CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have been a modest attempt to demonstrate how Guru Nanak took full cognizance of the shortcomings of prevailing religions and rightly assessed the socio-political and religious milieu of the day. On a dynamic philosophy, he founded a new religion based on moral principles which led to far-reaching changes in the socio-political and economic environment. His entire system was life affirming and ideology congenial to human growth. To give his ideology a concrete shape, he introduced various institutions which proved a unique contribution towards the establishment of his faith. Through these institutions, he organized his activities, consolidated his base, fulfilled his objectives and provided permanent base to his ideology. Thus, Guru Nanak brought revolutionary changes in religious ideology, social structure and political approach and they proved that Guru Nanak was an originator, a unique and revolutionary prophet.
Guru Nanak’s description of socio-political and religious institutions and practices revealed that there was subjugation and exploitation of the people by the priestly classes, rulers, officials and upper crust of society. The institution of Varna-Ashram-Dharma, pollution and purity, untouchability and poverty were reigning supreme. The politico-administrative set up of his time was in a sorry state of affairs. The social organism had become still and inelastic. The Hindus managed to survive by withdrawing into the web of exclusiveness provided by caste and kinship. Religion had become an instrument of socio-political exploitation and hypocrisy. The Hindu and the Buddhist creeds looked upon this world as maya or a vale of suffering. For them the highest end of life was to secure release from worldly traps. This release could be attained through self-torture and silencing of desire in one’s ownself rather than flowing out of oneself to secure one’s bliss with others. Thus we find that there was an absence of resistance on the part of victims against these oppressive and evil designs.

Guru Nanak had a revolutionary message to convey. He challenged the fanaticism and religious hypocrisy of the priestly classes and at the same time the religio-political oppression of the contemporary rulers. He rejected the authority of the Vedas and the strongly entrenched caste system. He denounced asceticism, idolatory,
ceremonialism and the role of intermediary agents between God and man. His aim was to enthuse such strength in the people as could give a concrete blow to tyrant rulers and the priests, and could safeguard their interest.

Guru Nanak propounded a revolutionary ideology which was altogether distinct from the earlier religious traditions. He envisioned all problems of life to be socio-religious problems which must be solved in a righteous and truthful way. Against life-negation, he recommended life-affirmation and complete social participation. Against asceticism and monasticism, he accepted life of a householder. He emphasized the role of religion as an instrument of liberation, personal as well as social. He laid the path of universal love and emancipation of man, discipline of self purification, of devotion, of meditation of God. He emphasized universal brotherhood of equal living in love and harmony without discrimination based on caste, colour, creed, gender, social status or geographical religion. Thus, equality and justice were the basic features of the Guru’s system. He laid the foundation of a dynamic religion, which, as Kapoor Singh says, “was not a mere system of philosophy, but a practical way of life, something that must be lived and experienced rather than something which may be intellectually grasped and declared.”
Guru Nanak gave us a simple philosophy of life. He gives us straight answers of each question like how to become sachriara? How to get a glimpse of His court? What in return to offer Him for His boons? What words to utter to win His pleasure? It is the easiest way to achieve perfection and attaining God. Guru Nanak emphasized true Naam which is as holy as Lord. There are various methods to express our devotion to Him. Everyone asks for blessings and He confers these on all.

Guru Nanak emphasized four things; one should get up in early morning (amrit-vela), meditate on His holy Name (sach naam), always admire His greatness (vadiae) and practise contemplation (vichar). Through obedience to His ordinance and Will, a person could become sachriara or true to the creator and thus demolish the wall of nescience. Thus Guru Nanak offered a new way to achieve perfection and God.

To Guru Nanak, truthful life was more important than truth. The basis of spiritual life was ethical conduct. He says: “Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is truthful living²”. He emphasized on compassion, understanding and charity and wanted that man should be humble before everyone, be ever-sweet of speech and forgive everybody. Humility for him was the source of moral courage and strength.
At the same time, he recognized fearlessness as one of the divine attributes. The goal of man should be freedom from fear, which ultimately led to the freedom of conscience, an essential stage on the way to perfection. Similarly, he emphasized that the goal of religion is the service of man, which can materialize only if the spiritual level of man is raised and strengthened. He also prescribed that it was both the duty and responsibility of religious man to resist aggression, oppression, brutality, discrimination and conflict. Guru Nanak even sanctioned the use of force for the righteous cause. Thus Guru Nanak started the process of revolution, not as a mob violence or massacre of ruling classes, but as S. Radhakrishnan says, “An urgent desire for intense and drastic change of the foundation of civilized life”.

