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Sikh Leader Passes Away

Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji Leaves Behind Spiritual Legacy

For photos and up to date information, visit: <http://www.sikhnet.com/yogibhajan>

Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji, known as Yogi Bhajan to hundreds of thousands of adherents worldwide, left his physical body at 9 pm MST on October 6th. His passing took place at his home in Espanola, New Mexico surrounded by family and friends. The cause of death was complications due to heart failure. He was 75 years old.

An outstanding pioneer in many fields with a deep and compassionate insight into the human condition, he established permanent institutions, created spectacular events, and produced a prolific body of teachings.

The first to publicly teach Kundalini Yoga, when he arrived in the West in 1968, he announced he had come to the West "to create teachers, not to gain students".

A deeply devoted Sikh, his inspiration and example motivated thousands to embrace the Sikh way of life. Through his personal efforts, Sikh Dharma was legally incorporated and officially recognized as a religion in the USA in 1971. In 1971, in acknowledgement of his extraordinary impact of spreading the universal message of Sikhism, the president of the SGPC (governing body of Sikh Temples in India), Sant Charan Singh called him the Siri Singh Sahib, Chief Religious and Administrative Authority for the Western Hemisphere, and he was given the responsibility to create a Sikh Ministry in the West by the Akal Takhat, the Sikh seat of religious authority in Amritsar, India. He was honored with the title Bhai Sahib by the Akal Takhat in 1974.

Born Harbhajan Singh Puri, August 26, 1929, in the part of India that became Pakistan in 1948, he was the son of a medical doctor. He spent his youth in privileged environments in private schools and his summers in the exclusive Dalhousie mountain region of Uttar Pradesh. As a young boy he attended a Catholic convent school.

When he became a United States Citizen in 1976, Yogi Bhajan changed his name legally to Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji

When he was just eight years old he began his yogic training with an enlightened teacher, Sant Hazara Singh, who proclaimed him to be a Master of Kundalini Yoga when he was sixteen and a half.

During the turmoil of partition in 1947, at the age of 18, he led his village of 7000 people, near what is Lahore Pakistan today, 325 miles on foot to safety in New Delhi, India, where he arrived with only the clothes on his back. Displaced Indians were given houses in India and soon he was able to continue his education at Punjab University where he excelled in debate and was a star athlete, playing both hockey and soccer and earning the name "China wall" from his opponents.

After graduating with a degree in Economics, he began Indian government service with India's Internal Revenue Department, and supervised the creation of the IRS building in New Delhi. Shortly thereafter he moved to the Customs Service and became head of Customs at Palam International Airport (now known as New Delhi's Indira Gandhi Airport).

He married Inderjit Kaur in 1952. They had two sons, Ranbir Singh and Kulbir Singh, and a daughter, Kamaljit Kaur.

Throughout his academic career and government service he continued to teach yoga to people from all walks of life.

In September of 1968, he left India for Canada to teach yoga at Toronto University, carrying a letter of recommendation from Sir James George, Canadian High Commissioner in New Delhi, who had been his student. After two months in Canada, he flew to Los Angeles for a weekend visit. Arriving in Los Angeles virtually unknown, Yogi Bhan met a number of young hippies, the spiritual seekers of that era, and immediately recognized that the experience of higher consciousness they were attempting to find through drugs, could be achieved by practicing the Science of Kundalini Yoga, while simultaneously rebuilding their nervous systems.

Breaking the centuries old tradition of secrecy surrounding the empowering science of Kundalini Yoga, he began teaching it publicly. With the yogic sciences of yoga, meditation, yogic philosophy, and loving acceptance, he gave the soon to be called "Baby Boomers" an effective alternative to the prevalent drug culture. He called it the "3HO" (healthy, happy, holy) way of life.

From humble beginnings, teaching first at the East West Cultural Center and then in a student's furniture store in West Hollywood, "The Yogi" was like a magnet. Students flocked to his classes. Soon he was teaching at colleges and universities, including Claremont and UCLA, and accepting invitations to teach in other cities.

In July of 1969 the non-profit 3HO Foundation (Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization) was incorporated in California. 3HO's service to humanity is through Kundalini Yoga, meditation and the Science of Humanology which improves physical well being, as well as deepening spiritual awareness. Under his guidance as Director of Spiritual Education, 3HO mushroomed worldwide, to 300 centers in 35 countries. In 1994 3HO became a member of the United Nations as an NGO (Non-Governmental-Organization) in Consultative Status (Roster) with the Economic and Social Council, representing women's issues, promoting human rights and providing education in alternative systems of medicine.

Traveling extensively in the seventies and eighties, Yogi Bhan crusaded tirelessly to educate, uplift, and enlighten everyone he met. His basic message was "It is your birthright to be healthy, happy, and holy."

Inspired and motivated by his words and adhering to the practices he taught, students created music, art, and poetry reflecting the universal wisdom he shared. Over 200 books have been written based on his teachings, as well as a wealth of CD's, videos, paintings, and sculpture. He himself wrote over 30 books including The Teachings of Yogi Bhan, Furmaan Khalsa, Masters Touch, and Mind and Its 81 Facets.

