

The Concept of Soul in Brahmakumaris

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Abstract

Human soul is a metaphysical entity, a conscient, infinitesimal small point of light that resides in this body. It has been interpreted differently in various philosophical and religious traditions. We are presenting Brahmakumaris popularly known as B k's views about the soul. According to B k's soul is a sparkling tiny point of light that is thoughtless, changeless, timeless, egoless and eternal. The soul has inherent qualities of peace, purity, happiness, love, knowledge, bliss and power. This self also known as atman is a spiritual being on a journey to the planet earth to have human experience. The soul has a natural and eternal relationship with God. The knowledge and awareness of the true nature of our own self is imperative, as lack of this awareness is the root cause of suffering, conflicts and war within the minds that manifest in the form of external conflicts among individuals, families, societies and nations at large.

Key words: timeless, egoless, eternal, changeless, bodyless, thoughtless

The idea that the soul "operates" the human body is a universal concept experienced by all of us in our daily lives. In order to understand the relationship between the soul and the physical body, we have to delve deeper in understanding both the soul and human body. All human knowledge is mostly concentrated on understanding the physical body that is visible to the naked eye with a little emphasis on metaphysical element that runs this body. Lack of this spiritual knowledge is the reason for conflicts between nations and religions. Brahmakumaris are known for their efforts towards world peace and has been honored with peace messenger award for seven times by the United Nations. They have been propagating the idea of one world, one family for the last 87 years. In order to understand their idea of oneness that is central to establishing peace and harmony in the world, we have to understand the concept of Soul as propagated by prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya that has branches in 140 countries of the world. According to BK (Brahmakumaris) the soul is a distinct, non-physical entity that interacts with and controls the physical body. According to this view, the soul is the source of consciousness and self-awareness, and it exercises conscious control over the body's actions, thoughts, emotions, intentions and behavior. It is believed to be the core of a person's being and the driving force behind their actions. Body is seen as a vessel or vehicle through which the soul interacts with the physical world. The soul is the animating force that gives life to the body. There is a fundamental distinction between the non-physical soul and the physical body. The soul continues to exist after the death of the body and carries with it impressions or resolves of past experiences. It's important to note that the soul and the body are interconnected and interdependent. However, soul has existence without body but body has no living existence without soul. Infact as the soul enters the planet Earth from its divine abode paramdham, also known as Brahamlok, it needs a space suit to function and to have human experience. God provides the soul this beautiful chariot in the form of human body with five senses mythological depicted as five horses. The word "I" is used for the soul which is the owner and word "my" is used for the body. The SOUL is the source of universal light that illuminates this physical world. All tangible and intangible that is visible around is due to the presence of soul the being. "I" the being is an illuminating dimensionless, image less, immaterial, changeless, bodyless, thoughtless, story less, timeless, egoless, eternal, powerful, non dual, still point of light. let's see in detail the qualities of this being.

Timeless

Soul is a timeless being. It suggests that the soul, which is an eternal, unchanging essence of an individual, exists outside of the constraints of time. In this view, the soul is not bound by birth or death and is considered to have a continuous existence beyond the physical body. The body of evidence about after life also corroborate this view that the soul persists after the body's demise. It implies that the soul's existence is not limited to a specific time frame and may transcend the temporal constraints of our physical world.

Changeless

It implies that the essence of an individual's soul remains constant and unchanging, regardless of the changes that occur in their physical body or external circumstances. Soul is eternal and, by its nature, transcends time and space. It is not subject to the same transformations and limitations as the physical world. The soul does not cease to exist after the death of the physical body but continues to exist in an unaltered state. Soul has consistency of identity and remains the same throughout our life. This means that the fundamental aspects of a person's character and consciousness are unaffected by the passage of time or life's experiences. The changeless soul reincarnate that means it undergo a cycle of rebirth, where it retains its fundamental qualities and learns from past experiences while inhabiting various bodies. While the soul is considered changeless in its core essence, it may still evolve in terms of its moral and spiritual development. In this view, the soul's journey is one of self-realization and self-improvement, and it can learn and grow in wisdom and virtue. This concept is also found in various religious and philosophical traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism and some forms of Christianity.

