



I.G. Randhawa thanks Babaji in Mizoram

### Blessed are the Peacemakers

"Gobind Sadan is the center of spiritual and cultural awakening in the world from which the love will spread to transform people and bring the peace needed for this new epoch," concluded Yuriy Ageshin, President of the Russian Federation Chamber of Law, in his inaugural address to the international participants of the Gobind Sadan Institute's February seminar "Blessed are the Peacemakers: the spiritual approach to peace." The Gobind Sadan Institute for Advanced Studies in Comparative Religion organized the seminar under the guidance of Baba Virsa Singh to help bring forth practical case studies in which a spiritual approach has brought peace and ended a major conflict.

Government and religious leaders, reconciliation specialists, and social and spiritual workers from Russia, Kazakhstan, United States, Africa, West Asia, and various parts of India came to share their practical experiences of the power of dharam to transform conflicts into peace.

Foremost among the case studies described in the seminar was the experience in Mizoram in the 1970's, when in thirteen weeks His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh worked with both insurgents and government

leaders in that border state and brought an end to a deadly insurgency that the government had been unable to control for thirteen years.

Mizoram's former Governor S. K. Chhibber explained how through Babaji's vision and spiritual power, peace was brought to India's worst insurrection since its independence: "Babaji touched the minds of the people, and hit terrorism where it mattered—in the hearts and minds of the youth who had rebelled against the government. Babaji brought his love and drove out the fear which had overcome our country."

### No One is a Terrorist

In his inaugural talk, Baba Virsa Singh explained, "Terrorism arises out of pressure. What I have seen is that nobody is a terrorist and no one is an atheist. Rather, it is misguided teachings that influence their behavior. The way we are approaching the problem we will never get rid of terrorism. With pressure, it will only increase. The more you try to suppress it, the more it will spread.

Now we should first stop and think what terrorism really means. It means to spread fear. By that definition, a corrupt person is also a terrorist. A person who suppresses someone else's voice is also a terrorist; a person who suppresses another's religion is also a terrorist. We must first try to understand what motivates them. Why do they rebel? They must have some difficulties.

The day they come to you, treat them like your family, treat them like you would your own children. If one of our children rebels, we'll think of many ways to bring the child home and try to understand why he is rebelling. But we would never shoot that child. Now someone will stand up and say, 'I want to finish terrorism,' but such people themselves are terrorists. They are corrupt and filled with anger and greed. When a person is angry, what we know as dharam, as truth and justice, is finished. Today anger has spread throughout the world. First find out what the people who are rebelling are thinking. Ask, "Why do you do this? Is someone taking away your rights, or is there any other cause?" They will tell you their problem. Then treat that problem. You are doing an operation without knowing what is the ailment. If you operate without a diagnosis, the person will die. Operate according to the confirmed diagnosis. To start shooting is not the way. First learn whether or not it is necessary to shoot. If you are a doctor, you are giving pills for which there is no need; similarly, you are shooting bullets to end terrorism without need. Now people are not asking. They only give orders: "He is a terrorist, so shoot him."

Today terrorism is not a problem of one village or country—it has spread over the whole world, and the whole world is speaking against it. It is not an ordinary thing now—it requires great thought. If it were a matter of one village, only one village would be harmed, but now it is a matter of the whole world.

What has come from this word "terrorism"? One country has risen up and attacked so many countries, has destroyed whole countries, saying, "They are terrorists." There are so many other countries like this. Just wait—perhaps some other country may do the same. One country has already done so much harm that we cannot restore what has been destroyed. Thousands and millions of people have been killed in the name of fighting terrorism.

You should go deeply into the matter—Why are people rebelling? Perhaps there has been some injustice or insult. Perhaps their daughter or sister has been insulted, and that is why they are rebelling. When such people give statements, the other type of people think, "They have attacked us." Just as when someone says, "Corruption is a bad thing," all the people who are corrupt think, "He is attacking us." Similarly, those people are fighting whose rights have been taken away. The title given to them is "terrorists," rather than "those who are fighting for their rights." So be very careful about these things. Try to understand what terrorism is. Until you do, terrorism will not end.

