Chapter 3

Sikhism and the Philosophy of Hegel

3.0 Introduction

The present chapter attempts to bring out the possible similarities of ideas in Sikhism and the Philosophy of Hegel. In this chapter, four philosophical concepts of Sikhism and the philosophy of Hegel have been taken for comparative study. They are (1) Positive definition to Metaphysical aspects of Sikhism and the philosophy of Hegel. (2) Idea of Negation in Sikhism and in the philosophy of Hegel. (3) Relation between Whole and Parts in Sikhism and in the philosophy of Hegel. (4) Idea of Self-consciousness and Absolute consciousness in Sikhism and in the philosophy of Hegel.

3.1 Sikhism and the Philosophy of Hegel: A Positive Definition to Metaphysics

The study of Philosophy is a process which formulates ideas about the reality. The change of aspects of reality induces the evolution of new thought patterns. It is true to state that the changes of thought patterns create revolutionary outcomes in the reality.

When the existing ideas are challenged, naturally it will bring changes in the existing ideas. If the societal reality is challenged, it will bring some revolutionary outcomes in social philosophy. In the same vein, if the existence of the idea of supreme reality is challenged, then the existing metaphysical ideas tend to change.

Metaphysics is an important branch of philosophy that deals not only with the aspects of the physical world but also with the
speculations beyond human comprehension. Usually philosophers start their philosophical enquiry from the sensible realities and end up with abstract conceptions about reality. The quest for the supreme reality is the basis of metaphysics. The term metaphysics derived from the Greek term ‘meta-ta-phusica’ which means beyond physical existence. It is said that “The term metaphysics came into usage in the first century B.C to denote part of the philosophical heritage of Aristotle. He called this the most important part of his philosophical doctrine, the ‘First philosophy’ that which studies the highest principles of all that exists, which are inaccessible to the senses, comprehensible only to speculative reason and indispensable for all sciences”. Metaphysics also evolves by using rational ideas. In Sikhism and in the philosophy of Hegel, the idea of metaphysics gets a new dimension which is different from the traditional phase of metaphysics.

The word metaphysics came into existence on account of the quest for knowledge. In metaphysics, there is a leap from physics. There, physics ends its enquiry leading way for the notion of supernatural entity. Actually the idea of supernatural entity is built as superstructure on the physical reality; but the idea of supernatural entity is said to be acting upon the physical entities. Metaphysicians often say that it is impossible to define the supernatural phenomena by the physical phenomena and they try to justify the physical phenomena using the idea of the supreme reality.

Metaphysics pretends to have the solutions to the problem of reality and existence. Aristotle is the first person to introduce the term metaphysics into philosophy. According to him, it is a science

---

of first principles. So, for him it is the first philosophy, which investigates the first principles of the objects of reality. In metaphysics, the enquiry starts from physical phenomena and end with the spiritual phenomena. Religiously speaking, metaphysics begins with the world and its objects and end in the idea of ultimate reality, that is, the idea of God. In Eastern as well as in Western philosophical traditions, metaphysics separates the worldly realm from that of the Godly realm and it tries to define the reality accordingly. Metaphysics expresses the idea of God. For metaphysicians, the status of the world is secondary or unreal. This position of metaphysicians either denies the existence of the world or lowers the status of reality. The problem here is that without experiencing the reality of the world, one cannot conceive of the metastructure of reality. In that sense, if metaphysicians start their enquiry from the standpoint of the reality of the world then their conceptions of the metastructure will reflect the reality. This position gives a positive definition to metaphysics; there the reality of the world is accepted. Here the idea of God creates the world and the idea of God can be realized by the world of objects from the realm of the world. Sikhism and the philosophy of Hegel accept this positive standpoint of metaphysics.

3.1.1 Sikhism: A Positive Definition to Metaphysics

To some extent, Indian philosophical tradition has highlighted the negative aspects of metaphysics. For example, one of the schools of Indian thoughts, Advaita Vedanta does not accept the reality of the world. For Advaita, world is unreal. Advaita advances the view that liberation is possible only through the realization of the self within. The idea of liberation, here, is purely individualistic. “Vedanta proposed an advaitic unity of Atman and
Brahman otherwise the aloneness of Brahman and Atman. It was a philosophy of transcendental individualism or transcendental selfism”. Such an idea of Advaita is negative in the sense that individuality is given importance than the inter-relatedness of the various elements of reality.

P.T.Raju says “In the Upanishad, atman is clearly conceived as dynamic and full of bliss and consciousness. Indeed it is not merely dynamic, it is also static because it is self-subsistent or as some commentators put it, it is neither dynamic nor static. If the Atman is the whole of reality and if it is inactive, why do the Upanishads speak of its activity and creation of the world”. Such a position of the Upanishads exemplifies its negative position of metaphysics.

Sikhism emerges as a trend against the religious orthodoxy which negates or attributes to secondary status to the physical reality. Most of the Indian religious traditions emphasise the primariness of absolute reality and discourage the worldly activities. That means, they hold that the concept of God or Brahman exists as the real and the world exists as an illusion or secondary reality. Sikhism rejects this metaphysical position and puts forward a philosophy which accepts the idea of God and the World and affirms that they are necessarily connected and that the reality is the unity of the idea of God and the World.

As in the case of every religion, Sikhism attributes primacy to the idea of God. Sikhism considers the idea of God as both transcendent and immanent and it holds that the creation of the

123 S.Radhakrishnan and P.T.Raju, Eds., The Concept of Man, Delhi, p.232.
world is by the immanent nature of the idea of God. Sikhism says “The one God is without form and yet with form; He is without qualities and yet possesses all qualities”.\textsuperscript{124} This idea proves that the idea of God is both transcendent and immanent. In other words, it can be said that the mutually opposite binaries co-exist in the idea of God in Sikhism. That is, God is without form and qualities and this transcendental position is beyond creation; the immanent nature is with form and qualities and this position paves way for creation. Sikhism perceives the idea that the creator is in the creation. This shows that Sikhism accepts the reality of the world.

Sikhism says:

“The creator is in the creation;
in the creation abides the creator,
Pervasive every where,
From one clay has the creator shaped
the innumerable forms”.\textsuperscript{125}

Sikhism gives emphasis to the worldly reality as well as the worldly activities. Sikhism analyses the reality from societal point of view. So, human actions are given importance in Sikhism. For Sikhism, metaphysics is not merely the co-existence of the world with that of the concept of God but it enunciates the relation of the idea of God through social action. It means that through realizing the world, realization of the concept of God is possible. The nature of metaphysics in Sikhism is that the idea of God is the first principle and that the world is a part of that first principle.

\textsuperscript{125} Gurbachan Singh Talib, Tr., \textit{Op.cit.}, p.2702.
Sikhism says

“It is God alone who Causeth man to act;
It is He Himself who diffuseth demerits and merits.”\textsuperscript{126}

The miri-piri idea advanced by Sikhism emphasises the human orientations in a society and it reveals the socio-religious character to Sikhism. The miri-piri idea represents the unity of the world and spirituality. This reflects the idea that the realization of the idea of God is possible only through the realization of social action. Here, humans are supposed to be duty bound towards social action. Sikhism can be called a socialized religion because the religious ideas are essentially social. So the socio-religious character of Sikhism has a value and difference when it is compared with the philosophies of those who emphasize the transcendental position of the idea of God. The social meaning of Sikh religion justifies social values. It is because of this reason that Sikhism categorically rejects castes. If the existence of the world is denied, then casteism would be a non-issue. But Sikhism considers casteism as a social evil. Sikhism says

“In the mother’s womb to man belongs;
Neither heredity nor caste,
All men are created out of divine essence.”\textsuperscript{127}

This perception of social equality arises only out of the idea that the humans are the manifestations of the idea of God; that all the humans have the same essence of God. From the analysis of

the nature of the world, it can be viewed that the Sikh metaphysics accepts the reality of the world.

Now, the status of action in Sikh metaphysics shall be analysed here. Sikhism considers all humans to be equal before the idea of God as the humans are supposed to be the creations from the same essence, of the concept of God. But in praxis one does not experience equality among human beings. The idea of negation of the world and its beings emerge due to the pessimistic approach towards the world and due to the manipulative approach towards the beings of the world. One has to uproot pessimism in order to experience the reality of the world in relation to the idea of God. One should not be pessimistic, then only one can realize the unity of the idea of God and World, there equality remains. Sikhism considers that the nature of action must be for the good of the society. Puran Singh says “In the Guru Khalsa state there can be no other law but be good, do good, think good, live good. For goodness is the fragrance of the life of the spirit; mercy, charity, love, helping fellow beings, feeling miserable at the misery of others, are the natural emanations of the life of the truly cultured humans who is the embodiment of God on earth”.¹²⁸ For all the above practices can be full-filled only through the exercise of action. Sikhism says “God becomes all-steel-Sarab Loh or Sword Bhagavati. The sword is made the prime cause of the world and made responsible for its creation and sustenance. It has also been stated that in the process of creation the first thing was a double edged sword”.¹²⁹ This statement is a beautiful example of Sikh practice of action. This represents God as sword to fight for good.

The dynamic unity and the universal inter-relationship are revealed only through the moment of action. In the Sikh concept of metaphysics, the universe, action and inter-relationship get an important status. It can be said that Sikhism provides a positive definition to metaphysics. Muthumohan says “The generalized philosophical idea of creation, sustenance and the destruction, the idea of Time, history, change, human work, etc. massively enter into the Sikh conception of reality. Philosophy as pure metaphysics ends here and a fresh definition of philosophy appears. Religion no more is pure spirituality having hatred towards the phenomenal life. Sikhism keys up the dialectics of spirituality and earthliness and it is redefining the idea of religion itself. The radical departure made by Sikhism is comparable to the same type of departure made by Hegelianism in the European philosophy”.130 The active immanent status of the God is the peculiarity of Sikh religion which is different from other metaphysical points of view.

3.1.2 Hegelian Philosophy: A Positive Definition to Metaphysics

The philosophy of Hegel has an immanent impact on the entire modern thinking. Hegel’s conception of the true nature of humans as the creator of history made an impact in the modern thought. Hegel considers that nothing in the world is beyond the conception of history. Hegel identifies the progress of humans in different historical stages and tries to prove that the progress is through human action and creativity. Action includes moments of oppositions and contradictions. Hegel’s conception of action is entirely different from that of the scholastic philosophy; scholastics term the action as passive and guide humans to the transcendental realm as a way of liberation. Hegel is different; he perceives the

action as the way to realize the true nature of humans and the absolute spirit; that is, the idea of God. Here the action is not related with pessimistic move to realize the idea of God but action helps to trace the entire history to experience how history and spirit are related and thereby provides the wisdom; that is, everything is considered as spirit and this idea leads to the idea of absolute. It is said “At any rate, metaphysics never means for Hegel a deviously and surreptitiously arrived at knowledge of things outside of knowledge but rather the unity toward which every thinkable claim to definiteness with reference to every other claim is oriented. This unity depends on nothing outside itself. Indeed it does not even tolerate the thought of an outside. It is for this very reason that it may be called absolute. For it is absolutely everything”.

