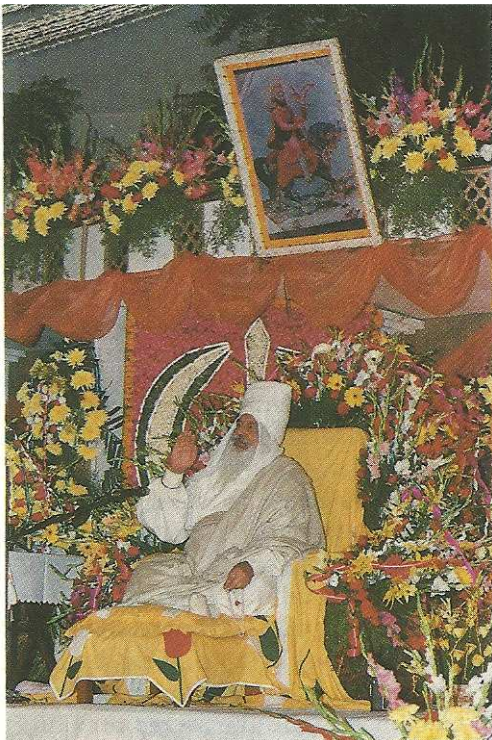


NEWS FROM GOBIND SADAN

Gobind Sadan, Gadaipur, via Mehrauli, New Delhi 110030, India

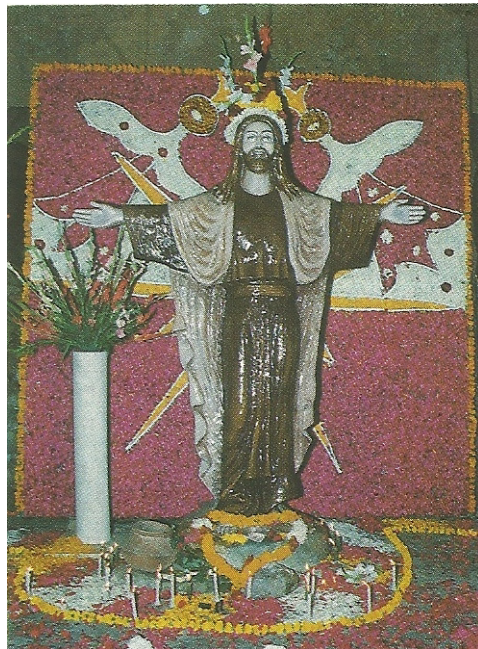
February 1999

Under the guidance of His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh, Gobind Sadan continually celebrates the great holidays of all religions. On December 25, thousands of wellwishers from many religions and all levels of society came to Gobind Sadan for a unique and joyous combined celebration of the birthday of Jesus, the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (the tenth Sikh Guru), Hanukkah (celebrating a Jewish miracle of light), and Ramadan (the month of fasting for Muslims in honour of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an). Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Jews gathered in the presence of a picture of Guru Gobind Singh and the life-sized statue of Jesus that has been erected where Jesus had appeared in 1984 to His Holiness Babaji. The first revelation of God to the Prophet Muhammad was inscribed in flowers next to a large menorah specially made for Jesus's Place. Hundreds of thousands of colored lights and flowers adorned every tree and surface, and thousands of candles and divas twinkled all about, creating an other-worldly atmosphere.



His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh, revered teacher to people of all religions, spoke of the Oneness of the prophets and of God, and of God's happiness in seeing His human family gathered to celebrate the birthdays of two of His great sons. He asserted, *"Dharma is one, enlightenment is one, love is one, the Father is one, God is one. There are no separate Ones. According to the language of love, Jesus and Guru Gobind Singh called Him 'My Father.' Guru Nanak said, 'There is one Father and we are all His children.' Prophet Muhammad called Him Allah, and summarized Him in a few words, 'Allah Ho Akbar — God is the Greatest of all. There is none equal to Him. He is La Sharik — without equal.' Therefore God is one, though named according to different languages.*

Whereas some people might think it strange to celebrate the birthdays of the prophets of two religions together, making fortresses around different religions is not the programme of Jesus. Look: I am not a Christian. I am a person who loves God. But to follow Jesus, to love Jesus, it is not necessary to become a Christian. It is necessary to love, for Jesus is Light. Light is always spreading its healing, its blessings everywhere, twenty four hours a day".



