

# **SPIRITUAL SOUND AS THE ESSENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN DIFFERENT WORLD RELIGIONS- A FUTURISTIC APPROACH FOR A UNIFIED WORLD RELIGION**

## **Abstract**

Different faiths around the world perceive the spiritual essence as the conscious self and uphold the significance of sound. These various religious traditions, while following distinct routes to fathom the ultimate reality, often converge in their underlying objectives. They expound upon the essence of consciousness, its multifaceted dimensions, its materialization in divine embodiments, and the methods and approaches for cleansing it in order to achieve self-realization, salvation, and other spiritual goals.

With basic scientific understanding and universal law of physics that any type of moving energy or force current is inherently accompanied by sound, or what we can call sound-current. Furthermore, each sound-current inherently carries the distinctive attributes of its origin and engenders an energy field in its vicinity. If we accept this premise, then it logically follows that the primordial source of energy, which is the spiritual energy residing within us and animating our existence, must manifest itself through spiritual sound currents, giving rise to spiritual sounds.

This paper tries to explore “Sound as the Essence of Consciousness in Different World Religions” and paves the way for logical establishment of a futuristic approach for a Unified World Religion.

**Keywords:** Spiritual Essence, Different World Religions, Religious Traditions, Cultural System.

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Before the act of creation, the Shabd existed in a latent state, devoid of a name. In this state, it was an entity entirely self-contained and therefore referred to as Ashabd (soundless), Anaam (nameless), Alakh (beyond comprehension), Agam (unfathomable), Akeh (inexpressible), and Akath (indescribable). Upon entering the realm of manifestation, it acquired the names "Shabd" or "Naam."

*"Shabd when hidden was Anaam, Shabd in manifestation became Naam".*

*Most Revered Sh. Shiv Dayal Singhji Maharaj*

Prior to the act of creation, there was neither sun nor moon, nor sky nor earth, for at that time, the Shabd existed in its formless state, self-contained. The essence of Shabd is Pure Consciousness, and it serves as the active life principle for the entire creation. It functions as the guiding and controlling force behind all that exists. All manifestations owe their existence to the Shabd, and without it, nothing would be. It is the very life essence of all things.

The physical elements, the subtle and ethereal powers, the vibrations, the causal seeds, and the essences—each and every one of them derives from the Shabd, being nothing less than the Shabd personified. We exist and have our very essence within the realm of the Shabd, and, in the end, we merge back into the Shabd. The scriptures of the world universally affirm that the Shabd stands supreme, transcending both the material and efficient causes, serving as the All-Controlling Power of the Universe. It acts as a vital link between the Creator and His creation, serving as a luminous bridge connecting the two realms.

The sounds unveiled in religion are mystical sounds from the inner realm, capable of transporting us to an unimaginable world and evoking profound spiritual sentiments. Across all the world's religions, it is emphasized that to perceive these sounds, one must engage in meditation, such as Yoga, and acquire the techniques of relaxation. Through meditation, individuals can ascend to elevated levels of consciousness. Chanting these sacred sounds can lead to inner peace, harmony, self-healing, and an enhanced sense of overall well-being.

While religion constitutes an organized compilation of beliefs, a cultural system, and a worldview that connects humanity to a greater order of existence, its fundamental objective is to bestow peace upon the soul. The soul discovers serenity when it unites with the

primordial energy source. To facilitate this union, seers and sages have imparted internal meditation techniques, enabling individuals to ascend the ladder of consciousness and attain unity with the Supreme God.

It is believed that sound serves as the foundation of all existence, and the primordial entity responsible for creating and governing the universe is the reservoir of ultimate energy. This immense energy initially materialized in the form of sound and then commanded matter to come into being, thus giving birth to the universe. When science and mysticism unite their facts and experiences, it becomes evident that the universe exhibits a universal characteristic of being musical, harmonious, and interconnected.

Hazrat Inayat Khan a Sufi saint has described-

"Sound is the source of all manifestation... The knower of mystery of sound knows the mystery of whole universe."