Guru Nanak visualized a new social order based on morality, love, truth, righteousness, justice and mercy and practically brought creative changes in the spiritual values and sympathized with the oppressed classes. This sense of social responsibility of Guru clearly involves that he had to create institutions and associations.

The Guru was fully aware that mere verbal utterances would not be enough to bring about a required change in the outlook of the people, as early experience of Bhaktas and Sants had shown. The institution of caste was so deep-rooted in society that it could not be
removed by mere lip ideology. He perceived the need for their inner transformation, and had a definite aim to give his message an organized form so that it should not be lost to the conviction of an individual or mixed up with the beliefs and practices of other religions, with the passing of time. To provide a strong and broader foundation, to bring about socio-political changes, and to build a new social order, there is necessity of setting up of institutions. Thus Guru took practical measures, made organized efforts and suggested ways and means in the form of institutions which could provide alternative moral and social structure and his ideology a permanent footing.

To preserve, practice and perpetuate his ideology, first of all Guru Nanak established Sangat. It was a co-operative body which met daily around the Guru, mostly for socio-religious purposes. Its purpose was mutual co-operation for all round development of the individual and collective betterment of the group. It gave a concrete expression to his ideal of unity, equality and fraternity, as high and low, rich and poor, men and women, could sit, pray and dine together. It brought a structural change in the social and mental set up of the people. It acquired great sanctity, owing to the belief that the spirit of the Guru lived and moved among them. Thus, a real brotherhood based on egalitarian principle was created.
The Guru established Dharamsai as centre of this new society. It literally means a place for practice of dharma or righteousness. Guru Nanak enjoined upon all sangats to set apart a place where they could hold congregation regularly for recitation and contemplation of Bani. It was a meeting place where they could hold congregation regularly for their socio-spiritual problems and matters of common concern. These not only came to serve as repositories of Sikh faith, but also played a vital role in maintaining the corporate life of the community. It reinforced the notion of religious collectivism and played great role in Sikh politics and welded them into an independent community, bound together by faith in the teachings of their Guru. These places also became the centres of missionary activities, education and Sikh learning. Thus, the establishment of the Gurdwaras was a practical step for carrying the society forward towards collective enlightenment and they became centres of unity and freedom.

Another unique institution was Langar, which was established to demolish old prejudices of caste, pollution and untouchability. It not only emphasized the need for good food for a normal life which includes Bhakti, but also gives concrete shape to the Guru’s vision. In Guru Granth Sahib, the term ‘Deg’ has been used by Guru Nanak to denote the infinite generosity of the earth that sustains and nourishes
every creature living on it. It was started for the purpose of teaching service, spreading equality and removing untouchability and other prejudices born of caste system. Through it, the principle of universal brotherhood, collective efforts and concern for others particularly those in need was emphasized. The maintenance of Langar was the corporate obligation. Thus, the responsibility of Langar rests on the entire Sikh community.

Guru Nanak then nominated his successor to carry on his divine task assigned to him. His ideals were still to be nurtured, motivated and developed. It was onerous to complete the destined task during his life time. Thus Guruship assumed the institutional form. The Guru is an enlightener and teacher. According to Guru Nanak “the true Guru must be such as to unite all men”. He was the central, unifying personality who brought cohesion and gave directions in the moral forces of society. Guru removed the barriers of caste and position set up by men among themselves and gathered them all unto himself, to unite them with God. The Guru was thus the Brahmgyani, who showed the way to spiritual deliverance. Guru Nanak inspired a line of nine successors, each of whom was great, unique and a true embodiment of the spirit of the founder.
Guru Amardas established twenty-two manjis, and knit the sangat into an organized system. He trained the first group of Sikh missionaries who were householders, something unique in the religious history of the world. The trained missionaries included women as well who held independent dioceses or areas of spiritual jurisdiction. Guru Arjan Dev further strengthened the mission by appointing masands to collect offerings from the Sikhs residing in different parts of the country to support the increasing demand of Langar and the construction of Harmandir Sahib.