Jesus statue at Gobind Sadan

A person who believes in the Vedas will not attack anyone. A person who believes in Jesus will not attack anyone. A person who believes in Guru Gobind Singh will not attack anyone. They are fountains of compassion, fountains of love. They said to give people good ideas, to give them love, not to antagonize them. Enmities have been created by those who come after the prophets and present themselves as their spokespersons. Dharam has thus been destroyed, and enlightened wisdom has also been destroyed."

Father Philip from Delhi Orthodox Centre offered Christmas greetings, saying, "When the message of Christmas was conveyed by angels to shepherds, the angels said, 'We are bringing good tidings for the whole world.' His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh has recognized that the joy of Christmas is not for Christians only. The joy and peace, the celestial love that Christmas imparts is for all communities. All-encompassing love: This is what is demonstrated in Christmas. "

Dr. Syed Ausaf Ali, Director of Islamic Studies at Jamia Hamdard University, observed, "Even if you travel to a great number of religious centres, you will never come to a place where the head of the centre is talking not only of one prophet but of all the prophets. That is the true spirit of religion, not its outer form. If you look at my religion, Islam, and read the holy book, the Qur'an, you will find mentioned there a very large number of prophets. Jesus Christ, whose birthday we are celebrating tonight, is mentioned at least 29 or 30 times in the Qur'an. So he is not the prophet of Christians alone; he is a prophet of all of us. It is a very historic day today that here in this unique centre we are celebrating the birthday of Jesus Christ and the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh; we are also celebrating Hanukkah and Ramadan. "

Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar of Judah Hyam Hall and his children lit candles on the new menorah, and Rabbi Malekar lovingly brought his 14-year-old daughter for the blessings of His Holiness Babaji, who had originally blessed her when she was a baby. The Rabbi said, "The teachings of all religions are the same. In all faiths, prayer must come from the heart."

Finally, Hindu political leader Sri B.L.Sharma Prem proclaimed, "The day the malvis, the pandits, the granthis, the priests, and the mullahs announce that all the paths lead to God, that day there will be peace in the world."

Guests from Gobind Sadan USA sang Christmas carols, and the choir from Delhi Orthodox Centre sang hymns in Hindi, English, and Malayalam.

Muslim qawwalis, Sikh kirtan groups, and poets from Canada, Russia, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab praised Guru Gobind Singh and his universal conception of one God pervading everywhere, beyond sectarian divisions.

In his closing remarks, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh said, "*When Guru Gobind Singh was born, the trees, the waters, the animals, and the whole Creation sang in joy that God had sent such a loving son into the world. Likewise, Jesus was God's very loving son. When both come together as we celebrate their birthdays, they may heal the whole world.*"

Id-ul-Fitr at Shiv Sadan

Id-ul-Fitr, the end of Ramadan fasting, was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Shiv Sadan, Gobind Sadan's largest farm, at the newly enlarged tomb of Shiv Sadan's beloved "Pir Sahib." The Muslim pir, whose grave had been washed away over a hundred years ago in a flood of the Ganges, has been showering blessings on that area ever since Baba Virsa Singh rebuilt his tomb according to the pir's request. People of all religions lovingly visit the place for the pir's blessings. Now, by the grace of God, a larger tomb with a fine dome is being built by Muslim craftsmen, to lift the sacred area high above any floodwaters.

For Id-ul-Fitr, thousands of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs converged on Pir Sahib's place for a happy day of listening to qawwalis and speeches by local Muslim and Hindu leaders, all of whom emphasized the same point: The Light of God is one, the prophets have all come from the same Light, and we should all love each other as brothers and sisters. Hundreds of poor people also were treated at a free eye camp and a free medical camp. These were offered by the excellent doctors from Delhi who have been donating their services at Shiv Sadan to the poor from the surrounding area for many years. Then everyone sat together for a delicious meal prepared by Babaji's devotees. The love and happiness which abounded on that day seemed clear proof of the blessings of the pir, of His Holiness Babaji, and of God.

