



Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc.

107 Lipton Lane, Williston Park NY 11596 (516) 782-3257

International Keertan Darbaar

2026 Rules

Nov 26, 2025

Use of Sikh Heritage String & Percussion Instruments is encouraged. *Keertan* should be *Shabad-pardhaan*, not *sangeet-pardhaan*. In other words, music should be used to enhance *Shabad-surat* rather than to exhibit musical artistry. The focus of *Keertan* should be on the *bhaav* (emotion) of the *Shabad*. The words of the *Shabad* should be clearly enunciated and comprehensible. The words should not be unduly stretched or sung too quickly or dominate music. String instruments must be played not simply held.

For Coordinators

1	The maximum size of the jatthas is 5. The minimum size of the jatthas is 3.						
2	Members shall not be shared at Regional Keertan Darbaar.						
3	The Shabad in the assigned Raag must be from Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) or Guru Gobind Singh's hymn (as stated in Sikh Rehat Maryada, Chapter V, Article VIc; reference – sgpc.net).						
4	Only Non-Partaal Shabads can be recited at the Keertan Darbaar. In the future, a separate KD will be organized for Partaal Shabads only.						
5	Shahad must be registered with and approved by the Regional Keertan Coordinator to avoid duplication at the regional level.						
6	At least the following number of member(s) in a jattha shall play SHSI. Other members may play non-SHSI. <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Group 1 (7-9 yr)</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Group 2-4 (10-25 yrs) - up to 4 members in a jattha</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Group 2-4 (10-25 yrs) - 5 members in a jattha</td><td>2</td></tr> </table>	Group 1 (7-9 yr)	1	Group 2-4 (10-25 yrs) - up to 4 members in a jattha	1	Group 2-4 (10-25 yrs) - 5 members in a jattha	2
Group 1 (7-9 yr)	1						
Group 2-4 (10-25 yrs) - up to 4 members in a jattha	1						
Group 2-4 (10-25 yrs) - 5 members in a jattha	2						
7	At the international level, member(s) can be replaced from a jattha who participated in Regional but is not participating at international level. Replaced member(s) shall be of the same or younger group from the same region only. Members shall be replaced as follows: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1-4 Members in a Jattha</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>5 Members in a Jattha</td><td>2</td></tr> </table>	1-4 Members in a Jattha	1	5 Members in a Jattha	2		
1-4 Members in a Jattha	1						
5 Members in a Jattha	2						
8	Only Regional Keertan Coordinator provided electronic tanpura device may be used. The device must not include any additional electronic instruments, such as tabla, swarmandal, manjira, or similar.						
9	Only those members who have participated in the Regional Keertan Darbaar may participate at the international level.						
10	Same Sahabd shall be sung at the Regional and International KD.						

For Scoring by Judges:

11	Singing should be preceded by a short explanation of the gist of the complete <i>Shabad</i> . Explanation must be in both Punjabi and English. Explanation regarding the Raag and instruments shall not be provided. Tabla player may explain the <i>Taal(s)</i> used.
12	While scoring for Shaan, Manglacharan and Shabad, performance of all musical instruments shall be treated equally.

13	Shabad and Manglacharan shall be sung in the specific Raag (including its variation/Parkar) prescribed in SGGS. A Salok from a different Raag shall not be sung in the assigned Raag as Manglacharan. See Appendix 1 for details.
14	Aalaap using the words of the Shabad is encouraged. Its purpose is to enhance the emotion of the Shabad. It should not be used to merely exhibit musical skills.
15	Taan using the words of the Shabad may be sung sparingly.
Mandatory Performance Requirements for Evaluation by Judges:	
16	Akaar Aalaap shall not be sung.
17	The <i>Rahao</i> Tuks of the <i>shabad</i> must be sung as <i>sthaa-ee</i> . If a Shabad contains two Rahao Tuks, both Tuks must be sung in the order in which they appear in SGGS, as sthaa-ee. In case there is no Rahao in the composition, then any Tuk of the selection can be sung as sthaa-ee.
18	Each <i>jattha</i> may sing only one Shabad without Parmaan(s) in the allotted time.
19	The complete Shabad, including all the Padas (if applicable) shall be sung. If the time allotted does not permit reciting the entire Shabad, then only one or more contiguous Padas may be sung but the gist of the entire Shabad shall be briefly explained. <i>Note: For the list of Shabads, please refer to "Tatkara Shabda ka" at the beginning of SGGS</i>
20	Jatthas shall not sing musical syllables – <i>sargam (Sa Re Ga----</i>).
21	Gurmat Sangeet tradition as explained in the SGPC publication " <i>Sri Guru Granth Sahib Rag Ratnagar</i> " by Dr. Gurnam Singh shall be followed for the Keertan Darbaar. It is available on the website as " <i>SGPC Reference Book.</i> "