Hegel argues that separation or tendency to reject an aspect of reality as unnecessary or to accept something as inevitable could not be a coherent thinking but to realize that all the objects have a purpose and necessity. It is true that some moments or aspects are inevitable but at the same time others may not be unnecessary. One can see the necessity of all the moments of reality as the connecting link and it forms the nature of absolute. That shows the oneness of reality. Hegel sees the movement of spirit from subjectivity to objectivity. Here, the subjective spirit realizes the total idea in itself. The subjective spirit enters into the objective world. For Hegel absolute spirit is the unity of both. That means the ultimate reality is the unity of subjectivity and objectivity. “Subjective and objective spirits are the two opposite extremes limiting each other. The absolute spirit is the concrete reality

---

which transcends the division between them. It is an actual consciousness which is neither purely personal nor purely impersonal. It is not consciousness of an individual and consciousness of the object. It is the absolute identity of the subject and the object”. Hegel equates the absolute spirit with the idea of God because it is endowed with all the qualities that the idea of God is endowed with.

Hegel understands metaphysics not as the study of the concept of transcendental God but as the study of the world and the idea of God as a whole. They are necessarily related in the philosophy of Hegel. He considers the absolute spirit as the unity of every individual phenomenon.

Hegel perceives that reality is dynamic because it is a systematic unity. In such a system the hierarchy of elements hangs together. The difference between objectivity and subjectivity which come together in absolute spirit are analyzed in Hegelian philosophy. In that way Hegelian philosophy advances the idea of difference in unity and unity in difference.

The idea of unity-in-difference is definitely a positive definition to metaphysics because of its attempt to rope in the different elements into a uniform structure. Hegel advances this idea as the concept of absolute. Hegel, by this idea, indicates that metaphysics is not the knowledge of things outside of intelligence but when one realizes the idea of absolute, there he realizes nothing outside of it. In it the idea of God depends on the world and the world depends on the idea of God.

---

It may be questioned as to why the idea of God depends on the world. But it seems to Hegel that, if the idea of God does not depend upon the world, then it cannot be realized. “Hegel attempted to penetrate the fundamental nature of reality by means of rational deliberation. Yet he conceived this reality as a historical and dialectical process intelligible only to the discarding and retrospective philosopher. Hegel’s metaphysics emphasized the radical dependence of God upon the world and promoted a divine immanent presence in human history”.\textsuperscript{133}

Hegel’s conception of reality is not different from the concept of Absolute. Such a conception overcomes the fundamental problem of philosophy which is related to the binary aspect of matter and spirit. Hegel does not negate either the physical phenomena or the supreme reality. He does not consider the metaphysics as the one which divides the nature of reality as binaries. Also Hegel never allows anything to be separated from the idea of Absolute. Hegel, thus, redefines the nature of metaphysics. In his idea of metaphysics, there is no division, no prejudice but only unity. So, the philosophy of Hegel forms a positive definition to metaphysics.

It is assumed that a system is in movement only when it is in touch with the worldly as well as spiritual realms. If it takes in to account only the social phenomena, then it will commit the fallacy of negation of spirituality, consequently it will invite criticism. If the system considers only spiritual aspects, then such a system will be passive about reality, there will be no action. The relevance of Hegel’s philosophy is that he socializes the spirituality. When the spirituality is socialized, one can justify the social movements in

\textsuperscript{133} Mircea Eliade, \textit{The Encyclopedia of Religion}, vol.1, pp.486-487.
relation with spirituality. According to Hegel, social movement can be against establishments. It may be for the satisfaction of human desires and for the fight for recognition. Compared to the nature of spirituality, all these movements are negative and contradictory to the nature of spirituality. Hegel perceives that without these desires, it is impossible to have a union with spirituality. So for a socio-spiritual unity, different types of movements of opposition and contradictions are necessary.

Hegel uses the term dialectic for the purpose of the synthesis of socio-spiritual unity. Alexander Kojeve says “The history must be the History of the interaction between mastery and slavery. The historical dialectic is the dialectic of master and slave. But the opposition of their thesis and antithesis is meaningful only in the context of their reconciliation by ‘synthesis’ of history necessarily has a final term, if humans who become must culminate in humans who has become, its desire must end in satisfaction, if the science of humans must possess the quality of a definitely and universally valid truth – the interaction of master and slave must finally end in the dialectical overcoming of both of them”.\textsuperscript{134}

The concept of slave and master was a reality. Humans were either slave or master but without the interplay of each other, no movement of history is possible. That is why Hegel says that the end of the dialectical process is synthesis and the synthesis is possible only through opposition. So opposition or contradiction is a reality. This reality of the existence of a thesis and its anti-thesis recognizes the union of socio-spiritual aspects. Hegel says “God is on the one side I am on the other; and the essential characteristics here is that I enclose myself with God within myself, know myself in

\textsuperscript{134}Alexander Kojeve, \textit{Introduction to the reading of Hegel}, p.9.
God as my truth and God in me”.\textsuperscript{135} This type of union is possible only when one gets the answer of ‘I’. There is nothing special in the answer of Descartes that ‘I think therefore I exist’ because that does not give the answer to the ‘I’ ness of the person concerned. Also, the Cartesian explanation that ‘I am a thinking being’ does not satisfy Hegel. For Hegel, ‘I’ am not only a thinking being but also ‘I’ am the bearer of an absolute knowledge. The ‘I’ gets the absolute consciousness only through action and creativity, which includes opposition and contradiction and fight for recognition. According to Hegel, the answer to the question of ‘what I am’ is possible only through action. After the human gets the answer to what ‘am I’ he/she begins to move with the idea of God that is absolute consciousness.

The ultimate realization of humans is not to prove himself/herself as a winner or loser after a fight, but to realize the perfect synthesizer in him/her. All the human efforts, at last, rest in synthesis to realize mutuality as reality for better living. Hegel says “The labour of the individual for his own, and the satisfaction of his own needs, of others as of his own, and the satisfaction of the needs he obtains only through the labour of others. As the individual in his individual work already, unconsciously performs a universal work”.

Hegelian idea of the Absolute represents the unity of the various moments of the societal living. Such an idea restructures the nature of metaphysics, for in Hegel’s philosophy, there is no unreality and, there is neither spiritual nor social but only socio-spiritual. In Hegel’s idea of metaphysics fight for recognition has a

\textsuperscript{135} Bernard M.G. Reardon, \textit{Hegel’s Philosophy of Religion}, p.27.

\textsuperscript{136} A.V. Mille, Tr., \textit{Phenomenology of Spirit}, p.213.
value, contradiction has a value because such aspects express the nature of reality. In this respect Hegelian philosophy is a positive definition of metaphysics.

Sikh idea of metaphysics and Hegelian idea of metaphysics give a scope for comparison. Both the philosophies accept reality as holistic in nature. There the idea of God and World are not separate and the realization is possible only through the acceptance of the worldly objects in relation with the idea of God. Social action reveals the unity of various aspects of reality.

3.2 Idea of Negation in Sikhism and in the Philosophy of Hegel

Negation is an aspect of reality which keeps the system active. Here the idea of negation does not mean the nullification or ascetic renunciation. But, it means, here, the possibility of an alternate or an anti-thesis in the sense that the anti-thesis contradicts the thesis in the world of affairs-itself. Negation, here, does not mean that the anti-thesis to a thesis lies in a transcendental realm but the anti-thesis presupposes the alternative through social action. A system is inactive only when all the particles in that system affirm an idea as the absolute reality without giving any scope for discussion or opposition. When an idea is accepted as supreme, then the scope for opposition to that idea gets nullified. It means wherever opposition is inactive, the dialectical movement of the system will become passive.

The basic instinct of human being is to be active. Humans negate, oppose and make synthesis. These tendencies exhibit the basic nature of humans. The dialectical movement of history is a proof of the necessity of negation.
In a philosophical system, if an idea is found to be irrelevant in its explanation of reality, it is opposed or negated. Through opposition or negation or contradiction of the existing reality the emergence of new idea is witnessed in the form of synthesis. Here it can be noted that the idea of thesis, antithesis and synthesis get validity and the idea of negation becomes fundamental to the formation of a synthesis.

3.2.1 Idea of Negation in Sikhism

In order to understand the nature of reality, Sikhism applies the idea of negation. Sikh philosophy is not dogmatic but it gives space to wider discussions and alternative ideas in the societal realm. Sikh philosophy attributes importance to the social commitments of humans and it considers the worldly affairs as active principles. The idea of negation becomes an active principle where social evil exists.

Sikhism represents a new model of religious philosophy where pessimism has no value. Sikhism accepts the reality of the world and considers it as an ever active reality. So the Sikh idea of negation stands to mean the differences that exist among various elements of reality. The idea of negation is a means to accept the plurality of reality. In order to know the Sikh idea of negation, one must analyze the nature of reality as perceived by Sikhism.

3.2.1.1. Nature of Reality in Sikhism

The idea of negation can be experienced only through the verification of the nature of reality. Sikhism considers reality as Dynamic and as Unity of opposites. This is not the authoritarian explanation of Sikhism, but the study projects this idea.
Sikhism considers that the world is constituted of hierarchy of elements which are different in nature. But it holds that the essence of all the elements of reality is same as they are related to the essence of the idea of God, even though a hierarchical structure exists among the various elements. Wherever there is hierarchy the differences between the objects of the system can be realized. Nirbhai Singh says, “The whole system represents higher as well as lower elements. This gradation of elements constitutes a hierarchical structure of the IK. There is nothing as lifeless matter. Matter is also alive”.\(^{137}\) The hierarchical structure of a hierarchical system shows dynamism in the sense that there used to be horizontal or vertical mobility among the elements of the system concerned.

The Sikh perception of reality has a dynamic character and the hierarchical structure of reality is kept active with the intervention of the idea of God. Sikhism says,

“Many millions live without exertion
Many millions are wearied with labour
Many millions are created wealthy
Many millions are anxious for riches
Wherever God pleaseth He placeth them”.\(^{138}\)

Sikhism considers that every aspect of a system is imminent. That is why it discusses, the importance of hierarchy. The different objects of reality reflect the dynamic character of reality. It is because of this reason that the terms such as distinctions, union, separation, hunger and experience are mentioned as the various objects of reality.


aspects of reality in Sikhism. The hierarchical structure and the differences between the objects are considered, in Sikhism, as a unified reality.

