



February 27, 2002



## Stand Up Against Tyranny

When Gobind Sadan celebrated Guru Gobind Singh's birthday from January 19 to 21, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh emphasized a basic similarity between the mission of Guru Gobind Singh and that of all the prophets: to uphold kshatriya dharam—the religious principle of standing up against tyranny. Babaji explained, Why is kshatriya dharam essential? Throughout human history, two personalities have always been present: those who are evil-minded and those who are compassionate. The hearts of those who are compassionate-minded are filled with love, humility, and the remembrance of God. Those who are evil-minded suppress goodness, obstruct religion, and prevent compassion and humility from arising in the world.

Sometimes evil-mindedness becomes so strong that fear spreads among the people. Their women are carried away, their goods are looted by invaders, and great injustices are perpetrated. When this happens, it means that people have forgotten to uphold kshatriya dharam. This was the case at the time of Guru

Teg Bahadur (the Ninth Guru): Evil was so prevalent that people were cowering from fear in their own homes and they had thus become weak. Evil had become so rampant that Guru Teg Bahadur had to give his life as a martyr to uplift the voice of dharam [righteous conduct, moral duty, religion].

Guru Gobind Singh created the Panj Piaras [the first five members of the Khalsa, from lowly occupations] to strengthen that same programme.

Through the [Amrit](#) ceremony, he created a great means to transmit the power to uphold kshatriya dharam to his followers. When Guru Gobind Singh Maharaj created amrit, his merciful glance fell upon it, his rays infused it, and he spoke with such power that the dharam and fearlessness that were hidden within the Panj Piaras were awakened, and they stood up to uphold kshatriya dharam. The creation of the Panj Piaras meant that our country would remain free, that the people's voice would not be suppressed, that no one could take away their rights, and that no one could enslave them.

When Lord Krishna instructed Arjuna to uphold kshatriya dharam, Arjuna obeyed him, and Lord Krishna bestowed such love upon him that he put him in the chariot seat with himself as the charioteer. Why? He knew that kshatriya dharam would always be necessary. It is necessary today, and it was necessary at the time of Lord Rama. He himself became a warrior. Guru Nanak said that worship would not be accepted if people could not protect their honour. When the Prophet Muhammad created his Four Friends ("Char Yar"), the real meaning was that they became kshatriyas. They were ready twenty-four hours a day to destroy cruel tyranny.

Every prophet has always brought two things: kshatriya dharam and worship of God. Kshatriya dharam encompasses the love of God, compassion, tenderness, and always being concerned about others, helping the weak and the downtrodden. Jesus did the same: He stood beside the weak and always challenged evil, refusing to accept it. He had to go to the cross to uphold kshatriya dharam.

Kshatriya dharam's actual meaning is to uplift the voice of whoever is fallen, whoever is afraid, whoever is disheartened. Whether this is done by lifting one's voice or lifting a sword, it is done without any self-interest. Such action is only for the sake of others. It is like an operation in which the doctor cuts out bad things and helps good things within the person to develop. Whenever prophets or saints come, bringing truth, they do the same thing: They reawaken dharam and destroy evil.

A fire set on November 18th by several misguided and drunken teenagers who mistook turbaned Sikhs for supporters of Osama bin Laden has destroyed the farmhouse at Gobind Sadan USA. However, the revered Guru Granth Sahib [holy scripture containing the inspired poetry of the Sikh Gurus and Hindu and Muslim

saints] and [Dasam Granth](#) [writings of the Tenth Guru] miraculously survived without loss of a single word.



Guru Granth Sahib after the fire

Gobind Sadan USA was founded by Baba Virsa Singh in 1987 in a rural area north of Syracuse, New York. His devotees have painstakingly converted its old farmhouse into a gurdwara, its garage into a meditation center, and its huge barn into a future interfaith retreat center. After five hours of battling the blaze, when fire marshals entered the room where the scriptures had been enshrined, they were astounded. As The Post Standard newspaper reported, "The fire marshals said they had never seen anything like this—that in the middle of this scarred room, both scriptures and their tabernacle were totally unscathed." Even the cloths covering the Guru Granth Sahib and Dasam Granth were not even smoke-damaged. The daughter of a Christian minister who attended the interfaith prayer service at Gobind Sadan after the fire therefore said to her mother, "God

must really be here. God must be in this holy place."

In Delhi, Baba Virsa Singh stated, Guru Granth Sahib is a scripture not only for all people; its revelation is for the whole universe. That is why the Guru Granth Sahib has not burned. It says, "Do not call the Vedas and revealed scriptures such as Bible, Torah, Zend Avesta, and Holy Qur'an false. False are those who do not understand and interpret them correctly." All the prophets and God are sitting together in Guru Granth Sahib. We understand Guru Granth Sahib as a living Guru. The Guru Granth Sahib is indestructible. It is not only a holy book but a living spirit—tangible and visible to me at all times."

