



Messenger from  
the Guru's House

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# MESSENGER FROM THE GURU'S HOUSE

The Life and Legacy of Siri Singh Sahib  
Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji  
Panth Rattan "Yogi Bhajan"

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# MESSENGER FROM THE GURU'S HOUSE

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One who understands the Lord, keeps their awareness in check.  
The actions of the knower of the One, are saintly and good.  
Nanak proclaims, the whole world is in awe of the one who realizes their Lord.

from the sacred *Sukhmani*, written by Guru Arjun



## Introduction: The Guru's House

The word "Sikh" was first coined by various people in the fifteenth century of our era to describe those individuals who had been infected by the buoyant spirit of a divinely inspired soul named Nanak. The life of a Sikh was minted by Nanak himself.

This Nanak travelled far and wide through the further reaches of the world of his day. Some speculate he ventured to the East as far as China. There are also those who insist Nanak was sighted in Budapest. What we know for certain is that the great saint's inspired Verses, of which there are many, are endowed with the dialects and vocabularies of a host of countries and regions other than his native Punjab.

So, while Columbus was setting out westward in search of the fabled land of the Indus and Martin Luther was defying the authority of the Pope, while the Turks were besieging Vienna and Ivan the Great's Muscovites were repelling the armies of the Khan of the Golden Horde, while the shogun of Japan was kowtowing to the Chinese emperor in the East, and Babur's Moghuls were invading India from the North, even as Vasco da Gama's seamen were pillaging its western ports, Nanak was encouraging people everywhere to live in peace and dignity, and to aspire to the highest human possibility.

Through much of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Nepal, and Bangladesh, temples still stand as reminders of Nanak's sojourns there. There are also historical accounts that say that he stopped over in Sri Lanka, and journeyed to Mecca, returning by way of the Asian hinterland, passing through the ancient cities of Samarkhand and Bukhara, visiting also the mountain kingdom of Tibet. By any account, Nanak was a well-travelled man for his time, considering especially that he journeyed with just one companion, on foot.

Nanak was so loved and admired by people that they gave him titles of respect in accord with their various traditions. In the western, predominantly Muslim, lands he visited, he was called "Pir". In the East, he was named "Guru". For the sake of simplicity and respect, we will call him Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak saw that everywhere he went people were suffering in one way or another. He told the people there was no need for them to live in pain. Most of them, he found lacked an appreciation of the impact of their own ways of thinking, communicating, and behaving on their ultimate happiness. They also did not realize the profound goodness alive right in their hearts.

Rather than waiting for someone to give them some secret initiation, instead of going on pilgrimages to distant lands, or just hoping for a miracle; rather than becoming lost in pointless rituals, or waiting for the parting of the heavens, or for some superhuman avatar to come and save them,

Guru Nanak taught if people wanted to be truly happy and fulfilled, they needed to initiate themselves into the truth of who and what they really are.

How? Guru Nanak taught his Sikhs to rise and bathe in the dark hours before the dawn, when hope normally escapes a man, and to meditate on the profound meaning of life and on the goodness and greatness inherent in every living being.

Then, with the arrival of dawn, he instructed them to sing and celebrate each new day and practise living in a spirit of courage and compassion, recognising each moment as a priceless gift from an ever-present Creator. Ultimately, Guru Nanak taught there was no qualitative difference between a self-realised person and Almighty God.

Some people thought the Guru's teachings were pretty far-fetched. Some considered his ideas heretical. A few thought he had lost his mind. But there were also people who recognised the beauty in what Guru Nanak was saying. And everyone could see that, day by day, the Guru and the people who believed in what he said were just getting happier and happier, and wiser and wiser, and more and more distinctive and inspired in their ways.

Out of all the Guru's followers, one man stood out from the rest. He practised Guru Nanak's teachings without fail. Year by year, this singular disciple just grew happier and happier, and more and more fulfilled, helpful, and carefree.

One day, when Guru Nanak had become quite old, he announced to his gathered Sikhs that he would not be remaining with them much longer in his familiar form. Rather, he said, they should recognise that he also lived in this one most excellent Sikh. This student had so readily and perfectly adopted Guru Nanak's teachings that, aside from physical details, there was no distinguishing between them. They were of one mind, one heart, and one being.

When Guru Nanak was no more, this Guru Angad ("Angad" meaning a limb or extension) continued to serve humanity in the enlightened tradition of his Master. Rather than travelling, he settled in the town of Goindwal, in the northwest of India, not far from the present-day border with Pakistan.

In effect, a holy lineage had been established. So it was that, for some hundred and sixty-nine years, the light of Guru Nanak lived on in a succession of the kindest and most compassionate of Sikhs.

Much happened in that time. Traditions evolved. Places of worship were built. The Guru's Divine Songs were played and sung. People were counselled and inspired. The community grew.

The fourth Guru in this lineage was a special case. While he was still a child, his parents both passed away, leaving him in the care of his grandmother, a woman of very modest means. Despite his



humble circumstances, the boy excelled. Under the tutelage of the third Guru, his heart opened. His mind was awakened. Distinguished by his kindness and wisdom, he became the Guru.

Guru Ram Das established a town named Amritsar around a sacred pool of healing water. In that pool, his son would eventually build the Golden Temple, the most famous Gurdwara (literally "Guru's door") of the Sikhs. Significantly, the cornerstone was not laid by the Guru or by any Sikh. It was laid by a Muslim saint named Mian Mir, at the Guru's invitation.

The fifth Guru, Guru Arjun went on to compile the inspired Hymns of his four predecessors, together with his own and the Divine Songs of several Hindu and Muslim saints, all in one large Volume, for the enlightenment of the whole of humanity. Those Holy Verses collected together came to be known as the "Granth Sahib".

As it happened, the fifth Guru, a true creative genius, an inspired poet and a musician of the highest order, also became the first Sikh martyr. His body was burned and tortured for five days and nights at the command of the Mughal emperor before it gave up his spirit in the waters of the River Ravi.

From that day forward, the Guru's Sikhs knew they had to prepare themselves for any eventuality. They loved to live as saints, but if necessary, they needed to be ready to die for the sake of what was good and wholesome and right.

Guru Arjun was not to be the only martyr in the short history of the Sikhs. Clouds of religious intolerance swarmed with increasing persistence around the bigoted Mughal raj. An ultimatum was issued to the Hindu priests of Kashmir: If they did not renounce their faith, after six weeks they would be put to death. Finding nowhere else to turn, these wise and religious men came to the ninth successor to the holy throne of Guru Nanak.

Guru Tegh Bahadur offered to intercede on their behalf, "If the mighty emperor can convince me to give up living as a Sikh of Guru Nanak, then all Hindus should follow my example and adopt the emperor's religion. If, however, using all the means at his disposal, he cannot convert me, then the Hindus should be allowed to retain their customary faith." The ambitious emperor gladly agreed, but despite every torment and torture, a Gurdwara now stands where Guru Tegh Bahadur willingly gave his head to defend the religious freedom of all humanity.

The sky continued to darken over the Mughal raj. In his thirty-fourth year, the tenth Master of the Sikhs called together his devoted Sikhs in an isolated, hilly encampment, safe from the attacks of the emperor's army. At Anandpur, he set a new standard and moulded a new identity for the fledgling Sikh Nation.

The Guru taught that it was far better to die as a hero than to live as a sneak and a coward. He graphically confronted his Sikhs with their fear of death. The five who rose to the Guru's challenge were the first entrants into the new Order of Khalsa.

These Khalsa were to be distinguished by their physical appearance. Like their Guru and so many saints and sages before them, they were to keep their hair long and unshorn. They were also to keep with them a wooden comb, and use it to gather their hair up each morning. During the day, they were to wear a regal-looking turban. Then, at night, they were to comb out their hair before sleeping. They were to wear modest-looking, baggy underpants. They were to keep a sword, and when there was no reasonable alternative, they were to use it to defend the weak and innocent from the transgressions of the unkind. They were also to wear a distinctive steel bangle around their wrist.

The members of the new Order were to live as saint-soldiers. They were to renounce meat and intoxicants, adultery and hair-cutting. They were to rise early to meditate on the Creator and be always ready to lend a helping hand to those in need.

Before he left this mortal world, Guru Gobind Singh instructed his Sikhs that he would ever be with them in the spirit of Khalsa and in the "Word", the Holy Granth Sahib compiled by the fifth Guru.

In those early days, the fledgling Khalsa withstood the genocidal measures of the Mughal power, a vast civilization extending from Mongolia to the shores of Spain. A large bounty was placed on every longhaired Khalsa head. There were hardships and holocausts. Survivors were reduced to living in deserts, swamps, and wastelands where no one else would go. Though the numbers of Khalsa were reduced, they lived undaunted, thankful, and ever alive to the shining prospects of the human possibility.

For some decades, there was turmoil in the land as the Mughal Empire fell to ruin. Nine times, powerful armies came out of Iran to ravage the towns and cities of Northern India. Finally, the Sikh tribes rose out of their strongholds in the wilderness and secured the Sikh homeland. They struck coins in the name of Guru Nanak and established a nation of their own.

For about fifty years, the Sikhs ruled an independent kingdom. It consisted of most of present-day Pakistan and Kashmir, parts of northwest India, Afghanistan and Tibet. Their rule was fair and just. The government gave financial support to every community - Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh - for the establishment and maintenance of their holy shrines and temples.

The Sikh state employed the veterans of Napoleon's Grande Armée to train the Khalsa army in European ways of weaponry and warfare. Frenchmen, Spaniards, Austrians, Italians, Hungarians, Russians, even Irish and Americans all served in the Khalsa army. Though it was feared, the Khalsa army was also respected for its fighting discipline. It did not indulge in the customary excesses of war. The enemy's women and children were safe from them. Soldiers who surrendered on the battlefield were spared.

After a time, the officers of the expanding British Empire cast their covetous eyes on the harmonious kingdom of the Sikhs. Having divided and conquered virtually the whole Indian subcontinent, their agents set about sowing strife and dissension in the Sikh homeland.

British intrigue and provocations led to two Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845-6 and 1847-8). The Khalsa army fought bravely. Once, in the heat of battle, the disheartened English governor-general prepared to surrender his army to the Sikhs. Another time, a contingent of badly mauled British soldiers waited hopelessly for the Khalsa army to arrive and deliver them from their agony.

However, fate was kind to the English. Eventually, the army of the Sikhs surrendered to them, submitting the heartland of Guru Nanak to the predations of the British Empire.

This is the setting where this true tale begins. Punjab, the "land of five rivers", is the traditional homeland of Guru Nanak and the other Sikh Gurus. In 1929, the year in which Harbhajan Singh was born, it was still a land possessed and obsessed by a foreign power, a European power.

By then, many thousands of Sikhs had already applied their activist spirits to the campaign of non-violent resistance that would eventually force the British to give up their most prized colonial possession. Yet, despite their progressive political thinking, the Sikhs were hardly forthcoming in sharing their greatest gift, the spiritual legacy of the House of Guru Nanak.

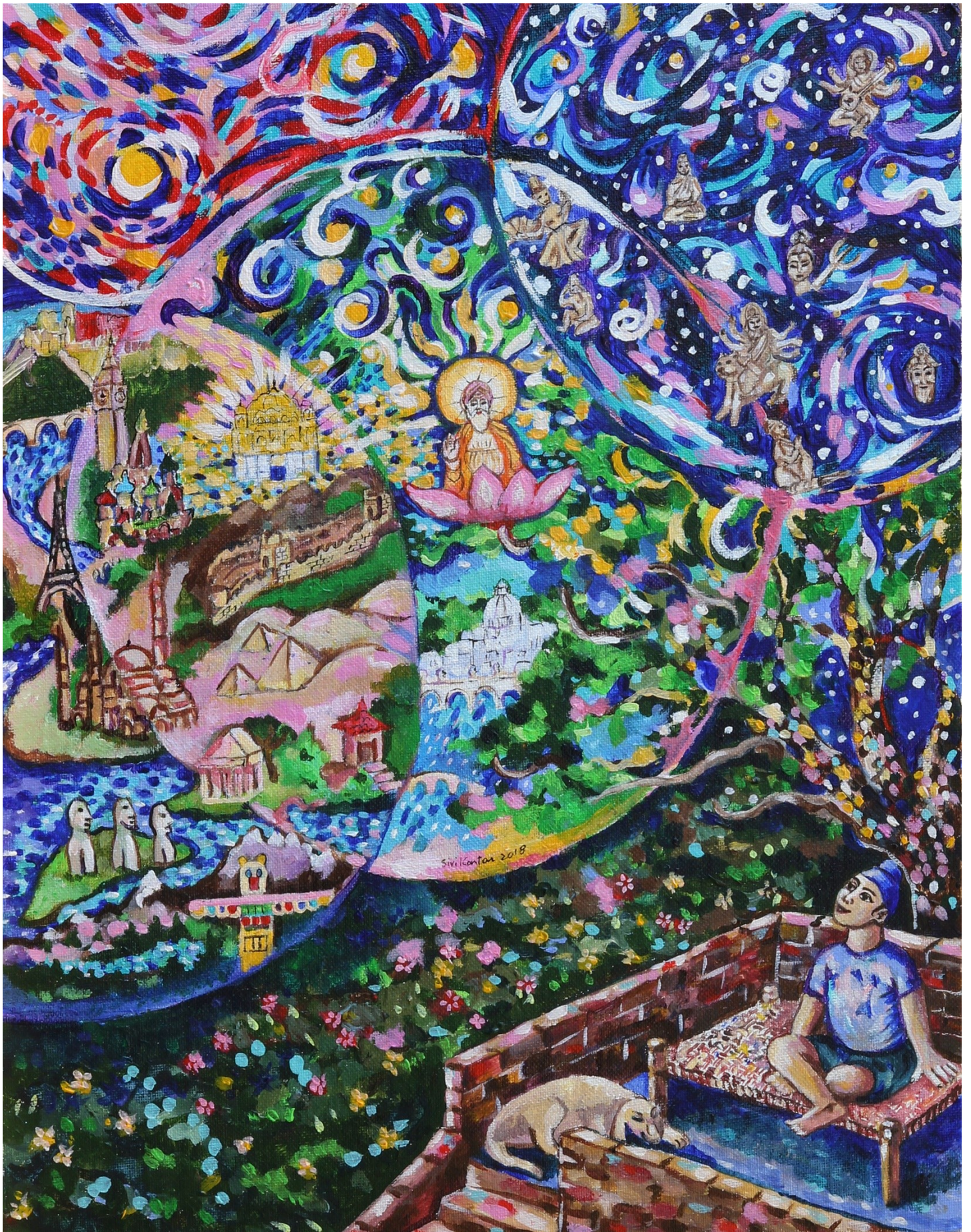
While they had boldly established a Sikh Missionary College in Amritsar right under the noses of the imperial British, there were in fact never any missionaries trained there. In truth, the teachings of Guru Nanak had not been propagated for two hundred years. The empowering technology of meditation in which the Guru had excelled, had fallen into general disuse.

Those Sikhs who went abroad at that time did so either in the service of the Mother Empire or for the sake of worldly gain. The notion of teaching Sikh dharma in America or Europe, for Americans and Europeans, never occurred to the expatriate Sikhs. In fact, secular Western influence was so dominant that many emigrants found it difficult to maintain their distinct turbaned identity once they left the Sikh homeland.

That such a man as Harbhajan Singh should, with his Guru's timely assistance, expand Guru Nanak's domain to include people of an amazing assortment of cultures, languages and nationalities, is the essence of this true tale. Thanks to the farsightedness and sacrifice of this Harbhajan Singh, this Yogi Bhajan, this Siri Singh Sahib, and his long decades of messengering, marshalling, teaching, inspiring, and smiling through every trial and hardship, it is possible that this great tale of spiritual awakening has only just begun.











# PART ONE

## GETTING HERE

### Beginnings

Harbhajan Singh entered this world as the answer to a fervent prayer. His family had longed for a male heir for over twenty-five years. His parents had vowed to visit the shrine of Vaishno Devi, high in the Himalayas, in thanks at the fortuitous possibility of his birth.

So it was that in the village of Kot Harkarn, in the district of Gujranwala in present-day Pakistan, where centuries before the Sikh heroes Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa had taken birth, at sunset on August 26, 1929, a child was born. Within days, the infant Harbhajan was strapped to the chest of his father, Dr. Kartar Singh Puri, and together with his mother, named Leela Wanti at birth and Harkrishan Kaur at marriage, they set out on the difficult journey to the mountain pilgrimage site.

From such an arduous and prayerful beginning, some might intuit the early foundations of a devout and strenuous life. Given the extent of the impact of Harbhajan Singh's adult life in distant lands, some might also conclude that his birth was more than an answer to one family's desperate plea for an heir, but the response to a bleeding humanity's cry for a spiritual guide and master.

### Sky

Little Harbhajan Singh liked to climb up to the roof on the topmost story of his family home. From there, he would see far out in every direction - the dry, rolling hills, the fertile plains, the distant, rising mountains. He liked the perspective in his lofty perch, high above the busy people, the lowing beasts and bristling landscape. It gave him a vision above and beyond the typical cadences of time and space, a sense of immortality, a cosmic dimension – something beautiful, vast, and ever present.

Some nights, little Harbhajan would look way out at the stars and space, so far, so near, so all-enfolding. He would wonder about times and distances long ago and far away. He would sit and imagine he was old - very, very old.

One day, some important British people came to call at Harbhajan's house, so a servant went to fetch the precious three-year-old from his favorite hide-away. One of the booted and hatted callers thought they would indulge the intelligent-looking youngster, his family's pride and joy.

"*Kaakaa, toosee kithay luk ho-ay see?*" the Englishman asked affectionately in fairly fluent Punjabi.

"I wasn't hiding. I was upstairs, looking out from the upper story."

"Could you see far away? Could you catch a glimpse of the Tower of London?"

"No, but in the sky I saw many stars and distant worlds. They are most wonderful and amazing to see, and much farther than your England. Sometimes I watch the sky from the upper story. It can be bright blue or red. Other times, at night, it is very dark. Sometimes it is clear. At other times it is cloudy. Still it is the same sky, day or night, here or there. It is the same wherever we are."

"Quite so! Quite right you are, young man!" The officer paused, and then remarked to his companions and the others gathered around, "You know - mark my words - one day this child will be a big one."

"What do you mean?" asked young Harbhajan.

"Well, my lad, the imagination you have is not the imagination of an ordinary person. You see, the reach of a person's imagination stakes out the ground of what they are to be, and even I cannot imagine as you do."

## **What Makes a Person Great**

Once, Harbhajan was walking with his grandfather and he asked him, "Grandpa, why do people bow to you?"

"They bow because I am a great man."

"What makes you great? You are no taller than anybody else in the village."

"No. Height doesn't make people great."

"Then what makes you great? Do you have a lot of money?"

"No. A lot of people have more money than I do."

"You wear good clothes."

"No, no, no!"



"You are an old man and you look good."

"No. No. No. That's not it."

They sat down by a little stream. Harbhajan asked, "Why don't you tell me what makes you a great man?"

"Bhajan, greatness only comes to those people who serve other people truthfully. By serving other people truthfully you will become great. It may hurt you while you are serving, but later on, other people will recognize that you have done a truthful service, and they will respect you. And once people know that you have no axe to grind, but just want to serve people truthfully, you will become a great person. And if you want to perform the greatest service, don't let anybody be hurt by his ignorance. That is the highest truthful service you can do."

### **Life Is Not Yours**

Bhai Fateh Singh would often sit and discuss things with his young grandson. He instructed young Harbhajan in the virtue of renouncing one's animal nature while one is still young: "Of what value is it for the toothless wolf to boast 'I am a vegetarian!' when he has actually lost all his teeth and grown too old to hunt?"

Another time, Harbhajan asked, "Grandpa, why do people suffer?"

His grandfather could only laugh in reply.

"You know, I am serious! Why do people suffer?" continued the earnest young man.

Bhai Fateh Singh laughed even louder, then replied, "So we can laugh at our sufferings. God sent us to be here and he gave us the privilege to kid around with the suffering and then go back to God. That's all. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand it, but how do you live it?"

"You don't live, you ego-centric kid! God makes you live. The day you will live, you will be in trouble. Life is not yours. It was given to you. Don't be a thief! Don't steal it away. The One Who gave it to you, remember Him all the time. He gave you the life. Don't you know that?"

And from that time on, Harbhajan knew.

## The Great Rishi

Bhai Fateh Singh had an open heart and an open mind, and in his home he would regularly entertain men of divine knowledge and devotion. Naturally, little Harbhajan, the pride of the household, was privy to their meetings and discussions. Even if he only understood a bit, still he could sense something good and something important was going on. He could sense and share somewhat his grandfather's appreciation of his saintly guests.

One day, a great *rishi* arrived. Harbhajan's grandfather and the whole family received him with exceptional warmth and hospitality. Little Harbhajan could feel there was something special in the air. He had never seen anybody quite like the *rishi* with his ochre robes and white beard, his smiling face and sparkling eyes.

After a prayer had been said and a meal shared with the whole family, the visiting sage and Harbhajan's grandfather spent a long time in a wide-ranging discussion about God and His manifestations according to the philosophies of East and West. There was such a warmth and love, such a depth of understanding joining the two men that Harbhajan, not yet four years old, could not resist snuggling onto Bhai Fateh Singh's great chest to absorb by osmosis that what his mind could not yet comprehend. And he lay there quietly for a long time, happily transfixed by the warmth, the love, the wisdom, the familiar and the as-not-yet-familiar, until he merged there, curled under his grandpa's beard, into the great mystery, the universal solvent of slumber.

## If God Comes

Harbhajan was as curious about the world's goings on as his grandfather was wise. Their on-going dialogue sustained an expanding awareness.

"Grandpa, why are the mountains so high? How did they become high?"

"What's the difficulty about it? You can read geography and you can know why they are high, but you ask me the question! God made them high. That's all it is."

"God made these mountains high, and God made the ocean deep?"

"Do you think anybody else has the time to work these wonders. Other than God, nobody takes care of anybody."

Once, in a distant village, somebody was murdered and they had to go to the funeral. While coming back, Harbhajan Singh asked, "Why was this man killed?"

"They just forgot God."

His grandfather's belief that everything was because of God was so complete and uncompromised, that Harbhajan began to believe it also. One day, his grandfather said to him, "Bhajan, you are the Divine Song. You are the "Bhajan" of "Har". You don't have to remember anything else."

Early one morning, they went together to the Gurdwara. They walked outside to the well to bathe their bodies. Then they sat down, and the elder recited his *Nitnem* as Harbhajan listened. Then, the younger said his *Nitnem* as his grandfather listened. Between them, despite the difference in their ages, there was an uncommon bond of familiarity and respect.

Then the two of them dressed themselves. That day, his grandfather corrected Harbhajan's cummerbund. It had been a little crooked. He held one end of that length of cloth and Harbhajan turned around and around and around. He made certain that there was a perfectly equal distance between one pleat and the next one.

Young Harbhajan asked, "Grandpa, does the Guru see this?"

He answered, "Yes, *Angsang Waheguru*. Guru in you is seeing how you are preparing and Guru outside is watching how you look, and how finally you come out."

He continued, "You know, my child, we go to Gurdwara much differently than we go to church or a mosque. They may be located in the same place, but I want to teach you the difference today. In a mosque, you go and then pray. In a temple, you go before the facet of God and then you pray. But, you do not go to the Gurdwara to pray."

Harbhajan was stunned by his grandfather's words. He said, "My God, I have been going to Gurdwara all these times to do the prayer before the Guru! Isn't Siri Guru Granth Sahib our Guru, and are we not going to pray before him.?"

"No."

"Grandpa, if Santji will hear you, I think he will punish you."

"Well, what I am telling you, I'll tell you, and when Santji comes next time, you tell him, because he has to learn a lot of things through you."

"Really? But you respect him so much."

"Yes. I respect him, and I teach him through you."

"Alright... let me learn now. Now, what do you want to say to me?"

"Look, Bhajan, when a Sikh goes to the Gurdwara, he goes to offer himself. Guru Gobind Singh did not give us the *Amrit* as the first thing when we gave him the head. He first gave us the *Bana*. *Amrit* was given later. He glorified the man into Godhood. This is the day of offering, when we go to the Gurdwara. We offer our beings, offer ourselves, then we listen to the Word of the Guru. In Gurdwara, we don't go to offer the prayer. In the Gurdwara, we receive! It is a selfish thing. In Gurdwara, we feel the blessing of the bliss."

His grandfather continued, "Suppose just now God appears to you right this minute, Almighty God, whatever you imagine about him. What will you ask him?"

Harbhajan responded, "Nothing."

"Well, what will you do?"

"I haven't figured it out yet."

"Well, that is my problem! My grandson has not figured out if Almighty God comes to him, he doesn't know, as the Prince of Wales, what to do. I'm a very sad man."

Harbhajan offered, "Well, I'll bless him!"

"That's it! You should have said it the first time! One thing to being a Sikh of the Guru is, if God comes before you, immediately bless Him and tell Him 'Go and work elsewhere. I'm okay.' Once you have come to the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, the rule is to stop seeking."

His grandfather's teaching struck at the core of Harbhajan's being. Through thick and through thin, it was a lesson he would never forget.

## Pressure

As he matured, young Harbhajan could sense the demands of a great spiritual legacy resting ever more firmly on his shoulders. He confided in his grandfather, "Grandpa, there is a tremendous pressure."

Bhai Fateh Singh took a moment and replied, "Yeah, that pressure will make a crystal out of you. Then time will cut you, and destiny will shine you, and you will become a star."

## The Holy Gathering

One day, little Harbhajan witnessed a gathering of holy men in his village. Though he could not fathom their differing philosophies, Harbhajan could tell they were men of God by their clothes and the way they acted and spoke. They were having a big and lively discussion. "But what are they saying?" wondered Harbhajan.

Just then, Harbhajan Singh's grandfather arrived, and humbly and affectionately greeted the saintly men, old friends and acquaintances of his, each by turn, until he had acknowledged every one.

After making his rounds, grandpa sat down amidst his fellows and assumed a meditative pose, his eyes closed, hands deliberately folded in his lap. All around the room, the men of God, one by one, took up similar postures. Each in their way assumed a silently meditative mood.

For a long time, not another word was said as they all entered a peaceful, enchanted reverie. That spell continued for hours. Fascinated, Harbhajan quietly drifted in and out of that gathering of saints for much of the afternoon.

Finally, when the sun started to reach toward the horizon, Harbhajan's grandfather took a deep breath, stretched his arms and legs, and stood tall again. Everyone else did the same. Once again, his grandfather made his way around the gathering of holy men, this time bidding each of them farewell. Finally, he took little Harbhajan by the hand and together they began to make their way home for the evening.

Harbhajan was bursting with questions. "Grandpa, what were they discussing?"

"They were trying to figure out God."

"But when you came, nobody spoke!"

"When I came," explained his grandfather, "I paid them respect and they understood God has no form except in everybody's heart. Then we all went and meditated and enjoyed it. But now it is our duty to go home and do the work."

"What work do we have to do now?" asked Harbhajan.

"Now it is our duty to recite *Rehiraas*."

"Why did you not recite *Rehiraas* there?"

"It is my duty to the family," answered Harbhajan's wise grandfather. "I will recite *Rehiraas*. You will listen to it. Everybody will listen to it. And our friends will listen wherever they are."

## The Job of a Woman

Bibi Ishar Kaur, Harbhajan's father's mother, had seen much in her long lifetime. Since she had been a girl, much of her experience had revolved around the daily routines of the kitchen. Over time, she had become expert in those routines. Typically, delicious food was made and everyone was fed without incident. Bibi Ishar Kaur however also remembered the mischief of Kartar Singh, Harbhajan's father, when he had been a boy.

Without his mother's knowledge, young Kartar had learned a mantra giving him control over the element of fire. One day, as his mother was preparing breakfast, he said, "I want food now so I can go early."

Kartar's mother was not about to agree. Breakfast had a protocol and everyone was to be served in their turn. In her kitchen, there would be no special deals. "No," she said, "you will eat last."

Her son was not pleased. He grumbled something under his breath and slipped off to school.

Bibi Ishar Kaur continued with making breakfast... but breakfast would not be made. The dough was pressed into *rotis* and ready to cook. The fire was there to brown them... but nothing happened. There was no browning or cooking happening at all.

Kartar's mother reflected on the strange situation. Finally, she said to herself, "Aha, Kartar, you did it! Now I understand you." She then went to school and brought her son home. Unfortunately, young Kartar had forgotten the mantra to reverse the situation.

Bibi Ishar Kaur told her son to tell her where he had learned the mantra and he told her the name of the pandit who had taught it to him. After she had punished him, they went to reckon with the pundit. That was long ago.

Harbhajan Singh's paternal grandmother was a gracious influence in his early life. Her wisdom was as nurturing as the food she prepared for the family each day. Bibi Ishar Kaur's routine was that every morning, she would rise at 3:00 a.m., take her bath, and recite her Nitnem. By 4:30, she would be all finished. Then she would begin to churn yogurt, chanting "*Sat Nam Waheguru*" all the while.

By 6:00 a.m., she would have prepared a tasty breakfast of fresh butter, buttermilk, and chapatis. At that time, the children would gather around, and their grandmother would ask them each to recite a verse of *Japji Sahib* before enjoying the tasty results of her handiwork.

Once, Harbhajan said to her, "Grandma, any time I see you doing any kind of work, you are always chanting."

She replied, "Well, grandson, women are meant to purify and sanctify everything on this

Earth. Everything which women touch becomes divine, and the only way to make something divine is to sanctify it with the Word of the Guru, so that it becomes pure, it becomes healthy, it becomes ever-living."

Like most young children, young Harbhajan had a soft spot right beneath his ribs, and his grandmother learned to use it to good advantage. For his part, at the age of three, her eldest grandson was typically self-centered. He would insist on being fed first. Whenever she gave the children freshly-made bread with butter and raw sugar crumbled over it, he would also demand his grandmother say a prayer while she put it on. If she didn't, Harbhajan Singh was liable to create a big disturbance. Then he wouldn't eat.

Harbhajan's sweet, divine grandmother had a special method of dealing with him. She would give him his chapati with a big piece of butter on top before the other children were served, and she would pray over it as well, but then she would hold out a handful of sugar candy and say, "Now you do your prayer, and when I am satisfied, I'll give this to you."

Her grandson would be dying to dig into that big, fresh, sweet chapati, but to get the candy, she would make him recite *Gurbani* for fifteen to twenty minutes. By the time he opened his eyes, the others would all be eating their food. Despite his young age, Harbhajan Singh's grandmother was already training him in the spiritual art of self-restraint.

Being the wife of the man who was head of the village, Bibi Ishar Kaur commanded the respect of all the people of that region. In fact, she had a gift for dealing with people. Recognizing that talent, her husband's family allowed her to rule the family's extensive domain without interference. People came to her from miles around to share their griefs and grievances.

Harbhajan studied how his grandmother always sat and listened attentively, no matter who had come or what was the situation. She never became upset or spoke about anyone in their absence. Once, he asked her, "Grandma, how do you decide everything so it is always right?"

She replied, "I decide things in the light of truth. I never decide things for my own personal gain or loss. This is what is expected of a human being."

Bibi Ishar Kaur was so well loved and respected that people would love to take any opportunity of serving her. Most of all, they would dread the prospect of being brought before her to be judged. People did not fear Harbhajan's grandmother because her judgements were severe. They were not. People just feared that they might die of embarrassment before that angel of a woman.

Despite her great authority in her community, Bibi Ishar Kaur did not issue abundant orders and directives. In reality, she hardly spoke at all and when she did, she was very soft-spoken.

Harbhajan was in awe of his dear grandmother. He was amazed at how the rudest of adversaries

could come into her presence and know the path to resolution without her uttering a word. She would say to Harbhajan, "If the presence doesn't work, then words are empty."

His grandmother so impressed Harbhajan that he once said to her, "Grandma, if somebody wants to know how peace lives, they should come and see you."

All the same, the children of the village sometimes liked to tease Bibi Ishar Kaur. They would say to her, "What was that, Grandma? What did you say?" And she would respond ever-so-softly. And the children would continue, "We can't hear you. Did you hear what grandma said? Grandma, what did you say?" After a couple of rounds of this, she would completely ignore them and not even murmur a response.

One day when the children were being very noisy, yelling and shouting too much, grandma went indoors and made a paste of butter and raw sugar. Everybody received a big glob of sweetness right in their mouth. That was the extent of her punishment.

Another day, the children forced a neighbour's son to come before Harbhajan's grandma. He had been very rude and abusive to someone. This time, she had a pot of fresh butter. She said to the boy, "Do you abuse others through this mouth? Open it!" When he opened it, she put a big ball of that butter right into his mouth, and that was it. Bibi Ishar Kaur liked to treat people's infractions with kindness. Kindness was her treatment.

Once, there was a man in the village having some kind of mental fit. He was yelling and screaming and kicking and punching wildly. People tied him up and put a cloth over his mouth, but he still yelled through the cloth. Finally, a doctor was called and the man was taken to hospital to be injected with morphine to make him sleep. That worked for a time, but as soon as the morphine wore off, he was a terrible as ever.

After the fourth or fifth day, the responsible people told the man, "You are going to *Mataji*," meaning Harbhajan's grandmother. The moment the man heard, he started to calm down. Finally, they tied his hands and brought him into her presence.

Everyone bowed down out of respect, except the man who was made to sit in a chair. Bibi Ishar Kaur, this frail old lady, spoke kindly to him, "Why are you doing this?"

The man looked as though he were in ecstasy as she spoke to him. After five minutes, he replied, "I am sorry. I will not do it again."

The village matriarch addressed those who had brought him, "Why did you tie him up? Let him be free."

Once he had been untied, Bibi Ishar Kaur offered the man a lassi and said, "Son, drink it. You



need rest and peace. May peace be with you!" The man recovered and never returned in that condition again.

Another time, a man came who was experiencing a lot of difficulty. He came with an axe in his hand, and he said, "My neighbour cut off my water! He has been harassing and abusing me for too long. Now, I am going to go and chop off his head! I have just come to inform you."

Calmly and quietly, she replied, "Is that so? Don't do it!"

"Okay Ma," he said, "if you say so, but you'll take care of it, won't you?"

Very politely, she replied, "Forgive us. It will all be taken care of." Then, she called the *munshee*, the record keeper. She said, "Did you hear him?"

He said, "Yes."

"Take care of it."

"He has no right! We gave him this. We gave him that. He blew this up. He's ruined this. He's spoiled this." There was a long list of his negligence.

She said again, "Take care of it." It meant she wanted him to go and do it.

Harbhajan watched the *munshee* go to the man and say, "You son of a so-and-so! You idiot! You go and you think you can get anything. This is ridiculous! We gave you everything, and you blew it up! Now you are coming to her."

The man looked at the *munshee* and said, "Yeah, we have a very divine woman as head of this land. Don't tell me. Go and tell her."

They talked some more, and finally the *munshee* said, "Yeah, I'll give it to you, but the next time you come, I'll see you're hung upside down!"

"No, you won't."

"Why not?"

"She won't let you. I know."

Afterwards, Harbhajan asked the *munshee* why people sometimes messed things up.

The *munshee* simply said, "Sometimes they do."

Later on, Harbhajan Singh asked, "Grandma, tell me why is it that people who do wrong can be served again and again, even with as many wrongs as they do?"

She said, "Did you read your *Japji* today?"

"Yes, I read it in the morning. You know we don't get breakfast if we don't read it. Remember?"

She said, "You didn't read it today. Come with me." So he went, and they sat down, and she said, "Read it now." After he had read the whole of *Japji*, she said, "Did you read "*Daydaa day lainday thak paahay. Jugaa jugantar khahee khahay. Hukamee hukam chalaay raah. Naanak vigasai vayparvaah.*" Did you read that?"

"Yes."

"Do you understand the meaning of it?"

"Yes. God gives and gives. We take and get tired of taking, but that carefree One of all gives and gives and gives."

"That's it! *Vandh chako!* Share with others! Give others love, kindness, smiles. Give, don't take!"

## Greater Than God

Harbhajan Singh's grandparents had a refined and subtle form of communication. Without speaking, they seemed to understand each other perfectly well. Their grandson hardly even saw them speak.

Once, young Harbhajan was waiting for his grandpa to come home, thinking they would have something to eat. Normally, he would go for a walk, then come home at eleven-thirty to eat. This time, when he came home, grandmother did not serve him anything. He never asked. She never bothered.

Harbhajan Singh asked his grandmother, "Isn't grandpa going to eat today?"

"No, he's not hungry."

"Why not?"

"I think he's not feeling well."

"How do you know?"

"Don't talk to me. I just know. You go ask him."

So he went and asked, "Grandpa, are you not going to eat?"

"No, I'm not hungry. I'm not feeling good."

"That's what grandma said!"

"Well, she knows."

When Harbhajan Singh was the ripe age of four, his grandfather said to him, "Will you have a goal in your life?"

"What do you mean, grandpa?"

"Everyone must have a goal, something they work to achieve or become. Without a goal to work towards, and without reaching that goal, a person cannot be happy."

"Grandpa, what is the secret of it?"

"Imagine and reach for the highest. It should be so high that even God should imagine He's one degree below that. This is what is humanly possible. Then a person has to try and achieve it."

"And what if we can't make it?"

"The secret is, then God himself makes it in your body."

Afterwards, Harbhajan Singh asked permission to go and eat. Then, he found his grandmother and began to ask her questions. What he really hoped was that he might provoke his grandma to fight his grandpa, because he could not believe anything might be bigger than God.

"Grandma, answer me one thing. Can anybody imagine something more than God?"

"Yes," she said.

"What is it?"

"A graceful woman."

"What do you mean? How can a woman be bigger than God? Isn't God bigger than anything?"

"Do you know Guru Nanak?"

"Yes, he's my Guru."

"It was some graceful woman who was blessed to give birth to him. Whenever the Mother Earth thirsts for dignity, divinity and grace, it is a woman who becomes blessed to bear in her womb a saint, hero or giver to uplift the humanity and take them through the challenge of the times. Mother is everyone's first teacher, and without a graceful woman to inspire goodness and loving kindness, there could never be any incarnations of God. God would never take a human form. This is why I say a graceful woman is greater still than God."

## The Performer

Harbhajan was not a great student in school, but in Gurdwara, he was a star performer. Sometimes a neighbour would drop by his house and ask, "Hey Bhajan, have you done your school work today?"

Harbhajan Singh would reply, "No, I didn't do it. I came late from the playground. I'll do it tomorrow."

"No, no, not tomorrow. Do it tonight. Tomorrow you have to go to Gurdwara. Remember?"

"Oh yeah, tomorrow is Gurdwara! Thanks for telling me."

Harbhajan would then quickly finish his schoolwork. Afterwards, he would begin to visualize and prepare himself for the next day's Gurdwara. Harbhajan would imagine what he would wear, what he would do, how he would sit, behave, and appear - all so that when the *Prashaad* man came he would give him a lot.

The next day, Harbhajan Singh would enter the Gurdwara so diligently and bow in front of Guru Granth Sahib in such an artistic and dramatic manner that it attracted everyone's attention. All the while, Harbhajan was thinking, "God knows who is going to distribute the *Prashaad* today, so let everyone meditatively watch me and see that I am a very, very good boy."

Next, having bowed to his Guru, he would turn with his hands folded and bow his head to the congregation, thinking, "Don't forget me when you give *Prashaad*!" Then, Harbhajan would look around the congregation to find a good Gursikh with a long beard to sit beside. He knew very well that some of these holy men were not supposed to take much sugar, so they would share their

*Prashaad*. After that, he would pretend to meditate. Harbhajan did not yet know what meditation was, but he copied his pose from the pictures he had seen, and he would practise sitting as a saint among saints.

Moreover, when the server came to give him *Prashaad*, Harbhajan Singh would deliberately not open his eyes and raise his hands to ask for it - all so the server might give him more *Prashaad* than otherwise. And it worked!

Harbhajan was very much an expert at this art, and it would serve him well later in his life, when he would say to people, "Fake it, you'll make it!" Anyone who one-pointedly adapts an attitude and aptitude which is divine - it does not matter who they are or where they have come from - the Guru's Blessing, or *Prashaad*, will surely come to them, and they will automatically be holy.

## The Sweetness Within

As he was growing, Harbhajan was fortunate to have a kind and appreciative nanny. She happened to be Welsh, but her manner and her personality were such that she had made herself an integral part of the Puri household. She took care of many of the daily details of Harbhajan's life, his diet, his clothes, his routine. Since he had been quite small, she had taken him to Gurdwara, and taught him to bow before Siri Guru Granth Sahib, and to sit up, straight and majestic. She had even taught him how properly to speak the Guru Mantra, "*Wa-hay Gu-roo*".

One day, as they were going for a walk, Harbhajan said to her, "Nanny, I forgot to put the sweet on my pancakes this morning. I didn't even notice. Still they tasted sweet!"

"Ha!" the perceptive Nanny spoke, "so you have found God!"

Harbhajan replied, "No, Nanny, but isn't it odd that I forgot the sweet this morning?" as they continued their walk.

"Yes, Baba. Today you have found the sweetness within. That sweetness is God!"

Minding this Harbhajan was not any easy task for his nanny. With his sharp wit and his irrepressible spirit, he was known to occasionally throw a tantrum or do something mischievous or weird, just to see what would happen and to innocently study the effects of his misbehaviour. Young Harbhajan's innocence and his sheer unpredictability made his care an especially challenging assignment. To do justice to the precocious youngster, a formal system of discipline was devised.

Whenever Harbhajan's misbehavior came to the attention of others, he was served notice that he would be brought before his grandpa at a certain time and judgement would be passed on him.

When that happened, Harbhajan might ask his nanny, "Well, I did it. Now how do I get out of it?"

She might respond, "Well Baba, I have told you many times, but you always put me on the spot with these troubles. You fully understand that my job is at stake. I'm very good with you, so why do you do these things? Now we have to go to grandpa and plead for mercy. There is nothing else we can do. The evidence is against us."

"Well, what is the evidence?"

"Well, this was expected of you in this situation and this is what you did wrong. What am I going to do?"

At times like this, Harbhajan, the adorable troublemaker, would search his nanny's eyes for a possible way out.

After a long silence, they would usually arrive at an unspoken understanding, and his nanny might say something like, "I think there might be a way. We could try to ask for a postponement."

The next day, at the designated time, they would go before grandpa, who would just then have come in from his customary morning walk, and would be sitting at his ease, and she would say, "Baba has to prepare for school exams and we need one week's postponement."

After a week, they would go again, and by that time things would have calmed down and Harbhajan would have done some very, very good things. First, they would discuss how his exam results were very good, and how his term results were also very good. Then, they would talk about how Harbhajan had participated in the best-dressed contest among the children at school.

Harbhajan's nanny would plead the whole case, and finally she would say, "It was just a slip-up. Baba lost his grip. I'm not saying it was right. He has recognized his mistake. Every morning he has read two extra *Japjis*, and I think it should be enough." Or something like that.

This process, this pleading, acknowledgement and self-betterment formed the basis of young Harbhajan's moral training. From an early age, he came to understand that each person is a sovereign, independent power - but when anyone defaults, they lose that sovereignty and become subject to others, and that subjugation is worse than anything on Earth.

## Harbhajan Comes of Age

It is said that before little Harbhajan was born, a hundred and eight relatives had recited the

sacred *Sukhmani* every day, so great was their longing for an heir, a baby boy. On his every birthday, he was put on a scale like a prince, and the equivalent weight of gold and silver coins were given to the have-nots of his community. Now, many of those relatives had come to join Harbhajan at his fifth birthday as his coming of age was being celebrated.

Little Harbhajan was used to being the center of attention. Everyone always waited on him. His family were the village landlords. They enjoyed a kind of power and prestige practically unknown today, a carryover from an age of feudal rank and nobility. The distress of the landlord family was the distress of the villagers and the happiness of the landlords was similarly the happiness of the entire village. Despite his status, Harbhajan played and visited with everyone and some evenings liked to snuggle in an old blanket around a fire with the common people of the village.

Harbhajan Singh had been up since very early that morning. This was a big day, and he sensed the delicious aromas which had been heralding its arrival for days now. His home was perfumed by the preparation of all his favorite dishes. They were all to be brought to the Gurdwara. There was heart-warming *saag paneer*, sweet corn *maki rotis*, delectable *samosas*, rose-flavoured *gulab jaman*, wonderful *raas milai*, steaming *halwa*.

Harbhajan's grandpa gave him a special smile that morning as he, with his sister and baby brother, mother, father, grandpa and grandma, left their home in the starlit morning for the Guru's House. Inside, everyone took their turn bowing and making their offering to Siri Guru Granth Sahib. Harbhajan found his place at the front of the Gurdwara, by the stage where the *Kirtan* would soon begin.

*Daadee kirtanyaas* had come for this occasion. They were well known and liked. Their knowledge of Sikh history was impressive, and made them great story-tellers and entertainers. The singers were also known to be able to keep up the inspired, energetic pace of *daadee kirtan* for hours without stopping. On this occasion, they had been summoned for little Harbhajan Singh's benefit, that he might know the meaning of the life and lineage that was uniquely his own.

The *Kirtanyaas* assumed their places, standing in front of the congregation. One tuned his little hand drums. The other coaxed his violin-like instrument into resonance with the drums. The third, barrel-chested and immense, stood silently, like a massive thundercloud, hovering, waiting to begin.

The sharp wail of the strings signalled that all was in readiness. In no time at all, the three voices rose and melded and wavered, as the *daadees* started to work their magic.

They began from the beginning, from the time of the Aryans, living deep in the central Asian steppe land, some 6,000 years ago. The *kirtanyaas* portrayed the intelligence of the Aryans, their sense of honor and family, their skill with their weaponry. They traced their coming south, across the harsh mountainous ranges, and the peoples they had met and conquered. They sang of the times of Sita and Rama, of their good, happy times, and the trials they endured. They sang of wars and peace,

death and birth, the ever-changing human landscape, new faces, new characters, new faces grown old, the ever-unfolding panorama of life. History unfolded unrelentingly through the telling of the three *daadees*, wound endlessly in and out and around the melodies they sounded. Courage, truth, betrayal, birth, rebirth, sacrifice, denial, succession, victory, happiness, honor, dishonor...

The bards went on. The wonderful story unfolded. Nanak-Lehna-Amar-Jetha. The *daadees* described how Harbhajan's forebears joined the illustrious Sikh nation. Hours passed. Ranjeet-Nalwa-Phoola-Singha. They described the life of little Harbhajan's great grandfather, his grandfather, then his father.

Some six hours later, the *daadee jatha* painted the last chapter in their narrative, sounded their final note, culminating that historical pageant in the here and now, in the village of Kot Harkarn in British India, in that summer of 1934.

Harbhajan, who was not any longer little, had listened to the whole epic. He had acknowledged it as his. He was born into this illustrious lineage of honor, wisdom, culture, and human sensibilities. Now, at his "*dastaar bandee*", it was ceremoniously bestowed on him, to carry like a turban, its dignity and grace to uphold, even at the cost of his life.

## Fortune

Next to Harbhajan's village, there lived the family of a building contractor. Once, that contractor and his family had lived in a large house with many servants. Harbhajan still remembered them. But now, they had no big house and no servants.

One day, Harbhajan, the village prince, came and visited their humble new abode. He came and sat for a time with the contractor's wife as she prepared dinner herself at the stove in her hut. She had no flour and no vegetables, only some salt. And in her couple of pots cooking on the stove, Harbhajan Singh made out that there were only stones, nicely washed and shiny to give any guest the impression there was food there, but they were only stones. The only real food was the *rotis* the woman had obtained as charity from the Gurdwara nearby.

Harbhajan did not let on that he saw the stones in her cooking pots, but he asked, "Auntie, why did this happen to you? Once you had a big, big house. Now you live here. What happened?"

The dignified woman of the house replied, "Nothing happened."

"Once you lived in a big, big house. Why don't you feel upset?"

"When we were rich, we never gave to others. God is only showing us the punishment of not



giving when you have abundance." And with those words, the kind woman gave little Harbhajan one of the chapatis that she had been heating by the stove, with a little salt added.

After he had eaten, Harbhajan Singh returned to his village and sought out his wise old grandfather. He told his father's father, "I have just learned a very serious lesson."

"What lesson did you learn, *ji*?"

"Do you know that auntie who used to live in the big house in the next village and now lives in that little hut?"

"Yes, I know the auntie."

"She cooks stones and makes dinner out of them. She doesn't even have flour in her house. She gets chapatis from the Gurdwara and serves them with great dignity. I thought she is being punished for something she did wrong. I asked her why she does this, and she said she is not worried because God is telling them when they were rich, they did not give enough, they did not share with others."

"Is that true?"

"Grandpa, you can come with me. You can see."

"What is there to see?" Harbhajan Singh's grandfather summoned his trusted servant and said to him, "You know the contractor's family over in that village? For one year, all the flour, all the lentils, all the ghee, all the oil, all the food requirements must be dispatched today. And I am going to visit them in a week." Then, as the trusted servant of the family was leaving to fulfil Harbhajan's grandfather's wishes, Bhai Fateh Singh cried out to him, "Wait, wait, wait! Make it two years."

The next week, Grandpa said to Harbhajan, "Let's go! Let's go for a visit!"

This time, there was plenty of food in the contractor's kitchen. And when they had nearly finished eating, Bhai Fateh Singh said to the man of the house, "I have learned a lesson too. When you have enough and you don't share, the same thing happens to everybody. I'm not going to boil stones in my house. Here is money! Start your business again. Stand up on your feet. It doesn't have any interest and you have not to return it."

And so it was that slowly the family's fortunes picked up again and they were restored to their former glory. But they never forgot Harbhajan Singh. Whenever he visited again, he was given the star treatment.

One time, Harbhajan protested, "Auntie, you know, I don't deserve all this attention. I just asked

Grandpa a question, but I didn't do a thing."

The contractor's knowing wife replied, "No, God works through his messengers. For us, you became the messenger. We should always recognize and treat you fittingly with gratitude."

## Everyone Has a Purpose

Harbhajan's grandfather expected that his son should one day carry a weight of some form of spiritual leadership. This understanding guided his daily dealings with young Harbhajan. One lesson he repeated often, "Everyone has a purpose. It is up to a leader to understand this and put every person to their best use so that all may gain."

## A Dog Trick

Harbhajan enjoyed a good prank. One day, he and a friend of his were near the village market. With them, was his friend's dog. Harbhajan's friend complained to him that his dear, skinny pet had not had any milk to drink for a long time.

Harbhajan thought a moment and replied, "Today he will have milk. Watch!"

His friend looked and saw a man passing in the street, swinging a bottle of milk in each hand. Harbhajan recognized from the precise, mechanical motions of the gentleman that he was a retired soldier. He called out in unison with the man's walking, "Hup, one, two, three. Hup, one, two, three. Hup, one, two, three..."

His friend watched. It seemed vaguely interesting, listening to Harbhajan and watching the rhythmic cadences of the military man's steps. But how was his dog going to have milk to drink?

"Hup, one, two, three. Hup, one, two three. Hup, one, two, three..."

Harbhajan's friend began to lose interest. After all...?

"Hup, one, two, three... *TEN!-SHUNN!!!* "

The veteran of many parade drills could not help himself. In no time at all, he had instinctively brought his arms to his sides. His torso and legs had gone perfectly rigid, his hands open, his fingers taut, ...and the milk crashing to the pavement. One thirsty canine bounded to the military man's feet and gratefully begun slopping up the spilled treasure, before the man could ever realize what he had

just done.

"See," Harbhajan winked at his friend.

## Grandmother's Release

Early one morning, Harbhajan's grandmother was going for prayer, as was her custom, in the open air on the flat roof of the family home. As it happened, a hatch door was accidentally left open and she fell through, a distance of about thirty feet.

When her husband was notified, he smilingly said, "There was no accident. She just wants to go home." Everyone was surprised at his response.

There were no signs of breakage or injury on Bibi Ishar Kaur's body. Afterwards, she simply lay down. A doctor came and examined her. She was conscious throughout. When someone said, "Oh my God, somebody did wrong to leave the hatch door open so that you fell," she replied, "No, I have not fallen. This fall is nothing. Rather, I will now like to rise to my home. Good luck and good wishes for all. *Wahe Guru.*"

That afternoon, she peacefully left her body.

## God Talk

When Harbhajan Singh was about six years old, his father, who served as a doctor in the government service, was transferred to the hill station of Dalhousie. It was a government town in the Himalayan foothills, popular with the English who liked to go there for its cool climate, especially during the sweltering summer heat.

Dr. Kartar Puri's family would be amply accommodated in Dalhousie and it was only to be a two-year appointment, but there was the question of finding a school for young Harbhajan. As it happened, there were no good schools nearby, none of the kind of schools that might educate the promising son of a doctor – save one. It was a Catholic girls' school, the Sacred Heart Convent School on Potreyn Hill overlooking the town.

Dr. and Mrs. Puri had a meeting with the Mother Superior and it was decided that, with his long, golden braids, Harbhajan Singh the family scion would be discretely registered at the convent school for the duration of his stay in Dalhousie.

When school started, little Harbhajan Singh in his braids and school uniform, looked pretty much in place among the hundreds of girls. Still, he became known among the nuns as being unusually outspoken.

One time, Harbhajan was summoned to come before his house mother. When he arrived at her office, the house mother looked at him seriously and said, "You should pray."

Harbhajan, the little prince, replied, "How come?"

A long talk followed about the basics of Catholic belief, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost and the rest.

Harbhajan's attention came to a wooden crucifix mounted on the wall. "What is that?" he asked.

The holy mother replied, "This cross will protect you. If you believe in it, it will bring you to the feeling..."

Harbhajan said, "I can understand it will bring me to remember. I understand that. But more than that, it is not going to do anything. It has to do something. Otherwise why should I care about it?"

She said, "No. No. No. That's it."

Harbhajan replied, "You do not understand a thing."

She said, "What don't I understand?"

Harbhajan said, "What is the difference between the pandit who makes a big monkey god and calls it 'Hanuman, the servant of Rama' and he worships it? What is the difference between him and you? You make a wooden cross, and you worship it. Both are worshipping a symbol. Both think that the symbol is God. The difference is not there."

She said, "No, you don't understand, Bhajan. You are too little."

Harbhajan said, "I am not that little. I'm just little. I understand I am little. It means I have to look towards you, but I have a good understanding about it. I understand as well as you."

She said, "God is one, and they worship Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh."

Harbhajan said, "Are you kidding? G – is for God. O – is for God. D – is for God. Generating power, organizing power and destroying power – that is Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. Same thing."

She said, "You are too much!"

Harbhajan said, "Alright, I am too much. Then what?"

She said, "We can't discuss it. You can't go beyond certain things."

Harbhajan said, "No. God is infinity. Let us discuss. Let us sit the whole night. Let us talk about God."

She said, "You are crazy! We don't have time."

"All you do is catch us, get into conversation, and talk. If you want to talk God, you can just go on saying 'God, God, God...' but that's not conversation. That's between me and God. I want to talk to you because you are supposed to teach me God and I am supposed to learn from you God. I want to sit with you and talk about God. Talk to me about God."

She said, "Look, I have a lot of other things to do."

Harbhajan said, "No, mom. This is the only thing. You wear this habit. You hang all these chains around you. You hang all these crosses. All the time, you do this Catholic stuff and you tell me to do this stuff. All I am asking is for you to talk to me about it – and you have no time!"

She said, "One requires a whole life to sit with you and talk. You keep on talking. I know you."

## **The Bell**

At school, Harbhajan was a rebel, but he was known as a good rebel. He had gained the respect of the Mother Superior, even though he did not always obey the rules.

Once he was called before the Mother Superior for punishment. She loved him very much, and when she saw him, she could only say, "Bhajan, again?"

"Yes, Mother."

"What did you do this time?" Harbhajan was in the line with the others who were going to receive punishment, which was being hit on the buttocks. She would intervene and let him go free every time, but this time she wanted to know what had happened.

"I didn't go to chapel."

"O my God! Now this is between you and Jesus Christ. I can't help." Normally, she would have

simply said: "Let him go."

"Yes, I know this is between me and Christ, so I'll defend myself this time." He went to face the Sister who had accused him.

She said, "You didn't come to chapel. Where were you?"

"I was outside my room, sitting on the bench."

"What were you doing on the bench?"

"I was meditating."

"What were you meditating on?"

"On the bell."

"Which bell?"

"The *chapel* bell."

"Why were you meditating on the chapel bell?"

"Are you crazy? What do you ring the bell for? Isn't it a divine message?"

"Yes."

"And so I was listening to it, calmly and peacefully."

"But that bell means you should come."

"That may be for *you*, lady. For *me*, when the bell rings, *that's it*. I cannot move. If you want me in chapel on time, then stop ringing that bell! This is not going to be decided by hitting my buttocks. Are you crazy? Why are you going to hit me? Did I hit you? Is that what Jesus Christ taught you, to hit people? Are you going to hit me in the name of Christ? *Are you?*"

"No, no, I am not going to hit you."

"Then why did you call me here?"

"I wanted to know."

"What do you want to know? You don't know how to meditate? You do not know what the bell means! All you know is what *you* know! I'm telling you what *I* know!"

"No, no, don't argue. You can go back to class."

"I am not going back!"

"What do you want?"

"I want a total exemption. When the bell rings, nobody should be punished for whether or not they come to chapel."

Mother Superior, who had been listening to their exchange, then chimed in, "Well, I think we can grant that. If people meditate, that is all Christ said. We only want them in the chapel for meditation, so that they can love Christ. We don't want to hit and hurt people. Let Bhajan go!"

## **The Young Confessor**

One day, Harbhajan saw there was no one in the confession booth to take confessions. Without hesitation, he quickly took the place of the father confessor behind the curtain. People then began, turn by turn, to arrive to make their confessions.

One person confessed, "I was rude to my mother."

"Ten thousand Hail Mary's" was Harbhajan's prescription.

Another person said through the curtain, "I raped my house servant."

"Ten thousand Hail Mary's." Harbhajan did not discriminate. Everyone that day was given the remedy of reciting "Hail Mary" ten thousand times on their rosary. The unusual rigor of his penances and the timbre of his voice might have given him away.

Later on, he was questioned by the Reverend Father, "What have you done today? You have to understand. You have to..."

Young Harbhajan replied, "Look Padre, the matter is very simple. I don't care what they have done wrong. Once a person, a little human, tells me what is wrong, I want to totally weld them with God. And I think ten thousand Hail Mary's can do it. Less than that, I don't think is worthwhile. That's why I gave everybody ten thousand Hail Mary's. Don't tell me I did right or wrong. If you think I did wrong, you can tell them to do only ten. You are more powerful than me, but I think God gave them

the time and God gave them the life. It is their privilege to turn toward God. I did it my way."

The Father continued, "Ten thousand Hail Mary's! But you are little in age!"

"That's the difficulty. I can multiply. I am very little in age and you are too grown up in age. You have very little time. I still have a lot of time."

## The Guru's Prescription

Harbhajan Singh's father, Kartar Singh Puri, was a qualified medical doctor. Yet, when Harbhajan was seven years old and very sick and all his medicines had proved useless, he brought his ailing son to Amritsar for his saintly father's blessing. Bhai Fateh Singh said to him, "Kartar, have you not learned that you are in Amritsar, and the House of Guru Ram Das is here? Why don't you go and get a blessing from Guru Ram Das? Why do you have to come running to me?"

Harbhajan Singh's father went to the roof of the house and stood facing the light of the Golden Temple. As he stood there, he remembered the circumstances of his son's birth. After his first forty days, he had tied his son to his chest and made a pilgrimage on foot to forty holy places to ensure the blessings of God on his precious first surviving son. Standing there, Dr. Puri said to Guru Ram Das, "If a man loses one eye, with one he can still do a lot. But when one loses both eyes, it becomes very difficult. I have lost one of my sons. A second is on the death bed. It happens that I am in your house. If his life be spared, I shall recite *Sukhmani* every day in gratitude for that."

When Dr. Puri returned to downstairs, his son asked, "Papaji, have you no medicine which can cure me?" He had to reply that he had nothing. Then his son said to him, "Guru Ram Das has appeared to me, and he has told me what can cure my sickness. If your medicine has all been tried, then you should give me the medicine which I suggest. Let me drink the juice of two onions and let an onion be fried in oil and that oil, when it is just warm, should be dropped into my ear."

Through the Grace of Guru Ram Das, by the next morning, the doctor's ailing son was cured. By his father's grace, Harbhajan Singh was blessed to have the sacred *Sukhmani* said on his behalf each day for the rest of his father's life.

## Sant Gurmukh Singh

Toward the end of his second year in Dalhousie, Harbhajan Singh celebrated his eighth birthday. A party was organized and the whole town was invited. There were games and presents and sweets and lots of delicious food. Harbhajan, growing bigger with every passing year, was weighed, and the



sum of his weight was given as alms in coins and grains for the poor, a custom that continued through his childhood. There was also a special Gurdwara.

Sant Gurmukh Singh, a Sikh preacher and man of peace, himself forty-six years of age, came and gave his blessing on the occasion. Gurmukh Singh had not been born into a Sikh family, but his warmth and engaging presence left none in doubt of his faith. Harbhajan and Sant Gurmukh Singh would meet again, but not until they were both many years older and in a distant land.

## The Cycle of Life

One morning when Harbhajan Singh was eight years old, his grandfather told him he would be returning that evening to take him for an outing. The day passed in anticipation. Finally, grandpa arrived home and they set out together.

"Where are we going, grandpa?"

"Watch. You will see."

So they went and walked until they came to a kind of outdoor arena that had been created outside the village. Sometimes there were soccer or *kabbadi* matches there. This time, there were people all around and some kind of commotion going on in the middle.

Harbhajan stretched his neck to see. His grandfather led him to a spot on the raised embankment that defined the arena. From there, they could make out most of what was going on.

From all the commotion, now they could see some of the men of the village running around and around. They were chasing a big squealing pig. The pig was running away and the men were running after it and hitting it with sticks. The pig would run and they would hit it. They would strike the pig and the pig would run around and around, again and again. There was no escape for the pig.

This went on for some time without any let up. The hitting would not stop and the pig kept running to try and get away. There was continuous hitting and running, squealing and running, with the crowd laughing and yelling and shouting abuse at the pig. The pig was bleeding now, but it did not stop at all.

Somehow, a bunch of men together caught the pig and picked it up. Together, they managed to take it and carry it to a side of the arena where a fire had been made and bright flames were licking the air. Perhaps the pig was weakened from the loss of blood, because the four men managed to bring it over to the fire without it squirming away. But when they threw the squealing, frantic animal into the fire, it bounced right out, a little singed, and the chase began all over again.

This must have gone on for another half hour, until finally the pig, tired, bleeding, burnt and wounded, simply fell over and moved no more. The contest was over. The men had won. The pig had lost.

Harbhajan Singh looked up at his grandfather. For all the frantic, electric energy in the place, his grandfather was still a picture of calm dispassion.

"You want to go now?"

"Yes, Grandpa. This was too much!"

They made their way out of the arena. The sun had almost set and the earliest stars were making their first, tentative appearances.

Harbhajan spoke again, "They were being so cruel!"

"They weren't being cruel," said his saintly grandpa.

"But you saw what they were doing! They were killing that pig!"

"Yeah. They were."

"But why?"

"Well, Harbhajan, it is a long story, but that is why I brought you here. You see, that pig was not always a pig. Once, the soul of that pig had been living a different life, the life of a man who lived in this village. He had been a Sikh like you and I."

Harbhajan Singh's grandfather paused for the words to sink in.

"He must have done something wrong."

"Yes, grandson. Our village had once been very united. Everyone belonged to the Guru. Everyone was noble and prosperous. But this fellow fell from grace and did lot of mischief in his life. He created bad feelings and doubt and turned people against each other. He divided the village."

"So he came back as a pig?"

"Yes, he came back as the pig we were watching. He lived his days in this village. Only this time he lived off the garbage and leavings of the people of the village."

"Grandpa, what will happen to him next? What will become of him in his next life?"

"Well, Harbhajan, you know he did some good in his life too, and for that reason, I was reciting *Japji* for his soul as we watched. With the Guru's grace, he will be born again in a Sikh home in that village nearby."

Harbhajan was amazed and wonderstruck imagining the transmigrating of that pig's soul into the body of a man. It was hard for him to fall asleep that night.

The next morning, Harbhajan Singh asked his mother, "Do you have a friend who lives in that village nearby us?"

"Yes, son. I do. Why do you ask?"

"Does she have any relation who is going to have a child?"

"I don't know. What are you thinking, son?"

"We should go there tomorrow. I want to see this auntie."

Though his mother resisted, finally her eldest son convinced her to agree and the next day they went for a surprise visit to her friend's house in the next village.

In conversation, it turned out that his mother's friend did have a daughter-in-law carrying a child.

Seeing her, Harbhajan said, "All the women of the world may turn out to be having daughters, but you definitely are going to have a baby boy."

The lady was surprised and pleased. She asked Harbhajan Singh, the child prodigy, to write it down and, to please her, he did.

A few months later, came the news that this particular woman in the next village had indeed given birth and the child had been a son. This time, Harbhajan Singh's mother was really curious. How, she asked her son, did he come to know all this?

Harbhajan then proceeded to tell his mother all about the evening he had spent with grandpa at the arena, about the pig the people were torturing, and about what grandpa said when the body of the pig was lifeless and dead.

His mother became pensive for a moment. A worry crossed her mind. She didn't mind that her child was precocious, but... "You'll never tell anyone this story that that boy used to be that pig, will you?"

"But, mother, it is true. How can I tell a lie if somebody asks me?"

"Still, it is not very nice, you know, and there are ways of getting around the question. You can just say you don't know!"

"I know, mother dear. I would never want to hurt anyone's feelings. Still, it is interesting to know, and I do know. I could never lie about it."

His mother frowned and shook her head. She decided against arguing with her eldest, honest son.

As it happened, a few days later, a servant came from the village of the new arrival and invited Harbhajan's family to come to a thanksgiving gathering to be held in a couple of weeks. But Harbhajan, the star guest, was not going to be in attendance. His mother had shrewdly made arrangements for the entire family to go to a different function in another village in the opposite direction that day.

## **The Need of a Teacher**

As the eldest grandson of the head of the village, Harbhajan Singh commanded the respect of the entire community. Moreover, if young Harbhajan, the irrepressible rascal, ever went to the local bazaar and noticed that someone did not salute him or show him due regard, he was certain to take notice. It was not unusual for offenders to afterwards find that a large boulder had somehow dislodged from the top of the steep hillside overhanging the village, and crashed into their home.

One day, his grandfather offered Harbhajan some sobering advice, "Look. See how they bow to you as though you were a prince. If you don't have the wisdom to keep them bowing, one day this head of yours will be cut off. You need to find a teacher to give you a wisdom that will see you through the coming years. In reality, a man is neither rich nor poor, Bhajan. He either wants to learn, or he is stupid."

When he was fourteen years old, a qualified teacher was found for young Harbhajan. Sant Hazara Singh was known for miles around. He was an accomplished horseman and martial artist. He was also a strong-willed and freedom-loving man. He had a police record for his actions against the colonial rulers. Besides all that, he was a devoted Sikh, a master of yoga, and a family man.

Santji was known to sit down and begin reciting Siri Guru Granth Sahib from seven o'clock in the morning. In twenty-four hours, without getting up, without moving, and without stopping, in one continuous recitation, he would go through the entire 1,430 pages.

Sant Hazara Singh taught a select group of aspiring young men. Some came great distances to be with him. In his unique and masterful way, he disciplined and polished and prepared them for the duties of manhood. Santji did not suffer fools gladly. A man of few words, he was uncommonly strict, but everyone knew that it was a privilege to be accepted as a student of Sant Hazara Singh.

When Harbhajan Singh, the favored prince of his family's village, turned up with his entourage of servants, luggage and horses, someone asked the servant in charge, "Who are you with?"

"We have come with Baba," he replied.

"Oh, so you are his paraphernalia?"

"Yes, sire."

"Pack up your stuff and take his things too!"

Left with hardly more than the clothes he was wearing, Harbhajan Singh was taken to a bare room like a cell and given a blanket. "This is your room. This blanket is all you will have. Every day, you will wash your own clothes. When you go to school, your uniform will be ready. This is a special concession allowed to you for your grandfather's sake, but remember, you must follow the law of this place."

No one had ever spoken to Harbhajan like this before. His grandfather had warned him, "Don't trust him. Don't believe him. Just listen to him, obey him, and listen to your angelic spirit." Harbhajan thought to himself, "Wow! Let's see how far this goes."

When Sant Hazara Singh met him for the first time, he told Harbhajan, "Hey, *you* are the servant! There are no servants for you here!" Harbhajan began his training with a shovel and an acrid bucket of lime. As the newest student, he was assigned the latrine duty.

Harbhajan the young aristocrat was not pleased. He was enraged and his mind embarked on a silent tirade: "How many of this kind can I buy? Thirty thousand? Sixty thousand? Who is he? What is he telling me? I am going to sleep tonight on this bunk bed? Somebody's going to sleep over me and pass wind? Is this teaching? What am I going to learn here? To smell someone's wind and look at the guy who's next door to me, while God made me so beautiful and elegant? I'm born in a good family. I have everything that I need. What do I need these teachings for? And now I have to go and look at the excrement of others and I'm going to put this lime on it? This is my first job? Who can I hire to do this? I can hire a whole town for this, but what is this? Why did I come? Oh no! Who is this middle-aged, puffy fellow? Who does he think he is? Why did my grandfather tell me to go? What for? What am I doing here? He's totally rude and ridiculous!"

Harbhajan touched his forehead and felt that he was sweating. He was not used to being so

provoked. That Harbhajan, the landlord's son, had allowed himself to be so riled in such short order added a particular sting to his predicament. He took a breath and managed to regain command of his emotions.

To himself, he said, "So be it. I'll prove that I can stand all this. God has blessed me. This man is a living challenge and I am going to win. Victory. *Fateh!*"

Harbhajan Singh slept a very sound sleep that night. He did not even turn once in his bed. The next morning, Harbhajan was fresh and supple as the new day.

## Chilling Punishment

One morning, Harbhajan Singh slept in. In his rush to make up for lost time, he did not properly shower and towel himself dry. Hurrying from the shower, he merely grabbed a couple of blankets to wrap himself in, and quickly found a place on the floor of the *sadhana* room where Sant Hazara Singh and the rest of the students were already sitting.

Harbhajan began to chant and meditate with the others. Somehow it did not feel right. He started breath of fire to try and focus his energy, but he was out of synch. Everyone else was doing something different.

Finally, Santji descended on Harbhajan. "Get up! Take off all those blankets! Stand naked in that corner!"

Harbhajan Singh, the student, protested, "Sir, do you know what you are doing to me?"

"Yes. I am trying to kill you officially. I don't want to take the burden of it, but I want you to die."

"Okay, if you want that, really?"

"Yeah. That person should die who cannot towel his body properly. So you get there, and you stand there, and you do your breath of fire! I know you are a yogi. I know you, but I also know what yoga is. You must not have taken a proper bath, and you must not have properly towelled yourself! That is why now you are compensating, because you are freaking out!"

"That is true."

"In that corner!"

Santji took Harbhajan Singh's blankets and left him with only a shirt, some short *kachheras* and a little turban on his head. The temperature was sub-zero, and he was left standing in that corner.

Harbhajan Singh asked himself, "What should I do?"

Himself answered Harbhajan Singh, "There are two ways. One is to really have pneumonia and die, because the guy is not going to give back my blankets. I cannot run away, because then he is going to send some boys after me, and they are going to bring me back. So what can I do?"

He started to march in that corner, on the spot, doing breath of fire, because he knew his life depended on it. He marched. And he marched. He took the chilling air deep into his warm lungs. The air made a mist in front of his face. He marched harder. He breathed more powerfully, deeper. He marched. He breathed. He breathed. He marched. He dedicated himself fully to that breath and that march, and just as his body was about to become warm from its own inner fire, Sant Hazara Singh spoke to him again.

"Bhajan, come sit down! Have your blanket, and meditate."

Harbhajan Singh obeyed. He came from the corner, took one blanket, covered his body, and sat to meditate. From that place on the floor, Harbhajan Singh's spirit soared. He felt lifted up, invigorated, peaceful... A tremendous, timeless sense of oneness descended on Harbhajan this time. His teacher had shown Harbhajan no mercy and so, to compensate, God Himself had come to show mercy to Harbhajan.

**"Time is not deprived."**

Sometimes Sant Hazara Singh would set his students in a yoga posture, and leave them while he went to the market, some distance away.

He might come back in the evening at eight o'clock and say, "Hah! You are doing it still! You must be hungry. Now let us have *langar* time. Alright boys! Go take showers and come back and we'll eat!" He allowed them about four minutes to shower and dress. No one dared be late.

Once, his students complained that they couldn't get things done because there was no time. He replied, "Yes, there is no time. But time is not deprived. You are deprived. And if you will not learn how to conquer time, you won't have a space with God."

After three months with Santji, Harbhajan looked around and counted his fellow students. At the first class, they were about two hundred and fifty. After twelve weeks of Sant Hazara Singh's ordeals, there were only seventy-two of them left.

Santji was a tough disciplinarian. If one of his charges made even one mistake, he was almost certain to be expelled from the *dehra*.

One day, Harbhajan and some of the others watched as a tearful student fell at Sant Hazara Singh's feet, grasping them and vowing never to let go. The young man had committed some kind of misdemeanour and was horrified at the prospect of being sent home. He cried and held on and held on, while Santji stood calmly, patiently, immobilized. The pathetic spectacle continued for a long time, with no end in sight. After eight hours, the contest ended quietly when the student finally tired. When he relaxed his grip, the Master unceremoniously stepped away.

Another time, during a class, a student came and knocked at the door. Sant Hazara Singh banished him for a year because he had disturbed the Master's talk.

Each Thursday, known as "Guruvaar" – the Guru's Day, the boys were permitted to speak with Santji about anything that was on their minds. On the next Guruvaar, they asked Sant Hazara Singh about the tough punishment he had imposed on his student. They felt that since the banished student had been called to Santji's presence, the penalty was too severe.

Sant Hazara Singh was unmoved. He told the young men his student should have had the courtesy of waiting for a guard and asking whether it was the right time to go in. "This is also learning. Whenever you are to go for wisdom and truth, be very humble. Go to a saintly person and a wise person with utmost humility. Humble yourself so much that you can fulfil yourself."

It was hard studying with Santji, but Harbhajan Singh decided he was going to stay and learn, no matter what.

Someone asked him, "Don't you think it's very painful?"

Harbhajan replied, "What does it matter? If this is the way they kill me, I'll die. I'll be fine! At least I'll keep learning. I'm not going to go away."

### **The Student Who Missed *Sadhana***

Sant Hazara Singh was very strict about the discipline of rising early each day and participating in the morning's yoga and meditations. If you missed the morning's *sadhana*, the punishment was usually horrific. Many times, Santji would break his cane over a student who neglected to turn up for meditation in the pre-dawn hours.

Knowing all this made Harbhajan Singh intrigued one day that another student had missed the morning's *sadhana* without any retribution whatever from Santji. Not only had Santji not punished



him, but when he encountered the student later that day, he had told him, "You are very blessed."

When Harbhajan found a chance, he took his fellow student aside and asked him, "What were you doing this morning? You didn't come for *sadhana* and *you* got the blessing while we were huffing and puffing here and didn't get a word."

He replied, "You don't know what happened. I had a most beautiful dream. At a quarter to three when I was ready, I thought, 'Let me meditate a bit.'" *Sadhana* began at 4 a.m., so he knew there was still an hour he could meditate.

"Somehow, in my meditation I must have dozed off," he continued. "In that dream, I went to the Harimandar, washed and wiped dry the marble floor, went to the Guru's kitchen, and afterwards heard the Guru's *hukam* for the day. Just when the *hukam* ended, I woke up. I still remember, word for word, what the Guru's order was."

Harbhajan took the young man with him to ask Santji about the amazing story. Santji replied, "Yes, it's true."

It all seemed too incredible to Harbhajan. To satisfy his curiosity, he arranged for someone to phone Amritsar and find out for him what that *hukam* was that had been read at 7 a.m. that morning. Sure enough, when the answer came, the *hukam* was the very same as Harbhajan's fellow student had remembered from his morning reverie.

## Serving the Master

Living with the Master also meant serving the Master. Often, that was how he taught his students.

Once, Harbhajan Singh went to see Sant Hazara Singh to tell him he needed to go to town.

Sant Hazara Singh replied, "How much money do you have in your pockets?"

"Fifty rupees," Harbhajan said.

"Okay, give them to me."

When Harbhajan handed over the money, Santji tucked it beneath the mat where he was sitting and gave him a list of things to buy, then sent him to town with no money at all.

Once he arrived at the store in the town, Harbhajan the rich landlord's son collected all the

things on the list and said to the shopkeeper, "I have no money. You can collect the forty-eight rupees from Santji. I can go right now and tell him."

"No, no," replied the shopkeeper, "no, no, for Santji it is okay."

When Harbhajan returned, he placed all the things before Santji, and Santji approved and dismissed him.

Harbhajan then looked for the fifty rupees. He looked beneath the mat, but it was nowhere to be found, so he left Sant Hazara Singh's room.

Just then, Harbhajan Singh saw a friend rushing by. Harbhajan tried to stop him, but his friend breathlessly told him, "No, I can't. I have to report to Santji right away and give him his change." He had two rupees in his hand.

Why did Sant Hazara Singh send Harbhajan without money, then send his friend to pay the bill? Purely to see if Harbhajan could manage his embarrassment, maintain his grace and dignity, and still deliver the goods.

Santji would routinely summon Harbhajan for some task or another. It might be any time of the day or night. It was midnight one time when the Master said, "Ah-hah! I just wanted you!"

"What can I do, sir?"

"I need yogurt."

Now in India in those days, there was only homemade yogurt, and that kind of yogurt is never ready at midnight. Had Santji asked for yogurt at five or six in the evening, Harbhajan Singh could have brought a truckload. At midnight, however, all the yogurt in the country was still in incubation. Every housewife had put the culture in the warm milk about three hours ago, and it would be another five hours before it would be ready. Knowing this, Harbhajan Singh answered, "How much would you like?"

"As much as possible."

Harbhajan thought for a moment and realized Sant Hazara Singh had to know it was impossible to find homemade yogurt at that hour, but he agreed and thanked him and set out.

Five and a half hours later, Harbhajan Singh returned with enough yogurt for the whole *dehra*. He did not say a word and Santji did not say anything either. They had met on the playing field of exactitude and finesse in service. They both knew that Santji had asked for yogurt at midnight, but had not asked for it right away. Five thirty was an apt and realistic time of delivery and Master and

student were both satisfied with the outcome.

Another time, Santji called, "Hey Bhajan, would you like to have the honor of going tomorrow and grooming my two horses?"

Harbhajan Singh knew that grooming each horse was a four-hour job. The two of them together would take eight hours. He replied, "Wonderful, sir! It will be a great privilege."

It was not unusual for the Master to add some special condition to an already difficult task. "Oh, by the way, two miles from there I have a friend who has two donkeys. Would you mind bringing them along? It will be a great privilege for you."

"Yes sir!" Under the circumstances, what else could he say?

Each time Santji put him to work, Harbhajan Singh would conscientiously carry out his duties, however tiresome they might appear. It meant, in this case, labouring eight hours over Sant Hazara Singh's horses, then going to the next village and getting the donkeys and walking them – not riding them, because that was not the condition – back to the *dehra*.

And every time, Harbhajan would be learning something. That day, he learned the value of companionship - even in the company of a couple of wilful and unruly donkeys.

## Trial in a Tree

One day, Sant Hazara Singh told a few of his charges to get dressed and be ready to go with him to the district government office in the nearest city. For the occasion, they were to wear their English suits. The boys wasted no time. In a few minutes they were at the tree by the gate of the *dehra* in their suits, their boots polished, ties perfect, turbans set, ready for a rare adventure outside the *dehra* with their Master.

Sant Hazara Singh appeared with a friend. All was in readiness. The young men were perfectly decked out. A car was on its way to pick them up. Santji's gaze took in the height of a shade tree under which his students had gathered waiting. His look singled out lanky Harbhajan, "How tall can this tree be?"

"About forty feet."

"As you are, can you go up?"

"Yes." It was not a question for answering. It was a time for demonstrating. Harbhajan put his

boots aside and began to climb. It was not easy. The branches were close together and difficult to penetrate, but in a couple of minutes Harbhajan was high in the upper, leafy regions of the tree feeling rather good about himself.

Sant Hazara Singh, barked up like a commander giving orders, "When I come back, you will come down."

Time can pass very slowly when you are up in a tree all by yourself. The sun hardly moved when it should have pranced through the sky, hurrying evening on its way. It was a long, anguishing time before Harbhajan could assure himself that the shadows had indeed lengthened. By nightfall, his back and arms were sore from leaning and hanging onto the trunk and branches.

Eventually, Harbhajan found a crook in his host's branches. Exhausted, he settled for a few hours of intermittent sleep. After waking up in his high perch, Harbhajan began to grow tree-wise. He learned to slake his thirst with water that accumulated from the morning dew in the forks between six of the larger branches. By noon, when Harbhajan's sense of hunger began to outweigh his sense of peril and abandonment, he began to pick and eat the leaves. The old ones were bitter and rotten, he found, but the young ones were sweet and edible.

After another night, Harbhajan was beginning to feel comfortable in his tree nest. He had designated a part as his bedroom, where he twined himself around a few branches. Another section of the tree was the dining room, where the leaves were most delectable. There was also a kind of kitchen where he would find water to drink. There was a toilet, too.

On his third day, Harbhajan was beginning to feel self-assured, cocky even. He was holding his bowel movements in case anyone really terrible might come by, so he could defecate down on them from up in the sky. With his humour returned to him, Harbhajan figured he could stay for a long time in the tree. Everything he needed was there.

At last, Santji arrived back from the town with his coterie of boys, craning their necks up at Harbhajan. "Hey, you have survived! Come on down from there!" he shouted.

Harbhajan lost no time clambering down from the sturdy middle branches of the tree.

"Oh and Bhajan, before you leave, clean up all this mess you have created!"

"Thank you, sir."

It was good to finally be out of the tree and walking erect on two feet on the firm earth, though his body was sore and cramped and slow to move at first. In that blessed tree, Harbhajan Singh had learned a lesson of lessons, the lesson of self-containment. In those three and a half days, his student nature had been challenged to his core, but now that it was done, he felt very good inside.

## Clothes and the Man

Once, someone told Harbhajan Singh that Santji wanted to see him. Harbhajan was fourteen years old at the time.

"Is it urgent or do I have time?" asked Harbhajan.

"Well, you can come as you want."

Harbhajan Singh went home and dressed quickly and presented himself.

Santji looked at him. "It took a long time."

"No. I came as fast as I could."

"Well, you are not dressed properly."

"Yes sir, I didn't dress properly."

"No, no, no, no..." And Santji had Harbhajan stand before a mirror and pointed out all the things that were wrong with his physical presentation. "Usually, you are the best dressed man."

"Oh, what a day it is today!"

"Sit down," Santji instructed. "I want to tell you something: Never get ready in a hurry. You will never be yourself. If you are lazy, you will be crazy. If you are in a hurry, you won't be you."

A month or two passed and again that man came. "You are wanted again."

"Again. Do I have time?"

"Yes, today you have time."

"Okay. Don't worry!" Harbhajan made a special effort and dressed himself immaculately.

When he arrived at Santji's house, he was walking outside on the lawn. "You have come?"

"Yes. All dressed up."

"That's true." Santji sat down and continued, "Whenever you want to get something, be bountiful, beautiful, and look as perfect as you can. Simple, gracious, and go with a smile."

Another day, and it was time for another lesson. Harbhajan was working the fields, hoeing with nothing more than his big undershorts, a light shirt and a little turban on his head. He didn't even have any shoes. Sant Hazara Singh found Harbhajan and said to him, "Come along!"

Harbhajan the once-haughty landlord's son followed along as Santji took him through the main streets of the city, barefoot. Finally, they returned to the fields. "Thank you. Can I go now?"

"No, no. I want to ask you something. How was your visit to the city today?"

"Truthfully, or do I have to just tell you what you want to hear?"

"No, truthfully."

"Very embarrassing."

"Thank you. I wanted you to experience embarrassment. That's all for now. We'll meet again."

## **The Cruelty of the Master**

Santji asked Harbhajan Singh one day, "Do you think I am cruel?"

Harbhajan frankly replied, "Yes, I think you are."

"Do you know why?"

"Yes, I know why. So that nothing will look cruel to me ever again."

Sant Hazara Singh nodded his head, "You are right."

## **The Three Holy Curls**

One day, Sant Hazara Singh summoned Harbhajan Singh, and when he arrived, Santji announced that they would be going for a walk. Harbhajan knew what this meant. Going for a walk with the Master always meant some kind of investigation. He wondered what was going on.

After they had walked for a distance, Santji asked, "Hey Bhajan, which scripture is it written in that you get up and then sleep, then get up and sleep, then get up and sleep? You must have read something somewhere!"

"You put that guy in my room. He must have told you, sir."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, he told me you wake up, then you curl around. Then you wake up and curl around. Then again, you wake up and curl around."

"It is not in any scripture. I made it up."

"What do you mean, you made it up?"

"Well sir, you know I bless my past, then I bless my present, then I bless my future."

"That's not true. You want to be doubly sure that you did a right job."

"Well, if you say it, I have no argument."

"You know, once you are trained as a Catholic, you are always a Catholic. You know, those three things in you."

"Sir, isn't *Ek-Ong-Kar* three things?"

"You are very intelligent. Now what does *Ekongkar* have to do with those three things?"

"Sir, I have reached a stage where it is all the same thing. God is the same thing. Those three things. There are three letters in 'God' too, not four."

Santji took Harbhajan into his gaze and sighed, "Well, you can do it."

Harbhajan said to himself, "Why not?" And the words came out of him, "Why not?"

"Now you have gotten rid of the guilt!"

"Sir, what is the guilt?"

"Guilt has one gift in life, and that is doubt."

"What is doubt?"

"Doubt is something which splits your personality."

"Then what happens?"

"Then you always hang in hell, romancing the heavens."

## Studying with the Master

Santji was a master of ordeals and a tower of patience. He could spend hours and hours training his young men.

Out of the blue, he once told a student to recite *Japji*. "You – *Japji*," he said.

In a funny mood, that student, just said, "*Japji*." The boys all found it very funny.

Santji was not amused. He replied, "Alright, everybody to that tree! Lock your legs, hang upside down, and recite *Japji* until you are told you can come down!"

It was not until many hours later, when they had finished forty recitations, that the Master allowed them to detach their legs. They had learned a difficult lesson – to keep cool.

Santji was relentless. Harbhajan Singh would say to him, "I love to come and see you, but I hate you."

Sant Hazara Singh could also be mischievous. Once, he had his students hold their arms out straight in front of them, supporting an apple in their palms. The ordeal might go on for some time, but it was straightforward enough, except in one respect: the apple. While the young men were sitting, Santji would concentrate to make the apple visibly levitate a couple of inches above their outstretched palms. The test for the students was that they should not move their hands to where the apple appeared to be, but concentrate to keep them perfectly outstretched in front of them.

Another day, Santji had his students sit with their hands straight out in front of them for what seemed like an eternity. The exercise was designed to engage the *sushmana*, the central energy channel in the spine, and enhance the flow of life force into the brain. For two and a half hours, they sat like that, without once lowering their arms. Afterwards, it took five hours just to be able to move their hands again.

Whenever Harbhajan Singh did something well, Santji would remark, "Wonderful! You did it! Now, let's go on to the next thing."

Tired, and with many hours of training already behind him, Harbhajan would think, "What do you mean 'next'? Give me a break!"

Santji was well aware of that Harbhajan Singh was not an ordinary student. Like a sculptor chiselling a striking image out of a unique and priceless stone, Santji recognized in Harbhajan the traits of a future sage and master. Freely and lovingly, Santji not only instructed Harbhajan, but he chiselled and moulded his developing personality to prepare him for his own life as a spiritual exemplar.