Immaterial

The soul is not composed of physical matter, and therefore, it is distinct from the physical body. The belief in the immaterial soul posits that the soul's essence is not made up of physical substance. It is often described as a non-physical, spiritual, or metaphysical entity that exists independently of the body. Dualism suggests that the soul is a separate, immaterial entity that interacts with the physical body but is not bound by its limitations. The soul transcends the material world and is not subject to the laws of physics or biology. It is seen as eternal and not bound by the constraints of time and space. The immaterial soul is often associated with consciousness and self-awareness. It is believed to be the source of a person's thoughts, emotions, and awareness, and it is not dependent on the functioning of the brain. Eastern philosophies like Advaita Vedanta also accept the existence of an undivided, formless consciousness as the true self. It shapes views on the nature of human existence, the afterlife, and the relationship between the physical and spiritual dimensions of reality.

Storyless

The idea that the soul is "storyless" suggests that the core essence of an individual's soul exists beyond personal narratives or life experiences. In other words, it implies that the soul's true nature is not shaped by the stories or experiences of one's life. The belief in a "storyless" soul implies that the soul is not defined by the events, experiences, or narratives of a person's life. It is considered to be an eternal and unchanging essence that is unaffected by the ups and downs of one's earthly journey. The true self is not tied to external circumstances or life events. Instead, it is a fundamental and unchanging aspect of a person's being. Belief in a storyless soul can be associated with the idea of spiritual and existential freedom. It suggests that individuals can detach from their life stories and find a deeper, unchanging sense of self that is not limited by past actions or experiences. It has moral and ethical implications also. This concept may also influence notions of morality and forgiveness. If the soul is considered "storyless," it might be viewed as inherently pure and free from the weight of past actions, allowing for the possibility of personal growth and transformation. The notion of a storyless soul can be integrated into a variety of religious and philosophical perspectives, including certain forms of Buddhism and existentialism, which emphasize transcending personal narratives to discover one's authentic self. The concept of "Drama" in Brahmakumaris adequately explains the story less nature of soul. The human soul takes a minimum of one birth and a maximum of 84 births. It is as an actor playing role in 84 movies. The story of each birth is different, yet the soul that plays this part is a storyless having no story of its own.

Egoless

The concept that the soul is "egoless" implies that the true nature of the soul is devoid of ego, which is often associated with the sense of individual identity, self-importance, and attachment to worldly desires and possessions. The belief in an egoless soul suggests that the soul is not driven by the ego's desires, attachments, and self-centered motivations. It is considered to be a pure and unadulterated essence that exists beyond the ego. An egoless soul is believed to transcend self-centered thinking and behaviors. This can lead to a sense of selflessness, compassion and unity with others and the world at large. The ego is often associated with illusions, such as the illusion of separateness and the attachment to transient worldly pleasures. An egoless soul is seen as free from these illusions, leading to a deeper understanding of the self. Many spiritual practices and traditions encourage individuals to diminish their ego in order to uncover the true nature of the soul. This process is often linked to personal growth, self-realization and spiritual enlightenment. The absence of ego is believed to foster qualities like compassion and altruism, as individuals become less concerned with their personal desires and more focused on the well-being of others. In Buddhism, the concept of "anatta" or "anatman" emphasizes the absence of a permanent, unchanging self, which is in line with the idea of an egoless soul. The belief in an egoless soul is a central theme in many spiritual practices, such as meditation, mindfulness, and yoga, which aim to quiet the egoic mind and connect with a deeper, more authentic aspect of the self. It is often seen as a path to inner peace, enlightenment and a more profound understanding of the nature of consciousness.

