



Babaji celebrates Lord Krishna's Birthday

The Prophet Muhammad's Birthday

Id Milad al-Nabi, the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings be upon him and his family), was joyously celebrated on August 9th at Gobind Sadan. A great light display, qawwali songs, and special langar were offered. As Baba Virsa Singh explained, "Prophet Muhammad is not confined in a walled fort. He is a great power. When he came into this world, there was so much crime, so much cruelty. He sowed the seed from which a great tree of religion has spread.

Spokespeople for religions have played havoc with religions and nations. We need to highlight the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, the revelations of Qur'an Sharif, which would help in ending hatred. Instead, we interpret them in our own way."

Babaji spoke to Muslim scholars and officials on Id Milad al-Nabi, questioning common misperceptions about Islam:

"A Muslim's heart is soft as wax"

"What is the greatest attraction of the Prophet Muhammad? Why do we love him? He had the same hands and legs as us; he looked like an ordinary person. But there was something with him that is not with us: the blessing of God. The divine Light had manifested in him. The Light of Allah is in all beings, but it has not manifested.

The Prophet never said, 'I am Allah' or 'I am an angel.' It is his greatness that he said, as God told him to speak, 'I am simply a messenger. Many messengers have come before me.' (Holy Qur'an 3:144). This humility is his most

endearing quality. He said, "Allah is the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful' (1:2-3). 'Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.' (24:35). In essence, the Prophet said, 'If you want to experience Allah, experience the cosmos. Love.' He revealed, 'Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out from error.' (2:255) The Prophet encouraged universal brotherhood, not hatred.

Islam means 'submission to the will of God.' A Muslim is therefore one whose mind is forgiving, one whose mind is compassionate, whose mind is prepared to serve. A Muslim is one in whom truth has developed, one who stands on the foundation of truth. As the Holy Qur'an (42:15) affirms, a Muslim is one who believes in all the scriptures that God has sent down. A Muslim is one who follows the Prophet's teachings.

In every religion, a disciple is one who follows the teachings — be it the teachings of Muhammad, or Buddha, or Mahavir, or Moses, or Abraham, or Guru Nanak. The qualities of the Master emerge in the one who follows the Master's teachings. Those who have acted according to the teachings of their Master have become dervishes, saints, enlightened beings. Those who obeyed the Prophet Muhammad's teachings became the Four Companions. Those who practiced the teachings of Jesus became his twelve disciples. Those who practiced Buddha's teachings achieved nirvana.

Religion is a matter of practice, rather than of birth. We can say that a child who is born into a Muslim's home is a Muslim. This is a label. But the real meaning of the word 'Muslim' is very sacred. Guru Nanak said, 'It is very difficult to be called a Muslim. A Muslim's heart is as soft as wax, very compassionate, and he washes away the inner dirt of egotism.' [Guru Granth Sahib 141]

The Holy Qur'an says that 'Whoever submits his whole self to Allah and is a doer of good will get his reward with his Lord... To Allah belong the East and the West. Whithersoever ye turn, there is Allah's face. ...To Him belongs all that is in the heaven and on the earth. Everything renders worship to Him.' (2:111-115)."

The prophets have always been opposed

"Whenever prophets have come to the earth, they have met strong opposition. Why? Because their words come from divine wisdom, which is a higher wisdom than that of the human mind. They spoke with human tongue, but the words were of God; God was speaking through them. To understand God's Word, you must do a lot of meditation, and you must have intense love for God.

The prophets do not want to seize anyone's kingdom, to disturb anyone, to make anyone nervous, to hurt anyone's feelings. They speak only of mercy, of love, of nonviolence. But people challenge them, 'Who are you to speak?' When Prophet Muhammad came, he was confronted by some authorities who had established themselves in the world. They believed that one deity brings wind, another the rain, another brings children, another brings good crops. The Prophet said, 'Allah! There is no god but He; the Living, the Self-subsisting, Supporter of all.' (2:255) 'It is Allah Who causes the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He causes the living to issue from the dead... It is He Who sends down rain from the skies... That is Allah; then how are you deluded away from the truth?' (6:95-99) Those authorities felt, 'Who is he to speak to us of truth?' And thus conflict arose. But he was speaking from divine inspiration, whereas they were thinking human thoughts. The battle is between human thought and divine wisdom.