One day, Sant Hazara Singh sat down with his most dedicated student and said "Bhajan, God knows, are you sure you will get up tomorrow?"

"I want to be sure, but I can't be sure."

"And if I don't get up tomorrow, who's going to teach you?"

"No one."

"Why don't you learn the whole thing tonight then?"

For the whole night, they sat and worked it through. When it was seven in the morning, Harbhajan spoke up, "Look, now tomorrow has come. Let me go!"

Santji replied, "No, no, no... Just one more lesson and we'll be through it." That lesson did not finish until eleven o'clock.

## The Spiritual Path

Harbhajan once asked Sant Hazara Singh to give a definition of the spiritual path.

His teacher replied, "Son, it's a rose petal. It's an opportunity. It has exactly as much life as that petal and it is as beautiful and sophisticated as that petal.

"You totally be it or you will miss it and it shall never come back again. Then all you will have is a dry rose petal. You can powder it, but it will never be what it was."

## The Man Who Almost Died

Once a man arrived at Santji's *dehra* on a stretcher. He had been brought from the hospital by a few relatives. The doctors had said there was no medical hope for him, that he was going to die. That sad group of people had brought the man to the *dehra* for a final blessing before he passed.

When the boys saw the pale, sickly man with the marks still fresh where the intravenous tubes had been in his arms, they grew excited. "Let's take him to Santji! We'll take him to Santji! He will heal him!" they enthused.

So the boys came in with the stretcher and the clutch of relations and explained the situation to

Sant Hazara Singh.

Sant Hazara Singh looked the man up and down and said, "No, he's not dying. They read it wrong." He took a glass of water and chanted over it, "*Sat Nam, Wahe Guru!*" and sprinkled that water over the face of the man.

Santji said to the man, "Get up, Brother! Please do some work." And to everyone else, Sant Hazara Singh pronounced, "This guy is the laziest guy on the planet. He doesn't do any work."

In no time, the man sat up and looked around, then dangled his legs off the stretcher and actually stood up. All the relatives were amazed. Santji's students, for their part, hatched a plan. A bunch of them piled into a car with the healed man and went back to the hospital.

Arriving there, they went back to the ward the man had come from and called the doctors. The medical men were all amazed. The doctors said, "This guy is alright. His pulse is alright. His temperature is alright. He is a little weak, but otherwise, he is okay. Absolutely there is nothing wrong with him."

Harbhajan Singh replied, "But can you just clarify for me, when he left he was pronounced to be dead?"

"That is true."

"And we have brought him hale and hearty..."

The doctors said, "Well, we want to know what you people did."

"We didn't do anything. Babaji just sprinkled some water on him."

"Babaji sprinkled some water!? But please there is no explanation from water! It is Babaji and his water! He does these things for which the hospital has no explanation!"

As for the man, he lived on for a good many more years.

## Physical Wisdom

With discipline comes power, and with power comes the temptation to abuse that power, as the boys in Santji's *dehra* were finding out. From their hours of meditation, they had learned to do a trick or two. One of the empowering mantras they best liked to chant was, "*Sa Ray Ga Ma Pa Dha Nee Sa Ta Na Ma Ra Ma Dha Sa Sa Say So Hung*". It was a long mantra chanted continually like a scale, up and

down through three octaves, from the deep, low notes to the high sopranos, and in reverse.

Harbhajan Singh had a favorite prank. In the morning, when the servant who brought everyone their lassis for breakfast, Harbhajan would chant and the glasses would suddenly fly up, then come crashing to the floor.

When Santji found out about this mischief, he ran after Harbhajan Singh. Though his student considered himself a star athlete, Sant Hazara Singh soon caught up with him, then started chasing Harbhajan back, hitting him left and right as he shouted, "*First*, you did mischief with people! *Second*, you spilled lassi on their clothes and spoiled them! *Third*, you did a very mean act and brought me shame! And *fourth*, you ran from me!"

It was not the only time, Harbhajan Singh would be physically beaten up by Santji. One day, the Master had his student's hands tied behind his back. Santji told another boy to beat Harbhajan and not to stop. Then Santji walked away.

The boy beat and beat Harbhajan. His turban was knocked off and not an inch of his body was spared. Harbhajan was a bleeding mess. Finally, the other boy tired and sickened of the brutality, and since Santji was not there, he stopped.

Seizing victory from the jaws of defeat, the indomitable Harbhajan jumped up and cried out through his split lips, "*I won! I won! You stopped going, but I didn't!*"

## Thirst

It was a hot day. Harbhajan Singh had been exercising outside and was very thirsty. For half an hour, he had looked for a place to satisfy his thirst. Finally, he found a well. Just as he was bending over to drink, he heard a familiar voice.

"Hey, Bhajan, what are you doing?" It was his Master.

"I am just taking a little water."

"Why water?"

"Ji, I am thirsty."

"Oh, you are thirsty. No, no, you should not drink water."

"Okay, so I should not drink water. What should I do?"

"Come with me," said his teacher.

If it had not been Sant Hazara Singh, Harbhajan felt he might have taken out his little *kirpaan* and attacked him. Instead, he said, "Okay."

Meekly, Harbhajan followed his Master while his mind thought of nothing but beautiful, drinking water.

Santji offered, "I think you exercised very well."

"Yes sir, very well."

"You were exercising up to now?"

"No, about half an hour I set out looking for water. I am dying! See my tongue? It can't come out."

"Don't worry! It will come out. It is not very important. Sometimes the tongue does such things."

Indirectly, Harbhajan had been trying to tell Santji that he could not take very much more – but to no effect.

Santji continued, "Hey, why don't you take off your shoes and run with me?"

Harbhajan thought, "Now this is too much! Well, if I don't run, I will be disobeying him. And if I run, I will fall. Alright, I'll run and I'll fall. Then he'll have to carry me. That will show him!" And he started to run. As tough as he was, he tried to fall, but somehow his feet carried him and he couldn't.

Finally, they returned to the *dehra* and sat down in the shade. Santji put a big piece of butter in Harbhajan Singh's mouth. He said, "Swallow it!" and handing Harbhajan a big jug of lassi, he said, "and take this lassi with honey in it."

Harbhajan was going to drain the whole jug in one gulp. "Slow, slow, slow, slow, slow..." cautioned Santji.

Afterwards, Harbhajan Singh felt very good. "Thank you, God. Thank you, Guru. Thank you, *Maya*. You are beautiful!"

"Now I have to ask you one question."

"Sir, you can ask me ten questions!"

"Why, when you were following me, were you abusing me?"

"To be truthful, I was very thirsty and couldn't believe that you would be such a nut. Do you know what thirst does to a person?"

"Bhajan, when you are that thirsty, you should not drink water right away. It is very dangerous. Do you know how I had to run to catch you before you drank the water? And I caught you just in time. I prepared these things because I knew they were what you needed."

## **When the Teacher Criticizes, God Smiles**

A few of Sant Hazara Singh's favorite students had the privilege of serving him his meals. Ordinarily, this duty consisted of taking a platter of food from the kitchen to Santji's room, serving him, then quietly sitting keeping him company until he finished. Next, the student would bring Sant Hazara Singh a pitcher of water to wash his hands and a towel to dry them, and finally take everything back to the kitchen. It was ordinarily a quiet time with Santji. That was the job.

This day was different. Sant Hazara Singh had only just blessed his food when Harbhajan found himself on the receiving end of an intensive psychoanalysis from his teacher for which he was completely unprepared.

"Bhajan, you know, first of all, you sometimes look this way and sometimes you look that way..."

And Santji illustrated with his own expressions. "Do you know what that kind of looking does to the hemispheres of your brain? And something else. I know you are thinking now. Do you know how I know you are thinking? It is because you are pressing your lower lip. This is all wrong. In fact, the way you walk, the way you sit, the way you eat, the way you think... it is all wrong! If you just look at yourself, you will know this is one of the greatest studies in the world." Santji went on for about forty minutes describing the deficiencies of Harbhajan Singh's ordinary physical behaviours in exhaustive detail.

Finally, when Sant Hazara Singh seemed to have finished, Harbhajan Singh ventured, "It is all wrong, I agree. Is there anything right in me?"

Santji smiled, "Do you want to know something right in you?"

Harbhajan hesitated, "If you can tell me."

"The only good thing in you is you listen. That's it! There is nothing else."

"Could you tell me Sir, why you feel I listen well?"

"Whenever I criticize you, there comes a shine in your eyes which makes me feel good about you. Your eyes shine out. And I don't know anyone else that happens to."

Afterwards, Harbhajan Singh went directly home and for a long time sat in front of a mirror reflecting on all Santji had told him. He looked left. He looked right. He pressed his lip as he was accustomed to doing unconsciously just to see how it all looked.

And then finally, when he had thought it all though... *he* caught it too. He *did* shine from his eyes! It was true! Harbhajan realized then there was nothing in the world he loved more than to excel and to improve upon himself. *This* was his pride and joy. It was the sparkle in his eyes. And Santji had been absolutely right.

## The Circle of Spears

There was a *gatka* match. This time, Harbhajan was not provided a shield, but given only a sword and ordered onto the field, the open arena where the young men practised this martial art.

Then, to challenge Harbhajan, six young men came to face him on the field, each armed with a long spear, a most challenging opposition.

"Wait a minute!" cried Harbhajan Singh, "This is not fair!"

In reply, Sant Hazara Singh sent out two more opponents armed with spears. There were eight now, and they began to circle around Harbhajan.

Harbhajan Singh knew there were three options before him. He could simply bow out and walk away. He could fight a mock battle with restraint and sportsmanship, according to agreed upon signals and cues of that martial art. Or he could fight all out unto victory.

Harbhajan thought, "I didn't ask for this. I was totally unaware that I would face these boys today, but now that they are here, I won't disappoint them." In his heart, he pleaded to the Guru, "You know how rotten I am, but dear God, you've got to stand with me now. Otherwise, I won't be able to bear it!"

Amazingly, after half an hour of vigorous battle, the heads of the eight spears were lying on the ground. Those who had held them knew full well that Harbhajan could as easily have cut off their hands, but he did not touch their hands.

That evening, when they were all came together for dinner, the young men asked Harbhajan, "Well, Bhajan, why didn't you cut our hands?"

He replied, "It was the Guru who was fighting, not me. There was no vengeance in my heart, even though you were attacking me left and right."

Like old friends, they laughed and ate and celebrated their good fortune.

## Santji's Healing Wonder

Sant Hazara Singh was blessed with an uncommon knowledge of the body's mysterious ways. Once, Harbhajan accompanied Santji to a place where a man was near to death. In his presence, Santji used a steel wire to cut straight through the man's neck. He applied certain leaves to the bleeding, headless body. Then he put the head back, and held it on with his two hands.

Harbhajan watched in amazement. After a time, he saw the head shake, as Santji's remedy began to take effect. He could not help feeling awe and a renewed respect of his master's rare and wonderful abilities.

## Faith

Another day, one of Santji's students challenged Harbhajan. He said, "Hey, what kind of a man are you?"

"What is wrong with me?"

"Whatever Santji says, you say 'Yes, sir!'"

"What is wrong with that? He is my spiritual teacher. I trust his wisdom."

"Suppose he is wrong."

"If he is wrong, then there is nothing which is right."

"That's called 'blind faith'!"

"My dear friend, faith *means* to be blind. If faith means to have two of your own eyes - one goes left, one goes right - that is not faith. If love and faith does not make you blind, you have not learned either of the two."

"What about the free will?"

"It's free, but it's not me. I have nothing to do with it."

"But we are learning. God has given us ideas. God has given us thoughts and free will. God has given us head and heart. What about all that?"

"All of me, I have given to this man in exchange for wisdom, and I trust him."

His fellow student was not satisfied, so he went to Sant Hazara Singh and said, "I and Bhajan have had this discussion. I don't agree with him. Tell me who is right."

"Where is Bhajan?"

"He is lying down sleeping there with a blanket over his head. You can see him right there."

Santji said no more, but when Harbhajan woke up, he found himself in a very cosy situation. There was someone massaging his feet. It gave him a very comfortable feeling. He was very tired, and he didn't get up. His inner voice said "Keep going!" And it kept going, and kept going, and kept going, and finally Harbhajan just couldn't believe that any one of his fellow students could give that kind of a foot massage for that long!

He pulled the blanket from over his head and sat up, and was surprised to see his own teacher! "Sir, what is happening?"

"Nothing. I just wanted to be comfortable where I knew I could be comfortable. The comfort lies in your feet."

"*My feet!?*" Harbhajan was stunned.

"Did I ever let you down?" Santji replied.

"No."

"Did I ever lie to you?"

"No."

"Whosoever will touch your feet, God will touch his heart and head both. Today allow me to give you a foot massage. It is my pleasure."

Harbhajan did not protest to Sant Hazara Singh, because he remembered well the story of Arjun



and Lord Krishna's headache.

The story went that one day Lord Krishna had called for Arjun, who was very proud that he was his Master's best disciple. Lord Krishna said, "Arjun, come here."

Arjun replied, "Sir?"

"I have a terrible headache."

"Sir, how can it be cured?"

"I want the dust of the feet of my best disciple."

Arjun hesitated a moment, then he offered, "Sir, I will go and find it." He then humbly went out from house to house, asking, "Give some dust from your shoes for Lord Krishna. He has a headache."

People responded, "Have you gone crazy? You want us to give the dust from our shoes for Lord Krishna? Arjun, something has gone wrong with you."

Finally he went to where he found the *gopis*, the cowherd girls who adored Krishna, were dancing. He said, "Hey, ladies... Listen. Lord Krishna has a terrible headache. He wants the dust of the shoes of his disciples."

They said, "Wait! All those shoes are there. Make a bundle of them! Take them all! Take the shoes along with the dust. If the dust doesn't work, the shoes will!"

Finally, Arjun returned with the shoes of the *gopis*, all in a bundle. "Here you are, Sir," he said.

When he saw his best disciple returning, Lord Krishna could not help smiling. Then, he asked Arjun, "Why did you go on this search? Why didn't you give me your own shoe and a little dirt from it and just touch my forehead? Aren't you a great disciple of mine? By the way, from the moment you heard that I had a headache, the headache was gone."

So Harbhajan thought to himself, "This is a very interesting situation. Well, he asked for it. Let him have it."

As he massaged, Santji said to Harbhajan, "Now I am pressing your heart... Now I am pressing your liver... Now I am pressing your kidneys..." Harbhajan was amazed. That was the day he first learned the meridian points of the foot, and how they work in relation to the organs of the body.

## Oranges for Santji

One evening, Santji summoned Harbhajan and the other students of the *dehra*. He said to them, "I have an assignment for you. Do you know that farm with the blood oranges? Do you know that landlord, that Sardarji, who manages those groves?"

"I have met him. He visits my grandfather sometimes."

"I want you to go there and steal the oranges, and I want them to be here in the morning, so we can distribute them to the poor people in the town. They may never have even seen what a blood orange looks like before now."

When they gathered together to discuss what they were going to do, many of the boys were shocked. They had thought they had become used to Santji's unpredictable ways. The young men realized that he might tell sometimes them to do the most unlikely things in the most improbable ways. They also knew that his word was the law in the *dehra*, that there was never any hope of appeal, and that their parents had full confidence in Santji, whatever he might do. But now he was telling them *to steal!*

"How can he make thieves of us?" they asked.

Someone replied, "Forget it! There's no way of stealing these oranges. They will kill you before you even get close! Firstly, there is a barbed wire fence, and we don't have any way of getting over it. Secondly, men on horseback with loaded guns, patrol it day and night. Thirdly, those groves are well inside the property, so you have to cross deeply into his territory just to get there. Fourthly, nobody has ever gone there and come back alive with the intention of stealing even one orange. They kill on sight."

Harbhajan Singh said, "We already know that. It is a question of how we steal them. Santji didn't say to practically go and steal. In English, "to steal" also means "to get away with something". It is an English word he has used for the first time. To steal can mean many different things."

Someone responded, "No, to steal means to be a thief!"

"'Steel' also is a metal," replied Harbhajan.

"You are just siding with Santji! What do you mean?"

"He definitely said 'go and steal them'," said another student.

Someone else said, "Well, whatever he said, are we going to waste time or are we going to do some planning? He wants the oranges in the morning, doesn't he?"

Everyone agreed.

"Does it make any difference how we get them? Did he say "beg, borrow or steal"? Did he say "s-t-e-a-l" or "s-t-e-e-l"? Did anybody ask?"

"No."

Harbhajan responded, "Then I am right. Steel also means to "fix it". That is also true."

"No, no, no. He means to actually steal them, to become thieves."

"How many times has he spoken in English? Very rarely," said Harbhajan Singh.

"Why are you defending him?"

"I'm not defending him. I'm asking you to consider two alternatives. One is to go there, try and steal them, get killed, and we'll be liberated, then we'll never have to do it again, but the oranges won't be here tomorrow morning... So we have to come through this alive, and we won't be alive if we go there in a way that is in any way offensive."

"That is the problem! What do you suggest?"

"For you, I will try to think of something," said Harbhajan.

Someone else suggested, "How about if we go to their door and just beg, "For our teacher, please give us..."

"First of all," Harbhajan shot back, "it is impossible to get to their door with any intention of begging. You will be halted outside."

At last, they settled on a plan. They dressed themselves in very respectable-looking clothes. Then they took a truck, and some other vehicles that were available, and rode directly to the property with the orange groves at top speed.

Sant Hazara Singh's students had not gone very far inside the property before, as they had expected, they were pulled over at gunpoint and asked to identify themselves. They politely stepped out of their vehicles into a wide spotlight one of the guards was beaming, and identified themselves.

Next, they were asked the nature of their business. Just as they had planned, they told the guards, "Our teacher, Sant So-and-so, has asked that these oranges be picked up tonight and delivered. The landlord has already promised them. We have come to collect them."

The guards resisted, as expected. "We have no orders," they said.

"We also have no orders. We have only been sent to ensure the delivery goes smoothly."

The guards looked at each other. They were starting to become confused. "How many oranges did you want?"

"The instructions are that every orange has to be picked up and delivered. You recognize me, don't you?" Harbhajan asked.

"Well, yes, you are from the estate over the hill. You are the grandson of that family."

"I am the one who is responsible. I was told to come here directly."

"Well, Sir, you have come..."

*"Alright boys! Let's not waste time. Let's get picking!"* To the young men's surprise, their ruse worked so well that some of the guards also began climbing ladders and filling baskets with the precious blood oranges.

By four a.m., almost every orange had been picked and loaded, and the truck's engine started and ready to go. Harbhajan said to the man in charge, "Will you please come with us to see it is properly delivered? Then, if Sardarji asks, you can assure him that everything has been done according to his wishes."

"No, no. I'm going to send this fellow. He can do the job."

"He is not going anywhere other than Santji's *dehra*," Harbhajan replied.

So all the oranges were delivered accordingly. The guard who came along even helped to unload. In the end, Harbhajan gave the man a receipt, and he returned to the property.

Amazingly, the job had been done, the oranges had in fact been stolen, just as Sant Hazara Singh had asked. But Harbhajan Singh was not entirely at ease. He told one of the students, "Look, why don't you go to Santji's house. It will take an hour and a half for you. For me, it will just take an hour to tell my grandfather what we have done, and to ask him to cover for us. If we don't have some kind of alibi by eight o'clock in the morning, when Sardarji takes his morning tea, I think his gunmen will be here to see us.

"Secondly," Harbhajan continued, "while I go to see my grandfather, please be sure Santji knows the oranges have arrived. Thirdly get to our family cashier, and inform him that an amount of money may be required to cover the expenses."

When Harbhajan Singh's grandfather learned there was some problem to do with the oranges, he immediately sent an invitation to the Sardarji to come have tea with him at his house. Meanwhile, Sant Hazara Singh ordered the oranges distributed in the poor areas of the town, and his students took care of that.

At eleven o'clock, when all the oranges had been given away, Harbhajan Singh said to the young men, "Let's ride to the village now to save our skins!"

Once they had arrived at Harbhajan's family home, they found two worldly-wise men, Harbhajan Singh's grandfather and the landlord, sitting, talking and relaxing, having tea.

When his grandfather saw Harbhajan Singh, he took him aside and said, "What have you been up to?"

Harbhajan Singh then explained how Sant Hazara Singh had told everyone to steal the oranges and serve them to the poor, and how they had managed to trick the guards into helping them. Finally, he asked his grandfather if he could please somehow help the boys so they would not end up in some terrible trouble.

Harbhajan's grandfather seemed surprised. "Oh no, there is no difficulty here. You did a noble job!"

"Noble or not, he has about two hundred gunmen. Once he knows his oranges are gone..."

"He doesn't know?"

"That's why I'm telling you!"

"It's alright. You are my grandson. Now, don't you worry."

Harbhajan's grandfather returned together with the young men to where the blood orange baron was seated in the house.

"Ah, the boys have come," said the Sardarji, "Sit down here, everyone!"

Then, Harbhajan's grandfather said to the landlord, "You know, you have done very noble work today!"

"Really?"

"You know, that Santiji where my grandson studies? He wanted the oranges from your yard to distribute to the poor."

"Oh, it would be a pleasure for me!"

"Your pleasure has already been distributed."

"Oh, is that so? How did it happen?"

"My grandson went and told your men, and they were very cooperative. Also, here is the money for the oranges." Harbhajan could see a huge bundle of notes in his grandfather's hand. "And I would be pleased if all your men were honored for their selfless service, at my expense."

"No, no, next year and the year after and the year following, these oranges will again be distributed freely! And this money? You can keep it, Sir. I will double it, and give it to everyone, I swear, on my honor!"

Harbhajan Singh was astonished at this entirely unexpected turn of events. He then began to reflect over how, in reality, everybody steals. Everybody buys cheap and sells dear. One way or another, people everywhere are always exploiting each other. But Sant Hazara Singh was a holy man. Harbhajan had never believed that Santji would really make his students into thieves. It had all been an elaborate test to see how ingeniously they could manage to distribute those oranges to the poor.

## The Champion

Training at the *dehra* included a rigorous program of martial arts and frequent competitions, of which Harbhajan Singh was regularly the champion. But a champion is not without his detractors.

One morning, Harbhajan was taking a brisk walk with a companion when his fellow student unexpectedly pulled his sword from its scabbard and said, "I want to challenge you!"

Harbhajan Singh responded, "I love you. I don't want to challenge you at all. It's not my way of life. But if you challenge me and I accept the challenge, I am going to snatch your sword and cut your throat. You don't want that."

"Come on! Let me see how good you are! You became champion because you have a rich grandfather and your grandfather gave money to everybody."

Harbhajan replied, "It was a matter of merit. I won honorably and I am willing to lose to you because of my honor."

“Why? I am stronger than you!”

“No. You are very weak. You are angry. You are jealous. You are stupid. You are challenging me on my morning walk. These are not the manners of a martial man.”

Harbhajan’s companion retorted, “You don’t understand me, man. If you don’t accept my challenge, I am going to kill you!”

Then everything happened very quickly. The next minute, the friend was lying on the ground with Harbhajan Singh standing over him, the offending sword in his left hand.

Harbhajan reached out with his right, and offered, “Get up, my friend. You couldn’t kill me and I won’t kill you. You are so angry, so burned with jealousy, that it would not satisfy my appetite.”

Harbhajan’s companion accepted his hand. When he was standing again, Harbhajan gave him back his sword, and asked him, “Can we go for a walk now?”

So they had a long walk and talked over what had just transpired and why. Harbhajan Singh’s friend stammered, “I-I-I-I-I want to be champion...”

As a man of honor, Harbhajan offered, “Next year, I won’t participate. If for one year you learn from me, you will be champion.”

They trained for a whole year. Twelve months later, the friend was better than anyone at the *dehra*. When Santji pitted them against each other, Harbhajan Singh instructed his friend, “I want you to win, but for God’s sake, don’t be angry and don’t be anxious. If you are angry and you are anxious and you want the championship too much, you won’t get it! Take my word for it. Fight me fairly!”

The friend’s voice quivered, “I am anxious. I am insecure. I want to have won it already.”

“No. Forget about the anger and fear. I have taught you. You know better.”

The two swordsmen men faced each other, and lightly touched their swords and shields together according to the *gatka* tradition, to start the match. The next moment, two flailing swords and two little shields clashed like thunder in the air. Each attack was fierce and powerful. The circle of students around them strained with anticipation.

Harbhajan confidently took the defensive, not wishing to defeat his opponent, enjoying his friend’s every maneuver. Feign and attack. Attack and feign. Strike, parry. Parry, strike. Strike hard. As the duel continued, Harbhajan’s match began to strike wildly, a sign that his emotions had got the better of him. After a few minutes of vicious attacking, he started to slow and tire from his exertions. It was now no longer a match. Harbhajan could see it. Santji could see it.

With a deft clip of his sword, Harbhajan Singh struck his friend's outstretched hand so he lost grip of his shield. In the surprise of the moment, as the shield came clanging to the ground, Harbhajan the teacher and gentleman snatched his student's sword, then handed it back, threw away his own sword and raised his opponent's right hand in the air to proclaim him winner.

"You can't do that!" said the friend.

"If I cannot honor my student, I have no honor left in me. You are the champion."

Sant Hazara Singh came and said, "You cheated me."

"Master, you have shown me compassion. You have shown me service. You have shown me helping. With this, he is helped, and he is really a champion! Let's not question this right now. Later on, we'll decide."

Santji laughed and said, "You are a real champion today because you created a champion!"

## Shakti Pad

One day, Harbhajan needed to speak with Sant Hazara Singh. He came to him and said, "Santji..."

"What is it? What is it, Bhajan?"

"I am in great pain."

"What?"

"I see myself all around me. I don't like it."

"Son, it is *Shakti Pad*."

"I don't like it."

"Well, you've got to go through it."

"No, come with me! Definitely come along with me!"

"Nobody comes with anybody at this time."



Harbhajan pleaded, "For God's sake, please... Am I not a good boy?"

"Yeah, yeah, kind of. You're nice."

"You've got to do something to give me moral support!"

Santji conceded, "Alright. For forty days, I'll just go on a water fast, twelve ounces of water a day."

Everyone was shocked that Harbhajan could bring Sant Hazara Singh to do such a thing. Harbhajan had pleased him to such an extent. Harbhajan had also realized that on the day when his ego would confront him, only one man would be able to help. On that fast, Santji's body lost almost a hundred pounds in weight.

### 'Innsecurity'

While Harbhajan Singh went to his high school, he brought his uncompromising habits with him. Sometimes they would land him in trouble with the authorities. Sometimes his teachers wondered at Harbhajan's unsinkable personality.

Once, in English class, his teacher reprimanded Harbhajan Singh for his spelling. He said, "I can understand that if I ask someone to spell 'etiquette,' few people will be able to spell it. And I also understand that if I ask you to spell 'committee,' it is a very difficult spelling. You always told me the biggest word is 'diaminodiahydrochlorideoxidobenzine,' and you still remember it. How come you cannot do this little thing? You cannot spell 'innsecurity.' Where did this double 'n' come from?"

Harbhajan Singh replied, "It didn't come from anywhere. I made it 'inn' with a double 'n' – where security lives. In an inn, we rest and are peaceful. So I made 'i-n,' which is negative, into double 'n,' which is the inn of the security. This is my spelling. If it is wrong or it is right, you can cut it out, but this spelling will stick with me. It doesn't matter what."

"You just lost ten marks."

"I lost them consciously, but I do not want to buy the word which makes a mess out of me."

"God, you are talking like a saint!"

"Watch me!"

The teacher was shocked. "Why should a boy of your age argue about a spelling, knowing the

spelling is wrong?”

Harbhajan Singh tried to explain, “My consciousness cannot accept the bounty of a negative word. I cannot afford the luxury of a negative thought. I cannot have a profile and projection of negativity. God made me, and God is positive. I am made in God, and I am positive!”

## **The Exam**

With his tall, powerful physique and intuitive smarts honed through his practice of meditation, Harbhajan Singh was an exceptional sportsman. When he was not playing soccer or field hockey, he liked to watch the competition play. One day, at a sporting event, Harbhajan Singh was holding onto a heating duct to better see over the crowd. The duct would not support his weight and collapsed, bringing the wall and ceiling down on top of him.

Half of his body was temporarily paralyzed, and he was rushed to hospital. His serious injuries threatened to have an adverse effect on Harbhajan's education. The final examinations for his graduation from secondary school were coming up, and to miss them would mean having to repeat his school year.

When Sant Hazara Singh heard about the situation and visited Harbhajan Singh in the hospital, he insisted that such a waste of time could not be tolerated. The bright young man must write his examinations!

Over the doctors' protests, Harbhajan Singh, who could not write and could only barely speak, was taken on a stretcher to the examination hall. Santji accompanied him, and convinced the examiner that Harbhajan Singh should be allowed to take the exam, and that someone be assigned to read him the questions and write down the answers he gave orally.

Remarkably, Harbhajan Singh passed that examination. His body eventually returned to full health. Most importantly, the aspiring young man had learned a valuable lesson in courage and perseverance.

## **Santji's Blessing**

One day, when Harbhajan was sixteen and a half years old, he was told that he was to have an audience with his Master the next day. It sounded like a troubling prospect.

A friend asked, “What do you expect?”

“Something unbelievably heavy,” replied Harbhajan, “That’s what I believe.”

Finally the time came and he went to Santji’s room for his appointment. Harbhajan was ushered in and shown to where his Master was sitting, eyes closed, absorbed in meditation.

Harbhajan bowed before Santji and sat nearby. Some time passed. Finally, Sant Hazara Singh opened his eyes. He began to speak, “Bhajan, the heavens have so far told me the truth. The heavens shall tell me all truth. The heavens shall know all truth...”

Harbhajan recognized this style of communication. Sant Hazara Singh always used these phrases when he set out to do something unbelievable. Ordinarily, Harbhajan had learned how to cope with Santji’s ways. The two of them were even friendly at times. But now he braced himself in the only way he could. In his mind, Harbhajan recited, “*Waheguru, Waheguru...* I don’t know what he’s going to say... *Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru...*”

The Master continued in his mystical language. Harbhajan was only half-conscious of what was being said, preoccupied instead with what he believed was going to be said. At last, Santji came to the point of his rambling monologue, “You are not a woman. You are not a man. You are not a person. You are not great. And you are not nothing.” And then he made a fist. “Why don’t you ask me who you are?”

Harbhajan Singh had been waiting for something like this. “My Master, you have told me I am not a woman, I am not a man, I am not a person, I am not great, I am not nothing. *So you will tell me what I am.*”

“Clever.”

Harbhajan was transfixed and motionless. This, he knew, was what he had been waiting for.

Santji continued, “You are a teacher. And you are the Master now, with one condition.”

Harbhajan was ready now. “Oh... what is the condition?”

“You shall not live in this land. Neither I shall. But in the other land you shall not come to see me because I shall live a very sinful, ugly, dirty life to which you shall not be a part. You are not even come to me for my blessing or audience. Is that clear?”

“Yes, Sir.” Harbhajan Singh understood that he had gained the mastery of kundalini yoga.

His teacher said to him, "You are perfect!"

Harbhajan Singh responded, "No, sir. Perfect is God. God does everything."

Two hours of discussion followed. Finally, Sant Hazara Singh said, "I feel like bowing to you."

Harbhajan Singh replied, "No, sir. I bow to you every day. If you were one day to bow to me, you would only be teaching me how to bow."

Santji asked, "Do you not have any feeling?"

Harbhajan Singh replied, "I feel you have taught me well. You have given me the experience I needed. Now I have an understanding."

Santji said, "Alright. Explain your experience to me!"

"Sir, the experience is like the experience of one who has been blind all his life, and then one fine day he is given eyes and he sees the beauty of the creation. What does he say?"

"What does he say?"

"Wha! In my own experience, I have seen Infinity!"

"Are you not happy?"

"I am not unhappy at all. But there's nothing to be happy about either, because now the work starts. I have to tighten down every nut. And God! It requires muscle. Sir, it's a long way to go!"

Santji replied, "Well, use all these tools when you are forty."

"Thank you. You have given me some time to enjoy. I'll need the experience of Earth because Earth should be equally strong as the heavens. Then you are very much loved by God."

"God bless you! Now go."

### **'Be Careful...'**

Harbhajan Singh felt a certain pride in his new status as Master. He also felt a little unnerved. Harbhajan was a keen observer at all times and it seemed to him that his thoughts, even trivial ones, were starting to manifest. Without his even saying a word, they were taking physical form.

One evening, Harbhajan returned to his room to find his bed a mess. He was fussy by nature, and looking at the dishevelled sheets and blankets, decided not to sleep in it. Rather, he went outside

his room to read the bedtime hymn, *Kirtan Sohila*.

When he returned to his room, the bed was perfectly made. There was no maid in his hostel and he did not believe in fairies, so Harbhajan Singh could not help wondering. With a thought of thankfulness, he retired to bed and slept until *sadhana* time.

Afterwards, he asked around, “Did anyone come into my room and make my bed?”

Everyone replied, “No.”

Finally, Harbhajan Singh went to see Santji to find the answer to his mystery.

Santji said, “You are asking me who made your bed?”

“Yes.”

“I did it.”

“You made my bed?” Harbhajan was astonished.

“Well, you didn’t want to sleep in a messed-up bed, did you? You wished it. I heard it. I obeyed.”

“Can you make it every day now?” quipped Harbhajan.

They both had a good laugh. “Well firstly, I’m not punishing you for not making your own bed, although you are supposed to. And secondly, it was a good bed, right?”

“Yes. It was great! I had a great sleep!”

“Be careful,” counselled Santji, “because from now on, all you wish shall be done.”

## Freedom!

All the years Harbhajan Singh was taking his training at the *dehra* and doing his studies at high school, the country was being taken up by a massive storm of change. After centuries of denying the people of India – and its subjects around the globe – the right to self-government, finally it seemed possible that the world’s biggest colonial power might unyoke the citizens of its richest and most populous possession. Yet, nothing was certain. The colonial regime had a record of promising much and then disappointing. Everyone, it seemed, needed to make some contribution to the struggle for

freedom.

One day, Harbhajan Singh took part in - some say he organized - a rally in support of self-rule, part of the movement to force Britain to "Quit India." In a loud, clear voice fired with emotion he recited a poem reminding its listeners "a life without independence is a life worse than death." The crowd that had gathered greatly appreciated Harbhajan Singh's sentiment. Even in Punjab, where this history of colonial domination did not reach as far as in other parts of India, emotions against the British were very high.

After speaking, Harbhajan Singh felt tired and emotionally drained. It had been a hot day. He went back to the hostel in the town where he had been staying and slept through the evening and the night. In the morning, he read a newspaper. There was a report that a large part of the town had been burnt to the ground by angry mobs, and that he, Harbhajan Singh was accused of inciting them.

Before Harbhajan was ready to rise and go to school, police arrived and surrounded his bed with their guns pointing at him.

"What is going on?" he demanded.

"You started a riot yesterday," said the officer in charge.

"I didn't start a thing."

"Where were you?"

"I was here, sleeping."

"You read a poem!"

"There were thirty people reading poems. I read a poem too. Those were my feelings."

"That is why this war has started. That is why people have burned the town. That is why..."

"What do you want? Do you want to take me?"

"Yes."

"Show me the warrant."

The police looked at each other. They did not expect such a spirited defence. They had thought they would just be scooping up another agitator and throwing him in jail. The officer in charge had not bothered to obtain a warrant. Usually the sight of uniforms and guns sufficed to intimidate anyone

they wanted to apprehend. But not this time.

“How did you enter the hostel?” Harbhajan continued.

“We walked in.”

“Please walk out. You don’t have a warrant and the hostel is a private property. Go to the warden. Serve him with a warrant and then come in.”

That little insurrection was quickly swallowed up in the sweeping tide of the freedom movement, and those policemen never returned for Harbhajan Singh.

## Blood on Blood

The impatience for independence took many forms. The year 1946 saw 1,629 strikes, including mutinies in the Royal Air Force and Indian Navy. The cry for a Muslim homeland took a violent turn when a call for a “Direct Action Day” in Calcutta became a massacre of Hindus, then a retaliatory slaughter of Muslims, resulting in thousands of dead. Then, a few weeks later, Muslim fanatics systematically killed and forcibly converted thousands of Hindus, desecrating their temples and looting their businesses in rural east Bengal. To the West, in Bihar, Hindu extremists exacted revenge, killing more thousands and leaving many thousands more homeless. Women and girls were sought out and kidnapped, especially by the mobs of rogues allied with the Muslim League. Rape emerged on both sides as a weapon of humiliation and conquest.

Sensing the increasingly dangerous tide of religious conflict, young Sikhs organized themselves in schools, colleges and universities. They educated each other about Sikh traditions and prided themselves in their unique way of life. The “Sikh Students Federation” organized camps where young people explored the practices of recitation of *Gurbani*, meditation on *Naam*, and selfless service. A few respected elders were also invited to contribute.

One adult Sikh leader named Giani Kartar Singh was impressed by the efforts of the young people. “You have brains,” he said.

The young Sikhs wished to honor their special guest, but distrusted the adult Sikh leadership as a whole. They replied, “We also have arms. We are strong and we don’t want this kind of politics.”

For the two years after his return from Sant Hazara Singh’s *dehra*, Harbhajan Singh prepared for the end of the British Raj and the beginning of a free India, whatever form it might take. Many were wary that the partition of Indian and creation of a Muslim “Pakistan” fired by religious hatred and intolerance could make the lives of families like Harbhajan Singh’s, situated in Muslim-majority areas

difficult, if not impossible.

In anticipation of whatever might happen, Harbhajan organized his friends and gave them parade classes. Each morning they lined up in formation and marched for two miles (3.2 kilometres). That routine built in them a rhythm, a confidence and a powerful spirit of oneness.

Meanwhile in New Delhi and elsewhere, negotiations were taking place on the exact shape of the future India. When might the British actually leave? What form of government might come into being? Was there any possibility of keeping the country together?

In response to the growing demand for the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan, Sikh leaders Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh, who both lived where Muslims were in majority, demanded a Sikh border state in Punjab between the two future Muslim and Hindu states. Over the months of negotiations, the Sikhs were by turns patronized and ignored by the representatives of the two religious majorities.

In early March 1947, fanatics stirred up Muslims in Tara Singh's home district of Rawalpindi. Visiting the village mosques, they told their co-religionists that the main mosque in Rawalpindi had been razed to the ground and that Muslim corpses littered the streets. Incited in this way, armed mobs went from village to village where Hindus and Sikhs were hopelessly outnumbered, killing, forcibly converting, looting, and raping their inhabitants. Homes and Gurdwaras where victims sought shelter were set ablaze. Women and girls killed themselves by jumping into wells or were beheaded by their menfolk to save them from molestation by the frenzied Muslims.

Harbhajan Singh is sure to have heard news of the atrocities in Rawalpindi, 140 miles (226 kilometres) to the north of Kot Harkarn, and the lackadaisical response by the authorities. Everyone knew the days of the British were numbered, while the Muslim police and judiciary were mostly unsympathetic. Ninety miles (150 kilometres) to the southeast, the holy city of Amritsar was descending into violence and chaos. The following month, closer to home, in the town of Wazirabad, 32 miles (51 kilometres) to the northeast, a sweet-seller's shop was burned to the ground. This caused widespread panic for several weeks.

After weeks of anarchy in Punjab, finally the date of independence was announced. India and Pakistan would gain their freedom at the midnight of August 14 and 15. For all their wishful thinking, however, the Sikh leaders were unable to deliver a safe zone, a neutral state for their people. In the fateful June 4 radio address when the representatives at the negotiations addressed the nation, the best Baldev Singh could manage was a plea for an end to violence.



## Frenzy

Readers today may reasonably wonder what role women played in the momentous events unfolding in South Asia at that time. The truth is that in this time and place, females were not free to participate openly in the world of politics. This is still many years before the first woman prime ministers and members of congress. Cultural norms simply prohibited it.

Some women played supportive roles of various kinds, supporting the great leaders of the day. Amtus Salaam, a young Muslim woman from Patiala, went to the town of Noakhali, the centre of carnage in rural east Bengal, and fasted for peace between the opposing sides. By the twenty-fourth day, when Mahatma Gandhi found Amtus and coaxed her to end her fast, she was verging on starvation and too weak to speak. Once ignited, however, the fire of religious intolerance proved difficult to extinguish even by with the eminence of the great mahatma.

Amrita Pritam was born in Gujranwala, the birthplace of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, not far from Kot Harkarn. As a Sikh, she was forced to flee to India. As a poet, she put some of her thoughts to verse:

### Frenzy

When religion goes to people's heads  
Steel is sharpened  
Tongues grow cruel  
Poisoned by black snakes of hatred.  
Red blood in the veins  
Turns dark  
Lips beautiful to kiss  
Foam.

The goddess of death  
Comes by night  
To drink blood from scattered skulls.

Beaks of vultures  
Eat the flesh of dead and dying  
And men's eyes cannot tell  
Other women from their own.

Sheep of every flock  
When they see a different fleece  
Taking a scrap of flesh  
Or a thread two yards long

Convert the stranger by force  
And drive it to join their own flock.

So they grow virtuous  
They serve religion  
They raise the flag.  
In bright daylight  
Or in pitch-dark night  
Steel is sharpened  
And innocent children

Delicate women  
Strong young men  
Are human beings no longer  
But animals for sacrifice.  
When religion goes to people's heads...

## Anandpur

By August 1947, there was no law and order in many parts of India and Pakistan. As news arrived that militant Pathans and Muslims from Afghanistan were planning to attack the city of Anandpur, Sant Hazara Singh called on all his people, including Harbhajan Singh, to defend the sacred city.

Before going to fight, Harbhajan Singh, dressed in steel with mail and *malas* and *kirpaans*, went before his mother to seek her blessing. Harbhajan Singh's mother was a devout woman, physically imposing, with a tremendous bearing. She recited the sacred *Sukhmani* three times every day. Now, Harbhajan Singh explained to this stately woman, his mother, that Santji had told his men to prepare themselves to make the ultimate sacrifice. He had given them a day to say goodbye to whomever they wished. His mother wanted to know what the odds would be in this conflict. Harbhajan explained that with him were about two hundred people with not very many arms. The enemy, numbering some fifteen thousand, was apparently very well equipped.

She said to her son, "Well, I do not want to bless you to die, because I never blessed you to live. You never were born in my family because we expected a son. You came through prayer, and if this prayer chooses to let you go, I will have no comments. But remember, you have to die one day, and no mother wants her son to die and neither wishes it to be so. But, seeing you as I see you, and seeing you so dressed, I feel that you have made your choice. And now that you have made this choice, I want to tell you one thing: Bhajan, life comes many times."

She asked, "Do you know that in our family there was supposed to be no son? Do you know I

took you to every holy place where I could take you within my means when you were born? With all that I could do for you as a mother, today I want to tell you one thing, and that is, you might have been born many times, you may have been my son in a previous incarnation or not, but now I am telling you that you were born out of me. If you are going to die for Guru Gobind Singh, don't come back in disgrace."

It was an act only a mother could do. Since Harbhajan Singh was not married, he had no wife to look to. He went to Anandpur, and with Guru's Grace, the danger of the situation was resolved. The enemies saw the Sikhs completely entrenched in the historic, fortified Gurdwara, and chose not to attack.

## **The Bridge**

From Anandpur, Harbhajan Singh joined other young Sikhs nearby as they prayed and meditated, discussed and prepared for the big changes happening in the country. Many of them were in their early and mid-teens, but they were educated and fearless. Everywhere they went, they rallied young Sikhs to take pride in their heritage and to prepare to defend themselves.

Meanwhile, large parts of north India erupted into chaos. In Patiala and Delhi, Muslims were massacred with the connivance of Sikh and Hindu authorities. Reciprocally, in Lahore and the Sikh heartland of Sheikhpura, Sikhs and Hindus were being butchered.

So far, the area around Kot Harkarn had been relatively peaceful, but Harbhajan Singh knew to return quickly in the case of violence. In mid-September, he received a fateful telegram. Thousands of fanatics and hooligans were congregating near his village, preparing to attack. It was time to come home.

On September 23, when Harbhajan Singh arrived, he and his trained cadre of young people took charge. In view of the increasingly dangerous situation, Harbhajan made the difficult decision that he and his family must abandon their estate, to leave that place where they had lived for generations, and make their way to the newly created republic of India. Seven thousand able-bodied men and women, the elderly and children came together from Kot Harkarn and the neighbouring towns to join in the evacuation. They brought their donkeys, cattle, bullock carts, and what little they could carry.

The decision was made that anyone who would join in the convoy to India would first be searched. No gold, ornaments or money would be possessed by anyone who started with them. All this wealth would be left behind.

The group decided to set out for Amritsar. Though a quarter of the city now lay in ruins, since it had been assigned to India in August, most of the Muslims living there had retreated across the border

to Pakistan.

Travelling was to be a challenge. There was no question of boarding a train or even travelling along the Grand Trunk Road, the direct thoroughfare from nearby Gujranwala to Amritsar. All the usual routes were made impassable by the murdering fanatics and their spies. From every direction, refugees were being attacked, their mutilated remains left by the roadsides. For their safety, the procession of people, carts and animals charted an obscure course through fields and paddies and every inconvenience.

They set out, slowly, painstakingly, constantly surveying the horizon for signs of menace or danger. After two weeks of avoiding every village or habitation, they finally reached the vital bridge over the Ravi River which they knew they must cross on their way to Amritsar. The bridge lay just north of the historic city of Lahore, birthplace of Guru Ram Das. Until recently, 300,000 Hindus and Sikhs had called Lahore their home, but with the butchery accompanying partition, the city was almost completely emptied of non-Muslims.

At the bridge, the situation did not look promising. On the one side were seven thousand mostly poor, simple people with their carts and animals and few belongings. Across the bridge, on the other side, was a large, hostile mob with spears, swords and guns, waiting to attack them. In between was an army regiment, a timid token of civility in this heart of madness.

The captain of the unit approached and informed Harbhajan Singh, "I have twelve hundred men. The enemy is about thirty thousand, and you are about seven thousand people. I don't think we can defend you. Frankly, we do not know what to do."

Harbhajan replied, "My dear, you have nothing to do. I'll give you half an hour. If in thirty minutes, you can disperse those people, they will all live. Otherwise, I will blow up that bridge and I will blow up those thirty thousand people, and right now I'll show you how!"

At his order "Trench yourselves!" every young woman lay down, one over the other like logs, to form a trench-like barricade. Behind them, the men immediately set up their weapons. They had a mortar, 25 mm shot guns and long-range guns, and a wall of living human bodies for protection. The whole demonstration took five minutes.

The army captain watched the whole thing. Harbhajan Singh started looking at his watch. The captain said, "Sir, give us fifteen more minutes! I'll see that these people go."

That man who had before told them they were on their own and that they were going to be butchered in the presence of his twelve hundred government soldiers, realized when he saw the courage, training and discipline of those Sikhs, that they were going to eat up that mob in no time. Before the half hour was finished, the road was opened, the bridge was cleared, and every man, woman and child was escorted to ten miles (26 kilometres) beyond the city limits.

In all, that trip took eighteen days, and of the seven thousand people, there were only about three casualties.

## His Mother's Command

Harbhajan Singh and his family eventually found themselves in Delhi along with thousands of other uprooted Sikhs, homeless and virtually penniless. As the eldest son, he went out and took a job to support the family. He worked hard and excelled at what he did. Soon, Harbhajan had a good position with a company. He was very happy with his job.

One day, Harbhajan Singh received a message at his work: "Your mother is seriously ill. Leave everything and come, but don't think you can go back to work." He was puzzled. What did this mean? Before acting on it, he called his mother.

She told him, "Yes. I am dying. I am dead already. I am telling you, I am dead already. You resign and come back!"

He said, "What is this? I don't understand your language."

She said, "You don't know, you freak. You come back immediately! Your mother is dead. I am telling you! Your mother is telling you! Don't you believe your mother?"

Harbhajan struggled with the logic of the situation. His supposedly-dead mother had just spoken to him. She had insisted that he did not know anything! Cautiously, he responded, "Well, what do you want?"

"Promise you will do one thing."

"What?"

"Resign and come home."

Harbhajan Singh thought it over and decided that maybe she was just feeling emotional for some reason. After a short time, he contacted her again. This time, she was absolutely blunt and to the point. He resigned. Everyone at work was shocked. He simply packed up and left.

The next morning after he had arrived home and had his breakfast, he asked her, "Alright, dead mother, what do you want?"

She said, "Look, I want you to be a college graduate, and you have not yet completed your

studies. I want you to join a college."

He said, "I was drawing so much salary! I was so happy! Our family..."

She said, "Our family needs nothing. Our family needs a graduate son. You idiot! Tomorrow morning you should be going to college. And today's breakfast is the last thing I am going to serve you until then."

He could not believe her words. "Mom, from where will we eat? I was sending you all that money."

She said, "I will work! I will wash clothes!"

He said, "You have come from a family that had so many servants! You don't know how to work!"

She said, "I will cook! I will sell garbanzos! I will do anything! But you shall study! You will join a college, and there will be no second thought about it."

Harbhajan Singh looked toward his father, but he was not about to say anything. She had already told him, "One word, and that's the end of your words!"

## **Bravado in Delhi**

In the upheaval following partition, a school had been set up in New Delhi for the many young refugees from Punjab. It was not much to speak of. The school had opened for evening classes in an upper middle class high school building.

The students had no tuition money. There was no library. There was no meeting hall. There were no dormitories. There was no place to eat. And there were hardly any offices. There were about a thousand students, some teachers, and the classrooms. Together, the arrangement was known as "Camp College".

The students had been thoroughly radicalized by their present circumstances. They had been uprooted from their ancestral land. The young men and women from rural west Punjab felt like aliens in the urban Hindi-speaking culture of New Delhi. In their minds, they had been betrayed by every grade of politician, Sikh and Hindu and Muslim, and the students breathed their defiance.

They were not in a mood for accommodation. Often the refugee students would meet to make or hear political speeches. Sometimes, they would gather for nostalgia's sake to sing the folk

songs of their divided Punjab.

In those days, the students, sons and daughters of landlords and gentry, enterprising businessmen and hardy tillers of the earth, Sikhs and Hindus alike, made two demands of the Government of India. They wanted tents to live in and loans to pay for their college fees. Having lost everything in the partition of the land, the students felt they had a moral claim for necessities that would allow them to make a fresh start.

At first, both the government's Ministry of Rehabilitation and the community surrounding the school were hostile to their demands. For the following weeks, noisy demonstrations and impassioned speeches took place every evening around a makeshift stage in the school courtyard, making it difficult even for those who attended class to study. The students organized themselves into clans the better to press their demands, until finally the government relented. Practically overnight, the large soccer field of the school was transformed into a hostel of rows of small army tents, each containing a cot and a few basic necessities.

At six-foot two, wide-shouldered, strong, quick-witted and prepossessing, Harbhajan Singh was well known and recognized around the campus. He was known by his schoolmates as "Bhaiji Lumba" - the "Respected, Tall Brother". With his handsome appearance, his sprouting beard, and his talkative, highly social nature, he could often be found standing in front of his college with his bicycle, his *kirpaan* hanging from his belt, his hockey stick and a few books in the carrier. He appeared to be in a constant state of readiness - ready to go on any errand, undertake any task, or assist anyone in need.

Harbhajan Singh surprised his professors with his excellent grades because he hardly glanced at his books. Rather than read books and attend classes, Harbhajan liked to devote himself to sports, field hockey and soccer especially. He was also a champion debater.

To make their spartan college more congenial, Harbhajan Singh organized a co-op canteen. To start off, Harbhajan and his fellow students pooled what little money they had and prepared the food themselves. The profit from the operation went into equipment and uniforms to start a field hockey league. The players did not mind that their games exempted them from classes.

Having been witness to the heart-rending events of partition, Harbhajan Singh and a few associates made it their special duty to protect the honor of the womenfolk at school. Young female students saw them as brothers, ready to protect them. The Sikh youths took pride in being the ones whom parents would allow to accompany their daughters on fund-raising drives through the neighbourhood.

One hot summer afternoon, Harbhajan Singh and a friend were standing in front of the college when another student came and told them a "bad character" had been spotted sitting with a girl in a nearby restaurant. He appealed to them to save the young lady's honor. Dutifully, they set off on their bicycles and positioned themselves in front of the restaurant so as to confront the rascal when he

came out. For two hours, they stood outside in boiling sun, only to realize their quarry had left undetected through the kitchen.

No one liked to take Harbhajan Singh on. He was known for his short temper. He might pick a fight in a second. When he became silent and his skin blanched, the people around him would worry. In those cases, no one would dare look into Harbhajan Singh's eyes, for to do so would mean becoming the instant object of his terrible wrath.

Harbhajan Singh was also known for feats of calculated bravado. One day, he and a few of his Punjabi friends laid claim to a gym occupied by dozens of wrestlers. As refugees, they never had access to the gym, so they knew there was only one way to get it. The wrestlers resisted their claim and a fight followed. In short order, Harbhajan and his friends had thrown the wrestlers out of the gym.

## The Sikh Student Federation

Harbhajan Singh organized the Sikh Student Federation in Delhi with the purpose of injecting new inspiration into the hearts and souls of young Sikhs. Often, he would travel to and from Patiala in Indian Punjab to participate in the meetings of the federation. The journey by train was no holiday excursion. All the carriages would be dangerously overcrowded. Often, the only place one could manage to find a place would be on the boarding steps, hanging precariously to the handrail.

Under such circumstances, Harbhajan's travelling companions greatly appreciated his height and physical strength. Often, he would pick his friends up and heave them through the windows of the carriages, landing them successfully on someone or something. It was also an asset having him along in case anyone happened to be smoking in the compartment of the train. The young Sikh men insisted that no one should be smoking, and with Harbhajan Singh along, no one ever gave them any argument.

The Sikh Students Federation had local circles which met weekly across northern India, developing trusting and authentic relationships. These circles then sent representatives every few months to participate in the national convention of thousands of young people. Gathered together in Patiala, they would communicate and organize support for regions that needed assistance and use their collective power to influence the direction of the Sikh nation.

Harbhajan Singh had ideas for the Sikh Students Federation and he wanted to be in charge. He wanted to be one of the selected five, the *Panj Piaray*, or the General Secretary. Harbhajan was impatient also. He wanted things to be done and wanted others to see the need of having these things done right away. Together with his communication skills, these were excellent qualifications for the job he was given as Propaganda Secretary.

When Harbhajan Singh tried to reach higher in the organization, people would say to Harbhajan,



“As Propaganda Secretary, you make a ruckus and create a fuss and turn things upside down. That’s your job. But as Secretary General we want somebody who can sit and think right and you are not that type. We don’t want you to run anything. You just do what you are doing. Create fuss. We will support you in what you are doing, but when it comes time for a decision, you will not be among the decision makers.”

Try as he might, Harbhajan Singh made plenty of trouble for the leaders of the Sikh Students Federation, but was ineffective in gaining any kind of control. The students selected a *Panj Piaray* to govern them. Everybody was young. The *Jathedar* of the Punj was just fourteen years old.

On one occasion, the young people faced a crisis. They felt the adult leaders, the members of the Sikh political party, the Akali Dal, were taking a bad course. Sikh Students Federation representatives had presented their views to the Akali leadership, but their views had been ignored. The Akali leaders felt they were older and more experienced. Moreover they had the money and the control of the Gurdwaras, so they reasoned that they could readily ignore the advice of the youthful representatives.

The Federation members met to consider a response to the Akalis. For his part, the *Jathedar* asked everybody what they had to say. This was his usual procedure and he would sit for hours and listen. Harbhajan Singh said he wanted to humiliate the Akalis to teach them a lesson, but in the end, after hearing everybody, the *Jathedar* pronounced, “Well, we are not going to insult anybody.”

“What should we do?”

The *Jathedar* continued, most humbly but with brimming confidence, “We not attend the coming Akali conference. Two miles from the big hall where they are to meet, we will sit in a field, all ten thousand of us, and we will chant ‘Sat Nam Sat Nam Sat Nam Ji.’ It will make the people passing by curious. In a couple of hours, there will be nobody in the hall. Everybody will be in the field with us.”

When the day came, that is exactly what happened. The ten thousand sat in a perfect posture as they had practiced many times. Their chanting “Sat Nam Sat Nam Sat Nam...” sounded a little drunk to passers-by and it intrigued them.

At first, there were whispers in the meeting hall of the Akalis, “Did you see...?” “Did you see...?” Then, within a couple of hours, the mass of young people was encircled by a smaller group of Akalis, chanting along. The large hall purposed for their meeting stood empty. Everyone had gone to the field to be with the young people.

Afterwards, the heads of the Akali Dal confronted the Sikh Students Federation leaders, “Why did you do this?”

The young people replied, “You wouldn’t agree with us though we told you that your decision

was not Guru's way, that is was wrong. You showed us your power with your big, expensive conference. What did we do? We are just humble Sikhs of the Guru chanting God's Name in a field. We didn't do anything more than that."

The young people knew that they were the children of their elders and elders cannot live without their children. With the power of that magnetism and the power of their meditation, they were able to demonstrate the power of God and Guru to the Akali leaders.

The key to the young people's power was that they believed Guru lived in them. They felt that the spirit of Guru Gobind Singh was in them and that, good and bad, they are children of the Guru.

Often, the young Sikhs would have no access to a Gurdwara or Siri Guru Granth Sahib, but they could make do. If there came time to make a judgement, instead of Siri Guru Granth Sahib, they might carry a large stone and place it on a higher place to preside over them, saying, "Well, this is the spirit of Guru Gobind Singh. Now let us all get the spirit in ourselves. Let us hold hands with each other. Let us decide who is true."

If a person confessed to some wrongdoing or betrayal, the others would not ask why they did it. Rather, they would say, "Okay, we are brothers. Let us never do it again." In this way, slowly they built an organization and a conception that was real. Many future Sikh leaders - including Tarlochan Singh, Manmohan Singh, Harbans Lal, Jaswant Singh Neki, Surjit Singh Barnala, Satbir Singh, and Shamsheer Singh Babra - evolved from their experience of the Sikh Students Federation.

In those tumultuous days, India and its people were redefining themselves. India's central government and its governing party, which had enjoyed the support of the Sikhs against the British and against partition, now broke its promises and rejected the legitimate claims of the Sikh people. Accompanied by a delegation of other Sikh youths living in Delhi, Harbhajan Singh went to persuade Master Tara Singh, to speak at the historic Bangla Sahib Gurdwara and there to place Sikh grievances before the international press.

Harbhajan Singh took upon himself the security arrangements for the trip. He and four other youths stood with unsheathed Siri Sahibs behind Master Tara Singh throughout the meeting, as the Sikhs of Delhi demonstrated their complete support of his leadership.

On another occasion, during a huge celebration held at Mata Sundari Gurdwara in Delhi during the holiday of Hola Mohalla, the official preacher of the S.G.P.C. started saying words against Guru Ram Das and the Golden Temple as tens of thousands sat and mutely listened. Harbhajan Singh stood up in their midst, and with a thunderous voice proclaimed, "Utter another word, and I shall snatch away your ugly tongue! You had better withdraw your remarks. You can't say this in the presence of the Siri Guru Granth. We are the Sikhs of the Golden Temple. We are the Sikhs of Guru Ram Das. And you can't say these words in public."

Everyone was suddenly awakened. The young man was right! This was no way to speak in a Gurdwara on this day of celebrating Sikh history. The luckless preacher at the microphone could not utter another word.

## At the Government Academy

After four years hard work, Harbhajan Singh graduated from Camp College with a Masters Degree in Economics. From there, he passed the civil service exam and went for special training to become a customs officer. One of his most memorable experiences there was with a sergeant at the government academy.

One day, the officer approached Harbhajan Singh, who by virtue of his acceptance for the Indian civil service, was already himself an officer. The man approached Harbhajan who was standing at attention in the parade ground and suddenly in a commanding voice, shouted, "*You sir, idiot!*"

Of course, Harbhajan Singh, the scion of a wealthy family, intelligent, disciplined and respected, was unaccustomed to being so addressed. He neither abused, nor he appreciated abuse, nor he accepted it. Instinctively, he replied, "Thank you sir, for your introduction."

Harbhajan's accuser paused and looked around at the other officers lined up in formation, all witness to their exchange. The sergeant was training these new officers. Well he knew that he could not afford to lose their respect. Indiscipline and disrespect could never be tolerated if he was to keep his authority. Softly, teasingly, he sneered at Harbhajan Singh, "You called me an idiot."

"Not me, sir. You," maintained Harbhajan.

The officer's glaring eyes narrowed into a fierce stare. Never in his years of training new officers had he encountered this kind of response. Normally, fresh recruits accepted his humiliations with a meek, "Sorry, sir." Who did this fellow think he was? The training officer retorted, "I said, '*Sir, you idiot!*'"

Harbhajan again responded coolly, "Sir, thanks for the introduction."

The sergeant could see he was not going to make any progress like this. The officers were all lined up taking everything in and this new recruit was not giving an inch. Sensing the distinct prospect of being himself humiliated, he ordered his men, "Alright, *get to work!*"

After some time, when there was a break in the day, the officer sought out Harbhajan Singh and introduced himself, "I am Sergeant Joginder Singh."

"Oh, that is your second name."

"I don't understand."

"In the parade you told me you are Mr. Idiot Singh and now you are saying you are Sergeant Joginder Singh. I don't understand it."

"I was mad at you."

"Try to never be so. You are supposed to train me. You are not supposed to train me how to be mad. I am an officer. Twelve hundred people will lie under my pen and under my word and if I act as a madman, twelve hundred men's lives will be jeopardized. I am reporting this whole thing to the high command."

"Wait a minute! No, no, no, I never meant it. I am sorry about what I said."

"You are not supposed to be sorry. You are my instructor. What are you sorry for? There is nothing to be sorry about. Rather you should feel good. You should feel good that I am right here to straighten you out!"

Harbhajan Singh remained in the academy for one year and four months. In that time, he never saw that sergeant utter another harsh word to anyone. Sergeant Joginder Singh had never before met anyone who was not cowed by his abusive communications. After his exchange with Harbhajan Singh, the sergeant was a changed man.

At the academy, one of Harbhajan Singh's most influential mentors was a British man who had stayed on after imperial England had been thrown out of India. His name was Mr. Weber.

One day, Mr. Weber told Harbhajan Singh to write on the blackboard "TRUST DEATH TRUST DEATH TRUST DEATH..." It was a very large blackboard and Harbhajan continued to write "TRUST DEATH..." until he had entirely covered it with those words.

When he had finished, Harbhajan Singh confronted his instructor, "What is this? This is crazy!"

"What is so crazy about it?"

"Without trust, there is no life," replied Harbhajan Singh, and proceeded to cite authorities beginning with the ancient Rig Veda and ending in the present. Then he added a quotation of his own, "Where there's no trust, there's no fun."

Mr. Weber was unimpressed. He said to Harbhajan, "Count how many times you wrote that."

After he had counted all the words, he replied, "Two hundred and thirty-three times."

"Well, wipe it off the board!"

Harbhajan Singh wiped the entire blackboard clean.

"Now write it again," said Mr. Weber.

"Why?"

"For questioning."

What could Harbhajan do? "Okay," he said and started all over until he had covered the entire board again.

Once his student had finished writing, Mr. Weber asked him, "Any questions?"

"Absolutely not, because questioning means I'll have to write it all a third time!"

"That's true."

"So I'm not going to question."

"But you *have* a question."

"If you promise that you won't make me write this again, I will ask a question. Otherwise, no questions."

"Okay. You won't have to write it again, but you will have to read it for asking me this question."

"Okay. Let me read first." And Harbhajan Singh began to read from the blackboard, "Trust death, trust death, trust death..."

When Harbhajan Singh had finished reading, Mr. Weber said to him, "If you don't have intuition and you trust, you are causing your own death."

Harbhajan responded, "This is a totally yogic idea. Where did you get it?"

"From your notebook. Yesterday afternoon, I read your notebook. Didn't you write that in your notebook?"

"That is true."

"I read that and I wanted to teach you a lesson. Normally, when you trust something and you don't have intuition, you are dead. How can the blind trust anything? The blind can't see! And your two eyes are not eyes you can trust. You can put your trust in the third eye, the intuitive eye, and if you don't have an intuitive eye, you can't trust!"

Mr. Weber was a demanding trainer, but he liked Harbhajan Singh very much and was pleased with his progress. Harbhajan, in turn, respected his teacher. When he graduated from the academy, Harbhajan Singh said to Mr. Weber, "I will like to receive from you one last personal instruction."

Mr. Weber showed a glimmer of a smile. "Alright," he said and taking Harbhajan aside, sat down with him. Mr. Weber said to him, "You are so intelligent, you are so beautiful, there is nothing to instruct you about. But I will like to share with you a little something."

"What?"

"Today you have qualified. In a couple of weeks, you will wear the uniform and the star and the rank, and you will be sworn in and you will become an authority. When you will become an authority, you will be in a position to write the fate of people. You can mar people, you can bury them, you can dig them out... whatever you want to do. There will be a most vital force called "authority" which will be with you."

"That I know."

"To execute that authority, you will have to decide, you will have to write, you will always have to keep written files."

"That I know too."

"Just remember one thing before writing: When people read those files five hundred years from now, how will they reflect on you? How will your decisions made with the weight of authority look to them then? That is the real test of authority."

## **Marriage**

Harbhajan Singh had a happy home life with his extended family. His relationship with his paternal grandfather, Bhai Fateh Singh remained particularly dear, and retained an extraordinary quality. Once, when he came home from college, his grandpa said to Harbhajan, "Blessed is this precious time when God must be so very present that He has given me the opportunity to see my grandson in a very joyful, divine way."

Harbhajan Singh turned to his saintly grandfather, and flapping his arms as though they were

wings, said, "Have I turned into an angel?"

His grandfather responded, "What, have you been sprouting wings lately?"

"I am just trying to see for myself. I thought perhaps wings had grown, and you might be seeing them."

"Yes," his grandpa replied, "your radiance is so excellent that I am seeing through you and your presence the very excellence of his Grace. Come on and sit down and we can talk."

One day, Harbhajan Singh's mother asked him, "What about marriage? Is there anyone at school you think you might like to marry?"

The truth was that there was hardly a young woman at "Camp College" who would not have wanted to marry this bright, plucky, Bhaiji Lamba. Her son replied, "Well, there are a lot of nice girls at school. The problem is that if I pick one, I will have automatically made all the rest into my enemies."

Another time, his mother advised him, "You know, if you ever see a girl you think it could be worthwhile marrying, you should go to her home and see how you are treated, as a guest of the house. You should study her mother well. As her mother is, so will this young girl be once twenty or thirty years have passed."

Finally, Harbhajan Singh agreed to be married according to the wishes of his parents. So it was that they set out to find someone they thought might make a suitable bride.

Eventually, a meeting of the parents and the prospective couple was arranged in a restaurant downtown in Delhi. Afterwards, the two families visited the Sis Ganj Gurdwara nearby, bowed their heads, and separately made their ways home. All the while, the modest young woman had no idea what was unfolding. As was customary, Bibi Inderjit Kaur had not even looked into the face of the young man, whose father she had known as a distant relative and family friend.

Afterwards, the ebullient Harbhajan Singh phoned his future father-in-law, "Congratulations! Your daughter is engaged."

"To whom?"

"To Harbhajan Singh Puri, isn't it?"

As Inderjit Kaur came home from school the next day, she could see there was a celebration at her house. There was music and people and decorations all over the house. She asked a friend of hers in the street, "What is happening? What is this big party in my house?"

Her friend looked at Inderjit Kaur with happy amusement, "You are engaged!"

"With whom?"

"Don't you know? You met that doctor's son."

"I never even looked at him."

"It doesn't matter. Anyway, your engagement is done."

Inderjit was curious now. Who was this man? What did he look like? At last, she hatched a plan to find out. When a cousin arrived from Mumbai to attend an engagement party with Harbhajan Singh's family which Inderjit was not permitted to attend, she told her cousin to bring back a photo of her husband-to-be. After much persuasion and insistence and sheer stubbornness, that cousin finally obtained the one and only photo possessed by Harbhajan Singh, his ID card. Seeing his picture, Inderjit Kaur's mind was finally at ease. The man in the photo was simply the most handsome, most beautiful man she had ever seen.

Subsequently, Harbhajan Singh's mother and sister arranged for the engaged couple to meet every few months. Sometimes they would go to Harbhajan's office, sometimes to the movies, sometimes to a restaurant. While he was starting his career in the civil service, she was finishing her education. Inderjit Kaur was seventeen and Harbhajan twenty-three years old.

The possibility of the two working under pressure for a common cause was tested early in their relationship. Bibiji was the leader at the time of a school strike aimed at the dismissal of a professor the students felt was incompetent. The principal of the school, who knew Harbhajan Singh, determined that he would try to use this recent engagement to his advantage. He approached Harbhajan Singh, and asked him to try to talk his fiancée out of the strike.

Harbhajan spoke with the young woman to whom he was so newly engaged. Bibi Inderjit Kaur explained her cause in detail. It was clear that she was not about to betray the trust her fellow students had placed in her.

Harbhajan Singh then spoke again with the principal. The principal listened, and assured Harbhajan that if the students would only return to their classes, he would deal with the unpopular professor.

Bibiji heard the principal's request that she act in good faith from her fiancé. Then she consulted with her fellow students. In the end, the strike was called off to everyone's satisfaction.

One day, Dr. Kartar Singh, Harbhajan's father paid a visit to Inderjit Kaur's father. The couple were in the second year of their engagement. "We would like to marry them now," he said.



Inderjit's father objected, "No. She has to finish her education first. That was our plan."

"No. My son says if you do not allow her to marry, he will kidnap your daughter when she goes to college. Either you decide the date today or you will be in trouble." Neither of the men doubted Harbhajan Singh's willingness to do exactly as he had said. They arranged the marriage. Inderjit Kaur would finish her B.A. as a married woman.

On November 22nd 1953, Harbhajan Singh Puri and Inderjit Kaur Uppal took the four wedding vows prescribed by Guru Ram Das. Bowing and encircling Siri Guru Granth four times, they entered the realm of married life.

That night after all the festivities, when they were alone at last, Inderjit told her new husband, "I don't know anything."

"Don't worry," Harbhajan assured his wife, "Accept me as your teacher."

And she did.

## The Guru Does a Miracle

The eternal Songs of Guru Nanak formed the healing touchstone, inspiration and total context of life in the new household. Mornings, Harbhajan Singh would enjoy listening to his new wife recite her daily Nitnem at the foot of his bed. This was her daily routine before engaging the demands of the world. Harbhajan Singh's father had given her an extra responsibility, to recite one *Sukhmani* each day for the good health and well-being of her husband, a responsibility she gladly accepted. Then at the end of the day, friends, neighbours, fellow workers, or acquaintances would often come over to consult with Harbhajan Singh over one matter or another, while his wife served them delicious food in the Sikh custom of gracious hospitality.

A career as an officer in the government of India however could mean a life of shifting settings. Once, Harbhajan Singh and his family were assigned a government house in the city of Faridabad, outside Delhi. Unfortunately, when they arrived, Harbhajan and Inderjit found that there was still a family living there. Moreover, that family had no intention of vacating the premises.

Harbhajan Singh was not pleased with the arrangement, but since he had pressing work to attend to, he left his wife with their children and their bags in front of the house, trusting her to work things out. Meanwhile, a crowd of about fifty curious neighbours gathered to watch.

Eventually, the woman of the house came out to speak with Bibiji. Feeling she needed a place to rest her body, she suddenly sat her weight down on one of the suitcases. Inderjit Kaur tried, too

late, to intercept the woman. The sacred Guru Granth Sahib, she rushed to explain, had been reverentially packed inside that suitcase.

The woman paled in embarrassment. The Guru had come to her house, she realized, and she had made it wait outside. Moreover, she had sat on the Guru Granth Sahib! The woman felt terrible. All at once, everything changed. She, who been keeping everyone waiting outside, instead invited everyone into the house where she offered them freshly-churned buttermilk to drink. Suddenly, everyone was on their best behaviour.

Later, when Harbhajan Singh arrived from his work, he found everyone inside the house. The lady who earlier would not even speak with them, was showing his family the warmest hospitality. Everything seemed to have been settled. "What happened?" he asked his wife.

Bibiji smiled knowingly, "The Guru has done a miracle."

## The Assistant

One day in the course of his duties, Harbhajan Singh found that he was to be given a new assistant. In advance, he received from the man's recommending officer a confidential report outlining the new man's character and abilities. It said, "Physically hard working. Spiritually dumb. Mentally fluctuating." Harbhajan the officer read it five or six times. He wondered aloud, "God, what are they giving me?"

Finally, he summoned his new assistant. The man looked impressive. The officer told his subordinate, "I'd like to receive you in a couple of minutes. Now if you have some other job to do, come back and see me in an hour."

After an hour, the man returned. Harbhajan Singh got up and said, "Come here and sit on my chair."

"How can I do that, Sir?"

"Just do what I say. Sit on my chair. Let's change places. Let you be my boss and I will be your subordinate. Here is your report." Harbhajan Singh placed the man's own file in front of him. Normally a man's report is kept confidential and no one but their superior officer sees it. "There is no confidence here. Read it yourself and see what it says."

Reluctantly, the man opened his report and looked and looked at it. Finally, he tore his eyes from the report and looked across the desk at the man who had placed him in his confidence. Then he took a sheet of paper and wrote something. He passed it over to Harbhajan Singh.

It said, "Physically beautiful. Mentally super-radiant. Spiritually sparkling." Underneath, the man had signed his name.

Harbhajan the officer looked up, and smiled. "Wonderful."

The man rose and said, "Sir, give me one year, and when you make the report, make me read it. It will be almost like this, I promise you." Then they shook hands.

The next twelve months passed. The man applied himself, his intelligence, his fibre, his calibre, the whole spirit of his being to every task that was put before him. He became consistent, sophisticated, and altogether considerate.

At the year's end, Harbhajan Singh congratulated his assistant. When he sat and wrote out his report, there was no point in sparing words. The man had become the best in his class. He had become simply excellent.

## The Real Hunger

Harbhajan Singh was now a yogi in a government uniform. As a security officer in the Income Tax Department, he put his Virgo temperament and intuition to good use. Harbhajan developed a reputation as a shrewd judge of character and a man of absolute honesty and integrity. The security officer with the commanding presence won the respect of both junior and senior officers. But when he felt mischievous, Harbhajan Singh could discretely make a person's car stall for no apparent reason, turn a person upside down or cause them to wet themselves.

To many who knew him, Harbhajan Singh was known as "Yogi Baba." Yet for all his powers, his knowledge and sensitivity, still there was a craving, a gnawing emptiness inside that told him he was lacking in some undefined respect.

Harbhajan Singh travelled often to visit with swamis and people whom others considered to be holy, hoping to find "it," whatever it was. Sometimes he would also bring his family along. But whenever Harbhajan spoke openly and revealed his desire to the great swamis and sages he met, they usually dismissed him, saying they had nothing to teach him and that he knew everything they did. In reality, they often feared this very sharp Yogi Baba, thinking he had come to test them.

Meeting people of reputed wisdom and holiness became a soulful preoccupation for Harbhajan Singh. Along the way, he might learn a particular yoga *kriya* or gain a special insight. Other times he would come to see that someone widely regarded as a saint was actually shallow, narrow-minded, individual, quite unworthy of respect.

One day, Harbhajan Singh suggested to a colleague that they visit a certain holy man his colleague had spoken of. His friend objected strongly, saying that he had done something wrong, and he did not want the Master to embarrass him in front of all the people at his ashram. Harbhajan proposed instead that he might go alone.

His friend agreed and gave Harbhajan Singh the directions to the ashram, in the sacred city of Rishikesh. As for the teacher himself, his colleague said simply that, even in a crowd of people, Harbhajan would have no difficulty whatsoever in recognizing him.

Intrigued, Harbhajan Singh made for Rishikesh and the celebrated yogi's ashram. It was a large building and there were many people there, but none of them seemed particularly extraordinary. After a time of searching faces fruitlessly, Harbhajan noticed that there was a hall in the ashram where people were sitting and being served food. Since he had not eaten in some time and was hungry, he went inside and sat down.

Among the rows of people seated on the floor, servers circulated, dispensing steaming rice and *daal* and cooked vegetables from the large buckets they carried. The food was tasty. Still, Harbhajan's mind was not at ease. He had come with a purpose in mind and that purpose had not been fulfilled. He had come to find this swami and he had not found him, neither did he know how he was going to find him, though there appeared to be a number of swamis coming and going in this place.

While his body was hungry, Harbhajan did not feel very much like eating. After all, he had not come for this sort of food! Abiding by his soulful resolve, he sat and waited, his eyes closed, his body straight and attentive.

After a short time, a voice spoke directly in front of Harbhajan. "You should eat some more food."

Harbhajan opened his eyes. Was this the Master?

The stranger motioned to a couple of nearby servers. They filled his plate with delicious food. Somehow, now Harbhajan's stomach agreed. Now he really was hungry!

Another server approached. "Here. Have some chapati." A mountain of chapatis appeared on his plate.

Harbhajan protested, "Hey, I'm not an army!"

"Don't worry. Now eat!"

To his own amazement, the pile of *chapatis* disappeared in virtually no time! Not only the *chapatis*, but what must have been a whole bucket of *daal*! They had not only disappeared, they had

disappeared into his very own stomach! He had been eating them. He had been enjoying every mouthful. He had never known himself to be so hungry!

Harbhajan asked, "How is this possible?"

The Master answered, "You have been very hungry. Normally the body is never fed. Usually it is just used and abused. Just now, you were truly hungry and you ate well. It is a good thing."

### ***The Akhand Paath***

One night, Harbhajan Singh went to take part in an *Akhand Paath*, an unbroken reading of Siri Guru Granth Sahib, at the historic Gurdwara called "Bangla Sahib." An *Akhand Paath* might take forty-eight hours to complete. Harbhajan's turn had been to read from one a.m. to three a.m. that morning. His driver had driven him and waited outside for him to return. However, it so happened that no one came to take his turn, so Harbhajan Singh continued to read and was not able to leave his duty until six a.m.

Naturally, he was a little disturbed about the unexpected turn of events, the more so when he went outside the Gurdwara and found that neither his driver nor his jeep were any longer there. Normally, the driver was a very reliable fellow, so Harbhajan Singh was further puzzled when he did not see him anywhere. He decided to take a bus to work.

When he finally arrived at his office, he found his jeep parked with the driver sitting waiting inside. Harbhajan asked him, "Where have you been?"

The driver responded, "I brought you over, and I have been here since."

It did not sound right, yet Harbhajan said nothing. He went inside to see whether the person who had had an appointment to meet with him was still there. To his surprise, their business had already been transacted! All the necessary orders had been given.

His secretary noticed Harbhajan's perplexed air, though he tried hard not to show it. "Shall I read the dictation back to you?" she offered.

Under the circumstances, Harbhajan could only privately marvel at what had happened. He had gone the extra distance that morning reading the *Akhand Paath*. Someone, or something, appeared to have mysteriously taken care of his responsibilities in his place. But who was ever going to believe him?

## Rain and Trouble

Once, Harbhajan Singh, the yogi, was travelling with a certain man who was known to have a regular *sadhana* and a refined inner sensitivity. As they walked together, that man said to Yogi Bhajan, "I smell rain."

The Sikh Yogi Baba looked at the nearly clear sky, and said, "Are you kidding? The sun is shining!"

But his companion insisted, "No, no. Let us go to a shelter. It is going to be a very bad storm. I feel rain in my head."

Yogi Bhajan teased his companion, knowing well his reputation. His friend insisted they find some shelter, so they entered a little shop which sold refreshments. They both sat down and ordered a milk and a lassi. Still there was no rain.

When, finally, they had finished their drinks, Yogi Bhajan turned his glass upside down and, drop by drop, began dripping lassi onto the newspaper in front of him.

His companion asked, "What are you doing?"

"I am making it rain inside because outside it is not."

"I still feel it. It is going to come."

Clouds had just begun to gather. Within fifteen minutes, they had burst and a torrential downpour beset the place. Less than an hour later, the stools in that shop were surrounded with water. The two had to put their feet up on the stools to keep from being soaked.

Yogi Bhajan's companion asked him, "Don't you feel some rain?"

He replied, "This is no rain. *This is a storm!*"

Another time, they were in a town somewhere, when Yogi Bhajan's companion indicated he wanted to leave the place.

Yogi Bhajan asked, "Is it going to rain again?"

All he would say was, "Let's go."

This time, they went a couple of miles down the road to the government rest house Harbhajan Singh was in charge of. They settled in for the evening. Because Yogi Bhajan's orderly was not with

them, they prepared their own meal, then ate and slept.

Bright and early, then, they rose and did their *sadhana*. Shortly afterwards, the orderly arrived, out of breath. He had run all the way from the town. He reported that people were rioting there, and burning down houses.

Yogi Bhajan's companion looked at him, and said, "See. I told you."

## The Boulder

Once, Harbhajan Singh, the government officer, was taking a jeep through the mountains of Kashmir. He and his driver were coming down a hill when a mechanical situation arose which neither of them could have wished for. The brakes failed. The hill ahead continued at a steep incline for about a thousand feet. off the road, was a precipice and a three thousand foot (900 metre) drop. What were they to do?

In that awesome moment, Harbhajan Singh heard his driver say out loud, "O God, O unseen God, protect me!"

Seconds later, a large boulder appeared, looming straight ahead in the middle of the road. The car struck the boulder and came to a sudden halt. The officer and his driver looked at one another.

Harbhajan Singh spoke, "Look. Do one thing. Let us take this stone and put it in the back of our jeep."

"What?"

"This is God!"

"How come?"

"Dummy! Don't you see that this stone is the only thing which came to our rescue? No man came and no mechanical thing happened. Only one boulder came right in the middle of the road. It stopped us. The car hit it, and now that boulder rests right here before our eyes."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Pick it up. Let's put it in the back of the car and keep it as a reminder that God can appear as a beautiful stone to save two lives plus a government jeep."

## The Reclusive Swami

Somebody once complained to Harbhajan Singh, "It's not right how all these yogis and swamis live. They just live like animals in the wild, without any sophistication whatsoever. They don't care about anything."

The Sikh Yogi Baba responded, "Baby, they care more than anybody else. I'll show you. Let us see how these people live."

They packed and took two duffle bags of biscuits, which were sweet, but light, for their journey.

They discussed their strategy. Harbhajan Singh said, "You will not speak. You will pretend that you don't know how to talk. Just say 'Aw, ow, oh, oh...' like that, okay? I'll do the talking because you are such a talker you will spoil the show. If this is the agreement, then I'll go with you."

He said, "Okay."

Harbhajan pulled his hair back and put on a scarf and wore the clothes that he would otherwise have worn. "Let me see how many people recognize me."

Eventually they arrived at a place in the mountains where a *sadhu* was supposed to live. Harbhajan Singh pointed, "Look at that."

The ground in front was clean. The cave was totally hygienic. Incense was burning and there was nothing dirty about anything. Even the firewood was piled in an orderly fashion. Everything was very methodical, although its value could not have been more than two dollars.

Harbhajan offered the mountain *sadhu* a box of the cookies, which he accepted. In return, he said, "May Guru Gobind Singh bless you!"

After they had left, they wondered, "Why did he say that?"

"He must have seen my *kangha* and *kirpaan*, because the guy was sharper than you think." They untied the scarf, tied a *rishi* knot, then wrapped a handkerchief around his head and made a kind of small yellow turban. It looked better than before because no one could see how long his hairs were.

On they went, to the second place. Harbhajan Singh's colleague was surprised to see the fellow there with a kind of broom cleaning the entire surface of the cave. Then, he began rearranging his bed. Harbhajan said, "How about this place?"

They offered the hermit a box of the biscuits.



The reclusive swami said, "Give me two more."

They gave him two more, and their host cleaned a space, put some straw on it, and told them, "Sit down."

They sat on the straw. The man opened the boxes. He took the biscuits out, and he whistled. Three dogs as big as lions came howling and bounding out of the woods, their huge red tongues hanging from their open mouths.

The swami said, "May Guru bless you. They have not to go and hunt for a fish today. These biscuits will be alright."

Harbhajan Singh could not help but notice that their host did not say the word "biscuit" the way it is normally pronounced in India, as "biscooit". He asked, "Have you studied in an English school?"

"Yeah. I did my M.A. in Oxford."

"In what subject?"

"I did my PhD in English, and then did my doctorate in literature. I was teaching at a university." He went on for five or six minutes, describing all the details of the worldly knowledge he had acquired.

"Why do you live here?"

"Just to find who I am. I get my pension. It goes to the children and to my wife. Once a year, they come and see me. Whatever I need reaches me here, and sometimes friends like you come in."

"Why couldn't you live back in the house?"

"I tried. I tried to make a cave in the two hundred acres I had on my estate." He described the area where he had lived before and told them his family name.

They realized that the swami they had just met was in reality extremely wealthy. They were amazed. "Why couldn't you live there?"

"It was not satisfactory. Here it is satisfactory. I have very precious company. My companionship is great and precious."

"Who is your companion?"

"You. You would not have visited me there."

"That is true."

"Are you Yogi Baba?"

"Yeah."

"I heard you speaking when you came to Haridwar. You come very often in summer, right?"

"Yeah. Where did you see me?"

"There was a place where a blind singer played his sitar. It was beautiful. His music just flowed like the sacred Ganges flows. I went in the evening to listen to his music. A lot of people went there. Afterwards, you would always sit with some people and have a discussion. I would sit among you. That is how I recognize you."

Yogi Bhajan was amazed. He started to feel how, after all, he was not alone, how everyone was simply bewitched and living in different bodies, seeking that Oneness from which they had come. The three passed an enchanted time in discussion there in that simple place, until at last it was time for this itinerant Yogi Baba and his colleague to return home.

## The Lesson of the Gorakh Baba

Once, Harbhajan Singh went to a remote area of jungle where he knew the Gorakh yogis lived. Many centuries before, Guru Nanak had sought out the reclusive Gorakh yogis in their isolation and taught them the essence of life and consciousness. Many of these yogis had changed their ways and subsequently engaged themselves constructively in the world. Others had remained behind, proud of their austerity, subsisting off roots and berries, and shunning humanity.

Harbhajan Singh was curious to learn what the practice of these *sadhus* was after these many years. It was, as it turned out, tough and austere as ever. One of the yogis, his body covered in ash, his hair all matted, told Harbhajan Singh that to have the realization of a Gorakh yogi, he must climb to the top of a tree and sit meditating there all night.

It was a dangerous feat. Should anyone attempting it fall asleep, even for a few seconds, they could easily fall to their death. After ten days of this routine, Harbhajan Singh met the leader of that group of yogis and said to him, "What kind of fear is this you are teaching? You hang me every night up in the tree. I have survived ten nights, but this is no good! There is no problem with me. All night I sit down and I do it. My *sadhana* is perfect. You know it. But is there no method through which you can teach me through love?"

The head yogi replied, "We don't know anything better. If you are very afraid, you can climb up a tree that is right over the river, so you will fall into the water if you fall."

Harbhajan Singh was not pleased with this reply. Bluntly, he replied, "Is man made to meet God or is he made to suffer? Answer me this question."

The *sadhu* looked into Harbhajan Singh's eyes for some time. Finally, he admitted, "Man has not been made to suffer. Man creates his own suffering."

"Then I am quitting tomorrow. I am not going to climb up that tree and meditate there. I am not going to create my own suffering! You have answered me correctly. Thank you very much. This is the end between you and me."

After six weeks, Harbhajan Singh's responsibilities returned him to that locality. In the evening, that same Gorakh yogi, the head of that particular group, came to see him. He said to Harbhajan, "I see a different light around you. Can you tell me about your experience?"

"Sure. It is no big deal. I have understood the whole scene."

"Then can I share it with you?" asked the Gorakh yogi.

"Tomorrow morning we will talk."

The next morning, when they met again, the elder yogi asked, "What was your experience, Yogi Baba?"

"I had no experience. God talked to me and I slept all the way through."

"Why?"

"Because you kept me awake all the time. I said to God, 'Why did you let me go under the direction of a madman when I wanted only to be with you?' I was mad at God. I didn't like it."

