At first a strong feeling originates in our mind. The intellect scrutinizes and gives it the form of a ‘thought’. Then when we wish to express this thought, we express it either through speech or writing. This means that our strong feelings or thoughts are indeed the real substance. Our language and ‘words’ and ‘alphabet’ are means of expressing these thoughts. All this performance or activity is the creation of the immanent Lord’s world and is the ‘play’ of trigun (the three attributes – rajo, sato, tamo).

Above this, the ‘play’ of the spiritual world is different.

The Supreme Lord’s form is ‘Spiritual-Light’ which is illuminated and activated through ‘shabad’ or ‘Naam’.

When, in the pitch of darkness of materialism, the shine or reflection of this spiritual light falls on our spiritually intoxicated mind, then this is said to be ‘anbhau’ or spiritual perception, sensation or insight.

According to Gurbani, experiencing the glitters of ‘spiritual-illumination’ is indeed said to be discovery research discernment recognition deliberation earning or cultivation of the ‘Shabad’, and not the understanding of it with the intellect.

Through conscious meditation, I linked my consciousness with the Immaculate Lord. Says Kabeer, then I obtained the Fearless Lord. 328

L58/1

SHABAD Part 1

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The disturbed mind has been absorbed in the Lord; duality and evil-mindedness have run away. Says Kabeer, I have seen the One Lord, the Fearless One; I am attuned to the Name of the Lord.

You shall attain the Gate of Liberation while yet alive. You shall come to know the Shabad, the Word of the Fearless Lord, and the essence of your own inner being.

They read and reflect upon all the Names of God; they listen, but they do not see the Lord, the embodiment of love and intuition. How can iron be transformed into gold, unless it touches the Philosopher's Stone?

I have quit searching outside; the Guru has shown me that God is within the home of my own heart. I have seen God, fearless, of wondrous beauty; my mind shall never leave Him to go anywhere else.

Inspired by the teachings of the Guru, gurmukh attains the state of spiritual perception.

Merging consciousness in the Word, the treasure of spiritual insight will fashion the un fashioned (mind).

Gurbani has been recited from the ‘intuition’ of spiritual illumination. For this reason it is beyond the scrutiny, understanding and grasp of our limited intellect. That is why we are ignorant of the deep, hidden spiritual meanings, secrets and implications of Gurbani and are incapable of enjoying the taste of the hidden underlying meanings and secrets of the depths of Gurbani. We remain satisfied having deliberated on the literal and the idiomatic meanings of Gurbani according to our own intellect.

The words ‘Shabad’ and ‘Naam’ have been mentioned in Gurbani innumerable times and just like other words, we explain and listen to the meaning of ‘Shabad’ with our intellect as a result of which there are doubt fallacies in the minds of the truth seekers about the world ‘Shabad’. Gurbani has confirmed this thus:-

They do not contemplate the Shabad; engrossed in corruption, they utter only empty words.

When someone understands the Shabad, then he wrestles with his own mind; subduing his desires, he merges with the Lord.

Those who understand the Word of the Guru’s Shabad are very rare.

Those who subdue their egotism, come to know the three worlds.

They read about the three qualities, but they do not know the essential reality of the Lord. They forget the Primal Lord, the Source of all, and they do not recognize the Word of the Guru’s Shabad.
One who is attached to Maya is totally blind and deaf.
He does not listen to the Word of the Shabad; he makes a great uproar and tumult. 313

He teaches, but does not practice what he preaches; he does not realize the essential reality of the Word of the Shabad. 380

You have not remembered the One Word of the Shabad, and so you shall have to enter the womb over and over again. 434

Those who do not know the Shabad are blind and deaf; why did they even bother to come into the world? 601

The fool does not think of the Word of the Shabad. He has no understanding, no comprehension. 938

As long as the mortal does not come to understand the mystery of the Shabad, the Word of God, he shall continue to be tormented by death. 1126

The mortal tries all sorts of things, and weeps and wails, but without the Guru, he does not know the Naam, the Name of the Lord. 1275

In this article (lekh) effort is being made to discuss the word ‘Shabad’ in the ‘intuitional light of Gurbani:-

Many adjectives have been used in Gurbani with the word ‘Shabad’ such as –
gur shabad
true shabad
unstruck shabad
one shabad
essence shabad
perfect shabad
boatman shabad
fearless shabad
Lord Shabad
invisible shabad
strong shabad
good shabad
jewel shabad
sustainer shabad
cool shabad
limitless shabad
provider shabad
To hear deliberative recognize discover discern cultivate enjoy

the intuitional meanings of the word ‘Shabad’ and the adjectives used, it is necessary to have ‘anbhau’ or intuitional awareness.

