

# ECHOES OF THE GURU'S DARBAR: RAI BALWAND AND BHAI SATTI IN SIKH HISTORICAL TEXTS

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## ABSTRACT

*The Rababi tradition played a formative role in shaping the musical and devotional life of the Sikh Gurus' Darbars (courts), yet its historical contours remain only partially examined. This paper focuses on Rababi Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta, tracing how their Keertan and devotional service are represented across major Sikh historical sources within the contexts of successive Gurus' Darbars. Rather than constructing a comprehensive biography or engaging in textual exegesis of their Bani, the study foregrounds Gurmat Sangeet as lived practice, as reflected in historical narratives, Darbar settings, and references to musical performance. Drawing upon primary Sikh historical works such as Mahima Prakash, Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin, and Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, the paper examines portrayals of Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta during the periods of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Angad Dev Ji, Guru Amar Das Ji, Guru Ram Das Ji, Guru Arjan Dev Ji, and Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. A Guru-wise analysis highlights descriptions of Keertan, the role and presence of Rababis within the Guru's Darbar, and the spiritual, ceremonial, and communal functions their music fulfilled. Through comparative reading of historical sources, the study identifies both continuity and variation in the depiction of Rababi Keertan, offering insight into the evolving musical culture of early Sikhism. By situating Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta within Darbar-based narratives, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Gurmat Sangeet in historical practice and affirms their enduring legacy within the sacred soundscape of the Sikh tradition.*

**Keywords:** Guru's Darbar, Rai Balwand, Bhai Satta, Sikh Historical Texts

## Introduction and Context

This study explores the Rababi Keertan tradition within the broader framework of Gurmat Sangeet in Sikhism, with specific focus on Rababi Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta. The tradition of Rababi Keertan began under the guidance of Guru Nanak Dev Ji with Bhai Mardana and was subsequently carried forward by Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta, who served in the Darbar (court) of successive Sikh Gurus. While the Rababi tradition is acknowledged in Sikh historical and scriptural sources, focused scholarly examination of its development and practitioners remains limited. Although the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji includes the Bani of Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta, particularly Ramkali ki Vaar Rai Balwand tathā Sattai Dūm ākhī on Ang 966, much about their lives, service, and musical contributions remains underexplored. Their presence in the Sikh canon places them among the very few non-Guru contributors whose compositions were enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib, granting them both devotional authority and historical significance. This unique position calls for closer examination of their role within the evolving tradition of Gurmat Sangeet.

As devoted Sikhs and accomplished Keertankars, Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta served from the time of Guru Nanak Dev Ji through Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. Their sustained presence across multiple Guru periods reflects not only continuity of Rababi Keertan but also the gradual development of Sikh musical, spiritual, and institutional life. Their service echoes the devotional ethos, musical discipline, and spiritual atmosphere of the Guru's Darbar, highlighting the Rababi contribution within the Gurmat Sangeet framework.

Historical records concerning Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta are limited, yet valuable insights emerge from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and traditional Sikh historical texts. Both belonged to the Mirasi or Doom community, traditionally associated with bardic, musical, and hereditary service in royal and spiritual courts. The titles Rai (Balwand) and Doom (Satta) reflect this cultural and professional lineage. Sikh historical sources such as Mahima Prakash, Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, and Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin note their prominence particularly during the time of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, while also indicating their active service across earlier and later Guru periods.

Traditionally identified as Khadooriye Rababis, Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta are recorded as serving at Khadoor Sahib during the period of Guru Angad Dev Ji, where a Keertan Chauki associated with their tradition was established. They later relocated to Amritsar, near Bhai Saloh di Tobha, as the Sikh center of spiritual and musical life flourished around the Guru's Darbar. From

this setting, they continued to contribute to the practice and enrichment of Gurmat Sangeet, leaving a lasting imprint on the sacred soundscape of the Sikh tradition.

## Primary Historical Sources on Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta

The historical understanding of Rababi Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta is drawn from a limited but significant corpus of Sikh literary and poetic sources composed between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While their Bani is preserved authoritatively within the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, details of their lives, service, and presence in the Guru's Darbar (court) emerge primarily through traditional Sikh historical texts that combine narrative, devotional, and didactic elements. These sources do not function as modern critical histories; rather, they reflect inherited memory, oral tradition, and theological interpretation embedded within poetic form. Among these, Mahima Prakash, Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, and Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin are particularly important for tracing references to Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta across different Guru periods. Each text offers a distinct narrative emphasis, together providing complementary perspectives on the Rababis' devotional service, spiritual trials, and role within the evolving tradition of Gurmat Sangeet.

### Mahima Prakash

Among the earliest Sikh historical compositions, Mahima Prakash provides a crucial narrative foundation for understanding the devotional and institutional life of the Sikh Gurus. Composed in verse by Sarup Das Bhalla and completed in 1776, the work draws upon earlier Janam Sakhi traditions, oral transmission, and community memory associated with the Guru lineage. Written in Gurmukhi and preserved in multiple manuscript traditions, the text presents history through independent sakhis that combine theological reflection with descriptive narrative. Although not composed as a critical historical chronicle and marked by occasional inconsistencies, Mahima Prakash remains indispensable for reconstructing the lived spiritual environment of the Guru's Darbar. For the study of Rababi Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta, Mahima Prakash holds particular importance due to the breadth of its references. Unlike later sources that concentrate on a single episode, this text traces their presence across several Guruships. It records Balwand's association with Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Guru Angad Dev Ji, his sustained role in Keertan, moments of ego and correction, and the gradual emergence of Bhai Satta during the period of Guru Amar Das Ji. These references, though dispersed, form a coherent devotional arc that situates the Rababis within a continuous tradition of Gurmat Sangeet extending across generations.

### Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth

Composed in the nineteenth century by Kavi Santokh Singh, Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth represents one of the most ambitious poetic renderings of Sikh history. Written in Braj Bhasha using the Gurmukhi script, the work narrates the lives of the Sikh Gurus through an epic structure organized around the metaphor of the sun as divine illumination. While its style is overtly poetic and didactic rather than analytical, the text remains central to Sikh historiography due to its expansive scope, integration of earlier traditions, and enduring influence on historical imagination. Within this vast narrative, references to Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta appear primarily in passages associated with the later stages of their lives, especially during the periods of Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. Rather than offering biographical continuity, Suraj Prakash concentrates on moments of estrangement, repentance, and restoration. These episodes are framed as moral trials that foreground humility, divine grace, and ethical accountability. Through this lens, the Rababis are portrayed not merely as court musicians, but as devotees whose spiritual journey embodies core Sikh values. The text thus contributes a distinctly theological perspective on their role within the Guru's Darbar and the Rababi Keertan tradition.

### Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin

The narrative focus of Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin lies primarily in the life and authority of Guru Hargobind Sahib, yet the text also preserves important insights into the devotional culture of earlier Sikh courts. Written in a Braj-influenced poetic style and transmitted in Gurmukhi, the work reflects a layered compositional history and survives in multiple printed editions. Despite scholarly debate regarding its precise dating and chronology, the text remains significant for its portrayal of the ethical, musical, and spiritual expectations associated with service in the Guru's Darbar. References to Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta within Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin are concentrated around the period of Guru Arjan Dev Ji and focus on a pivotal episode of estrangement followed by repentance and reconciliation. Although the text does not attempt a comprehensive account of their lives, it presents this episode with emotional intensity and moral clarity. The reconciliation is depicted not simply as personal restoration, but as a reaffirmation of Gurmat principles, emphasizing humility, forgiveness, and the transformative power of Keertan. In this way, Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin contributes a focused ethical and devotional dimension to the understanding of Rababi service within the Sikh musical tradition.

## Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta: Presence Across the Gurus' Darbars

### During the Time of Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Most of the reference for this time is found in Mahima Parkash.

#### Sakhi Baba Ji Ka Nit Karam

In Mahima Parkash “Sakhi Baba Ji Ka Nit Karam (page 315)” marks the first recorded mention of Bhai Balwand in historical Sikh literature. His name appears in the fifth verse of the Chaupai section, situating him as a Rababi engaged in daily Keertan during Guru Nanak Dev Ji's spiritual routine.:

#### Original Verse

ਪੁਨ ਬਾਹਰ ਆਵੈ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਬਜੈ ਰਬਾਬ ਅਨਹਦ ਧੁਨਿ ਸੋਇ ॥  
ਬਲਵੰਡ ਭਜਨ ਕਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਵੈ ॥ ਕਰੈ ਭਜਨ ਪਹਰ ਏਕ ਬੀਤਾਵੈ ॥੫॥

Pun bāhar āvai kīrtan ho-e ॥ Bajai rabāb anahad dhun so-e ॥

Balwand bhajan kare prabh bhāvai ॥ Karai bhajan pahar ek bītāvai ॥<sup>5</sup> ॥

#### Translation

Then he came outside, and Keertan (devotional singing) began.

The Rabab was played, producing a sound like the **anahad shabad** (the unstruck, eternal sound). **Balwand** engaged in devotional singing, which pleased the Divine.

He continued his **bhajan** (devotional practice) for **one full paher** (a three-hour watch of the day).

Verses 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> also talks about Balwand's Keertan and daily schedule like this:

ਸੰਧਿਆ ਸਮਾ ਕਰ ਭਜਨ ਬੀਤੈ ॥ ਹੋਰਿ ਰਾਤ ਇਕਤੁ ਬਾਬਾ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤੈ ॥ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਰਬਾਨ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਅਖੰਡ ॥ ਗਾਵੈ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਜੁਗਤ ਬਲਵੰਡ ॥ ੯ ॥

ਅਰਧ ਰਾਤੁ ਤਕ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਪੁਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਰਹੇ ਪਲੰਘ ਪਰ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਇਹ ਜੁਗਤ ਰਾਤ ਦਿਨ ਹੋਇ ਬਿਤੀਤ ॥ ਸਦ ਹੋਇ ਭਜਨ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਨਿਤ ਨੀਤ ॥੧੦॥

Sandhiā samā kar bhajan bātītai ॥ Hor rāt ikat Bābā ke prītai ॥ Hoi nirbān kīrtan akhaṇḍ ॥ Gāve prem jugat Balwand ॥ 9

Aradh rātr tak kīrtan ho-e ॥ Pun Satigur rahe palaṅgh par so-e ॥ Ih jugat rāt din ho-e bitīṭ ॥ Sad ho-e bhajan kīrtan nit nīṭ ॥

#### Translation

As evening approached, he (Balwand) continued in bhajan (devotional singing). The rest of the night passed in loving devotion to the Guru. An unbroken, blissful stream of Keertan took place. Balwand sang with deep love and spiritual method.

Keertan continued until midnight. Afterward, the Satguru rested on His bed. In this manner, the nights and days passed—Constantly filled with uninterrupted devotional Keertan.

These verses describe the daily devotional rhythm of Balwand's Keertan in the Guru's presence. His singing continued into the night, creating an atmosphere of spiritual absorption and unbroken Keertan. The Guru retired only after midnight, reflecting the depth of immersion in sustained, loving devotion through music.

#### Sakhi Baba Ji Da Emnabaad Lalo Badhi De Ghar Jana

Next mention of Balwand ji in Guru Nanak's court is in Sakhi Baba Ji Da Emnabaad Lalo Badhi Dey Ghar Jana (page 316)

#### Original Verse

ਲਾਲੇ ਕੇ ਗੁਰ ਆਏ ਦਿਆਲ ॥ ਲੀਏ ਲਹਨਾ ਬੁਢਾ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਨਾਲ ॥ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਆਇਆ ਸੰਗ ॥ ਭਈ ਭੇਟ ਲਾਲੇ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗ ॥੨॥

Lālo ke Gur āe diyāl ॥ Līe Lahanā Buḍhā sādharan nāl ॥

Balwand Rabābī āiā sang ॥ Bhaī bheṭ Lālo Hari raṅg ॥

#### Translation:

The compassionate Guru came to the house of Lalo. He was accompanied by Lehna (later Guru Angad Dev Ji) and the humble Bhai Buddha Ji. Balwand the Rababi also came along with them. There, a spiritual meeting took place in Lalo's home, filled with divine love.

