



November 28, 2002



Campaign Against Vilification of Prophets

His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh, revered preceptor of Gobind Sadan, has initiated a major new initiative: to find and counteract false accusations written against prophets of any religion. This initiative has begun in India, with his exhorting the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to change inaccurate material in its textbooks that is insulting to various religions. In the Class XI textbook, for instance, the saintly Ninth Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur, who gave his head to protect the freedom of religion of Hindus, is described instead as being involved in political intrigues and plunder of Punjab. Similarly, the Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, noted for uplifting and protecting people of all castes and creeds, was cynically dismissed in an encyclopedia article as a military failure who was "hounded out of Punjab."

Unfortunately, students were reading the misinformation about Guru Teg Bahadur in their textbooks for twenty years until Babaji learned of these falsehoods. "Some of these schools were run by the gurdwara management committee," Babaji points out, "but our so-called religious management is so spoiled with politics that nothing religious is left. They are simply taking the name of religion to hold power. If they truly follow the Gurus, how could they accept such writings against the Gurus? By the grace of Guru Gobind Singh, Gobind Sadan made great efforts and the books have been changed."

With Babaji's blessing, Dr. J. S. Rajput, Director of NCERT, took up the cause of correcting the textbooks. Ultimately the issue went to the Supreme Court of India. The Court ordered that the textbooks should be changed, in favor of respectful, accurate, and equal education about all religions.

In its landmark ruling, the Supreme Court wrote, "The object for value-based education is to have national fight against all kinds of fanaticism, ill-will, violence, dishonesty, corruption, exploitation and drug abuses... What is required today is not religious education but education about religions, their basics, the values inherent therein and also a comparative study of the philosophy of all religions. Students have to be given the awareness that the essence of every religion is common, only the practices differ... Even if there are differences of opinion in certain areas, people have to learn to co-exist and carry no hatred against any religion. One should never forget that all the values are derived from ultimate reality—supreme power or self-consciousness—to which man orients himself. To believe that we have the divine spark in each one of us is the most important eternal value to be inculcated by the small children even before starting their school life."

At a well-attended press conference on this subject held at Gobind Sadan on October 30, His Holiness said, "This poison of false allegations against the messengers of God is not good for our country, not good for any country. Nothing good will come of attacking the prophets. What we need now is justice and compassion. We need meditation and worship so that peace will come in our country. We do not need people writing against the prophets. Even if you do not like a particular prophet, do not criticize him. If you do, you are criticizing God's choice and God's message. Guru Nanak said that all prophets come from that great ocean from which all the scriptures have been written."

Babaji continued, "This is not just an issue involving misinformation about our Sikh Gurus. We respect all prophets. We cannot tolerate criticism of any prophet. We have made it our goal to carry on this campaign through all media, around the world."

Gobind Sadan is also preparing an international seminar in which noted scholars will take up the subject of libel against prophets and its disastrous consequences in stirring up hatreds and violence between people of different religions. People of all religions are urged to send to Gobind Sadan any false material written against their prophets or founders so that it can be studied and counteracted with correct information. This

material should be sent to the attention of M. Fisher, Gobind Sadan Institute for Advanced Studies in Comparative Religion, Village Gadaipur, Mehrauli, New Delhi 110030, India.

The Prophet Muhammad is not a Terrorist

As soon as His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh learned that a well-known religious spokesman in the West had called the Prophet Muhammad a "terrorist" on a major television programme, he himself gave a half-hour television address refuting this false allegation. Babaji said, "The prophets bring God's message to the world. They never fight to spread terrorism. They fight for the uplift of humanity.

Recently a well-known person called the Prophet Muhammad a terrorist. There is absolutely no basis for this. The Prophet Muhammad always spoke of living a virtuous life and controlling the mind. When the mind is controlled, evil thoughts are destroyed. After being driven from Mecca, he returned with a large army. He could have fought and slaughtered the people, oppressed the survivors, and destroyed their homes. But he proved who he really was and what his mission was. He told the person who was announcing his return that the people of Mecca were frightened. They had dishonoured him and had been very cruel to him, and now they thought he had come back to take revenge. Instead, the Prophet Muhammad instructed the courier to call the people and tell them that there was no need to be frightened of him or his men, because he had no intention of taking revenge. Whatever the people of Mecca had done to him was all due to misunderstanding, for they did not know who he was. Instead of taking revenge, he told the courier, "Tell them I have not brought stones for them. I have brought flowers of blessing for them. Tell them, 'I will pray for you before God.'"