Sikhism considers reality as a unity of various objects. The unity is attained through the essence of God. Earlier the purpose of ‘difference’ in a system and especially how Sikhism accommodates the differences were discussed. According to Sikhism, acceptance of difference is possible through the realization of the idea of unity. This unity is through the God idea.

“In all creatures are Thou pervasive,
Within all abiding,
One supreme reality all pervading”.\textsuperscript{139}

The above verses show the unity of beings in the Sikh philosophy.

“Thou the tree – all existence are Thy blossoming branches; Thou the subtle essence, palpable have turned, Thou the ocean, form, bubble – Nothing besides Thee is visible. Thou the string and the beads; The knot and the principal bead too art Thou”.\textsuperscript{140}

Sikhism holds the view that the unity is not meant as the unification of the objects of same character but a systematic unity of different elements. Sikhism says “Thou the ocean, all creations are in Thee contained”.\textsuperscript{141} This idea points out that every object is differently active in a system. Sikhism tries to overcome the

\textsuperscript{139} Gurbachan Singh Talib, Tr., \textit{Op.cit.}, p.28.
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Ibid.}, p.211.
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}, p.29.
limitations to make a system active by way of realizing the consensus among the different elements of the system.

The idea of negation exists in the idea of reality in Sikhism. The two aspects of the nature of reality, that is, dynamism and unity include the idea of negation in the sense that dynamism reflects the possibility of opposition within a system and unity is the outcome of the realization of the consensus among the different elements of the system.

3.2.1.2. The Role of Negation in the Idea of Reality

Negation is an aspect of a system which makes it dynamic. For Sikhism, the idea of negation is a method to realize the dynamic unity of multiple natures of elements. The metaphysical side of negation explains that the idea of negation goes along with the oneness of reality. Sikhism uses the term Sunya to emphasis the ‘one’, or the Real. The doctrine of Sunya claims that there is nothing besides; it means that reality is one. The metaphysical question here is how one can submerge into the One or Sunya. Adi Granth says “The man has to die to self and then rise to life. This is how one should submerge into Sunya”. Balbir Singh says “Sunya seen in this perspective of death within oneself is a process to cleanse the mind. It is a procedure to empty out the contents of consciousness. It is a discipline to drain out the cravings and latent propensities of the mind. Now all these reflect the denial side. Obviously, it is the negative aspect. The Sikh scripture does not stop short at it but goes beyond it. It does not pause at the negative. It affirms that via the negative the self must ascend. From its own ashes, the phoenix is to spring up and soar

---

142 Balbir Singh, Messages of Guru Gobind Singh and Other Essays, P.8.
heavenwards. For Guru Nanak the two aspects, the negative and positive are not disconnected. They occur side by side. These two together form one integrated discipline for the realization of Truth”.143 Here the importance of negation in the process of the realization of reality as one can be witnessed. The concept of Sunya in Sikhism is, thus, the intermingling of the nothingness and the absolute. When nothingness is ascribed to mean the real or the One, it means that nothingness has a value in the sense that it is the source of all creations. Psychically, nothingness means the emptiness of the mind from its egoistic tendencies, and it acts as the spring-board for the realization of the unity of the various elements of reality.

Sikhism dose not consider reality as a single entity which is totally aloof from other objects; but reality as a whole, is the totality of the entire object irrespective of their human considerations as good or evil. The idea of negation is included to make a systematic progress in the development of the whole.

Sikhism perceives that the world is constituted of hierarchy of elements which are different in nature. In a hierarchical structure, the opinions towards an idea can be different and the differences can not be analyzed from a single point of reference. In a hierarchical system, the elements may take opposite stand to each other. The oppositional stand of elements in a system is not permanent but they enter into an alliance, which can co-habit the mutual interests of the opposites, for the survival of the system through the process of negation. In other words, synthesis is possible through negation of the parts of binary aspects; the thesis and the ant-thesis combine to form a synthesis through the

143 Ibid., p.9.
process of negation of mutually irreconcilable elements between them. The activity of negation influences a system in two ways. First, it makes a system dynamic and dialogical in nature, second, it makes a concrete unity through synthesis. The dynamism and unity are the characters of Sikh perception of reality and the idea of negation is the guiding factor to realize these characters.

3.2.1.3. Role of Negation in Social praxis

Sikhism considers that the metaphysical issues are not different from the social issues. Togetherness of the metaphysical and social realms represents the idea of reality in Sikhism. In the metaphysical realm, the role of negation is realized at the structural levels of the creation in Sikhism. In the social realm, the idea of negation has an important role in the shaping of the society in Sikhism. The progress of the society is associated with the idea of negation. The idea of negation which is accepted as the fundamental part of the whole in Sikhism is also manifested in the process of social construction.

Sikhism identifies societal living in a different way. Generally, religions give leverage only to the spiritual aspect. Normally, it is felt that societal problems are not bothered in the affairs of religions. Spiritual elements of the religions induce humans to withdraw themselves from the entanglement in societal problems and thus religions are considered as the source of renunciation of the worldly aspects. But Sikhism accepts the social realm with all its problematic and identifies the humanity as the tool of the idea of God to solve the societal problems. Sikhism prefers social service to ritualism. In this regard, humans are considered as the tools of God, through whom the Divine ordinance
operates to eliminate the social evils. Here, the idea of negation is directly involved with the social issues.

Sikhism offers freedom to humans to work out his strategies, in tandem with the Divine ordinance, in a world of differences. Thus, the distinct elements and different parts of reality are free to take contradictory positions, possibly negating each other. The role of negation in the world of difference offers the space for the dialectic of the differences and thereby it intends to make a consensus or unity among the different elements of the society. On the other hand the social praxis of the idea of negation in Sikhism also can be witnessed from point of view of social inequality. Here the process of negation can be identified in the Sikh history. All through the Sikh history, the idea of negation operates against the social evils of the day.

In the Sikh history, one can identify its fight against the social inequalities which includes casteism, brahminism, despotism, tyranny, social oppression, etc. Sikhism theoretically negates these sorts of social inequalities and any form of oppression. In the times of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, the idea of negation becomes more practical and the absolute reality, that is, the idea of God becomes manifested in the sword. Sikhism emphasizes the role of sword for a noble cause to resist oppression and tyranny and secure justice and equality for humanity. Guru Gobind Singh says,

“When all other means (to secure justice) fail,
It is righteous to take the sword in hand”.144

The Sikh attitude of the idea of negation in the realm of social praxis is entirely different from other religious trends. Sikhism associates the idea of negation with the realization of righteousness in society. Sikhism says

“This body is all seat of righteousness,
Bearing the holy eternal light,
In it are hidden jewels, that only a God directed devotee
May dig out”.\footnote{Gurbachan Singh Talib, Tr., p.642.}

The way to dig out or bring out the righteousness is possible only through the idea of negation. The idea of negation is not related to passivism. In other words, the bringing forth of the righteousness through negation is related to activism. Activism paves the way for overcoming of the problems either by way of eliminating the social evils or by of reconciliation of contradictions, in order to realize unity. According to Sikhism, the importance of negation lies in the process of realizing the unity of multiple elements of reality.

3.2.2. The Idea of Negation in the Philosophy of Hegel

Philosophy is a dialectical process which passes through different stages to constitute the truth. The process moves not only through the positive areas but also through its negative sides, that the Truth is constructed not on the basis of one of the binaries, but on the basis of the combination of elements of both the binaries.

In modern philosophy the idea of negation gained momentum during the period Hegel. Hegel constructs his philosophy upon the idea of absolute spirit and he considers it as the real, concrete and
objective force. For Hegel, absolute spirit is personified in a number of manifestations as the world spirit. On the basis of the analysis of consciousness, Hegel identifies spirit as the final essence of humans and history. Hegel seeks to discover how the unfolding of the spirit is manifested in the actual happenings. When this idea of spirit comes to the concrete level of reality, humans realize the effective model of struggle. In the struggle one movement negates another movement and after a long process of becoming, real society comes into existence. According to Hegel, the history ends when the real society comes into existence. The Hegelian idea of negation arises in the process of becoming.

Hegel proceeds from the point that “Each stage in the forward movement of the mind negates the preceding stage, yet could not exist without having that preceding stage to reject. That which vanishes in the process must be looked upon as essential. Yet not as something fixed and cut off from what is true. Nor is the true something static, dead and passive. What appears is the becoming and passing away that does not become or pass away. This process of becoming and passing away truly exists, is in itself and constitute the actual reality and the active life of truth”.146

The task of Hegelian philosophy is to establish the idea of Holism. When the idea of negation is taken, Hegel doesn’t negate anything in its totality but suspends a part of process to redirect the way of a movement. So the task of negation is not the rejection of propositions but to suspend and preserve the proposition. Even if a stage is negated, it does not mean its rejection from the process, but means its temporary suspension useful for another development.

---

Regarding the idea of spirit, Hegel conceives that the spirit cannot exist as such “It can exist only by overcoming its opposite. It can exist only by negating its own negation”.\textsuperscript{147} This is the point Hegel makes in the preface of his master work, ‘Phenomenology of Spirit’ “The life of the spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself unquenched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment it finds itself. It is the power not as something positive, which closes its eyes to the negative as when we say of something that it is nothing or false, and then having done with it, turn away and pass on to something else; on the contrary, spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarry with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being”\textsuperscript{148}

Hegel thinks of contradiction as the source of movement because whatever is in contradiction must pass over into something else and this is the basis of human progress. Taylor says, “When we say that the whole is in contradiction, we mean that it unites identity and opposition, that it is opposed to itself. Perhaps one might want to amend this way of putting it to get over the apparent paradox. We might want to say for instance the identity and opposition are not to be considered incompatible. But to put it in this way Hegel wants to retain some of the force of the clash between identity and opposition. For \textit{Giest} is in struggle with himself with his necessary embodiment and only comes to

\textsuperscript{147} Charles Taylor, \textit{Hegel}, p.104.

realization out of this struggle. So we would have to say that opposition is both compatible and incompatible with identity”.\(^{149}\)

Negation is the basis of opposition and the Hegelian idea of spirit emerges due to this negation. It can be said that there is negativity within everything. In particular, Hegel links negativity to the subject, whose nature is to return to itself through its opposites. That is why Hegel says “The living substance is being which is in truth subject... this substance is as subject, pure simple negativity and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple: it is the doubling which sets up opposition and then again the negation of this is different diversity and of its antithesis”.\(^{150}\)

### 3.2.2.1 Hegel as Dialectician

Hegel discovers a process in which one stage leads into the other. When one examines the phenomenology of spirit, there the consciousness moves into self-consciousness and conceives the rational consciousness which is the idea of the absolute. This movement is a dialectical movement because on the way to the absolute idea human consciousness experiences the problem of contradiction and opposition. That is why Hegel is called as dialectician.

