

she first met in 1971 at a winter solstice retreat in Florida. It was Yogi Bhanan who conferred the Sikh name on her. “‘Sat Kartar’ means Truth Doer,” she explains. “The doing, acting, creating aspect of God—the doer in everything.” The words “Sat Kartar” are also a mantra in the Sikh tradition. A joyously expansive recording of it is included on *Flow*. “I was looking for mantras that haven’t been done very much,” says the singer. “‘Sat Kartar’ had never been recorded by anybody. Since it’s my name, I thought, ‘I need to chant this for my growth.’”

The mantras are traditional, but Sat Kartar composes her own musical settings for them, often adding lyrical elements in English. Much of her musical inspiration comes from Naad Yoga, a yogic science of sound and vibration: “There’s an inner sound resonating inside of you, almost like the call of your soul. By doing these chants, meditations, and yoga practices, you come to the point where you’re clear and still enough to hear what we call the unstruck melody, or *anhad*.”

Unlike the Hindu-based *bhakti* chanting popularized by artists like Krishna Das and Jai Uttal, which is a devotional form of yoga, “Kundalini chanting and Sikh *kirtan* are practiced as a seated meditation,” Sat Kartar says. “Very often there’s a specific *asana*, breathing practice, *mudra*, and visualization that goes with each mantra. It can be a different kind of practice, although both are wonderful, both are *bhakti*.”

Sat Kartar’s *kirtans*, or chants, combine elements of concert and yoga practice, energized by live percussion, electric bass, and the singer’s open-tuned acoustic guitar playing. Sat Kartar used to lead Friday morning *sadhanas* (yoga sessions) at Golden Bridge Yoga Center in Los Angeles, before settling in Phoenix to be near her two sons, now in their 20s. She teaches Kundalini classes and Naad Yoga workshops locally, integrating these pursuits with her musical career.

“I feel like my job is to serve people with this music. It’s a continuous quest to find ways to make this tradition accessible to people so they can have the experience.”