Spiritual Sound as the Essence of Consciousness in Different World Religions – A Futuristic Approach for a unified World Religion

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Different religions in the world reveal the spirit entity as the conscious self and advocate the primacy of sound. The religions and their aims coincide at some level, although the paths taken by them to reach the fundamental reality may be quite different. They describe the nature of consciousness, its many facets, its manifestations in Divine forms, and ways and means for its purification to attain self- realization, salvation etc.

It is a matter of simple science and a General law of nature that every form of Kinetic Energy or Force Current is accompanied by a Sound or Sound-Current and every Sound Current carries with it the characteristic of its source, and develops the Energy field around it. If this is so, then the Primordial Source of Energy – i.e. the Spiritual Energy which is Kinetic within us and which makes us alive has to have manifestations in the form of Spiritual sound currents producing Spiritual Sounds.

 Before the creation, Shabd existed in its latent form and as such had no name. In this state, It was something completely established in Itself and was thus known as Ashabd (sound-less), Anaam (nameless), Alakh (ununderstandable), Agam  (inconceivable), Akeh (unutterable) and Akath (indescribable). When It came into manifestation, It was called "Shabd" or "Naam."

“*Shabd when hidden was Anaam,
Shabd in manifestation became Naam*”.
                    Most Revered Sh. Shiv Dayal Singhji Maharaj

Before creation nor was there any sun nor moon nor sky nor earth, for then the *Shabd* existed by itself in a formless state. The essence of *Shabd* is Pure Consciousness. It is the active life-principle of the whole creation. It is the Guiding and Controlling Power behind all that exists. All manifestation is the result of *Shabd* and without it, nothing exists. It is the very life-essence of everything.

The physical elements, the subtle and ethereal powers and vibrations, the causal seeds and essences, one and all are from Shabd and nothing but Shabd personified. We live and have our very being in Shabd and ultimately dissolve into Shabd. All the scriptures of the world tell us that Shabd is above the material and efficient cause and All- Controlling Power of the Universe.

 It acts as a life-line between the Creator and His creation and serves as a golden bridge between the two.

The sounds revealed in religion are mystic sounds of inner realm that transport us to an unimagined world and evoke feelings of spirituality.

All world religions have mentioned that to listen to these sounds, one has to perform meditation, i.e. Yoga and learn the techniques of relaxation and finally while performing meditation one can attain higher levels of consciousness. Chanting of such sounds can lead to peace, harmony, tranquility of self healing and overall wellbeing.

Though the religion is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural system and world view that relates humanity to an order of existence but the basic motive is to gain peace for soul. The soul finds solace when it merges with the primordial energy reservoir. To do this, Seers and Sages have disclosed internal meditation techniques so that one can climb the ladder of consciousness and acquire oneness with Supreme God. It is believed that sound is the foundation of all existence and the primordial entity which has created and is regulating this universe is the reservoir of ultimate energy. That enormous energy first manifested itself in the form of sound and then commanded the matter to come in to existence and the universe was created. It becomes obvious and self evident when science and mysticism combine their facts and experiences –that the universe shows a universal characteristic of being musical, harmonious and inter connected.

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 catch the ethereal vibrations and listen to the divine melody until we get in tune with the Infinite by adjusting our mental apparatus. Therefore we become etherealized more and more as we come in tune with the heavenly music. *Shabd* is the connecting link between God and man.

A person can get the benefit of contemplation in right manner if he contemplates on a *Dhunyatmak* Name which is also called *Bij Mantras*. According to the teachings of religion of Saints the whole creation is divided into 18 regions or spheres. Currents emanating from these centers or Deities permeate their respective regions and maintain them and each of these currents produces a sound. These sounds, when reproduced in articulate human speech, are known as *Dhunyatmak* name or *Bij Mantras*. This is why it is said that there exists an essential and eternal connection between name and the named i.e. between the name of the Deity and the Deity Himself or in other words between *Vachaka* and *Vachya*. Sage Vyasa in his commentary on the *Sutra* on *Samadhi* of *Patanjali Yoga Darshana* writes that there is an eternal connection of the *Parmatma* i.e. *Brahma* with His name and that the connection between *Vachya* and *vachka* is understood by yogis only.

