



## Loving God Release

On April 13, the eve of Vaisakhi, when Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 created the Khalsa to stand for truth and justice for all humanity, Baba Virsa Singh presided over the release of his first internationally published book, *Loving God: The Practical Teachings of Baba Virsa Singh*, by Sterling Publishers. It is an expanded version of a book previously published privately by Gobind Sadan. *Loving God* contains the essence of Babaji's teachings on subjects such as "Prophets of One Light," "Realizing God," "Meditation," and "Overcoming Poverty."

The eminent journalist and Parliament member Kuldip Nayar, praising Babaji's practical work, said, "Babaji himself worked and linked people to the land and showed the way for our country to progress. What impresses me most is that Babaji has offered us a practical example of how we as a nation and a world can overcome our religious differences by respecting all religions."

Sri Ashok Singhal, International President of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, spoke of the need to unite India, a very diverse nation. He proclaimed, "If we want to strengthen the fabric of Indian society, then we should all adopt the teachings of Baba Virsa Singh. Babaji has played a great role in uniting our nation. If the leadership of India would listen to Baba Virsa Singh, then we would not have any problems."

Ranjit Singh Kalha, former Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs and now Member of the Human Rights Commission, said that Babaji had inspired him throughout his career: "Even though Babaji himself never went to school, he was able to answer even my most difficult questions. Babaji's personal example of honest hard work and loving God set the model of Khalsa for me throughout my life."

On this occasion, Baba Virsa Singh emphasized the need for Khalsa in today's world, saying, Khalsa is not just for one group. It was created to embody the vision of Guru Gobind Singh Ji ("Recognize all people as one human race"), to affirm the vision of one God and one human family, and to defend the rights and meet the needs of all people. Khalsa is one who controls his or her anger, who never criticizes anyone, and who is always linked to God through Nam. Being Khalsa means distinguishing ourselves by our character. Today there is no security in our lives. Just as Babur [16th century] and Abdali [18th century] invaded India at will and terrorized our citizens, things have plunged to that state again that our women are not safe on our own streets; our children and our elderly are not safe. Now is the time that we need Khalsa more than ever.

## God Takes the Woman's Side

On March 8, in honor of International Women's Day, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh hosted a celebration in his beautiful garden. Guests from Russia, North America, and Gobind Sadan's community were entertained by music, dance, and talks showcasing the value of women. Dr. Surjit Kaur Jolly, Secretary of the Gobind Sadan Institute explained, "At Gobind Sadan we celebrate all religions' holy days. And Maharaj gives women a high place. He always encourages us and has such progressive ideas." Babaji has put women in charge of many areas in his communities. At Gobind Sadan, women conduct prayers and manage many of the daily aspects of the community, for Babaji feels that women are natural managers and are more dependable than men.

In his address, Baba Virsa Singh said, I could tell of the respect given women in the scriptures and through the lives of God's messengers of any tradition, but tonight I will take stories from Islam. There are many wonderful stories of Khadija, who first recognized Muhammad Sahib as the Prophet and became his wife. The clearest proof is that Muhammad Sahib had a mosque built for her in his own presence to show that women can not only attend but also offer prayers. However, with the spread of fundamentalism, that mosque has been torn down.

A'isha [an influential later wife of the Prophet] enjoyed wearing jewelry, even while she worked. The Prophet Muhammad stopped going to her home. Now look at how God took the woman's side: From that day, the Revelation stopped. Then Abu Bakr, her father, said, "My child, Allah has chosen him as the Prophet and he is the ruler. Apologize to him." A'isha replied, "But Father, Allah is just." Then Allah spoke, "Muhammad, A'isha is right." She retorted, "See Father, Allah took my side."

There are many stories like this in Islam that people have tried to bury. Take the time of the great battles when so many Muslims were martyred, leaving numerous widows behind without any resources. The question arose: "How can we help these widows and their children?" The Prophet replied that each man could take up to four widows as his wives. But today men have forgotten that the order was to provide shelter for four widows. Now they are simply taking four wives. That means they are not following the Muhammad Sahib's orders. The Prophet has said that whosoever takes in the widows must provide each of them the same quality of food and comfortable beds and treat them equally. That is the most important point. How can one man offer the same treatment to four separate women? His feelings will differ among them. At the time, Hazrat Ali was sitting next to the Prophet. He said, "I am happy with just Fatima [his wife, daughter of the Prophet]." This indicates that Ali understood he could not give four wives equal attention. The Prophet agreed.

