Chapter-3
Interactive Dynamics of the Sikh World-View:
Man, Ultimate Reality and the World

3.1 Concept of Man: An Introduction

Till date as proven by discoveries in physical and chemical sciences, there is no end of the universe in which man is living. It is unlimited and extends to unknown horizons. According to scientific findings, human race evolved from very small scale entity, “but there are still numbers of unconvinced people who, impressed by great and real differences which separate the mentality of lowest grades of humankind from that of highest grade of ape, can’t believe that man has arisen from a lower form by any natural or evolutionary process.”¹ Man can predict and control physical objects according to the knowledge possessed by him. The essence of all forces, working in universe, can be found in man from a psychological point of view. Man is, thus, such a giant unit of cosmos. “According to Indian tradition, by constant meditation on God, he can attune himself with God and can become one with Him. It won’t, therefore, be wrong to call a universe, a macrocosm and the man, a micro-cosm.”² But though man has wonderful intellectual powers and has succeeded in controlling the nature and other natural events yet he can’t claim to be the creator of the cosmos and is one of the creatures on planet.

By analyzing Sikh thought we can easily say that Man is neither a soul, nor a body nor a mind but rather a sum total of all these factors. Man and universe are similar to each other, having essence and cosmic unity. A very deep relation lies between man and universe. “Man is, therefore, the microcosm and the universe is macrocosm. The universe is divided into regions and men are also classified according to the preponderant element of subtle content found in them; it may be called parallelism.”³ Kapur Singh differentiates the conception of man coined by Sikhism and Superman of Nietzsche. He writes “Sikhism agrees with this except that Sikhism declares that the meaning of the earth reaches far beyond the stage of superman and superman is only an interim stage, a bridge not a goal.”⁴ He argues that according to Sikh conception of man, a soul oriented man tries to establish “a perfect society of God conscious men, a psycho-social perfection.”⁵
Man is the central point of the universe around which whole cosmos is revolving. Everything is subservient to man. “No religion or philosophy can exist without man, nor can either be said to be complete without giving an explanation of the network and purpose of life.” It is God who sends man down to earth and calls back to heaven after the death. Man is a final stage in sequence of eighty four lac forms of creatures. Man has to enter into the realm of Divinity otherwise he will be subject to the cycle of birth and death.

3.1.1 Body

Generally matter is defined as immaterial potential opposite to speculative bliss and spiritual. “Matter has thus been placed in opposition to life and mind, soul and spirit, and a pre-occupation with worldly pleasures and bodily comforts and as opposed to the “higher” pleasures of the mind…” Matter is the major constituent of body and like other physical order of nature, man is also subject to physical and chemical laws. His existence within time and space projects him as a physical object like others. After death, physical body of man reduces to dust or ashes. According to scientific laws matter consists of atoms and atom is made of electrons and protons that are sources of energy. As scientists explored the deeper and dark corners of atoms they found very complex patterns which are till date not understood. According to Sikhism, man is a composition of different elements and intellect (energy) makes him moved.

Body or matter, in itself, is not ultimate but is a way in which spirit reveals itself. Body is not the sole reality but is relative to spirit. If matter is considered in relation to spirit, we would perceive it as valuable too. According to Sikh thought sehaj is a stage of highest wisdom or unity. In that state of mind it is possible to know real nature of self to lead a life of bliss where all tensions cease to be. The Cosmic Spirit has been called purakh in Gurbani; it may be generally translated as ‘The Person’. Human being is also known as purukh or purush in Indian tradition. It means that man is the very reflection of ‘The Person’. So God is simultaneously physical as well as metaphysical, though having no attributes yet is source of all attributes. On the other hand, a person is believed to posses the divine element. Universe is a manifestation of ‘The Person’. So relations of a person and ‘The Person’ must be determined.

Sikh Gurus exhorted man to recognize his divine source because man embodies the very light of the Lord. He not only reflects the physical aspect within time and space but
the mysterious and spiritual aspect too. To attain this spirit of realization, he has been
granted with intelligence. It means man has unique psychological and spiritual capability
that would carry the world forward. Due to these qualities, Sikh Gurus placed man as a
king of the universe. According to the discoveries in scientific field, life only occurs on
this planet till date no other star or planet shows any sign of life. Thus man is the master of
this earth (or universe).

In Sikh philosophy man has been elevated to the superior status among all creatures
due to his link with the Ultimate Reality. But we see that he is also subject to merits and
demerits. So, all levels of reality are united in his personality. He includes divinity as well
as animalism which mean he is mixture of good and evil. In such an undetermined and
dual nature, man cannot be the measure of all things, that’s why in Indian philosophy
brahman is the center of cosmos. Spiritually blind person is known as manmukh whereas
spiritually awakened person is regarded as gurmukh. Sikhism is a firm believer of human
transformation through efforts and meditation. A man can save his spirit from evil. Human
intellect or understanding only can help man in technical problems and issues but
psychology and spiritual mysteries are beyond any logical calculations. It raises the sense
of incomprehensibility that leads man to his microcosmic position in the whole of cosmos.

3.1.1.1 Body and the Sacred

Body or matter is generally considered opposite to the spirit. Soul or spirit is
abstract and being divine remains near to its source whereas body, made of gross matter
under the conditions of time and space, is beyond its source. Influence of three gunas
shapes the physical form of man generally as it is proclaimed that body is made of rakt and
boond (blood and semen). Theory of five koshas, mentioned in Upanishads also
contribute to knowing of the structure of gross body. These five koshas are namely
annamai kosh, pranamai kosh, manomai kosh, gyanmai kosh and last one is anandmai
kosh. First two strictly represent the gross constituents of human body whereas other three
belong to subtle body, rational and spiritual aspect respectively. Though body is made of
matter opposite to spirit but it is described as home for soul and the divine supports the
matter. Similar views regarding the purity of body can be found in other religions too.
According to Sikh thought body has a very superior status and even gods are also
interested in having it. It should be maintained as a temple of God. Though it should not
be worshiped yet must be utilized to achieve divine cause. Maintaining the human body is our primary need but being attached with matter closely it wants to indulge into sensual pleasures so it must be prevented from. Over indulgence with material comforts is regarded as irrational.\textsuperscript{15}

It is an animal tendency but man is above animal and other all species. Thus human body is subordinate to spirit. It should be used to serve the spiritual purpose of man. According to the Sikh Gurus when man recognizes the significance of body he will be able to realize the true purpose of his life. Though it physically appears as a product of five elements,\textsuperscript{16} its inner quest reflects divine urge too, because body, the temple, has been constructed by God himself.\textsuperscript{17} Human body is a part of a mysterious act in the form of universe. After producing it from five elements, nine doors were exposed but tenth and last one was put latent that is to be found by man with his individual efforts.\textsuperscript{18} No doubt, man is combination of mind, body and spirit but body as a material existence is primary condition to be called human being. Other characteristics of being are very subtle and abstract but body is influenced by birth and death. Being made of matter it has qualities of matter. It feels hunger, pain and other physical necessities are required by it. Thus human body is the main source of empirical knowledge which wisdom is gathered by spirit in its true sense but first experience of empirical world occurs with gross body.

We can say that body can’t be defined merely as a physical entity; its metaphysical aspects are of more importance. Its real ontological importance comes into existence with its latent factors. It is the most complicated unit of universe. In this context remarks by Sher Singh are very important. He says that, “What we call matter is not the total exclusion of spirit. It is the comparative lack of manifestation of the soul-element. This is how the Guru’s monism stands making man a distinguishable but not separable part of the whole universe.”\textsuperscript{19} Further he writes that “Man in relation to the universe may be regarded as a universe on a small scale. The universe has been named by the Guru brahmand and the man as pind. Just as a body of man is made of five gross elements ether or sky i.e. space, air, fire, water and earth, similarly the universe is also composed of these elements.”\textsuperscript{20} Body of man has been assigned a motive to attain on earth. It has to discover the real being or soul existing within itself. Analyzing the body’s relation with two other constituents Dr. Shashi Bala observes that “Man is also a manifestation of the Absolute being with its
threefold constituents viz. matter, energy and life. Body, as matter, is not permanent and it comes into existence with the association of spirit and it terminates on the dissociation of spirit. Nonetheless, human body serves as an instrument to realize the divine spirit.” Speaking metaphorically, the body has been considered as the wife of soul. This relation has been portrayed in the form of dialogue between the body and the soul (dhan and pir) by Guru Arjan Dev. In that hymn, wife (body) requests her husband (soul) to remain with her forever, but the husband works under the will of his Master (God). It may be concluded that, “Thus, man is a prototype of the universe. The being, manifested as microcosm, also resides in the macrocosm. Man in relation to the universe is regarded as a universe in miniature. The divine element or universal soul is the essence of both of them.”

3.1.2 Mind

We see that human body is a far more complex structure and more subtle possibilities existing within this. It is true that body is made of matter but body is not only matter in its complete sense. It means there is something more than matter called ‘mind’. Mere matter does not make a living creation. It is mind that makes human body to be conscious about its existence. Thus human body exists on psychological level too. It may be said that mind is also a body in subtle and abstract realms. Functioning of body is inspired by mind and a man who is mentally or psychologically ill can’t live a normal life because the abstract source of which body follows order becomes upset; power of mind is reflected through body (matter). Man can’t realize his physical entity without intellect. Thus mind functions through sense organs and consciousness helps body to collect knowledge and wisdom through these sense organs. Analysis and comparison of information gathered by mind creates a rational side of man. Animals and other biological creatures too have senses like man but they can’t discriminate things according to their own nature. It is mind that generates advance progress into physical orders of cosmos. Knowledge is in what way objects or subjective self is contacted by mind or how it interacts and interprets above mentioned domains. We can say that these are not our senses that contact outside and inner self but in real sense our mind contacts objects. “manas (“Mind”) is that subtle or immaterial structure of one’s being by which one knows that one is related in various ways to other divine and human beings. It is incorporeal dimension of the human being in which awareness resides and from which the sense of being alive
That’s why in Indian tradition, mind is a very important aspect of Man. Concentration of mind has been emphasized by the scriptures and other religious texts. In the Sikh thought mind is of very complex structure, sometime it is regarded as soul and elsewhere as an power point of knowledge. To realize this complexity and potential of mind, we can see some instances from Gurbani:

I. By conquering mind one can conquer the world

II. Mind is restrained by wisdom that is gained under the guidance of Guru

III. Mind, born out of five elements, acts and follows the dharma.

After knowing the essence of mind man can conquer the world. It is mind that operates dynamics of world. It is a power point of knowledge where from structures of polity, economics, society, art, science etc. are generated. So to know the power and potential of mind, concentration has been stressed by prophets, saints, mystics, religious masters etc. All have experienced distinctive shades of human subjectivity, “So mind is the master and the sense organs are servants at its command.”