Becoming the Mahan Tantric (only living Master of White Tantric Yoga) in 1971, he conducted workshops in cities around the world. In 1987 he transferred these workshops to videotape, calling them "Renew to be New" Courses, which will continue to be held worldwide.

In 1973, Yogi Bhan founded 3HO SuperHealth, a remarkably successful drugless, drug rehabilitation program, blending the proven ancient yogic wisdom of the East with the modern technology of the West. SuperHealth was accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare

Organization and received its highest commendation. In 1973 it distinguished itself as being in the top 10% of all treatment programs throughout the U.S.

In 1989 Yogi Bhan met with then President Mikhail Gorbachev and established addiction treatment programs in Russia based on the 3HO SuperHealth model. Currently a pilot project of Superhealth is being formed by the Punjab State Government in India.

True to his earliest commitment, "I've not come to gather students, but to train teachers," the International Kundalini Yoga Teachers Association and KRI (Kundalini Research Institute) now holds teacher-training courses throughout the world.

Embodying a rare combination of spiritual and down-to-earth practical wisdom, Yogi Bhan was equally at home in the pulpit, the podium, the board room, the living room, or sitting on the grass in a park, teaching and educating people in all walks of life. His expertise and influence extended into the realms of communication, the healing arts, business, religion, and government.

Loyal friend and mentor of Senators, Congressmen, and Governors regardless of political affiliation, he promoted spiritual awareness in all arenas. An ardent advocate of world peace and religious unity, the Siri Singh Sahib met with world leaders of all faiths to encourage dialogue, including Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, the Dalai Lama, and two Archbishops of Canterbury. In 1995 he received the Courage of Conscience Award from the Peace Abbey in Sherborn, Massachusetts

In 1971 at the Celebration of Life Music Festival in New Orleans he shared the podium with Swami Satchidanda and Swami Vishnudevananda. He participated in many interfaith forums and conferences, including the World Parliament of Religions. In the early 70's he helped organize the first 'Meeting of the Ways' in San Francisco and was co-founder of the Unity of Man Conference. He became Co-President of the World Fellowship of Religions in 1974. He served on the Board of Directors of the American Council of Executives in Religion and was a member of the Interreligious Council of Southern California, the Rotary Club, and the Los Angeles World Affairs Council.

In June of 1985 he established the first International Peace Prayer Day Celebration in New Mexico. This annual day of musical celebration and interfaith prayer draws several thousand participants, including prominent national and international leaders in the realms of religion, politics, and humanity. Those honored at this event and given grants for leading the way in spreading the word of peace have included: Grandmothers for Peace and the Gesundheit! Institute.

A graduate in Economics from Punjab University (1952) and a savvy entrepreneur he encouraged his students to start their own businesses. One of the first, Yogi Tea, brought his famous recipe into the mainstream, and it is now one of the leading tea companies in the health food market in the USA and Europe.

He became a trusted management consultant for 14 corporations worldwide, representing industries as diverse as health food manufacturing (KIIT-Golden Temple Foods), computer systems (Sun and Son), and security services (Akal Security). He conducted business seminars and authored several books to guide the aspiring entrepreneur as well as the seasoned executive.

He was a champion of women's rights, and believed that it is women who are the backbone of society, and since 1972 when he inaugurated the first of annual women's camps, he taught technology to turn 'chicks into eagles.'

Yogi Bhan fathered the science of Humanology and in 1980 he earned his Ph.D. with his dissertation titled "Communication: Liberation or Condemnation."

Standing six feet three, his powerful and dynamic presence dominated any gathering. Fearless, outspoken yet humble, he could be both charming and daunting as the occasion required. His openhearted acceptance of everyone along with an uncompromising insistence upon excellence made him a formidable teacher.

His motto: "If you can't see God in all, you can't see God at all."

His credo: "It's not the life that matters, it's the courage that you bring to it." His challenge to students, "Don't love me, love my teachings. Become ten times greater than me."

Although Yogi Bhajan has left his physical form, he asked that his students and those who knew him celebrate his Homecoming. The light of his spiritual essence continues to bless all those whom he loved, and that is the entire human race.

He is survived by his wife, children, five grandchildren and all those in his 3HO and Sikh Dharma families.

In accordance with Sikh tradition, and his wishes, cremation will take place at Berardinelli's Family Funeral Services at **1:00 PM Saturday October 9th**, at 1399 Luisa Street Santa Fe, NM 87505. During the weekend of October 23rd we will be holding a memorial service for Yogi Bhajan in Espanola, New Mexico. Everyone is invited to join us. Other memorial services will be held throughout the world in his honor. Visit: <http://www.sikhnet.com/YogiBhajan> for up to date information, or call (505) 367-1688.

If you would like to leave a message for Yogi Bhajan's family or staff please call 505-367-1661, or send email to ybmemorial@sikhdharm.org.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to:

"Kundalini Research Institute" for the Library of the Teachings of Yogi Bhajan,
P.O. Box 249,
Santa Cruz, NM 87567
USA