



## Challenge to Religious Leaders

His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh has issued ringing challenge to religious leaders in his statement for the Millennium Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, held at the United Nations the end of August. Read the entire text: [Challenge to Religious Leaders](#). The organizers had asked for proposals for what religious leaders can do to bring peace. In his message conveyed by Ralph Singh, His Holiness said, in part, "When religious leaders speak, the issue is not whether they have read books. The question is whether or not they themselves have awakened spiritually. Dharma [spirituality] is very powerful. It transforms people's minds, transforms their lives, and transforms their inner habits. It is only spirituality that changes people.

Now the great source of conflict and hatred is that one says, "My religion is good," while another says, "My religion is good."

Thus we should look at the messages of all the prophets. They say, "Love each other. Help people, think of serving. Love God. Give that Love of God to the trees, to the animals, to humans, to the earth." The love of God heals everything. We must receive this Love from God, by loving God, and then share that Love with all of God's creation. Guru Nanak said, "I am wonderstruck to see God residing within all of Creation!" Those who speak for God must have this inner awakening. The teachings and practical lives of the prophets reveal that they themselves saw God everywhere.

If priests, pujaris, or granthis are sitting in temples, mosques, churches, or gurdwaras, it does not necessarily mean that they have realized God. They are managers. Anyone can enter management. Did a priest become a religious manager by reading books or was he or she chosen by God?

Religious leaders will know whether they themselves are spiritual or not. Do we have the forgiveness of Jesus, who from the cross prayed, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do"? When the prophets were here, they had no goldcovered buildings. They built a beautiful inner temple where peace prevailed. If we are spiritual, we will be contemplating all prophets, loving their messages, loving their commandments, loving their ethical codes.

Throughout the world, religion has become a great fort made of hatred. All the prophets have taught us otherwise. All prophets, messiahs, and nabis have come in love, and all have said the same thing: Love. We should first adopt this message.

If someone goes to speak among Christians, they will say, "Listen to us. We believe in Jesus. Jesus is the only Son of God. You say there is another Son also." They will grab the cross and hit him on the head, and he will draw a sword and strike them with it. He will say, "There are other prophets also. Our prophet is also a Son of God." Guru Nanak says, "There is one Father and we are all His children." There is no question of high or low. When we are inwardly awakened, we will see God in all. But now we cannot see God even in some of His prophets.

Each group will say, "Our scripture is unique. No other scriptures have come from God." But Guru Nanak said, "Do not consider the Vedas, Qur'an, and other scriptures false. Contemplate them." The Holy Qur'an reveals, "Say: I believe in whatever Book Allah has sent down." Enlightened wisdom is one. When we have not even understood the enlightened wisdom in our own scriptures, how can we preach to others?

My message is that all prophets have come from one Place. There is one God, and they have brought His message. But religious leaders say, "Mine is unique, mine is unique."

Therefore you must first deal with the conflict among the religious leaders. The laypeople are not at fault. y this movement were taken to the villages—that Jesus came from the same place wherefrom Guru Gobind Singh came, that Jesus came from the same place wherefrom the Prophet Muhammad came—then these conflicts would end.

Actually, we do not know where the disease lies. The disease is lying here—in religion. They say, "Nobody else can be like Guru Gobind Singh." "Nobody else can be like Lord Rama." If you take Lord Krishna's name, there will be a conflict. I believe one hundred percent that the root of the conflict lies here. First eliminate it.

First digest these points in your mind: Religious places belong to everyone. Where there is truth, it is for all. Where there is love, it is for all. Where there is prayer, it is for all. Where there is worship, where there is reading of scripture, it is for all.

Charge the religious leaders with this duty: They should go to their religious places and celebrate the holy days of each prophet. They should gather their whole congregation and explain, "This prophet brought this message of love, this prophet said this about love." When their congregations will unite behind this theme, then society will itself unite.

If you speak of other masters and saints, people may suspect that you want to change their religion. To the contrary, it is good to remain firm in one's faith. What is there to change? The Light and enlightened wisdom of God are already within us all. They are not to be changed. They are to be recognized. Then one will believe the teaching of Jesus, the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad, the teaching of Buddha, the teaching of all the prophets.

First the religious leaders must recognize that Light within every person. Jesus's Father is within everyone, the Prophet Muhammad's Allah is within everyone ("closer than his jugular vein"), Guru Gobind Singh's Father is within everyone ("nearer than hands and feet"), the Paramatma of whom Lord Ram and Lord Krishna speak is within everyone. Therefore, let us all turn inside.

## Banjaras Take [amrit](#)

In an unusual development, leaders of the Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh Banjara Movement have asked His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh to administer amrit—an empowering ceremony established by Guru Gobind Singh—to members of their widespread community, to help strengthen dharam. On July 18, some 29 Banjara men of all ages came to Gobind Sadan as the first group to do so, and were accordingly given amrit in the traditional way.