<i>Manglacharan</i> in the assigned Raag, Single Taal.	Salutation to Waheguru by the vocalists. Invocation for Divine Grace. Setting the mood for the <i>Shabad</i> . Slow tempo. <i>Vadda taal</i> (Vilambit Taal). Taal for Manglacharan could be different than used for the Shabad. Manglacharan shall be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the <i>sirlekh of the Shabad, or</i> <i>moolmantar (Ik Onkaar ----- Gur Parsaad), or</i> <i>a Saloke from the assigned Raag from Sri Guru Granth Sahib.</i> Any Tuk from outside SGGS is not allowed.
<i>Shaan</i> in the assigned Raag	Instrumental prelude (invocation) to <i>Keertan</i> . Salutation of <i>raag</i> and <i>taal</i> , by all the instruments & to the <i>Bani</i> . Setting the mood for the <i>Shabad</i> . Medium tempo. Classical <i>taal</i> (not <i>keherva</i> , <i>dadra</i> or <i>paurhi theka</i>).

<i>Sikh Heritage String Instrument (SHSI).</i>	SHSI	Guru ji's period
	Rabab	Guru Nanak ji
	Saranda	Guru Amar Dass ji, Guru Ram Dass ji, Guru Arjan ji
	Israj	Guru Arjan ji
	Taus, Sarangi	Guru Hargobind ji
	Tanpura	Guru Gobind Singh ji
	Dilruba	<i>Smaller version of Taus</i>

Sikh Heritage Percussion Instruments (SHPI): Jori, Pakhawaj & Mridang shall be encouraged.

2026 Raags – Section Headings

Salient features of the Shabads of 2026 Raags is based on the explanation by Prof. Sahib Singh in the introduction of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan available of the internet. The link is:

<https://www.gurugranthdarpan.net/introduc.html>. Specifically read – section heading ਅੰਕ

.Raag	Raag Parkaar	SGGS Ank From To		Partaal	Salient Feature	Outcome
Kedaaraa	None	1118	1122	None	Mehla 1 – 5 Shabads. Sections heading are “Kedaaraa”. Within the sections, Shabads also have heading “Kedaaraa”.	All Shabads are in “Kedaaraa”.
		1122	1124		Bhagat Banee – only section heading mentions name of the Raag. It is not mentioned before each Shabad.	All compositions of Bhagats are in Raag Kedaaraa.
Bhairao	None	1125	1152	None	Mehla 1 – 5 Shabads. Sections heading are “Bhairao”. Within the sections, Shabads also have heading “Bhairao”.	All Shabads are in “Bhairao”.
		1153	1153	1	Only one Shabad with two4 Antras and one Rahao.	Recite in Partaal.
		1153	1157	None	Mehla 1 – 5 Shabads. Sections heading are “Bhairao”. Within the sections, Shabads also have heading “Bhairao”.	All Shabads are in “Bhairao”.
		1157	1167		Bhagat Banee – only section heading mentions name of the Raag. It is not mentioned before each Shabad	All Shabads are in “Bhairao”.
Basant	Basant	1168	1170	None	8 Shabads in Basant.	
	Hindol	1170	1172		4 Shabds in Basant Hindol.	
	Basant	1172	1177		17 Shabads in Basant.	
	Hindol	1177	1177		1 Shabad in Hindol.	
	Basant	1177	1178		2 Shabads in Basant.	
	Hindol	1178	1179		5 Shabads in Hindol.	
	Basant	1180	1185		13 + 4 + 1 = 18 Shabads in Basant.	
	Hindol	1185	1186		3 Shabads in Hindol.	
	Hindol	1186	1187		Section heading is “Raag Basant Hindol”. There are 5 Shabads. Heading of Shabads 2-5 is “Basant”. Numbering ends with “5”. Next section starts with a fresh numbering series.	All 5 Shabads shall be recited in Raag Basant Hindol.
	Basant	1187	1190		7 Shabads in Basant.	
	Hindol	1190	1192		1 + 1 = 2 Shabads in Hindol.	
	Basant	1192	1193		2 + 1 = 3 Shabads are in Basant.	
	Basant	1193	1195		Section heading of Bhagat Kabir’s compositions is “Basant”. There are 6 Shabads in this section. None of the Shabads has the name of the Raag at the beginning of the Shabads.	All 6 Shabads shall be recited in Basant.

	Hindol	1195	1195		1 Shabad by Bhagat Kabir 1 Shabad by Ramanand	
	Basant	1195	1196		3 Shabds by Namde 1 Shabad by Ravidas 1 Shabd by Kabir	
Saarang	None	1197	1200	None	7 Shabads in Sarang.	
		1200	1202	Partaal	6 Shabads in this section. Section heading is Partaal.	All 6 Shabads shall be recited as Partaal.
		1202	1229	None	All Shabads are in Saarang.	
		1229	1231	Partaal	10 Shabads are in Partaal.	All 10 Shabads shall be recited as Partaal.
		1231	1253	None	All Shabds are in Saarang.	

Note: For reciting Partaal Shabads at the Keertan Darbaar, please refer to Rule # 4.