

DOCTRINE OF SOUL IN GURBANI

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ABSTRACT

Soul is the primal power, a purposeful force at the core of being an individual person. It guides righteous living by partaking in choices of the mind and performance of deeds by the body. Originating with the creation as part of the Divine self, the Soul sustains the spirit that understands the impersonal nature of the energy dynamics in which human is involved. The Soul is very energetic and powerful force that empowers the life and personality of its attendant. When the energy of Soul is recognized, acknowledged and valued, an individual gains authentic empowerment that allows love without restrictions and acceptance without judgment. Every living organism has a Soul. The thoughts, feelings and consciousness are its attributes. The physical body, mind and Soul are different entities coexisting as a human being. Ever since the awareness of its identity, human has questioned the origin, existence and meaning of the Soul! How does Soul interplay with the mind and body? What happens to Soul after death? Religious, theosophical, academicians and science scholars in every aspect of life are still debating answers to these questions. It is beyond the scope of this author's comprehension to solve this mystery, however, an attempt is made searching Gurbani to find answers to some of these questions.

INTRODUCTION

Soul is the primal power, permeating in every aspect of creation, a purposeful force at the core of being an individual person. It guides righteous living by partaking in the choices of the mind and performance of deeds by the body. Originating with creation as part of the Divine Self it sustains the spirit and understands the impersonal nature of the energy dynamics in which human is involved. The essence of every thought, action and deed is realized by the Soul. It is that aspect of individual's perception, which helps realization of the pleasures and pains of life that are beyond explanation to anybody else (discussed in detail under Existence and meaning of Soul). Every part of creation has a Soul depending upon the species and the living beings.

The soul is not just a passive or a theoretical entity that occupies space in the vicinity of chest cavity. It is a positive purposeful force at the core of creation and being a human. The soul is very energetic and dynamic force. When the energy of soul is recognized, acknowledged and valued, an individual gains authentic empowerment; loves without restrictions and accepts without judgment. The Soul not only empowers life and personality of its attendant, rather it impacts other living beings also that come in contact with that personality.

The development of the soul may be interpreted as the goal of evolutionary process in which human are

involved and the reason for its being. Every experience that one has or will have upon the earth encourages the alignment of one's personality with the Soul. Every circumstance and situation gives the opportunity for Soul to shine through and bring into physical world an unending and unfathomable reverence for and love of life. Guru Arjan says:

ਜੀਉ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਹਰੇ ਸਾਚਾ ਏਹੁ ਸੁਆਉ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 47 [1].

The Soul, breath of life, mind and body shall blossom forth in lush profusion; this is the true purpose of life.

There are several quotations by Guru Arjan and other authors in Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS)[1] that consider conglomerate of physical body, mind and Soul as separate entities yet existing as one physical form.

Ever since the awareness of soul and its relationship with the Almighty, human has questioned the origin of soul. What is the role of soul and its Existence during life? How does it interplay with the mind and body? What happens to soul after death? These questions are still being asked and debated by religious and academic scholars. The answers to solve this mystery are not easily discernable; however an attempt is made in searching Gurbani [1] to comprehend the doctrine of soul as interpreted in Aad Guru Granth Sahib.

The terms applied for 'Soul' in Gurbani.

The words used for 'Soul' in Gurbani are 'JIO' (ਜੀਉ),

(ਜੋਤਿ) 'JOT' and (ਆਤਮਾ) 'ATMAN' with profound application of the term 'JIO'. The word 'Jot' (ਜੋਤਿ) has also been applied in reference to the 'Eternal Light' as the source of life. Most of the discussion about Soul in this paper is oriented around the term 'Jio' (ਜੀਉ) with occasional reference to the term 'Jot' (ਜੋਤਿ).

According to Mahan-Kosh [9], the word 'jio' (ਜੀਉ) is interpreted as an honorable mention or as Soul and Mind: ਜਿਚਰੁ ਵਸਿਆ ਕੰਤੁ ਘਰਿ, ਜੀਉ ਜੀਉ ਸਭਿ ਕਹਾਤ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 50.

As long as the Soul-husband dwells in the body-house, everyone greets you with respect and honor.

At times, the word Jio (ਜੀਉ) has also been used as an adjective for respect or honor, such as 'ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ' means 'Respected Almighty'.

