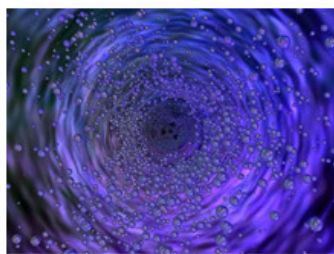


Introduction to Shabda Meditation by Michael Turner



"In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God."
- John 1:11

"Spirit is the golden thread, so fine as to be invisible, yet so strong as to be unbreakable, connecting all beings, in all planes, in all universes, throughout all time – and beyond time – into eternity." – Paul Twitchell

Ever since the late 19th Century when British rule of India began bringing eastern philosophy westward, and especially since the dawn of the modern new age movement in the 1960's, people have been interested in a wide variety of occult, metaphysical and spiritual paths. All of these paths (or areas of interest) are like facets on the diamond of God.

Those engaged in the spiritual quest must ask themselves one essential question: "What is my goal?" Is it gaining knowledge about various subjects, acquiring virtues, powers, health, and abundance? Or is it spiritual freedom, attaining liberation from the endless cycle of death and rebirth, and serving God?

Most philosophies, metaphysical systems and occult theories appeal to the former perspective. There is a vast amount, and variety, of information to be acquired and knowledge gained. It is rather like going to a university with a thousand elective courses, each as attractive as the next. We could spend a lifetime studying, and still not be satiated. This semester that we call "life" would be over, and we would want to enroll for another – just one more class, just one more experience. And so it goes, around, and around, and around.

This desire for experience, for knowledge, for metaphysical prowess -in fact, just plain desire, period – is the underlying root cause of karma and reincarnation. We will explore this in depth at another time. Let us suffice to say for now that if we desire to learn about such psychic arts as astrology, Theosophy, crystal work, aura balancing, healings, psychedelic neurologic, ascended masters, manipulating various cosmic rays, channeling, tarot, palmistry, etc., there is plenty of information available. And we will have all the time in the world to learn it.

However, if we wish to attain spiritual freedom, and be released from the wheel of karma and reincarnation, that is another thing altogether. The quest for spiritual freedom is really a quest for soul-knowledge and God-realization, a quest to know ourselves in our ultimate, core spiritual essence, and to directly experience God of Itself. This may seem like a tall order; but every major spiritual teacher has taught that soul-realization and God-realization are the only goals worth pursuing. Paul Twitchell stated this very clearly when he wrote:

"It is a spiritual law that we must first seek the Kingdom of God, which is God-realization. There is little need to seek His attributes, like love, wisdom and understanding, for they are secondary causes and will be attained provided we have first the enlightenment of Divine Reality . . . It was during His great Sermon on the Mount that (Christ) urged all, Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and all else will be added unto you! Thereafter, He reemphasized the spiritual law of God-realization as the primary goal of one's life in practically every public speech."

This postulate, of itself, raises three basic questions: What is the true nature of the Self? What is God? And how do I attain their respective states of realization?

I. The Nature of The Self

Simply put, our true identity is Soul (also known as Surat, Jiva, Atma or Tuza) an eternal spark of Divine Love in the Body of God. As the 15th Century mystic poet Kabir put so succinctly:

"O Kabir, the soul is a particle of the Lord."

Kirpal Singh, a 20th Century Satguru, reiterated:

"...Soul is a conscious entity, a drop of the Ocean of All consciousness, and in its miniature capacity carries all the divine attributes of Godhood. Since it is environed by mind and matter, it has lost its heritage and forgotten its origin, the True Home of the Father. The Masters come to our help, to awaken us from this long slumber of ignorance. All the past Masters including Christ have been stressing the importance of this inner development of soul."

Soul is a timeless unit of pure awareness. It is not the mental body, or the causal body, the emotional body or the physical body. These are all protective sheaths it wears in order to function and communicate within the harsher vibration levels of duality, psychic energy, space, time and matter. They may be compared to a car used for locomotion, or a deep sea diving suit used to protect the physical body from the pressures of oceanic depths.

An important extension of this principle to understand is that, while we are atoms in the body of God (or drops in the Ocean of All Consciousness), we are also individuals who will continue to exist throughout eternity. There is no point along the path to enlightenment wherein we lose our individual consciousness and merge back into the Universal Mind or Great Void of the Unconscious. We are Souls. We are eternal. And we simply become points of attention in the great wave of Divine Love.

II. The Nature of God

The second question is, "What is God?" The Supreme One has been known by as many names as there are languages. The closest I can come to describing God is: an incomprehensibly vast vortex of pure, conscious, golden Love.

It is neither an old man on a throne in the sky as seen by traditional patriarchal religions, nor the maternal earth goddess favored by wiccan, neo-pagan and some Hindi schools of thought. These, and all other stated attributes, are mere reflections of the One. Neither male nor female, Brahma nor Kali, Jehovah nor Gaia, God nor Goddess, IT is beyond all duality. IT JUST IS! One of the best descriptions of the indescribable – the Supreme One – was written

by Guru Nanak in the late 16th Century. In the prologue to his classic Jap Ji, Nanak declared:

"There is one Reality, the Unmanifest-Manifested
Ever-Existent, He is Naam (Conscious Spirit)
The Creator; pervading all
Without fear, without enmity;
The Timeless, the Unborn and the Self-existent;
Complete within Itself.
Through the favor of His true Servant, the Guru,
He may be realized.
He was when there was nothing;
He was before all ages began;
He existeth now, O Nanak,
and shall exist forevermore."