Hegel says “Dialectic is the principle of all the movements and of all the activity we find in reality... Everything that surrounds us can be treated as an instance of dialectic. We know how all that is finite, instead of being stable and ultimate, is rather changeable and transitory: this is no other than the dialectic of the finite where

---


by it, being implicitly other than itself is driven beyond what it immediately is and turns into its opposite”.  

It is the dialectics of the finite beings that sets the society in motion. Such a dialectics changes the existing actuality. Hegel perceives that everything in the world involves opposite and contradictory aspects and that contradiction is the motive force of the world. Hegel identifies the contradiction as the motive force, because for him, the dialectics is the theory that formulates the multiplicity of events arising from the contradictions.

Hegel does not consider dialectical movement as a mental phenomenon but as a social phenomenon. When Hegel perceives the operation of the dialectical process in the reality, the idea of negation exists as the basis. When opposition and contradiction emerge, there the theory of negation arises. The corner-stone of the dialectical movement is negation. It is through negation that the dialectical process begets progress from the moments of contradiction.

3.3.2.2 The Social Meaning of the Concept of Negation

For Hegel, philosophy is not merely an intellectual exercise, but thought and feelings have a social meaning. At the end of the eighteenth century, Germany witnessed culture consciousness and conservatism. This was the period of French revolution too. Confusions and contradictions were the prevalent situation in Germany, at the time of Hegel. Realizing his age as the period of conflicts, Hegel welcomed revolution as a way out of the mess. When Hegel witnessed the invasion of Napoleon into Germany on a white charger, he characterized that event as the emergence of the

---

\[151\] J.N.Findlay, _Hegel – A Re-examination_, p.65.
world spirit on a white charger; there he used the term ‘world spirit’ to denote Napoleon. Here Hegel articulates the idea that truth is dynamic. The aspects of opposition, contradiction, negation and human desire join together to make Hegelian concept of whole a dynamic one.

When it is said that the whole is dynamic, it means that it is a process which includes contradiction and consequently the moment of negation. So the social meaning of the concept of negation exists in the oppositional and contradictory movements. Hegel defines the movement of a process in a different way, starting from man. He says “Man is self-consciousness. He is conscious of himself, conscious of his human reality and dignity; and it is in this that he is essentially different from animals, which do not go beyond the level of simple sentiment of self”.152 So self-consciousness is the basic identity of humans. In order to get the recognition of ‘I’, humans need to be active and they need to act to get rid of the contradictions between their actuality and their desires. The desire of a being constitutes the being as ‘I’. Hegelian perception of desire creates the history. Hegel says “Human history is the history of desired desires”153 because a historical process is possible only by desires, when humans realize their being in becoming.

A society gets its meaning only through history, which is created by humans. It can be interpreted that society gets its meaning only through human desires because human history is the history of desires. When a desire is directed towards another desire, then the society gets more meaning. When a human desires

to move beyond the actuality, he/she carries all the aspects such as opposition, affirmation of contradictions and negation with it. The basis of opposition and contradictions is negation, because, when one opposes, there he/she is applying negation, when one contradicts, there he/she negates the existing actuality by preferring an alternative to it. Hegel holds that the movement of the society is possible only through oppositions and contradictions. The fulfillment of humans’ desires succeeds in contradictions and oppositions; they are the different ramifications of the negation of actuality. So desire can be fulfilled only by negation.

Here, it can be concluded that human desires create history and the fulfillment of desire can be achieved only through negations. So the humans realize the ‘I’ in the process of negation, by which process the society is also set in motion. In other words, the base of the progress of society lies in its negations. This is the social meaning of the concept of negation. Hegel says “Desire disquiets him and moves him to action. Born of desire, action tends to satisfy it, and can do so only by the negation”.  

Hegel elaborates the value of negation from the micro level to the macro level. A concept like negation gets a social meaning, only when it has got a wide appeal in the society. Hegel applies the idea of negation in a socialized form. He holds that self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in self-consciousness. Hegel says “self-consciousness is desire.” All the movements in the world occur in order to fulfill the human desire. It was earlier stated that desire creates opposition which consequently ends in negation of

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p.4.\]

\[\text{A.V. Miller, Tr.}, \text{ Op.cit.}, \ p.109.\]

113
the existing reality. Hegel formulates this idea in the context of master slave relationship.

Hegel offers a social meaning through the idea of negation in the master slave relationship. It is the confrontation of two mutually exclusive consciousnesses that is the bourgeois consciousness and the proletarian consciousness, which Marx takes up as a model for his social theory.

Hegel identifies the development of consciousness only through the contradiction with other being. So the self-consciousness encounters each other and struggles to defeat each other in order to prove their independence and freedom against the other. After the struggle one emerges as the master and other as slave. Here the master risks his life to attain the recognition as an independent self-consciousness. Here one contradicts the other. So it is a moment of negation.

Hegel says, “Negation is inherent in a property as a discriminateness which is immediately one with the immediacy of being, an immediacy which, through this unity with negation is universality”. In the philosophy of Hegel the idea of negation tries to unfold the mystery of the idea of ultimate reality and makes it a socialized one.

Sikhism and the Hegelian philosophy offer space for comparative study because in both the systems of philosophy, the idea of negation is in relation with the ultimate reality and is used as a tool for social transformation.

---

156 Ibid., p.69.
3.3 The Idea of Self-consciousness and Absolute Consciousness in Sikhism and in the Philosophy of Hegel

Philosophy gives importance to explain the nature and purpose of human existence. Humans are said to be the centre of all the objects of reality, because they control the world phenomena and modify the reality according to their desires. The human desire arises from the contradictory consciousness that arises out of the existing reality. Sikhism and the philosophy of Hegel have discussed the nature of consciousness elaborately. They consider two types of consciousness such as self consciousness and absolute consciousness. These two types of consciousness are not entirely different but relative to each other because the self-consciousness always moves towards perfection that is, absolute consciousness. Both are important in the making of humans.

In Sikhism the idea of self-consciousness is called Manmukh and absolute consciousness is called Gurmukh. The movement here is from Manmukh to Gurmukh.

3.3.1 Sikh Idea of Manmukh and Gurmukh

Sikhism accepts the status of man as supreme among all the creations. Sikh philosophy examines the human nature and its characteristics. Sikhism advances the idea of interrelationship; there every object is connected with the other object. The idea of God is said to be the centre of all relations because the essence of all the related objects is the essence of God. Naturally, every object in the universe is linked with the idea of God.

The discussion on the human nature in Sikhism leads to the areas of interrelatedness and the beauty of human essence. In
Sikhism, humans are related with the idea of God and with other human beings, considering God as the creator and other beings as the carrier of the same essence. It can be concluded here that God created humans and so the human essence is same that of the idea of God. Thus, every human is interconnected. Sikhism says,

“Of the universe, Himself Father and Mother,
Himself is He the subtle essence;
Himself the Palpable substance,
The Supreme Being, all-holy, all forms created,
All on one thread has He Strung”.\textsuperscript{157}

Further, Guru Granth Sahib says,

“All Creatures are noble, none low
One sole Maker has all vessels fashioned”.\textsuperscript{158}

Even though all humans are made out of the same essence of God, there are still perceptible differences among humans in various respects. Though all humans are said to be manifested with the same essence of God, there still prevails imbalance and inequality among humans. So the question, as to why such inequalities exist in a world where the essence of the idea of God unifies and relates the beings of the world, still remains. Sikhism answers, thus:

“In desire man is born,
From desire he consumes objects of various tastes,
By desire is he led away bound,
Buffeted across the face”.\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Ibid}, p.130.
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 129.
It is not false to say that human desire is the primary aspect by which the difference gets manifested. So the statement that the desires lead humans to misery is incorrect. The aspect of desire has got a positive value in the society in the sense that desire sets the world in motion. Even if the desire keeps the world active, sometimes human desire moves in an extremely individualized manner. Here the idea of Manmukh and Gurmukh are immensely enlightening. These terms stand to mean self-consciousness and absolute consciousness.

Sikhism uses the term Manmukh to denote the meaning of individual ego. Sikhism holds the view that the humans are conscious of their being from the beginning of the birth. With the aid of self-consciousness, human progress is realized. This stage is termed as Manmukh or the consciousness of the self. Sikh scripture accepts this stage, saying this as the creation of God.

“Egoism is Man’s nature, 
Through egoism does he perform actions 
Egoism is the bondage that brings the self 
Again and again to birth 
How has it arisen, 
By what discipline May it be discarded 
Know that egoism exists by Divine ordinance”.

Sikhism accepts the status of self-consciousness or the egoistic approach of humans because Sikhism perceives the world phenomena, not as the place of goodness alone but as the play of the good and evil. Sikhism advances the idea of holistic approach here, in the sense that the reality of good and evil are accepted as

---

parts of actuality instead of denying either of them. Nothing is denied within its holistic view. So the idea of self-consciousness is also viewed in the holistic perspective. Sikhism holds the view that a system is dynamic only through contradictions and contraries. Here self-consciousness has a status of reality, but not a forbidden reality, in so far as it is the source of creative contradictions that keeps a society agile. Further, if Sikhism had not offered place for Manmukh as a reality, then its world-view might have been a one-sided affair. By accepting the concepts of Manmukh and Gurmukh as real, Sikhism perceives the reality as dynamically holistic.

### 3.3.1.1 The Nature of Self-consciousness

The first phase of consciousness is self-consciousness. The self-consciousness is prevalent among all the humans. This idea has got common acceptance. Sikhism identifies a movement from Manmukh to Gurmukh that is, a move from self-consciousness to absolute consciousness. Sikhism advances the idea of God consciousness by which the humans understand the beauty of interrelationship. When a human is filled with ego, he/she is said to be lacking with the consciousness of the idea of God. Holy Granth says,

“The egoist devoid of God consciousness

Thrown away from Him, is buffeted about”\(^{161}\)

Such a problem arises in the state of self-consciousness due to the aversion towards the truth that the creations of the God are interrelated through the essence of the idea of God.

“The egoist realize not truth

No shelter shall they find anywhere”.162

One, who is not interested in finding the truth, will go back to himself/herself and create a world of his/her own by insulting himself/herself from the other relatedness. “Man immersed in the feeling of I-ness perceives the world as his possession. The self-centered man loses his societal nature and his primordial familial relation with nature. Nature becomes an object to him and he feels that he is the master of it”163 Says Muthumohan.

