Chapter 4
Sikhism and the Philosophy of Whitehead

4.0 Introduction

The present chapter analyses Sikhism and the philosophy of Whitehead in a comparative perspective. In this chapter, the comparative study has been made out under two topics, they are; the concept of God in Sikhism and in the Philosophy of Whitehead and the idea of Flux and Permanence in Sikhism and in the Philosophy of Whitehead. The philosophy of Whitehead is called Process Theology; it says that all objects of reality are in process, so God is also in process for the completeness of nature. Sikhism also proposes similar idea as that of Whitehead. God manifests himself in the world of objects and that the manifestation is a continuous process. So God is in flux while it maintains the reality of permanence. That is, it can be said that the reality is in between the permanence and flux. The methodology of research adopted in the present chapter is analytical and comparative and the chapter concludes with a brief summary.

4.1 The Concept of God in Sikhism and in the Philosophy of Whitehead

Sikhism and the philosophy of Whitehead identify God with the idea of the unity of plurality of reality. They explain the reality and God from the holistic point of view.

4.1.1 The Concept of God in Sikhism

Sikhism advances the idea of Integrative monotheism, that is, God is one and the plurality of existence is related with God by the
all-pervasive principle of God. There are different schools of thought. Each of them perceives the nature of reality in different ways. For example, God in polytheism is different from other schools of thought. Sikhism considers the idea of monotheism and it can be said that monotheism identifies the reality of the nature as the unity of Plurality

Sikhism advances the idea of integrative monotheism that emphasizes the idea of oneness of reality. This idea of integrative monotheism may seem to be related to the idea of Pantheism which considers that God is Nature but both of the ‘isms’ are entirely different. In Sikhism, as a religious tradition, God has a social relevance in the sense that the reality of the multiplicity of the world is in dynamic relation with it. The idea of Sikhism is that, the world is holy and that the God’s creations are wonderful. The acceptance of the reality of the world induces human commitment to social action and service to the society; human existence gets its meaning only in the world of reality. The idea of Miri-Piri, as the central theme of Sikhism, portrays God as immanent and transcendent.

4.1.1.1 The Nature of God

The nature of God is understood only in the existential realm. Sikhism identifies God as both transcendent and immanent and it means that God is both in the world and beyond it. Sikhism perceives that the presence of God in all aspects of reality, without which nothing can be explained. God is the potentiality of all aspects of reality and the guiding principle of the world of objects. The entire reality is interconnected by the all-pervasive principle of God.
“The Lord is all-pervasive and near
Himself is He deep absorption in the holy word
Himself He views the universe and therein feels joy
Himself providing amrita to quaff
Himself grants He liberation”

The above hymn shows the nature of God which is understood only through aspects of the world. Nothing is beyond the control of God but every element of reality is inseparably connected with God.

Order is the basic need of a society. There is an order existing in the universe. Sikhism says that God only made the order by his divine ordinance. That ordinance exists in the universe forever. The universe is operated with that divine ordinance. So the discussion on the nature of God abides the principle, that, God is the ground of order.

4.1.1.2 God as the Ground of Order

Sikhism perceives that God is a universally operative concept. God has an absolute influence over the World. This influence is supreme because God is the supreme entity over all the elements of the world. When it is said that God is the eternal stuff of the world and that the movement of every system is under the influence of God, then it is sure that there is a divine order in the universe and that God is the ground of order.

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Sikhism uses the term ‘Hukam’ to indicate the idea of order. The meaning of the term ‘Hukam’ is Divine Ordinance. By the divine ordinance, the universe operates.

“By Divine ordinance are all forms manifested;
Inexpressible is the ordinance.
By Divine ordinance are beings created;
By ordinance are some exalted.
By Divine ordinance are beings marked,
with mobility or ignominity,
All by the ordinance are governed, none exempt”.221

Hukam is an important concept in Sikh thought. The manifestation of God in the objects of the world occurs through the divine ordinance. The divine ordinance governs the universe and no object is exempted from that governance. Sikhism, as a religious thought, lays emphasis on the divine power which controls the whole of the universe. That divine power has the capacity to relate the physical elements in order to make them an orderly whole. The divine power which governs the universe is Hukam. Sikhism perceives that it is not possible for human intellect to know all the details about the divine ordinance. Nanak says “How can a son be a witness of the event attending his father’s birth: All are limited by an act within his divine order”222.

221 Ibid., p.2.
4.1.1.3 God as the Universally Operative Concept

Sikhism holds that the universe, its objects and the worldly phenomena are the creations of the will of God. Every thing came into being by a natural process of evolution. Sikhism uses the term Karta purakh to denote the creative principle “Karta purakh means the supreme consciousness; it means that the all pervading God is creator of the universe and all that is in it”\textsuperscript{223} With this idea, the notion that God is a universally operative concept, gets stabilized in Sikhism.

Evolution is a continuous process that makes the hierarchy of elements as lower and higher. It can be said that if there are higher and lower elements, then the realisation of equality is a futile exercise even if they are the creations of God. It is to be mentioned here that Sikhism never identifies every object as same but it holds that every element has its own purpose to fulfill. So every element strives to fulfill its own purpose through its relation with other elements of lower or higher strata. The connection among various objects of reality is possible because God’s essence pervades in them. According to Sikhism, God is all pervading. So God’s essence exists in lower as well as in higher elements and that essence makes the order in the universe. Sikhism says,

“The one is manifested in innumerable forms
He alone is wherever I look”.\textsuperscript{224}

The above hymn shows the character of hierarchy and the relation among the hierarchy of elements. Nanak says “Some has

\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Ibid.}, p.121.

He made beggars: others are given to hold grant courts”.225 This clearly shows the existence of hierarchy among Gods creations. From this hierarchy, Sikhism holds the idea of God as a universally operative concept which makes an order among the beings of the universe. The basis of this concept is the idea of Negation. It means that the lower elements aspire to become the higher ones through the idea of negation. Such a movement is not chaotic but it is necessary for a creative social order. The lower as well as higher elements are actual entities even though differences prevail among them. These differences are essentially related by the essence of God. Such a system is operated by the ordinance of the divinity. So God is called as universally operative system.

4.1.1.4 The Rationality of Physical Phenomena

In order to concretize the view that God is the ground of order, the rationality of the physical phenomena has to be discussed. It is true that physical phenomena are rational, real and explainable. Sikhism affirms this view. Sikhism considers the particularities as reality and accepts the organic interconnection of particular objects that exist in the universe. The question of how rationality is attributed to the physical phenomena is to be answered only by God. Sikhism is of the view that the physical phenomena have no rationality without God because nothing exists apart from it. So, physical phenomena cannot be understood by itself, but only through God.

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“Thou the creator; all by Thy will happens

None besides Thee in the universe operates”.226

It means that the happenings in the physical world are possible only through God. Here the human beings are impotent without God and the creative potentials of human beings are through the immanence of God. Sikhism says,

“In human’s hand lies no power

Overall creation is the Lord’s will supreme”.227

This view substantiates the idea that rationality is attributed to physical phenomena only through the immanent manifestations of God and this view proves that God is the ground of order.

4.1.1.5 God is in Process

Sikhism holds that evolution is a continuous process and the creations of God never end. It means that a system never ends but it is in process always. Creation is not made in a definite way or style. Even if it is made in such a way, God only knows the definiteness which is not comprehensible to human intellect. From the point of view of the universe, it can be said that the creation takes different forms. It shows that God is in process always; that is why the creations are not yet over. It also means that God pervades all over the creations. “On the basis of Sri Guru Granth Sahib it may be said that it is not only once this creation was done, rather the cosmos has been created many times and accordingly it merged time and again into its primeval source paramatman. This creation is the self-pleasing sport (Lila) of paramatman when He desires, He extends Himself into names and forms and when He so

226 Ibid., p.29.
227 Ibid., p 573.
wishes He dissolves and contracts this whole cosmos in Himself”.

This view supports the idea that God is the ground of order of the universe. If God is not in process, the justification for the new emergences will become difficult. In this position new emergences have justification when as God is in eternal processing. This view moves in a holistic way that the elements come under the process of God.