One thing that must be remembered while studying the mind, is that all decisions and actions taken by mind are not subject to be positive always. Determining the attitude towards different situation it may be both negative and positive, even between negative and positive too. “Man’s nature is, for Guru Nanak, dependent upon his affiliation and nature is transformed when the affiliation is transferred from the world to divine Name.”

Distinctive nature of every person is a result of this attitude. Guru says that “O mind you are the very embodiment of the Divine, so realize your original spirit.” But on the other side this foolish mind is greedy but by chanting nam mind of gurmukh becomes beautiful.

Above mentioned instances represent two separate conditions of mind that generally is dominated by negative energy and has forgotten its original spirit. Mind and body are relative to each other. Both are connected intimately and inseparably. Body is a home where mind resides. In Gurbani nature of mind has been depicted from two standpoints. On the one hand it is a part of the very Divine spark but on the other hand it is unsteady too. Generally, in Guru Granth Sahib, It has been compared with elephant that wanders in all the directions without any purpose. So it must be controlled with the help of Guru who has goad of wisdom (sabda) with which he guides it towards the path of God.
Only Guru is able to wash away the dust of ego which separates it from its original source. This is Guru that brings it forth out of three *gunas* but due to its unsteady nature, it is mostly attracted by *maya*. Its ignorance makes it inclined towards five vices. That’s why it is required to control and remove the evil of ego. In their daily prayer Sikhs demand the humbleness of mind (ਓਹਾ ਚੇਰੀਂ) free from any type of ego and vices.

In Indian tradition mind has been recognized as a very minute form of matter, a very subtle image of physical body. “According to *Chandogya Upanishad*, mind is matter and like the body, it is made up of food. Whereas the body is gross, the mind is subtle and even more subtle than the physical energy.” Indian philosophy has also termed *antahkarana* that is more broader concept of mind. According to that it includes four aspects viz. *mana*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *ahankara*. These aspects functions on very subtle plains. It means our inner capacities are multi-dimensional and are not obliged to a single function. Similarly mind is not only related with some single aspect, according to the Sikh thought it has been portrayed in various layers or conditions. These descriptions show that mind is not a simple phenomenon to understand and it can’t be comprehended merely on the basis of intellect. Its floating and unstable nature has been discussed thoroughly. It always wavers from one state to another. Yoga of Patanjli is very important in this context. It aims to control the mind or hold it to nurture the mystic concerns of man.

### 3.1.2.1 Function of Mind

Generally mind perceives, discriminates and delivers reflection about the objects and experienced phenomenon. Its association with external world begins with perception that is a very natural activity of mind. This interaction makes mind a part of duality. In this way ego becomes instinctive to it. In religious life, whole of the efforts are made to revive the natural state of mind. Prophets and scriptures state that man should try to know its real entity. What we want to say is that transformation of spirit starts in mind. Removal of veil of darkness is done by wisdom of Guru. It illuminates the mind in the ego-oriented state. Mind has been termed as blind enveloped in darkness. So, realization of divine knowledge is must to eliminate the duality and ego. This state of mind can’t be attained by empirical knowledge or by observing rituals and other ceremonies. To gain the tranquility of mind, it has to go through the inner purification and transformation. According to Dr. Shashi Bala, “In the Vedic literature, three states of mind are mentioned and these states
are due to the predominance of gunas of prakriti i.e. sattva, rajas and tamas. Being indulged in these gunas of mental states, man comes and goes and knows not the secret. Guru Nanak depicts the fourth state of mind which he enunciates as turiya avastha and which is above and beyond these three mental states.”

3.1.2.2 Interaction between Mind and Body

It is clear from the above mentioned discussion that human body represents matter and mind which indicate the emotional and rational aspect of human existence. Both are interrelated and affected by each other to a perplexing extent. According to the Sikh thought, mind can’t be associated fully with body nor with spirit, does it however plays a significant role in both realms. It means mind has close proximity to matter as well as spirit. “In fact, mind is the connecting link between God and world and it makes or mars a person according to its nature.” Basically mind characterized by the Sikh Gurus is of dual nature that may lead man either to material oriented life or to spiritual solace. Mind has two options to attach itself with body or soul. Mind originates the idea and body works accordingly. In a way these two are different facets of human existence.

3.1.3 Soul (Spirit)

According to Sikhism, man is living on two levels one is body (material) and other is mind (mental) but last the constituent dominates other two. Soul is more subtle and abstract than mind, so it is hard to understand it intellectually. But its role to control the mind and body has been experienced from different angles and by different religious personalities. A man feels its presence in everyday life. How can we create a contact with this underlying essence? Natural and life sciences are unable to answer such question. According to them nothing exists like atma or soul, it is only coherent dynamics of energy that is responsible for bodily functions and intellectual exercise. Indian tradition propounds upon the very question of atma in a very assertive way.

It is only the spiritual element that makes mind and body active to participate in life. Sometimes terms like self, conscience, spirit etc. are employed to convey the meaning of soul. It is beyond any description in objective terms because it is not an object that can be grasped through sensory organs. It is too personal to share with others. The Sikh Gurus say that being a part and parcel of Ultimate Truth, human soul is free from physical limitations such as birth, growth, death etc. but these attributes are associated with body
not with soul. Due to its instinctive relation with divine touch, it is impossible to prove logically but it can be felt and to some extent its certain characteristics can also be comprehended on the basis of experiences as delivered by spiritual personalities.

So without the element of soul, it is impossible to conceive the human body. Activity of our senses is motivated by the presence of soul living in the body and human actions get their power from the soul or spirit. In a way only soul is the real identity of man. All different forms of existence found in the universe, all are having the same light, pervading in the world.³⁹

During the Vedic period, Varuna, Indra, Prajapati etc. are replaced one after another. These deities took away the place of supreme deity from one another. This trend is regarded as “different ideas emerged and developed in this literature in different directions.”⁴⁰ So, this type of henotheism can’t be termed as monotheism. Dr. Shashi Bala writes that “If we study the ancient Indian Tradition, it becomes clear that there is no definite idea of self in the Vedic period. The Vedic seers are conscious of the presence of an immortal element behind the mental faculties and they identify it with various aspects of human being, namely breath (prana), Consciousness (cetanatam), and controller of mental process (dharyit sutratman).”⁴¹ But we can find an elaborate description of the notion in Upanishads. Upanishads are very intuitive and introspective in their approach to ultimate reality. They put their whole potential in searching the innermost depths of soul. That’s why they are known as atamvidya or brarhamvidya. “Hence, it is obvious that soul or atma, according to Upanishads is the innermost essence of an individual and is distinct from the physical as well as the mental personality of the individual.”⁴²

Idea of cosmic order or universe will remain devoid of significance unless the idea of the ‘self’ is imagined. Indian tradition discussed the very idea since the days of Vedas “The range of Vedic literature extends from the worship of Nature to the conception of Universal Unity, which suggests a single, basic reality expressing itself in a great variety of existence.”⁴³ It is an achievement of Indian philosophy that it explored the very idea of self to hidden layers of human consciousness and declared that man possesses intuition underlying the bodily frame that enables the ‘self’ to find its roots. It is neither a fully psychological nor metaphysical but a total sum of both. Though it can’t be seen but causes things to be seen. With the higher realization of human self, man identifies himself with
Indian philosophy holds the view that man or self is an integral part of God. Man’s origin happens from the Absolute Being. Upanishads provided the answer of this problem by saying that human self that is carried by human body is identical to the Absolute Being. These scriptures enunciate that brahman produced the self from his own entity.

The Sikh Gurus also shared and imbibed the essential spirit of Indian tradition. Even they went to the extent of stating that it is the ego that causes the world to come into existence. It is a very philosophical and complicated problem raised by the Sikh Gurus. Here ‘Ego’ is not employed in the terms of negative force of human individuality that separates it from others but it is an essence of the One Universal Spirit. In negative terms the ego of an individual makes him to be attached with existential concerns in spite of recognizing a unifying force behind the multiplicity of objects. Egoism or the veil of falsehood or ignorance closes the doors of intuition that help the self to know its original form. A man under the spell of ego becomes subject to physical limitations.

Knowledge of one’s own incapability before the vastness of universe creates experience of vismad or Wonder and man listens to the music of soul. “This is the stage of anand (blissfulness) or sehaj (equipoise), or turiya (the fourth state of mystic consciousness), or the ‘tenth door’ that opens up in the innermost recesses of the human heart where microcosm and macrocosm become one.” When human ego is removed by devotion, the door of illumination opens to him.

Man cannot fulfill the purpose of the universe while focusing on his own plans. If man appears as unit of cosmos it happens just because of physical conditions in which man is surrounded. But man is not a part of the universe but has a whole universe within himself. Man’s quest to trans-humanize himself expands his entity even beyond universe, time and space. In a way man belongs to every particle of planet. To know and realize this deep relationship he has to reduce his physical aspect to transcendental one. As told before, transformation does not occur instantly, nevertheless immediate change may be seen but in exceptional cases of prophets, saints etc. A lay man has to make efforts to attain spiritual solace. Transcendental state of mind is not ‘one step’ achievement and hundreds of times a man has to take birth in the world. As in Hindu tradition mukti has been defined in various forms. In the Sikhism a man has to cross five phases of inner transformation i.e. five khands. These phases show a gradual and step by step growth of human soul.
We have seen that man has a dual side of his entity viz. physical and non-physical. In a similar way transformation happens in and is assisted by two modes. I. *nam-simran* (Non-physical) II. *karma* (Physical)

### 3.1.3.1 Nam-Simran

*Nam-simran* has been depicted in many ways in Gurbani. As man has a central place in Universe, similarly *nam-simran* is the core of the spiritual process as an experience of a devotee. *Nam-simran* is very magnetic and charismatic potential during spiritual journey. Only *nam-simran* can release man from bondages of past and present *karmas*. *Nam-simran* restores the original self, uplifts from individual and personal level to cosmic spheres. Practicing this, man gets enlightened and raised to higher plains. “Sikhism urges man to divinize the whole of humanity on this earth by transforming, mind, life and matter (body) through a conscious effort and will, and with the aid of spiritual technique of *nam-yoga*...”