One day the three of them were sitting as a family—The Prophet, Fatima, and Hazrat Ali. The Prophet said, "Fatima will live for a short time after me. I will give Fatima both worldly power and spiritual power. She will inherit my seat. All the blessings that Allah has given will go to Fatima." However, the Prophet knew that Abu Bakr would take his seat after his death. There is a tradition of kissing the hand of whomever sits on the seat of authority. After the Prophet died, Abu Bakr assumed the position; Ali did not kiss his hand. When questioned, Ali replied, "The blessings are with Fatima; I will kiss Abu Bakr's hand only after Fatima dies." After her death, Ali came out and kissed Abu Bakr's hand.

This shows how great a position women were given in Islam: The Prophet gave all his spiritual powers to Fatima. Today people want to suppress these facts, but they cannot be buried. This cycle always continues. People try to suppress the truth, but the truth ultimately re-emerges.

Within Islam, Rabi'a is revered as a saint, and we have proof of her greatness. As the story goes, another saint went to Mecca to pray but found that the Ka'aba was not there. He asked, "Where has Ka'aba Sharif gone?" He was told that the Ka'aba had gone to receive a very weak but extremely devoted woman. This is a unique incident in spiritual history. Otherwise, the Ka'aba has never gone to receive anyone. And there is more to the story: When the Ka'aba came before her, Rabi'a asked, "Where is Allah? I have not come to see Allah's house. I want to meet Allah." Look what great proof we have of how high a position women really hold in Islam.

Respect for women exists in other religions as well. It is written in Hindu scripture that happiness leaves the house where women are not respected. In India people take the wife's name first in prayer. We say, "Sita Ram, Radha Sham [Krishna]." In the Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak said, "How can we denigrate those who give birth to our kings?" But up to today, the Golden Temple has never gone to receive a woman. It is only in Islam that the holiest place, Ka'aba Sharif, has gone to receive a woman. This shows how much respect the Prophet Muhammad and Allah have given to women. Let us put these things into practice. God has always taken the side of women.

If you say you accept a prophet, then follow his rules. If you are a follower of Guru Nanak, then follow his rules; if you follow Guru Gobind Singh, obey his rules. If you do not obey the orders, you will not be blessed. People are suffering today because they are breaking the rules. In honor of this Women's Day, I would like to stress: Follow the orders and give women the respect they deserve.

### **Russian Women's Seva**

A number of Russian women have been living on a long-term basis at Gobind Sadan, studying all religions and actively participating in the work and devotions of the community. They are highly respected for their dedicated attendance in the havans as they take turns throughout the night and day, reading Jaap Sahib in Russian translation. Their seva is also legendary, especially as they roll up their sleeves and clean everything—rooms, halls, roadsides, kitchen. From February to April, a group of these volunteers lived in Sarawan Bodla, the childhood home of Baba Virsa Singh in Punjab. There they began round-the-clock reading of Jaap Sahib in the havan, painted all the rooms, developed new flower beds, cleaned the area around the tomb of a medieval Muslim saint and the samadhis of Babaji's mother and father, helped in the kitchen, repaired the furniture, and offered educational programs at nearby schools and colleges.

### **Dharam Teaches Love, not Hatred**

Babaji's birthday in February was celebrated by his devotees with the same enthusiasm that he lavishes on the celebrations of the holy days of all religions. He has always stressed that much of the conflict in the world is caused by those who either do not understand or who misinterpret the spiritual force and teachings of dharam [the essence of religion]. This was the major focus of his birthday message:

Dharam is not the separate subject that people have made it. Dharam grows out of kindness. Dharam drives out hatred. It is the unifying force of the universe. It cannot be used to create conflict. Wherever a spiritual person looks, if he still sees separate religions, then that is not truly dharam.

All the scriptures have described God as omnipresent. The Vedas called God Sarbag. Lord Krishna spoke of God as Brahm—the One permeating the cosmos. When God exists everywhere and within everyone, how can we fight over religious boundaries? Guru Gobind Singh said that it is the same God we pray to in all our religions, and that all religious places have been created to glorify the same One. While these are the teachings of the Prophets, fundamentalists have put forth their own thoughts and divided us. I appeal to everyone that this approach will only continue to spread the fires of conflict. Where there is Brahm, there is only Light and Love.

The teachings of dharam are very simple. The basic teachings of all religions can be summarized in just ten or twelve points.

We should understand that dharam is a force that brings forth good qualities which benefit everyone, including doctors, scientists, or anyone engaged in research. They will see God everywhere and in everyone.

The second point I would like to make is that everyone should share whatever they earn, share whatever they have. Whatever love they have within them, they should share that love as well. The one thing they should not share is their anger, their hatred.

If we can all understand that dharam is within us and all around us, work hard and share the fruits of our labour with others, call on the power of God within through meditation and prayer, and follow the eternal principles of dharam, then peace will automatically come.