Physical forces in nature work by means of currents from center to circumference. It is general law of nature that every force current is accompanied by a sound or sound current and every sound current carries the characteristics of its source.

On the same principal, man’s spirit functions by means of spiritual currents which start from its center, located in the certain part of the brain and spread out to the circumference viz. the entire human body.

“*Every spirit current is accompanied by a spiritual sound or sound current which carries with it the characteristics of its source, the spirit. As the principal attribute of the spirit or Surat is love or attraction i.e. inward attraction towards its center, the moment the spiritual sound manifests itself within a devotee, he begins to feel a powerful inward attraction towards the center of spirit force. The devotees mind and spirit under its influence are drawn together to the center, having been withdrawn from every other direction, get focused at that center*…” [[1]](#footnote-1)

To understand this reality one has to plunge in to the writings of *Sufi* *Saints* and Mystic men with an open mind and a balanced thinking .In many places, in Hindu, Sikh and Christian literature, it has been mentioned that the nature of physical universe reflects the supremely subtle pattern, blue print or essence of God .The order and integration arises automatically when the power of God, the Word or Shabda, is first split and divided by the universal mind .This complex, subtle essence , containing in seed form all that lies below, is known as Nature.

Consciousness–Greatest challenge before science.

Consciousness is the ground of being. Universal consciousness is achieved when man withdraws his attention from senses and mind and merges it in intelligent self, and that universal consciousness in the peaceful Self is called Pure Consciousness.

The higher states of spiritual consciousness are related to physical creation as well, besides the results of quantum physics which justify at subatomic level; large-scale-systems have also demonstrated that mind can influence matter. Cognitive studies show that the Soul manifests through the body and mind .If the soul gets dissociated with mind and matter, it can reach to a higher level of consciousness and this can only be achieved through the awakening of spiritual faculties.

Quantum physics says that the subatomic particles do not show nature of particle but are more subtle in nature. They consist of vibrations, pure energy and units of probability. Most Revered Prof. Prem Saran Satsangi Sahab has given a frame work for scientific investigation for consciousness with the nature of Esoteric Macrocosmic Creational System and the corresponding Microcosmic System.

In *Vedantic* religion the different levels of consciousness have been described as wakefulness *(Jagrat avastha),* sleep *(svapan avastha),* deep sleep *(sushupti),* *Turiya* and *Turiyatita*.

However, in Sant Mat, they go further and the levels of consciousness have been correlated with various grand divisions of macrocosm which are also present in human microcosm.

With complete detailed description of the various levels of consciousness described by Most Revered Shri Shiv Dayal Singh Sahabji revealing the true name of the Supreme Being and further elucidated by His successors, the three grand divisions are-

1. Pure Spiritual Region

2. Universal Mind Region or Brahmanda

3. 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.

One can hear the sound of higher levels by cultivating inner realms .The invisible or unseen realms are part of *alam-al-gayab* or it can be achieved by practicing meditation taught in many religions; also described by *Patanjali* in Y*oga sutra*.

Vibration is the most fundamental characteristic of entire universe. Johannes Kepler, the 16th century astronomer responsible for determining the laws of planetary motion, was convinced that the relationship between the planets –indeed everything in nature has been attuned to perfect harmony by the Divine attuner. It has been established that vibrations arise due to sound. Every sound is associated with energy which can be established by Einstein’s famous formula E=mc2. It also indicates that matter (m) is but an expression of energy (E).

In different world religions, the manifestations of internal sounds have appeared to be almost the same. For example, the sound of *Bell* is taken to be a divine sound both by Christians and Hindus. They hang bells in Church and Temples.

On studying spiritual sounds of different World Religions, it became evident that there is a

Correlation between sounds mentioned in various religions. It seems that the echoing sound of ‘*sat-sat’* and ‘*haq-haq’* are same when heard continuously for a long period of time.

Similarly word ‘*Kun’* and ‘*Om’* resemble each other as they are the sounds reverberating in *Brahmanda* and articulated in different languages as they are from different religions.

Sound is important in meditational practices and teachings of saints emphasize on contemplating the *Naam* given by them at the seat of spirit that is called *Surat-Shabda-Yoga*.