Members of Gobind Sadan USA have refrained from anger and retribution; instead, they have from the time of the fire prayed for forgiveness of the perpetrators. And at the sheriff's press conference in response to the arrest of the youths who set the fire, Ralph Singh read a statement of forgiveness from Baba Virsa Singh: We have offered a prayer of forgiveness that the ignorance or hatred that led to this senseless act be taken away. However, there is a distinction between forgiving people and forgiving the act they committed. There is no doubt that the act was terribly wrong, no matter what the motivation. Laws exist to hold people accountable for their actions, and we will not interfere in the process of law. Yet we know God is all-forgiving to those who seek God's forgiveness. And the Sikh tradition, like all others, calls on us to forgive others (as Jesus said, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us") so they may seek forgiveness from God, and learn not to commit acts of violence or hatred again. For if we show hatred to those who act against us, then how will they ever understand that God, Whom they can't see, is forgiving? And out of hatred we will only perpetuate the cycle of violence that exists in the world. By forgiving our enemies we have the opportunity to create peace.

## Impressions of Russian Guests

Many Russian visitors come to Gobind Sadan to see its practical example of the power of dharam and to take the guidance and blessings of Baba Virsa Singh Ji to uplift their country. In 1989 Babaji foretold the breakup of the Soviet Union on Russian national television, and he has seen in vision that the country will rise again on a dharmic basis.

Four Russian and Belorussian women who visited in November held a press conference in Chandigarh. Taissa Bondar, editor of The Magazine of World Literature in Belarus and Slavic World in Moscow and author of several books about the influence of Baba Virsa Singh in her life, stated, "I have visited many different temples, I have heard many public preachers, but my deep religious feeling was awakened in Gobind Sadan. Here I saw how love to God transforms people, makes them joyful and happy, gives them strength and the desire to serve, cleanses and enlightens them. This is what everybody on our earth needs!"

Mrs. Bondar further explained, "We have published many of Baba Virsa Singh's messages in our magazines in order to introduce to our people his religious views, his spiritual power, and his love. It is he who has taught us about the Guru Granth Sahib. I am sure that Guru Granth Sahib is a scripture for the future for most of the people on the earth, because it expresses respect and love for all other religions and prophets, and unites all minds and hearts in their striving to the Highest. Love, humility, and serving are not

simply God's commands; the people we have seen at Gobind Sadan's communities live according to them."

## **We Are All God's Children**

On January 5, 2002, Gobind Sadan hosted a program for participants in the Temple of Understanding's interfaith conference on Education for a Global Society. Swaranjit Singh, President of the Gobind Sadan Institute for Advanced Studies in Comparative Religion, explained to the participants, "Gobind Sadan was founded 34 years ago in 1968, when Babaji transformed a rocky jungle into this flourishing farm. This is his mission, his life's work. He teaches that with prayer, hard work, and love we can accomplish the impossible. God is one. His teaching is one. His Light and Truth are present in every one of us. We have all come here for a purpose, and if we join hands in love and work together in peace we can surely achieve our goals."

"Though he has never been to any school or received any formal education, Babaji is highly respected for his great knowledge, his depth of vision, and his practical teaching. A simple man with a profound sense of humour, he repeatedly admonishes his devotees, saying, 'I am not a Guru but an ordinary man trying hard to do with God instructs me to do.' I can say that God surely works through Babaji."

Dr. Karan Singh, International President of the Temple of Understanding, said, "Today we have come to a truly remarkable place to get the blessings of a truly remarkable human being. Gobind Sadan is interfaith in action. Gobind Sadan reveres all the great religions of the world. And Baba Virsa Singh is constantly stressing that religion can never mean hatred and conflict. On the contrary, religion must involve love and understanding between all human beings. I was particularly keen to bring the delegates here because apart from what we say, we have to feel in our hearts the unity of all religions. I'm sure that those of us who are not practicing Christians felt that when we lit candles and bowed before the image of Jesus Christ just before coming in here."

The sacred fire goes on here 24 hours a day, and has been going on for many years. Babaji himself quotes extensively from the Qur'an, from the Bible, from the Guru Granth Sahib, from all scriptures. It is really a place of great power, and a place of great inspiration."

In his address to the group, Babaji painted a picture of the difficult times in which Guru Gobind Singh came to free the people from cruel oppression: God speaks continually with the prophets, and perhaps they keep demanding only one thing from Him: "The world is burning. Please save it with Your blessing. Bless the people. Help them." At the time of Guru Gobind Singh, God must have replied to him, "The fire will be extinguished. But your children will have to be sacrificed. You will have to leave your home. Your feet will be without shoes. You will have to leave all your kingdom."