During this process, as concentration increases in relation with Ultimate Truth, human self gets stronger. This experience becomes too personal to explain. Doctrine of *nam* is much necessary for attaining God consciousness or transformation of one's life and mankind. As Guru feels that man is living in hard times and is surrounded by negative forces, therefore “adopt the way of *nam*.”

Nam is central idea in the house of Nanak. That is why it has been repeated again and again in Gurbani. As told elsewhere that *bhakti* has been recognized as a leading way to liberation and, knowledge and sacred action takes its origin out of spiritual experience. Both are aftermath of *bhakti*. Before the Sikh Gurus, in India there were many practices viz. *yoga*, *sanyas*, *tantra*, gods’ worship etc. Regarding inner cleanliness, these are not valid paths to liberation, various disciplines and practices, known as religious, are insignificant as compared to *nam*.

Though no speculative structure is found in Gurbani but in daily congregational prayers *nam* is sought and the Sikhs conclude their prayer with *nam*. The *nam* is all encompassing essence. Its practice has alchemical influence over human soul, mind and body. Ignorance and sickness can be removed by practicing *nam*. Rituals like *yajna*, and worship of gods and goddesses are also not fruitful without *nam* and is useless. and pilgrimage to sacred temples, rivers and other places can’t help man to get inner purity. It is only *nam* that is source of peace and tranquility of mind.
In the Indian thought, reason of suffering and transmigration lies within one’s own deeds. Bhagavad Gita prescribes triple way to get rid of sufferings. According to Guru Granth Sahib, our sufferings have clue and guideline to liberate our self and man finds a divine purpose.\textsuperscript{54} So he dedicates himself fully to the will of God.

3.1.3.2 Karma

Generally \textit{karma} is defined as, “a moral law corresponding to the physical law of causation.”\textsuperscript{55} It also plays a very important role on the physical level to transform the self before and after. According to Mimansakas, ritualistic formalism is compulsory to achieve the state of ‘moksa’. Whereas Advaita Vedanta of Sankara insists that all types of \textit{karmas} lead only to involvement in the world. Liberation from \textit{sansara} can only be achieved through knowledge. “While agreeing that the performance of certain acts helps one to undo the effects of past sins, he considers \textit{Karma} to be fulfiller of desires only and not as the helper for the achievement of the eternal soul. Thus Sankara holds the view that knowledge of the inner self is hostile to \textit{karma} and these two cannot co-exist in a realm even.”\textsuperscript{56} In this way this term was used in Indian tradition, in the sense of religious ritualism. Yoga system of Indian thought admits the six types of \textit{karma} known as \textit{khata karma} (Dhoti, Neti, Nevali, Vasati, Trataka and Kapala Bhati).

Merits and demerits of human body and life are said to be determined by \textit{karma}\textsuperscript{57} but Sikhism rejects the idea of rituals that are performed for the mental purification rather these actions are ego oriented. So such rites are useless for the moral and spiritual progress. To be free from \textit{karmas} man should be independent of the reward. Gurbani stresses that human existence is, in fact, the result of past \textit{karmas}.\textsuperscript{58}

We find that man’s existential status is conditioned by past deeds but he is free to choose what is good and bad according to his intellectual faculties. Present deeds will determine the situation of our self hereafter similar to the principle of ‘like begets like’ or ‘like attracts like’ or ‘as we sow, so shall we reap’. Another characteristic regarding transformation is its indescribable nature in its complete sense. While propounding upon the tenets of Sikhism, according to McLeod, the Sikh Gurus enunciated their followers that “Meditate on this, conform your life to it, acquire a nature which, in accordance with the law of \textit{karma}, will carry you beyond the cycle of birth and death thus you shall find salvation.”\textsuperscript{59} During this process man bears different layers of spiritual experience
simultaneously. Because of its personal and mystical nature changes or ups and downs of this state become beyond intellectual exercise, so these are hard to express in verbal form. Thus we see that how complicated and intense this experience is. Human language can only portray those experiences which are subject to senses and are within the range of time and space. In that ecstasy everything happens in logical time not in historical time. Similarly conception of space changes accordingly. The Sikh thought admits that our reward and punishment, enjoyment and suffering all flow from past karmas that can be named as theory of cause and effect. Our life is the result of actions done in previous lives, so karma becomes man’s compulsion that goes on forever with a never ending cycle. Only nam and grace of God are capable of putting an end to karmas and to enlighten our mind and soul because all actions and efforts are made to create wisdom within our mind.60

“Every human being acts for the fulfillment of its requirements, in relation to time and space. The human being, being rational, makes use of his thinking faculty. He distinguishes between good and bad actions.”61 Man is responsible for all of his deeds. So death of man does not put an end to karma. No worldly power can change the course of karmas, except almighty’s Grace. He may pardon a person to get rid of pain and bondage of human existence.

Sometime Will of God (cosmic order) and theory of karma are misinterpreted just as they fetter the mind and human will. We must know that when man exists in the world of material, his societal surrounding and instincts also play a very important role in shaping his personality. So to some extent, man is free to do everything. What his action reflects? He will be rewarded by similar spirit. So it is clear that every act is an inevitable outcome of the preceding conditions. Man’s physical world may be ruled by karmas in its strict sense, but they can’t dominate spiritual aspect of human being. No doubt man’s bodily capacity is limited but spiritual capacity within man enables him to transcend them. Thus inner and divine side of man works as a beacon light for him. So humans are blend of two different streams appearing as contradictory, but are paradoxical. On the one hand according to physical laws he is subject to karmas, on the other hand he is not free to do everything and is subject to divine vision of his soul.

Theory of karma has a great ethical value too. It inspires the man to act, as he desires. It remembers his responsibility toward God, world and himself. It encourages an
ethical attitude in man. In other words it is an opportunity that generates the possibility of hope in life. Man who is suffering from misfortunes and is facing problems in life can change the flow of *karma* by doing service and by living a very honest life. So according to the Sikh thought doctrine of *karma* gives an inspiration by which man while doing good deeds make a cut from past life and *karmas*. It is right to say that, “*Karma* is not ‘fate’ because all the time we are making our own *karma* and determining the character of our further status and births.”

Another important factor of Indian classical thought regarding the *karma*, is that actions are strongly associated with caste. In India caste is considered as a hallmark of being. In fact caste is determined by our *karmas* and our present actions will also play a vital role to determine our caste in next birth. In a way our actions are conditioned by our caste and vise-versa. After death a person goes to heaven and hell or his soul will have to undergo another birth in this world according to merits and demerits of actions. *Moksa*, as freedom from the cycle of transmigration, is an ultimate goal of every man. One type of *moksa* can be attained only after the death and as per second it is possible here too in the present life. Buddhist thought criticized the very doctrine of *karma* as in Indian tradition. The eternalism and annihilationism, it visualized in another system known as middle path. Buddha said that spiritual process of soul, based on actions, proves man crazy, going through life after life and sometime he may consider the present life useless. “According to Buddha, there is incessant change, but at the same time, there is nothing that changes. There is action but no agent.” Middle path enunciated by Buddha is that method by which human personality or existence is composed and remains forever. After dissolving of physical body, these elements are passed on to another person or individuality. Only *karmas* migrate to another bodily existence. Explaining the theory of *karma* composed by Buddhism, M. Hiriyanna writes that “It is not merely when one lamp is lit from another that there is a transmission of light and heart. They are transmitted every moment...Similarly the *karma* belonging to an individual may transmit itself at death as it does during life; and though the dead person does not revive, another with the same disposition may be born in his stead.” But “This doctrine was criticized by the Brahmin on two grounds. The new individual suffering for the actions of the first individual is not the same person. Secondly the belief in the previous births was recognition of some sort of
continuity. This was a great flaw in the philosophy. Without transmigration of soul, the doctrine of Karma does not stand. According to Sikhism, actions done in complete secrecy are known in all the four directions. One who practices virtues will be called virtuous and wrong doer will be known as sinner and present pain and sufferings are due to autonomous choice of past life.

But it does not mean that man is strictly and completely conditioned by the law of action and he has no other option to get rid of. The Sikh thought does not discourage the moral efforts of man. Man’s life is not just a result of mechanical dynamics. This dynamics and relations are of various types at different levels. On one level man may be conditioned by the laws of previous karmas but on another level karmas can be subject to God’s grace. So there is always a scope for unity of man and God.

3.1.3.3 Moksha

Spiritual transformation is the chief objective of religious life. Experience of prophets and saints has depicted this very significantly. Religious traditions of several cultures affirm the idea behind all religious phenomena.

After God and world, man is of ontological importance in the analysis of the Sikh world-view. According to our anthropological, sociological and physiological approaches, man faces the question from very origin who am I? Where from my physical body come? Is there any supernatural source that generates this worldly phenomenon? Objects existing in universe are not isolated from one another but are united and integrated with. So apparently we see them incoherently but the fundamental spirit is same behind everything and a common cause is shared by everything. So in a comprehensive context, different objects have no independent goal varied from others, but whole universe is going to achieve a common ultimate ideal.

Looking at position of human being in cosmos, we can’t analyze the existence of man avoiding the surrounding within which man lives. Indian tradition emphasizes *moksha* as the ultimate goal of human life. *Moksha* is not only to get rid of materialistic attachments but realization of self as a segment of God. Goals of human being have been divided into four categories:

1. *Dharma*: to do one’s duty as prescribed by spiritual authorities and scriptures.
2. *Artha*: to earn to meet one’s own materialistic needs.
3. **Kama**: to satisfy procreative needs of body.