Guru Arjan played a pivotal role in establishing the Sikh religion and carried forward the message of Guru Nanak. He took an active interest in material, moral and spiritual welfare of his followers. He actually built a corporate society in which the Sikhs were supposed to lead their social and political life in accordance with their Dharma. Guru Arjan compiled the Granth Sahib and built Harmandir which became the focal point of the Sikh faith. The process of development of these institutions continued while Harmandir Sahib emerged as a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating institution. It was on the basis of the strength of their institutions that the Sikhs became a force to be reckoned with and came to occupy a status of a ‘state within a state’.
These institutions helped Guru Arjan to build a nation of self-respecting individuals, purely devoted to God, filled with a sense of equality and brotherhood for all, ever eager to die as martyrs for their faith, when opportunities so called. It soon came under attack from the State which saw the new religion as a threat to its power. Guru Arjan had to court martyrdom for it and he saved the Sikh religion from annihilation by safeguarding its ideals. It was this spirit of martyrdom for the cause of faith and freedom that gave Sikhism a taste of complete political and cultural freedom.

Guru Hargobind raised Akal Takhat adjacent to the Harmandir Sahib and thus handed down to the Sikhs a unique idea of spiritual and empirical unity. The installation of two flags of Miri and Piri at the common compound started the process of converting Sikhs into saint-soldiers. It was from the Akal Takhat that the Sikhs conducted their long drawn out political struggle against the foreign invaders. Thus, the Guru gave a concrete shape to the creative and life-affirming vision of Guru Nanak. It is due to this ideological approach that the Guru came into conflict with the contemporary rulers and Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life for the religious freedom of man. His martyrdom was to vindicate the individual right to religious freedom. The Gurus, thus by their example, enthused such spirit amongst their
disciples as we discover in a long line of martyrs in Sikhism. Martyrdom became an institution in itself in Sikhism.

At the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the social structure was complete and various institutions had been tried and tested for two centuries. He reformed the existing order from within and set all doubts, dissensions and differences at rest by setting aside all those elements which were likely to create schism and lead to cults and sects. Accordingly, the Udasis, the minas, the Dhirmalias, the Ram Raias, etc. were not allowed to associate in any way with the mainstream of Sikhism. The Tenth Master put an end to the institution of Masands as they started deviating from the path shown by the Guru. He transferred the spiritual and temporal authority of the individual Guru to the collective spirit of the Khalsa.

Thus, Guru Gobind Singh performed the epitomical act of creating the Khalsa and prescribing the role of sant-sipahi for his followers. The Guru laid the foundation of a grand collectivity called the Panth, which was invested with the collective leadership of the community and was to guide itself in the light of the word (shabad) incorporated in the Guru Granth. He abolished, once and for all, the nomination of any person as the Guru and democratized the Sikh community. The personality of the Guru was incorporated in the Panth and spirit in the
Granth. The Guru’s authority was vested in the Khalsa. He bestowed on the Khalsa the high power to take decisions, binding on everyone, irrespective of position and rank. The greatest respect began to be shown to the incorporated Word. The Guru’s injunction that ‘there shall be one Guru, one word and only one interpretation’ became the guiding principle for the entire Panth.

Thus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, the period of two centuries is the period of fundamental importance as most of the distinctive features of Sikhism as a religion took shape through its institutions. As they were created for the growth and development of Sikhism, they greatly influenced man’s conduct and brought radical changes in their behaviour. These institutions channelized and organized human activities in new directions. They provided guidance in programme of social action and helped in social control and cohesion. They played an important role in the organization and preservation of new society, which in turn created an egalitarian order. Jagjit Singh rightly says: “What the radical Bhaktas could not do, the Sikh Gurus did. They created an egalitarian society outside the caste society and made it a springboard for giving shape to a revolutionary movement”. Thus, these institutions fulfilled the mission of Guru Nanak.
Institutions also helped the Gurus to organize their disciples on new ideological lines. It strengthened the Sikh way of life and preserved and transmitted the tradition, wisdom, technique and laws from one generation to the next. They were essential for the survival of the new religion and to preserve its originality.