They threw stones at Prophet Muhammad when revelations came to him, and they crucified Jesus for speaking from divine wisdom. Why do people doubt what they cannot understand? Because they are not ready to accept what they do not understand. The prophet's words are beyond their comprehension.

The Holy Qur'an is not something of the mind. It is a matter of vision. How can vision be doubted? Why doubt God? God has existed from time immemorial and can never be destroyed. Why doubt His message?"

Kafir and Mu'min

"In India, the word 'Kafir' is incorrectly used to signify 'non-Muslim,' and the word 'Mu'min' is incorrectly used to signify 'Muslim.' Actually, 'Kafir' means 'one who conceals the truth,' whereas Mu'min is 'one who believes in God and spreads the truth.'

When a person takes a high position in the world, such as an officer or a king, he or she must always remember God and pray to God for strength. Why should we take strength from God? A human's life is of limited duration; God is timeless, limitless. We should always pray for blessings from That which is Imperishable. To become a good person, everyone needs God's grace.

However, we are afraid. When we sit in an office, we try to avoid performing Namaz (Muslim daily prayers). We evade that Power Who has stated that he who conceals the truth is a Kafir. We always conceal the truth. Who goes out of the office to perform Namaz? Most remain sitting in their offices, embarrassed that their colleagues would criticize them for performing Namaz during the time of their office duties. But that is also an office! You have left the Office of Rahmat (Mercy), and you have chosen the office which is just the source of your daily bread.

When Rahmat is not there, what is the use of bread?

When there is no ibadat (worship), what is the use of a nice house? When there is no ibadat, what is the use of this body? When there is no ibadat, what is the use of medicine? They are all fruitless.

When we believe what has been said by the messengers of God, then we receive strength. Shaikh Farid (a great Indian Muslim saint) was a human being like us. But he acted fully upon the message, and the divine Light developed within him. Moinuddin Chisti (a saint who brought Islam to India by the power of love) was a human being like us. But he also acted fully upon the message, and the divine Light developed within him. That Light developed within them which was capable of transforming people's minds.

We people have created so many beliefs — for instance, that an impure person's gaze should not fall upon that which is holy. But how then will the impure become pure? When Umar first came to the Prophet Muhammad, he came in enmity; we can say that he was impure at that time. The Prophet could have said, 'I am pure and he is impure. I will not meet him. Instead, he said, 'Open the doors!' When Umar fell under the merciful gaze of the Prophet, what happened? He became Mu'min, such a Mu'min that ultimately he became a great caliph, successor to the Prophet. Why? The Prophet Muhammad's merciful gaze fell upon him, and he removed his sword and placed it before the Prophet. The Prophet lovingly asked him, 'How long will you desist from using the sword against Allah and His Messenger?' Under the effect of the Prophet's word, thought, and merciful gaze, Umar could not remain the same man as he had been. At once he replied, 'From today, my sword, my thoughts, my mind, will proceed according to your order.'

The Prophet Muhammad therefore never said, 'Don't mingle with the impure.' He reportedly said, 'The best Islam is that you feed the hungry and spread peace among people you know and do not know.' (Ahadith-i Mafhnauri, no. 597). In other words, he said, 'Go in peace and love among the people — Mu'mins and Kafirs alike.'

A Kafir is not a Hindu, a Sikh, or a Christian. A Kafir is one who conceals the truth. We all are concealing the truth — Who speaks truth? The whole world is Kafir — what else? There is no one speaking with courage.

I go into big gatherings and into people's homes and speak on the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad for hours. How powerful this Holy Book is! So many saints have been born who read the Holy Qur'an and who have talked to God. I do not think they can be counted on the fingertips; there must have been thousands of them. It cannot be said that Islam was spread by the sword. It has spread by enlightenment and love.

Many people say that Islam has expanded by demolishing temples and building mosques over them. Why do they say this? Because you do not speak to correct this mistaken idea. Why don't you speak? Because you think the

listener will come after you. Then you are definitely Kafirs. You are concealing the truth.

My feeling is that you can speak about the Prophet Muhammad anywhere with pride. He stood on the foundation of love. He always said, 'Love, love, love!' Why can't we speak of love?