Atman 'ਆਤਮਾ' is the pivotal source through which knowledge, wisdom and consciousness is gained. According to Bhai Kahn Singh [9], Vedantic philosophy describes the 'Jeevatman' as the sum-total of reflection of soul in innocence, foundation of soul in innocence and the innocence itself. There is just One Soul, and just like the rays of sun are reflecting the same sun in different pots of water, so is one soul in different forms in different beings. Further, to signify 'soul' as the primordial reason for all existence, Bhagat Kabir Ji [1] narrated: ਜੀਉ ਏਕੁ ਅਰਿ ਸਗਲ ਸਰੀਰਾ॥

AGGS, Kabir, p 330 [1].

There is only one soul and it pervades all physical forms.

ORIGIN OF SOUL

The human has been yearning for time immemorial to learn and understand the mystery of soul where soul comes from, what is its origin?

With the limited human ability and awareness that results from understanding the means of evolution and developing consciousness, it is unfathomable to appreciate the reality of soul. The sages, prophets and even occasionally ordinary human beings recognize the deepest values of soul hidden in the creation of physical reality. They understand the dynamics of soul sustaining the spirit and motivating human perceptions. With the blessings of Almighty one is led to deeper understanding and perceives meaningfulness, purpose and relation of soul with life. Bhagat Kabir trying to demystify existence of the soul narrated a sabd in Raag Gond, page 871 in Aad Guru Granth Sahib. In that he questioned the existence of Soul's unknown entity that is occupying or associating with the physical body? By negating most other possibilities such as the Soul being not a human, god, celibate, hermit, father, mother or son, king or beggar, does not live or die; Kabir [1] concluded that the

Soul is formed of the same essence as the Almighty. He wrote:

ਇਆ ਮੰਦਰ ਮਹਿ ਕੋਨ ਬਸਾਈ ॥ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਕੋਊ ਪਾਈ ॥੧॥
ਰਹਾਉ॥ ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਇਹੁ ਰਾਮ ਕੀ ਅੰਸੁ॥ ਜਸ ਕਾਗਦ ਪਰ ਮਿਟੈ
ਮੰਸੁ ॥੪॥੨॥੫॥

AGGS, Kabir, p 871.

What is it, which dwells in this temple of the body but whose limits no one can define? Then Kabir answered his question in the last sentence of the same sabd when he narrated: Says Kabir, this (Soul) is formed of the same essence as the Lord. It is like the ink on the paper, which cannot be erased.

Bhagat NamDev [1] in his writings also surmises the origin of soul and admits that it is beyond anybody's comprehension to specifically pinpoint the source of light (soul). He explained further that it only became possible with the blessings of the Almighty and complete acceptance of the universal reality that he could comprehend the mystery. He wrote:

ਜੀਅ ਕੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਕੋਈ॥ ਤੈ ਮੈ ਕੀਆ ਸੁ ਮਾਲੂਮੁ ਹੋਈ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

No one knows the truth where the light of soul comes from? Following total commitment, I learnt to recognize Soul's origin.

ਪ੍ਰਣਵਤਿ ਨਾਮਦੇਉ ਇਹੁ ਜੀਉ ਚਿਤਵੈ ਸੁ ਲਹੈ ॥੧੦॥

Prays Naam Dev, whatever this soul wants, it obtains.

ਅਮਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਸਦ ਆਕੁਲ ਰਹੈ॥੪॥੩॥

Comprehending relationship of Soul with the Creator, one becomes wise and immortal.

AGGS, Nam Dev, p 1351.

Guru Arjan in his Gurbani confirmed the origin of Soul from the Creator and emphasized the truthful nature and existence of Soul during life. He wrote:

ਮਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਆ ਤਨੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ॥ਪੰਚ ਤਤ ਰਚਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਿਆ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 1337.

Having made up His mind, Almighty fashioned the entire Creation and gave it a bodily form. From the five fundamental elements He created the physical form, then Almighty blessed Light (Soul) within it.

ਤੂ ਦਾਤਾ ਜੀਆ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਜੀਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਤੁਹੀ॥੨॥

You are the Great Giver of all the lives; You are the Soul living within all beings.

AGGS, M 1, p 1254.

The creation of Universe took place, when Almighty provided Soul for guidance of evolution to develop human being and other forms of life. Guru Amardas [1] while describing the purpose of sensory organs, body and mind clearly illustrated that Soul as the primal force in the Creation:

ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਕਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਰਚਿਆ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਾਖੀ ਤਾ ਤੂ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ
ਆਇਆ॥੩੩॥

Says Nanak, Almighty laid the foundation of the Universe, then He infused Light (Soul), only then you came into this world.