But generally our understanding is (limited) to hearing comprehending explaining discussing

the literal meaning of the ‘essence shabad’ with our limited intellect.

But in reality there is the hidden meaning of the ‘essence shabad’ which can be known discovered unraveled

ship shabad manifest shabad prodding shabad eternal shabad sweet shabad
great essence shabad curative shabad etc.
researched
recognised
deliberated
cultivated
assimilated
meditated
enjoyed

only through ‘anbhau’ (or intuition).

Until the intuitional illumination takes place in our innermost consciousness, we, while passing through this world, have to follow the literal form of Gurbani’s ‘Gur-Shabad’. It is not only necessary to understand and to make others understand the meaning of Gurbani’s recitation, kirtan and discussions, but it is a must for the spiritual path.

Satsangat (the company of spiritually elevated souls) and simran (or meditation) are the means which take us to the intuitional country or spiritual realm.

It is important for us to have the correct knowledge of the activities of these two ‘mental’ and ‘spiritual’ realms. Only then can we mould our ‘spiritual lives’ according to this knowledge.

Many people in the Sikh world are content to understand that mental and physical efforts are indeed the religious ‘destination’.

In actual fact physical and mental and physical efforts are:

- are endeavours - not the result!
- are means - not fulfillment!
- are ladders - not the peak!
- are classes - not the degree!
- is knowledge - not achievement!
- is the journey - not the destination!
- is the flower - not he fragrance!
- is the fruit - not he taste!
Our ‘destination’ is to reach the original ‘Divine Realm’ through intuitional-illumination and to be absorbed in the Lord Waheguru.

Various aspects of ‘Shabad’ have been mentioned in Gurbani, such as ‘Shabad’—

- is Guru
- is illumination
- is wholly permeating
- is pure
- is Naam
- is spiritual taste
- is spiritual colour
- bani (scripture) from the Lord Himself
- is light
- is essence
- is perfect
- is fearless
- is eternal
- is pure mystic sound
- is provider
- is true Guru’s teaching
- is substance of love
- is flavorfull
- is precious jewel
- is food
- is the seal
- is the soul
- is the boatman
- is the ship
- is blessing
always accomplishes
is the focusing within
is inexhaustible wealth
is the treasure of devotion
is (holy) lotus-feet

Before creating the universe, the ‘Formless One’ (Waheguru) for ages remained absorbed in himself in perfect ecstatic mental tranquility. The visible and invisible world was in existence. This wonderful and unique form of ‘Nirangkaar’ is described in Gurbani thus:-

1. *We can only express a sense of wonder about the beginning. The absolute abided endlessly deep within Himself then.*

2. *For endless eons, there was only utter darkness. There was no earth or sky; there was only the infinite Command of His Hukam. There was no day or night, no moon or sun; God sat in primal, profound Samaadhi.*

3. *For so many days, You remained invisible. For so many days, You were absorbed in silent absorption. For so many days, there was only pitch darkness, and then the Creator revealed Himself.*

Beyond the mind, mental faculties, intellect, word, beauty, shape and primal sound, the ‘essence – form shabad’ was already residing in the perfect mental tranquility of the Formless Creator.

4. *When there was no form or shape or social class, then the Shabad, in its essence, resided in the unmanifest Lord.*

In ‘Sidh Gost’ (a composition in Guru Granth Sahib), the Sidhs (ascetics) asked many questions regarding the ‘Word-Guru Religion’ of Guru Nanak Sahib Ji. Some of these questions are briefly mentioned here:-

1. What is the source of this ‘religion’?
2. When did this ‘religion’ begin?
3. Who is your ‘Guru’?
4. How does one become a disciple?
5. "What is the root, the source of all? What teachings hold for these times? Who is your guru? Whose disciple are you?*
Guru Nanak Sahib Ji answered these questions as follows:

1. The name of the ‘religion’ is ‘True Guru’s Religion’ meaning that the source or director of this religion is indeed the Timeless Being Himself.

