

NEWS FROM GOBIND SADAN

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Ramadan roza

Dewa Sharif, a great Muslim shrine in Uttar Pradesh, requested Baba Virsa Singh to offer a message for Ramadan. Babaji responded thus: *"What is the real purpose of roza (fasting)? That one's thoughts should be continually directed toward Allah. That one's eyes should always see the Light of Allah throughout Allah's Creation. That one's ears should always hear good things praising Allah. That one's brain should always think good thoughts about Allah. That one's hands should be outstretched in worship of Allah, do good work, and give in charity for Allah.*

Roza also means keeping your ears, eyes, brain, and nose closed against bad things. It means keeping your senses away from all desires, directing your feet toward goodness, toward worship of Allah, and speaking of goodness with your tongue. Only after all your senses have been thus controlled can it truly be called roza. If there is no control over the senses, it is not roza. Roza does not mean merely limiting eating. The real purpose of roza is to control all one's desires.

The month of Ramadan is very important, but only if you worship after controlling your desires. If control over even one of your senses is broken, then your roza will not be acceptable in the Light of Allah, the Sight of Allah, You should experience Alla'h with all your senses. Your eyes should see Allah's Creation, your ears should listen to Allah, you should walk toward Allah's Nazar (Merciful Gaze). Then it can be said that your roza is perfect.

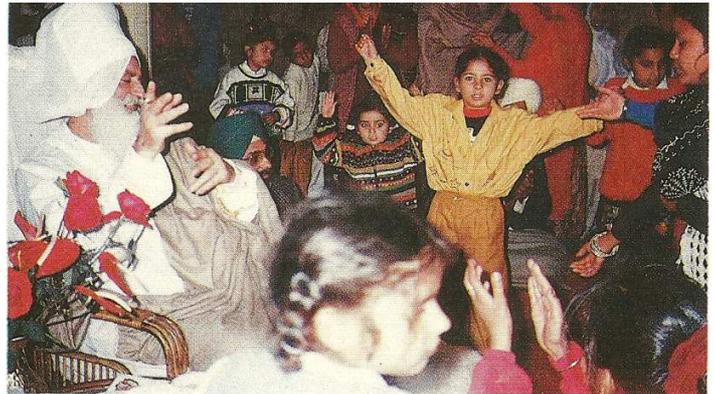
Then you will understand that Allah's Merciful Gaze has been cast upon you, and when you finish roza, your actions will be different from when you began. The real meaning of roza is that Allah has cast His Nazar upon you and blessed you. This blessing happens only when all the senses and desires have been controlled. To abstain from food is only one part of roza. These other points are even more important than abstaining from eating.

It is good to observe roza, for this is a sacred commandment which has come from Allah, through the Nabi. But all these aspects of roza should not be neglected. You should therefore think carefully before undertaking roza. If you do not follow all the points, it will not be considered roza even if you omit two meals each day. The change that occurs in you during Ramadan depends on the inner roza, not just on abstaining from eating.

I am not saying this from my own thoughts. The Nabi has spoken thus, and it is written in the Quran Sharif."

Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday

On January 15, Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday was celebrated with such joy that Babaji himself was dancing,



with the children dancing around him. He told the congregation, *"What is Guru Gobind Singh's birthday? He has been coming since time immemorial. As it is written in Guru Granth Sahib, 'My Master is always living; he neither comes nor goes. He is immortal, and he prevails in everyone.' Guru Gobind Singh is the eternal Light. Sometimes he is manifest; sometimes he is non-manifest; then again he is sometimes manifest.*

There are two reasons why we celebrate the birthdays of the prophets. One is to assemble in their memory. The second is to sit together as fellow human beings and listen to what they have spoken about God, about humans, about changing our actions. It would be a mistake to say that we are celebrating the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh or Jesus or the Prophet Mohammad or Lord Krishna because God has appeared on that day. God exists in beginningless time; no books have been able to establish the date of His coming. It is written in Sikh scripture that there was primeval darkness for thirty-six ages. There were no trees, no animals, no life, nothing — but God existed even then.

We celebrate the prophets' birthdays because at that time, the Hidden Power came to speak to us in manifest form. On that day, His qualities were manifested through the prophet. We are thanking God, 'You sent a person in material form who had hands and feet like us, who was speaking like us, laughing like us. But Your Power which was within him was very great. We thank You that You explained to us in material form, so that the actions and character of those who act upon those teachings would be transformed. The inner truth in human beings became manifest, solely by the prophet's speaking. His thinking and his existence had vanished, and they were replaced by Your thinking, Your existence.

