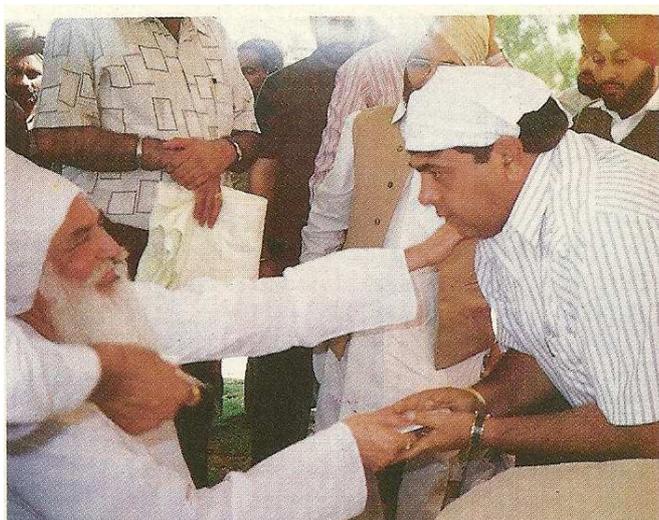


NEWS FROM GOBIND SADAN

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Babaji distributes the wealth of Jaap Sahib

Sharing Wealth

Baba Virsa Singh often comments about the general unhappiness in the world. *"Everyone is worried, everyone is depressed. No one sleeps well at night; no one has good digestion. Nothing brings any satisfaction. No one is happy."* He is not talking only about those who have nothing, who do not know how they will get food to eat, who have only one ragged set of clothes. He speaks particularly about the unhappiness of the wealthy.

In India, wealth is rapidly growing to phenomenal heights. The rich are building huge marble villas for themselves, surrounded by high walls and security guards. In the middle class as well, materialism and consumerism are rising and traditional values are declining. The many poor remain poor.

In this context, Babaji explained to a recent guest the dharmic use of wealth:

"Dharam tells us, 'Share whatever you have.' Gobind Sadan's wealth is for the people. Pilgrims continually come and whatever is here — our food, our spiritual wisdom — is shared with all. Those who work hard but still cannot meet their needs are given food, clothing, medical care, school fees, employment, weddings. Books and newsletters are printed to spread dharam. Thus the people's bodily thirst and also their spiritual thirst is satisfied. We hold big celebrations of the birthdays of all prophets — such

as Jesus, Muhammad, Lord Krishna, Buddha, Sikh Gurus — for those days are very auspicious. At those times, God sent us a messenger in human form like us. He put His Light, His Voice into those forms, so that we could remember the Light which we have forgotten.

What is the difference between the income of a saint and the income of an ordinary person? The ordinary person uses all of his earnings for his small family. But the saint considers whoever comes to see him his family. He gives everything he has to everyone who comes. The greatest thing he has is enlightenment, and he shares that freely. If he has any worldly goods, he shares them also.

The system of kirt (Guru Nanak's spiritual path of working hard to support yourself and sharing the fruits of your labours with others) is that you share whatever you have. If you have nothing, even then you share.

Remember that whatever food you eat comes from God. The clothes you are wearing also come from God. The electricity which is running the fans is also from God. If you boast, 'See what a big house I have built!' then where is God? We should acknowledge and repay a little of our debt by sitting an hour or two each day in worship, in pleasing God.

Your wealth is purified by giving, and your mind is purified by reciting Nam. It is a good thing to celebrate your birthday, for instance, by giving good food to others, distributing the surplus which is lying with you. If you give food in this life, you will be well fed hereafter. If you do not give anything here, your kitchen will be empty in the next life. We have a proverb: 'The crops have been grown in advance in great quantities, so the person now eats to his full satisfaction.' The good deeds which you have done — your service to others, your love — will always accompany you, and you will forever reap their benefits.

Always bear in mind that neither this body nor this mind belong to us. These thoughts have been given to us by Someone Else. He gives us thoughts, and thus we speak. He gives us this body also. It will remain for the period that He wants to retain it, and then it will be discarded.

People seek to protect themselves by every possible means and want to remain ever happy. But they have forgotten one point: There is a power within us which can provide us both happiness and protection. It is the power of God. There is no greater happiness, no greater safety than the enlightenment gained by meditating, by loving God.

Contentment is an inner matter. Dharam teaches us to regard everything as God's gift. A person who loves God says, 'If there is hunger or sorrow, this is Your gift. If there is poverty, I am happy. If I am barefooted, I am still happy. If I have nothing, still I am happy.'