Hinduism

In Hinduism it is interesting to know that *Hamsa Upnishad* claims that if one contemplates one crore times the *Hamsa Mantra*, spiritual sounds are revealed internally. They give account of ten different spiritual sounds which can be heard internally.

If one turns away his attention from worldly pleasures and focuses all his attention internally it is stated in *Hath Yoga Pradipika* that *Nada* manifests within the *yogi*.

“*When the yogi sits in Sidh Asana and practices the Vaisnavi Mudra, he should hear the sound through his right ear. By communion with the Word, he will become deaf to the external sounds, and will attain the Turiya Pad or a state of equipoise within a fortnight. Initially the murmuring sounds resembling those of the waves of the ocean, the fall of rain and the running rivulets and the Bheri will be heard intermingled with the sounds of bell and conch*”.[[2]](#footnote-2)

It is advised to such a Seeker to discard nine of them and listen to the tenth one resembling the sound of thunder of clouds attentively. This leads to the realization of *Paramatman*.

It is recorded in Tandya Brahmana-

*“In the beginning the Prajapati was all alone. His entire wealth consisted only of Vani (sound).If He had a second, it was none other than Vani. With this Vani He created all this Prakriti i.e. nature*”.[[3]](#footnote-3)

This shows that the *The Prajapati* i.e. *Brahma* has evolved the whole creation through the medium of sound (shabda) and at the beginning of the creation the sound current which has started from its center, spread throughout the whole creation and then returned to its source.

“*The Satapatha Brahmana(14. 4. 3. 13) Contains the expression “vagevadevah” i.e. God are merely sound (shabda). The Gopatha Brahmana “vagdevah” i.e. Sabda is a deity and the Aitareya Brahmana (2.38) “Vagyonih” i.e. Sabda is a womb or source of creation*”.*3*

Different Internal sounds mentioned in Other World Religions

The ancient Greeks also spoke of Shabd. In the writings of Socrates, we read that he heard within him a peculiar Sound which pulled him irresistibly to higher spiritual realms. Pythagoras also talked of Shabd. Plato spoke of It as the "Music of the Spheres." In the Greek language we have the term Logos, from "logo," to speak, which stands for the "Word" or Second Person of the Trinity.

This term Logos also figures in both Hebrew and Christian philosophy and theology and in its mystic sense is used both by the Hellenistic and Neo-platonist philosophies. St. John has used the term "Word." It is a Sound Principle (Shabd) emanating from the Great Silence (Ashabd). In Chinese scriptures, it is known as Tao. Lao Tze, in the fourth century B. C., used the word Tao meaning "Road" or "Way" to denote the Hidden Principle of the Universe.

In the Avestic writings of Zoroaster, the Persian prophet of life, we come across the word Sraosha, which stands for the angel of inspiration that inspires the Universe. It is a Power apart from the six spiritual Powers of which Zoroaster speaks. It is the cult of Eternal Life and is from the Sanskrit root "Shru" (to hear) and means that Power of God which can be heard. In the end Avesta, we have an invocation to Mazda praying for the gift of Sraosha for those whom He loves. It is the same as Shabd in the terminology of the saints.

The creative and Active power of God that created and constantly sustains the entire creation, moment by moment, the essence of all material substance and the life force within all soul is the sound. Sound (*Sabda*) currents are issued forth from the Supreme Being hence it is said that He is “*Sabda Svarupa*”. 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*”[[4]](#footnote-4).

Listening to internal sounds in Sufism

 Sufi Mystics of Persia used to perform sound practices which was called (*Sultan-ul-Azkar*) or the *Surat Shabda Abhyasa*  means-King among the methods of repetition of God’s name. *Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani* performed this practice for twelve years to listen to *Anhad Shabda*.

In Sufi Mysticism divine music is that which is heard with the inner faculty of hearing during mystic assent. This music is an aspect of divine creative power, the Word or Nam, which permeates and enlivens the entire creation. It has a magnetic attraction, intoxicating the mystic and pulling him through the process of *mawt ikhtiyari* (voluntary death, (dying while living). Prophet Mohammed practiced in the cave of Hira, for six years, the *Sultan-ul-Azkar* (*Surat Shabd Yoga*) and that *Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jillani*, did the same for twelve years in that sacred cave.