A letter to the Pope

Unfortunately, the easy harmony among people of all religions at Gobind Sadan's communities does not prevail everywhere. Recently there have been appalling acts of violence against Christian missionaries in India. In this regard, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh dictated a letter to His Holiness Pope John Paul II:

"When Jesus spoke, he always spoke of love. This message was needed two thousand years ago, and will be needed a thousand years from now. Just as Guru Gobind Singh stressed this message and sacrificed himself for it, so too Jesus spoke of love and was crucified.

Do not worry: No one can disrupt this force. Jesus was no ordinary person; he was spiritual Power. He always spoke of that Power, and worked in the world for that Power Who had created him. Whenever he spoke, he rose above any worldly enmity. He always said that if someone slaps you, turn the other cheek; if someone takes your coat, give your shirt as well and relieve his miseries. He never spoke on behalf of any one class, country, or community. He spoke for all humanity, for all creatures.

Here in Gobind Sadan we have always celebrated Jesus's birthday with a grand welcome and great respect. I always explain that Jesus loved everyone.

Do not be afraid. Truth will always live. Love, truth, compassion, and desire to serve others will never die in this world, no matter what happens.

Therefore, calmly pray and generate healing, just as Jesus gave healing to everyone. He proved the greatness of God's Power when he was crucified. People thought that he was dead, but he rose again and appeared, alive. Never forget the words he uttered when Mary went to the tomb: 'Why are you seeking the living among the dead? I am alive.' Do not forget that He is still alive today.

May God bless us and give everyone love. May God bring forth within us kindness, compassion, and a desire to serve others, and remove anger from us all. These bad deeds have arisen only out of anger. But just pray before Jesus. He is always forgiving, always beneficent. His mission is never in danger. People may be in danger, but do not worry. Pray intensely with great love, and maintain a spirit of compassion. Develop whatever good ideas you receive. Do not abandon them out of fear. They will benefit all of society, will benefit the downtrodden.

Develop love within people. Do not create a closed community, for Jesus will never be happy with an enclosure. Jesus is Light, love, and healing. He does not want boundaries to be erected. Boundaries always create fighting. Jesus never established any boundaries."

Blessed athletes are victorious

Among the recent visitors to Gobind Sadan have been a series of athletes and teams who have come to seek Babaji's blessings before their matches. After being so blessed, one very unlikely champion, a rather frail and spindly runner, broke the Indian record for 400-meter sprinting which had stood for 38 years. The women's hockey team won their match 13 to 0 in the All-Asian Games in Bangkok. Women's weight-lifting teams and men's hockey teams were also victorious in international competition. Babaji had given them all the same formula for success: Read Jaap Sahib, have faith in God, and when you feel yourself weakening, say, "*Dhan Guru Gobind Singh*" — Oh great and blessed Guru Gobind Singh!" He readily offered this blessing to non-Sikhs as well as to Sikh athletes, for the Guru's great sacrifices and his blessings are not just for members of one religious community; they are for all humankind.

Guru Gobind Singh Conference

On February 18, Gobind Sadan and the Temple of Understanding held an excellent conference on the subject "Guru Gobind Singh's Life and Teachings." Preparations are being made around the world to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Tenth Guru's creation of the Khalsa Panth, and this conference was convened to help bring forth salient points about the Guru.

Dr. Karan Singh, prominent statesman and International President of the Temple of Understanding, gave the inaugural address. He spoke of the tremendous spiritual power of the Guru, who in creating the Khalsa Panth — the Order of the Pure — turned lowly sheep into lions who would always stand up to defy intolerance and injustice. Dr. Karan Singh repeatedly praised the Guru for accomplishing and sacrificing so much in such a short lifespan to establish the principle that Truth is one, that no one religion has a monopoly on Truth, and that we are one human family with the same Light in each soul.