The attitude of I-am-ness blurs the actual scene of its interrelated existence. Jodh Singh says “Manmukh is always obsessed with cares, which end only with his death because he is inert and only makes castles in the air, wasting his previous life time. As life passes onward, his anxieties go an increasing because he has not taken any care to finish the work in hand”.164

Sikhism conceives the problem of self-consciousness as a human separation from the primordial relation with the society. Here it is to be considered that, in Sikhism, social aspect and religious aspect are not separate. In that sense, human self-consciousness separates him/her from the idea of socio-religious unity of beings. Daljeet Singh says “Man’s present problems of conflict, war, aggression and poverty are due to his consciousness being egoistic and self-centred”.165

162 Ibid., p.145.
Even though Sikhism shows the drawbacks of I-am-ness, it does not deny or negate it in total. Though Sikhism considers I-am-ness in the socio-religious viewpoint, it considers I-ness as the necessary creative force on the other hand. Moreover the feeling of I-am-ness can be modified into higher consciousness because human is always in a process; here the consciousness moves from I-am-ness to the absolute consciousness. The Gurus were very much emphatic on this issue. “Not only is there hope for man, but it is also his destiny to rise above his egoistic condition so as to become a super man or Gurmukh”.¹⁶⁶ That is, human is in process and the self-consciousness has an important role to make the humans realize the limitations. Guru Nanak says,

“Egoism is a Malignant Malady
Yet is it not without remedy”¹⁶⁷

Guru Nanak realizes the different aspects of egoism, its negative and positive sides. Pritam Singh Gill says, “Guru Nanak believed in the dual function of I-am-ness. He asserts I-am-ness is an evil as well as a virtue. It is essential for the development of personality but it becomes an evil if it crosses a certain limit”.¹⁶⁸

Relating with the idea of self-consciousness and its nature, Sikhism uses a particular concept that is, Haumain to explain the trivial nature of self-consciousness. Haumain is a feeling of separation. When human is in self-conscious nature, the feeling of separation arises.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.92.
3.3.1.1.1 The Problem of Haumain in Sikhism

Sikhism considers humans not as individual beings but as a societal being as well as the highest beings of the divine creation. So the feeling of individuality has no status in Sikhism. The feeling of individuality erupts in the individual during the stage of self-consciousness, when the socialization of the individuality is in progress. During this stage, the individual wrongly perceives that he/she is not a part of the society but an independent individual. This attitude encourages him to distance himself from the social order. This attitude is called as Haumain, in Sikhism.

Self-consciousness is a stage in the process of development. This process is supposed to culminate in the realization of the absolute consciousness. But if the human happen to be in touch with the limited consciousness or limited knowledge without realizing their interrelatedness, obviously they inhibit individualistic tendency towards the other. In the stage of self-consciousness, the humans realize their I-ness and their others; they relate their selves with others. In this stage of socialization, if a human happens to develop a contradictory relation with the other, instead of developing mutuality with the other, there he/she becomes individualistic, rather than realizing the sociability. So in the process of self-consciousness the humans face difficulties. Sikhism uses the term Haumain to denote the individualistic nature of human behavior. The problem of individuality is one of the outcomes of the self-consciousness. So Haumain is attributed as the deviant behavior of the process of self-consciousness.
3.3.1.1.2 The Meaning of Haumain

The word Haumain is referred as ego, egoism, individualism, self-centeredness, self-conceit etc. It can be defined as the sense of individuality or the feeling of separateness from the whole, particularly, the other beings. Another term which can be used to denote the meaning of Haumain is alienation. Muthumohan, a south Indian Sikh scholar, says “Haumain of individual as non-relatedness also means human alienation... Haumain is human alienation, loneliness, restlessness, suffering, violence, irresponsibility and it is also an unidentified longing for love, affection and solidarity”.\(^{169}\) Guru Nanak uses the metaphor ‘fish out of its own water’ to indicate the desperate position of alienated humans. Water stands to mean the whole in which the fish is a particular existent. Sikhism points out the meaning of Haumain as separation from the union.

“Those to alienation destined remain away from God;
Union to egoist comes not
Saith Nanak: To attain union, suppress thy ego”.\(^{170}\)

Sikhism relates the problem of Haumain with the disorders of the reality. So haumain is identified as malady which collapses mental cohabitation of the ‘I’ with the others, and consequently infuses separation from the unified whole. This sort of mentality makes a human purely individualized and alienated.

Sikhism says,

“The world is a dream; a play in an instant is it over
Those destined for union are united;


Those to alienation destined are scattered”.171

In this sense, Haumain is revealed as a negative tendency which prevents the unity, and makes the individual as an alienated being and foresees him/her to alienate from the unified existence. The idea of Haumain means separateness or non-relatedness, and then naturally a question arises as to what it means to be separate. This question is answered in the Sikh conception of reality. The specific nature of the reality is that which connects all the beings in a string. Consequently, the Sikh conception of reality means the relatedness of the being with the idea of God, nature, society and thus the human existence is portrayed as a spiritual continuum. The nature of relationship among various objects of reality is described in a different way, in Sikh philosophy.

“What difference between Thee and me – and me and Thee?  
No more than between gold and the bangle  
And water and the wave”.172

Sikh perception of difference is to be understood through the relationship of the general and the particular. In terms of human perception, the difference among the objects could be experienced. But these differences are very well related through the idea of essence. There is no essential difference between gold and bangle as bangle is made of gold. In the same way no wave is possible without water and that the wave is not essentially different from the water. These examples portray the nature of reality in Sikhism.

Deviating from the reality of relatedness, the problem of separation arises. Haumain denies the relatedness and it acts as

171 Ibid, p.43.
the source of inducement of the tendency of separation. Sikhism says about the separation, thus:

“The Lord is the ocean; we as the fish in water
To be without this water is death”.

That is, if the fish feels to be separate from the ocean or water, then it means that its separation from the essential relatedness will lead to death. The case of humans is not different. Due to the influence of Haumain, humans may feel the non-relatedness with the reality to which they are essentially united. So the negative aspects of Haumain mean the essential separation of humans from the social reality; that is, the individualistic view blurs the realization of an individual as a human being.

The concepts of Maya and Haumain are considered as necessary evils by Sikhism. The meaning of these two terms is similar to the meaning of alienation. Dharam Singh says “Maya is a kind of veil that obscures the human self as the division of supreme self. It is the utter darkness of ignorance in which humans loses the jewel of God and weeps. Thus he is separated from God and lost in darkness”.

The idea of Maya cannot be understood in the Vedantic meaning. Advaita-Vedanta considers all appearances in the world as illusory (Maya). But Sikhism considers the world as relatively real, though transitory, in so far as it is the manifestation of the real. Sikh Gurus reject Sankara’s idea of Maya, but they inject a positive meaning to it.

173 Ibid., pp.197-198.
174 Dharam Singh, Sikh theology of Liberation, p.49.
Maya and Haumain are the two different interpretations of the reality. Nirbhai Singh says, “Maya and Haumain are two facets of the real because of individualization ... when the real is projected through the self-willed individuated consciousness, it is called haumain and the manifestation of the real through the individuated forms of the universe is Maya. This, from objective stand point it is Maya and subjectively, it is Haumain”. These two different interpretations of reality reflect nothing but the alienation of the self from the reality of unity.

When a person is totally ignorant of the unified existence, he/she exhibits the negatively individuated behavior. The negative movement of a person obstructs the course of the society. If the course of the society is obstructed, chaos will be the outcome. The position of an egoist in a society creates chaos. This is the social perspective of Sikh ideology. So whenever humans possess the individualistic approach towards an object or wrongly perceive the reality, these effects can be explained in the society. In this way Haumain affects the society.

3.3.1.1.3 The Eradication of Haumain

As a religious thought, Sikhism advances the idea of spirituality as the remedy for the problem of Haumain. Generally spirituality is closely associated with ritualism, other-worldliness and the devotion to God. Sikhism is not against the devotion to God. In Sikhism, the devotion to God is not only related to the worship of God, but it is also realized through human activity towards societal well-being. Sikhism has a socio-spiritual character; there devotion to God means the union with the idea of

---

God through righteous action. Through righteous actions humans overcome the problem of Haumain. In Sikh thought, the devotion to God does not mean chanting mantras but it means human action. Sikhism says, “Hard is devotion to the Master; It comes through sacrifice of life and egoism”.176 That is, through active existence human consciousness progresses. Towards the absolute consciousness, individualistic tendency of humans starts disappearing and thus Haumain disappears to make way for social consciousness. Here, after discarding egoism through righteous actions, the individual is transformed into the universal phenomena. The individual transforms his/her individualistic tendency to make the system interrelated. The realization of interrelatedness of beings of the world eradicates Haumain.

“As light to Light is united,
And consciousness to the universal mind,
Violence and egoism then vanish,
Gone is also doubt and suffering”.177

As a Holistic system, Sikhism does not deny the existence of Haumain as illusion but as a real entity, which has definite purpose in the making of humans in the sense humans realizes good only through the experience of evil. Haumain is such evil.

3.3.1.2 The Idea of Absolute Consciousness

Individual’s consciousness of imperfection makes him/her to move towards perfection. On each and every movement, there seems to be a transition from less perfection to absolute perfection. In the case of human being, it is felt that the consciousness

\footnotesize


develops from the lower to the higher stages. In the higher degree, the beings reach the totality of its progress. This totality can be termed as absolute because every stage of the progress has been included in it. At the instance of human beings, they are guided by consciousness and the consciousness is in progress. On its attainment of the totality of its progress in consciousness, it becomes absolute consciousness. Attainment of the stage of absolute consciousness marks the realization of the unity of reality in human beings.

Sikhism considers consciousness as a progress which starts from I-am-ness and ends with universal consciousness. In other words, consciousness is a progress from Manmukh to Gurmukh. Here Gurmukh is the absolute consciousness. Daljeet Singh says “Man has also the potentialities of developing a higher level of consciousness, called God-consciousness or universal consciousness which is different from the ego-consciousness, which is the chief disability of the present day man”.178

3.3.1.2.1 The Nature of Absolute Consciousness

Absolute consciousness can be said to be the ultimate end of consciousness. Every school of thought discusses ultimate reality and every school has a different notion on the nature of reality. According to Advaita ultimate reality is Brahman which is attainable only through the realization of the world as Maya. Christians aim at the Heaven that is considered to be the ultimate reality. Here the knowledge which is attained to understand the ultimate reality is called as the absolute consciousness by which humans realize Brahman, Heaven, etc.