A person sits in darkness, surrounded by his family, hoping that he will not die. He has got a job, got married, produced children; then his life revolves around and around them like an oilseed press. Before long the angel of death comes and says, 'Let us go.' The person replies, 'I am already tired.' Actually, a person becomes exhausted before his death. His options, his tastes, his enjoyments, his attention are all finished, as if he were dead.

The Guru says, 'An illusion has been created in the world, but to the minds of the people, it appears sweet.' However, the attraction of wealth must reach a limit. A person may have been very fond of eating. He may eat and eat, but he has only one stomach. If there were several stomachs, one could be filled, then the next, and the next. But as it is, the person finds no enjoyment in anything.

Instead of worrying, 'What will happen to my children? What will happen to my house? What will happen to my spouse?', come out of all that and think, 'I must thank God for giving me children, house, spouse, energy and life.' Meditate by elevating your mind, by having communion with God. Attraction toward God never fades. It may keep increasing for thousands of years. When you think of Him, there will be great attraction, but no other attraction will remain."

Mind and Soul

Two Russian friends of Gobind Sadan, Lena and Gerald Shahgedanov, often come to Babaji with deep questions. Recently they wanted to know, "Do the parents' qualities have any effect on a child's soul?" Babaji answered,

"There are two things: One we call mind — our thoughts, our nature. Our mind is affected by all the residual impressions from this life and previous lives, impressions from our parents, inheritance from our ancestors, and our environment. The second thing is what we call atma. It is above all these influences. The atma is that which keeps us alive and which gives us consciousness and enlightenment. All religions speak of this eternal aspect in a human being, though they give it different names, such as 'ruh,' 'soul,' 'atma,' 'fravashi,' or 'Buddha-nature.'

What happens when we sit in meditation? If a musical instrument is lying untouched, it will not make any sound. But when one strokes a finger across the strings, then it begins to emit sounds.

Similarly, when shabd ('Nam, the Word of God) is coupled with surt (attention), they touch and awaken our atma. As shabd and atma strike each other — like two stones struck together to kindle a fire — the enlightened consciousness of our atma begins to be illuminated.

Once we reach that state, our nature will continue to exist, but it will no longer trouble us, for when a bright light appears, a dim light disappears. That dim light of our karmas will pack its bags and leave, and our troubling thoughts will cease. The light of the atma remains. It was

this light to which the Guru referred when he said, 'When that Light was put into your body, then you took birth in the world.' In the fourth state (the highest state of spiritual development), what remains is the eternal atma. It cannot be burned, drowned, or cut.

The Guru says, 'This atma comes from another realm, and the clothes it wore have caught fire from all sides.' At death, the body is burned, but the atma is untouched. The effects of the person's actions also remain, determining his next birth. What will happen when he is reborn? His karmas will rejoin his atma in the womb of his new mother, and thus the two will remain together.

The inward path

The karmas attached to your mind keep you wavering. They create fear, worry, greed. We must find a path through them. We may call it illumination of the atma, or opening of the Third Eye, or awakening of intuition. When you turn inside, focusing your eyes on that path rather than on your thoughts, what will happen? When that small light joins the great Light, then those troubling thoughts will loosen their grip. Their attacking power will become weakened, as if an enemy decides to think twice before attacking again.

The karmas which beset the mind are not attached to the atma. When Kabir attained enlightenment, he said, "Ram (God) and Kabir have become one. My nature and habits have ended, my mind has disappeared. Only the infinite atma remains. Ram is looking at me and I am looking at Him."

The saint Nam Dev was asked, 'What is God like?' He replied, 'Look at your face in the water. God is like your face that you see in the water.' He said this when his mind was finished and his atma was illumined. He said to God, 'You are me, I am You. There is no difference between us.' In this state, whatever God is, you are, for the atma has joined the Great Atma. Nam Dev said, 'It is infinite, infinite.'

You might understand mind and atma this way: A king is sitting on a throne. Many armies are working under him, but not everyone can see him. He is giving the orders, but those who carry out the orders are separate.

Or think of it like this: There is a bulb inside us which is illuminated and giving light, but there is a cover over it. Mosquitoes and such will land on the cover and affect it, but the bulb is safe inside. That light of consciousness itself is dharam. Its illumination means that your self-existence has disappeared and His existence has taken its place.

Nam Dev was a human being. But he turned away from his thoughts and actions and focused on the Master. There were enemies on every side, ahead and behind, but he passed through them and communicated directly with his Master."