4. **Moksha**: to be free from cycles of rebirth and to be united with God

After examining above mentioned division, we see that life has been divided into two realms, one is spiritual and second is temporal. On one hand man is sacred but on the other hand he is profane too. Thus two (*artha* and *kama*) out of four belong to temporal aspect of human existence and other (*dharma* and *moksha*) are attributed to spiritual concerns.

Nature and functions of *moksha* have been analyzed deeply in different sects of *Vedanta*. *Moksha* has been accepted by these sects according to their own spiritual experiences. But they are more philosophical than spiritual. “Shankra considers *mukti* of two types; *Jivan Mukti* and *Videha Mukti*”\(^{68}\) Whereas Ramanuja rejecting the *jivan mukti* visualizes salvation as “a supra mundane sphere and there enjoying in the presence of God the highest bliss.”\(^{69}\) But “Like Ramanuja, Madhva also rejects the ideal of Jivanmukti and insists upon...scriptural rites that are obligatory”\(^{70}\)

This state of mind/body/spirit is not attained immediately after spiritual purification, Man’s soul is liberated in different modes according to its deeds while living in the world. These kinds of salvation depend upon the degree of purity as gained by human soul. Purification happens in spiritual harmony through prayer and meditation. In such a state of mind, social and geographical differences wither away. In fact man transcends all physical variations and knows the reality of total cosmos. This spiritual transformation is defined as enlightenment.

The Sikh thought also admits man as a physical as well as spiritual being. Man instinctively comes to know the truth behind the duality of universe. To realize the inner truth of his identity is an inherent urge of man. Real meanings of life lie in inner transformation, if it does not happen life becomes meaningless. So to make a niche in the creation of God, man has to transcend his physical limitations. This is a mystic journey to know its original self and to establish its authentic identity in the spiritual realms. This is very removing of ego or assertion of real ego without which entity of man is impossible. This transformation is necessary for man being a central figure of universe. According to the Sikh thought man is the leader of the biological world due to his rational aspects and is more capable to control and guide creation on planet and can even exploit them for his selfish motives. He can adapt himself in accordance with changing laws of environment.
and social orders. All these features maintain the supremacy of man over other world. But as we find that authentic identity of man consists of three constituent elements namely mind, body and spirit.

It is clear, that man is neither physical nor metaphysical (rational), so far these aspects have come under deep consideration of philosophical traditions of east and west, third and last element is more important for eastern religions. All these traditions and schools are more conscious of the spiritual aspect. Last one is regarded as more powerful than others. Man’s relation with God is not only his individual or personal aim but a collective or corporate purpose. In this context Kapur Singh rightly says that “This indeed, would be society of human gods and the ultimate purpose of the divine impulse of creation is the establishment of this society of human gods in the terrestrial spheres of universe.” Further he assertively points out that the Sikh Gurus not only mentioned the goal but also revealed the way too.

As for an independent and full-fledged growth of man, freedom is sought for individual; similarly human soul must be liberated from evil or *maya*. According to Indian thinkers, *maya* or the grand illusion diverts man from his real purpose of life. To get rid of these illusionary bondages is called *mokhsa*. For the Sikh Gurus, liberation is neither *nirvana*, nor concession by *yamraj* nor the idea of *dargah* but they encompass them and pave a way for new concept of liberation. Prayer with devotion and grace of God are closely attached concepts found in the Sikh thought. “Prayer is upheld equally strongly by Guru Nanak and his followers, especially on the grounds of their support to the *bhakti-yoga*, in addition to the *gyan-yoga* and *karma-yoga*. In fact, Guru Nanak’s scheme comprises elements of all the three systems and yet offers a new course of liberation, which, in recent years, has been named Nam-Yoga.”

Almost every Indian school of philosophy has discussed this term. For Sankhya liberation refers to disjunction of *purusha* and *prakrti*. In Advait Vedanta liberation is gained through knowledge. It is total assimilation in *brahman*. “It is a state none other than one’s own inherent nature as Brahman and is not acquired state like paradise. It consists in attainting the state of Universal Spirit.” It is a state free from every type of duality in which neither good nor evil, neither past nor present nor future has place. Some scholars say that soul attains the very nature of God but others claim that soul does not identify
itself with Him. According to the Sikh thought, mukti is possible through the grace of God and with individual efforts. Guru Amardas says that everyone has desire to go to heavens and attain mukti and hopes to achieve this end, but those who want to have a sight of the lord, do not implore for mukti they are satisfied only with the sight of the Lord. Similarly Guru Arjan dev reveals that I neither want kingdom nor mukti, I just want the love for the lotus feet of lord. Term sehaja has also been employed in the Sikh Scripture to denote the spirit of mukti. The term literally means inborn, innate, spontaneous, instinctive etc. The term was very famous in Siddha and Natha tradition in which ‘the union of nada and bindu’ is regarded as sehaja. Nirvana is another term used by the founder of the Sikhism. In fact nirvana is very popular with Buddhist tradition. There it means complete extinction of individuality. According to the Sikhism, in this state man becomes free from illusion and duality of matter. Duality and illusion are opposite to liberation, they captivate the man with material desires and other attachments. Guru is also a helper who breaks the bondage and illumines the mind of individual.

3.1.3.4 The Man: Gurmukh

The Sikh Guru aimed to create a person who should be able to intervene in the history and contribute to the humankind according to his potential. Society cannot be transformed without the modifications of men who create society. So, for the Sikh Gurus transformation of human being was an imperative and they named it gurmukh whose every activity reflects the experience of Guru and has realized the eternal energy sabda and the communication of the very energy was not inter-personal but collective and institutional too. Gurmukh participates in history as God intervenes through physical form in time and space to create a balance. He meditates on God’s nam and finally gets enlightened. In this way he remains in sehaja, the cosmic tranquility and collects the energy of nam through inner transformation of mind. The balance or energy which is gained by gurmukh in the trance allows him to participate in the history with an enlightened consciousness.

In Guru Granth Sahib gurmukh has also an opposite called manmukh who only follows the negative potential of his mind. Manmukh has been defined in Gurbani in many ways, he has no control over his greed for money and property, hates saints and gurmukh, engages himself always in quarrels, over indulges into the sex, anger etc.
It is obvious that *manmukh* does not meditate on God’s *nam* rather has negative characteristics, opposite to those of *gurmukh*. He also intervenes in the history but in a very unauthentic way that’s why he remains always disintegrated. Authenticity means living with the sense of honour or dignity, therefore *gurmukh* identifies the sense of self-respect and interferes in history with transformative acts positively. *Gurmukh* has been preferred to *manmukh*. It is *gurmukh* who is devoted to the stage of liberation where he enjoys the highest state of deep consciousness with God. His emancipation from the cycles of life is not individualistic but he also shares it with others. Every type of attainment by *gurmukh* is not limited to him but also communicated to others. Thus the hero is shaped in community (*sadh sangat*). Gurbani declares that the person who dwells in the interiors of the saint community is the true person. In this way *gurmukh* enlarges himself by participating into social and political dynamism. Dr. Gurbhagat Singh says that “For that reason, the *gurmukh*’s consciousness and actions are not subjective. They belong in the category of objectivity even if accompanied by the internal power and concentration.”

It may be said that *gurmukh* synthesizes the aspects of subjectivity and objectivity but by transcending both categories makes efforts for self and community welfare simultaneously. This liberation seeking person experiences life becoming a part of saint-community because the Divine dwells within the very community. “He does not stop at that, he goes on to conceive a society of *gurmukhs*, who not only know this reality as truth but activise themselves for being truthful in order to attain that reality.” His life is neither separated from the joy and beauty of the world nor bears a shallow philosophical abstraction. Both realms are embodied in the body of *gurmukh*. “Morality is both knowledge as well as action. So far as we have seen that *gurmukh* is the staunch follower of One Reality whose name is *sat* and he does not like to be only a passive entity brooding and speculating. He is dynamically engaged in action.”

He does not lose the integrity that happened not before him in Advait Vedanta. He fights to enrich the existential concerns of humanity and revolutionizes out of which pours love for human race. Guru Gobind Singh says, “Only those who love meet God.”

We see that concept of love as mentioned in Gurbani is a multi-dimensional aspect of *gurmukh*. Its range covers the total phenomenon related with man herein and hereafter. It includes the human race, society, God etc. That is why it is a predominant concept in the
writings of all the Gurus. They neither advocate the emotions-oriented mysticism nor constructed a dogmatic system but invented new signs, symbols and expressions, having new meanings. They encompass meanings of aesthetics, militancy and change and leading towards structural changes to establish new paradigms. Not only concepts but meanings as well, were different from the contemporary religious systems. Dr. Gurbhagat Singh claims that, “Both content and form of these signs were different…The God with aesthetic, Yogic and militant characteristics and especially in relation to the other radically modified signs in different from the God used by priesthood helping the Mughal Sultans, and from the Brahma and other puranic gods used by brahmamic priesthood to fragment and subdue the masses.”

In more specific terms, it can be said that the Sikh Guru were creating a new cosmos and managing relationships from a novel angle. “The questions posed by them and the answers suggested are different from the contemporary imperial and Brahmamic system”82

These signs and symbols helped the Sikhs to act and respond to world distinctively. Their neurology was totally changed by them. “It is to be understood that man is a mixed produce of spirit and matter. Spirit is the source of all life and all virtues. Material body is the vehicle of the indwelling and the unseen spirit. The spirit expresses itself through the actions performed by material body, which is animated by the former”83

3.2 Ultimate Reality

Now we would discuss the idea of Ultimate Reality or God proposed by Sikhism. Word God is, “applied to all superhuman beings of heathen mythologies who exercise power over nature and man.”84 So, super human entity or entities are an important part of these traditions. It is easy to understand that every person lives in a social and cultural milieu and is also influenced by these phenomena. This impact can be seen on thought of man according to his social milieu. So even being a prophet Guru Nanak was not an exception, impact of contemporary thought can be easily realized on his teachings as we find in bani but it should not be defined as amalgamation or syncretism of prevailing religious traditions as some time observed by scholars by naming it “...as a vision of this Hindu-Muslim common ground.”85 “No doubt the impact of prevailing thought is traceable in Guru Nanak bani but it is not a synthesis of contemporary beliefs.”86 It is generally
considered that thoughts of medieval saints were influenced by the Islamic Godhead, Allah.