"You were mad at God? What are you talking about, ji?"

"When people like you are scaring people, I don't think God is a good thing. I have realized God is love and virtue. And your God I cannot talk to, I cannot understand it, and I do not relate to it any more. You call it 'a consciousness'. You call it 'a development'. You call it 'an understanding'. I have found now a God to whom I can talk, with whom I can feel, with whom I can play. I am He. And now He is me. And I have realized that I was a fool to go on top of the tree and do all that business."

## The Healer and the Disease

Once, Harbhajan Singh was advised to meet a man who gave people cures for various ailments. After half a day of hiking with his orderly through a remote, forested area, Harbhajan found the man, but his appearance was shocking. The man appeared to be very, very sick.

Harbhajan Singh asked the reclusive healer what he was doing there. The man replied that he wanted to live far removed from people because he had a fatal and highly contagious disease. There was a circle of virtually impassable bamboo trees around the man's simple habitation, which was meant to keep anyone from approaching him.

Harbhajan asked, "Why are you suffering so much?"

"I never wanted to tell people how to cure themselves, and I think God found the best way to fix me up. I can't move, I can't walk, and I have a disease for which I haven't yet found the cure."

On their way back, Harbhajan Singh asked the person he had come with what the healer was suffering from.

"Sir, nobody knows," was his reply.

"That man is fighting his environments, no more than that."

"I don't understand you, sir. What do you mean to say?"

"If this man decides that he wants to be well, and if he goes back to telling people how to heal themselves, he will be healed himself."

The next morning, Harbhajan Singh's orderly suggested, "Sir, let us go back and tell him what you said. I feel you are right." Harbhajan the Yogi agreed, so they went back and his orderly said to the unfortunate man, "This Baba of mine has something to say to you."

Harbhajan Baba spoke, "Sir, if you pray that if you are healed, you will go all around and tell others how to be cured, I think you, too, can be healed."

The man to whom he had just spoken replied as though from a great distance, "I know that, but it is too late."

Under the circumstances, there was nothing more to be done and only little more to say.

"Bless you."

Harbhajan Singh and his orderly began their lonely walk back out of that desolate place. They had done their best, but the man whom they had seen dying before their eyes had chosen his own defeat. He did not want to answer the call of his soul. Surely there was a bitter lesson in the example of that dying healer.

## The Out of Body Swami

There was a certain personality who commanded a growing reputation as a great holy man, one of the greatest saints of the century. It was not long before Harbhajan Singh made his way to his ashram in the pleasant city of Rishikesh.

There, in the Himalayan foothills, he encountered a disciple of the saint who was clearly enamoured of his guru. The follower advised Harbhajan that the famous holy man was always with God. Harbhajan Singh asked him, "What do you mean, he's always with God? Isn't he with himself sometimes?"

"No, no, no, no, he's always out of his body. He's in..." the disciple began to say, but the inquiring guest cut him off. Leaving a token offering of eleven rupees, Harbhajan said, "Okay, thank you very much."

"Oh, aren't you going to talk with him?"

"Why do I have to talk with him? He's always with God! That's enough."

"Isn't that wonderful?"

"Not at all! If he has no time to be with his God-given self, then I'll have no time for him either. What kind of human being is that? Even worms won't want eat him! They won't want that meat! Mark my words, if you put him into a grave and go after five years, you will find him intact. His *tattwas* won't properly disintegrate. Such a disrespect of the self! By the way, you are the craziest man I have ever met!"

Rather than spending the night at the facilities provided at the ashram, Harbhajan Singh decided to bed down at a motel nearby and to return the following day. He had come a long distance to see this reputed holy man, but now he felt disgusted and wanted to go back at the earliest opportunity.

Surprisingly, the famous man who had no time for himself found Harbhajan where he was planning to spend his night. He said, "I am very disturbed."

"Why are you disturbed?"

"No, no, no, I'm not disturbed. I just want to be with you."

"I know you want to be with me, but I don't want to be with you. A man can be known from his disciple, and your disciple laid out for me that you are always with God. You aren't with yourself at all, and I know what the scripture says. I know what enlightenment is. It is when, for everything, you know the Doer of the thing. You know you are the channel of the thing and you know the Doer is doing. You must see that play within you as you."

"You are right. I want to be your disciple."

"Wait a minute. This must be a joke. You are sixty-two years old. You are on your way. Besides, I don't want a disciple like you. I don't want any disciple. This is the last thing I should want. If you want to be my disciple, do you know what you will have to go through? First, you will have to reduce your weight. I'll give you one suggestion. You know the Ganga River that goes by your ashram."

"Yes."

"You should swim six hours every day in the river."

After they had finished their talk and Harbhajan the Yogi began to make his way to the door, the swami tried to touch his feet. Harbhajan tried to avoid the touch of the old guru's hands on his feet.

Then, Harbhajan Singh stopped and said, "Look, this is such a fraud you are doing with your own consciousness! Nobody has told you what God is and what God consciousness is. It is when you see the seeing, the seeing of the seeing of whatever you see. Whatever it is you are seeing, you are seeing the seeing of that seeing too. You see, you agree, but at the same time you see the One who is seeing that see. When you combine that and you, that is what the game is.

"The game is not *"I am meditating. I am fasting. I am pure. I am impure."* This doesn't work! In your life, living only as you are living doesn't work. When you are living as you are living, then you must also see *the very livingness of you!*"

## Hospitality in a Cave

Once, when Harbhajan Singh and a companion were trekking in a part of the lofty Himalayas where yogis and *rishis* lived, they became isolated and lost in a powerful snowstorm. Just as they were resigning themselves to a frosty death in that remote mountain region, they stumbled across a huge cave buried under some fourteen feet of snow.

To their astonishment, they found inside dozens of goats, several cows, a pair of buffalo, and one very hospitable *sadhu*. As it turned out, this mountain yogi had once lived in the bustling metropolis of Mumbai. He had earned three degrees, and had worked there as a chemical engineer. Finally, he had left his complicated city existence for the simple life of a Himalayan cave.

Nowadays, in the summer, people would come to him from near and far as he prescribed ayurvedic remedies for them. In return, people would bring the swami all the supplies he needed for his long winter isolation. In effect, his cave was a self-contained biosystem. Oxygen, food, light, warmth, everything was provided for.

"But why do you live here, so far from everything and everyone?" Harbhajan Singh's companion asked their reclusive mountain host.

"I have found me. I am complete. I don't need anybody else."

Harbhajan the Yogi, laughed, "There is a reason for your being here. If you had not been here, we would have been frozen outside. This much is certain."

They remained in the cavern with the mountain *rishi* for five days, until the snow had melted and their host set them back on the winding trail to civilization.

## The 'Avatar'

In the course of his travels, Harbhajan Singh sought out a famous holy man known for his ability to materialize things – a rose, a gem, virtually anything – out of thin air. When Harbhajan, the Yogi, saw the man, he knew right away there was something wrong with this famous "incarnation of God."

After a time, the supposed saint recognized Harbhajan Singh and wanted to speak with him. The Sikh Yogi agreed, but suggested they go for a walk together, which the man agreed to. After some introductory chit chat, Harbhajan told his host what he saw. The fellow knew there was no use in denying it. He admitted he had not been feeling well, that in fact he had not had a bowel movement in several days.

Harbhajan Singh marvelled at how this man, worshipped as a god by millions, should be humbled by such a basic, earthly malady. In this person he recognized a brilliant, accomplished mind at odds with an ordinary human body. Harbhajan asked his host, "With all your power, with all your awareness, with all your knowledge, with all your *siddhis*, I want to know one thing: who produced you?"

"God."

"All this power to produce things has been given you by God or by someone else?"

"By God, but I have them."

"Then why do you shave your beard every morning? Why not with your *siddhis* go 'Gillee gillo go, gillee gillee go' and throw it away? Why do you have to have hot water in India and soap and razors? It's very difficult, isn't it?"

The supposed avatar replied, "What the body has to do, the body has to do. Does the mind have to do everything? All the *siddhis* are by the mind."

Harbhajan Singh noticed a man nearby them carrying a sword. He motioned toward it and said, "Alright. Chop off your head, then work through your mind. Why have a body at all? Friend, you are equally bound down by the karma in this body as everybody else is. You have not realized the creativity of the Creator. This beard which grows on your chin is a creation of the Creator, but you have not realized it!

"Remember my words. You will not like them, but you will come many more reincarnations to be liberated!"

The bitter truth spoken by his yogi guest left the avatar numb and speechless. There was nothing he could say.

The visit was over and Harbhajan Singh made his way home from the famous man's ashram. "God is infinite," he thought to himself. "The finite cannot realize him."

## The Test of a Holy Man

One day while he was in the south of India, a junior officer to Harbhajan Singh told him that a holy man lived nearby. Naturally, this stimulated the curious side of Harbhajan, the Yogi. He replied, "I am going to find out if it is true."

"How are you going to do that? He is a very renowned man. He has about ten million people bowing to him every morning. People worship him as a god."

Harbhajan Singh answered, "You don't know me. I'll find out if he is holy in a couple of minutes."

"I want to come along."

"Sure. Come along."



"What do we have to do?"

"Go and tell him I am a holy man too."

"Well, I guess I can tell him that. It is the truth."

"Don't worry about truth," replied Harbhajan Singh, "If you worry about truth in life, you are not going to work for me. I want you to do exactly what I tell you to do. I don't want you to tell me what is the truth and what is a lie. Then your mind will be divided."

"Alright. Tell me what to do."

"Go and tell him 'From the north part of India a very saintly and holy man has come. He is going to the Western countries and to visit the Pope in Rome. He was not planning to come over here, but I forced him to come.' And if he asks what time I will visit him, tell him 'lunch time.'"

Harbhajan Singh's colleague went and made the arrangements. The puffed-up credentials were intended to secure the interview, which indeed they did.

The next day, when Harbhajan Singh and his junior officer went to the man's ashram, his secretary informed them that "his reverend holiness" was expecting them. He also asked if Harbhajan Singh would like to eat with him.

"Sure, I would love to eat with him. I am very hungry. I would be honored."

Harbhajan Singh and his friend were then ushered into the holy man's quarters. They greeted each other and sat down. Then food was served.

Just as the server was about to leave, Harbhajan Singh said to him, "No, no. You should not go anywhere! Do you think we have just come to visit with his holiness? Here, eat from my plate. Come on!"

Harbhajan Singh had done it. By this one action of inviting the server to share his food, he had utterly fouled the mood of his supposedly saintly host. Harbhajan had invited the server to join him, so there was nothing wrong in it. But conventionally and ritually, those who serve are not permitted to eat with holy men. Only after the holy men have been served are the servers supposed to eat.

Their host was so displeased that in the middle of their eating, he stood and washed his hands. It was a great discourtesy and Harbhajan Singh also had to leave off eating. For the rest of the visit the "holy man" had not another word to offer Harbhajan. Eventually, the secretary came to see his guests off.

On the way out, the secretary said to Harbhajan Singh, "You are not a holy man! You do not have the manners of holy men! How could you allow anyone to eat from your plate like that? His holiness is very disturbed and now he has dismissed me from making his future appointments."

Harbhajan was not concerned. He had made his point. He was tired of unforgiving "holy men," these intolerant frauds with their public relations. Where, he wanted to know, where was the spirit, the grace, the humanity in these ridiculous business people?

## The Power of the Name

Once Harbhajan Singh was on a tour with five men in the high Himalayas near the Tibetan border when they were caught in an avalanche. They managed to dig themselves out from the snow, but their supplies were lost and they found themselves suddenly helpless. As they discussed, they realized their best hope was to somehow send a signal for help.

Mindful of the importance of keeping his men's spirits up, Harbhajan laughed and said, "Last time we got trapped, at least we were in the cave of a *sadhu* and it was very comfortable. God, we never wanted to leave! Now, if we do not get any help, we shall be dead." Then Harbhajan the Yogi shared an idea that came to him.

The group said, "Sir, I don't think you should do it. It could cause another avalanche and we will be gone."

Harbhajan Singh, the commanding officer, said, "There is one chance. If I cannot do it and I won't do it, then we all will be dead. Three, four days we will survive here. From the ice, we can drink water. That's fine. After that, there is nothing, so let me do it."

After that, the men helped each other crawl up to the top of the mountain they were on. The climbing was not hard, but every so often someone would slip and a small avalanche, tons of snow, would wash over them and down the mountain. Bit by bit, they persevered and Harbhajan Singh made it to the summit where he could see for miles and miles in each direction.

First, Harbhajan did an experiment. In his loudest voice, he chanted, "Laaaa..." and then he and the men listened.

Sure enough, the sound found the surrounding mountains and echoed back, "Laa-Laa-Laa-Laa..."

Then he chanted, "*So-hunngg, So-hunngg, So-hunngg*" and again the mountains echoed for miles and miles around.

Harbhajan Singh's men were impressed. "My God, it works!" In no time, they were clambering to join him on the snowy peak. Then everyone began to chant "*So-hunngg*" in a loud unified voice and their voices reached to every crevice and every valley in the region.

After thirty minutes of chanting, a helicopter appeared overhead. Harbhajan Singh said to his men, "We will be picked up. No problem. Keep on doing it until they come down." And so they continued to chant for their lives.

After a few more minutes, the rescuers had descended a ladder from the helicopter and proceeded to help the men aboard.

Once Harbhajan and his men were safely in the helicopter, they began to laugh.

Their rescuers asked, "Why you are laughing?"

Harbhajan Singh said, "We have used the God's Holy Name to protect ourselves. We should have used it to tell him to come in and have fun with him, but the desire was not that way. The desire was to use the sound to resound the whole valley to send a signal out."

### **The Lama's *Kriya***

Once, Harbhajan Singh together with his orderly and a sherpa guide went across the border so he could learn a *kriya* from a lama at a monastery in Tibet. He then had seven days to practice it before returning.

After the seven days had passed, Harbhajan's host said to him, "You will fall victim to the Chinese army, but you should not worry as we will block the army."

On hearing this, Harbhajan Singh thought, "What can these people do to block the army?"

His host discerned Harbhajan's anxiety and said, "Don't worry. You will be safe. You should go now."

The return journey across the mountains was to take three days. They had barely started when they found themselves exposed in full sight of a Chinese army encampment in the mountains. In four foot deep snow with their big boots, they knew there was no use in running as they could easily be shot.

"Do you know where we are?" the orderly asked Harbhajan.

“Yeah, don't worry. Trust. We are protected.”

As they walked toward the camp, they could hear the murmur of their Chinese hosts, which Harbhajan Singh and his orderly could not comprehend. The sherpa instructed them, “Everybody silent. I will talk.”

In his language, the sherpa said to the Chinese, “These people are going to India to do intelligence work. They need food, rations, and care. Look after them.”

Through the ingenuity of the Sherpa, the Chinese army became their hosts. The Chinese fed them and made them rest.

After a time, the sherpa said to their hosts, “We have to move on. We have a mission.”

The Chinese gave them some of their precious food and tea, and sent a small party to guide them to the border with India. Along the way, they learned that, had they continued in the direction they were going, they would have come to a place where only a thin layer of snow covered a two thousand foot deep crevice. Instead, they were guided safely along the side of a glacier.

After their Chinese escort had left them, Harbhajan Singh and his companions reflected on their good fortune. He asked, “Didn't you feel that there was an extraordinary force that blinded everybody?”

Their sherpa guide said, “Didn't you hear my voice change?”

Harbhajan replied, “You didn't speak in your ordinary voice.”

The sherpa explained, “The big lama was speaking through me.”

Harbhajan Singh reflected, “Must be. Otherwise they would not have shared their so much needed tea with us. They needed every cup. And not only that, they gave us some for the way. They even told us how lost we were. Without that guidance, we would not have made it.”

## Duty

As devout and conscientious Sikhs, Harbhajan Singh and Inderjit Kaur could not help being affected by the efforts of anti-Sikh elements in the government of New Delhi. Certain politicians wanted to deny Punjabi, the language of Guru Nanak, the status of an official language in the newly-founded republic of India. They believed if they could first kill the language, then the distinctive life of the Sikhs would die out over time.

All Sikhs were offended by the arrogant behaviour of the government officials. Sikhs had sacrificed more than any other community to free India from the yoke of colonialism. Mohandas Karamchand "Mahatma" Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru had promised them a place in India where they could "experience the glow of freedom" for their efforts in the struggle for liberty and justice. When it became clear that independence was inevitable, the British had even offered them their own country. Sikhs knew they deserved better treatment.

Bibiji was aware that her husband, as a civil servant, would not be able to openly demonstrate against the central government. However, in her heart, she knew that she herself had to do something.

A large demonstration had been called. Everyone was to meet outside the historic Sis Ganj Gurdwara, where Guru Tegh Bahadur had nearly two hundred years earlier given his head for the sake of everyone's religious freedom. Although Bibiji had only just given birth to Kamaljit Kaur, her third child, thirteen days before, she gave her daughter to the care of the family servants, and set out.

On her way to Sis Ganj, Inderjit Kaur went to visit her father-in-law and secretly told him where she was going. She had already been trained, and was prepared for any consequences. Like all the other protesters, she was distinguished by a black armband. She had packed a wet towel and a water bottle, remedies for the expected teargas.

By the time Bibiji arrived, tens of thousands of protesters had already gathered at the historic Gurdwara in central Delhi. Soon, the large body of indignant Sikhs came to life and made its way in the direction of the city hall.

Without warning, the police began to lob teargas grenades at the peaceful marchers. Tens of thousands of towels and water bottles came into play, but the Sikhs would not be stopped. They continued the march with their wet towels over their faces.

A mile later, the armed riot police began shooting the determined marchers, and carting their bloodied bodies away. Inderjit Kaur's contingent of women moved to the head of the thousands assembled there. Calmly, determinedly, they confronted the armed police, face to face.

The police commander scanned the faces of those who had arrayed themselves against his forces with such fearsome resolve. They were clearly prepared to win their martyrdom if the situation required it, if only he, the commander were to grant it to them. He summoned all his professional disinterest as he confronted this unfamiliar foe, these armbanded women.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, a flicker of recognition shook the steely-eyed commander. Among this body of dedicated women, he recognized the wife of a good friend of his. Hurriedly, he phoned the number of the office at the airport where he knew his friend worked.

Harbhajan Singh, for his part, found the commander's claims difficult to believe. After all, Bibiji had just had a baby. She had to be at home! Still, his friend insisted that she was there, with him, at the demonstration. It seemed very odd.

Harbhajan Singh phoned his father, hoping he might be able to shed some light on this mysterious appearance at the demonstration. What he heard, touched off almost the entire range of emotions a man can possibly feel - fear, anger, admiration, helplessness... Ultimately though, as a Sikh, he knew that it was God's Will that had placed her in such apparent danger, and there was little that he could do.

He called back his friend, the police commander. Yes, he had been right. It was Bibiji whom he had seen. She was there participating in the demonstration.

"What should I do?" implored the commander.

With an air of deep circumspection, Harbhajan the yogi replied, "She has her duty. You have yours. Do your duty."

His friend decided to avoid a bloody outcome with the women. He had them all arrested and put on buses, then dispersed to remote outlying areas of the city. Inderjit Kaur, nearly a martyr, hailed a taxi and returned home.

When Harbhajan Singh returned, he first of all reprimanded the servants for not informing him of what had happened. They diverted his attention upstairs. There, in his bedroom, he found his living wife and their new daughter nursing safely on their bed.

## **Karma!**

Everyone knew this Yogi Baba was a sharp, no-nonsense kind of man, but none imagined the extent of his abilities. His words had power. Once, Harbhajan's son, Ranbir had displeased him. In a fit of temper, for which he later apologized, he had declared his son should break his hand – and Ranbir subsequently went and did just that.

With the power of his mind, Harbhajan Singh could stop a car from running. This yogi had even achieved mastery over the element of water, a power he sometimes used for his amusement. If somebody really annoyed him, the yogi in Harbhajan might make that man publicly suffer the embarrassment of wetting his pants.

One day, there had been an outdoor religious gathering and he had used his secret ability to prevent the people all being drenched in a cloudburst. All around them, the ground was soaked, but

not a drop had fallen where the people were sitting. The people appreciated Yogi Baba and he felt a sense of pride and satisfaction in having performed a psychic social service.

Afterwards, while everyone was enjoying langar, one very old man called to him, though he obviously had some difficulty in making himself understood. "Ummmm, Ummmm, Ummmm, Ummmm."

"What do you want?"

"Ummmm, Ummmm."

Yogi Baba came closer and sat by the man, the better to understand what he said.

"Did you do this?" asked the ancient fellow.

"What? I didn't do anything."

"I mean you wished that there should not be rain."

"Why, it was inconvenient. We were so merged in God and so happy, so in ecstasy."

"Do you see these trees and plants? You took away their water. Why did you do it?"

"I didn't do anything. I did wish, yes. I am not denying it. I did wish it should not rain here. Yeah, I did wish."

"Don't you see there's so much rain all around, but not here?"

"I do see. What did I do? I just wished. You mean my wish got granted?"

"Don't you know that?"

"I don't know."

"You better know it! See it yourself! *Are you blind? See it!*"

"Yea, but I'll ask my men. You know I have so many men, thousands of men. I'll ask them tomorrow to water the whole thing. I can tell them now. I have so much manpower, I'll just say one word. It will all be taken care of."

"Ah, that's good. So you have control over water?"

"Kind of."

"Then when your soul will be free it shall go through the water."

"Well, if I take a bath, what difference will it make?"

"Half of the 8,400,000 incarnations live in the water. You shall go through all those 4,200,000 water incarnations. Do you want that?"

"Wait a minute! What are you saying?"

"I am trying to make you understand that if you have a siddhi, control over an element, you then have to go through that element."

"Okay. Now I understand." A great weight had just fallen on the self-assured image of Harbhajan Yogi Baba, the load of 4,200,000 lifetimes of karmic debt. There was only one thing he could think to do. Commandeering his jeep and driver, Harbhajan Singh the regretful yogi set out for his spiritual home in Amritsar.

After what at times seemed like an endless drive, Harbhajan Singh stood at the gate of the Harimandar and prayed: "Blessed are you who have taught me all. Bless me today that I shall have no power. All shall belong to you."

The next day, Harbhajan Singh, the officer, went to the head of the government office where he worked, and told them, "You know, you owe me one!"

The department head agreed, "I owe you a lot."

"Post me at Amritsar!"

"Amritsar! You? What are you going to do in Amritsar?!"

"Just sit down. Listen calmly. You want to favor me or you don't want to favor me?"

"I want to favor you. What do you want?"

"Post me at Amritsar."

"It will create a chaos!"

"I don't care what it creates. You just post me. I'll be gone! That's it!"



"Give me time."

"Right now! Promise! Either you promise or you say 'No'. Yes or no?"

"Well, okay, yes - but for just six months."

## **Sewa at the Golden Temple**

Yogi Harbhajan Singh was given his post and settled his family in the gated community around the Central Revenue Building. In all, he stayed in Amritsar for four and a half years, from 1960 to 1964. During that time, he never ventured far away. Early each morning it was his routine to arrive at the Golden Temple and humbly join in the washing of the marble floor of the House of Guru Ram Das.

All the while, he carried one prayer in his heart: "Look, I'm innocent! I'm an idiot! I made a mistake. I didn't know it was 4.2 million lives! I thought it was just a power you could play with. I was totally busted! Okay? Let me go! I will never ever do it again!"

Harbhajan Singh made a determined effort and arrived early each morning to take up his regular duty at the Golden Temple. He knew that, wherever his duties might take him, if at nightfall he were within one hundred miles, he could still make it back to the Harimandar in time.

One day, circumstances arose which carried Harbhajan about a hundred and twenty-five miles away. He had never wanted to break that *sadhana*. In his mind, he lamented, "Oh my God, why couldn't the city have been just ninety miles away? Why here?"

He finally returned to the House of Guru Ram Das, four days later. When he arrived, Harbhajan Singh asked the *jathedar* for the allotment of a work area. The man said, "Continue your yesterday's area."

Knowing that he had not been there the previous day, Harbhajan replied, "I don't understand what you mean by yesterday."

The *jathedar* replied, "You don't understand yesterday? You don't understand the day before yesterday? You don't understand anything! You've been doing that area right in front of you for the last three days! Why don't you just continue?"

It was more than Harbhajan Singh could argue. He took his bucket, went, and did what he was asked to do.

There also was a lady from his work group sitting there. She always chanted, "*Wahe Guru,*

*Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru...*" while they worked. When she saw Harbhajan Singh, she said to him, "*Braajee*, why don't you get the same tea which you brought yesterday?"

Harbhajan thought, "This is too much! Either I am crazy or all these people are crazy! What should I do now?" He did not know which tea he had brought. Did he bring it from the *langar*?

Harbhajan Singh took courage, and went outside. He had a friend with a tea stall there. He asked his friend, "Could you make a special tea with cardamon and all that?"

When Harbhajan asked his friend to give him the bucket of tea, he asked Harbhajan, "As much as I gave you yesterday, or should I give you more?"

This was the end of it! Harbhajan could not believe what was happening. He simply took that one bucket and served the lady in the Gurdwara.

"Yes. It is fantastic!" she said.

Afterwards, Harbhajan Singh inquired about a lot of things and asked a lot of people to try and get to the bottom of the mystery. Everyone testified in total innocence. Nothing had been made up, and yet he had definitely not been there. Harbhajan was left to wonder about the inexplicable workings in his Guru's House.

## **The Woman Who Couldn't Die**

Those years in Amritsar changed Harbhajan Singh. Many mornings, Harbhajan would load up his family on a motor scooter – the boys in the front, then papa and mama with little Kamaljit Kaur in her lap – for a trip to the golden Harimandar Sahib. While before, Harbhajan Singh and Inderjit Kaur used to host parties at their home, instead they started hosting spiritual gatherings, such as all night *Kirtans*. Their friends changed.

The spirit of all the saints who had lived and sacrificed in that holy city began to fill Harbhajan Singh's life. He took real pleasure in serving good people and listening to the Guru's hymns. While still keeping up the busy life of a government officer, he focussed more on his spiritual practice.

One fine morning as Harbhajan Singh was having his breakfast at home, there was a commotion at his front door, unusual for that hour. "What is going on?" cried Harbhajan to his faithful orderly whom he could make out actively engaged in conversation.

"Sir," replied his orderly, "they seem to be all very respectable people from Amritsar, and they want to see you."

Harbhajan thought for a moment and said, "If they have some business, they could have come to my office. They have come to my home. Let me go out and see them."

When Harbhajan Singh left the kitchen and came to the living room where the guests had been seated, he saw a group of eight elderly, distinguished-looking people. They all seemed to be about ninety years old. "*Sat Sri Akal!* What can I do for you, dear ones?"

They all returned the greeting, then one of them ventured, "We want to take you with us to do a prayer."

"Who told you that I do prayers?"

"Well, we have learned about it. We don't want to discuss it, but if you can come and do a prayer, it will be appreciated."

"Sir, I am not a priest. I am not anything. I am just a government servant and I am going to my office. You are asking me for a prayer as though it were my duty."

Another of them replied, growing visibly vexed and impatient with this civil servant, "We know you are a government servant. We know you are a big boss. But we want you to do a prayer for us."

Harbhajan Singh did not like being an annoyance to these respectable people, but as a government intelligence officer he wanted and needed to know what exactly they needed from him and why. On the other hand, he thought if just by his one prayer he could make eight people happy, it should be an easy investment. "What kind of prayer?"

"There is a woman. She is not dying and she is one hundred and thirty years old. She is very, very sick. Somebody has told us that if you come and do the prayer she will pass on out of her body if she wants to quit."

Many thoughts rushed into Harbhajan Singh's mind. First of all, he had always believed in praying for life. That a prayer should also be needed for death was an idea he was not accustomed to. Just then, he began to recognize his guests. He had seen them often doing *sewa* at the Harimandar Sahib. They were devout and respectable citizens. Finally, Harbhajan conceded, "Alright, alright. Let us go to that house and let us see."

Instructing his orderly to go to the office and tell the staff he would be two hours late, Harbhajan Singh went along with his guests. When he arrived, he saw the woman they had been speaking of. She looked like a skeleton with a skin stretched over it like the head of a drum. She was a living skeleton, feeble and weak. The people had to open her eyes for her and to yell into her ears to make her know she had a guest. This ancient woman appeared to be in great pain, but even her tear ducts had dried up.

"This is it," someone said. "Can you do the prayer?"

Harbhajan Singh replied, "God has to do the prayer here. She's not going to die."

"Why?"

"Even death is ashamed to take this woman. Why do you want me to do a prayer?"

"But that is why we want you to pray for her. Nobody said that before."

"Well, it is a long process."

Harbhajan Singh and the elders had a long discussion then about the purpose of death and the meaning of life. In the end, Harbhajan Singh offered, "Let me go and work, then I'll go at five o'clock tomorrow to the Golden Temple to wash the *parikarma*, which is my daily routine. Then, I'll come here again." And they parted. Harbhajan did not actually have the faintest idea how to satisfy the wishes of these sincere, elderly people, but he trusted that Guru Ram Das would help somehow.

At five o'clock, Harbhajan went to the Harimandar and they were already waiting. They insisted he do something. Harbhajan Singh went and retrieved some cleaning cloths and distributed them. Together, they rubbed the marble, as was Harbhajan's routine. They continued for an hour or two.

When they had finished, a thought came to Harbhajan Singh. He said to one of the gentlemen, "Do you have a pot to hold something?" Someone came up with a big bowl. Harbhajan took a wet cloth he had been cleaning the marble with and squeezed it into the bowl. Then he said, "Look, gentlemen. Now you don't need me. Take this and sprinkle it on her."

Once again, they parted. Taking the bowl with the water, they thanked Harbhajan.

The next morning while Harbhajan was enjoying his breakfast, he could hear some activity at the front door. It sounded like the same people. His first thought was, "Well, it didn't work." It seemed they were going to spoil his breakfast again and keep him from going to work.

This time, Harbhajan Singh did not bother asking the orderly. He wiped his hands on his napkin and came directly to the living room. The same eight elders were sitting there more or less as they had during their previous visit.

*"Sat Sri Akal!"*

*"Sat Sri Akal ji!"* They all stood up to meet their host. "We just wanted to tell you that she passed away last night."

"Thanks, Lord!"

## Future Knowledge

Once Harbhajan Singh was visiting with a great astrologer. He was interpreting the horoscope of another person who had come with him. The astrologer forecast, "Four months from now, there's going to be a terrible situation and you are going to jail."

"Huh? What did I do?"

The astrologer replied, "I don't know."

Seeing the person's misery, Harbhajan Singh said, "Young man, you are very fortunate."

"Because I am going to jail?"

"Sure. If you miss this opportunity of going to jail, you'll be very unhappy."

"Why?"

"The situation is this. If you ever go to jail, then come out after three months, you'll be almost a state minister!"

Three months passed. There was a big student agitation against the government. The young man who had visited the astrologer was the leader. He was arrested. After three months, the government conceded the students' demands. One of them was that their leader should become the minister of youth and sports.

When he had taken his oath as minister, the first thing he did was to call Harbhajan Singh, and visit him in Amritsar. He said, "Well, what you told me, came true!"

"It is not yet all true."

"What else?"

"The further thing is that you are going to topple this whole ministry."

"I won't do it!"

"You are going to do it."

After eight months, he did. Again, he came to visit. "I did it!" he said.

"I told you, you would do it."

"What more?"

"Nothing. I won't tell you anything any more."

"Why?"

"You are becoming a leech. Now you want me to tell you everything. You are a human being. You live your karma. I know everything. That doesn't mean I am going to tell you everything. I was just telling you astrology was not that accurate. I told you one or two things. That doesn't mean I'm going to interpret your life."

"But now I want to know."

"You should not. There's nothing to know. God is unknown. Accept Him like that."

## The Simple Life

Harbhajan Singh once made the acquaintance of a simple Gursikh. He was not educated and he lived in a small, isolated village, but his devotion was very pure.

When he took his morning bath in cold water, he kept chanting "*Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru...*" While he was eating, he kept chanting. While he was walking, he kept right on chanting. To him, everything was "*Wahe Guru*".

Harbhajan asked him, "Do you understand what you are chanting?"

The man replied, "No. I don't need to understand."

"Why not?"

"Look, Baba, you are a sophisticated man. You are from the city. I am just a farmer, a villager." The man did not know that Harbhajan Singh was also from a village. In his eyes, anyone who wore good clothes was a city person. "Your karma is to understand. My karma is not to understand."

"How come?"

"The air is free. The rain is there when we need it. The land is there to till. We are simple people. That is all we need to understand. You are rich people, and you may understand why these things are, but you can't buy our simplicity with all your riches, nor can we sell you our simplicity for any price."

Harbhajan Singh reflected on the truth of what the man had said. He was right. The simpler a person is, the kinder they are. The more complicated our life is, the more unkind we are. When we are not direct in our dealings with another human being, we are unkind. And when we are not kind to another person, we are creating a huge void.

### **Vision at Vaishno Devi**

In the course of his duties, one day Harbhajan Singh went along with the Deputy Commissioner of Shillong and the Chief Secretary of Assam, on a trek to the mountain shrine of Vaishno Devi, in the foothills of the Himalayas, near Dharamsala. This shrine had a personal significance for Harbhajan Singh. Only forty days after his birth, Harbhajan's father had fulfilled a sacred pledge by strapping his infant son to his chest and carrying him some hundred and fifty miles along the mountain roads and trails leading to that sacred cave in the rarefied air of the Himalayas.

On the way, they came to a village called Gagal. His two companions wanted to visit an astrologer there, so Harbhajan Singh went along. Once the man had spent time with his colleagues, he turned to Harbhajan Singh, and offered to calculate his horoscope. The astrologer told him that he would soon begin a new phase of his life. He would resign his job and travel to foreign lands, where he would teach and liberate people of the West. He predicted that one day each house would have his photograph, and he would be respected and served like a king, but his consciousness would remain sweet and humble like a saint. Millions of souls were awaiting his arrival, said the astrologer.

There was a caveat however. According to his calculations, Harbhajan Singh would not live beyond the age of forty-eight. It was a sobering thought, given that his subject was already thirty-four years of age. If the soothsayer was to be believed, there was clearly much to be done, and the means were yet far from clear.

Before leaving, Harbhajan Singh wanted to give the astrologer ten rupees. The astrologer refused the money, saying he knew it was all his guest had, and that he would be needing the money.

Harbhajan Singh checked and found this was true. He did not have his wallet with him. The only money he had were those ten rupees which he had instructed his orderly to always keep inside his uniform pocket in case of an emergency. Still, he insisted to the astrologer, "They are all yours."

The astrologer replied that he would not take the money, but that Harbhajan Singh should rather give it to the poor he encountered on the way up to the sacred cave where they were going.

Leaving the astrologer, Harbhajan Singh had the ten rupee note changed into coins to distribute among the people who called to him along the way in the name of the Divine Mother.

It was a steep and strenuous climb. When the three finally reached the top, Harbhajan Singh wanted some water. His last memory was drinking that very cold mountain water.

The next thing Harbhajan knew, he was lying inside a kind of globe of light. Light was coming from every side, and he began to see the panorama of his life, from birth through every stage of life, up to the very day when he had climbed up to the Vaishno Devi cave, and up to that moment in the panorama show where he saw himself taking that drink of water.

Harbhajan Singh found himself transported through a cylindrical shaft of light. Like an elevator, it moved him down into the earth. The further he went, the calmer and more pleasant it was. That experience of ecstasy went on and on, until Harbhajan reached a place where he was approaching an opening, like the end of a tunnel, where everything was pure light.

A voice asked him to choose his path. There were two ways to go. One side was warm and cosy, like a dwelling place. The other was like a snowy mountain peak with light like bright sunlight. "You have to choose which way you want to go." On both sides, he could feel the magnetic attraction of his ancestors.

At that moment, however, he stopped and thought, "I am not going to either side, because this is a holy place where I have fallen unconscious, and to die here will mean that all people who go to such holy places of pilgrimage will lose faith." He bent down in prayer and said, "Oh Divine Mother, I mean no harm to the faith of the people."

She replied, "Then go out and spread the faith."

Harbhajan Singh then saw himself opening his eyes and he saw that on his body there were lots of blankets and people all around, and there was quite a commotion when he began to get up. The people told him that he had been declared dead, and that he had been like that for forty-five minutes. He had no choice but to believe it. Even a doctor assured him it was true.

Someone asked Harbhajan what had happened. He replied, "For a moment, I forgot my Guru."

Harbhajan Singh told his two companions, "Now our one *yatra* has been completed, and a new *yatra* is to begin." They then descended from that mountainous height and drove directly to the Harimandar, to pray and give thanks at the House of Guru Ram Das.



## The Candy Uncle

Eventually, Harbhajan Singh and his family had to transfer back to Delhi. They had been in the holy city of Amritsar for four and a half years, but now his duty to his government employer required he take up responsibilities for customs at Delhi's airports. Saftajang was the city's original airport, while the newer Palam International served as India's largest and busiest air terminus, handling thousands of passengers and a fortune in freight each day.

From Punjab, Harbhajan Singh and his family moved back to their big house in Nizamuddin colony with plenty of room for everyone: his parents, the three children and Harbhajan and Bibiji, and the six servants. There was a car and driver to take him to work. Everything was perfect. All but Harbhajan Singh's relations with the children of the neighbourhood.

Each day, when Harbhajan Singh would return from work in his uniform, all the children would come out and stare at him. In those days, police uniforms were considered very negative. Harbhajan Singh's government uniform looked very authoritative, so the children would be afraid. Pretending boldness, the children would jeer at him from a distance. Some were more insulting. They would hide in the bushes and urinate at him.

After a couple of days of this, Harbhajan Singh resolved to change their behaviours. He began to bring candy with him, sit in the centre square of the neighbourhood and give it to all the children who came near.

One by one, the children began to warm up to the uncle in the uniform. Day by day, there were more and more of them. After a few weeks, when it was time for Harbhajan Singh to arrive home, there would hardly be any child left in his or her house. As they grew to know each other, the children would each day come and dance around Harbhajan and walk with him, as he lavished them with candies and stories.

Where once there had been fear and animosity in their hearts, instead those children grew up with fond memories of their neighbour, the "candy uncle".

## What Is Permissible and What is Not

As customs inspector at Palam International Airport, gateway to the nations of the world, each day, Harbhajan Singh dealt with thousands of people, coming and going from every part of the globe. Smugglers, criminals, thieves, and ordinary citizens all came under the purview of Harbhajan Singh.

Once, in the course of his duties, he was given the assignment of keeping a very pretty young

woman from a foreign embassy under surveillance. Wherever she went, he was to follow and report on what she did. Before long, she came to see that he was pursuing her, and it became ridiculous to hide it.

One day she said to him, "Why chase after me? Look, let's take the same taxi. It will save us both money."

"It sounds fine to me."

"Okay."

From then on, they took one taxi, went to one hotel, one restaurant, whatever the circumstances were. They became so good at it, that she forgot that she was supposed to run away from him, and he forgot that she was supposed to be running away. It had become a mutually convenient working situation.

Then, one night they checked into a hotel. Harbhajan Singh said, "One room for me and one room for her."

The check-in clerk replied, "Sir, Ummmm, there is only one room for you available."

"This lady would also like a room."

"Well, sir, you can both be in the same room."

"Sorry. We can't do it. Alright, give my room to her."

So she checked in and Harbhajan Singh, the officer, saw her up to her room. Once she had opened the door, she turned to him and said, "Well, come in. What's the problem?"

"This is the problem."

"What?"

"Let me tell you. Up to now, you were being chased and I was chasing. But if we share one room, the drama ends. I don't want that drama to end."

"What is bothering you?"

"My duty. My duty and my status and my obligation, my taking an oath and my being an officer, my being that Bhajan, that intelligence officer, that incorruptible image, does not allow me to share the room with you."

"Well, who is going to know?"

"Me."

"You? What you? You have been with me all this time."

"That was permissible. This is not." Harbhajan Singh Yogi, Gursikh, government officer, had spoken. The matter was decided. There would be no appeal.

## **A Mother's Prayer**

In 1965, there was a national mobilization as India's western border was suddenly invaded by the Pakistani army. With his experience as an intelligence officer of smuggling routes along the border, Harbhajan Singh was posted in mountainous Kashmir, not far from the enemy lines.

As it happened, Harbhajan Singh and five other officers were assigned together one day, when their orderly announced in the usual army style, "Sirs, your dinner is served."

He and the other five accordingly went to sit in their tent and have the meal that had been prepared for them. Halfway through eating, Harbhajan Singh excused himself. There was no need for anyone to ask any questions. Everyone understood where their companion must be going, and what for. They had all been finding the army food, the local water and the altitude a little difficult to adjust to

Hurriedly, Harbhajan Singh ran along the side of the river by their camp until he found a large boulder. He crouched behind the boulder to do his business. Just then, there was a huge noise. Harbhajan wondered for a moment what the sound might have been.

Afterwards, everything was again calm. He washed his hands. But when he made his return to the tent, Harbhajan Singh found there was no longer any camp, any tent, any dinner, nor any officers. He looked up to the sky, to an imaginary God, but there was hardly anything to say or know, and there was nothing that could be done. Where once there had been life, now there was nothing more than a heap of smouldering cinders.

A week later, the lone survivor received a letter. It was from his mother. She wrote: "On such-and-such a day in the evening, I had such a painful thought about you that I could not stay home. I went to the Gurdwara and I prayed and asked God to protect you. Then I had a feeling, and I took all the pay you sent to me and distributed food among the poor. Your papa was not feeling well. He was mad that I came home so late, but you know sometimes I do those kinds of things. I hope you let me know how you feel. Are you okay? I saw you very, very sick. It may be my imagination. I'm going to

stop this letter. I would like to hear from you."

Harbhajan Singh looked at the date of the letter. He remembered the camp, the tent, and the dinner. The time difference could not have been more than three minutes.

## Two Wives

Harbhajan Singh was fortunate to have a devoted and even-tempered wife in Inderjit Kaur. In Delhi, he witnessed the fates of differently favored husbands.

Once, Harbhajan and Inderjit were invited to a very sumptuous presidential kind of a dinner. It was a great honor. Along the way, they were to pick up a friend and his wife. They left fifteen minutes early to be sure to be on time for this important occasion.

On arriving at his friend's house and being invited inside, he realized there was a war going on. Amid the yelling and shouting, a big vase, a priceless glass vase from Norway that he used to appreciate, narrowly missed Harbhajan Singh as it came flying toward the very door he had entered and scattered before his eyes.

Harbhajan hurried back out to the car. His wife asked, "Are they coming?"

"If we do not get out of here fast enough." To the driver he said, "*Chalo, chalo!* Go quickly!"

Inderjit Kaur was surprised, "What?"

"Don't ask for the explanation. If we don't hurry, this car will have a big dent, so let's get out of here!"

The next day, Harbhajan Singh called his friend, "How are you?"

He replied, "Well, we are collecting the dead bodies and the ambulance is here. It's no big problem, but I am sorry I couldn't go."

Harbhajan said, "You ruined your career because your absence was felt so badly. I think tomorrow you will be called upon."

Three days later his friend, who was due to receive a posting at a mission in a foreign country received a note: "Your appointment has been cancelled for circumstances which shall be explained to you later." Later on, he was told, "You cannot go on a diplomatic mission because your wife has a temper." Period. Two lives. The fellow was locked into a chair forever. There was nothing he could

do.

On another occasion, Harbhajan Singh said to a friend, "It seems you have the bitchiest wife in the world. She abuses everybody who comes to your house, including you. She does a public demonstration. Why don't you put her in a Broadway show, where such acting is required, it's so natural with her?"

His friend replied, "You wait until you sit at our dining table and you eat."

"Why is that?"

"Oh, nothing. I didn't mean anything."

Out of curiosity, Harbhajan went to dinner at their home. He said, "She is two hundred times more than what you said."

His friend said, "But wait, you are my guest tonight."

Harbhajan said, "Well, my reception was good enough, but where is the stomach to eat?"

His friend said, "That's alright. It happens to everybody who comes to my house. It's nothing unusual."

Harbhajan Singh watched carefully the interactions between his host and hostess. He gauged the subtle thrust and parry of their conversation, what she remembered and he forgot, what she forgot and he remembered. He noted the respect and consideration underlying their endless dueling.

So they sat and ate. While Harbhajan Singh was departing, his friend said, "Well, what is your opinion?"

"I have changed my opinion. Keep her." In these two he had observed a deeply rooted relationship of complementary needs. What he needed, she provided. What she provided, as much as he might complain to Harbhajan, he actually needed. He required the constant attentions of his wife, even if they were not always positive, and she took pride in her husband even though she did not usually show it. In reality, they were made for one another.

## Yoga in Delhi

In New Delhi, Harbhajan Singh continued his habit of seeking out people said to be knowledgeable of the mysteries of body, mind and spirit. During his early years in the capital, he

studied Hatha yoga and the impact and balance of the nervous system with Acharya Narinder Dev of the Yoga Smriti Ashram. Afterwards, he frequented the Vishwayatan Yoga Ashram, where he learned from Swami Dharendra Brahmachari. This yoga master taught a number of therapeutic yogic regimens. He gave special attention to problems associated with a displaced navel centre. The swami's ashram was well-known, and patronized by such celebrities as the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and his aspiring daughter, Indira Gandhi. After a time, Harbhajan Singh began to offer instruction there.

Harbhajan Singh also had a fateful relationship with Baba Virsa Singh. At the time, Virsa Singh was constructing a farm and spiritual centre on the outskirts of Delhi. Baba Virsa Singh was known for inspiring a strong work ethic and for his practice of mantra.

While he fulfilled his government duties, Harbhajan Singh taught yoga and counselled an on-going stream of people who visited his family home at C-24 Nizamuddin East each day. When the weather was nice, they might have classes outdoors at the nearby Humayun Cemetery grounds. On other days, a simple sheet would be laid out for the father to sit on while he taught the theory and practice of yoga, his sons taking turns demonstrating the poses. At work, Harbhajan Singh would teach his colleagues and friends how to meditate and to heal their physical ailments with traditional remedies. Then, on weekends, the house would be filled with students. People came from several embassies, from the United States, Europe, Canada and the Soviet Union.

It was a full life of engagements and responsibilities. Sometimes during hot summer nights, after the house had emptied and Harbhajan Singh and his wife lay sleepless on their cots under the stars, a memory of another life, the life forecast by the astrologer on the way to Vaishno Devi would exercise Harbhajan Singh's mind. He would say to her then, "Okay, the day is coming when I will lecture to all the Westerners."

She would answer, "How will that happen?"

"I will go to Palam airport and visit," ventured Harbhajan, "and the airport will have a red security alert. All the planes will land there. So all these people will be in the transit lounge, and I will sit on the bar and give them a lecture to calm them down. Don't you think that's what it meant?"

His wife would say, "Yeah, it looks like it."

"That's the only way I can sit on a higher place and teach these Westerners. What else am I going to teach? They are not going to come into the Humayun cemetery to learn yoga from me, and I am not going to go to some academy to lecture. I am a uniformed officer!"

## Checking on Children

Harbhajan Singh spent a lot of time working at the airport. Bibiji spent most of her day at home with servants and family. Together, they entertained guests at home daily. All this meant they spent little quality time together, just the two of them.

They made a plan one day that Bibiji would have some food prepared and join Harbhajan Singh and his staff at the airport for lunch. Bibiji dressed up special and came and had lunch with everyone. It was a nice change from the usual. But time passed quickly.

All too soon, Bibiji told her husband she needed to return home and see how their three children, Ranbir, Kulbir and Kamaljit were doing. Her husband, the romantic, told her to stay a while. He would take care of the situation.

Unknown to Bibiji, there was a helicopter testing facility close by. Harbhajan Singh contacted a friend there and in a matter of minutes, his wife was aboard a helicopter destined for their home at Nizamuddin. After a quick sortie to their house and a low flyover of the backyard to observe the children playing, Bibiji was whisked back to her husband's work.

When his wife returned to his office, Harbhajan Singh asked, "Now, you are fine?"

"Yes. Everybody looks like they are okay at home. They were playing in the yard."

"We will go back home at five together." Truly, this was a husband's love.

## *Journey to Sach Khand*

One day at about midnight, Harbhajan Singh was returning from work when he thought to stop by the Gurdwara near his home in Nizamuddin. His idea was to pray for a short time and go home.

When he entered the Damdama Sahib Gurdwara, he found a Gursikh sitting as though he were reading from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, except he was fast asleep. The Granth Sahib was open, his head resting on the opened pages. The man seemed to be in a very deep slumber. Harbhajan could hear him snoring.

Harbhajan Singh sat down and settled into a deep meditation in the quiet ambience of that place – the historic Gurdwara, the Siri Guru Granth, and the Sikh, his soul far removed from this world. A timeless time passed in this way.

Suddenly another Sikh entered the Gurdwara and approached where the first man was

sleeping. As though sensing danger, the sleeping reader stirred and raised his head. Within a second or two, the other man had grabbed him by the shoulders, brusquely pushed him aside, taken his place, and begun reading in an angry voice.

Yogi Bhajan asked the man who had just awakened, "You looked very peaceful there. Where were you just now?"

The man smiled, his eyes aglow, "I was in *Sach Khand*, the inner court of God. It was so beautiful, so peaceful, so wonderful there. I saw you were meditating there. I just never wanted to leave." Thinking again, he implored, "Oh no - this guy is going to create a lot of trouble! May Satguru protect me!"

Even as he spoke, the body of the angry, fanatical man began to shake. The tremors shook his arms, his head, his legs. Within three minutes, his hatefulness and intolerance had so overcome his physical body that he collapsed right there in front of them.

Harbhajan Singh rushed to the man's crumpled body. He began to massage its feet vigorously, hoping to bring the man back to consciousness, but it was no use. He did not go home at all that night. It was not until late the next morning that the man again opened his eyes and returned to wakeful consciousness.

For his part, the Gursikh who said he had been to *Sach Khand* took the fallen man's place and reverently resumed the "continuous reading" of Siri Guru Granth Sahib.

## **Dutiful is Beautiful**

One time when Harbhajan Singh was working at Palam airport, the officer who was to relieve him did not arrive on time. In fact, he did not arrive at all, so Harbhajan Singh volunteered to work another twelve hour shift. At the end of that shift, again there was no relief, so Harbhajan stayed on for a third day.

Naturally, his family was concerned for him. Bibiji phoned, but she knew her husband was duty bound to maintain his post.

On the third day, when it finally came to the attention of Harbhajan Singh's supervisor, he said, "Why didn't you just go home?"

"What? And leave the security arrangements of the largest airport, the comings and goings of tens of thousands of people and all this cargo unattended to? All this will not stop just because there is no one here to attend to it. Someone has to be here," replied Harbhajan.



Finally a replacement was found so Harbhajan Singh could return to his family. When the situation became known through the customs service, hell broke loose. A number of officers were transferred out of Harbhajan Singh's office. From that day on, Harbhajan's supervisor would periodically check at his home to see that his dutiful officer had left his work at the airport to return to his family.

## The 'Gift'

A close friend of Harbhajan Singh came over for breakfast once. After breakfast, he said, "I have a gift for you."

Harbhajan responded, "Wait a minute. As far as gifts go, I am not very concerned. It all comes from God. If you have brought a gift, I will like to see it. Show it to me, but don't leave it."

"No, no, no. At your leisure, you can look at it."

"Wait a minute! My leisure is right now. Let me look at it." Harbhajan Singh opened the present. Inside were bundles and bundles of bank notes. "What is this for?"

"Well, you know, I just thought you are my friend, you know."

"Hold on now! Money buys services. It doesn't buy friends, so you don't have to leave it here. This matter is finished."

"No, no, no. You keep it. There are no strings attached to it. It's not anything. Just accept it as a present from God."

"If it is from God, it will come right from the sky! It doesn't have to come through you."

"Well, God can prevail through me."

"Then God is also prevailing through me. You take it away! If there's anything you want me to do, I'll do it."

His friend took back the money. The subject was closed.

A week later, they met again. Harbhajan Singh enquired, "Oh, by the way, what do you want me to do?"

"What do you mean?" his friend asked.

"Well, you know, if I am willing to do it for you, why are you upset? Come on, what do you want?"

His friend replied, "You are too clever!"

"Why?"

"I'm not giving you any hints."

"No hints. Just tell me. What do you want me to do? There is something you want me to do. Otherwise, you know, what was the idea?"

"Look, I forgot how you were introduced to me. It was a long time ago."

"How was that?"

"'Upright, uptight, always right.' Sorry, I was wrong."

## **The Test of Love**

In his years of service, Harbhajan Singh inspired the respect of co-workers, senior and junior to him. Some knew him from his reports. Others knew Harbhajan from weeks spent together patrolling the Himalayan border lands in search of smugglers. In that difficult terrain, Harbhajan Singh knew much depended on his men's morale. During long nights, he would regale them with uplifting stories and tales of uncommon wisdom. The respect of his men took many forms.

One day, a subordinate told him, "Sir, I love you."

Harbhajan, the officer, replied, "What do you mean, you love me? Is there something wrong with you? We are executive officers and among us there is no love and no hatred. Well, now that you have said you loved me, are you serious?"

"Yes, sir. Am I not supposed to love you?"

"Look, boy, when you love me you have the right to hate me, and I don't want to give you that right. I want you to do what you have to do and what I tell you to do and that is all. From where came the phenomena of love and hate?"

The subordinate replied, "But my inner self told me that you are perfect and I could not resist. Please excuse me, but seriously, I am telling you that I love you."

"Okay," spoke Harbhajan Singh, "but now you will have to prove it."

Three months passed. Harbhajan asked the company commander to summon that officer and have him meet him at work for breakfast. As they were eating breakfast, Harbhajan Singh inquired, "How do you feel today? Do you still love me?"

"Sir, what do you mean? Love is one-pointed. You told us that."

"Okay then. I have a job for you."

"Sir, I am honored to do it."

"Good." Harbhajan Singh fingered a photograph. "I want the man in this photo to be arrested, alive, by you."

The man in the picture was a dangerous criminal, a smuggler who had already killed several officers who had tried to apprehend him.

"What? Sir, why me?"

"What do you mean? You are the only one who loves me."

"Sir, do you know what a risk is involved? I don't think that ten companies could arrest him. Do you know what kind of man he is? Why do you want me to do it?"

"Because I want you to die," answered Harbhajan Singh.

"Really?"

"Yes. You love me, and love can only be tested by a sacrifice, and death is a great sacrifice. You go alone. Arrest him single-handed. I want him alive."

"Sir, can I give you my answer a little later?"

"Yes, you can, but first go with my orderly to cell three and return here with the occupant of that cell.

"Yes, sir."

There in the cell was the very man Harbhajan Singh's subordinate officer had been hesitant to go out and arrest. He was shocked and speechless. When he returned, Harbhajan motioned to a chair and said, "Sit down, friend. Last night, I went out myself and got him. Because I love you and I knew

that to get him alive was the most difficult job, I did the job for you."

"I don't understand you."

"I know. I know you don't and you didn't understand anything, anything at all. You only know how to express yourself emotionally. You never learned to express yourself devotionally. I just wanted to test your love."

## A Tryst with Death

One afternoon, Harbhajan Singh returned home to find his wife had gone with their children to her parents' home. Harbhajan decided he would relax and do a few things at home, then join her for the night.

It was a lovely day. The wind was just right. The weather was very nice. Harbhajan was at ease in a coloured bush shirt and pants he normally never wore. With the wind came an idea, an unconventional inspiration.

Harbhajan put on his shoes and jumped on a new bicycle he had recently bought. His plan was to go to the customs house and check on the guard, then leave the cycle, change into uniform, go see Bibiji, then continue about twenty miles from his in-laws' house to check on another post. It was just a whim of the moment.

So it was that Harbhajan Singh cycled up to the check point of the customs house unannounced and unexpected. Just as the guard post came into view, Harbhajan could see the glint of the sentry's bayonet as he directed his rifle at him. "Who's there?" demanded the guard.

Harbhajan, feeling mischievous, waited without reply.

After a few moments' pause, he could hear the click of the rifle as a bullet entered its firing chamber. The voice of the guard repeated in a much louder, more determined tone, "*Who's there?*"

Harbhajan realized he would not be given a third chance. "*Friend!*" he answered.

"*Password,*" demanded the voice.

Harbhajan Singh knew the password. He knew his life depended on it. "*Strapped cat!*"

"*Proceed slowly!*" cautioned the voice, as the guard scrutinized the unexpected arrival to make visual identification. A few moments later, as the light of recognition penetrated the guard's eyes,

there was another click for the bullet to exit the firing chamber. As the rifle came down to his side, he commanded, "Pass, friend! All is well!"

In a few moments, the whole post was made aware of Harbhajan Singh's arrival. There was a tremendous commotion and a presentation of arms as everyone saluted their commanding officer.

In his mind, Harbhajan Singh savoured the near encounter with his friend, Death that he had just enjoyed. "Sat Nam," he thought, is the identity and "*Wahe Guru*" the password the soul must present on passing from this fleeting world.

## The Judgement

Where there are rules, there are usually exceptions, and the exceptions to those rules and regulations are often traceable to the influence of a woman.

Once, Harbhajan Singh, the officer, was to decide a case. Being aware of his reputation for bluntness and honesty, the other party expected Harbhajan's punishment to be harsher than anyone else could have given. There was no question of bribery or other types of inducement or persuasion, so they sought out Harbhajan Singh's weakness, his mother.

The morning of the judgement, Harbhajan prepared to leave his house and go to work. He had on his best uniform. His orderly had just arrived with his car, and he was about to get in, when his mother appeared.

She asked if he was going to the office, and exactly what work he would be doing that day.

He replied, "Well, there is an important case. I have already prepared it, and I am about to submit it."

She asked if it was about certain particular people. When Harbhajan said it was, she looked at him in a way he had never seen her before, then lifted her hand and slapped him so hard that his turban went flying to the floor.

He was stunned! Normally, if anyone did that to a government officer in uniform, they would risk being charged with a felony and arrested on the spot. "What was that for?"

"Do you think it is possible that I should have a son who doesn't know how to have any compassion that can stand above the law?" was her authoritative reply.

Harbhajan Singh, his mother's son, retied his turban, and got into his government car to go to

work. When he arrived at his office, he pulled out the case file of those people and wrote on it that, since this party had approached his mother and created a prejudicial situation, he could not decide on the case.

When he returned home in the evening, he asked his mother what she had intended that morning. She replied, "I did what any honest mother would have done. I don't want you to be known as so honest that people would be afraid you had no compassion left in you!"

## Quarantine

Harbhajan Singh was responsible for the lives of the dozens of men under his command. He was also accountable for the security of India 's largest airport. Looking after the best interests of his men and securing the travellers and goods arriving and departing each day from Palam airport involved making endless decisions involving countless considerations. Sometimes a little yogic knowhow could save the day.

When an outbreak of jaundice in Delhi took on epidemic proportions, Harbhajan Singh was ordered to disband his security unit in the interest of the health of his men. It was a difficult order for him to obey. After all, if the men were discharged and sent home so as not to catch the potentially fatal disease, there would be no one to manage the security of the airport. On the other hand, if Harbhajan refused to discharge his men and one of them died, he would be held personally responsible because he had been told to disband them.

Weighing his options, Harbhajan Singh decided on a stringent course of action. First, he ordered his men confined to barracks and the water supply to their barracks turned off. Harbhajan suspected that Delhi's water supply was to blame for the epidemic and he wanted to ensure his men had no access to that water. For drinking, Harbhajan Singh supplied his men with a *chaae* made of cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, cloves, black peppercorns, and milk, otherwise known as "Yogi Tea."

After a couple of days being confined to their barracks with only the tea to drink, the men petitioned their commanding officer, saying, "We have to take a bath. We need water!"

Harbhajan Singh was impassive. He replied, "Take it with Yogi Tea. I don't care!"

"It is impossible! We cannot bathe in tea," protested the men.

Harbhajan Singh, the officer ever concerned for the lives of his men, relented just a little, "I will only give you a bath if there will be a sentry on the person taking the bath, and if the person will first drink two glasses of Yogi Tea so he may not drink water under any circumstances. If you will agree to each man bathing under one man's supervision, only then I will agree."

The men wanted to bathe so much that, after some discussion among themselves, finally they agreed.

So it was that for ninety days there was a health emergency all around the country. People died left and right. But in the barracks commandeered by Harbhajan Singh, not a single man fell ill. When at last the epidemic was over, he and his men laughed and celebrated their good fortune, thanks to the health-giving powers of a certain yogi's tea.

## **Message from Moscow**

In the course of his work, in 1966 Harbhajan Singh came upon a secret communiqué. It had been sent from Moscow to the Soviet Ambassador in New Delhi. The message pointed darkly to the necessity of destabilising and eliminating Sikhs as a religious and political force. Accomplishing this would serve the long-term objective of the sovietization of India, thereby giving the U.S.S.R. access to the prized wheat of Punjab and much-needed warm water ports.

This knowledge was to weigh heavily on Harbhajan Singh's mind in times to come.

## **The Waters of Gurdwara Sis Ganj**

Harbhajan Singh loved to visit the beautiful Gurdwara Sis Ganj in central Delhi. The history of that holy place was known to every Sikh and many Hindus as well – how in the dark days of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb people had been tormented and tortured for their faith. And how Guru Tegh Bahadur stood up to the tyrant ruler on behalf of the people, sacrificing his head to the imperial executioner's sword so that all might be free to live their faith. The large, majestic temple now stood where the noble ninth Master had triumphed over the terror tactics of that bigoted emperor.

One day, Harbhajan Singh was outside that historic Gurdwara when he saw a man arrive by car at the temple gates and enter inside. Once inside, that unfortunate man prostrated himself and began to sob and weep.

Harbhajan could not help but see that Sikh gentleman appeared to be in great pain. Out of curiosity, he approached the man and asked, "What is wrong?"

Hearing him, the man sat up and wiped his eyes and introduced himself. Harbhajan Singh recognized the man's name. He was widely known as one of the richest men of Delhi.

"What went wrong?"

The man gave a sad look toward Harbhajan and replied, "Everything!"

Harbhajan Singh stood up. Nearby, at the steps leading into the Gurdwara, there was water flowing where worshippers washed their feet as they entered. Harbhajan went and bent down, and scooped up a handful of that water, infused with the dust of the feet of so many pilgrims. Then he returned to the sorrowful man and sprinkled it over him.

The man's attitude softened. He asked, "Who are you?"

"Just an instrument."

"What you have done to me is very satisfying."

"Yes. I have shared with you the House of Nanak."

"Who are you?"

"I am a son of this House."

"I have been coming here every day, but today I am satisfied."

"Today I have shared with you my father's bounty. Now go back and you will have what you don't have. Your needs will be satisfied and your pain will be gone because this is the House of Nanak."

On that day, that man was healed by that sprinkling of holy water from the Guru's house, and he never forgot that blessing. From that day onward, through every disaster, even when there was a curfew in place and it could be fatal to do so, that Sikh turned out without fail at Gurdwara Sis Ganj in the ambrosial hours to offer his prayers. With a beautiful new voice, he learned to recite the hymns of the ninth Guru and he recited them so melodically that it might seem he was the only one in the world with such a gift. And, even when Harbhajan Singh lived far, far away, if he ever came to Delhi, that man would always remember to come and pay his respects.

## **The God of Change**

In the course of his work at the airport, Harbhajan Singh was told that an inspector of his had stolen a case of whiskey from the customs warehouse. Harbhajan calculated there were twenty-four bottles in that case, and that if his subordinate was going to drink it all, he would not be seeing him for a month. On the other hand, if he was going to sell it, there would be a lot of problems.

He went to the inspector's office, sat down with him, and said, "Let us talk very gently to each



other. What about the whiskey you stole?"

"Uh... I mean, sir... uh, you know about it?"

"Now listen! There are twenty-four bottles, and yet you have not opened the case. Is that true?"

He said, "Yes, sir."

"You want to sell them?"

He said, "Yes, sir."

"First of all, this thing is meant for insane people, people who cannot handle themselves. It is meant for them. It is a medicine. Are you one of them? Can you handle yourself?"

He said, "Yes, sir."

"In that case you will sell it and get the money for your children. You know, then it will be an infinite sin. It will pollute your children's consciousness to infinity. You will be injecting a dishonesty into your children, my brother.

"That's why I came to see you," Harbhajan continued, "I am not here because I am worried about those bottles. Not at all! But by selling those bottles you are going to earn money, and sending that money to feed your children, you will be injecting your children with absolute dishonesty. And then can you ever expect your children to be honest? Do you want your children to be honest or not?"

"Yes, sir!" he said.

"Well, bring that case in. It is right under your bed. Could you?"

He pulled it out.

"Put it in the car. Let's go back."

They then drove to the warehouse. While his remorseful inspector was lifting the case to the top of a large stack of other cases, it fell crashing to the floor. In a couple of minutes, the entire warehouse reeked of whiskey.

Harbhajan Singh put a handkerchief over his nose and mouth, and exclaimed, "My God! It's awful!"

"Sir, you go out. It smells bad here."

"My God, you were going to drink it, and now you say it smells bad?"

The next morning that same man came to see Harbhajan Singh. After saluting, he sat down, and Harbhajan asked him, "How do you feel?"

He replied, "Ji, one thing I understand. I am a changed person."

"What happened to you?"

"You know, I also used to accept bribes."

"Since when?"

"Well, I want to tell you everything. I have been getting a lot of money."

"Then, what's happened?"

"This morning, people came to bring me the money, and I refused. I couldn't accept it."

"Can you manage yourself?"

"It doesn't matter now. It doesn't matter at all. You will see, Sir. I'll manage!"

Two years later, that same man came and said, "You know, you were telling me that if somebody will be good for two years..."

Harbhajan Singh replied, "No. Two and a half!"

"Oh... Six months more to go?"

"What do you mean?"

"I have not done a wrong thing for two years. I have become conscious."

Harbhajan Singh smiled inside. For the rest of the day, he felt very happy. It felt good to know he had affected a significant change in that man's life. But there were so many employees and so many temptations at the great Palam airport.

Later that day, another of Harbhajan Singh's colleagues asked him, "Look, Bhajan, what is happening? Somebody is tickling you? You are so smiling! We have never seen you like that."

Harbhajan Singh answered, "Yeah, something is tickling me. Look at that man. Have you watched him for the last two years?"

His colleague replied, "Oh, my God, he is a totally changed person! Didn't you know? Something happened to him. He tells me that God came to him in a dream, and thereafter he's totally changed."

"Yeah, God came to him in a dream. I know that. He is totally changed."

"Yeah, he's totally changed."

Harbhajan Singh, the officer, continued, "I feel so great seeing him. Why don't *you* change?"

His colleague replied, "God didn't come to me in a dream."

*"I am right here!* I am the one who was there. I am right before you now. *I am* the God. I am telling you. *Now, change!*"

"What are you saying?" the colleague flustered.

"I am telling you that I am the God, and *I want you to change.*"

"What? Is this a joke?"

"I am the God of Change. Don't you understand? There are a lot of Gods. Is there not a God of Change? Do you know any God of Change?"

"No."

*"I am the one!"*

"You're just faking it."

"I'll fake it, and my God will make it! Don't you worry about that. *Now, you change!*"

"What are you asking about?"

"Look, this morning you took five hundred rupees as a bribe. That person went and pawned all his wife's gold to get you that money, to get that job done, because he's afraid he'll be out of a job. And, now it is in your pocket. That pocket is right on your heart center and, my friend, it is really burning there. I want you to give it back to him."

"I won't!"

"Look. Your wife is pregnant. If you will not return it, your son shall have no milk, and shall die, so it is written in your destiny."

"How do you know that?" The colleague surveyed Harbhajan Singh's face for some understanding that so far had eluded him.

"I am seeing it, and I am telling you. Since his wife had to give up those ornaments, she has been cursing you and your children like a mantra. And now her curse has almost eaten up your protective aura. It has almost reached you. I am just seeing it and interpreting it."

He looked around. "Ummm... How do you know I have that money?"

"I'm telling you. Change! I just know."

For a minute, the man stood straight and stern, thinking. Then, he gave in. "Do you have the keys of your car?"

"Yeah. Here you go." Harbhajan, the God of Change, handed his colleague his keys. Shamefaced, the man accepted them.

## **The Secret Prayer**

Driving to work in his government vehicle one day, Harbhajan Singh saw a neighbour of his. He said, "Hello. Do you want to go anywhere?"

"Yes. Can you take me where I am going?"

"It will be my pleasure to serve a neighbour at the government's expense," Harbhajan Singh joked, though he was authorized to go anywhere he pleased.

His neighbour said, "I want to go to such and such a holy man with a prayer, and request something from him."

"Oh, you know a good holy man. I'll go too!"

When they arrived, Harbhajan's neighbour prostrated himself at the holy man's feet and said, "Sir, you know my heart's desire."

The holy man said, "Yes, yes, it will happen."

"Sir, when?" the neighbour asked.

"Never!" interjected Harbhajan Singh.

His neighbour and the holy man turned to look at Harbhajan, who said to the holy man, "Tell him 'Never!'"

Harbhajan Singh's neighbour was furious. He nearly grabbed him by the collar. "How do you know what's going on here?"

"I just know. You came all the way here, lay down very humbly, but when he said it would happen, you wanted to know when. You don't trust him at all!"

"You have ruined me!"

"No, I haven't. When I gave you a lift, your prayer was already answered. I just came to see your holy man. You are crazy!"

The holy man smiled, "He is right! You don't have any faith, but your friend does."

The neighbour asked Harbhajan Singh, "How do you know all this?"

Harbhajan said to his neighbour, "Give me a piece of paper." He wrote on the paper, "I don't know what your prayer is, but it is granted. Signed, Bhajan"

He gave it to the perplexed neighbour, and said, "Take this paper. If your prayer isn't answered, you can blame me. If it is answered, you will have a good party."

"Okay."

Later that week, the man called Harbhajan Singh, "My prayer was answered. Now let us have a party."

"No. Why should I have a party with you? You are a bad man. I was only saying that."

"No, no, we should have a party! Besides, tell me how you knew."

"What are you saying? Faith moves mountains. Otherwise stones are heavy. You started with faith. There was no duality in your mind at that time. That is where your prayer had its impact. Then, the rest of the time you were in duality.

"All the time you were sitting with me in my jeep, I was watching your aura - and you were going nuts! It was sometimes red, sometimes green, sometimes yellow. At one point, I wanted to throw you right out of my jeep! I didn't think you were even worthy of giving a lift. Then, when you were sitting in the holy man's presence, you became a nut again! That is why I spoke up. Living in such inner controversy, my friend, does not allow you to enjoy life."

## **The Guru's Kindness**

There was a man who came to Harbhajan Singh's house in India and asked for his blessing. Harbhajan Singh asked, "What is wrong with you?"

The man replied, "I have to go for a job interview, and I definitely need your blessing."

"Well, if the interview is so important, you had better go to Gurdwara and pray for an hour, and then go for the interview."

That evening, the man called Harbhajan Singh very disappointed. "When I arrived for the interview, I was late. I didn't get anything."

"You got something. Now tell me what happened."

The man told him, "First the cab driver wouldn't take me to Gurdwara, so I had to catch the bus, which took me one hour. Then I meditated for one hour. Again, I couldn't get a cab, so I took a scooter that broke down on the way. When I finally arrived there, everything was over!"

"Now do me a favor. Check and see what happened to that cab."

Two days later, he called again. "The cab is in the repair shop. When the cab driver left me, he got into an accident."

"If you would have been in that car, you would have ended up like a mashed potato. My friend, I couldn't bless you. I sent you somewhere where you could really get blessed in time and space. We couldn't stop the time, but with the Guru's Grace, we could shift the space. That's why you are still able to call me and I am able to hear you."

## **From Everything to Nothing**

While serving at the Vishwayatan Yoga Ashram, Harbhajan Singh would always invite students

and guests to join in the meals. He noticed a certain poor man, a beggar who came almost every day and took certain lessons.

The man had a very cultured and conscientious air about him. He regularly cleaned the eating area and served the food most graciously. Eventually, when most everyone else had been served, he would sit down and begin eating, but not without a long silent prayer beforehand.

Harbhajan Singh asked the man his profession. He replied, "Unfortunately, I do nothing but begging."

Somehow, it did not sound right to Harbhajan Singh. He kept an eye on the beautiful, gracious beggar. Finally, three days later, he told a faithful assistant of his to pick the man up and, in a friendly way, to question him.

Afterwards, the assistant came back with his findings. It turned out the man was lovesick. He was a millionaire with six factories, well-studied, with a PhD from Harvard University. Somehow his mind had flipped, and he had gone from everything to nothing.

## To See God

In the course of his duties at Palam airport, Harbhajan Singh witnessed a growing procession of Westerners passing through India's gateway to the world. They were rock stars and celebrities, and more often they were simple young people seeking some kind of truth they had not been able to locate in the West.

They made their ways northward from Delhi, sometimes in well-appointed coaches, but usually in the ordinary crowded buses most Indians used. Sometimes they had an address or destination. Sometimes they allowed themselves to be led by a haunting intuition. Mostly, they turned up in the holy cities of Haridwar, Rishikesh and Benares – among crowds of saffron-robed swamis, half-naked *sadhus*, devotees, and foreigners like themselves.

Sometimes they would be taken in by a solicitous monk and spend their whole holiday in an ashram, eating simple food, taking part in a daily routine of hatha yoga and rituals and hanging on every word of their exotic hosts. Other times, they might stay a couple of months or more and learn a few yoga *kriyas* or be given a "secret" mantra.

Mostly, sooner or later, they would find their way back through the timeless continent's gateway to the world, a little thinner, a little poorer, a little anxious to be back in the hubbub of their familiar Western ways. Seeing that endless stream of tender aspirations, day after day, saddened the worldly-wise Harbhajan Singh.

One day, Harbhajan received a call to come home because of an emergency. He hurried home and found that he was urgently needed at the Vishwayatan Yoga Ashram.

Arriving at the ashram, Harbhajan Singh found Swami Dharendra Acharya, the ashram head. Swamiji related that the emergency was that a young Portuguese woman had come. India had poor diplomatic relations with Portugal at that time, so the woman was not permitted to remain in the country, but she had come to the ashram with very little time and a very specific request.

Swami Dharendra Acharya said, "I do not want to deal with this insane woman! She is from the West. You deal with her. She wants to find God."

"What is the difficulty? You could have shown her God in one second."

"Forget it! This nonsense... Who wants this insane white woman? Get rid of her somehow. Talk to her in English. I can't talk in English."

"No. No. I will not talk in English. I will give her God."

"How?"

"Just wait. Wait. But after that, my condition is I have to go to my job. You won't detain me for showing God to somebody else."

"Okay," agreed Swamiji. "Just one God, and it is over with."

"Fine."

The woman was brought before Harbhajan Singh. He told her to go take a bath and get prepared and pretend to be holy.

"Just understand," he told her, "this is one moment, if you miss it, you will never find God!"

The woman agreed and took a bath, then dressed herself in an orange robe and sat before Harbhajan.

He said, "Look in my eyes."

She looked into his eyes.

"Now you close it. Close it. Now you live. Right? But don't fight. Live. Live! Don't fight!"

"How?"



"Put your hands in the back, and lock them." Harbhajan Singh put her into the posture. Then he took his hand and stopped both her nostrils and her lips.

Time passed...

She wanted air.

More time passed...

She began to realize that she desperately needed to breathe.

Time passed slowly...

Slowly...

s-l-o-w-l-y...

s---l---o---w---l---y...

Her mind raced wildly. Finally, the woman focussed all her strength and wrenched her mouth wide open. "GOD!!!" was all she could say.

*"You got it!* That's all it is! When there is no hope... the hope in no hope, the love in the unloved, the unknown in the known... That is God!"

Still recovering her breath in deep, convulsive gasps, she beamed a grateful smile, "Thank you!"

## Toronto

Sometime in 1968, events converged to bring to a close Harbhajan Singh's comfortable life in Delhi. One of these influences had its roots on the other side of the Himalayas, in the Soviet republic of Uzbekistan. There, in the capital of Tashkent, the USSR was establishing a centre for the study of psychic phenomena.

That centre was an important part of a larger project. The Soviet Union was positioning itself as the world leader in the field of research into ESP, psychokinesis and other so-called paranormal phenomena. In a typically grand gesture, the officially atheist Soviet Union was hosting an international conference on parapsychology in Moscow in June. The event would draw together some of the best scientific minds from behind the Iron Curtain. World-renowned physicists, including Nobel Prize winners, would attend.

While American research into parapsychology was limited to a couple of small ventures and widely stigmatized as "unscientific", the Soviet state lent its full support to these explorations. A widely respected Russian academic enthused, "The discovery of the energy underlying ESP will be equivalent to the discovery of atomic energy." Although some of the research remained purely investigative, its ultimate objective appeared to be to assist the Soviet Union's secret police and its military in the communist superpower's quest for dominance over the capitalist world led by its archfoe, the United States.

As it happened, because of a complicated system of global alliances, in those days Pakistan was aligned with the United States, while India fell into the Soviet orbit. The USSR provided India with advanced military hardware and industrial goods. In turn, India supplied Moscow with tropical fruits, textiles, spices, leather goods, jute and all kinds of handicrafts.

When a representative from the Soviet side approached someone in New Delhi for help with their psychic research, it was not long before the name of Harbhajan Singh came up. It was thought that he would be an ideal candidate to go and teach the Russians. It would be a prestigious posting for him. Moreover, Harbhajan's going would be a distinctively Indian contribution that would improve his country's trade deficit with the Soviet superpower. There was a good deal of pressure for Harbhajan Singh to go.

At home, Harbhajan told his wife about the offer to go to Tashkent. His wife asked, "You will go to Russia?"

"No. I don't want to go." There were a number of reasons he did not want to go. Harbhajan Singh was not impressed with the Soviet ideology. He did not like the state-controlled economy. He knew that monopoly capitalism was the worst kind of capitalism, and a state monopoly was absolutely the worst. Harbhajan was also aware of the restrictions on thinking and communicating in the USSR, and that any form of worship was forbidden there. Senior employees from the Soviet embassy had come regularly to his home for classes, so he had had some experience with people from that country first hand. But the USSR was not a place he wanted to go.

A few days later, Harbhajan Singh received some unexpected direction from a Sikh holy man who visited him at the airport. The *baba* saw the pure delight in how Harbhajan Singh read his *Rehiraas* one evening. Afterwards, he said, "Sir, what is your name?"

"Harbhajan Singh."

"What are you doing in customs?" said the holy man.

"I am the officer in charge here today."

"What were you doing there?"

"I was doing the 'Hari Bhajan' – the praise of God."

"Please do it all the time. This work doesn't suit you any more."

"You are right. I understand." And he did. The holy man had spoken to Harbhajan Singh's eternal soul, and his soul knew it was time for a change.

Baba Virsa Singh also seems to have played a role in the large changes about to occur in Harbhajan's life. He may in fact have been the "holy man" from the previous story although Harbhajan Singh's telling leaves that question open. What he did tell us is that Baba Virsa Singh physically touched his forehead, inducing a dramatic state of enlightenment, that he gave Harbhajan the mantra *Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wahe Guru*, and that late in 1968, he was sent to the West by Virsa Singh.

Harbhajan Singh and his wife were often visited by a friendly and energetic western woman a little older than them who worked in the health club of a hotel. She was a Canadian who made her living as a massage therapist. The woman took part in Harbhajan's yoga classes and loved Bibiji's cooking. When she heard of Harbhajan Singh's predicament, the Canadian woman said, "You are such a good yoga teacher and yoga is becoming a fad now in the West. You should have no trouble finding work in Canada. Besides, I am planning to return to Toronto in a few weeks. You can stay in my apartment until you find a place of your own."

From then on, things began to happen very quickly. Harbhajan Singh submitted his resignation at work. The Canadian woman used her network of friends back in Toronto to find him a post at the university, possibly as the chair of a department of yogic studies. The head of Canada's embassy in the Indian capital, who had been taking classes with the Gursikh yogi, wrote him a glowing letter of endorsement.

.....  
Dear Mr. Harbhajan Singh,

I am glad that you are going to Canada to teach yoga. The interest in yoga exercises and therapy is growing, and teachers of your quality are badly needed. Having worked with you quite intensively for three months, I know your gifts and your integrity which nothing can commercialize. You will not need to try to persuade anyone. People will come to you for help and they will not be disappointed, whether it is better health, a more balanced mind/body, or a one-pointed attention they are seeking.

With my best wishes and grateful thanks always,

Yours sincerely,

James George

High Commissioner

Office of the High Commissioner of Canada

New Delhi, India

July 23, 1968

Some of Harbhajan's colleagues confronted him. They said, "You are a fool! How can you do this? You may be successful. You may not be successful."

"I don't care whether I am successful or not. It is a matter that I am Har Bhajan Singh, I am the divine song of God. I have not given enough time to it. Soon I am going to touch my fortieth year. I just want to do it."

"How will you live?"

"I *will* live."

That summer, plans were made for Bibiji and their three children, Kamaljit Kaur, Kulbir Singh, and Ranbir Singh, aged nine, eleven and thirteen, to remain in Delhi until such a time as they could join Harbhajan Singh in the West. They had no savings. The servants would have to be dismissed.

By the grace of Guru Ram Das, when a long-time acquaintance heard of the situation, he offered to pay for Harbhajan's family's expenses in Delhi. It was arranged that at the beginning of every month until Harbhajan Singh was self-supporting, his friend's wife would come and bring household money to Bibiji.

People were surprised, some were simply stunned to know that Harbhajan Singh was planning to go to far-off Canada. He had a respected position in the government service. Harbhajan was well established. He had a comfortable life. He had many friends and acquaintances. They decided to hold a farewell party for their good friend, Harbhajan. Over and over, they said to him, "You must be crazy!"

Harbhajan Singh would reply, "You are right, but I still know what I am doing."

His acquaintances would argue, "Look. You just sit here, and every day people come to see you - fine, distinguished kinds of people. You have a good job. You're healthy. You are well fed. Everything in your life is fine. Now why do you want to leave all this and go all the way over there?"

"But I'm not *going*. Somebody's *taking* me. Moreover, if I don't go, I will have to die. Then I will end up being born there. That's a long wait. Why should I have another body and go through the whole process of this nonsense? It is simple, as simple as can be said and seen. I want to get it over with.

"I owe some people. I have to go and deliver their message to them. I am a postman. I want to go and take up my beat. I want to empty my bag. They may read their letter or not. They may throw it in the fire. I don't care. I want to just empty my bag, get old, get crucified, and die over there."

As the day of his leaving approached, one pandit, an astrologer, came and cautioned Harbhajan Singh. He said, "I won't deceive you. You know I am indebted to you. I have taken your salt. You

should not go for two and a half months. It will be very difficult for you."

Harbhajan Singh replied, "I am a Sikh of Guru Ram Das. Even if two and a half months are bad, let me go. Let me see the worst. Then I will appreciate the best."

Before leaving, Harbhajan Singh offered a prayer, and consulted the wisdom of Siri Guru Granth Sahib. From the Guru, came the following Order:

"With the Guru's Grace, practise raj yoga." (page 211)













PART TWO  
**RAJ YOGA:**  
**THE SOULFUL SOVEREIGNTY OF THE DIVINE**

I am a yogi.

September 13, 1968

Harbhajan Singh Yogi, now thirty-nine years of age, waited his turn in the line-up that had just disembarked at Toronto's international airport. In the queue were tourists, professionals, government people and hopeful immigrants. Gradually, Harbhajan's place in line moved up, as people were cleared at the front by the customs inspectors.

Having himself so recently been the chief customs officer at India's busiest airport, Harbhajan Singh savoured the sweet irony of his new status. Finally, the people in front of him were cleared and it was his turn to step forward and engage the officer at his desk. The inspector's eyes took in the papers placed in front of him.

"Your profession?"

"I am a yogi." Harbhajan Singh the former customs inspector had decided to make a break with his past. A new future required a new identity and this was it.

"Pardon me?"

"I am a yogi. You can say it is like a priest. I am a man of God."

"Do you plan to work here?"

"Yes. I have been offered a job at the university here as a teacher of yoga. You can see from the letter here."

"I see. What do you have with you?"

"Only this handbag. My luggage went missing in Amsterdam."

"Alright, then. Welcome to Canada."

The arrivals lounge was packed with people moving to and fro. You could hear French and English being spoken. There was a cluster of Czech refugees, just arrived, with their precious bundles and suitcases. At six foot two, Yogi Harbhajan Singh, towering over the milling crowd, looked for a familiar face. It was not there.

Yogi Harbhajan, master of patience, went within. An hour he waited, then reached into his pocket for the number of the man from the university who was to receive him. It was Friday afternoon, and he called the office of his sponsor. The secretary who picked up the phone had been expecting his call. She did not have good news. The professor had been involved in a serious traffic accident and died just the day before.

Harbhajan Singh thanked the secretary and offered his condolences. Hanging up the pay phone, he reflected on the briefness of life and the inscrutable course of destiny.

What was he to do now? His employment and all his plans were up in the air. His luggage, so carefully selected and packed, was gone forever. There was not even anyone to receive him at the airport.

At that moment, the Word of his Guru came to Harbhajan Singh. The lines were from Guru Nanak's *Japji Sahib*:

*Kayti-aa dookh bhookh sad maar, ayeh bhi daat tayree daataar.  
Band khalaasee bhaanai ho-i, hor aakh na sakai ko-i,  
Jay ko khaa-ik aakhan paa-i, oho jaanai jaytee-aa mu-eh khaa-i,  
Aapay jaanai aapay day-i, aakheh si bhi kayee kay-i,  
Jis no bakhsay sifat saalaah, Naanak paatishaahe paatishaaho.*

Whatever afflictions and deprivations might be, these too are your gifts, O Bountiful One! Freedom from bondage comes only by your Will. Nothing more can be said. Any fool who presumes to know better shall live to eat his words. He himself knows and he himself gives. Only a few acknowledge this. That one fortunate to sing the praises of the Lord, O Nanak is the King of kings!

"So," Harbhajan the Yogi thought, "it is Your Gift. Thank you!" Just then he saw the diminutive Canadian masseuse he had known in Delhi. She had made the arrangements for him to teach at the university. The woman had heard the news of the professor's accident and come to the airport alone to receive Harbhajan. Together they took a taxi to her apartment home where she had an extra bedroom prepared for her tired guest.

Fall was in the air. Soon the leaves would be changing colour. The Canada geese would be flying south. The Canadian holidays, Thanksgiving and Hallowe'en were coming, and soon after, the snow would fly.

Yogi Harbhajan Singh had arrived in another hemisphere, very different to what he had been accustomed to. The inhabitants looked pale compared with the coffee-skinned people of Delhi. They spoke with a different accent, sometimes difficult for Harbhajan to understand. There were lots of cars here, but no rickshaws and far fewer people than back home.

There was a whole new world for Harbhajan Yogi to explore, but after a little dinner with his host and *Kirtan Sohila* to himself, it was time to put all this aside and rest for the coming adventure.

## **You are no longer Sikhs!**

Harbhajan Singh had left India, but he had not left his people. Sikhs had lived on the west coast of Canada since 1897. The first Sikh had arrived in Toronto fifty-seven years later.

When Yogi Harbhajan arrived in Toronto, there were two Sikh congregations of about twenty-five people each. Every couple of weeks, they would come together at a community center to keep alive their spiritual traditions in this foreign land. It was clearly a struggle. Nearly all of the men had discarded their distinctive turbans and cut their long hair on the excuse that it was the only way they were going to find work in Canada.

When Harbhajan Singh arrived at the gathering in the community center at Eglinton and Avenue Road, the members of the congregation were hotly discussing whether or not the Gurdwara should, like a church, have chairs for the people to sit on. Harbhajan with his pink turban bowed to the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, and addressed his fellow Sikhs. He encouraged them to take pride in their own spiritual heritage, rather than mindlessly aping the customs of Westerners. Yogi Harbhajan Singh also advised them to discuss their problems and resolve their differences politely and respectfully when they were in the presence of the holy Granth Sahib.