Soul is an illuminating Star

The concept that the soul is an "illuminating star" is another metaphorical and symbolic representation of the soul's nature. This metaphor uses the imagery of a star to convey various aspects of the soul. A star is known for its radiant and brilliant light. Similarly, when the soul is likened to an illuminating star, it suggests that the soul possesses an inherent luminosity and brilliance, symbolizing its divine or transcendent nature. Just as stars have been used throughout history as navigational guides, the soul as an illuminating star can be seen as a guiding light in a person's spiritual journey, providing direction and a sense of purpose. Stars in the night sky can represent the vastness and infinity of the universe. In this context, the soul is associated with a connection to the infinite or the cosmos, emphasizing its boundless and timeless nature. The idea of an illuminating star also signifies the soul's ability to transcend darkness, ignorance, and worldly attachments, leading to spiritual awakening and enlightenment. Stars, while unique, are a universal and shared part of the human experience. The concept of the soul as an illuminating star underscore both its individual significance and its interconnectedness with the broader cosmos and other souls. The imagery of the soul as an illuminating star can be linked to mystical experiences where individuals report encountering a radiant, inner light during deep states of meditation, contemplation, or transcendence. This metaphor is found in various religious and spiritual traditions, where it is used to inspire a sense of inner divinity, illumination, and spiritual awakening. It's a symbolic and poetic way of describing the soul's nature, highlighting its divine or transcendent qualities.

Thoughtless

The concept that the soul is "thoughtless" suggests that the true essence of the soul is beyond the realm of thinking and mental processes. When the soul is described as thoughtless, it implies that it exists beyond the activity of thoughts, cognitions, and intellectual processes. It is not constrained by the limitations of conceptual thinking. The thoughtless soul is often associated with a state of inner silence or stillness. It signifies a mind that is free from the continuous stream of thoughts and mental chatter. The absence of thought in the soul can be seen as a state of pure awareness or consciousness. It represents a direct, unmediated experience of the self that is not shaped by mental constructs or the ego. The thoughtless soul is believed to transcend the ego, which is often associated with self-centered thoughts and desires. In this state, one's sense of self is not limited by ego-driven thinking. The concept of a thoughtless soul is often linked to experiences in deep meditation, where individuals report entering a state of pure awareness, beyond the confines of thought. Such experiences can be associated with spiritual awakening and inner transformation. The thoughtless soul is considered to be beyond verbal or intellectual expression. It is often described as an experience that cannot be adequately articulated through words or language. This idea is particularly prevalent in certain spiritual practices and meditative traditions, where the goal is to quiet the mind, transcend thoughts, and access a deeper, more profound aspect of the self. It emphasizes

direct, non-conceptual experiences of the soul's true nature and the potential for inner peace and self-realization beyond the realm of thinking.

Soul is bodyless

The concept that the soul is "bodyless" suggests that the true nature of the soul is independent of the physical body. It implies that the soul is not bound by the constraints of the physical world and exists separately from the body. The belief in a bodyless soul asserts that the soul is a non-physical, metaphysical entity. It is not composed of matter and is not subject to the same limitations as the physical body. This concept often goes hand in hand with the belief in the immortality of the soul, suggesting that the soul continues to exist beyond the death of the physical body. The bodyless soul is thought to transcend the physical world, including the boundaries of time, space, and the laws of the physical universe. It is often believed that the soul is the seat of consciousness and self-awareness, and it remains unaffected by the changes and decay of the physical body. The idea of a bodyless soul can hold significant moral and spiritual implications. It underscores the idea that individuals should focus on the development and purification of their inner, non-physical essence. The concept of a bodyless soul is present in various religious and philosophical traditions, including those in Hinduism, Christianity, and certain branches of Buddhism.

Soul is non-dual

The idea that duality doesn't exist in the soul is a concept often associated with non-dual or monistic philosophical and spiritual traditions. It suggests that the true essence of the soul is beyond the distinctions and divisions typically found in the material or dualistic world. Non-dual traditions emphasize the inherent oneness of all existence. In this view, the soul is considered a part of this cosmic oneness, and it is not subject to the dualities and divisions that characterize the material world. Duality often involves pairs of opposites, such as good and evil, light and dark, pleasure and pain. Non-dual philosophies propose that the soul transcends these dualities and is free from the judgments and conflicts they create. The absence of duality in the soul is associated with a state of inner harmony and balance. Non-dual perspectives suggest that the soul's true nature is a state of perfect equilibrium. Non-dual traditions often describe mystical or spiritual experiences where individuals temporarily transcend dualistic thinking and directly experience a sense of unity and oneness with all. The absence of duality in the soul can influence views on morality and ethics. It suggests that moral judgments are relative to the dualistic world and that a higher, non-dual understanding transcends conventional notions of good and bad. Non-dual perspectives are found in various philosophical and spiritual traditions, such as Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism, certain interpretations of Buddhism, and mystical aspects of Christianity and Sufism. These traditions emphasize the idea that the soul's true nature is non-dual, unitive and beyond the limitations of dualistic thinking. This concept encourages a profound exploration of the nature of consciousness, self and reality.