While it is natural to be interested in the attributes/reflections of God, they of themselves will not lead to God-realization. However, God-realization will lead to the attainment of these attributes, and much, much more. In other words, such skills as telepathy, prophecy, channeling and psychic healing will not bring about enlightenment. However, enlightenment will bring about these capabilities.

III. The Holy Spirit (Shabda)

Having addressed the questions of self and God (or creation and Creator), you may ask yourself: "Well, how do I get there?" The answer is simple: through conscious linkup with the creative essence of God. This essence is known by such names as the Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, Name of God, Word of God, Ruach, Logos, Kalma, Kalam i Ilahi, Shabda, Bani and Naam. It is a singular flow of pure, golden, creative love energy, manifesting Itself as Light and Sound, and is the source and foundation of all that exists.

We can learn from a living spiritual teacher how to harmonize our awareness with the return flow of the Holy Spirit and allow It to gently lift us up above body consciousness and into the pure positive worlds of Soul-knowledge and God-realization. In doing so, we achieve the goal of spiritual freedom ("Jivan Mukti"), are liberated from the bondage of karma and reincarnation, and are free to be creative, loving co-workers with God.

Writing about the Holy Spirit is a challenge for me. When I pick up my pen to describe this wondrous God Force, all words and form drop away as I am immersed in Its glory. The ringing radiance that flows out of the heart of the Supreme One surpasses all. It is almost beyond comprehension.

The simplest way I know how to put it is: GOD IS! Out of Its heart flows an audible Stream of Life and Divine Love which can be heard as Sound and seen as Light. From God, It flows out to the farthest reaches of creation, creating and sustaining all of existence. The great Shabda Meditation Master Sawan Singh expressed this exquisitely when he wrote:

"The Shabd . . . is the quintessence of the Lord and . . . sustains millions of universes and regions. It is the soul-current of consciousness. It is the Celestial Melody. It is the life-current which originates from the Lord and pervades everything. The Lord creates and sustains the entire universe through this great Current of Power. It gives life to the whole of creation and can take every living being back to his Original Home or the Lord. The currents of the Lord pervade everywhere, like radio waves . . . The Shabd is the basis of all true religions, for religion means that which connects us with the Lord."

Kirpal Singh reaffirmed this precept, stating:

"...This Naam or Sat-Naam is, then, the controlling power of the universe. It is the great cementing force whereby various elements, so very divergent in nature, are held together in the wonderful mosaic of the many-coloured dome of the universe. It is the string of life running through the entire creation, and, thus, the connecting link between the Creator and His creation."

And Charan Singh, Sawan Singh's grandson, described the Shabda beautifully when he wrote:

"The Word combines both light and sound. The sound is meant to determine the direction from "which it comes, and the light to enable us to travel toward it. All religions embody these two symbols. In the Hindu temples they use the bell or conch and the lights. In churches, high above the roof, hangs a bell and candles are lit inside. The Muslims put lights on their tombs, and their clergy call from a minaret to awaken people to the remembrance of the Lord. These symbols were meant to serve as reminders to us that both light and sound are to be met within, and it is with their help that the inner path is to be followed and the destination reached."

From the outer reaches of creation, the Holy Spirit returns home to God. We, as embodied souls, can experience God-realization and spiritual freedom here and now with the aid of a living spiritual teacher who can link us through initiation to this stream of Light and Sound, enabling us to be lifted and carried back to our true home in the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. By learning how to let go to and merge with this Life Stream of the Holy Spirit, we can experience the Kingdom of Heaven while still alive in the physical body. This is spiritual freedom, liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth.

What is wonderful about this process is that you can tangibly experience It. As Darshan Singh put it, by using the human body as our laboratory, we can employ meditation to see the inner spiritual Light, hear the inner spiritual Sound, and rise above body consciousness. This form of meditation is sometimes called the "Science of Spirituality" or "Surat Shabd Yoga." I prefer to simply call it "Shabda Meditation." Shabda Meditation offers us a means by which we can confirm for ourselves the reality of this Light & Sound Current (Shabda or Holy Spirit) and the existence of higher levels of awareness, explore higher planes of existence and directly experience God Itself.

As we practice this meditation, we focus our attention within to see and hear various frequencies of spiritual Light and Sound. The Light is seen, with the eyes closed, in the area between the eyebrows. This point of focus is traditionally known as the "third eye" or "single eye," as noted in the Holy Bible, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of Light." The Sound Current is heard with the inner, spiritual ear. These colors and sounds correspond to various frequencies of consciousness. Just as sunlight has different colors when filtered through different layers of atmosphere (rainbows and sunsets are two good examples), so too does the pure Voice of God have different colors and sounds when filtered through the emotional, causal, mental and etheric

states of consciousness.