AGGS, M 3, p 921.

The quotations from the Gurbani mentioned above are clearly providing evidence to the fact that the Soul originates from the Divine Force and permeates in every aspect of creation. Soul, Mind and Body are forming one integral component of the expanding process of Creation.

EXISTENCE AND MEANING OF SOUL

To understand and realize the existence of soul, first one has to admit that the soul exists in every aspect of creation. Secondly one has to understand some basic fundamentals in realizing the existence of anything. Within the body there are faculties such as intelligence, knowledge and sensations in their forms that are potentially the subjects that are knowable and sensible. The person develops knowledge of the things, events or their forms. When the mind is actively aware of something, it is necessarily aware of it along with an image; for images are like sensuous contents except that they contain no physical matter. The mind, based on inferential knowledge and experience, develops its own perceptions. Both mind and soul should be considered as forms and not objects that have been confused with various other components of human body. It follows that the mind is analogous to hand, for as the hand is a tool of tools, so the mind is form of forms, and the sense of sensible things. Since there is nothing outside and separate in existence from sensible spatial magnitude, the objects of thought are in the sensible forms, viz. both the abstract objects and all the states and affections of sensible things. Hence no one can learn or understand anything in the absence of sense.

There are two distinctive peculiarities by reference to which soul is characterized (1) local movement and (2) thinking, discriminating and perceiving. When we think both speculative and practical, it is regarded as to a form of perceiving; for in the one as well as the other the mind discriminates and is cognizant of something, that is. The perception and practical thinking are not identical, for the former is universal in the animal world and the latter is found only in small divisions of it. Further, speculative thinking is also distinct from perceiving and is found in rightness and wrongness—rightness in prudence, knowledge, true opinion and wrongness in their opposites. The perception of the special objects is always free from error, while it is possible to think falsely as well as truly, the thought is found only where there is discourse of reason and sensibility. The soul guides mind for righteous thinking and living.

The survival of physical form appears to be the fundamental criterion of evolution in perpetual processes

of creation. The physical arena is a magnificent learning environment. It is a process of experimentation, which helps understand expansion and contraction, the causes for growing and shriveling, what nourishes the soul and what depletes it, what works and what does not. When activities of life are infused with reverence of soul, they come alive with meaning and purpose. Whereas when reverence is lacking from the life's activities, the result is cruelty, violence, and loneliness. When the thoughts, emotions and actions are aligned with the highest force (soul), one is filled with enthusiasm, purpose and meaningful life. The power of soul makes one fearless, compassionate person loving joyously and intimately engaged in helping and caring for others. This may well be called an experience of soul possessing authentic power. The manifestation of this power above the level of mind is the experience of men and women whose intellectual powers are not equal to the task of explaining it, is evidenced by the fact that mystics themselves differ widely in their explanations. The emotions, feelings and actions displayed by the soul through mind and body are not a potential to be realized in a distant future; it is an ever-present knowledge and phenomenon to be aroused by aspiration, intuitions, and realization by vast majority of blessed people. Guru Nanak confirmed the role of Creator in blessing the living with the soul and protecting His creation:

ਜੀਉ ਪਾਇ ਤਨੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਰਖਿਆ ਬਣਤ ਬਣਾਇ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 138.

Almighty placed the Soul in the body, which He had fashioned and then protects the Creation.

Then Guru Arjan adds:

ਇਕਸ ਕੀ ਮਨਿ ਟੋਕ ਹੈ ਜਿਨਿ ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਦਿਤਾ॥

ਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮਨਹੁ ਨ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਵਸਿ ਕੀਤਾ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 45.

The support of mind is only One (Almighty), who has blessed us with body and Soul. Almighty may never be forgotten from the mind; He controls everything.

ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ॥

ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਸਭੁ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੁ ਹੋਇ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 45.

There is only One Supreme Lord, Almighty, there is none other at all. Soul and body all belong to Him; whatever pleases His Will comes to pass.

In general, the Soul, mind and body are considered separate entities intermingled as one unit forming physical body. Most often Soul and Mind are taken as interchangeable principles affecting their role in physical form. Throughout Gurbani a plethora of sabds narrated by different authors clearly demarcates Soul, Mind and physical body in separate entities. Guru Arjan

very clearly elaborates the blessings of the Almighty for providing living beings with the soul, breath of life, physical body and treasures for sustenance along with senses to enjoy the pleasures of life:

ਜੀਉ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਤਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਦੀਆ ਦੀਨੇ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 706.