Sikhism considers God as the ultimate reality. Sikh religious thought clearly points out the nature of God as an ever active entity, which is the cause of every happening. So the idea of God in Sikhism is not qualityless as said in Advaita. It is in the process of manifestation in creations. In order to understand the ultimate reality, humans have to realize the different manifestations. In different manifestations one can witness the essence of the idea of God by which one can experience the interrelatedness among the objects. For example a human is related to God, other fellow beings and the objects of the world through the essence of the idea of God. Contrary to this, if a human keeps the relation with God alone considering the society as secondary, he/she can not realize the nature of God. He/she may be said to be totally unaware of the manifestation of the essence of the idea of God in all the beings of the world and their interrelationship. So according to Sikhism, no reality is possible without society and the world of objects. It is because of this reason that Sikhism is known as Miri-Piri system, where spirituality and material nature unite by which ultimate reality is realized. This is the unity of all elements, where all objects interact with other objects realizing their manifested nature of the same essence. Nirbhai Singh says “In Sikhism the metaphysical system is conceived by the Sikh Gurus as a dynamic structure in which the units go on changing their respective relations with other units. These units are not to be treated as independent and static, but are inseparable and dynamic elements of the being”.179 The consciousness of the dynamic interrelation of the objects can be called Absolute consciousness in Sikhism; there every object is active, related and inseparable from the idea of God.

3.3.1.3 The Change from Manmukh to Gurmukh

Humans are not self-sufficient beings but are interdependent. No individual is independent from social unity. Mutual dependence or inter dependence is the aspect which keeps the humans in the path of progress. Sikhism elaborates this idea in a beautiful manner. Here the human feeling of ego-consciousness realizes its essence as mutual dependence which culminates in the attainment of absolute consciousness. Such a change is not through yoga or austerities but the realization of the strings of relatedness. Sikhism says that it is possible only through the service and through remembering the names and attributes of the idea of God. Sikhism proposes various methods to eliminate the feeling of Manmukh. The method varies from the devotion to God to dynamic action-oriented life.

“Through devotion is found the immortal-
tree of God – consciousness”. 180

By devotion human attains the God-consciousness and the relation of the idea of God to the world. Also, Sikhism says, “With good acts alone is wisdom perfected; without good acts, all is in decline”. 181 Action gives clarity to wisdom that develops the human social consciousness, Sikhism says,

“Who discarding egoism takes to the path of service,
And dies to the world desires,
He who gave body and life is our true Lord”. 182

181 Ibid., p.56.
182 Ibid., p.473.
Here human self-consciousness gets transformed into absolute consciousness through social service and sacrifice for the society. In Sikhism, the change from Manmukh to Gurmukh happens within the realm of society. Absolute consciousness is possible only through the truthful living in the society. Sikhism says

“Realization of Truth is higher than all else
Higher still is truthful living”.  

The transition from I-am-ness to the level of absolute consciousness is a process that every human is supposed to encounter. When the human realizes the reality as a dynamic unity through the accumulation of wisdom through social action, then the interrelatedness of beings through the essence of God is revealed. Socio spiritual unity is revealed through human sacrifice for the society realizing the body and life as the creations of God. Thus, humans experience absolute consciousness.

3.3.2 Hegelian Idea of Self-consciousness and Absolute Consciousness

It is a nature of the human being that his mind can't stick on to a particular object for ever, but receives various sensations from various objects. That means, mind is in an ever active process. To put it in another way, the human consciousness is ever active and is always engaged in a curious process to know the nature of reality.

Hegel has conducted a detailed study about consciousness and its movement. Hegel perceives that consciousness moves from self-consciousness to absolute consciousness in a dialectical process.

183 Ibid., p.130.
Hegel considers absolute consciousness as the consciousness of all or as the completion of self-consciousness which develops through a dialectical method. In this development, nothing is defected but every moment of progress considered and included as necessary to reach absoluteness. J.N.Findlay opines, “In dialectical thought the false must always be in a sense preserved in the truth, not indeed qua false, but as overcome in this truth”.\textsuperscript{184}

Earlier it was stated that self-consciousness develops to become absolute consciousness. But at the end of the process among these two categories consciousness, self-consciousness gets transformed into the absolute consciousness. The dialectical method helps to point out the difference of the categories. “The only way in which we can show the difference between an absolute knowledge, and a conscious which is inadequate, is the dialectical method: we must allow the latter to develop into the former. Each inadequate form of consciousness must be given enough rope to hang itself: it must be allowed to ruin itself in doubt and to break down in utter despair”.\textsuperscript{185}

\textbf{3.3.2.1 The Nature of Self-consciousness}

Self consciousness is an existing phenomenon, which projects the individual nature of a human being. Hegel views every object as to be in the process of becoming into some other. Hegel identifies self-consciousness as a value in the making of human being because it is an inadequate consciousness, which tries itself to become adequate through dialectical method. What is the nature of human being when he/she is in self-consciousness stage, how

the self-consciousness of a human being makes an impact on the society and how the self-consciousness of the human beings become absolute consciousness, are to be discussed in the following passages.

In the ‘Phenomenology of Spirit’, Hegel, says that there is a development in consciousness from the level of sense certainty, that is, immediate knowledge. In the initial stages of the phenomenological process of consciousness, the self believes itself to be the richest kind of knowledge but later on it acknowledges its knowledge as the poorest kind since in the initial stages it merely identifies the object of what it is. Hegel says “In the event, this very certainty proves itself to be the most abstract and poorest-truth. All that it says about what it knows is just that it is and its truth contains nothing but the sheer being of the thing”.\textsuperscript{186} Even if it is proven to be the poorest kind of knowledge, consciousness starts from the immediate knowledge and then it progresses.

It is common that the knower starts from the immediate knowledge available but Hegel conducts a systematic study on it and identifies its stages of the progress. By this progress consciousness reaches the level of self-consciousness. Hegel says “In sense certainty, pure being at once splits up into what we have called the two ‘Thises’, one ‘this’ as ‘I’ and other ‘this’ as object, when we reflect on this difference we find that neither one nor the other is only immediately present in sense certainty but each is at the same time mediated. I have this certainty through something else, viz., the thing; and it, similarly is in sense certainty through something else, viz., through ‘I’ ”.\textsuperscript{187} The ‘I’ which represents the

\textsuperscript{186} A.V. Miller, Tr., \textit{Op.cit.}, p.58.
\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Ibid.}, p.59.
self-consciousness and every activity in the society is passing through it.

Hegel identifies the nature of self-consciousness as desire that means the nature of human being. Hegel says “With the first moment, self-consciousness is in the form of consciousness, world is preserved for it, but at the same time only as connected with the second moment, the unity of self-consciousness with itself; and hence the sensuous world is for it an enduring existence which however only appearance, or a difference which, in itself, is no difference. This antithesis of its appearance and its truth has, however, for its essence only the truth viz. the unity of self-consciousness with itself, this unity must become essential to self-consciousness, i.e., self-consciousness is desire in general”.\textsuperscript{188} The desire of human being is a positive aspect in order to move to the higher levels of knowledge. When self consciousness is desire, the desired object activates the human being to satisfy his/her needs in the sense that the desired object tries to equate it with other objects for his/her satisfaction. In such a position, Hegel says “Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness”.\textsuperscript{189} In the process of achieving the satisfaction, there erupts the fight between a human being and another. Here the self-consciousness takes the form of pure individualism and sees every activity for the sake of itself. Hegel identifies the movement of self-consciousness as a process which leads to a confrontation among human beings for recognition. Here the I-amness denies the ‘other’. Hegel says, “Self-consciousness is, to begin with, simple being for self, self-equal through the exclusion from

\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Ibid.}, p.105.
\textsuperscript{189} \textit{Ibid.}, p.110.
itself of everything else. For it, its essence and absolute object is ‘I’ and in this immediacy or in this (mere) being, of its being for self, it is an individual. What is ‘other’ for it is an unessential, negatively characterized object? But the ‘other’ is also self-consciousness; one individual is confronted by another individual”.\textsuperscript{190}

The tendency of confrontation among human beings creates a tension and the tension is transformed into a struggle between life and death. Those who become victorious in the struggle will emerge as the master and those who fail in the struggle became the slave. So the self-consciousness is the source of division among human beings. The problem of self-consciousness here is that, it never considers the ‘other’ as independent self-consciousness; he/she never considers the importance of the ‘other’. In other words, the self-consciousness tries to keep a distance from the ‘other’. Hegel says “Individual consciousness as it exists immediately in the real ethical order or in the nation is a solid unshaken trust in which spirit has not, for the individual, resolved itself into its abstract moments and therefore he is not aware of himself as being a pure individuality on his own account. But once he has arrived at this idea, as he must, then this immediate unity with spirit, the (mere) being of himself in spirit, his trust, is lost: isolated and on his own it is he who is now the essence, no longer universal spirit”.\textsuperscript{191} Here Hegel explains, in the self-consciousness stage, individuality arises, the bond of trust which links it with the social unity is destroyed, and then the self-conscious individual works to achieve personal

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., p.113.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., p.214.
happiness. “The dialectic of self-consciousness opens here with the figure of the individual searcher after pleasure”.\textsuperscript{192}

Hegel holds the view that everything is in progress and so self-consciousness is also in progress. Even if it is in progress, it is not necessary for a self-conscious person to overcome his entire problem related with the universality. Taylor says, “But although on an incomparably higher level, this naïve figure of self-consciousness will obviously not solve the problem. For humans still seeks satisfaction as an individual, even though now he may define himself in universal categories”.\textsuperscript{193} J.N.Findlay argues that “The self-conscious individual becomes clear that the world is ‘his oyster’, the mere field of his conscious activity that consciousness in a sense is, in a sense, all truth and all reality”.\textsuperscript{194} But this is an incomplete consciousness. When the consciousness of the absolute is attained the individual consciousness will be proved to be inadequate.

In the process of self-consciousness, the individual tries to alienate himself/herself from the reality. As a part of self-consciousness, it is important to look into the ideal of alienation advanced by Hegel.

\textbf{3.3.2.1.1 Problem of Alienation}

Hegel identifies the nature of every object in a unified manner. For him, the reality is the unity of every object and that makes a system absolute. Hegel conceives that in an absolute idealistic system, the possibility of non-relatedness has no

\textsuperscript{192} Charles Taylor, p.163.

\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Ibid.}, p.163.

existence because that is against the meaning of the absolute. So relationship gets meaning and this relationship makes Hegelian philosophy as a Holistic philosophy.

Hegel considers human as a social object rather than an individual object. In the process of self-consciousness getting transformed into the absolute consciousness, the individual misjudges the movement of the system and perceives that he/she is not a part of the society and tries to make him/her recluse, ignoring the reality of interrelationship. Hegel identifies this attitude of the individual as Alienation. That means the separation from whole. When an individual is in the stage of self-consciousness, he has a tendency to withdraw himself from the universality. That is, he feels alienation, which shows a negative relationship with the absolute.