This verse recounts Guru Nanak Dev Ji's visit to the home of Bhai Lalo, accompanied by Bhai Lehna Ji, Bhai Buddha Ji, and Rababi Balwand. Bhai Lalo, a humble carpenter of Saidpur, exemplified honest living. The Guru's preference for his simple, honestly earned food over lavish offerings affirms the Sikh principle of kirat karni and highlights the sanctity, humility, and spiritual intimacy of the gathering.

### Sakhi Sri Guru Babey Ji Ka Joti Jot Samauna

This Sakhi is about Guru Nanak Dev Ji Joti Jot Samauna (page 342), His light merged with Divine Light and he left his Body. It shows in this verse how Balwand was called in this auspicious Divine moment for Keertan.

#### Original Verse

ਪੁਨ ਦਿਆਲ ਸਭ ਸਖਾ ਬੁਲਾਏ॥ ਇਹ ਬਿਧ ਸਭ ਦੌੜੇ ਆਏ॥ ਬੁਢਾ ਭਗੀਰਥ ਅਉਰ ਸਧਾਰਨ॥ ਆਏ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਭਜਨ ਸੁਖ ਕਾਰਨ॥੫॥

Pun diyāl sabh sakhā bulāe ॥Ih bidh sabh daure āe ॥

Buddhā, Bhagīrath, aur sādharan ॥Āe Balwand bhajan sukh kāran ॥

#### Translation:

Then the compassionate Guru called all his companions. Upon hearing the call, they all came running. **Bhai Buddha, Bhagīrath,** and other devoted Sikhs arrived, And **Balwand came as well**, to offer **devotional singing (bhajan)** for the comfort and joy of the Guru.

Then in verse 12 there is mention that before departing from His body, Guru Nanak Dev Ji instructed to send Balwand Rababi with Guru Arjan Dev Ji

#### Original Verse

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਤੁਮ ਸੰਗ ਜਾਵੈ॥ ਸਮੇ ਸਮੇ ਹਰਿ ਭਜਨ ਸੁਨਾਵੈ॥ ਇਸ ਪਰ ਦਇਆਵੰਤ ਸਦ ਰਹੀਐ॥ ਦਾਤਨ ਮੇ ਜਿਮ ਜੀਭ ਰਖਈਐ॥੧੨॥

Balwand Rabābī tum sang jāvai, Same same Har bhajan sunāvai. Is par daiyāvānt sad rahīai, Dātan mo jim jībh rakhīai.

#### Translation:

Let **Balwand the Rababi** go with you. From time to time, he shall sing and recite the praises of the Divine. Always remain **compassionate and gracious toward him. Protect him like the tongue is protected during brushing** (dātan).

This mention here Reaffirms that Balwand was already in Guru Nanak Dev Ji's service. Contains an instruction to ensure Balwand continues Keertan seva in the next Guru's court. Uses a metaphor ("as the tongue is protected while brushing") to emphasize care and respect for him—indicating his value and vulnerability in continuing the tradition.

### During the Time of Guru Angad Dev Ji

Next Reference in Mahima Prakash is of Balwand's Keertan in the Court of Guru Angad Dev Ji. In the sakhi titled "Khadur Vich Sri Guru Angad Ji Da Alop Ho Key Rehna", we find a mention of Balwand Rababi performing Keertan in the court of Guru Angad Dev Ji. Notably, only Balwand is referenced here, there is no mention of Bhai Satta at this stage. This section presents some initial references to the presence of Rababi Balwand in Guru Angad Dev Ji's court. A more detailed timeline, including the sequence of appearances and key events, will be discussed in the following sections.

#### Original Verse

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਆਨ ਚਰਨਨ ਪਰ ਪਰਾ॥ ਅਤ ਬਿਓਗ ਮਨ' ਦਰਸਨ ਕਰਾ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਤ ਜੀ ਦੀਓ ਦਿਲਾਸਾ॥ ਕਰੇ ਭਜਨ ਹੋਇ ਪਰਮ ਬਿਲਾਸਾ॥੧੮॥

ਪੁਨ ਅਪਨੇ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਪਰ ਆਏ॥ ਸਿੰਘਾਸਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤਹਾ ਬਿਛਾਏ॥

ਤਾ ਪਰ ਬੈਠੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਆਇ॥ ਪਏ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਦਰਸਨ ਸਭ ਪਾਇ॥੧੯॥

Balwand ān charnan par parā ॥At biyog man' darshan karā ॥

Gurū Angad jī diyo dilāsā ॥Karo bhajan hoi param bilāsā ॥18

Pun apne asthān par āe ॥Siṅghāsan Satigur tahā bichae ॥

Atā par baiṭhe Satigur āe ॥Pae nihāl darshan sabh pāe ॥19

**Translation**

Balwand came and fell at the Guru's feet. Overcome with the pain of separation, he longed for darshan. Guru Angad Dev Ji consoled him gently, Saying: "Continue your bhajan—it will bring supreme bliss." 18

Then the Guru returned to His seat. The throne was prepared, and Guru Angad Dev Ji sat upon it. All were overjoyed and spiritually fulfilled upon receiving His darshan. 19

Mahima Prakash describes an early episode from Guru Angad Dev Ji's Guruship in which Rai Balwand, distressed by separation, sought refuge at the Guru's feet. The Guru consoled him and directed him to continue his devotional service, affirming both Balwand's role in the Keertan tradition and the continuity of musical devotion from Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Angad Dev Ji.

**Sakhi Related to Guru Angad Dev Ji's Daily Schedule**

Mahima Prakash, Page 351 – Sakhi: "Satguru Angad Dev Ji Da Nit Karam Bivhaar Karna". This Sakhi describes the structured and spiritually rich daily routine of Guru Angad Dev Ji. Each day began with the Guru bathing during the ambrosial hours (Amrit Vela), after which he would sit in a state of Sehaj Avasthā (serene meditative posture). As morning light spread, devotees were blessed with the opportunity to see the Guru and receive spiritual grace through his divine presence. During this sacred time, Rababi Bhai Balwand would arrive to perform Gurbani Keertan in melodious Raags, adding musical bliss to the spiritually charged environment.

**Original Verse**

ਪੁਨ ਰਾਇ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਆਵੈ ॥ ਧੁਨ ਰਾਗ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਗਾਵੈ ॥

ਨਿਰਬਾਨ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਮਹਾ ਬਿਲਾਸ ॥ ਜਿਸ ਦਰਸ ਪਰਸ ਤਿਸ ਪੁਰਨ ਆਸ ॥੫॥

Pun Rāi Balwand Rabābī āvai ॥ Dhun Rāg sudhār Gurbānī gāvai ॥

Nīrbān kīrtan mahā bilās ॥ Jis daras paras tis pūran ās ॥5 ॥

**Translation:**

Then Rai Balwand the Rababi arrives. He sings Gurbani beautifully, tuning it to the melodious Raags. The sublime Keertan becomes a source of immense spiritual bliss. Whoever receives the Guru's sight and touch finds their deepest hopes fulfilled.

ਪਹਰ ਦਿਵਸ ਜਬ ਬਾਕੀ ਰਹੇ ॥ ਤਬ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਆਨ ਸਿੰਘਾਸਨ ਬਹੇ ॥

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਬਦ ਕੀ ਚੌਕੀ ਕਰੇ ॥ ਸਭ ਸੁਨੇ ਭਜਨ ਲੇ ਮਨ ਮੇ ਧਰੇ ॥੧੪॥

Pahar divas jab bākī rahe ॥ Tab Satgur ān Singhāsan bahe ॥

Balwand Sabad kī Chauki kare ॥ Sabh sune bhajan le man mo dhare ॥14 ॥

**Translation**

When a portion of the day remained, The True Guru came and sat on the royal throne.

Balwand began the Shabad Chauki (Keertan session), All listened and engaged their hearts in divine remembrance.

This Sakhi highlights the disciplined and community-centered life under Guru Angad Dev Ji, with Bhai Balwand playing a central role in sustaining Raag-based Gurbani Keertan after Bhai Mardana. It also reflects the Sikh ideal of an integrated life combining devotion, music, community engagement, and physical discipline.

**Sakhi Related to Demolishing Balwand's Ego and Rudeness**

Source: Mahima Prakash (Page 358), "Sakhi Rai Balwand Rababi Ka Hankar Door Karna". This Sakhi recounts an episode in which Rai Balwand, influenced by the special affection he received from Guru Angad Dev Ji, allowed pride to enter his service. When Baba Budha Ji humbly requested a Shabad out of devotional longing, Balwand refused, insisting it be sung only at the appointed time. This response reflected a lapse in humility expected in service to the Guru. Guru Angad Dev Ji, perceiving this subtle ego, was displeased, and the episode unfolds into a process of correction and inner transformation for Balwand.

**Original Verse**

ਦਿਵਸ ਏਕ ਬਸ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਹੋਇ ਬੁਢੇ ਕਹੀ ॥ ਹੇ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਬਦ ਸੁਨਾਇ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਰੁਚ ਭਈ ॥

ਉਹ ਬੋਲਿਓ ਬਚਨ ਕਠੋਰ ਨ ਸਬਦ ਸੁਨਾਇਆ ॥ ਹੇ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਨ ਭਲਾ ਭਾਇਆ ॥੩॥

Divas ek bas prem hoe Būḍhe kahī. He Balwand shabad sunāe mere man ruch bhāi.

Uho bolio bachan kaṭhor, na shabad sunāiā. Ho antarjāmī Satgur na bhalā bhāiā. (3)

#### Translation

One day, Baba Budha Ji lovingly said to Balwand, "Please sing a Shabad—my heart longs to hear it."

Balwand harshly responded and did not sing. This lack of love did not sit well with the all-knowing Satguru. (3)

ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਅਭਾਉ ਦਿਆਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨ ਮੇ ਧਰਾ॥ ਇਹ ਢਾਢੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਬਿਗੀਨ ਅਹੰ ਮਨ ਮੇ ਕਰਾ॥

ਭਜਨ ਸਮਾ ਜਬ ਭਇਆ ਆਇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਿਓ॥ ਹੋ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਮੁਖ ਲੀਓ ਫੇਰ ਪੀਠ ਤਾ ਢਿਗ ਧਰਿਓ॥੪॥

*Ih prem abhau diyāl gurū man mo dharā. Ih dhāḍhī prem bihīn ahan man mo karā.*

*Bhajan samā jab bhaiā āe kīrtan kariyo. Ho Satgur mukh līo pher pīṭh tā dhig dhariyo. (4)*

#### Translation

Guru, the ocean of mercy, noted this absence of loving devotion. He recognized ego had crept into the minstrel's heart.

When the time came for Keertan, Balwand came to perform. But Guru turned His face away, and gave him His back. (4)

This Sakhi conveys a profound lesson in humility and surrender. Despite his devotional service, Balwand allowed ego to arise, which manifested in disrespect toward Baba Budha Ji. Guru Angad Dev Ji responded through dignified silence, allowing Balwand to realize his error through separation and reflection.

### During the Time of Guru Amar Das Ji

#### Sakhi: Baba Amardas Ji Listens to a Shabad from Bibi Amro

**Source:** *Mahima Prakash*, Page 362–364, Sakhi "Baba Amardas Ji Sri Satguru Angad Ji Naal Milaap" This sakhi recounts the profound spiritual awakening of Baba Amardas Ji upon hearing a Shabad being recited by Bibi Amro, daughter of Guru Angad Dev Ji and wife of Bhai Jassa Ji. The Shabad is from Raag Maru, composed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and is a deep reflection on karma, divine will, and the consequences of forgetting the Name.