We cannot perceive the ethereal vibrations and tune in to the divine melody until we synchronize our mental apparatus with the Infinite. As we align ourselves with the heavenly music, we become increasingly etherealized. Shabd serves as the bridge between God and humanity. Contemplation yields its full benefit when focused on a Dhunyatmak Name, also known as Bij Mantras.

According to the teachings of Saints, the entire creation is subdivided into 18 regions or spheres. Currents emanate from these centres or Deities, permeating and sustaining their respective realms, with each current producing a unique sound. When these sounds are articulated in human speech, they are referred to as Dhunyatmak names or Bij Mantras. This connection between name and the named is considered fundamental and eternal, linking the name of the Deity with the Deity itself, or in other words, between Vachaka and Vachya.

Sage Vyasa, in his commentary on the Sutra on Samadhi from Patanjali's Yoga Darshana, states that there exists an eternal connection between Parmatma (the Supreme Being) and His name, and that the connection between Vachya and Vachaka is understood only by yogis.

The physical forces in nature operate through currents that radiate from a central point outward to the periphery. It is a fundamental law of nature that every force current is accompanied by a sound or sound current, and each of these sound currents bears the distinctive characteristics of its origin.

Following the same principle, the human spirit operates through spiritual currents that originate from its center, situated within a specific region of the brain, and then extend outward to encompass the entirety of the human body.

“Consciousness-Greatest challenge before science.”

To grasp this profound reality, one must delve into the writings of Sufi Saints and mystics with an open mind and a balanced perspective. In numerous instances, within Hindu, Sikh, and Christian literature, it is noted that the structure of the physical universe mirrors the supremely subtle design, blueprint, or essence of God. Order and integration arise organically

when the power of God, often referred to as the Word or Shabda, is initially divided and separated by the universal mind. This intricate, subtle essence, containing in its seed form all that exists below, is known as Nature.

Consciousness serves as the fundamental essence of existence. Universal consciousness is attained when an individual redirects their focus away from the senses and the mind, merging it instead with their intelligent self. This state of universal consciousness, residing in the tranquil self, is referred to as Pure Consciousness.

The elevated realms of spiritual consciousness have a connection to the physical creation, as is evidenced by the findings of quantum physics, which not only apply at the subatomic level but have also demonstrated that the mind can influence matter in larger-scale systems. Cognitive studies reveal that the soul manifests through the body and mind. To attain a higher level of consciousness, where the soul becomes dissociated from the constraints of the mind and matter, the awakening of spiritual faculties is essential. This awakening allows for the exploration of heightened states of consciousness.

Quantum physics indeed asserts that subatomic particles do not exhibit the conventional characteristics of particles but instead possess a more subtle nature. They are composed of vibrations, pure energy, and units of probability. Professor Prem Saran Satsangi Sahab, a highly respected figure, has provided a framework for scientific exploration of consciousness, which incorporates the esoteric macrocosmic creational system and its corresponding microcosmic system. This framework offers a unique perspective on the nature of consciousness and its connection to the fundamental aspects of the universe.

In Vedas the Five levels of consciousness have been described as wakefulness (Jagrat avastha), sleep (svapan avastha), deep sleep (sushupti), Turiya and Turiyatita.

Saints have described levels of consciousness in human body (microcosm) with various grand divisions of Universe (macrocosm).

The three grand divisions are;

- Pure Spiritual Region
- Universal Mind Region or Brahmanda
- Pind Region or material mind region,

With each division forming six sub-divisions, with their characteristic features, such as shabda, sound and deities, and these have impressions in human body and mind.

The ability to perceive the sound of higher levels can be cultivated by delving into the inner realms. The invisible or unseen dimensions are often considered part of alam-al-gayab, and these can be accessed through the practice of meditation, a technique taught in many religious traditions. This approach to inner exploration is also described by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras. Through these practices, individuals can tap into and experience the subtle and hidden aspects of existence.