How can there be greater proof than this? In this practical way, he explained that he was against cruelty, not against the people. There are many such examples of how he used to pardon people who had mistreated him.

Lord Ram, Lord Krishna, and Guru Gobind Singh fought battles. If fighting battles is terrorism, then all of them were terrorists. But no—they fought battles to end cruelty. One who fights battles against cruelty is not a terrorist—he is a great hero. Lord Krishna asked Arjuna to stand up and face the enemy like a kshatriya [warrior] whose duty is to destroy cruelty.

The Prophet Muhammad also had the same aim: to raise the voice of the people high, to give them freedom to pray, and to free their country. He sought to let the people retain their culture and their religion, for pressure was being put on them. At that time, people used to make many idols for worship. The Prophet Muhammad gave the message that God is One, and God can do everything for you. There is nothing of terrorism in this teaching. It is a message of blessing

The first revelation to the Prophet given in the Holy Qur'an was, "Oh God, let me see those people who obeyed You and received Your blessings. Let me not see those people who did not obey You and received Your anger." He further revealed that those who believe in and respect the scriptures that already exist and those that will come in the future and who follow the Holy Qur'an will be blessed. Such messages bring peace and blessing into the world. They transform the minds of the people.

The Prophet Muhammad's mind was very humble and full of love. He never recognized any caste distinctions. He taught the value of meditation. He did not draw any boundaries around God, Who is the Master of the earth, the skies, the worlds, the whole Creation.

How can you call him a terrorist who is asking the whole world to believe in one God? How could hatred for human beings occur in a person who loves the earth, the trees, the animals, the skies?

We find proof of the Prophet's nature when we read the writings of saints like Shaikh Farid, who says, "Do not criticize the dust, because it is unique: It is under our feet while we are alive, and over our body when we are dead." This saint who follows the Prophet Muhammad forbids us from criticizing even the dust. How can one be a terrorist whose saints are so humble? If the saints have so much power, how great must their prophet be? Those who followed the Prophet Muhammad included very great saints such as Shaikh Farid, Qutub-ud-Din Bakhtyar Kaki, Nizam-ud-Din Aulia, and Khusrau. Many miracles occurred as they touched people with their blessed hands. Even people's minds were transformed.

Responsible people should give very careful thought before making any statements. I think nothing can be more serious than calling the Prophet Muhammad a terrorist. May they ask the Prophet Muhammad to pardon them and give them his blessings, and keep God happy. A person who criticizes the Prophet Muhammad while praising Jesus and Moses will never receive happiness from Jesus and Moses.

Let those who call the Prophet Muhammad a terrorist give proof from his life and teachings. This allegation is a great bomb. Therefore control your tongue.

Many people believe in the Prophet Muhammad. We cannot compare him with his followers. Some of them may be thieves. But it is unheard of that anyone who truly believes in him would be a thief, or deprive others of their rights, or look at women with evil intentions, because he prohibited such things. He was always bestowing blessings on people and praying for them. He was his own example. He was neither fighting battles for the sake of war nor training people to fight. He used to take action only against cruelty.

Guru Gobind Singh fought several battles. There was truth in these battles. He instilled boldness in weak people, and raised the downtrodden.

Lord Ram's wife Sita was kidnapped. The evil ones had to be taught a lesson that the righteous are more powerful than the evil ones. He could not sit quietly; he had to fight battles. There was no question of terrorism in this. It was a matter of truth. The kingdom had to be taught that dharam [righteousness, the eternal way of religion] is very powerful. Dharmic people have very great powers.

Lord Ram had to face all kinds of difficulties for fourteen years. He fought battles by many means and finally won Sita back. At that time evil people were disrupting our sacred fires. There was no freedom to read the ancient scriptures. It was not a question of anger but rather a battle for righteousness and truth. Lord Ram did not make the people emotional. Courage had to be awakened.