4.1.1.6 God as the Valuation of the World

Sikhism explains God not from the established dogmas but through the motion of the presence. The statements such as ‘God is the unmoved mover’, ‘the ultimate philosophical principle’ and ‘God is a moral energy’ generally do not portray the idea of the God in the light of the presence. But these statements are validated only when they are observed within the present structure of the universe. Sikhism analyses the nature of God with the present structure. Sikhism does not seek for the existence of God; as a religious system, its ideas are interwoven with God.

It is true that Sikhism wants to place God very close to the reality of the world. It was stated earlier that physical elements are not rational without the idea of God and that they are related entities. But it cannot be said that the world is God. One can only say that they exist as inseparable relation between God and all the creations and that God is the ground of order. In order to understand the relatedness of God with the worldly objects, God exist as the valuation of the world, has to be dealt with.

God values action. God exists as an observer of the activities of human beings. Sikhism says “He has created the world and watches over it”.\textsuperscript{229} It means that God exists as the valuation of the world. He values the activities of the worldly objects. “Himself He views the universe and therein feels joy”.\textsuperscript{230}

It can be stated that God mirrors the whole universe and watches over the good and evil. An individual is free to choose between these two. Whatever be the human selection, God will be an ideal companion to it and measures activities accordingly.

“When delusion of the universe He created, 
Then in the three qualities did He expand Himself, 
Then began considerations of evil and good, 
Some to hell in clinging. Some to heaven. 
Then were spread complications of Maya-Snare, 
Egoism, attachment and burden of delusion and fear, 
Suffering, joy, honor and dishonor, 
That in numerous ways got stated. 
His play He Himself enacts and views”.\textsuperscript{231}

According to Sikhism, God shares its essence with every new creation and exists as the valuation-principle of the creations. No object is above the exercise of valuation. Consciousness is particular in humans whereas it is universal in God. For example, In the case of love, humans are very particular as to whom to love, what to love and when to love and so on but God’s love is universal

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., p.342.
\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., p.232.
in nature. So the principle of God stands as the reality element in the world as well as evaluation of every event of reality.

4.1.1.7 The Transcendental Nature of God

Normally meta-physical philosophies deal only with objects which are beyond the physical level. From the religious point of view, the ultimate reality is usually situated in the metaphysical realm. The ultimate reality is defined as God and the concept of God is said to be beyond sensory perception. In other words whatever comes under sensory perception is not considered as a meta-physical entity. Also, it means that God is transcendental and that it is beyond the physical phenomena and human perception. This idea is purely meta-physical.

A transcendental entity is considered as permanent and eternal and it is said to be devoid of change and transition. In this way, a separate status is ascribed to the transcendental realm and that realm is identified to be devoid of physical elements.

Sikhism as a socio-religious philosophy, affirms the transcendental realm and considers God as transcendental also, which is unaffected by physical phenomena. The physical phenomena are identified with changes, transition and competition among them whereas the transcendental realm is quite contrary to the above said nature of physics.

Sikhism identifies the validity of physical phenomena also. The Sikh view is that physics has a definite role to shape the thought of human beings. The physical phenomena are also to be justified as reality in connection with God even if it is different from the transcendental position of God. Sikhism perceives that the
process of creation emerges from God and the created objects are in the process of becoming. The question of how the transcendental God becomes the cause of the changeable objects is answered by Sikhism through the idea of immanent nature of God. The immanent nature of God justifies the reality of change. According to Sikhism, the continuous creation of physical bodies flows from the immanent nature of God. In that sense, for Sikhism, God is both transcendental and immanent. The idea of transcendence stands as a universal concept without having anything in common with the changeable world. On the other hand, the changeable world is created and protected by the immanent nature of God.

### 4.1.1.8 God as Transcendent

In Indian philosophy, the idea of transcendentalism is an important aspect. All through the history of Indian philosophy, this concept has been discussed elaborately with the aid of speculative and spiritualistic approach. In Indian context, the idea of Brahman has been termed as Nirguna that means without quality. This reflects the idea of pure transcendentalism because the idea of Nirguna Brahman is unrelated to the physical phenomena. On the other hand, Brahman is also characterized as Saguna. Here the concept of Saguna Brahman gives justification to the physical phenomena.

Sikhism has been influenced by the concepts of both Saguna and Nirguna. Jodh Singh, holds that “Guru Nanak believes that ... He is Nirguna Brahman because He is unknowable, infinite, unapproachable and imperceptible Lord”.\(^ {232}\) The state of Nirguna

Brahman reflects the character of detachment from the worldly reality. That means, transcendental nature of God is conceptual. Daljeet Singh says “The Gurus clearly described at a number of places that there was a stage when the transcendent God was by Himself and it is later that He started His creative activity. In Sidh Gost, in answer to a question as to where be the transcendent God before the stage of creation, Guru Nanak replied, to think of the transcendent Lord in that state is to enter the realm of wonder. Even at that stage of Sunn (void), He permeated that entire void. The guru in effect means that to matters that are beyond the spatio-temporal world”.\textsuperscript{233} If the transcendental conceptualization of God is beyond spatio-temporal aspects, then it can be said that such conceptualization is beyond human comprehension.

\subsection*{4.1.1.8.1 Transcendental Nature is Conceptual}

The transcendental nature is conceptual speculation because the perceivable objects have no value in the transcendental nature. A concept exists in a universal form whereas the perception exists in a particular form; perception is meant for the experiencing of the particular events but concept stands as universal. It means through the transcendental nature of God, in the universal form, is attributed with the wealth of potentialities, it is inactive as long as it is not in association with the world of objects. That means, for the movement of particular entities, transcendental nature of God gives the potentiality, without which the particular entities cannot be known. Particular objects are directed only through the concept because there is a universal form that exists as a concept and that concept is unchangeable. The concept is not limited by any object

in the world because it is above the worldly activities. The conceptual nature never takes the initiative for the creation but the world is created through the conceptual nature of God. Here God is unattached with its creations because the transcendental nature is above creation and exists as a universal concept.

4.1.1.8.2 Transcendental Nature is Unconscious

We discussed that the transcendental nature exists as a concept and that the particular objects move according to this concept and that the concept is unaffected by the particular objects. To put it in another way, at the transcendental level, God is not influenced by the particular objects but the particular objects are the dependents of transcendental concept. With this idea, one can derive another point that the transcendental nature is unconscious.

Unconsciousness means the total withdrawal from the conscious activities. In unconsciousness, contact with the empirical reality or empirical activity disappears. The stage of unconsciousness is inactive because that stage has nothing to do with activity. A concept is unconscious and inactive if it has no contact with the empirical phenomena. That means in Sikh viewpoint, the transcendental nature of God is unconscious because transcendental nature never experiences the empirical actuality. The experience of empirical actuality is impossible without consciousness.

But it cannot be said that unconsciousness is devoid of knowledge. Unconsciousness predicts the stage of hibernation while keeping the absolute potentiality into itself and without having any contact with the empirical phenomena. Sikhism says
about Sunn Samadhi, which shows the character of unconsciousness because Sunn Samadhi represents the meaning of deep meditation. This position is before the creation of the world by God. Such a state has potentiality to act but it never acts. It means that the position of Sunn Samadhi is unconscious because God has nothing to do with the creative action but in deep sleep. Even though Sikhism accepts this nature of God, it also lays emphasis on God which is conscious and ever-active.

4.1.1.9 The Immanent Nature God

It was discussed that the transcendent nature of God is conceptual and unconscious and that it has no contact with the empirical reality. It means that the transcendental nature of God was there before the process of creation and it is beyond all the creations. This is one of the aspects of the nature of God.