3.3.2.1.2 The Meaning of Alienation

From the philosophical point of view, alienation is defined as a tendency which separates one individual from other fellow beings. Dictionary of Philosophy says “Alienation is a form of estrangement that deprives an individual of all relations with fellow humans”.\(^{195}\) So alienation is the fallenness from the absolute. In unity, alienation takes the position of individuality, negating the reality of unity. Alienation represents the nature of individuality, which separates an object from the co-relations.

The idea of alienation has been found discussed by various philosophers. Marx perceives the religion to be the refuge of the alienated human who finds no solace in the social order “Marx instantly embraced the theory of religion as alienation... Religion,

Marx asserted, mythically justifies a fundamental social frustration. Far from constituting the essence of human alienation, the need for religion implies a tacit protest against the existing, dehumanizing conditions of society.”^196 Here it means the general tendency of alienation to separate something from the unity. “In both Hegel and Marx, alienation is always fundamentally self-alienation. Fundamentally to be alienated is to be separated from one’s own essence or nature; it is to be forced to lead a life in which that nature has no opportunity to be fulfilled or actualized. In this way the experience of alienation involves a sense of a self-worth and an absence of meaning in one’s life. Alienation in this sense is not fundamentally a matter of whether your conscious desires are satisfied, or how experience your life, but instead of whether your life objectively actualizes your nature, especially your life with others as social being on the basis of a determinate course of historical development”.^197

Hegel says that self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness. Though this statement reflects the contextual unity of self-consciousness between human beings; the unity is not realized by the beings concerned as they are in the mode of self-consciousness. Alienation works in this way. John Torrance says “Yet others are neither able nor willing to grant recognition, simply by the fact that they are others. But yet again all are equally desirous of recognition since each can treat the other only as a conscious object of his need – as a mirror of his ego- and not as a self-conscious being in his own right, a subject, and the

^197 Ted Honderich, Ed., The Oxford Companion to Philosophy, p.22.
general desire for recognition turn into an all-round struggle for recognition”.  

Alienation is a problem of the ego consciousness which rejects the otherness or utilized the other for its own needs. The totality of beings gets individuated. The basic aspect of alienation is that humans feel that their substance lies something outside of them. Hegel was one of the philosophers who dealt with the problem of alienation. He sees alienation as an unavoidable part of spirit to become actually what it is potentially. Because overcoming this stage makes clear the absolute in totality. Hegel says “This world is however a spiritual entity, it is in itself the interfusion of being and individuality; its existence is the work of self-consciousness. But it is also an alien reality already presents and given, a reality which has a being of its own and in which it does not recognize itself”. So the meaning of alienation is separation from the reality and the individualization of a person from the social reality. The course of alienation, in the simple sense of the term, is the inability to see the reality as a whole. It is the problem of consciousness. In that stage the self-consciousness is attracted by the self-activity only. There, the mind strives to satisfy him. So he will be in an all round struggle for recognition. Here the mind misjudges the unity of beings. This causes alienation.

3.3.2.1.3 Eradication of Alienation

Hegel considers the absolute spirit as God where the universal and the particular unite. Because of the self-conscious nature, an individual keeps the idea of alienation in mind and tries

---


to distance himself/herself from the idea of God. So in order to eradicate alienation, one has to reach the idea of absolute spirit. “The universal in religion is God; the particular is the human mind which is in alienation from God. Hegel is of the view that alienation of the human mind from God appears as sin and misery”. So individual mind has to give up all its selfish impulses and realize the universal mind which lies in its inner core. It is only then that it becomes one with the other. This is the way to eradicate the problem of alienation.

Hegel perceives Christianity as a religion, which tries to unite humans with the idea of God. “In Christianity the reconciliation or the unity between humans and God can be seen according to Hegel in the doctrines of incarnation”. The unity is through Church, which is a social institution that helps to eradicate alienation.

3.3.2.2 The Nature of Absolute Consciousness

Hegel considers a system as holistic in nature that means, the reality is a whole and every part is necessarily related to and makes the universal form. To put it in another way, every finite object is included in the infinite. For Hegel, a system is absolutely idealistic. Absolute consciousness paves way for the realization of the system. When human mind thinks of the separation from the infinite, that reflects the activity of self-consciousness and whenever the mind realizes the inclusion of finite with the infinite, the absolute consciousness is realized. Absolute consciousness includes contradiction, negation and opposition; all these make a system active and leads to the higher level of knowledge.

---

201 Ibid., p.137.
For Hegel “True is the Whole”\textsuperscript{202} This idea represents the reality in a way that human mind is not the beginning itself but for-itself. The idea also reflects that self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction in others. That means mutuality is also present even in the stage of self-consciousness. There human realizes “I that is we and we that is I”.\textsuperscript{203} This notion is the absolute consciousness. Here the self-consciousness develops through dialectical method to achieve absolute consciousness.

\textbf{3.3.2.3 The Change from Self-consciousness to Absolute Consciousness}

Human being is not an absolute independent entity, but the culmination of absoluteness is possible only through mutual dependence. But this consciousness is totally lacking in human self-consciousness stage. So every idea in this stage is obscure and incomplete. Hegel finds the way to overcome this dilemma through reason. There the negative relationship with the ‘other’ due to self-consciousness becomes positive relationship. Here the self-consciousness sees the positive nature of the other through reason at the higher stage. Hegel says “now that self-consciousness is reason, its hitherto negative relation to otherness turns round into a positive relation”.\textsuperscript{204} Hegel identifies reason as the certainty of consciousness which reflects the reality. For Hegel “Reason sanctions the truth of the other certainty, viz., that there is for me an ‘other’ that an other than ‘I’ is object and essence for me, or in that I am object and essence to myself, I am only so by drawing

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[(202)] A.V. Miller, Tr., \textit{Op.cit.}, p.11.
\item[(203)] \textit{Ibid.}, p.110.
\item[(204)] \textit{Ibid.}, p.140.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
back from the ‘other’ altogether, and taking my place as an actuality alongside it”.205

Hegel accepts that the reason makes the change in the self-consciousness. He analyses different types of reasons because reason is set to know the truth. He says about observing reason which is the observation of the nature. “In observing the organism, Hegel tells us, reason constantly makes use of the category of end and purpose”.206 It is the method to identify the relationship in society.

According to Hegel, reason holds the key to find the truth through dialectical method. All through the human history, one can find the movement of reason. So reason acts as the lever of change from stages of self-consciousness to absolute consciousness. There every activity is performed for the goodness of all. Hegel says, “Welfare has no independent validity as the embodiment of a single particular will but only as universal welfare and essentially as universal in principle”.207

Sikhism and Hegelian philosophy understand the idea of self-consciousness and absolute consciousness in a similar way. They are of the opinion that consciousness is in process and ends in absolute consciousness. The problem of Haumain in Sikhism and the idea of alienation in Hegelian philosophy reflect the character of completely isolated humans in a society. In both the philosophies the overcoming of alienation is considered as a movement towards absolute consciousness.

205  Ibid., p.141.
207  T.M.Knox/Tr., Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, p.87.
3.4 The Relation of Whole and Parts in Sikhism and in the Philosophy of Hegel

It is an enquiry into the nature of relationship between two entities which seem to be similar in perception and seem to be different in nature. The whole represents the absolute reality which is infinite and unchangeable, whereas particular represents the reality which is finite and changeable. In philosophy, the absolute reality is accepted as unchangeable and infinite. And whatever is changeable and finite is considered as unreal or secondary. In such dichotomized reality, the whole excludes the relevance of the parts. This is one way of understanding the nature of reality. Contrary to the above idea, some trends in philosophy identify reality as the unity of the whole and the parts; here the whole includes the parts. Sikhism and the philosophy of Hegel advance the idea of inclusion as the way to reality. According to them, every part is included in the whole. So parts are real entities in connection with the whole.

3.4.1 The Relation of Whole and Parts in Sikhism

Sikhism advances the idea of holism. Holism includes every element of the universe in a structure. So holism considers everything as a whole, which shows the nature of inclusivism. Some Indian religious traditions have a negative approach towards the idea of holism as they try to construct reality through exclusion of elements from the whole. In their structure of reality, the whole is partial due to the exclusion of some parts. Sikhism, on the other hand, considers reality as a whole in which nothing is excluded. So Sikhism is against the dualistic idea. In other words, Sikhism is against polarized reality. It is true that Sikhism accepts the reality of the absolute as well as the particular and considers their unity
as the reality. In that sense the Sikh conception of reality is a dynamic one because the unity is the relation of different aspects of reality.

3.4.1.1 The Meaning of the Whole

Sikhism accepts the idea of monotheism that shows the oneness of reality. The oneness of reality means that the reality becomes one through the unity of different parts. In that sense, Sikhism can be termed as the holistic philosophy. Here the meaning of the whole represents the nature which is inclusive and it shows the idea of oneness of the many. Sikhism identifies the idea of God as the base of all entities and the immanent nature of God manifests itself in the world phenomena. On the other hand, the transcendental nature of God exists as a universal concept unaffected by the creative process.

The idea of whole emerges from the idea of immanent nature of God because in the process of creation, all individual objects become the manifestations of the idea of God essentially. These individual objects are not independent in so far as they are the manifestations and their existence is possible only through the idea of God, because the different images of creation is the work of the Reality. So the individual objects are not apart from the Reality but the manifestation of it. That means, in Sikhism, the idea of God stands similar to the idea of the whole. In the idea of whole, the One becomes many. The same process happens in Sikhism also, as God is the creator of all the objects of reality. Sikhism says,

“By His order there is creation, and by His order,
Absorption in Himself.
The occupations of his and law are according to this order
By His order there are the varied phases of nature
Having created, He beholdeth His own greatness.
Now, God is contained in all things”.  

The Sikh perception of God is that the idea of God is in the parts which are perceptible through the senses. So the realization of the idea of God is fulfilled only through the inclusion of the parts. Here the idea of God exists as the wholeness of reality. That is, the parts are the different reflections of the whole. The idea of IK- om- kar in Sikhism advances the idea of whole, there the figure IK express the unity, which shows the oneness of God. This is the Sikh perception of reality. It can also be said that the idea of God assumes different forms to become many or the whole is in the process of creation where the whole evolves into parts. Sher Singh says “Same God is one and the many. The many aspects of the idea of God are not the primitive polytheism. Whether the idea of God be the subject of many or the predicate of it, the copula and the idea of God must remain singular. The primal being when takes the form of becoming, does so and becomes many. But for the true eye, even the many is one when many is known as Anek. He is one-EK, becomes many – Anek and again becomes one-phir EK”.  

The problem of dichotomy between the idea of God and the idea of world is settled, when it is said that one becomes many. God manifests itself different forms. If one experiences the different forms, then he/she realize that the different forms are the manifestations of the One. When one experiences the movement of the parts, then it is understood that the parts are not different from the whole.