To speak truth is to be Mu'min. Whether one speaks as a Sikh, a Buddhist, a Christian, a Muslim, or a Hindu, whoever speaks truth is a Mu'min. There is no shyness in religion. Prophet Muhammad is truth, not a theory. You can take complete guidance, complete love, from what he has said.

People now think that women have no status in Islam. But Prophet Muhammad has given such a high position to women. When his beloved wife Khadija died, he ordered a big tomb built for her, and he himself performed the ceremonies for her. He loved his daughter Fatima so much that it is said that before he died he privately bestowed all his blessing, his light, upon her. Her husband Hazrat Ali therefore did not kiss the hand of Abu Bakr (who was sitting as successor to the Prophet) until Fatima died six months later. Hazrat Ali knew what the Prophet had said before he left the world.

Now what has happened? The tomb of Khadija has been destroyed and the grave of Fatima has been moved from Prophet Muhammad's side to a more distant place. Why? Because they were women. You people have hidden these things. You are all Kafirs. If you see clearly, the Prophet Muhammad has given very great importance to women.

What has happened? You have monopolized the Prophet Muhammad. You have made him the leader of one sect. But the Holy Qur'an describes the Prophet Muhammad as 'a shining lamp' (33:46), a 'beautiful model' (33:21), sent by Allah as 'a Mercy for all creatures' (21:107). The Prophet asserts that God will guide 'whom He will to a way that is straight.' Q:142).

What is that 'straight way?' The same teachings that God has sent from time immemorial through all the prophets: Be good to your parents, recognize that God will provide for you and your children, avoid bad deeds, regard all life as sacred, do not oppress the weak, speak only truth and justice, and keep your covenant with God. (6:151-152). What is this covenant? The Holy Qur'an reveals, 'Whoever believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: From the depths of darkness He leads them forth into light.' (2:256-257)."

Speak truth courageously

"If you want to be saved, you must speak truth forcefully, courageously. If you merely want to read the Holy Qur'an and not follow it, you will not get the blessings of the Prophet Muhammad. You will not be effective; your feet will not be on the ground.

Some people mistakenly believe that the Holy Qur'an is

only for Muslims, the Guru Granth Sahib only for Sikhs, the Gita only for Hindus, the Dhammapada only for Buddhists, the New Testament only for Christians. But this is not true. The scriptures are universal; they are for all of us.

Why are you afraid of the truth? The sun has risen and is casting light; why don't you accept the truth? Why fear? Try to understand what the Prophet Muhammad is. Read his teachings and perhaps your faith will develop again. Don't lose faith in him by listening to the religious spokespeople. Where has Prophet Muhammad said that brother should kill brother? Ask yourself whether those who speak in the name of Islam are fully enlightened. If not, how can they explain the enlightened revelations of the Prophet?

In all religions, the religious authorities are managers, whereas the prophet is a Light. If you make your decisions based on the spokespeople who are sitting in the way, how will you reach the Light?

If you are troubled by the truth, you are all Kafirs. If you speak on the truth, you are Mu'mins. The Mu'min's qualification is to speak truth, be unafraid of truth, and spread truth."

The Power of Women

These days, Baba Virsa Singh is repeatedly stressing the power of women and seeking the truth about the original high position of women in each religion, in contrast to cultural and historical oppression that has entered the picture later. His words on women's power are reflected in his actions, for through the years he has delegated many important roles to women. He says he has observed that women are better at taking responsibility and acting on it. Recently he gave this message to women:

"Why are women left behind in the world? Why do women consider themselves weak? Women should stand up.

In the writings of the Sikh Gurus, God is sometimes referred to as the female Power, sometimes as one's closest girlfriend, and sometimes as Mother of the World. Here in India, God is often referred to as Mother, with 108 female forms, all of whom are avatars. The blazing splendor of God's Power is manifested in female form, as Bhawani. Women have thus been historically highly respected in India.

A daughter is brought up to be a good manager by her mother, and then by the requirements of running a household, raising children, and taking care of guests. She naturally becomes a capable manager.