On another occasion, Yogi Harbhajan was blunt and forceful. He confronted those who had been born in Sikh homes, but had disowned the heart of Sikhism when they settled overseas. They had forsaken the dynamic genius of Guru Nanak to live a shallow life of rituals, controversies and social observances. They had discarded a priceless pearl, to cling to a hollow, worthless shell.

"You are no longer Sikhs," Harbhajan Singh told the crowd of bare-faced immigrants. He singled out their self-serving leader, who had lived in Canada the longest, for some choice words of criticism.

After those scathing words, the erstwhile leader had run for cover and was nowhere to be found. Some members of the congregation approached Harbhajan Singh afterwards, hoping he might serve as the Gurdwara's president. He thanked them, but excused himself. Yogi Harbhajan explained that he needed to focus his energies elsewhere and preferred to remain from the Gurdwara's politics.

## Mr. Eckhardt

As a new immigrant with an employment visa, Yogi Harbhajan was required to remain in touch with the government and report his progress. One morning, he visited the immigration office to inform the officials there of his situation at the university. Harbhajan was directed into an office to be interviewed.

A senior bureaucrat, Mr. Eckhardt was waiting for him. When Yogi Harbhajan produced a book of photos showing him in a number of yoga poses, the civil servant was impressed. Still, he quizzed Harbhajan, "What is the proof you are a yogi? I want the proof you are a yogi. Is it written on your forehead that you are a yogi?"

"I do not have to give proof. The very fact that you ask me three times, that you doubt that I am a yogi, is the answer in itself. You are in doubt, I am not. If I am not, it doesn't matter to me. If I am, it doesn't matter to you."

"I don't understand."

"What you don't understand, I understand."

"Will you just tell me what makes you believe you are a yogi?"

"My belief not to rebut you makes me a yogi, and your belief to rebut me and to corner me makes you an interviewer."

Finally, the government officer realized that this Harbhajan Singh he had been interviewing was indeed a yogi. Moreover, since a yogi was neither a physical education instructor nor a priest, though he shared some aspects of both, an entirely new category of immigrant was created to suit the qualifications of the newly arrived.

## Time to Move On

Life could be interesting with a real Indian yogi in the house. Neighbours complained to his hostess that they could hear him chanting at the unearthly hour of 3 a.m.

Harbhajan Yogi could tell the woman who has offered him a place to stay was coming unhinged when he returned to her home one evening to find her sitting and fuming at him.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"The cottage cheese is gone!"

"The cottage cheese is not gone. It is eaten up," he replied.

"Who can have eaten it up?" shot back the woman whom Harbhajan and his wife had fed and respectfully treated as their guest for some four and a half years.

"Well, I ate it."

"You ate the whole cottage cheese?"

"No. My guests came and I just served them the cottage cheese."

An air of retaliation was palpable to the sensitive yogi. He had been valued by his guest at something less than a \$1.29 tub of cottage cheese. Reciprocation for years of hospitality and sharing did not enter the picture for this furious woman. Only a week had passed, but it was clearly time to move from this place.

## **The Loud Knock**

Yogi Harbhajan's first job in Canada was looking after a house. It seemed like a nice situation with a warm and comfortable space all to himself where he could relax.

At night, he put four or five blankets underneath and another four or five on top of himself and slept soundly. In the morning, Harbhajan woke up and meditated. Afterwards, he was very happy – happy to have meditated and happy also to have peace and quiet all to himself. Harbhajan Yogi returned to his cosy nest of blankets for a nap.

Abruptly at seven o'clock there was a loud knock and the doorbell rang. Harbhajan stirred awake and looked outside. He was shocked to see a policeman at the door. Opening the door, he asked, "Officer, what can I do for you?"

The police officer replied, "Nothing for me. Take your shovel and clean the sidewalk! There is a lot of snow in front of your house. Everybody is doing it and you are sleeping in."

"Oh, that is my responsibility? Okay." Harbhajan put away his blankets and found a shovel, then went outside to join all the neighbours in clearing the snow from the walkway.

While he hacked at the ice and chopped away at the snow, Yogi Harbhajan mused how every country comes with seasons and every house comes with responsibilities. He wished he should not be in Canada.

## The Government Check

The Canadian government's file on Yogi Harbhajan Singh slowly made its way through the bureaucracy. So it was that one day he was directed to the government employment office at 222 Dundas Street West. There he met a friendly longhaired counsellor who told him the government had checked everything and agreed with Mr. Singh that, while he had been given a lucrative offer of employment at the university, now he was practically unemployed.

As a matter of routine, the young man continued, the unemployed yogi was to be issued weekly checks of \$150 until he could find work in his trained profession.

Harbhajan Singh Yogi was not interested. "No, I don't need this subsidy."

The counsellor replied, "You have to have it. If you don't accept this, my job will be gone."

Harbhajan Yogi ordered the young man, "Stamp my passport. Give me the check."

The counsellor complied and handed him the envelope with the first \$150 check inside.

Harbhajan deliberately took the check out of the envelope, tore it in two, and returned it in the envelope.

The young man said, "I don't understand you, man!"

Harbhajan replied, "Now you speak my language: 'I don't understand you man.' Man, I have come here for a purpose. I will deny myself everything. Let the purpose solve my proposal and my projection."

"You speak a different language!"

"That's the way I speak. Have you seen my passport? Do you see the name on it? This name brought me here, not Canada. Not your parapsychology and hydrotherapy and supreme health investigation program. That was a tool. Now all that is gone, but one thing remains: Har Bhajan remains to do Har Bhajan. That's my identity. There is no other reality."

## Yoga in the Canadian Woods

A student of Yogi Harbhajan's at the Canadian High Commission had given him the address of his son, who was about to begin studies at the University of Toronto's School of Architecture. One day, he dropped in at the student's basement apartment in the Rosedale district of Toronto. The young man

was surprised and delighted at his exotic guest. He explained that he was just preparing to go north for his course and was already late.

"Wonderful! I'll go with you and you can show me your country."

"I'm afraid I only have a little motor scooter."

"No problem," said Harbhajan who well remembered travelling Amritsar with his wife and three children, all balanced on a motor scooter. "In India, we travel by motor scooter too."

So it was that the two of them, the skinny red-haired freshman and the turbaned yogi, set out in a cloud of blue smoke, dragging the muffler over every hump in the road.

About six hours later, they arrived at the sketching camp deep in the Canadian woods, near the village of Dorset. The student apologised to his supervisor for being late. He also explained that he had brought someone with him and that he had no idea what to do next.

After a discussion with the professor in charge, it was resolved that the yogi could stay until the first available ride back to Toronto presented itself. Since everyone needed either to be a student or on the staff, Yogi Harbhajan was enlisted as a member of the staff. The yogi's presence might, they concluded, after all be an asset on this artistic excursion. His assigned duty was to teach a yoga class to the students and faculty.

The next evening, after several hours of sketching in the woods, everyone gathered to find Yogi Harbhajan situated in lotus pose on a stage improvised with a few tables pushed together and covered with a cloth.

The Sikh yogi sat on the improvised stage, and began to explain the meaning of yoga to this gathering of budding architectural minds. Harbhajan the Yogi proceeded to share with them how through yoga a person could train their mind to relax. It was a form of self-hypnosis, he told them. Then, to prove his point, the master yogi lay down for one... two... three... four... five minutes, before at last sitting up and announcing to the students that he had just, before their very eyes, enjoyed a perfectly sound and refreshing sleep. Such was the power of yoga.

After the demonstration, someone came forward to share with the masterful man in the turban a problem he had been having. It was not insomnia. The man had a peptic ulcer. This too, the yogi assured him, could be treated with yoga, and he proceeded to tell him how.

## TV Yogi

After a few days, everyone made their way back to Toronto. Yogi Harbhajan went to stay for a week with Ron Baird, a young sculptor and resident artist at the architecture school. They had a considerable meeting of minds, this Western artist with his curiosity about Eastern ways, and this yogi from the East seeking to transplant the wisdom of the orient to Western soil.

The yogi asked Ron how he might best make Canadians aware of the benefits of yoga. Ron replied that he should go on television. Surely if he went on television, Harbhajan would be able to clear up any misunderstandings people had about yoga. Everybody in Canada watched television.

The very next day, Ron received a call from his guest. Harbhajan had phoned to tell Ron to tune in to The Elwood Glover Show. There happened to be a last-minute cancellation on the interview program and now Yogi Harbhajan was going to be interviewed and broadcast coast to coast across Canada.

After his successful debut on television, Yogi Harbhajan began giving classes at downtown Toronto's YMCA. The classes grew. They would start with a handful of students. Those people would tell their friends. Then there would be twenty or thirty in a class. Students were struck by the magnetic yogi in the bright pink turban who wore his sandals even out into the snow.

Yogi Harbhajan appealed to people's basic desire for peace, health and empowerment. Soon, he was giving classes at three different YMCAs. As word spread, one or two hundred people were attending his classes.

## The House of Yoga

An Australian woman named Rhonda Tulloch came regularly to Yogi Harbhajan's classes. She had been practicing yoga on her own for six years, and aspired to be a teacher in her own right. Together, they decided to establish a yoga center in Toronto. In November, "The House of Yoga" opened at 167 Church Street downtown, just a block from the city's busy main street.

After several invitations, at last a reporter for the "women's section" of Canada's national paper came to visit. She wrote a complimentary piece on the new centre and the "high-voltage yogi" who taught there. Yogi Bhajan's picture supporting a student in an inverted pose appeared across the country on the front page of The Globe and Mail newspaper.

Patently, the Guru's messenger did his work, proclaiming the possibilities inherent in a life dedicated to the love of spirit and empowered by the practice of kundalini yoga.



## Hunger's Repast

Yogi Bhajan's next stopping off place was with relatives of his who lived in Toronto. They did not understand or appreciate what the Harbhajan Singh they had known in India was doing in Canada. Why wasn't he back in New Delhi with his wife, his family, his government job? They put him up in the basement in their home at 325 Hillsboro Avenue, a quiet residential street not far from the downtown. A plywood bed was hammered together to suit the dimensions of the Yogi's large frame. But things were not easy.

His relatives would ask, "What do you want to do?"

The Yogi would reply, "Nothing."

"You don't want to earn money?"

"What money?"

"You are come here as an immigrant. You've got to make your life!"

"It's already made! It's set!"

"You are crazy!"

"Who made me crazy? Death or no death, health or no health, food or no food, I am not going to do a thing!"

"Learn something!"

"I have come here to teach. Why should I learn?"

"You've got to learn something!"

"Nothing!"

One day, the Yogi clashed with the woman of the house. She liked to complain that he always stayed out late and never came home on time for dinner.

"I hope I will be coming back soon," he said on his way out the door. To finance the new yoga centre, Yogi Bhajan was working as a bookkeeper during the day and as a janitor at night. Moreover, his evenings were increasingly filled with yoga classes, so he knew the chances of returning in less than twelve hours were not very good.

"Come at dinner time and don't come very late." she insisted.

When Yogi Bhajan had finally done his work, he was driven home by a student. There was no doubt that it was late. The door to the house was locked. It was cold and there was snow all around.

The student offered, "Can I take you to my house?"

"No, I can't do that," the Yogi declined.

They decided to doze in the driveway with the engine running and the car's heater on. Finally, at about eight o'clock the door was unlocked and Harbhajan Yogi entered the house. The first thing he did was to take a bath. Then he sat for a time and meditated. Afterwards, Harbhajan went to look for something to eat.

In the kitchen was a pot of his favorite dish. Black garbanzo *daal* had been prepared. Harbhajan eyed the delectable meal. He was hungry, and this was a wonderful kind of breakfast, like he used to have at home. But then he saw something that spoiled his mood and made his appetite vanish. A big piece of meat sat in the middle of the pot of curried beans. Harbhajan the Yogi understood right away that his relative had put that meat into the *daal* so he could not eat it.

Harbhajan Singh remembered well what respect he had received from these relations when he had been a servant of the Government of India. Now that he had set out in a humble way to be a servant of God, they despised and resented him. How false, he thought, were these worldly relations! What mocking cruelty they were capable of!

The Yogi contemplated the pot of curried black garbanzos. Three thoughts came to his mind. The first idea was that the piece of meat had been put over half of the dish, but half of it was untouched and pure, so he could eat that half. The second thought was that he could spoon out *daal* from the bottom of the pot. It should be alright, and he could eat that. The third thought was, "To hell with the whole thing! I can bless it by putting my *kirpaan* through it and eat it. What does it matter? I haven't eaten in three days!"

Then a fourth thought came to Yogi Bhajan's mind, "God has put this piece of meat here to let me know I am not supposed to eat it. It is also attachment." Harbhajan retired hungry to the place in the basement that had been relegated to him. He picked up his *Gutka* volume of Guru's Songs and allowed the pages to fall open to consult it, to see what Guru expected of him.

The *Gutka* spoke in the divine voice of the Tenth Master:

*"Prabh joo to keh laaj hamaree.  
Neel kanth na naaraa-in neel basan banvaree.  
Rahaa-o.*

*Param purakh paramaysar su-aamee paavan paun ahaaree.  
Maadhav mahaa jot madh mardan maan mukand muraaree.  
Nirbikaar nirjur nindraa bin nirbikh nark nivaaree.  
Kirpaa sindh kaal trai darsee kukrit pranaasan kaaree.  
Dhanarpaan dhrit maan dharaadhar an bikaar asi dhaaree.  
Hau mati mand charan sarnaagati kar geh layho ubaaree."*

"Dear Lord, You are the Preserver of my honor.  
Blue-throated Shiva and the man-lion, Krishna, Dweller in waters and forests,  
*Pause and reflect.*  
Supreme Being, Supreme Lord and Master, living on air,  
Sweet Lord, Great Light, Destroyer of the pride of Vishnu,  
Liberator, Vanquisher of demons,  
Everlasting, Unaging, Unaffected by sensation, Unsleeping, Deliverer from hell,  
Ocean of mercy, Seer of past, present and future,  
Eraser of the outcome of mindless actions,  
Bearer of the celestial bow, Embodiment of patience, Support of the Earth,  
Changeless, Wielder of the sword.  
I of faulty mind seek the sanctuary of your Lotus Feet.  
Please take my hand and save me!"

(Raag Sorath – Shabad Hazaaray – 710)

The words so touched the Yogi's heart that his eyes began to tear up. After a time, Harbhajan realized his tears were flowing from his cheeks down onto his *Gutka*. Only then did he dab his eyes dry. Not wanting to spoil the pages, he took the opened *Gutka* and covered it with his only towel so his tears might dry. But the damage had been done. From then on, whenever Yogi Bhajan consulted that *Gutka*, it would always open to those same pages and the identical verse would present itself.

Harbhajan Singh sat in resignation, but he was not entirely resigned to starving like this. Another Verse of the Guru came to his mind:

"O mind, why do you scheme so, when the Lord Himself is providing your care?  
From rocks and stones, He created living beings and before them He places their food."

Inwardly, Harbhajan was taunting his Guru, "*So where is the food?*"

It was not long before he could hear the ring of the phone upstairs, then a voice calling, "*Hey Bhajan! Telayfo-nah! Telayfo-nah!*"

Harbhajan climbed the stairs to take the call. On his way, he noticed that the *daal* with the meat in it had been thrown into the garbage. On the phone was a yoga student of his. She said, "Sir, where

are you?"

"Where can I be? I am at home."

"I understand they didn't let you enter the house last night."

"Yeah, I slept in the car. It was pretty warm. No problem."

"Do you want to come out?"

"No. I don't feel good. My whole body has stiffened up. To be very honest, I have not eaten and I feel very weak."

"Food is no problem."

"Not for you. For me, as far as I am concerned, it is the only problem I am facing," Harbhajan replied.

"Oh, didn't you eat your donuts?"

"No, I told you that day I have given them up. You told me they are so bad. You are the one who lectured me, and I said I won't eat donuts from that day, but I don't know what to eat. You go out and you ask for bean soup and they say, 'Well, it is made with beef, and this is made with chicken and this is made with fish and this is made with this...' What you can eat?"

"Tell me where you want to eat."

"I just want to eat through the telephone. Do you understand?"

"I don't want to bring food to that house, but we have got some food. Can you make it to the yoga centre?"

"Another twenty-five cents on the subway?"

"Well, we have found something that will never, ever allow you to be hungry again."

"Alright, if this is the situation, I will come." Harbhajan could not help feeling that his prayers had just then been fulfilled. He dressed himself to go outside again and with his weakened, hungry steps made his way to the subway station and paid his last twenty-five cents as fare. Harbhajan Yogi felt cold, dehydrated and disoriented. It was difficult telling north from south. Perhaps, he thought, some carbon monoxide from his night in the car had gone to his brain. Arriving at his subway stop, Harbhajan barely could summon the energy to climb the stairs to street level and on to the yoga

centre.

At the House of Yoga on Church Street, he found a number of students celebrating his arrival. And there was an array of nine large flattened boxes with chapatis they called "pizza" – all vegetarian and of nine different kinds. Some of the students had even brought Indian food from sympathetic families who had heard that Harbhajan was not being fed and was growing weak. There were about twenty dishes in all – a real feast by any standard!

Yogi Bhajan picked a large pizza and ate the whole thing himself. Having taunted his Guru just an hour earlier, now he gratefully accepted the bounty of the Preserver of his honor.

### **The Artist and the Yogi**

Ron and the Yogi remained in touch through the following weeks and the changing of the seasons. One day, Ron confessed to Yogi Bhajan that his conscience had been troubling him ever since he had spent Thanksgiving with his family. The centerpiece of the feast were some Cornish hens his mother had gone to some trouble in preparing. Ron had been trying to give up eating meat, but after some initial hesitation, he had succumbed to the familiar pressures and joined the rest of his clan in gorging on the tasty flesh of the hapless hens. He shared his predicament with the Yogi and wondered aloud what he might have done.

Yogi Bhajan's response was a heaping helping of enlightened common sense. "In a case like this, it is one's duty to eat what one is served - then to go outside and throw it up!"

That Halloween, Ron and a few friends spent an evening carving faces into pumpkins to make the season's festive jack-o'-lanterns. The end-products were all singularly spooky and enchanted.

One, however, stood out from the rest. Like the others, it had a wide, infectious grin. Unlike the rest, it was marked by a large, discerning third eye in the middle of its brow.

### **Flower Power**

Yogi Bhajan visited an innovative eighteen-story free school called "Rochdale College." There, he had his first experience of the "flower power" culture - the paisley, tie-dyed, long-haired, half-crazed, half-enlightened movement toward love and peace and blissful nonconformity that was sweeping college campuses, providing creative expression for the pent-up idealism of a generation. LSD was its proclaimed avatar. Its creed was: "Turn on. Tune in. Drop out."

In a way, the eccentric-looking yogi fit in perfectly with all the other "groovy cats" in the building. Its upbeat culture disavowed superficial judgements based on appearances. It professed everyone's right to "do their own thing."

Yet, Yogi Harbhajan Singh's enlightened point of view derived from a profound inner discipline, not from a flash of psychedelic euphoria. He was a man with a mission. He had a family of his own. He was twice the age of many of the hippies. All these things marked him apart from the "free love" generation.

## The Man in Blue

One day, Yogi Bhajan was very hungry. He told a couple of his yoga students, "Let's not eat here. Let's go to the Gurdwara today and join their prayers, and eat *langar*. I'll show you how generous Sikhs are."

The Yogi had visited the Sikh services with some of his students before. Occasionally, two or three young students would go with him and sit and silently meditate as the Songs of Guru Nanak were recited or sung in the congregation. Sometimes there would be a piano for accompaniment.

This time, they just arrived in time to hear the last minute of *kirtan*. Then, after sitting through a boring speech, and after *Ardaas* was done and the *Prashaad* all given out, everyone sat in lines and was served the Guru's *langar*.

Just then, to everyone's surprise, a certain gentleman with a perfect blue turban came up to Yogi Harbhajan Singh, picked up his plate, and said, "Yogis have no right to join a Sikh *langar*." He took the plate and walked away.

Harbhajan's students offered him their own plates, but he told them, "No, you keep it." Instead of eating with everyone else, he just sat very calmly and quietly studying the fate of the people there.

After *langar* had been served, a kindly old woman came up to the Yogi and put a large plate of *langar* in front of him. He said, "No, you should not get in trouble for me."

She replied, "Some people have taken that guy and straightened him out. Please eat this, and give us your blessing."

When everyone had eaten, Yogi Harbhajan Singh got up to leave. Along the way, he met with the man in blue. Both his eyes had been blackened. It appeared as though he had been taken to the washroom and beaten up.

The Yogi asked, "Can I do anything for you?"

"I've had plenty."

"Thank you. You deserved what you got. You took that plate from me in front of my guests."

"Yeah, I felt I needed to do that."

"You think you are powerful, and you want to challenge me. Never mind what has been done to you. I will show you how to beat someone without leaving a mark on their body."

"You mean you know how to fight?"

"God, you just don't understand me. Some day..."

After some time had passed, God provided the Yogi with an opportunity. There was a games competition on a Sikh holiday. The main game was *kabaddi*, a Punjabi team wrestling sport.

Harbhajan Yogi joined the team opposing the other man. In the first round, he flattened him and carried him to his side of the field, where he threw him to the ground. Then, Harbhajan stretched out his hand to help the man up.

The man said, "I never knew you were so strong!"

Yogi Bhajan replied, "I may look lousy, but test me out. Put your money on the table, and I'll put mine. We will have an arm wrestle, you and I, and God will be the witness."

"Okay, just for once."

"No, three times." Harbhajan the Yogi wanted to make him understand it was not necessary for him to belittle other people. The man had a psychological problem, and the Yogi was doing all he could to help him. So, when they gripped each other's hands, Yogi Bhajan squeezed the other man's hand so hard that it turned blue. He had no strength left to even hold Harbhajan's hand, let alone resist.

Yogi Bhajan asked, "How many times do you want to go? One, two, three, four?"

"Well, I have lost the money..."

"You take the money and go. That was not my intention. I just wanted you to know that the way you use brute force has no human intelligence to it. And the way you act is without human courtesy." Surprisingly, that man was a university mathematics professor, an intellectually sophisticated being, but his behaviour was graceless and neurotic.

When Harbhajan Singh went to retrieve his shoes before returning home, he found they had been taken. To make his way home, the resourceful Yogi made shoes out of paper and glue, and then tied a string around each one.

## Plenty

Since the time that he had begun to teach, some devoted students had started looking after the needs of this disciplined, and very determined yogi. He, who would not ask for food and who kept to a strictly vegetarian diet, was now being regularly treated to pizzas and other wholesome Canadian fare.

Often, there was more than enough. The remainder would go to the homeless people who gathered evenings in the nearby park. Sundays, one big pot of beans and another of rice would be cooked and distributed to the park people. Fifty to two hundred people would sit in rows on the park benches to be served this vegetarian banquet.

To be honest, not everyone was entirely satisfied with the yogi's generosity. Once, a man inquired whether next time the Yogi's students might not also provide some wine with the feast.

These street people, who lived a sparse existence in the parks and hostels of Toronto, held a certain fascination for Harbhajan Singh. He studied and appreciated them. He noticed that many of them regularly gathered at a mission church downtown. They would finish their bottles of cheap wine outside, then go in and sing their inebriated hearts out.

Yogi Bhajan marvelled at the good humour of the pastor of this peculiar congregation. He had never seen anything like this in India. Moreover, the pastor shared with him an unexpected insight. When the collection plate came around, these simple-looking men were more generous than their well-outfitted suburban counterparts. When it came to matters of the spirit, these "winos" were prosperous indeed!

## The Yogi's Dilemma

In November, on the occasion of Guru Nanak's birthday, Harbhajan Yogi drove to the Canadian capital of Ottawa with a couple of his students. After having a party and attending a reception, they were ready for the long drive back to Toronto. It was very early in the morning, but they were rested, so off they went.

Some hours later, as they approached the burgeoning city of nearly one million people, the Yogi suggested they have breakfast with a certain acquaintance. Everyone was hungry, and so it was agreed



that the three would go there for breakfast.

It was a Saturday and their hostess was very happy to receive them. It was eleven o'clock. She could guess what was on the minds of the weary travellers. In no time, a delicious home-made breakfast was served.

As the guests enjoyed their late breakfast, their hostess asked them, "What is the next program?"

Harbhajan Yogi replied, "Just to relax here for a while, then take the car and go to London, Ontario in the evening. There is a lecture there. I have to go there."

"Can I go with you?"

"Fine."

After they had finished their meal, their hostess asked Harbhajan, "Can I speak to you for a minute, for heaven's sake?"

"Sure. Go ahead."

In another room, she asked him, "What did you do today?"

"What is wrong with you? *What did I do?*"

His hostess went on, "You know if you would have knocked, I would have opened the door. Instead, you came all the way up the drainpipe, through the window, pulled me out of bed, and took me to the shower. And then you disappeared the same way. If anybody would have seen you jumping over the wall and coming in, there would have been a lot of problems here. People don't do these things here."

"Which window?"

She took him to the window. "This window was open. You came in and you were going like this. I know you are a yogi. You can do these things, but please don't do it here! There are six people living in this house."

Harbhajan Yogi was astonished. "You are imagining things! I never came here."

But she was adamant. "No! Look, you are not supposed to tell a lie!"

"Wait a minute." The Yogi thought of a way out of his predicament. He called to his travelling

companions. "At three thirty this morning, where were we?"

"We were driving between Ottawa and Toronto."

"While I was in the car, did I disappear?"

"No. You were there with us the whole time. I'm sure of it."

"Are you sure? Can you say it on oath? She says I came through the window. You say, two of you, that I was in the car. Now which one is true?"

Unfortunately, the Yogi's guest had read some odd things in books about yoga and the power of yogis. "No, no," she said. "A yogi can be in three places, four places, it doesn't matter. You were there and you were here too!"

Yogi Bhajan was shocked. Here he was being disbelieved by four mature adults! None of them would believe him. "Look, ladies and gentlemen, I'm not going to drive with you any more. You can go and disperse. I'll walk. I'll take the train. I'll just go to my house. You are the craziest people! I was driving with you and she was hallucinating, and now you are totally abandoning me!"

"No, no. You were with us," said the student, "but you were also with her."

Harbhajan Yogi summed up his feelings, "I worked for so many incarnations to get this human body, which holds the identity. I did it just to identify the Infinity which created it, and because of one hallucination, now you just have taken away from me the very basic right of being human. It is too much!"

Sometimes the misplaced faith of raw and inexperienced students could try even the patience of a Master.

## **Stranded**

One day, Yogi Bhajan planned to set out again for London, Ontario with three of his students. It was about a three hour drive in the direction of Detroit, south-west of Toronto. Preparations were made, everyone loaded into the car, and they set off.

Half an hour out of Toronto, the car suddenly came to a halt on the side of the road.

"What happened?" asked Harbhajan.

"No gas," replied the embarrassed driver.

"You were reading empty as full?"

"That's right," was the sheepish reply.

They sat there for a time by the side of the road. Snow fell. Wind began to blow the snow in powerful gusts. A half hour passed. Snowdrifts settled around them. The car was being steadily submerged in an ocean of frosty whiteness.

"I am going to get out," Harbhajan Yogi finally announced.

"I don't think it is good," replied one of the passengers.

"What is good? We are going to die here? This car is going to be a refrigerator soon and this is going to be freezing section top level one. When they are going to find us we will be smiling here, and we will be dead. I have got to get out."

"It is very dangerous outside."

"Outside is God. In the car is death. I can't stay in!"

"What do you mean?"

"If I go out and snow falls on me and I freeze, then somebody will think there is a snowman. That's better. But if we sit in this car, nobody is going to look around. People might be thinking we are making love and parking and doing all that kind of stuff. I have to get out. Watch me! Something will happen."

The four of them got out of the car. They were not warmly dressed, so they all started exercising to keep their circulation going. The four exercised for a couple of hours, never wanting to stop because they knew if they stopped they would freeze, or at least catch frostbite.

Almost two hours later, Yogi Bhajan and his students were still exercising when a big gas truck pulled alongside their car, half-buried in the snow.

The trucker rolled down his window, "Hey man! You don't have gas? Why didn't you check at home?"

"I don't know. It's my trouble. The driver..."

"Who drives? Your driver? You are without gas? You are a rich man?"

"No, I am a poor man, but the car doesn't have gas."

"You mean you don't have money?"

"Had there been money, I think she would have got the gas."

"Oh, don't worry! Don't worry!"

The trucker got out and went to the back of his truck, disappearing for a minute in the frenzied snowstorm. Then he came back, trailing a hose behind him. He unscrewed the car's gas tank and let loose a flood of precious fuel.

Within a few seconds, the car's tank was overflowing and a noxious, highly flammable pool of gas had formed, swelling in every direction from the car. At last, the trucker managed to put a stop to the gushing stream of gasoline.

As their trucker friend disappeared into the blizzard again, returning the hose to its mount at the rear of the truck, Yogi Bhajan said to his student behind the wheel, "Dummy! Drive and run! God knows what will happen to this pool he has made."

The driver motioned to them from the window of his cab, and said, "Come here!"

Harbhajan Yogi said, "I'm sorry. I have to thank you."

The trucker said, "No. No. Don't thank me. Here's twenty dollars."

"What's this for?"

"Oh, you know. You don't have money. You have to eat."

"Did you ever give money to anybody?"

"No, no, no, no... I want to give it to you. I just want to give it to you."

"Don't give it to me. Give it to that girl who is driving."

The trucker got out once more, and headed to the driver's side of the car in the middle of the gas pond.

"Honey, here's twenty bucks!"

She replied, "No, no, no. We don't need money."

"Either show me twenty bucks, or take it!"

An embarrassing moment followed.

He smiled warmly, "Take it!"

Gratefully, she accepted the twenty dollars.

### **I am a restless man.**

As the thousand, nine hundred and sixty-eighth year of the Christian Era drew to a close, the small community of East Indians in Toronto felt a deep sense of pride. Next November, they knew, would be Guru Nanak's five hundredth birthday celebration.

There was even talk of buying and renovating a building in the great Guru's name. The Yogi himself took the initiative by contributing a dollar. The rest of the community raised another seven thousand to buy and renovate a building, thereby creating the first Gurdwara in eastern Canada.

Yogi Bhajan had accomplished much during his brief stay in Toronto. He had given the science of yoga national publicity. He had co-founded a yoga centre. He had taught large classes at the House of Yoga, and at four YMCAs.

For everyone with eyes to see, Yogi Harbhajan Singh was a new, different kind of Sikh. He had shown himself to be out-going, self-confident, and deeply devoted to the form and spirit of his faith. The Yogi lived his religion and, rather than being sucked into the vortex of money-based Western culture, he had managed to successfully share the sacred teachings of the East with the people of a cosmopolitan North American city.

Yet, as he told those who wanted to know him, he was a restless man, a man with a mission and so much more to do. In December, when Harbhajan Yogi received an invitation and a ticket to Los Angeles to visit an acquaintance of his from New Delhi, the messenger from the Guru's House did not hesitate. His most regular student, named Terri, saw Harbhajan to the airport.

The Yogi took only a light travel bag and thirty-five dollars. It was Friday, and he planned to come back Monday after a couple of days' visit in Los Angeles. In fact, he would not be returning for weeks.

## The Jook Savages

It had been twenty-one years since Harbhajan Singh witnessed the painful wrenching apart of his homeland at partition. His impressions as a youth, seeing tens of millions of people uprooted and homeless, the traumatic birth of two hostile republics from the humiliation of the colonial past, remained forever seared into his memory.

The country Harbhajan was to enter now as Yogi Bhajan was engaged in a gruesome partition of its own. America, the same country that one hundred years before had been consumed by a terrible civil war, was being torn apart by a war of generations.

In America, which called itself "the land of the brave and the home of the free," twenty million young people had stood up to oppose its modern-day culture of militarism, materialism and mindless conformity – and to honor instead the gracious ideals of their country's founders. As their numbers swelled, they regularly filled the streets with their songs, their placards, their banners to demonstrate the courage of their beliefs. For their convictions, thousands of youths were regularly tear-gassed and water-cannoned. Thousands more were beaten and jailed. A precious few sanctified the movement by their martyred blood.

From their whitewashed citadels, governors and presidents, generals and chiefs of police issued orders demanding fear, submission, and obedience, but the outrageous spirit of revolution would not be browbeaten or cowed. The bold young activists did not fear, did not conform. Neither would they obey.

America was not the only Western country being wrenched apart by powerful new dreams and visions. The previous May, the youth of France had led their countrymen in a two-week insurrection against the moribund bureaucracy of the universities, the government, the state. Chanting "Power to the imagination!" they had been joined in a general strike by ten million workers. The president was so alarmed that he fled the country, taking refuge in neighbouring Germany.

Then, in August, the world's attention focussed on Prague and Bratislava, where the young at heart conspired to subvert the Marxist regime into something better, something freer, something with a human face – only to be faced by an invasion of tanks from neighbouring East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the USSR. Tens of thousands left Czechoslovakia for Western Europe, Canada and the US.

Come October, five thousand students and unionists took to the streets in Mexico City to demonstrate for the independence of their universities, for democracy and social justice for all, only to be ruthlessly machine gunned by their army. Hundreds of protestors laid down their lives for what they believed. Hundreds more were beaten and jailed. Those who survived became a deeply radicalized force against the government.

While in Canada, Yogi Bajan had seen little of this social unrest. But Canada served as an escape valve for some of America's most peaceful and conscientious aspirations. Tens of thousands of American men of military age were welcomed into "the true north strong and free" even as hawks in Washington tried to convince their countrymen that their war in Southeast Asia was both winnable and just. For its part, Canada had an independent Prime Minister and its own bands of strummers and singers and activists dedicated to peace and humanity and the end of war.

America had been in the throes of social upheaval for some time now. Starting in 1961, smart young kids from northern universities had joined forces with brave Afro-Americans in the South. Together, they had confronted the most uncivil scourge of racism. In 1963 they had forced the President's hand, making him set in motion far-reaching civil rights legislation.

Two years later saw the first "teach-in," an open forum on the Vietnam War, at the University of Michigan. The participants were part of the best-educated generation in the country's history. Soon there were hundreds of teach-ins at campuses across the country and the first gathering of fifteen thousand demonstrators against the war in the nation's capital. On the other side of the country, in Oakland, several hundred students from the nearby University of California risked their lives standing on the railroad tracks to block trains of new inductees rolling into the city's large army base.

In that same city in 1967, Afro-American militants formed the Black Panther Party, replete with guns and cultural education and meals for impoverished ghetto children. In the spring and fall, there were anti-war protests in San Francisco and forty university campuses. In April, civil rights leader Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., led hundreds of thousands from New York's Central Park to the United Nations to demand the immediate withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam. In October, thirty thousand gathered in Washington for a peace rally and mock exorcism of the "dark spirits" ensconced among America's military establishment in the Pentagon.

Even as the war intensified, the year of Yogi Bajan's arrival was a particularly bloody one for activists, young and old, Black and White. In March, Martin Luther King was felled by a Caucasian sniper. The killing set off fiery riots in Afro-American ghettos in a dozen cities across the US. A couple of months later, in a hotel kitchen in Los Angeles, a second member of the Kennedy family, this one a presidential hopeful supported by millions of idealistic youth, was shot and killed. And in August, America was shocked to see hundreds of Chicago police tear gas and beat up demonstrators and journalists at the Democratic Party's national convention. Many witnesses called it a "police riot."

Many of the young who left their families of birth and the society they no longer believed in, made their own tribes. They started over and created Edens in the form of intentional communities, open families, conspiratorial cells, ashrams and Jesus communes. A few advocated violent revolution. Some thought they might meditate the world into a better place. Many set out to "get high with a little help from their friends."

This generation that made their diet an important and distinctive part of their culture. Whole,

unprocessed foods, organic produce, granola, yoghurt, sprouts, soy beans, brown rice, and tamari were high on the menu of these denizens of the “whole Earth.” Their music, sometimes loud and raunchy, but filled with real emotion and sometimes genuinely inspired, turned heads. Their elders, of course, didn't like it. The new music spread a message. The message usually was something to do with peace or love or freedom. Sometimes it was about hair.

"Darlin', give me a head with hair, long beautiful hair,  
Shining, gleaming, steaming, flaxen, waxen,  
Give me down to there hair, shoulder length or longer,  
Here, baby, there, momma, ev'rywhere, daddy, daddy,  
Hair, hair, hair, hair, hair, hair, hair, hair,  
Flow it, show it, long as God can grow it, my hair..."

(from *Hair*, the "American Tribal Love-Rock musical," by Gerome Ragni and James Rado)

As the theme song of the 1967 Broadway musical proclaimed, hair was a proud symbol of this generation. Natural, sensual, energizing, unregulated, sexy, free... any way you looked at it, long hair was a defining characteristic of the 1960s revolution. Some called the young people "hippies." Some called them "flower children." To themselves, they were simply “freaks” or "longhairs" in a world of oppressive crew cuts.

The land of enchantment, known as "New Mexico", was home to a number of farming communes. Though homesteading was hard work, their members aimed toward self-sufficiency. They raised goats and chickens and grew their own foods organically. Women delivered their babies at home, just like pioneer mothers once did. Breast-feeding was making a comeback.

Everybody was a visionary at heart. Some respectfully visited the Hopi pueblos and reservations to learn from and participate in age-old aboriginal traditions. The members of the new tribes were digging deep, going back in time and across cultures to create new beginnings, a new way, a new society far from the siren song of greed and war and hate.

The Jook Savages had arrived in New Mexico from California in early 1968. They had left their city homes and settled in the mountain country, where land was cheap and the air still pure. The tribe of fifteen made a big adobe house in the village of Abiquiu their home. They lived all together, one room per family, with a kitchen and one communal room.

The members of the community felt they shouldered a responsibility to all Americans disaffected by the conventional way of doing things, the way that had resulted in such war and grief and injustice. In an effort to unify and provide leadership to the growing counterculture, the Jook Savages spread the word all that spring, that they would be hosting a gathering of all the tribes at Aspen Meadows in the Tesuque Indian reservation above Santa Fe, to celebrate the rite of Summer Solstice.



Hundreds of hopeful, long-haired, young people came together that June. It was a high-altitude "Human Be-In." They made music and read poetry. They traded in tie-died and hand-sewn clothing, jewelery and peyote.

For ten days, they shared and prayed, sang and danced, got high and meditated. Then these visionaries and pioneers returned along winding highways, past billboards, motels, McDonalds, natural wonders, range lands, farm lands, missile ranges, industrial complexes, military bases, shopping centres, gas stations and suburban wastelands, finally to arrive at their homes and communes all along the West Coast, the Rockies, across the Midwest and east to New York.

That fall, the Savages put out a call for another festive gathering. This time, they planned to celebrate the occasion of the Winter Solstice, when the darkest day turns to light and the cycle of spring begins anew.

This time, however, the turnout was discouragingly sparse. The mountain meadows of northern New Mexico, so gaily flowered in June, were covered over with snow and raked with bitterly cold wind in December.

A feeling of despair hung over the heads of the members of that tribe in Abiquiu. The Jook Savages were painfully aware that the machinery of the dominant culture continued to focus a relentless onslaught of death and dismemberment against a courageous people across a Pacific ocean and to wage war on its young and disenfranchised. They realized also that their desperate efforts to usher in a new age of peaceful enlightenment had become dangerously bogged down.

One evening in January, according to an ancient Hopi custom, thirteen remaining Savages gathered around a fire in a tepee to form a sacred prayer circle. As the ritual progressed through the night, they remained conscious of the sparks and tiny particles of flaming debris caught in the updraft, and drawn out of the tent into the wide open sky.

In accord with that ancient custom, every little glowing thing was considered to be the soul of a being, now disembodied, yet unable to detach itself from its temporary home, the Earth. As each spark escaped the microcosm of the holy tepee, every member of that dedicated gathering empowered it with their collective prayer and blessing.

However, in the darkness of that night, a sacred tradition was violated. For some cosmic reason, one of the Savages rose and left that timeless rite. In spite of their prayers and best intentions, their circle, symbol of soulful continuity, was broken.

The following morning, the sorry group of Savages made an effort to reunite. Ultimately, it became clear to them that they had gone as far as they could by themselves. It was apparent that they needed a guide, someone capable of showing the way along the harrowing heights of spiritual leadership.

Lacking any particular direction, over the next couple of weeks, thirteen people set off in every direction.

## The Visit

Los Angeles must have provided a very pleasant contrast to Toronto in the winter of 1968. The only snow to be seen was high above on the peaks of the coastal mountain range. In the city, palm trees waved their welcoming fronds.

Yogi Bhajan's old acquaintance and his wife had three daughters, a nice home in the suburbs, an office downtown, and an impressive new American car. He was a dentist to the stars and a wealthy, well-connected celebrity now in his own right. For him, this was the good life, and he did not mind telling his guest, "Nobody lives here without money."

Harbhajan replied, "I did not ask you to give me money. I'm just here Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Monday I'll be gone. Will you put me on the plane?"

"No. I don't want you to go."

"I don't want to stay." Somehow Yogi Bhajan stayed for a few more days.

As old friends, they talked about many things – old times, changing times, the inscrutable hand of destiny, Harbhajan Singh's urge to serve his Guru. Meaning well and wanting his friend to settle with him in America, Harbhajan's host returned to the subject he thought he knew best.

"You know, you have come to America and I want to tell you something."

"What is wrong in that? What is it you want to tell me?" Harbhajan replied.

"You have got to learn to drive."

"I know driving."

"No. No. No. Indian driving is no good."

"What is wrong with Indian driving?"

"Oh, they drive on the left side. Here we drive on the right side. There are freeways here and boulevards. There are traffic lights and traffic police. All those things you never used to find in India."

"Why do I have to drive?"

"Well, you've got to go somewhere sometime."

"No. I'll not go anywhere! I'll be taken everywhere."

"What do you mean, 'taken everywhere'? There are no servants here. Forget about your limousine and your drivers and all that."

"You forget about it! I was serving the government of India. I had a limousine. I had a driver. I had a car. I had a jeep. I had everything. You mean I am going to serve God and I am going to drive myself?"

"You are crazy!"

"Yes, I am crazy. Naturally, you should be crazy for that. It is worthwhile to be crazy."

Harbhajan Yogi smiled. His friend searched in his eyes. Was there really something crazy about his dear old friend? Maybe there was. Maybe for once it was good to be crazy.

The two old friends had a good laugh about the absurdity of it all.

## **Bhabi**

The next morning, Harbhajan Singh the Yogi packed his bags for good and said, "I'm leaving, my friend."

"Don't go yet! What's the matter?"

"Things are not working out here. It is time I should go."

"Why? What went wrong?"

"I got up this morning to take a bath, I heard your wife abusing you. She was saying, 'He used to be a great officer. We were proud of his friendship. Everybody used to salute us because of him. Since he has come here, he sleeps on the floor, eats only a little, talks to nobody, and chants '*Gur, gur, gur.*' *He is a totally useless man!* He is living in our guest room, not talking to anybody, and hopelessly taking up that space. You know, *you are stupid!* He is not the friend you think he is. You have been telling me, "He is my brother. I'm not going to let him go. He is a man of God. He'll bless us, blah, blah, blah..."'"

"Did you hear that?"

"The door was open. It was everywhere. Look, I don't want your wife to beat you up. I am leaving."

"No, don't go this way. Come back inside and meet my wife, and at least you can tell her you are leaving as a courtesy."

So, Harbhajan Singh, the Yogi, went back and faced his friend's wife. He said, "Bhabi, I am leaving."

"Why?"

"Because you are stupid."

"How can you tell me I am stupid?"

"Because you abused my brother this morning, saying I am unnecessarily taking up a space and eating food and doing nothing. I came for a purpose. You don't think that purpose is worthwhile, so I have to go."

"Why did you come?"

"Bhabi, you don't have a son. You have been praying all your life for one. I am here to pray that you will be blessed with a son, but now I don't think you deserve it, so I have to go."

"That's not so. You are trying to make me insecure."

"I am going today. Soon you will know whether I am right or wrong. Check it, if you really believe I am just trying to make you feel insecure so you will ask me to stay or to apologize to your husband. You should be satisfied within fifteen days. If I am wrong, you can come and slap my face!"

"We will see. You know, a lot of people come and visit us."

"That's why I am going. I am not going to see you again."

"Why?"

"When I drop somebody, not even God picks them up, and I never see them again. I am going. Best of luck!" Harbhajan picked up his bags and made his way to the door.

"Where are you going?" his old friend asked.

"I don't know."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know."

"But you don't have a car."

"I know I don't have a car. I'm walking."

"Will you come in my car? I'll take you to the bus."

"I can't ride the bus. I have no money."

He really didn't have any idea where he was going - but his friend knew better than to argue with Harbhajan Singh once he had made up his mind. Putting on a brave face, he stepped out the door of the spacious, suburban home, and made his way down the long, prestigious driveway, past the immaculately-kept lawn, to the mysterious Unknown.

Just as he reached the bottom of the driveway, an enormous silver limousine pulled up beside him. The driver rolled down his window, "Where are you going?"

"I don't know where I'm going. Only my God and my Guru knows."

"Come on then, hop in!"

## **Cooking for HELP**

Seeing his first vegetarian eatery in America was a moving spiritual experience for Yogi Bhajan. Located on 3rd Street near Los Angeles's Farmer's Market was the HELP Natural Foods Restaurant. In the carrot cake and brown rice, in the banana smoothies and freshly baked whole wheat bread, Yogi Bhajan recognized the new generation's idealism taking a practical and compassionate form.

Harbhajan the Yogi was so impressed that he offered to cook the soup of the day. When the owner realized his talented help had no place to live, he offered Yogi Bhajan a place in his own house in Hollywood.

As it turned out, Harbhajan's soup was a hit. A few days later, the owner asked him to make a daily curry, as well. His whole-hearted, innovative cooking became very popular at the

restaurant. Yogi Bhanjan's experience there gave him confidence. He thought, "If I can cook a curry and it can sell, let me cook God! It will sell too!"

The HELP restaurant served as a hub for the Los Angeles counterculture. Students, anti-war organizers, hippies, film people, musicians, and drop outs of all kinds liked to stop by and have a meal, or a cup of Mu Tea and maybe a scoop of honey-sweetened ice cream.

If there was ever a peace march or a psychedelic concert or a meditation lecture, an eye-catching poster would usually make its way there.

In this way, Yogi Bhanjan came to know of the East West Cultural Center, and that the director of the center, a respected Sanskrit scholar was giving a talk there the next day, December 22. He was intrigued by the director's Indian name, and that she was a Western woman. For these and countless other reasons, Harbhajan made a point of going there.

## East West Cultural

We do not actually know what the topic of the talk at the East West Cultural Center that Sunday was. We do know there may have been up to one hundred and twenty-five people in the audience because that is how many the auditorium at the center would seat. We also know a little about the speaker.

Dr. Judith Tyberg, the speaker, would have been sixty-six years old. Born to Danish parents in California, she was a respected figure in the California Eastern mystical scene. She knew and was known to Alan Watts and a host of Indian swamis, yogis and luminaries, many of whom came to her center in Los Angeles as guests.

Judith Tyberg had a Theosophical upbringing, thanks to her parents. From a young age, they had exposed their daughter to the teachings of karma, reincarnation and meditation. Dr. Tyberg graduated from, then taught at and held the post of Dean of Studies at, the Theosophical University in southern California. Her speciality was Sanskrit studies.

In 1947, at the age of forty-five, Judith had journeyed to the south of India on a spiritual quest. That quest took her to the ashram of the renowned teacher, Sri Aurobindo of Pondicherry. Dr. Tyberg was deeply moved and inspired by the sage's understanding of classical Indian spiritual teachings. Sri Aurobindo accepted Judith Tyberg as his student and gave her the name, "Jyotipriya, the Lover of Light."

Dr. Tyberg returned to America in 1950, the year of Sri Aurobindo's passing. She established the first East West Cultural Center at the home of a friend. In 1955, she moved to the building at Ninth

Street, near Vermont Avenue, complete with facilities for a library, a small school, several living quarters, and the auditorium in which she gave her talk on December 22nd.

After her talk, Dr. Tyberg and a small group of devotees went out to dinner. Yogi Bhajan was among them. It appears that he introduced himself to the director of the East West Cultural Center, and was asked to give a presentation at the center himself two weeks later.

Another member of the dinner party was Osu. Born in Minneapolis, she had moved to Los Angeles with her mother and brother in 1943. Osu had excelled academically and socially, graduating as Valedictorian from Hollywood High. She went on to study at the University of California.

Since her early twenties, Osu had studied various spiritual teachings in an effort to make sense of life's strange reasoning. Her reading had encompassed the Bhagavad Gita, Edgar Cayce, and P. D. Ouspensky. Osu had once hosted a talk by Meher Baba in her apartment in West Hollywood. She had also learned Sufi meditation from Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan. In the mid-1950s, Osu had lived for a year with her young son at the East West Cultural Center, which at the time had a school for children. From Dr. Tyberg, she learned Sanskrit and Indian religion and philosophy.

For years, Osu had attended lectures at the East West Cultural Center, the Vedanta Society and the Self Realization Fellowship in Los Angeles. Two years before, Osu had gone on a forty day quest to India, visiting the ashrams of Sri Aurobindo, and of Swami Chinmayananda in Mumbai and Sri Satya Sai Baba in Bangalore.

At the end of 1968, Osu was thirty-nine. She had seen a good deal of spirituality. Some of what she had seen had been wonderful and some of it had not. She was not looking for another teacher.

We do not know what was on the menu that evening. It hardly matters. Sometime in the course of the dinner, the tall beturbaned yogi leaned across the table toward Osu and told her, "Your son is in trouble, isn't he? I can help you."

Osu responded with shock and amazement. How could this stranger know about her son? Who was he, anyway? What business of his was it? These were the defensive reflexes that immediately shot through Osu's mind.

But what if this tall, striking Indian could help? What then? How could she live with herself if she did not at least try to find out? Thousands of thoughts riddled Osu's psyche in the passing of a moment. In the end, she took the phone number Yogi Bhajan proffered and agreed to call him.

After dinner, when the group had dispersed, Osu shared with Dr. Tyberg what the yogi had said. Osu also shared her misgivings. She did not trust this strange man with the secret knowledge. What was he after? Her best guess was that the man in the pink turban wanted to take over the center and she warned Dr. Tyberg to beware.

## The Interview

On Christmas Day, Osu made the promised call to the yogi gentleman she had met. They arranged to meet again at the East West Cultural Center. It was on this occasion that Yogi Bhanan told Osu about his journey – his life in India, his original plan to teach at the University of Toronto, and his current situation in Los Angeles.

For her part, Osu told the yogi her life story. The yogi had been right. Her son was indeed in trouble. He had joined the United States Army. Now, the best she could tell, her son had attempted suicide, then gone missing from the army. In the course of their talk, Osu also told of all she had studied and learned from various teachers and supposed masters of meditation.

When he heard of the many things Osu had learned in her study of the spiritual path, Yogi Bhanan said to her, "You have been a student long enough. You should be a teacher." He went on to explain, "I have come to train teachers, not to gather disciples."

But Osu was sceptical. "Oh, sure, fat chance!" she thought to herself.

As they went on with their discussion, the yogi told Osu that he recognized she knew a lot, but he could help her piece everything together. Hearing those words, Osu thought to herself, "Who does he think he is?" Not so long ago, she had been conned out of house and home by a self-styled American spiritual teacher. Most of her experiences with swamis and yogis had left Osu feeling empty and disappointed, if not betrayed. Finally, she confronted the yogi, "How should I believe that you are not another useless person?"

Yogi Bhanan replied, "Well, I can't discuss it right now, but I feel like sometime you will sit with me and let me know."

And so their interview came to a close with Osu feeling rather testy, yet still vaguely hopeful some good might come of her connection with the yogi. It happened that he wanted to see a hermit teacher he had first met at the talk at the East West Center. Osu offered to drive him to his destination in the Hollywood Hills. They arranged to meet again the following day.

The next day, Yogi Bhanan and Osu continued their conversation at the East West Cultural Center. He started by telling her, "Give me the privilege to serve you so that all the wrong which has been done to you by these teachers, I can make it up to you."

He suggested they go to the library of the East West Cultural Center. There, Yogi Bhanan located a translation of Sikh verses and opened it for Osu to read. She was not interested. She had already studied the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, Buddhist scriptures, Taoist texts, the Koran, the New and Old Testaments – every known text of spiritual wisdom and philosophy. Now what was this? After reading a few lines, she said, "I'm not really interested," and politely gave the volume back



to the yogi. He duly returned it to its place on the wall of books. The subject did not come up again for many months.

Osu told the yogi about health issues which had been making her life miserable. Having embarked on some radical fasting earlier in her life, she had acquired serious digestive difficulties, which had only become more serious year by year. At this time, she could not even drink a glass of water without feeling acute pain.

Yogi Bhajan recommended she take up a secret *kriya* he knew and practice it for forty days without missing a day. He showed her the technique. As for Osu's son, he assured her that nothing in the world was more powerful than the prayer of a mother for her son. On a little piece of paper, he wrote the words "*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru.*" Yogi Bhajan told Osu that if she would chant this mantra powerfully from the navel point, all in one breath, for one hour daily before sunrise and pray for her son, he would be alright.

Osu objected, "What about all the other things I am doing?" She was already doing Sufi chanting, Hopi Indian mantra and Vedanta meditation.

Yogi Bhajan assured her, "Go ahead and do everything, but try this also."

That seemed reasonable to Osu, so that is exactly what she set out to do.

## The Yogi's Detachment

One day, the old friend Yogi Bhajan had been staying with rang him up, "Yogi Bhajan, Bhabi is in trouble. She has a terrible pain."

He replied, "You are a doctor. Take her to the hospital."

"But what is the trouble?"

"She has to have an operation."

Some days passed. When Bhabi had recuperated and come home, she gave her husband's friend a call, "You were right. Can I apologize?"

"What for? I came to your house to give you a gift. Then I realized you were undeserving, so I walked out. No bad feelings."

"But you are my husband's dearest friend!"

"It is true," he replied. "I was your husband's dearest friend. You stood at the airport for four hours to receive me. When I came to your home, I ate the food, I felt the feelings. I knew that your entire prayer was for one son, and that you already had three daughters. I said to myself, 'I can twist the hand of God a little for her. She deserves it.' But when, in that ambrosial hour, you started abusing your husband, I couldn't help it. It was best not to stay in your house."

"How could you leave just like that?"

"Bhabi, you call me a 'yogi.' Opposites do not affect a yogi. Yogis may be the most rotten people on Earth, but there is one thing they have going. They are not attached."

## I Ching in Ibiza

Meanwhile, in the faraway port of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, Thelma Oliver was on a journey of self-discovery. Having achieved a degree of fame on Broadway and in Hollywood, Thelma, who was African-American, wanted to find a way to make the lives of her people better. To do this, she wanted first to explore her ancestral roots in Africa, to better know herself.

Working on a ship going to Africa had seemed like a good idea, but it turned out that women were not allowed. Undeterred, Thelma hitchhiked through Belgium, through France, through Spain, to Ibiza Island at the Straits of Gibraltar, and finds that she cannot continue in this way to Africa either.

Thelma was not discouraged, but she did think whether perhaps the universe was giving her a message and she did consider briefly returning to New York City to fulfill some contractual obligations she had there. Seeking guidance, Thelma tossed a set of yarrow sticks for a reading of the I Ching. The sticks spoke to her: "Go West and meet a great man."

Stuck in Ibiza, the next day, Thelma gave the sticks another reverential toss. "Go West and meet a great man," they said to her. It seemed strange. The odds of receiving the same message twice in a row were remote given there were sixty-four possible readings.

The next day, hoping for an outcome more in alignment with her own predilections, Thelma consulted the I Ching a third time. Uncannily, it repeated its earlier advice: "Go West and meet a great man."

In frustration, Thelma threw her yarrow sticks into a corner, thinking, "This I Ching is not working for me. I want to go South and East."

## The First Public Lecture

Despite the agonizing uncertainty surrounding her son, the following days passed quickly for Osu. Each day, she would rise extra early and apply herself whole-heartedly to the *kriya* and especially to the mantra Yogi Bhajan had given her. She would then pour her energies into her job as a waitress at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

On the second morning of her meditation, Osu had such a great experience she could barely wait to phone the Yogi and tell him, "I don't have to do anything else. This is it!" And slowly, her digestion improved as well.

Those days before Yogi Bhajan's much anticipated talk at the Center on January 5, Dr. Tyberg and Osu came to know him better. Often, he would come by and cook lunch for Dr. Tyberg, whom he respectfully called "Ma."

On one such day, Yogi Bhajan told Osu of a vision he had of a "3HO" organization. He went on to say that she would be the mother of the "Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization."

This was just too much, too soon, for Osu to agree. The idea stretched her sorely tried credibility. The yogi was a stranger in America. He was a visitor with no legal status. The yogi's accent was so thick, how was he going to start an organization? When he said "vision," it sounded like "wision." His "H" sound like "etch." These ideas exercised her keenly refined critical mind. Besides, Osu was still burdened with the worry of her missing son. "No thanks," she replied. "I've already raised my son. I don't want any more responsibility, and furthermore I don't like organizations."

As luck would have it, or perhaps it was through the love and sheer force of Osu's chanting, she received a call a couple of days later from her son. He was happy to report he had been "rescued" near San Francisco. Thankfully, the situation resolved itself even to the army's satisfaction.

Finally the day arrived for Yogi Bhajan's lecture at the East West Cultural Center. It was Sunday, January 5 in the evening. The audience who turned out to hear him speak was steeped in esotericism. They enjoyed the periodic visits of celebrated swamis who would come and dazzle them with their mystical terminology. The speakers would talk of "man and superman," "Nescience" and "Omniscience," "transcendental truth," "*Ananta*," "*Parapurusha* and *Parabrahman*," and other important-sounding words and phrases.

Yogi Bhajan was different. He did not wear a saffron robe, but a shocking pink turban and a regular shirt and pants. He was a man and did not try to hide the fact. Instead of a shaven head, he had a bushy black beard. The yogi kept his Sanskrit to a minimum. He cut through the terminology and talked straight. He addressed the audience to empower, not to mystify them. The yogi provoked the intelligence of his listeners. He told them things they had never heard before.

Yogi Bhajan did not teach "Om." He called it a polluted form of "Ong." Whereas *Ong* resonated the palate, the sound *Om* didn't. *Om*, the Infinite, Absolute, he said, had no direct relationship with the creation. Moreover, in Sanskrit when "m" comes before "k," it changes to "ng." Therefore, when God is in relation to his creation "Kar," *Om* becomes "Ongkar."

Yogi Bhajan talked about real physical things, bodily things. No one had ever heard a swami talk about vibrating the palate with mantra, or the necessity of sitting with a straight spine, or the need of setting the navel, or the vital secretion of the glands. He talked about *kundalini* and nobody else ever taught kundalini yoga, not in the West.

Yogi Bhajan said the science of yoga teaches perfect control of the body, nerves and mind, so these three can be used under the guidance of the will. He seemed to know a good deal. The yogi concluded his talk by covering the classical "eight limbs" of yoga, the five do's and five don'ts, posture, breath control, exercise of the mind, concentration, meditation, and finally, the bliss of *samadhi*.

Yogi Bhajan finished by challenging his audience, "You are ultimately to act like a god. Time is short. The time is now. It is your birthright to be healthy, happy and holy. Kundalini yoga is a tool to help you manifest that birthright."

## A Liberated Man

Yogi Bhajan was like a rolling stone. He never remained in one place very long before circumstances made it necessary for him to move on. Yogi Bhajan was happy staying at the home of the owner of the HELP restaurant. There was a quiet space where he could go each morning to practice his yoga and meditation.

Everything started to go wrong when the owner's girlfriend also started rising for early morning yoga with their guest. It was too much for her boyfriend to bear. Already he had been annoyed at the amount of time the yogi had been spending on the phone. He told Yogi Bhajan to find another place to live.

When they heard of this development, Osu and four other students agreed to pay ten dollars a month to meet the rent for an apartment across the street from the East West Cultural Center. This became Yogi Bhajan's new home.

Far from Toronto, and farther from New Delhi, Yogi Bhajan was establishing himself in this palm-fronded media capital. Mindful of his easy success with the media in Toronto, he phoned the Los Angeles office of TIME Magazine. The staff of the widely-read publication, however, gave him a cold reception. California was already home to a number of Eastern spiritual teachers, all of whom TIME, the glossy weekly with its roots deep in the American establishment, had dismissed as

unnewsworthy. Yogi Bhajan, the great unknown quantity, vowed he would have nothing more to do with this magazine.

There was clearly a need for Yogi Bhajan to teach. Students were wanting to learn more after his introductory talk. Dr. Tyberg offered him the arts building at her center as a place he could teach classes Sunday afternoons. Osu and Yogi Bhajan together phoned the YMCAs around Los Angeles to ask about setting up classes there as well.

The YMCA at Alhambra, a nearby suburb of Los Angeles, responded favorably. A time and date were set for the first class. It was arranged that the sessions would cost \$1.50 per student, and that half the money would go to the Y and half to Yogi Bhajan.

When Osu drove Yogi Bhajan to give his first class on the appointed day, they found a beautiful hall. The lectern had been decorated with flowers in his honor. But there was just one student who had come for the lesson.

The manager of the YMCA apologized, "Sir, I don't know what happened! We sent a notice out to our mailing list. I just don't know what happened." In fact, the wrong date had been given in the advertisement.

"Nothing has happened. I am going to teach the class."

The manager of the YMCA talked to people all the following week. He said, "We have got a yogi. He lectures to empty halls!" The manager aroused such a curiosity that by the next class, the room was packed. Everyone wanted to know what kind of a human being would teach a class to a virtually empty hall.

Over the weeks, people came from near and far to hear the yogi pour out his wisdom and empower them with a timeless technology of health, happiness and holiness that had been the secret preserve of Indian *yogis* until now. The teachings made sense. The yoga felt great. People brought their friends and the classes grew.

Along with the Alhambra class, Yogi Bhajan was soon teaching at the YMCA in North Valley and at Claremont College. In all, there were three classes six days a week, plus the Sunday afternoon class at the East West Cultural Center.

One time, the yogi arrived at the Alhambra YMCA to find his students all sitting on the steps outside the building because the classroom was being painted, and therefore unusable. Undaunted, Yogi Bhajan gave one of his best lectures.

"What is a liberated man? And what is the reason we suffer in the hands of time?"

"Man has two sides. One is a carefree side. The other is a careless side. When man lives in his carefree side, he is guided by his divine faculty. When he lives in his careless side, he is guided by his animal force. It is not the carelessness of breaking a glass or accidentally throwing away something you meant to keep. Materially, we are considered careless when we are unable to discharge our material responsibilities, but in reality, we are truly careless when we lose our divine personality - when that "something" which is very precious, beyond value, is lost just for passion.

"Emotion and passion are the two buyers of our spiritual personality. If you analyse this thought, you will realize that such a bargain is too costly. For what are we trading our spiritual Self?

"This world of ours is a temporary phase of life. It is not permanent, but we always associate ourselves with it as if we belong to it and it belongs to us. Subconsciously, behind every action, is the desire to be recognized. But if you classify your desire for recognition and the way you try to be recognized, you will find that you want recognition without maturity. You want to be recognized as a mature being, but you have not developed the mature attitude of a carefree being.

"The only carefree being is that person who is free from negativity. He is liberated. It is a cosmic law that such a person is never short of anything. A carefree man doesn't know any misery. He may be humble, but that doesn't mean he is miserable. Ever wise, he sails through time undisturbed. He does not need any correction at the hands of time. His smooth behaviour and calmness of personality are the signs that he is a liberated being. In a nutshell, he is the happiest person ever on the earth.

"This does not mean you should be barred from having worldly goods. Matter is media. It cannot be created and it cannot be destroyed. Similarly, emotion and involvement in desire are also media, but their satisfaction is temporary, not everlasting. If you understand how the addiction to liquor begins, you will understand the theory of involvement.

"This is how it works. A man who does not drink comes under pressure and doesn't know what to do. He goes to the house of a friend for consolation, for man is a social animal, and by having someone participate in his grief, he feels relieved. The friend offers whiskey for a soothing effect and the man is persuaded to take a drink. The alcohol goes into the body. and does its chemical action. It soothes the nerves and energizes the energy centers so the man's attitude relaxes and he becomes flexible.

"It is only a temporary relief, but the memory of that first taste sticks in his mind. He can never ever regain the smoothness of that first taste of liquor, but for the lust of that taste, and to recapture that experience, people become habitual drinkers - alcoholics. They believe that the best way to escape from the pressures of life is to continue drinking and thus drinking becomes a need of the body. Similarly, when you involve yourself in any mode of life, you are going into a channel where you will go on and on, and you can never come back to the point from which you originally started.

"When we forget our original basis of action and become involved, we become a slave. It has been seen in our entire concept of life that we are fifteen percent slaves to routine, to habit. Man must have certain habits without which his life cannot go on. But he can attain liberation by changing the character of these minimum required habits.

"There are two kinds of habits: promoting habits and demoting habits. Demoting habits make you unhappy physically, mentally and spiritually. Promoting habits make you happy physically, mentally and spiritually. In your life, if you have all the habits which are promoting habits, you will end up as a liberated, divine person. If you have demoting habits, you will end up as a physical wreck, mentally insane and/or spiritually defunct.

"Habit is a must of your personality and mind. For that period when you are acting under a demoting habit, you are totally in the negative personality. It is also a fact that if you get into any one negative habit, you will automatically attract its four sister habits, for they love to stay together. These five demoting habits of behavior and attitude are: greed, anger, lust, attachment and negative ego. When one sister enters the house, she calls the others to join. Each habit is supported on two tripods: 1) physical, mental and spiritual, and 2) past, present and future.

"There are two guiding instincts in man. He is either improving his future or blocking his future improvement. If you are conscious of this and have an honest and sincere urge to improve your future, you will always have promoting habits. *Oh man, if you are to care not even for God, at least care for the future.* When you care enough for your future to have promoting habits, you will become a liberated person.

"A liberated person is always a happy person. He does not lack in any material comfort. He does not know any power on earth which can insult him. He lives in grace in this world and when he leaves this body he is respected for generations to follow.

"Everyone can be like that. Yesterday's greatest sinner can be a saint this minute. The only thing required is a decision: 'Am I to guard my future and choose to be a liberated person, or am I to block my future and go by the material-physical aspect of the world?'

"For any person who blocks his future, it is a guaranteed fact that he suffers in the future. Any person who takes advantage of the "now" causing someone else's loss, blocks his future. Anyone who takes advantage of the "now" invites trouble from Mr. Future.

"Maintain a positive attitude with promoting habits for forty days, and you can change your destiny. This psychological concept of human behaviour is a pattern which can guide you to that goal which is described in our scriptures as paradise.

"In the self, one has to sow the seeds of divine vibrations and with the power of these vibrations one has to dwell in the ultimate which is a truth, a reality and an ever-living primal force. This primal

force has been named "God" by Christians, "*Paramatman*" by Hindus, and "*Allah*" by Muslims. Some name has been given it by all, but the universal consciousness of this universal spirit has one name, that is Truth, so we call it "*Sat*" and we remember it as *Sat Nam*. *Sat*, in the language of the gods, Sanskrit, means truth. *Nam* means name. So without dispute we can say that universal consciousness, that universal spirit, that creative force in us has a universal name and that is *Sat Nam*.

"All those who want to liberate themselves and seek to dwell in the ultimate must cleanse their physical selves and direct their mental self towards *Sat Nam*, the being of beings. One who dwells on the vibrations of this Holy *Nam* – *Sat Nam* – in the prime hours of the day before dawn when the channels for vibrations are very clean and clear, will realize the concept of a liberated being through the grace of this *beej mantra* (seed vibration) which awakens the goddess of awareness in a being. He then lives as a liberated man on this earth."

That priceless talk was later transcribed and entitled "A Liberated Man." Tens of thousands of copies were printed and served as an introductory brochure.

## The Contest

A handful of students came together not only to study with, but also to look after the needs of their teacher. He had touched their hearts, and they wanted to help him in any way they could. But this yogi was very particular. His students observed that he would rather go hungry than ask for something. As well as washing his clothes and paying his rent, they made sure that he had food to eat.

Looking after the Yogi Bhajan was also a chance to learn. He had a gift of teaching. His time was mostly free and he enjoyed talking and teaching and sharing what he knew. One time, Osu and a student named Anne spent a whole night enthralled by the yogi's knowledge and wisdom.

It was 3 am when Yogi Bhajan pointed out that the time to meditate had arrived. He challenged the two of them, "Whoever shall chant the loudest, shall be the strongest!"

Off they went... "*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru... Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam SiriWha Guru... Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam SiriWha Guru...*" They chanted the mantra over and over again at the top of their lungs.

After a few minutes, someone hammered loudly on the wall from next door to try and make them stop. Anne quit, but Osu kept right on chanting.

It was no contest. Yogi Bhajan smiled. Osu had persisted, *and* she had been the loudest.



## The Unexpected Lunch

It was a holiday Monday, George Washington's Birthday. Dr. Tyberg had locked the kitchen at the East West Cultural Centre where Yogi Bhajan took his meals and left for the day, absent-mindedly taking the key with her. Knowing this, and knowing the food stores for miles around would be closed that day, Mario, the student who was supposed to look after Yogi Bhajan's needs that day, asked, "Yogi Bhajan, do you ever fast?"

"No, I never fast. I don't believe in fasting."

"So what do you do when you have to fast?"

"I eat one meal a day and observe a monodiet. That is the maximum I think, according to scriptural value, should be the fast. Anything beyond that is not my concern."

"But today you have to fast."

"What do you mean 'Today you have to fast'?"

"Today the kitchen is closed. The outside is locked. There is nothing I can do. The lock is a bolt lock and we can't break it. We can't get inside. I know you don't go to any restaurant to eat because you don't eat meat and you think they mix meat into everything. I don't know what to do, but I feel guilty because I am supposed to provide for you. On George Washington's Birthday no shop opens around here and I don't have a car to go miles and find some food."

"Mario, you sit and relax!"

"What is there to relax? I can't give you food!"

"You do not know the tradition of my Guru. In his house, over ten thousand people we feed every day. And for the sake of that, I will get a good meal today."

"How?"

"Because the human has failed, God will act. And if the human has failed and God is going to act and Guru is going to supervise it, it is going to be fine."

Mario was skeptical. "Well, well, well... You people are like that. It is your thing."

Yogi Bhajan replied, "Do me a favor. When the food comes, don't eat by yourself. Wake me up. I am going to go to sleep."

It was about 12:30. Yogi Bhajan felt tired and lay down for a nap.

Two hours passed, and the doorbell rang. Yogi Bhajan called out, "Mario, open the door! Food has arrived."

"How do you know? How do you know?"

"Go, go!" Yogi Bhajan urged him, "Food has arrived."

Mario opened the door and there was Mrs. Haeckel, a student of Yogi Bhajan's, her arms filled with a feast. No one asked any questions. Both Yogi Bhajan and Mario had a healthy appetite, and the smell and sight of delicious rice and beans and enchiladas and a date cake for desert was hardly a stimulus for conversation.

When Mario and Yogi Bhajan had been fully satisfied, Yogi Bhajan asked their provider, "What made you bring this food?"

"Today is George Washington's birthday. I didn't buy any groceries last week, so I had nothing at home to eat today. I called a Spanish family restaurant and asked if they could give me a meal. They said, 'We are closed, but if you come, we will serve you.' When I ate there, I was very happy and I thought that you would like this kind of food. So I asked if I could take out for one holy man. They said 'Fine.' I thought you are never alone. There are usually two or three people. So I brought food for two or three people."

Although he did not press the point, Yogi Bhajan had been right. God had acted on his behalf and Guru had supervised – and it had been a very fine meal indeed!

## **The Priceless, Destiny-Writing Pencil**

Due to the great response to his first talk, Dr. Tyberg arranged for Yogi Bhajan to give a second public lecture. They agreed to a fifty-fifty split of the income. About three hundred dollars came in, so afterwards she very neatly counted one hundred and fifty dollars, and put it in an envelope for her sometimes enigmatic lecturer.

She said, "Yogi Bhajan, I am very pleased today, and this is your share."

As Yogi Bhajan picked up the envelope, she said, "I want to be further honored. I want to take you to a restaurant nearby and feed you."

"Okay. Why not? Come on. Let's go!"

On their way was a sightless black man standing on the sidewalk. He pleaded to them, "I'm not a beggar. I have family, but I don't have eyes. There is nothing going for me, but there must be something going for you. I have nothing to offer except these writing pencils. If you buy these pencils, perhaps out of this I can feed my family."

Yogi Bhajan was touched. He took the envelope with his lecture money inside and put it in the blind man's hand, saying, "I am buying one pencil for it." He took one pencil.

Out of the corners of his trained eyes, Harbhajan the Yogi could see the aura of his host take on the characteristics of a California firestorm. To himself, he said, "O my God! I don't know what I'm going to eat now."

They entered the nearby Ontra Cafeteria on Vermont Avenue and picked out what they wanted to eat. His hostess reached for her purse to pay for their meal, then stopped short. Knowing her guest's shirt had no pocket, and that he had given away all his money, she turned to him and said, "Yogi, you pay for it!"

He asked, "How much is the total bill?"

She added it up and said, "Three dollars and thirty cents for you, and two dollars and so many cents for that and three dollars... Alright... nine dollars and something."

Out of his turban, Yogi Bhajan pulled a ten dollar bill, and gave it to her. He thought that would settle things, but it did not. As they sat down and started eating, Dr. Tyberg said to him, "You know that man asks for money every day. You need money. You don't have money. You gave him all that money. One hundred and fifty dollars to one man for one pencil!"

Yogi Bhajan replied, "My dear lady, I needed this pencil very badly."

"What for?"

"With this pencil my destiny will be re-written. This pencil will write endless zeros which I don't have. I'm only a one at this time. I needed this pencil. You don't understand it."

"What is to be written?"

"It is going to be written that I shall be written on the surface of this planet earth. I'll tell this story to people, and because of that, you will be remembered. That is what is going to be written. Because of this act of mine and this anger of yours, I'll tell the story to people that will keep you alive. Otherwise, you are worth nothing. You do not understand. I paid nothing for that pencil."

"Write something with it!"

On the back of the bill, he wrote, "I am, I am," and gave it to her. He said to her, "This pencil will not stop writing whatever I want to write, but it is / who have to write it."

"You Indians are so philosophical. We don't understand you at all. I was in India for ten years. I learned Sanskrit. I did my Masters in it. Still you people come and puzzle us!"

Yogi Bhajan replied, "No, you are such a puzzle that we are puzzled as to how to solve it. We didn't come here for anything. Don't try to act like a superior American. Ten, twenty, two hundred years ago, you were rotting somewhere and you were kicked out. I got kicked out of my country to do a certain job. Everybody comes here to do something."

"Yeah, I understand it..."

## **The Yogi and the Savages**

Meanwhile, the Savages, flower children, children of the soul of the land, their destinies dispersed in thirteen directions, reassembled in the urban landscape of Los Angeles. Destiny called them together one evening in a house they had all known. They shared news as they always did. One of them told the others of a bearded, turbaned man from India they had heard was teaching kundalini yoga at the East West Cultural Center. It sounded unusual. It sounded interesting. It sounded like the best thing going.

Though they were in Los Angeles now, the Savages were still very much the New Mexican communards. The bus they piled into the next day for the trip to the center had teepee poles tied down on top and a steer skull mounted on the grill. The Savages themselves were brightly adorned with feathers, beads and embroidery. Witnessing the arrival of his newest students, Bhajan, a yogi through and through, never batted an eye.

Over the weeks, more and more young people came out for the yogi's classes. The streets were lined with their distinctive psychedelic vans. And soon the big classroom at the East West Cultural Center was full.

Yogi Bhajan gave his students vigorous, empowering exercises and worked them hard. The Master taught them to engage their navels with breath of fire. He revealed to them the healing and rejuvenating physiology of the root lock. He worked the hearts of his students. He worked their lungs. He worked their brains. He worked their nervous systems, their glands, their electromagnetic fields. There was hardly a part of them that the Yogi did not engage to make it more flexible, stronger, more radiant, more alive. Then, at the end of each class, Yogi Bhajan would have them all relax, blissfully on the floor.

Yogi Bhajan enriched the minds of his students with timeless yogic understanding. Sometimes he would make them laugh at the comical inconsistencies of life. Sometimes he would lift them high with stories of great sages and saints who had gone before. He would share with them the purpose of life, the joy of life, and the ideal of human perseverance and sacrifice. He would speak of God within and the futility of seeking God anywhere else.

"After meditating at the lotus feet of my Master, who has granted me liberation from the time cycle and the cycle of karma, oh my sweet student teacher of the day, I disclose to you the secret of the *Naam*. If you care to listen to me this day and you will practice, you will be liberated like me.

"I have seen the God. It is a light equal to millions and billions of rays of sunlight. It is the cosmic energy which is the brightest of the bright, and most beautiful of the beautiful. Nothing beyond this can be said. It is the greatest of the great. When the Master, through his blessing, blesses you, you will realize this within you.

"Out of the four *yugs* which the scriptures described, one was *Sat Yug*, the Age of Truth or Golden Age. Then came *Treta Yug*, when the truth was three quarters full and it was the Silver Age. After this, came the *Doapar Yug*, when the truth was half revealed. Thereafter, came the *Kal Yug*, when the truth is one quarter. This *yug* is known as the Dark Age, Age of Steel or Machine Age.

"The duration of each is respectively 1,728,000, 1,296,000, 864,000, and 432,000 human years, a ratio of 4, 3, 2, 1. This ratio is found to prevail in many sacred computations. These four *yugas* together make 4,320,000 Earth years of what is called *Maha Yug* or Great Age.

"In *Sat Yug*, the Age of Innocence or Truth, man was one with the divine and he realized the vibration which this cosmic energy created to make *prakriti* and man meditated on the *Naam* "Ong" – the vibration of the divine. After this, came *Treta Yug*, when the power of the truth came to three quarters, the being became weak and he recited the *Naam* "Sohang." Through this vibration, he acknowledged his identity with the divine, which means "I am you." Thereafter came the *Doapar* Age, when truth was weakened to half and man recited "Ong Namō Narayana." He worshipped the God in the form. We are now in the Steel Age, Age of Machine which is represented by a circle, which is the wheel of creation.

"It works with the power of another wheel which runs it. Constant vibrations from the wheel of cosmic energy give power of life movement to this wheel of creation. Now, my sweet love, you draw one circle like the wheel and put another circle like a wheel over it, and it will make the figure eight, which according to the science of numerology represents infinity turns sideways.

"There are twenty-six vertebrae in your spinal column. Two plus six equals eight, therefore said the Master, 'Whosoever in this Machine Age will meditate and recite this mantra which will be to the glory of the Lord and will have eight vibrations, will open the lock of ignorance and darkness. And this will liberate the being and unite him with the divine.'

"Thus, the Master meditated and became one with the Lord and gave the mantra, '*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru*,' which has eight vibrations and describes the Glory of the Lord. Thus said the Master, 'In the time period, two and a half hours before the rising of the sun, when the channels are most clear, if the mantra is sung in sweet harmony, you will be with the Lord. This will open the solar plexus, which in turn will charge the solar centres. They will get connected with the cosmic energy and thus man will be liberated from the time cycle of karmas, and those who will meditate on this mantra in silence will charge their solar centres and be one with the divine.'

"That is why, with the blessing of my Master, I speak to you of why we should meditate and recite this mantra. All mantras are good. They are all for the awakening of the divine, but this mantra is effective and is the mantra for this time, so my lovely student, at the will of my Master I teach you the greatest divine key which has eight levers. And this key can open the lock of the time which is eight in figure. Therefore, when this mantra is sung in the neck lock, at the point where *praana* and *apaana* meet *sushmana*, this vibration opens the lock, and thus one becomes one with the divine.

"The Master of the time gave me this mantra, and in turn, meditating at his lotus feet, I to you disclose this secret of the divine today for the uplift of humanity and those who will follow it will be liberated and be one with the divine."

## Old Friends and New Students Meet

Yogi Bhajan one day phoned a friend of his whom he had not seen for many years. Shamsher Singh Babra had left India in 1953 and was now in Georgetown, outside the American capital. Yogi Bhajan told his old acquaintance he would be visiting in a few days, much to Shamsher's delight.

The days passed and Harbhajan the Yogi arrived in Washington. Shamsher Singh told his friend that he had arranged for a number of mutual friends to come visit the following afternoon. Yogi Harbhajan offered that he was starting a movement in the United States to lead the youth to true living, and that a few Americans might also come.

The next day, the kitchen in Shamsher's house was scented with the delicious aroma of *pakorras*. The missus had prepared tea and vegetable fritters for about fifteen. Their Indian friends numbered eight, and she expected four or five young Americans.

The afternoon went as planned with the arrival of the Harbhajan's old friends, Americans now, all with their stories to tell. And then after an hour or so of renewing acquaintances, one by one, there arrived a virtual parade of flower children. They were in their teens, the same age as Shamsher and Harbhajan when they had gone to school together in India. One by one they came, twenty or thirty young women and men, barefoot and with folded hands, each bearing a rose for the Master. After they had deposited their floral offering in front of the teacher from the Golden Temple, they sat down

on the floor.

Poor Shamsheer's wife was at a loss. In no time, the thoughtful and generous hostess had run out of *pakoras*. Only tea was left to be served.

But this was no time for anxious thoughts. Before Harbhajan's astonished friends, there was a real spiritual joy as the flower children drank the intoxicating atmosphere of that special time and place and listened carefully as the Master spoke to them words of God and Guru and the challenging times to come.

## The Choice

Returning to Los Angeles, a dichotomy was building in Yogi Bhajan's classes at the East West Cultural Center. While the Master talked of unitary wholes and cosmic oneness, his class was increasingly made up of two different and conflicting cultures: the one anchored in a smug aloofness borne of superficial study of esoteric philosophy and knowledge of ancient texts; the other, chaotic and energetic and committed to a creating a new world, iridescent and bright, an era of peace and justice and truth.

The Jook Savages' wild looks and their ignorance of the finer points of social etiquette did not endear them to the regular patrons of the East West Center. Dr. Tyberg was also concerned about the effect the hippies might have on the children who came to her school at the center.

For their part, the Savages did not appreciate the sophisticated ambience of the East West Cultural Center. Nor did they share the upper middle age aspirations of the ladies. Unfortunately for the regular patrons of the center, the youthful freaks thoroughly enjoyed the yogi's inspiration and came regularly for his classes. As word spread among their friends, every week there were more psychedelic painted Volkswagen vans full of hairy hippies.

The big room where Yogi Bhajan conducted his classes was becoming uncomfortably crowded for the ladies. Week by week, the tensions grew.

Dr. Tyberg decided to speak with the yogi at the end of one of his classes. It was April of 1969. The ladies looked forward to having the handsome yogi to themselves again. Surely, they thought, he would understand. They had been generous to him. Dr. Tyberg, whom he called "Ma," had offered to sponsor his becoming a U.S. citizen. Osu and Dr. Tyberg were his closest associates in Los Angeles. The yogi had made his home just across from the East West Cultural Center. Surely, he would help them get rid of all these unruly outcasts of society.

The Savages were not altogether surprised at this development. After all, their own parents had rejected them. Most of the older generation had turned its back on the flower children. They had

despised them and called them "dirty hippies."

Then something unexpected happened. Like a lion roused in all his glory, the yogi turned on the not so gentle ladies. His eyes at once piercing and tender and warm, and with a gesture encompassing all the youths in that room and flower children everywhere, Yogi Bhanan pronounced, "These are my people. These are the people I came to teach, and I will go with them."

## New Beginnings

Yogi Bhanan left the East West Cultural Center with the hippies and Osu as well, never to return. For her part, Dr. Tyberg took back her offer to sponsor him to become a U.S. citizen. Under the circumstances, the unshakable yogi said to Osu that she should pray and that by the end of the day "with Guru's grace" he would find a new sponsor.

The Yogi's classes would not end, but continue. One of his students very much enjoyed and appreciated the kundalini yoga classes and offered to do what he could to help.

Jules Buccieri owned an antique furniture store located five miles away, on the Beverly Hills side of town. Jules said that each day when his store at 8802 Melrose Avenue closed at 6 p.m., the students could take his antiques outdoors so Yogi Bhanan could give his class inside. It was a generous and ingenious offer, and his teacher accepted.

Jules Buccieri was well connected among the rich and famous in Los Angeles. He catered to the tastes of some of Los Angeles's social elite. It was said that he had decorated Barbra Streisand's mansion. Jules also took upon himself the job of finding someone new to vouch for his teacher becoming a citizen in the U.S., and, sure enough, by the end of the day, a new sponsor was found.

The new sponsor was a pop star who shared the billing in the Los Angeles's nightclub scene with another hot local act called the Doors. His name was Johnny Rivers. He had a number of popular hits to his name. Johnny Rivers also had his own record label. He was currently producing a vocal group he had named "The Fifth Dimension."

As it happens, that group had just recorded a song from the hit Broadway musical *Hair*. The song was "Aquarius." It was rocketing to the top of the Billboard chart that spring and would remain at number one for most of April and May. "Aquarius" was playing everywhere in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the army garrisons of South Korea, Japan, Guam and South Vietnam. Hippies and housewives, businesspeople and soldiers were all grooving to the new beat, the hopeful theme of Aquarius.

"When the moon is in the seventh house



And Jupiter aligns with Mars,  
Then peace will guide the planets  
And love will steer the stars.

*This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius  
The Age of Aquarius  
Aquarius! Aquarius!*

Harmony and understanding  
Sympathy and trust abounding  
No more falsehoods or derisions  
Golden living dreams of visions  
Mystic crystal revelation  
And the mind's true liberation...

*Aquarius! Aquarius!"*

(from *Hair*, the "American Tribal Love-Rock musical, by Gerome Ragni and James Rado)

Now with the classes at the antique store, the Yogi and his students began a new routine. Each day, everything from beds and cabinets to the most delicate antiques was carefully shuttled out of Jules' store. And after each class, the students - happy, relaxed and carefree - meticulously carried it all back to where it had been. Once they had finished, the store would be just as it had been before. Only the students would be transformed.

Their teacher called himself "a postman." What he was delivering was a whole new way of breathing, thinking, relating, and living on Mother Earth. The students' bodies, minds and spirits would be set alight with each new class, by the Yogi's talk, by their exertion, by the deep relaxation to the soulful sounds of the Yogi's gong. Each day, his dedicated students found themselves recharged and renewed by the transformative art of their masterful guide and teacher.

## **The Long Time Sun**

There is no denying the power of music. From early on, the Savages from New Mexico contributed a song with old Celtic roots to the yogi's new classes. They had known it as a part of "A Very Cellular Song" and it had been performed by The Incredible String Band from England. The song went:

*May the long time sun shine upon you,  
All love surround you,*

*And the pure light within you guide your way on...*

It was originally sung as a round, again and again. Yogi Bhanan loved their song and asked his students to sing it at the end of every class, with a long *Sat Nam* at the end.

## **The First Turban**

Gerry Pond lived in Jules's antique shop. A tall, charming, guitarist and song-writer, he had shared concert billings with the Grateful Dead in San Francisco in 1966. When the FBI opened a file on him in their aggressive campaign to intimidate, jail, even kill leaders of the youthful movement for peace and social renewal, he left America and studied in the Mexican wilderness with a shaman.

That shaman had eventually sent him to find and study with a "Great One." Now, having searched, Gerry felt he had indeed found and was learning from such a one.

However, it was not easy. One day, the Master asked Gerry where he worked. His student proudly answered that he didn't work. Hippies knew that work was for slaves. Gerry didn't work. He was a musician.

Yogi Bhanan was not so pleased with his student's hippie logic. "That's very well, Sonny, but you need to learn to work too. If you want to understand the teachings, you'll have to understand the students. Most students aren't musicians. They work. They have jobs."

Yogi Bhanan laughed and turned to Jules. "Hire this music man on the spot," he said, and the next day Gerry the musician began dutifully sanding and painting Jules's precious antiques.