Almighty provided the soul, breath of life, body and wealth along with pleasures to enjoy.

ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਜੀਉ ਰਾਸਿ ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੇ ਸਾਹ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਾਚੇ॥

AGGS, M 4, p 169.

My mind, body and Soul are all your capital assets. You, O' Almighty, are the True banker of servant Nanak.

From above referenced quotations it is obvious that the soul, mind and body are all separate components of one unit blessed by the One Almighty. The soul being the powerful force impacts life by guiding human thoughts feelings and actions. To enjoy rightful living and happiness, Mind and soul are necessary to be in alignment. There is subtle difference in understanding the role of soul and Mind impacting the body.

To elaborate the difference between body mind and soul, it may be of help to define these entities separately.

Body

The existing physical form of human is nothing more than a vestment, a possession guided by the Soul and acted upon by the mind. It survives a span of life because of the Soul that is essential to a person's identity. During life, the Soul is the guiding force for mind to develop precepts and concepts that are essential in molding the principles, character and morals of the human to appreciate the opportunity for existence in the cosmos.

Mind

A person's sensory organs perceive external and internal stimuli while the brain records these perceptions, and transforms them into 'inferential knowledge'. Perceptions developed by the human mind can trigger emotional responses, such as pain and pleasure, sadness or happiness, making us conscious of daily life events. From the inferential knowledge and emotional perception, the intuition, introspection and consciousness have emerged. For instance, when a child sees a beautiful flower, his emotional response is to touch it, expecting pleasure. But, when his hand reaches for the flower, and he feels only thorns, his concurrent response is pain. Thus, sensory perceptions and emotional responses coexist and simultaneously create consciousness. Consciousness and sensory perceptions cannot exist independently. Biological triggers activate the sensory organs, creating a response inseparable from the perception. It will be hard for humanity to survive if either of these existed

individually or separately. The role of mind and Soul is further elaborated under the label of 'Interplay of Soul, mind and body' [6]. The Mind, not abiding guidance of the Soul is a wanderer and may be responsible for the chaos in the world as described by Guru Arjan:

ਨਿਮਖ ਮਾਹਿ ਚਾਰਿ ਕੁੰਟ ਫਿਰਿ ਆਵੈ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 277.

Soul

Ultimate realization of the essence of perceived sensations through Mind and Body is enjoyed by the soul. Guiding Mind in the righteous living is function of the soul and that is the source of all thoughts and thought waves. The fundamental component for originating thoughts is the soul, whereas processing various actions by human body are deployed by the 'Mind', an attribute of the brain. Soul is the primal force that guides mind and through it sustains life in its righteous conduct. A truly blessed soul is one that values others more than it values itself and values God's Will and love more than the physical world and what is in it. It is this invisible realm that the origin of our deepest values is found. From the perspective of this invisible realm, the motivation of those who consciously sacrifice their lives for higher purposes makes sense. The power of purposeful Souls like Guru Arjan, Guru Teg Bahadur, Jesus Christ and several others with their compassionate acts are not easily comprehensible and accessible to the Mindful human bodies.

How does soul interplay with Mind and Body?

The Soul being cause and source of living body has vital correlation between the Soul, mind and the physical body by means of which the body is governed and directed. Man is only demonstrably man while he is in the physical body with Soul as the guiding force, mind to think and body to act. As a thinker, it is difficult for man to determine between, Soul as a director of mind and body and or body as the creator of mind and Soul. The whole confusion is brought about, seemingly by the effort of the thinker to identify oneself with an order of being to which he does not belong. But, when we understand the thinker is a man as an onlooker, and the present ruler of the body as a sensitive and passionate Soul, the confusion begins to clear. The human nature can only allow to admit the perceptual facts for anything in existence and most comprehensible with or through the available senses.

For believers that the human is blessed with Soul at the time of birth and its departure from the body at the time of death has been challenged by the belief that the All Provider, All Giver, Sustainer and Destroyer has created the universe with self sufficient mechanism for

survival, sustenance and perpetuation. Most of the confusion arises when one accepts God as an external force micromanaging creation from a distance vs. creation as self-existing Order/Will that has been manifested with the Soul to start with.