Experiencer

The idea that the soul is the "experiencer" suggests that the soul is the fundamental aspect of an individual responsible for experiencing and perceiving the world. It implies that the soul is the subjective, conscious element of a person's being that directly encounters and processes experiences, thoughts, emotions and perceptions. The soul, as the experiencer, is believed to be the locus of conscious awareness. It is the part of an individual that is aware of and engages with the external world and internal mental states. The soul is seen as the perceiver of reality, where all experiences, whether pleasurable or painful, are known and understood at a deeper level. It is the unchanging core that remains constant through the ever-changing flow of experiences. This concept is closely tied to the idea of self-identity. The soul is often considered the true self, and the experiences it undergoes contribute to the development and evolution of spiritual journey. Many belief systems posit that the soul is believed to transcend the physical world and continue to exist beyond the death of the body. As such, it is the eternal experiencer of existence. The notion of the soul as the experiencer is a central theme in various philosophical, religious and spiritual traditions. It can shape beliefs about the nature of consciousness, the purpose of life and the afterlife.

Eternal

The idea that the soul is an "eternal entity" suggests that the soul is an unending and timeless aspect of an individual's being. An eternal entity, the soul is often believed to be immortal, meaning it does not cease to exist, even after the death of the physical body. The soul is considered to be beyond the constraints of time and space. It is not subject to the limitations of the physical world, where everything is subject to birth and decay. The eternal nature of the soul implies that its core essence remains constant and unaltered, regardless of the passage of time or the experiences one undergoes in life. This concept is often associated with the belief that the soul existed before one's birth and continues to exist after one's death, signifying a spiritual continuity across different lifetimes or states of being. The belief in the soul as an eternal entity often carries profound spiritual and moral implications, as it suggests that one's actions and choices in life have lasting consequences beyond the earthly realm. The concept of the soul as an eternal entity is a fundamental tenet in many religious and spiritual traditions, including various forms of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and other belief systems.

Powerful

The idea that the soul is powerful suggests that the soul possesses a significant and intrinsic strength, often in a spiritual or metaphysical context. This concept can be understood in various ways. The "power" of the soul may refer to its inner strength, resilience, and capacity to overcome challenges, adversity, and obstacles. It is the source of inner fortitude and courage. The soul's power can signify its ability to transcend the limitations of the physical world and connect with higher or spiritual realms. It may represent the soul's capacity to reach a state of enlightenment, wisdom, and self-realization. The soul's power may be associated with its ability to guide individuals toward moral and ethical choices. It can inspire altruism, compassion, and a sense of purpose. The soul's power is seen as connected to universal energy or divine force, allowing it to tap into and harness these energies for personal and collective transformation. Soul's power often extends to its eternal nature, signifying that it continues to exist beyond the physical body, contributing to the idea that it holds a lasting and significant influence in the grand scheme of existence. The soul's power may also be linked to its capacity to awaken individuals to a deeper understanding of themselves and the world, leading to spiritual growth and enlightenment. The belief in the power of the soul is fundamental in various spiritual and philosophical traditions, where the soul is seen as the most potent and essential aspect of a person. This concept emphasizes the soul's transformative and transcendent potential, as well as its ability to guide individuals toward a higher state of being.

Operator of the body

The idea that the soul "operates" the body is a concept often associated with dualistic views of the relationship between the soul and the physical body. In this perspective, the soul is considered a distinct, non-physical entity that interacts with and controls the physical body. According to this view, the soul is the source of consciousness and self-awareness, and it exercises conscious control over the body's actions, thoughts and behaviors. The soul is often considered as the seat of an individual's identity, thoughts, emotions, and intentions. It is believed to be the core of a person's being and the driving force behind their actions. In this perspective, the body is seen as a vessel or vehicle through which the soul interacts with the physical world. The soul is the animating force that gives life to the body. The idea that the soul operates the body is closely linked to dualism, a philosophical stance that posits a fundamental distinction between the non-physical soul and the physical body.