Sikhism accepts the reality of empirical truths. The question of how the particular events become real is answered by the immanent nature of God in Sikhism. The world, its objects and phenomena are justified by the immanent nature of God. It is said that God exists beyond and above the world and in the world. ‘God is in the World’ represents the immanent nature of God. “In all beings is He Himself manifest through all eyes is He Himself the beholder”.234 So the world is manifested through the immanent nature of God. Sri Guru Granth says,

“In all the worlds is His glory supremely manifest;
In all ten directions is the sole Lord pervasive,

On earth, in the Sky, behold thou the Lord,  
On water and land, in forests,  
Over mountains and in the nether regions,  
Everywhere is the Lord compassionate.  
In subtle and gross matter,  
Everywhere the Lord pervasive”.

Sikhism uses the word ‘Naam’, which is the fundamental gospel of the entire structure of its theology that denotes the idea of immanent. “God and Naam are one and the same and the latter may be called the immanence or qualitative aspect of God... Naam as the dynamic immanence of God or the reality is sustaining and working the manifest world of force and form”.236 Here the immanent nature of God is active and dynamic. The dynamism could be realized through the ever-changing nature of the world phenomena. This means that the immanent nature of God is perceptual.

4.1.1.9.1 The Immanent Nature of God is Perceptual

The immanent nature of God operates in the world. It can be said that God is in the world and in its every particular phenomenon. The world phenomena can be experienced by perception; the contact between senses and the objects is possible. It means that through sensory perception, the world phenomena can be realized. Sikhism categorically affirms the status of the world because it is the manifestation of God. This shows that God is objectified as the world. When an object is evolved from God, the

235 Ibid., p.621.

essence of God will be inherent in that object. Sikhism identifies that the creator is in the creation. It can be said in another way that world has the same essence as that of God. This reason leads to the conclusion that God is world. On the other hand, it cannot be said that world is God because world is only a part of God. Humans cannot comprehend the entire manifestations of God. So it cannot be said that world is God. But it can be concluded that God is world from the empirical and spiritual experiences of humans. Sikhism says,

“These Master! Within and without is the Lord –
All space by Him is filled.
Divine Master the Lord all – pervasive has this universal play spread;
Himself He watches it, being manifest”.

The world can be perceived. Its process can be experienced. When Sikhism says that the space is filled by God it means that the spatial world is filled by God. As the world is perceptible, it means that God also can be perceived through it. So it can be said that the immanent nature of God is perceptual.

4.1.1.9.2 The Immanent Nature of God is Conscious

The Sikh perception of reality identifies the immanent nature of God in the form of consciousness. Sikhism holds the view that every object has a purpose and the interrelationship between the objects makes reality the dynamic. In this sense the objects are not interacting with each other aimlessly but consciously participating in the process. One of the aspects of the human

237 Gurbachan Singh Talib, Tr., p.358.
nature is consciousness. With consciousness humans understand the reality of the universe. So consciousness is a human nature without which humans cannot function.

The question of how consciousness comes into being can be explained only through God, because regarding the idea of creation it is clear that nothing exist apart from the creation of God. That is the essence of humans and the activities of humans are the design of God. Accordingly, it is to be noted that human is not aimlessly moving, but he/she has a definite purpose with consciousness of the situatedness. The human essence is not apart from God. In that sense, humans never create anything new but function with the God-given potentialities. In this position consciousness is not a new thing made by humans, but it already exists in them at the time of creation itself. It is clear that whatever is the essence of humans, it is to be identified as the attribute of God. In this way, consciousness is also the quality of God. If God is unconscious, humans also will be unconscious; but as humans are conscious, so God also must be conscious. Here it can be said that the immanent nature of God is conscious. Sikhism says,

“He is the life in all, in all beings pervasive
By the Master’s grace in the self casting illumination”. 238

It may be questioned that in all human beings the idea of consciousness is not applicable as they are different in nature. So consciousness varies in the practical experience. As an example, wisdom and ignorance can be taken. These two aspects represent the degrees of consciousness. In this case, it may be doubted whether the aspect of ignorance is also the nature of God. But this

238 Ibid., p.2561.
assumption is wrong because Sikhism presumes that human is a highly potential being. So whenever humans use their potentiality for realizing the phenomena around them, thus undergo a process which culminates in absolute consciousness. This type of consciousness exists in God. If God manifests himself in the humans, then consciousness also exists in the humans.

4.1.1.10 The Relatedness of Immanence and Transcendence

Sikhism develops a humanistic idea. This particular idea stands between classical Indian philosophy and contemporary Indian Philosophy. In classical Indian Philosophy, the transcendental nature of God and material reality are unrelated. The idea of liberation according to the former is the total withdrawal from the material reality. In this position, there is a possibility for humans to become negative in their approach. Consequently the worldly reality and the human effort also become useless.

Sikhism questions this type of approach without denying the transcendental nature of God because Sikhism identifies the importance of material reality in the human life. That means, for Sikhism material reality is also important. In order to justify this reality, the idea of immanent nature of God is posited in Sikhism and it can be found that all the worldly processes are connected with the immanent nature of God. It means that Sikhism has given importance to the immanent nature of God as it is perceivable to human senses. In this way, transcendental nature of God has no status in the process of evolution, which is carried out by immanent nature of God.
The relation between transcendence and immanence can be found in two ways. First, these two are not absolutely separate and opposite because the idea of God possesses both the aspects. Second the potentiality in these two natures are same but it differs in one sense that the potentiality of god is in hybernation while the idea of transcendence stands as a concept to all phenomena. The immanent nature which has the same potentiality to that of the transcendental nature is always in action.

It can be found that the transcendental nature is unconscious and conceptual because that nature never functions even though it is absolutely potential. The immanent nature is conscious and perceptual because it is the basis of the process of evolution. So these two natures do not stand unrelated, but related.

4.1.2. Concept of God in the Philosophy of Whitehead

Whitehead sees that the entire reality needs a theistic principle He reasons out that the general potentiality of the universe must be somewhere. This is where God comes in the philosophy of Whitehead.

Whitehead never considers the idea of God to be outside of the world but realizes it to be with the world. He says “It was a mistake as the Hebrews tried to conceive of God as creating the world from the outside”. He experiences, that a God who has no attachment to the world, has no value. If everything is perfectly made from outside of the world then how imperfection prevails is a puzzle. “An all foreseeing creator, who could have made the world

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as we find it now—what could we think of such a being? For seeing everything yet putting into it all sorts of imperfections to redeem which it was necessary to send his only son into the world to suffer torture and hideous death are outrageous ideas. The Hellenic religion was a better approach, the Greek conceived of creation as going on everywhere all the time within the universe... God is in the world, or nowhere, creating continually in us and around us. This creative principle is everywhere, inanimate and so-called inanimate matter, in the ether, water, earth, and human hearts”.\textsuperscript{240}

Whitehead here contradicts the extreme metaphysical position that God is beyond our comprehension and denies the abstract character of God and prefers the concrete character. God is not transcendental to him.