The pre-creation status of the Universe has been well emphasized by Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan, as written in the *Maroo Raag*, M 1 on page 1035 and in the *Raag Gauree* M 5 on page 293 of the AGGS, respectively. When transformation of the pre-creation status to the Creation through the process of evolution is considered as an established fact, the confusion begins to clear [7]. The provisions for sustenance, death or destruction and rejuvenation for each species are proceeding in an orderly manner. The existence of universe has been for eons and still with the enhancing knowledge is in the process of constant evolution. Everything known to man has been created with just five basic elements (earth, water, fire, gases and the ethereal substances) and their combinations in different forms. Guru Ram Das stated this fact very emphatically as follows:

ਪੰਚ ਤਤੁ ਕਰਿ ਤੁਧੁ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਸਾਜੀ ਕੋਈ ਛੇਵਾ ਕਰਿਉ ਜੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਵੈ॥

AGGS, M 4, p. 736.

The five basic elements created by the 'Will' of Almighty are responsible for the evolution of this world, and if anyone can create sixth, let him/her.

To understand the proper correlation between Soul, Mind and Body consider the affections of the complex of body and Soul. To assign any affection peculiar to the Soul by itself is indispensable but difficult. In reviewing majority of them, there seems to be no case in which the Soul can act or be acted upon without involving mind and the body; e.g. anger, courage, appetite, and sensations in general. Thinking seems the most probable exception; but if this too requires to be form of imagination or to be impossible without imagination, it too requires a mind and body as a condition of its existence. If there is any way of acting or being acted upon proper to Soul, Soul will be capable of separate existence; if there is none, Soul's separate existence is impossible. It therefore seems that all the affections of the Soul involve mind and body; passion, gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving, and hating, in all these, there is concurrent affection of the mind and body [2]. In the latter case, it will be like having the essence of any sensation enjoyed by the Soul, perceived by the Mind is created through the bodily organs. For example, suddenly coming upon a very attractive scenic view, perception is carried through the eyes to the brain, analyzed and perceived by the Mind for its beauty vs. the ugliness, but the enjoyment or the dejection of the scenic essence is realized only by the Soul. But to express the perception of that essence is beyond the

existing vocabulary of any human being. Bhagat Kabir illustrated this phenomenon very clearly as follows:

ਜਿਉ ਗੁੰਗੇ ਸਾਕਰ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ॥੧॥

AGGS, Kabir. p 327.

Just like a mute who eats sugar candy, smiles in enjoyment and excitement, but cannot express it to anybody.

Guru Amar Das in *Raag Aasaa* (in the AGGS on page 440) has described the role of human during life as a whole with particular reference to the mind and its nature. The total composition of the sabd includes ten stanzas, out of which seven are dedicated to the guidance of mind. Essentially, the sabd is for mind to realize and adore the ruler (Almighty), the Creator of the Soul, Mind and Body.

The first stanza stresses the service to the Almighty to obtain the wealth of Naam. The path of loving devotion is not easy and rare are those who find it through the glance of His grace. The sabd continues to advise mind to abstain from cleverness and falsehood, understand the Lord's Will and be absorbed in His Love to obtain peaceful and a steady mind. The whole sabd is long and the space available in this paper is not enough to include the complete version; only the essence of sabd is mentioned:

ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਬੈਰਾਗੀਆ ਤੂੰ ਬੈਰਾਗੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਸੁ ਦਿਖਾਵਹਿ॥

ਹਰਿ ਸੋਹਿਲਾ ਤਿਨ ਸਦ ਸਦਾ ਜੋ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਹਿ॥

ਕਰਿ ਬੈਰਾਗੁ ਤੂੰ ਛੋਡਿ ਪਾਖੰਡੁ ਸੇ ਸਹੁ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਾਣਏ॥

ਜਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਣਏ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 440.

O my detached mind, unto whom you show your detachment? Those who sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord, live in the joy of the Lord, forever and ever. So become detached, and renounce hypocrisy; your ruler knows everything. The One Lord is pervading the water, the land and the sky; the Gurmukh realizes the command of His Will.

Guru Amar Das in recounting some of the attributes of mind being anger, lust, greed, passion and ego along with the sensations such as touch, smell, sight, hearing and taste; is recommending alignment of Soul, mind and body to the service of Almighty. Because the Luminous Lord recognizes the origin of Soul and mind, Guru Amar Das recommends the human to realize this fact and stabilize his/her mind and Soul through Guru's teachings:

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 440.

O' mind, you are the embodiment of the Divine light-recognize your origin.

The Soul described earlier as part of the Divine Light is essential for the guidance and survival of the mind and

body, helps mind to be bereft of wandering in Maya and ego. The mind listening and following intuitions of the Soul can enjoy living righteously with humility and modesty.