#### Original Verse

ਰਾਗ ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧॥ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਰਗਦੁ ਮਨ ਮਸਵਾਣੀ ਬੁਰਾ ਭਲਾ ਦੁਇ ਲੇਖ ਪਏ ॥

ਜਿਉ ਜਿਉ ਕਿਰਤ ਚਲਾਏ ਤਿਉ ਚਲੀਐ ਤਉ ਗੁਣ ਨਾਹੀ ਅੰਤ ਹਰੇ ॥

ਚਿਤ ਚੇਤਸ ਕੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਾਵਰਿਆ॥ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਸਰਤ ਤੇਰੇ ਗੁਣ ਗਲਿਆ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*Rāg Māru Mehalā 1. Karṇī kārgad man masvāṇī burā bhalā dui lekh pa'e.*

*Ji'u ji'u kirat chalāe ti'u chālīai ta'u guṇ nāhī ant hare.*

*Chit chetas kī nahī bāvariya. Har bisrat tere guṇ galiā. ||1|| Rahāu ||*

#### Translation

Raag Maru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji:

Actions are the paper, the mind is the inkpot; good and bad deeds are both recorded.

As per past karma, we move—yet without virtue, there is no true end.

The mind does not focus; forgetting the Lord, your virtues are lost. ||1|| Pause ||

Later on page 364, Guru Amardas Ji asks Bibi Amro about the source of the Shabad, and she attributes it to Guru Nanak Dev Ji, saying she hears it daily being sung by Balwand Rababi in Guru Angad Dev Ji's court.

ਤਬ ਬੀਬੀ ਅਮਰੇ ਕਹਿਓ ਸੁਨਾਇ॥ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਬਿਸਨ ਪਦ ਆਇ॥

ਮਮ ਪਿਤਾ ਅਗੂ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਨਿਤ ਗਾਇਆ॥ ਮੈ ਸੁਨਿਓ ਤਰਾ ਤੇ ਹੀਏ ਬਸਾਇਆ॥੪੩॥

ਤਬ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬਿਨੇ ਬਚਨ ਮੁਖ ਕਰਾ॥ ਹੇ ਪੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਮੋਹਿ ਲੇ ਚਾਲੇ ਤਰਾ॥

ਉਨ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੀ ਮਨ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਸ ॥੪੪॥

*Tab Bībī Amro kahi'o sunāe. Gurū Nānak jī kā bisan pad āe.*

*Mam pitā agra Balwand nit gāiā. Mai suni'o tahā te hīe basāiā. ||43||*

*Tab sāhib bine bachan mukh kahā. He putrī mohi le chālo tahā.*

*Un darshan kī man dharo piās. ||44||*

#### Translation:

At that moment, Baba Amardas stood before her and said:

“O daughter, from whom did you hear this divine utterance? Hearing it from your mouth, I consider it my great fortune.”

Bibi Amro replied, “This is a divine verse of Guru Nanak Ji.

My father-in-law Balwand sings it daily. Hearing it from him, I have internalized it in my heart.”

Then Baba Amardas spoke with longing, “O daughter, take me there!

My heart is now filled with a thirst for the vision of that Guru.”

This sakhi reveals how deeply the Keertan performed by Rababi Balwand in Guru Angad Dev Ji's court impacted listeners. Baba Amardas Ji, upon hearing Guru Nanak's Shabad recited by Bibi Amro, experienced an intense spiritual awakening. The episode highlights the pivotal role of music and oral tradition in transmitting divine knowledge and fostering transformation. It also affirms Balwand's continuous presence in Guru Angad's court and the living influence of Guru Nanak's Bani in shaping future Sikh leaders.

#### Sakhi Related to Guru Amardas and Jogi Peer

This episode is drawn from *Mahima Prakash*, titled “**Sakhi Khadoor Dey Jogi Peer Da Guru Ji Naal Durbaad**”, in which Pauris 51–52, page 376 specifically mention Bhai Balwand.

#### Original Verse

ਬਡਾ ਅੰਨਦ ਭਇਆ ਮੰਗਲਚਾਰਾ ॥ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਚਰਨ ਖਡੂਰ ਜਬ ਧਾਰਾ ॥

*Baḍā anand bhae mangalchārā, satgur charan Khaḍūr jab dhārā.*

Great joy and celebration spread when the Satguru set foot again in Khadoor.

ਆਨੰਦ ਪੁਨ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਤਬ ਕਰੀ ॥ ਉਸਤਤ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਉਚਰੀ ॥੫੦॥

*Ānand pun Balwand tab karī, ustat Satgur kī uchrī. (50)*

At that moment, Balwand rejoiced in divine bliss and sang praises of the True Guru.

ਪੇੜੀ ਕਰੀ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਇਹ ਟਿਕੇ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥

*Paurī karī Balwand ih ṭike kī vār milāe.*

Balwand then composed this Pauri, adding it to the sacred composition known as *Tikay Ki Vaar*.

ਸੋਹਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗਰੰਥ ਮੇ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਗਾਵਤ ਤਾਹ ॥੫੧॥

*Sohat Srī Granth mo sabh kau gāvat tāh. (51)*

It now shines in the holy Granth, sung by all with reverence.

The sakhi reinforces Balwand's enduring presence and service in the Guru's court across successive Gurus, and it exemplifies the use of keertan not only as a medium of devotion but also as a historical witness to spiritual milestones.

#### Sakhi Related to Guru Amar Das Ji's Guruship Tenure

The *Mahima Prakash* Granth (page 384), in the Sakhi titled “**Aagey Mahima Mahaley Teejey Ki**”, narrates a spiritually significant episode following Guru Amar Das Ji's formal succession as Guru. At a sacred gathering, **Balwand the Rababi and Satta** also arrived and had the blessed *darshan* of the Guru. They played the **Rabab**, and in their ecstasy, offered musical praise. During this occasion, they composed and sang a **Pauri (stanza) of Ramkali Ki Vaar (Pauri 6<sup>th</sup>)**, also known as *Tikay Ki Vaar*. This moment marks the **first time in Mahima Prakash that Satta is mentioned alongside Balwand**, firmly establishing them as Rababi musicians in Guru Amar Das Ji's court

**Original Verse**

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਸਤਾ ਆਏ ॥ ਅਤਭੁਤ ਦਰਸਨ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਪਾਏ ॥

ਤਿਨ ਧੁਨ ਰਬਾਬ ਕਰ ਉਸਤਤ ਕਰੀ ॥ ਟਿਕੇ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਕੀ ਪਉੜੀ ਕਰੀ ॥੨੦॥

Balwand rabābī Satā āe, Atbhut darshan Satgur pāe.

Tin dhun rabāb kar ustat karī, Ṭike kī vār kī pauṛī karī. ॥20॥

**Translation**

Balwand the Rababi and Satta arrived. They had the wondrous darshan of the True Guru.

They played the Rabab and offered heartfelt praise. They composed a stanza of Tikay Ki Vaar. (20)

The mention of Bhai Budha Ji reinforces historical continuity and reverence, while the arrival of **Balwand and Satta** underscores the centrality of Rababi musicians in early Sikh tradition. The Pauri sung during this congregation "**So Teeka So Behna Soi Deebaan...**" (Pauri 6 of *Ramkali Ki Vaar*) was later included by **Guru Arjan Dev Ji** in the **Sri Guru Granth Sahib**, further attesting to the enduring spiritual value of their composition and service.

**Sakhi Related to Guru Amar Das Ji's Daily Schedule**

**Sakhi** *Guru Amardas Di Nit Karam Rehni Bivhaar*, page 386, offers a glimpse into the serene and spiritually rich daily routine of Guru Amar Das Ji. It reaffirms the role of **Rababis Bhai Balwand and Bhai Satta**, whose keertan was integral to the Guru's routine. Their playing of the rabab and singing of Shabad in prescribed Raags added a sonic dimension of devotion and discipline to the Guru's court. The Sakhi also mentions congregational kathā sessions and uninterrupted bhajan sessions, presenting a fuller picture of daily spiritual practice in the Guru's presence.

**Original Verse:**

ਨਿਜ ਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘਾਸਨ ਹੋਇ ਅਸੀਨ ॥ ਸਹਜ ਸਮਾਧ ਨਿਜ ਸੁਖ ਮੇ ਲੀਨ ॥

ਇਸੀ ਜੁਗਤ ਹੋਇ ਪ੍ਰਾਤਰਕਾਲ ॥ ਪੁਨ ਸਤਾ ਸਬਦ ਧੁਨਿ ਕਰੇ ਬਿਸਾਲ ॥੫॥

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਬਾਨੀ ਰਾਗ ਧਰ ਕਰੋ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਮੇ ਉਚਾਰ ॥ ਬਾਜੇ ਤਾਰ ਰਬਾਬ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਧੁਨੀ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ ॥੬॥

Nij bhagat singhāsan hoi aśīn. Sahaj samādh nij sukh mo līn.

Isī jugat hoi prātahkāl. Pun Satā śabad dhun kare bisāl.

Amrit bānī rāg dhar karōm amrit samē uchār.

Bāje tār rabāb kī pragat dhunī oankar.

**Translation**

In this same manner, during the early morning hours, Satta would produce a grand musical recitation of the Shabad.

The nectarous Bani was sung in specific Raags during the sacred early hours.

The strings of the rabab played clearly, resonating with the primal sound of Omkaar.

This Sakhi from *Mahima Prakash* portrays the deeply devotional environment of Guru Amar Das Ji's court. The daily practice begins with the Guru's meditative presence, followed by Shabad Keertan rendered by Bhai Satta in the early morning using traditional Raag structure. The verses vividly describe the sacred music played on the rabab, creating an atmosphere charged with spiritual vibration.

**During the Time of Guru Ram Das Ji**

There is no reference of Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta in any of these primary resources during Guru Ram Das Ji timeline.

**During the Time of Guru Arjan Dev Ji****Balwand and Bhai Satta Recitation of Tikay Ki Vaar Pauri 8**

Source of Sakhi : *Guru Ji Ki Ustat Leela* (Mahima Prakash, p. 470); This Sakhi captures a spiritually uplifting moment where Balwand and Satta are once again mentioned performing devotional Keertan. The event not only affirms their continued presence in the Guru's court but also records the recitation of the 8th Pauri of what later became known as Tikay Ki Vaar or Ramkali Ki Vaar, enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

**Original Verse**

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਸਤਾ ਤਹ ਆਇਆ॥ ਆਨ ਹਜੂਰ ਰਬਾਬ ਬਜਾਇਆ॥

ਗੁਰ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਗਾਵਨ ਲਾਗਾ॥ ਕਰੇ ਭਜਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਰਸ ਪਾਗਾ॥੮॥

ਪਉੜੀ ਕਰ ਉਸਤਤ ਮੁਖਿ ਗਾਈ॥ ਟਿਕੇ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਸੇ ਲਾਈ॥

ਸਤਗੁਰ ਤਾ ਪਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੀ॥ ਸੰਗ ਵਾਰ ਲਗਾਇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਲਿਖ ਧਰੀ॥੯॥

Gur ustat kar gāvan lāgā. Karē bhajan prem ras pāgā. ||8||

Paurī kar ustat mukh gāi. Tikē kī vār māhi so lāi.

Satgur tā par kirpā karī. Sang vār lagāi granth likh dharī. ||9||

**Translation**

Satta, the son of Balwand, came before the Guru. He began playing the Rabab in the Guru's presence.

He started singing the praises of the Guru, Immersed in the divine nectar of devotional love

They recited a pauri (stanza) in praise of the Guru. That stanza was included in the Vaar of the coronation.

The Guru bestowed His grace upon them, And the Vaar was recorded in the sacred Granth.

On hearing the pauri of praise, the entire congregation was overjoyed.

This Sakhi documents a moving episode in which Balwand and Satta again appear in the divine court, offering Keertan with deep love and devotion. Here, Satta is explicitly referred to as the son of Balwand ("Balwand putar Satta"), affirming a lineal connection noted in other parts of Mahima Prakash. The 8th Pauri of what became the Tikay Ki Vaar, "Charey Jaagey Chahu Jugi Panchain Aapay Hoa", was composed and sung at this time. The Sakhi tells us that this Pauri was subsequently included in the compilation of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, under Guru Arjan Dev's guidance, signifying both the spiritual merit and the historical authenticity of their contributions.