Nowadays countries are meeting about terrorism. What do they do in the meetings? One senior person says, "We will end terrorism." But he himself has killed millions of people by bombing them. However, the others will not ask him, "What should we call you?" Because cowardly people are sitting there, and because he is a strong person with so many weapons and so much money, no one will question him. So long as

these things are not discussed in the meetings, terrorism will not end. All are cowards.

In our country, invaders used to come and plunder the country's wealth and also take away the young girls. Nobody said anything. They were afraid: "They will kill us if we speak up." The same thing is happening now—people are cowardly like them. To accept cruelty, to see cruelty, and to commit cruelty are the same.

These days, everybody is worrying about their own children, their own interests. No one is concerned about the public. That is why cruelty is growing and law and order is breaking down. Terror is everywhere. It is not just a matter of a person stepping out of the jungle and throwing a bomb; girls are being abducted in the markets, and whole cities and factories are being bombed. No one is representing the public's griefs and sorrows. By contrast, Guru Nanak spoke up for the public and worked for the people. He aroused fearlessness in the people. He trained the people how to help others, he trained people to earn their righteous livelihood, and he trained them to speak with courage. Guru Gobind

Singh also brought the same effects. Thus our country somewhat came to life. But now people have forgotten the teaching of sacrifice that was given by the Gurus. That is why in these days there is no law and order; no one is safe. How can a responsible person sleep soundly? One day everyone has to go, but the person who will die doing God's duty will be remembered in the history books. Now people are sleeping, but we must wake them up and bring those things to the surface again. Otherwise, in the name of terrorism, all the world will be destroyed."

## The Mizoram Experience

Changing the Terrorist Mind: Bringing Sustainable Peace to Mizoram, an illustrated booklet describing Babaji's role in Mizoram was prepared for the seminar by Ralph Singh using historic diaries and first-person accounts. All underscore the extraordinary power of dharam to bring peace where all political and military means had totally failed.

During the seminar Ralph Singh paid a special tribute to the great visionary devotee of Baba Virsa Singh, Gurnam Singh Randhawa, who was Inspector General of Police in Mizoram: "It was amazing to me to find a soldier who was truly a saint, a peacemaker and not just a peacekeeper. Later I learned that it is the duty and even the hallmark of a Sikh to bring calm wherever there is fear. Mizoram had all the elements of a terrorist movement—a rebellion that was recruiting and training youth committed on a path of death for themselves and those around them, in which one was unable to distinguish friend from foe. When I.G. Randhawa took charge, he told his troops, 'Besides my army experience I have Nam [recitation of God's Holy Name], and if you take this Nam you will succeed. It is your greatest weapon.' Behind everything was Maharaj ji. His spiritual power was ever present and guiding every move."

Mohinder Singh Sandhu, who was Commander of Mizoram Armed Police during the insurrection, related that the Mizo nationalists had so infiltrated the police that the previous Inspector General, Deputy Inspector General, and Superintendent of Police had all been killed by the insurgents in a single bold attack. "But Maharaj visited the police and talked with them, telling them to perform their duties honestly and peace would prevail. These police people after hearing Maharaj started functioning honestly." Mr. Sandhu related a dream in which a voice spoke loudly to him and told him to get up at once and interrogate a particular person who had been detained. Under questioning, the person broke down and they discovered that "he was the person who had killed 10 to 15 people and so many weapons were with him. Ultimately, he gave all the weapons and he became a friend. Now you understand which was that Power that told me, 'Interrogate him.'" Babaji also met with the terrorists--after thwarting their surprise attacks through vision--assuring them that the government would give them jobs and government positions, and thence they laid down their arms.

Mr. Sandhu explained, "Terrorism is not fought in the field. It is in the heart. All those people who surrendered were looked after nicely. Those who wanted to kill me became my first friends. I loved them and I love them now, even today. We ensured that a proper climate was established. This situation was only possible with the blessings of Maharaj. He did everything. My first weapon recovery was a 38 special revolver. I went and placed it before Maharaj. He said, 'No, place it before Guru Granth Sahib [the Sikh scripture]. There should not be any firing by you. Love them and look after them. What do you want? You want weapons and the people to surrender?"