Similarly, Guru Gobind Singh did not create terrorism when he created the Panj Piaras [first five members of the Khalsa]. He awakened their inner power and boldness. They were taught to abide by God's will. Dharam was awakened within them, and the virtues of truth were instilled in them. They then protected the honour of young women, stopped the looting of our houses, and ended fear that gripped the country. Previously, our country's culture, language, and religion were being destroyed. But the blessings, power, and merciful gaze of Guru Gobind Singh became so strong that our country became independent in all respects. Guru Gobind Singh had to fight several battles and instill this power of fearlessness.

If a person fights battles, this does not mean he is a terrorist. Had Guru Gobind Singh remained silent, our country would have been divided into seven pieces by the seven countries surrounding it. Guru Gobind Singh protected us. It was out of his kindness that he developed the qualities of a kshatriya and brought happiness and blessings, brought the power to speak truth and to act on truth.

Today, incorrect statements are being made about the prophets. This could give rise to a great revolt. People believe in the Prophet Muhammad and in Guru Gobind Singh. People are ready to sacrifice their heads, their property, their families for the sake of their names. Beware of writers who publish incorrect information about the prophets. With such statements, such a great revolution may come in the world that nobody will be able to stop it. There are bombs of love in every mind. You cannot imagine the results when these bombs explode. When you criticize someone's friend, he will be ready to give his life to defend him. When you criticize someone's Master, what can happen?

What is the fault of the Masters? They sacrificed their homes and families for our sake. The Prophet Muhammad sacrificed his grandsons and son-in-law and his Four Friends. The Prophet Muhammad, Lord Ram, and Guru Gobind Singh were not ordinary persons. Their devotees were cut into pieces with saws, their limbs were chopped into pieces, and yet they did not feel anything—they gladly sacrificed themselves. Publication of libel against the prophets is true sedition. These false pronouncements will not be tolerated, for the prophets have sacrificed their families and struggled very hard.

Always take blessings from the Prophet Muhammad and Guru Gobind Singh. They are always merciful. Their missions cannot be thwarted by books. Get pardon for your mistakes and take their blessings by researching the truth. Do not criticize them. Dharam is one; their mission is one.

Durga fought battles to destroy evil and re-establish dharam. Lord Ram was fighting for fourteen years. Lord Krishna also fought battles, as did Guru Gobind Singh. These battles were not to spread terror. They were to help people follow truth, drive evil away, and destroy cruelty. Therefore the battle of dharam cannot be called terrorism.

Nothing Good Comes From War

Baba Virsa Singh has issued a special appeal regarding war as an instrument of foreign policy. In part, he asserts, Nothing good comes from war. War does not discriminate. It kills good people, peace-loving people, as well as those who are evil. All our prophets have stressed peace.

To remove a few bad people, you will destroy a whole country and perhaps the world. To rid yourself of one bad person, you would kill countless children and parents. Think of the cries of the orphans for their parents; think of the cries of the parents for their children. There are always bad people in the world. But to remove them you do not need to kill everyone. Innocent people are always killed in greater numbers than the clever ones who are responsible for creating terrorism or rebellion. In any conflict, the trouble-makers are never eliminated easily, whereas the innocent face great sufferings. All conflicts are ultimately settled by negotiations anyway. Why not sit down and resolve the conflict peacefully? Why are you so eager to wage war?

The message for evildoers everywhere is this: Beware of God, for those innocent people whom you are killing for no reason will not only knock at God's door. They will enter that door, and then you will be punished very heavily by the Almighty.

Our ultimate goal should be to spread peace and allow people to live happily. We should enjoy this beautiful Creation of the Creator and let other people enjoy it, too—its beautiful trees, its mountains, its grasses, its fresh air and clean water. We should not blacken it and earn God's anger forever.

Punjabi Folk Dance Seminar

With the blessings of His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh, a very successful seminar was held on October 22 in Babaji's childhood homestead in Sarawan Bodla on "Expression of Religious Harmony and Martial Heritage through Punjabi Folk Dances." The seminar was organized by the Mata Iqbal Kaur Memorial Educational Society, established in the name of Babaji's mother. Many eminent professors from Panjab University, Chandigarh and Punjabi University, Patiala offered the fruits of their research into the spiritual roots and meaning of traditional folk dances of the region, particularly bhangra dance. They felt that these traditional associations were being lost in commercialization of the dances, and vowed to help keep their meanings and forms alive for the sake of coming generations.