There are five or more distinct sounds, each coinciding with and activating a particular frequency of consciousness. These are known in the east as the five Holy Names or five Shabds. Students of this path are taught these names at the time of initiation as a means of contacting and transcending their respective states of consciousness.

One of the names already well known in the West is “Om,” which is the creative sound of the Causal Plane. Many people consider Om to be the true Word of God. However, it is simply an offshoot, an attribute of the Master Power of the Holy Spirit. It, and the Causal Plane from which it emanates, is still a product of the worlds of duality. Because the beauty of this realm is vastly more radiant than earth, because time is far more expanded and the wisdom greater, most yogis and mystics who have achieved this state (commonly called cosmic consciousness) believe they have reached the ultimate heaven – and this is what they teach.

But this perspective turns out to be an illusion, another veil of Maya. One is still subject to time, space, karma and reincarnation. Only through the Master Power arising from the nameless (“Anami” region of Divine Love) can this be transcended.

Spiritual teachers have expressed this in a variety of ways. Charan Singh stated:

“What do the saints teach? They tell us to withdraw our body-consciousness to the eye focus and there contact the ever-resounding music of the Word or Logos. This is the Word that can neither be written nor read nor spoken. It is the Word that can be heard without the ears, seen without the eyes, touched without the hands and reached without the feet. It is God’s own voice which is ceaselessly calling us back home. It emanates from the house of the Lord and its harmonies resound in all human beings behind the eyes. When we attach our attention to it, we travel inward and upwards and reach its source.”

And Paul Twitchell also noted:

“To be one with Spirit means you are within Spirit, have knowledge of It, and are able to be possessed by It. This Spirit is what Kirpal Singh calls the Master Power. You never accept this Spirit, or power, but It accepts you. Once you have received It, then you are able to understand that It has taken you over. You are then omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient – all present, all powerful and all knowing. Not that you are, but that Spirit is working through the instrument of the flesh!”

This is what sets Shabda Meditation “union with the Holy Spirit” apart from other systems of yoga, meditation and metaphysics. To rise above the subtle snares of duality and seductive traps of illusion or Maya, we must know how to focus the attention inward and tap into the pure singular essence of the Holy Spirit as It flows from the true God worlds.

This is one reason for having a living, God-realized teacher. Unless the teacher is both a living human being, and has explored the higher reaches of pure Spirit, he or she cannot truly guide us there. While it is possible, as Paul Twitchell once wrote, to explore the inner regions without the benefits of a living guide, a living, God-realized Satguru certainly helps to streamline the process. The role of the living spiritual teacher was well expressed by Kirpal Singh:

“At the time of Initiation, the Master imparts His own life impulse. When we remember Him, He remembers us, with all His heart and soul. He is not the body. He is the Word made flesh. To get the full benefit of the Master Power, the disciple must develop receptivity.”

While much of the ancient science of spirituality must be learned at the feet of a living awakened soul, some things can be told to the casual reader. First and foremost, just as there are spiritually- charged words through which we can tap into the psychic realms (e.g., “Om”), there are also words which harmonize us with the pure, positive spiritual vibration.

Among these is the word “Hu,” a name of God which has been practiced by God-realized mystics and sages since time immemorial. Many Sufis consider It the Holiest of the Holies, the most sacred Name of the Lord. Long a closely held secret, handed down by word of mouth from guru to student, It was brought out into the open in the west in the 20th century by such luminaries as Hazrat Inayat Khan, Julian Johnson and Paul Twitchell.

Little can be said or written of Hu. It must be experienced by the individual. As Harold Klemp put it, one must “Be the Hu.” Pronounced either “hooo” or “hue,” It is best practiced in a quiet place, where you won’t be disturbed, for a half-hour or so. Sit upright, close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and then sing It in one drawn-out sound. Do this a few times, and then sit and pay attention to what you see and hear. Then do it again, mentally, with the tongue of thought. Gradually, you will begin to feel your heart open up and golden, Divine Love pour through, lifting you up into Itself. Hu is both God’s gift to Soul, and Soul’s love song back to God. When you do this spiritual exercise consistently – for at least a half-hour every day, preferably at the same time each day – you will begin to see spiritual Light and hear spiritual Sound. The Light may take the form of a starry sky, which then gathers into blue, golden or white light – like a sun or moon – on the inner screen. The Sound may appear in a variety of forms, such as the ocean, a conch shell, drums, a ringing bell, crickets, bees, violins, a flute, bagpipes, harp, and a spectrum of other sounds.

Sing Hu with an open, loving heart – be still – and pay attention to any light you see, or sound you hear from the middle or right hand side. What you will hear and see, in whatever form It takes, is the ringing radiance of the Holy Spirit lifting you above physical, emotional and mental consciousness, the Voice of God calling you back to your True Eternal Home.

Source: <http://www.livingcosmos.org/2010/01/aum-om-compared-to-hu/>

[Partner in Dreams Awake Universe](#)