



July 28, 1999



Baba Ji with Hindu leaders
who have become Khalsa

Khalsa Commemorated

Three hundred years ago, in April 1699, Guru Gobind Singh drew his sword on the fields of Anandpur Sahib and called out to his assembled devotees for one brave enough to offer his head. One by one, five came forward. They all came from lowly castes, but after being initiated with [amrit](#)—holy water stirred with a double-edged sword—they were transformed into fearless upholders of justice, performing great feats of bravery to protect people of all castes and creeds from cruelty and oppression. These Five Beloveds, as they were called, became the first Khalsa, the first saint-soldiers in the order of the pure who dedicated themselves fully to Guru Gobind Singh's nonsectarian

mission.

This year marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of the Khalsa. His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh was a chief guest at the huge celebrations in Anandpur Sahib. Millions of people from around the world thronged to the area, which contains dozens of holy sites associated with Guru Gobind Singh. By the Tenth Guru's palpable grace which permeated the atmosphere, there were no accidents—a world record for such huge crowds.

For the occasion, His Holiness said, How great is the Power of God, and how great is the weakness of human beings! Sometimes truth and enlightenment become so obscured by misdeeds that there is great darkness concealing them. In that darkness, a person has no self-respect, no love. He seems empty. Then the prophet comes.

Before Guru Gobind Singh appeared in the world, people were worshipping, reading scriptures, delivering and listening to lectures. But neither the lecturers nor the listeners were enlightened. Such darkness had developed that tyranny had become very powerful. People did not know how to recognize truth or evil, courage or cowardice. They became like dead bodies.

Like other great spiritual personalities who came at other times, Guru Gobind Singh was born at that particular time to give courage to the people who were suppressed and frightened, to affirm truth for those who were confused. In order to transmit the healing power of God to the people, each prophet chose a path, according to the commandment of God. At the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the path was amrit. Already his tongue was bathed in nectar, his thought and speech filled with nectar, but a discipline was made for administering amrit and the Five Beloveds were created. Then the power of God passed into them, and they were inwardly healed. That Power stood like a great mountain to help the people and protect the weak. As the Khalsa helped, saved, provided for, and encouraged the people, they felt compassion for them. They rose above all enmity, opposition, and anger. They rose above their religion. In their discipline, they regarded all daughters as their own daughters, sisters as their own sisters, and all men as their brothers.

Guru Gobind Singh infused that power of God in the Khalsa and soon they began to offer great proofs of that power to protect the people from cruel oppression. Women who had been abducted were rescued; goods which had been snatched were recovered. This became such a big movement that the cruel tyrants became confounded and those who had been frightened developed courage. Previously they had regarded their ruler, whether cruel or merciful, just or unjust, as their sustainer, the ruler of their spirit. But now, when a ruler forsook his duties, they began to demand their rights. They recognized, as it is written in Gurbani, that "These rulers last only for a few days, and their pomp and show is all false."

In those days, the Khalsa had to struggle very hard. At length, prices were put on their heads; rewards were offered even for anyone giving information on the Khalsa. But Guru Gobind Singh infused in them a spirit which is free from concerns of birth and death. Always, even while sleeping and eating, they were thinking, "How may we help others? Is a sound of distress coming from any direction? The dharmic

thought which was in them was not for the benefit of any particular religion or closed circle of people. They were surveying people of the whole world and asking, "Where is there pressure? Where is there injustice?" They had no enmity toward any ruler. Their clash was only with cruelty. Again and again they were reminded, "Oh Nanak, falsehood will one day end, and truth shall prevail." They had a great effect on the public, for their speech and their actions were one. Sometimes they traveled on horseback, sometimes on foot. Sometimes they had nothing to eat for days. But the commandments and discipline of Guru Gobind Singh were never broken. Neither money nor worldly power had any effect on them. The only effect upon their minds was the hukam of Guru Gobind Singh and the blessings of Guru Gobind Singh. Their example was so great that even their enemies praised them.

We are now celebrating the 300th anniversary of the creation of Khalsa with great pomp and show. But may it not be that we only commemorate this day but leave without forsaking even one bit of our inner evils. The purpose of celebrating this day is to burn the evil and develop the goodness within ourselves.

What is goodness? As the Guru has defined it, "The Khalsa will forsake anger and criticism of others, and forsake lust for another's wealth or another's spouse. The Khalsa will fight on the front line." The Khalsa must always clash with evil. He will never submit to being corrupt, depriving others of their rights, looking at others' daughters and sisters with an evil eye, being angry with others, being greedy.

The most important aspect of this day is that on this day evils were burnt and goodness was developed. Then the Light of God was manifested from within to full perfection. Today that Light was illuminated of which Shailh Farid has said, "When that light is illuminated, when enlightenment comes from inside, there is no difference between that person and God." As Guru Gobind Singh said, "God and His devotee are one. There is no difference between them, as waves merge with water." Their enlightenment had been hidden, but on this day it became manifest. After that, they became such human beings that their state could not be described. The state of those who truly believe is known only to God.

