



October 28, 2001



## Ending Terrorism

Gobind Sadan extends its condolences to all those who have lost loved ones in the September 11th attacks in the United States. For inner calm and protection, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh advises people to read scripture and worship. In a statement issued on September 28, he offered enlightened guidance which remains crucial even as events continue changing.

What is terrorism? It is an idea. The issue is which direction one develops one's thoughts. By developing an idea one can become a great prophet or a brave warrior, commit crimes or begin killing people. Ideas can never be ended by war. We must explain to people, giving examples and interacting with them.

There is no society, no country, no place called "terrorism." It is just an idea that has developed. Throughout the ages, prophets have come to change the way we think. The Messiah, the Nabi, the Gurus have all come for the same purpose: to promote good ideas and put an end to bad ideas. Trying to respond to war through war will only create more negative thoughts.

## A new wave has begun which we call terrorism

Without proper understanding, this wave cannot be stopped. It will be stopped only if religion transforms people's minds, and that will happen only if religion is guided by enlightenment. Through enlightenment, bad actions will be eliminated and good actions will develop. If we do not change, there was no need for the prophets to come and sacrifice so much. The whole reason they came was to transform our minds through their struggles, meditation, and sacrifices.

Today this sickness of terrorism has spread all over, but it is not new in India. Nearly a thousand years ago our sisters, daughters and property were being carried away by invaders. We believed that it was the duty of the king to save our daughters, to protect our property and our homes. But during those times, the rulers lost control, and the society could not protect itself. After centuries of this terrorism, Guru Nanak came with words of love, with the power of healing and meditation. He raised his voice against this injustice and explained that sitting in worship does not mean that you should allow someone to snatch your property, your home, your daughters. Very lovingly he taught that if you cannot protect your honour, your worship is useless. True worship means that "If you recite the Name of the Fearless One, fear will vanish." When a person truly worships God, he becomes fearless and without enmity. Then a person who meditates will save not only his own daughters but also others' daughters and protect others' property.

Guru Nanak's voice was very powerful, and it spread. But the invaders' voices were also very strong because they had become addicted to stealing and brutal killing. Finally when Guru Gobind Singh came, he instilled his healing power into the Panj Piaras (the first five Khalsa initiates), made them very brave, and trained them. So much power and healing came from their voice that other people changed. They overcame their fear and began to protect every home, every community; they took responsibility for the whole country. If anyone invaded the country, the Khalsa at once confronted them bravely, disarmed them, rescued the women, recovered the stolen property, and drove them away.

According to Guru Gobind Singh's teachings, religion is not a sect or a fortress. Neither he nor his followers were in any danger. It was the people who wore the holy thread and applied a sacred mark to their foreheads (Hindus) who were being terrorized. But the Guru created the Khalsa to protect everyone. There were many struggles during that period, and terrorism was removed from our country. This was made possible through their sacrifices, and through loving discourses. For one thing, they inspired fear in the invaders—fear that our people were as brave and powerful as they, that their terrorism would not be tolerated and would be punished, and that they would not be successful in abducting women from our country. They never dared to invade again. Secondly, Guru Nanak travelled to their countries, sat among them, and began to change their minds through his preaching. The atmosphere changed so much that

those who had been terrorizing our country's people instead settled here to work for a living. This is the way to uproot terrorism: to create fear in the attackers and at the same time, develop dharam (spirituality and righteousness) within them.

Today the policy has been adopted to destroy any country labelled as terrorist. What will be the result? One day the country that destroys other countries will be seen as the greater terrorist. Then it cannot say that it is fighting terrorism, for by fighting, that country itself becomes terrorist. The need of the day is to introduce dharam, to develop good policies, and then to uproot terrorism by understanding their problems. They obviously have some difficulties and grievances, and that is why they are killing people. There must be a reason why a person becomes defiant and attacks, why a person commits suicide. Dharam will remove those destructive thoughts.

I become very sad when I think of all those innocent people who died. How long it had taken to bring them up. First they were infants in their mothers' wombs. As they grew up they were educated, nourished, cared for, protected from accidents. Then for them to be killed like that when they were grown is very sad. God will never be happy with that.

We must bear two things in mind: We must take God's blessings, and we must also uproot terrorism. We will receive blessings only if we do not adopt their methods. If we use the same means, then we are the bigger terrorists. Neither God, nor writers, nor history will ever forgive us.

I can speak with authority on this subject because terrorism was widespread in our country. In a single raid, 50,000 women were abducted and 100,000 people killed. Imagine the chaos and the cries that must have filled the air. There must have been terror all around, but even then the response was not cruel. The invaders were helped to understand by love and enlightenment. At that time, there were no modern armaments. They fought on horseback with swords. The invaders had many brave warriors. They always issued a challenge, and then they attacked. But the invaders' movement was wrong, absolutely wrong. The Khalsa instilled fear in the invaders, but also gave them jobs without any feeling of vengeance.