2. From the time air was made or from the beginning of this creation, this ‘teaching’ has been in vogue. Therefore Guru Nanak Sahib Ji’s ‘Word-Guru Faith’ is just not 500 years old, because this ‘Shabad’ (or Word), has been experienced in every age, in the form of ‘Bani’ (or scripture) by Guru Nanak Sahib and various other avatars, saints, devotees and great souls. Guru Nanak Sahib, reviving this vanishing ‘Shabad-Guru Faith’ through the ten Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib Ji, has made it prevalent again, has highly praised it and gave its significance.

3. From the True Lord came the air, and from the air came water. From water, He created the three worlds; in each and every heart He has infused His Light.

4. Air, water, fire and earth were put together. The fifth element ether was kept between and creator God, the sixth one, invisibly permeated among all. BG 1/2

5. From the air came the beginning. This is the age of the True Guru’s Teachings. The Shabad is the Guru, and my consciousness the chaylaa, (or disciple).

6. The whole universe has originated from the above-mentioned ‘Shabad’ and it is in the ‘Shabad’ that it gets absorbed and it is from the ‘Shabad’ that it comes into being again.

7. Creation and destruction happen through the Word of the Shabad. Through the Shabad, creation happens again.

8. The next question by the Sidhs was, ‘where does the ‘Shabad’ stay’?

Then Guru Nanak Sahib Ji replied that the ‘Shabad’ inhabits deep in our innermost consciousness and is interwoven and intertwined in the outward creation and is active everywhere.
The created universe is the manifestation of Your Name. Without Your Name, there is no place at all.

The One who pervades the Universe also dwells in the body; whoever seeks Him, finds Him there.

This Shabad permeates the nucleus of the self, deep within, in its own home; the Light of this Shabad pervades the three worlds.

That Shabad dwells deep within the nucleus of all beings. God is invisible; wherever I look, there I see Him.

From the above examples of Gurbani, it is automatically clear that the Supreme Being through the ‘Shabad’, ‘Naam’, and ‘light’ form is wholly permeating in us and in the whole universe.

Scientists have broken matter into fine particles and have proved that dead matter is made of minute nuclear particles – invisible, very subtle –

1. Protons
2. Neutrons
3. Electrons etc.

Of these, the protons and neutrons remain still in the nucleus of the atom, but the electrons at the speed of light vibrate and oscillate around the nucleus. It is through the movement of these electrons that all the things and electric-current of this world have come into existence. This means that the subtle, invisible vibration of electrons is indeed the source of solid and visible power of matter and electric-current.

Exactly in the same manner everything on this earth is subject to gravitational-pull, the atoms of all the things obey the laws of this pull. Such a pull in all atoms is not only in force on this earth, but is permeating and active in the whole universe.

The ‘gravitational pull’ like the ‘magnetic pull’ is working according to an automatic or blind principle. Such natural principles can be differentiated from the divine principles because they are automatic or unconscious.
From the two examples above it is clear that ‘power’ is working in ‘dead or inanimate matter’. But this ‘power’ and its principles are not ‘conscious’ because they are without intelligence and emotion. The controller of these external visible worldly elements and their unconscious or automatic principles is another Primal Element which is ‘Truth-conscience-bliss’ form. This living-wakeful Divine Life Current pervades the whole creation in the form of ‘unstruck sound’. Subordinate to Divine ‘command’, this Divine Life Current is active and wholly permeating in the natural principles of all creation.

According to Gurbani, the appearance and activity of these hidden, subtle, primal elements of:

- primal element
- life-current
- unstruck sound
- celestial melody
- wisdom power
- Bani
- Naam
- Hukam (or command)

is said to be the Shabad.

This wordless WORD is the Divine Current—

permeating
running through
vibrating
projecting
guiding
governing
animating
every particle of the cosmos.