It was dusty, dirty work and Gerry seemed to collect all that dust and dirt in his dark mop of unruly hair. It was tough: the ego of the pop musician tied up in his uncut, long hair pitted against the rigours of his new work. Finally, Gerry intuitively managed to wrap a scarf around his head enough times to capture all his curls into one well-mannered clump. That helped a lot.

One day, as Gerry was rapt in his work, a voice boomed from behind him, "*What is that?*"

Gerry turned at once and replied, "It's my turban, sir!"

"Why you're doing that?" probed his teacher.

"To be like you," said a voice, "I want to have what you have." Even Gerry was surprised at what he was saying.

"Wow!" said Yogi Bhanjan with a big smile, "For you to cap an ego like that, it's really something. Let's see what it brings."

## Do Something!

When I lie down in my bed, I can't sleep. I say, "Yogi Bhanjan, they love you so much, and like a nut, you are sleeping! What for are you sleeping on this bed? Don't they need you? Are they not supposed to progress? Then, if they are supposed to progress more, what are you, boy, doing here? Get up and do something! Help them in some way or another. If you do nothing, at least sit there. Even your presence is enough pressure to put them on the alert. Write them a letter, do something!"

This is known as, if I may not even write you a letter, I may not even come, but the very thought that I have thought about you, does connect me subconsciously to that factor and that area. And that is known as "communion of the mental projectivity with the heart," because there is a positive vibration.

## The House on Phyllis Street

After a few weeks of Yogi Bhanjan commuting to his classes at Melrose from his apartment across from the East West Cultural Center, Jules Buccieri invited his teacher to move into his house on Phyllis Street in West Hollywood with him. Yogi Bhanjan arrived with a few dedicated students. Circumstances soon tested the dedication of those students.

There were no finances and no plan other than to teach and practise the teachings and just keep going. Money was very tight and living was not easy, but high spirits, endless service and lots of yoga carried the day. One of the students had been expert at scrounging food and making ends meet when she had lived as a Jook's Savage in New Mexico. She took charge of the kitchen and feeding Yogi Bhanjan and a regular stream of guests.

Yogi Bhanjan persevered with his one checkered shirt and pink turban. He hardly slept. Whenever he dozed, he would wake up saying "*Waheguru!*"

Each morning, Yogi Bhanjan rose early and showered before settling down to read aloud from his "holy book." There, he half-chanted, half-sang for two and a half hours, while a handful of students silently meditated around him.

A wonderful smell like Christmas baking soon was wafting out of the kitchen, like some

delectable incense. Yogi Bhajan had given Osu his recipe for "Yogi Tea" – ginger and cardamom, black pepper and cloves and cinnamon, with milk and honey to taste. Everyone who dropped by was given a cup of the wonderful healing beverage, and the recipe was passed on and on, eventually around the world.

He could never remember the name of the woman in the kitchen who served everyone so selflessly. The Yogi said her name had no relation to her and instead he gave her a new name. Closing his eyes, Yogi Bhajan said when he thought of his student he saw the Ganges River, Mother of India, feeding the masses, healing and flowing the length of the entire country, so he called her "Ganga," the Indian name for that river goddess. He also gave her his own name, adopting her as his spiritual daughter, and thus she became "Ganga Bhajan Kaur."

Yogi Bhajan was not above learning from his students. Far from it! In his later days, he would say he had learned how to be a Sikh from them. Ganga always wore natural white cotton clothes. Her attire was simple. It was graceful. Yogi Bhajan took note and soon he was wearing Indian-style white tunics and *churidas* pants. His turban colour changed from vibrant pink to simple white. In a couple of years, he would lecture on the virtues of wearing natural white cotton, but in 1969 it was just a new phase, a conscious transition.

Students, seekers, and lovers of higher awareness began to appear from far and wide for Yogi Bhajan's daily classes at Melrose Avenue at ten a.m. and eight p.m. They were greeted, "*Sat Nam!*" - God is Truth!

When students came to classes, they would often have no money, but Yogi Bhajan had a strict policy that no one could attend class without paying.. It was a clash of cultures. Some students would be verbally abusive. The Bible said that money was the root of all evil, and these kids were believing it.

To help bridge the gap in values between his tradition and those of his students who shunned money as a medium of exchange, Yogi Bhajan would scatter coins here and there in the yard outside. When anyone came without money, the person responsible for registering the classes would direct them to go outside so they too could have the dignity of paying something. "If you come empty-handed, you go empty-handed" was Yogi Bhajan's saying.

Even this did not make everyone happy. While some collected more money than they paid for the class, others resented having to pay anything. One disgruntled hippie complained out loud, "*So you think you are a big dude leaving money outside?*"

With a great deal of love and patience and a seemingly endless stream of yogic know-how, Yogi Bhajan worked to heal and build his students, these American "diamonds-in-the-rough." With just the right combination of sweetness, firmness and exquisite timing, he plied his precious trade. Mostly he offered them suggestions and encouragement, rather than directives or outright criticisms.

Yogi Bhajan took a personal interest in the lives of his students. When Osu became sick, he visited her and made her usual breakfast of scrambled eggs, although he himself never ate eggs, and would soon be teaching his students to avoid them. Once, he told her that her hair needed cutting, though he never cut his hair and soon would openly teach the importance of keeping it. Such was Yogi Bhajan's ability to identify with others. Eventually he gave Osu a fitting new name: "Shakti Parwha Kaur" - the princess of the flow of eternal power.

One day, a student came to Yogi Bhajan, tearful at having lost her pet dog. Out of kindness, he told the young woman where to find her furry, missing friend.

The news travelled quickly. All of a sudden, hundreds of people were calling to tell the man they considered the Saint Anthony of the West Coast about the objects, pets and people that had vanished from their lives.

## **The Yogi's Guru**

On April the thirteenth, Yogi Bhajan introduced his students to a special day called "Baisakhi." Baisakhi was the birthday of Guru Nanak, the "Guru for the Aquarian Age." Yogi Bhajan had someone borrow a book from the university and draw a picture of Guru Nanak from it, since he could not find any in Los Angeles.

The Yogi introduced everyone to the term "Sikh," meaning student. He shared with them the Sikh principles of living in the world with grace, kindness, courage and distinction. In that visionary talk, he also told them about the sacred Siri Guru Granth Sahib, "the Word as Guru."

Many of Yogi Bhajan's student were brought up Catholic. Many came from Jewish homes. No one was interested in taking up another religion. Everyone had had enough of formalities and creeds and ritual obligations. In a world of war and injustice, the religions they knew did not seem to make a bit of difference, but they listened intently to their teacher's heartfelt sentiments.

## **Shakti's Story**

Shakti Parwha Kaur served Yogi Bhajan selflessly as his first American student and flag-bearer. Married at eighteen, a mother at twenty, divorced at twenty-two, her service and the yoga taught by Yogi Bhajan contributed to her healing.

Back in the days when he gave private classes, the Master once told her to lie down in corpse pose, breathing long and deep. And then he left the room and did not come back for forty-five minutes. The effects of that one class would stay with her from that day on.

Shakti Parwha was not terribly good with postures. Even with Yogi Bhajan's help, she could not lift her lower back to come into wheel pose. Cat-cow, however, she could do, so the Master would encourage the class, saying, "If Shakti can do it, anybody can do it."

Shakti Parwha Kaur knew stress before the word was widely recognized as a human condition. She was also hypoglycemic and premenopausal. Often, she would burst into tears for no apparent reason.

Whenever Shakti became upset, he would advise her, "Relax! Heavens are not going to fall." When she showed him a minute-to-minute itinerary she had composed for her day, he would often counter, "The One who rotates the Earth for you, don't you think He can take care of your routine?"

One night when Shakti Parwha phoned the Master upset about one thing or another, he advised her, "Get *Peace Lagoon* and start reading *Jaap Sahib*." She started reading and calmed down almost immediately.

He said, "You should read *Jaap Sahib* every day." That *Bani* was known for its capacity to inspire self-regulation, strength, courage, and a state of grace.

She said, "Okay." But the next day she called him and said, "I don't like *Jaap Sahib* very much. Can I read *Japji* instead?"

"Fine." Little did she know that when a student disagrees with a spiritual teacher's advice, they just tell them to do what they want.

A few days later, Shakti had a change of heart, "Well, since you recommended *Jaap Sahib*, I guess I'll read it."

For the first five years, Yogi Bhajan never offered Shakti Parwha Kaur a word of criticism. His patience and kindness, together with his life-giving teachings, gave her the support she needed to heal from within.

## The Hollywood Party

Jules with his many Hollywood connections took a personal interest in the mission of the yogi he now shared his home with. Jules told his yogi guest that he could make him a star. He could be on television. He could be famous. According to Jules, it was just a matter of meaning the right people and making the right connections.

Yogi Bhajan did not like the scheme being presented to him. He did not want to be famous right away. He was perfectly content doing what he was doing, building a solid foundation of consistent, humble efforts. He did not need the egos of stars or their money. India too had its stars. He was not enamoured of them or their superficial reality.

Finally, the teacher gave in to the sincere entreaties of his student and Jules arranged for a celebrity party in Yogi Bhajan's honor at someone's mansion in Beverly Hills.

Then the evening came and Yogi Bhajan went to see what this was all about. He had never attended this kind of party before. Soon, corks were popping, noses were sniffing, and the smell of marijuana filled the air. There were whole, roasted pigs and lots and lots of other delicacies.

By nine o'clock, Yogi Bhajan noticed the hands of many of the other guests beginning to reach and grope inside each another's clothing. It was apparent that the drugs and alcohol had diminished whatever inhibitions the guests might have had, and that developments were on a roll, rolling downhill fast.

What was a yogi to do? No sooner had he asked himself this question than the answer became obvious: he would meditate! Taking a chair to a corner of the room, Yogi Bhajan began sitting facing away from the rowdy guests, blissfully indifferent to the mundane details of the party's lascivious goings-on.

After some time had passed, Jules came by and interrupted the Yogi's meditation. His enthusiasm was unbounded. "I am going to make you the greatest yogi of the planet!"

"Look, I don't believe the planet is worth anything," replied Yogi Bhajan. "I have come here to talk to some people, person to person, and uplift and tell them they have a soul and tell them they have a mind and tell them they can be happy and tell them they can contain the contentment in themselves, tell them their future... I have a lot of good schemes, but what is this going on?"

"Yogi, you don't understand. We are going to spend \$50-60,000 tonight on this party!"

"You pigs! You are going to eat all that yourselves and drink all that yourself. What do I have to do? I am sitting for the last three hours on this corner chair. Nobody has even come to me and you are telling me this is a party in my honor!"

"They all talk about you. They all know about you, but they do not know how to come to you."

"Fine. What am I supposed to do? Sit here? That's all?"

"Yeah. Your grace is working."

"No, no. You don't understand. My grace is not working today. My grace is being worked to death. I don't understand what grace means here. Everybody is drunk and..."

"You don't understand! This is Hollywood and champagne is flowing tonight."

Jules left Yogi Bhajan and arranged for the hostess, who had taken some yoga classes, to introduce the guest of honor. She gathered everyone's attention, as much attention as there was to be gathered under the circumstances, and introduced Yogi Bhajan, but it was no use. People were too drunk or high to remember his name. Many could hardly recall their own.

As graciously as he could, the Yogi retired to his quiet chair in the corner, perhaps to meditate. After a few minutes, a lady in a flowing gown came by. It looked like she wanted to make conversation, but she was drunk and high and all she managed to do was insult the Master, again and again.

With his impeccable manners and unbounding restraint, he sat and listened and smiled.. At last, Harbhajan the Yogi saw an opportunity, stood up, and walked to the door.

At the door, someone asked him, "Are you going?"

He replied, "No, I am just slipping out for fresh air."

"Are you coming back in?"

"Never!"

"Is something wrong?"

"Nothing."

"But has something gone wrong?"

"Yeah."

"What?"

"I am suffocating! It is very wrong. It is gone very wrong." And the Yogi stepped outside and delighted in the pure night air, the first time in hours he could fill his well-developed lungs with oxygen without the miasma of others' alcoholic breath.



## After the Party

The next morning, Jules and Yogi Bhajan met again. Jules said, "Yogi Bhajan, what you have done? You have totally blown it!"

Yogi Bhajan replied, "Blown it? I haven't blown anything. What 'blown it'?"

"Did you know that" - and Jules named a famous actress - "...was at the party?!"

"Look, I am not going to work in movies! What is this actress so-and-so? And what is this 'I will be a great yogi'? Man, if I had been there half an hour more, I would have been dead! You are talking 'blown it'. I think I have saved myself 100% by walking out!"

"You walked all the way?"

"No, I got a lift along the way. I know how to raise now this thumb and I told somebody, 'I am a lost person and that is my address and there is at nine hundred, at big tall building. From there, I can find my house.' So they took me there and dropped me and 'Good-bye!' and 'Thank you!' Look, I am not going to go to these parties for a million dollars apiece! It is not possible. It is not my kind of bag. It is not my cup. Period."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know. I will prefer to hang myself than to go for this kind of introduction!"

The phone rang. It was the woman who had sat and spoken with him at the party. "Did I insult you yesterday? Did you feel it?"

"No, I didn't feel it. I was numb. I do not know what to feel. I didn't feel and I was pretty numb and I don't think you did insult me. I think you did what you did."

"I didn't mean to. I was just told that you were sitting alone and I wanted to communicate."

"Yes. I am very grateful that you came and gave me the company and did communicate with me. It is alright."

But it was not going to be alright. The woman cursed at Yogi Bhajan and practically screamed through the phone, "*You are putting me off! Why don't you open your heart?*"

"You have to understand that I do not understand that I have in any way felt anything and I think that you are trying to make me feel today, and I don't think I can feel today, but I am very grateful you have told me how Americans live. This is a part of their culture. I'll work on it."

*"Good... good... good... I am glad you learned something, you Indian pig!"* The line went dead.

Yogi Bhan reflected on the essence of that abusive communication. He felt the frustration, the rage, the humiliation. He felt it all. What could he do for these people?

There and then, out of a deep sense of concern born of compassion, he made up his mind to teach Americans how to talk from the heart, not from the head, not from the ego of their money and their structure, but from their light, being human, and from their delight, being creatures of God.

## The Price of Initiation

Despite Yogi Bhan's best intentions, the word spread through the Hollywood hills that a charismatic teacher had come from India. Chauffeur-driven cars and limos began to pull up in front of the yoga center before class. "Personal assistants" would come and lay out expansive towels for their celebrated employers to exercise on. If he went to the washroom, Yogi Bhan would find \$100 bills on the mat where he sat to conduct the class. The yoga master had unwillingly become a part of the Hollywood social circuit: from film shoot to yoga class to cocktail party to oblivion.

A number of women of wealth and social status were also attracted to Yogi Bhan's classes. They wanted the enchanted yogi to give them initiation of the sort they had read about in their books on mysticism.

Yogi Bhan refused them all, saying he was teaching this yoga openly and publicly. There would be no secret initiations. *"Sat Nam,"* meaning Truth Personified, was the mantra. It did not depend on any one personality. Those who wanted to practise it, needed to initiate themselves.

The ladies wondered at the elusive yogi. What was he really after? What was he doing in Los Angeles? What was his price, anyway?

One balmy day after class, one of the women, wealthier and more self-assured than the rest, looked directly into the Master's eyes and made him an offer she thought he could not refuse: eighteen million dollars, plus an estate in Malibu with a big house, a nice car, and maintenance provided. To have all that, Yogi Bhan only needed to put his hand on her head and pronounce that he had initiated her.

The Master answered the determined woman as he had answered those who had asked before. There would be no private or public initiation. Quoting scripture and invoking reason, Yogi Bhan tried to make his American students understand there was no easy way to enlightenment.

The woman could not hear the Master's words. As he spoke, she sat and became visibly angrier

and angrier. When she opened her mouth to reply, her words were hot and bitter. "I'll take all that money to slander you and get you out of the United States faster than you think."

The Master spoke calmly and coolly, "Lady, I have not come to the United States to have bucks here. Someone who brought me will take me away. Neither you brought me, nor you..."

"Why not?"

"Did you write me a letter inviting me here?"

"No."

"So that ends the matter. Don't be upset. No problem."

A week later, the same woman came after class and sat down before the Yogi. She thought she was being reasonable. "Why don't you accept my money? I want to give it to you out of love."

"Look. You have to understand something. If I am a man and you tell me to get pregnant, tell me how will I get pregnant? Explain it to me. You don't understand big language. I will explain to you in human language. I am a male, right? Can you believe that I can be pregnant?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"You are not capable of being pregnant."

"I am not capable of initiating anybody. I can't initiate you because I am not capable. Period. It's not in my genes. It's not in my process. I don't want to come from India to America and cheat Americans. I am not here for that purpose. Period. I don't need your money, and I don't need your land, and I don't need your house, and I don't need you!"

"What do you *want*?" She was starting to lose her composure. Her voice was turning harsh and shrill.

"I want somebody who can initiate himself."

"How?"

"I'll tell you..."

*"I don't want to learn that!"*

"Then that's it! You don't want to learn. I am willing to tell you. If you don't want to learn, don't learn! Please don't yell at me. Because if I initiate you, you won't initiate yourself. You got it? And so long as God gave you identity and you don't initiate yourself, then it is not possible that you can progress. Ego is the biggest disease, but there is a solution in the ego. The ego solution is to initiate with your own ego your own self and don't accept any other initiation."

## The Identity of the Master

Yogi Bhajan's openness and love, his purity of intention and sheer innocence, drew people of all sorts and personalities. The rich thought he was one of them because he acted rich. The Master spoke and moved with the flare and self-confidence of the truly rich.

The celebrities thought he was one of theirs because of his good looks and charm. Words never failed him. In fact, the Yogi's charm was genuine, unpretentious and unrehearsed. He was a grand actor in a grand role on a universal stage, and he lived his part with grace and magnanimity.

The hippies, too, considered Yogi Bhajan one of their own. Was he not a rebel against the establishment, like them? Did he not teach them yoga to get them high naturally? Wasn't he a counter-culture prophet with his message of peace and love and the Aquarian Age?

The members of each group, each in their way, liked to claim Yogi Bhajan for themselves. They talked to the Yogi as though he were one of them. He could be enigmatic and hard to fathom, but ultimately he belonged to them. And Yogi Bhajan accepted all this, up to a point.

Meanwhile, Jules continued to plan and scheme wealth and fame for his yogi guest. He regularly brought celebrities and trendy people to meet Yogi Bhajan.

Jules the celebrity maven loved to surround himself with the "hip" and trendy crowd, but could not bear the discipline and "uptightness" of one of the yogi's students. "I can make you a star, but you've got to get rid of this woman because she just doesn't make it. She alienates all the people I bring to you."

"I cannot possibly do that," replied the yogi in Yogi Bhajan, "I have promised this woman who has been misled and misused by spiritual teachers that I would not do that. For the sake of the reputation of the spiritual teacher and of all spiritual teachers, I must be true to her. And if she is my only one student, then that is how it is, but I won't abandon her."

The life of the Yogi in Los Angeles was a bed of tribulation. People came and people went. Some came to try the yogi. Some came to seduce him. Some tried to threaten the yogi. Some came to challenge him. Some wanted to own him. Failing that, they would slander him.

"Womanizer!" "Black magician!" "Smuggler!" "Anti-Christ!" These were some of the names Yogi Bhanjan was called, but none could buy or coerce him.

In the midst of all the turmoil, Ganga prayed in the kitchen of the Phyllis Ashram to know who this man really was. In reply, she came to see the teacher she was serving as the channel and the answer to the prayer of her generation.

## The Room

Yogi Bhanjan was once invited to a function at the home of a couple who had been attending his classes. They had a large home and about three hundred people came to the event. The hostess gave her special guest a tour of their mansion. She took pride in her home and explained how it was always humming with activity of one kind or another.

Without checking himself, Yogi Bhanjan ominously said, "Oh oh..." then quickly changed his tone, "That's nice. Anyway..."

Later on, when we were sitting alone and everyone was gone, the hostess asked, "Yogi, I don't know... When I was talking to you about something that was bothering me, you said, 'Oh oh... It's alright.'"

Yogi Bhanjan replied, "No, no. I didn't mean to disturb you."

His hostess and student persisted, "Well, there must be something. Are you avoiding saying something?"

The Master replied, "Yeah, I am avoiding saying something. I have learned not to say a lot of things. That's called 'control of mind.' I'm not going to say anything."

She continued, "Please. You are my guest. You have already said something."

Yogi Bhanjan insisted, "Well, it was a slip of tongue. It was not very important."

She said, "I don't know what you mean by that. How do you like my house?"

He said, "I like your house very much and I love that small, little room which is very sunny. I like it."

She said, "Yeah, once in a while, when I really want to be alone and meditate, I want to go there."

He said, "Don't worry. You are going to be there all the time now. That is what I am not saying."

She said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I don't know what I mean, but you have taken me through all the rooms of this house and I see you there fixed and I don't know what it means. What I am seeing is this whole house, this seventeen-bedroom house with nineteen bathrooms and all these grounds and everything, and I am wondering how you are going to end up just in that room."

His student said, "Do you see something further?"

Yogi Bhanan said, "No, just a secret. I don't think I can do anything."

In the course of time, Yogi Bhanan's student was involved in a serious accident. Coming to hear of it, Yogi Bhanan tagged a student and together they went to visit.

As it happened, it had been decided that the best place for the woman's recuperation would be the sunny room in her house and that is where they found her. Seeing her, Yogi Bhanan said, "Wow! Wonderful! That's great!"

His hostess said, "This is the second time you have said that. Now what does that mean?"

Yogi Bhanan said, "Not much. I am very happy."

She said, "What?"

He said, "What has happened is, physical damage is not much, pain is not much, but the prospect to achieve solitary, conscious meditation which you are going to go through is already set up. It is going to happen."

Twenty days later, her husband found Yogi Bhanan. In a great hurry, he said, "My wife wants you right now. Please get in my car and let's go!"

Yogi Bhanan asked, "What did she say?"

He said, "Well, she said, 'Bring Yogi! I have a very short time.'"

Yogi Bhanan said, "Yeah, she has a short time. That I know. Let's go..." Putting a shawl around himself, he set out.

When he arrived at his student's bedside, she laughed and said, "Ha! You made it!"

Knowingly, Yogi Bhajan replied, "So you made it!"

As she closed her eyes, he said, "Good-bye!"

In shock, her husband looked at Yogi Bhajan. He was a successful man with a beautiful house, servants, wealth, reputation, status, authority. He said, "What! Who made what?"

Yogi Bhajan said, "She is gone. Don't you see? Gone."

He said, "Where?"

The Master said, "Home."

The man said, "Are you crazy?"

Yogi Bhajan said, "No."

"You mean my wife is dead?"

He said, "No, she is alive. She is with God. These are the bones, the flesh. That's the jail. That's the dungeon. That's the ribcage. She has left them behind for you."

"Oh Yogi, I am in pain! What are you saying?"

Yogi Bhajan said, "I am not saying anything. I am just telling you what happened. Look, she is gone! 'She made it!' she told me. I said it too."

"Oh God! My wife is dead."

Harbhajan Singh said, "Your wife is not dead. She is alive. She is with God. You are not accepting it. You never accepted your life as a gift. You accepted her as a property. You thought you had a hold, a household. You thought she is your wife. You had a hold over it. No, you didn't have a hold. God had the hold. You are not God. Now she has made it home. She has left, and in this earthly home she has left for you her earthly form."

## **Training the Teacher**

In those days, Shakti Parwha Kaur served an indispensable role as driver, interpreter and host to Yogi Bhajan. He did not mind that she often took the wrong turn and made them lost and late for appointments. The Yogi was always relaxed and accepting of his first Los Angeles student.

He plied her with questions. "What is the difference between a 'boulevard' and a 'freeway'?" "A *tomayto* and a *tomahto*?" More particularly, he wanted to know what made Americans the way they were. Those long drives served as valuable lessons in American culture.

Yogi Bhan emphasized to his students that he had come to create teachers and not to gather disciples. It was only natural then, that when he began to travel out of town, he would have others teach his Los Angeles classes. Two of his most regular students, Shakti Parwha Kaur and Wallace, were assigned to cover for the Master.

Shakti's most memorable experience from her first class came when she instructed the students to exhale powerfully – and was nearly knocked backwards by the force of all those yogis exhaling at once!

Wallace's experience was somewhat different. All the classes at the YMCAs were cancelled afterwards. Up to that point, Wallace had been one of his best students. He had a good discipline and was developing his yogic powers.

Afterwards, Yogi Bhan asked his student for his version of events. "What is wrong with you?"

Wallace told of his encounter with an unhappy student at the class he had come to teach. "She told me I am a Negro. 'How can you represent the Yogi?' she said." Wallace happened to be Afro-American.

"So what?"

"Well, I told her 'I am a Yogi.' She said I was not. I wanted to prove it to her."

"Prove what? You have nothing to prove. God approves and proves for a teacher. We don't do a thing."

In his desire to prove himself, Wallace had summoned his powers and said, "Rise, rise..." thereby lifting the terrified woman off the floor, three feet into the air. Unfortunately, he forgot the mantra to bring her down safely and she fell from that height, breaking her leg.

## **Work Now, Be Appreciated Later**

It was late spring now, going into summer. Change was in the air. Yogi Bhan gave an order to his students which was sure to effect change in their lives. First, he told them all about the health-giving properties of garlic. Then he said that all his students should eat several cloves of the potent vegetable every day.



As expected, all that garlic proved very detoxifying to his students. It also impacted terribly on the social life of all the socialites and film star.. Within days, they and their personal assistants were no longer to be seen. Yogi Bhajan afterwards said to his remaining students, "See! Didn't I tell you that garlic is purifying?"

Jules Buccieri continued to wish fame and riches on his mysterious guest.

"Do you want to make money or not?" insisted Jules.

"My friend," Yogi Bhajan replied, "I have an honors degree in economics. I know what money is. Money is what money does. And I have enough money to do what I have to do. I don't need more."

"Well, what's wrong if there is more?"

"Then there is an audit and there is trouble. All I want is as much as I need to have."

"There is something wrong with you!"

"Yes, one thing. I don't want to be appreciated now. I want to be appreciated a little later."

"Why?"

"You don't know the basic human psychology. Those who work now are appreciated later. Those who waste time in being appreciated now cannot work, and then there is nothing to appreciate. It is a simple psychology. Whosoever wants to be appreciated, has to really work now, and then that creative work will get you appreciated. But if you start getting appreciated now, you will not have any time. You will waste all that time in being appreciated."

For all of Jules's best intentions, their two minds could never meet. Soon thereafter, he moved to another house and left the Phyllis Ashram to Yogi Bhajan.

## **The Solstice and the Fair**

Outside, trees were blossoming, and warm breezes skimming off the pacific blue. The Savages were growing restless. Dreams of inner valleys and holy mountain headlands danced in their brains. The Savages shared their visions of ancient, sacred solstices with their yogi friend.

Preparations were made, and by May it was certain that Yogi Bhajan would come to New Mexico, to the coming Summer Solstice celebration. The next month, about fifty people set out in a

motorised caravan from the "city of angels," up and over the coastal San Gabriel range, across the Arizona desert, toward the San Juan highlands of northern New Mexico.

When one of the cars gave out under the stress of the trip through the desert, it was left on the side of the highway, and its passengers given space in the remaining vehicles. Yogi Bajan had taught the highly individuated Americans that the journey to Universal Consciousness led through "group consciousness," the sharing and caring for the needs of others. And so it was.

At last, the parade of brightly coloured Volkswagen vans and an assortment of cars and buses arrived at their destination: the Tesuque Indian Reservation, a few miles to the north of Santa Fe. Many others had already arrived at the reservation. All in all, a couple of hundred hippies and "Whole-Earthers" came in from all over New Mexico and the surrounding area. This was the second summer solstice gathering – a "Gathering of the Tribes" as it was called, and there was reunion in the air. Everywhere, there was music, laughter, and celebration.

Tepees, including a large one for Yogi Bajan, were set up around the Aspen Meadows site. At night, his tent served as a gathering place and a place for all kinds of visionary discussion and deliberations. This was where an invitation to help with a planned "music and art fair" in upstate New York was discussed. Some of the solstice folk had been contacted and told the event was going to last from August 15 to 18, and it was going to be held outdoors. For this, the organizers needed responsible people who had actually slept under the sky. They were to serve as the leaders and caregivers of the many thousands of young people expected to converge at a large alfalfa meadow on a dairy farm outside of Woodstock, New York.

In the end, it was decided that some of the Jook Savages would go along with communards from the nearby Hog Farm and New Buffalo community to set up the free stage, medical tents, free-food kitchen, and other facilities, and otherwise help out at the "Aquarian exposition." It would only be appropriate to bring some kundalini yoga. Tom Law, one of the Savages, would teach at the fair.

## Solstice Frolics

Early morning in the San Juan Mountains was beautiful, peaceful, starlit. Bright and early, Yogi Bajan would rise to shower and prepare for meditation. It was like the pristine forests of the Himalayas - except that when he came back, the Yogi found his tent taken over by couplings of amorous flower children.

*"Hell is happening!"* cried the Yogi, and Shakti Parwha Kaur rushed over to shoo away the morning romantics and clear the way for Yogi Bajan's morning meditation.

For some of Yogi Bajan's hippy students, sexual promiscuity came without a blush or second

thought. As he was teaching the cat-cow exercise during his first class in a virgin meadow, a young man mounted a woman from behind and initiated intercourse. By the time Yogi Bhajan had arrived to ask, "What are you doing?" it was all over. His student shrugged to say, "She didn't mind it."

The most exciting part of the Solstice was the "Great Bus Race" – eight roaring psychedelic-painted buses careening along a track just wide enough for three or four of them, across the Aspen Meadow and back again.

One bus sliced through a tent, whose occupants had just come outside to investigate the racket. The race rumbled past Yogi Bhajan, who offered a bow and a smile as the buses and their attendant cloud of New Mexico dust narrowly passed by. Two of the buses stalled along the way, creating an obstacle course for those behind.

It was all uproarious, noisy, chaotic fun, but on the final downhill stretch to the finish, one child stood helplessly transfixed in the middle of the track at the sight of the herd of roaring steel quickly bearing down – until someone heroically leapt out of the crowd, grabbed, and rolled the scared youngster to safety just as the buses roared by.

For some of the campers, the highlight was the weddings Yogi Bhajan conducted.. He had encouraged couples to commit to lasting relationships. In his words, "Marriage is the carriage to infinity."

So persuasive was his argument that Tom and Lisa Law, and Dawson and Karen Hayward, together with six other couples decided to tie the knot then and there. Lacking any other provisions, Yogi Bhajan had a fire made in a pit, then had the brides and grooms vow their lifelong fidelity and circle the fire, hand in hand, thereby beginning a tradition of solstice marriages.

## Solstice Reverie

For his part, Yogi Bhajan was taken up by a reverie on the irrepressible course of destiny. He recalled the astrologer who, barely eighteen months before had predicted he would one day be famous, that places where he had gone to the bathroom would become temples, and that the summer solstice would find him sitting on a high place teaching Eastern wisdom to Westerners.

Harbhajan remembered how he and his wife had joked on the roof of their Nizamuddin home during the warm Delhi nights. He had pictured the Palam airport being closed for some big emergency. All the Westerners would then congregate in the transit lounge and he would sit on a bar and tell them something spiritual to calm them down.

"Does that sound right? What do you think, Bibiji?"

"That sounds about right to me." They had enjoyed a laugh at the expense of the astrologer, taking in the apparent absurdity of the prediction.

"After all, they are not going to come to the Humayun graveyard to learn yoga from me and I cannot go to some academy to lecture. I am a uniformed officer."

It was not long before the hand of destiny began to take Yogi Bhajan's life in an altogether unexpected direction. First came the report that the Soviet government was looking for a yogi to participate in its research institute in Tashkent. Then, within a few days, came the opportunity of teaching in Toronto. The Canadian ambassador had been sympathetic and most helpful.

"Resign, and come to Canada," he had said. And he did.

Yogi Bhajan's days in Toronto had passed like a dream. All the classes, the people, the interviews, the cold, the hunger, the strange food, everything. Through it all, he had sung to himself,

"One day, the day shall come when all the glory will be Thine. They will say it is yours and I shall deny 'not mine.' *Gobinday Mukanday, Udhaaray Apaaray, Hariang Kariang, Nirnaamay Akaamay...*" Verses and verses, he used to make up just to keep his spirits up, to keep his focus, and pass the time.

Then he had come to visit his old friend in America, and gone on to teach first at the East West Cultural Center, then at the YMCAs and Jules's antique shop.

And now he was in the ancient land of New Mexico. It was the day of the longest sunlight and shortest night. Harbhajan Singh the yogi was in a small canyon with his students. They had made a sizable mound of earth and stone, and covered it with a Hopi blanket for him to sit on. This is where he had taught his first class.

Thinking about it, Yogi Harbhajan was amazed at how accurate the astrologer had been in his prediction. Only he had been off by about twelve hours as he had not properly accounted for the time difference between India and America.

## Lessons at the Free School

After the final "Long Time Sun..." had been sung at the Solstice site, Yogi Bhajan was invited to visit the Free School in nearby Santa Fe. True to its name, the school charged no fees. Its curriculum was also free and wide-ranging. Free schools typically taught everything from Zen meditation to

macramé, from political consciousness-raising to natural child birth.

The true spirit of education at the FreeSchool touched the Master's heart and he agreed to stay for a week and give a number of classes of his own. One lesson he gave was a demonstration of 108 yoga poses, captured for posterity by Lisa Law's unerring camera.

The following lesson was given on June 24th and taken down by Shakti Parwha Kaur's serviceful pen and paper.

*"Ong Namō Guru Dayv Namō"*

First, Yogi Bhajan had his students sit on their heels and lock their hands together, their arms stretched out straight in front. Then he told them to inhale and move their arms up and down three times in a pumping motion, and exhale. They repeated this sequence for three minutes. Next, the Master told them to continue the exercise, but pumping the arms up and down ten times per breath. This exercise, he told them as they worked their arms up and down, works on the thyroid and parathyroid.

Next, Yogi Bhajan had his students lie down and lock their hands behind their neck, lift their left leg up two feet off the ground with the toes pointed and begin deep breathing. After one minute, he had them change sides, then repeat on the other side, change sides again and repeat.

After that, the Master had the young men and women in his class sit up in easy pose. *Praanayam* - breathing exercises - were next. First, with the right thumb on the right nostril, slowly and deeply inhaling and exhaling through the left nostril. After two minutes, they were instructed to place their right forefinger on their left nostril and continue the long and deep breath through the right nostril. The next variation called on them to make a "U" of the right thumb and forefinger, and begin to inhale through the right nostril and exhale through the left. After a time, they then reversed the flow and began Breath of Fire, inhaling through the left nostril and exhaling through the right. Then, to completely open the *praanic* channels, the students continued the Breath of Fire, but reversed the flow of the breath once more.

The students were young, energetic and strong-headed, but the Yogi had a remedy for their wanton energies: from the navel, open the heart! From sitting, he had them lie on their back with their legs straight, heels together, toes pointed forward, hands beside the thighs. So far, easy. Then the voice of the Yogi commanded with unmistakable love and authority, "Lift up your heels six inches, lift your head up to look at the toes, and begin Breath of Fire. Do your best, then rest and try again immediately." It was the hardest exercise many of them had ever imagined. Fifteen minutes.

At last, the Master instructed, "Pull the knees into the chest! Wrap your arms around your shins and put your nose between the knees. Begin Breath of Fire."

And after another while, Yogi Bhajan then told his yogis in training to sit up and bend forward, catch a hold of their toes and begin long, deep breathing.

Finally, the Master had them lie on their back and lift their heads up twelve inches, stretching their arms forward, parallel to the ground, with their feet remaining on the ground. Breath of Fire. This exercise, he instructed, would give perfect eyesight.

By this time, even the strongest in his class were exhausted from their exertions. At the perfect moment, Yogi Bhajan directed everyone to lie on their back as he began to play the gong. The gong resonated louder as the Master directed everyone to relax and lift their mental body three feet above their physical body and remain floating there.

Gone with stress. Gone with Earth. Gone with time. Gone with troubles. Gone, gone, gone with the cosmic roar of the gong. Gone.

All too soon, the Master summoned everyone back and told them to roll their hands and feet and to rock on their spines, then to sit in easy pose with their hands in *gyan mudra* and chant: "*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru*" - There is One God. Truth is His Name. Great is His Indescribable Wisdom!

And so it was! And so it is!

## Returning Home

From New Mexico and the Summer Solstice, the yoga students returned to their homes, scattered across the warring American nation, recharged and with a sense of common purpose. Many of them came to realize that it was their destiny to teach, to inspire, and to sacrifice so that a new age of peace might be born out of the old.

Encouraged by Yogi Bhajan, they dedicated themselves to the service of humanity and the Aquarian ideals of truth, justice and soulful well-being. Having learned a little, they set out to teach much to the many.

## Sufi Sam

That summer, Yogi Bhajan made the acquaintance of a much-loved teacher of the Sufi way. Their first meeting was at a celebration in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco under unusual circumstances. As it happened, a man of Bangladeshi origin took some sort of exception to Yogi Bhajan. So much so, that he launched into an unbroken tirade of abuse at the top of his voice.

About a thousand people had just finished participating in “dances of universal peace,” led by Murshid Samuel L. Lewis, popularly called "Sufi Sam", when Yogi Bhajan had arrived with a following of students. No one knew what to make of the intruder. Harbhajan the Yogi, for his part, simply stood his ground, an impassive tower of calm resolve.

A student of the Sufi master managed to penetrate the crowd surrounding the Yogi and his maligner, to tell Yogi Bhajan, "Murshid Samuel L. Lewis is here and would like to greet you in love and unity."

This finally broke the impasse. Yogi Bhajan proceeded to walk across a field to where Murshid rose to greet him most affectionately. Yogi Bhajan responded in kind and introduced his haranguer as "Ahmaddiya." The maligner was becoming increasingly upset, since his quarry was slipping away.

While it did not seem possible to silence the stranger, Murshid masterfully began to say some things about the grades of ego as taught in the Ahmaddiya school of Islamic thought.

The slanderer retorted, "Those things mean nothing to me!"

Murshid turned and asked permission from Yogi Bhajan to speak up for him and to take this man on directly. This did not please the Ahmaddiya very much, but Yogi Bhajan seemed to give his consent.

The man renewed his abusive attacks. At this, Murshid turned to Yogi Bhajan and said, "I didn't know how great you were!"

With each statement the man made, Murshid became more effusive in his praise, as if, instead of slander, the man were heaping praises on him.

The attack continued. Murshid's laudations became all the more exaggerated.

The maligner would not stop his stream of abuse. Murshid then dropped to his knees and bowed at the Yogi's feet, repeating "I didn't know how great you are!"

The abuser began to become progressively more befuddled. At last, in complete exasperation, he turned his scorn directly on Murshid. But by now he was so tongue-tied, all he could say scream was, "*You are a jackass!*"

Without a moment's hesitation, Murshid rose up on all fours and began to bray!

This proved to be more than their friend could take, as he turned and stomped away.

Murshid then stood up and took his place beside Yogi Bhajan, and they had a long discussion of mutual goals and mutual visions, trading stories on into the day. It was the beginning of a deep

friendship that was to last until "Sufi Sam" left this temporary place in January of 1971.

## The Pearl of Purposefulness

In those early days, a few students would come to the make-do yoga ashram at Jules's house to answer the phone. They would volunteer to do that job for four or five hour shifts.

Once a lady came to help out. After four hours, someone was supposed to replace her, but no one came by. Four more hours passed. Still no one came, and another four hours went by.

Finally, Yogi Bhanan looked at her and said, "Don't you think you are being over-detained? I don't think anybody's coming, so why don't you go?"

She looked back at him and said, "How do you do it?"

"Do what?"

"You *really* work!"

"Yes, I do."

"How do you do it? I've been watching you for the last twelve hours. You are just constantly doing one thing or another!"

"I don't understand you. What did you think I was doing?"

"Answering telephone calls and doing this and that and the other thing. You do so many things around here that it's hard even to believe!"

"But it's not me that's doing it. I am doing nothing! I'm just a shell. But in this humble shell there lives a purpose. Imagine a Mexican jumping bean! In that bean, there's a little thing which makes it jump. It's exactly the same way for me. There's no difference."

Some years before, Yogi Bhanan had realized that a life without a purpose has hardly any more value than an empty shell. He had come to know that the spirit of service and dedication is to a human life what a priceless pearl is to an ordinary oyster. Without that precious pearl, the oyster is just another piece of flesh in a shell. It has no special use and is of no particular value.

With his tireless sense of mission and personal care and attention to the many details of his craft, the Master was all the while remembering the exquisite pearl of purposefulness.



## **Making the Festival**

Back in New Mexico, the Hog Farmers received \$1,700 from the festival organizers to gather as many people as possible and get them to the festival site in upstate New York. In all, eighty-five Hog Farmers, Jook Savages, New Buffalo people, and fifteen Hopis set out to the appointed destination in upper New York state. Some drove in buses packed with supplies. The rest gathered a few days later at the Albuquerque International Airport and boarded a special American Airlines jet to New York's Kennedy Airport.

From the airport, Tom and Lisa Law and the rest of the crew were whisked off to a languid resort on White Lake, which was stirring with business for a change. There, they connected with those who had come by bus, who by now had assembled a kitchen to feed them all.

There was nine days left to assemble the free stage, medical tents, free-food kitchen, serving booths, information tents, and special tents for those needing respite from too many people, too much rain, too much stimulation. It was going to belike Solstice, only bigger and louder - a lot louder.

While most of the crew set to work assembling the site, Lisa Law, six months pregnant with her second child, set off for New York City, with a truck and a driver to pick up supplies for the free kitchen. On her shopping list were big, stainless steel bowls and pots, cleavers and a giant onion cutter, 1,200 pounds of bulgar wheat and rolled oats, cases of currants and wheat germ, kegs of soy sauce and honey, and 130,000 paper plates and spoons and forks. Lisa also picked up a jade Buddha in Chinatown "for good luck and to keep the kitchen crew happy and healthy and blessed."

## **Onion Juice Purifies the Blood**

Wherever he went, Yogi Bhanjan sought out people known or claimed to be spiritual. This led him to meet with Swami Satchidanda in Malibu, California. His Hindu friend was fourteen years older. He had been in America teaching yoga since being invited by pop artist Peter Max in 1966. The Swami was on his way to inaugurate the festival in New York state. No doubt, the two yogis compared notes on the strange customs of the natives.

Strange as they were, Yogi Bhanjan did his best to appreciate their customs and even their lingo. Sometimes he would himself say something was "far out." He learned the meaning of "spaced out" and "laying a trip" and a lot of other hippie slang, and he used it too. It helped bridge the culture gap, the generation gap between them.

Some of the students had no inhibitions at all. After all, Yogi Bhanjan lived among them and hardly made any distinctions. To many longhairs, the Master was just the "cool cat." When there were picnics, they were known to pick food from Yogi Bhanjan's plate without a second thought. As far as

they were concerned, he was simply one of them.

Yogi Bhan encouraged his students to rise bright and early each day. "Early to bed and early to rise..." he would say. His basic prescription for self-liberation was to rise two and a half hours before sunrise and chant "*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru*" - There is One God. Truth is His Name. Great is His Indescribable Wisdom!"

Sometimes he had his students sing his Guru's Words, "*Jis neech ko koe na jaaneh, Naam japat oho chau kunt maaneh* - O that mean, mean man, he sins and sins again and again, but if he chants the Name of the Lord, the four corners of the world will bow down to him!"

Yogi Bhan advised his yoga students of the need of the times. He reminded them of the fate of previous civilizations consumed by the use of intoxicants. India had been ruined by marijuana. China had been laid waste by opium. Alcohol had wrecked the great Roman empire. Peyote had spoiled the civilization of the pharaohs. America, still in its infancy, had all four.

One afternoon, while Yogi Bhan was visiting at Shakti Parwha Kaur's West Hollywood apartment, she noticed him suddenly close his eyes and draw deep within. After a couple of minutes silence, the phone rang. It was Tom Law from the Woodstock festival. There was a problem. Someone had put LSD in the drinking water and not everyone was having a nice trip.

The Yogi knew just what to do: Massage onion juice on the soles of the feet until they come down from their trip. Bitter onion juice serves to purify the blood.

## American Dreams

Yogi Bhan was a discerning student of the human condition. Again and again, he found himself amazed by the social conventions of California society. In the India he had known, people cherished long-term, nurturing relationships. They had families and belonged to communities. Here, he saw that many Americans lived alone. Families in California's trendy social scene were sadly riven by separation and divorce.

Yogi Bhan recognized that many of the people he met were also driven by a blinding, impersonal ambition. Relationships, so far as they existed, were often mutually exploitative.

Yogi Bhan went to the movies. There, he saw the cutting edge of America's social drama, with its full complement of gratuitous sex and violence. On the streets of Los Angeles, he marvelled at the gaudy, bubble-like quality of the American dream gone sour: its endless supermarkets and stretch limousines, its vast car parks and spiralling freeways, its smoky bars and shiny skyscrapers, its topless clubs, pornography, casual sex and bottomless morality.

## At the 'Bird's Nest'

In Orlando, Florida, John Twombly was preparing for a visit of his teacher, Yogi Bhanjan, whom he had met at a music festival. Yogi Bhanjan was to come to Florida for the first time to teach some kundalini yoga classes. There was a problem however. John was living with his parents still, and his parents did not appreciate his new, yogic lifestyle. At dinner with his students, Diane and Harry Bird, it was decided that it would be best if Yogi Bhanjan stayed at their house. A few days later, it was agreed that Yogi Bhanjan and his tour secretary, together with John, would be staying at the Bird's comfortable house on Oakmont Lane.

Wherever Yogi Bhanjan went, his students were also sure to turn up. So it was that a bus dubbed "Road Hog" arrived with members of the Hog Farm commune. A couple of dozen other guests also arrived from here and there. As Yogi Bhanjan did not have a regular schedule in those days, over the several days he stayed, he spent much of the time between classes on the living room couch and visiting with anyone who was around.

Harry and Diane provided what hospitality they could. As there were only three bedrooms, the Birds and their two young children cozied up in one, while their special house guest slept in another and his tour secretary on the floor. The Hog Farmers stayed in bunks in their Road Hog, while the twenty-odd others slept wherever they could, side by side throughout the house, on the back porch and the pool deck.

Mornings, the swimming pool was used for bathing. Several holes were dug with shovels to serve as latrines, as there was only one toilet in the house and it ended up being plugged. Someone, wanting to be a good yogi guest, had tried unsuccessfully to flush their bag, or bags, of drugs down the drain.

On another occasion, Yogi Bhanjan was invited to teach in Miami. In those days, whenever he received a paid fare, Yogi Bhanjan would travel just about anywhere to teach classes. When he and his tour secretary arrived in Miami, they were very surprised to find their hostess making inappropriate advances. When Yogi Bhanjan told her that he was only interested in teaching, their hostess insisted they get out of her vehicle, then sped away, leaving them stranded at the roadside. Fortunately, the two of them had just enough money for a bus ticket to Orlando, where Harry picked the weary travellers up from the bus station for a few days of rest with the Bird family, which the Master had dubbed the "Bird's Nest."

## Old Friends Lost

In those days, Harbhajan Singh, the Yogi, saw little of his old friends from India, now living in Los Angeles. They wondered what he was doing with all those young Americans. Rumours back in Delhi

were not any more inspiring.

What was the former customs inspector up to? The status-conscious immigrant community considered their old friend had no qualifications for success in their adopted homeland. Why, he had no job, no car - Harbhajan Singh couldn't even drive! What was he doing? Had he lost his mind? To their minds, Harbhajan Singh's prospects looked very bleak indeed.

## The Bait

The ashram at 9006 Phyllis Avenue in LA, was a hive of activity with people working, people visiting, and people just passing by. The Master took inspiration from the dollar bill with its motto: "In God We Trust" – but dollar bills were not in abundance. Yogi Bhajan and a few volunteers who did the correspondence and other office work, took turns using a well-worn blanket to catch a couple of hours sleep. They affectionately called it the "holy blanket."

The kitchen of the Phyllis Ashram could be a very busy place indeed. Daily, Ganga engaged in the alchemy of making something from nothing to feed the guests. The need for groceries was so great that one devoted student sold her cherished record collection to stock the kitchen with food.

Ganga had once complained to Yogi Bhajan that she would have preferred to leave the kitchen, wear a pretty nice dress, and join the guests in the living room. He advised her that if she just chanted and cooked and did the dishes, she would wash her karmas away. And that is what Ganga did.

The people who came to see Yogi Bhajan would come with all sorts of motivations. Some wanted guidance. Some wanted gratification. Some were confused and didn't really know what they wanted. And then, there were "yogi hunters" who also wanted his time and attention.

On one occasion, Yogi Bhajan interrupted a woman who had come with a proposition for him, "I would like to ask you a question."

She said, "What?"

He replied, "Are you a hooker?"

"Huh? How can you say that?"

"I don't know what it means to you, but I am just asking in simple English... I speak English English. I am not American."

"What do you mean by 'hooker'?"

"You know the fish? You take the fish, you take the reel and you put that hook? And one who puts that hook is called "hooker."

"Well, in this country, they call a prostitute a 'hooker.'"

"No, you are not a prostitute! Prostitutes are very honorable, so you are not a prostitute. A prostitute is honorable. I have all respect for a prostitute. You know, they sell themselves, they charge the money, they give you in return, and that's it. It's a business. They sell their body. You give them money. It's very 'unfairly fair' I call it.

"But these hookers, God knows where they first are going to stick that thing into you, and then how long you are going to do like that, you know. You know what I mean? And when are they going to put you in a bag and how you are going to be treated? I mean, you can't predict anything! By 'hooker,' exactly I mean that."

"Do you know how many million dollars I want to give to you.?"

"I definitely know that I am a man in a very shallow pond, okay? But I am not willing to take your bait."

Yogi Bhanan was a learned man. In his learning, he was very well aware that the greatest consciousness and divinity and morality and strength and power of a man is knowing the bait. An ordinary man thinks he has the power to bite, not knowing that once he bites he may never bite again. A yogi, therefore, knows he should never bite. He should read between the lines and find the bait... and let it stink.

## The 'House of Shiva'

Yogi Bhanan met a young lady outside the Phyllis Ashram. It was an unusually quiet day. The student who usually came to answer the phone and do the secretarial work was dozing, and there was no one around.

Yogi Bhanan recognized the woman. He had seen her coming and going from one of the houses across the street. They introduced themselves. She said she worked for a company that arranged hospitality and accommodations for Hollywood's many actors and performers. It sounded like a reasonable occupation.

The lady invited her yogi neighbour to visit across the street where she worked. Inside were apartments, where apparently the denizens of the Hollywood scene might spend a night or catch a few hours rest between shootings. It was clean and tidy. It also looked fairly ordinary from the outside.

Everything seemed reasonable enough. Then, this hospitable woman asked, "Do you worship Shiva, in India I mean?"

"Many people worship Shiva. He is a God of gods."

"I mean how do people worship Shiva?"

"People chant mantras. They practise yoga. They bring garlands to the temple. People have many ways of dedicating themselves to Lord Shiva in their love and meditation."

"You know, many of our clients are really into Shiva. We have a room in the house next door which we call our "pooja" room. Would you like to see?"

It seemed a little odd. Shiva, the great ascetic, with devotees in this harem of Western superficiality.

But when Yogi Bhajan saw the room, he began to understand. The *pooja* room was adorned with a large image of the dancing Shiva and a solid Shiva "lingam." There were flowers too, and candles, and many other, smaller lingams. These, his hostess informed Yogi Bhajan had been formed with plaster of Paris from the members of her clientele. She named some of them. They were all well-known on the American entertainment scene.

Since the young woman had first mentioned the name of Shiva, Yogi Bhajan had sensed there was something terribly wrong here, and when later on his hostess directed her oddly familiar gaze into his, he recognized that it had become rather late, and that he had better be returning to his work at the ashram, in the name of Shiva, for the sake of the Indian God's reputation, and for the sake of this and every fallen angel.

## Teacher and Students

About this time, Jules arranged for the garage with its antiques to be renovated, the better to serve as a place for Yogi Bhajan's classes. Classes were bustling. About eighty students regularly came out for the evening class. Some also came for the class in the morning.

Shakti Parwha Kaur would drop into the Phyllis Ashram every day from her morning job at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel coffee shop. She was the only member of the growing family with a regular job at that point. Shakti supported the ashram in more ways than one.

Of course, Yogi Bhajan had his own way of showing concern. One day, he told his student not to park her car in front of her Santa Monica apartment. Instead, Shakti moved it and parked in front of the ashram, half a block away. The next day, when Shakti looked out into the street in front of her

home, she found her neighbour's car demolished exactly where her car would have been.

Another time, Shakti scalded her foot in a cup of hot tea. Yogi Bhajan sent a woman student over and told her to put salve on it. After spending a fitful night, Shakti awoke to find her foot as good as new.

"I can't believe it!" she exclaimed all that day. By late afternoon, the foot was as red and ornery as the night before. Such, apparently, was the power of disbelief!

In those days, there was a definite push to empower and rebuild from within these drop-outs from the American nightmare. Yogi Bhajan's often repeated formula was "Sadhana, Aradhana, Prabhupati" - Self-Mastery through self-discipline. The great mantra of the Aquarian Age, was "Keep up!" he told his students. "Keep up and you will be kept up!" he would say with a fierce smile.

The Master declared, "I have not come to gather disciples. I have come to create teachers ten times greater than myself!" He also told them, "If you want to know a thing, read that. If you want to understand a thing, write that. If you want to master a thing, teach that!" By October, students had been sent to establish ashrams in Berkeley, Washington, D.C. and Orlando, Florida.

In early December, Yogi Bhajan and his tour secretary went to Washington, D.C., his second visit there, this time to support the founding of an Ashram at 1704 Q Street NW.

When a reporter from a local paper came to cover the event, the Master instructed him, "God is vibration. The divinity in you is in control of the breath... Kundalini means to uncoil the coiled energy within a human being which will raise his consciousness so a person will not have any negativity."

Yogi Bhajan kept in touch with his teachers, wherever they were, and in more ways than one. On one occasion, he was heard to pause in the middle of a class to caution a student-teacher, "No John, not this way!"

At that time, John Twombly was teaching a yoga class thousands of miles away in Florida.

### ***Tratakam Yoga***

In his classes, Yogi Bhajan gave exercises for all different purposes: to strengthen, to heal, to remedy, to balance. Tratakam yoga is a branch of yoga which focuses on the eyes. Traditionally, yogis have gazed at the early phase of the sun's rise on the horizon to strengthen their vision. Yogis have also meditated on the flame of candle, the tip of their nose, the point between their eyebrows, and a picture of their spiritual teacher.

Over the first months of the Master's teaching, he gave numerous exercises for good eyesight. Yogi Bhajan spoke of the importance of taking care of the eyes and hinted at a relationship

between eyesight and personality.

Eventually, Yogi Bhajan introduced his students to a simple black and white photo of himself to gaze on in order to enter a meditative state. About it, he said, "Not all pictures do anything. However weird that particular picture is – sometimes you don't like it – but that's the only picture that works. All other pictures can do nothing. That's the only one. What should I do? Now, I know some people complain to me, 'Yogiji, your other pictures are more beautiful,' but I say, 'I can't help it. Sometimes non-beautiful things are required too.'"

## The Master of Coax

Yogi Bhajan was a true "fisher of men" – a teacher finding his students, a master recognizing, building and inspiring mastery often where none else could see it. Even his best students could be less than willing to embrace their spiritual destiny.

Michael Fowlis was a graduate student in mathematics at the University of California. For some time, Michael had been dreaming he was going to meet someone special, someone that would change his life. But feeling quite comfortable with his life and not wishing to change a thing, Michael had virtually locked himself in his office and refused to go out.

That was until a student came in and gave Michael a newspaper with a picture of Yogi Bhajan indicating he would give a lecture on kundalini yoga just across the street in half an hour. This was too much of a coincidence to let go by. Michael finally relented and left his office to take in the class.

Michael Fowlis had already learned hatha yoga and thought he was becoming very accomplished with his poses. He had also learned to meditate already. Lastly, Michael considered himself to be a very good academic. In all events, Michael thought he would be sure to come up with some good questions to ask the yogi after the lecture. Though he had never learned anything about kundalini yoga, he went to the class feeling quite self-assured.

The experience with the yogi turned out to be much more engaging, much more inspiring, and entirely different from anything Michael had ever done. He sensed a new relationship to his body, to energy, and to the joy of life itself. Michael loved the feeling and it loved him back.

After the class, he went before Yogi Bhajan to ask some intelligent questions he had thought of. Michael would never have a chance to ask those questions.

The Master leveled his student with a barrage of accusation, "You idiot, you're late! I've been coming out here for three months. I hate the smog. I don't like traveling. Why are you such a non-intuitive klutz that you didn't show up on time? Look, I don't have time to fool around with your nonsense! Are you coming with me or not?"



For a few moments, Michael stood aghast before this heavily accented yogi. Then, his body relaxed. A far-off memory arose and began penetrating his conscious awareness. "This is my teacher," it said, "I've been with him for lifetimes." As the fog lifted in his brain, Michael's tongue became animated with that dawning realization. It replied, "Uhh, yeah."

"Okay, come. Have a Coke!" said the Master.

"I don't drink Cokes."

"You do now."

Michael Fowles had just found his spiritual teacher. The next day, he was teaching his first kundalini yoga class.

## **The 366th Day**

On January 6th, 1970, Yogi Bhanan had entered his second year of teaching kundalini yoga in America. The date passed uneventfully, which was actually a relief to the Yoga Master. He had been warned there was a curse on anyone who openly shared the sacred, and till then secret, technology of kundalini yoga. Whoever defied the restriction was supposed to die before the coming of the second year.

On his 366th day of teaching, Yogi Bhanan remarked to his student, Gerry Pond, "I knew that was a load of nonsense. I am who I am, and that is that!"

There had been no curse, or if there had been, it had proven ineffectual in the face of the love and devotion of this special yogi.

## **Sunday Evenings**

Lawton Bozeman had grown up in Orlando, Florida and was almost nineteen. He had met Yogi Bhanan in Orlando, then made his way to Los Angeles in January of 1970 to connect with the source of the teachings.

Lawton took a train to Phoenix. Then his hitch-hiking luck served him well. Arriving in Los Angeles at 11 p.m., with no idea where he was, the driver dropped him just two blocks from the Phyllis Ashram.

Once there, Lawton settled into the rigorous daily routine that had evolved. It started each morning, rising at 2:30 am for a shower and an hour of kundalini yoga, followed by two and a half hours of the "long" chant: *Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru* till daybreak. Then there would be a morning class and an evening class, with occasional yoga through the day, just for fun.

During one memorable class, Yogi Bhajan directed everyone to do stretch pose, the excruciating exercise done lying on the back with the feet just six inches off the floor, then casually left the room of struggling students to greet and converse with the mailman at the front door.

Sunday evenings were special occasions for music, food and celebration, when guitars would come out and students would remain after until well after class. Lawton and Gerry Pond others would open their musical hearts, creating all kinds of *Sat Nam* tunes and music - rocking, rolling, joyful and inspiring.

When classes were not going on, a core of volunteers at the Ashram – Mark Lamm, Craig and Diana Schnurr – was busy compiling community news, exercises, recipes, teachings, stories of Guru Nanak, wisdom from the Guru, quotes from Yogi Bhajan, and organic gardening information for a newsletter. Their inspired creation was fittingly called "Beads of Truth," each issue a bead on a string of growing self-awareness.

Beautifully illustrated and designed, and starting with just eight pages, a new issue was mailed out each month to inform and inspire Kundalini Yogis across America.

## Seeing the Unseen

Alan Weiss was a good observer. The young man was particularly interested in watching Yogi Bhajan, his teacher, and his mysterious ways. Weiss also had an interest in the ways of the human body which would one day lead him to become an accomplished cardiologist.

It came to Alan's awareness that Yogi Bhajan had phoned a member of the Los Angeles community and told her she was pregnant, an observation she denied, saying it was impossible since she had had her period a week earlier. After a passage of time, it turned out that what the Master had said had been true.

After seeing Yogi Bhajan make this kind of observation many times, Alan approached the Master and asked how he did it. Yogi Bhajan explained that when he sees two auras in one body, he knows there is a pregnancy.

## “Living Truth”

*Twice a day, Yogi Bhajan would challenge his students at the Phyllis Ashram with inspiring stories, as well as hard truths and unpleasant wisdom, so they might grow in grace and glory as spiritual teachers.*

It is a great privilege to understand the life, but every understanding has to be lived, and the greatest understanding is that every life has to be lived very normally, but has to be lived in higher consciousness.

It is a kind of joke that we run on a path to know the truth. The reality is that we all are aware of it. None is unaware about truth, but to live up to the truth by our own self-projection is what is normally difficult for us. Talking on truth, having a library on it is all an easy thing, but molding yourself a way of life where you live with such a standard that there should be no ego that you are a different being than a normal human being, that's a very important point.

We find a little bit of truth and then start living like it is really something. Then we find a little bit more truth, then we raise our chair up there. We do not live like normal beings, and that is where our weakness lies, and that is where our progress stops completely. Each one of us has to acquire the maximum of the light around us, but he has to live as a more humble being than the beings around him. That will give him a push to reach the higher consciousness.

By knowing yoga postures, what can you do? I have got two albums and we got them snapped in one hour, and I went through like a snake and did all one hundred and eight postures. There it is, but what does that mean?

Does it mean that I have just become God, that I am one with God, and that I have got total fulfillment of mind and nothing wrong can happen to me? I know all the *kriyas*. Does that mean that I am free from karma? I have mastery over all *praanayam*. Is that a surety that now the god of death can't come near me? Nothing. I have to keep myself always guarded against my own weakness and I have to live more humbly, lest I may become trapped in my own ego.

We have written letters to all teachers, we have told them that kundalini yoga is a practical thing, it is a knowledge of the human beings. It is not a talking matter.

By these exercises, what can be accomplished in one thousand years, does get accomplished in one thousand minutes. The ratio is very fast. What happens normally to us is when we achieve something little, we go crazy. We think we are great, then we fall in the trap of different things. We get involved in certain things, thinking that is the destination, but that is not. Many more things are on the way...

Remember one thing. I don't want to bug you on this issue, but if up to this day you have never learned to respect yourself, forget it! You're not going to reach any God, whatever you say. You will

always be run by the cycle of time. A man who does not know what assessment he has of himself and how great he is, and what he is, what do you mean?

What about the Supreme Lord in you who is the light within yourself? The beauty, the quietness, the calmness can be achieved on the face of that grace which you can achieve as the outcome which they call God's light. It only comes when one learns to meditate on himself and feel the flow of the divine light within himself.

These yoga sutras and yoga are not a joke. It is not an art to convert a Christian into Hinduism. It is a science and a factual realization for the uplift and for the awareness of the man. We are not here to convert people or to do that kind of stuff. There are already so many religions, there's no fun in making twenty more.

Purifying yourself will give you a help. Purifying yourself will give you a happiness. By meditating on yourself, you will be rid of greed and lust. Your behavior will become sweet and you will trust others, and others will trust you. And all you have to do is you have to meditate on yourself. You have to consider yourself as a pure channel of the Universal Spirit.

Now what trip is this? Have I said, Do this, do that...?

No mantra. Nothing of the sort. Simply sit down calmly and bring your mind energy on one point: that you are a pure channel. It may not happen in the very first moment, but you keep on doing it. It is your *sadhana*, the *beej* mantra, *Sat Nam*, I am Truth, I am Truth, I am Truth.

Those people who condemn themselves are the worst people. When God has made you as his projection, and you - because you have been given a free will - vibrate negative toward you, do you think you do a favor toward him? Are you aware of that?

And now sit down this morning and think how many times you have condemned yourself. By condemning yourself, you are condemning God.

You might not have chanted that much. By thinking, "I am this, I am that..." you don't do anything but invite sickness.

The best way to be clean and pure is to meditate on the self constantly and feel that you are very pure and you are a channel of the Creator. Do it for three days and see what result you will find. See what beauty will come to your face...

May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the pure light within you guide your way on... *Saaaaaat Nam*

May your eye see the pure light of God, your ear hear nothing but the name of God, your

tongue speak nothing but the glory of God. Then, if you are not a living god, there is no God! *Sat Nam*.

## The Darkness Before the Dawn

"It's been a long time comin'.  
It's gonna be a long time gone.  
And it appears to be a long,  
Appears to be a long,  
Appears to be a long  
Time, yes, a long, long, long, long time before the dawn..."

(from *A Long Time Gone* by David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash and Neil Young)

The Yogi Bhanan story simply cannot be told without referring to the world in which he lived. Ganga was probably not the only one who saw in "the Yogi" the answer to the prayers of a generation, but the challenge for us now, fifty years later, is to comprehend the spirit and substance of those times. Much of what happened then may be difficult for us today, in our current world of hyper-connectivity and point-and-click activism, to believe.

The euphoria of the Woodstock festival was not to last very long. While the album and the movie of the event were being put together, history continued on its unswerving course. Sometimes it marched to drums of war, sometimes to the chants of protestors, sometimes as a dirge to the dead... marching, ever marching on.

This was America at war, and to a large extent, it was at war with itself. It was Yogi Bhanan's gift to be able to see this and, day by day, to minister to its casualties, to garner new volunteers, and to train his gentle forces for a long march toward peace, freedom and humanity.

War was breaking out all over. The palpable frustration of the young and the bold boiled over into the streets. In Chicago, began a show trial of some of the younger generation's most inspired and provocative political activists. Outside the court, demonstrations grew, and on October 8, three hundred young people outfitted with helmets, goggles, cushioned jackets, chains, pipes, and clubs stunned the country by smashing cars and windows in the wealthy Gold Coast neighborhood, charging right into a formation of two thousand riot police.

By the next weekend, hundreds of thousands of the young at heart peacefully marched on Washington and campuses and state capitols across the nation demonstrating their opposition to the government's undeclared war across the sea in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. In November, a group of American Indian activists struck a blow against the empire by seizing and holding the rocky island of

Alcatraz, formerly a federal prison, off the California coast. It was a strike for Red Power, the growing movement for justice for America's indigenous peoples. Three days later, a reporter broke the story of the massacre of 109 civilians by scared and stupefied American troops in the Vietnamese village of My Lai two months earlier. Come December, fourteen Chicago police took their revenge on the fearless and proud Black Panthers by raiding an apartment and shooting dead two members while they slept.

Outside of sanctuaries where health, happiness and holiness were the regimen of the day, even the flower children were losing their innocence. Too many drugs, too many fake hippies, too much hippy capitalism were grating the tender psyches of psychedelic crowd. And then there were the bad hippies. Before Woodstock was over, a coven of drug-crazed killers had been arrested for the widely-publicized murders of a pregnant actress and several others at their rural California digs.

On December 6, came the great Anti-Woodstock: the Altamont Free Concert, near San Francisco. Instead of the Hog Farmers, the organizers enlisted the infamous Hell's Angels biker gang to help at the festival. The event was full of bad vibes from the beginning, and did not end without a near riot of the hundreds of thousands who had come out, and the Angels' murder of a young spectator while the Rolling Stones hooted the dark lyrics of "Sympathy for the Devil" into the night.

For many, John Lennon and Yoko Ono served as voices of reason in that tumultuous time. Their days of bedding in for peace at hotel rooms in Amsterdam and Montreal back in June had struck an incredulous chord around the world. Why indeed couldn't people just make love, not war? At year's end, they hired billboards around the world to say: "War Is Over If You Want It – Happy Christmas from John and Yoko." Lennon could be innocent and sweet, but was also capable of bitter and world-weary, as in "Working Class Hero," Lennon's hit from the fall. His big hit, apart from the Beatles, was "Instant Karma."

Things moved quickly. A Senator from Wisconsin called on students to fight environmental degradation with the same intensity that they opposed war. The first "Earth Day" was scheduled for April 22, 1970, and preparations were going well. Meanwhile, three hundred hard-core activists held a council in Flint, Michigan and decided to continue their efforts to fight "the System" from underground. The FBI's most wanted list would soon be expanded from "Ten Most Wanted" to Sixteen. Half were wanted by the police for crimes against the state. Army recruiting centers, government buildings and banks were favored targets for destruction. According to a U.S. Department of Treasury survey, in 1970, every week saw an average of forty-two politically motivated bombings or acts of arson.

Outside the court houses, the intergenerational war in America was partly a war of symbols. To be young with hair over your ears would mark you for suspicion from the police if you happened to be a male. In the U.S. South, it might put you put in jail with a free haircut. If you ate granola, it was a dead giveaway that you also smoked pot. Granola was hippie food, and hippies smoked pot. In those days, it was irreversible logic and usually true. Hippies ate other things too: sprouts and wheat germ, yogurt and whole wheat bread, brown rice and tamari, tofu and tahini. That the foods were healthy

was one thing. That they challenged the status quo made them insurrectionary and potentially dangerous.

The revolution had its own music. The soft, plaintive sounds of the mid-1960s, with the likes of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez and Peter-Paul-and-Mary and The Beatles, was mixed with the more strident sounds of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane, the Who, the Rolling Stones, Crosby-Stills-Nash-and-Young and the MC5. Then there was also Ravi Shankar, in a class of his own.

Hippie reading encompassed much that was practical and quite a lot that was purely visionary. The Whole Earth Catalogue, first issued in 1968, provided all the information you ever needed to set up a homestead and survive on your own. The lilting verses of Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* appealed to romantics. Acidheads liked *The Politics of Ecstasy* by Timothy Leary, who proclaimed LSD to be the avatar of our times. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* was a favorite of many for its take on the absurdity of war. Political radicals preferred Abby Hoffman's *Steal This Book!*

Broadcast media also played a role. Dissenting views and appearances were mostly excluded from the television networks, excepting when CBS's news anchor Walter Cronkite would offer the kids a sympathetic word or when, once a week on select stations, the long-haired musical group, The Monkees would appear on their popular show. Mostly it was on FM radio that you would hear the longhair music, the serious stuff, the longer cuts. Shorter three-minute versions aired on AM.

Where the hippies really flourished was in print. Hundreds of weekly journals opened up with the Liberation News Service, a radical Reuters, linking them all together. Out West, there was the Los Angeles Free Press, the San Francisco Oracle and the Berkeley Barb. Atlanta had The Great Speckled Bird, Austin its Rag, and there was the Chicago Seed, and the Village Voice in Greenwich Village. Even Easley, South Carolina had its Aquarian Times. Up north, there was Vancouver's Georgia Straight, Prairie Fire in Regina, the Octopus in Ottawa and the Harbinger in Toronto. Over in Europe, Amsterdam had its Om and London its Oz, and there were many, many others.

People created the fervent, the movement, the demonstrations, the ashrams, the yoga classes, the free schools, the free concerts, the free kitchens – and the underground media reported it, mythologized it, and nurtured it by giving it other people's attention.

## **The Peace-Giving Name**

It is a quantum age realization that nothing exists in isolation. Even for those of Yogi Bhanjan's students who immersed themselves completely in their new lifestyle, violence from outside occasionally intruded on their peaceful reality.

In April 1970, when a gathering of the Master's devotees assembled at the arrivals terminal of

the Washington airport, chanting softly in anticipation of his coming, the airport police thought they were demonstrators and forced them to leave.

Once the Master arrived, he stayed for a week, teaching classes and encouraging the local Kundalini Yogis in their efforts. Yogi Bhajan also took time to visit with a Congressman, assuring him that not all America's longhaired young were violent insurrectionists.

On a quiet Tuesday evening, Yogi Bhajan and his students found their way to a small lecture room at the American University. The Master delivered a talk on the power of *Sat Nam* and the dawning age of heightened awareness. But just as he finished his presentation and the questions drew to a close, the sound of shattering glass resonated up the hallway.

There, in the main auditorium, anarchist Jerry Rubin had just given a talk of his own, inciting his student audience to destroy the System, beginning with the very building they were in. There was a distinct smell of smoke as the rioters torched the place.

In the room with the Master, someone picked up a guitar and the peaceful Yogis spontaneously began chanting to ride out the pandemonium. They continued and continued, until police and firemen arrived to guide them safely outside. The evening provided everyone with a poignant reminder of the polarised state of the American union – and the remedy of chanting the Name.

## Sikh Vows

Lawton Boseman and Richard Lasser lived together and regularly took Yogi Bhajan's classes. It was April 19, celebrated as Baisakhi Day, and the two of them were going to the Sikh Study Circle on Vermont Avenue. Yogi Bhajan had told them it was a special day, and they were going to go see what it was all about.

As they made their way, Richard told Lawton that he was going to become a Sikh that day.

"Why are you going to do that?" asked Lawton.

"Because my teacher is a Sikh and I want to be like him," replied his friend.

"Okay, I'll do it too."

When Lawton and Richard arrived at the Sikh Study Circle, they announced their intention to the people they found there. These Sikhs from India had never before seen a non-Sikh who wanted to become a Sikh. They were stumped. What should they do? One of them phoned to ask Yogi Bhajan what he thought should be done. He advised them that all they needed to do was simply give these



young people to Siri Guru Granth Sahib. There was no need to tell them anything. The young men would know what they needed to do.

A simple ceremony was improvised. Two men from the congregation graciously offered the steel *karas* from their wrists so that these new Sikhs might have them to wear. The youths stood before the Guru and the congregation.

In front of the assembled Sikhs, most of whom had cut their hair and shaven their beards in an effort to "Americanize," the president spoke, somewhat awkwardly, to the two sparkly-eyed Americans, "Well, you've got the beard and the turban. I guess you know what to do."

### The Perfect Turban

There might be a great deal of pride among these new Sikhs. There could also be light-hearted comedic moments.

One Sikh said to the other, "Yogi Bhajan showed me how to tie a turban."

The other said, "Yeah?"

The first Sikh, "Yes, and I tied it myself and it's perfect."

For a moment, it *was* perfect, but perhaps the ego of the wearer spoiled the perfect alignment of the folds and creases of the turban because just at that moment, the frontal layer of the turban unravelled and fell comically from the crown and into the face of the first Sikh – to the quiet delight and amusement of the other.

### To San Francisco

A good day's drive north of Los Angeles lay San Francisco, hub of the alternative culture. By 1970, that culture had peaked and was in sordid decline, but what a ride it had been! In 1964, the nearby University of California at Berkeley had served as the lively center of the student-driven Free Speech Movement. The summer of 1967 was dubbed "the summer of love." Psychedelics were pure and cheap then, and the innocent and idealistic were arriving in droves, sometimes with flowers in their hair. This was the time of Allen Ginsberg and Richard Brautigan, poetry in the parks, and psychedelic Human Be-ins.

San Francisco was politically aware and decidedly dissident. The city rivalled New York for the

size of its peace marches. Nearby Oakland was the headquarters of the Black Panther party. Berkeley was a constant hotbed of discontent.

Buddhists and Sufis, hippies and Alan Watts configured the alternative spiritual landscape of the city of the Golden Gate Bridge. The music could be hard and loud or just gently psychedelic. This was the home the Fillmore Auditorium, the biggest rock palace in the world, but by now, especially after the Altamont festival disaster, things were going down. There was more drugs and less art, less free-spirited expressionism and more party line. God - the joyful Trickster - was on the run.

The day after Earth Day, Yogi Bhanan set out north to give a week of classes in San Francisco, at the University of California at Berkeley and the Sausalito Community Center. He was hosted there by Steve and Leigh Samuels, his teachers in the Bay area, whom he had just married at the previous Summer Solstice in New Mexico. As well as giving classes, Yogi Bhanan performed another wedding during his tour.

In Yogi Bhanan's classes, he covered laya yoga, mantra yoga, *mool bandh* and *maha bandh*, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and gave vigorous exercises for transmuting sexual energy. Yogi Bhanan counselled his student teachers against fanaticism and judging others. He also encouraged them to think before speaking and to be humble. These are some of the other things the Master said:

"*Sadhana* is never do what is 'right for you.' Always do what is right...

"I fully understand people do not like discipline and everyone wants something else, but out of the lot, maybe somebody can make it. Teaching en masse is so that some few may come forward and be the leaders of the public when the hard times come...

"When an individual doesn't keep up their *sadhana*, the teacher suffers. That is the reason why others do not teach kundalini yoga. The teacher becomes the center of an energy complex and he pays the toll for the fault of his students...

"If you are ever to hold yourself back from negative acts, do it while you are young. What credit goes to the aged toothless wolf who cries out that he is a vegetarian now?"

### **"Seven Centers, Three Methods"**

*As Yogi Bhanan taught – prolifically – others recorded and transcribed his notes to share with others. Sometimes they would be published and sent around in the 3HO newsletter.*

*Over the years, Yogi Bhanan would refine his message and change his emphasis, but from early on he was a straight-talking teacher who would brook no nonsense. If his English wasn't flowery, his words carried weight. And that is why they were so cherished.*

There are six nerve centers in the body. They are all in the spine. They each have a projected center, which are: first is in the rectum, second projected center is the sex organ. Third is where rectum and sex organ you pull. That joint is the third center of consciousness. Fourth is the center of the two nipples. Fifth is the neck. Sixth is when between the two eyes you draw a triangle.

What a man is? Do these centers have some co-relationship with the man? Yes. A person whose consciousness dwells in the rectum is a faggot or a lesbian. He will never have a straight sex relationship.

A person whose center of consciousness is the second center of consciousness, he will be a sex maniac and a sadist. He will enjoy giving pain in sex.

Third center of consciousness is the third point. We call it the *mool bandh*. Here that person can't overcome his greediness, he may try his level best. Somehow he will like to get others' things. They may be useful to him or not. No problem.

Fourth center of consciousness is the heart center of consciousness where equality, service, love starts.

Fifth center of consciousness where nipples and throat form a triangle, a man gets knowledge. He may talk – his words may not be a flowery English – but words will have that heaviness of consciousness they will go straight into the heart.

Sixth center of consciousness is man can know around him everything. He may use it or not. Because the pituitary gland gives the greatest intuition, that man can foresee into the time, and what he sees is the correct thing.

The last center of consciousness, which is the highest center, is a person becomes most humble. Extreme humility if you will find in a man, his center of consciousness is highest center because his ego becomes universal ego. Then that person has no pain and no pleasure. What he says, happens. And that is the highest center of consciousness.

With long, deep meditation, one can first know where his consciousness is and it can be seen and judged by assessment how my environments are and what is the most thing I need in my life. One can know about it. Now, knowing does not make any difference.

Can you pull it up and change gears in such a way that you can come out of it? There are three ways: Having a faith and looking to your God or to your minister and trying to act on what he says.

The second method is long meditation to transcend oneself. One knows one's weakness. One goes to the root of this weakness and one has to fight them and thus eliminate them, and then he has

to come out of it.

The third position is one should make his energy, his nerves, so positively sound that his mind may not think of anything which is negative and thus he may pull himself out. These are the techniques known to the world.

## The *Kriya*

Yogi Bhajan was entrusted with the secret knowledge of the timeless sages of India. This he knew, and as needed, he would openly dispense that life-giving, consciousness-raising know-how. Over time, his students and others also came to know of the potency of these techniques. Most accepted them gratefully as the teacher allowed.

One day, a student of Yogi Bhajan's, attractive and well-mannered, spoke to him. They had been sitting for a time when she said, "Sir, I have a very humble request. If you will grant it to me, I will be your slave. You can put me in that bottle."

Ordinarily, as a religious man, Yogi Bhajan would have said, "Oh, fine. What can I do for you?" But his intuition told him to answer otherwise, "Wait a minute. What is it?"

"I would like to have a promise first," coyly she replied.

"What can a mortal promise? There is no such thing as a promise. If you trust me, tell me what you want."

"I went to India..." she replied.

"I know."

"In India, somebody told me, 'If you want to learn this *kriya*, ask a man who has gone to America. His name is Bhajan Yogi. He can teach you. He is the only one on this planet who knows.'"

"That is true."

"I want to learn that."

"What for?"

"Isn't it a good thing to learn?"

“No, it is a most rotten thing to learn because this is one thing which is very powerful, and it should be with people who know how to keep it.”

“Have you not learned it?”

“Yes, but I have never used it.”

“I won't use it either.”

“Forget it! I never asked my teacher to teach it. He taught me. He gave it to me. He trusted me. And you are asking for it. I will never teach you that.”

The pretty woman said, “Hell hath no fury like the wrath of a woman scorned!”

“That is for men. Yogis drink it.”

The outcome of their exchange that day was that the woman published and distributed rude, negative, slanderous pamphlets ostensibly about Yogi Bhanan. The pamphlets were so provocative that many people would turn up at Harbhajan Singh's classes just to see who he was. Classes grew tremendously with all these curious people.

One day, the woman returned and asked Yogi Bhanan, “Are you not afraid of all this publicity?”

Yogi Bhanan replied to her, “What is my publicity? What is my purpose in life? I am not afraid of publicity, nor afraid of people. I am only afraid of God and Guru. Let me be true to there, to go home. I want to be true there. I want to tell him, 'Look at what all they did to me, but I never forgot you.' That is all I need. I do not need you and I am not afraid of your publicity. You do your best. Leave the rest to God.”

Yogi Bhanan then said to the woman, “If I had thought of just being comfortable, I would have chosen that path long ago. I was offered the presidency of a trust where there was so much money that you don't know what to do with it. I refused. I had my own thing to do and wanted to do it the way it was to be done. What does it matter?”

## **Solstice Invitation**

The 60s were over. While the four Beatles disbanded in bitterness and U.S. campuses erupted in demonstrations at the news U.S. troops had invaded Cambodia, as AM radio broadcast the saccharine sounds of "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and "Let It Be," Yogi Bhanan was making plans for a dawning Aquarian Age.

The coming summer solstice was foremost in his mind. In the May issue of Beads of Truth, the monthly newsletter, the Master put out an invitation for children of the Aquarian Age to come out for the event.

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May 15, 1970

3HO Family

United States of America

Dear ones,

SAT NAM! Greetings to all the 3HO family and the entire community. The day is drawing near for the celebration of the Summer Solstice, June 21st, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This day is the day when the yearly cycle reaches its peak of expansion, when the flow of energy is at its height, when we experience the year's longest day and shortest night, and the annual day of unity (Yoga) for children of the Aquarian Age.

Each of you must notify and alert all the community to prepare and depart in caravans for the Maharaj Ashram, Route 4, Box 88D, Santa Fe (Phone, 505: 983-1913). Coordinate yourselves and all be together in a unit as a family. Each one must notify the community by sending the message through the local underground radio stations and newspapers, and let the word be spread, so that all may unite to experience and create the purest vibrations, to gather the energy and be united for the uplift of humanity.

Make preparations to advise all your people that they will be sleeping outdoors and should be prepared for very, very cold nights (35-45 degrees) and very hot days (up to 85 degrees). They should come equipped with food and utensils for cooking and eating, and a good suggestion is to bring plenty of brown rice and soy sauce. Also be sure to carry water containers.

I may also request you to take up a special collection for this Summer Solstice to be sent to 3HO Headquarters to help us to cover this time when there will be less classes and more expenses for traveling.

God bless you all, and His wisdom continue to prevail through you, each and every one. It will be a great day when we all can meet in Santa Fe for this beautiful celebration of the Aquarian Age.

Humbly yours,

Yogi Bhajan

Santa Fe has instructed us to plan to arrive after the 10th of June at Santa Clara Canyon and to bring plastic tarps in case of rain. Caravans will be departing from Los Angeles on June 10th. See MAP of campsite on a following page. SAT NAM

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## The Santa Clara Solstice

Some would say this was the first truly 3HO solstice. This time, there would be no psychedelic

bus race, hardly any psychedelics, and less nudity and casual sex. In contrast with previous events, kundalini yoga would be the main event and Yogi Bhajan the master of ceremonies. This was also the first solstice with a price attached: all of \$5!

On the evening of June 10, after a yoga class and prayer with Yogi Bhajan, a caravan of ten cars set out in pilgrimage from Los Angeles for the Solstice site. Picking up two more cars of yogis at the Nanak Dwara Ashram in Scottsdale, Arizona, the entourage arrived at the Santa Clara Canyon on June 13.

The Santa Clara Canyon where everyone gathered was located on an Indian reservation. This idyllic location in a pine forest was an outcome of the longstanding rapport between the original tribes of New Mexico and the new longhaired tribes from the cities. It was endowed with a clear mountain stream, meadows of long sweetgrass, and tall, beautiful pine trees. The place was high enough in the mountains that there was a dusting of snow when everyone awoke that first morning. The weather varied considerably with frost at night and blazing sun during the day, punctuated by occasional hail and rain and gusts of wind. One day, a rare, triple rainbow decorated the sky above.

In that pristine environment, a routine was established. Mornings, teachers from various centers offered classes. In the evenings, Yogi Bhajan would teach.

## Solstice Yoga

Notes by Shakti Parwha Kaur:

Sit on your heels, arms in the air with the fingers locked together and the first finger up. Inhale and exhale deeply for two minutes.

Men chant "Ong" (Creator), women chant "Sohung" (I am Thou). After five minutes, relax for two minutes.

Assume the previous position and begin breath of fire for three minutes.

Do *sat kriya*, pulling the navel on "Sat" and relaxing on "Nam" for three minutes.

Stretch your legs out in front of you and bring your head to your knees for two minutes with normal breathing.

Spread the legs apart. Hold your heels. Breathe easy for one minute.

Sit in easy pose, legs crossed, spine straight, with the palms joined at the center of the chest. Chant: *"Ek Ong Kar, Sat Nam, Siri Wha Guru..."* (June 16, 1970)

## The Visit of the Hopi Elders

At that time, a delegation of Hopi Indian medicine men, very old men with long white hair, came to visit. Yogi Bhanan received them all with respect and they returned his consideration.

The elders had come to share their tradition with the great yogi, just as many of his students had learned from the Hopis. As they sat together, the ancient seers told Yogi Bhanan of huge gatherings of spiritual people that had taken place for a hundred thousand years. They described how the heroes and leaders of those times would gather from all over the Americas and across the Bering Strait to celebrate and sanctify the "One Unified Supreme Spirit." That spirit existed in everyone. By gathering together in this way, they believed the spirit would manifest more clearly.

According to the Hopi elders, these gatherings occurred every one hundred and eight years. In this way, everyone who attended would have heard about the event from someone who had experienced the last meeting. The last gathering had taken place over two thousand years ago. At that time, it was decided that the forces of destruction and violence, disharmony and perversion were increasing so forcefully that their sacred traditions needed to be protected and kept from the onslaught of that darkness. The Hopi tribe was elected to be the keeper of the "One Unified Supreme Spirit."

The Hopi elders went on to say that, according to their sacred tradition, just before the darkness reached its height, a white-clothed warrior would come from the East and create an army of warriors dressed in white who would rise up and protect the "One Unified Supreme Spirit." This would be the final battle between good and evil. The Hopi elders continued that they had come to give the sacred duty of keeping and protecting the "One Unified Supreme Spirit" to Yogi Bhanan since they had determined he was the Warrior in White of their prophesy.

After the exchange, there was a sweat lodge ceremony to seal the bond between the two tribes, the one ancient and Western, the other newly from the East. Many of Yogi Bhanan's students participated, although they did not know what to make of the visit of the ancient shamen. The Master, however, was clearly affected by their teachings. A great responsibility had been placed on his shoulders and soon, and from an unexpected direction, trial and adversity would begin to make itself felt.



## Bossiere's Land

Because of their history together in New Mexico among the Hopi and Pueblo tribes, the hippies had enjoyed the tribes' cooperation through the late 60s. Now, however, the situation at the canyon was becoming strained. The natives found the nude bathing of the hippies in their stream offensive. They were also particular that any fire was a sacred fire which required a ceremony to be lit, and that non-natives not light any campfires whatsoever.

Seeing that Yogi Bhanan and his students were about to be evicted from the reservation, a friendly Métis by the name of Robert Bossiere offered them the use of his arid acreage nearby. That night, he joined with the heads of all the ashrams in a teepee to bless and pray for the sacred mountain they were about to leave. They meditated all night.