The banjaras, commonly known as gypsies, number around 60 million in India alone. Many of them worship Guru Nanak and his elder son, Baba Siri Chand, and have made great sacrifices for the Sikh Gurus. After the Ninth Guru, Sri Guru Teg Bahadur, was executed by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in the Guru's stand to protect freedom of religion for Hindus, Lakkhi Shah Banjara courageously set fire to his own hut to secretly cremate the body of the Guru. Bhai Mani Singh is famous for his devotion and the sacrifices he and his clan made for the mission of the Sikh Gurus.

After the amrit ceremony, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh said to the new members of Khalsa, "Guru Gobind Singh did such intensive meditation that he contemplated the Lord of Time and Death. Then from the state of duality, he became one with God. If you, too, practice tapasya [spiritual discipline], you can become great leaders. But first comes the tapasya; the rest follows.

The most important thing is to get up early every morning and meditate. The Guru said, "Kali Yuga [the darkest of ages] has come. In Kali Yuga, only the Name of God will save you. The period is very hot, and Nam [God's Holy Name] is very cooling. The food of the mind is the Name of God. Without truth, you will be defiled. Your mind can be cleansed only with Nam." Then all the evils of your mind will go away, and good qualities will remain.

As your mind becomes clean, the actions of your body will also be cleansed. Our body is the instrument of our thoughts. When anger arises, the body shakes. To move in any direction, first the thought moves that way, and then the body follows. Thus Maharaj says, "When the mind is conquered, you have conquered the world."

At present the mind is wavering twenty-four hours a day. But when the mind receives its full nourishment, full energy, then it becomes powerful. [The ruler tried to kill the saintly sixteenth-century weaver, Kabir.] Kabir said, "My mind is not frightened. How can you frighten the body?" Kabir was thrown before an elephant and placed in a fire; they tried to drown him and punished him by many means. He said only this: "You have tried your best, and your weapons are very shiny and your elephants very strong. But my mind is not frightened. How can you frighten the body? The body is earth, and the mind is not frightened. The mind does not see your elephants nor your power. You have innumerable elephants and horses, but in my house, I have only one God with me. Please understand this: My one God is more powerful than your elephants, more powerful than your army. He is more powerful than you as well. I will pull you down at once, because God is more powerful than you." Then the king begged to be pardoned; Kabir did not ask to be pardoned. When he was bound by chains and thrown into the Ganges River, his fetters were broken by the waves of the Ganges, and she spread a deerskin for him to sit upon.

There is no limit to the greatness of Nam. The Guru says, "All living beings are sustained by Nam. This lower world and the higher world are all sustained by Nam; all regions of the universe are sustained by Nam." Thus the entire cosmos can be seen within you. The power of God will also be seen within you. Everything of God's will be seen within you; nothing is outside. When someone meditates, he is illumined from inside; the Light comes from within.

At that stage when enlightenment comes, caste is ended, distinctions of high and low are ended. One says, "Gobind, Gobind, Gobind," seeing Gobind [God] throughout the world.

Develop the habit of reciting Nam. The Fifth Guru says, "Do this while laughing, while standing, while dressing well, while eating—thus you will be liberated." Once you are joined with God, you will not be separated. This is God's habit: Once He has taken your arm, you may try to shake Him off, but He will not let go of your arm. Even if you let go of His garment, he will remain with you; He will come again and again.

These days, there is fear, doubt, and selfishness in everyone's mind, for our base is shaking. Mind is the base. How can we keep our mind powerful? Rise early in the morning. Thank God that He has given you sleep, has given you food. Arise and join with God.

When you join with Him, there will be a shower of blessings, a flood of blessings. They are all created through Nam. Nam is a seed that gives birth to a tree under whose shade millions of people can rest, can receive comfort. What tree is this? That which brings about truthfulness, destroys evils, and puts an end to fear by creating fearlessness.

Live in the world as good people. Love and enlightenment and compassion will be created in you, and your moral character will become very strong. At present there is one thing which everyone wants but they do not know how to obtain it. We are to get it from inside. Sit and recite Nam, and you will receive it from inside. It is a treasure which will never diminish.

## **"Truth is Struggle"**

An extraordinary congregation of devotees from Gurdaspur in Punjab near the border with Pakistan often comes for the blessings and guidance of His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh. They are so Godintoxicated that they sing and dance for hours and hours, sometimes throughout the night, praising God's manifestations in all the prophets and avatars. Most of them have received amrit at Gobind Sadan. When His Holiness spoke to them on July 13, he said, "Enlightenment does not come to everyone. If the people had been enlightened, they would not have said that Guru Nanak was going astray; they would not have called Guru Gobind Singh the master of uncivilized hillpeople.