**Bhai Satta's Accompaniment to Guru Arjan Dev during the Visit to Bhai Mohan**

This Sakhi (Mahima Prakash, Page 493) narrates the spiritually profound moment surrounding the compilation of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji under the visionary leadership of Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru.

Selected Verses from the Sakhi

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ਜਾਨੈ॥ ਕਾਹੂ ਕੀ ਸੰਸਰਾਮ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਨੈ॥

The True Guru, knower of all hearts, did not rely on external intermediaries.

ਮੇਹਨ ਜੀ ਜਬ ਕਰੇ/ਪਠਾਇ॥ ਤਬ ਦੇਵੈ ਪੋਥੀ ਯਹੀ ਉਪਾਇ॥੮॥

*Mohan jī jab kahe/pathāi; tab devai pothī yahī upāi.*

When Mohan Ji was addressed with humility, he agreed to hand over the sacred pothis, this was the means to success.

ਤਬ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪਰਮ ਚਤਰ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨਾ॥ ਮੇਹਨ ਕੀ ਉਸਤਤ ਛੰਤ ਇਕੁ ਕੀਨਾ॥

*Tab Satgur param chatar prabīnā; Mohan kī ustat chhand iku kīnā.*

Then the all-wise Guru composed a beautiful verse of praise for Mohan.

ਸਤਾ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਲੀਨਾ ਸਾਥ॥ ਅਉਰ ਗੁਰਮਖਿ ਸਿਖ ਸੰਗ ਜੋੜੇ ਹਾਥ॥੯॥

*Satā Rabābī līnā sāth; aur gurmukh sikh sang joṛe hāth.*

He took Satta Rababi along with him, joined by other Gurmukh Sikhs.

This Sakhi beautifully captures the *divinely orchestrated reconciliation* that made possible the formal compilation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It highlights the spiritual foresight of Guru Arjan Dev, the important role of Rababis, especially Satta, in delivering heartfelt devotional music that catalyzed Mohan's change of heart. It reflects how Keertan (devotional music) and divine love become instruments of unity and transformation and further confirms the historical role of Rababis like Satta and Balwand in pivotal Sikh moments.

## The Episode of Ego, Separation, and Forgiveness: The Rababis Balwand and Satta

*Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin Adhiyaye 4* (pages 131–139) presents the pivotal episode of ego, estrangement, and eventual reconciliation between the Rababis Balwand and Satta and Guru Arjan Dev. The narrative offers a spiritually rich illustration of human failing, divine grace, and the transformative power of humility and forgiveness.

### Balwand's Return and Conferment of the Title "Rai"

Original Verse: ਸੀ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਉਪਮਾ ਕਰੀ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਕਬਿਤ ਬਨਾਇ । ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤਿੰਹ ਧੀਰਜ ਦੇ ਐਸੇ ਕਹਿਓ ਸੁਨਾਇ ॥ 267॥

Sī gur kī upmā karī Balwand kavīt banāi. Srī Satigur tih dhīraj de aise kahiō sunāi.

**Translation:** Balwand composed poetic verses in praise of the Guru. The Guru, full of patience, gently addressed him.

Original Verse: ਇਤਰ ਬੈਨ ਤੁਮ ਨਾ ਰਰੇ ਮੁਹਿ ਆਗਿਆ ਇਹ ਮਾਨ । ਮਿਲ ਸਤੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰੇ ਸੁਨੇ ਰਾਇ ਬੁਧ ਵਾਨ ॥ 268॥

Itar bon tum nā raro, muhi āgiā ih mān. Mil Satte kīrtan karo, suno Rāi budh vān.

Translation: Do not speak of other matters, honor my command. Reunite with Satta and sing Keertan together. Listen, wise Rai.

Balwand was welcomed back to the Guru's court and respectfully conferred the honorary title "Rai" for his artistic and devotional service. He was asked to resume Keertan duties with Satta, marking a brief moment of harmony and honor.

### Family Marriage, Financial Request, and Estrangement

Balwand and Satta respectfully sought financial assistance for their sister's wedding. Guru Arjan Dev, ever compassionate, gave them some wealth immediately and assured them they could collect all the offerings made by the Sangat the next morning. However, the following day, only a meager amount was collected, a single rupee from each devotee. Interpreting this as neglect or insult, the Rababis felt slighted and departed in anger, choosing to abandon the Guru's service and seek support elsewhere. Their sense of entitlement, paired with wounded ego, initiated a painful estrangement from the Guru's court.

Original Verse:

ਕਿਤਕ ਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਭਾਂਤ ਬਿਤਾਯੋ । ਬਿਆਹ ਸਮਾਂ ਭਗਨੀ ਤਿਹ ਆਯੋ ॥ ਦੁਹੁ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਢਿਗ ਜਾਈ । ਗੁਰ ਅਰਜਨ ਕੀ ਉਪਮ ਸੁਣਾਈ ॥ ਪਾਛੋ ਗੁਰ ਕਉ ਐਸ ਅਲਾਯੋ । ਨਿਕਾਹਿ ਬਹਿਨ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜੀ ਆਯੋ ॥ ਕਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਬ ਸੁ ਦਯੋ । ਦਾਸ ਜਾਨ ਹਮ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਯੋ ॥ ਸੀ ਗੁਰ ਕਹਾ ਧੀਰ ਤੁਮ ਧਾਰੋ । ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਅਲਖ ਭੰਡਾਰੋ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਾਤ ਕਾਲ ਪੁਜਾ ਚੜੇ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਦਰਬ ਤੁਮਾਰ । ਗੁਰ ਅਰਜਨ ਜੀ ਅਸ ਕਹਿਓ ਕਾਰਜ ਲੇਵੇ ਸਾਰਾ ॥ ਸਵੇਯਾ - ਚੌਤ ਪਰਾਤ ਭਯੋ ਜਬ ਹੀ ਤਬ ਸੀ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੋ ਸਿਖ ਆਏ । ਸਤ ਏਕ ਰੁਪਯਾ ਸੁ ਭੇਟ ਧਰੀ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਸਿਖ ਸੈਗਤ ਰਯੋ ਇਕਠਾਏ ॥

ਤਮਰੇ ਸਾਥ ਨਹੀ ਹਮ ਜਾਵਹਿ । ਐਰ ਜਗਤ ਤੇ ਮਾਂਗ ਲਿਆਵਹਿ ॥

Kitak kāl ih bhānt bitāyoñ. Biāh samān bhagnī tih āyo. Duhu bhrāt Gur ke dhig jāi. Gur Arjan kī upam suṇāi. Pāchho Gur kau ais alāyoñ. Nikāh bahin kā Prabh jī āyo. Kar kṛipā Gur darb su dayo. Dās jān ham kāraj kayo. Sī Gur kahā dhīr tum dhāro. Gur Nānak kā alakh bhandāro. Prāt kāl pūjā chaṛo sabh hī darb tumār. Gur Arjan jī as kahiō kāraj love sārā. Savayyā – chaut parāt bhayo jab hī tab Sī Gur darśan kau sikh āye. Sat ek rupiyā su bheṭ dharī sabh hī sikh saigat hyo ikathāye.

Tamre sāth nahī ham jāvah. Aur jagat te māng liāvah.

### Guru's Visit and the Rababis' Ego

Before Guru Arjan Dev himself intervened, other Sikhs made several attempts to counsel Balwand and Satta, urging them to let go of their pride and return to the Guru's service. Despite these efforts, the Rababis remained unmoved. Guru Arjan Dev, displaying immense humility and compassion, personally visited the home of Balwand and Satta in an effort to bring them back.

Original Verse:

ਤੈਸੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਤਗਾਂ ਸਿਧਾਏ । ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਗੁਰ ਆਏ ॥

ਆਗੇ ਬੈਠ ਰਹੋ ਧਰ ਮਾਨ । ਸੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਕੋ ਨਹਿ ਆਦਰ ਠਾਨ ॥

Āge baiṭh rahiṅ dhar mān. Sī Guru kau nahi ādhar ṭhān.

Translation:

Thus, Guru Arjan Dev himself set out and came to the home of Balwand and Satta.

They sat with pride before him and did not offer the respect due to the Guru.

### The Guru's Directive: Keertan Without Rababis

In response to the situation involving Balwand and Satta, Guru Arjan Dev, in His divine wisdom and boundless compassion, chose not to react with anger even when He became aware of their grievances. However, upon hearing remarks that touched

upon the sacred legacy of Guru Nanak Dev, He withdrew from their presence and returned to His court with calm dignity. There, Guru Sahib held a Diwan and graciously instructed the gathered Sangat to carry forward the service of Keertan themselves. He reminded them that the divine teachings of Gurmat Sangeet were not confined to any one individual; those blessed with humility and devotion could serve as vessels for the Guru's message. By doing so, Guru Arjan Dev upheld the sanctity of Shabad Keertan and ensured that spiritual service continued in a spirit of surrender, not pride. His decision reflected both divine justice and the continuous flow of grace.

**Original Verse:**

ਗੁਰੁ ਅਰਜਨ ਨਿਜ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਸੁਨਕੇ । ਕਛੁ ਨ ਕੋਧੁ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਤਨ ਮਨ ਕੋ ॥  
ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਸੁਨੇ । ਕੋਧੁ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਮਨੇ ॥  
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਉਠ ਤਹਾਂ ਤਬ ਆਏ । ਥੜੇ ਬੈਠ ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰ ਕਢਾਏ ॥  
ਥੜੇ ਬੈਠ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਲਗਾਏ । ਨਿਜ ਸਿਖਨ ਕਉ ਬਚਨ ਸੁਨਾਏ ॥  
ਵਹਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵਹਿ ਮਦ ਕੇ ਮਾਤੇ । ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਕਰੇ ਰਾਗ ਅਬ ਤਾਂਤੇ ॥  
ਵਿਦਿਆ ਰਾਗ ਸਭੀ ਤਮ ਪਾਵਹੁ । ਤਿਨਕਾ ਤੁਮ ਸਭ ਮਾਨ ਗਵਾਵਹੁ ॥ 291 ॥  
Gur Arjan nij nindā sunke, kachh na krodh upjiyo tan man kau.  
Gur Nānak kī nindā suno, kaup upjiyo ati hī mane.  
Srī Gur uth tahān tab āe, thare baiṭh jis kār kaḍhāe.  
Thare baiṭh dīvān lagāyo, nij sikhān kau bachan sunāyo.  
Vah nahī āvahī mad ke māte, tum hī karo rāg ab tānte.  
Vidyā rāg sabhī tam pāvahu, tinkā tum sabh mān gavāvahu.

**Translation:**

When Guru Arjan Dev heard their slander, he did not grow angry in body or mind.  
But upon hearing slander against Guru Nanak, deep anger stirred in his heart.  
Guru Ji rose and walked to the court. On the platform, he held an assembly.  
Seated there, he addressed the Sikhs: “Those who are drunk with ego shall not return.  
You yourselves now sing the Raags. You have learned all the music and knowledge from them,  
now renounce their honor and perform with devotion.”

**Social Boycott and the Rababis' Decline into Hardship**

Following Guru Arjan Dev's instruction, the Sangat no longer interacted with Balwand and Satta. Their prior position of respect had now given way to isolation. As divine justice unfolded, they became afflicted by severe physical illness and inner anguish. Even their music, once a medium of divine praise, was silenced. Attempts to seek help from the community were met with closed doors. This period of estrangement and suffering marked a profound fall from grace, intended not as punishment, but as a spiritual turning point leading them toward humility and reflection.