Thought is very powerful. It is always moving, and also slipping. Only the One who created thought can make us understand it. It runs with great speed, questioning,

answering, changing every moment. But God can make it stable. The prophets have explained how to stabilize the mind. The hidden Power of God spoke through them, and after meeting the prophets, people's thinking was transformed. The prophets' enlightened wisdom was recorded in books, and enlightenment thence came forth in human minds.

We therefore celebrate the birthdays of the prophets because at that time, God made a child to give His message. The prophets and messiahs have all come from that great place of Light. Not everyone can see it; it can only be perceived by one who is spiritual. Guru Gobind Singh came from the same Light from which Jesus came. Jesus called God his Father, and Guru Gobind Singh wrote that when light emerged from Light, God said to him, 'Go — I have made you My Son.' Their Father is one.

Even when a person is liberated from birth and death, he sometimes sits with God, looking at that Light, and says, 'My Parent, please send me again — I want to see the drama of the world.' There are so many things to see in the drama of the world, so many forms of enjoyment. If people are enlightened, they become tired of acting in the drama, but they enjoy watching it.

Guru Gobind Singh said, 'I am the servant of the Supreme Lord, come on earth to watch His play.' Why? Because he was an enlightened being. He was God. He was Light. He could say, 'This is the ephemeral world. I have come to watch the drama.' Seeing this drama, one is wonderstruck. If all day long you see the actions and thoughts of the people around the globe, there is no need to watch television or movies. Each person thinks that no one knows what he is doing and thinking, but God knows. It is all a drama, and each one is an actor in the drama.

I therefore say this to you: Rise early in the morning, recite God's Name, read scriptures, and pray to God from inside, 'Oh True God, we do not know what You want. Make us as You want us to be. Make our mind as You want. Make our body act as You want. We want to love You, but we do not know how.' As Guru Nanak said to God, 'Neither do I know the way, nor are my words sweet. I do not know the rhythm or the tune which will be appealing to You. You will have to bless me.'

Therefore, when you even lift your foot, always feel, 'God has given me this foot; that is why I am moving ahead.' If you use your hand, feel, 'You have given me this hand; that is why it is working. You have given me this tongue; that is why it is speaking.' God is nearer to you than your hands and feet. He is sitting alone inside you with His Light, and you are running outside. Talk to Him.

Enlightenment is within you; always remain united with that true inner wisdom. The Gurus say, 'The Master is with me always; wherever I go, He helps me.'

Wherever there is love of God, there is pleasure. There is no other pleasure. Therefore always love God and receive blessings, forgiveness, and grace from God. God is always forgiving, always merciful."

On child neglect and divorce

Babaji is very concerned about breakdown of the family. When he was asked to give a statement for a group working in California to help prevent child neglect and abuse, he made these points: "There are two essential things to be done from earliest infancy: The mother should nurse the baby with her own milk, and before the umbilical cord is cut, she should clasp the child to her heart. From that time onward, the mother will feel affection toward the child, and the child toward the mother. The mother will never forsake the child, nor the child the mother. These are natural ways of love which should be carefully nurtured, for scientists and doctors confirm that they automatically create bonds of affection between the mother and child.

Consider the animals. If you take away a mother cow, she will cry for her calf and try to run toward it time and time again. The calf will also cry, "Where has my mother gone?" Why? Because the calf drinks its mother's milk, and when the calf is born, the mother naturally licks it. In our holy scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, it is written that even if the mother cow has been taken to graze on lush vegetation five miles away from her calf, she will cry, "Baaah! Where is my child? I am eating, but I don't know my child's condition," Her thoughts are on her calf, because the calf drinks her milk.

Affection has been broken among humans because they have become "advanced," and thus give babies milk in bottles. Unless the mother gives her own milk to the child and embraces the child, child neglect will persist.

In addition, the parents should give time to the child, for a child requires their love. If mothers and fathers spend time with their children, perhaps the children will stop using drugs. They are taking drugs only because they feel lonely. There is no one who will speak with them or listen to them. When they despair of receiving support from their parents, where will they seek support? In drugs. If children go astray, it is not their fault; it is their parents' fault.

Now there are many broken homes, but children need both parents. When there is a divorce, the child is once orphaned. One parent says, "I will take the child," while the other says, "No, I will take the child." But nobody cares for the child's feelings in between. If one of the parents takes him, he still wants the other also.

In our traditional Punjabi culture, if any reason arose for the mother to consider leaving the home, she would never leave her child, even if she were cut into pieces. Her attachment to the child, her sacrifice for the child, kept the family intact.