Sikhism also acted as a powerful force in creating and maintaining group cohesion and unity and helped them emerge as a socio-political force in Punjab. The ideal of collectivism, feeling for common interdependence, bound and integrated Sikhs and their conformity to them resulted in the progressive social order, and generated a spirit of confidence amongst the Sikhs.

The task of institutions was to attain the goal envisaged by the founder and helped in establishing the autonomous and unique status for the Sikhs. They also elevated the socio-political ideology of the community to a higher level by creating a value-carrying social structure which gave it permanent and distinct character, and prevented its absorption into other faiths. Thus they imparted strength, sustenance and stability to Sikhism.

By replacing the existing institutions with delibration and planning, the Gurus sowed the seed of socio-political revolution. With support and strength of these institutions, the mission was organized,
moral ethics were reconstructed and a new environment was created for its growth. The institutions had tremendous potentialities for spreading the word of the Guru worldwide and for a better furthering of the Sikh Panth. They streamlined the process of collection and mobilization of resources for the successful completion of shrines, tanks, baolis, sarais and fortresses. These institutions show that the Sikh religion is neither syncretic, nor a sect of any other religion, but is independent, original and unique. Through these institutions, writes Bhai Gurdas, the successors of Guru Nanak gave Sikhism a completely new social regulation, new code of conduct, new rites, new scriptures, new organization and church of their own: "Nanak nirmal panth chalaya°”. These developed institutions later provided safeguard for the protection of freedom, human rights, dignity and justice. The Sikhs gradually became familiar with a kind of self-government of their own at the centre of which was the Guru with his un-challenged authority, his magnificent Darbar and his control over the entire organization of the sangats. He was to them a symbol of unity and of something mystical beyond all ordinary considerations, imbued with the ideals of discipline, dedication and self-sacrifice. The institutions gave practical shape to these ideals and the Sikh Panth began to be looked upon as a potential threat to the rulers.
The growth of these institutions made the Sikhs tough and untiring under different stress and strain of invaders. When during the eighteenth century the Sikhs were passing through a turbulent period and prices were fixed on their heads, the collective will of the community expressed itself through the Sarbat Khalsa and Gurmatta which provided cohesion and unity to them. Many a time, they had to sacrifice everything to protect the human rights, individual liberty and freedom of thought, speech and action. Though they had great difficulty in preserving their institutions, they always performed their religious duty of helping the downtrodden, helpless and needy, at the cost of their life.

But unfortunately, when the Sikhs were literally in exile, the Gurdwaras came under the control of Mahants and Udasis, who were corrupt and indulged in practices that were contrary to the spirit of Sikhism. Later when they organized themselves in Misls, the institution of Sarbat Khalsa and Gurmatta infused a spirit of unity and cohesion in their ranks and enabled them to devote their energy for the well-being of the Khalsa Panth. The emergence of Ranjit Singh as a ruler of Punjab was a unique historical phenomenon. He was the characteristic product of the Sikhs tradition and referred his government as Sarkar-i-Khalsa, which derived its legitimacy from the Khalsa common wealth.
This great task was accomplished, due to the vision of the Gurus, who had set up institutions and strengthened them to perfection.

When the Britishers annexed Punjab, the institutions of Sikhs were in doldrums. This period was a time of intense trauma and turmoil for the Sikhs. The Britishers knew fully well that Sikhs derived their entire strength and vigour from these institutions. So they made sure that the Sikh religious places were kept in the hands of those who were hostile to the thesis of the Gurus and sought to divert them to the ritualistic urge of Hinduism. Mahants were appointed by them in Gurdwaras including Harmandir Sahib and thus adopted a strict and rigid policy detrimental to the growth of Sikhism.