More details were provided by Sushil Kumar Chopra, the former Additional Secretary of Mizoram, and now Deputy Commissioner of Delhi Municipal Corporation. He described the situation in mountainous Mizoram, with its porous international borders, in which Mizo nationals had been launching surprise attacks on non-Mizos for years with money from external sources. He said, "The non-Mizos lived in very extreme uncertainty and high alertness. Every curfew siren evoked a chilling response. Today I realize the experience felt by the many innocents in the terrorist-wracked parts of the world. Nevertheless, we all waited for some miracles. Then miracles happened and our prayers were answered. Baba Virsa Singh Maharaj Ji was the divine Light that we were all awaiting to guide us. On the behest of Brigadier Randhawa (IGP), Maharaj Ji physically visited Mizoram along with a few of his disciples during 1977, as the guest of then IGP Brigadier Randhawa and the elected governor Mr. S. K. Chibber. With the blessing and spiritual vision of Maharaj Ji, the years of failure were reversed in a short period of time. There were continuously successful missions carried on by the security forces, which resulted in the insurgent groups' core lines being almost entirely eliminated. Subsequently, the insurgents became open to the offer of discussion with the Government of India and after various rounds of negotiation, a peace settlement was concluded with eminent officials. Mizoram remains the most peaceful state in the Northeast countries as of today. Without Maharaj Ji's guidance this would never have been attainable by ordinary people like us. They were simply miracles and beyond our comprehension. We all experienced God's victory first hand."

In response to a question from the audience about whether the Mizoram success was applicable to conflict situations elsewhere, Governor Chibber replied, "The crux of the Mizoram background was terror in the minds, the dislike and hatred in the minds of people rising out of a search for identity. That's where the spiritual message went home in a very strong manner. What was really remarkable was that people like us, who weren't very spiritual—I wasn't, nor were the typical policemen, who were notoriously non-spiritual—responded, as you have heard

today. First they opposed like anybody else, but what they heard, what they were told, what they saw, and the personal visions they had [changed them].

Whether it is Indian terrorists or Chechnya terrorists, or any other terrorists, the heart is the same. Once you touch the heart and the sensitive point in the heart, if it reacts and you are able to reach that heart, after assessing the problems which a terrorist is facing, you will find this principle of peace and love is universal and applicable to the whole world."

Speaking very personally, M. S. Sandhu said, "I want to tell you what was the feeling in my heart when I joined Brigadier Sahib's army. I could not understand the language; neither did anybody else, nor the culture, nor the eating habits, nor anything else. There was hardly any difference between the terrorists and my police people. They are expressionless. You cannot read their expression and figure out what they want. Suppose my orderly who is a policeman comes with a cup of tea early in the morning. I always shivered and never knew if he would bring a pistol from his pocket and say, 'Stand up. I am here to take your life.' This is how we started. But after Maharaj's blessing, my fear went away. They are the people who now love me."

## The Voices of Youth

A very touching introduction to the seminar was given by twelve-year-old Inderpreet Kaur. Speaking for the children of today, who are the leaders of tomorrow, she said, "We have to accept that spiritual power is the one which can make this world peaceful. Whenever a spiritual leader—for example, Lord Jesus, Guru Nanak, Prophet Mohammad, Moses, Lord Ram, and many others—came and spread the teachings of God, peace prevailed, though terrorism was at a high peak at that time. A person can bring peace for a period of time with his power, but spirituality can bring peace forever. Many groups of people come here from different parts of the world, and they say they have felt some change in their life after visiting Gobind Sadan; they have found some peace. They also say that not only there is change in them but when they give the same message to other people they see change in their society, too. If some people can change, then why can't the world change?"