Whitehead, in his book, ‘Science and the Modern world’ expresses the idea of God as the principle of limitation. But in order to make clear of his Pantheistic structure of the idea of God he withdraws this principle at a later stage of his philosophical development. “When Whitehead introduced this expression, he perhaps had not yet achieved clarity as to the panentheistic structure of his theism. Certainly the God of his later writings is no more ‘principle’ that is mere abstraction, but a concrete stream of ‘experience’ containing at each moment the unity of the whole of reality as actual at the movement”.\textsuperscript{241}

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{240} Ibid., p.370. \textsuperscript{241} Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, p.273. \end{flushleft}
4.1.2.2 The Nature of God

The idea of God, for Whitehead, is an absolute entity which is not transcendental absolutely. The nature of God is to be understood only through experience because God exists in the world. Whitehead speaks about speculative philosophy and identifies it as a better way of understanding. The speculative philosophy gives an idea about the nature of God of Whitehead. Whitehead says “Speculative philosophy is the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted”.²⁴²

Whitehead accepts the speculative approach to philosophy by which a total abstraction about the universe is possible. He says “It is presupposed that no entity can be conceived in complete abstraction from the system of the universe and that it is the business of speculative philosophy to exhibit this truth”.²⁴³ It is true that through speculation, one can have the abstract vision of a complete structure of a system that is a universal system. Here Whitehead considers that the realization regarding the truth of God can be achieved only through speculative philosophy. Whitehead gives more importance to experience and the experience leads to speculation by which the truth about the essence of the universe is revealed. Whitehead says “There is an essence to the universe which forbids relationships beyond itself, as a violation of its rationality. Speculative philosophy seeks that essence”.²⁴⁴ It means, as earlier stated, the general potentiality of the universe must be


²⁴³ Ibid., p.5.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p.6.
somewhere. God is considered as this potentiality and speculative philosophy makes this idea clear.

4.1.2.2.1 God as the Ground of Order

Whitehead introduces God into his system as a universally operative concept. He perceives that God exerts providential influence upon the world. We are influenced by God and God’s influence is supreme because He is the supreme actual entity. Whitehead defines God as an ‘Actual entity’ which is supremely beautiful and attractive. He says “Actual entities – also termed actual occasions are the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real. They differ among themselves: God is an actual entity and so is the most trivial puff of existence in far-off empty space. But though there are gradations of importance and diversities of function, yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies all are on the same level. The final facts are all alike, actual entities and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent”.245

Whitehead uses the term ‘Actual entities’ instead of ‘Actual entity’. Among these actual entities God is the highest; other actual entities are not illusory elements but they are the reasons for composite nature. Taking the idea of ‘Substance’ from Cartesian philosophy and the notion of ‘power’ proposed by John Locke, Whitehead has developed the idea of ‘Actual entities’. Whitehead says “The notion of ‘substance’ is transformed into that of ‘actual entity’ and the notion of ‘power’ is transformed into the

245 Ibid., pp. 27-28.
principle that the reasons for things are always to be found in the composite nature of definite actual entities – in the nature of God for reasons of the highest absoluteness, and in the nature of definite temporal actual entities for reasons which refer to a particular environment’.  

Whitehead discusses about the innumerable number of actual entities and each is analyzable in an indefinite number of ways. Among them the idea of God is the highest absoluteness and the others refer to a particular environment.

The idea of actual entities is similar to the idea of ‘Monads’ of Leibniz that there are infinite number of Monads and God is the Monad of Monads. But Leibniz holds that Monads are ‘Windowless’ which means one Monad is unrelated to other Monads, there he denies the interaction between the monads directly. Whitehead on the other hand argues actual entities are inter-related. “Whitehead’s actual entities are however not windowless that is undergoing purely internal development but they are in active interaction with each other throughout nature. Whitehead looked on this as a generalized notion of organic interconnection”. Here Whitehead uses the term prehension for the interconnection. In the categories of existence he uses the term prehension, as the concrete fact of relatedness. Whitehead says “Actual entities involve each other by reason of their prehensions of each other”. He continues “A prehension reproduces in itself the general characteristics of an actual entity, it is referent to an external

\[246 \text{ Ibid., p.30}\]
\[248 \text{ Alfred North Whitehead, Op.cit., p.29.}\]
world, and in this sense it will be said to have a vector character, it involves emotion and purpose, and valuation, and causation. In fact, any characteristic of an actual entity is reproduced in a prehension”.\textsuperscript{249} Whitehead conceives “A prehension is only a subordinate element in an actual entity”.\textsuperscript{250} He wants to substantiate the commonness of actual entities which interact with each other and which can be prehended. So prehension makes us clear about the interconnectedness. It is subordinate in the sense that prehension reproduced the general characteristics of actual entities. So it is always with actual entities.

Whitehead accepts particularity as reality. He says “Actual entities involve each other by reason of their prehension of each other. There are thus real individual facts of the togetherness of actual entities, which are real, individual and particular, in the same sense which actual entities and the prehension are real, individual and particular”.\textsuperscript{251} Here Whitehead observes every event prehends certain other events and this implies that they depend logically upon each other.

Whitehead realizes a connection between objects. The objects are nothing but actual entities which are individual and particular. It means that actual entities vary according to their conditions but all are connected through the idea of prehension. This means everything in the universe is interlinked.

\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., pp.28-29.

\textsuperscript{250} Ibid., p.29.

\textsuperscript{251} Ibid., pp.29-30.
Whitehead observes that every being is in process. He conceives God is an actual entity and this actual entity is the highest absolute, among the actual entities. So God is also in process. It is because of this reason that Whitehead says “God is the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality. In this aspect, he is not before all creation, but with all creation”. This means, God is there in actual entities or otherwise in every worldly object. Whitehead observes “God is the unconditioned actuality of conceptual feeling at the base of all things; so that by reason of this primordial actuality there is an order in the relevance of eternal objects to the process of creation”.

This is the idea which makes God as the ground of all. Supporting the view of Whitehead, it is said that “All actualities are units of experience, each of which is partly influenced by other such units. But no such unit can exist unless it is furnished with a world of units already in being, to offer its data of experience. And there must be some measure of harmony among the data”.

Whitehead holds the view that God is a unifying force which saves the world. He says “God’s role is not the combat of productive force with productive force, of destructive force with destructive force; it lies in the patient operation of the overpowering rationality of his conceptual harmonization. He does not create the world, he saves it or, more accurately, he is the poet of the world,

\[252 \text{ Ibid., p.521.}\]

\[253 \text{ Ibid., pp.525-526.}\]

with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty and goodness”.255

The philosophy of Whitehead reflects the idea that there is mutuality between God and the world. Even though God is the highest actual entity and the ground of order, it can be conceived only through other actual entities. That is, the nature of God cannot be experienced without the actual entities and at the same time, actual temporal entities cannot be rational without God. Whitehead speaks of this mutuality thus “It is true to say that the world is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the world”.256

4.1.2.2 God as the valuation of the world

Whitehead experiences God not through the established dogmas or through the existing religious perspective, but from the immediacy of the present structure. He goes through the existing ideas of God in other systems of thought and finds it as the ultimate philosophical principle; as the image of a personification of moral energy and as an imperial ruler. Here, Whitehead comes to the conclusion that all the existing ideas of God are established dogmas that never looks into the future. He says “A part from any reference to existing religions as they are, or as they ought to be, we must investigate dispassionately what the metaphysical principles, here developed, require on these points, as to the nature of God. There is nothing in the nature of proof. There is merely

confrontation of the theoretic system with a certain rendering of facts”.257

Whitehead perceives that there is no established nature of proof but only conflicts regarding the nature of God in metaphysics. He considers these metaphysical facts as controversial and inadequate. In order to overcome this dilemma, Whitehead looks into the futurology of the idea of God.

Whitehead wants to place God very much closer to the world. But he maintains that the world is not God. For him world and God are inseparable entities. Whitehead says “What further can be known about God must be sought in the region of particular experiences and there for rest on an empirical basis”.258 He perceives that God is with all the creations. So the question here is, in what respect he interlinks the idea of God with the world. Earlier it was discussed that the nature of God is the valuation of the world.

Whitehead perceives that God values the activities of human being. In that sense one can call that God watches over the universe. Even though God is said to be watching over the world, the humans have been given freedom to choose between evil and good; whatever it be, God will be an ideal companion.