Luckily, for Sikhism, in the nineteenth century men like Giani Ditt Singh, Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Bhai Jawahar Singh, Bhagat Lakshman Singh and Bhai Mayya Singh rose to the occasion and ushered in a new era of socio-religious awakening. The Singh Sabha leadership helped the Sikhs to regain their strength and cohesion. They invoked the authority of the Sikh gurus, the Sikh scriptures and the Sikh traditions in support of everything they said and preached. These learned men rendered a great service to the community by raising institutions like the Singh Sabha, the Khalsa Diwans, the Sikh educational conferences, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, Khalsa College.
Amritsar, and scores of Sikh educational centres. In 1909, the Anand Marriage Act was passed, which legalized the Sikh form of marriage. It was another significant achievement of the Singh Sabha. All these helped in re-assertion of independent socio-religious identity of the Sikhs.

In 1920, the Shromani Akali Dal was formed, which pleaded that Sikh shrines and religious establishments be handed over to the elected body of the Sikh community. They could no longer afford to permit their religious institutions to become places of corruption and practices to destroy the very roots and sap that in history had given them unbelievable strength and vigour. They led a peaceful campaign for the Gurdwara reforms and control, and were successful in forcing a reluctant colonial government to pass the Sikh Gurdwara and Shrines Bill (1925). The Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee was set up as an elected body to manage historical Gurdwaras and use their funds for their management, missionary work, educational endowment and educational institutions. The Harmandir Sahib became the centre of Sikh power and inspiration. It is from here that the Akalis waged a struggle for the liberation of the country. They fought their country’s freedom on the basis and strength of their religious identity and
institutions. The *Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee* (SGPC) became the sole institution of the community.

But a retrospective look reveals that the SGPC has not been able to provide a good recruiting ground for the political leadership of the Sikhs. The educated elite section of the community has not been successful in gaining representation in the SGPC. The so-called leaders of the Sikhs displayed a complete lack of political vision and far-sightedness. In free India, the basic issue faced by the Sikhs has been that of preserving their distinctive socio-religious and political identity. In the current socio-political milieu, the Sikh tradition, institution, culture, language and identity are seriously threatened. For whole-life religious system like that of Sikhism, the calibre, vision and commitment of the religio-political leadership matters more than anything to keep the community cohesive and vibrant and institutional framework intact.

Enemies of the community are within the community, who are responsible for dishonouring the august institutions of Sikhs and undermining the Sikh value system. Religious institutions began to be controlled by irreligious politicians who were either illiterate or semi-literate and were not aware of the ethics and values prescribed by the Gurus. Institutions like *Miri-Piri* were wrongly interpreted by them. For
them their personal agenda was much more important than the welfare of the community. The Jathedars of Akal Takht had been used by them as pawns for their political ambitions.

The Sikhs have been and are being exploited by various semiliterate and self-proclaimed Babas. Their deras are mushrooming and they are being patronized by politicians. These Babas are most dependable allies of the politicians and with their help they have established unchallenged spiritual and intellectual supremacy over the Sikh masses and exploited the glorious Sikh traditions for themselves. They distorted the original Sikh concepts and debated and tried to prove their description as genuine. The Sikh institutions which are supposed to uphold the true Sikh spirit, act in subordination to political power. The political leadership is doing immense harm to the Sikh cause by knowingly or unknowingly compromising the higher values of Sikhism. Unfortunately, those in power lack the vision and those with vision are powerless to change the popular mind set.

The preachers of the SGPC are not role models. They themselves do not adhere to the Sikh Rehat Maryada. Unaccounted money collected in the Gurdwaras is being misused and the Gurdwaras become the places of commercial interest. As far as spiritual development is concerned, there is no element of activity in the
gatherings. The *Langar* in the *Gurdwaras* has lost its purpose. Instead of doing *sewa* or sharing food with others, the *sangats* come to *Gurdwaras* to have their lunch and take along with them tiffins full of food. Similarly, the real purpose of the *Sangat* has been lost.

