Introduction

Analyzing history of world civilizations, we come across the question that for what reasons ancient civilizations have survived through their long journey. The answer is that they have their own epistemological structures of society, polity, economy, culture etc. If a group of people or religion aspires to systematize itself for its survival, then only world of ideas would help it. Here intellect plays a very significant role as a mediator between subjective and objective reality. It serves to relate both realms and to remove the distance between them it constructs methods to regulate life. These formations can be shaped out of some type of knowledge because an essence precedes objective reality. Experiences of the world religions have shown that soul, an abstract reality, is basic truth underlying the body. Thinkers and philosophers from world civilizations have given priority to abstract realm of objective reality. Material phenomenon is also true but produced by some type of metaphysical power. Similarly, society, polity and economy have their roots in speculative thought. Physical existence without any theoretical format would prove to be a mess leading to nowhere. Thus life may collapse without some type of principles and doctrines evolved out of intellectual exercise.

Sikhism, the latest religion of the world is still a growing religion. Co-incidentally, it took origin in Indian subcontinent where already ancient religions of the world like Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism have grown up during their long journey. They developed their own systems of society, polity and economy. Thus, they formulated a full-fledged world-view. Their thinkers left no stone unturned that can contribute to human existence in any way. That’s why they have multiplicity of scholars, schools based on them and sub-branches within. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are no exceptions too. Consequently they have a well-organized world-view and knitted structures that helped them to survive despite of new challenges and problems.

Sikh Studies is doing its best to formulate a complete perspective of life but due to some geographical, political and cultural reasons so many corners are still hidden. In the present research work, we have taken up the problem of world-view that means an overall perspective responsible for determining the nature-behavior of a concerned class, society or religion. World-view imparts structure of things or forms of thought as human conceives from his surroundings. Because of its origin in Indic tradition, Sikhism had spiritual and cultural affiliations with it. So, it cannot be separated from the subcontinent. Here Indian tradition must not be misunderstood as solely various sects of Hinduism but Buddhism and Jainism are also there, even Islam as well.
Another thing important in this context is that all faculties of life should be analyzed in interconnected lineage. As an academic discipline, like other subjects, religion is also being explored in relation to other fields. Surpassing the boundaries of individual experience, religion now has expanded to other faculties of human life. Every area or activity of life is subject to the concept. So, modern human needs to integrate the scattered aspects of world-view. Only harmonized or holistic world-view can help human consciousness to contemplate upon reality from right perspective.

Present research venture has chosen the problem of Sikh world-view in the context of Indian tradition. It will explore the teachings of Sikh Gurus and Sikh history pointing out imprints leading to Sikh Civilization. It will study its ontological and cultural structures alongside its futuristic vision in modern context. It is an effort to realize the potential of Sikhism that must be demonstrated into different faculties of life other than spirituality. Present thesis incorporates major postulates of Sikh world-view formulating a total perspective of life.

First chapter addresses the fundamental problem of the thesis that is theoretical in its nature. It finds out different dimensions and extensions of concept of the world-view. Along with definition, meaning and theoretical model a detailed study of its speculative aspect has been presented. It portrays that how from its origin in cultural anthropology, the concept has transcended the traditional boundaries of meaning attached with it and encompassed a wide range of implications. It is an epistemological structure of material world and other dimensions related with. Every human has his own world; his idea of world-view expands or modifies itself as new situations, experience etc. are confronted by human.

The second chapter dwells upon the world-view as suggested by categories of Indic tradition one by one and tries to find out their distinctions as compared to each other. We have analyzed Sikh world-view co-relating it with Indian religions; however similarities and dissimilarities are natural outcome. Orthodox tradition begins with nature mysticism and passing through so many phases undergoes numerous changes. Intellectual exercise of six systems prepares a logical base for orthodox tradition. On the other hand heterodox one comes out of reactionary approach towards orthodox. Carvaka, Buddhism and Jainism do not form a common metaphysical ground just like the previous one but they expose their dissent with the prevailing systems of religiosity. We have focused on the study of the Sikh world-view in the context of Indian tradition due to some reasons. Sikhism flourished in the Indian subcontinent where
already its counterparts exist. Another purpose is to trace those areas where from Sikhism can start its dialogue with Buddhism, Jainism and Carvaka traditions alongside the Hinduism.

