

INTRODUCTION TO KIRTAN

**In this Dark Age (Kaliyuga) fruition of life lies in singing the praises and glory of the Lord (Kirtan)
- Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh Spiritual Scripture)**

What is Keertan?

'Kirtan' or 'Keertan' means singing of scriptural compositions in traditional musical measures. The word Keertan may have originated from the word "Keerat" which in Punjabi language means 'Praise'.

The Sikh practice of Keertan generally refers to a person playing a musical instrument (typically the Indian harmonium ie: vaajaa) and another person playing drums (typically the Indian traditional drums, ie: tablaa). The person playing the instrument sings sacred verses from the Sikh Spiritual scripture **Guru Granth Sahib**.

Sometimes Keertan is intertwined with "Simran" which is the practice of reciting the name - any name - of God in praise and love. When the Simran is being done with music and drums, and all the devotees sing with love and appreciation due to the universal energy of truth within all, the atmosphere becomes very powerful and it is a truly beautiful experience.

Kirtan Tradition:

The Sikh tradition of Keertan-Gurmat Sangeet- was started by Guru Nanak(1st Guru). Gurmat sangeet(Kirtan) is a unique musical tradition in which the divine message is communicated through shabad-kirtan, which is an inseparable part of the Sikh way of life. The Gurus enriched devotional music both in classical and folk styles. The Bani/Shabads/Verses in Guru Granth Sahib has different headings on it along with ragas; thus combining the beauty and significance of inspirational poetry with melodic excellence.

The Role of the Raags is extremely important, as it expresses a definite mood and has its own distinctive nature. Traditionally it is believed that different raags should be sung at different times of the day. However, the Gurus encourage an internal expression of mood, which is not dependent on time, but on the feeling of an individual at that time.

Guru Granth Sahib Ji

1) The true and permanent Spiritual Guide of the Sikhs.

- 2) Guru Granth Sahib Ji was compiled by Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs.
- 3) Contains verses/Bani of other Saints and Bhagats such as Kabir, Farid, Surdas, Namedv, Tirlochan, Ravidas, Ramanand, Dhana, and Jaidev etc along with the Sikh Gurus without consideration of their caste, creed or religion.
- 4) Shabads/Verses are set in several musical ragas (tunes).

Main message for Humanity

- 1) Only by the grace of a true Guru, the ego can be dissolved and eternal happiness can be achieved.
- 2) To smilingly accept the will of God.
- 3) Selfless service of humanity is the true worship of God.
- 4) Women deserve the same respect as men.
- 5) Truth is highest of all, higher still is truthful living.