Soul during Life and after Death?

Since the origin of understandable religious beliefs, the mystics, theologians, psychologists and scholars in general have attempted to search this mystery - fate of Soul during life and after death? Transmigration/redemption and or Extinction of Soul are the opposing beliefs delegated by the religious authorities in understanding the fate of Soul after death or during the span of human life.

The general disposition according to Christianity has been to regard the superior consciousness as one into which the human race will eventually evolve, and to look on those who have had intimations of it as forerunners of the rest of mankind. When this theory goes hand in hand with the idea of physical evolution or race-evolution as it sometimes does, and there is element of the immortality of the individual Soul implied in it, it means that succeeding generations of men and women begotten of the present ones will have an increasing number of cosmically conscious persons among them, cosmic consciousness becomes the general and finally the universal condition. Mostly theologians treat the experience as a passing intimation of the after death states, a sort of foretaste of heaven vouchsafed by God to saintly persons during their earth life. The exponents of this theory are in grave difficulties. The chief one arises out of the fact the experience is not confined to the saintly persons but sometimes happens to persons whose lives are to say the least heretical and sometimes markedly irreligious in any sense that would please the orthodox God. Conversely many persons of saintly conduct do not achieve any such foretaste of the hereafter.

The Hindu theory proclaims that the Soul is engaged in a pilgrimage of experience, which requires a long series of lives on this earth, in the course of which it evolves successive powers [3]. Having passed through an arc of descent from spirit to matter and having turned at the mineral on its way back to a vastly enriched spiritual existence, the Soul, has had successively the consciousness of the mineral, the plant and the animal, and is now passing through the mental state of consciousness as man. Beyond the mental state is a state of direct cognition or awakening into reality, which they call *Budhi*. This has been attained by the leaders of mankind and into it all men in due time will enter. Those who have experienced it partially are vanguards on the long path of evolution of the Soul. This is the opinion commonly offered today as Theosophy. In point of fact it is orthodox Brahmanism and is, in its own way, scarcely

less a distortion of Theosophy than is orthodox Christianity.

The fatal defect of Brahmin explanation of the data of cosmic consciousness is identical with the defect of the Christian explanation of the ecstasies of the saints as an advanced knowledge of the hereafter. Both religions assume that those who have a touch of cosmic consciousness are of great mental and spiritual stature. The facts show that they are not. While many who experience the higher vision are, like Jesus, Buddha, and Nanak beings of transcendent spirituality, several of the recorded cases are of very simple, often ignorant and frequently anything but blameless people. The experience is nothing if not sporadic and obeys a law of its own nature.

In Sikhism, the Gurbani, finding no rule for it, attributes the whole thing to the Grace of God. Guru Arjan has made a profound statement about such an experience and recommends his followers to be prepared to receive such a blessing from the Almighty: ਸੁਣਿ ਮੀਤਾ ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਸਭੁ ਤਨੁ ਅਰਪੀਜੈ ਇਉ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਪਾਈਐ॥੩॥

AGGS, M 5, p 612.

Listen, friends: dedicate your Soul, body and your whole being to the Almighty; thus receive the Blessed Vision of His Darshan (Grace).

Bhagat Kabir [1] apparently intrigued by the mystery of Soul had realized its destination and described the relationship of Soul with Almighty and its creation as follows:

ਪਿੰਡਿ ਮੂਐ ਜੀਉ ਕਿਹ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਤਾ ॥ ਸਬਦਿ ਅਤੀਤ ਅਨਾਹਦਿ ਰਾਤਾ ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਤਿਨਹਿ ਪਛਾਨਿਆ॥ ਜਿਉ ਗੁੰਗੇ ਸਾਕਰ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥੧॥

AGGS, Kabir, p 327.

When the body dies, where does the Soul go? It is absorbed into the untouched, un-struck melody of the Word of the Sabd. Only those who realized Almighty can comprehend the mystery of Soul united with cosmic consciousness. Just like a mute who eats sugar candy, smiles in satisfaction and excitement, but cannot express it by speaking.

The ‘Word of Sabd’ mentioned in this quotation, has immense significance as the future of Soul, and needs further elaboration. The word ‘Sabd’ applied in Gurbani has been designated to the status of Guru as explained by Guru Amar Das:

ਸਚੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁਣਾਏ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 364.

The True Word of the Bani is narrated by the Guru’s sabd.

