

### Key concepts

- The “Atma” or “Soul” according to Sikhism is an entity or “spiritual spark” or “light” in the body because of which the body can sustain life. On the departure of this entity from the body, the body becomes lifeless. The soul is the ‘driver’ in the body. It is the ‘roohu’ or spirit or atma, the presence of which makes the physical body alive.
- Every person has a divine spark which is part of Waheguru (God).
- Jivatma (individual soul) is a spark or ray of the Ineffable Spirit, Paramatma, and its deliverance lies in its reunion with its source. What hinders such reunion is the jiva’s egoism. When a person is finally released from the cycle of rebirth soul re-joins Waheguru. Release from the cycle is called Mukti.

- Transmigration of the soul is the doctrine of rebirth based on the theory that an individual soul passes at death into a new body or new form of life.
- A person’s soul may be reborn many times as human or animal. The cycle can only be broken when the soul is in human form because only humans know the difference between right and wrong.
- There are five stages of development on the path of enlightenment – the five khand – and in the context of the soul Saram Khand is of great importance. It is the realm of spiritual endeavour.

- Karma decides if soul can be released from cycle of rebirth.
- Many things can stop the soul from reaching Mukti - pride, lust, anger, greed.
- One monist way of reading the Sikh concept of ‘One’ is that there is no duality between God and creation or between God and the soul because ‘All is God’ (where a monist perspective on existence is read as the opposite of a dualist one).
- Some Sikhs stress the monist position that the individual soul and God are one.

### Key quotes

‘Those who meditate on God attain liberation. For them, the cycle of birth and death has been completed.’ (Guru Granth Sahib p 11)  
 ‘When the body is filled with ego and selfishness, the cycle of birth and death does not end.’ (Guru Granth Sahib p 126)  
 ‘This body is the Temple of the Lord, in which the jewel of spiritual wisdom is revealed. The self-willed manmukhs do not know anything at all; they do not believe that the Lord’s Temple is within.’ (Guru Granth Shaib p 1346)  
 ‘The soul, the subtle essence of the five elements, cherishes the Nectar of the Naam, the Name of the Lord.’ (Guru Granth Sahib p 299)  
 ‘If your soul overcomes the five elements, then you shall come to have a home at the true place of pilgrimage.’ (Guru Granth Sahib p 491)

### Key words

Atma	rohu	<i>jivatma</i>	paramatma	mukti
Khands	Waheguru	dualist	karma	rebirth
monist	Saram Khand	egoism	jiva	Ineffable spirit
transmigration				

### Issues for analysis and evaluation

#### Key arguments/debates

Some would argue that Sikhism has a monist view of the relationship between God and the soul. Others would argue that it is without doubt monotheistic. Some would argue that some aspects of Sikhism portray it as a monist relationship while others as being monotheistic.

#### Key questions

How important is the concept of the soul in Sikhism?  
 To what extent does the concept of the soul influence the Sikh view of humanity?