Maharaj spoke of manmatt and Gurmatt—our own wisdom, and the wisdom of the Guru. With the Guru's wisdom come Light and the Guru's power, the Guru's courage, the Guru's love. With our own wisdom come self interest, greed, anger, clashes. We must burn those evils. The Guru has said, "Offer your body, mind and wealth to the Guru and obey his commandments. Then only will you reach the destination. "Think of everything as belonging to the Guru. Even then, await further orders.

Amrit for Hindu Leaders

In an astonishing turn of events related to the 300th Khalsa anniversary celebrations, leaders of Hindu organizations who have been associated with fomenting sectarian violence against Christians and Muslims came under the influence of His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh and asked him to baptize them as Khalsa. For decades His Holiness had not offered the amrit baptism, for it means a solemn commitment to very high standards. But by the commandment of God, he agreed to baptize the Hindu leaders, leading to their stunning transformation.

Ralph Singh of the United States, a longtime disciple of Baba Virsa Singh who also took amrit at Gobind Sadan along with these leaders, reported to the North American Interfaith Network newsletter, "I recently returned from participating in a monumental event in India which confirmed that, in the midst of decades—if not centuries—of strife, India is now on a path to overcoming religious violence: Leaders of major Hindu fundamentalist groups, who have been associated with the destruction of mosques and churches in their attempt to 'purify' India, have now publicly renounced their violence and pledged to bring peace and justice among those they had previously persecuted.

Under the influence of His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh Ji these leaders determined that the real way to bring peace and justice to India was not to rid it of so-called 'foreign elements,' but to respect and support all religions. They said they have finally reamed from Babaji the difference between sectarian religion and true justice. In his powerful address, one leader [the former B. L. Sharma "Prem," ex-MP, Central Secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and Chairman of the Brahman Samaj, now renamed Prem Singh Sher1 pledged to the thousands gathered and to the national media that he and his followers would become the protectors of the minorities they had previously persecuted."

His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh explained to the bewildered and sceptical press that it is possible for a person to change, for this is the work of dharma_to transform people inwardly. To become Khalsa, he asserts, is not a matter of changing one's religion: We speak of changing religions, but religion is one. Prem Singh Sher has not converted to a different religion. He had somewhat forgotten his own religion, and now he has become more firm in dharma_in the Dharma of God. Dharma is not a matter of conversion; it is an inner awakening.

What is the real meaning of enlightenment? To do everything for others, and to renounce everything for oneself. Guru Nanak said with love, "Pain and hunger also always come from You, oh my Giver." The dharmic person thanks God amid troubles as well as amid pleasures, for both are His gifts.

God has always given great examples of such love, detachment, and renunciation through His people. At the time of the Ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur, the government was putting great pressure on the people, They were very upset and jealous. No value was placed on anyone's character or voice or religious path. Some of the people came to the Guru and asked for his protection. He listened to them with love and then assured them, "Do not be afraid. Tell the rulers that you will happily accept whatever the Ninth Guru says." Being fully enlightened, he knew in advance that with these words, great difficulties would begin for himself and his family. But with his enlightenment, his renunciation, his love, and his detachment from worldly things and attachment to God, he held firm in the belief that the people were to be saved, even if it meant sacrificing his own head and his family.

When he reached Agra in the course of his preaching, Guru Teg Bahadur received a summons from the ruler. As there was no case against him, the summons was written strategically: "You should not help those who are weak; you should not help those who do not believe in your mission."

Your religion is not that of the sacred thread and mark on the forehead; your religion is that of God." But the Ninth Guru firmly repeated, "My religion is this: to achieve freedom for those who are enslaved, to protect the honour of women, and to lift up the voices of those who speak on behalf of the people so that they may believe in their religion. correctly and have freedom of thought. Everyone should associate with each other, believe in God as their Father, and move under His command' I am not to help only those who believe in my mission. I must help even a person who does not believe in anyone. Why should he be oppressed?"

When the day of his martyrdom came, the Ninth Guru remained unwavering in his determination. The same smiling countenance, the same glory, and the same love for God were evident in him, for the Love whom he loved never wavers. That One is the Remover of the consternation and fear of the whole world. The Guru was firm in the principle that "No one is an alien, no one is ours; we are to embrace everyone." Guru Teg Bahadur never complained to God about anything, for he fully accepted that to give one's family, one's home, and one's tread for the people by the commandment of God is also God's gift.