**Original Verse:**

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਬਚਨ ਸੁਨ ਤਿਨ ਮੁਖ ਲਗੇ ਨ ਲੋਗ । *Srī Gur ke ih bachan sun tin mukh lage na log.*  
ਤਬਹੀ ਤਿਨ ਤਨ ਫਿਟ ਗਏ ਸ੍ਰਵਯੋ ਤਾਂਹਿ ਬਡ ਰੋਗ ॥ 295 ॥ *Tabhī tin tan phiṭ gae sravyo tāhi baḍ rog.*  
When the Guru's words were ignored, no one spoke to them. Then their bodies became afflicted, and they suffered severe illness.  
ਰੋਸ ਗ੍ਰਸਤਿ ਬਯਾਕੁਲ ਭਏ ਭਯੋ ਰਬਾਬ ਸ ਲੋਪ । *Raus grasat byākul bhae, bhayo rabāb sa lopp.*  
ਮਾਂਗਨ ਜਾਵਹਿ ਜਿਸੈ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਆਗੇ ਹੋਵੇ ਕੋਪ ॥ 296 ॥ *Māngan jāveh jis grih āge hove kop.*  
Overcome by inner turmoil and distress, even their Rabab was set aside. Wherever they went seeking help, they were met with anger and rejection.

### The Compassionate Role of Bhai Ladha as Intermediary

After suffering from illness, poverty, and deep regret, Balwand and Satta sought refuge with Bhai Ladha, a devout and revered Sikh, known for his compassion and unwavering obedience to the Guru. Acknowledged even by Bhai Gurdas for his paroupkār (selflessness), Ladha was initially hesitant to intervene, aware of the gravity of their actions. However, seeing their sincerity and spiritual distress, he agreed. In an extraordinary act of devotion and humility, Bhai Ladha proposed to take symbolic responsibility for their misdeeds. He vowed to perform the ultimate gesture of penance, blackening his face, shaving his head, and riding a donkey through the streets toward Guru Arjan Dev's court. This courageous and humiliating act was not done to dramatize guilt, but to embody true repentance and selfless service. It was his faith that such an offering might soften the Guru's heart and lead to the Rababis' redemption. This moment stands as one of the most moving examples of Sikh humility and communal intercession in early Sikh history.

#### Original Verse:

ਜਾਵਤ ਪੋਥ ਸੁ ਐਸ ਵਿਚਾਰਿ ਹੈ ! ਭਾਈ ਲਧਾ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਹੈ । Jāvat poth su ais vichārihai, Bhāi Ladhā paroupkārīhai.

ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਕਹਾ ਨਿਰਧਾਰੀ । ਭਾਈ ਲਧਾ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ॥ . . . Bhāi Gurdās kahā nirdhārī, Bhāi Ladhā paroupkārī.

ਪੋਥ ਰੈਨ ਬਸ ਪਹੰਚੇ ਤਰਾਂ । ਭਾਈ ਲਧੇ ਕਾ ਘਰ ਜਰਾਂ ॥ Poth rain bas pahmche tahān, Bhāi Ladhē kā ghar jahān.

ਜੇਉ ਸਿਖ ਤਿਨ ਨੋੜੀ ਜੇਵੈ । ਬਚਨ ਮਾਨ ਗੁਰ ਅਚਰ ਲੇਵੈ ॥ 301 Joū Sikh tin nautrī jovai, bachan mān Gur achar levai.

ਤਬ ਦੁਹੰਅਨਾ । ਬਿਨਤੀ ਕਰੀ ਹਮਰੀ ਕਰੇ ਸਹਾਇ । Tab duhūan binatī karī, hamrī karo sahāi.

ਤਾਹਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਕਹਿ ਪਦ ਗਰੇ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਕਰਾਇ ॥ 302 ॥ Tāhi tāhi kahi pad gahe, paroupkār karāi.

While reflecting on whom to approach, they thought of Bhai Ladha, the benevolent one. Bhai Gurdas had affirmed that Bhai Ladha was indeed a compassionate soul. They arrived at night and stayed at the house of Bhai Ladha,

a Sikh whom other Sikhs served and who always obeyed the Guru's words. Then both of them pleaded, "Please help us." Saying this, again and again, they clasped his feet, seeking his intercession.

ਖੋਲ ਕਿਵਾੜ ਭੀਤਰ ਬੋਠਾਏ । ਸੇਸਾ ਤਜਹੁ ਸੁ ਧੀਰ ਧਰਾਏ । Khaul kivār bhītar bothāḏe, sesā tajahu su dhīr dharāḏe.

ਤਮਰੇ ਹਿਤ ਮੈ ਜਤਨ ਸੁ ਕਰਹੰ । ਮੂੰਹ ਕਾਲਾ ਕਰ ਗਰਧਬ ਚੜ੍ਹ ॥ Tamre hit mai jatan su karahn, muḥh kālā kar gardhab charḥ.

He opened the door and seated them inside. "Abandon doubt and stay composed," he said.

"For your sake I will do what must be done, blacken my face and ride a donkey."

ਮੂੰਦ ਮੂੰਡਾਇ ਮੌਰ ਕਿਆ ਜਾਵੈ । ਸਫਲ ਦੇਹ ਜੋ ਪਰ ਹਿਤ ਲਾਵੈ । Muṇḍ muṇḍāḏe maur kiā jāvai, safal deh jau par hit lāvē.

ਮੰਡੇ ਬਾਲ ਹੋਇ ਮੁਖ ਖੋਵਹੁ । ਬਖਸ਼ਾਇ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇ ਤੁਮ ਦੁਖ ਖੰਵਹੁ ॥ Maṇḍē bāl hoḏe mukh khāvahu, bakhshāḏe Gurū te tum dukh khāmvahu.

"What matters if my head is shaved and my honor lost, if it brings relief to others, it is a worthy act.

Let the head be shaved and face darkened, if by this the Guru forgives you and removes your suffering."

ਐਸੇ ਕਹਤਿ ਰੈਨ ਤਹਿ ਸੇਏ । ਭਈ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤ ਤਯਾਰ ਤਬ ਹੋਏ । Aisē kahat rain tahi soḏe, bhāi prabhāt tayār tab hoḏe.

ਪ੍ਰਥਮੇ ਲਧੇ ਮੰਡ ਮੁੱਡਾਯੇ । ਮੂੰਹ ਕਾਲਾ ਕਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨ ਧਯਾਯੇ ॥ 304 ॥ Prathamō Ladhē maṇḍ muḍḍāyō, muḥh kālā kar Gurū man dhyāyō.

Thus speaking, they slept through the night. At dawn, they made themselves ready.

Bhai Ladha was the first to shave his head and blacken his face, all while meditating on the Guru.

ਗਰਧਬ ਏਕ ਮੋਗਾਇਕੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਓ ਸੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਚਿਤਾਰ । Gardhab ēk māgāikē charḥiō su Gurū chitār.

ਪਾਛੇ ਢੋਲ ਬਜਾਇਓ ਦੇਖੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਜਾਰ ॥ 305 ॥ Pāchhō ḍhōl bajāiō dēkhō lauk hazār.

He mounted a donkey while keeping the Guru in his thoughts.

Behind him, drums were played, attracting thousands to witness the sight.

### Forgiveness, Healing, and the Composition of the Tikay Ki Vaar Pauri <sup>8</sup>

This concluding section recounts the moment of divine forgiveness and healing bestowed upon Balwand and Satta through the intercession of Bhai Ladha, culminating in their heartfelt offering of *Ramkali Ki Vaar*. This composition, honoring the legacy of the Sikh Gurus, was accepted by Guru Arjan Dev and enshrined in the sacred scripture.

#### Original Verse:

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਤਬ ਪੁਛਤ ਭਏ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਹੇ ਸੁਨਾਇ । *Sī Gur tab pūchhat bhae, kāran kaho sunāi.*

ਜਾਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਐਸਾ ਕਢਿ ਕੇਉ ਨ ਸਕੇ ਕਰਾਇ ॥ 310 ॥ *Jān kāran aisa kīō, kou na sakō karāi.*

The Guru asked gently, “Tell me, what caused you to act this way? No one else would have dared do such a thing.”

ਤਬ ਲਧੇ ਪੁਨ ਬਿਨਤ ਉਚਾਰੀ । ਇਨਕੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਦੁਖ ਟਾਰੀ । *Tab Ladhē pun binat uchārī, inkō bakhshē Prabhū dukh tārī.*

ਦੇਹ ਅਰੋਗਾ ਇਨਕੀ ਅਬ ਕਯੇ । ਗਾਵਹਿ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਰਬਾਬ ਦਵਾਯੇ ॥ *Deh arog inkī ab kayo, gāvahi shabad rabāb davyai.*

Then Bhai Ladha humbly pleaded, “O Master, forgive them and relieve their pain.

Grant them good health once more, so they may sing Your praises on the Rabab.”

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਸਨਮੁਖ ਆਇਕੈ ਕੀਨੀ ਵਾਰ ਉਚਾਰ । *Srī Gur sanmukh āikai, kīnī vār uchār.*

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਸੁਭ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਿ ਪਉੜੀ ਅਸਟ ਸੁਧਾਰ ॥ 316 ॥ *Rāmkalī subh rāg mahi, paurī aṣṭ sudhār.*

Coming before the Guru, they offered their sacred composition,

An eight-stanza *Vaar* set in the auspicious Raag Ramkali.

ਪ੍ਰਤਖ ਬੈਠੇ ਅਰਜਨ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਹ ਬਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿ ਉਚਾਰ । *Pratakh baiṭhē Arjan Gur, ih bach pragaṭ uchār.*

ਤਾਂਤੇ ਗਰ ਅਰਜਨ ਨਿਕਟਿ ਕਰੀ ਵਾਰ ਨਿਰਧਾਰ ॥ 319 ॥ *Tānte Gar Arjan nikaṭ kahī vār niradhār.*

While seated in congregation, Guru Arjan Dev made this declaration:

“This *Vaar*, performed on stringed instruments, shall be recited before me henceforth.”

ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਿੰਧਾਂ ਹਰਖਤਿ ਭਏ ਸੁਨੀ ਵਾਰ ਸੁਖ ਖਾਨ । *Kripā sindhān harakhat bhae, sunī vār sukh khān.*

ਤਤਕਾਲ ਤਬ ਹੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗ੍ਰਿਥ ਮਹਿ ਆਨ ॥ 320 ॥ *Tatkāl tab hī likhī Srī Granth mahi ān.*

The ocean of compassion, the Guru, rejoiced upon hearing the *Vaar*, a treasury of bliss.

Immediately, he had it written into the Holy Granth.

ਸੋਰਠਾ ਪਾਛੇ ਭਯੋ ਅਲੇਪ ਰਬਾਬ ਗੁਰੁ ਰਿਸ ਦੇਖ ਕੰ । *Sorṭhā pāchē bhayō alēp, rabāb Gurū ris dēkh kan.*

ਪੁਨ ਆਯੋ ਧਰ ਓਪ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤਾ ਹਰਖ ਭੇ ॥ 321 ॥ *Pun āyō dhar ōp Balwand Sattā harakh bhe.*

Afterwards, due to the Guru’s displeasure, the Rabab had fallen silent.

But now, Balwand and Satta returned and were filled with joy.

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤੇ ਭਈ ਦੇਹ ਅਰੋਗ । ਭਯੋ ਕੋਠ ਕੋਕਲ ਸਮ ਜੋਗ । *Balweḍ Sattē bhāi deh arog, bhayō kauṭh kaukal sam jog.*

ਉਪਮ ਵਾਰ ਕੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਕੀਨੀ । ਕਸਟਿ ਨਿਵਾਰਨ ਅਤਿ ਸੁਖ ਦੀਨੀ ॥ *Upam vār kī Srī Gur kīnī, kaṣṭ nivāran ati sukh dīnī.*

Balwand and Satta’s bodies were healed completely; their forms glowed with strength and joy.

The Guru honored their *Vaar* with high praise; it was blessed as a remover of suffering and giver of peace.

ਜਿੰਹ ਨਰ ਕੋ ਬਡ ਰੋਗ ਦੁਖਾਵੈ । ਯਾਹਿ ਪੜੇ ਦੁਖ ਦੂਰ ਪਰਾਵੈ । *Jinh nar kau baḍ rog dukhāvai, yāh paṛho dukh dūr parāvō.*

ਔਰ ਕਸਟ ਕਉ ਰਹਿਨ ਨ ਪਾਈ । ਪੜੇ ਵਾਰ ਜੋ ਨੇਮ ਧਰਾਈ ॥ *Aur kaṣṭ kau rahin na pāi, paṛho vār jo nem dharāi.*

To those afflicted with great illness or grief, reading this *Vaar* dispels pain.