*Hazrat Inayat Khan* wrote about the Sound as the true revelation from God and describes *‘Hu’* as the original eternal Sound;

“*All things and beings proclaim this Name of the Lord; for every activity of life expresses distinctly or indistinctly this very Sound. This is the Word mentioned in the Bible as existing before the light came into being: ‘In the..and the word was God”.*

*This Sound develops through ten different aspects because of its manifestation through ten different tubes of the body; it sounds like thunder, the roaring of sea, the jingling of bells, running water, the buzzing of bees, the twittering of sparrows, the vina (a stringed instrument), the whistle, or the sound of shankha(conch), until it finally becomes Hu, the most sacred of all sounds”.[[5]](#footnote-5)*

Rumi also indicates about the sound of Hu.

*“When the pen is of wind and the scroll of water,*

*Whatever you write perishes speedily;*

*It is written on water*

Sounds revealed in Sant Mat

Saints like Kabir Sahab, Guru Nanak, Paltu Sahab, Tulsi Sahab and Soamiji Maharaj have spoken of higher regions of creation beyond Para-Brahma-Pada of the Vedic religious tradition. They stressed on the importance of the practice of listening to the internal spiritual Sound-Anahata Shabda Yoga or Surat Shabda Yoga as the sure means of salvation and taught other holy names besides 'Omkara', namely, 'Sat Nam' and 'Radhasoami'

 Kabir Sahab in his writings stressed the importance of Satguru, the True Spiritual Teacher and the practice of hearing internal sounds (Surat Shabda Yoga). He clearly spoke of regions beyond the Para-brahma-pad i.e., region of Parabrahma.

"*Hai Til ke Til ke Til Bhitar Birle Sadhu Paya hai*

*Cahun dal kamal Trikuti Saje Omkar darsaya hai*

*Raramkar pad Sety Sunn Pad, Satdal kamal Bataya hai,*

*Parabrahma mahasunn manjhara Soyi nihacchar gaya hai*

*Bhanwar Gupha me Soham Raje, Murali adhik Bajaya hai, !*

*Sant lok Satpurush Biraje, alakh agam dou bhaya hai ;*

 *Purus anami sab par Svami, brahmand par jo gaya hai[[6]](#footnote-6).*

Modern Scientific Perspective

The modern holistic approach in Human Possibilities, View on consciousness and emergence of

Transcendental System can be made inclusive of higher states of Consciousness that have been revealed by *Rishis*, *Munis*, *Prophets, Sufis, Saints* and *Param Sants*.

The stages of spiritual consciousness, therefore incorporates wide range of scientific discoveries and thoughts. As consciousness is being aware of collective thoughts and feelings, while understanding the wholeness and oneness of the creator who manifests, maintains and keep things in order in the universe.

The energy of spirit force is invisible, incorporeal, creative and omnipresent while also being physical, natural, and empirically discernible.

This energy plus fundamental forces forms a creative force which acts like a universal spirit force of universal mind. Every force acts from a higher plain, through a medium and manifests at a lower plain. For example sun rays which are electromagnetic radiation produce heat energy on Earth. All the material forces physical and chemical need aid of spiritual force to manifest. The attributes of this spiritual force are *Sat, Chit, Anand, Prakash, Prem, Akarshan and Shakti*. The spirit current is accompanied with sound current as well. This Universal spirit force current can get activated by concentrating and resonating at the same frequencies which are of higher consciousness plain.

Most Revered Prof.P.S.Satsangi Sahab has given a postulate for Universal Consciousness Realization which says,

*“Yoga ,uniting of surat(spirit force) with Shabda (spiritual Sound Current) which is the means taught in the Religions of Saints for achieving union with the creator*.”