The Sikh institutions flourished as long as the Sikhs followed the Gurus injunctions. Though initially they played a significant role but subsequently had failed to evolve to the extent required by the new and formidable challenges. Ths Sikhs are passing through a challenging time. There is a concerted attack on the purity of the Sikh doctrine both from inside and outside. The present is similar that of Guru Nanak’s age. Every evil has crept into Sikhism against which Guru Nanak had raised his voice. Brahmanism has made deep inroads in Sikh thought. There is degeneration in the character of the Sikhs. Apostasy has become prevalent among the Sikh youth. For one full year, unaccounted or unofficial *Degh* slips were sold to the devotees at *Harmandir Sahib*. No proper guidance is given to the people who want to offer *Rumala Sahib* at Amritsar, instead some specific shops and their owners play an important role in its sale. Religious institutions which were meant to attain the higher values, collectivism and humility, have now become defunct. Formalism and ritualism have taken the place of devotion. At present they are marked with the lack
or inadequacy of performance and their failure is indicative from the crisis faced by the Sikh Panth these days.

The Akali leadership has failed to salvage the socio-political identity of the Sikhs. Lacking in commitment and sincerity of purpose, the Akali leaders have reduced their politics to a sordid game of self-interest, political expediency, internal struggles, mindless opportunism and corruption. Thus the Sikh institutions are rendered subservient, impotent and alienated. They have been deprived of their democratic character. Ridden by nepotism, corruption and factional loyalties, these institutions have suffered an unprecedented decline in the recent past.

Society is dynamic and the world is changing. There is a change in education, means of communication and industrial technology. Modern techniques have led to the fusion of western and eastern culture. The result has been a tremendous change in social and economic environment. The Sikh diaspora all over the world need adjustment to different ways of life and yet to preserve its identity. They are obliged to modify *Rehat Maryada* at times without changing the spiritual aspect of life. So institutions must necessarily adapt themselves to the changing structure for survival. Religion must be
redefined, clarified, reorganized and subjected to much thoughtful experimentation to meet the demands of the day.

There is a need to re-orient and rejuvenate institutions in the light of present ideals and past traditions. Decadent leadership which has caused enough damage to the ideals and institutions of the Sikhs, must be replaced by learned, vibrant, visionary, honest and committed leadership. The Sikh religion does not consist in showing others how devoted and religious a person is, but actually living by the teachings and principles of the Guru for one's sake rather than for others. Ideals which Guru Nanak stood for, can be realized only if their true significance is clearly placed before the people. Thus Sikhism must be propagated based on its virtues and principles. There should be a proper mechanism and a recognized authority competent to interpret it. A religious advisory committee had existed all along on paper with the SGPC. At the moment it is defunct. It should be revived, reinforced with acknowledged authority on Gurmat.

There should be supreme Sikh Board or an apex body to meet the new challenges to tide over the critical time to which the Khalsa Panth is passing. This body is to be on the lines envisaged by Guru Gobind Singh at the time of conferring eternal Guruship on Guru
*Granth Sahib* and entrusting the *Panth* with empirical responsibilities under the doctrine of *Guru-Granth* and *Guru-Panth*.

Jathedars of *Akal Takht* should be persons of the highest calibre and well-versed in the Sikh scriptures and the Sikh tenets and men who have made contribution in the service of the Panth. They should have integrity of character, moral fortitude, well-educated and trained in the institutes of repute. They must be non-controversial, have the knowledge of other religions and show an impassionate approach to problems and controversial issues. They could be appointed by the SGPC, but after their appointment should be autonomous from their appointing authority. They should be role models for Sikhs.

The Guru is necessary in acquiring true wisdom, to inculcate the feeling of discipline, to attain the highest spiritual realm and guide the Sikh in his endeavour. The service of the Guru consists in understanding his divine sermons and acting upon them, abide by His will, obey His command, meditate on the *Shabad* and the submission of the ego. Guru Amardas had said that without the true Guru every word is unripe. It means only the Guru’s word is the voice of God and, therefore, this word alone could be the abiding Guru of mankind. Bhai Gurdas affirmed it when he said *Guru-murat Guru Shabad Hai, Sadh Sangat vich Pargatyaiya*. Actually, Gurbani is the true Guru which has
come from God and effaces all worries and anxieties. Thus the Guru Granth Sahib is the everlasting Guru. Baba and Sant culture must be rejected as non-Sikh model.