In my life, Baba ji said, I have never put pressure on anyone to leave his religion and adopt mine. God always says to me, "_anyone is attached somewhere, help him to become more firm, more powerful in that place." If a Muslim comes to me, I emphasize that he should recite five Namaz and I speak to him of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad. If a Christian comes, I will surely emphasize that he should pray with great inner love. If a Jew comes, I ask him to love Moses, because Moses was a very great power. If a Hindu comes, I speak of teachings from the Vedas, the Gita, the Ramayana. But at the same time, I link the stories of Guru Gobind Singh with these teachings. Understand this as my love for Guru Gobind Singh; I never do so in order to change anyone's religion. Whatever enlightened wisdom I have, I understand it as the gift of Guru Gobind Singh. God has given this gift to you, you remember him with every word you speak

At Gobind Sadan, everything we do is according to the commandments, the consciousness, the enlightened vision of Guru Gobind Singh. It is his commandment that the holy days of Jesus, of the Prophet Muhammad, of Moses, of Lord Krishna, of all God's prophets are to be celebrated on a very large scale. We are sitting in Guru Gobind Singh's house. He passes on the commands, and we are trying to obey them. No one who comes to Gobind Sadan has ever been told, "Leave Jesus and worship Guru Gobind Singh" or "Leave Moses and become a Sikh." Our mission is to make people firm in dharma.

We are to see God's Light and God's Presence in everyone. When we set up boundaries in the name of any religion, the great Dharma by which the whole cosmos is moving recedes somewhat into the darkness,

and religion created by humans comes to the fore. If we are to summarize the true Dharma in a few words, Dharma is compassion, Dharma is love, Dharma is humility. A dharmic person forgives everyone, for God is always pardoning, and He is always merciful. When a person meditates upon Him, He removes miseries and bestows compassion. What miseries does He remove? Egotism, pride, I-ness. All are destroyed, and awareness of the presence of God awakens. Where there is hatred and pressure are being fomented, be sceptical, for God never oppresses.

The Guru says, "All are equal partners; no one is an outsider. God is present in every particle." Then why are we dividing Him into separate sectarian religions? Look at the cosmos: God is prevailing everywhere, giving Light, life, and sustenance to all. When we have faith in that God, the idea does not remain that "My religion, my lecture, my programme are special." Only this idea remains: "All are special. I must always accept the enlightened wisdom of God, retain that enlightenment within myself, and act upon it." The power to respect others is a sacred trust from our Master. We are to thank God for this gift, keep it safe, and use it where He has said to use it.

In Dharma there is no rigidity, no question of conversion. Dharma automatically illuminates and removes the darkness. Human beings may be ignorant, but God's Light leads to enlightenment. As the Guru says, "Oh mind, you are the image of God's light. Recognize your root."

A person who believes in Dharma becomes of the state that he loves God and receives everything from God, but never uses the name of God to put pressure on anyone. He becomes fearless and thus without enmity toward anyone. Dharma is not man-made. It is not a matter of conversion. It is an inner awakening. God does not belong to one person. He is of the whole cosmos. We should love the One who is God of us all, understand each others' troubles as our own, and all move forward together. The Guru says, "Be concerned for the sake of others." You yourself have no worry, for you have become Someone's. Be concerned about others, and make them also Someone's.

Subsequent to the baptism of the Hindu leaders, hundreds of people of various religions have taken amrit at Gobind Sadan. All consider it a great spiritual blessing and report feeling a new inner peacefulness, spiritual dedication, and joy.

Babaji Travels in Uttar Pradesh

Leading up to the Khalsa celebrations in Anandpur Sahib, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh was a specially honored guest at a function at Nanakmata Gurdwara in Uttar Pradesh. Guru Nanak had preached to the yogis there.

After his appearance at Nanakmata Sahib, His Holiness traveled through the surrounding area, including his farm in the midst of the deep forest in Shajahanpur. There he told the people of the area, who were overjoyed to see him, "We who are here must recognize that our thoughts are changing all day long. Sometimes greed arises, sometimes anger, sometimes envy. A person thinks, 'I am the same. What is this storm within me?' To rid ourselves of that storm and to make our minds firm, Guru Nanak has said, 'In the house of Nanak, there is only Nam [remembrance of God by reciting God's Name until it permeates and illuminates the mind]. Kali Yuga [the darkest of ages] has come; sow the seed of Nam. In Kali Yuga, one can be saved only by Nam.'" He says, "The food which the mind requires is Nam. Keep it carefully in your mind. It is always stable."

The Guru says that the treasure of Nam is so great that you can keep expending it and sharing it amongst each other. But without Nam, a person is like a dead body. He should not be called a human being.

Further, he says that animals are better than a person who does not recite Nam or have feelings of service. The cows and buffaloes eat dry fodder and give milk for our families. We can rise in the morning and churn butter from the curd and drink the whey if we choose. "But what are your virtues?" he asks. "You are so proud of yourself and you are hurting other people. Animals are better than you, for they eat fodder and give milk. Even pigs are better than you. A pig eats the filth in the village and thus it becomes cleaner, but you do not even do that."

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