Meditate on your Master

A government official, after listening attentively to Babaji, recently asked him, "How should we

meditate?" Because the official was a Sikh, Babaji framed his answer in Sikh terms, with reference to Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. Babaji helps people to draw closer to God through their own religious tradition. This time, Babaji said,

"How can enlightenment be attained? By focusing our mind on our Master. Consider Guru Gobind Singh or Guru Nanak, for instance. They assume every form. Look at the trees: They are bestowing light upon them. Look at animals: They are giving them life. But to concentrate the mind when we sit in meditation, we have to focus it upon one who has brought the message of God and is joined with God. Then we will begin to feel something arising within us. We will see that Power in the outer world and also inside us.

Actually, the enlightenment of meditation is within us. But when we sit in meditation, it is essential to focus on the master whose teachings or actions are most appealing to us. Understand this well: The Light of all the masters is the same, the skill is the same, the Word is the same. But you must choose one. Perhaps Guru Nanak is most appealing to you, for you like his way of speaking, his politeness, his way of explaining. Or perhaps you feel that what Guru Gobind Singh, or Jesus, or Moses said was right. What all the prophets said was right. But you will have to choose one and concentrate upon that one.

When you sit in meditation, concentrate upon the master you choose. In this way, your scattered attention will be collected in one place. When your mind is concentrated, what will happen? As Kabir said, 'My mind has become pure like the water of the Ganges. What I used to see in the outer world, now I can see inwardly.'

Furthermore, Kabir said, 'An amazing thing has happened. With meditation, my own identity has vanished, and now when I am saying, "Ram, Ram," Ram is following me saying, "Kabir, Kabir." I questioned Him: "I am the one to be blessed, whereas You are the Giver of Blessings." Ram replied, "Ram and Kabir have become one. Your personal identity is no more, the name your mother gave you is no more. Now you have become Brahmigiani (enlightened one)."

There is no issue of idolatry. We learn everything from forms. Guru Nanak came into the world with the same hands and feet as us in order to tell us about enlightenment. Guru Gobind Singh came and spoke like us, and thus we could learn about enlightened wisdom. When Brahma (a form of God) came and spoke, the Vedas (India's ancient scriptures) were created for our understanding.

Those who came to us were great powers. The head of Baba Deep Singh was severed, yet holding it in one hand, he wielded a sword with his other hand in order to reach the threshold of the Golden Temple and place his head before his Guru, as he had vowed. As Guru Gobind Singh says, 'The One Light pervades throughout the heavens and earth. It neither increases nor decreases.' In Baba Deep Singh that power had manifested which cannot be severed, cannot be decreased, cannot be torn, cannot be pierced with an arrow.

His head of flesh was severed, but he had attained that inner strength of enlightenment which can never be severed.

Concentration of the mind

In order to meditate, sit in a comfortable position, as long as you can, with your body relaxed. With great love, concentrate on the master whom you have chosen. Keep sitting for some time. You will feel that your mind is wandering. Then slowly, slowly, slowly, the mind will begin to become steady. When concentration begins, then unshakeability begins.

A common person 's thoughts scatter in many directions: 'What will happen at work?', 'What will happen to my children?', 'What will happen to my wife?', 'What will happen after my retirement?', 'Will my boss be good or not? What will my boss do? '

When you instead concentrate your thought on the master, your entire mind will be collected. Then you will say to God, as Guru Gobind Singh did in Jaap Sahib, 'You are "Karan Kunind" — the Cause of all actions, You will do all my work. You are "Razak Raheem" — You are the Benevolent Provider of my sustenance.'

Your concentration will slowly, slowly increase. A child tears his primer in the first class, but as he gradually comes to know something, he tells his mother, 'Please bind my book; please give it a cover.' We ourselves are children. When enlightened wisdom begins to manifest in us, we will see His form in every person. We will see His form in the whole cosmos. We will look upon everyone with mercy.

The greatest thing in meditation is utter quietness. The difference between meditation and prayer or worship is that as we worship or pray, we say something, whereas to meditate is to turn inside, think of the guru, and listen to what he says. To begin, gently turn your attention toward your guru. If your master is Guru Nanak, you might think of how Guru Nanak sat in contemplation, how he spoke, how he became one with God. Think of that Light which fell upon him: What was its color? He brought healing everywhere — he healed the air, he healed the trees. Make such scenes the focus of your mind. Then these qualities at which you are looking will start developing inside you.

If you like Guru Gobind Singh, concentrate on him. He has no form; he creates myriad forms. As he said to God, 'Zahar zahoor hain, Hazar hazoor hain — You are gloriously manifest and You are present.' After coming into the world, Guru Gobind Singh said, 'I was deep in meditation on the timeless and mighty God who transcends death. Neither time nor weather have any effect on Him, for He is eternal. My attention was deeply fixed upon His feet.' Guru Gobind Singh himself focused his attention on an image for concentration, as he said.