All afflictions vanish for the one who recites it with discipline and devotion.

Moved by the sincere plea of Bhai Ladha, Guru Arjan Dev forgave Balwand and Satta, restored their health, and invited them once again to the sacred duty of Keertan. They responded with deep humility, presenting their most heartfelt gift, *Ramkali Ki Vaar*. Originally composed of seven Pauris, they later added an eighth to complete the composition. The Guru, seated before the congregation, rejoiced at its spiritual depth and beauty. He immediately had it written into the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, recognizing it as a true offering of devotion. Their Vaar, set in Raag Ramkali, was honored for its healing power and grace, both physical and spiritual. This moment not only marked their complete redemption but affirmed the inseparable bond between the Guru's divine mercy and the power of sincere repentance.

Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth narrates this episode in detail in Raas 3, Ansu 44 (verses 21–35), tracing the gradual emergence of ego in Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta, culminating in their request for financial support from the Guru for their sister's wedding and their subsequent withdrawal from service. The reconciliation is described in Raas 3, Ansu 45, where Guru Arjan Dev Ji, moved by Bhai Ladha's sincere appeal and the Rababis' humility, extended divine grace and permitted their return. Their spiritual restoration was completed through the recitation of Ramkali Ki Vaar, which was accepted and later enshrined in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. This concluding segment presents their repentance, physical and spiritual purification, and the transformation of their return into an enduring contribution to the Sikh canon.

### **Asa Vaar Recitation during the Final Moments of Baba Mahadev**

In *Adhiyaye 7 of Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin*, an emotionally resonant account is given of the final moments of Baba Mahadev, the elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev. The passage describes the respectful and spiritually uplifting ceremonies led by Guru Arjan Dev, with Rababis Bhai Balwand and Bhai Satta playing a central musical role in the final rites. The reverence shown, the choice of specific Vaars, and the involvement of the wider sangat are testaments to the sacredness of this moment.

#### **Selected Verses**

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤੇ ਕਹਾ ਬੁਲਾਈ । ਆਸਾ ਵਾਰ ਪੜੇ ਮਨ ਲਾਈ ॥

*Balwaṅḍ Sate kahā bulāī. Āsā Vār paṛho man lāī.*

Balwand and Satta were summoned and instructed to recite *Aasa Ki Vār* with heartfelt focus.

ਮੁਹਰੀ ਆਦਿਕ ਬੈਸ ਗੁਰੁ ਆਵਤਿ ਭਏ ਤਹਿ ਵਾਰ । ਕੀਰਤਨ ਭਯੋ ਅਖੰਡ ਤਬ ਕੋ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ ਉਚਾਰ ॥ 35 ॥

*Muharī ādik baus gur āvat bhae tahi vār. Kīrtan bhayo akhaṅḍ tab kau kar sake uchār.*

Many respected members of the sangat arrived as the *Aasa Ki Vār* continued in an unbroken, deeply devotional manner.

### **Vadhans and Maru Dakhani Vaar Recitation during the Final Rites of Baba Mahadev**

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤੇ ਕਉ ਗੁਰਿ ਫੁਰਮਾਈ । ਵਡਹੋਸ ਵਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮੈ ਪੜ ਭਾਈ ।

ਬਹੁੜੇ ਮਾਰੁ ਡਖਣੇ ਵਾਰ । ਆਗੇ ਹੋਇ ਮੁਖ ਕਹੁ ਉਚਾਰ ॥ 39 ॥

*Balwand Sattē kau Gur furmāī. Vadhans vār prithmai paṛ bhāī. Bahuro Māru ḍakhaṅe vār. Āge hoī mukh kaho uchār.*

The Guru instructed Balwand and Satta: “O brothers, first sing the Vaar in Raag Vadhans.”

Afterward, perform the Maaru Dakhan Vaar. Come to the front and begin the vocal recitation.

### **Pauri and Sohila Recitation as a Spiritual Farewell to Baba Mahadev**

ਰਬਾਬੀ ਪੌੜੀ ਲਾਇ ਤਬ ਸੋਹਿਲਾ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਨਾਇ ॥ 45 ॥ *Rabābī pauṛī lāi tab Sohilā Sikh sunāi.*

The rababi musicians began to play the concluding hymns (*Sohila*) as the Sikhs listened with reverence.

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤਾ ਸੰਗ ਲੈ ਸੀ ਗੁਰ ਪਿਆਨ ਕਰਾਇ ॥ 48 ॥ *Balwaṅḍ Satā sog lai sī Gur piyān karāi.*

These verses highlight the continued centrality of Rababi Keertan in the Guru's Darbar. Bhai Balwand and Bhai Satta are described as performing devotional Keertan during the passing of Baba Mahadev, the elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. They rendered *Aasa Ki Vaar* in the early morning, followed by *Vadhans Ki Vaar* and *Maru Dakhan Ki Vaar* under the Guru's guidance, and later recited *Sohila* hymns during the final rites. This episode demonstrates that Rababi Keertan was integral not only to daily worship but also to moments of collective mourning, affirming their sustained role in shaping the spiritual atmosphere of the Guru's court.

The following verse from *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*, specifically Ansu 24 of Raas 4, also documents this historical moment involving Bhai Satta and Bhai Balwand during the final moments of Baba Mahadev, brother of Guru Arjan Dev. It highlights their esteemed role as Rababis and integral contributors to Gurmat Sangeet within the Guru's court. This passage illustrates the respect and importance given to the duo by the Guru during sacred transitions.

### Original Verse

ਤਬਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਸਹਤ ਕੇ ਮੁਹਰੀ ਤਤਛਿਨ ਲੀਨਿ ਬੁਲਾਇ। ਸੰਸਰਾਮ ਜਿਹ ਸਾਥ ਅਰਥਮਲ ਸਿਖ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਆਨੰਦ ਸੁ ਆਇ। ਸੱਤਾ ਅਰੁ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਬੁਲਾਏ ਕਰਹੁ 'ਕੀਰਤਨ' ਬਚ 'ਫੁਰਮਾਇ।  
ਭਈ ਭੀਰ ਧੁਨਿ ਉਠੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕੀ ਸੁਨਿ ਬੈਰਾਗ ਸਭਿਨਿ ਉਪਜਾਇ ॥ ੧੮॥

Tab Satigur parvār sahat ko muharī tat-chhin līn bulāi. Sansarām jih sāth arthamal sikh sangat ānand su āi. Sattā aru Balwand bulāe karahu 'kīrtan' bach 'phurmāi. Bhaī bhīr dhun uṭhī shabad kī sun bairāg sabhin upjāi. ॥18॥

### Translation:

Then, the True Guru immediately summoned his entire family and close associates.

Along with Sansram, Arthmal, and the Sikh congregation, all arrived joyfully.

Satta and Balwand were called forward, and the Guru instructed them explicitly, "Perform the Keertan."

As they sang, the profound melody of Shabad resounded, awakening deep spiritual longing in everyone present. ॥18॥

### Keertan by Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta in the Royal Court of Emperor Jahangir

This episode from Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin (Adhiyaye 8) captures a profound moment when Bhai Balwand and Bhai Satta, the esteemed Rababi musicians, performed Keertan in the royal court of Emperor Jahangir during Guru Arjan Dev's time. Their performance, marked by mastery, devotion, and spiritual resonance, not only touched the Guru's congregation but also deeply moved the emperor himself. This moment serves as a powerful testimony to the reverence Rababi musicians received and the elevated platform Sikh music had attained by this period. It also reflects the unique blend of spiritual power and political diplomacy that characterized Guru Arjan Dev's presence.

### Selected Verses

ਬੈਠੇ ਗਰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਤਬ ਸੁਨਤ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਮਨ ਲਾਇ। *Baiṭhe gar darabār tab sunat śabad man lāe.*

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤਾ ਧਨ ਰਾਗ ਕੀ ਮੁਖ ਸਿਉ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਗਾਇ ॥ 640 ॥ *Balvaid Satā dhan rāg kī mukh siu sundar gāe. (640)*

As the Guru sat in the royal court, immersed in listening to the Shabad,

Balwand and Satta beautifully sang sacred verses in melodious Raags.

ਆਯੋ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਗੁਰੁ ਸੁਨ ਪਾਇਓ। ਜੇਠੇ ਕਉ ਤਿਹ ਅਗਰ ਪਠਾਇਓ। *Āyo shāh gurū sun pāio, jothe kau tih aḡar paṭhāio.*

ਜੇਠੇ ਸਾਥ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਚਲਿ ਆਇ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਬਹੁ ਪੁਜ ਚੜਾਇ ॥ 641 ॥ *Jeṭhe sāth shāh chal āe, Akāl Takhat bahu pūj charhāe. (641)*

When Emperor Jahangir heard of the Guru's presence, he sent incense through his courtiers. He arrived at the Akal Takhat with full royal homage and offerings.

ਕੜਾਹ ਚਾੜ ਬਹੁ ਬੈਦਨ ਕੀਨੀ। ਦਰਸ ਤਖਤ ਕਰ ਆਨੰਦ ਚੀਨੀ। *Kaṛāh chār bahu baidan kīnī, daras takhat kar ānand chīnī.*

ਪੁਨ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਗਰਿ ਅੰਚਰ ਡਾਰਿ। ਰਾਯੋ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਤਿਸੇ ਹਿਤਧਾਰਿ ॥ 642 ॥ *Pun darabār gari anchar ḡār, gayo shāh atise hitdhār. (642)*

Numerous offerings were placed in sacred pots; he beheld the Takhat with bliss.

Then, covering his courtly robes with a scarf, the emperor departed, filled with love.

ਮੁਹਰ ਪਾਂਚ ਸੈ ਪੁਜ ਧਰ ਪੁਨਾ ਕੜਾਹਿ ਧਰਾਇ। *Muhar pāñch sai praj dhar punā kaṛāhi dharāe.*

ਬੈਦਨ ਕਰ ਬੈਠਤ ਭਯੋ ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤੋ ਨਿਕਟਾਇ ॥ 643 ॥ *Bodhan kar baiṭhat bhayo Balwand Sato nikaṭāe. (643)*

He offered five hundred coins again, placing them in the offering vessel,

And sat in discourse, with Balwand and Satta seated nearby.

ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਤਬ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸੁਨਿ ਦੀਨਾ ਦਰਬ ਆਪਾਰ। *Bādshāh tab śabad sun dīnā darab apār.*

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤੇ ਕਉ ਤਿਹ ਸਮੈ ਗੁਰ ਕਉ ਬਦਨ ਧਾਰ ॥ 644 ॥ *Balvaud Sate kau tih samai Gur kau badan dhār. (644)*

The Emperor listened to the Shabad and offered countless gifts.

Balwand and Satta at that moment sang praises directed toward the Guru.

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤੇ ਤਬ ਪਾਯੇ ਭੋਗ । ਉਚੀ ਸੁਰ ਗਰ ਧਾਰਨ ਜੋਗ ।

ਕਰ ਬੰਦਨ ਗੁਰ ਤਥੈ ਸਿਧਾਏ । ਜਗੰਗੀਰ ਨਿਜ ਸੰਗਿ ਲਵਾਏ ॥ 645 ॥

*Balvaud Sate tab pāyo bhaug, Ucī sur gar dhāran joug.*

*Kar bandan Gur tabai sidhāe, Jahāngīr nij saṅg lavāe. (645)*

Balwand and Satta received gifts and honors. They sang in exalted tunes worthy of royal courts. After bowing to the Guru, they were honored further, Jahangir took them along in his company.