Ordinary people look at others from their own point of view. When you become ecstatic from Godrealization, if you go to people who are rigid and fanatic, they will condemn you. They will criticize your hand-clapping they will criticize your becoming unconscious with ecstasy. Why? Because their condition is not the same as yours! It is written in the Guru Granth Sahib, "The state of a God-realized person can be known only by a Godrealized person."

Guru Nanak always spoke about Nam, but when he visited priests, he did not speak about Nam but rather about taking action and doing gainful work. He said to them, "Oh pandit [Brahmin priest], "Get up and go to work. " He told them, in effect, "Enter worldly life. You are sitting here proclaiming yourself an authority, but you have no enlightenment."

The Guru also said to the priests, "Your mind is contaminated, but you are offering palmfulls of water to the deity." What will you gain by offering water to the deity if your mind is filthy? The Guru rejected rituals; he did not reject truth.

A truthful person never becomes entangled in quarrels, but always speaks truth. Neither the rulers of the times, nor the leading personalities, nor the priests will agree to the truth. Therefore one has to struggle; one moves along the path by struggling. Afterward, the antagonistic people repent, and write history books, and stand on stages banging their fist on the table, proclaiming, "Babaji has said this, Babaji has said that." But previously they were after the Babaji with drawn sword.

This is the nature of the people, so there is no need to be dismayed. Keep speaking truth. Keep increasing your faith in Maharaj [a generic reverent term for the Guru, which Babaji usually uses for Guru Gobind Singh]. Keep growing in love for Maharaj. Do not look to this side or that side or at the path ahead, because people will always be criticizing you.

Truth is like the sun. Falsehood is concealed by darkness. Guru Nanak has said, "Falsehood will disappear, and in the end, truth will be proved correct." Falsehood has no base. Truth will always be victorious; evil will not.

We must distinguish the essence, the truth from millions with the help of Guru Nanak, with the help of Guru Gobind Singh. When they were preaching by giving their heads, no one went near them. All were frightened by their voice of truth.

When the Ninth Guru was martyred, there was a call for someone to come forward and cremate the body. No one came forward; all were frightened. At that time, the people did not wear symbols as you do. Then Guru Gobind Singh [who was the son of the 9th Guru] asked, "Didn't anybody say a word against the tyrants?" The reply came, "All became silent and retreated into their homes." Maharaj said, "I will give them such a form by which they will be easily recognized; they will not be able to hide themselves." Then his followers were baptized with amrit and given this form [the outer symbols of Khalsa: long God-given hair wrapped in a turban or veil, a comb for keeping it neat, a small sword as a symbol of protecting the weak, a steel bracelet as a servant of God, and special undershorts for modesty and perpetual readiness for the struggle of truth and justice]. Guru Gobind Singh put his stamp upon them: "Where will you hide now?"

The Ninth Guru always spoke humbly, explaining with great love. He always helped all communities, all castes, all people. But such a situation arose that one day he had to sacrifice his head [for the sake of religious freedom of Hindus]. Warrants were issued for his arrest. Why? Because the worldly powers can do whatever they choose. But he knew beforehand that without his sacrificing his head, peace would not come to the country, for it was burning. The fire could only be extinguished if Guru Gobind Singh's sons were also sacrificed. Guru Gobind Singh also had to struggle, suffer tremendously, and fight battles. Similarly, Jesus was crucified for telling the truth.

Truth always requires a great struggle. But the beauty in this struggle is that Truth is standing beside you and the Guru is standing beside you. They become your fast friends and stand beside you. Those with whom they are standing will certainly be victorious.

The people who speak truth are very few. Others have a great majority. But consider the majority like this: There is one lone tiger in the forest. It emerges from the forest, and five thousand sheep are standing there. At the mere sight of the single tiger, hundreds of sheep die. When the tiger walks about, they become breathless. The tiger knows how many sheep he needs to kill, but the breath of all the sheep fails.

Likewise, victory always belongs to quality, and never to the majority. If a single person stands up in society, the direction and culture of the people changes. Even a single person's standing up removes the people's cowardice. Guru Gobind Singh has stated, "How is cowardice to be removed? Taking the broom of enlightenment in your hand, sweep cowardice out."

It is essential not to be angry with others. Stand by your programmes and keep on strengthening your aim. Do not be afraid of anyone. You must speak the truth. The prophets were born out of struggles, leaders were born out of struggles, saints were born out of struggles. If you just sit in your home and carry on your daily routine, looking after your children, the day comes when you, like everyone, must die. When God will question you whether you have done something for others or just looked after your own children, what answer will you give?

Therefore struggle. Truth is struggle.

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