### **The Importance of Jaap Sahib**

On March 5, when Babaji celebrated Tegbir Singh's birthday in his garden, he gave the following message: In Gobind Sadan, we recite Jaap Sahib [Guru Gobind Singh's empowering hymn of God's praises] twenty-four hours a day. There is no other gurdwara [Sikh temple] where it is recited so much.

Why do we recite Jaap Sahib? Because people are always beset by worries and fears. Jaap Sahib tells us, "Namo kal karta--Oh God, You create the conflicts." Next it teaches, "Namo and hkaare—You Yourself are darkness, and I bow to You even in darkness" Then Guru Gobind Singh Ji says, "Namo shant rupe—You are the bringer of peace." That means, "You, God, are the One who creates conflicts, and then You are the One who brings peace. You are in disease and in our difficulties." When we understand that God is in everything, we will not worry. Guru

Gobind Singh Ji bows to God in the form of darkness, in conflict, in all things. Jaap Sahib constantly gives the reader gyan [enlightenment], and that is why it is so significant. Wherever Jaap Sahib is recited, you will see God in all things. You will never think as most people do today. That is why I am telling everyone to recite Jaap Sahib in every home. But read it with understanding.

When we quarrel at home, we say that God is angry with us. But in Jaap Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh tells us, "The conflict is also God, and I bow to God in that form." When difficulties come in our home, Jaap Sahib teaches us that we should not worry. God is in everything. God is peace, God is difficulties; God is conflict, and God is the only one who can solve the conflicts. Guru Gobind Singh teaches the whole world that we must accept God's will. This means that we must learn to see God in the conflicts, in the darkness, in our diseases, and in our difficulties. We should always think that nothing in the world exists that is not under God's Order.

Jaap Sahib is the need of the day. It will enlighten us. People go to temples and gurdwaras, but whenever there is a fight in their house they begin to question, "I regularly go to my place of worship, so why should this fight occur?" But Guru Gobind Singh Ji himself bows to God in the fight. That is why I say that Jaap Sahib contains a lot of enlightenment, and if we would only recite and practice its teachings then we will not see anything outside of God.



Foreground: Bhagat Ji and Bhai Kirpal Singh welcome Dasam Granth.

### Dasam Granth Welcomed From Nanded Sahib

In November 2005, Dasam Granth, the collected writings of Guru Gobind Singh, was presented to His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh by the Jathedar of Nanded Sahib, the historic gurdwara where Guru Gobind Singh left his body in 1708. The scripture was carried reverently on a special train and then received with highest honors in Delhi on its journey to Gobind Sadan. When it neared Gobind Sadan, the whole community turned out to welcome it, led by Panj Piare (five men representing the Five Beloveds of Guru Gobind Singh). It was installed with great love in the Darbar Sahib room where previous copies of Dasam Granth have always had a place of honor next to Guru Granth Sahib. "In addition to Guru Gobind Singh ji's prayers (most notably Jaap Sahib), it contains the history of the 4 yugs [spiritual eras]," said Baba Virsa Singh. "It gives unique insights into the state of civilization." Gobind Sadan has taken the lead in Dasam Granth research. A scholarly Punjabi edition has already been published, with volumes in English, Hindi, and Russian in progress.

### A Tribute to Our Beloved President

Dr. Bhai Mohan Singh, beloved President of the Gobind Sadan Institute of Advanced Studies in Comparative Religion, recently passed away peacefully after a long illness. At the end of his life he found relief from his physical discomfort in serving Gobind Sadan and his devotion to Babaji. Even in the midst of his own difficulties, whenever any member of Gobind Sadan was sick he would personally take them to the hospital and see that they got proper treatment. During any function, he was always at Babaji's side. Babaji praised his devotion: "That family is blessed in whose house he was born. He not only took his whole family to great heights, but was such a great man that he also worked to raise his community and his country. The whole country was blessed and will feel his loss. Despite his epic business success he always spoke sweetly and showed respect to all those around him regardless of their position." Bhai Sahib's is one of the great business success stories of our time. The son of a wealthy contractor during British times, he was one of the few who survived Partition with at least their Delhi property intact, and he soon became a banker to the refugee community. One of his clients was a small chemist shop called Ranbaxy. When the firm ran into difficulties the owners asked Bhai Sahib if he would buy them out. The rest is history. From a local chemist he built Ranbaxy into one of India's leading multi-national pharmaceuticals. He was recognized by the Government of India as Padma Vibhushan, the highest award for distinguished service to the country. Despite his worldly success he loved singing [Kirtan](#) and serving his community. Babaji has asked that a special akhand path be kept in his honor at Gobind Sadan. Our thoughts and prayers as well as our hearts go out to his family. We miss him greatly. As Babaji says, "He will always have a place in Gobind Sadan."

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