Third chapter of the thesis delves into the ontological aspect of Sikh world-view. It describes the philosophical interpretation of man, Ultimate Reality and world. We would see that human existence is product of body, mind and soul and these aspects are inter-connected. According to Sikhism, an ideal man is *gurmukh* who represents combination of earthly and heavenly attributes. *Gurmukh* participates in history as God intervenes in a unique manner in order to vindicate righteousness. Experience of Sikh Gurus solves the problem of determinate and indeterminate forms offering as *sabda guru* as eternal and ultimate. That’s why Guru Granth provides equal space for Ram and Allah. It also can’t be taken as mixture of both religious traditions but experience of Guru Granth, about Ultimate reality, transcends the prevalent patterns of approaching the God. In Sikhism unity of God contains concrete pluralistic forms of divine expression. Concept of world is also of ontological significance as it has been discussed from ancient times in India. Some Indian sects and religions condemn world due to its transitory nature. But Sikh Gurus adopted a very balanced approach towards materialistic attitude in which over-indulgence is equal to renunciation because both represents extremist attitude. Sikh Gurus took both to an exemplary combination.

Fourth chapter excavates the cultural basis of Sikh civilization. It describes those insights which can be very useful for the structure of society, polity and economy. First comes the social dimension. After discussing Indian society in brief historical background, doctrinal basis and institutional reflections have been elaborated. Similar pattern has been implemented on political and economic dimensions also. Common characteristic of all these is that they are of liberal and open disposition defying the hegemonic designs. For example Politics is not an end in Sikhism but an instrument to serve the social order in a better way. It is not means to create a monopoly or hegemony of a particular group, race or creed over others but to serve the people at large. As a whole this chapter tries to address *miri* character of Sikh world-view. It indicates that Sikhism has capability to contribute human race more than a mere religious tradition and it must visualize its own cultural structures theoretically borrowing help from other counterparts.

Fifth chapter is an effort to locate a space for Sikhism in science and reason driven world. In this age everything is changing not only in objective sense but on psychological level too. Present generation has totally fresh outlook, beliefs and life style about things as compared to
previous one. Science and reason have opened the doors to unimaginative world. No doubt technological advancements have facilitated human life but threat to existence of man also emerged with it. Secularism, globalization, ecological imbalance, pluralism, fundamentalism, identity crisis etc. are major issues which cannot be bypassed in this age. Every civilization, religion or culture will have to deal with them to sustain in the rapidly transforming world. This change has confirmed that only flexible world-view can survive in such conditions. Rigid and narrow thought systems will lose their meaning and will not be able to contribute humanity. Postmodern age has rejected the claim of empirical and rational method as a sole means to grasp reality. It gives equal status to every method either traditional or modern. Ultimate reality can’t be grasped with a single way because of its complex nature. Therefore, now objective methods are not sufficient to know multifaceted truth. Trans-empirical nature of Sikhism transcends the domain of scientific logic. In this chapter we have given a close examination of above mentioned issues and problems in the context of Sikhism. We have succeeded to conclude that Sikhism also provides insights to deal with these problems. Though primarily Sikhism is a spiritual way of living yet it does not escape the existential crisis and worldly affairs. It offers a holistic and universal vision.

We hope that present academic pursuit would help scholars and researchers to explore new areas and would contribute to Sikh Studies. It would also assist to understand recent discussion in the context of Sikhism. Though we have sincerely analyzed the topic yet imperfection and error are common to human effort. So in spite of genuine endeavor it may lack in many respects. At last, we would once again repeat that if Sikh tradition indispensably insists upon more than a spiritual way of living, then it must spell out its own social, economic, cultural and political structures and present research job is an initiative in this direction.

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