Why are divorces taking place these days? Because people have not understood that marriage is a commitment with God. Whether a marriage takes place in a church, a mosque, a gurdwara, in the open, or around a fire, a commitment is being made with Someone. The couple should understand that they are making a commitment with that Power which is doing everything for them. To

divorce is to break that commitment, to break God's commandment, and this will not be good for people. Even if people do not believe in God, they should recall the commitment they have made to each other. In our traditional culture, our homes have been kept safe by the parents' love for the children and the understanding that their union is made by God. Parents also understand that their children will suffer badly if they separate, so they sacrifice for the sake of the children.

Nowadays people have faith only in the mind. If the mind so desires, one person goes one way and another person the other way. Anger arises unchecked and people become emotional and separate. If there is no control over the mind, what can be done? When a bridge is broken, what can shovels do? Now a crane will have to be brought to rebuild these broken bridges.

God tells us not to injure the feelings of others. Parents must first make it a firm principle not to hurt each other. If you quarrel, both of you are miserable - the mother is crying by herself on one side and the father is crying by himself on the other. If you do not agree, it does not matter. Do not separate from each other in haste. Instead, meditate upon God, control your anger, and recognize that it will be a great loss for the children if you do not remain together. If you grow in love and compassion, the foolishness within you will not be allowed to pass through your gates and hurt others. With this approach, both you and your children will experience peace. Even if clashing actions or angry thoughts have come between you, pass over them. Thank God and ask God to bless that bad situation. Take His Love, His willingness to serve. Then remain together and give time to your children. Perhaps the day will come when your thoughts will change, and then you will see that there was no need for divorce.

This is very essential, for these are difficult times. With the blessing of God, this bad period will end, and a good period will come. This change can be brought through worship, through prayer, through meditation, through remembrance of God. It is imperative to save the children. To do so, improve yourself: Control your anger, your character, your mind. Pray to God, and give love and time to your children. Receiving the intoxication of your love, they will abandon all other intoxicants.

In memory of Father Gregorius

Out of regard for his dear friend, the late Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios, Baba Virsa Singh sat with His Holiness Mar Thoma Matthews II, Catholicos of the East, and His Holiness Swamy Chidanandaji Maharaj at a memorial function for Father Gregorios on January 5th. Asked to bless the occasion, Babaji said, in part, "When Father Gregorios and I first met, I said, 'Jesus is Light. If we try to confine him within sectarian boundaries, the trees and the oceans will despair, the whole Creation will despair, because Jesus gives Light to everything. This is my inner feeling. I respect

Jesus day and night." Father Gregorios rose and embraced me. He folded his hands and said, 'I feel the same way. Jesus is not a matter of a boundary. He is universal. If the Light is enclosed in a fort, all people will be unhappy.'

My feeling is that if we truly and correctly believe in religion, it is not a matter of boundaries. In the Holy Qur'an, it is specially written that Lord Jesus is a prophet and Mother Mary is blessed. Jesus is as much mine as he is yours. Jesus belongs to the whole Creation. He is Master of the oceans, Master of the earth, for Jesus is Light. If the Light is extinguished, what will the earth do? What will the trees do? What will the whole Creation do?

My feeling is that if Jesus is believed in this form, if the prophets are believed in this form, then our boundaries will drop away, our countries' conflicts will end, the conflicts in our homes will end, and the conflicts in our minds will end.

Every prophet has told us to love. However, we people do not obey their commandments. Their messages have been coming to us from time immemorial. Jesus and Guru Nanak said the same thing: Love the entire Creation and love human beings as well. The Prophet Mohammad said the same thing.

But we have left their words behind and set forth our own ideas before the people. Therefore there is no peace in this world. Crime is increasing and people are upset. It is very necessary now to put into practice this one thing which all the prophets have told us. There is no other way. This is the only way.

I will give this message to you all: We are all sisters and brothers. There is one God of us all. We all have one Love. We all have one Master. If we make divisions in this, there will definitely be quarrels among us.

I appeal to you to do as we are doing at Gobind Sadan. Whenever the holiday of a prophet or messiah comes, we celebrate and prepare special meals as if our father's own day has come. When we celebrate the birthday of Jesus, among us are Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Jews. We never feel that there are any differences.

I will pray to God that He should bless and heal us all, and make us very good human beings. At this time, we all need His blessings and His grace very much. My inner prayer is that God should forgive us all, be compassionate toward us, heal us all, and become Master of us all."

Stone and statue speak:

Stories from the Editor, Mary Pat Fisher

I have been asked by His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh to tell you about my recent experiences at Jesus's Place. They seem ordinary to me, for such things happen to many of us at Gobind Sadan. But the fact that I am author of college textbooks may make it more surprising that I have been conversing with a stone and a statue. I have agreed to tell these stories in the hope that others may grow in faith in that Reality which definitely exists, but which we cannot see.