Dr. S. Ausaf Ali of Jamia Hamdard University emphasized the significance of Guru Gobind Singh's great hymn of God's praises, Jaap Sahib. He stated, "Jaap Sahib is a book that can bring about great understanding between faiths, for it takes you to one eternal Truth. It is that universal truth in Guru

Gobind Singh's teachings which should be highlighted. His was not a fight between Sikhs and Muslims, but rather a fight against injustice."

These addresses were followed by scholarly and touching talks by a number of eminent professors from Punjabi University in Patiala, Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, and Delhi University: Dr. Kirpal Singh, Dr. G.S. Nayyar, Dr. Jasbir Singh Rai, Dr. Sukhdyal Singh, and Mrs. Raj Wadhwa. Mrs. Lena Shahgedanova, who is preparing Russian translations of Sikh scriptures, spoke of the significance for Russians of Guru Gobind Singh's social ideals. Giani Gurdev Singh, a visionary from Gobind Sadan, spoke of the Guru as a great spiritual power who has inspired His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh in vision since childhood.

The Vice Chancellors of two major universities then gave very profound addresses. Dr. Harbhajan Singh Soch, Vice Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, spoke of how astonishing it was that Guru Gobind Singh's requested his own father to sacrifice himself for the cause of protecting religious freedom. Quoting from the Guru's great hymn, "*Manas ki jaat sabhai ekai pahchanbo — May all humanity be recognized as one human race,*" Dr. Soch emphasized the greatness and importance of the Guru's realization that "the only way that we can be identified is that we are human beings."

Dr. Joginder Singh Puar, Vice Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala, said, "When I was asked to come to this conference, I had two thoughts: I wanted to come to hear the scholars' presentations, and I wanted to have Babaji's darshan. I have come to this Sadan some fifteen times, and every time I am very happy to see that Baba Virsa Singh gives practical form to Guru Gobind Singh's principle of rising above all caste and sect distinctions. We may hold as many seminars and read as much scripture as we like, but the great thing is to be Sikhs of the Guru like those of whom the Khalsa Panth was created."

His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh addressed the participants in his hillside garden, saying, "*We all want the evils in the world to end, but why then aren't these things under our control? It was to bring them under control that Guru Gobind Singh came into the world: to end the self-interest and fear which were prevalent. He taught us to try to become good human beings, especially through the practice of*

meditation. This has been the mission of all the prophets.

I feel that Guru Gobind Singh himself is the Creator and the Destroyer of the whole cosmos, but to see him, one must love him. He never created any sectarian religion. Rather, he uplifted lowly and weak people and transformed them into Khalsa, meaning those who burn their bad karma and rise above anger, criticism, and desire for other people's property.

Our formula at Gobind Sadan for people who come from all countries, all religions, seeking help with their difficulties, is to give them Guru Gobind Singh's Jaap Sahib. Whether Hindus, Muslims, Christians, or Sikhs, many of them come back to say, 'After reading Jaap Sahib, my difficulties were all removed,' or 'I was healed in two days of my incurable illness.' If Jaap Sahib is so powerful, imagine the power of the one who wrote it! I feel that one need not become a Christian in order to believe in Jesus, or a Muslim in order to believe in Prophet Muhammad, or a Sikh in order to believe in Guru Gobind Singh. These separate houses of religions have been created by priests, not by God. There is only one way to follow Guru Gobind Singh: to see him everywhere, after seeing him in your heart. Guru Gobind Singh and the power of God, the existence of God, are the same. One who follows him can never create a small fortress out of religion."

His Holiness Babaji was then interviewed by television crews about the upcoming 300th anniversary of the Khalsa Panth. He said, "*We are celebrating this day to remind us again that weak people like us — such outcasts that they were not even allowed in any holy place — can become strong and help others by every means. Guru Gobind Singh infused three qualities in one who became Khalsa: to be a great giver, a great hero, and a great devotee of God.*"

Babaji repeats: "*All prophets have said that there is one God, one Truth, and one Love, and all have told us to work. When their messages are similar, why have religions become separate? If we look deeply, we will see that the managers of religions have separated them. Religious divisions have not been created by the prophets, messiahs, and messengers of God.*"

Internet website: www.gobindsadan.org