Discussion

The concept of soul as given by Brahma Kumaris is in tune with the Greek notion of soul (Snell :19). They hold the view that the presence of soul distinguishes the living human body from a corpse. It is something that a person can risk in battle and loses in death. Homer never attributed any activity to the soul of a living person. It implies that soul is a silent observer to the role played by the character by using the body in the world drama.

Socrates also up holds the view that soul is immortal and it contemplates truth after its separation from the body at the time of death. Brahma Kumaris views about soul are similar to the concept of atman in Hinduism. Atman is considered the essential self of a person. Atman refers to the non-material self, which never changes. It is distinct from both the mind and the external body. This real self is beyond the temporary designation we normally ascribe to ourselves in terms of race, gender, species and nationality. Upanishads offer two facts:

- * soul does not belong to Maya or the mayic world because it itself is an eternal, infinitesimal and divine entity.
- * soul has a natural and eternal relationship with God. Soul in its purest form has God like qualities.

In addition B k 's views also corroborates the concept of atman in Buddhism. According to Buddhism characteristics of Self include permanence, immutability, absence of suffering of the being and is unaffected by prior events. Real self would have been ever happy since, it would have been aware of itself. It would not have been changed and it would not have been dependent on anything else. Real self and human self entirely distinct. Self is spiritual rather than material being. In this world the Spiritual being the atman has human experience rather than human being having a spiritual experience. We have to recognise the truth that we are under the bondage of Maya. The being had to renounce the ignorance that it does not belong to the mayic world. It belong to divine beloved God with whom he had all kind of sweet relationships. Upon God realisation the worshiper of Nirakar Brahm soul enters the dormant state of divinity called kaivalya Moksha in Buddhism. This is known as seed stage in Brahmakumaris which can be realised after a long practice of meditation.

Results

According to Brahma Kumaris, the true nature of the soul can only be understood in the context of its relationship with the Supreme Soul and its role in the world drama. The soul, a tiny point of light, is an eternal being that resides in paramdham, its heavenly abode. Every soul descends on earth to play a part in the eternal world drama. It plays a part in various serials(lives) as hero actors. As the soul is eternal, it transmigrates from one body to another only to continue its journey. Depending on the role, the thoughts, feelings, and emotions vary in every birth. A soul can take a minimum of one birth and a maximum of 84 births. Recording of these roles exists in the mind. The soul belongs to God and is eternally related to Him. Soul is a still point of light that plays its role using the body as per the recording in the mind. It is similar to the role played by a character in a serial. Just as a hero remains the same at the end of the movie as it was before that movie, similarly soul remains changeless as it was before it descends on earth. Only the role is played out as per the script of drama. Soul is thoughtless as its true nature is only silence. Thoughts, feelings, and emotions are different in each role as per the requirements of character. The soul is timeless. It has no past, no future, as past and future are of the character playing a part, and hence the awareness of the role leads to a no suffering stage. It is always in the now, a silent witness to the role being played out as per recording in the mind. The soul is storyless. There is no story of the soul, and there are no ups and downs. It is constant and always in a stable state as distinct from the character identity of the part being played. As every character in the movie face challenges, feels sorrow at times, is happy sometimes, and these ups and downs of life make the story interesting and it is how the world drama moves on. After the end of one life journey, the soul takes another costume and moves on. The body perishes, but the soul is eternal. The soul comes in world drama to play a part in order to have a human experience. That is why it plays a variety of roles sometimes of a prince, a beggar, an ordinary man or woman and soul is essentially non dual in nature. For this divine traveller, there is essential oneness underlying all humanity. All beings on the earth are souls. All souls belong to one God and have eternal and permanent relation to Him. Therefore, all souls are brothers. So, an essential brotherhood underlies all humanity. There are no boundaries of caste, creed, gender and nationalities. All humanity is one world one family and have one Father. The realisation of this awareness as given by Almighty God Father binds us all together and brings about a 360-degree change in our perception, thinking, attitude, and behavior. The unconditional love of Almighty binds us all together as kins of one divine family.

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