On the morning of June 18, all the goods and people were accounted for and neatly packed into a caravan of sixty-four vehicles on the dirt road at the entrance to the site. Once everything was in readiness, Yogi Bhanan took up his position as traffic cop in the middle of the main road and, swinging a large shawl over his head, began to urge the drivers onto the highway. "Go, go, go!" he shouted as they pulled out and gained speed and traction on the asphalt.

It was a fine exercise moving in unison, but the best was yet to come. When the second-last vehicle had pulled out and turned right to follow the others, Yogi Bhanan commandeered the final one – an under-powered Saab with Dawson, the head of the nearby Espanola ashram. With unswerving faith, the Master urged his doubting charioteer to enter the opposing lane of the narrow highway and to speed ahead - to pass one, two, three, four of the vehicles on the right. Over rises and around blind curves and bends they went, Dawson's face and hands sweating on the wheel. Then eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen - minute by minute, second by precarious second... twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-one, thirty-two, thirty-three, thirty-four – and onward... fifty-eight, fifty-nine, sixty, sixty-one, sixty-two, sixty-three – until at last they had miraculously passed the whole column and taken the lead position at the head of the caravan.

Finally, the new site loomed up ahead, past the landmark Camel Rock. There it was: a patch of dry unremarkable riverbed, a piece of the tawny semi-desert stretching out from the side of the road. The column paused and the vehicles made their way, one by one off the road and down a steep, crumbly embankment.

For those who stuck with the Yogi, there would be no possibility of going back, no thought of it even. It didn't matter that there were no facilities, no water, not even a way out. For the next days, this would be their home. Somehow things would work themselves out. For now, they were there, and that was all that mattered.

## The Trial by Fire

The stay on the Bossier land would turn out to be a trial by fire. Scorching in the daylight and numbingly cold at night, the yogis persevered as best they could. It was hardest for the mothers with young children. For water, they beat the sand at the bottom of a riverbed and soaked up water in their towels for their children to drink.

In consideration of the change, Yogi Bhajan suggested everyone change their diet, which had been brown rice and soya sauce, to watermelon during the day and rice in the evening. Classes continued in the cool of morning and evening. As the chill night air set in, the campers reveled in creating large bonfires.

For two days, the yogis survived in the heat and cold on that shadeless, shelterless land next to the highway while much of New Mexico drove by and watched. They must have looked like the pitiful victims of some terrible miscalculation. What were they doing – women, men and children – in that horrible heat?

There was an election going on. Robert Bossiere ran a well-known restaurant not far away and was of one mind with Yogi Bhajan. They both recognized the need to do public relations for the yogis in the sand. The arrival of the man who would possibly become governor provided a great opportunity to clear up any misunderstanding of who they were and exactly what they were up to. It was important that they not be associated with any kind of insurrection, crime, or illegal substances.

So it was that Bruce King, who would indeed become the next governor of New Mexico, was given a tour of the Solstice site. King, Bossiere and Yogi Bhajan were all gentlemen and men of the world. A respectful camaraderie grew out of their meeting, though the candidate for governor did not think the yogis in the sand would survive a month in his state.

Then came the highway patrol. Their chief had heard that possibly dangerous revolutionaries had set up a survival camp. The officers were sent to keep an eye on them. This was the beginning of a daily campaign of pressure and intimidation. The yogis were accused of breaking a fence, harassed for lighting fires at night in the riverbed, and for any imaginable infraction.

Word about the apparently hapless hippies also made its way to the mayor's office. He took pity on the poor strangers and disagreed with the police. "They are spiritual people," the mayor said, "and I will not let them die of thirst." He dispatched a tanker filled with water to the yogis in the sand.

Soon thereafter, someone started sending truckloads of watermelons. The big melons were a welcome sight for their thirst-quenching and nutritive value. Yogi Bhajan was quick to spoil the flavor of sweet melons, however. He brought around a bucket of ground black pepper and scooped generous amounts onto everyone's melons. Black pepper purified the blood, he said, and eliminated gas from the huge quantities of melon so readily consumed.

The melons also served another function. Some of the campers used the shells as head covers to deflect the scorching rays of the solstice sun.

## The Dedication of Guru Ram Das Ashram

In Los Angeles, while the Solstice *sadhana* went on, that special day in the yearly solar cycle was celebrated in yet another way. The converted garage next to Jules Buccieri's antique shop at 8802 Melrose Avenue received a spiritual name. At Yogi Bhanan's instruction, the building with its high wooden rafters, hallowed over the previous months by the presence, hard efforts and blissful experiences of many seekers, was named "Guru Ram Das Ashram."

Yogi Bhanan was a thankful and thoughtful teacher. He remembered well that night in Amritsar when he was but a boy and his father the doctor had despaired of relieving his fever and saving his tender life. It was Guru Ram Das who had appeared to Harbhajan in a dream and offered his remedy. And when, as a grown man, Harbhajan Singh had been bedeviled by his reliance on psychic powers, it had been Guru Ram Das who in the course of four and a half years of nightly washing the floors of the Golden Temple, had lifted the spell of Harbhajan's ego and made him whole.

It was only fitting then that the place where the Guru's messenger taught and inspired others should be named after the fourth Master in the holy Sikh lineage, the Lord of grace and miracles.

Gerry Pond, who had contributed significantly to the renovation and upkeep of the designated ashram, returned from the Solstice in New Mexico just in time to share his music and the latest inspirations of Yogi Bhanan. Twenty-five people in all gathered to herald the dawn of that solstice morning in song and dedication.

Richard Lasser, whom Yogi Bhanan had just renamed "Baba Singh" consecrated the event with the reading of hymns of Guru Ram Das translated into English. At last, Gerry hung the beautifully-made wood and art metal sign over the door, and everyone celebrated heartily with a feast for body, mind, and soul.

## The Ninth Day of Solstice

By the ninth day of Summer Solstice, it was time for the marriages. With Yogi Bhanan's encouragement, fourteen couples came forward to take vows, Ganga and her husband-to-be Larry Wentick being among them.

This time, the ceremony was different from the previous year. Yogi Bhanan's Sikh heritage was

more in evidence. A Sikh prayer book known as "*Gutka*" provided the centerpiece around which the couples ceremoniously walked, hand in hand. The vows, composed by Guru Ram Das, were recited in poetic English for all to understand.

It was a clear blue New Mexico day, perfect for the wedding. The celebration continued with chanting and dancing while Yogi Bhajan beat a drum. Four couples who had been married at the previous Solstice were honored. Wedding cake was served.

As so often happens in that area of the mountains, the weather changed suddenly. In no time, a storm blew in, then a violent rainfall, and for a few minutes the dry riverbed became a gushing torrent.

Then, just as quickly, the skies cleared, the torrent subsided, cactuses reached out their delicate blossoms, and the riverbed became almost as it was before.

The Solstice celebration was over. Robert Boissiere invited everyone to return next year, but "in greater numbers." All that remained were the farewells and finding a way out of the sand trap they had put themselves in.

Lawton scouted the riverbed for a mile before locating a possible outlet onto the highway. A small business that sold stones for paving was located there. Having obtained the owner's permission, the gaily-colored caravan of sand *sadhus* snaked its way along the riverbed and, to the stone seller's quiet astonishment, up the embankment, back to the world of pavement and long distances home.

## **The Atlanta Pop Festival**

Lawton, for his part, had a special mission. After his weeks in Los Angeles with Yogi Bhajan, he had decided that if his teacher wanted him to be a teacher, then he would indeed be a teacher.

Having grown up in Florida, Lawton made his way to nearby Georgia. With him, he had ten dollars Ganga had given him, plus two pants and three shirts for his yogi wardrobe.

The Grace of Guru Ram Das seemed to favor Lawton, who had driven to Solstice with Baba Singh and now had a ride in a VW van with a man and woman going to Atlanta. There was going to be a big rock festival an hour's drive south of the city and Yogi Bhajan was to give a talk there.

Within a few days, Yogi Bhajan arrived. He was brought to a motel that had been rented out by the organizers of the rock festival. Lawton went out to see his teacher and take in what he could.

Lawton had a number of memorable experiences. One day, his teacher was on the second floor balcony of the motel with his all hair down. Lawton could see how regal and majestic Yogi Bhajan looked with his mane full of hair. Around him, were the hippie organizers with newly uncropped hair peeking over their ears or just touching their shoulders. They were clearly in awe of the yogi in their

midst, the yogi whose hair had never seen the cutting edge of a razor or a pair of scissors.

Another time, Lawton marveled at how the Master conducted himself in his busy motel room. A mirror over a sink was a prominent fixture of the furnishings, but in all the hours he sat with Yogi Bhanan, Lawton never once saw him even glancing into the looking glass. Like a spiritual sun, the Master shone consistently and selflessly. In his self-assurance, he never bothered to ponder or doubt his physical reflection.

Finally, on July 3rd came the start of the three-day festival. Estimates of the size of the crowd varied between 200,000 and 600,000. The weather was sweltering, in excess of 100 degrees Fahrenheit. They had come to hear their favorite bands. Thirty-six groups were to play over the July 4 Independence Day weekend, including The Jimi Hendrix Experience, The Allman Brothers Band, and B. B. King.

It was evening. The massive crowd was loud. Yogi Bhanan's job was to take the stage and engage the young people's spirits, to give a blessing of sorts to that raw and restless Aquarian convention.

To the raucous multitude, the Yogi spoke, "It is not possible by hooting and shooting you are going to get everything. You are the future of the United States of America and nobody is going to take everything from you. You are to be peaceful..."

The ruckus persisted. This was not the laid-back, Woodstock festival. This was a summer evening in Georgia and almost everyone was drunk or high on something.

"You are to be great. And you have to do one thing. Peace within your heart will lead you to have everything you need. But be peaceful, calm, and absolutely quiet. They will give you what they call themselves to be. And today is their day. Tomorrow is our day. *Sat Nam.*"

Yogi Bhanan had arranged for other luminaries to speak later in the festival. Robert Bossiere had come from New Mexico to represent the American Indian spiritual tradition. Yogi Bhanan's friend, Swami Satchidananda, also joined him there, along with Christopher Hills of the World Yoga Society, Dadaji of the Ananda Marga, Swami Vishnu Devananda of the Sivananda Ashram, and Yogi Amrit Desai.

When their time came, each one of them took a few minutes to share their message, as the throng mostly politely listened. After everyone else had spoken, Yogi Bhanan took to the stage again. In simple words, he shared his dream of an Aquarian nation, healthy, happy and holy. Soon the entire crowd was on its feet, energetically waving their arms, making "peace signs," swaying back and forth, chanting "Peace, Love, Peace, Love..."

Afterwards, Baba Singh asked Yogi Bhanan, "Sir, you've got to explain to me how you did what

you did. You basically said the same things, in the same tone of voice, as the others. With your accent, you are even harder to understand than all those other people! So how was it that you could accomplish what you accomplished?"

Yogi Bhajan answered in a word, "*Sadhana*. A person who does *sadhana* every day has a power that nobody can match."

After the festival, Lawton stayed on. He made himself at home in the apartment of the festival organizer which was available with the final month's rent paid. Lawton the teacher moved in with some new yoga students and, by the Grace of Guru Ram Das, Harbhajan Singh Puri Ashram was begun.

## The Holy Man Jam

From the festival, Yogi Bhajan journeyed to New York City. Already, there were a couple of *Sat Nam* outposts in the state. Lynn Anderson was teaching near Woodstock. On Staten Island, lived Steve and Susie Burns, newly married by Yogi Bhajan at Summer Solstice.

During his visit, Yogi Bhajan met a young man named Alan Oken whom he came to know had a gift for astrology. The Master took a liking to the unassuming fellow and said to him, "Come to Colorado with me and you will leave an astrologer. Do not charge any money. Take everyone who comes and read them for twenty minutes." Yogi Bhajan was inviting Alan to a week-long "holy man jam" he was organizing in Boulder, Colorado.

Outdoors at the quadrangle of the University of Colorado, some three thousand seekers converged in July to listen to the wisdom of the East. Yogi Bhajan and Swami Satchidananda joined together again, along with Steven Gaskin of San Francisco, a Buddhist named Bill Quan-roshi, Yogi Bhajan's student Tom Law, and another teacher. For seven days, they spoke on every topic imaginable... enlightenment, karma, death, and the wonder of life.

As for Alan, he followed the Master's counsel and taught astrology every morning to a crowd that grew through the day from three hundred to three thousand people. From noon to 5 pm each day, he read horoscopes. Yogi Bhajan had set up a special tent for him and through the week grateful people filled it with offerings of breads, bowls, beads, crystals and other gifts. In the evening, Alan would go out into the crowd, give away his gifts, and make many friends.

By the end of the week, Alan Oken had done two hundred readings and taught thousands of students. He was an astrologer now.

## The 'Official' Turban

While on his tour, Yogi Bhanan received a desperate call from a student. He had been stopped by the police for some minor traffic infraction. Seeing his long hair, the police had automatically locked him in the local jail.

The usual routine was that any inmate with hair over his ears would have his head forcibly trimmed. This, Yogi Bhanan's student did not want. He protested that he was a Sikh and that Sikhs never cut their hair. The judge was not convinced. He had never heard of a Sikh.

On receiving the call, Yogi Bhanan had a letter typed up certifying his student was indeed a Sikh and that Sikhs could not be deprived of their long, unshorn hair. He had the letter notarized and himself arrived at the court house. Yogi Bhanan also brought a long towel and instructed his student to wrap it around his head like a turban. After paying a small fine, the student was free to go with his crown of hair intact.

## The Grace of God

Back home in Los Angeles, Yogi Bhanan started to speak on a new subject in his talks – the essential grace of womankind. "When the born of a woman acts with respect to a woman, there will be peace on Earth," he said.

Those were heady days for America's women. The 70s' women's liberation movement was just taking form. Women were finding strength in sisterhood, and dignity in their struggle for rights equivalent to those enjoyed by men.

Yogi Bhanan's perspective differed from the typical feminist view. He saw women as the moral fiber of a nation. While some feminists celebrated the high-paying jobs of women in bars and brothels and their inherent right to those jobs, Yogi Bhanan deplored the moral climate that permitted someone's mother, daughter or sister to be so demeaned and objectified. Just two blocks from his home on Phyllis Avenue, billboards advertised the strip clubs and bars of Sunset Strip. It revolted his conscience as a decent man born of a graceful and morally impressive mother.

So it was that on September 22, 1970, Yogi Bhanan began a movement for the upliftment of America's largest exploited underclass, its women. With candles in hand, his graceful students numbering only a couple of dozen, but impressive in the courage of their convictions, filed in procession past the nude bars and porn showcases of San Francisco's red light district. Together, they chanted, "We are the Grace of God!"

Yogi Bhanan called this new development the "Grace of God Movement for the Women of America," soon the "Grace of God Movement for the Women of the World." To his students, he said,

"When a man falls, an individual falls. But when a woman falls, an entire generation is lost. You are the grace of the individual. You are the grace of the town. You are the grace of the nation. You are the grace of the world!

"The world starts with you, and it ends with you. Therefore, you should never be cheap. When you cannot handle what you are, you become cheap. The crown of grace, divinity and dignity should be on your head, and it should not create a headache for you.

"Therefore, you have to be trained. You have to train your emotions. You have to train yourself. And you have to go one way. There is one way to One God for woman: selfless, dignified and graceful behavior. Dignity and divinity are your birthright.

"The only solution a woman has is in her own depth. The only tragedy a woman has is in her own shallowness. I fully understand how terrible the past was. I fully understand how I can blame my past. I fully understand that I can mess and enmesh myself in the past. But, after all, I have a chance and a very short chance, to be my own future also. Similarly, each woman should remember that she has her own future, and that future can only be achieved if she becomes her own future."

Yogi Bhajan believed emphatically in the ability of an individual to sculpt and reform their habits and personality by changing their self-concept and the habitual patterns of their mind. To this end, he gave his students the Grace of God meditation:

"Lie on the back, fully relaxing your face and body. Inhale deeply, hold the breath in and silently repeat ten times, 'I am Grace of God.' Exhale all the breath out. Hold the breath out and silently repeat ten times, 'I am Grace of God.' Continue breathing and repeating the mantra in this manner for a total of five inhalations and five exhalations.

"After the cycle is completed, relax your breath, and with eyes still closed, come sitting up into easy pose. Bring your right index finger curled under your thumb, the other three fingers straight, palm up, wrist resting on the knee, elbow straight. The left hand is held up by the left shoulder as if taking an oath. The breath should be relaxed.

"Tense one finger of the left hand at a time, keeping the other fingers straight, but relaxed. Repeat aloud, 'I am Grace of God,' five times. Continue this sequence with all the fingers and thumb of that hand, meditating on the inherent energy in each – the little finger: Mercury, power of communication; the ring finger: Sun/Venus, physical health, grace and beauty; the middle finger: Saturn, patience, transforming emotion to devotion, responsibility; the index finger: Jupiter, wisdom and expansion and the thumb: positive ego.

"When both parts of the meditation are completed, lower the left hand and relax for a few minutes."



## The Grand Host

Yogi Bhanan could be many things to many people. He could be puzzling or positively inscrutable. He could seem foreign, or just strange. He could appear to be aloof and absolutely detached. And for those who made the effort to really watch and observe him, the Master might be lovingly servicable, profoundly engaged, and totally in command of his circumstances.

Because of his meditative practice, Yogi Bhanan's thinking tended toward originality. He did not think inside anybody's box. He did not care for boxes at all. It meant that, from time to time, his actions might be completely unexpected, boyishly charming, and utterly disarming.

One day, Yogi Bhanan was invited to some rich person's house somewhere around Los Angeles. Inside the copious mansion, the master commenced a tour on his own. Methodically, he inspected every floor, opened every door along the way and looked inside. His hosts tagged along at a respectful distance, quietly mystified. What was their guest looking for?

Finally, the Master made his way to the kitchen of the grand house. Opening the refrigerator, satisfaction gleamed in his eyes and the magnanimity of his spirit took expression in his first words, "May I serve you something?"

## Teaching at UCLA

The fall of 1970 was a tumultuous time in America. It saw the passing of iconic figures of the youth culture in musicians Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, both 27 years old, through drug overdoses. It also witnessed the dramatic spiriting away of LSD-guru Timothy Leary from a California prison to safe haven in Algeria. Demonstrations, arrests, bombings, wiretaps, infiltrations, and all kinds of disruptive tactics and behaviors were coming to a destructive crescendo.

While there were many who advocated the destruction of established authority, Yogi Bhanan instead created a new, alternative organization with a dynamic teaching and outward social expression. He was not at all opposed to applying to the United States government for a federal tax exemption – which the 3HO Foundation was granted at the end of the year.

Another significant development of that year was the introduction of an accredited course in Kundalini Yoga at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Yogi Bhanan was invited to teach by Dr. Anthony Brunse, the Head of Research and acting Chief of Staff for Sepulveda Veteran's Administration Hospital. One of the main purposes of the course was to inspire doctors to be healers also.. Classes were given twice a week in the Adult Education Division of the university. The historic first class was given on November eleventh.

The Master began the class, "Dear ones, there are no barriers between man and man. The only barrier is lack of awareness. As you open up inside, the outside will open up to you. There cannot be a vacuum in space. As you open up, the outside will open up to you to bring a balance.

"There are people interested in different theories on the powers of yogis and how this can happen. Some have doubts about it. Some have knowledge about it. All spiritual teachers have come here to create disciples. Let us do something different.

"There are thirty-three books in this country that have dedicated one or two chapters to kundalini yoga, warning Western people not to practice it. Actually, the warning is not to practice it without a teacher. The other half of the sentence, nobody has read.

"It is not true that it requires incarnations to become God-conscious. When you concentrate your mental energy on your Self, you are in a state of meditation. And the result of that meditative act is your attitude. Structure within is the same as structure without.

"Why study kundalini yoga? Man has an inborn, infinite urge to be united with the Supreme Consciousness. This urge exists in us. Our subconscious mind is aware of our reality, but our conscious mind is an imprint of our environment. When you consciously tune the subconscious mind into the Supreme Consciousness, you will see the Unseen and know the Unknown.

"The books we have given you are How to Know God – the Patanjali Yoga Sutras (with commentaries by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood) and Yoga by Ernest Wood. They will give you some written statement about what this world of yoga is about, and they will tell you something about kundalini, but they will not give you the methods.

"This has been kept secret for many reasons, some authentic and some not. The authentic reason is that if you give this knowledge out and you cannot with your psychic body control the wrong use of it, it can put you into rough circumstances. But if a man has practiced and has a mastery of it himself, then there is no limitation of time or distance, and everybody can practice it to reach to that awareness without any search, caution or danger. What appears in those books is nullified. We have worked before coming here one and a half years, and 50,000 to 60,000 people have practiced it. The results have been nothing but positive.

"Kundalini comes from the Sanskrit word "*kundal*" which is very romantically the curl in the hair of the beloved. Kundalini refers to that coil. Serpent has nothing to do with it. The serpent in India is known as awareness or wisdom. This animal also sits in a coiled position. That is where the term "serpent power" comes from.

"Kundalini is that divine power, that *Adi Shakti*, that Creative Force coiled within us. To uncoil that coiled energy is called "kundalini yoga." One who teaches it is called a "Yogi," and one who learns it is called a "Sikh" or "student." As all rivers flow into the ocean, all purposes of a spiritual nature are

to raise this awareness within you. All worship, consciously or unconsciously, leads to this end.

"When your prayer is not answered, it is because you are not tuned into it. You have not put in your plug. You are muttering. Your sound current is not relating to the Supreme Sound Current. Otherwise, your every prayer has to be answered.

"Once you know the art of one-pointedness of mind, you know everything. To control the mind, you have to have a hook. When you use the will of the mind, it is called "raja yoga," and when you use the breath, it is called "kundalini yoga."

"Using mind over mind is a difficult process. Breath is more practical. It is a 100% guaranteed process. Why is it not taught? Because breath is the *pranic* energy that leads to the universal energy and one who controls it also has to be in it.

"If through any method you can relate to your soul within this body within this lifetime, then duality, whether of God or not, will go. Coming from New York, you can stop five or six times and change flights. But there are also services that will take you directly to Los Angeles, and that is what kundalini yoga is.

"I felt it is a necessity to teach people this hidden science. Honestly, I broke a cosmic law for which I have been infinitely rewarded. The law was: the person who will teach this science indiscriminately without first testing his students, shall not see the next sun. In other words, by this last birthday of mine, I should not have been alive..."

## Banana Bliss

Yogi Bhajan loved to transform his students inside and out. From the inside, he encouraged them to deeply engage the breath of life and to practice invigorating *praanayam*. He also instilled the virtues of mental and verbal hygiene – watching what you think and say. Of course, underlying all this was a vigorous regimen of rising early, showering with cold water, exercising for an hour, then meditating for two and a half hours. This was the regular routine.

To speed up his students' progress, Yogi Bhajan gave them the banana fast. From the new moon to the full moon, three bananas three times a day, preceded by a cup of freshly-squeezed orange juice in the morning, and accompanied through the day by water and Yogi Tea. This was the banana diet.

Those who engaged in it, purified their bodies, strengthened their nervous systems, and gave their overworked digestive systems a rest. Participants also were known to become light-headed, perhaps a little grumpy, lose weight, have psychedelic flashbacks, and be sorely tempted by their

favorite foods. By the eighth day, even foods you did not ordinarily care for, might exude otherworldly fascination.

Some banana fasters were more fastidious than others. Some, in an unguarded moment, might include a couple of slices of "heavenly" banana bread into their routine and wake up the next morning with "rocks" in their stomach. Some fasters kept up until they chanced upon banana cream pie – and then they just went bananas. For others, it was the irresistible allure of banana ice cream.

Those great yogis who survived their regimen to the fullness of the moon had another challenging prospect before them. Their insides had by now become so delicate from their ultralight and simple fare, that to have french fries right away would do irreparable damage to their digestive organs. The fasters were called on to endure a month-long restorative voyage across a sea of soupy mung beans and rice with turmeric and lots of green vegetables, supplemented by fresh fruits, bananas even, and Yogi Tea.

With all the talk of that humble fruit, sweet and easy to eat, there were even recipes in the 3HO Newsletter for banana *pakor*s and banana curries. Taking the movement to its natural conclusion, the yogis at the center in San Rafael, in a moment of mellow-yellow satori, named their home "Banana Ananda Ashram." The name stuck for a few days, until someone in the Los Angeles Ashram heard of it, and a more dignified name was found instead.

## Master of White Tantric Yoga

The loving storm of *Sat Nam* energy spread out from its calm center in the "City of Angels," Los Angeles, raining blessings of health, happiness and holiness all around the United States. Besides San Rafael and Sausalito, Santa Fe and the nation's capital, Orlando and Atlanta, Staten Island and Woodstock, teachers were setting up new centers in Hartford, Honolulu and Houston, Detroit and Birmingham in Michigan, Portland and Seattle, Philadelphia and Phoenix.

As the Aquarian vision and 3HO lifestyle spread through America, the Master made plans to take an entourage of his students to the homeland of the Gurus, the birthplace of the Khalsa.

Students were promised nineteen hours a day of *sadhana* in India. It was not a prospect that daunted anyone. After all, they were young and energetic and they had heard "There is no liberation without labor."

The pilgrimage was the culmination of several months of energized activity. Ganga remembered back to a day in March 1971, how after that morning *sadhana* Yogi Bhajan had said something about a shift that had just taken place. It did not make sense to her at the time, but that was the morning Lama Lilan Po had departed his physical body and passed the mantle of "*Mahan Tantric*" to her

teacher. When Yogi Bhanan was a teen, he had studied with the lama under Sant Hazara Singh. From that morning on, Ganga had noticed the phone seemed to hardly stop ringing and the pace of life at the Phyllis Ashram picked up about threefold.

Since Yogi Bhanan's becoming Master of White Tantric Yoga, he would, from time to time give extraordinary courses that engaged the cosmic forces of *Shakti* and *Shaktiman* – the feminine and masculine energies. It was in October, at one of these events, that Thelma Oliver first encountered Yogi Bhanan.

Thelma had been on a long journey across time and continents. A couple of years before, she had been a successful performer on Broadway, but she had tired of the routine of drawing applause from audiences. In her heart Thelma had wanted to find a way of making some real and lasting contribution to her African American community. That quest had taken her to West Africa, where she had explored and traveled for more than a year. It had also consistently pointed Thelma in the direction of yoga. Before arriving at the Phoenix White Tantric Yoga course, she had taken classes in Kundalini Yoga in Boulder and Santa Fe.

This Phoenix course was ten days long – ten days of meditation in some tantric juxtaposition, usually face-to-face or back-to-back, with a partner of the opposite gender. During those ten days, Yogi Bhanan instructed his students to eat only fruits – apples and oranges, pears and bananas, dates and avocados – that grew four and a half feet above the ground. This was so they might benefit from the naturally elevating energies of these foods.

In Phoenix, Yogi Bhanan spoke passionately of his plan to return to India with some of his students at the end of the year. He also gave a few personal words of guidance to Thelma, words that would profoundly change her sense of destiny. Although she was still recovering from her year in Africa, Thelma knew she too must go to India with the Master.

Some days later, Thelma went to Los Angeles and sought out Yogi Bhanan at the Phyllis Avenue Ashram. She brought an offering and expected the Master might bless her and tell her about her life. Instead, he fixed Thelma in his gaze and told her she must teach in her community and she must begin right away. Thelma objected that she had only just started to learn this yoga herself. How was she going to teach it? An argument ensued, but the Master insisted, "Your community needs you. Do you agree to teach?"

Thelma was incredulous, but finally she did.

As she walked out of the house on Phyllis Avenue, Thelma said to herself, "What have I just done? I hardly know anything about this yoga. How am I going to teach my community?" But something inside her was fixed and resolute as the North Star. Thelma's mother had taught her that a person's word is their bond. Having agreed with the Yogi, she knew there was no way out.

After a couple of days' putting it off, Thelma contacted a friend who ran an acting school. She asked if she might teach the acting students a yoga class – and they agreed.

Thelma wanted very much to channel the inspiration of Yogi Bhanan in her first yoga class. The worst thing she could imagine was to be tongue-tied and stage-struck. To help out, Thelma brought a small photo of Yogi Bhanan in a frame with her and placed it behind her on the teacher's bench, right at the base of her spine before she chanted "*Ong Namo...*"

The class was easy. Thelma was amazed at the guidance she gave her students. Everything just flowed. Thelma knew intuitively that the Master was working through her. Her friend asked Thelma if she would teach two classes of this yoga each week.

With pride and delight, she called Yogi Bhanan afterwards to tell him. He congratulated his student and told her to meet him the next day at the Gurdwara in Los Angeles, where the birthday of Guru Nanak was to be celebrated.

The following day, Thelma was sitting in the Gurdwara daydreaming when she heard a booming voice calling her name again and again. "Why would someone be calling her name?" she thought. When Thelma recognized Yogi Bhanan's voice, she rushed to see him.

The Master had another proposition for his student, and he forcefully presented it to her: "From now on you will be Krishna. Do you agree? You will change your name legally. You will be my Black Krishna. Do you agree? You will change your name. Do you agree?"

Clouds of doubt and misgiving that had been lingering many lifetimes suddenly cleared away. The student agreed. Through the bond of her sacred word, she became no longer Thelma, but emerged anew as Black Krishna.

It was not long before Black Krishna, brimming with confidence, was teaching eighteen Kundalini Yoga classes a week. As the date for departure to India approached, she became concerned for her responsibility to her students and came to the Master for his advice. What should she do?

Yogi Bhanan replied, "You will go to India as my personal attendant. Do you agree?" And she did agree.

## **The Measure of the Breath Meditation**

With only a few days to go before the big pilgrimage to India, Yogi Bhanan continued to teach his classes with undiminished fire and dedication. On December 15, he gave a special practice for those of his students who would remain to practice during the three months he would be away.

"You are all sitting in this room, you and me. There is no purpose in sitting hiding. That is the first laugh in meditation. But once you set yourself in the surrounding, you have to forget the surrounding first. And then you will proceed on instruction, and then you will grow and grow and grow.

"These 'body pains' are not actually body pains. They are a mental adjustment. Nerves resist, muscles resist, body resists, parts resist, intellect resists... All these guys who you feel are your friends, the moment you want to join with your Supreme Consciousness, they become your opponents. It takes one minute and they turn their back on you and hurt, hurt, hurt.

"Every dirty thought will come when you are meditating. Every distraction, every worldly work you will remember only when you are meditating. All these things will happen to you in meditating time and that is how you can understand who is your friend and who is your enemy.

"Spine straight, hands in this position. I will repeat physically, you will repeat mentally these same thoughts:

"O Giver of the *praana* and *apaana*, O Lord of the lords, I can only request Thee to fill me and this cup of my desires, open up my heart so that I can dedicate these few minutes to Thee. O Supreme, O Infinite Love, O my Lord of lords, O my Great Self, today with utmost humble self and with earnest heart, I beg out of Thee with these two folded hands. Fill and answer my only one desire. Give me these few minutes so that I can dedicate myself unto Thee, O my Creator, O my Dear One, Sweet One, O Beautiful Lord, O Bountiful Lord. Please answer me, O my Protector. Protect me at this time so that I can unite with Thee. O Most Beautiful of the beautiful, Most Desirable of the desirable, O Most Charming of the charming, O my Whole Self, now blend my higher self with my lower self and be united. It will be a union of hell and heaven. And once that can be consciously known to me, I'll be a living god. Supreme is thy Flow, supreme is thy Energy and that Supreme Energy is ever filling my cup which shall ever constantly be extended this minute unto my dedication. I dedicate myself physically, mentally, and spiritually through my guide of this hour and shall lead on the path of truth to join my infinite love and my ultimate desire.

"With this – *inhale deep, hold this breath* – in me is filled this breath of life, in me is filled with divine energy, in me is the living God. My temple is the house of the Lord Creator. May the light inside, may the energy inside, may the life inside – it is a union, it is a union with him. It is an automatic course of way in which I am dwelling. May this union be ever-dwelling, all negatives leave me. *Exhale. Inhale.*

"Life Force, come in me and dwell in me. Fill me, fill me, each pore of me, every part of me until I know every part of my life, until I know every part of my body unto my every feeling of mind, until I know every situation in which I am, soundness of mind, to each part of my relevant body may this breath go, this messenger of life from my God Creator. May it fill me ever, ever. I hug it. I kiss it. I love it. It is mine. It is mine. It is mine. It is mine, ever mine. O negativity, leave me. *Exhale. Inhale.*

"O come, O gods, fill me up. O gods of Life, O gods of Force, O gods of Energy, O gods of Truth, O gods Positive, my Life-giver, O my Beauty-giver, O Charming gods, Lord Beautiful, Thy message is sweet. Thy Sweetness, thy Soundings, I feel Thee all in me, in my body filled up with all that great love. In me lives, lives, lives on in me through God. I am filled up and filled up. Fill more, fill more and fill me up. Fill more and fill me up. Go away, dark forces! Leave me alone. O listen now. I am filling up my soul. I am filling up myself with God divine that early morning. When there is none around me, me and my Lord when we intercourse, on the course of truth at that union, we are all united, at that union there is nothing but the ring of truth, that truth. It is in me now. It is ever in me. I fill myself with that truth and I exclude all that is known as weakness. *Exhale*.

"At this moment, slowly and calmly turn your neck and fix your chin. Keep your hands where they are and lift your neck. I do that myself to be a complete surrender to the Universal Spirit, that Great Spirit which surrounds me and fills me with love.

"The breath of life, it must go in by inches. Breath shall go by inches and it shall come down also by inches. Breath does not obey you. You must make it to obey you. Without that, the negative person will never let you do your *sadhana*. That is the law of the universe. I cannot change it, you cannot change it, but it is the Divine Will in us which can change everything.

"This little breath will measure itself, inch by inch. It will go in and also it will also come out, inch by inch. You will keep on doing it without letting yourself go while the demons will hover over your consciousness more strongly than ever you have felt it. You'll feel their presence and your mind will revolt. At that time, you will transcend and be with your higher consciousness."

Yogi Bhajan chanted for a time, as everyone listened, then he continued his talk, "This is the breath measured by inches. Don't create sound, no sound. There should be no hardship to the body, but the breath should be resisted.

"All the gods and goddesses, saints and prophets have been invoked to bless you. All you have to do in return is measure your breath. Measure your life stream. If you can do that, there is nothing on this Earth which cannot happen at your command. Your dedication to your Guru will help you and your ego will not bother you. Your desire to grow and become great will make you overcome the pain and the energy will bring you the total awareness.

"This triple action at this moment, it is a rare moment in your life and style. Dedicate your total life to it. Days do not come back again. Perhaps this honest effort may be sufficient to take you across. The art is to measure your breath. Be at the command of your breath.

"There is so much heat in the room at this time that you can sweat to death if you measure your breath. It will open up all the circulatory system, take away all the dirt out of your body, and give you a new life. And extreme flood of *praana* will flow into your nostrils if you take them by measurement.



"Meditate on yourself through this *sadhana*. Again and again, put your entire attention, concentration on your breath please. Measure its entry in and measure its exit out. This today what you are going to earn and learn, you might have learned in a few months.

"How beautiful you are, my words do not explain that. How beautiful you will be if you can perfectly do it! No words on the Earth can explain that. We're working on you with your Supreme Higher Consciousness, that part of you which is God. And go through it. It will help you many times. It will wash away the many future events which are negative which are going to pounce on you. It will clear your way and destiny. It will make you superior among human beings. No work ever goes unpaid and no effort is without fruit. Work through this physical pressure and you will have a mastery of the body."

Yogi Bhajan led the class, "May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you and the pure light within you guide your way on, guide your way on, guide your way on... *Saaaaat Nam*"

And he prayed on everyone's behalf, "Cosmos, the Cause of all causes, O Creator, create those involvements in their hearts that they can seek Thee and be with Thee forever. Make it possible that this union may be a blissful and sound opportunity for our health and happiness. May we be the givers, not the takers. May we love without lust. May we serve without notice. May we walk in brotherhood and always look to our higher self. May thy blessings and thy mercy make us united, so that truth may prevail and there be peace on the Earth. *Sat Nam*."

### **To India!**

Just about any of Yogi Bhajan's students who could afford it, booked tickets to come along to India. Shakti Parwha Kaur sent money ahead to cover the group's accommodations in Delhi. She and Baba Singh would stay behind and keep the Los Angeles classes going.

Coming along were Krishna and Ganga and her new husband Larry Wentick. John Twombly, who had started the Baba Siri Chand Ashram in Orlando was coming. Jim Baker, who owned and ran The Source restaurant where Ganga worked was coming too. A crew of students of Sufi Sam filming a movie about spiritual teachers had also bought their tickets. There was Alan Weiss, planning to go to medical school in New York, Mark Vosko from Detroit, and Richard Buhler, who would soon after start a publishing house called "Brotherhood of Life" in Albuquerque, and about seventy others.

Arrangements were made. Some students had the money. Some borrowed it. Some received it as a gift. Everyone who could afford to go, came aboard.

In the end, eighty-five *Sat Nam*-ers decided to join with Yogi Bhajan on a magical pilgrimage departing December 27 via Air India from New York and arriving two days later at Delhi's Palam Airport. They were to remain there for nearly three months, returning on the equinox day, March 21.

## The Master of Delhi

If America was not your home in 1970, it might have seemed very fast, exciting and energizing, albeit lonely and unfamiliar. If you made it to America, you would have felt that in some sense you had really "made it," for America was the cultural hub of the universe – the centre of global entertainment, finance, innovation, space exploration, democracy and those really big bombs.

If India was not your home, on first visiting it might have seemed chaotic, archaic, beautiful, very poor, dignified, and occasionally very rich. India was, and is still, the hub of a different civilization, a different perspective, and a certain sense of timelessness. Some people coming to India thinking it is not their home are surprised to realize after a time of awakening familiarity, that *Mata Bharat* is, and has always been, their mother.

When the entourage disembarked from the Air India plane where they had spent the last day and a half, they were already disoriented by jet lag, having traversed at least eleven time zones.

Once they had gathered their luggage, they set out in a pair of belching diesel buses for their pre-arranged accommodations at the Gobind Sadan ashram.

Gobind Sadan should have been familiar to some of the eighty-five as it was home to the illustrious teacher Yogi Bhajan referred to as "Maharaj-ji" or "my Master." The teacher's photo adorned Yogi Bhajan's altar. The important Santa Fe ashram where Dawson and Karen Hayward managed things was named Maharaj Ashram after Yogi Bhajan's teacher. While it was true that Harbhajan Singh had learned from many men of God, this was a special relationship. Some said it was this master who had sent him to America.

The Americans were exhausted and excited both. Outside their buses, there were monkeys frolicking overhead in the trees, cows sauntering through the streets, and a group of dark, wiry men in identical green shorts and white undershirts jogging in formation. There were trees the likes of which they had never seen before, and birds; and all around them, crowds of determined people going places – men in tunics, women in saris, and polite children on their way to school. As the buses belched forward in the endless, honking traffic, the Americans could see that they were in a big city, vast, expansive, the size of Chicago or Los Angeles.

Eventually, the two buses stopped on the top of a barren, windswept hill. Yogi Bhajan spoke with the drivers. After a time, it became clear even to those who understood not a word of Hindi, that something was not right. Yogi Bhajan made sure everyone was settled, then set off on a mission.

A couple of hours later, when Yogi Bhajan returned, he had with him the makings of a number of large army-style tents. And a couple of hours after that, once the tents had been pitched, some cheerful volunteers arrived with a wonderfully aromatic cargo. The hungry Americans were asked to sit in rows and their turbaned friends plied them with warm chapatis and *daal* and rice pudding. It was

their first meal in India and it was delicious.

Yogi Bhajan did not spend much time with his students on the hill. He had business to attend to. Bibiji and his children Ranbir Singh, Kulbir Singh and Kamaljit Kaur were anxious to see him. And there was some problem he needed to attend to. Money had been sent ahead for their accommodations, but Harbhajan Singh was told it had never arrived. Moreover, a bag with everyone's passports had mysteriously disappeared.

It was not long before thirteen-year-old Ranbir had joined the Americans and was clowning with the best of them. Otherwise, everyone settled in to their new routine in the tents in that exotic new environment, waiting for something, they were not sure what exactly.

One day, Yogi Bhajan returned with Maharaj-ji. Before the students, his Master unsheathed a sword and began to use it to stir a narrow steel cylinder of water as he chanted over it. After a few minutes, Maharaj-ji offered the enchanted water to the students standing and watching nearby. He told them, and Yogi Bhajan translated, that not a drop should touch the ground.

Alan Weiss and another young man by turns drank from the cylinder. They could immediately feel something. Drinking that water brought on an experience of great clarity and extraordinary intensity unlike anything they had ever felt before. Alan would afterwards say this had been a turning point in his life.

Afterwards, in the confines of Gobind Sadan, Yogi Bhajan and his teacher sat and talked. What exactly transpired between them we can never know. But we do know that somewhere in that meeting of spirits, there was a falling out.

In their conversation, when Maharaj-ji mentioned that he gave substantial money to the political party, Harbhajan Singh challenged him, "What for?"

The man called "Maharaj-ji" replied, "So they don't scratch me."

Yogi-ji said, "Wait a minute! You do so much and you are afraid to be scratched?"

He replied, "Yeah, who wants that? So I give them money to get rid of them."

A discussion ensued about the Sikh view of spiritual and political power. Harbhajan Singh insisted that a spiritual authority should never fear the power of mere politicians. It was a surprise to him, that a man he had considered a saint paid off politicians to keep in their good graces.

As the days passed, Yogi Bhajan's came to know that Virsa Singh's assistant, Nirlep Kaur had been trying to convince his students that he was using them, and that they should bow at Virsa Singh's feet and accept him as their spiritual teacher. For the Americans, however, this was out of the

question. Yogi Bhajan had always encouraged their self-reliance, self-respect, and self-initiative. He had never initiated them or told them to bow before him and they were not going to bow themselves at anybody's feet.

Yogi Bhajan was also told, but would not consent, to submit his American students to this teacher. Harbhajan Singh asserted that he had not come to India to hand his students over to Virsa Singh. Rather, it was his intention to introduce them to the riches of his Sikh heritage, personified for him in the holy personage of Guru Ram Das.

The Master of Delhi taunted his student, "You say you talk to Guru Ram Das."

Yogi Bhajan replied, "I do."

"You think you believe in Guru Ram Das."

"I do."

"He is your personal Guru."

"He is."

"Siri Guru Granth Sahib is your Guru."

"Yes."

"Why do you talk about Guru Ram Das?"

"That's what I feel. I went to Harimandar Sahib. I washed the floors for four and a half years, and Guru blessed me. That's it. I was a yogi. I could stop rain. I could do weird things to people."

"If Guru Ram Das is your Guru, he should have given you his personal mantra. Every Guru gives his disciple their mantra. What is the mantra Guru Ram Das gave you?"

Yogi Bhajan had to admit he had no mantra other than "Wahe Guru," the Guru Mantra of all Sikhs, but he trusted Guru Ram Das to give him a mantra in his hour of need.

## **Farewell to Gobind Sadan**

Gobind Sadan was no longer a suitable home for Yogi Bhajan and his students. Luckily, he was able to contact his old friend, the one who had looked after the monetary needs of Bibiji and his family all the time he was away in America. That friend offered Yogi Bhajan his mango farm not far from Delhi

to camp in. When he heard that the Americans' money had been stolen, he returned with a large pillowcase full of money.

Yogi Bhajan told him, "It's so much money!"

His friend replied, "It doesn't matter."

"Thank you very much. I will return it when I come back to India."

"No. We stole it. We gave it."

"You didn't steal it. You are a friend. These people stole it."

"These people, these people, we people, all people... The people who have come from America to India are the guests of India and your money has been stolen and you have not filed a complaint and you don't want to do any nonsense, so here is the money."

It turned out, the money was more than what had been stolen from them. From that day on, that was Yogi Bhajan's pillow.

So it was that the Americans pulled up their tents and prepared to take their buses to the outskirts of Delhi. Before leaving, another fortunate thing happened. One of the travellers found everyone's passports in a bag under a bush. After that, Harbhajan Singh advised everyone to hold onto their passports.

A rupture between a spiritual guide and his student is not a small thing. When Martin Luther broke with the Pope, there were wars and persecutions for a hundred years. Where schisms and leaders and the fortunes of the faithful are concerned, it can be dangerous for everyone concerned.

The word at Gobind Sadan was that Harbhajan Singh the Yogi Baba had become a disloyal student, that America had been too much for him, that the *maya* of the West gone to his head and he had turned his back on Virsa Singh.

Yogi Bhajan was aware of the danger of the changing situation. The police were informed and armed guards arrived at the mango farm to provide protection.

## The Sanctuary

The mango grove turned out to be a blessed and peaceful sanctuary. On the property was a simple wooden building that could hold everyone who came out for *sadhana*. Sometimes, Yogi Bhajan

would join his students there in the early morning hours.

In the designated *sadhana* building, Black Krishna had created a simple altar with a nice cloth and candles and a picture of Guru Ram Das. But there was a problem. For a couple days in a row, Krishna would come and find the all candles melted and the altar cloth burnt to ashes. Strangely, the picture of Guru Ram Das remained intact and not even singed.

Krishna was perplexed. She took every precaution to prevent it happening again. The candles were not lit. And each time it happened, she told Yogi Bhajan about it and apologized profusely.

After the second time, Harbhajan Yogi's curiosity was piqued, and he decided to meditate by the altar along with Krishna. After a time, he saw a beautiful thing.

There was a man on a horse, less than five and half feet tall, in the perfect image of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Master – but without a head. Where the head might have been, was a large flame.

Yogi Bhajan spoke to the flaming vision, "Guruji, what is this? There is no head."

The vision replied, "Hard times will come on you. Dharma will spread, but I will have to return these seeds which you have brought with you from across the ocean. Follow me, and I will carry you safely across. And then we will see what Khalsa will be."

After that, the altar never caught on fire again.

The days passed with plenty of scheduled yoga and meditation. Yogi Bhajan would often give classes in the *sadhana* building. Sometimes, everyone would pile into the buses to attend various events nearby. Life was easy in the mango orchard and still rather novel for the Americans. Yogi Bhajan made sure there was plenty of good Indian food, though the mango trees all around them would not be in fruit until the summer.

On January 15, 1971, Yogi Bhajan told the students who had gathered for *sadhana* that two friends had died and their spirits needed to be freed from the pull of this world. The one was a student who had committed suicide. The other was Murshid Samuel L. Lewis, known as "Sufi Sam," who had befriended Yogi Bhajan at the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco in the summer of 1969. The American Sufi teacher had slipped and fallen on the steps of his San Francisco home before dawn a couple of weeks earlier and suffered a severe concussion. Murshid had just left his body in the hospital where he had spent his final days.

Yogi Bhajan went on to teach his students how to liberate a soul once it had become detached from its body. He told them to meditate within and chant "*Akaal*" - and meditate they did.

As they all chanted, Yogi Bhajan's students could see two shimmering sparks of light. It seemed as though their chanting was propelling them, making them subtle and blue and bright. As they watched, one of the lights became bluer and purer, but for all their efforts, the other was drawn to some kind of brown stuff. They chanted and chanted until one was completely merged with the blue ether, while the other had taken the path to be born again on Earth.

## On Tour!

After a few days of this routine, Yogi Bhajan told everyone to prepare to leave the next day. The mango grove and their occasional excursions nearby had been nice, but it seemed all of India awaited beyond, so it was with some eagerness that the students took their seats aboard the buses for the next stage of their tour of the Guru's homeland.

As they drove along with their police escort, the Americans looked out on the countryside – green and fertile, and much as it had been for thousands of years. There were large fields of towering sugar cane and golden wheat interspersed by farmers with their tractors, and occasional women, children, and water buffalo.

The first stop was a village an hour's drive away. It was as good a place as any for Yogi Bhajan's students to learn the finer points of Punjabi hospitality.

With Yogi Bhajan to interpret, his students followed along. Because of their absolute unfamiliarity with the surroundings and their inability to speak or understand, the Americans would be doing a lot of following in the weeks to come. This routine did not come naturally. There were still hippies and trippers among them. For many, the tagging along and doing what they were told - more than the dysentery and more than the crude toilet facilities - was the most difficult part of the trip.

The locals came in from their fields and houses, anywhere they may have been, and soon it seemed the whole community, leather-skinned elders and tiny babes in arms, wives and mothers, fathers and sons, uncles and aunts, just everybody was there to take in this new sensation from abroad. The word "Am-ree-kan" (American) passed from ear to ear.

The sense of wonder was mutual. After all, the Americans had to varying degrees cut their family ties when they had joined the great Aquarian conspiracy. Their families, communes and ashrams were young and hardly multi-generational. Yet, here before their eyes were generations of people of the Earth, uncomplicated folk with a natural wisdom, arrayed before them in four generations.

After a few words between Yogi Bhajan and a couple of the older men, everyone proceeded down the dirt road to the largest building of the community. Outside was a flag of orange with an

insignia none of the students could make out. It was the Gurdwara. Inside they squeezed, the nearly one hundred pilgrims and their five hundred hosts, though quite a number of the women would soon take their leave. This was an occasion for a grand community meal in the Sikh tradition, and they would make themselves busy preparing it.

At the back of the building was a canopy and beneath it a wooden edifice, covered with shiny cloth. An attendant behind was ceremoniously waving a yak's hair fan. In front, on the edifice and under the cloth, some of Yogi Bhajan's students understood was the present Guru of all Sikhs, the Word as Guru, Siri Guru Granth Sahib.

One of the elders stood up beside the Siri Guru and delivered an obviously emotional address of welcome. Then Harbhajan Singh went up and spoke for some time himself. His booming voice filled the hall for an hour or so, punctuated now and again as he plied his sense of humour, with chuckles of amusement, or by loud choruses of acclaim. Lastly, the eighty-five Americans squeezed onto and over the stage behind where Yogi Bhajan had spoken.

Raising their voices, Yogi Bhajan's students began to sing together with him: "*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru*" the mantra they had been chanting as their *sadhana* in the early morning hours, the mantra he had taught them in his first classes in America. And they chanted and chanted, much to the delight of the villagers.

After perhaps an hour of their chanting, all would rise and there would be a prayer. Then Siri Guru Granth Sahib would ceremoniously be opened and some words read from it. Next came time for the sweet, delicious *Prashaad*, passed from a shining bowl to the cupped hands of everyone. After that, everyone would sit in rows as the soul food of the Sikhs, their *Guru-ka-langar* of chapatis and *daal* and curry was served.

This was a routine that would repeat itself many times in the course of the *yatra*. Inevitably, some on both sides of the linguistic and cultural divide would make an effort to reach across. Smiles and gestures were exchanged to and fro, especially as the serviceful men with buckets of tasty *daal* and curry and stacks of chapatis moved up and down the rows gauging the needs of their guests. The pantomime between servers and those being served might go something like this:

"Eat!" The server smiles and gestures with a ladle.

"Okay." The served smiles and nods their head.

"Have some more." A different server smiles and gestures.

"Alright." The served smiles and leans back as though to allow space for the ladle.

"Take some more." The server smiles and gestures again.



"This is delicious!" The served smiles broadly and rubs her/his belly.

"Have more." Another server smiles broadly.

"Okay, but just a little..." The served acts pensive and motions with her/his thumb and forefinger.

"Have another!" The first server holds out a freshly made chapati and smiles.

"Maybe." The served looks pensive, but smiles.

"Just one more." A server smiles and motions with their forefinger in the air.

"I don't think I can eat any more." The served blows out their cheeks and holds her/his stomach with both hands.

"You must have another!" One of the servers smiles broadly and gestures with his ladle.

"Uhhh..." The served presses their hands together at their heart centre, smiles, makes direct eye contact, and shakes her/his head from side to side.

The hearty Punjabis were always concerned their skinny American visitors had enough to eat. The two children in the entourage were special objects of attention. As was their custom, legions of well-meaning Punjabi grandmothers came by to affectionately pinch their cheeks.

Then, as day turned to night, arrangements were made, often on the Gurdwara floor, but sometimes in neighbour's houses, for everyone to sleep. Usually the evening would end somewhere under a cozy quilt with a warm glass of sweet buffalo milk. Then off to dreamland till the early morning...

## Village Folk

Yogi Bhajan took his students to the heart of Punjab where life still went on much as it had in the time of Guru Nanak. Yogi Bhajan, once a villager himself, shared his home and his country and its history with his students as they went from village to village and town to town.

Everywhere, there was history. There were stories to be told, landmarks to decipher, things to celebrate, introductions to be made. At one little village, Yogi Bhajan pointed out a short, blue-clad *Nihung*, a member of a warrior clan dating to Guru Gobind Singh. Yogi Bhajan told everyone that the man was a great saint, and that they should shake his hand and get to know him. And so, as much as the limitations of language and their short stay allowed, they got to know him.

Sometimes the congregations in the Gurdwaras were too stunned by the sight of the Americans. When the looks and whispers became too much, the tour master would forcefully inform the *Sangat* that if they would not chant along with their guests from afar, they should bow to the Guru and exit the temple, as there was a crowd outside hoping to find a place inside.

One day, Yogi Bhajan told Jim Baker, who owned the restaurant in Los Angeles where Ganga worked, "Wait till you get to the next village. See how the people receive you."

Sure enough, when the entourage disembarked from their buses, the locals there seemed to be especially in awe of Jim. The villagers were generally respectful of their visitors from the West, but for some reason they congregated around him in a most humble and devotional attitude. Yogi Bhajan explained that Jim reminded the people there of a Sufi saint who had lived with them and looked exactly like him.

One time, Krishna and Devorah found themselves on the balconies of two opposing buildings. What did they do? Why chanted, of course! They chanted to and fro, line to line, back and forth in beautiful melodic style.

Guru Nanak had said that chanting was the great presiding power of this age, and so they chanted in fulfilment of his word. For those who heard it, their spontaneous performance was one of the high points of the tour they would remember for years to come.

## The Cloud of Death

The royal city of Patiala loomed up ahead, an ancient city with a real *maharaja*, a carryover from centuries past. It had an old fort and a palace, a museum and several Gurdwaras. There was much to see and appreciate. But when the buses pulled up to their latest way station, the occupants were sore and cramped. For many of them, their first and only thoughts were to shower and rest their bodies.

As it happened, there was a scheduled event, a plan to attend a Gurdwara in Patiala. The Yogi was going. Who would accompany him? Though they were tired, about twenty students roused themselves and followed in the train of the Master.

As they crossed the courtyard outside the Gurdwara, an uneasy feeling came over Ganga. The closer they came, the stronger her sense of foreboding. She caught Yogi Bhajan's attention and stopped beside him, saying, "Sir, don't take another step. I see the black cloud of death hanging over that Gurdwara. We can't go in there because they're going to kill us!"

Harbhajan Singh looked for a moment into Ganga's terrified eyes and calmly assured her, "Ganga, a Sikh never shirks from death," and continued walking toward their engagement at the

Gurdwara.

Ganga's mind went into hyperdrive. Her insecurity screamed loud: "A Sikh! What are you talking about? I'm an American! I'm not walking to my death! Do you think I'm a fool?"

But when she saw her teacher going ahead with calm assurance, Ganga thought again: "I have to go with him. I don't have any choice. I am this man's daughter. If he is going, I have to go. If he has the courage to go, I have to go with him."

One by one, Yogi Bhajan and his twenty students went inside, bowed before Siri Guru Granth Sahib, and seated themselves as a group in the congregation, but not for long. Within a few minutes, a small group of men entered and, from the back of the Gurdwara, began to shout at the congregation. Everyone turned. Some shouted back. Then there was more shouting, all in Punjabi utterly incomprehensible to Yogi Bhajan's students, except that it seemed abusive and dangerous. It felt like the beginning of a riot.

Yogi Bhajan was completely aware and had already surrendered himself to what was going to happen. As a yogi, he closed his eyes, drew his attention deep within, and became motionless. For their part, his students formed a protective ring around their master, with their faces to the danger outside, and began to chant their protective mantra out loud.

The angry people gathered like a storm around the Americans and their teacher. They encircled them, waving sticks and shouting, shouting and screaming, waving their sticks threateningly in the air. Like a thunderstorm, they broke all around them, thundering and crashing, their faces angry and contorted, while in the centre of the storm, the Yogi meditated and his students chanted bravely, defiantly, around him.

Yogi Bhajan meditated, and the group of men shouted, but they did not, or perhaps they could not, approach the ring of the Master's students, roused in love and prepared to sacrifice.

Eventually, the storm passed and the angry people, like clouds, seemed to blow away. Having spent their fury, they turned and vanished.

Some people from the temple management remained and tried to console the Americans. One who spoke English, assured them that everything was safe and they could go now.

Ganga spoke for the group. She was not about to be consoled. The subtleties of who was who and why things had turned out so violently escaped her. She refused to trust anyone she did not know. Ganga insisted the police come and provide an escort.

When the police arrived about a half hour later, everyone was still chanting and Yogi Bhajan still deep inside his physical shell. Finally, when the chanting stopped and he came to life, there were tears

in his eyes.

The head policeman remarked, "You are a yogi, and you are crying? But they've all run away. There's no problem!"

The policeman could not have understood. Yogi Bhajan was crying tears of love, tears of thankfulness, tears of humility. "These children don't deserve this," he said.

In his own country where he had lived for thirty-nine years, where he had been a government officer and could count hundreds of friends, when an attack was made on his life, who had stood by him? Those who belonged to him. In his heart, he knew then that he belonged to these American students.

### *Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru*

Yogi Bhajan had not had a ready answer for Virsa Singh, but three weeks later, at 3:30 in the morning, in a village outside Amritsar, when his personal attendant, Krishna came to rouse him with a foot massage according to their routine, he was not under the covers, but already sitting and awake. Her teacher told her that Guru Ram Das had been with him the whole night, that he had received the Guru Mantra from him, and that it would keep them safe.

It was a dark, moonless night and the street was dotted with potholes, so Yogi Bhajan held each others' hands and chanted the mantra for the first time as they navigated their way the three blocks to the school here they were to have morning *sadhana*. "*Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru*," they softly chanted as one voice in the darkness.

Arriving at the school, everyone pitched in to put the desks and chairs to the sides so there would be room to exercise and meditate – and exercise and meditate they did.

Afterwards, the people of the village lined up on a concrete pavement to see Harbhajan Singh, this Sikh Yogi from America. Everyone had a problem, it seemed. After speaking with each person, he would direct them to Black Krishna, seated outside on the grass. She was to chant the mantra he had just received with each one. She and Yogi Bhajan were just within eyeshot of each other, and he would direct her to chant fifteen minutes with this person, twenty minutes with this one, and so on through the morning.

Later on, Yogi Bhajan described how he came to spend the night in the awesome presence of Guru Ram Das. It had begun with his chanting "*Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru*" in the way to which he was accustomed. Slowly, as Yogi Bhajan chanted, he had become aware of a change in the sounds his mouth was uttering. First, he felt the change. Then, he heard the actual sounds and he

understood that he had been given what he had prayed for. Guru Ram Das had given him his Guru mantra.

After a time, he was surprised to find that there was a pure light in that room, and that a human being was sitting there in the very visible form of Guru Ram Das. The great Guru spoke, "At this time you need the protection of a mantra. The people who are following you are not ripe. Chant this: "*Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru.*" You do not want to claim anything as your own achievement, and you don't want to take the blame either. Let the claim be mine and let me also take the blame. Now say this mantra."

Yogi Bhajan shared with all his students the mantra he had thus received. It was chanted on the buses from then on. Black Krishna, for her part, hardly ever seemed to stop chanting.

### **The Honest Police Inspector**

In a certain Punjabi village along the way, Yogi Bhajan had been assigned to stay in a school and a *sewadar* was assigned to bring him warm water, so he could have a tub bath in the morning. While taking his bath, Yogi Bhajan asked him, "What do you do?"

The gentleman replied, "I was a police inspector."

"What happened?"

"I was an honest police inspector."

"Then what happened?"

"You know what happens to honest police inspectors."

"I don't understand."

"They dismissed me. They wanted me to do something. I told them it was impossible, so they took their vendetta. They just charged me with disobedience this and that. Nobody listened. I am out!"

"Okay, Mister Police Inspector, what do you want to do now?"

"I don't want to do anything. I just want to serve some people. I am in too much pain and I am too much in anger. I feel great injustice has been done to me. I feel there is no place in this world for a righteous man."

"No. There is. How righteous do you feel I am?"

"I don't know. But I feel very comfortable with you."

"Hey, I'll give you my Mantra!"

"What is it?"

"Sit down and repeat '*Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru*'. Just say it."

"What will it do?"

"A fool asks what a mantra can do. It doesn't do anything! Just sit down and don't worry about it."

They would not see each other again until three years had passed.

## Questions in Amritsar

After their close encounter with death, the tour continued. Out of concern for their security, there were frequent detours and changes of plan, but still they soldiered on.

As Yogi Bhanan and his students continued their way in the east of Punjab, further to the west, in the holy city of Amritsar, some people in the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.), the body that governed the religious affairs of the Sikhs, discussed reports they had been hearing about a former government officer and a number of American youth touring the countryside. It sounded very odd.

Who was this man? And why would any officer of the Indian Civil Service just quit and go to America? Some said he had left his family in Delhi. Some said he was associated with Gobind Sadan. But what was he doing with all these Americans?

Punjab was a rural, clannish and insular culture. It was also a border region. In 1965, it had been the front for a war between hostile neighbours India and Pakistan and in a few months it would be so again. There was a history of being suspicious of outsiders, and good grounds for it too. They could be spies, foreign agents, troublemakers, communists. Who knew?

Most young Americans who came to India and Pakistan and Nepal were easy enough to figure out. They came for the cheap and readily available hashish and marijuana. But why was this group touring Punjabi villages?

Some foreigners came for spiritual enlightenment. Why weren't these Americans further north at Dharamsala with the Tibetan Buddhists, or in the *sadhu* culture of Rishikesh and Benares to the east? Why were they in Punjab, and why were they following a *Sardar*?

The committee members decided the situation was too odd to simply ignore. Besides, the group seemed to be slowly making its way closer to Amritsar, the city of the sacred Harimandar, the Golden Temple. A couple of S.G.P.C. men were assigned to go east, find the group, and figure out what they were up to.

If there were grounds to be suspicious, there would still be time to stop them, one way or another, before they disturbed the holy ambiance of the city of Amritsar.

## Alamgir

When the agents of the S.G.P.C. found them, Yogi Bhajan and his students were at Gurdwara Alamgir, a few kilometers from the industrial city of Ludhiana. This Gurdwara was bigger than most of the Sikh temples they had seen. It had been enlarged just a couple of years before.

The story of this holy place, which Yogi Bhajan shared with his students, dated back to the terrible days when Guru Gobind Singh was a fugitive from the Mughal Empire. After the Khalsa had been forced to evacuate the fort of Anandpur, a pair of Muslim brothers who used to sell the Guru fine horses, came to hear of his lonely plight. Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan set out and found Guru Gobind Singh. Meeting him, they offered the Master their help. Dying some cloth offered by a devotee a suitable blue, Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan dressed the Guru as a Muslim holy man. While the Mughal army scoured the countryside, the two carried the object of the army's manhunt on the road disguised in a palanquin.

It was at the place of the present day Gurdwara that the tenth Master had dismissed Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan after giving them a letter of commendation that would be treasured by their family for generations. Guru Gobind Singh proceeded from there on a horse provided by an old Sikh named Bhai Nauda who lived nearby.

As the agents from Amritsar approached, they found the Americans sitting outside the Gurdwara. Yogi Bhajan's students were chanting. The agents watched and listened from a respectful distance. They could make out the words: "*Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru.*" The men had never heard this chant before.

As the sun passed overhead, the agents began to tire. The Americans, sitting or sprawling on the grass, continued to chant. Hours passed and the men from the S.G.P.C. grew in amazement. The devotion of these students of this Harbhajan Singh surpassed anything they had imagined. They

telephoned Amritsar to tell of their humbling experience. So far as they could see, there was no threat from these Western devotees of Guru Ram Das.

## Guru Amar Das

The tour continued on with Yogi Bhajan serving as teacher, story teller, and guide. One big pilgrimage place had a very large well with a decorative dome overhead. Guru Ram Das's spiritual guide, Guru Amar Das, the third Master, had arranged for the well to be built with 84 steps leading down to the water. He said that anyone who chanted Guru Nanak's cosmic poem, the Japji Sahib once on each of the steps, then took a dip in the water after each recitation, would be freed from the bondage of 8.4 million lifetimes. That *sadhana* would take hours and hours, but it seemed there were always people there faithfully reciting on the marble steps and dipping in the chill waters below.

Nearby was a large marble hall dating back to the third Master's time. According to the history of the place, the Emperor of Mughal India, Akbar, came there once to meet with the Guru. The emperor was an open-minded ruler, sympathetic to the Sikhs. When Guru Amar Das heard of his arrival, he sent word that before meeting, Emperor Akbar must eat "*langar*" - the common meal – with everyone. This defied the tradition of that day, that kings were superior to common people, their subjects. It hinted bravely of a new tradition when all humanity should be recognized as one.

The good emperor seated himself among people of all ranks and religions, men and women, farmers and tradesmen. That day, the only food available was rice and a seasoning of salt. After partaking of the *langar*, the ruler remarked at how delicious it had tasted. "There must be some special ingredient," he said. The only special ingredients were the love of the Sikhs and the grace of the Creator.

Another Gurdwara marked a place where Guru Amar Das had secluded himself for several days in meditation. On the door of the brick building, he had written a notice that anyone who entered the door and disturbed his meditation would no longer be a disciple of his.

After looking far and wide for several days, Baba Budha, one of the Guru's eldest and most respectful devotees finally found the place with Guru Amar Das inside. But what could he do? Baba Budha's great longing to be reunited with his Master gave him but one choice. Brick by brick, he burrowed his way through the wall, until he was inside. After that, all was forgiven, and the Guru joined his Sikhs once more.



## Amritsar

Day by day, as the entourage neared Amritsar, the excitement increased. It seemed to exude from Yogi Bhajan and everyone was feeling it. Controversy also dogged the group, some of it fed by Virsa Singh and Nirlep Kaur. Punjabis at all stations of society found difficulty in understanding why American young people would live drugless, chaste lives while following a Sardar. To fight the cynicism and sheer incredulity of his countrymen and women, Harbhajan Singh spent much of each day talking to old friends, common people, religious people, anybody he met, to assure them of his purity of intentions and the spiritual dedication of his students.

Mindful of the problems they had encountered in Delhi, Yogi Bhajan left most of his entourage at a village a short distance from Amritsar and went ahead to secure the situation. Once in Amritsar, Harbhajan Singh naturally made his way directly to the Harimandar Sahib, the fourth Guru's resplendent house, to offer his homage. In the holy city, his concerns were dispelled. Guru Ram Das, it seemed, would personally host the much-maligned group of Americans.

Returning from the Guru's house to the village where he had left his students, Harbhajan Singh told everyone to embark for the holy city. At his word, their buses began to make their way through the sundry traffic of bicycle rickshaws and brightly-painted trucks, and cars and cows and dogs, bearing right, steering left, weaving left and right, honking regularly, the final distance toward the holy city.

There was no downtown of looming skyscrapers ahead. Rather, Amritsar was manifestly humble and close to the Earth. Early in their century-long reign here, the British had erected a tall clock tower to try and literally overshadow the Harimandar or "Golden Temple." The people of Amritsar had demolished the tower in 1945 and thereby restored the city's respectful modesty.

For nearly four hundred years, the gracious town of pilgrims had grown – under Mughal rajahs and Afghan invaders. The Sikh maharaja, Ranjit Singh, had made his summer palace here. During the British period, it had been the site of large demonstrations and a massacre of a thousand innocents, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. After independence, it had been at the centre of protests and demonstrations to gain for the Sikhs their promised Punjabi-speaking state.

Parts of Amritsar remained much as they had been for centuries. The original buildings, noticeable by their smaller bricks, dated from the days when Guru Ram Das himself had held court on the banks of the fabulous pool excavated to hold the Harimandar at its centre. It was here that Guru Ram Das disguised himself at night and set out for the last pilgrim station before the entrance into the beginnings of the town of Amritsar. Incognito, he would wash and bandage the feet of the pilgrims, then return to his duties as Guru in the day.

This was the city of Guru Arjun, the fourth Guru's son, who completed the temple and compiled the priceless *Shabad Guru* to be installed as a jewel therein. It was from here that he left for Lahore to be tried and painfully put to death. And it was here that his son, the sixth Guru, Hargobind Sahib erected the Akal Takhat, the Immortal Throne, higher than the throne of the emperor, a deliberate

affront to his bigoted authority.

Twice, the Harimandar had been blown up in the 1700's, its holy pool filled with the corpses of innocent cattle. And twice it had been restored.

In the dark days when it was a crime to even say "Guru," intrepid Sikhs would take the chance of being painfully put to death just to take a quick dip in the waters of the holy Harimandar. It was here the legendary Baba Deep Singh came with his volunteers to liberate the temple, continuing the fight though his head was severed from his neck. And in peaceful days that followed, the Harimandar was embellished with marble and filigree and a crown of precious gold by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Harimandar Sahib was set like a jewel in the very centre of the city, amidst the maze of alleys and laneways designed to hinder invading armies. Visitors' first sight of the famous temple came through the high archways of the entrance, the Darshan Deori. There it glistened beautifully, majestically, a gilded vision in the golden sun.

### **At Home in the Harimandar**

Amritsar opened its heart to the American pilgrims. The people of Amritsar showed themselves to be gracious and warmly hospitable, curious and self-consciously discreet. They engaged the Westerners, some of them habitually turbaned now, at every turn. A number of the students were becoming adept at joining their hands in greeting and offering the customary "Sat Siri Akaal!"

For the newly-arrived Americans, Amritsar was an ancient city, a new continent to be discovered, a mystery to be uncovered. Each neighborhood brimmed with history. There were seemingly endless relics and artifacts, gates and Gurdwaras. And for those with even a little to spend, there were shops with fabulous sweets, outdoor stands with unheard-of fruits, and bazaars arrayed with all kinds of exotica.

The gem at the heart of Amritsar was the sacred temple of marble covered in gold, the Harimandar Sahib. After washing their feet below the large multi-domed entranceway, pilgrims descended a wide arcade of stairs and entered the holy site. Before them lay a vast, gleaming spectacle: white of marble, blue of sky and waters, gleaming gold of the domes of the Harimandar. Far to the left and far to the right, ran a broad, rectangular marble walkway arranged in intricate geometric patterns.

The walkway itself was completely surrounded by the outer building of the Golden Temple complex, comprised of the Sikh Museum and countless rooms for individual prayers and meditation, with domed entranceways on two sides. Inside the walkway's perimeter, the waters of the temple beckoned pilgrims to immerse themselves, to bathe and soak up the healing energies of that place, as

devotees had done for centuries. Then, over the sparkling waters, a walkway with brass handrails offered pilgrims access to the brilliant temple, the foremost of Gurdwaras, resplendent in its surroundings.

Inlaid with semi-precious stones formed into innumerable intricate designs and motifs, the Harimandar had been constructed by Guru Arjun as a holy seat for the most inspiring poetry of his time and place, the utterly transformative *Shabd Guru*. And there, seated beneath a precious canopy, on a gold throne with attendants all around, the Living Word, Siri Guru Granth Sahib, held court from the very early morning until late at night, as thousands arrived from far and near to offer their respects.

Yogi Bajan had already advised his students of the miraculous power of this place, and how just a few years before his destiny had been forever changed washing the floors of the holy Harimandar. He had described it as the nucleus of powerful spiritual center, where heaven met the earth to create a cosmic harmony. There was only one other place like it in all the world - in the heart of the true seeker, the Sikh.

As impressed as they were by the sheer splendor of the Harimandar or "Golden Temple," with its majestic ambience, its sacred pool, its serene marble promenade, and all the beautifully fashioned shrines and memorials of variegated marble, semi-precious stones and gold, all of it resounding to the delightful sounds of *Gurbani kirtan* and exuding the delectable fragrance of the Guru's *Prashaad*, there was something still more amazing that captured the imaginations of the new arrivals. It was the people of Amritsar.

Here, for the first time, these Westerners saw people of all ages, sizes and economic situations working all hours of the day and night doing "*kar sewa*" - sweeping and washing the *parikarma*, serving water to the thirsty, making and serving *langar*, and doing any of a hundred other duties - all with the enthusiasm of Americans going to a party!

Then, after the *sewadars* had done their part, they would have *Prashaad*, sit, meditate, pray, then go their way looking perfectly contented, relaxed and fulfilled. Many of the Americans who had grown up around people who worked begrudgingly, compulsively, or solely for money, were in shock. Clearly, for all their "first world" pretensions, there was something they had been missing.

## The Offer

In Amritsar, Yogi Bajan reconnected with some of his friends and associates from when he had been posted there. He would visit their houses with his Western students, who were acclaimed as celebrities now, speaking a foreign language (English) and yet chanting in the Guru's tongue. Yogi Bajan was also met by Giani Mohinder Singh, a gracious and humble man who happened to be the

Secretary of the S.G.P.C., the organization that administered most of the Gurdwaras in Punjab.

Mohinder Singh had taken an interest in the case of Harbhajan Singh and his entourage. Now that they had met, he did everything in his power to accommodate and serve them. The S.G.P.C. was a buzz with the arrival of the Westerners. Some members did not like the idea of hippies from America taking up their religion. Others took a more accepting view. Giani Mohinder Singh was instrumental in representing the Sikh Yogis in their discussions.

Finally, it was decided that if these Westerners really wanted to embrace the Sikh way of life, they should be given an opportunity to be baptised into the Order of Khalsa. And what better place to be initiated than in the most holy city of Amritsar? This was a genuine offer. It was also a way of silencing the S.G.P.C. hardliners who believed American hippie freaks would never agree to take up the hardy discipline of the order of saint-soldiers.

When Yogi Bhajan explained what was being offered to his students, many of them were very keen. Their hearts had been opened and their souls touched by the spiritual richness, the sheer human splendor, and the warm-hearted devotion they had witnessed since arriving in the Guru's Land. They had been amazed at the humble service and endless hospitality extended to them. These longhaired Americans in Punjab had realized for themselves much of what they wished for their troubled society back home.

Not everyone, however, was so eager to give up their freedom to do whatever they wanted whenever they wanted, a cherished American tradition. For them, this was more of a tour than a pilgrimage, and nobody was going to make them join any kind of religion.

## **Baisakhi 1699**

The *Amrit* ceremony dated back many years to the days when the Mughal empire had cruelly dominated India's religious landscape. Guru Gobind Rai, tenth of the Sikh Masters, had seen his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur dedicate his last days to the cause of freedom of worship. The ninth Guru had courted arrest and gone to Delhi on behalf of the Hindu priests of Kashmir. In the capital he and three of his disciples had been cruelly tortured and put to death, remaining true to their faith to their last breath.

Twenty-four years later, when the Guru was a man of thirty-three, he called his followers together in the fortified town of Anandpur in the Himalayan foothills for the spring festival of Baisakhi. There, he challenged his Sikhs to come forward and give him their head. Only five responded to the Master's order. One by one, they came to him and were beheaded in a nearby tent. The Guru's sword bore the blood of his dear disciples. Tens of thousands who witnessed the events were stunned by what they saw.

After a time, Guru Gobind Rai re-emerged from the tent with his five disciples alive and in tow. Somehow, their severed heads had been rejoined with their bodies and they had been restored to life. The Master had proudly dressed them with beautiful saffron turbans and tunics. He then introduced them to the amazed multitude as his “five beloveds,” for they had passed his most difficult test. Their devotion had surpassed their fear of death. While Guru Nanak, the first Master, through Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth, had each found only one disciple worthy of the crown of guruship, Guru Gobind Rai was about to anoint five worthy Sikhs as his equals in the holy Order of Khalsa.

The Guru set to work stirring a steel bowl of water with a double-edged sword as he chanted and infused that water with superhuman courage and strength. Then his wife, Sahib Devan, came by and contributed sugary sweets to the roiling nectar. This was to make those who partook of it sweet and humble as well.

At last, after reciting a number of Hymns, Guru Gobind Rai had his disciples sit in *veeraasan* on one heel with the opposite knee against their chest as he infused them with the spiritually charged water, the *Amrit*. In their eyes, in their mouth and on the crown of their head, they thirstily received the nectar. From that day forward, the five men were given the royal “Singh” as a last name, as women would receive the name “Kaur.” Some days later, the Master requested the five to honor him with the same baptism, and he became known as Guru Gobind Singh, the Master who himself became a disciple.

From that day forward, the Khalsa grew in strength and numbers. One by one, it conquered the bigotry of the caste system, the oppression of the Mughals, the greed of Afghan invaders, the smug rule of the British and the duplicity of India's modern-day rulers.

## The *Amrit* Ceremony

So it was that, early one morning, Krishna and Ganga and Larry Wentink, Mark Vosko and Alan Weiss, John Twombly, Richard Buhler, Sandy Cohen, and about thirty others, including a couple of youngsters, came together before the Akal Takhat building, across the waters from the Harimandar. The first musical strains of the *ragees* at the mother temple would have just begun to waft through the darkness.

There they met with Yogi Bhajan, who instructed them, “My job finishes here. From now onward, you will take these steps alone, because *Amrit* is an initiation in which I cannot participate. This is a direct relation between you, Guru, and God. It can never be repeated by anybody else. It is a direct relationship. It is not my relationship with you and your relationship with me. Now, you guys go up and you take the *Amrit*. I have done my job to bring you to the bottom step of Akal Takhat.”

Yogi Bhajan's students then filed up the winding stairs to the roof of the historic Akal Takhat, where they and two Punjabi gentlemen who had come for the same reason, waited for the ceremony to begin. They were met by a saintly old Khalsa and five other men adorned with saffron-coloured turbans and tunics who would perform the ceremony. To some in that gathering it seemed odd that Yogi Bhajan, who had seen them through so much, should not be there. Perhaps having not heard his words, they expected him to arrive at any moment, but he did not arrive.

The Head Priest of the Akal Takhat, Singh Sahib Sadhu Singh Bhaura, had officiated over hundreds of ceremonies like this. For many years, he had served as a missionary near the border with Nepal, where it was Hindus who would come to join the casteless fold of Khalsa. First of all, a little of the tradition of the Khalsa was explained to the group through an interpreter. Then the vows were enumerated: they were to rise each morning and meditate on the Name of God; they were never to take intoxicants; they were not to commit adultery; they were never to eat meat butchered in the custom of halal; they were to keep their bodies intact, never cutting their hair; they were to wear a steel bracelet, cotton undershorts with a drawstring, a wooden comb and a small sword of self-defence.

Over the centuries, many thousands had since put aside their egotism and dedicated their lives to purity and piety through this very ceremony, but that morning it proved difficult for some of those gathered on the roof of the historic shrine to accept everything wholly and without reservation.

For years, it had been the practice of these rebels and outcasts to distrust every known convention and authority in order to find their own truth. They had turned their back on the American nightmare of war and greed and exploitation and deception, with a hope of realizing the high ideals of that country's founding. Along the way, they had had only themselves to rely on – their own integrity, their own judgment, and their own word. They had also learned to trust their Yogi friend and teacher as well, but these vows sounded new and strange to them.

Several candidates took exception to some of the vows required for joining the Order of Khalsa and they spoke up.

“What if I have been working all night or have been sick and cannot stay awake to meditate in the early morning hours?” “I know the vow says I won't take alcohol, but what if there is alcohol in a medicinal tincture that I must take to recover my health?” “What if I promise today to wear my undershorts all the time, but tomorrow I want to join in a sweat lodge ceremony with my Hopi Indian brothers where you are supposed to be completely naked?” “I never want to cut my hair, but what if I need to go for surgery one day and the doctor says they need to shave the skin where they want to operate?”

And so, after these objections and conditions had been aired and responded to, the ceremony was about to begin. Just then, someone asked about a big pile of new turbans for all the men who

wanted to become Khalsa to wear. “What about the women?” they asked. “Aren't we going to have turbans like our brothers?”

The kindly old Khalsa in charge of the ceremony was stumped. He had never seen women demanding their own turbans at an *Amrit* ceremony or even heard of such a thing. Normally, everyone was just happy to go along, grateful to take part in the ceremony. People did not raise objections. Besides, all the shops would be closed at this hour of the morning. Where could they obtain turbans for the women participating in the ceremony? The *jathedar* came down the stairs to speak with Harbhajan Singh.

“What is going on upstairs? You come and check on them!”

Harbhajan Singh replied, “It is not my problem. I was to bring them up to the doorsteps. After that, they are their own body. They have come to you to get the *Amrit*. Give them or not, that is your problem.”

“Won't you come up?”

“No.”

“But we don't have turbans for the ladies!”

“Get them!”

There was a lull of about half an hour as the *Amrit* candidates chanted and someone hurried to the Harimandar to obtain sufficient *Siropas*, short saffron turbans... and finally the initiation ceremony began.

By the time they were all done, the sun was above the horizon and there were forty-two beaming Khalsa transformed and a little exhausted. They all lined up on the steps on the Akal Takhat with the sun in their eyes, and with Yogi Bhajan and a number of well-wishers, and posed for the probing eyes of posterity.

## Siri Singh Sahib

News of the initiation swept through Amritsar, and especially the S.G.P.C., like a storm. Westerners had actually taken vows to live as Khalsa. Afterwards, they had been invited to sing on the marble walkway outside the Harimandar. Krishna Kaur, Mark Singh, and a number of others had sung the Guru's Words to the surprise and amazement of the pilgrims to that place.

Some critics took consolation from the fact that not quite half of Yogi Bhajan's entourage had taken *Amrit*. The truth was that nearly half of those who had come to Amritsar with Harbhajan Singh had taken part in the ceremony atop Akal Takhat. This in itself was history.

It was not the first time Westerners had been accepted into the fold of Khalsa. In the previous two centuries, a few Englishmen in India had been known to “go native” and take up local customs and religions. But never had so many come to join the Order of the Khalsa. Besides, these new Khalsa were from America. America was known as a melting pot of assimilation and up to that time had been a graveyard for Khalsa aspirations. Most Sikh immigrants shed their turbans and beards before stepping on American soil.

How had Harbhajan Singh done it? Was it a miracle? Was this the beginning of a wave of conversion to the Sikh faith? How should the S.G.P.C. respond to this altogether unexpected turn of events? These and more questions filled the air.

Harbhajan Singh Yogi was invited to meet with senior Sikh officials as they discussed the unfolding course of events. Giani Mohinder Singh was there, as was Sant Chanan Singh, who had served as President of the S.G.P.C. since 1962. He was a brave and dedicated soul who had been jailed eleven years earlier during the peaceful movement to make the Indian government deliver on its promise of a Punjabi-speaking state. There too was Sant Fateh Singh, the head of the Sikh political party, the Akali Dal. He also had served the Sikhs in a brave and exemplary way over the years.

At one point in the meeting, Sant Fateh Singh indicated that Yogi Bhajan ought to be presented with a symbolic sword of honor, a "Siri Sahib", at the Akal Takhat, and that he ought to be called by the title “Singh Sahib,” even as the head priests of the holiest shrines of the Sikhs were known.

His long-time friend and collaborator, Sant Chanan Singh replied, “What do you mean? This one Harbhajan Singh will create many Singh Sahibs! We are presenting him with a *Siri Sahib*, so let us call him “Siri Singh Sahib”!”

So it was that on March 3, 1971, Yogi Harbhajan Singh was presented with a ceremonial *Siri Sahib*. In an official letter signed and dated five days later, S.G.P.C. Secretary Giani Mahinder Singh, authorized Harbhajan Singh “to act as a Minister of Divinity and to perform marriage ceremonies according to Sikh rites.” It also empowered the designated Siri Singh Sahib “to initiate and perform the *Amrit* ceremony, according to Sikh rites, initiating individuals into Sikh Dharma and further to appoint such initiated Sikhs as Ministers of Divinity.” A new chapter of Sikh history characterized by a renewed, expansive vision was beginning to unfold.



## Return to America

With their return to America scheduled in two weeks, the tour group of yogis and Sikhs made the most of their remaining days in India. Because of the danger of another attack by the thugs of Yogi Bhajan's former teacher, security had become a daily consideration. Still, there were Gurdwaras to visit, places to go, people who wanted to see them. Wherever they went, they travelled with their police escort.

Remarkably, on every occasion, Yogi Bhajan spoke as “we Americans.” He told the people of India, “America is not a country of sex and sensuality. America will create those great potent people who will not only be teaching God realization, but they will achieve God realization.” Not everyone he spoke to liked to hear this, but Yogi Bhajan was not one to care.

The Americans were the focus of a good deal of attention. One gentleman even offered to Yogi Bhajan that he should like to marry one of his healthy, happy, holy entourage. Yogi Bhajan approached Devorah and, with her agreement, a Sikh wedding ceremony was quickly arranged.

Sadly, the marriage only lasted a couple of days. It was long enough for those who wished Yogi Bhajan harm to foist the question of the legality of the marriage. The union of an American and an Indian citizen, was quite a rarity in those days. Yogi Bhajan's arrest and detention emerged as a real possibility.

The seed of other difficulties also took root when Ralph, a student of Yogi Bhajan's arrived in India late for the tour. Ralph innocently made his way to Gobind Sadan in Delhi, where he was adopted by Virsa Singh as his prize American disciple. After a few years at Gobind Sadan, Ralph Singh would become an outspoken representative, fluent in Punjabi and English, of the Delhi Baba.

Yogi Bhajan gathered his students together and cautioned them of the difficulties still ahead, “Look folks, we have come to visit the house of Guru. We shall go back. Chant '*Guru Guru Wahe Guru Guru Ram Das Guru*'. You came to this country on my faith, right? I came on my Guru's faith, right? Now we know at this time we are alone and there is a possibility that they will attack us to kill us. One thing if you keep on chanting, nothing will happen to us.”

Someone asked, “How, Yogiji?”

“I don't know. All I know is we are innocent. Something will happen that nothing will happen to us. We'll get out of this whole cloud. I know the time is hard. I know we are in a problem. I know we are encircled by police for our life protection. I know we cannot go on the town. I understand all that, but dear ones, keep on chanting. Everything will vanish.”

Then Yogi Bhajan prayed, “Lord, I do not know. I came to Thy house. I brought these people to Thy house. They don't know who you are. They have never seen you. They have come on sheer faith. It

is a divine faith. And if you will not maintain the divine faith, tomorrow nobody will come to the House of Guru Ram Das. Period. You should hear it very clearly too. I don't care if you have a house of gold and marble. I don't care. I know you have. I have love for you. But these people are new. They are here. They have enjoyed. It was a height of bliss and pleasantness when we were with you. Now the clouds have come. In your house we have been honored. In five hundred years of Indian history, they have never respected any foreigners with that respect they have given us. God bless you. Thank you for taking care of the children.”

Soon, everyone was chanting together, “*Guru Guru Waahay Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru...*” They chanted as they made ready to board their bus. They chanted as they took their seats on their buses. They chanted as they rode through the flatlands of Haryana, toward Delhi. When they disembarked several hours later for a call of nature, still they were chanting.

Yogi Bhajan walked a discrete distance away to perform his personal business behind a rock or tree. He met a farmer sitting there tending his field. The man looked up and said, “Are you a Yogi?”

Yogi Bhajan naturally answered, “Yes.”

“Where are you going?”

Yogi Bhajan began to explain their planned itinerary. The farmer piped up, “Don’t go.”

“Why?”

“Two hours before, about twenty gunmen were sitting here to attack you and your group. Are you with the Americans?”

“Yuh.”

“Then don’t go this way,” said the farmer, pointing.

“Which way did they go?”

“They went this way!”

“What do you suggest?”

“Just go a mile, and then one road cuts through. You go that way and you will be okay.”

On the road to the Delhi airport, the bus was stopped by Tarlochan Singh, long-time friend of Yogi Bhajan’s, who was well-connected with the Indian government. They had a conference together in Tarlochan Singh’s car. After some conversation in Punjabi, Yogi Bhajan turned around from the front

seat and said to Krishna Kaur and his tour secretary, seated in back, "I am going to have to stay here because they are planning to arrest me when I get to the airport. You have a choice: to go ahead and go ahead with the group or stay. It is totally up to you."