God has made woman fertile like the earth. Everything is born from the earth. When great scientists, philosophers, doctors, prophets, saints come into the world, they are all given birth through women. God has decided, 'I will make the medium a woman.' The mother is also the child's first teacher. In my heart there is always this thought, 'If my

mother had not come, where would I be? If my mother had not existed, how would I give the message? If Jesus had no mother, then from whence would Jesus give the message?'

That is why woman is blessed. She does not need the blessing of a man. She needs the love of man; blessing is already hers.

Some women ask, 'Why have women seldom been accepted as prophets? Actually, the woman has a higher status than a prophet, for it is she who gives birth to prophets. One who creates something is very powerful.

Never has a prophet taken birth through a man, only through women. Men may make as many positions for themselves as they like, but God has specially blessed women in this way. It is even said that Mary was directly blessed by the Holy Spirit in order to conceive Jesus.

There is a story of Rabia (a great eighth century Muslim saint of Iraq) told in the book Tazkarat-ul-Aulia. Many people, including great male prophets and saints, went to Mecca to perform their obeisances at the sacred Ka'aba. But when Rabia went, the Ka'aba itself traveled ten miles from Mecca in order to receive her. At the same time, the saint Hazrat Ibrahim Azam went to Mecca for his pilgrimage, but the Ka'aba was not there. A voice from above said to him, 'The Ka'aba has gone to receive a humble lady, Rabia.'

Guru Gobind Singh chose Five Beloveds, and there was no woman among them. But woman is higher than the Five Beloveds, for she has given birth to them. And it was Guru Gobind Singh's wife, Mata Jitoji, who sweetened the amrit with which the Five Beloveds were baptized, to bless and temper their characters with love.

There were so many people whom Jesus rewarded, but he selected Mary Magdalen to anoint him with oil. When he was resurrected after his crucifixion, she and perhaps other women were the first people to see him. God did not send a man with them, because God did not want to give that high rank of woman to a man.

When Buddha was practicing meditation to the point of near-starvation, it was a woman who brought him khir to eat. There were so many men around him, but it was a woman who fed him.

In Hindu scriptures, there was a time when the world was overrun by demons. At that time, God sent Power through a woman, Durga Mata. She killed all the demons and restored goodness in the world.

If women want to become prophets themselves, there is no obstacle. But if a woman becomes a prophet, she may be downgrading the blessings of God. God has made woman even higher. Women are the creators of prophets."

Heavenly Arta

Thousands gathered at Gobind Sadan on September 3rd to celebrate the birthday of Baba Siri Chand, elder son of Guru Nanak and teacher of Baba

Virsa Singh. At 2 a.m., suddenly a great wind arose, lightning illuminated the skies again and again, and torrents of cooling rain fell. The heavenly show commenced as the congregation began singing Baba Siri Chand's "Arta" in praise of Guru Nanak.

To welcome his father home from one of his long journeys in God's mission, Baba Siri Chand wrote that the whole cosmos joins in celebrating Guru Nanak. Just so, myriads of lights and flower garlands twinkled at Gobind Sadan and God provided a great celestial display as the sangat sang in Punjabi, "*The whole cosmos is Nanak's temple. Congregations sing sweet songs in his praise The moon and sun illuminate him with their radiance. Masses of flowers are offering him fragrance. The True Master, the True Light, he is merciful to the poor. The King of the Winds fans him, while saints and sages meditate on his holiness... He is one with God, Whose Name is Truth.*"

Baba Siri Chand is honored at Gobind Sadan as the model for a life of intense meditation and selfless hard work on behalf of humanity. Like Baba Virsa Singh, Baba Siri Chand did not take money or collect followers for himself in the name of God. He was once the most respected saint in all India, adviser to kings and nawabs and Sikh Gurus. He began appearing to Baba Virsa Singh when Babaji was just a boy with a great longing for God.

Babaji says, "*Baba Siri Chand was Brahmgiyani, one with the eternal light of God, one with that eternal Power of which all religions' scriptures have spoken.*"



The new langar shelter on Baba Siri Chand's birthday

Gobind Sadan's communities in India and the USA offer spiritual and social uplift for people of all faiths and all walks of life, supported by transformation of barren wastelands into productive farms. Audiocassettes, videocassettes, and books of Babaji's words are available at Gobind Sadan's community in New Delhi.