Guru AmarDas has signified the relationship of sabd to the Almighty and the difference it can make if sabd is not there:

ਜੀਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਸਹ ਮੇਲਾਵਾ ਹੋਇ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਜਗਿ ਆਨ੍ਹੇਰੁ ਹੈ ਸਬਦੇ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਹੋਇ॥

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਮੋਨੀ ਪੜਿਪੜਿ ਥਕੇ ਭੇਖ ਥਕੇ ਤਨੁ ਧੋਇ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਦੁਖੀਏ ਚਲੇ ਰੋਇ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 1250.

The Soul within all living beings is Word of the sabd. Through it, we meet our Almighty. Without the Sabd, the world is in the darkness. Through the sabd, it is enlightened. The Pandits, the religious scholars, and the silent sages read and write until they are weary. The religious fanatics are tired of washing their bodies. Without the sabd, no one attains the Almighty; the miserable depart weeping and wailing.

Guru RamDas emphasizes the relationship of ‘Word of Sabd’ (Gurbani) to the Guru and his disciple:

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅਮਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ॥

ਗੁਰੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਪਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ॥੫॥

AGGS, M 4, p 982.

The Word of the Sabd, the Bani is Guru, and the Guru is Bani; Within the Bani, the Ambrosial Nectar is contained. When His humble disciple believes, and acts according to the Word of the Guru’s Bani, then the Guru, in person, emancipates him/her.

These quotations are clearly stating the ability of living Souls to align with the higher consciousness through the ‘Word of Sabd’ i.e. Gurbani. The disciples with total dedication and complete acceptance of Ultimate Reality can realize the benefits of righteous and joyous living while completing their life’s journey on this earth.

The ‘Word of Sabd’ had been revealed to the Sikh Gurus and through them has been narrated into Aad Guru Granth Sahib. Prof Davinder Sigh Chahal [4,5] and Dr Bhai Harbans Lal [8] have discussed Sabd-Guru very eloquently in the scientific Research journal of Understanding Sikhism, published by the Institute of Understanding Sikhism.

Guru Amar Das while preaching to be humble and praising the Almighty, is asking for Lord’s Grace to align his Soul with the True Guru during life by conquering desires and duality. To achieve such a merciful boon, he is recommending, die in the ‘Word of the Sabd’ so that one can live forever and shall never die again:

ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰਹੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੀਵਹੁ ਸਦ ਹੀ ਤਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥

ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਮਨਿ ਮੀਠਾ ਸਬਦੇ ਪਾਵੈ ਕੋਈ॥

ਦਾਤੈ ਦਾਤਿ ਰਖੀ ਹਥਿ ਅਪਣੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਦੇਈ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਤੇ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਦਰਗਹ ਜਾਪਹਿ ਸੋਈ॥੪॥੧੧॥

AGGS, M 3, p 603.

Dying in the Word of Sabd, you shall live forever, and never die again. The ambrosial Nectar of the Naam is ever sweet (soothing) to the mind; but rare are those who obtain the ‘Word of Sabd’. The Great Giver Almighty keeps His Gifts in His control and gives to those with whom He is so pleased. O Nanak, imbued with the Naam, they find peace of mind, and in the court of the Lord, they are exalted.

From the above mentioned quotation, it is obvious that the Great Giver Almighty acts upon the Souls of His devotees. The exalted Souls experience an immeasurable quickened sense of unity with the Almighty and want to unite with the rest of mankind as well. Such experiences have been described in various ways. Sometimes it is flooding of the nature of the subject with great love, whereas at times it presents as a sense of peace resultant on the passing away on the sense of separation. At times it has also been described as an attainment of the center of the wheel where stillness prevails and the stress of earthly life, even of mental life vanishes.

The scientists have problem to comprehend whether the Soul of man can transcend mind under conditions so contradictory as to preclude the idea that the Soul is slowly evolving into the transcendent state. The decision to be made is whether to accept the mystic idea that this is a fantastic gift of personal God or with the occultists who say it is the renewal, brief or enduring power entering supreme consciousness that has been forgotten.

According to Nanakian Philosophy in Aad Guru Granth Sahib, there are factual descriptions about the origin and role of Soul in human life (as discussed above), but the ambiguity about the extinction or transmigration of Soul is not completely cleared. Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus have questioned similarly about what happens to Soul after death? Guru Nanak stated:

ਨਾ ਜੀਉ ਮਰੈ ਨਾ ਭੁਬੈ ਤਰੈ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਕੀਆ ਸੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰੈ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 151.