Whitehead says “The completion of God’s nature into a fullness of physical feeling is derived from the objectification of the world in God. He shares with every new creation its actual world; and the coherent creature is objectified in God as a novel element

257 Ibid., p.523.

in God’s objectification of that actual world. This prehension into God of each creature is directed with the subjective aim and clothed with the subjective form, wholly derivative from his all-inclusive primordial valuation”.259

Whitehead identifies God as the binding element in the world. Lewis S. Ford says “Whitehead maintains that we not only experience the parts of nature. We experience its unity in terms of the creative advance of nature”.260 The power which is generated to understand the unity of objects exists with God. That is why Whitehead’s idea of God stands as a finding element. That shows consciousness which is particular in humans is universal in God. If it is love, it is partial in humans but it is impartial in God. Apart from the God idea there is no world and its purpose is always embodied in the individual events, which make the actual state of the world. This shows that nothing is above God’s valuation and the idea of God exists as a valuation of every actuality in the world that is why it is said “He is not the world but the valuation of the world”.261

4.1.2.3 The Primordial Nature of God

Metaphysics deals with the study of ultimate entities, which are above the human sensory experience. Metaphysics is the study of objects which are beyond physics. Humans’ sensory perception makes contact with the physical objects and understands that, they are changeable, particular and transitory. If the position of


260 Lewis S. Ford, The Emergence of Whitehead’s Metaphysics, p.96.

physics is a changing event, then the metaphysics is considered to be permanent and eternal.

Whitehead tries to connect everything with God and he considers that every creation is because of God. But objects are particular in nature and are in the process of becoming, whereas the idea of God is not a transitory movement or a temporal object but it is an eternal and all-pervading entity. Earlier it was mentioned that eternal entity exists beyond physics. So God exists as an idea which is beyond physics. At the same time, God enters into the objects of particularity through the process of creation; thus the God and the World become inseparable entities.

Whitehead identifies the nature of God as primordial and consequent; primordial nature is purely a metaphysical concept where God exists as a purely universal form and as consequent nature, God enters into the particular entities. In another way these natures can be denoted as transcendent and immanent nature of God.

Whitehead says “The primordial created fact is the unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects. This is the primordial nature of God”. Here Whitehead explains primordial nature as a quality of God, which exists as a concept and that concept evaluates all the multiplicities from outside. Apart from this concept the objects will be unrealized in the actual world. Whitehead here wants to substantiate that the primordial nature of God has the relation with the world as a universal concept.

\[262\text{Ibid., p.521.}\]
4.1.2.3.1 Primordial Nature is Conceptual

Whitehead perceives the primordial nature of God as conceptual. So, sensory perception has no value for the understanding of the primordial nature of God. The concept exists always in a universal form whereas percept exists in a particular form. But the concept has always a role in the particulars as a guiding factor. Whitehead says “Viewed as primordial, he is the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality”.263

It is to be understood that without the absolute potentiality nothing can be realized as particular entities because for every particular object there should be a universal form which exists as a concept. So primordial nature has a conceptual character. The conceptual character never changes. Whitehead says “God’s conceptual nature is unchanged by reason of its final completeness”.264 So conceptual forms exist as unchangeable. Here the Aristotelian idea of the ‘unmoved mover’ comes close to the idea of primordial nature. Aristotle claims that the unmoved mover is purely conceptual.

Whitehead gives one more interpretation regarding the “primordial nature as conceptual”.265 He says “One side of God’s nature is constituted by his conceptual experience. The experience is the primordial fact in the world, limited by no actuality which it presupposes of it therefore infinite, devoid of all negative

263 Ibid., p.523.

264 Ibid., p.524.

265 Ibid., p.524.
prehensions. This side of his nature is free, complete, primordial, eternal, actually deficient, and unconscious.\textsuperscript{266}

The explanation to the primordial nature pursues us to understand that it is purely conceptual. Here all the absolute metaphysical concepts have been attributed to primordial nature and are totally separate from the actual world, which is changeable, finite, and impermanent and conscious whereas primordial nature is unconscious.

\textbf{4.1.2.3.2 Primordial Nature is Unconscious}

The idea about the nature of ultimate reality as unconscious, inactive or qualityless is not a new discovery by Whitehead. In Indian philosophy as well as in Western Philosophy, such ideas have been articulated before Whitehead. In the Indian context, Samkhya Philosophy speaks about two independent ultimate realities, they are Prakrti and Purusha. Of these two, the nature of Purusha, in its nature is unconsciousness. Attributing unconscious nature to the ultimate reality is a mean to separate it from the worldly phenomenon, which is active and conscious. A concept is inactive and unconscious and it has nothing to do with the changeable phenomena. It means that the primordial nature is unconscious and this unconscious element is influenced by the particular objects to be conscious and active. Whitehead understands that as the primordial nature is purely conceptual, it means, it is deficiently actual. It means that it does not experience the empirical actuality. When primordial nature lacks this kind of experience, then it is known as unconscious.

\textsuperscript{266} Ibid., pp.521-522.
Whitehead says “viewed as primordial, he is the absolute wealth of potentiality. In this aspect, he is not before all creation, but with all creation. But, as primordial, so far is he from, ‘eminent reality’ that in this abstraction he is ‘deficiently actual’. His feelings are only conceptual and so lack the fullness of actuality. Secondly, conceptual feelings, apart from complex integration with physical feelings, are devoid of consciousness in their subjective forms. Thus, when we make a distinction of reason and consider God in the abstraction of reason and consider God in the abstraction of a primordial actuality we must ascribe to him neither fullness of feeling nor consciousness”.

Whitehead perceives the primordial nature of God as totally unconscious because of the non-participation with the empirical actualities. This means that the primordial nature is totally unrelated to the phenomenological realm but without entering into the phenomenological level, God guides the world phenomena through the concepts. Every concept is a concept in itself which cannot be understood or perceived in totality. As an example, ‘Atom’ can be taken. It is known that matter is divisible. When division continues, it reaches a point beyond which division is not possible. Objects which are perceptible through ordinary sense perceptions can be divided. It means an object which is indivisible cannot be matter but it will be the concept of matter by which every material object is made. It means that the concept cannot be perceived through ordinary sense perception.

Whitehead conceives the primordial nature of God as the base of every object of reality but separates this nature from the

267 Ibid., p.524.
world phenomena and holds it as devoid of feelings and consciousness

4.1.2.4 Consequent Nature of God

As a continuation of the nature of God as primordial and its implications, one can have another set of idea of God from the point of view of its consequent nature. It was discussed that the primordial nature is conceptual and unconscious. Whitehead identifies the reality of the world and he justifies it through the consequent nature. Here Whitehead wants to prove the direct impact of God on particular objects.

Whitehead identifies the primordial nature as the wealth of potentiality which is deficiently actual because of its conceptual nature. So it is said to be lacking in the fullness of actuality and its unconsciousness is attributed to the lack of its integration with the physical feelings. But from the human point of view, one needs fullness of actuality and consciousness of physical feelings. This is where the importance of the idea of consequent nature emerges. Whitehead says “The consequent nature of God is conscious; and it is the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature, and through the transformation of his wisdom. The primordial nature is conceptual; the consequent nature is weaving of God’s physical feeling upon his primordial concepts”.268

The difference between the primordial and the consequent natures is clear; the primordial nature is the primary action of God on the world; it means God is the principle of concretion. On the other hand, the consequent nature emphasizes the reaction of the

268 Ibid., p.523.
world on God. Whitehead says “The completion of God’s nature into a fullness of physical feeling is derived from the objectification of the world in God”.\textsuperscript{269} This means that the consequent nature justifies every particularity in the world and reveals God’s nature in the particularities. This reason leads to the perception that there is an impact of the world on God. The objectification of the God can be substantiated.

\textbf{4.1.2.4.1 Consequent Nature is Perceptual}

The analysis of the consequent nature of God leads to the idea that the consequent nature of God is always in touch with the worldly objects. Earlier it was stated that the objectification of the God shows the relativity of all objects in God and there is a reaction of the world to God; in this way, God experiences the physical feelings with every new creation. It is true that created objects are perceivable; when the created objects are perceived, there the consequent nature of God is experienced. In other words it can be said that the perceivable objects are changeable ones because their final completeness or unchanged form exists as conceptual in the primordial nature of God. So changeable objects cannot be conceptual but can be only perceptual.