Guru Gobind Singh firmly replied, "Even if everything is sacrificed, grant the people freedom, stop the anguished cries of the girls who are being abducted, stop these terrified pleas for help. It doesn't matter if my whole family goes, but bless the people, bless them."

The prophet always demands the same thing. He never comes to settle his own family or his inner circle. The one identifying characteristic of the prophet is this: concern for the sake of others. What kind of worry can the prophet have? Our worries. Prophets are also concerned that we should remain happy, that we should have nice clothes, good houses, and a good way of life.

What are we doing today? We are creating boundaries. The person from the temple speaks of the temple, the person from the mosque speaks of the mosque, and the person from the gurdwara speaks of the gurdwara. But they are all the same.

Where there is enlightenment, religion is a matter of one God. Where there are religious institutions, there is conflict. Therefore let us all proceed according to enlightenment. When we look from an enlightened perspective, there is one God, one love, one compassion, one willingness to serve, one humility.

Why do we get stuck in divisions? Because we follow preachers and institutions who are not enlightened. They put forth their own opinions, and say what is in their own self-interest.

In my mind, enlightenment shows that there is one God, and all prophets are His family. That is why we celebrate all the prophets' days with great love and joy. We illuminate a myriad of lights whether it is Jesus's birthday or Guru Gobind Singh's birthday, Krishna's day or the Prophet Muhammad's day. We celebrate them all with the same affection.

If we respect one prophet and disrespect another, we will never be blessed, for this is contrary to dharmic principles. As the Prophet Muhammad said, "Respect all the holy scriptures that have come. Be proud of them, love them. Also love the holy books that will come in the future. Love the founders and elders of every religion and every caste, for all were created by Allah."

At Gobind Sadan, we do not make any boundaries. For us, that person is special who is enlightened, compassionate, and filled with love and humility. Who is special in God's House? One who is forgiving, humble, loving, sweet-spoken, always welcoming. All scriptures—be they Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, Holy Qur'an, Bible, or Guru Granth Sahib—say so. The person who truly follows dharam will attain awareness, love, and unity.

We must meditate and see God everywhere, in every form of worship, in every religious place. We should not just go to our own religious institution and speak of our own prophet and criticize other prophets. We were never taught to do so.

Rather, we are always taught that God is everywhere, in every leaf, in every pore. We have abandoned this awareness and are entangled in a competition between the prophets—"One has done this and another has not." What they are doing, they are doing for our good. We should follow their instructions, we should love them, and we should recognize that they are always with us.

The true reason for meeting with each other is to see how to develop faith in the one God. We all have the same goal. Truth and love will always be victorious. Love for God will always be blessed. As Guru Nanak said, "Ultimately falsehood always loses and truth is victorious."

With the blessing of God, we can live together with love as sisters and brothers. Always recognize that there is one Father, and we are all His children. As Guru Gobind Singh said, "Recognize all people as one human race."

Speak of this throughout the world. God is so powerful that He can change the whole world in the blink of an eye. The Guru said, "If you think of Him with love for half a breath, He will instantly appear. One who meditates on Him with full concentration for even one second will not fall into the snare of Death but will live eternally with God."

God is so powerful. He always dwells within us, and we must look for Him there. He will bless us. He is always listening, and always speaking.

## Celebrations

Diwali, Navaratri, Id-ul-Fitr, Guru Nanak's birthday, and Christmas were all celebrated with great love and happiness at Gobind Sadan as always. For instance, on December 25, Christmas was celebrated on a massive and joyous scale at Gobind Sadan's gurdwara and farming community. Crowds came throughout the day and night to enjoy the thousands of candles, light-bedecked trees, flower decorations, balloons, stars, chains of flags, dancing horses, traditional Punjabi music and dance, Santa Claus, Christmas cake, lovingly decorated statue of Jesus, and the blessings of Baba Virsa Singh Ji.

Babaji explained, People wonder why we celebrate Christmas in a gurdwara. Our holy scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, tells us that the Vedas, Bible, Holy Qur'an, Torah, and Parsi scriptures are all true, so why should we not celebrate the holy days of the prophets who brought them to us? We are fighting with each other over different Names for the same God, over symbols, over rituals. But a person who truly follows Jesus will never raise a sword against anyone. Jesus said, "If someone takes your shirt, give him your coat as well." The Prophet Muhammad said, "Allah is Merciful; then why is there antagonism among the people?" Guru Gobind Singh said, "God is the same One, by every name. Hindu puja and Muslim Namaz are the same." No prophet taught us to hate each other. But there is a conflict between the masters and their followers. In every religion, we are challenging our prophet by not obeying his orders. When Christians truly start following Jesus, when Muslims truly start following the Prophet Muhammad, when Sikhs truly start following their Gurus—and when every prophet's day is celebrated in every religious place, there will immediately be peace in the whole world.

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