Another young woman—Zarinn Abdulkhalikzade from Uzbekistan—spoke of her research on Indian spiritual culture and particularly His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh at Tashkent Institute for Oriental Studies: "I was boundlessly impressed by my teacher Professor Azad N. Shammatov's sayings when he gave me a rare opportunity to share his profound devotion to His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh ji. I started to be acquainted with his teachings and views on crucial problems of present life and griefs of mankind, especially his inexhaustible love and tolerance towards different kinds of human beings irrespective of their nature, religion, creed, race and behavior, his celestial power to give mental support to all people either surrounding him or being far away. Babaji in my mind can be imagined as the rarest Peacemaker and Mediator among Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs, as the main communities of your great country as a whole."

In the excellent panels, some participants distinguished between the truth of religion and malpractices in religion. Valeria Porokhova, Russian translator of the Holy Qur'an, said, "The only borders that separate us are the structures of faith—not faith itself. It is written in the Holy Qur'an that you should never make borders between yourselves." Mohammed Rafiq Wasiq Warsi of Deva Sharif and Riyadh observed, "There are very few people who understand Qur'an and the spirit of Qur'an. It's very sad that we do not understand the real meaning, the reality of Islam."

Dr. S. A. Ali, Founder Member of Hamdard University, said, "Religion means 'to unite.' Real religion leads to unity. That which is not true religion leads to discord." Dr. Gurbaksh Singh from Institute of Sikh Studies asserted, "No one can claim a monopoly on God. Guru Nanak founded the sangat, in which Hindus and Muslim, men and women, high and downtrodden belong to one family." Dr. M. D. Thomas of Catholic Bishops' Conference of India proclaimed, "When we travel together, not alone, the spirit of life is there, and that is the highway to peace." Swami Om Vesh, a leader in the Arya Samaj movement and Sugarcane Minister of Uttar Pradesh, said, "Religion is not in the temples and big buildings. Religion is there to protect humanity. Religion is that which can wipe the faces, can understand the people's pain. Babaji is a saint who has taken the responsibility to stop the peace-breaking. He always says, 'Why is everyone fighting?'"

Some participants brought news of successful spiritual approaches to peace. Rev. Dr. Harvey Sindima of Colgate University reported that twelve African countries have established Peace and Reconciliation Commissions as a way of dealing with evil, "realizing that pardon rather than punishment is the most fundamental way of establishing and living in peace." Andreas D'Souza, Director of the Henry Martyn Institute in Hyderabad, told of Muslims and Hindus who risked their lives to help each other during violence between members of their communities. Reverend Samuel Muyskens, Director of the interfaith council in Wichita, Kansas, observed, "One thing is to merely tolerate each other. But if we live in respectful presence with each other, we want to know about each other. Here at Gobind Sadan we may experience something that is even beyond that—to live in reverence of each other, to live in reverence of all."

Galina Ermolina from Siberia and Natasha Schenova of Ekaterinburg told stories of Russian saints whose spiritual power had protected the people from harm during conflicts. But even ordinary people can do something. Maria Mangte spoke of her social work in the troubled Northeast of India, saying, "I use women as an instrument for peace. It is always the women who suffer when violence takes place." Nitai Deranja, founder of Ananda Living Wisdom Schools in the USA, said, "If you learn about religion with your heart, you learn in your own life what it means when Jesus says to forgive." Lobsang, a Tibetan Buddhist nun from Jamyang Choling Institute, said, "We people of all religions must do our duty, even if we live in remote villages. If we change ourselves, people who look at us will change themselves. We are all human beings, and we have to learn the art of being together."

Other participants spoke of the effects of contemporary culture on people's minds. Professor Kim Shilin of Moscow State University spoke of the need for a new paradigm to replace the "false cultural foundation" of Western civilization. Larisa Trunina, Moscow Director of the International Association for Peace through Culture, underlined the ill effects of aggression-promoting television programmes, saying, "The mission of mass media is to give light, to give positive news."

In his major address to the final session, Sergei Glasiev, influential member of the Russian Parliament, said, "Events in the world show that we cannot establish control by force. As Babaji has said and shown us, we must change people's minds. Spiritual values promote social justice; they teach that we are all united by God and therefore we are all responsible for each other. We should understand that the human creativity that stems from spirituality is also the major source of economic development. Spiritual values should not be simply seen in a historical context but understood to be practical and necessary for the uplift of humanity and as a source of peace in the world."

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