---

Sikhism says that the reality can be conceived only through the knowledge of the parts and through the realization that the parts are not separate entities apart from the whole. Sikhism says,

“He is not born, neither doth He die;  
He playeth His own parts  
Things visible and invisible, which come and go  
The whole creation is supported by the commander  
And He Himself is contained in everything”.

When the idea of God is contained in every objects of its creation, there can be no separation of parts from the idea of God or there can be no separation of an entity from the whole of reality. If an object is said to be separate from the whole of the reality, it means such an idea is against the spirit of holism. But Sikhism the idea of God exists as the essence of every movement. Here the idea of absolute is in complete cohesion with the idea of God. Sikhism considers the God and the World as having distinct features, but the world is identified as an extension of the idea of God. Sikhism says

“All places belong to the supreme Being;  
Creatures have different names according,  
Where God placed them.  
God extended Himself in endless waves”.

The meaning of the whole becomes clear here when it is said that all places belong to God and that the idea of God extends itself into every object. So when one realizes an object to be a part of the totality, then the meaning of the whole becomes explicit.

---

Sikhism identifies a movement in the consciousness, that is, from self consciousness to absolute consciousness. When an individual is in the stage of self-consciousness he/she denies the idea of unity of all and tries to part ways from the holistic idea because of the individuated consciousness. Sikhism calls this process as Manmukh; it means the negative relationship with the idea of the whole. The individual overcomes this dilemma, when he/she attains absolute consciousness where the essential relationship between him/her and the other is realized. Sikhism perceives the reality to be the understanding of the totality of the objects including the idea of God.

### 3.4.1.2 Meaning of the Parts

The relation between God and World is defined in a novel way in Sikh thought. Sikhism holds the view that God evolves as world and the reality can be perceived only through the mutuality of the idea of God and the World. Earlier it was concluded that the idea of God stands as the whole of the reality. The meaning of the parts also lies in the meaning of the whole in the sense that part has no separate existence apart from the whole. Here the idea of God pervades the whole of the reality and so the parts must be its evolutes. That means, parts stand for the world objects. The idea of part represents the objects which are the manifestations of the idea of God. That means world is an aspect of the idea of God and the elements which are included in the world are parts. Sikhism says

> “The one God is in every place

> He Himself acteth in His own parts”.\(^{212}\)

\(^{212}\) *Ibid*. p. 236.
This verse explains that the parts are nothing but the reflection of the idea of God. The part, that is, the worldly object is a finite entity and changeability is the nature of the part because world is in a process. Every aspect of reality aspires to reach the higher stage of reality. Sikhism conceives this process as the play of God and accepts the theory of becoming. So Sikhism identifies every part that is in the process of becoming. So it is changeable where as the idea of God is associated with the unchangeability or permanence. Sikhism accepts the unity of changeability with unchangeable in the sense that the worldly reality manifests the essence of the idea of God through the aspects of extension and thought.

3.4.1.3 Relation between Whole and Parts

Sikhism identifies the whole as the ultimate reality; Parts have no separate existence in it as they emerge from the whole and as they are the manifestations of the essence of the whole. Sikhism points out that God is like a tree and that the beings of the world are the branches. The same relationship exists in between the whole and the parts. Sikhism says, “Thou the ocean, we are like fishes disporting Thee”. Here the term Ocean stands to mean the idea of the whole and the term Fish stands to mean the idea of parts. So the whole and parts are inseparably related in Sikhism.

3.4.2 The Relation of the Whole and the Parts in the Philosophy of Hegel

Hegel is a misconceived philosopher in many aspects. He has been named as a transcendental metaphysician, who deals objects lying beyond empirical realm or the absolute idea which is beyond

---

any individual person’s knowledge or comprehension. He has been misconceived as a subjectivist who thinks that history exists only in or for someone’s consciousness; it may be the consciousness of a mind. He has been misconceived as a rationalist, who tries to do his philosophy with apriori that means the details of nature and experience are foreseen.

These three views systematically deny the importance of the world phenomena and give less importance to it. The studies on Hegel prove that his metaphysics includes world and spirituality, so, it is not subjectivism but objective idealism. He learned the process of reality on the basis of experience and in this way he formulated the philosophy of Absolute. Hegel makes all these efforts are to show that the Reality, which is derived in any of the philosophy, has been necessarily connected with every object which exists in nature. So the aim of Hegel is to show that the whole and parts are inseparable and that the reality is the unity of these two. These two entities are analyzed in the following passage.

3.4.2.1 The Meaning of the Whole

Generally, the term, whole represents the totality of the phenomenon. That includes different elements of finite and changeable, in their nature. That means the whole is an ever active and dynamic phenomenon. Hegel, in his philosophy, uses the term whole to represent the above idea. Hegel says “The bud disappears in the bursting – forth of the blossom and one might say that the former is refuted by the latter; similarly, when the fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as a false manifestation of the plant, and the fruit now emerges as the truth, instead. These forms are not just distinguished from one another; they also supplant one another as mutually incompatible. Yet at the same
time their fluid nature makes them moments of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which each is as necessary the other; and this mutual necessity alone constitute the life of the whole”.  

Hegel here mentions that the whole is not devoid of the parts and the parts make the fulfillment of the whole. Hegel’s idea of the absolute is synonymous to the term, whole. When the whole is capitalized, it will refer to the comprehensive totality of the absolute. So Hegel speaks more regularly of the absolute than of the whole. He identifies the aspects of eternity and temporality within human historical experiences. For him, the completeness in history is the total manifestation of the absolute. Here Hegel overcomes the ontological difference between the absolute and its finite manifestations. He realizes the absolute as the whole of reality. He perceives the absolute as what is entirely present, and it is not something over the objects or behind them or besides them. Supporting this view, Stanley Rosen says “The Hegelian absolute is not realized in a super mundane consciousness, not in a timeless comprehensive vision, but in the creative activities and products of the artist, the faith and worship of the religious person, and the systematic work of the philosopher”.

Hegel uses the term God as synonymous to the word absolute “Hegel conceives of God or the absolute as activity which, even though eternal and necessary exhibits its essential nature in human history”. That means, God is the whole of reality and all the finite manifestations are from the idea of God. To put it in

---

another way the concept of God is considered as the idea of the whole in the philosophy of Hegel and that whole is with parts and that the whole and parts are necessarily interrelated or interconnected.

For Hegel, the idea of absolute is the realization of the reality in totality which is not something beyond the human comprehension. That means the attainment of the whole or the absolute is only through the affirmation of the parts. So the parts have a positive relation with the absolute or the absolute includes every particular object of nature. So the parts project the nature of the whole. When the absolute extends it does not have any separate status from that of the parts but it moves in a mutual understanding with the parts.

The classical rationalists do not identify the whole with any of its parts, not even with the parts that think the whole. But Hegel realizes that the true is the whole that includes every one of its parts.

Hegel identifies the progress of consciousness from that of self-consciousness to the absolute consciousness. In his terms, the spirit is considered to move from subjectivity to objectivity. The subjective consciousness shows that the self-consciousness and the objective reality reveal the entire nature of the world as interrelated to the idea of the absolute. Hegel argues that the absolute is the unity of both subjectivity and objectivity. That means, the comprehensible truth is a relation between the subject and the object. Also Hegel proves that the idea of God is not a transcendental entity which has no relation with the nature of the world but that it is involved in all finite manifestations which are objective in nature. It is important to underlie the fact that Hegel
is not a subjectivist. He does not claim that objects are merely the product of imaginations. He thinks that ‘to be’ and ‘to think’ are co-existing. In the Hegelian sense it is identity-within difference. “Absolute is the formation – process of subjects and objects. If we begin our scientific investigation by disregarding subjectivity, or by dedicating ourselves to the effort to objectify it, then we shall never understand subjectivity or objectivity and the whole or absolute will be for ever denied to us”.217

Hegel rejects the notion of division of the whole and its parts because it totally denies the reality of the world as unessential. For Hegel, both are essential to realize the absolute. Hegel says “The relation of the two is for it a relation of essential being to the unessential, so that the latter has to be set aside; but since for it both are equally essential and contradictory”.218 This is the idea of the whole in which nothing is omitted as unessential. In another way it can be termed absolution. “This act of absolution is now arbitrarily (if suitable) chosen by Hegel as an act which anticipates the complete and satisfactory reconciliation between the unchangeable and the changeable, the universal and the singular, the essential and the unessential”.219 Thus, Hegel arrives at the conclusion, that the whole is the unity of unchangeable and changeable.

3.4.2.2 Meaning of the Parts

In philosophy, the term, part, has been used as a constituent of the ultimate reality or the infinite being. Earlier it was discussed

---

219 J.N. Findlay, p.102.
that the whole is infinite and unchangeable. So it is obvious that the parts are changeable and finite. Even then Hegel identifies the parts with the whole as the mutuality of opposites. The changeable objects are the world and its phenomena, because they are the finite but essential manifestations of the idea of God. The world is always in a process of dynamic change and the worldly objects follow the same methodology of change. This phenomenon of change, in general, can be named as the part of the infinite in so far as the change admits the manifestation of the infinite being in the finite objects of reality.

Hegel accepts the reality of the parts in relation to the whole. But the part requires the whole and whole requires the part. If there is no such mutuality, a system cannot function in the holistic dimension.

The part has the nature of changeability because the world is in the process of becoming. As parts of the world, the parts are also in the process of becoming. The part has also the nature of imperfection because the part is in the process of perfection. Though the nature of the whole and its parts are different, they are interrelated essentially. Hegel conceives that there is identity in difference between the parts and the whole. The parts are inseparable from the idea of God because parts are the finite manifestations of God.

3.4.2.3 The Relationship between the Whole and the Parts

The idea of the whole is a conceptual knowledge that means, it is a class of all classes. So the idea of the whole is a universal concept. Such concept cannot sustain without the parts. Hegel uses the dialectical method to show that each of them requires the
other in the sense that the whole exists only in relation to its parts and that the parts exist only in relation to the whole. In this way the whole and parts unite and this unity is considered as the idea of absolute.

3.5 Conclusion

Regarding the idea of whole and parts, Sikhism and Hegelian philosophy are axiomatically similar in their approach as both the philosophical perspectives consider that the idea of God exists in the whole of the reality and that the parts are the finite manifestations of the idea of God. So the unity of the whole and the parts includes both the transcendental as well as the immanent nature of the idea of God. That is why Hegel says that the absolute is the unity of subject and object and Sikhism says that God is both transcendent and immanent. So both the systems accept the reality of the world in relation to the idea of God; they consider the unity as the conceptual knowledge that is interwoven through the objects of the world in relation to the idea of God.