Although their visas were due to expire on that day, there was no question in Krishna Kaur's mind. "If you stay, I stay. When I left LA, you said I was going to be your attendant and that would be my privilege and responsibility forever, and so until I get back to LA, I'm here."

His tour secretary concurred, "I'm staying also."

The three followed Tarlochan Singh to his house. There followed hours of intense telephone conversations and activity as efforts were made to clear a way for their departure.

While he was there, Harbhajan Singh had an unusual vision. The tenth Sikh Master, Guru Gobind Singh, appeared before him on a horse, but the Guru was strangely headless. Yogi Bhajan said jokingly, "Why are you riding this horse without your head?"

From within the neck, a bright flame emerged, and a voice spoke, "Hard times will come on you. Dharma will spread, but I have to return these seeds you have brought with you from across the ocean. Follow me and I will carry you safely across, and then we will see what Khalsa shall be."

On the day they were to leave, Yogi Bhajan called together the group of those who were returning, although a few were planning on staying behind for a time. He said, "Look, if we are honest and if our God and Guru are with us, on the twentieth of March I'll be speaking in San Francisco at that conference where I have been invited by the AMA and all that stuff. But if we are not righteous and if I have earned any bad karma, I'll be left. Then it is up to you sons to like me or dislike me. But if you can leave, as many as you can should try to leave."

Finally, by the end of the day, things were settled and Yogi Bhajan and his two stalwarts flew off to Bombay (Mumbai) to join the rest of the entourage for the journey home. Krishna Kaur, for her part, chanted to Guru Ram Das at the airport and all the way to England on the plane. When they stopped over in a hotel in London, she was still chanting lest anything go wrong.

Yogi Bhajan's tour secretary was beyond keeping up. She was exhausted and needed to be hospitalized. She would remain in England for a couple of weeks. Yogi Bhajan too showed some of the strain of the journey, the betrayal of his former teacher, the separation from his family, and all the other tribulations. Gray hairs had begun to show themselves in Yogi Bhajan's beard.

During their day-long stay in London, Yogi Bhajan gave a yoga class at the ashram his students, Vic and Debbie Briggs, had begun at 34A Saint Stephen's Gardens. Vic had played bass guitar in a group called The Animals and Debbie was a former actress. The Indians affectionately called him "Vikram."

Yogi Bhajan also went out to meet with some people he knew there from his days in India. Seated among them, there was an Englishwoman who fancied herself a Sikh and was encouraged in her delusion by the immigrant community. In typical style, Yogi Bhajan poked gaping holes in the notion that one could be a Sikh without living the lifestyle.

In the course of his discussion with the Sikhs living in England, the subject of Yogi Bhajan's former teacher, the Delhi Baba, came up. After some intense conversation, Yogi Bhajan switched to English, "When I left India, he was an angel. When I came back to India, he was a demon!"

The class, the feasts, the *kirtan*, the meetings over, Yogi Bhajan and his students boarded their plane for New York and the final leg back from India.

Eight hours later, the airplane carrying them descended from the clouds, hurtled along the runway and came to a halt outside the big terminal building of John F. Kennedy Airport in New York. Outside, two big police cars with sniffer dogs awaited everyone.

When Yogi Bhajan looked outside and saw them, he protested to God, "No, this is not divine! We are not carrying any marijuana and we can't go through this process. We are not going to remove our pants and get sniffed! No, No! O God, you saved us from bullets. O Guru, you saved us from that tragedy. Now we are back and what are you going to do with us here? God, no! You can't betray these people. They came on a *yatra*. They came to visit the holy places. They can be shot, they can be fired at, and they can be sniffed by the dogs. No problem. But at this time, we are not being exposed. You are being exposed. Protect Thyself!"

Yogi Bhajan went into an altered state of consciousness. All he could say and think was "No, no, no..."

Having an Indian passport, Harbhajan Singh was separated from the rest of the group. Yogi Bhajan gave his passport to the customs officer. The officer said something and all Yogi Bhajan could say in reply was "No, no, no."

"Where is your baggage?"

"No, no, no."

"Take it away." Then the officer wanted to go through Krishna Kaur's baggage.

Yogi Bhajan continued, as though in an ecstasy, "No, no, no."

"Alright. This is no offense."

In a few minutes, everyone was clear. No one was detained or searched. It was a minor miracle.

At this stage, everyone from the East Coast of the United States separated and Yogi Bhajan continued on to California with the remainder of his students. Another long flight above the clouds, and they were there.

Baba Singh brought some coconut water to the airport for his Master. Yogi Bhajan was still in a trance.

“Is this San Francisco? No, how can it be? Where are we?”

“Sir, it is Los Angeles.”

“No, how can it be Los Angeles?”

“The aircraft was so scheduled that it came into Los Angeles, and then you are going to San Francisco in one hour, forty-five minutes. We received a phone call and so we came here.”

Finally, it felt as though a pall were lifting. The travellers had been protected in so many ways and now they were safe and home again to continue their adventure with the spirit of *Sat Nam* in America.











## PART THREE

# THE MAJESTY OF KHALSA

### High Times

On Saturday, March 20, 1971, the spring equinox, Yogi Bhan returned to the city of poets, San Francisco. That morning, he addressed the annual State Convention of American Physical Therapists. In the afternoon, he proceeded to the equinox celebration at the Sonoma State College, where he performed a wedding.

When he returned to his home base in San Rafael at Hargobind Sadan – formerly the “Banana Ananda” ashram - at 16 Culloden Drive, the Master told his host, Baba Bert, that he was completely exhausted and was going to stay in his room for three days and did not want to see anyone.

Three hours later, Yogi Bhan came out of his room, “Is Swamiji in town?” meaning Swami Satchidananda.

When Baba Bert told him he was, the Master replied, “Let’s go see him,” and off they went. It was one of many visits with a dear friend.

Baba Bert had spent much of the previous months and years organizing peace marches and serving as manager of the rock group, The Grateful Dead. Knowing Yogi Bhan was coming to town, he put together an event for that coming Wednesday featuring Yogi Bhan with The Grateful Dead along with the choir and dancers of the late Sufi Sam at San Francisco's Winterland Ballroom, a large ice skating rink and music venue.

Yogi Bhan stayed a few days. He gave a number of classes and viewed a documentary on drug abuse and its solution through Kundalini Yoga which had been filmed at the ashram. Yogi Bhan also visited the zoo and aquarium by way of recreation.

Soon, Yogi Bhan was back in Los Angeles where he resumed teaching the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) credit course in Kundalini Yoga he was giving at Guru Ram Das Ashram. Even in Yogi Bhan's absence, classes in the Los Angeles area had been growing and now numbered forty-three a week.

Classes were cropping up on more and more California colleges and universities. Teachers trained by Yogi Bhan were teaching at California State College in Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley State College in Reseda, and at the University of California campuses at Berkeley, Davis, Santa Cruz, and Santa Barbara. This in addition to Yogi Bhan's accredited class at UCLA, Michael Fowles's new credit

course at Pitzer College in Claremont, and similar courses at the University of Oregon in Eugene and Phoenix's University of Arizona.

It was fitting that on the weekend of April 3, Yogi Bhan with Gerry and Toni Pond and Krishna Kaur should participate at the "Earth Rebirth" event at the University of California at Davis. Yogi Bhan spoke and his students created divine harmonies, chanting of "*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru*" with several thousand in attendance at the outdoor celebration.

Back in Los Angeles, Yogi Bhan resumed teaching at his beloved Guru Ram Das Ashram, the beautifully renovated former garage on Melrose Avenue. There was always a guitar and someone who could play in those days, and classes always began with chanting. Since the India trip, the chant was usually in praise of Guru Ram Das. New melodies were being created, week by week.

*"Guru Guru Wha Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru..."*

"Inhale. When we chant this mantra, '*Guru Guru Wha Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru*' I'd like to explain to you what you are chanting and how powerful it is, and what this vibration can do for you, so that you can be very clear in yourself.

"Those who chant *sargun* mantra, they can immediately reach for *nirgun*. *Sargun* has to be accomplished before you can reach for *nirgun*. When we say '*Guru Guru Wha Guru*', this part of his *nirgun* part, it is a part of infinity. But when we say '*Guru Ram Das Guru*', it is a relationship which is a finite relationship. It is a relationship between you and the Guru's place, we call it '*ishtjistaan*'.

"There are very few places which can be called *ishtjistaan* you will be surprised to know. You have to look over the whole world to find such a place which should qualify these conditions. And the first condition is it should be the cleanest place which should welcome people of all faiths, castes, creeds, religions, colours, and make no distinctions. And there should be a place to feed people and take care of them. It will be a place where the house wears the name of God and the Lord is praised twenty-four hours continuously without break.

"Twenty-four hours without break the vibration must be created at that place and that place only relate to higher consciousness and nothing else. And when you relate to Guru Ram Das, you relate to Harimandar, Amritsar, and that place does meet these qualifications.

"The people who have visited that place with us this time, they know it positively that twenty-four hours the hymns to the Gods are sung there. It is the cleanest temple they have visited and is open to everybody at all times. And there is a free kitchen where you can be fed very respectfully under all circumstances, and beautiful buildings where Westerners can live according to their needs and Easterners can live according to their needs. So this place does qualify as a place of *ishtjistaan*, and hundreds of thousands of people come, they meditate, chant, and they sing hymns to God.

“This place has a big, long history behind it from time immemorial, the time of Rama, the time of Lord Buddha, and to the time of Guru Nanak. They understand through the history and the record that these people came there to meditate and take water from that little pond, which is now a 'tank of nectar' they call it. 'Amritsar' means actually the tank of nectar.

“On this trip, we had a girl with us who had eczema for which she tried every medicine, and when she went to Amritsar, she said, 'Yogi Bhajan, am I going to get cured here?'

“Yes,' I said. And she is right here in United States. She came back clean, perfect face. And I said to her, 'Could you just try some medicine?'

“And she said, 'No, it's gone now, not going to come back again. No problem.'

“This place has four doors and one central door to go through. Very clean, very bright, very sunny, perfect. Even the most prejudiced and biased mind there will find peace. You see people from different countries, different races, different religions, different faiths, there all the time. That is the *ishtistaan* which was founded by Guru Ram Das, the fourth Guru Nanak, the man of peace, real peace, man of grace and man of humility.

“Somebody told him, 'Why you have such a nice white, long beard?'

“He told them, 'To wash the dust off your feet.' That kind of humility, practical humility. People used to come to see his grace and have audience in the morning, and at night, he used to go change clothes and go with hot water to wash their feet and comfort them, unrecognized, incognito. They used to walk long distances to come and see, and at night they would come and see, and they would rest and he would do it to them.

“Master does not need a throne to attract people. He doesn't need public relations. His soul is the light which attracts people from distances.

“The quality of a great master, you should rather understand, is the negative people will negate him, the positive people will love him because he is a balance of darkness and light within himself. A man who is not negated and slandered is not a perfect master. Don't misunderstand that, because he has a magnetic field to attract the negative and the positive alike. The negative will get attracted to him and they will do their negative things. The positive will do their positive things. And there will be a very positive balance around him. That is why people with weaker faith will run away, people with faster faith will stick. And it is an automatic test of the personality.

“So through this mantra, we connect our consciousness with the finite *ishtistaan* and infinite. And about the sound current '*Wha Guru*' I want to be very definite with you. You have to understand it beyond any prejudice, but just for the real knowledge of truth which is *Wha Guru*. *Wha Guru* is a sound current which consists of two different words - 'Wha' and 'Guru'. *Guru* is nothing but

divine wisdom, spoken truth. It comes from the root Sanskrit *gre* 'speak it'. And it relates to the truth of higher consciousness. One who speaks it, becomes Guru, because these are the words of scripture.

“*Gur, Guru, Sat Guru, Siri Guru, Wha Guru*. *Gur* means technical know-how. *Guru* gives the technical know-how. *Sat Guru* is one who is ever truthfully willing to give it. *Siri Guru* is one who is above all the time, space – truth. And *Wha Guru* means God himself.

“If I say, 'Mr. Omar, you are a beautiful, wonderful man. You look very bright and very pretty and very nice and I love you and I hope to see you very soon. Seeing you is a very bright situation for me!' Now you count how much long adjectives I have used. And I say 'Wha! Mr. Omar is beautiful because of everything.' One sound is the par excellent expression of communion between the man and his consciousness, and when he says '*Wha Guru*' he is in the highest excellence.

“If once you say this sound from the very inner of your heart, '*Wha Guru*' to that infinity, you have done a *japaa* a hundred thousand times with a perfect action. Therefore, it is sound and sound only which is the creative power of the supreme consciousness which you normally call as 'God'. There was a Word with God and Word created the world. It doesn't mean anything different.

“We always used to speak that language and then we used to understand that language in those times. Now we call it a 'sound current'. And now these days, we call it 'mantra'. It should not make any difference to you. Everything is not a mantra and everything is a mantra. Mantra is a sound current which relates to its object. To what level of consciousness you want to relate, the mantra decides it. But at what level of consciousness you are, that decides the power of mantra.

“In all of this, you always chant a mantra which is *ashtang*: it has eight sound vibrations in it. You count up: *Gobinday, Mukanday, Udhaaray, Apaaray, Hari-ang, Kari-ang, Nirnaamay, Akaamay* – eight. *Ek Ong Kaar Sat Naam Siree Wha Guru* – eight. God and me, me and God are one – eight. *Guru Guru Wha Guru, Guru Raam Daas Guru* – eight.

“You will never find me chanting any mantra without *ashtang*. Why? Because there are twenty-six vertebrae. The total comes to eight. Twenty-six bones in the foot on which you stand, the lotus feet of the master. The structure of every lotus foot is twenty-six bones. Total comes to eight. Your very conception: the sperm takes eight circles around the ovum and then you conceive. It doesn't take nine, doesn't take seven. Numerologically, eight means God and his creation. And eight does represent infinity.

“We, the finite, have to join the infinite and that circle and this circle has to get united – through what? Through something like eight. The greatest scripture of this time, *Siri Guru Granth Sahib*, is written in eight ragas. All the mantras in it, the total comes to eight. It is not a thought of you and me alone. It is a part of the time which man has to understand without prejudice, not that I like it or dislike it.

“What the truth is? First concentrate to find out what the truth is, then find the truth and be one with the truth. And if you have found the truth and you practice it, then you have become truth and you need nothing. If you have found the truth and you do not practice it, then you are in a duality. This duality is between your higher consciousness which is truth and your lower consciousness which is a *maya* within you.

“And sometimes you fluctuate between the centers of life. The constant life in total positivity is meditation. And when you go deeper and deeper in it, it becomes your deeper self. And out of that deeper self, that one part of that atom within you, glows the energy which creates life around you, and vaster and vaster the vibration of rays spread, and then hundreds of thousands of people start looking to you. But remember, they will only look to those who have been blessed with the grace of God.

“And also, hundreds of thousands will come to crucify that man to bring the balance between the light and darkness, regardless. Be conscious of this lost spring consciousness. Those who hear ill about anyone, they inject in them the misery and unhappiness. Those who keep the meanest dirt in themselves, those who carry it and pass it to others, they spread the dirt and become ritual in it. And so through the vibrations of negativity and unhappiness... it is we who built it. It is not our destiny.

“You can surely and positively change your destiny if you can control this vibratory system of yours, your tongue and your mouth, or your communication or your communion with others, and let yourself be with one positive thought: I shall neither listen nor talk ill of anyone, come what may, and if you start it, by May generally you'll be a holy man, provided you have that practical determination and you make it.

“Practice makes a man perfect, and without practice, no perfection can be achieved. Having intellectual knowledge, having known the entire technical know-how, if you have not cleaned up your mind to have the soul of a yogi, stop being called or stop pretending to be a yogi! There is the power of the soul in you. It is the expansion of your own consciousness. It is the enlightened self within the being which is a yogi. Technical know-how is the process to be a yogi. It leads to a destination, but that is not the destination.

“We always live in our own 'I', that little 'I', that little ego. We don't feel there is one and that everybody has to live with that one. Ego is ignorance and it creates separation. And we'll always suffer under this separation. We are lonely and this loneliness is miserable. It brings unhappiness to us.

“Before coming to class, somebody just telephoned me. I just picked up the telephone. He was speaking from Redwood, near San Francisco. He said, 'Yogi Bhajan, I have a problem.'

“I said, 'What is your problem?'

“He said, 'I am alone.'

"I said, 'I am not. My Guru and my God are with me. We are always three people: walking, talking, sleeping, eating... So how can you be?'

"He said, 'I don't have a guru.'

"I said, 'You have your God or not? At least you and your God makes two. How can you be alone?'

"He said, 'That is right! I didn't give a thought to it.'

"I said, 'Well, here now think of it, peace be with you, and you are with him.'

"He said, 'Is there anything I can feel other than God? I don't feel God.'

"I said, 'Your breath. Your breath is with you. Feel it. Breathe it consciously. It is something with you. Without it, you will be nothing. If your breath will not be with you, your money, your charm, your pink slips and your bank balance don't mean anything.'

"So why are you worried? You are together so long as you are together with your breath. And your mind follows the breath, and through mind, you can join yourself with supreme mind, universal mind, in simple English we call it 'God.'

"You know how ignorant we are? I will give you a very exact example of our ignorance. What year is it? 1971? In the year 1971, man presumes he is very wise and he knows everything. And somebody said to me, 'Man knows everything.'

"I said, 'This is only year one of the consciousness of man that man knows nothing.'

"He said, 'What are you saying?'

"I said, 'How many fingers have you got?'

"He said, 'Ten.'

"I said, 'What is the length of your fingers?'

"He said, 'I don't know.'

"I said, 'Go measure it.'

"He said, 'What, man?' And then he said, 'I'll do it.'

“But I said, 'You are not asking that one question.'

“He said, 'What is that?'

“I said, 'You are very unaware. You didn't ask me whether you are to include your thumb in that, because thumb is not a finger.'

“He said, 'Is it?'

“I said, 'Yes.' And I said, 'Do you know what these fingers represent to you? They represent the different star energies in your body. This little finger is Mercury. The ring finger is the Sun energy. This tall finger is the Saturn energy. And this one index finger is the Jupiter energy. And this is your ego, logical reason, ego.'

“He said, 'How is it the ego?'

“I said, 'When you become uptight with anything, become angry, start moving your thumbs. In two minutes, you will calm down. Work it out. You will be surprised. Just clap your hands like this and start moving your thumbs like this and you cannot be angry. Work it out. I can tell you a formula. I give you a *gur* to practice. *Gur* means a formula. If you become very uptight and your feet start rattling, start moving your thumbs and you will be cool in one minute. You will forget what you were angry for. Practice it!'

“I was assisting in India at a mental hospital. I used to go and give them this exercise only. Keep on doing it all the time. Don't rest. Fifteen minutes. In days together, we found they started becoming people with understanding, talking. Now you say, 'America has had great research done. We have got a great many hospitals. Our every doctor is an M.D.'" Ask him, 'What is it your thumb does?'

“He'll say, 'There is one bone with two joints and this muscle is called this and that muscle is called that.' That's all he knows about the thumb. He does not know at all that the thumb can just console you more than anything. It does console you when you are a baby. You suck it. Did you forget it? I know you forget it. That is the misunderstanding. We are unaware. We are totally a bunch of unaware people.

“A little child sucks his thumb and becomes consoled against food, against hunger, against insecurity. And we go to the doctor and he says, 'Yes, it has a nail. It is to protect the end of it. It has a joint. It has this bone. It has that. It has this flesh. It has that skin... and blah, blah, blah, and that is your thumb.' And if you get an injury, he's going to give you nursing and that is all he knows about it.

“But this thumb can change your entire personality, inside out and outside in, if only you know how to use it. It is a substitute for mother. It is a power and fear. It is a security and insecurity. It is a calmness against anger and all these powers flow through it. If your logical reason is weak, if you

practice these thumb exercises, you can become very rational and very logical. It can open your brain cells which are connecting your reasoning and logical powers.

“What should I tell you about a thumb? Put a thumb on a paper, and it becomes a thumb print. The thumb has lines which never change. Everything in the body changes, except these vibrations, these vibrations of the thumb. That is why they take your thumb prints very calmly and your finger prints. Every print can have little a b c and all that, but the thumb is not going to change. And the left thumb is so original that right from childhood, at two years, old age, it can have only expansion, but the lines shall be as they were on the birth. Do you know anything about that? Were you aware before today about the thumb? No.

“I have just taken one thumb of yours. Just understand how unaware we are. Here we are great. We are on the moon. And we go in the rocket every day. And we are making this, we are making that, not knowing this even and we want to save the entire world!

“Leaving this class, if anyone can give you this information I have given you on the thumb, I'll be their student! Any teacher in this universe today on this planet Earth, if they can give this much information on the thumb, I'll be his disciple.

“The growth of the nail on your thumb tells in proportion the power of life energy in you. The shape of the nail of the thumb will tell how effective you are in your life. And the colour of the nail of your thumb will tell what is the life frequency of the circulation of your blood. And the lines and the dots tell on the thumb nail your future events to come. Do you want anything more to know about your thumb? That much important is only the thumb and its nail to the man – and everybody claims himself to be a very aware person!

“Jupiter is a guru – the index finger. When you point out somebody, you are one-pointed with it because it means the entire mind, the entire personality is behind it. Why? Because this is the Jupiter finger. The tallest of all is the Saturn finger. The greatest of all is your Sun finger on which your beloved puts a ring and you feel very happy about it. What happens to that ring? A ring on the Sun finger collects the Sun energy. It passes through the stone of that and converts the vibration of that energy, and passes it on to the body. That is why you should be very careful wearing a ring with a particular stone on the ring finger. It means a lot, a lot to the person and his destiny. And you call it a 'little finger'. It is Mercury. It controls your vibration. It controls your power to collect worldly wealth and do business – and you call it a little finger? It is not little. On this little finger, rests your entire happiness which is worldly. On this (Jupiter) finger rests your entire destiny which is spiritual.

“What a palmist does? He looks at your fingers, looks at the base of the finger, we call it the 'mount', and from those mounts, he says, 'This man is this. He's going to be this, this, this.' He tells about the child totally, predicts even his life, after seeing those mounts because he knows the mount is the base energy of that finger. And what the mount represents does represent what is to come out of this self, this life.



“I have not yet come to your palm. I am not talking about the hand at all. If every person for half an hour massages his hand very correctly and does not let any crystal grow on it, there is hardly any chance on this planet that he can be sick. Let us not talk of anything. Let us start with our basic fundamentals, because when you bless somebody, what do you do? 'God bless you!' Your hand goes in that direction like a dart. The hand projects something out of it. It is an antenna. It projects the entire power of your *praana*, and right is your Sun hand and left is your Moon hand. When you see these holy people say, “God bless you!” they raise their hand. It is automatic with them. And if you really love somebody, you fold your hands. Your *praana* and *apaana*, *ida* and *pingala* will meet a central point of neutrality. You become neutral when you fold your hands – and God is neutral.

“You, dear ones, who have to have the knowledge of the age to follow, the age to come, we call it the 'Age of Aquarius'. We must understand beyond rituals what we know because Aquarius is 'I know and I believe', not 'I believe I know'. When you fold hands in prayer, you must know what you are doing. You are becoming at that moment a neutral energy, and neutral energy is God energy.

“It is *Ong*, not *Om*. *Om* is the absolute. *Ong* is the creativity of that absolute. There is a difference between 'g' and 'm'. There is no such Sanskrit word. You can't write '*Om Kaar*'. There is no such thing. You have to write '*Ong Kaar*'. *Ong* is the sound of creativity, which is the sound of the gong. *Ong*. There's energy in it. There's creativity in it, and *Kaar* is the universe.

“God is universe. Universe is God. That we have to understand. So every part of this supreme soul, *aatmaa* is *parmaatmaa*, *parmaatmaa* is *aatmaa*. Use any language. It doesn't matter. Talk in English. Talk in Sanskrit. Talk in French. It will come out the same thing. If I call a computer a great master computer and I call myself a unit computer, it is the same when I say *aatmaa* or *parmaatmaa*, only we look at it in this age time language.

“But look how aware the man is! He's fighting for the language. He's fighting for the political boundaries. He's fighting for the greed. So unaware is the man! One who does not know about his tongue, says he knows about the entire universe. This universe of ours is within us, and we cannot physically discover our universe, but the easiest way is to discover ourselves. If we can discover our Self within our self, there is nothing in this universe that will be unknown to us.

“But, you know, man wants a pill. Man will make everything, but he will never make a knowledge pill. Knowledge pill will never be available to the man because he has to learn the *gur*, and he has to learn it from a Guru. And he has to become Guru to lead his destiny. To know the *gur* and learn it from a Guru does not make any sense if you do not become Guru – because you have to be PhD, you have to do a doctorate. And when you do a doctorate, you write your own thesis.

“Who teaches you? Libraries? Are libraries your Guru? No, disciple. You write your own thesis. You do your own research. All you have to do is submit it. And when you submit it, they will know it, they will assess it as good you will have it. And if not, when?

“There's a lot, a whole lot a man has to know. If he knows one thing – that he's part of that *Ong*, and that *Ong* is one, and he's the one to be one with the One – he has to know nothing. Otherwise, he has to know nothing everything. And if he knows he's the one of the One and he's the one to be one with the One, he has to practice it. And then he has to know nothing. Otherwise, he has to know everything. Time and again, time and again, he will go through this cycle.

“And this man has to decide within himself. And this is a very important moment of man's life when he decides. 'Man' includes woman in this statement of mine. He has to decide. Is he going to be what he ought to be within himself?

“After that, he can find ways and means that he'll be delivered. He'll be fulfilled. This fulfillment is known as '*nirvana*', 'liberation', 'levitation'... You may call it anything. 'Higher consciousness', 'holy being'... They are all words that sound the same note. That means he's a man of higher consciousness and this consciousness has to be acquired by each man by unfolding himself.

“From a bud, one has to become a flower so that the smell, the fragrance can come out. And that is why one has to raise his kundalini for which we are very afraid because the books have been written on it. The bud may never become pregnant. The flower may wilt, but the bud had the fragrance. You can't deny that. And this unfoldment will come to those who fold their hands, become neutral, and learn the truth – because knowledge does not come to an egocentric. Knowledge is the rightful light of a humble being.

“Knowledge comes only to those who are humble. Truth only awakens in those hearts that are humble and sweet. The moment you become humble and sweet, you become conscious and you are consciously conscious that you are a great being. And great beings always have contact with great beings, so my soul, they have the contacts with the greatest of the great beings we call 'God'.

“And this is how we have to develop our personality, and that is why we chant '*Guru Guru Wha Guru Guru Ram Das Guru*'. That is the purpose, that is the note behind it, and that is the tone behind it. And this light on which we meditate is the light within and the light without. We call it 'supreme consciousness' or 'God consciousness' or 'higher consciousness'.”

For a time, everyone in the room resumed chanting to Guru Ram Das.

“Inhale deep and relax with this breath to infinity and hear the sound of this mantra through your mental ears and this practice will make you perfect. When this mantra becomes yours, your finite world and your infinite heavens will become yours.

“May his grace be your grace. May his light be your light. May you all be healthy, happy and holy. May your consciousness be united with that supreme consciousness through your *sadhana*, through your will, through your truth in it, which is the being in you which is seeking to be one with the One, that supreme being. *Sat Nam*.”

*“May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the pure light within you guide your way on. May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the pure light within you guide your way on, guide your way on, guide your way on. Sat Nam.”*

## **The Broadway Ashram**

On returning from India, Yogi Bhajan directed Krishna Kaur, his attendant on the tour, who had shown immense devotion through trying circumstances, to open an ashram to serve her people, the Black people of America. In obedience to her teacher, she rented a property at 5273 South Broadway in the Afro-American section of Los Angeles. To pay her bills, at first she made and sold sandwiches.

Like everyone else, Black Krishna found Yogi Bhajan difficult to fathom and finally they had their first argument.

“The truth will lead you to the infinite. A lie will bind you to time and space,” he said.

Krishna had been brought up to be honest. This sort of thinking was not a part of her education. “But what about the facts?” she countered.

Yogi Bhajan went on to explain that the job of a spiritual teacher is not to mindlessly convey readily observable truths, but to shed new light and create new understanding. “Jack and Jill,” he explained, was not an inspiring, purposeful story. Its undertone was, in fact, dark and depressing. This kind of finite truth was understood by a child before its seventh year.

Black Krishna did not have a great deal of confidence in her abilities as a Kundalini Yoga teacher, but she had immense faith in her teacher. For her first class, she took a little picture of him and put it behind herself to draw on it for inspiration. That first class went great, and from that day on, things slowly improved.

Krishna Kaur happened to have a bent old fork that she used in aerating the soil for her potted plants. One day, an idea came to her. If such a useless thing as that bent-out-of-shape old fork could be used for some good purpose, then so surely could she!

Over time, classes grew and eventually people moved in. The place Krishna had started was known as Guru Ram Das Ashram, Broadway, or just the “Broadway Ashram,” which was ironic because Krishna Kaur wanted to leave behind her show business past.

When called upon however, Black Krishna could still perform. When a touring band of 3HO musicians was formed, she was a lead vocalist. One of their standards went, “It doesn’t really matter what colour you are – the trees, the stream, the brightest star. We all come from one Creator, yeah,

we all come from one Creator!”

Yogi Bhanan was very aware of the bitter racial dynamics of American society and sometimes he spoke openly of the struggles of Americans, Black and Brown and Red. But sometimes he could also be oblivious of the local dialect.

Once, after he had returned from a teaching tour in Texas and Louisiana, Yogi Bhanan wanted Krishna Kaur and innocently asked someone, “Where’s my nigger?” When she heard of it, she was embarrassed, but still she felt blessed that he should call for her at all.

Yogi Bhanan would test Black Krishna’s faith in large and little ways. At a Solstice celebration, they walked into the camp kitchen and he picked fifteen long chilis out of a pot of mung beans and rice. Putting them on a little plate, he served them to Krishna and said, “Eat these!”

Krishna knew about chilis – hot Mexican jalapenos, tiny Indian peppers that burned your mouth for hours, firey African chilis... Putting aside her fears, she tentatively started on the chilis served to her by her Master – and found they were not even spicy!

## Endlessly Teaching

It seemed as though Yogi Bhanan never stopped teaching. In his relaxed moments, in every conversation that he was engaged in, he was always working. The Master had the ability to look into people’s souls and he worked on their inner potential, often without their awareness. The Siri Singh Sahib saw unasked questions and problems from people’s auras, and then purposefully worked on answers and resolutions.

Most evenings after Yogi Bhanan taught a class - and he never missed a class, no matter what - he would invite several of his students to sit and have a meal with him. The Master believed in *Sangat*– gathering together for divine meditation - and *Pangat* – sharing food freely in an attitude of service and equality. Very often, these meals would become counselling sessions. There were no secrets. The Siri Singh Sahib believed in group therapy. While counselling one, he would counsel everyone in the group.

## A Garland for Guru Nanak

Yogi Bhanan was known to have an exterior of stainless steel and a heart soft like gold. Late one Saturday evening at the Sikh Study Circle, Yogi Bhanan looked to a picture of Guru Nanak hanging on the wall. It was the night before Guru Nanak's birthday was to be celebrated.

"Why isn't there a garland of flowers on Guru Nanak?" he demanded from Baba Singh who happened to be there.

"I don't know, sir."

"What do you mean, you don't know? There should be a garland on Guru Nanak by morning." It was an order.

"Yes, sir," replied his devoted student.

After Baba Singh had driven Yogi Bhajan to the ashram where they shared a room, he went out combing Los Angeles, looking for flowers. It was about midnight. No flower stores were open. Baba went to the wholesale market. A sign said it would not reopen until Monday.

Baba Singh became depressed. The prospects did not look very good. He did what he usually did under those kinds of circumstances: he went to an ice cream place where he downed nearly a quart of "pistachio dream" to cheer himself up. It did not help matters much. Next, he went into a doughnut shop. The doughnuts didn't offer any consolation. He felt terrible. What would Yogi Bhajan say? There was simply nowhere he could go to buy flowers.

Finally, it dawned on Baba Singh that he might find an all-night supermarket that sold flowers. Sure enough, the Mayfair Market had just what he was looking for. Baba bought a few bunches and, with a needle and thread and an air of grim determination, set out for the Sikh Study Circle to sew a garland out of the flowers.

Some Indian ladies there gave Baba Singh encouragement. They showed him how to properly thread the flowers together, and he began. By four thirty or five, it was done. At last, Baba Singh hung the garland around Guru Nanak. It looked wonderful!

The thought crossed Baba Singh's sugar-frazzled mind that he still had to go home and return for the actual celebration. It seemed like such a long way to come and go. Exhausted from a lack of sleep and an overload of junk food, he dragged himself home, back to the ashram.

Quietly, he opened the door and went in. To his surprise, he found the tireless Master sitting on his bed. Yogi Bhajan ordinarily never sat on his student's bed. He had a bed of his own. But there he was, propped up with his eyes half open and half shut. The Master looked as though he had himself been up all night.

As his student entered the room, Yogi Bhajan looked up. He said nothing, but warmly opened his arms. The young man came and fell into those welcoming arms. As Yogi Bhajan held him close, his wearied student fell asleep, his head embedded in his Master's shoulder.

As Baba Singh sank into that very deep slumber, he felt like God himself were welcoming him into his arms. He also felt that Yogi Bhajan had known the whole night what he was doing, had in fact been with him the whole while. Only he had been too foolish to be aware of his most compassionate Master's presence.

They must have remained like that for an hour or so when the Master stirred him awake, "Okay Baba Singh, get up! Get your shower! Let's go to the Sikh Study Circle!"

## Peace Lagoon

On April 20, Yogi Bhajan had an announcement, which he delivered to his students during his UCLA class at Guru Ram Das Ashram. "There are many books in this world, and in this country, there are books and books, but there was a need for a book. I'm not very much for books, but there was a need for a book when you got bugged somewhere, you have to talk to something and that something should be inspiring, should relate to your consciousness, and it should drive you to your destination which is your higher sense.

"One of our students made a painting of Guru Nanak and we have printed that in this book. We have a copyright over it and that is the most beautiful painting we have of Guru Nanak, and we gave it to our Maharaj Ashram in Santa Fe. One thing about this book is it is not written by a fanatic and it is written by a person who has practiced *Sat Nam*, the real sense Guru Nanak taught.

"There is a saying of Yogi Bhajan in it which says 'Only that man who has experienced the state of true love in the human body...' You know, sometimes I listen to my own sayings. Excuse me. I love it because most of the time I do not know what I am talking about. Sometimes I walk down without wearing shoes, thinking I am wearing shoes and that kind of stuff. My apologies for my state of consciousness. That's the way I am. So, sometimes I love to even listen to my own tape.

"You know, the oil pipeline is not the oil, so don't take the pipeline for oil. When a teacher gets into an ego that he is a teacher and not a channel, he is the greatest fool. And that is his downfall. And that is why all these teachers die a miserable death, because they are cockroaches for the next life to come.

"I don't kill a cockroach. Why to kill a brother of mine? Because when you are enlightened and you behave once in ego, you become a bug of darkness. That is what a cockroach is. You see how many cockroaches there are? They are all teachers. Don't have any misunderstanding about this. It's a matter of fact.

"A teacher has to choose very carefully whether he wants to be liberated or he wants to be a cockroach. You know, it's not fair. You can get caught into ego at any level and you have to guard

yourself at every level of life. There's no fun and the teacher is the most vulnerable person.

“These teachers, you know, they start learning a few words, then they start expanding themselves until they are great. You're asking for a hell of a trouble because you can't have truth in you and you can't have a lie existing side by side. You have to be very humble. Truth is carried by a channel of humility. Man has to boast only once and God is going to throw him on his nose.

“Only that man who has experienced the state of true love in the human body can sing the praise of his love, which Guru Nanak sang in his native language, a song of the true love and ecstasy which he felt with his one God. And only that love inspired this translation of the language into American English...’

“It was a necessity. English English has a very wrong meaning in American English. 'Gay' means a happy person, and in American English you know what 'gay' means. And I have found so many words that carry different meanings that finally we decided if we have to have scriptures here, we have to have them in American English. We can't afford scriptures in English English for American students. That was the one reason this *Peace Lagoon* has to come out. That was the real reason. There was no other reason for us. This book is being sold just for the cost that has gone in, so it is not a profit venture or that kind of stuff.

“...for the children of the Age of Aquarius, so they can look to it for a spiritual guide. This is the song eternal, song of love, and song of spiritual wisdom. This book has the power that when somebody will meditate and open it up...’ Now this is my declaration. I stand as a written guarantee by this and I know it is true, and if I am a pipeline then it must be true. Otherwise, I should withdraw being so. '...somebody will meditate upon this and it will talk wisdom to the person's heart. The beautiful children of the Age of Aquarius who are the children of higher consciousness and love shall find it a companion to their soul and heart.' This is a few words which I could say at that time and I'll ask Premka to read the prayer and the *Kalijug* and one more thing which I love.

“She did a *sadhana* where you control your all vibrations from this world, when something in you happens. When I went on that university tour I left her behind and one day she rang me up. I was in Florida perhaps, yeah. She said, 'I want permission for a few hours to go out and see sun and be in some park.'

“And I said, 'The only permission I can grant is that you get out of your house. There is a green lawn and there is a tree and there is a hedge around. And you can stay there for thirty minutes, not more than that, and that is your park. Then get back to your room and be at your work and I should listen to the typewriter working right here.' It took her forty-five days of very intensive *sadhana* to bring this what we have today in hand. It didn't come just as it is.”

Yogi Bhanjan was effusive in his praise of Sardarni Premka Kaur and her accomplishment. Then, at his direction, the students closed their eyes and Premka read out the dedication and prayer she had

written as preface to the book, and a brief passage on the *Kalijug*, the Age of Chaos we live in. Thereafter, she allowed the *Peace Lagoon* to open itself, revealing a certain passage destined by God, and she read those special words of counsel as well.

That day was the first public reading of the *Peace Lagoon*, the original rendering into American English of some of the essential guiding words of Siri Guru Granth Sahib.

## Showdown at the Yogi's Corral

Sandy Cohen had become a regular at Yogi Bhajan's classes. He had gone to India and taken Amrit too. Sandy played a guitar, sang wonderfully, and made enchanting melodies. Aside from the rigorous yoga and cold showers every morning, life was sweet and easy.

But life was never sweet and easy for long in the company of the master of ordeals, Yogi Bhajan. One day, Yogi Bhajan dropped into the house where his student stayed. The Master posed a question. "Do you love me?"

"Yes," came the reply.

"I want you to teach in Tucson. Pack up and be out of town by sundown!"

It was a classic showdown. The budding ego of the new student versus the cataclysmic force of the Master. Luckily, the ego bent to the Master. "Maha Deva Ashram" at 819 North Fourth Avenue in Tucson was the fortuitous outcome.

## The Widow's Wisdom

Yogi Bhajan was a wise and fascinating story-teller. He would regularly reinforce universal truths with spell-binding tales from ancient days or his own experiences in India. Sometimes his stories would shed light on dismal customs of the West or East. Always his tales would illumine the very best in humankind. And he would hardly repeat a story.

"The scriptures say neither something is bad, nor any of your behavior is bad. Bad is that person who has the bad intention. Clean intentions mean clean conscience and no harm can come to that man who has a clean conscience. That is very important. It is very important for your happiness.

"I remember, it was about ten years ago, a lady came to me. It took her five hours to explain her case, a very negative situation. Her story was filled with every known misery on the planet. Her six



sons had died in her lap, one after the other. Her husband had died. The husband's brother took away all the money. And all the other relatives said she had squandered all that money which was hers. They put out legal cases on her, put her in the cold. The day came when she could not take it any more. She decided to commit suicide to get out of this trouble. So she was staying with a girl friend of hers and she recommended she come talk to me.

“She came. I sat down. I remember I was overtired that day. And I was lying down with a blanket underneath and one over me, and a pillow, in my garden trying to enjoy the beautiful roses and that beautiful rose smell coming from them.

“This lady came. I listened to her for five hours very calmly, quietly, straightly. In the end, when she had finished, she said, 'What should I do?'

“I said, 'You should do nothing. Play football. Laugh. Ignore it.'

“She looked at me, 'What is going to happen?'

“I will tell you what is going to happen to you. Nothing is going to happen to you. Nothing! Absolutely nothing. So you can do nothing. And, mind my words, one day you will tell me you are the happiest woman on this planet. Go, have fun!'

“She looked at me again and said, 'How have you come to this conclusion?'

“I said, 'First of all, God was on one month holiday when he made you, you are so beautiful. He carved your own features with great exactness. Secondly, he has made you so beautiful that with all that five hour story of what you have gone through, there is not a single sign of suffering on your face. That shows you are perfect. It all happened for a purpose. And thirdly, somehow you have found me and I am a very positive man. Neither I believe in negativity, nor I listen to it, nor I spread it, nor I become a part of it. That is the way I have lived.'

“She said, 'I have to do something.'

“You know, in that very pensive mood I said, 'Get up every morning and look toward the sky, inhale deep and say, “Do whatever you like,” and then relax. And if something good happens, you tell me.' And so we broke.

“After a week, she rang me up and said, 'All the cases have fallen clear and now I have got ample money because after my husband's death the decision came that I own everything and I am all by myself.'

“And you know in India legal remarriage is impossible. First of all, nobody remarries. If the husband is dead, the woman feels she must live out the rest of her life alone. It is her karma. It is a

different attitude from the West. And she said, 'Someone has proposed to me and I don't know what to do!'

"I said, 'Do you feel if you marry him that you commit something that is wrong?'

"She said, 'Yes. I feel that it is not true. God took my husband away for a purpose and there is no reason for me to get married.'

"I said, 'In this country, no one proposes. The very fact God has made a person to propose to you, shows it is God who is doing it. And I believe you should go ahead.'

"She said, 'You know to what extent women oppose remarriage in this country. If the women rally against me and they start picketing my house, I will not be able to live in India.' That is their method. They don't let any man divorce, and they don't let any woman remarry.'

"So they went to an adjoining country and they got married there. They came back and it was kind of cool. No problem. Time went by. I forgot about it. She forgot about it. Once, at an airport we met again. She was very happy, very strong. I watched her. For forty-five minutes she sat, she was smiling and laughing. For the last fifteen minutes, I went over and her first words to me were, 'I am very happy!'

"I said, 'You were the opposite when you met me.'

"And she asked, 'Why am I so happy?'

"I said, 'The long, dark nights have passed and now you can enjoy the day. Enjoy the day! The world is the same. It is the same world which was there. And now you and I live unattached with it. As you became unattached with the sorrow world, be unattached with the happy world. Be balanced. You will be beautiful.'"

## **The Sentry and the Saint**

"There is nothing in this universe except sound. The life in the atom is sound. When you become an instrument and you are positive, your sound will be effective. Relate to the universal, positive being whom we call 'God' and the result can be whatever you shall say, it will turn everything into positivity.

"Now I will tell you a great story. A saint came to a town and found the gates open. Now, in those days, every town had a big wall, like a fort, and at night they kept it closed. It was late at night and he had planned that he would stay outside and in the morning when the gate would open, he

would enter the town. But he found the gate open, so he went in.

“He found a sentry who was almost three quarters dead. He asked him, 'What is wrong?'

“The sentry said, 'There is something wrong with this town. Everyone is weak. Our limbs are broken.'

“The holy man said, 'That is not so. It cannot be! I have never gone to such a place in my whole life. Everything must be alright where I am!' It was the universal ego speaking on the part of that being.

“The sentry said, 'No, holy man. Look at me! I can't get up.'

“He said, 'No! Get up! Up you go!' And this sound was like electricity running through the sentry's body, and in a minute he shivered a bit and he was up and smart. Look at that truth!

“And the sentry ran to the office of his commander and said, “I have just found a holy man. He just made me okay. He said nothing can be wrong. Look at me! I have come running to you!"

“And the chief of the guards said, 'Fool, get him here! What do I care? Why didn't you bring him?'

“And the sentry just put his commander on his shoulders and started running toward the empty palace. And he shouted, 'Everything is alright! Everything is alright! Don't run! Everything is alright!'

“People started following him, anybody and everybody, all the people of the town. Somebody was yelling in the street, somebody there, somebody here. Whoever heard the words 'Everything is alright' became alright.

“By the time the sentry reached the palace, almost two thousand people were behind him. And when the king heard it, he became alright. He was amazed and thankful and he ordered his subjects, 'Go out in my kingdom and tell everyone everything is alright!'

“The sun was not yet up, and the whole town was alright. So powerful was the vibration in the town.”

### **“The Simple Holy Man”**

I have met a very great and saintly man. I wanted to talk to him about scriptures. I was fool enough not to know he never knew what scriptures actually mean, because I asked him, “Is there any

*shastra* you have read?”

And he said, “What? What is *shastra*?”

*Shastra* means scripture book and Bible is a *shastra*, scripture. And I asked him, “Have you read any *shastra*?”

He said, “What is that?”

“Have you studied with any master teacher?”

He said, “What has that to be done for? Why?”

He asked me “Why?”. Do you know what I felt on hearing such an answer? I said, “Ji, there is one little request I will make.”

He said, “Yes. Go ahead.”

I said, “You are in a very remote area, far from the area you had known. Now you are with the people here, there is community and everything is provided for. You are a holy man. I have seen from your vibration. I can see from your patterns that you are a very good man, but how it happened?”

And you know what he said? It will impress you. He said, “I met a holy man and he told me to do this, this, this, that, that, that,” and in the end I said, “I don’t want to do all this. Is there any one little thing I can do and be better than you?”

He said, “Yes. Just think you are a God-conscious being all the time.”

And the holy man told me, “Now it is my habit. I think I am a God-conscious being. So when I speak, I feel God is speaking through me. When I eat, I feel God is eating through me. When I sleep, I feel God is sleeping through me. I go through the nature call, I feel God is going through the nature call. I feel that way and I am that way.”

And he laughed at me, and he said, “Yogi-raj, do you know how long it took me to become God?”

And I laughed back and I said, “It could not be more than nine and twenty days because I understand the way you can concentrate.”

He said, “You are right. All I missed is four or five times, and those days I slapped myself and turned my back to myself and said, ‘Hey, you are a God-conscious being! What are you talking about?’ And finally it became a very solid, permanent thing in me, and now I cannot slip from

that.” And then he asked me, “Tell me, why do all these people come to me and see me, and what do they get out of me?”

I said, “I can tell you. You are a permanent source of light. Any candle which comes near you will get the light and start burning. You arouse the soul in people. It is the highest of the highest karma. You make them aware and conscious of the truth about themselves because your intention is to make them be God.”

## The Essential Grace of Womankind

Yogi Bhajan had long instructed his students about the essential grace of womankind. He had founded the Grace of God movement the previous September. Early on, Yogi Bhajan had said, “O beautiful creative power of God, the woman, you have to create three kinds of children: the giver, the saint, the hero. Otherwise, don't lose the charm of your creative power and God in you. Don't bother to conceive at all, if you cannot create these three kinds of children.”

Yogi Bhajan had also reached into the heritage of Indian spirituality to revive the holy custom of honoring the mother and especially celebrating her on the fifth month of her pregnancy. On Mother's Day in Los Angeles, he decried the crass exploitation of women as sex objects in America and spoke of the teacher's need to raise people's awareness that every exploited woman is a sister, daughter or mother of someone. Yogi Bhajan continued:

“A year ago, we started a movement. We gave an exercise. I am very, very much in debt on this Mother's Day to those ladies, those graceful ladies who have practiced that exercise, who have found the Grace of God in them, and the light in themselves, who are totally relaxed, who have assured me through thousands of letters that they are grateful to me and through me they are grateful to God. It gives me a very great satisfaction that I could do something for the woman of America. I am assuring you that I will virtually live for this.

“I am a worshipper of the woman, Bhagwati. Lord Shiva is known to be the God of this Earth and I can kid with him any time I like. I don't care for him. But for Bhagwati I do care very much because I worship her in my heart. She is with me. And the Divine Mother protects me all the time.

“I know my faults and my follies. And I know my strong protection. That protection is stronger than anything I have realized in my whole life. Therefore, I feel like just lodging a great protest with the world today:

“Don't talk about peace. Don't talk about spirituality. Don't give us a message of Guru Nanak, Jesus Christ, Buddha, Rama or Krishna. We have heard that and heard that. Give us something so that we may stop exploiting our own mother. Give us something so that we may tune into the cosmos to

be worthy of our mother. Give us something so that we can relate to this creative power of the God, which is the mother. Give us something so we can honestly draw in our hearts the image of the grace of the mother. And O Lord of Lords of the time, if you have created this world, create those environments where everybody's mother, sister, and every woman on this planet can live with grace and there shall be no circumstances in which she has to sell her beauty, sell her body, sell her being, sell her consciousness to live on this planet.

“I do not know whether my tiny and feeble voice – well, it is strong. I know about it. – can be heard and where, but I am pretty sure I will shout from those mountains. I will never rest on that planet on which woman is still being exploited. That is my ultimate goal and my ultimate urge. But I am not fool enough to try single-handed. I know my thousands and hundreds of thousands and millions of children shall be ready, and when the day shall be ready, we will wipe this insult to our own generation out from our planet.

“God has given me a sufficient big heart, I can practice patience better than I can practice yoga, therefore I will wait up to the time when the soul in you will be so pure, so awake, so aware that you will be willing to sacrifice your being to protect the very gentle, sweet being who brought you to what you are today.

“With these words and with this prayer of mine, on this most beautiful day I can relate to – it is a day to be reminded of my own source of energy – I bow to every mother and I also ask the would-be-mother to be graceful. And I ask every man who would seek peace to realize peace doesn't come by protests and rallies. We know it and we are aware of it. Peace comes by peaceful actions, and so long as the born of the mother will not learn to respect the woman, there shall not be any peace on this planet. The day on this planet the woman will not be exploited, there shall be peace on this Earth.”

### **“Communion of the Mental Projectivity with the Heart”**

“When I lie down in my bed, I can't sleep. I say, 'Yogi Bhajan, they love you so much, and like a nut you are sleeping! What for are you sleeping on this bed? Don't they need you? Are they not supposed to progress? Then, if they are supposed to progress more, what are you, boy, doing here? Get up and do something! Help them in some way or another. If you can do nothing, you should just sit there. Even your presence is enough pressure to put them on the alert. Write them a letter, do something!'”

“I may not even write you a letter, I may not even come, but the very thought that I have thought about you, does connect me subconsciously to that factor and that area. And that is known as communion of the mental projectivity with the heart, because there is a positive vibration.”

## The True Husband

Whenever Yogi Bhajan came to San Francisco, he liked to visit the ashram of Dr. Rammurti Mishra who was a yogi in his own right. Harbhajan Singh had such respect of Dr. Mishra that he once invited him to speak to his UCLA class in Los Angeles.

All kinds of interesting people came through the ashram. One was an American man with a crippled wife whom he carried on his shoulders everywhere he went. One day, Yogi Bhajan sat with him and asked the husband about his unusual relationship, "Don't you feel your life is totally entangled with her?"

He replied, "Yes, it is entangled. When I married her, Yogi Bhajan, I knew I was entangling myself with another human being. She was healthy. She was beautiful. I loved her. Then, all of a sudden, a fever happened. And now she cannot even walk. I am a rich man. I could have cared for her in a hospital, but that would not give me satisfaction. I married her, not the hospital, not the doctor, not the nurses. I took a vow before God that I would accept her as my wife, be true to her, and now I am just trying to be true to her."

Yogi Bhajan answered, "Well, sometime you must work."

The man replied, "Yes, once in a while I work for a month and make one thing, and that sells and gives us two years' money. I am a very well-known person."

"How do you personally feel?"

"Very healthy because I am always carrying these hundred and ten pounds on my shoulders. It is very good exercise."

Yogi Bhajan had observed the husband walking blocks and blocks with his wife on his shoulders. He asked, "Why don't you put her in a wheelchair?"

He said, "No, that would be very uncomfortable. She enjoys my ride. I am good. She is a human being. I am a human being. I want to hold her until my death. I took a vow, Yogi Bhajan, before God."

## Conscious Cookery

One of Yogi Bhajan's many talents was as a nutritional healer and chef. He could make make healing and restorative food that tasted great. His original recipes abounded and some of his student teachers set out to start their own cooking enterprises – variously named Guru Ram Das Conscious

Cookery in Detroit and Houston, Hanuman's Conscious Cookery in Denver, and Nanak's Conscious Cookery in Santa Fe. They would be followed by a similar inspirations: Golden Temple Conscious Cookeries in Amsterdam, Bend-Oregon, Colorado Springs, Dorchester-Massachusetts, Kansas City-Missouri, London, Los Angeles, Ottawa, Phoenix, and in the American capital, Washington, DC.

The restaurants provided the communities that ran them with honest employment and the employees with plenty of work. They also gave customers a unique glimpse into the healthy, happy, holy lifestyle. Tens of thousands of people first heard “*Sat Nam*” and the sweet sounds of *Sat Nam* music at a Conscious Cookery somewhere. Sometimes the food led to larger questions of yoga and meditation, even a class nearby.

The 3HO yogis were on the cutting edge of a new holistic understanding, a vegetarian ethic and what in thirty years would grow to be a huge natural foods industry. Their Conscious Cookeries provided answers to the perennial question of those days: “What do vegetarians *eat*? *Carrots?!*” The answers turned out to be surprisingly flavorful, nutritive, ethical, and filling.

Aside from Yogi Tea, customers were sure to find a range of tasty and wholesome staples on the menu like mung bean and rice stew, well-seasoned soups and hearty breads, lively sprouts and zingy yogurt, delicious squares and cookies. Much of Yogi Bhajan's conscious cookery was absolutely unique, not to be found anywhere outside the growing and glowing 3HO universe.

How about some energy-packed Potent Potatoes?

12 potatoes	2 tablespoons caraway seeds
4 finely chopped onions	2 tablespoons poppy seeds
1 whole bulb chopped garlic	1 tablespoon ground black pepper
¼ cup chopped ginger root	1 tablespoon turmeric
1/3 cup sesame oil	1 tablespoon oregano
1 pint yogurt	1 teaspoon ground cumin
	1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Wash and oil the potatoes and bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for one hour. Fry the spices, onions, garlic and oil until the onions turn clear. Set aside. Cut the potatoes in half and scoop out the insides, leaving the hollowed-out peels. Place the hollowed-out peels on a cookie sheet, like empty shells with the open side up. Mix the potato insides with the fried onions and spices. Add one pint yogurt, then fill the potato shells with this mixture. Top with slices of your favorite cheese and put in the oven just long enough to melt the cheese. Makes enough to feed a small gathering of hungry yogis.



## White Tantric Yoga

One day in the spring, after his regular morning *sadhana*, Yogi Bhajan went back into meditation for some time. When he returned from the *sadhana* room, he announced that someone named Lama Lilan Po had just died. The lama had carried the mantle of "Mahan Tantric", which had been passed on to him at the death of Sant Hazara Singh.

Yogi Bhajan explained that while he had himself been Santji's best student, his pride in the fact had made him unfit to assume the role of Mahan Tantric. Only one person at a time carried this sacred responsibility. From the lama, it had at last passed to Yogi Bhajan.

No one who heard him speak, understood what this all could possibly mean to their lives with the yogi. They could not help noticing, however, that the pace of life at Guru Ram Das Ashram in Los Angeles had somehow intensified. From that point on, the phone seemed to ring almost without stopping.

Within a short time, Yogi Bhajan announced that there would be a course given in "White Tantric Yoga". Unlike its cousins, the black and red varieties, which satisfied an individual's craving for occult power or sexual communion, this type of tantra would purify the subconscious minds of those who participated. It could be neither learned nor taught, but could only be experienced in the presence of the Mahan Tantric of the time.

The first course was held for three days at the Melrose Ashram. Each day, Yogi Bhajan instructed everyone to sit in alternating rows of *shaktis* and *shaktimans*.

Under his guidance, each couple went through a series of yoga exercises, using specific combinations of mantra and posture, often gazing directly into the eyes, "the windows of the soul" of their partner.

Each day's session lasted five hours. People sweated, endured, and increasingly rose beyond their self-imposed limitations. The forty days after this course, and every subsequent session, were guaranteed to be interesting times, as the subconscious mind of each participant was cleansed, and more enlightened behavior patterns established themselves.

Some White Tantric courses went from noon to evening for ten consecutive days. In order to help the yogis get through their changes, Yogi Bhajan gave them specific diets. For some courses, the participants were to eat only fruits that grew four and a half feet above the ground. For new vegetarians, he recommended a diet of thirty days of nothing but fruits, nuts and vegetables.

## The fight is on!

The Summer Solstice Sadhana of 1971 took place high in the mountains of western Colorado, in an apple orchard near the town of Paonia. On their way from California, Yogi Bhanan and four students took a scenic drive across the Great Divide near Aspen, Colorado.

When they reached the top, the car began to slip. The road was covered with a slick layer of ice. To their right was the sheer side of the mountain. On their left was a several thousand foot drop.

The car scraped the mountain and veered in the opposite direction. One wheel, and a quarter of the car, dangled helplessly over the abyss. Yogi Bhanan chanted all the while. "*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wahe Guru...*"

Faces blanched all around. Then, the car defied all known laws of physics and returned to the road... only to swerve off it and into the void, again.

Hearts stopped. Yet again, strangely, the car returned to the icy pavement.

Yogi Bhanan began, "*Angsang Wahe...*"

Someone asked, "Why did you stop?"

"Because it's going to do it once more..."

As though on cue, one of the front wheels lurched crazily off the road and into space. Then once more, defying gravity, the car returned to the road.

"...Guru"

On the way back, the trauma of what had happened haunted everyone but Yogi Bhanan. Nobody spoke.

The Yogi tried to cheer everyone up, "Look at me. I am talking. I am okay."

One of his students, known as "Richie the Wild" spoke up, "Yogi Bhanan, I'll tell you something! There is a difference between you and us."

Yogi Bhanan replied, "My God! In one minute now we have become different. We were in the same car, remember?"

Richie went on, "That is where we learnt that we are different."

“How are we different?”

“When you were born, Man, all you had was Shiva, who sits and snakes curl around him and the Ganges comes out of his *rishi* knot, and he sits and meditates.”

“Then what?”

“When we were born, we had Mickey Mouse. We are the product of Mickey Mouse. You are the product of Shiva, the Deathless One. That's why, when we were dying, we were dying. When you were dying, you were living. And that's why you said '*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wahe Guru*' and you chanted '*Angsang Waheguru*'.”

“How does it feel to be that way?”

“Man... I feel very, very disturbed.”

“Why?”

“How can you be trained and not us?”

“I am here.”

By now, there were tears in Richie's eyes as he spoke, "It's too late."

"Well, the fight is on!"

"What?"

"Don't take anything lightly. Everything counts! The fight begins now!"

## Entering the New Age

Many of the students of Kundalini Yoga who came to the Paonia Solstice gathering from the East Coast and elsewhere had learned everything they knew from the teachers sent out by Yogi Bhanan. They took this opportunity to see the Master for themselves. Among that gathering of first, second, even third generation teachers, was the realization of an expanding community centered on sixty ashrams or live-in centers, extending from coast to coast, and to Puerto Rico, Canada, Sweden, Israel and beyond. Someone counted three hundred and seventy-five people in all at the Paonia Summer Solstice.

The nights were chilly up in the mountains and the mornings chillier still with a bath in a glacier-fed irrigation ditch, but the air was pure and the energy electric. *Sadhana* consisted of Kundalini Yoga and chanting “*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wahe Guru*” on the grass, between the trees.

The first days were held in sometimes maddening, sometimes exquisite, silence. Wordlessness helped speakers value their words, the better to imbue their daily speech with clarity and purpose. So it was that communication was restricted to saying just “*Sat Nam*” and “*Wahe Guru*” for those eight days of meditation.

Everyone contributed silent work each day to the farm, hoeing, weeding and watering. The food, closely supervised by Yogi Bhajan, consisted of two vitalizing meals a day. The diet for the first half of the Solstice consisted of rice with spicy curry. For the last days, the morning meal was fruit, with salad for dinner.

Yogi Bhajan gave talks every day. He talked about his coming death and the need for his students to grow in discipline and self-reliance. On the third day of the gathering, he talked of the dawning Aquarian Age.

“The world has changed. The stars and heavens have changed, but still man is caught in his ego. We know through the ancient science, the science of stars, astrology and numerology, that under the main period of the Saturn, the *Kali Yug*, the Golden Age is going to come, and we are in the cusp of that Golden Age. The fifth of January 1961 was the day when Uranus started the projection of its rays on the planet Earth, through the reflection of the moon.

“Mind expanded. People who were in the establishment, they became crazy. ‘What has happened to the kids?’ That was their problem.

“There was nothing happening to the kids. Kids' minds started fluctuating more, more self-thought vibrating. Their heart expanded. They became nearer to the originality. They wanted to know more reality than all what the establishment could offer.

“Mind represents the moon. Now, Uranus the star of knowledge and truth, was reflecting, and because it travels from West to East, therefore the west got affected earlier than the East.

“On the fifth of January 1970, the cycle of nine years got completed. Those nine years were of drugs and all other objects which could help man to break his ties with the establishment.

“Now, that was the universal mind. Some people got affected less, some got more, some were happy, some were unhappy, but it did not work on the ego. The pattern was the same. There were teachers who could have taught the spiritual science, but they were calm, quiet, sweet, beautiful, which are the disqualifications of a teacher.

“A teacher who is sweet, who is calm, who is sober, who is nice, who is decent is a nonsense because he'll never make sense in the long run. It is much better to have one student and hammer him out, give him the shape, give him the reality, put your energy into him, and leave this world, than to have hundreds of thousands of disciples and just create nothing in them! Half-created art is never perfect and has never a value. But the Piscean Age was in force. There was no way out. The teachers were teaching the knowledge of the Piscean Age: “Believe me, and then you will know.” And that is what a Piscean is: “Believe me first, and knowledge will come to you later.”

“The individual mind revolted against this because the stars of Uranus which was expanding the universal mind, also affected the individual minds, therefore the kids revolted against this theory. They said, “Show us first! Let us know first, and then we will believe.”

“It was not the job of an individual person. It was the universal mind which was affected. People started looking for something positive, something real. They wanted to know, “If there is a soul, where it is?” They wanted to feel the soul. They wanted to exactly know the location of it. They wanted to know what they were talking about, but there was no answer for that: ‘If there is a soul, where it is?’ And when you cannot show or make someone feel there is a soul, why you are talking about it? So much soul...

“Somebody said to a very great teacher, ‘I have got two soles and they are right under my feet. If you cannot show me a soul, I'm not going to believe you.’ And he walked out of that gathering.

“That challenge was very shaky. It shook those who were holding the port of spirituality. They became crazy themselves. They never knew what to do about it. Some were feeling that it is a time now to change. Some actually changed, some did not, and so the time of nine years passed. But the people were ready for it. They were finding it anywhere where it is.

“Now, in these ten years, from '70 to '80, the twenty-first of June 1972 is a very important day. If God will permit us, perhaps we will meet again. We will celebrate that Solstice. Twenty-first of June 1976 is a very bloody time. That will be the test which will show the values. Twenty-first of June 1980 the steel of everyone will be tested and if we cross that day, we'll enter the Age. If not, God bless the Age. Whosoever enters it will see it. Now this is a destiny in the stars. It is not an individual thought. It is not something one can see or one can feel.”

“If that is so, then what is the preparation? Now these are the main branches of yoga. First, there's hatha yoga which nobody knows and everybody practices. Hatha yoga nobody knows. *Ha-tha*, sun and moon energy. Yoga means union. Your headstand is not hatha yoga. These are the preparations for Hatha yoga. The eighty-four postures, twenty-four mudras, three gunas, these are all preparations toward Hatha yoga, and Hatha yoga is a direct physical science.

“Write it down so that tomorrow you may not just feel what that is. Hatha yoga is a science where directly moon and sun energy is united to raise the kundalini. That is the purpose. It requires

twelve years under a well-established, knowledgeable guru. And without that experience, a hatha Yogi is not supposed to teach anybody else. Now I am quoting the scriptures. But in the West, hatha yoga has become a little bit of postures, a little bit of breathing exercises, and they feel that's all it is.

“The mental part is a very important part. Mind and breath is a very important part in Hatha yoga that has been forgotten, that has not been practiced, and that is why Hatha yoga has become nothing but a physical gymnastic.

“You have to go to the meaning, *ha-tha*. They are two words, sun and moon, yoga, *yog*, joining them at *sushumna*, that is the central nervous system, and through the *praanayam* that can be achieved, and when that can be achieved, what is the end of it? You have to raise your kundalini, chakra by chakra, and you have to achieve the same thing which we have to do ultimately.

“After that, comes raja yoga. Raja yoga is when under the guidance of a competent teacher you focus your mind energy on each center of consciousness and raise your level of consciousness, by level and level, to the protection that your kundalini can raise to the lotus of a thousand petals. And the *sadhana*, minimum time required is six years. That is raja yoga.

“Then comes before us bhakti yoga. Be devoted. Praise the Lord. Forget everything else. Within the lifetime somewhere God will bless you and your kundalini will rise and you'll be aware. Bhakti yoga: total devotion, selflessness and praise the Lord. Nothing else is required for the Bhakti Yogi.

“Karma yoga: selfless work. Serve everyone everywhere under all circumstances selflessly. You should not get any reward for that work. Within this lifetime are too many lives which may or may not follow. You will be liberated.

“Jnana yoga. Jnana yoga is look at everything and bisect it, and see the cause of everything you see is God, and concentrate on that. By working on that concentration, you will develop a habit through which you will see God through everything, and thus your consciousness will be related to the highest. This is known as jnana yoga.

“Mantra Yoga, which is a branch of the laya yoga. That consciousness gets merged with the universal consciousness with the power of the mantra. When that happens, all knowledge comes to that person. If you perfect a mantra, you will perfectly reach God. There is no duality.”

## Kundalini Yoga and the Universal Ego

At the Paonia Solstice, Yogi Bhajan spoke of Muhammed and Rama and Krishna. Of land, woman and power: the three things that come to a man of inner strength, he spoke. He spoke of Jesus

and kundalini yoga and Swami Vivekananda.

“Selflessness cannot be achieved through consciousness without universal consciousness. And if you will not uncoil yourself, you will never be a universal self. It is said that all rivers will end up in the ocean and all yogas will end up raising your kundalini. It is not wrong. It is not because I happen to teach it and you happen to learn it, therefore we are special. It is not an ego trip.

“If you read what Swami Vivekananda said in the book “How to Know God,” it is very clear there. Whatever your little soul, that is the level of the raising of the kundalini in you. And Vivekananda said very clearly...

“Anyone has got “How to Know God” with you? Yes, get me one. I'll read you the very sentence from it. Swami Vivekananda has quite completely and honestly written what the kundalini is. Do you have the book? Bring it here.

“You read in the second part: 'When,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'by the power of long internal meditation, the vast mass of energy stored travels up along the sushumna and strikes the centers, the reaction is tremendous, immensely superior to the reaction of dream or imagination, immensely more intense than the reaction of sense perception. Whenever there is any manifestation of what is ordinarily called supernatural power or wisdom, there is a little current of kundalini that must have found its way into the sushumna. Only, in the vast majority of such cases, people have ignorantly stumbled on some practice which set free a minute portion of the coiled-up kundalini. All worship, consciously or unconsciously, leads to this end. The man who thinks he is receiving responses to his prayers does not know that the fulfilment comes from his own nature, that he has succeeded by the mental attitude of prayer in waking up a bit of this infinite power which is curled up within himself.'” It is page one hundred and fifteen.

“And if this breath belongs to a center, definitely it is kundalini yoga, do you know that? Those Vedanta people are the first, Vedanta and the Theosophical Society, they are the first great enemies of kundalini yoga. And the man who established this lodge and this Theosophical Society, he got his kundalini raised through his Master in India. He was the one person who experienced it and all he said was that you must study it under a competent teacher because the process is so quick.

“The astral projection of the teacher must protect all the students. That's the natural requirement. That is why normally everybody cannot teach it. So because they cannot teach it, they say it is dangerous.

“It is dangerous because it is a very complicated and very powerful process. It is very quick. It is taught like heat, like light. The teacher should start up your magnetic field and through practice, this should set you on the path.

“The distraction on this path is the ego. When your ego comes up, you become an individual

unit and you fall apart. This is a science of contact and disconnect. When through that contact for a sufficient time you get totally charged, then you have your battery working. And that is where the secret is.

“If in kundalini yoga it is said that we are ego-less, when the teacher sends you out, be a universal ego. In that way God shall prevail through you. And it is true.”

## **As Below, So Above**

For the first time, Yogi Bhajan introduced the Solstice gathering to White Tantric Yoga. *Shaktis* and *shaktimans* sat as couples in row after row in the open air, as the Master directed their attentions to the highest heavens and the innermost reaches of their souls.

The sessions could be gruelling. One posture, the "dancing Shiva," balancing on one leg, facing one's partner eye to eye, went on for two, maybe it was three, hours.

Before one such crucifixion, Yogi Bhajan advised, "This will harness your horniness!" The fortunate ones were just barely able to walk away after that exercise, but only just. Bodies ached, minds resisted, but spirits... ah, they soared!

The exercises could be fun as well. One memorable exercise involved holding one of your partner's hands while using the other to remove one of their socks!

One day, the inscrutable Yogi Bhajan put everyone into a meditation and disappeared into the cabin situated next to them. He remained there for some time. Meanwhile, the sun beamed down and roasted the determined yogis, as they kept on with their meditation.

Finally, the Master emerged from inside. He surveyed the beaming yogis, and burst out, "*You idiots! You dummies! The sun is too hot! What are you doing? You have messed up!*"

He ascended the stage. "*Raise your hands up!*" Every hand raised up.

*"Stretch your fingers!"*

Fingers stretched.

*"Inhale!"*

All inhaled.



*"Now chant Saaaaaaaaaat Nam!"*

And they did.

*"Stronger and louder!"*

They did!

*"Louder!!!"*

And they chanted and chanted, louder and stronger and louder.

At last, after some time, a wind began to blow, and clouds came overhead.

"That's better!" Yogi Bhajan concluded. "If you meditate properly, you will always have a cloud cover."

## **Solstice Sadhana is No Retreat**

*Yogi Bhajan emphasized the visionary purpose and exacting discipline of the gathering of yogis.*

"The idea to come for these ten days is to dedicate yourself to God so that all your fulfillment may be pre-fulfilled. I am finding a bit of difficulty. I thought you all love me, but I know you are cheats. Some of you are breaking the law of talking. I have very clearly said there are certain specific persons which have been allowed to talk. Everyone else has to be silent up to the midnight of the eighteenth. It was not done to make my position easy. Not at all. I wanted you to do a *sadhana* to preserve your mind energy.

"You have not to hassle here for food. You have not to hassle here for anything. You have to come to the class. You have to just learn. You have to be beautiful. And therefore, it is the best chance available where you can preserve your vibrating energy and you can just define it to a course, first by controlling it.

"But I have fooled myself in some cases where I have seen people breaking this rule. I don't think that is very good. Self-deceit is the worst karma. It will not bother me, but it is my job to inform you that it is not right for your interest.

"Certainly, I am not crazy when I say go and have a dip in the morning in that cold creek. The reason for telling you to go and have a dip in that cold thing is you have a habit to live in air-conditioned houses, so your nervous system does not have the proper weather conditioning. Bringing

you out in the open and letting you live out in the nature is to take you out of that atmosphere and in the morning when you jump into that canal, the cold water affects your nervous system and your circulation so nicely that you will find in ten days you will have a lot of better health than.

“It is a wonderful system. And to keep yourself emotionally balanced, strong nerves are required. Also, you will not catch cold. When you have cold water and massage your body and rub it with a good towel, and then take a blanket and come here for the job, you will feel yourself very hearty and very healthy. But if you just come out of your tent and sit down here you are going to catch cold anyway.

“Secondly, I will discuss those people who are assigned in the morning to do the mantra. They should do it in such a hard way that people should sweat. And we have all the mantras. They are strong mantras. They are very powerful. So, chant that for the ten days in your one year for the *sadhana* which you have adopted. We want to make it beautiful to have maximum benefit out of it and it is all in your interest.

“Tomorrow, you are going to be teachers. You have to go through all the *sadhana*. You will like your students to go through the *sadhana*. Therefore, basically you must go yourself through those *sadhanas* and have the experience. Without the experience, you cannot sustain yourself.

“When I saw people somewhere here playing ego games and all that kind of trips, I do not talk. But don't misunderstand, I watch. I watch everything.

“I want you to understand the final higher conscious state of man is when you can share the experience of the truth with others. That is why I want you to have that experience of truth with you first. We are here to develop one mind to relate to one God. That's why we are here. And here we have to learn to be totally egoless for ten days. Therefore, you must train your mind and tell it to become egoless so that you may have an experience of egoless-ness.

“When we call for food, some people are in their tents. When it is time for *sadhana*, some people are doing something different. It may be a little different from what you are supposed to do, but that little difference matters because it means the mind is not tuned into a particular way.

“It means you know the “G,” you know the “d,” but you do not know the “o.” When you write “God” with a “G” and “d,” what it means? How does it sound? “Gd.” “G” and “d” doesn't make the sound “God.” “O” the organization, the organic part, is very important.

“Destroy your negativity, generate all positivity, and yourself you'll become a living God. The difficulty is I am not working for myself. I want to modify you so you become great and things will become smooth in the future.

“You do not understand. You just come here to meet Yogi Bhajan and everything is groovy. And

we are just camping out and there is good food and that kind of stuff. That is not it. This is not a retreat!

“We have not come here to retreat. We have come here to advance. I heard news this was ‘a retreat.’ I don't keep a retreat. I have never retreated. Out of all my mistakes, I learn wisdom. I do not lament and cry on my mistakes at all. I do one hundred and one mistakes each second! I don't care! But my mistakes teach me what I must know. Therefore, I don't retreat and I won't let you retreat. You have come here to advance yourself. And do it quick, otherwise I can't wait!”

“Therefore, we have to condition our mind with that smooth stability that when you go back from here, you are nothing but teachers. And believe me or not, there is only one link. That is love.

“We know each other too well. That's why I want you to be away from any other trip, from sexual trip, from power trip. Lay aside all your cases. Let them rest. Regenerate yourself. Renervate yourself. Be true to yourself and become beautiful, so when you go from here, you may have a soul in you and your mind may relate to that soul. And if that is ever gonna happen, then you will do it.”

### **“A Solstice Blessing”**

Guru Nanak has tried to relate to the man, to take him from this universe and make him relate to the supreme consciousness, but the uptightness of his nature, the fear in his nature, the training of the mind to become selfish makes us forget that we are all one soul, makes us forget there is a soul in everyone. Therefore, you forget patience and you forget tolerance. When we forget patience and tolerance, we forget love. And when we forget love, we forget God. It is a continuous cycle.

When you forget one thing, you forget everything. When you get Sister Greed in you, the other four sisters shall present themselves. Nothing lives without anything. One thing is never complete without the other thing.

Therefore, I have to request of you one thing today: Dear woman, you have come into this universe to spread the grace of God, therefore do it. O man, you have come to dedicate yourself to God. Assess yourself to this. Write it down. Let us all write that we entered this place on the tenth and we shall leave it on the twenty-first morning after our sunrise service. Let us sit down and assess how much we have dedicated to our self to God. Let every woman be a divine mother, be a holy sister, be a beautiful child and inspiring wife. Let her sit down today and assess herself how much she is graceful and how much grace of God is she. And that shall decide the entire gracefulness of your life.

If your relationship to the God within you is an established relationship, you'll become fearless. You'll become non-emotional. If your relationship is not with your soul, you will blow it up. It is difficult to fight with five demons. Somehow, they are going to get you. And because we do not

relate to our protector, who is going to protect us? The divine power is within us.

And don't be proud that you have money. There are millions and millions of millionaires. Don't be proud that you have a beautiful woman. One woman is more beautiful than the next. Don't be proud that you have children. There are people who have got dozens of them. And don't be proud of what you have. On the spur of the moment, what you have can be washed away.

You can only be proud of one thing, and that is if you have found the soul within yourself. You can only be proud of one thing, and that is if you have found the selflessness within your self. And then we become the grace of God. Then there is nothing which can bother you. Then there is nothing which can take away from you anything because you have been created by God and then God shall create all the circumstances to create happiness for you. And when he creates the happiness, it is everlasting, God which we do not understand, the Creator of this universe.

Therefore, dear one, as we are coming to the Summer Solstice, the highest light of the year, the highest day of grace, the highest day when the sun energy, the life force prevails on this planet, I will like you to sit down and assess yourself, what you have been, how much you have been. And let this day be a day within you when you should leave something behind, some elementary pushing habit, some ego habit, something which keeps you away from your soul and makes you discourteous.

May God bless you. May he prevail through you. May his grace be your grace. May you become the true teacher of the Age of Aquarius. May you confirm yourself to spread the truth and the light to the Aquarian Age. May each one of you practice the grace of God and be grace of God. *Sat Nam.*

## Love and the Single Yogi

This was one Solstice where more and more attention came to be focussed on couples. Many of the hippies were abandoning their free love ways and wanting to settle in with the yogi, the Sikh, to find a good righteous *Shakti*, or *Shaktiman* to marry and maybe raise up some little yogi-Sikhs.

With Yogi Bhajan, it was easy, sort of. You just told him you wanted to marry. If he thought you were ready, he would find someone for you. Sometimes, he would find a perfect match for your soul right on the spot! These marriages were not necessarily painless. Nobody said they were supposed to be, but if you could handle the pressures, they were very good for your soul.

At Paonia, Yogi Bhajan held a meeting with the women and another with all the men to talk to them about the importance of married life. He described marriage as a kind of yoga. Two people entered into it and what came out was one unified soul. At least, that was the idea.

Even Ganga together with her husband Larry, and other teachers, were becoming actively involved in matching people up, making "perfect couples," finding people their soulmates. They had someone in mind for a student who had come along to the Colorado solstice. They told this fellow, Bob McMasters, a law student at Columbia University, not to bother Yogi Bhanjan about it, but Bob's soulfelt longing took him to seek out the Master despite their advice. He had never spoken directly with Yogi Bhanjan before.

Yogi Bhanjan listened carefully. His eyes looked through Bob, as though he were pure glass. Then, he pointed in the distance. "Bring back that girl with the red bandanna!"

Obediently, Bob followed the direction the finger had pointed, a little awkwardly. He was near-sighted, and had some difficulty seeing anyone at any distance. Finally, he found someone with a red kerchief and brought them back to see what Yogi Bhanjan had to say.

"No," Yogi Bhanjan said, matter-of-factly, "not a man! A woman! Bring the woman with the bandanna!"

Determinedly, Bob set out again, awkwardly and a little embarrassed. Another red bandanna presented itself. This time, it was... yes it was a young woman. Stiffly, he tapped her on the shoulder and said, "Yogi Bhanjan wants to see you."

As he took her back to the Master Yogi, Bob's mind raced ahead of him. "Why," it asked, "am I doing this? There are millions of women in the world! Why this particular one?"

Yogi Bhanjan smiled his approval. "Your auras are blue like the ocean! You will make each other happy."

Barry Rippens from Seattle also informed Yogi Bhanjan of his desire to be married. Yogi Bhanjan send the word out to see if there were any ladies who would like to be married.

After a time, about a half-dozen young women came to be interviewed by Yogi Bhanjan in his cabin. Once he had spoken with each of them, the Master said to Krishna, who had observed everything with some amazement, "I think *that* one might be the nicest."

A senior teacher was then asked to take the lady, named Erica, and introduce her to the man from Seattle, so that they could see whether they both felt the same way Yogi Bhanjan did. Barry could be seen, with his back to them, up by the camp kitchen, on the top of a hill not far away.

The lady and her escort began to make their way along the path leading to the top of the hill.

Once they had almost ascended the hill, something happened. The man's back straightened as he slowly turned to look. His gaze fell on this lady, as hers fell on him. Her escort stopped and

watched as the two of them began to walk into the space between them.

They met. They began to speak and, after some minutes had passed, Erica and Barry turned away from the cabin, ascending the final distance of the hill. Behind them, everyone could see the sun setting in heroic splendour as the couple strode and spoke. There was so much to say.

In all, twenty-two couples were married that Solstice.

## **Journey to the East**

There was much to do and no time to waste. Right after Solstice, Yogi Bhan and his tour secretary drove on to New Orleans. In the city of the Mardi Gras and Bourbon Street, he gave talks at the Celebration of Life Festival and at the Unity Temple. Yogi Bhan also taught several classes at David Kazmirzak's yoga center, the Sat Nam Sunshine Warehouse.

From there, they went north and east, over the Appalachians, to America's capital where Larry Singh Wentink and Ganga were growing a community of yogis at Ahimsa Ashram on Q Street. That visit netted an interview in the Washington Post.

Yogi Bhan also had it in mind to visit with a number of colleagues and acquaintances with a view to creating a yoga federation in America. All of them were having similar experiences. They were gaining enthusiastic followings among the young people, genuine interest among various scientists and clergy and members of the media. But the vast majority of Americans were baffled by their Eastern names and terminology.

Was it: "yogurt" or "yoga"? "Yogi Bha-jan" or "Yogi Bha-han"? Like most people, the people of the United States preferred the familiar to the unfamiliar, the known to the unknown – and they found the yogis and swamis newly arrived from India to be strange and curious indeed. Yogi Bhan and Swami Satchidananda in particular thought that by joining forces, the advocates of yoga in the United States would have a better chance of creating understanding in the mainstream culture.

Yogi Bhan's next stop was Philadelphia, where he met with Yogi Amrit Desai. Yogi Amrit had originally come to study art in 1960, but shortly thereafter had begun teaching yoga in the City of Brotherly Love. By 1966, he had founded the Yoga Society of Pennsylvania and was managing hundreds of classes a week. The next day, Yogi Bhan's friends, Swami Satchidananda and Dr. Rammurti Mishra, came and joined them.

Swami Satchidananda had first visited New York City in 1966, at the invitation of pop artist Peter Max. Soon thereafter, he moved to the United States where he actively toured the country, giving workshops. Like Yogi Bhan, he had a mind toward inter-faith pioneering. In 1968, with Rabbi

Gelberman, Swamiji co-founded the Center for Spiritual Studies as a forum for priests, rabbis and swamis to respectfully exchange views. With his flowing hair and beard and saffron robe, he was an iconic presence, famous now for inaugurating the big Woodstock rock festival with a poignant talk and a short chanting meditation. Swami Satchidananda's organization was the Integral Yoga Institute.

Dr. Rammurti Mishra had been in America the longest. He divided his time between New York City and San Francisco. Dr. Mishra had founded the Yoga Society of New York in 1958 and published "The Textbook of Yoga Psychology" five years later. He was a trove of knowledge of Sanskrit, hatha yoga, Yoga-Vedanta and the ancient Vedic fire ceremony.

After meeting with all of them, Yogi Bhajan continued on to New York City to see Swami Rama. The accomplished yogi had spent many years living in caves in India. In 1969, Swamiji had started the Himalayan Institute in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. Swami Rama's special mission was to convince the American medical establishment of the powers of yoga. He did this by submitting his body to tests confirming his remarkable ability to control his heartbeat and other autonomic functions of the body.

After visiting with Swami Rama, Yogi Bhajan set off for Rochester to give a radio interview, then to Staaten Island for a press conference, to Hartford for a lecture at a Unitarian Church, then to Boston for a radio interview, and back to Washington, to New York again for a talk at Hunter College, and a return drive to Ahimsa Ashram for a talk at American University on July 14th. In Washington, Yogi Bhajan stayed and conducted a White Tantric Yoga course lasting eight days, about five hours each day.

Untired, Yogi Bhajan returned north to teach in Buffalo, then to Detroit where he gave another White Tantric Yoga course. From the Great Lakes State, Yogi Bhajan flew to the West Coast to teach in Seattle, Portland, and Eugene, then on to San Francisco.

By August 10, Yogi Bhajan was back at the San Rafael Ashram, just north of San Francisco, with Baba Bert and Cliff Lamereaux. Yogi Bhajan gave a talk on the Age of Aquarius which someone thoughtfully recorded for posterity.

"Tonight, we are going to discuss the subject, Man and the Age of Aquarius, and our responsibility in today's generation. My unconditional apologies if I hit you hard, but that is the way. Sometimes the truth is very bitter. I'll try to make it as soft as possible, but sometimes words cannot substitute the expression.

"In our life and style, we all know and we all have seen, that we have to take proper care of certain very minor things in life, such as planting a little plant of rose, a rose plant. We have to take care of the land, manure, proper seed and seedling, putting the 'L' into it, and still growth will take time. Finally, what we get with all this effort, 4 or 3 flowers at a proper season for just a few days.

"Today, let us have a check-up, how much we are known or to be known as educated

parents. These are all very serious questions. Compare it with the one plant of that rose plant or marigold plant you plant in the house. Just think how serious you are. You want to get the best seed, you want to find the proper soil, you want to take care of it, planting around it a perfection, what you do not do?

“But when you plant a new generation of humanity, what do you do in comparison to that? That is what I have to understand. Child is conceived, no vibration; child grows, no vibration; child comes out in life, no vibration. Nobody takes care of that child.

“The scriptures say: *Gurdev Mata, Gurdev Pita, Gurdev Swami Parmeshura*. The first teacher is mother, second is father, third is relatives, fourth is environments, and fifth is the *parmeshram*, or the man of God. So the spiritual teacher is the fifth teacher who comes into life and if the ground is not prepared, circumstances are not right; already four teachers have failed. Do you understand that man has a ‘magic’ in him to turn everything right in one moment?

“Honestly, truthfully, think: how many mothers are there today who might have prayed that they will have a Saint, a Giver or a Great Man born out of their self? How many of you are even prepared to give this world, which is suffering, which is burning in ego and lust, a Savior? How many fathers are prepared to pray to create in them, throughout their prayer, that seed which must sprout tomorrow to save the humanity? Yet, you say you are part of the Age of Aquarius that is going to be the age of peace, and truth and happiness.

“Behind, under my shell, I laugh. I assess what you say and talk, and I assess how much you are ready and prepared to live up to it. It is unfortunate, I have one more year, just to be patient and wait. Then I’ll come after you. I’ll come before you with the blunt truth. It will shake you all. Today I cannot do that. I have to nurse you so that you may be in a position not to misunderstand me completely and run away from me. Just imagine, what we are giving this world that we are going to be proud of; how much can we save the future tomorrow? This is a direct question today to every human being.

“Our ladies are competing with the men, but neither have they grown a beard, nor shall they ever grow one. They shall remain to be controlled by moon. Their instinct to be mother will be ever living with them. But if you tell them, they feel bad, they don’t want to listen to it. They feel somebody is putting them down.

“No. Somebody’s not putting you down. You start working as a woman’s liberation front. From whom are you getting liberated? From your sons? From your husbands? If today, woman decided that she will give birth to a saint, in twenty-five years, she will have a generation. They will act as good sons, whatever she says. You will have your whole Congress and Senate at your command, but you have to work it today.

“You have to give this world a child of God. Instead, what do you give it? Attorneys and doctors,



or you give with the vibration “my son should have lots of money, should be very rich.” In return, you are going to get the same from Mother Nature – misery, sickness and a lot of hassle. If every mother wants her son to be an attorney, the whole of humanity will have cases in courts. Ten times the vibration must return to you; ten times. Mother is the giver of what we call creation, *Adi Shakti*. Whatever in a country woman will think, it will fall on the whole generation of that country, ten times heavier. This is the law of the *Shakti*.

“You chant the mantra of *Adi Shakti*, *Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru*. It is not a man’s mantra. It has no image before it. It has infinity before it. The one Creator who has created this world whose name is truth, great, what a wisdom is He! That is what you chant. If you love infinity, you will go to infinity.

“This world is a transitory period. This is a passing phase. You have come here to go. How many of us are ready to go? It is a truth, we have to go. How many of us are prepared to go? That is what we have to think. Those who want only to come, not to go, they shall stay in this world. That is the law of consciousness which neither you can change nor I can change. Man has to prepare. Man has to lay the new foundations of a new world which we are imagining to be a world in a new truth and light, the Age of Aquarius.