ਤਖਤ ਓਰ ਜਬ ਗੁਰ ਪਗ ਧਾਰੇ । ਜਗੰਗੀਰ ਤਬ ਬਿਨਤ ਉਚਾਰੇ । *Takhat or jab Gur pag dhāre, Jahāngīr tab binat uchāre.*

ਚਲੇ ਪੀਰ ਮਾਤਾ ਨਿਕਟਾਇ । ਪਰੀ ਭੂਲ ਮਮ ਛਿਮਾ ਕਰਾਇ ॥ 646 ॥ *Chalo pīr mātā nikaṭāe, Parī bhūl mam chhimā karāe. (646)*

As the Guru stepped onto the royal platform, Jahangir offered his humble plea:

“Let us go together to your revered mother, I seek forgiveness for past missteps.”

This Adhiyaye 8<sup>th</sup> verses from Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin captures an iconic moment where music, royalty, and spirituality converge. Balwand and Satta are not only present but are prominently featured as musical ambassadors of the Guru's court, performing in the presence of Emperor Jahangir. The verses showcase - the spiritual influence of Sikh music, even in imperial courts. the respect commanded by Guru Arjan Dev, symbolized by Jahangir's humility, the continued prestige and role of Rababis, particularly Balwand and Satta, as central figures in Sikh musical tradition.

Their participation reflects the power of Keertan as a force of grace and diplomacy, and their names being mentioned in such a context underscores their deep integration into the Sikh historical and spiritual narrative.

## During the Time of Guru Hargobind

### Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta Performing before Jahangir after Chandu's Fall

The verses in Gur Bilas Pathshahi Chevin, Chapter 8 (page 315-316) appear during the early Guruship of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, after the **death of Chandu**, the antagonist responsible for the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev. Upon learning of his death, Emperor **Jahangir visits Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji** with a sense of reconciliation. Acknowledging the justice in Chandu's demise, Jahangir declares that no one should ever harbor resentment against the Guru. During this occasion, **Bhai Satta and Rai Balwand** perform Keertan in the Guru's court. Their singing brings spiritual comfort not only to the Sangat but also to Jahangir himself, who feels peace upon hearing their devotional music. In appreciation, Jahangir bestows **gifts upon Satta and Balwand**, reaffirming their honored position in the Guru's court and in the royal presence.

#### Original Verse (Original):

ਜਗੰਗੀਰ ਤਬ ਗਰ ਪਹਿ ਆਇ । ਚੰਦੂ ਮੁਓ ਸੁਨਤ ਹਰਖਾਇ ॥ 708 ॥

ਮੁਖ ਸਿਉ ਕਹਾ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਇੰਹ ਮਾਰਿਓ । ਗੁਰ ਸਿਉ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਫਿਰ ਰਿਸ ਧਾਰਿਓ ।

ਗਾਵਤ ਸਤਾ ਔਰ ਬਲਵੰਡ । ਸਨਤ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਸੁਖ ਮਡ ॥ 709 ॥

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤੇ ਕਉ ਦਰਬ ਦੇ ਗਯੇ ਸ਼ਾਹਿ ਨਿਜ ਧਾਮ ।

ਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਹ ਮੈ ਸੁਨਉ ਕਥਾ ਔਰ ਅਭਿਰਾਮ ॥ 710 ॥

*Jahāngīr tab gar pah(i) āye, Chandū mūo sunat harakhāye. ॥708 ॥*

*Mukh siu kahā duṣṭ inh māriyo, Gur siu ko-i na phir ris dhāriyo.*

*Gāvat Satā aur Balwand, sanat Shāh man meh sukh maṇḍ. ॥709 ॥*

*Balwand Satte kau darab de gayo Shāh nij dhām.*

*Bhagat Singh ih mai sunau kathā aur abhirām. ॥710 ॥*

**Translation:****Chaupai**

Jahangir came to the Guru's presence, rejoicing upon hearing of Chandu's death. ||708 ||

With his own lips, he said, "This wicked man has been slain.

No one should ever again harbor resentment toward the Guru."

Satta and Balwand were singing hymns; the Emperor's heart was filled with peace. ||709 ||

Jahangir gave gifts and offerings to Balwand and Satta,

O Bhagat Singh, now listen to this further delightful tale. ||710 ||

This is a significant moment that demonstrates the continued legacy of the Rababis into Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji's time, showing how their Keertan played a role not only in devotional practice but also in diplomatic and emotional healing during pivotal historical moments.

In Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth also (Raas 5, Ansu 9) we find historical insights into the presence and prominent role of Bhai Satta and Bhai Balwand during the visit of Mughal Emperor Jahangir to Guru Hargobind in Amritsar. This visit underscores the Rababis' respected role in the Guru's court, particularly emphasizing their musical excellence through Gurbani Keertan, which captivated even Emperor Jahangir.

**Selected Original Verse Verses**

ਸੁਰਜ ਉਦੈ ਭੋਗ ਤਬਿ ਪਰਯੋ। ਸਭਿਨਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਦਰਸਨ ਕਰਯੋ॥ ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਕੇ ਨਰ ਪੁਨ ਆਏ। ਕਹਿ ਪੰਚਾਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਹੁ ਕਰਿਵਾਏ॥ ੬॥

ਇਤਨੇ ਬਿਖੈ ਆਪ ਚਲਿ ਆਯੋ। ਕਹਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਸੰਗ ਮਿਲਾਯੋ। ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਕੇ ਆਏ। ਦਰਸਨ ਦੇਖਿ ਸੀਸ ਨਿਵਾਏ॥ ੭॥

ਗਾਇ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਅਖੰਡ। ਇਕ ਸੱਤਾ ਦੂਸਰ ਬਲਵੰਡ। ਨਿਕਟ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬ੍ਰਿਧ ਭਾਈ। ਬੈਠੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਤ ਸਮੁਦਾਈ॥ ੧੦॥

ਬੈਠਿ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਕੇ ਸੁਨਿਬੇ ਲਾਗ। ਜਿਨਹੁ ਬਿਖੈ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕੇ ਅਨੁਰਾਗ। ਰੀਝਕੇ ਰਾਗ ਪਰਖ ਕਰਿ ਤਹਾਂ। ਦਿਯੋ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਕੇ ਧਨ ਮਹਾਂ॥ ੧੨॥

Sūraj udai bhog tab paryo. Sabhin Gurū ko darshan karyo. Jahāngīr ke nar pun āye. Kahi panchāmrit bahu karivāye. ||6 ||

Itne bikhai āp chal āyo. Kahi Satigur ko sang milāyo. Pratham Akāl Takhat ko āye. Darshan dekhat sīs nivāye. ||7 ||

Gāi Rabābī shabad akhand. Ik Sattā dūsar Balwand. Nikat Granth Sāhib bridh bhāi. Baithe Sikh sant samudāi. ||10 ||

Baith shabad ko sunibe lāg. Jinhu bikhai Prabhū ko anurāg. Rījh ko rāg parakh kari tahān. Diyo Rabābī ko dhan mahān. ||12 ||

**Translation:**

At sunrise, the morning rituals concluded, and everyone had the Guru's audience. Jahangir's attendants arrived again, presenting lavish offerings of *Panchamrit*. (6)

At that time, Emperor Jahangir himself came and met the True Guru. First, he visited the Akal Takhat, bowing reverently at the sight of the Guru. (7)

Rababis sang the continuous divine hymns; one was Satta, and the other Balwand. Near them was the Granth Sahib, with elderly Sikhs and saints seated around. (10)

Jahangir sat, attentively listening to the sacred hymns, which inspired great love for the Divine. Pleased with the melodic excellence he experienced, he generously rewarded the Rababis. (12)

**Final Days and Spiritual Legacy of Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta****Original Verse**

\*\* ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤਾ ਤਬ ਦੇਹ ਤਜਿ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਹਿ ਜਾਇ ॥ 899 ॥

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤਾ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਸੁਖ ਧਰਹਿ । ਹਰਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਢਿਗ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਹਿ ॥

ਏਕ ਦਿਵਸ ਬਹੁ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕੀਨੇ । ਗੁਰ ਬਪੁ ਦੇਖ ਹਰਖ ਮਨ ਲੀਨੇ ॥ 900 ॥

ਅੰਤ ਸਮਾ ਅਪਨਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਾਯੋ । ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਬੋਲ ਪਠਾਯੋ ॥

ਸਰੀ ਚੰਦ ਪੁਨ ਲਖਮੀਦਾਸ । ਮਹਾਂਦੇਵ ਦਾਸ ਸੁਖਰਾਸ ॥ 901 ॥

Balvaṇḍ Satā tab deh taj(i) Gur Nānak pah(i) jāi.  
Balveḍ Satā man mahi sukh dharahañ. Hargobind ḍhig kīrtan karahañ.  
Ek divas bahu kīrtan kīno. Gur bapu dekh harakh man līno.  
Ant samā apnā drisṭāyo. Srī Gur Nānak bol paṭhāyo.  
Srī Chand pun Lakhmīdās. Mahādev Dās Sukhrās.

### Translation

Balwand and Satta left their mortal bodies and spiritually departed to Guru Nanak's abode.  
They had spent their final days in peace, doing Keertan in the presence of Guru Hargobind Sahib. One day, they performed an extended session of Keertan, and upon seeing the Guru's form, their minds were filled with bliss.  
Sensing their end was near, they had a vision of Guru Nanak summoning them. Four spiritual guides, Sri Chand, Lakhmi Das, Mahadev, and Sukhras, were sent to escort them.

### Original Verse

ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਲੋਵਨ ਪਠੇ ਏਹੁ ਚਾਰੇ ਤਬ ਆਇ । ਬਲਵੰਡ ਸਤੇ ਕਉ ਦਰਸ ਦੇ ਐਸੇ ਕਹਾ ਸੁਨਾਇ ॥  
ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਤੁਮਹਿੰ ਬੁਲਾਯੋ । ਸਰਾਪ ਪੂਰ ਜਸ ਤੋਰ ਮਹਾਯੋ ॥  
ਬਲਵੇਡ ਸਤੇ ਤਿੰਹ ਬੋਦਨ ਧਾਰ । ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕਉ ਕੀਓ ਦੀਦਾਰ ॥ 903 ॥  
ਗੁਰ ਮੁਰਤਿ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਕੀਨੀ । ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਕਹਿ ਬਪੁ ਤਜ ਦੀਨੀ ॥  
Gur Nānak lovan paṭhe ehu chāro tab āi.  
Balvaṇḍ Satē kau daras de aise kahā sunāi.  
Gur Nānak jī tumhiṁ bulāyo. Sarāp pūr jas tor mahāyo.  
Balveḍ Satē timh bodan dhār. Har Gobind kau kīo dīdār.  
Gur mūrati(i) man mahi driṭ kīnī. Satnām kahi bapu taj dīnī.

### Translation

Guru Nanak, recognizing that their prior curse had run its course, sent for them with love.  
Upon beholding Guru Hargobind, they fixed their minds upon the Guru's divine form and uttered "Satnam" as they left their bodies.  
Balwand's soul took on the form once belonging to Bhai Mardana, radiant and divine.  
Satta's soul entered the eternal Shandar Dev.  
They departed with honor, riding divine vehicles alongside Guru Hargobind's spiritual entourage.

This passage from *Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin* describes the peaceful and spiritually exalted final moments of Bhai Balwand and Bhai Satta. After a lifetime of devotion, music, and even moments of estrangement and reconciliation, their journey concludes in deep harmony. Guru Nanak Dev, symbolizing eternal acceptance and divine grace, sends his emissaries to receive them. Bhai Balwand's soul is described as merging with that of Bhai Mardana, further reinforcing his role as a divine musician in the Guru's court. Bhai Satta, too, receives a celestial identity, and both are honored with spiritual transport alongside Guru Hargobind's assembly. Their death is not presented as an end but as a divine reunion, completing their arc as blessed Rababis in Sikh history.

### Final Rites of Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta

This passage describes the final moments, and ceremonial honors given to Bhai Balwand and Bhai Satta after their death.