Whitehead derives the idea of the consequent nature of God to concretize temporality as valid and to give a status to the world of change. All these issues come under the objectification of the world which undergoes change.\textsuperscript{269} Such perception makes the consequent nature exactly opposite to the primordial nature. Whitehead says about consequent nature as “It is determined,\textsuperscript{269} Ibid., p.524.
incomplete, consequent ‘everlasting’ fully actual and consciousness”. That is, the dynamic character of the consequent nature of God which is guided by the perceptual experience makes the way forward to the realization of the conceptual nature.

### 4.1.2.4.2 Consequent Nature is Conscious

The static position of reality is devoid of physical feelings; the primordial nature of God represents the static position. Such a position is conceptual. When it is conceptual it lacks the fullness of actuality; in this sense, Whitehead considers the primordial nature as unconscious. Whitehead understands the problem of unconsciousness from the point of view of an active world. The world’s activities are not unconscious activities. No object is in motion aimlessly but consciously. To give a justification to the conscious movements, Whitehead states that consequent nature is conscious. Charles Hartshorne says “It would be more reasonable to say that Whitehead is the first great systematic philosopher who does mean it when he says that God is conscious, i.e., knows the world to be such and such”. Whitehead says “The consequent nature is conscious; and it is the realization of the actual world in the unity of his nature and through the transformation of his wisdom”.272

The conscious nature of God realizes the real structure of the world. Through consciousness, humans realize change and permanence; change leads to an order and consequently order

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270 Ibid., p.524.


272 Ibid., p.524.
leads to change. So consciousness reveals cosmology and the spiral movement of the dialectics.

4.1.2.5 The Relation between Primordial and Consequent Nature of God

Whitehead identifies everything in a holistic way; for him nothing is unrelated. But when one goes through the qualities of the primordial and consequent natures, it is seen that, both natures mean the two stand at two extremes; one possesses unconsciousness and conceptual and the other possesses consciousness and perceptual. But, according to Whitehead, they go together. Whitehead clarifies that the unconsciousness exists because of its inexperience with the physical feelings, but the concept has the potentialities of the physical feeling and the potentiality is activated through the consequent nature. That the consequent nature is conscious and it comes under the category of perception. Here the words of Kant are comparable that ‘the concept without percept is empty and percept without concept is blind’. Whitehead takes a similar position. Whitehead says “God is to be conceived as originated by conceptual experience with his process of completion motivated by consequent, physical experience initially derived from the temporal world”.273

Whitehead affirms the importance of the temporal world as an everlasting system of change and the everlasting changing system gets the potential from the conceptual experience. Whitehead says “The primordial nature is conceptual; the consequent nature is the weaving of God’s physical feelings upon

273 Ibid., p.524.
his primordial concepts”. So, in the view of Whitehead, the two natures of God do not stand as two extremes but go together to make the system dynamically holistic.

**4.2 Problem of Flux and Permanence in Sikhism and in the Philosophy of Whitehead**

The study of philosophy represents different ideas from different standpoints. The different standpoints, in order to concretise their ideas, thoughtfully criticise the other standpoints; the criticisms evolve into different schools of thought. This means that, it is very difficult to find an absolute philosophical idea that holds good forever. The reason behind this problem is that everything undergoes change and so the ideas also undergo changes. But, as long as, the particular epoch of the social reality continues, the idea that reflects the particular reality can be said to be contextually permanent.

Flux and Permanence are two important ideas in philosophy which reflect the idea of reality. The question is whether the reality can be considered as always in Flux or in Permanence. On the basis of these views one can find the division among the philosophical schools. Another philosophical approach is that Flux and Permanence are the characteristics of One reality. Sikhism and the philosophy of Whitehead have a definite view regarding this problem and they accept Flux and Permanence as the two aspects of One reality. This idea of holistic reality puts the traditional ideas into question regarding the idea of reality.

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4.2.1 The Problem of Flux and Permanence in Sikhism

In the traditional Indian philosophy, one can witness the influence of absolute reality which is beyond any change. This means that the idea of permanence is attributed to the absolute reality. This idea of absoluteness leads to the conclusion that the Truth is permanent and unchangeable. If permanence is the only truth, then the idea of change has no status in reality. In Sankara’s Advaita Philosophy, one can witness the negation of the idea of flux. A philosophical system, which denies the importance of change, naturally takes the position of negativism because, if there is no change, every system will become passive.

Contemporary Indian philosophy realizes the mistake committed by the early Indian philosophy and tries to rectify the mistake. Contemporary Indian philosophy tries to establish the truth of change and realizes that change is immanent in an active system. In this position the idea of flux also gets acceptance. A simple example to justify the idea of flux and permanence is available in contemporary Indian philosophy; that is, human body is in constant flux from birth to death; along with the constant flux there is something within the flux which is permanent all through the constant change of the body. In this example the existence of permanence within flux can be. The contemporary Indian philosophy takes up this issue and necessarily accepts the importance of flux and its relation and strongly affirms the idea of flux and permanence because it considers flux as a catalyst to clarify the reality of permanence. In this way, contemporary Indian philosophy takes a turn from traditional Indian philosophical concepts.
For every change, there will be relatedness among the events concerned. Regarding the idea of flux, the medieval Indian philosophy acts as the link between traditional thought and contemporary thought. The transition from traditional thought begins with medieval thought and Sikhism takes a leading role in that period. In this sense, Sikhism, as a philosophical trend, emerges in the late medieval period and still stands as trendsetter. Wherever the question of duality and the denial of the world appear, Sikhism ideologically uproots them. In order to uproot the idea of duality, Sikhism takes up the problem of flux and permanence.

It is necessary to analyze why dualism is a negative concept according to Sikhism. Guru Nanak takes up this issue in a socio-religious perspective. Nanak develops the holistic idea at a time, when it was considered that the spiritual realization is possible only through withdrawal from the worldly activities. One cannot think of societal living without the idea of worldly activities.

Advaita Vedanta indirectly affects the dynamism of societal living because in it the world is considered as Maya; the worldly activities too are considered as Maya. In this way, the consideration of world and spirituality as separate entities will lead to the intellectual discourse which may not have any connection with societal living and so, the world and religion will stand as unrelated units.

Sikhism questions the duality of the God and World and takes up the issue of flux and permanence in relation to God and the world. Sikhism perceives that reality is dynamic. This means that every system undergoes change to become more perfect. In
other words, it can be put that every system is in process. Sikhism accepts the idea of process.

**4.2.1.1 The Meaning of Process**

The meaning of process can be defined as an unending continuity towards perfection. It means, the attainment of perfection is possible only through process. Every system aims at perfection. This means no system is absolutely perfect and it can attain perfection only through process. When it is said that a system is in process, it means that the system undergoes change. That is, the idea of process means the idea of change.

Sikhism accepts the idea of process and considers that change is an essential postulate in order to understand the nature of reality. This means that the idea of process gives clarity to the understanding of the nature of reality. One can say that the idea of process is closely related to the idea of perfection.

**4.2.1.2 The Idea of Flux in Sikhism**

The term ‘Flux’ can be described as the potentiality of an object to make changes or transformation by itself. The flux is inherent in every living organism. With this idea only, the change and the nature of process can be experienced. In absence of the idea of flux, it is not possible to experience the idea of process which necessitates changes. There is constant change in every object. The base of such a change is the idea of flux. Sikhism accepts this idea and identifies it with the reality of the world. The idea of flux can be witnessed in the evolution of human beings. Sikhism says,

“For numerous births were we incarnated as worms and winged creatures.”
For numerous births, elephants, fishes and deer.
For numerous births did we become birds and snakes;
For numerous births yoked as horses, bullocks.
After a long period has thy humane frame
come into being”.  