Azad Faruqi and Kapur Singh consider unity of God in Sikhism as more similar to Semitic tradition. I.H. Azad Faruqi writes that “Sikhism, while in its rejection of the incarnation or appearance of Divinity in any material manifestation, is close to Islamic belief in monotheism; in some other respect, in this regard, it has its own individual approach.” Similar views have been expressed by Kapur Singh, according to his approach, “The Sikh Concept of ultimate Reality is more akin to Judaic notion of an Almighty Person than to the Aryan concept of an immanent neutral principle.” Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia tries to establish the connection of the Sikh God with Christianity from existential point of view. He thinks that “The Sikh conception is closer to the Biblical thought in that it considers time to have begun with the creation of the existential reality.” While discussing this issue it must be remembered that condemnation of incarnation or idol worship should not be misunderstood as an absolute rejection of basic spirit of God is Hinduism. 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 transcends the prevalent patterns of approaching Godhead. According to the Sikh Gurus, God attributes his determinate and indeterminate forms but ultimately converges into a single form. He Himself is immanent as well as transcendent, by manifesting thus he fascinates entire world.

Rehitnama of Bhai Nand Lal provides another example to understand this issue. In the very dialogue, going on between the Sikh and Guru, Bhai Nand Lal requests the Guru that how he can have darshan of Guru? In the reply, Guru Gobind Singh explains his third form of gur-sabda including sarguna and nirguna forms:

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In Sikhism Unity of God is not any mystic or invisible experience but it contains concrete pluralistic forms of divine expression. In *mool mantra* the word *akal* denotes that God is beyond any limitations of time and space but the term *murti* expresses the physical aspect. Concept of *brahman* in Advait Vedanta “is contra-distinguishable from the Sikh concept of *akal murti* which refers to the *a priori*, in itself, time-transcendence of God who *qua* spirit descends in historical time.”\(^9^3\) It is God who creates the world as a veil and a duality, as a test of being. *Manmukh* is unable to understand the mystery and nature of duality and rather indulges himself into the pleasures of material, whereas *gurmukh* is the one who after realizing the truth of duality also avails the benefits of material but does not allow the duality to dominate his real self, on the one hand, he is free from the negative influences of the world but also lives within this. Forms and attributes are relative to God only in the context of physical reality and intellect of man. But on the other hand, in His absolutistic experience He is indescribable. Several modes of matter are not different from the God, even are very significant part of Divine entity whose dynamic aspect is reflected in this way. Essence of God can’t be comprehended by only human senses. Similarly Dr. Shashi Bala claims that “Admittedly, God can be viewed from two standpoints, one depicting the relation of God to world, tracing relational attributes such as creator, sustainer and destroyer, and the other stating the ontological status of God by describing metaphysical attributes such as omnipotence, infinity and eternity.”\(^9^4\) Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal also agrees with Shashi Bala and says that, “Therefore, the God of Guru Nanak is transcendent entity (Beyond our comprehension) that means God is *nirgun* in this respect it is also *sargun* in respect of it being Nature, Laws of Nature and pervading in nature as well as in every living being in the whole universe but not in trinity or in anthropomorphic form.”\(^9^5\)

### 3.2.1 Problem of Determinate and Indeterminate Forms

Another important question is whether God is transcendental or immanent. “The composer of Upanishads experienced *atman* and *brahman* in cosmic, acosmic, monistic and sectarian theological ways. Those who interpreted the self cosmically (*saguna*, “with qualities”) depicted as subtle and stable essence of all that is ,the foundation of the entire world…understood acosmically (*nirguna*, without qualities), *atman* and *brahman* are the final reality that exists independently of all physical, personal and causal terms.”\(^9^6\) Though
both concepts appear as paradoxical but after close examination, we would find a subtle meeting point between them. Equal value has been given to these concepts. Gurbani proclaims a deep rooted harmony of these aspects. Basically *nirguna* defines the abstract or unmanifested form of God. So, transcendental aspect of God is beyond any type of attributes. Image of God has been depicted very clearly in several ways in Guru Granth Sahib. According to the Sikh world-view, all in one and one in all is the concrete truth. It is not an imaginative idea. In fact the very principle of pervasiveness indicates towards the immanent form of God. Sacred compositions of the Sikh Gurus depict God pervading throughout the mythic three worlds\(^97\) and containing regions of water and earth.\(^98\)

The Sikh spiritual experience rejects the concept of deism that advocates total transcendence of God. In deism, after the creation of the universe God isolates himself from the world. But the Sikh thought stresses merciful and kind aspect of Supreme Truth according to which He takes care of the world. Wazir Singh’s remarks are appropriate for the understanding of this doctrine. He says “Since God is the creator of the whole cosmos, He may be entity separate from the created order, as an author is distinct and apart from the work, produced by him. But God may also be present in his creation, just as author is present in his work, and the artist lives in his work of art.”\(^99\)

In its real sense, God is devoid of all merits and demerits but man is emotionally more interested in immanent form. Though God incarnates Himself in the form of man, but it is not His limitation rather His mercy on mankind which strengthens man’s faith in sacred realm. We can say that God is formless but is powerful enough to assume any form.

There may be similarity between monism of *advaita* and oneness of God in Sikhism but means for the realization of God are different. Sikhism emphasizes the devotion as well as phenomenal world of diversity which is also helpful in spiritual unity with God, whereas Sankra’s monism is extreme unity of *brahman* and denies the existence of world. In quintessence, knowledge is must to realize the oneness of *brahman*. According to Shashi Bala, “It is stated that monotheism is synonymous with monism. It is due to the emphasis of both on the oneness, yet difference lies in their different mode of approach i.e. intuition and intellect.”\(^100\)

Wazir Singh points out that “Another problem regarding the Sikh conception of God is that Is it synthesis of contemporary beliefs of Hinduism and Islam? No doubt we
can find impact of then prevailing language on the Sikh Gurus but influence can not be defined as borrowed ideas. The Sikh experience of the God suggests different meanings and expressions. It is strictly neither Semitic nor Indic.\textsuperscript{101} No doubt, God is one but his manifestation in different modes can’t be rejected,\textsuperscript{102} as sun remains same in various seasons similarly God is one having different forms and names.\textsuperscript{103}

In \textit{rag maru}, Guru Says that there was a state of absolute chaos before creation and also indicates the creativity of God. The world of physical objects has been created by God for his own delight. It is impossible to locate the right point of time when God created the world. Now it depends upon the man to know the essence of world of objects. \textit{Gurmukh} is the one who knows the reality of God and plurality helps him to find out his ultimate goal but Man indulges himself in the variations of world. He snubs his natural quest to transcend the limited phenomenon and accepts the parallels of God. The Sikh world-view recognizes one God who is the sole cause of world and manifests himself in different patterns and colours. Visible objects, made of gross matter, are not other than God rather God himself.\textsuperscript{104} So it is insignificant to discuss the creation out of blank space. So we can say that whole creation is existing within God who is essence of everything and beyond. It means He is immanent as well as transcendental. The Sikh concept of God is not of dichotomous nature. God is present in amidst of world,\textsuperscript{105} and sustains its existence as a dairy farmer protects his cows.\textsuperscript{106} There are several more epithets and attributes which are referred to God as a sustainer. \textit{Gopal, gobind} and \textit{pratipalak} are major attributes of God. The Sikh Gurus employed so many terms from Indian philosophical tradition but none of them dominated their thought in its totality. All the Indian streams of philosophy have shown their interest for Ultimate reality though with a degree of variation. From the Vedic age to Vedantic schools, the Hindus have emphasized the concept of Ultimate Reality and interpreted it from different standpoint. We see that Vedic monism does not reach to the climax of pure monotheistic attitude. Upanishads also identify the absolute truth with Brahman whose consciousness and bliss are root cause of the creation. But according to GB Singh this “conception of God was dominated by the monistic attitude.”\textsuperscript{107} Nyaya holds the view of God as the creator of all objects of the universe. He is the material and efficient cause of the world Himself and also nourisher and destroyer of the creation but
this conception of God is individual in nature. Vaisesika God is creator of atoms. The Mimasikas do not assign any purpose of God in creation.

The Sikh conception of God is based on the *mool-mantra* that describes “God is one. His name is truth. He is the creator, without fear and enmity. Death is unable to grasp his entity. He is unborn and self realized.” Besides he is incomprehensible and indescribable too. In the Sikh world-view, though, God has been described as transcendent as well as immanent but the main focus is on the unity of God. According to the Sikh thought ultimate reality is beyond both these categories of philosophy. He has been introduced as the ‘third dimension.’ He imbibes both classifications within himself. Term used in *mul-manta*, for God, is *akal murti*. This term has very powerful connotations to outline the conception of God. *Akal* denotes the Divine entity free from the bondage of time-space limitations. It means spatial experience is unable to grasp infinite entity that is full of attributes. Human capacities can reach to God with its own flows and limitations. Because of our bodily limitations, our soul does not flourish completely. On the other side term *murti* has also been used which unfolds the phenomenological aspect of God. It means physical world is not meaningless but also has divine sanction though it is full of impurities as against to the perfection of God. Our empirical experience also supports and serves spiritual concerns to realize the final goal of human life. Another important aspect is that both these words have been used jointly but not separately. Physical objects are not only true from the phenomenological angle but also significant from spiritual angle. So the Sikh conception of God contains prevalent concepts of ultimate truth, *nirguna* and *sarguna* classification cannot define the God in His perfection but only can assist the soul and intellect to assume some attributes of Divine entity. He creates and rules over his creation; whatever is created by him is known to him. The trinity and Hindu gods (*Brahma, Visnu and Mahesa*) are his creations and they are dependent on God for their existence. Everything is born in him and finally will be absorbed in him.