The stature of the Sangat, the stature of the Panth, should be raised so that it should represent Guru in person to spread Guru’s mission all over the world. Sangat should be given the right to amend, change or abolish altogether any of the customs, rituals and ceremonies. Decisions and orders of the Sangat must be obeyed. Sangat should work for the upliftment and development of the institution of the Gurdwara. The Sangat as a whole should care and look after widows, orphans and poor people. They should manage historical Gurdwaras, use their funds for management, missionary work, educational endowment, and educational institutions. Thus, Sangat should undertake projects for the welfare of the community as a whole.

The purpose of Langar requires a proper understanding. The Guru’s mission to unite all beings of the world under the Lordship of God and to tie them together with bond of common brotherhood based on equality must be fulfilled. Sewa should not be limited to Langar, upkeeping of custody of shoes of the devotees or cleanliness of premises. Help should be given to those affected by natural calamities.
such as drought, floods and earthquake etc. and also to the elderly, the handicapped and the destitute.

The Gurdwaras should provide facilities for gurmat prachar. Dedicated volunteers be prepared for prachar at national and international level and arrangements be made for inter-faith discussions and debates. The Guru Granth Sahib is replete with philosophical wisdom. If the Bible could reach the people, why can’t the Guru Granth Sahib. Seminars on Amrit Prachar to educate Sikhs about the need of taking amrit be organized. Debates, declamations, poetical recitations, lectures should be held at the school and college level. Arrangements must be made for proper reading, explaining, understanding and discussion of Guru Granth Sahib. Properly trained bhais should be employed to teach the new generation to recite gurbani in the ragas prescribed for it.

Gurdwaras should provide facilities for education, career guidance, dispensaries, first aid centres, libraries, museums and lecture halls and money collected must be used for development and constructive purposes like managing schools, colleges, asylums, old age homes, etc. They should emulate the activities of the Christian Church and missionaries.
Akal Takht is the supreme Sikh authority. It should be accepted as a venerated institution and should act as a unifying force. It should provide institutional solidarity for people of Sikh faith. It has a commanding role. So it should inspire, guide and direct a global Sikh mission. Learned and impartial Jathedars must work for enthusing the revival of Sikh ethics and must check the cultural derecination and work for Sarbat-da-Bhalla.

The perception of the Sikhs as people who are willing to kill is erroneous. It should be changed. Sikhism, in fact, is a religion that has transcended death. The tradition of sacrifice should be given a new line of action and thought. The Sikhs must sacrifice lust, greed, self-interest and above all work for the welfare of others. They must sacrifice themselves to protect human rights, freedom and liberty of thought, action and dignity of man.

The Sikh institutions presented a solution to the theological, ethical and moral conflicts generated by semitic and Hindu faiths. It found out ways and means for the solution of various human and social problems. Judged from this angle, the Sikh thought has contributed a lot to the reshaping of the image and scope of religion to make it more useful for practical human life, by inter-relating its spiritual ideals with the worldly life of man.
Sikhism became a well-knit original, distinct, revolutionary and efficient organization due to its institutions. A new society was created which was free, united, democratically constituted and ushered an egalitarian social revolution. Thus, institutions should bear the stand of all that is best, progressive and dynamic in Sikhism. These institutions should grow, develop and cope with the need of the time, but without compromising on the basic principles on which they were established. These must be made functional to articulate the highest expectations and aspirations of the Sikhs. They should be reoriented, assimilated and consolidated. The task could be accomplished by a new and well equipped leadership who would blaze new paths of thought and action. Thus, decadent leadership must be replaced by vibrant, visionary, honest and committed leadership which should exercise the corporate will and authority of the entire community and also give unity and coherence to their decisions. Sikhism then would become truly a major world religion, as the Guru envisioned, in the twenty-first century.
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2S.G.G.S., Sri Raga, Mohalla 1, p. 62.


4S.G.G.S., Raga Wadhans, Mohalla 3, p. 593.


6Gurdas, Bhai, Var 1, Pauri 31.

7Ibid., Var 20, Pauri 4.