Sikhism affirms the potentiality of flux as a force to change which has been characterized in the evolutionary process of humans. No element can remain as it is for ever because of the potentiality inherent in the element in the form of flux. Change appears to be a necessity for the progress of every element. So the idea of flux and its importance has been emphasized in Sikhism. Flux is a reality that can be experienced in all the worldly phenomena. The potentiality of flux changes the physical objects into different forms and through the constant changes the physical phenomena attain perfection. Sikhism perceives that the human evolution is attained through constant change.

Sikhism not only accepts the changes in the body but also in the mind. If the flux is not a reality, it cannot experience the different stages of consciousness towards the nature of truth. That means the human mind is in constant flux in order to satisfy the self. That means humans think constantly and this constant process only make humans to march towards perfection. Sikhism accepts this view. Sikhism holds the view that mind travels from ego consciousness to absolute consciousness. Here the evolutionary process in the mind is continuous until the mind experiences the absolute consciousness. Sikhism never considers

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human as absolute in himself/herself but always demands the reality of change that makes human being perfect.

If the body and mind is in constant flux; then it can be concluded that the world is in constant flux. That means the world undergoes change. The change may or may not be perceived by sense perception but it is a truth. Human beings live in the world of change that is why the faculty of human mind experiences the emergence of new objects. Sikhism accepts this view and says,

“Many ways has this universal expansion occurred. Many times has the universal expansion occurred, millions upon millions of creation in numerous species have been raised”.\textsuperscript{276}

If, flux alone exists, then the question as to how an order is possible arises, Sikhism answers this problem in a systematic manner. Sikhism considers that the flux is a reality and it makes changes in the world, but the flux which makes all changes in the world is totally controlled through Divine Ordinance, Hukam.

Heraclitus, a philosopher of the pre-Socratic period, advocated the reality of change. His work is more related to cosmology and finds that everything is in constant flux and that is the reality. Based on the idea of change, Heraclites puts forward the idea of opposites, which means the objects change into its opposite.

The problem here is, if everything is in constant flux, then it is totally uncontrolled. Heraclitus answers, to this question in a logical way, that is, the constant change are controlled by ‘Logos’.

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., p.571.
Heraclites perceives that the logos determine the course of all that comes to pass. That means, ‘logos’ makes an order in things. He says “The Logos which orders all things”.277 The term, ‘logos’, represents the idea of order or works as a guiding principle that controls the constant change. That means every change is related to logos and that makes an order in the universe. Heraclitus wants to substantiate that constant change is not uncontrolled in its character but an order is retained in the idea of change. Logos stands as a guiding principle of the change which occurs in every object.

It can be seen in Sikhism that there is an order behind the constant flux. That means whatever be the changes that occur in the world, they change in an order and totally controlled by the guiding principle, that is, Hukam. Sikhism accepts this view in relation to the idea of Flux. So the idea of flux does not operate as the absolutely independent process unaffected by any force, but there is a regulating principle. According to the directions of the regulating principle, Hukam, the changes occur in the universe. Hukam is a concept by which all the changes are regulated. Nothing is out of control of Hukam. According to Sikhism, Hukam can be defined as divine ordinance by which all manifested forms are regulated. Sikhism says,

“All beings of Divine ordinance arise;
By the ordinance in action engage”278

Sikhism accepts the world of change. The basis of the change and the means of change are formulated by Hukam.

Sikhism considers that reality is dynamic and the world of change is real as well as the order that controls the change is also real. Here it can be found that there are two different aspects. They are the regulator and the regulated. It can be understood that the regulator is the idea of Hukam and the regulated is the world of change. In order to find out the nature of the regulator and in what way it controls the reality of constant change, one should look into the nature of the idea of Hukam and its root. Here Sikhism introduces the idea of permanence, that works as the sustainer of the whole complex phenomena or it can be put in another way that the world of change is sustained by the permanence.

4.2.1.3 The Idea of Permanence in Sikhism

The term permanence reveals the idea of something that exists for ever without any external influence in order to exist for its existence. The enquiry into the nature of the idea of permanence goes beyond the sensory level because the idea of permanence is referred to the reality which exists forever. That means, it is not possible to point out an example for the idea of permanence because whatever is experienced in the world undergoes change. As stated earlier world is in constant flux and nothing is permanent. The reality of permanence cannot be denied even though it cannot be found within the reality of the world because something must be beyond the world of change to regulate the movement of change. The ordaining principle should not be in flux because if it is in flux then the world will be in an orderless position. The question of who makes the order can be answered by the idea of permanence. That means a permanent object, which exists forever, controls the change. Sikhism accepts God as the
symbol of permanence that exists forever, controls the change and absolutely free from change.

Sikhism perceives that God is the creator and sustainer of all. That means God creates the world of change and allows the reality of constant flux to function in a rhythmic way. In this way the world functions as the idea of permanence stands here as an all pervading and self-existing entity which permits changes in the world. The Mulmantra of Sikh scripture clearly states that

“He is the sole Supreme Being; of external manifestation creator, immanent reality; without fear, self-existent; realized by grace of the holy preceptor”.

The versions from Mulmantra points out the nature of God that is permanent because the creator or a self-existent entity cannot undergo change but it allows changes. In this way Sikhism perceives that God is in the nature of permanence which is the cause of change and the regulator of orderly change.

4.2.1.4 The Relatedness of Flux and Permanence

Sikhism considers that world is in flux and the God is permanent and self existent. That means the ideas of flux and permanence is different in nature. In this position, how a relationship is possible between flux and permanence when the natures of these two ideas are opposite is to be discussed here. It was stated that the idea of flux and permanence are necessarily related, in Sikhism.

279 Ibid., p.1.
Sikhism considers that God is both transcendent and immanent and the transcendental nature is conceptual and absolutely free from the process of creation. Whenever God is unaffected by the process of creation and if He distances Himself from the creations, it is not possible to find a relationship between God and the World. That means absolute transcendent position of God is unaffected by the process of change because in such a position God exists as pure conceptual entity. The transcendental nature of God from the point of view of the world of change, is totally inactive because, there is no space to experience the transcendental nature of God in the world of change. That means transcendental nature of God is unrelated to the idea of world of change. This shows that the relation between the idea of permanence and flux is not possible in the transcendental nature of God.

The Sikh view of metaphysics considers that God and world are necessarily connected. That means the idea of permanence and flux are related. Sikhism finds this relation through the immanent nature of God by which all creations take place.

Sikhism says,

“In all times are Thou immutable, changeless,
The creator constant ever”\textsuperscript{280}

While emphasizing the changeless character of God, Sikh idea accommodates the idea of flux in its changeless nature, saying: “The holy eternal, immanent through all time”.\textsuperscript{281} It means that the

\textsuperscript{280} Ibid., p.21.

\textsuperscript{281} Ibid., p.497.
The immanent nature of God beautifies the world reality through constant flux. Here, Sikhism accepts the importance of flux that exists in the idea of permanence. This idea is controlled by permanence that is why an individual realizes that he/she is in flux to attain the higher degree of reality.

Here, the idea of flux and permanence are important because the more the idea of flux is revealed the more the idea of permanence is revealed. That means the more the idea of world is revealed; the more the idea about God is also revealed. In another way it can be said that the more the idea of permanence is revealed; more the idea of flux is revealed too. The basis behind this is that whenever the enquiry into the world of change continues it reveals a phenomenon that controls the world of change. That means the idea of permanence of God will be revealed when one carefully watches the world of change. To enquire into the idea of permanence, one has to go through the world of change and realize the beauty of permanence. Sikhism says,

“In Thy beauty dost Though fascinate all creation
By Thy looks dost Thou the creation penetrate”\(^\text{282}\)

The realization of the beauty of the permanence of God is possible only through the created elements. Also the beauty of the created elements is revealed only through the aspect of change. When the process continues through the idea of change, it leads to the realization of the beauty of permanence. So both flux and permanence are important to Sikhism and both are interdependent.

