

come into our lives and help us. Meditate and pray to God and do the Jap Ji Sahib meditation. This is the start of a beautiful spiritual awakening.

"Meditating in remembrance on the Lord, the Eye of Death cannot see you. Meditating in remembrance on the Lord, demons and ghosts shall not touch you. Meditating in remembrance on the Lord, attachment and pride shall not bind you. Meditating in remembrance on the Lord, you shall not be consigned to the womb of reincarnation. ||2|| Any time is a good time to meditate in remembrance on the Lord. Among the masses, only a few meditate in remembrance on the Lord. Social class or no social class, anyone may meditate on the Lord. Whoever meditates on Him is emancipated. ||3|| Chant the Name of the Lord in the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy."(SGGSJ, p.1150)

"He is contained deep within each and every heart. He is always with you, as your Helper and Support."(SGGSJ, p.48)

"In good times, many come and sit together, surrounding you on all four sides. But when hard times come, they all leave, and no one comes near you. ||1|| Your wife, whom you love so much, and who has remained ever attached to you, runs away crying, "Ghost! Ghost!", as soon as the swan-soul leaves this body. ||2|| This is the way they act - those whom we love so much. At the very last moment, O Nanak, no one is any use at all, except the Dear Lord."(SGGSJ, p.634)

The Guru is the most powerful transformational being after God. The Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji teaches us that anyone or anything who approaches the Guru with humility will be emancipated. So always thank Guru and God for giving you this opportunity for your spiritual evolution.

"Finding the True Guru, the perfect cleansing bath is obtained, which transforms even beasts and ghosts into gods."(SGGSJ, p.1329)

Guru Nanak called a Ghost

Not everyone who met Guru Nanak Dev Ji was impressed with his teachings or his spiritual power.

There were many people who slapped, cursed and accused the Guru of being a demon and a ghost. This is recorded in the Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and this stanza finishes with a beautiful teaching of Sikhism, which is that spiritual people consider all beings to be inherently good and this would include being that may cause us pain and anguish.

"Some call him a ghost; some say that he is a demon. Some call him a mere mortal; O, poor Nanak! ||1|| Crazy Nanak has gone insane, after his Lord, the King. I know of none other than the Lord. ||1||Pause|| He alone is known to be insane, when he goes insane with the Fear of God. He recognizes none other than the One Lord and Master. ||2|| He alone is known to be insane, if he works for the One Lord. Recognizing the Hukam, the Command of his Lord and Master, what other cleverness is there? ||3|| He alone is known to be insane, when he falls in love with his Lord and Master. He sees himself as bad, and all the rest of the world as good. ||4||7||"(SGGSJ, p.991)

Conclusions

Experiences with ghosts happen to many people from all walks of life and Sikhism teaches us that if we meditate on God then there is nothing that can cause us harm. In addition, we will have fulfilled our real purpose in life which is to become one with God through meditation and selfless service. Finally, as spiritual people we should regard the whole world as full of goodness and good people and ourselves as bad, as one of the important spiritual keys for liberation is humility.



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Sikhism and Ghosts

Sikhism

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Introduction

The knowledge of ghosts goes back to the beginning of human civilization. Ancient cultures such as the Egyptians, who compiled the Egyptian Book of the Dead, show deceased people in the afterlife appearing much as they did before death, including the style of dress.

A ghost is defined as the apparition of a deceased person, frequently similar in appearance to that person, and encountered in places she or he frequented, or in association with the person's former belongings. The word 'ghost' in the Sikh Holy Scripture, the Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (SGGSJ) is used in a number of different scenarios, but generally it refers to the spirit or soul of a person.

This essay has been compiled with direct experience of such phenomena to provide other seekers of truth with an appreciation of the philosophy and the types of experiences which would identify a personal ghost experience, why these occur and what action you should take.

Why do Ghosts Occur?

Gurbani teaches that upon our death our soul will either find eternal peace as it merges back with God or it will be assigned back to the samsara cycle of reincarnation, depending on our actions and our focus in life.

The samsara cycle is designed to take us back to our true home of God, but Maya (attachment) keeps us bonded to this cycle. Maya includes our minds being ruled by lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride.

Part of the samsara cycle could include living as a ghost or soul on the earthly plane for hundreds of years before we are given the privilege of human life again. This is a form of karmic suffering. The Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji says:

"He commits many millions of sins. Day and night, he does not get tired of them, and he never finds release. ||1||Pause|| He carries on his head a terrible, heavy load of sin and corruption. In an instant, he is exposed. The Messenger of Death seizes him

by his hair. ||1|| He is consigned to countless forms of reincarnation, into beasts, ghosts, camels and donkeys. Vibrating and meditating on the Lord of the Universe in the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, O Nanak, you shall never be struck or harmed at all."(SGGSJ, p.1224)

"The ghost (soul), in the body-cage, suffers all sorts of afflictions. Those who are blind to spiritual wisdom, remain in hell (samsara cycle). The Righteous Judge of Dharma collects the balance due on the account, of those who forget the Name of the Lord. ||6||"(SGGSJ, p.1029)

The Jewel of Human Life

Human life is the only life form through which we have an opportunity at achieving mukti or liberation from the samsara cycle and merge back with God. This is why the Guru stresses the importance of seva (selfless service) and simran (meditation) to ensure we do not waste this very rare and temporary opportunity of achieving eternal peace. The Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji says:

"The Lord is found only through this human incarnation. This is the time to contemplate the Lord."(SGGSJ, p.844)

"Through 8.4 million incarnations you have wandered, to obtain this rare and precious human life. O Nanak, remember the Naam, the Name of the Lord; the day of departure is drawing near!"(SGGSJ, p.50)

"Now that you have obtained this human body, meditate on the Lord's Feet; Nanak advises with this advice."(SGGSJ, p.632)

Characteristics of Ghost Experiences

A large number of people have interactions or experiences with supernatural phenomena such as ghosts. However many people will not speak about such experiences due to fear of ridicule.

Temporary Paralysis

The most common experience by far is when you may be sleeping and you become conscious of the fact that you are trying to wake up but you are un-

able to move and unable to speak. You are in a state of temporary paralysis and it can be scary, especially if we do not know what is happening. This is how experiences start and they can become progressively worse including forces pushing you down in your bed.

Mind Tricks

You may also start to see visible apparitions and become aware of mind tricks being played on you, which are being done to test your character. Ghosts can be aware of what you are thinking because they are pure consciousness and so they can play games with you while you are in semi-conscious states and act on your thoughts.

Times of Day

These experiences can happen at all times of the day or night whenever you are sleeping or falling asleep. However you may begin to find that the most violent or scary experiences occur around 3.00am to 6.00am and strangely this is considered the best time for meditation and remembrance of God.

"In the fourth watch of the early morning hours, a longing arises in their higher consciousness."(SGGSJ, p.146)

"In the Amrit Vaylaa, the ambrosial hours before dawn, chant the True Name, and contemplate His Glorious Greatness."(SGGSJ, p.2)

However, as your spiritual practice develops through this unusual spiritual catalyst, you will find that you are meditating continually on God at work, while eating, on the way home from work and while studying etc.

"Twenty-four hours a day, they remain unconcerned, imbued with the Love of the One Lord."(SGGSJ, p.146)

Many souls who become stuck in the earthly plane unfortunately choose to cause issues and problems for humans in this manner. In these situations no one is able to help you except the Guru and God, and the only solution to our problems will be to ask God to