Here it is important to study the portion from the Vision Talk delivered by Revered Prof. Prem Saran Satsangi Sahab at the Special Forum on 'Quantum Theory and Science of Consciousness' at the International School and on Quantum and Nano Computing Systems and Applications

(QANSAS 2012) organized at Quantum-Nano Systems Centre, DEI, Dayalbagh November 28, 2012

**Neuro-environmental Cognitive Spiritual Phenomenology**

*“The factors which are considered necessary and sufficient are mystic words which resound within you as you experience these internal phenomena. These mystic words for the nine higher regions (in the hierarchy of cosmic consciousness) are the well known five mystic words, Niranjan at the lowest Brahman (the first Brahman of the Vedas) at Sahasdal Kamal (the thousand-petalled rose), Om at the next Brahman (the second Brahman) at the so-called Trikuti, and then the third one, corresponding to the third Brahman at Sunna, viz. Rarang. These are regions of the Universal Mind. Then beyond these, there are two mystic words, for the purely spiritual region, which is the highest one. This is Soham at the gateway or the first portal of the purely spiritual region, viz. Bhanwar Gufa; and then Sat which is the most resplendent form of the Sat Purush Radhasoami. (Radhasoami itself is having no form, no shape and no colour. It is the source of pure energy, truth, intelligence and blissfulness….”*

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| Table 1: EXPERIMENTIAL 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 LOKANAMI LOK | SNAKE CHARMER’S FLUTE (BEEN), WIND INSTRUMENT |
| RADHASOAMI | ALAKHAGAMRADHASOAMI (NIJ DHAM) | UNIDENTIFIED MELODIOUS RUN - JHUN SUPERIMPOSED WITH BEE – HUMMING  |

Hence it can be seen that a person with developed latent consciousness can experience or understand these transcendental sounds. Even other correlates like cognitive neural and environmental, all testify to similar results. For this, hypothesis is being tested by tests of psychological or cognitive kind.

 Conclusion

Thus we see that different religions of not only India but around the world have an innate belief that some sound or ‘*Naam’* , and its ‘*Anhad naad’* is reverberating within us and is not only the source of Spiritual activity or the way leading to the almighty but was also the seed of Creation. Religions worldwide have accepted its fundamental existence, though the degree of importance attached to it varies from religion to religion.

One important point is that one may argue that the terminology or the names associated with these sounds have little co-relation amongst different religions. Many may argue that if God is ONE, which irrefutably is true, then why are there differences amongst the descriptions of sounds in different religions. For this a very simple analogy can be made. A simple sound like that of bell or *ghanti* or *ghanta* ringing is described differently in different languages and by different people as “*ding dong*” or “*tin-tin*” or “*tan-tan*”. If such a simple sound, heard so clearly by the physical senses is translated to different verbal connotations by different people, it should be easily acceptable that celestial sounds reverberating within us, which are not present in this physical world and whom very few blessed people are ordained to hear, can have different verbal connotations .Also the sounds of different religions are according to the spiritual levels or regions of the macrocosm they represent, and with due respect to all religions it can very well be argued that the sounds revealed in different religions are according to the levels of spiritual elevation reached in that religion.

Thus it can be concluded that *‘Shabd’* is a strong pillar of faith of each religion, and now when the Creation has entered its final stage before “*Mahapralaya*”, the Religion of Saints have been ordained by ‘His’ Will to reveal the power and importance of ‘True Shabd’ and the way to reunite with the Almighty with its help through the *Sahaj marg* of “*Surat Shabd Yog*”.

This shows the perplexing relationship between modernity and religious faith an examines it from historical, sociological, and phenomenological points of view. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and countless others, were conversant with the practice of the Word, though they did not necessarily expound it as a regular science. Most of them tell of Anhad Shabd only, leading up to Und and Brahmand or the subtle and cosmic regions. But perfect saints, irrespective of whether they belonged to one religion or the other, have gone even beyond this and have spoken of Sar Shabd and Sat Shabd as well, and of regions beyond Brahmand (Par-Brahmand, i.e., Sach Khand, Alakh and Agam Deshas).

Hence, it is justified to believe that such sounds exists in higher realms and in order to hear these sounds , one must follow an *Adept*, who is well versed in *Surat Shabd Yog*.

Thus we see that with the unified concept of internal sounds in all world religions, we can aim for a futuristic religion based on awakening of consciousness with the help of internal sounds.

1. *Most Revered Sir Anand Swarup Sahabji in Yathartha Prakasa,pg 45.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Aiyar, K. Narayanasvami (trans.) ‘Nada Bind Upanishad in Rigveda’ 1914* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Sama Veda,20-14-2* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)