\(^{282}\text{Ibid., p.254.}\)
4.2.2. The Problem of Flux and Permanence in the Philosophy of Whitehead

In the course of philosophy the discussion on the nature of reality moves towards two ends. At the one end there is flux and in the other end there is permanence. From the early Greek period onwards different ideas have been put forth regarding the nature of reality. Early Greek thinker, Heraclitus conceives that all things flow, he is of the view that one cannot step into the same water twice because of change. Heraclites concludes that change is the reality. Another Greek philosopher Parmenides contradicts the view of change and relates the world with the idea of permanence. Such ideas have been variously accepted in western as well as in eastern philosophy.

Critical examination of the two different aspects of reality reveals that the flux of the objects is permeated by the aspect of permanence. Thus, Whitehead makes his attempt to realize the nature of reality through both the aspects, that is, flux and permanence.

4.2.2.1. The Idea of Process

The meaning of the term process can be defined as an everlasting continuity leading to perfection. The process encapsulates all the objects of reality. Whitehead identifies the end of process as the attainment of the ground of holism. He traces the previous history of philosophy concerning the problem of flux and permanence. He realizes the unacceptability of the Heraclitian statement that all things are flux because when the established postulates such as soul or God are taken, they cannot be defined that they are in flow. Whitehead says “At this point we have
transformed the phrase ‘all things flow’ into the alternative phrase ‘the flux of things’. In doing so, the notion of ‘flux’ has been held up before our thoughts as one primary notion for further analysis”.283 By doing this, one can have an insight into the flux of things and the permanence of things. When the study continues on the flux and permanence the question of importance also arises, that is, which is preferable first. There is philosophical notion that the changeable objects are lower than that of the permanent objects because it is perceived that all that undergo change are illusions. As an example, human beings find permanence in a static, spiritual heaven and flux in the imperfection of the physical world. This is a tendency to separate the flux from permanence and to identify flux with imperfection. Whitehead opines that “Aristotle in his own person expressed a useful protest against the platonic tendency to separate a static spiritual world from a fluent world of superficial experience”.284

Another set of philosophers try to ignore the importance of flux. The philosophy of Bergson holds that human intellect specializes the universe and such specialization tends to ignore the fluency and to analyze the world in terms of static categories. Here the static categories represent the permanent objects.

Whitehead defines his philosophy in a holistic way. In his philosophy the matter and spirit are not separate and unrelated entities, but definitely related. Whitehead conceives the problem of flux and permanence in relation to the unity of matter and spirit.


Whitehead clearly states that the unity of matter and spirit represents the unity of world and God.

4.2.2.2 The Idea of Flux

The meaning of the term ‘flux’ represents the opposite meaning of permanence that means, flux is the one that undergoes change. Changeability is the nature of flux. Flux can be related to motion that tends to transformation. It means one object has the capacity to assume different nature through flux. In this way, all objects are undergoing transformation and flux can be called as the principle of transformation.

In philosophy, whenever the idea of flux appears, it will be defined only through the world of change because it is considered that world is nothing but a place of change. The problem here is that if the world is considered as a place of change, then it is to be answered that whether it is real or unreal. If one considers this question from the point of view of phenomena, there will not be anything in the world which can be termed as real. If this position is accepted then humans will find their life to be futile and will become negative in their approach towards the worldly phenomena. In such a world the creativity will be associated with the other worldly aspects. If the reality of change is not accepted then it is not possible to accept the reality of human body which undergoes change.

If the problem of flux is analyzed from the point of view of temporal nature of reality, then one has to accept that the world is real and the change is eternal. Whitehead accepts the reality of flux and considers that it makes a system dynamic. It means he accepts the reality of the world and the world of change. From his
point of view, he not only accepts the flux but permanence also and he finds togetherness in between them. He says “It is true to say that God is permanent and the world is fluent, as that the world is permanent and God is fluent”.285

4.2.2.3 The Idea of Permanence

The meaning of permanence represents the idea that the object exists forever. The question here is what exists forever. For this one cannot show the example of the existence of world or the objects of in the world because these objects undergo change. From the metaphysical point of view, one can show that the ultimate reality that is called, God, is permanent and unaffected by any type of change. Whitehead accepts this view point and considers that God is permanent. The question as to why it is permanent needs more explanation. The Whitehead’s idea of God assumes two nature, they are primordial and consequent. The primordial nature stands as conceptual and that concept is applicable to all objects but it is unaffected by the world process. If it is unaffected by the world process then the world cannot make any influence upon the primordial nature of God. That means, the primordial nature of God is not influenced by the aspect of flux. It means primordial nature of God stands as permanent forever. By this way it can be said that God exists forever.

Whitehead perceives the problem of absolute permanence and understands that it is unaffected by the world of change. Whitehead introduces the idea of the consequent nature of God, as a solution to the problem of absolute permanence and to make it

285 Ibid., p.528.
related to the world of change. The consequent nature of God is permanent and stands as a unifying factor between permanence and flux.

4.2.2.4 The Relation between Permanence and Flux

Whitehead constructs a dynamic system of metaphysics by relating the idea flux with permanence. He considers that the basis of the particular relationship between flux and permanence is necessary to understand the truth of reality. He uses the consequent nature of the idea of God as the reference point to relate flux and permanence. He says “The whole understanding of the world consists in the analysis of process in terms of identities and diversities of the individuals involved”\(^{286}\). That means the changes happen through the consequent nature of God and can be realized only through the experience of the world of change and which is in process.

Whitehead knows that, to make the world purposeful and meaningful, God must be related to the world of change. That means, the God must be in process, then only the purpose of the world becomes clear. He says “In God’s nature permanence is primordial and flux is derivative from world; in the world’s nature, flux is primordial and permanence is derivative from God. As the world’s nature is a primordial datum for God; and God’s nature is primordial datum for the world. Creation achieves the reconciliation of permanence and flux”\(^{287}\). What Whitehead tries to prove here is that, opposite elements stand to each other in mutual

\(^{286}\) Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, p.135.

requirement. In this unity, these two ideas inhibit or contrast each other. He uses the term ‘opposites’ to give emphasis to the idea of multiplicity of elements. This idea derived from the consequent nature of God. He says “Consequent nature of God is composed of multiplicity of elements. It is just as much a multiplicity, in it there is a unity”.288 He concludes the problem of flux and permanence with a statement of unity. “It is true to say that the world is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the world. It is as true to say that God creates this world, as that the world creates God”.289 This is a novel idea in philosophy and reflects the character of holism. He considers that the purpose of philosophy should not stick on to the radical transcendental reality. He says “The use of philosophy is to maintain an active novelty of fundamental ideas illuminating the social system”.290 This idea has been reflected throughout his philosophical works.

4.2.3 Conclusion

Sikhism and the philosophy of Whitehead perceive God as a unifying factor. Both the philosophies hold the view that the transcendental nature of god is conceptual and unconscious because it is unrelated to the worldly phenomena. But the immanent nature of God, which is perceptual and conscious, relates with the world of objects.

The similarity regarding the idea of flux and permanence can be found in Sikhism and in the philosophy of Whitehead. Both put

288 Ibid., p.531.
289 Ibid., p.528.
forward an idea which is relevant to the contemporary world. They try to bring the idea of God from transcendental level to the world of change in order to achieve the holistic unity between them. Both the philosophies affirm the idea that the idea of God and the world are in process. Both the systems of philosophy apply this idea of process in order to prove that the reality is a dynamic unity of flux and permanence. Sikhism and Whitehead’s philosophy deny the absolute transcendentalism due to its unrelatedness with the idea of change. It is a positive movement in philosophy in the sense that Sikhism and the philosophy of Whitehead identify the aspect of change along with the idea of God.