Soul does not die, it does not drown or swim across. The one who created everything does everything.

ਸੁੰਢੀ ਦੇਹ ਡਰਾਵਣੀ ਜਾ ਜੀਉ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਜਾਇ॥

ਭਾਹਿ ਬਲੰਦੀ ਵਿਝਵੀ ਧੁਠੁ ਨ ਨਿਕਸਿਉ ਕਾਇ॥

ਪੰਚੇ ਰੁੰਨੇ ਦੁਖਿ ਭਰੇ ਬਿਨਸੇ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਇ॥੧॥

AGGS, M 1, p 19.

The empty body is dreadful, when the Soul goes out from within. The fire of life is extinguished and the smoke of breath has ceased. All five senses then cry out that they were beguiled by the duality. 1.

ਖੇਹੂ ਖੇਹ ਰਲਾਈਐ ਤਾ ਜੀਉ ਕੇਹਾ ਹੋਇ॥
ਜਲੀਆ ਸਭਿ ਸਿਆਣਪਾ ਉਠੀ ਚਲਿਆ ਰੋਇ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮਿ ਵਿਸਾਰਿਐ ਦਰਿ ਗਇਆ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਇ॥੪॥੮॥

AGGS, M 1, p 17.

When the body mingles with dust, what happens to the Soul? Then all intelligence and clever tricks are burnt away as well, and Soul shall depart crying. O Nanak, the Soul forgot the Lord and its Naam—now what can Soul expect at the Lord's court. (4)(8)

ਪਿੰਡੁ ਪਵੈ ਜੀਉ ਚਲਸੀ ਜੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਈ॥੨॥

AGGS, M 1, p 418.

The body shall fall, and the Soul shall depart; if only they knew this (2).

The quotations mentioned above from Gurbani, are giving confusing explanations whether the Soul transmigrates or becomes extinct after death. However the facts are pointing to the Soul achieving consciousness above mind is the oneness towards Almighty. The devotees find their way in the Word of Sabd attaining peace in earthly life and of merging in Ultimate reality. The Unity to which the enlightened Souls return is the rest of human race. That may well explain the reason why persons who had a touch of cosmic consciousness show a prevailing impulse for the rest of their lives to make mankind the object of their devotion, to see God in everything and every body.

CONCLUSIONS

- The Soul originating with the creation is the wonderful gift of Almighty to human for guidance, thinking and imagination for its sustenance and procreation. The needed tools for local movement and sensations are energized by the Soul.
- Every living organism has a Soul and compassion, love and wisdom are the attributes. During their life on earth, the development of Soul empowers its attendant to align its personality with the Soul, so as to give the opportunity for Soul to shine through and bring into physical world an unending and unfathomable reverence for love of life.
- The Soul, mind and body are entirely separate entities although combined in the same physical form. The Soul is considered to be the primal force that provides dynamic energy for the breath of life to blossom mind and body.
- With the blessings of Almighty, human is led to deeper understanding and perceives meaning and purpose of Soul and its relationship with mind and body.
- The power of Soul makes one fearless, compassionate person loving joyously and intimately engaged in helping and caring for others.
- The existing physical form of a human is nothing

more than the vestment, a possession guided by the Soul and acted upon by the mind. It survives a span of life because of the Soul that is essential to a person's identity.

- During life the Soul can be merged into the 'Word of Sabd.' The evolutionary process of Soul over a period of multiple generations and redemption as a race are not included in the Nanakian Philosophy. However, truthful and righteous living with reverence to Almighty can help in achieving the blessings for Soul to be aligned with cosmic consciousness during life.

The following sabd of Guru Arjan will help to understand the significance of truthful living and abiding in the 'Word of sabd':

ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਬਚਨੁ ਬਸੈ ਜੀਅ ਨਾਲੇ॥

ਜਲਿ ਨਹੀ ਡੁਬੈ ਤਸਕਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਲੇਵੈ ਭਾਹਿ ਨ ਸਾਕੈ ਜਾਲੇ॥

The Guru's Word abides within my Soul. It is never lost. It does not sink in water; thieves cannot steal it, and fire cannot burn it.

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਬਚਨਿ ਮਿਟਿਆ ਮੇਰਾ ਭਰਮੁ॥

Through the Guru's Word my doubts have been dispelled.

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਬਚਨਿ ਪੇਖਿਓ ਸਭੁ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ॥

Through the Guru's Word, I realize Almighty everywhere.

AGGS, M 5, p 239.

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