Once a person gets pricked by a thorn on a particular path, he will avoid that path in the future. Catch those who are committing atrocities and offer opportunities to the others. Arrange jobs for them, food, shelter, education for their children, and help them get settled in marriage. When they become busy in their duties, their minds will be busy. How can they then commit terrorism? An idle mind is Satan's workshop. Keep them busy. Satanic thoughts will leave, and healing thoughts will remain.

The great struggles of Guru Gobind Singh's Khalsa were against terrorism, not against any religion. If he had been opposed to Islam, the Guru would not have asked the great Muslim saint Mian Mir to lay the foundation stone of the Golden Temple, nor would the Muslim saint Buddhu Shah have given his sons, his brother, and seven hundred followers in support of the Guru. Islam must not be confused with terrorism. Islam is the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad—teachings of love and compassion.

The teachings of Jesus are those of love and mercy; they have no connection with terrorism. According to his teachings, we cannot go to war. Jesus says, "If someone takes your shirt, give him your coat as well. "

It is essential throughout the world, in every religion, to develop good preachers and good people. In every home, people should be taught in depth what are the true teachings of Islam, of Christianity, of Judaism, of Sikhism, and so on. Thus harmony will arise.

Nowadays so many weapons are being made. For what? To kill people. Countries are facing poverty, but still we are manufacturing armaments worth billions of dollars. Listen: Heal the mind that has gone astray. Explain to it, and the mind will understand. In your home, if a child goes wrong, then the mother keeps showering him with love, and he begins to follow her. The father keeps giving him advice, and the child learns.

When our country fell prey to terrorism, how did we eradicate it? We did not destroy any village or kill any innocent people. We just made them leave out of fear, and at the same time, Guru Nanak taught them through enlightenment.

At present it is essential to emphasize and spread good thoughts. Pray with love, asking the Almighty to change their minds, give them enlightenment, and bless their souls. They have gone astray. Not only them—today we are all confused. When a person slips and falls, he hurts himself physically. But imagine a person whose mind is slipping all the time—what will his condition be? At present, everyone's mind is

slipping. Every person's mind is out of control. Everyone is angry, selfish. Any person who has his eye on another's spouse or property has no base. That person is finished. Change your thoughts. Why should it even enter your mind whether a person is a man or a woman?

In ashrams, in offices, in society, people's minds have slipped. Anyone who does not control his mind will commit corruption, will look lustfully at other people's sisters and daughters, will hurt other people's feelings. The most important question is how to get the mind back into its abode. Your mind will be controlled only when you pay attention to the message of your prophet. Every country has had its prophets. Learn from them, take their enlightened wisdom, and control your minds. Once your minds change, there will be no frustration or anger, for within every person there is the love and healing that Guru Gobind Singh brought forth.

Nowadays there is not only one kind of terrorism. Every office has become terrorist. The person who commits corruption can be viewed as a terrorist; he who deprives others of their rights is a terrorist. A terrorist cannot be recognized because he wears a feather in his cap. The corrupt person is a terrorist. He who attacks another person's religion is also a terrorist. Terrorists do not have horns on their head—it is just that their thoughts are not under their control. Therefore do not fight this act of anger by retaliating in anger.

We have established courts to punish people according to their crimes. Do not just kill them. Killing will not solve the problem, because the person who is killed will be someone's relative and someone's friend—and thus ten more terrorists will spring up in their place. Today the feeling is, "That country which nurtures terrorism should be destroyed." But with this destruction there will be further anger, and that anger will lead to more terrorism. It is possible that a whole country may become terrorist.

Those committing terrorist acts should be caught by any means possible, and then tried and punished according to law. It is essential that those who commit atrocities should be punished. Both worldly law and God's law provide for this. But in order to punish one person you should not destroy ten thousand more. To do so is viewed as a very great crime in God's house. Seeing one person punished, others learn that cruelty will be severely punished, and they will then become afraid to commit cruelty. Do not fight terrorism in such a way that the criminals escape and many innocent people die.

Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh emphasized that to stop terrorism you should keep your character intact, keep your religion intact, keep your morals and goals intact, think of a woman as your sister, your daughter, or your mother, and consider another person's money as poison. At that time our character had become so powerful that our people could not be misled.

We should not fight anger with anger; we should reply with love, and lovingly explain with examples. Not every person is enlightened. We open schools, colleges, and universities to give training and produce great philosophers, scientists, doctors, and prophets, whose training is meditation. These institutions are built to change bad thoughts. No one is born a doctor, a scientist, or a saint. One must be trained.

Today we have labelled those whose minds have gone astray "terrorist." They are consumed with anger and attack with a bomb, not recognizing how many people they will kill. We must control this. Those people should understand, "If someone does the same to you, how will you feel? Now you yourself cannot escape. Take the protection, love, and healing of religion, and control your anger."