Vibration stands as the most fundamental aspect of the entire universe. Even Johannes Kepler, the 16th-century astronomer renowned for formulating the laws of planetary motion, firmly believed that everything in nature, including the relationship between planets, was meticulously attuned to perfect harmony by a Divine attuner. It is well-established that vibrations are the result of sound. Each sound is intrinsically linked to energy, as underscored by Einstein's famous equation,  $E=mc^2$ , which signifies that matter (m) is essentially an expression of energy (E). This equation reveals the profound interconnectedness between energy, matter, and the vibratory nature of the universe.

Across various world religions, the manifestations of internal sounds have often displayed remarkable similarities. For instance, the sound of a bell is considered divine in both Christian and Hindu traditions. Bells are commonly used and revered in both churches and temples as they hold spiritual significance and are believed to facilitate a connection with the divine. This shared recognition of certain sounds underscores the commonality and universal appeal of certain spiritual experiences.

Upon a deeper study of spiritual sounds in different world religions, it becomes apparent that there is a correlation between the sounds mentioned in various faiths. It appears that when certain sounds, like "sat-sat" and "haq-haq," are continually heard for an extended period of time, they may converge and sound very similar. This suggests a shared resonance and profound connection in the auditory and spiritual experiences across different cultures and belief systems.

Indeed, the resemblance between words like "Kun" and "Om" highlights the shared essence of these sounds as they resonate in the vast universe and are articulated in various languages associated with different religions. Sound plays a pivotal role in meditative practices, and the teachings of saints frequently emphasize the significance of contemplating the Naam or sacred sound imparted by them, especially at the seat of the spirit, a practice known as Surat-Shabda-Yoga. This underscores the universality of sound as a means of spiritual connection and realization, transcending linguistic and religious boundaries.

## **I. HINDUISM**

In Hinduism, it is intriguing to discover that the Hamsa Upanishad asserts that when one meditates upon the Hamsa Mantra a crore times, spiritual sounds are unveiled within. It enumerates ten distinct spiritual sounds that may be heard internally.

If an individual diverts their attention from worldly indulgences and directs all their focus inwards, Hath Yoga Pradipika declares that Nada materializes within the yogi.

When the yogi assumes the Sidh Asana and engages in the practice of the Vaisnavi Mudra, they should listen to the sound through their right ear. Through a profound connection with the Word, they will become impervious to external sounds and achieve the Turiya Pad, a state of balance, within a fortnight. Initially, the murmuring sounds akin to ocean waves, the patter of rain, and the flow of stream, along with the resonance of a Bheri, will be heard mixed with the tones of bells and conch.

It is recommended for such a seeker to abandon nine of those sounds and focus their attention on the tenth one, which resembles the thunderous sound of clouds. This practice leads to the realization of Paramatman.

It is recorded in Tandya Brahmana- At the outset, Prajapati existed in solitary solitude. His sole wealth comprised Vani, which was all-encompassing. With this Vani, He fashioned the entirety of Prakriti, i.e., nature.

This illustrates that Prajapati, namely Brahma, has manifested the entire creation through the medium of sound (shabda). At the inception of creation, the sound current, originating from its core, expanded throughout the entirety of creation and eventually returned.

## **II. DIFFERENT INTERNAL SOUNDS MENTIONED IN OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS**

The concept of Shabd, or sound as a spiritual principle, is not limited to particular regions or cultures but has appeared in various forms throughout history. Ancient Greek philosophers and thinkers also referred to this principle. Socrates, for example, mentioned hearing a unique Sound within himself that drew him towards higher spiritual realms. Pythagoras and Plato alluded to the idea of Shabd, with Plato describing it as the "Music of the Spheres."

The Greek term "Logos," derived from "logo," meaning "to speak," stands for the "Word" or Second Person of the Trinity in both Greek and Christian philosophy and theology. This concept has had mystic interpretations within Hellenistic and Neo-Platonist philosophies. In Christian theology, St. John used the term "Word" to signify a Sound Principle (Shabd) emanating from the Great Silence (Ashabd).