Here it is necessary to understand something else. Scientists have
broken the visible matter into very small particles and have discovered its ‘subtle-element’ form which is ‘unconscious power’.

But saints, turning their attention inwards and controlling their invisible scattered inclinations, have through meditation (done) with love filled devotion, experienced in themselves the ‘conscious-light’ and the ‘supreme-essence’ like ‘Shabad’ or the ‘unstruck-melody’.

When the mind hears the ‘unstruck-melody’, it enjoys the astonishing-amazing taste and getting into spiritual swing of ‘wondrous-wonder’, this feeling is expressed through some language, which is said to be ‘Bani’.

When the expression of the Divine ‘Unstruck Melody’ occurred from the holy mouth of Guru Sahib Ji, then it was said to be Gurbani. Thus when the saints or devotees of the four ages utter some ‘word’ from the depths of their minds, then it is aid to be ‘sant bani’ or ‘devotee bani’. This ‘unstruck-melody’ or ‘sound’ is always echoing consistently in the spiritual depths of our body in a hidden manner and it is said to be ‘Shabad’.

1 The Ambrosial Word of the Guru’s Bani emanates from the Word of the Shabad. The Gurmukh speaks it and hears it.

2 The Lord is ever-present, permeating and pervading all places; the Name of the Infinite Lord is enshrined within the heart. Throughout the ages, through the Word of His Bani, His Shabad is realized, and the Name becomes so sweet and beloved to the mind.

It is important to understand properly that the

beginning

essence

form

experience

of this ‘Shabad’ is like its ‘source’ the Lord God (who is) beyond

appearance

colour

line

circle

mark

L58/11
mind
time
voice
country.

In Gurbani the ‘unstruck’, ‘subtle’ intuitional existence of ‘Shabad’ has been mentioned thus:-

1. Through these fifty-two letters, the three worlds and all things are described. These letters shall perish; they cannot describe the Imperishable Lord. ||1||
Wherever there is speech, there are letters.
Where there is no speech, there, the mind rests on nothing.
He is in both speech and silence.
No one can know Him as He is.

2. Rise early each morning, and with the Saints, sing the melodious harmony, the unstruck sound current of the Shabad.

3. He enshrines the unlimited, absolute Shabad deep within.
Chanting the Shabad, he is liberated, and saves others as well.

4. The Creator has staged His Wondrous Play.
I listen to the Unstruck Sound-current of the Shabad, and the Bani of His Word.

5. The Guru’s word he receives is Waheguru, the wondrous Lord, and remains silently immersed in delight

6. He gracefully makes the unstruck melody enter into the unchiselled mind and refines it.

From the above discussion it is clear that –

1. ‘Shabad in visible materialistic world is expressed in word-form and language.

7. From the Word, comes the Naam; from the Word, comes Your Praise. From the Word, comes spiritual wisdom, singing the Songs of Your Glory.
1. ‘Shabad’, शब्द-अन्वेषन अधूरा दृष्टि है।

2. ‘Shabad’ is not entirely word-form.

3. In the invisible spiritual sphere, ‘Shabad’ which is ‘subtle’ and imperceptible is beyond the ‘grasp’ of our mind and intellect.

4. The Divine ‘Shabad’ can be –
   understood
declared
discerned
recognized
discussed
earned
reached
cultivated
contemplated

5. ‘Shabad’ is indeed the –
   expression
   emblem
   illumination
   proof
   symbol

6. ‘Shabad’ and ‘Naam’ are the two aspects of spiritual illumination.

   ‘Shabad’ – is the illumination and signifier of Divine ‘existence’
   ‘Naam’ – is the dynamic activation of this illumination.

Both ‘Shabad’ and ‘Naam’ are signifiers and expressions of the one ‘spiritual illumination’.

1. Through the Word of the Shabad, the Name wells up; through the Shabad, we are united in the Lord’s Union.

2. I have come to know the unstruck sound current and the Word of the Guru’s Shabad; I enjoy the sublime essence of the Lord, the Lord’s Name.
1. Through the Word of the Guru's Shabad, he chants the Name of the Lord. 1056

2. The Word of the Guru's Bani prevails throughout the world; through this Bani, the Lord's Name is obtained. 1066

It has been mentioned earlier that ‘essence Shabad’ like its ‘source’, Lord God is very abstract and formless. ‘Consciousness’ also like the ‘essence Shabad’ is abstract and formless.

