INTRODUCTION
The human race since its birth has ever been struggling hard to unfold the mystery of the universe. This urge of human mind to solve this problem gave birth to science and metaphysics, two main branches of learning in the history of mankind.

Science and metaphysics both work to understand the real nature of the world. Science analysis in a systematic manner and it admits conclusions only when they are based on physical evidence. At the same time, a scientific theory is always provisional. It is a guide to further development and to its own replacement.

Metaphysics is the philosophical study of the world as a whole. It seeks to define what is ultimately real as opposed to what is apparent. It wants to reveal hitherto unknown facts and on the basis of such facts to evolve a theory about the world. A metaphysical hypothesis that could reasonably have been held in the light of experience a hundred years ago would appear basically just as reasonable to-day in the context of a much richer knowledge.
In the field of science, mathematicians, physicists, geologists, biologists and astronomers have put forward various ideas about the origin, nature and future of the universe. Such ideas about the universe as a whole are called the cosmological and cosmogonic ideas.

So far as status and scope of study of cosmology and cosmogony is concerned, there is yet no general consensus among the scholars in this respect and divergent views have been given by them.

Etymologically cosmology means 'science of cosmos'. It is, therefore, considered as a branch of science. As its subject matter borders closely with astronomy and physics, it is said to be a branch of astronomy as well as that of physics. Some scholars are of the view that cosmology is not itself one of the physical sciences as it is not experimental. They consider it as a branch of philosophy.

Another view is that it is primarily an observational science. The tools of its observation earlier were optical telescopes. Now electromagnetic

1. Cosmology : p.3
2. Cosmological Theory : prefix page v
3. op.cit. 1 : p.3
waves (such as Infra Red, Ultra Violet, X-Rays, Gamma rays, Radio-waves and Microwaves) are being widely used for probing into the secrets of the universe.

So far as scope of study of cosmology is concerned, it being the science of cosmos, various authors are of the view that it should study both the organic and inorganic world. These authors define cosmology as 'the study of bodies from the viewpoint of their general characteristics'.

French writer J. de la Vaissière was of the view that 'cosmology must include in its scope the study of all the living bodies'.

D. Nys asserted that 'cosmology should restrict itself to the complete study of the inorganic world leaving to psychology, the questions of life in all its forms. He observed that psychology, as the name indicates, is the study of the soul or the first principle of life possessed not only by man but also by animals and plants.

Hence the philosophical study of these three classes

2. Ibid : n.
of beings evidently does not belong to cosmology.
He defines cosmology as 'the philosophical study
of the inorganic world'.

According to Narendra Nath Bhattacharya
'cosmology is that branch of learning which treats
the universe as an ordered system and as such it
is confined to a description of the salient features
of the observed universe in terms of such categories
such as time, space and matter'.

One of the modern views is that cosmological
theory deals with the system of the extremely massive
extra-galactic nebulae and its subject matter is the
structure of the universe as a whole.

It is also believed that cosmology like any
true science, would be content merely with an accurate
and aesthetically appealing description of the

cosmos.

In fact, cosmology is neither a branch of
science nor that of philosophy. It has no dispute
with psychology, as well, so far as its status and
scope of study is concerned. Both scientists and

1. Cosmology : p. 27-28
2. History of Indian Cosmological Ideas. : p. 1
3. Cosmological Theory. : p. 1
4. Some Mysteries of the Universe. : p. 2
philosophers interpret the observed physical universe in their own way and put forward a thought or a theory accordingly. Indeed, 'cosmology is a thought or a theory advanced by a scholar which interprets scientifically as well as philosophically various aspects of the observed physical universe such as its description, structure and future'.

Similar is the position of cosmogony in the field of learning. Cosmogony is also a thought or a theory which interprets the observed physical universe in terms of its origin and evolution.

So far as metaphysical field is concerned, prophets, rishis, seers, bhaktas, philosophers etc. have also been dealing with the subject relating to the nature of the universe and life therein from time to time in their writings. Sri Guru Nanak Dev was one of the luminiscent stars amongst them. Besides being a mystic saint, his divine intellectual attributes are like the myriad colours of a rainbow. His was indeed, a pure soul which had mingled with the cosmic soul. His sacred utterances preserved in the holy Guru Granth Sahib in the shape of sweet and melodious poetic verses are like an ocean which contains numerous jewels including wise revelations about the universe as a whole.
So many scholars have culled out different subjects out of Nanak Bani for research but none seems to have touched the subject relating to the universe and life therein as a whole though a few scattered works are available on this subject in the literature about Gurbani. But they do not present the Gurbani thought in its true perspective. For example, Gurbani scholars very promptly declare that the universe is 'infinite (limitless)' probably on the basis of the following and similar other Gurbani verses:–

"There are nether worlds below nether worlds and lacs of skies over skies." (1)

"The limit of His created creation is not discerned. The bound of His this and yonder end is not known." (2)

There is no doubt that their inference is true but before arriving at such a conclusion, they ought to have clarified the verses of Nanak Bani which give the impression of a 'finite' universe. Such verses are as follows:–

"The true One Himself established the universe with His hands; Breaking the egg into two He separated them and yet united them He; And the earth and the sky turned into His dwellings." (3)

1. G.C.S. : p. 5
2. ibid : p. 5
3. ibid : p. 839
"Creating the two mill-stones of the earth and the sky He has separated them."

The above quoted instance shows that Gurbani scholars draw up their conclusions on the basis of piece-meal study of verses of Gurbani. This practice not only tarnishes the sublime image of the sacred thought of Gurbani but also creates doubts about its authenticity in the minds of conscientious readers of Gurbani.

In order to understand the true meaning of Gurbani, it is necessary that the interpretation of it should be based on the basis of its over-all study and not on piece-meal basis. An effort has been made in the present investigations to interpret the Gurbani thought in this manner.

This work has been based on a comparative study of various scientific theories about the origin and nature of the universe in relation to the holy scriptures such as the Vedas/Upanishads, the Bible and the Quran with a view to examine Nanak Bani in a wider context.
Brief plan of the thesis is given below.

It has been divided into the following six chapters:

I. Concept of the Universe
   (Description, Composition and Structure of the Universe).

II. Origin and Evolution of the Universe.

III. Concept of Life.

IV. Life in the Universe.

V. Origin and Evolution of Life.

VI. Future of the Universe.

The basis of each chapter is the scientific theories and related ideas available in the Vedas / Upanishads, the Bible, the Quran and Nanak Bani. The place of Nanak Bani among the holy scriptures as well as in the field of scientific research has been highlighted at the end of each chapter.

After the concluding portion of the thesis, list of abbreviations used, Gurbani verses in Punjabi and selected bibliography have been given.