Before the creation of the Universe, he was absorbed in meditation and *sunya*. But having created the world, He became associated with it. Everything works according to His will. No image or idol is identical to God.

Generally, it is impossible for a lay man to realize or understand God beyond empirical experience. That’s why God has also been attributed with thousands of epithets
by every religious tradition. So to comprehend the abstract reality, personal merits are attached with God. In Advait Vedanta, God is represented as *sat-chit-ananda*. This is a state of pure consciousness to extreme degree. All attributes are incapable to describe or to grasp essence of Brahma because he is devoid of all forms and names. “In this state of purity no attribution can be made with respect to *Brahman* and he is the negation of everything that can be comprehended. *Brahman* is *Sarguna* when we see that the world is not self-explanatory: it refers to an intelligent cause as its creative ground and then is called *Iswara* and the world is a manifestation of the *Ishwara*.”

Akatha, agama, alakha and adi purkha are other attributes employed by the Sikh Gurus which points out to infinite nature of God. Another feature of God in the context of Indian tradition is that the Sikh conception of God is dynamic and creative. The Sikh Gurus reject the view that attributes the origin of world to any other source other than God. Because of this God has been described as *karta purkh* in the Sikh Scripture. In Sankhya tradition, *prakiti* creates the universe but *purusa* is just a witness. Nyaya and Vaisesika systems proclaim that God is only efficient cause of the physical objects but not the material cause. In Vedanta tradition, we find a different situation where *brahman* is not a creative authority. His dynamic reflection is *ishwara* i.e. God has to be creator then he will have to transform himself from *brahman* to *ishwara*. In its pure essence *brahman* is not creator, though his phenomenological authority has been accepted but in the form of *ishwara* who different from *brahman*. In this way concept of *brahman* dominates the *ishwara*. According to Sikhism both are not two separate authorities. But they are one or same. “There is no fundamental cause outside him. All cause is under the jurisdiction of the creator and, he alone upholds the creation through this power.”

3.2.2 Nature of God

Now the question arises whether duality of world is natural. Nature created by God however has limitations yet God manifests himself throughout it. This very reconciliation of *Nirguna* and *sarguna* has been speculated with keen interest in Indian thought. Vedanta of Sankara conceives the *brahman* in its total unity that is devoid of physical attributes and
variations. Except Supreme Truth everything seems unreal, appearances are excluded from the conception of brahman as envisaged by Sankara.

Dr. Jodh Singh’s views are relevant on this problem. He writes, “In traditional Indian philosophy both these aspects of the same brahman have been defined elaborately. Though ishvara or saguna brahman is supposed to be the subject matter of ancient epics and Puranas yet the dominating tone and substance of traditional Hinduism pertains to Nirguna Brahman, who is the primeval source of Saguna and His further incarnation or forms.”

The world, according to the Sikh thought, is real due to creation of God but its momentariness proves it unreal. Before beginning of time and space, He was in abstract form but willed to create the universe. Sankara constructs the theory of maya e.g. jiva’s ignorance. “Maya is the antithesis of Moksha in Hindu thought, but it is not the antithesis of absolute reality.” In a way world in its instinctive terms is unreal. So to understand the very nature of physical world or to remove ignorance, knowledge is required. But on the contrary side, conception of God as appears in Sri Guru Granth Sahib is not only of being but also of becoming. “Maya in the thought of Guru Nanak is not the cosmic illusion of classical Vedanta. The world is indeed Maya, but it is not unreal. It is an illusion only in the sense that it is accepted for what it is not.”

The later aspect of God has been emphasized by many modern Sikh scholars during second half of 20th century due to the identity crises of Sikhs in relation to Hinduism. Indian conception of God in Upanishdas and Advait Vedanta is sat-chit-anand known as Brahman that is not a creator absolutely. In Sikhism, the world is made by God and is remembered as waheguru. This is the key word in the Sikh philosophy and theology; its meaning must be understood in its proper context. This is the God of wonder but wonder at what?…at myriad forms of creatures, vegetation and starry planets. It means variations in physical world originate an experience of wonder or rapturous state of mind. It builds a close relation of man with external world which is not only created by God but also a very image of its creator. But when we see towards Advait Vedanta where world is just like a fake reflection of truth, world is a problem in spiritual progress due to its pure terrestrial nature and has an artificial attractive look. “The Advaitvad maintained by Shankracharya however, presents that the creation is based upon the divine essence as its fundamental
substance...with no differentiation in its absolute and abstract oneness.”¹¹⁴ But when we enjoy taste of material objects, all this become transitory, their availability for man is not everlasting. So, the Sikh concept of Ultimate Reality is not fully akin to Indian experience of *brahman* but having a little relation with it.

**3.3 The World**

The most fundamental and metaphysical problem man faced was about the creation of world, composition and elements of matter. This was the first step to realize the truth of world and to know about universe (macrocosm), and to understand this, primordial man turned to his inner sides (microcosm). Difference between expressions about world was natural due to immensity or macrocosmic nature of universe. A man can’t comprehend the true nature of matter fully because of his psychological and physical boundaries. So persons who make effort to grasp truth about the world, find distinctions in their expressions naturally. We mean to say that scientist, philosopher, artist or literary figures poses only partial view of physical reality. In this way nature of world becomes indescribable.

The world consists of variants of materialistic expressions such as rivers, seas, mountains, plants, vegetation etc. We see in Indian tradition, that the world has been divided into several psycho-religious departments. Firstly, for the saints and seers of Vedas the world has different shades, every shade is distinctive, even sometime dominating over each other. “At one time, *Varuna* held the supreme position as the only duty to which worship was due, at another time *Indra* took the place of *Varuna* as the supreme deity and again at another time *Prajapti* held the supreme position.”¹¹⁵ So it is impossible to understand the real nature of gods and goddesses. It is also accepted, as mantras of Vedas shows, that early Aryans were more materialistic as well as spiritual yet division of gods and demands regarding material needs are prominent characteristics of this age. To understand the nature of world, six schools of thought provide a very descriptive study about world. In these studies, matter becomes transparent enough to understand it from metaphysical outlook.

Secondly, *Sankhya* is more helpful in this context to know the reality of primary ingredients. This system conceives the two eternal ultimate realities i.e. *prakriti* and *purusha*. Dynamics between these two elements resulted into the emergence of world.
With the meeting of *purusha* and *prakriti* material world is generated. So *Sankhya* highlights dualistic nature of world as it recognizes two independent elements.\textsuperscript{116}

Thirdly, next conception about world, in the context of Indian tradition, is Shankra’s *Advait Vedanta*. It is very important to know that till date only Shankar’s interpretation is used to introduce the Indian view of world. Particularly dialogue between Hinduism and Sikhism has been conceived through the *Advait Vedanta*. The Indian world-view has been rejected as compared to Sikhism as it promotes escapism. But as we look at Hinduism, four *pursharthas* (i.e. *dharm*, *artha*, *kama*, *moksha*) are integral part of its life. Most importantly, ancient *rishis* and god-goddesses all led married life and had children as well. Even sometimes it is found that Hindu gods and goddesses are also participating in wars against demons. So question is how it is speculated that Sikhism is world affirming religion whereas Hinduism advocates the negative attitude towards material aspect of world. But just on the basis of Shankar’s viewpoint total spirit of Hinduism can’t be interpreted. Obviously, it is a partial understanding. So dialogue of the Sikh thought with Hinduism ever since its formulation was lop sided without considering the total nature of Shankar and other variants of Vedanta. If Shankar is denying the existence of world, it is due to its temporary and transitory disposition on spiritual level. But on realistic level world exists and plays a very vital role in human life. The very conception of *ishwara* indicates towards this aspect. In modern academics Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia has tried to explore speculative sides of this dialogue. Though, he too belongs to school that labels Hinduism as world denying religion, yet his efforts are useful to promote and to understand this dialogue. The second problem of a researcher is that *Advait Vedanta* is normally considered as whole of Vedanta whereas other denominations and offshoots are also engaged to solve the duality of spiritual and temporal. Particularly Ramanuja is very important who accepts the world as true and real due to the creation of ultimate reality. Hiriyanna with the help of *Sri Bhashya* writes that “This constitutes a radical difference from Shankar, who represents the Upanishada ultimate as *nirguna* if the Upanishads describe *brahman* as without qualities, Ramanuja says, all that the description can mean is that some qualities are denied while there are still others characterizing it.”\textsuperscript{117} Other sects within Vedanta like Madhavacharya, Valbhacharya, Nimbarkacharya, Chaitanya all
wanted to create a compatibility between God and world. So their notions also treat and reflect the same problem in different ways.

In Gita, Lord Krishna also inspires Arjuna to pick up arms and to fight against injustice to do his duty. Lord Krishna enunciates to Arjuna that “Having regard to your own duty also, you ought not to falter, for there is nothing better for a Kshatriya than a righteous battle. Happy are those Kshatriyas, O son of Pritha! Who can find such a battle (to fight)...but if you will not fight this righteous battle, then you will have abandoned your own duty and your fame, you will incur sin.”\(^{118}\) So it is very difficult to reject Indian tradition just on the basis of world affirmation. In Vedas demands that are put before gods, most of them pertain to materialistic world. They are very closely related with worldly life and needs. What we mean to say is that debate must be promoted in new contexts now. New paradigms and perspectives should be introduced to speculate the problem between world and God.

### 3.3.1 Sacred and Profane: Where the Problem lies?

It seems problem occurs when we consider Indian tradition or Hinduism as a single unit. So it creates a very complicated situation to grasp the reality underlying the Indian Tradition. As we try to peep into depths of the very tradition, we know that Hinduism or Indian tradition contains multiple layers of different thought patterns. It is a set of various independent sects and schools. Every tradition or sect has its unique nature in theory and practice, though they are related to one another according to historicity and in many cases due to theoretical inheritance yet they are expressions of different aspects of religious and psychological progress of India. In the context of India, notion about world in Sikhism has common relations and distinctions as well.