In Chinese scriptures, the same concept is known as "Tao." Lao Tze, in the fourth century B.C., employed the word "Tao" to denote the Hidden Principle of the Universe, often translated as the "Way" or "Road." This demonstrates the universality of the idea of a divine or transcendental sound present in various cultures and traditions throughout history.

In the Avestic writings of Zoroaster, the ancient Persian prophet, the term "Sraosha" appears, representing the angel of inspiration who kindles the Universe. This concept stands as a distinct Power, separate from the six spiritual Powers described by Zoroaster. Sraosha is associated with the cult of Eternal Life and derives from the Sanskrit root "Shru," meaning "to hear." It signifies the Power of God that can be heard, emphasizing the auditory aspect of spirituality.

In the closing sections of the Avesta, there is an invocation to Mazda, the Zoroastrian deity, praying for the bestowal of Sraosha upon those whom He loves. In the terminology of the saints and spiritual traditions, this concept aligns with Shabd, highlighting the shared understanding of divine sound and its significance across different cultures and belief systems.

The creative and active power of God, responsible for the ongoing creation and sustenance of the entire cosmos, down to every moment, resides in the essence of all material substances and the life force within every soul. This power is often associated with sound, as sound (Sabda) currents are believed to emanate from the Supreme Being. This is why it is said that God is the very embodiment of sound, often referred to as "Sabda Svarupa." This concept highlights the intrinsic connection between sound and the divine creative force in many spiritual and philosophical traditions.

The same idea is lying behind the words of Lord Christ:

*"In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God  
and the Word was God".*

He also mentioned;

*"Word was made flesh"*

### **III. LISTENING TO INTERNAL SOUNDS IN SUFISM**

Sufi mystics in Persia, as part of their spiritual practices, engaged in what was known as "Sultan-ul-Azkar" or "Surat Shabda Abhyasa." This practice was considered the foremost among methods for repeating the name of God. Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani, a prominent Sufi saint, is known to have dedicated twelve years to this practice with the goal of attaining the experience of Anhad Shabda, which refers to the unstruck sound or the divine sound that transcends the physical realm. This practice is indicative of the significance of sound in Sufi mysticism and its role in their pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

In Sufi mysticism, divine music is that which is perceived through the inner faculty of hearing during mystical experiences. This music is considered an aspect of the divine creative power, often referred to as the Word or Nam, which permeates and animates the entire creation. It possesses a magnetic allure, captivating the mystic and guiding them through the process of "mawt ikhtiyari," which translates to voluntary death or dying while living.

Prophet Mohammed is believed to have practiced a form of Surat Shabd Yoga, specifically "Sultan-ul-Azkar," for six years in the cave of Hira. Similarly, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani is said to have undergone a similar practice in that sacred cave for a period of twelve years. These instances illustrate the importance of sound and mystic practices in their spiritual journeys and signify the profound connection between divine music and spiritual awakening in Sufi mysticism.

Hazrat Inayat Khan expounded on the concept of Sound as the authentic revelation from God and depicted 'Hu' as the primordial, eternal Sound.

Rumi, too, alludes to the sound of "Hu" in his poetic expression:

#### **IV. SOUNDS REVEALED IN SANT MAT**

Saints such as Kabir Sahab, Guru Nanak, Paltu Sahab, Tulsi Sahab, and Soamiji Maharaj have all expounded on the existence of higher regions of creation beyond the Para-Brahma-Pada, which is a concept found in the Vedic religious tradition. They emphasized the significance of the practice of listening to the internal spiritual Sound, often referred to as Anahata Shabda Yoga or Surat Shabda Yoga, as a certain path to salvation. In addition to the traditional 'Omkaara,' they taught the importance of other holy names like 'Sat Nam' and 'Radhasoami.' These teachings underline the diverse approaches and practices within the broader spiritual and religious landscape, each aimed at achieving spiritual realization and salvation.

