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

Submitted by: REENA MATHUR

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.

It is a matter of basic scientific understanding and a universal law of nature that any type of kinetic 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.

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.

***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.c. inward attraction towards its centre, the moment the spiritual sound manifests itself within a devotee, he begins to feel a powerful inward attraction towards the centre of spirit force. The devotees mind and spirit under its influence are drawn together to the centre, having been withdrawn from every other direction, get focused at that centre.***

Most Revered Sir Anand Swarup Sahabi in Yathartha Prakasa, pg 45.

“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 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.**

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 meditational 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.

# 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 ofrain and the running rivulets and the Bheri will be heard intermingled with the sounds of bell and conch"***

***Aiyar, K. Narayanasvami (trans.) Nada Bind Upanishad in Rigveda 1914***

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 ie. nature".***

***Sama Veda,20-14-2***

This shows that the The Prajapati ie. 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 centre, 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" Le. Sabda is a womb or source of creation"***

***Sama Veda,20-14-2***

# 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"***

# 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 Jillani 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 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"***

***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 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 'Omkara,' 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 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 ie., 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 Sun 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 .”***

# Modern Scientific Perspective

The modern holistic approach to human possibilities, views on consciousness, and the emergence of transcendental systems can indeed benefit from inclusivity regarding the higher 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.

***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.***



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, ie., 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.

PRIMARY SOURCES

1 Internet Source

2 Submitted to Dayalbag Educational Institute (Student Paper’s)