### 3.3.2 Cosmology

After discussing the basic complication between the Indian and the Sikh thought, now we would explore the fundamental issue of the Sikh world-view i.e. cosmology. “Cosmology means a theory of the world or of the world order. The term ‘cosmos’ is mostly used in the sense of an orderly world, or a world-order in contrast with chaos or disorder.”\(^{119}\) The Sikhism holds the emanation of world from God as rays flows from sun, waves comes from water but in their ultimate destiny both go back to their sources. Guru Nanak presents description of creation in *rag maru*\(^{120}\) where silent and ecstatic form of
God has been portrayed but creative and active dynamics of God is also there. According to the Sikh thought, God is the being as well as becoming. Though God’s own entity is unchangeable but he can make things change. He has capacity to create a wide gulf between planets and to put them near to each other. In Gurbani, a detailed description is found about cosmology. According to that, only God is a single cause of universe who has created whole starry world without any external support. Even after creation, He is not separate from it but entire universe exists within Him and God himself dwells in this. He is not only creator but also bears a merciful attitude towards this. So He becomes creator as well as sustainer too. He is source of all things and everything depends upon Him from a particle to planets. He can convert whole world into ashes within a second. But as we look at Indian mythology, these attributes have been depicted in the three forms of different principal gods Brahman, Vishnu and Mahesh, known as trinity.

Sikhism holds that none is equal to God, so He is the sole creator of the world. No god participates or helps God rather they have secondary position to God. Shiva and shakti, purusha and prakriti have been created by God. Activity underlying the matter is due to spirit. Gurbani maintains that God Himself create matter and spirit. It means that “the final duality between matter and spirit is denied.” Several references about maya are also available in the Sikh scripture but it has no separate and independent identity but a part and creation of God. Nature of world is too complex to understand. Sometimes it is symbolized as a book whose initial and concluding pages have been lost. It shows the infinite realms of world, which are beyond the reach of human intellect. “The scientists perform experiments in physical world and draw their conclusions; the philosophers resort to speculations based on reason and thinking. The Gurus see the universe through eyes other than physical eyes, the eyes of divine wisdom. With these they can see through millions of years forward and backward and into eternity.” Sikhism does not propose views on technical structure of universe like scientific or speculative theories. They were not confined to present position of stars and planets. As mentioned above they were able to see what was beyond the sight of scientists and thinkers. There are so many terms employed in Gurbani like अग्र, अग्नि, अत्तिन्द्र, अधर्म, तत्त्व etc. conceives vastness of material shapes created by God. The Sikh Gurus were philosophers and scientists too, but a great part of their spiritual experience denotes about their vision that is more than of scientists and thinkers. As we are
informed in Gurbani that their souls transcended all physical phenomenon. Other reason is that they were basically ‘Gurus’ (some like prophets) who were inspired by God to revive spiritual relations of humanity with God. Thus they were more concerned with the religious cause of man. Nevertheless we find some references in Gurbani related to origin of universe and to great extent they are compatible to scientific approach too.

3.3.3 Genesis

In Indian tradition, Rigveda depicts the origin of Universe in Nasdiya and Purusha Suktas. Both embody the Vedic cosmology. According to first one, in the beginning, there was only Supreme Being (purusha) who had enveloped the earth and ten directions of space. Nothing was existing beyond the totality of Being. Five elements, knowledge, animals, birds, moon, sun, varnashrama were born out of the Supreme Being. Nasdiya Sukta describe the condition of darkness before the creation of universe that has similarities with the theory of ‘Black Hole’ and Guru Nanak’s description of genesis in raga maru. According to that air, heavens, death and life, day and night did not exist then, except the self-sustaining One. Desire born out of Supreme Mind that was the primal seed of universe, nobody knows when and how creation happened? The Sikh thought accepts God as the single root cause or creator of cosmos. He is the sole archetype of everything perceivable and non-perceivable; thus everything derives its existence, meaning and aim from Him. Before the creation of universe, darkness pervaded for time infinite. Except God nothing existed in that condition. God was also there but in His absolute form. This state before universe cannot be defined as blank space, but God was in his transcendental form i.e. Smun Smwidi. There was neither mater nor mind. Earth and sky, day and night, sun and moon were not there:

अवसर नववस पूरवरव || ग्रहित र बाणव द्रवव अतवरव ||
त हित्र हैहित र चंद्र ह सूरव स्मृवल चम्पायि लक्ष्मिनिग्र ||

“...further statements made inside scripture…are remarkably akin to the picture which has now been adumbrated by scientific speculations...” sometime are termed as emptiness or Black holes scientifically but it can’t be defined or equated with voidness. It is a primordial void where only Absolute exists. “Nothingness does into mean without anything. In fact the thing is there but it is in a so small volume
that it appears to be ‘Nothingness.’ Above mentioned ‘सूर्य समाविष्ट’ does not mean the state of ‘Non-being’ but refers to absolutistic from of God. Guru Nanak’s hymn in raga maru is very relevant in this context:

मूर्त वल्ल अपरणीति याति || आधि निवल्ल अपरन आधानी ||
अथि खुरबड़ि विव विव वेये मूर्तिव मूर्त दिवपालिय ||
पहले जन्मो महीं के मने || राहिलो दिवपालि बालिका बाल बने ||
अर्थि जन्मो नीदु तेहद तभारी मूर्ते वश महरिय || 132

Here term ‘वल्ल’ occurs twice and “अथि खुरबड़ि विव विव वेये” should not be ignored. ‘वल्ल’ points out to ‘his will’ or ‘game of entertainment.’ Generally its literal meanings are miracle, art, talent, magic, merit etc. God created planets and other starry world as he willed. He creates material world out of his indeterminate form and assimilates everything back within Himself. 133 “अथि खुरबड़ि विव विव वेये” means this process of creation and absorption takes place again and again. 134 Basic substances like air, water etc. all comes out of God. So universe has a beginning as well as an end. In Japuji, Guru Nanak says that it is hardly to imagine that how the cosmos came into existence, even we are helpless and incapable to know the beginning of planets. Whenever we try to think over the very problem we are left with amazing and wonderful experience because several universes are working simultaneously. Scholars and spiritual representatives, from Indic and Semitic traditions, are failed to interpret exact time, season, day and month of creation.

Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru, expresses his views in Akal Ustat regarding the process of creation and dissolution. He says that as sparks arising from fire seem separate but go back to fire, particles of dust can fill the air but after sometime they merges into dust, waves are not different from water, because they are produced by water, similarly all physical forms of matter are manifested by God, from himself and at last will be, after destruction, resolve back into Him. 135

Thus we see that according to the Sikh thought God is a supreme spirit and an eternal power, whereas matter is subject to time and space. Material objects are manifested by Him according to His own wish. Human being deals with varieties of matter within time and space, so man has microcosmic place as compared to macrocosm (Universe). It is impossible to know whole by a part of it. Knowledge of entire universe can’t be attained
by man’s intelligence. Human mind or intellect can’t be successful to understand the underlying reality of matter. Pritam Singh calls it “Involution-cum-Evolution Theory.” He writes, “The universe is an involution cum-evolution process, descent-cum-ascent movement. These are simultaneous movements. The universe was created by God out of himself in \textit{Nirguna} form...after the evolution started. The descent was followed by ascent. Man began to make an upward progress. He is rising up and up to become one with the supreme spirit, again this is an inverse movement of evolution. Therefore creation was beginning of becoming.”\textsuperscript{136} In fact Pritam Singh reiterates the theory of Kapur Singh who describes it with the help of Jaina cosmology. He writes that “these two processes of involution and evolution, \textit{apasarpani} and \textit{upararpani} as the profound ancient Jaina thought speculated, constitute a double but simultaneous movement and thus creation of the universe is an involution-cum-evolution process, a descent and an accent. The universe, thus, is nothing but God in becoming.”\textsuperscript{137} Though the creation and creator are one yet creation can’t be defined as total sum of creator. His whole being is beyond the creation and can’t be exhausted by the process of creation. His pure being exists out of created world. So it can be maintained that the Sikh conception of God and universe “left aside the prevalent dualistic or the pantheistic views…”\textsuperscript{138}

3.3.4 Creation and Dissolution

The Supreme Lord is the only cause that originated the whole universe. The limitless creation is just a sport or game for the God. In the Sikh scripture, there are a number of terms that refer to different aspect of the creation. \textit{Loka} and \textit{jagat} are terms used by the Sikh Gurus to interpret the universe. Terms \textit{jaga} or \textit{jagat} mean physical or objective phenomenon. “In the Upanisads and in the Bhagvadgita the term occurs to denote universe created by God, who is all pervading and has all beings under his control. He maintains the entire world which stands bewildered by three strands, \textit{viz}, \textit{Sattva}, \textit{Rajas}, and \textit{Tamas}. One can overcome three stands by seeking refuge with God.”\textsuperscript{139} And about Manu Smriti Ravinder G.B. Singh writes that “The \textit{Manu-Smriti} tells us that Brahma resided in the egg for one year and then divided it into two pieces from which heaven and earth were created and from the middle portion of these two parts of the egg were produced sky, eight directions and the sea.”\textsuperscript{140}
According to Sikhism the process of creation started with water, fire and air. God is creator of it and the universe is tied with His power and everything in this world is under his command but creator Himself is detached from the flows of worldly objects. The term loka has been used in various ways. Sometimes it is interpreted as having three parts-heaven, earth and hell-but at some place seven worlds are enumerated. There are also reference to fourteen bhavans and nine continents.

Sikhism believes that whatever has been created is prone to death. Hence the cycle of creation and dissolution goes on. The terms parlao and udkarkhan have been used in the Sikh scripture to denote the idea of dissolution. Sikhism asserts that nature of world is not everlasting, only God is responsible for its destruction that happens according to His will.

3.3.5 Role of Nature

"In the history of philosophy the term ‘nature’ has been used in various inconsistent sense, corresponding more or less to different attitudes which thinkers adopted towards the material part of the world in relation to the rest…With the renaissance there came a more friendly attitude towards material world, and older Greek conception was revived. And so in the due course we find in Bruno and Spinoza among others, the term nature was used in the all comprehensive sense of the entire universe- a sense which, of course, excluded the possibility of anything supernatural.”