Abstract ‘substance’ can only be grasped or discovered through abstract means.

Therefore it is the abstract consciousness that can ‘experience’ the essence Shabad because the abstract consciousness has the ability to enjoy

Divine fear
Divine wonder
Divine love
‘unstruct sound
‘Naam-melody’

through ‘anbhu’ (or intuition) and crossing the boundaries of trigun materialistic

country
wisdom
vices

it can get absorbed in the ‘essence-Shabad’. This gift of ‘abstract consciousness’ has only been bestowed upon man among from among the 8.4 million life-forms.

3. Gracefully He bestowed hands and feet, ears and consciousness for listening to the Word and eye for beholding goodness. V BG 18/3

Here it is important to understand that this ‘essence-Shabad’ is beyond the grasp of our ‘dross’ mind, memory, intellect which are absorbed in materialism.

From this discussion it is clear that –

‘Essence-Shabad’ – is the Guru and
‘consciousness’ - i is the disciple

Just as ‘Shabad’ is a bridge between this ‘world’ and the ‘formless one’, so in the same way ‘consciousness’ is a translator between the abstract ‘essence-Shabad’ and the ‘visible-Word-Shabad’.

In other words, the ‘consciousness’ can explain the abstract Divine experiences.
of the innermost consciousness in words and experiencing the abstract Divine Virtue described in words in the innermost consciousness is capable of enjoying ‘Spiritual taste’.

It is the ‘consciousness’ which experiencing the ‘essence-Shabad’ like bridge between God and this world, that takes man across the materialistic ocean of fear. This ‘abstract-play’ became clearer from the under mentioned examples:-

1 He is seen, heard and known, but His subtle essence is not obtained. How can the lame, armless and blind person run to embrace the Lord? Let the Fear of God be your feet, and let His Love be your hands; let His Understanding be your eyes.

Says Nanak, in this way, O wise soul—bride, you shall be united with your Husband Lord.

2 The lotus flower floats untouched upon the surface of the water, and the duck swims through the stream; with one’s consciousness focused on the Word of the Shabad, one crosses over the terrifying world-ocean. O Nanak, chant the Naam, the Name of the Lord.

3 My mind is the bull, and meditation is the road; I have filled my packs with spiritual wisdom, and loaded them on the bull.

4 Taking consciousness into the depth of Word he has shaped the unchiselled mind.

But this inward ‘abstract play’ can only be discovered or known through sadhsangat (the company of the spiritually elevated ones) and Guru’s Grace. This point has been explicitly explained by Bhai Gurdas Ji in his ‘Vars’ or verses:

5 He enters into the immersion of word-consciousness through the Guru and the holy congregation

6 Reaching the holy congregation the consciousness of a gurmukh gets absorbed in the Word of the Guru.

7 One cultivates the word of the Guru in the company of saints

8 In the congregation of the holy persons resides the Guru-Word.

9 In the holy congregation, only the word of the Guru, is loved

10 In the holy congregation the Word of the Guru is churned

11 Attuning the consciousness with the Word, the gurmukhs or guru-orientated ones alertly move with firm feet on the path of the Guru.
and desires in the truth seeker and stops him from moving towards low desires every moment. The internal Divine voice of the conscience is extremely helpful in ‘carving’ the

mystical awareness
understanding
mind
intellect
character

of the truth seeker.

The intuitive consciousness, intellect and understanding of the mind are shaped there. The consciousness of the spiritual warriors and the Siddhas, the beings of spiritual perfection, are shaped there.

It is clear from this discussion that the voice of the ‘ethical sense’ or ‘soul’, has deep connections with the meeting of ‘word-consciousness’, and are interwoven with one another. This voice of the ‘ethical sense’ can also be heard in the innermost consciousness through the mystical awareness.

With the union of ‘Word-consciousness’, all the spiritual virtues of the Divine sphere enter and become active in man’s mind, body, memory, intellect and he becomes he becomes a ‘fortunate being’ and a ‘gurmukh’.