I have firm faith that if we hold several meetings of all concerned parties, they will definitely come to an agreement. A human being is not made of stone. A person becomes flexible. A person changes. By a worldly approach, we cannot reach a conclusion in one or two meetings, because one side will ask something and the other side will say, "No." But if you will talk lovingly, they will agree. If you bring in God's grace, they will agree. No one wants to die. No one wants to stay hidden all his life. Everyone wants to be free. They are slaves of their thoughts. Just correct their thoughts. It is not a big thing.

In my life I have seen people change. Many influential people come here. Some do not believe in God, but when we sit with them and explain to them, after some time they are so overcome with love that they begin to meditate, to pray, to praise God, and to criticize evil—even though they themselves may have been doing those same wrong actions before coming here.

When we went to Russia in 1989, Russians were all said to be atheists, but now thousands of them are reading Jaap Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh's divine praises of God. In 1977, when the northeastern Indian state of Mizoram was in chaos from a deadly insurgency movement, we spent three months there, gained the confidence of the terrorists, and also met with the government leaders. A compromise was worked out, and the terrorists laid down their arms. An officer wept at the news, telling us, "I am amazed that religion

can correct people's minds. We thought that religion is ineffectual."

I am not trying to pass an order as a guru. "Guru" is such a great word that when I hear it, I am immediately reminded of Jesus, who was crucified. I am reminded of the Sahibzadas, the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh who were sacrificed. Truth always faces retaliation. When someone speaks truth, people stand up to oppose him and ask, "Who are you to speak this way?"

You may question why I am saying not to destroy that country. It is my feeling, my thought, my vision that this problem will be solved not by killing but by love. The sword should not be answered with the sword. Explain to them; they may lay down their swords. Explain to them, and perhaps their minds will be corrected. Terrorism has sprouted from pressure; it will not be ended by pressure.

You must keep in mind that the anger that has arisen within you may result in a world war. When you will destroy any country, another country will stand by its side. When one is being beaten, another will stand by him in sympathy. Do not answer their anger with anger. They are not animals who will not understand. They are human beings like us. They have the same ears, same eyes, same body as we. The only difference is that bad thoughts have entered their minds. Bad thoughts can also occur in us. Thoughts can be transformed to good thoughts and used in a positive direction.

Today there is anger in every home. Our children are filled with anger. There are fights in our homes, divorces in our homes. Why? Because our thoughts are not under control. Our children go astray because their thoughts are not under control. You would not think of killing those children. They must instead be controlled.

Those whom we call terrorists are like children gone astray, because they have been misguided. Their ideas have been developed in the wrong direction: "How can we destroy this building? How many people can be killed in this building?" There could instead be another line of thinking: "We are to make a building—how is it to be built to protect us from rain and thunder?" How would the latter thought develop? From good training, good healing.

Anyone can become angry. What is difficult is to bring peace, love, healing. Defiance is easy. It is the duty of us all to control our temper, our corruption, our desire to deprive others of their rights. We must take the blessings of Guru Gobind Singh,

who said, "The God of Hindus and the God of Muslims is the same, temples and mosques are the same." The person trained by Guru Gobind Singh can go into a mosque, a temple, a gurdwara, a church, for he recognizes that God is everywhere. For him or her, there is no boundary. Human beings have created boundaries and think themselves special. He is special in whose heart there is light.

## **Baba Siri Chand Birthday and Website**

A great three-day celebration of the birthday of Baba Siri Chand culminated on August 26th at Gobind Sadan. Baba Siri Chand is the elder son of Guru Nanak, the first of the Sikh Gurus. A great ascetic, he was highly respected by people of all castes and creeds. The Emperor Shah Jahan conducted a survey of Indian saints, fakirs, and dervishes, and discovered that Baba Siri Chand had the largest following of all. It is said that for upholding religion, many miracles flowed from his spiritual power. He travelled widely, spreading Guru Nanak's non-sectarian message of intense meditation plus hard work to support oneself and help others. The Sikh Gurus respected Baba Siri Chand so much that the Third and Sixth Sikh Gurus offered their sons to him as disciples. When Sikhs were being terribly persecuted, it was Baba Siri Chand and his followers who took care of every Sikh shrine and historical place.

In addition, Babaji pointed out, "Muslims considered him their pir. He always served people of all communities by his power, his mercy. He was Brahmgiani of Brahmgianis, dervish of dervishes. The Sufi saint Mian Mir said, 'At this time, Baba Siri Chand is an ocean of light.' Holy places were built in his honour wherever he went. Even now he is giving healing, love, and light to the whole world."

To help the world learn about this great holy person, Gobind Sadan has developed a special website: [www.babasirichand.org](http://www.babasirichand.org).

## **Celebration Calendar**

Thanks to the hard work of volunteers in Canada and the United States who prepare Gobind Sadan's website—[www.gobindsadan.org](http://www.gobindsadan.org)—you can now see a current calendar with the dates of the holy days of all religions, their spiritual meanings, and how they are traditionally celebrated, to help people of all faiths celebrate each others' prophets, as Gobind Sadan does.

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