Celebrations

Parties of senior Hindu pandits came to Gobind Sadan daily for 30 days to conduct all-day worship of Vishnu, and then came again for the nine days' celebration of Navaratri, commemorating the victory of the Goddess Durga over the demonic forces. Diwali was joyfully celebrated with special lighting throughout the community and a large free kitchen.

Baba Siri Chand's birthday celebration was attended by thousands of people who spent days at Gobind Sadan amidst a great display of lights, seven Akhand Paths (continuous reading of seven copies of the Guru Granth Sahib), reading of scriptures at the sacred fire around the clock, massive free kitchens, and an all-day programme on September 15 including Muslim qawwalis and Christian choirs singing praises of the Almighty, eminent professors illuminating Baba Siri Chand's history, renowned Punjabi poets offering their stirring poetry, bhangra dancers from Gobind Sadan, and numerous illustrious speakers, including Murli Manohar Joshi (Union Minister for Human Resources), Motilal Vohra (Member of Parliament and former Governor of Uttar Pradesh), Professor J. S. Rajput (Director of National Council of Educational Research and Training), Parkash Singh Badal (former Chief Minister of Punjab), Trilochan Singh (Vice Chairman of Minority Commission, Government of India), Ashwani Sekhri (Minister of Tourism, Punjab), Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar of Judah Hyam Hall, Wasiq Warsi of Dewa Sharif, and Gurbachan Singh and Ralph Singh of Gobind Sadan USA.

Rabbi Malekar observed that on the same date, Jews were observing Yom Kippur, the great day of atonement and cleansing. He praised Gobind Sadan's example of appreciating and celebrating all religions. Mr. Wasiq Warsi, editor of Deva Sharif News, spoke of the strong connection between Deva Sharif, tomb of the great saint Hajji Waris Ali Shah, and His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh. He said, "I have closely seen many holy men and grew up with them. But when I saw Baba Virsa Singh Ji, with such a great personality and glow on his face, I did not blink my eyes for a while. It was the first time in my life that I was so impressed with someone. To my surprise, all the messages that Babaji gave me were exactly the same as what our

Rasul, the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) had said. Our Guru at Deva Sharif also gave the same message, which is to love."

Murli Manohar Joshi remarked, "This is the right place to celebrate the birthday of a great saint. Whenever there is trouble on earth, these spiritual powers take birth to save us. Lord Krishna has said in Bhagavad Gita, 'Whenever irreligiousness spreads on earth, I come to promote dharma (religion) and destroy adharm (irreligion). Guru Nanak also came for the same reason, and so did Baba Siri Chand. And Guru Nanak and Baba Siri Chand Ji came to say that all religions need to be followed and understood."

In his address, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh stressed the close relationship between Baba Siri Chand and the Sikh Gurus. He spoke, for instance, about Guru Amar Das and Guru Hargobind's giving their sons to Baba Siri Chand as disciples, and Guru Arjun Dev's patiently waiting for days to meet Baba Siri Chand when he was deep in meditation. When Baba Siri Chand at last met him, he requested water blessed by Baba Siri Chand's own hands to be poured into the sacred pool he was constructing at Tarantaran. Guru Arjun Dev kept the water blessed by Baba Siri Chand aloft throughout his journey to Tarantaran, and after he poured it into the tank, it has never been fully emptied, in order to always preserve the blessings of Baba Siri Chand. Baba Virsa Singh emphasized, Baba Siri Chand obeyed his father's hukam from the beginning. If you criticize other religions, you are disobeying Guru Nanak's hukam. The important message that we should take from Baba Siri Chand is to obey the orders of our Heavenly Father and to be in communion with Him twenty-four hours a day. Baba Siri Chand's virtues should develop in our minds—the same qualities of peace, of justice, of seeing God in each human being. It will be only then that the conflicts in our homes, societies, and countries regarding boundaries between people will disappear.

Babaji's powerful talks are being broadcast daily by Alpha Punjabi TV/Zee TV Network from 6:30 to 7:00 a.m., Indian Standard Time.

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