Keep the object of your concentration in your mind always, not only when you sit in meditation but even when you sit in your office, so that you form the habit. When you focus on that Power when meditating, it will begin to

develop inside you. When you are sitting in your office, think of Him. When food comes before you, think of Him. When tea is before you, think of Him. Always think, 'Oh Maharaj, this is Your gift. Please be gracious.' Then you will feel that He is in everything.

Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Nanak were not ordinary people; they were sent by God. These Powers' form is omnipresent. But you must develop some specific image and focus on that. Thus you will attain success. Slowly, slowly your mind will begin concentrating, and then you will turn within.

Communion with God

When the mind turns within, as Kabir said, 'You are me and I am You; there is no difference.' Then you will continually talk with Him within yourself and all around you.

The masters have given this instruction to us, so always think of it. If we have come to know about God, about Creation, about the path, we have come to know through the masters. Guru Nanak Sahib came to the world and said, 'God is the Master of the whole Creation.' The Prophet Muhammad came and said, 'He is Master of the Heavens and Master of the Earth. He has no equal; He is only One. Fight the great battle to control your mind, and commune with Him.'

Jesus said, 'Love my Father. My Father is only One.' He called God his Father, and so did Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh said, 'God spoke to me: "Go — I appoint you My son. I give all My boons to you, all My powers to you." What He said to me, I am repeating to you. I cannot remain silent in this transient world. I have come to deliver God's message.'

Therefore, you should become so joined with God that you feel Him wherever you are. Develop a relationship with Him. The Fifth Guru says, 'You are my Mother, You are my Father, You are my Relative, You are my Brother.' He said, 'Develop any kind of relationship with Him. There is no other Relative in the world like God.' Guru Nanak says to God, 'You are my Friend, You are my dearest Girlfriend.'

God is very powerful. He is the Master of Creation, Master of the Cosmos. He is our Master also. He is the One Who runs our brain, Who does justice from within us, Who gives us wisdom from within, Who reminds us of the good of society. He is very merciful, He gives us work, He gives us the ability to sleep. To some He gives cars, servants, families. Why should we not keep our attention on Him? Guru Ram Das says, 'He takes care of us every breath. Why should we not be thankful to Him?'

God is not in a walled fortress; God is sitting within us giving us His life. As the Fifth Guru said, 'Where does God live? He is sitting on the tongue of saints.' When a person meditates, God remains on his tongue 24 hours a day. He is not confined in some building. As Saint Ravidas says, 'He is sitting within you, nearer than your hands and feet.' Your

hands and feet are farther from you than God is.

It is very essential that we meditate, for meditation clears the effects of our thoughts and actions. When we meditate, our karmas are burned and our inner enlightenment is illuminated. Kabir said, 'The storm of enlightenment has come, and ignorance has gone, I know not where.'

Therefore, you must turn your attention toward the guru and meditate as much as you can. But the twenty-four-hour-a-day meditation is this: When you grasp a pen, think of God. Think of Him as you sit in your office. Whenever you do something, always think of Him: 'Oh my God, all this is Yours. I am nothing. People come and stand at my door because of Your blessing. I am Your servant, for You have chosen me, and I must serve You.'

Give your life

You will not attain enlightenment just by closing your eyes. If your mind is still scattered, worrying, you will be in the same position after closing your eyes as before. To advance in any endeavour, you must give your life to the effort. A village person cannot use a stethoscope just by holding it in his hand. To become a doctor, one must persevere and study for 25 to 30 years. Telephones were not created by mere talk; scientists have given their whole life so that we might sit under electric illumination, watch television, and speak to people just by picking up a phone.

Similarly, you can become enlightened only by giving your life. Kabir said, 'Only that person can pass Ram's test who has become dead in life.' Ask gold how it has come to adorn a lady's ear. It will say, 'Ask the goldsmith. I was just a lump. He put me in the furnace so that none of my identity remained. I became a fiery coal. I was annihilated. Then he moulded me. Because I was completely transformed, now I have become ladies' fine earrings, a necklace for a queen, and sit beneath a canopy over the head of a king.'

When does a jewel become precious? When it is cut into a proper shape. The more it is cut, the greater its value. When a diamond is cut by a master diamond-cutter, its light is revealed. Wood is of no great value until it meets the master carver. Then it becomes a throne for a king or queen. The Five Beloveds of Guru Gobind Singh offered their heads to be cut, and thus they rose so high that the Guru himself sat inside them. The guru is a diamond cutter. His arrows carve away our evils, revealing our inner light.

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