Kabir Sahab, in his writings, emphasized the significance of Satguru, the True Spiritual Teacher, and the practice of listening to internal sounds (Surat Shabda Yoga). He distinctly articulated the existence of realms beyond the Para-brahma-pad, specifically the region of Parabrahma.

#### **V. MODERN SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE**

The contemporary holistic approach to human potential, perspectives on consciousness, and the emergence of transcendental systems can certainly gain from being inclusive of the elevated states of consciousness revealed by Rishis, Munis, Prophets, Sufis, Saints, and Param Sants. Incorporating the insights and wisdom from various spiritual and mystical traditions can enrich the understanding of human potential and consciousness, leading to a more comprehensive and balanced perspective on the complexities of the human experience and the interconnectedness of all spiritual paths and teachings. This inclusive approach allows for a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the human journey towards self-realization and spiritual growth.

The stages of spiritual consciousness indeed encompass a wide range of scientific discoveries and philosophical thoughts. Spiritual consciousness involves becoming aware of collective thoughts and emotions while recognizing the unity and interconnectedness of the Creator who is responsible for the manifestation, maintenance, and order of the universe. This holistic approach combines the insights from both spiritual and scientific perspectives to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the human experience and the nature of existence. It acknowledges the interplay between individual and collective consciousness and the larger universal order.

The energy of the spirit force possesses dual characteristics: it is invisible, incorporeal, creative, and omnipresent, while also being physical, natural, and empirically discernible. This energy, when combined with the fundamental forces of the universe, forms a creative force that functions as a universal spirit force, closely connected to the universal mind. In the functioning of these forces, each force operates from a higher plane, utilizes a medium, and ultimately manifests at a lower plane. For instance, consider the example of sunlight, which, as electromagnetic radiation, generates heat energy on Earth. All material and physical forces, including chemical ones, require the assistance of the spiritual force to manifest.



The spiritual force is characterized by attributes such as Sat (truth), Chit (consciousness), Anand (bliss), Prakash (illumination), Prem (love), Akarshan (attraction), and Shakti (power). This spiritual force is accompanied by a sound current as well. To activate this universal spirit force current, one must concentrate and resonate at frequencies associated with higher states of consciousness. This alignment and resonance enable individuals to harness the power of this universal spirit force for spiritual growth and realization.

The esteemed Prof. P.S. Satsangi Sahab has presented a postulate for Universal Consciousness Realization, which asserts: "Yoga, the union of surat (spirit force) with Shabda (spiritual Sound Current), is the method imparted in the teachings of Saints and religions for attaining oneness with the creator."

**Table 1: Experimental Simulation**

FIVE MYSTIC WORDS	HIGHER REGIONS	ACCOMPANYING ANHAD NAD
NIRANJAN	SAHASDAL KAMAL	BELL & CONCH
OM(AUM)	TRIKUTI	DRUM, THUNDER (PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS)
RARANG	SUNNA	STRING INSTRUMENT – KINGARI, SARANGI, SITAR, VEENA
SOHANG	BHANWAR GUFA	FLUTE (WIND OR PIPE INSTRUMENT)
SAT	SAT LOK ANAMI LOK	SNAKE CHARMER'S FLUTE (BEEN), WIND INSTRUMENT
RADHASOAMI	ALAKH AGAM RADHASOAMI (NIJ DHAM)	UNIDENTIFIED MELODIOUS RUN - JHUN SUPERIMPOSED WITH BEE – HUMMING

Hence, it can be observed that an individual with evolved latent consciousness can perceive and comprehend these transcendental sounds. Even other factors, such as cognitive, neural, and environmental aspects, all corroborate similar outcomes. To validate this, the hypothesis is being examined through psychological or cognitive tests.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Therefore, it is evident that various religions not only in India but across the world share an inherent belief that a particular sound or 'Naam,' and its 'Anhad naad,' resounds within us. This sound is not only considered the source of spiritual awakening or the path to the divine but is also seen as the seed of creation. Religions globally have acknowledged its fundamental presence, although the significance attributed to it may vary from one religion to another.