These days are filled with spiritual grace at Jesus's Place. We are now in the process of building a natural

stone setting for our statue of Lord Jesus. To build a little mountain, we had a crane bring huge boulders from a nearby rocky prominence. Before the crane came, I went over to look at the rocks which had been selected for Jesus's mountain. The two largest ones were a huge standing slab which had split in two over time. I asked the smaller piece, "May we move you to Jesus's Place?" The rock answered, "No — this place is itself sacred. Leave me here." I looked around and could not see anything obviously holy about the place, but perhaps someone might have worshipped before those great stone slabs eons ago. Later I discovered that the area was slated to be dynamited, but neither the rock nor I knew that at the time.

Once the crane came, in the excitement of moving the huge boulders, I forgot what that stone had said to me. When at last it was pried away from the ridge, the crane's axle broke. I felt terrible, for I had forgotten the stone's words and had not stopped the crane. But at last the axle was fixed, and the great rock was brought to Jesus's Place.

I went to Baba Virsa Singh, my beloved teacher, whom we reverently call Maharaj ("The Great King"), to apologize about the stone. I told him we wanted to bring its companion as well, and asked if that would be permissible. He closed his eyes, looked at the situation in his clear inner vision, and then said that the other stone would come along readily if I took Jesus with me and asked in Jesus's name.

The next morning before the crane's arrival, I prayed at Jesus's Place, asking Jesus to please come with me. Then we set out across the plain. I didn't know whether to let him go ahead out of respect or to lead him to the spot where the rock was. But as it happened, he seemed to be in such a light mood that the two of us danced and skipped together across the plain. When I got to the rock, I stood before it in prayer — but where was Jesus? He seemed to have disappeared. I looked around in vision and tried to feel his presence, but he wasn't there anymore. All I could feel was Maharaj, Maharaj inside me, Light, Light, Light, as always. Then I understood: There is no difference between Jesus and Maharaj. There is only one Light, eternally, but sometimes it shows Itself to us in different forms. It can even reveal Itself to us in a rock, in a statue.

This is all God's drama. The rock of course came along easily, just as Maharaj had said.

God is also creating a drama involving Jesus's clothing. One wintry night, Maharaj looked at me sweetly and told me to go ask Lord Jesus if he were cold standing up there in the form of the statue. I went and asked, and Lord Jesus at once indicated that he was cold on the left side because the wind was blowing from the west into his open sleeve. Even though I was facing the opposite direction to the wind

at the time, I could feel what he was saying on the left side of my own body. I suggested to Lord Jesus that maybe he could stand in some other way that felt warmer. He held his arms up and forward, so that tremendous power radiated downward from his palms, and thus doing, he was no longer cold. Nevertheless, I said to him, "Actually, we don't want to confine you to one position. Even though we have made a statue of you with outstretched arms to commemorate the way you appeared to Maharaj, please feel free to move around here. Please come to touch the people, embrace them, heal them. Please dance if you like."

Jesus kept quiet, just as Maharaj does when we have not yet discovered the truth. So I brought my shawl and blanket and struggled to tie them on Jesus's statue to keep him warm.

When I later asked Maharaj if it were permissible to put warm coverings on Lord Jesus, someone suggested that we should also put a raincoat on the statue to keep Jesus dry. These are issues that never arose within the Christian churches of my childhood, for here we worship Jesus under the open sky. Jesus seems to like it this way, but still we do not want him to be uncomfortable in this extreme climate. Maharaj blessed a poncho and told me to take it up to the statue to see if Jesus wanted it. Even before I reached the statue of Lord Jesus, cozy in his shawl and blanket, to offer the raincoat to him, he told me that he did not want to wear a raincoat unless it was raining.

To me it seems quite natural to talk silently with stones and statues, as well as to trees and animals, for they respond. I am a rational person, writer of dozens of college textbooks on many subjects, including a best-selling textbook on the world's religions, as well as a publisher and radio producer. At the same time, I have great love for and faith in God because I have seen so many practical proofs that God is all-powerful and pervading everywhere, though beyond our limited sense perceptions. I know from my own life that if you approach anything with love and fellow-feeling, you can communicate with it.

Maharaj explains, "*Jesus is materially manifest and Jesus is also subtle, non-manifest. His statue is a material structure. Healing rays come from that structure, and there is no difficulty for him to speak as well. He is alive for those people who love. He talks to those who love. If he does not talk, then wherefrom does the healing come? If we think it is just stone, then why do we stand in front of it, praying for healing? Healing comes from that which is alive. If God is bestowing Light on that structure, it can also speak, and it can walk as well.*

People who have no faith will be surprised by these things. The faithful will never be surprised. They know that such powers can speak when they like and become silent when they like. These powers are always alive."