Varieties within the universe created an ecstasy of delight and wonder in the mind of the Sikh Gurus. Nature and its associated parts have played an inspiring role for achieving a peaceful state of mind. Thus Nature and its objects become a mark of power/energy of God who ordains such huge phenomena such as storms, floods, fire, earthquakes etc. All these happenings show the boundless energy underlying the nature. Breast of Nature is full of minerals, vegetation, water etc. and possibilities of such latent objects, which are yet to be discovered in future and it may be possible that these objects may remain hidden from human approach forever. So such expansion of universe on vast scale fills human mind with celebration of ecstasy. Planets, billions of stars, galaxies and rhythm in solar system inspire man to search something beyond his physical world. Thus we can understand the meaning of samadhi. Going through meditation or concentration is not just a psychological satisfaction but spiritual methodologies and postures that are directed towards understanding the vastness of universe. Closing of physical eyes is an
opening of inner ones. Inactive or passive body in meditation is most dynamic one. So understanding the universe has been very significant part of spiritual seekers. Same feelings were lying within the mind, body and spirit of the Sikh Gurus and they were much inspired by the grandeur of Nature and expressed very beautiful hymns about it. Every aspect of nature filled the Sikh Gurus with wonder. For Guru Nanak sound, wisdom, life, distinctions, form, colour, creatures, immense space, physical substance like air, fire, water etc. are works of wonder.\textsuperscript{142}

In \textit{Asa Ki Var}, Guru Nanak realizing the wonder and grandeur of Nature says that seeing, hearing, fear, happiness, under world and heavens, Indic and Semitic scriptures, eating, drinking, dressing, colours, species, goodness and evil, honor and dishonor, winds, water and fire are because of Nature.\textsuperscript{143} Here it does not mean by ‘nature’ but ‘The Nature’ not in the context of physical context but in its substantial meanings. Swami Swarupa Nanda writes that, “The grand world-views of Shri Guru Granth Sahib is to see a world of no distinctions. It acknowledges that the world is full of varieties and differences however there should be no distinction of high and low, or discrimination due to gender, caste, race etc.”\textsuperscript{144}

To analyse the Sikh concept of Nature, particularly in association with and to understand the nature of universe, a \textit{sakhi} of the Guru Nanak when he was on his visit to Jagannath temple of Puri, is very important. When Guru Nanak arrives at Jagannath Temple, he was asked by the priests of temple to join the \textit{arti}, worship ritual performed in Hindu Temples. He observed that lights, flowers and incense in golden utensils were being used for invocation of Lord Jagan Nath. As it is generally a proven fact that the Sikh Gurus prohibited his followers to worship idols and statues, so he refused to do so as per asked by the priests, but felt that whole of nature and its different elements are engaged in worshiping God in different ways. It is believed that a hymn Guru Nanak recited there, in which whole cosmos is doing \textit{arti}. Essence of hymn is that Sun and moon are lamps decorated in the vessel of immense space that is studded with pearls of galaxies and planets. Perfumed wind of mountains is working as a fan over Your Head, whole of the vegetation is follower presented before you. O! Lord what a beautiful/wonderful worship is being offered by Nature itself.\textsuperscript{145}
Above mentioned description shows that as God or Ultimate Reality can’t be delimited by defining him. Similarly nature is too vast a phenomenon which is beyond human language and intellect. So nature, in the Sikh thought, has been presented as a most splendid work of art by God. Nature or its planets are not destination in their own way but inspires humanity to realize power that is more gracious than nature. Thus nature has, surely, very crucial role in the Sikh spirituality, but as a secondary motivation force. None anything else is considered to be superior to God.

According to the Sikh thought Nature is not just an object subordinate to life on the planet but a very integral part of life, even life in itself. It has pulsating presence of God. Nature and its elements have been elevated to the status of Mother, Father, Guru etc. It means that the Sikh religion presents relationship of man and nature in holistic and integrated terms. No duality or dichotomy is existing here, as modern man has assumed. Modern man, considering nature as a ‘useful thing’ and ‘other’ is plundering it. “Man differentiated himself from nature treating himself as ‘subject’ and the latter as object.”

For him, nature is not a living one but inanimate. He has discovered technology to reshape raw material not for his needs but to gain profit under the capitalistic attitude.

We observe that in the Indian tradition especially in the Vedas planets, galaxies and material substances are worshiped in the form of gods and goddesses. *Rigveda* is very important in this context where prayers of sages are being offered to gods and goddesses for physical/material requirements. So Vedas are constructing a ‘nature mysticism’ in which God is replaced in the nature. Gods and goddesses in Hinduism are named after the planets and material elements. Influence of Vedic mysticism, even is reflected by life of Indian society. Their prominent *tirathas* are situated on the banks of rivers or on high mountains. That is why their sages and seers go to forests and mountains. It may be interpreted as escapism from social life but nature mysticism plays a role of driving force behind such attitude about life. In itself, mysticism is also a romantic phenomenon. Beauty of Nature builds romantic rapture in mind that lead to solitude. It may be opposite to social or physical realities of life but it can’t be described as meaningless. “All the gods and all of nature were seen to be reflection of inner structures and processes.” It may be explained as an initial stage of Indian spiritual journey leading to a pure spiritual consciousness. But on the other hand, the Sikh Gurus have also experienced the climax of
it that transcended it with more active participation in the social fabric. So in a way, Sikhism is distinguishing between natural and supernatural. Same attention is being paid by modern naturalists as by the Vedic sages. They raise the slogan of ‘Back to Nature’ that can be substituted as ‘Back to Vedas’ of Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Both have similarities due to experiencing the same degree of nature mysticism. But opposed to Vedic religiosity, naturalists do not accept anything like supernatural. So stress is put on nature rather than God. According to them, working of universe is conducted by natural laws, so this functioning is since the beginning of time and it will last till universe exists. No outside element or power can interfere or change the methodology of natural laws. In a way it is an evolutionary interpretation of universe and Nature, in other words it is an independent dynamic order without any purpose. Kapur Singh highlights another etymological aspect of the Sikh conception of nature in relation to Indian tradition. He explores the reasons that why Guru Nanak chose and employed the Arabic word ‘qudrat’ consciously whereas in Sankhya system the term prakriti was already there. He argues that word ‘qudrat’ designates nature and cosmos, literally speaking under the authority of its master’ but prakriti refers the demarcation from purusha, thus, creating dichotomy. He says that, “he (Guru Nanak) abandoned altogether the term Prakriti for the purpose though he was quite familiar not only with the dualism of these terms, but also with their philosophical imports as is vouchsafed in the Sikh scripture”

An analysis of Guru Granth Sahib proves that the Sikh Gurus’ outlook about world is that of a prophet (Guru). With their divine wisdom, they were able to comprehend the meaning and purpose behind the order of universe. Man, being a very small part of vast universe, can exercise his intellect on the basis of perceived things and events. Human observations are imperfect as compared to celestial laws. The world has been designed and brought into concrete existence by God. While focusing on above mentioned stanza, Pritam Singh writes in a lyrical way “what a beautiful estimate of the unlimited resources of the world? God has provided for all times to come, man cannot starve, it is some men who make others starve; God never wills it. See the age of this earth and the people that have been fed by it but there is no sign of diminution of resources. That shows how intelligent the plan of the creator is.” As already told the Sikh conception of universe transcends the naturalist’ view of cosmos by encompassing spirit of their outlook. God is
the creator of universe, therefore, is separate from it claiming its transcendental form but on the other hand the very universe reflects Him, which means He is immanent too. Former aspect may be named as natural where as latter one is supernatural. So Sikhism believes that universe is conducted by a ‘Certain Law’ known as hukum, raza or bhana. In Asa Ki Var, it has called bhai (੧). The very ‘Certain Law’ can change the course of things existing within universe according to his own ‘Will’. So natural is dominated by supernatural. Though by assuming immanent form of world, He manifests Himself through nature but yet His substantial spirit lies beyond any type of physical approach.

3.4 Conclusion

At last we can formulate that triad of man, Ultimate Reality and world holds a great merit in every world-view. After the brief discussion we come to the point that these three aspects do not undergo a secluded existence but form an interactive dynamics.

Firstly, Human body is a foremost priority to be called a human being or to have an existence. (I) The Sikh world-view denotes that physical body is not a spontaneous or automatic combination of various elements but is created by God and has eternal relationship with it. (II) Body is not free to follow what it aspires for but is subordinate to soul particularly to mind which dictate latently and body concretizes orders through actions. (III) As body under goes supremacy of mind and soul, similarly mind is also overshadowed by soul that is a fundamental element and microcosmic form of a body. As body is not free to do anything opposite to the command of mind but mind has the option to choose the path, negative or positive. However ultimately, mind is ruled by human soul. Nam-simran and karmas lead to attain the status of moksha in which soul of man is transformed into The Man or gurmukh.

Secondly, Ultimate Reality in Sikhism is known as waheguru, akal purakh and akal murti etc. (I) Though the Sikh world-view does not believe in notion of incarnation and idol worship but it does not mean an absolute rejection of spirit of God in Hinduism. According to Sikhism, (II) God has three forms i.e. Determinate, Indeterminate and gur-sabda. Last one is pure and absolute that includes other two forms. (III) Mostly, conception of the Sikh God is considered as opposite to Advait Vedanta but we must keep in our mind that after Sankara, Ramanuja who is another well-known exponent of Vedanta school of philosophy, tries to accommodate both nirguna and sarguna forms. What we
mean to say that Sikhism must extend dialogue to other offshoots of Vedanta and Indian philosophy as well.

Thirdly, after discussing man and Ultimate Reality, conception of world is another important aspect of world-view in which human existence survives. Literally, world means variants of materialistic expressions surrounding humans. (I) God is material, efficient and instrumental cause of universe. He has capacity to create a gulf between planets and to put them near to each other. Everything, even god and goddesses are made by Him. (II) Nature and its associated domains are a mark of God’s power. In Indian tradition Vedas offer nature mysticism but the Sikh world-view does not believe in such type of mysticism however nature occupies a significant place in the Sikh experience and the Sikh Gurus have designated it with spiritual adjectives.