### Original Verse

ਪਾਛੇ ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕਰ ਐਸੇ । ਮ੍ਰਿਤਕ ਤਨ ਕ੍ਰਿਯਾ ਬੀ ਜੈਸੇ ।  
ਰਬਾਬੀ ਬਾਬਕ ਨਿਕਟ ਬੁਲਾਯੋ । ਤਿਨ ਕਉ ਸਭ ਕਹਿ ਸਮਝਾਯੋ ॥ ੯੧੦ ॥  
ਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਗੀਤਿ ਜੇ ਤੋਹਿ ਮਾਹਿ ਕਰੇ ਸੋਇ ਮਨ ਲਾਇ ।  
ਬਾਬਕ ਸੀ ਗੁਰ ਬੈਨ ਸੁਨ ਕੀਨ ਗੀਤਿ ਸੋਭਾਇ ॥ ੯੧੧ ॥

ਬਲਵੈਡ ਸਤੇ ਕੀ ਦੇਹ ਉਠਾਇ । ਰਾਵੀ ਤਟ ਦਾਬੀ ਹਿਤ ਲਾਇ ।  
ਕਬਰ ਬਨਾਇ ਆਇ ਪੁਨ ਤਹਾਂ । ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੁਰ ਇਸਥਿਤ ਜਹਾਂ ॥ ੯੧੨  
ਕੀਰਤਨ ਤਾਂਹਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਨ ਲਾਯੋ । ਨੌਨ ਨੀਰ ਰੁਮਾਲ ਹਟਾਯੋ ।  
ਬਾਬਕ ਕਉ ਪੁਨ ਇਮ ਫੁਰਮਾਇ । ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਹੁ ਰਬਾਬ ਬਜਾਇ ॥ ੯੧੩  
ਬਾਬਕ ਤਬ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਲਗਯੋ ਦਿਵਾਨ ।  
ਕਵਿ ਬਿਨਤੀ ਗਾਥਾ ਅਧਿਕ ਕਹਿ ਤਕ ਲਿਖਹੁ ਅਜਾਨ ॥ ੯੧੪  
Pāchhe Har Gobind kar aise, mritak tan kriyā thī jaise.  
Rabābī Bābak nikat bulāyo, tin kau sabh kahi samjhāyo. 910  
Mrit rīt jo tohi māhi karo sohi man lāi.  
Bābak sī Gur bain sun kīn rīt sobhāi. 911  
Balwaind Satte kī deh uṭhāi, Rāvī taṭ dābī hit lāi.  
Kabar banāi āi pun tahān, Har Gobind Gur isthit jahān. 912  
Kīrtan tāhi Gurū man lāyo, naunan nīr rumāl haṭāyo.  
Bābak kau pun im furmāi, Kīrtan karahuṃ rabāb bajāi. 913  
Bābak tab kīrtan kare, sundar lagyoṃ divān.  
Kavi binatī gāthā adhik kahi, tak likhahuṃ ajān. 914

#### Translation

Afterwards, Guru Hargobind performed the last rites in accordance with tradition. He summoned the rababi named Babak and explained everything to him. “Perform the death rites as are customary,” said the Guru. Babak, upon hearing the Guru’s words, accepted them and carried them out gracefully. The body of Balwand and Satta was respectfully lifted. It was placed with devotion near the banks of the Ravi River. A grave was prepared and made at the location where Guru Hargobind was present. The Guru then focused his mind on the Keertan (devotional singing). He removed the cloth from his tearful eyes. He instructed Babak to now begin the Keertan while playing the rabab. Babak then performed Keertan beautifully, and the whole court appeared divine. The poet (narrator) says, “I have shared much of this sacred tale; now let me conclude this section.”

Guru Hargobind, with full reverence, conducts the funeral rites of Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta by the Ravi River. He invites Babak, a rababi musician, to perform the traditional musical tribute using the rabab.

The Guru instructs Babak to carry out the rites and Keertan in a way befitting their lifelong service. A grave is respectfully constructed, and with the Guru's presence, the moment becomes one of solemnity and spiritual reflection. The scene ends with Babak’s emotionally charged Keertan in the Guru’s court, honoring the departed souls.

This excerpt from *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth* (Raas 5, Ansu 15) also provides a clear historical record of Bhai Satta and Bhai Balwand’s continued and dedicated service to Gurmat Sangeet until the end of their lives. Their departure signifies the conclusion of an era and the transition of Rababi tradition to their successor, Rababi Babak. This passage documents not only their unwavering devotion but also the continuity and institutional recognition of the Rababi tradition within the Sikh Guru’s court.

#### Selected Original Verse Verses:

ਦੇਹਰਾ:

ਸੱਤਾ ਅਰੁ ਬਲਵੈਡ ਜੁਗ ਹੁਤੇ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਪਾਸ। ਕਰਤਿ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਰਾਗ ਧੁਨਿ ਸਭਿ ਉਰ ਦੇਤਿ ਹੁਲਾਸ॥ ੭॥

**ਚੋਪਈ:**

ਪਹੁੰਚਯੋ ਅੰਤ ਸਮਾਂ ਤਬਿ ਤਿਨ ਕੋ।ਲਵਪੁਰਿ ਤਯਾਗ ਦੀਨਿ ਨਿਜ ਤਨ ਕੋ।  
ਅਪਰ ਰਬਾਬੀ ਬਾਬਕ ਨਾਮ।ਜੋ ਗਾਵਤਿ ਰਾਗਨਿ ਅਭਿਰਾਮ। ॥੮॥  
ਰਾਖਯੋ ਤਬਿ ਹਜੂਰ ਨੇ ਪਾਸ।ਲਗਹਿ ਦਿਵਾਨ ਸੁ ਰਾਗ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼।ਸੁਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਨ ਕੈ ਦੇ ਬਡ ਮੋਜ।  
ਹਰਖਤਿ ਦਰਬ ਸਰਬ ਦੇ ਫੈਜ। ੯॥

**Dohra:**

Sattā aru Balwand jug hute rabābī pās.Karat kīrtan rāg dhun sabhi ur det hulās. ॥7॥

**Chaupai:**

Pahunchoyo ant samā tab tin ko.Lavpur tyāg dīn nij tan ko.  
Apar rabābī Bābak nām.Jo gāvat rāgan abhirām. ॥8॥  
Rākhyo tab Hazūr ne pās.Lagahi divān su rāg prakāsh.  
Sun prasann hrai de bad moj.  
Harkhat darab sarab de phauj. ॥9॥

**Translation:**

**Dohra:** Satta and Balwand, the two renowned Rababis, were always by the Guru’s side.

Their Keertan, filled with delightful melodies and musical modes, brought joy to every heart. ॥7॥

**Chaupai:** When their destined end arrived, they abandoned their bodies in Lahore and ascended to the heavenly abode. Another Rababi, named Babak, who beautifully sang delightful Ragas, succeeded them. ॥8॥ The Guru then kept Babak in close attendance, who illuminated gatherings with his melodious Ragas.Hearing him, everyone was pleased and joyous; The Guru’s entire court and assembly were filled with delight. ॥9॥

**Integrated Guru-wise Summary of Keertan-related Events**

Following table consolidates the Keertan-focused events and references related to Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta across successive Guru periods, as presented in the primary historical sources used in the paper. It highlights how Rababi seva appears in different settings (daily routine, Chauki, sacred transitions, funerary rites, and royal encounters) and shows both continuity and change in how Keertan is portrayed in the Guru’s Darbar over time.

Guru Period	Key Keertan-related Events Involving Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta	Keertan Setting and Function	Primary Source in Paper
Guru Nanak Dev Ji	Balwand performs daily Keertan with Rabab; sustained, unbroken Keertan described into the night; accompanies Guru to Bhai Lalo’s home; called for Keertan during Guru Nanak’s Joti Jot; instruction given that Balwand should continue Keertan seva with the next Guru	Daily Darbar routine; Keertan as continuous devotional discipline; Keertan as ethical-spiritual accompaniment in sangat settings; Keertan as sacred support during transition; continuity of Rababi seva emphasized	Mahima Prakash
Guru Angad Dev Ji	Balwand seeks darshan in separation; Guru directs him to continue bhajan; Balwand performs Gurbani in Raags as part of daily routine; performs Shabad Chauki; ego episode where Balwand refuses Baba Budha’s request and is corrected by Guru	Keertan as comfort and seva; institutionalized Chauki practice; Raag-based Darbar Keertan; ethical discipline of Keertan seva and humility	Mahima Prakash
Guru Amar Das Ji	Bibi Amro attributes the Shabad tradition to what she hears from Balwand’s daily Keertan; Balwand sings praise during Guru’s arrival; Balwand composes/adds Pauri linked to Tikay Ki Vaar; first explicit joint appearance of Balwand and Satta at Guru’s darshan with Rabab and composition; daily	Keertan as transmission of Bani and catalyst for spiritual awakening; Keertan as historical witness through composition; Rababis integrated into Darbar worship and routine; continuity now explicitly as a duo	Mahima Prakash

	routine includes Raag-based Shabad by Satta and Rabab resonance		
Guru Ram Das Ji	No explicit reference to Balwand and Satta in the selected primary sources for this Guru period	Absence in these texts likely reflects narrative focus and preservation patterns rather than proof of absence of Rababi tradition	(no specific mention)
Guru Arjan Dev Ji	Recitation/composition of Tikay Ki Vaar Pauri 8; Satta accompanies Guru during visit to Bhai Mohan linked to pothis; major ego-separation-forgiveness arc culminating in return through Ramkali Ki Vaar; Rababis recite Vaars and Sohila during Baba Mahadev's final rites; Keertan performed in Jahangir's court	Keertan linked with scripture memory and Darbar recognition; Keertan as persuasion and spiritual softening in pivotal moments; Keertan as moral discipline where seva cannot be ego-based; Keertan as funeral-liturgical practice; Keertan as spiritual diplomacy beyond the Sikh court	Mahima Prakash; Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin; Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth
Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji	Balwand and Satta perform Keertan during Jahangir's reconciliation visit after Chandu's fall; their Keertan brings peace and gifts are given; final days described as spent in Keertan near Guru Hargobind; final rites include Rababi Babak continuing Keertan, indicating succession	Keertan as emotional and political healing; Keertan as lifelong seva concluding in devotion; continuity of Rababi institution through successor	Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin; Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth

## Conclusion

This paper examined how Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta are represented in Sikh historical texts through the lens of lived Gurmat Sangeet, with particular attention to Keertan in the Guru's Darbar. A Guru-wise reading across Mahima Prakash, Gur Bilas Patshahi Chevin, and Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth shows that Rababi seva is repeatedly placed at the center of daily spiritual routine, congregational practice, and major communal transitions. In the earliest depictions, Balwand's Keertan appears as part of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's daily devotional rhythm and continues into Guru Angad Dev Ji's period through structured Darbar routines and Shabad Chauki practice. During Guru Amar Das Ji's time, the narratives further show Keertan functioning as a vehicle of Bani transmission and spiritual transformation, while also establishing Balwand and Satta together as Rababi performers whose praise and compositions become part of remembered sacred repertoire.

The sources also present a consistent ethical framework in which Keertan is not validated by musical skill or inherited role alone but by humility and correct spiritual orientation. Episodes of pride and correction, especially the detailed estrangement and reconciliation during Guru Arjan Dev Ji's period, portray Keertan as seva that must remain free of ego and entitlement. These narratives also broaden the function of Keertan beyond daily diwans, depicting Rababi participation in funerary rites through the recitation of Vaars and Sohila, and extending Keertan into imperial settings where it operates as spiritual diplomacy and emotional healing. In Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji's period, the continuation of Balwand and Satta's Keertan, their peaceful final days near the Guru, and the transition to Rababi Babak collectively reflect the institutional continuity of the Rababi tradition within Sikh religious life.

Overall, the comparative reading supports a historically grounded insight: Rai Balwand and Bhai Satta are remembered not only because their Bani is preserved in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, but because Sikh historical memory consistently associates them with the practice, discipline, and communal role of Keertan in the Guru's Darbar. Their portrayals illuminate how Gurmat Sangeet functioned as daily devotion, ethical seva, ceremonial accompaniment, and a public spiritual language, strengthening our understanding of the evolving Sikh sacred soundscape across the early Guru periods.

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