“Where is the devotion? Where is the sacrifice? Where is the love? Love is the experience of selflessness within one self. That is love. We do lusting. We call it 'love'. Love never dies. Love is God. How can you love somebody and you hate him the next day? How can you change from truth? How can you back out from righteousness? If we will not learn to love, disaster is waiting for humanity. And it will fall heavy on each one of us. I know you don’t want that disaster. I don’t want it either. It is painful to see the whole humanity suffering *en masse*. It is not our desire.

“But what we have done to save that? Where is that mother who created Jesus, who created Buddha, who created Guru Nanak, who created Ram and Krishna, who created Mohammed? If you cannot find that mother, the world cannot be saved. A Savior has to be born, must be born out of a woman and a woman must be graceful. She must realize her grace, she must act as a grace of God. She must stop those naked dances. She must not dance on the tune of the devil. Only then, the Savior will come. Otherwise, there is no way.

“With dirty vibrations, with lustful acts, living in the first and second chakra, you cannot give this world a savior. It is the call of the times, I am simply interpreting it to you. The time is now to start the higher consciousness. Now is the time. Tomorrow it may be too late.

“I would like to know one man who can come forward and say, ‘Yogi, I don’t mind if my sister is topless or bottomless in a bar, or my mother is topless or bottomless in a bar.’ With that faith in humanity, do those who go and see somebody’s sister and mother topless or bottomless deserve to be called human beings? Is it not a naked dance of our lower nature as humans? And still we want everything should be cool. Everything should happen as we want it to happen.

“This is a big question today. Years are passing by. It is the cusp of the Age of Aquarius. We have 30 more years. If we will not change by the virtue we have, time will change us. When Draupadi was ordered in the full assembly to become naked, she prayed to Lord Krishna and infinite clothes started coming from the air. Duryodhan failed in his design to make her naked. The Pandavas took her back.

“Somebody asked Lord Krishna what this meant. He said, 'The whole civilization on the soil of India will ever be wiped out.'

“He said, 'How, Lord? You are living here.'

“He said, 'I can't help it. It is beyond me. The ruler of the state wanted to make naked the woman of another man just to humiliate him. Mother Nature will not tolerate this insult.'

“What happened? There was a fight of Mahabharata. The total humanity got wiped out completely. There was none left to tell the tale. What happened to that civilization? You will try to read the Bhagavad Gita. You call it 'Divine Song'. This is what happens when woman gets degenerated because when the soil gets degenerated...

“Ah, don't think about ecology of your surroundings. Think about the ecology of man. Think what man has done wrong, where. The foundation, the soil on which the man is born, grown, that has been polluted. That is where you have to work hard, right where you are now. The circumstances are so poor, unprepared, it is totally insecure. How can you expect from sand that you will have an apple tree growing? We are in a very important time. We are on a crossroad. Either we have to live in the truthful sacrifice of love, or we have to continue our number of lust.

“The more lustfully we live, the more weak we will become. The more we'll be going by the fear complex, the more low shall we be. And when that time comes, it will be difficult to save the generation. But if, today, we all decide that we will give this world a better manhood, a better unit in most pure vibrations, it will not take even twenty-five years that we will have on this planet gods and goddesses, living in the form of man. It is a reality.

“Our generation is one generation which has to compensate for what wrong we have done in the past. We have to keep it. We have to pay that debt. We have to work it for the future. If we all prepare for that, the Age of Aquarius will come in as softly as we should expect. Otherwise, let us not even talk about it.

“You all hear prophecies. Prophecies may come true, may not come true. Every estimate is there. I am talking to you. You are all men of God. You are beautiful. You are here to seek God. It is your innermost desire, to know God. Before you can know God, you should know who you are. And you must remember, in our life, already two, three, four, even five teachers have failed. Therefore, you have to become sometimes your own teacher. You have to arouse in you the righteousness. You

have to live in the light of your own soul even if there is nobody around you to guide you, because you are also the same beautiful part of that Creator who has created this whole universe.

“People who do not learn to live in grace, they shall never have grace around them. It is a law of nature which you cannot change or amend because it is beyond you. A man who does not know how to live in gratitude, if his own eye is hurt, he starts yelling and screaming and crying.

“I think he is totally unaware there are hundreds and thousands of people on this earth that do not even have two eyes. We do not know even how to start our day with thanks. How unthankful we are! Mostly for anything which comes to us, we have an ego: 'we created it, it is ours'. Then when we lose, we yell and cry, 'I lost it!'

“Do you know four things you do not know how to make happen? When to be born, where to be born, and why to be born; where to die, when to die and why to die; when you are going to gain, where you will gain, and how much; where you will lose, when you will lose, and how much. These four things are beyond man, but we have been developed in a very complete fear complex. From where did this fear complex come in our mind? Fear complex comes to us when we have nothing higher to relate to than us. And that is the greatest weakness of the man.

“What is a religion? Religion means origin. If man knows his origin, he's a religious man. If a man is religious, he shall not hate, he shall be an open man. He will love everybody. He will serve everybody because he is religious. He is a man of God and God belongs to everybody, so he belongs to everybody. He will serve everybody because he is religious. He is a man of God and God belongs to everybody, so he belongs to everybody. He will be one with everyone because he has found the One. That is the quality of the man of God.

“Judge on this touch-stone, how many men of God are available today? How many religious men are available today? Just imagine, you all know. That one who has not yoked himself, has not yoked himself. It is his destination, and if he has not attained the soul of satisfaction and contentment, then he does not know the A B C of yoga.

“If postures are yoga, the people who are in circuses are the best yogis. They can turn themselves round and around like a snake. If physical strength is the only yoga, then the elephant must be God on earth.

“Yoga is when man meditates on the breath as a gift of the higher power into him and through this divine link, he links himself with infinity being a finite being. And when his behavior becomes confirmed, he becomes a yogi, not only in technique, but he gets the soul of a yogi. Then this whole nature serves that man. Then his vibrations are delightful. That is the truth, my dear, which each one has to reach.

“Meditation with closing eyes and the closing of thoughts and substitution of the negative

thoughts with a positive thought, is just a practice. It is a practice of meditation. It is a practice of meditation. It is not a meditation. It is practice of meditation. Meditation is when in the whole life you are one pointed, central on one thing, and no other thought disturbs you. That means you have achieved the state of meditation. Up to that time you are practicing. *Praanayam* is when each breath comes in you, you feel the *praana* that comes. When each breath goes out of you, you know that the *yam* has gone. That is awareness.

“Yoga has been defined now. Nobody can fool anybody. It is a conscious control through the consciousness when one relates to the Supreme Consciousness. It is that ego which crosses the barrier of the super ego and merges with the supreme ego. It is that yoke. It is that yoke where every religious origin starts to that end, the destiny. That is what it is.

“There are five stages for a yogi. *Karm Pad, Sarm Pad, Shakti Pad, Sahej Pad, and Sat Pad*. First, he must have the desire to come under the protection of a teacher who should teach him the truth. It is a very difficult state.

“Mostly 80% people fall in that. Whenever they achieve something, their ego becomes elephantous, they become fat, and they do not see anything. Their mobility is lost, they feel: 'Ah, I got it! Ah, I got it!' But he's not going to get anything more. He's through and that is the end of that. That is "Shakti Pad".

“But when one crosses this *pad*, then he comes into "Sahaj Pad", then he flows with the cosmic flow and then the whole cosmos serves that man because that man is part of the cosmos. When Mother Universe caters to that man, he lives in humility, he's inexhaustible. You cannot insult that man, you cannot put him down because he's merged with the whole universe. He sees the negator as his beauty.

“And then comes the "Sat Pad" when he becomes confirmed by the truth. Then everything looks to him as truth. That is the goal of everyone. It requires a lot of guts, a lot of nerves. And we have to get those nerves and guts from the very childhood.

“Who can give us those nerves? Who can give us those guts? Mother. Who gives you good food? Mother Earth. Who gives you good environment? Mother Earth. Similarly, in the little sense, mother and home has to produce those environments, has to create those nerves so that child of tomorrow may become man of God consciousness.

“When you do not get God immediately after going to a teacher, don't feel sad and don't get mad. There is a lot of garbage in us. We are by-products of a messed-up circumstance. There is nothing wrong with children, they are just blaming the kids because they don't want to blame themselves.

“I have never seen a watermelon growing on an apple tree, and until somebody will show me

that way, I will never bother to listen to this going on talk: 'Kids are getting astray.' Kids are of the fruit of that tree. There is something wrong with the tree. That is why the fruit is going bad. It is the responsibility of the tree to grow fruit worth the world so that it can be useful. That is where we have gone astray. The giver of life, the mother, was not prepared for that responsibility.

“I am making you aware. It is a sad story. I am making you aware so that you may not feel upset when quick results do not come to you of *sadhana*. Instead of that, mother tells you lies. Makes circumstances what you do not have faith in her at all. Then comes father, the second guru, who should give you imagination of higher inspirations. He has no time at all. Then comes relatives. They do not have any message for you. Then comes the environments, the concrete and plastic.

“You, dear ones, are the by-products of the outcomes of these four big follies. And spiritual teachers are also very rare. Don't you understand now how hard is the time for the man to grow? Don't you honestly realize how difficult it is for a man to grow to his higher consciousness?

“That is why you have now to all become teachers. You have to come out of the shell of your negativity and cowardice. You have turned your inside out. You have to forget the past. You have taken a vow and then you should relate to nothing but God Consciousness and thus you start and get into the world to help those brothers and sisters who are seeking what to do. This way, through the cusp period of the Age of Piscean and Aquarian, we can serve the future.

“If you feel it is the responsibility of Swami Satchidananda, Yogi Bhajan, and Bla Bla Bla, they are two human beings. How much can they run around? Well, what do you think they are? How many months you see I have got?

“You have to grow. You all know what God is. You all know what soul is. You all know what truth is. Come out and speak now. Come now and lead, that is the need of the time. And if you will not serve the need of the time, it will smash you. That is what we have to fulfill. We have to sacrifice. We have to stop lusting and start loving. We have to bring to this world of tomorrow. We have to become example parents.

“Mother has to become a most powerful soul so that the seed of tomorrow's God-man may grow. Who knows in whose womb the God has to come? Everyone has a chance, but prepare yourself with heart and soul for that, so that the savior may come through you. Take credit. That woman can stand liberated and God will bow to that woman who will make tomorrow's off-spring a Savior, a Saint, a Giver.

“Who will make, inspire her husband to be a truthful man of God? That is the need of the time, and that is a serious point of ecology for the mankind itself. You can survive in a smog, but this kind of smog will generally wipe out the generation after generation. Therefore, let us do this *sadhana*.

“I am a feeble man. I cannot reach the whole world in one minute. I am here this evening to

share this truth with you. With my capacity, I have taught everywhere I get a chance. So I wanted to share with you this evening these facts. Time is calling on us, and we have no where to go. Let us all promise to become pure. Let us stop this physical lusting. Let us relate to the infinity from where we have come. Let us try to go with grace to infinity where we have to go.

“San Francisco is known to be a very spiritual area in the United States of America. When our first student teacher came here, I said, 'Son, you have everything?'

“He said, 'I know *Sat Nam*.'

“I said, 'If you know *Sat Nam*, nothing else you need to know. Go!'

“Student teachers are still sticking around, creating the vibrations of *Sat Nam* for you. But now is the time, you must all gather around and you all become *Sat Nam*. You all become God. You all become God. You all become higher consciousness. You all become truth so that we can be prepared for the calamities and the time, if it strikes.

“Let every mother become a holy mother. Let every sister become a great sister. Let every wife become a righteous wife and let every man become a man of understanding and compassion and truth. Only then, the God consciousness can be prevailing through all of us. Then only we'll be healthy, happy and holy. Then dreams will come true.

“Don't say: 'The East has a civilization. The West has a civilization.' What different civilization do you have come from the East? Where's New York from San Francisco? It is east of us. You have your own East and own West.

“Think about you, think about the real you. Bring that real out and smash this up-front ego. This convenience of the moment in which you are living, it should not make you convenient for the rest of the time. The way to hammer is through the valley of that. You all know it. I know it.

“We have to prepare for that time if we honestly need and want the proper incoming of the Age of Aquarius. Sexuality and sensuality will not give God consciousness. You have to become high permanently, completely and totally. You have to become egoless so that you may have the chance to merge in the Supreme Ego.

“It is a duty I have to call on you, like a forced man. I have to deliver you your message. You may ring it in your head or not. It is your problem. My job is over.

“I have served you with the honesty and strength which I have. As a human, everyone has their weaknesses. I have mine. You have yours. But let us all pull it together. Let us make it together. Let us save disaster. At least if I am a bad man, you should grow to be ten times better than me to save the coming of the world. If I am not a good teacher, try to become ten times better a teacher than

me.

“Come out of your negativity and your protective shells. Time is reaching us fast and you are too slow even to listen to me. Dear Ones, it is equal responsibility now. Let us share equally. It is honesty which will matter now. Let us for a while become honest. It is the love now which is needed. Let us leave the lust and become totally in love for each other. Let us all feel and practice. Let us all become one with everyone, so that One, that *Ek Ong Kar*, may find you.

“If you cannot do that, then the laws of nature will have no mercy. You will have done wrong to humanity, and those souls will do you ten times more butchery and time shall prove it true. You will pay for your ancestors. The only chance you have is to change that time by changing your totality and if you can change your totality, then the time shall have to change. And that will be the most beautiful thing which we can create on this earth. That brotherhood of man and man, that brotherhood of grace of manhood, is what is needed from all of us.

“Don’t think because you are living in the Bay area, therefore you know everything. But, you are fortunate. You can practice everything. Let us change our practices. Let us turn into our own self. Let us produce the light of God within our self. Let each one of us become the torch bearer of that truth. Let us from today onward cater to our children to make them as beings of God consciousness. Let each mother, each sister start acting in the right direction. Let each man start achieving his goal, stage by stage.

“Within years, we will have perfect harmony, peace and truth. We will all become one because we are all one. There is one soul in us. We are the outcome of one infinity. We have to merge in one infinity. Let somebody not be crucified to bring compassion in you to learn righteousness. Let you do it. Let you carry your own cross. Let you crucify your ego and negativity so that you become the light of God, so you are a True Son of that Great Father.

“Rise, oh rise people! Rise as people of God, so that you can spread His Light, so that humanity may not suffer under those clouds. And time is now and now is the time. Who knows, tomorrow shall come or not? Let us meditate. Let us give, with a straight spine to our God consciousness. Let you all chant after me, 'God and me, me and God, are one...'

And they did.

“Inhale, and then chant breath by breath: 'God and me, me and God, are one...'

“Chant it totally mentally now. Meditate on your pineal gland and chant it. Meditate on your pineal gland so that it may grow...”

And they meditated on the pineal glands in the middle of their skulls.

“Inhale! Exhale! Relax.

And everyone sang together, “May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the pure light within you guide your way on, guide your way on, guide your way on... *Saaaaaat Nam.*”

And Yogi Bhajan finished the class, “May His Grace become your grace, may His Light become your light. May you be healthy, happy and holy. May through that awareness, through that power of that *Adi Shakti*, you have that purity and your totality through selflessness, through humility, through service, that you may find that contentment. May you become one with everyone, to find the only One, the Creator. May this day start in you a new life, may this be a turning point to your higher consciousness. May you relate to your soul and the whole world be a place for you to enjoy, live in peace, happiness and bliss! *Sat Nam.*”

### **Precious Arrivals from India**

The reunion of Yogi Bhajan and his wife in California occasioned changes all around. Like Shakti Parwha Kaur, Bibiji was of another generation than Yogi Bhajan's students. Moreover, she was of a different culture. In her neighbourhood in New Delhi, Bibiji had devoted servants to cook and clean and wash the clothes. In America, nobody knew the first thing about making a delicious curry, and for many of the young people washing their clothes was an afterthought, if it was a thought at all. While in India, only widows wore white, here her husband was telling all his students to prefer white cotton attire. What was she going to do with her suitcases full of beautiful saris? Bibiji was not used to seeing women going bra-less, to say nothing of people going naked at outdoor concerts. After a few days, Yogi Bhajan's wife was feeling America was a very strange culture indeed.

Bibi Inderjit Kaur, who had expected to resume something like her familiar routine with her husband, was also dismayed by her living situation. No longer would she and her husband share a comfortable house as they had in India. Instead, her husband lived in the Ashram when he was in Los Angeles and made the most comfortable arrangements he could for her elsewhere in the community.

Bibiji felt isolated in America. She missed her children and family and trusted servants. She begged Yogi Bhajan to return to their life in India, but to no avail. Instead, he showed his wife that her destiny was to stay in America and to serve these young people from the bottom of her heart. It was hard advice, but Bibiji, the devoted wife and Sikh of the Guru, at last agreed. She would arrange for the rest of the family to come as well.

Also arrived from India were many precious parcels sent from Amritsar containing Siri Guru Granth Sahib in English translation. The treasury of Guru Nanak, the *Shabd Guru*, had arrived to guide and inspire this new nation of Sikh Yogis in the West. Yogi Bhajan made arrangements for the volumes to be distributed to all the 3HO Ashrams.



## Happy Birthday, Yogi Bhajan!

After a brief stay in Los Angeles, Yogi Bhajan continued south to San Diego, where he stayed to give a White Tantric Yoga course, several days of hard work and fun with the objective of making his students' auras bright like the blue sky.

When Yogi Bhajan returned to Los Angeles, there was a grand party to celebrate his birthday, his forty-second. Some said nearly a thousand people came. But who was counting?

There was music and food. The *Los Angeles Times* sent its food editor to do a piece on the organic feast. A television crew was there too.

The hit music of the evening was a song by Gerry Singh that had everyone singing along:

“Peace Lagoon, let's get there soon  
When your heart is in full bloom.  
The mind's in ecstasy.  
To hear the Lord is to be  
Coming home to the Mother.  
Sing the wedding song.  
The Lord is coming along  
Joining the family of the Mother.  
Heaven is right here on Earth  
If you're looking to get back home.  
Just say those words that you've always heard.  
Heaven is everywhere you roam...”

While the little Ashram was crammed to capacity with partiers, outside on a stage Yogi Bhajan and an astrologer named Gandhi performed a fire ceremony symbolizing the vanquishing of the ego. There was a play and children singing.

Yogi Bhajan himself was the focal point of the celebration. With boundless energy and joy, he could be seen dancing, leading a gong meditation, and handing out presents to the guests.

Students of Yogi Bhajan had come from far and wide. All of the Ashrams represented were given volumes of Siri Guru Granth Sahib in translation. The Master had always said his students should never bow to a man. Now they would all be able to develop their personal relationship with the Word given by Guru Nanak.

It was also a time of departure, as it was announced that Yogi Bhajan's wife, Bibiji would be returning to India the next Sunday. The Long Time Sun song was sung for her safe journey.

The celebration could have lasted until dawn, but in his wisdom, Yogi Bhajan sent everyone home a little past midnight.

In the next issue of *Beads of Truth*, Yogi Bhajan profusely thanked his students:

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My dear Shaktis and ShaktiMans :

Sat Nam. You, the chosen children of the Age of Aquarius, and my soul's light --- Greetings!

Please accept my humble salutations on your birthday which you celebrated on the 26th of August, 1971, to practice your projection, your courage and your endeavour to be Sat Nam.

It was a complete demonstration of: "I love you and you love me and let us be Sat Nam." The magnificence and the glory of the celebration was a befitting tribute to you all, as you came from the four corners of the United States to be together. May Sat Nam bless you for this yatra (holy journey) you performed to have the flow of the union of the brotherhood of Truth, light and humility.

"He who has realized the True Lord is called the True Guru:  
In his company the disciple is saved, and calls on the Name of the One.  
The True Guru sustains the disciple;  
He is always kind to him.  
He removes the filth of his evil mind,  
And through the Word of the Guru, he is enabled to call the Lord's Name.  
The Guru breaks the bonds of his disciple,  
And the disciple turns away from evil doings.  
The Guru gives to his disciple the gift of the Name:  
How fortunate is he to find such a Guru  
Who saves him here and hereafter.  
By his love of the Guru, the disciple is protected."

Peace Lagoon (p. 90)

Keep up my dear ones, the tide of the future is in your favor and now is the time to make it. In the Name of the cosmos which prevails through everyone and the Holy Nam which holds the world. Sat Nam.

Humbly yours,

Yogi Bhajan

YB:spk

*EK ONG KAR SAT NAM SIRI WHA GURU*

Yogi Bhajan designated woman as *Shakti* and man as *Shaktiman*, *Shakti* being the source of divine inspiration and *Shaktiman* (pronounced “*Shakteemaan*”) being the devotee of that inspiration.

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## A Time to Practice and a Time to Share

The day after his birthday, Yogi Bhajan set out for the federal prison at Terminal Island, California. Students of his had been coming and offering classes at the prisons for some time. They had occasionally brought whole vegetarian feasts for the inmates.

It was Yogi Bhajan’s belief that getting high practicing kundalini yoga, and then not sharing it where it was needed was a form of selfishness. Moreover, it was a matter of pure luck whether his students lived in or out of prison. Most, if not all, had tried drugs and been liable for arrest and jail time.

When he spoke to the women at the federal prison, Yogi Bhajan expressed his understanding that some of them might actually be innocent, but could not prove their innocence, while others were guilty according to the laws of man. He told them this was a time to work on the self without any pressure from the outside world, a blessed time for constant *sadhana*.

## “The Requirements of a Spiritual Teacher”

*Yogi Bhajan had studied well the art of a spiritual teacher. He had learned from examples, good and bad, what to do and not to do, and how to be a pure channel or, as he liked to say, a “forklift” to lift up those less fortunate. The best route for their self-realization, Yogi Bhajan taught his students, was to work to become spiritual teachers themselves.*

*This is the talk he gave on September 18, 1971:*

The soul is immortal. The soul does not know death. This body is made out of matter. Matter neither can be produced nor can be destroyed, matter does not know death. Mind is a part of the universal mind, mind does not know death.

Human beings consist of mind, body and soul: physical, mental and spiritual. These three things make the human being and yet we are very much afraid of them. We cannot love because of the fear of death. The fear of death is so powerful in some of the people that their life is miserable.

The question is very simple. We have never considered to think about our origin, from where

we have come. We have never trained our mind to think who we are and where we have to go.

Unfortunately, people are brought up under very weird circumstances. You are trained to be in the world to be rich. You are trained to be in the world to possess material things. The energy that is concentrated on possessing the material things, does not leave you any time to do anything with the material things.

So, the question is to possess for what? I can spend three billion tomorrow and it will be a hassle to me - what I have to do is build very great buildings in all the cities where people can do their *sadhanas*. Some people have billions of dollars but they do not know what to do with it - they get stuck with it. They have it. They have it with the fear of losing it and the fear actually kills their nerves, they shrink, they feel bad, they feel negative. So this vicious circle takes away the entire nervous strength of a man to enjoy, be happy and relax.

People do not know how to give. You ask a person to go to a movie, to eat dinner, he's willing to spend twenty dollars. You ask him to go to a spiritual cause, he'll ask, why do I have to spend another dollar, and he'll make a fuss. For twenty dollars to go to a movie and eat, and to oblige a friend, nobody minds. But we don't consider that we have to pay or feel responsible to anything such as soul.

We do not realize that there is a soul in us. That is the biggest fault of a person. *Samskaras* are that account of those karmas you have earned in the previous life, that is why you got the body. This physical body was granted to you according to those *samskaras*. Then with those karmas, you make the karma in this life; *samskaras* and karma get together and that guides your destiny.

You folks might have some unfortunate misunderstanding about a spiritual path or the spiritual teacher, If there are very heavy *samskaras* and the karmas to not overshadow them - *samskaras* can be either positive or negative, both ways - then a blessed being falls in attachment to learn from a teacher who is a first rate teacher on the spiritual path.

A first-rate teacher is a teacher who is very hard, very intolerant of the mistakes of the students, and he gives a crushing blow on every step. This is first rate. A second-rate teacher is who just pleases him. There are three types of teachers in the universe. The harder the teacher is, the better one can learn; the softer the teacher is, the less one can learn. Because all the time you are in a fight between the ego and the soul, the conscious and unconscious mind.

The conscious mind tells you that you have to come to this world, you have made a journey, and this world has come to go, and *maya* is what it is, etc. Then when it comes time to practice, the sub-conscious mind says to forget it. Try to get up at 3:30am? Yogi Bhajan is crazy, why do you listen to him? Oh, forget it, it is a good day and warm blanket. Why do I have to come out? You start intellectualizing the *hukam* - an instruction which is for your benefit - and then comes a duality: a love for your teacher, or a love for yourself.

All teachers are mystic, but they will never talk to you in that language. They know certain things, they talk about certain things. It has been seen that about ninety percent of the students do not know what their teacher says because words do not mean anything to you. Consciously, you are not very clear in picking up the vibrations, though some people nod their heads. These are some of the mysteries which surround people and their teachers.

A pupil understands what a teacher is when he does not understand him with his ego. Then you can understand clearly. If I am talking in a room with this man, and somebody is listening from behind that wall, he does not hear clearly. If he will try to listen from there he may not clearly understand, because the wall does create a resistance to the sound current. So his ego, the wall of negative ego, when trying to intellectually understand what the teacher says, does create a confused state of mind in a normal practitioner.

You must understand one thing, a teacher has no interest in you, except to make you spiritual, self-confident and fearless. That is the power he has and he will adopt every method to show you your weakness. If he cannot show you your weakness. If he cannot show you your weakness and your negativity, then why do you have a spiritual teacher?

A teacher is a person who tells you where you are at. That negativity you do not like because it hurts your ego. So, if you love your ego, don't walk on the path of spirituality. Then make money, eat steak, drink beer, have a lot of fun, have orgies, do something which everybody is doing, why should you suffer? I'll say either be a crow and live with crows or be a swan and live with swans. Don't be a crow and live with swans, crows can't live with swans. It has a very weakening effect.

You must basically understand this truth, I want to make it very clear to you: if you want God, God consciousness and spirituality, then learn to surrender. That surrender is not to a man, rather he's just a custodian to Truth. He doesn't care whether twenty people bow to him, or twenty-thousand people bow to him. What does it matter to him?

Basically, there is a problem, you have to learn to surrender to your higher consciousness. Without learning this first step, you may have all the knowledge in the world about mystics and spiritualism but you are not going to achieve any results whatsoever. That is why we have given a basic surrender order to those practitioners who want to study: they must get up in the morning, they must chant the Holy Nam so their soul may become clean and powerful and their ego may become less and less and less. Surrender is within the self.

Suppose a student feels I am a teacher, and he touches my feet all the time? It won't do anything. By touching my feet, bowing to me, all he can get is the treatment which I give, in my house, to Baba Singh. If my car has a little something wrong somewhere, if anything goes wrong in the house, Baba Singh is the one who has a stick on his head. If my shoes are not polished, if something is run-down at the ashram, if the printing is done wrong, Baba Singh is at fault. That guy is on the spearhead. And still he has to teach all the classes, do his master's degree, massage my feet, take care

of the whole household and still do his *sadhana* perfectly and see that everything for tomorrow is right. And this is what we expect of him. That is the minimum requirement of that one man. After all, he is one among you, he has chosen the path. But I wish sometimes you should see when he takes the class and doesn't differentiate who teaches whom.

I have never appreciated Baba Singh in all these two years he has stayed with me because there is no reason to appreciate him. If he is me, then why do I have to appreciate him? You mean I want to just do my self-portrait? Why do I have to appreciate him? What for? Why do I have to appreciate myself? I am, I am. He has chosen to be I am. You people who are at a little distance from me, you have never studied me from that angle or with that angle. You feel Yogi Bhajan is a very kind, sweet fellow and that is all you know about me. For you, time has to improve you, your sincerity, your selflessness.

To teach other people and raise their consciousness, that will improve you, that will teach you. That's the karmas you are paying. You are doing it also, you are experiencing hardship too, but you are doing the same type of karma in a different way. By selflessly helping people, raising their consciousness, praising the Lord, spreading the Truth, you are also paying that type of karma. But in that karma there is one difficulty that I want to make very clear. Whereas in the case of Baba Singh, the next minute he's caught and he is skinned out for it. That is sometimes not available to you. When you do wrong, your consciousness revolts.

Every morning you do meditation, and messages are regularly sent to you people where your head is at, whether you tune in or not. You always know where your wrong is, and you are told where your wrong is, but you are the greatest fools on this planet, you start intellectualizing it.

You must understand basically that a teacher should always feel that his Guru and his God is with him, that he need not hide anything. When the impulse comes to him, and when the message comes to him, his consciousness tells him that he has done something that is not soul, that is ego, he should reprimand himself. They call it "self-diagnosis."

A person must diagnose himself, or he should get up in the morning, do meditation on what he had done yesterday and analyze all his karma, how much ego was involved, how much sacrifice was involved, and improve the next day. In the case of duality, strong conflict, write in down in a letter: this is the situation of my mind, this is how I feel. Can you please guide me on this? The moment you will write, the next morning, you will have the answer in your meditation and all the answers from the letter will come.

A practitioner who does not practice self-analysis, cannot improve because what happens is the ego takes a different shape, the ego mixes with intellect and starts giving a powerful reasoning: 'Oh, I taught a class yesterday. Everybody was stoned.' That teaching is finished, all the good teachings of that karma is wiped out because ego took everything.

If he sits down and asks God to flow through him during the class, then the class will get the effect. The rightful man should go in gratitude: 'Thank you my heavenly Father, thank you my guide, thank you my Guru, thank you my mantra, thank you my *sadhana*, thank you my *praana*, thank you my consciousness... you made me an instrument to do this. If you make me again, I'll do better. Please don't leave me. Please flow through me. Bless me.'

The highest *sadhana* is when somebody does anything wrong, pray twice for them. This is the highest *sadhana*. This will unfold to you all the mysteries of the world, and the world to come.

Live in gratitude. Those who live as the flow is, in gratitude, who can praise them even? So that is the attitude you need to have.

We need a teacher at this time. The time is in a very great conflict. But you must understand, we are not hungry for you. You aren't doing any person a favor. You are doing yourself a favor. You are paying off your own karmas. You are pleasing the God and his consciousness. Individually, it is just a help to you. That help is also essential because that little spark does enlighten in you the fire and the kundalini light of God consciousness.

You are always that when you relate to it in direct proportion. It is all there. The karmas and *samskaras* are better. *Samskaras* lead you to the virtuousness. Karmas perfect you in that virtuousness. If you understand this mystic law of God consciousness, you can make yourself to be a great teacher in this life.

Otherwise, you must remember that ego one day or another day will be powerful enough to take you away in spite of all your desires, your wishes, your fantasies, your situations. It is a flow: so shall you sow, so shall you reap; as you do, so shall you get. Empty-handed you come, empty-handed you go. If you don't pay reverence to your teacher, your students will not show reverence to you. If you insult and beat up all those who are old today, tomorrow when you become old, you will be beaten up.

The world is a law of existence. It is a tit for tat. Don't misunderstand that the wrong you do, even if a man does not take notice of it, God is not ignorant to record it.

What happened in this world? All these men were put on a cross, or in gas chambers, put to death, by the ignorant people of the time, then their civilization got wiped from the planet. This is the power of the curse which follows doing wrong. There is a saying in the scripture: You may not do good to any man who praised the Lord all the time, but don't dare do any wrong to him because when the wrong is done, the hand of God reaches there faster than for any other reason because they are protected also. Their master will not like it.

You can protect a dog because you are the master of the dog. Do you think that a man who is the master of the dog will not be protected by his master? That is the situation, symptoms and

signs.

Our purpose in this life is to live in higher consciousness and to teach others to live in higher consciousness. But the best test to that consciousness is humility, selflessness and sweetness. But when you teach, teach with honesty, truthfulness, and straightforwardness. As a teacher, never compromise. As a man, always compromise. The teacher who compromises, is an idiot because the teacher does not teach for himself, but for the higher consciousness. And higher consciousness will never compromise with lower consciousness. That is a straight law and that has been considered as a law, that has to be observed as a law.

Therefore, please don't misunderstand, if you do not find me hard enough, do find another teacher, work out your karma. Life has been given you to do it anyway. But if you want to study with me, three things you must do: 1) never get into any secret mantra or initiation; The Mother Kundalini will diversify you and you will not be happy here; neither will you be happy in heavens. It is a terrible mistake a person can make. Any practitioner of Kundalini must not go into any kind of secret knowledge. It is the first law of this knowledge. 2) Join the practice with reverence and leave it with reverence. Because all rivers get into the ocean, all knowledge is meant to raise the Kundalini. Negating this Mother Divine Power, this creative power of God, sometimes does not have happy results. 3) You must not forget: a practitioner of kundalini yoga must not disrespect a woman under any form or shape. If you can carry out these three instructions, the result will be very quick, wonderful, and delightful. If you break any law, it is your karma. God bless you.

It is time to go. I always leave physically, never spiritually. If you want to test it sometimes, you can do it. My greatest reward goes to those who have improved themselves, who have come here for this yoga and going from here keep the Mantra in their heart. Try to improve yourself better and better so that when we again meet we will be in a position to do better than this.

## **The Life of a Teacher**

When Harbhajan Singh, now Yogi Bhajan, now Siri Singh Sahib, now Mahan Tantric as well, visited San Francisco, he always made a point of visiting a learned swami who had a teaching center there. One evening, the two of them arranged to meet with another teacher, named Ajaari Dr. Pemchekov Warwick.

Ajaari was from Russia. He had studied meditation in Japan, and had established an ashram in San Francisco. The central part of his discipline was fire walking. In the middle of the top floor of the large, Victorian building where Ajaari made his ashram, was a large, open fireplace specially designed for this purpose.

All Ajaari's disciples shaved their heads, and wore distinctive pants and tunics. He was known as



a strict disciplinarian. Ajaari was also known to be possessed of a fiery personality.

The Sikh yogi, the Hindu swami, the Russian ascetic, and a number of their students were together at Ajaari's ashram, when the host engaged his *brahmin* friend in a lively discussion. Ajaari felt strongly that the swami was doing his students a disservice by not initiating them.

The swami's approach to teaching his students had been cool and detached from the details of their actual daily lives. This had always been his style. After all, he was a *brahmin*, and he was unmoved by the Russian ascetic's criticisms. Still, Ajaari persisted.

In this way, the discussion continued for some time. As it went on, the atmosphere in the room more became heated. Ajaari finally gave his *brahmin* guest an ultimatum, "You can't consider yourself to be a spiritual teacher because you're not initiating your students!"

The swami protested to Ajaari, "But I can't initiate my students! If I do that, I'll have to go through heaven and hell with them!"

Yogi Bhanan, who had silently been taking in the entire debate, broke in, "Yeah! That's it! When you're a teacher, that's what you *have* to do."

Yogi Bhanan went on to describe how he taught, how he saw that his students had spiritual names, and how he suffered their pains and enjoyed their delights and successes along with them. "That's just what it is!"

## The Humblest of the Humble

Yogi Bhanan continued to carry his banner, his Guru's banner against all odds. Outspoken and fearless, yet gentle and unassuming was the Master. Some might sing his praises and whispered that Yogi Bhanan was an incarnated disciple of Jesus. Others might spout that he was the devil incarnate and deface his class posters with "666." It made no difference to him really.

"One day, the day shall come when all the glory will be thine.  
They will say it is yours and I shall deny 'not mine.'  
*Gobinday Mukanday, Udhaaray Apaaray,*  
*Hariang Kariang, Nirnaamay Akaamay..."*

That was Yogi Bhanan's song, and he returned to it, again and again.

Sometimes diplomacy was the order of the day. Yogi Bhanan remembered well the lesson he had learned from Mr. Weber at the civil service academy so many years ago. Things needed to look

good not just now, but five hundred years into the future.

Lawton Singh was Yogi Bhajan's devoted student in Atlanta. With his new wife Rose – Yogi Bhajan had plucked her from the Ahimsa Ashram and married them at the Summer Solstice in Colorado – he was teaching classes and representing Yogi Bhajan's teachings from their yoga center, which he had gratefully named “Harbhajan Singh Puri Ashram.”

Yogi Bhajan knew. He appreciated his student's humility and devotion, but it did not suit him to have an Ashram in his name. Better to glorify his Guru, he thought.

The Master dictated a sweet and tactful request to be mailed to his loving student, guitarist, poet and song-writer in Georgia:

.....  
September 21, 1971

My dear Lawton Singh,

Sat Nam. Greetings from Los Angeles and my prayers are with you. May God bless you with higher consciousness and may he bless me with humility, selflessness, love and sacrifice.

In appreciation of your love and sincerity to me, I have not suggested anything on your naming the ashram, but I feel you will be kind enough and it will please me a lot if you will name your ashram as Guru Ram Das Ashram, Atlanta. I hope you will not deny me this request for which I will be grateful.

In the Name of the Cosmos which prevails through everyBODY, and the Holy Nam which holds the world,

Humbly yours,  
Yogi Bhajan

.....  
From then on, the cosy Ashram at 1066 Colquitt Street North East in the capital of the great state of Georgia was lovingly named for Guru Ram Das.

## **Brainwashed!**

A student once came to Yogi Bhajan and told the Master, “I want to know God. Give me an experience.” He said he was going to leave Los Angeles the next day and he wanted the experience today.

Yogi Bhanan replied, "Well, I can give you an experience if you are willing."

The man replied, "I am willing to try anything. If you want money, I can give it."

"Forget it! Those things are just for the Earth. Let's talk of the Heavens."

He said, "What?"

"For one day, see God in everything as unkindness, as ugliness, as treachery, as debauchery, as ill-will, and total insecurity – and be the opposite to it."

The man said, "How come?"

Yogi Bhanan replied, "When you have a coin and you see one side, you have to see the other. What you think of God is all positive, so think of God as all negative and then be positive. It will test out whether you have found God or not."

The fellow went away and after a couple of hours returned again. He said, "God, it is very difficult. I have been brainwashed."

"Who told you?"

"I know I am brainwashed."

"With what? With soap? What is the use for your brain? How did they wash it? Did they take the skull out?"

He said, "No, no. I don't mean that."

"I will love to be brainwashed if someone will wash my brain, I'll be great."

Yogi Bhanan knew that sometimes you have to brainwash yourself by yourself. He himself had been doing it for years. Sometimes you have to use self-discipline, self-hypnosis, self-knowledge, self-kindness, self-grace and self-understanding to understand just one thing: It doesn't matter who you are. It does matter what you deliver. That is God.

## **The Hopeless Woman**

A woman came to counsel with Yogi Bhanan. She came with a friend. In the course of their conversation, Yogi Bhanan came to know this woman had been divorced seven times.

“What is the problem?” he asked.

“I want to be married again. I want to know whether it is going to work this time or not.”

“Why do you ask me? Seven times it hasn't worked. The eighth time, it won't work. What does it matter to you? You are so good in not working it out. I think you should run classes in how to marry and have it not work out.”

There was a silence as the woman took in what Yogi Bhanjan had said.

He continued, “All seven men were idiots?”

She replied, “Is there something wrong with me?”

“No. You are rotten. There is nothing wrong with you. Wrong can be corrected. Rotten can't.”

“God, how can you say that to me!?”

“I am going to say two or three more things. This is just one thing I am talking. You are rotten, neurotic, and you are the greatest idiot. These three things have accumulated in you.”

“You mean I have no hope?”

“No. Hope is ashamed of you. You are nowhere.”

“Why do you say this?”

“I say it dear. Your mother was a human being?”

“No, no, she had an education. My mother was a university graduate.”

“Yeah, yeah, she was a graduate, but she never learned a thing about how to be a mother. She never learned how to be a mother. She never practiced being a mother. She never was your mother, and now that gap is making your life a living hell.”

“What should I do?”

“Do you have any granny? The great mama? Go. Stay with her for six months. Don't do anything.”

“What will happen then?”

“Then, when you marry someone, you will never divorce him.”

And so it was. In time, the woman remarried and with her husband had three children. Their married life was very happy.

## A Gift of God and Guru

Meanwhile, winter was coming to New Mexico. In Santa Fe, the Maharaj Ashram which was the regional headquarters designated by Yogi Bhajan, consisted of a lot of inspiration housed in tents on the outskirts of town, on Aqua Fria Street. Each morning, they did their morning *sadhana* in the adjacent field around a campfire.

The community centered around Dawson and his wife, Karen Hayward. In spring of 1969, having just finished lucrative work as a construction worker, Dawson had bought twelve acres of land just south of Santa Fe, with the idea of starting a commune. Seeking some form of guidance, he had consulted the *I Ching*. Its oracular guidance had told him to prepare to meet his master. And prepare he did.

After four days of fasting, Dawson attended the first Summer Solstice with Yogi Bhajan and felt immediately that this was his master. After the Solstice, several dozen people joined Dawson and Karen on their twelve acres. A trailer home served as office and living quarters for the Haywards. Everyone else lived in tents. There was a large tent for yoga classes and morning yoga. The requirements were rising each morning at 3 a.m., paying two dollars a day, and sticking with a strict daily discipline. Over the cold winter, the community's numbers had dropped to just four members. By the following summer, it had grown back to thirteen members.

Much of the community's energy was devoted to starting a natural foods restaurant, a way for the community to be self-supporting. After several months of renovation and preparation, Nanak's Conscious Cookery came into existence at 646 Old Santa Fe Trail. The community also had a large garden and a variety of fruit trees.

As the fall of 1970 set in, Dawson and his wife joined the rest of the community by tenting alongside them. An early snowfall in October and generally freezing temperatures made morning yoga difficult. The schedule was adjusted to start about 7:20 a.m. when the sun showed itself at the horizon.

Life at Maharaj Ashram was rigorous beyond a doubt. Community living always had its challenges and while the warm summers were pleasant, the return of winter was a prospect no one looked forward to. One fall day, Dawson and Karen packed up and left, leaving the rest of the community with no place to live.

William Steen, a member of the group, called Yogi Bhajan on everyone's behalf to see what they should do. Their teacher said they must stay together. They should drive north, he said and find a place where the sun was shining on a house. That was to be their new home. Yogi Bhajan assured them God and Guru would guide their destiny. Since no one in the community had a car, he arranged for his friend Robert Bossier to drive them.

Robert had rescued everyone when the Solstice yogis had been evicted from the reservation in June of the previous year. It was he who had arranged a place on the side of the highway where everyone could continue their *sadhana* celebration. And he was happy to help out again.

With enthusiasm, they set out to locate their new ashram. The sky was overcast, where usually it would be clear at that time of year. On they went, in full faith that if Yogi Bhajan had said it, it would come true.

They had been driving half an hour without any visible break in the clouds, when they started up a gentle hill on the way to the adjacent town of Espanola. All at once, a beam of light shone down from the heavens. The group followed that column of brilliance off the main road and along Route 106 to a house, the only place the sun was shining that day.

It was a simple farmhouse owned by an old couple. It was about as old as they were, but solidly build. The walls were thick adobe. The farmhouse had a good roof, electricity and running water, and a shed and barn located on six acres of land.

The couple were surprised that anyone should want to buy their home, but when they saw that saw their guests were serious, they immediately agreed and set a price of \$24,000. Yogi Bhajan was contacted again. He borrowed \$10,000 from a student which he later paid back with his own money. The remainder he was able to borrow from the Valley National Bank.

It was perfect. A large dirt-floored room that had been used for storing apples was carpeted over and thus became the *sadhana* room. There was room for a women's dorm and a men's dorm, with a cosy kitchen for community meals and Yogi Tea in the middle. It was lovingly named Guru Ram Das Ashram.

## The Twenty-Eight Million Dollar Man

Back in Los Angeles, a well-to-do student approached the Master and offered, "I will be your disciple. I will give you all my wealth." The man had a personal fortune of twenty-eight million dollars. "I will be your disciple for the rest of my life and I will travel with you wherever you will go. I will make all your arrangements."

In those days, the total 3HO endowment fund consisted of less than thirty dollars.

The Master, the consummate haggler, replied, "What are the concessions you want?"

"There is just one condition. You will never ask me to change something which I don't want to change."

The offer hung in the air for a few moments. Thoughtfully, the Master reached into his pocket. There were five dollars. He unfolded the bills and gave the money to the man. "You will make my arrangements, right? Isn't that what you promised? Here are five dollars. If you don't have your car, take the bus and get out of here and never come back again! You are nothing but a Mister Insult to spirituality and consciousness!"

The man looked hurt and surprised. He pleaded, "Please, give me knowledge. Let me know who I am."

"You are Mister Super-Ego. The only punishment I can give you for your behavior is that I will like you to leave." The twenty-eight million dollar student hesitated. The Master sat firm and motionless.

There was to be no bargaining spirituality. Consciousness was an all or nothing proposition. Finally, the man got up and left the Ashram, never to be seen again.

### **"The King of the Air"**

There was an eagle. The king of the air was flying one day. An arrow came and struck in his stomach. He came all the way down. He fell in the hut of a saint. He looked at the saint and said, "Oh saint, I am the king of the air. How come this arrow can come and hit me?"

The saint laughed. He said, "Eagle, look at this arrow. In the back of this arrow, your own feather is fixed. It was the power of that arrow, the straightness of that arrow, the lightness which that arrow drew from your very feather that got right into your stomach. If the hunter had not got your feather on the arrow, no arrow could be so accurate that it could just hit you right in the air!"

### **The Temper and Humor of the Master**

Once, on a trip up to the San Francisco Bay area, a certain Sikh drove to pick up Yogi Bhajan from his temporary quarters and deliver him to an engagement scheduled nearby.

As the driver entered, he found Yogi Bhan in an animated conversation with a secretary back in Los Angeles who had obviously displeased him. He slammed the phone down in a furore. "*These American women!* I can't stand these American women! They are the *worst!*"

His tour secretary, with the benefit of her experience and knowledge of the demanding yogi and his sometimes testy relationship with members of his staff, was taking the situation in stride, smiling to herself.

The driver, however, was shocked at the explosive tone of the Master's remarks. He mumbled, "My God, if I had known it was going to be like this, I would have stayed outside in the car!"

Yogi Bhan quickly redirected his torrent of abuse, "*As for you, this is 'Sat Nam'!* *This is truth I am speaking!* *What the hell is the matter with you, you goddamned idiot?* *You can't even understand truth when I speak it!*"

This was more than his secretary could contain. She lost all her reserve, and simply broke out laughing.

The Master's flaming tirade flickered a moment, then it wavered. Finally, even he had to smile. It was all just too much for anyone to take... this pride, this incompetence, this ego, this *maya*, this deliciously ridiculous American *maya*!

## **A Mango for Your Thoughts**

For his American students' long list of lifestyle-induced ailments, Yogi Bhan came prepared with an array of original remedies.

One of the favorites among the Master's enthusiasts was "the banana fast." From the new moon to the full moon, they dined on a menu of three meals of three bananas - nine bananas in total - a day. The bananas on the two-week fast were supplemented by green cardamom seeds and lubricated by liberal amounts of Yogi Tea and orange juice. After two weeks of bananas, the fasters could look forward to four weeks of a watery stew made of rice and mung beans, green vegetables and spices, plus Yogi Tea and fresh fruit. For those with the discipline to stick with it, the diet paid off in rich dividends of mental clarity, weight loss, and physical renewal.

Eventually, a fruit and vegetable pharmacopaedia was compiled listing the Master's numerous unusual, yet remarkably effective, dietic therapies. Why, hadn't the Greeks also said that one should eat to live, not live to eat, and that one's food should be one's medicine?

Yogi Bhan prescribed according to a set of correspondences that was as bewildering to the



meat-and-potatoes dieticians as it was rewarding to those who actually went by them. There were artichokes for the liver, tomatoes for the brain, celery for the nerves, and apples for over-tense ovaries.

How these remarkable mono-diets actually worked was difficult to say. On the other hand, the East had some long-established conventions about the underlying causes of "dis-ease." One tradition held that virtually all ailments enter the body through the stomach. Guru Nanak's recognized the mind as the vital determining factor in the body's ultimate ease or disease.

In all events, it was instructive to watch the Master at his work. Once, someone came and asked to be given a diet. Yogi Bhajan's eyes narrowed, the better to see this fellow.

"You are sure you want a diet?"

"Yes."

"Lettuce. Thirty days will do you good."

"Lettuce? Nothing else? Nothing but lettuce!? I can't do that!"

"Then sixty days."

"Sixty?! Not even any Yogi Tea?"

"Ninety days then, and if you keep arguing, it will be a hundred and twenty."

Sometimes the problem was mostly in the mind.

## **The Inscrutable Path of Destiny**

The classes at Guru Ram Das Ashram in Los Angeles attracted people from many walks of life. So many souls, so many lives, so many destinies... Who could know what the great yogi saw when he came to his classes in the bustling, hustling metropolis adjacent to tinseltown, Mecca of unreality?

A woman came to Yogi Bhajan once in a severe state of agony. Almost her entire body was covered with a form of skin cancer.

The Master fixed his inner eye on the pathetic spectacle in front of him and burst out, "Ha, ha, ha! How does it feel, general?"

The woman shrank back. She gazed at this man, this Master, as though from a great

distance. "What does this mean? Why are you laughing?"

The Yogi unravelled for her the thread of cause and consequence. In India during the Mughal period, he explained, she had been a general. It had been the general's job to round up any long-haired Khalsa men, women or children he could find in his area.

They were then to be given the choice of either giving up their religion and accepting the faith of the tyrants who ruled over them, or death. Since none of them ever gave up their own faith, he always ended up killing them.

This general was known for the particularly gruesome way in which he put to death those Sikhs his soldiers were able to capture. Their bodies would be wrapped in a layer of cotton wool, and set ablaze in such a way that they lived to suffer the agony of that searing flame on their skin for many, long minutes. It provided some grotesque amusement for the general and his sadistic companions.

What the general could not understand was how none of his captives ever shirked from death, even the horrible, agonizing death he had devised for them. Rather, they had seemed to accept it as something inevitable, as a price they willingly paid for being who and what they were. This, the general could never understand.

God, the Judge of All, and the very conscience of that general, saw to it that the torturer of so many good people died a good many excruciating deaths. Yet, there was one redeeming merit in what the general had done. He had caused all those saints to focus their minds one-pointedly on their Creator during their final time on this earth.

When they recited the Hymns of their religion or prayed, he gave instructions to his soldiers not to molest the Sikhs. The Khalsa were left to prepare for their last moments in peace.

For that small kindness, this many-times-reincarnated general, was given this one audience with Yogi Bhajan. The Sikh yogi gave him a meditation with the power to alter the course of his terrible destiny. It was all he could do for him under the circumstances, Yogi Bhajan said.

Whether the general practised the meditation and benefited from its liberating effects, was now entirely up to that singular cancer-stricken American woman.

On another occasion, Yogi Bhajan spoke to a pretty young lady who had been coming to the class a number of times. "You are going to Mexico in a couple of weeks?"

"I am going next week"

"Don't go."

"Why not? He loves me. He is taking me to Mexico. All my life, I have been thinking about going to Mexico. Why do you say that?"

"You will be dead." Yogi Bhanjan knew the man the young lady intended to leave with. He knew of the man's morbid sexual bent, and that he had been wooing the young woman to fulfil his murderous fantasy. "He is going to take you, kill you, come back. *Adios!*"

"How do you know?"

"I am just telling you in confidence."

She went to Mexico the next week, never to be seen again.

## **For the Grace of God**

With the refined sensitivity of a man of God, the Siri Singh Sahib could not help but feel the deep inner anguish of the Western woman. Used and abused by a crass, commercial culture, she was treated as no more than a casual plaything. Radios, televisions and print media exuded her charms nearly endlessly. Her youth and beauty were visibly lavished on a bewilderness of billboards all across the United States of America.

In the homeland of the consumer culture, where everything and virtually everyone was for sale, the word was out: "Sex sells!" And so the timeless feminine mystique, the divine *Shakti*, the mother principle, was prostituted to sell people watches, vacations in Florida, cars, beer, cigarettes, politicians, and just about any unwanted and unnecessary thing.

On September twenty-second 1971, near San Francisco, the Siri Singh Sahib for the West began a campaign to elevate America's largest, most exploited underclass. He proclaimed, "As long as humanity does not learn to respect woman, there can be no peace on earth. When a man falls, an individual falls. When a woman falls, a generation falls. But when a woman rises, God rises."

On that day, he gave American women the Mantra, "I am the Grace of God," to empower them and give them the experience of their direct relationship with Almighty God. It was, after all, the hand which rocked the cradle, that ruled the world!

Some nine weeks later, on December the fourth, two hundred American women devotees and students of their newly-found patron saint, held a candlelight procession in San Francisco to celebrate the beginning of the "Grace of God Movement for the Women of America".

## On to Winter Solstice!

The last time the Juke Savages, some of whom became Yogi Bhanjan's students, had put out a call for a Winter Solstice celebration, things had not worked out so well. Back in December of 1968, in the winds and snow of northern New Mexico, hardly anyone had come out to celebrate the annual solar shift. Now, a year after the *yatra* to Amritsar, Yogi Bhanjan had a new plan for a gathering of Yogis. For a number of reasons, returning to India was not feasible at this time, or desirable even. But there was an Ashram in Florida now. The weather there was warmer than in New Mexico. To accommodate the large number of students on the East Coast of the United States, Yogi Bhanjan planned a first Winter Solstice to take place outside of Daytona Beach.

The call went out, and in the dark days of December, about one hundred and fifty students arrived, many of them in converted school buses, at the improvised Solstice site, part of a trailer park surrounded by a high fence. People in cars and caravans had come from as far away as Boulder, Albuquerque and Toronto.

It rained a lot that Solstice. The stage was covered with plastic tarps. Without a roof on the stage, even Yogi Bhanjan would occasionally wrap a tarp around himself to speak.

Yogiji's talks ranged far and wide. He spoke of the difference between love and lust, about the *Adi Shakti*, the five basic elements, the eight chakras, and all the facets of life. Then, sometimes he sat with his students and gave them a sense of new developments, where they were going and where they had been.

“Now sit down very calmly, straight. After you have bought a property in Santa Fe, Guru Ram Das Ashram Santa Fe is now dedicated. It has been purchased. Six and a half acres of land, plus a house on it. And in the summertime, courses will be as usual. All those who want to participate, can. Yesterday, you bought another property, Guru Ram Das Ashram, Los Angeles. (Applause) And I realize Guru Ram Das is really tricky. It was in the heart of the Jewish community. They never wanted us to get it at any cost. It is a great property. But the man who helped us was our student in the university and he is a *pukka* Jew too. So he knew it that he will wangle it. So yesterday at 1300 hours the closure was ordered and there was nothing except the 3HO, and finally the deal was struck and it is over now and belongs to you.

“If God gives me *praanaa* and I get to breathe a few years, our immediate plan is that we have a ring around America. You can see it, right near the ocean, all over we go like a ring around it so our people can go, have rest, have place and all that.

“We have a property in Toronto. Jeff is trying to do some deal. I have a map about it. Toronto people will sit together and will discuss it. He has already paid the down payment, and that is a start in that land too.

"You must remember, dear ones, the day I have to go, you can search my coffin. There will be not a single dollar with me. I am not going to carry those papers, but I am trying to create a community which must have its own houses everywhere where people can go, stay, do their *sadhana*, and we are not given trouble: 'You cannot chant...' 'You cannot play the gong...' 'You cannot serve the food...' All these weird trips they lay on us! And I am at last fed up with it. I cannot even chant in my house. The neighbour lady yells, 'Quiet! I am sleeping! Don't you know?' And it is 7:30, you know. 7:30 in the morning she is sleeping."

Laughter

"So, this is what we are up against. And slowly and gradually we will meet together, be together. I never thought it was possible for us, but somehow I am grateful to all those who have sent their contribution to the buying of Guru Ram Das Ashram. Whatever I had, I had contributed, but whatever I had is yours. I am not going to carry it or to give to my own blood children anything out of all we are doing.

"We are playing a very clear game. We will earn. We will work. We will pay all our taxes regularly. And the rest of whatever we will have, we will contribute towards the build up of a structure which will be belonging to all those who want to carry on their *sadhana*. It will be a simple deal. There will be no trip laid down on anybody. No preconditions, except we will not be too loose and we will be not too uptight. We will help everybody, but if anybody will like to lay his trip and spoil our *sadhana*, that man will be paid a fare to go to the next town. That's all.

"After Maharaj Ashram in Santa Fe fell, the community became so strong that within ten, fifteen days, they got together, they put together what they wanted to put together, and after fifteen days they had the deal signed, and it is theirs. I hope in summer, those who will want to stay there, they will have a place.

"I am specially... I need not mention it. She is one of my children. Claudia Bhajan has donated one square mile in Colorado for our *sadhana*. It would have been very expensive to have it transferred, so we had a lease on it for ninety-nine years.

"I am especially grateful to her father, Congressman Bingham, who cooperated in the whole deal and also put in all the energy to get the land in France. We have a few acres in France and two houses on it. And I hope in the time to come we will have a deal with the French government and we may have a very reasonable fare to visit France and do our *sadhana* there."

Applause.

"If that deal comes through, first of all, you will be surprised, from Los Angeles to France they will charge us \$250 to \$275 return fare. It is much cheaper than coming to Washington DC, number one. Number two, the government is trying to collaborate – I do not know a lot of French. If I had

known it, then I would have known the whole deal.

Laughter.

“But understandably they are in a mood to help us so that we can help their kids there, and for that they will give us certain concessions, which is very convenient.

“You have centers in Israel and the guy is very strong. Denmark, Holland, Switzerland... God knows where and where not. I do not know the names of the countries even, but there are many centers. The idea is, as we can go around America and stay at our Ashrams, similarly we want that all over Europe we should have centers where our family can move freely and we can move internationally to understand this planet, at least, so that we can see this planet at least. Why not should we enjoy this planet all over? That is the basic idea.

“We have now a permanent facility at Golden Temple, Amritsar. Any member who belongs to 3HO family, if ever they should like to do, they will be taken care of. Thanks to Air India, they have reduced the fare to \$450 both ways from New York, and Pan Am and TWA from Dulles Airport. The atmosphere in India at this time is not good. They have come out of the war. They have fallen into the lap of the Russian government. I could smell it when I went last time. So we will like the situation to settle down there for a while. And after that, I will expect the people with music to get their guitars, sitars, whatever their instruments are, ready. We will go.

“We have a facility in Indonesia, in Jakarta, and we have a facility in Singapore. We are trying to make elaborate arrangements with other governments and friends, and may have some day a cruise tour. One of our brothers is working and he has a pretty good hand in a big, reasonable ship. He feels that it will be available to 3HO family soon. Things are getting better and better. You must not misunderstand. Things are much better than to begin with.

“We have no grudge against all those people who do not like us. Rather those who slander us and hate us, we are grateful to them because that is what makes us strong. The attitude is that we are open to everybody. We love everybody. And we are not afraid of hardship.

“I know for the teachers who have gone out to open centers there are a lot of difficulties. I feel for them. I pray for them. But you have not started with those difficulties with which I started. So how come you expect sympathy out of me? I mean, why should I sympathize with you? As I came in and I knew I had to do it, you should also know you have to do it. And we all have to do it! We are not doing it for bread or for our ego or for our convenience and all that stuff. We have to do it! This is the need of the time! Tomorrow it will be too late.

“We do require in the society people who are perfectly healthy. They can think better. They can lead better without being upset, without being uptight. We must learn how to feed thousands of people without a lot of hassle. We must understand how to live under adverse circumstances. We

must learn how to take our caravans together and lead them properly. We must develop that leadership. Leadership with humility, service and love.

“New England should get ready. I am going to visit them pretty soon. Perhaps after summer, some program will be made there. We will flood them with people. Canada is also getting their feathers together. They are pretty strong. There is no doubt about it. They all pull their load together. They are beautiful people. I have no worries.

“So what we are trying to do is to develop a community feeling where we are not lonely. We know we are. We know sometime we do wrong too. We know sometimes there are mistakes on our part. Agreed. But that doesn't make any difference. We are human beings. We live for each other. And we live in love. If there are errors, forgive each other.

“If you feel somebody is on an ego trip, you get on a love trip and match it. Ego cannot be matched with an ego. Ego can be matched with love. And it should be your easy responsibility to match ego with love. It is my personal responsibility to prepare you to be the teachers of the coming age.

“Each day, I am getting to grayhood. Each day, it is your day. Therefore you must develop in yourself the possibility and the power to lead people. Lead people to righteousness. Lead people to truth. Lead people to *Sat Nam*. You must lead people to grace! You must live with grace. You must live with strength. The weak do not have survival on this land. Live with strength and grace. Have the soul in you. Your God and your Guru is always with you. Work him out. There is never a chance if you will pray with wholeheartedness, with concentration, that you will ever lose.

“Each time, we are getting better and better. I remember three years ago when we started the Summer Solstice what a program it was. There was a pig running around. We had a polluted water that gave everybody diarrhea. But we enjoyed that. Do you remember? The second year we had the Summer Solstice, the Indians betrayed us. They took away all our money and they served us a notice to quit. And in that bed of the river where there was no water, scorching sun, the watermelons were the only thing which saved us. And you all remember how much the police bugged us. After that, this year we were in Paonia. It was a beautiful thing. The people who have experienced it, they enjoyed it and we were much better. And now, we are far out!”

### **“The Spirit of Selflessness”**

The badness in the man is sufficient to kill the bad man. He doesn't need a sword. If you start having a bad behavior, it will be sufficient to isolate you from the society. A selfish person is isolated from the society. You will be surprised in your life, some people are the greatest givers. And how important it is to be unselfish you can see by example.

In our 3HO family, we have one *shakti*. We call her Shakti Parwaha. A very little woman. From the very first day, 5th of January 1969 to this day, she is the most giving person ever 3HO has had. In those days, when we never used to have any kind of money, she used to work even overtime to clear 3HO bills. Do you know you have more bills than even you can imagine? Eight hours she worked for her work. She would come back. Nine hours she would type your letters.

We paid her back. In this Summer Solstice, when all the two hundred girls went to the airport to receive her and the newspaper carried a story on the divine mother. It really freaked her out. She never imagined that can be. She asked me, 'What is this? Do I deserve it?'

I said, "No. You don't deserve it, but God is bound to give you what you give people. You give people love. You write them inspiring letters. You sit in your room and all the time think about them, send them good vibrations. In the car of 3HO, you are our brakes. You stop us doing anything which possibly could cause us tomorrow trouble. And that kind of action and reaction is keeping us together. And in return, people have given you love."

Still she works the same hard way she used to work, earns her own bread, and whatever green energy she gets, she puts it towards this cause. It gives her a satisfaction. She doesn't ask for thanks even.

It is an attitude in a man's life, how one builds himself up. Selflessness always makes a man higher in consciousness, and the moment there is a higher man in consciousness, people shall mark the way unto him.

It is a time and a chance. With that same power of lust *praanaa* we can create the creativity of a greater life on this Earth – or we can waste that energy, convert it into a lustful, sexual energy.

And thus, there are some people who are coin collectors. They collect coins. They invest their total energy in coins. They go far, far away and pay anything possible to get a very ancient coin. Their job is no worse than the job of the teacher who goes and teaches people and collects people. Collecting coins and collecting people is the same thing!

The spiritual teacher goes and collects people and puts them together. A drop of water, drop by drop, drop by drop, drop by drop, stream into stream – what it makes? A river. The spreading of consciousness for the sake of consciousness is also energy. It is *praanaa*. And we can waste it through our lustful maneuvering too. You have a set of energy. Every one of you has a set of energy. This cannot be reduced. It has to be totally used either in one direction or another.

I was always given a choice to suffer as a yoga teacher or accept a job. Three months in Canada this hassle continued. They asked me again and again, "Do you want to accept a government job? Or do you want to be a yogi?"



I said, "That is the way I came. That is why I migrated. That is the way I am and I shall be. No job will mean anything to me. My job is specified and I will do that job. Please don't misunderstand me. I will make my headway one way or the other. It may be ten days late or ten days early. Don't you feel upset."

It is the same job. Everybody of you has to do the job because the energy has to be focused, it has to be cared for, and it has to go all the way. But you have a choice. You can focus your total energy and build one home, a beautiful home, a cosy unit, or you can run around and have a mess full of life. Energy is the same. *Praanaas* are the same.

Everybody has a specific energy or a unit of *praanaa*. You can use it the way you like. If in your young age you will save these *praanaas*, in old age you will be happy. If in your young age you will waste them too much, in old age you will be unhappy.

I have noticed in my life, two people and they were the same age: sixty-two. One was very intelligent, capable and clear. The other was paranoid, all the time cracking on people, and very short of temper. Materially, both were of the same status. They had almost the same economic status and almost the same kind of history, but in behavior they were very different. One's grandchildren will not even visit him. Once I talked to one of his sons. He said, "Going to him means going under the blows." Whereas the other will not even ask for his grandchildren to come and they were all the time hanging around with him.

Why? Why this is so? It is a very simple answer. At a certain stage of the race, you require a certain energy and if you do not have that kind of energy, you cannot cope with the pressure of the life. Therefore, we have a systematic system to revalue our daily system with *praanaa*. That is the basic foundation in kundalini yoga. Recharge yourself every day to live every day.

## Light Times

While Yogi Bhajan made it his business to engage his students with inspiring words and tough meditations during the day, in the plentiful dark of Winter Solstice in Florida, music served as a balm to everyone's sorely awakening spirits. There were so many talented musicians. Gerry Singh Pond had come from Los Angeles. Sat Nam Singh had come from Tucson. Lawton Singh Boseman had come from Atlanta, Steve Josephs newly from music school in Boston, and Sat Peter Singh from Ahimsa Ashram, Washington.

Gerry Singh's Golden Temple Song was a popular hit that Solstice. And there were a few new renditions of the 3HO standards, *Guru Guru Wahe Guru Guru Ram Das Guru* and *Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha Guru*.

Sat Nam Singh, who had been to India, had a few tunes of his own with an Indian flavor or a mystical air. On a harmonium, he would sing the praises of the eleven Sikh Gurus, one by one, in a hypnotic *raga*. Most of the music was repetitive. No one refrained from refrains. Far from it. This was *japa*, constant recitation of an essential verse or mantra over and again, ingraining it into the soul of the singer.

“Blessed am I.  
Freedom am I.  
I am the infinite in my soul.  
There is no beginning,  
Is no end.  
All is myself...”

And in the morning, after *sadhana* there was:

“Yes, it's a very nice day.  
Just a comin' your way.  
Yes, it's a very nice day.  
Just a comin' your way.  
See all around, his grace.  
Hear what he has to say.  
It's a very nice day.  
Yes, it's a very nice day.  
Just a comin' your way.  
Just a comin' your way...”

In the evenings, Steve Josephs played his repertoire of Beatles' classics before shifting to a side-splitting medley based on the rock hit Long Tall Sally:

“Well, I'm a long tall yogi.  
I'm gonna lay some truth on you  
Yes, I'm a long tall yogi  
I'm gonna lay some truth on you  
And if you don't watch out  
You're gonna realize the God in you.

Now I loves all the *shaktis* and I'm heavy with the men  
They gotta love all the women for the God in them  
And I lays all these trips on these spaced out kids  
We're gonna save this nation from the karmic skids

Cause I'm a long tall yogi

I'm gonna break your ego down  
Yes I'm a long tall yogi  
I'm gonna break your ego down  
And you may know by that  
I'm the most Saturn teachin' Virgo yogi in town.

Yes, rustle up some garlic and lay it on some bread  
We're gonna do breath of fire. Gonna knock 'em dead  
Garlic, ginger and onions in my mung bean stew  
And if you don't watch out, you're gonna eat some too

Cause I'm a long tall yogi.  
I'm gonna lay some truth on you  
Yes, I'm a long tall yogi  
I'm gonna lay some truth on you  
And if you don't watch out  
You're gonna realize the God in you.

I transmute sexual energy by the megaton  
And the light in my head eclipses the sun  
My kundalini zips up and down my spine  
And my brain swims in *ojas* all the time

Cause I'm a long tall yogi.  
I'm gonna lay some truth on you  
Yes, I'm a long tall yogi  
I'm gonna lay some truth on you  
And if you don't watch out  
You're gonna realize the God in you.

Yes, we've got a buddy on the astral plane  
We chant to him a lot. Guru Ram Das is his name  
We calls on him for everything. We works him real hard  
'cause he's our astral bodyguard.

Cause I'm a long tall yogi.  
I'm gonna lay some truth on you  
Yes, I'm a long tall yogi  
I'm gonna lay some truth on you  
And if you don't watch out  
You're gonna realize the God in you.

(Change to a square dance melody)

...Now get up at four and jump in a ditch  
Watch yourself you don't get hitched  
Now grab your partner in the shakti pose  
Breath of fire through the nose  
Straighten your spine, look her in the eye  
Who is she and who am I?  
God, I guess..."

## A Prayer for Peace

Aside from the musicians who regaled the yogis into the night and Gerry Pond, who led the pre-dawn *sadhana*, Yogi Bhajan was center stage for the ten days of the Solstice. Before the event was over, he would be presented with a Santa suit which he graciously donned to applause, minus the red hat. There would also be sweet treats for everyone Christmas morning.

Importantly, near the end of the event, Yogiji would lead everyone in a long prayer for strength, humility, and peace.

"On the concluding day of our *Sadhana*, we will sit down this evening, the Christmas Eve. Imagine it is the 23rd of August. (laughter) I am sorry I can't get over it because I am born on the 26th of August and I was told three days earlier he got born. It is a confirmed statement, however there is nothing wrong in just imagining. Just imagine it that way. And come with me and pray. We will go in a prayer of thanks.

*"Ong Namō Guru Dayv Namō. Ong Namō Guru Dayv Namō. Ong Namō Guru Dayv Namō. Ong Namō Guru Dayv Namō. Aad Guray Nameh, Jugaad Guray Nameh, Sat Gureh Nameh, Siri Guru Deveh Nameh. Aad Guray Nameh, Jugaad Guray Nameh, Sat Gureh Nameh, Siri Guru Deveh Nameh. Aad Guray Nameh, Jugaad Guray Nameh, Sat Gureh Nameh, Siri Guru Deveh Nameh. Aad Guray Nameh, Jugaad Guray Nameh, Sat Gureh Nameh, Siri Guru Deveh Nameh. Onnng.*

"Cosmos Creator, we in our humble self bow to the primal *Adi Shakti*, the Mother Power of the universe, the *Pritham Bhagavati*, the light, love and energy of this universe and universe to universe. Kundalini, we bow at the soul and the spirit of the actual self of Guru Nanak, the living humility, light and truth, Guru Angad, the service, Guru Amar Das, the sacrifice, Guru Ram Das, the love and delight who proved the lowliness of the man is the holiness of the man. Guru Arjun who gave us the word and the music, taught us the lesson of self-sacrifice, Guru Hargobind, who gave us the power to live in grace, Hari Rai, the silent master of the peace, Harkrishan, whose soul knows all knowledge. Meditating on him, all hardship vanishes, Tegh Bahadur, the giver of the *siddhis*, the peace

and tranquility, Guru Gobind, who taught us to live in grace and to leave this world with grace, Baba Siri Chand, the *bal-yogi*, great son of Guru Nanak, the giver of the awareness who took away the pain of this world, Baba Atal, on whose house today everybody is fed without discrimination of caste and creed, the great Baba Deep Singh, who headlessly defended the righteousness of the man, and saint of the saints, Baba Buddha, the wisdom of the time, the giver of the light, and the humble of all humility. We also bow to the soul and light of all saints and sages, to the great masters, and to the master of the time, the great humble man of light, purity, dignity and sacrifice, Master Jesus, who taught us to love and serve in humility. We also bow to the infinity, to the finite, to all prophets, saints, sages, great men, men of virtue, men of truth, men who sacrificed, men who taught how to sacrifice, the givers, those who gave, those who sacrificed and gave, but still laughed, all those great beings in this human body who came to lead the world, the world of righteousness, those who taught us how to die with grace and pleasure in righteousness, those who led us to the path not to sell our consciousness, not to bow cowardly before the wrong, those who filled us with light and spirit that we lost the difference between the man and God and merged, being finite and humble beings into the infinite light and God. We pray this day for protections for the holy spirit to prevail through us. We ask one little, humble self, whatever our karma is, we are thine, you are ours, you are the Creator. We are thy children. Give us power so that we can live in our higher consciousness. Give us the life back so that we can live in love, tranquility, peace and harmony.

“O Creator of our consciousness, give us consciousness to sacrifice. Make us the givers, saintly and if we ever have to die, our death should be for the righteous cause. We are also grateful to those who slander us, who deceive us. Their deceitful actions give us patience. Their standards make us clear in consciousness. Those who hate us, we are grateful to them. They taught us how to love. Those who negate us, we are grateful to them that gave us power of fortitude. Those who are jealous of us, we are grateful to them that gave us the power of compassion. Give us the power always to live for others. Give us the power always to love others. Those who have done blunders towards us, accused us openly, give us the power to serve them.

“O Great Consciousness, as you prevail, give us the power to prevail in the same way. O Guru Ram Das, as thy house cures people of ills today, as the great union takes place where the golden dome and the marble structure makes the sun and moon to meet in the nectarous tank which cures millions of people today, as at thy house everybody who comes and calls is fed with service and love, give us the structure so that we can shine, have enough to give to all those, serve those who call on us, but still ego should not take over us. O Guru Nanak, Angel of Peace, teach us to spread the light as you walked on this planet, latest of all, to give the message of peace. O Great Master Jesus, O Totality of Sacrifice, Love and Service, as in poverty you spread the radiance and knocked at every door, taught people and gave them the message of righteousness, on this day be with us so that our darkness may leave us and we may lead the path to righteousness.

“O Dear Ones, let us all unanimously pray for all of us. Let us give one thought into our own thought. Let us all get into our own oneness. May the bond and link of love link us forever! Let us promise to live with each other in our higher consciousness, in our total totality, and let us bring the

great peace on this planet. May the mantra, the *Maha Mantra*, the *Beej Mantra* of *Sat Naam* guide us to the righteousness and truth. May we realize the *Satya* is the Higher Self in us. And when we come to the crack in our *sadhana* through the *Shakti Pad*, O Lord Creator, help us at that moment so that we may not fall to the depths of ignorance again and we may not be eaten up by the ego. To slip from the ground level is easy, but when you have gained a height, to fall from that height, then that leaves nothing behind. All those on this day who have fallen, forgive them. Give them the encouragement and courage enough so that they can travel again on the same path. And those that are to enter the *Shakti Pad*, test not, O my Lord. We are always weak, and errors are human. Give us the guidance and clearance so that in this lifetime, we can make it. Thy creation is great. Thy beauty is great. Thy greatness is great. Thy expansion is great. Thy projection is great. You are the infinite, beyond time and place. You shall be the infinite, beyond time and place. Cut down this cycle through which we have to go so that the unit may merge with the infinite and we rest in peace and in bliss. Give us the power to join with everyone so that we may find one within and without. And help us to bring a brotherhood of truth, love and *Satya*. May they grace prevail. May thy light prevail. May thy blessing be with us on this day. May you create a union in which all may be one and one may be prevailing in all. May this day go in our memory to remember, so that on it we may build up the great mansion of love and service. Our great and kind thanks for giving us the opportunity to do our *sadhana*. Our greatness and kindness which prevails through us was all you, and our weaknesses were which need to be forgiven. Give us all time and effort so that we may rebuild ourselves and may become as great to be worthy of thee, realize thee, to be with thee in love and devotion so that through the time we will make it possible to bring peace, happiness, health and joy on this planet. *Sat Naam*.

“Blessed are those who through their heart and humility have prostrated before the Infinite God, and with their heart and soul and mind they have urged for the peace of everyone. In the Name of the ten Gurus, all saints and sages, all prophets, all good men and holy men, and in the Name of the Master Jesus, the living soul who taught love, by this day bring light, peace, and power to sacrifice in all of us. Thank you. God bless you all. *Sat Naam*.”

*“May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the pure light within guide your way on, guide your way on, guide your way on... Sat Nam”*

## The Mother of 3HO

Shakti Parwha Kaur was of another generation than most of Yogi Bhajan’s students and she would not be hurried. She was conservative, systematic, and thorough in everything she did.

Shakti Parwha’s *sadhana* was known to the police who would check in on her almost every morning. When they came to know that Yogi Bhajan was her teacher, they pleaded with him, “Sir, give her an apartment somewhere else and save us – otherwise, every morning we are ashamed to knock on the door of this woman who calls God so loud.”

Shakti worked very hard at her job in the Hilton Hotel, then again at the ashram. After two years of straddling two worlds, she made up her own mind to devote herself full time to the mission Yogi Bhajan had come to serve. In recognition of Shakti Parwha Kaur's dedication, he would call her the "Mother of 3HO."

## **"O" is for Organization**

In January, ten months after he had been commissioned to appoint Ministers of Divinity in the West, the Siri Singh Sahib took the historic step of making four of his students into "Singh Sahibs", proper Ministers of Sikh Dharma. They had paid their dues in sweat and prayer, enduring the Master's sometimes tortuous Tantric Courses, and assuming a considerable weight of responsibility in their communities.

Singh Sahib Richard Singh Katz was earning a degree in law while facilitating the "Cosmic Flow Ashram" in San Diego. In time, he would come to be known as Singh Sahib Ram Das Singh. Singh Sahib Baba Bert Singh lived and taught Kundalini Yoga classes in San Rafael. He would later be known as Sat Santokh Singh. Singh Sahib Leigh Singh Engstrom managed two businesses in Eugene. One of them, the happy health-food confectionary that provided the world with its popular "Wha Guru Chews", would gain fame as the Golden Temple Bakery, while Singh Sahib Leigh Singh would receive the name Sat Kirpal Singh. The fourth Singh Sahib was Michael Singh Fowles, the travelling genius of Guru Gobind Singh Shakti Sadan, and later, of Boston, to be known as Gurucharan Singh.

In February and March, the unfolding Mission of the Guru's messenger also achieved another milestone with the purchase and renovation of 1620 Preuss Road in Los Angeles. This new property became known as the House of Guru Ram Das and as the official International Headquarters of the 3HO Foundation. Inside, was a proper office, moved out from Shakti Parwha Kaur's apartment, a space for teaching yoga classes, a small boutique, and modest living quarters for the Siri Singh Sahib.

## **The Santa Cruz Teachers Intensive**

Yogi Bhajan returned across America from the first Winter Solstice Sadhana to the West Coast. Wherever he went there was a tremendous need to train teachers to go out and teach. And there was so much to teach. Yogi Bhajan had only just begun to share his wisdom and know-how.

So it was that a gathering of teachers was arranged in Santa Cruz, in the lush valleys of northern California. The meeting was a Kundalini Yoga Intensive and it would last a week, beginning January 29. During that week, Yogi Bhajan taught and taught and shaped his teachers.

Mindful of the possibility that these new teachers might become too insular and self-absorbed, Yogi Bhanjan also invited Dr. Mishra, the founder of yoga societies in New York and San Francisco, and Christopher Hill, an inspired teacher of New Age Christianity, to share their wisdom with the assembled student teachers.

Yogi Bhanjan began speaking of the power of the Name in common usage and in religious traditions of the East. Soon he was on to talking about the correct relationship between a student and teacher. “You know you must have a Guru. Without it, it is impossible to survive. I agree, but there is one requirement of having a Guru. The Guru must be a being who should make another being a Guru. Guru should not create a disciple. Disciple should always be a disciple, but Guru should do his utmost to create a Guru out of him.

“Have you seen a candle burning? You all have seen it, right? When you light another candle, first the flame is always little, but finally it becomes a flame equal to the flame from where you have lit your candle. Same principle applies.

“The test of humility of a student teacher is he remains a student first, teacher later. And the test of humility of a Guru is that in his consciousness he always feels the disciple of his is his future. Therefore, everybody wants a better future, therefore everyone has to work harder for the future.

“It is useless to have a bunch of disciples. Fifty thousand, one hundred thousand disciples, it does not mean anything to you if you do not basically create a very powerful foundation of the disciple and turn him on to the highest consciousness of guruship. The same principle I repeat today: If you want to know a thing, read that. If you want to learn a thing, write that. If you want to master a thing, teach that.”

“Sometimes in our life we become very, very fanatic spiritual people, which is worse than any garbage of the kind seen on this planet. Don't misunderstand me if I speak in exact, bitter words. Spiritual people are more unspiritual and they are very much possessive of their students, and they rather mislead more than they lead. Blind leads the blind to the well of death and disharmony, and the result is very evident.

“Today in this world we have religious fanaticism. Man loves to kill man in the name of religion. And we have fought more in the name of religion than we ever saved. Yoga is catching roots in this country and the effort has been made that we may learn, and let teachers teach what they know so that we may not end up bringing on this planet fanatic yogis. It may not be possible tomorrow. People may say 'My teacher is best and yours is worst!' And they may punch noses on this issue. That is a possibility.

“So for the last three years, we have been trying to bring all the teachers together and share teaching, and make it happen. Dr. Mishra exists on a very friendly note. He has quite a powerful



tolerance and he goes into medical experience to explain. He also believes man does not have to be fanatic. Relaxation is the law.

“Now in question is the matter of opportunity. If I start teaching and speaking, he is available to us today. Tomorrow afternoon he is going to slip away. So why not make the best of what you have, if you cannot have the best?”

“We have all gathered to one purpose. The purpose is fundamentally one, to reassure that we are conscious and to practice that we will follow our conscience.

“There is no doubt to know what truth is. Everybody knows what truth is. But the difficulty comes when you have to practice the truth. It needs assurance. It needs love. It needs encouragement. It needs somebody's association to go along the path. You require a certain buffer and at sometime when you fall apart, some loving voice which you know and respect and feel will tell you 'Keep up!' and then you keep up. Otherwise, it is nothing.

“I have not seen a miracle that I have been to a man and he said to me 'Gillie, gillie, come’ and my kundalini raised and I jumped from the ground six feet and all that kind of stuff. I have heard that nonsense myself. Once I was sitting before a man who spoke like that. It hurt me. How daringly, how unwisely, how idiotically they mislead people! These teachers have no logic, no reason, no back ground. They have no truth and they have not experienced anything.

“I was very much ashamed when I read that book “Kundalini”. It is on every bookstore shelf. It put me to death shame. I have read it myself. I have it on my book reference list where I teach at UCLA.

“It is very surprising how people exploit people. It is going on and there is no end to it. The only way we can end it is let those people who are genuine, who believe they are meant to serve people, inspire people and lead people to higher consciousness, they should get together.

“You can make two gods sit together, but to get two teachers to sit together is a very difficult job. But I feel personally, and that is what my endeavor is, that all are welcome because the greatest student is always the greatest teacher. So those who will learn to be a student and practice to be a student. They need not become a teacher. Time shall make them a teacher anyway.

“The study of one-pointedness of mind and the practice in existence of that one-pointedness of mind make a man to live in his own higher consciousness. Therefore, it is a privilege to have Dr. Mishra among us. I received a call from another teacher. He is coming also.

“And you must believe me. This is what I believe. And I don't believe it straightaway because my Papa told me. I believe it through my experience – that everything on this planet which exists has a relative capacity to teach. There is nothing in existence on this planet that has no capacity to teach.

“Everything teaches, but sometimes when we form a *Sangat* – the gathering of the people for the higher cause is called “Sangat” where we like to explore the truth. It is a unique way. It is a very powerful way. It is a fortunate way. I am practically against images. The best way to break the image is to teach in participation. So we decided to have our best friend, who is well known to the United States of America quite earlier.”

### “The Proof of a Kundalini Yogi”

I have seen in my thirty-nine years in India people who are respected as *Jagat Guru*, the Guru of the whole world. I would not like you to spit at their face, their ego and their aura are so dirty. They represent the black aura.

But what to do? Millions of people go, bow down, and that guy, hundred and twenty-eight pounds, forgets that he is a channel of God. And everybody lies down before this flesh and his big belly which is like a beer belly.

So there are things and there are situations in which man forgets he is a channel of God, and his life is just to serve and quit. Because the aim of life is to quit smiling. We've come into this world that we may not get grounded, attached, so much, so heavy, that we may not know how to quit, and while quitting, we may carry a lot of attachments and strings with us and then come back.

You may have all the knowledge of the world. You may recite all the scriptures by heart. You may do postures better than anybody can do in the circus. You may have twenty million followers and the Bank of America may only exist because of you. Even then, while quitting this world if you cannot go in peace and harmony and the last sound is not graceful, such as *Sri Ram! Jai Ram! Sat Nam! Wahe Guru!* in that ecstasy because you have come from there, from it, whatever you are willing to call it. You've got to go there.

Somebody asked me one question, 'What is the sign the man has raised his kundalini? And the reply still exists on record. If the person has become fearless and he has found yonder than death, the house of his Father, you can assume that he had an experience. Because when your awareness will become universal in relationship to everything and you will feel you are a visitor to this planet, and you have come to go. And when for you that doesn't become painful at all, God has blessed you. It is his mercy. It is his grace. It is *Gur Prasaad*.

### “The Responsibility of a Teacher”

Life is not an ice cream float, and ice cream float does not come without a dollar. And a dollar

does not come without sweating for a few hours. You have to work a few hours to get a dollar.

People come to me to study and they don't like any kind of discipline. What is a study? What is a yoga? Yoga is to discipline oneself. Yoke: it is a yoking oneself. It is just to take the bull and yoke him, and there stands the teacher with a big stick, Hey-da, da-dat, da-dat... That is how we plow the soil and plant the seed of truth. And then it sprouts. Then it becomes a great tree, and that is what it is.

One who does not know that, what does he know life is? In ancient India when brahmins were not the teachers, teachers were the teachers. A *brahmin* is a teacher who knows all the words and the scripture, but practically he is zero.

The sign of a *brahmin* is: he'll eat too much, talk about truth too much, practice nil. Actually a brahmin is a person who knows the *Brahm*. *Brahmacharya* does not mean a celibate. *Brahmacharya* means whose actions are divine. Brahma means divine. *Achar* means actions. These renunciates and celibates have got their different code. They have made the scripture look like them. It is a tragedy which is done to the truth.

If renunciation and celibacy can bring truth and God-consciousness, let the whole humanity become celibate and, in truth, it will take one hundred years and the whole humanity will be wiped out. If you all become renunciates and nobody produces food, nobody builds this house, you'll be living like other animals in the jungle. Talking is groovy, but reality is something different from that.

People ask me, "You have so many students, so many teachers, so many things going on. Why you are sitting in Los Angeles in that smog? Why not have a country home somewhere? A groovy place. Yogi Bhajan, you are dying. Your blood is getting too much of smog. We need you." All that stuff they lay on me. I know.

Seven million people live in Los Angeles. I can reach them. From Monterrey, I cannot reach those seven million people. What moral, ethical right as a teacher I have got to deny the audience to those seven million people? Death is inevitable. It is going to come anyway, the earlier, the better. I'll say, "Bye!" and get out of it. But I don't want to die in a consciousness that I escaped, I ran away.

There is a basic honesty. It is not because I am Yogi Bhajan and I am known in America and people can come be where I am. That doesn't make any sense. It means I want to limit myself. That is not true. It should not be. That is why it is good to be in smog. Where the people are, there you should be.

These yogis did this trick. They all ran away to this mountain, Sumaray Parbat. They went and built an aura around it that no man can enter. Guru Nanak went out there. First they were surprised at this little child. How can he come?

They said, "Why have you come?"

He said, "I have just come to love you."

They realized the man who can break their aura and enter and be with them must be quite a thing, so they said, "Let us make him a disciple." It is in your *Peace Lagoon*, this *Sidh Gosht*. *Sidhs* are those who have got occult powers and that is why we translated that. They told him, "Take this container. Go and fill it with water, and bring it back."

So he went. Guru Nanak went and he found there were rubies, diamonds, *maya*... They created *maya*. So he came back with an empty pot. They said, "What is the matter?"

He said, "There is no water."

They realized this man cannot be sucked in by *maya*. They asked him a question, "How are the people living in the city?"

He said, "They are cursing you."

"What?"

"Yeah, you ran away. You sit here for your meditation. There is nobody to guide the people. People are living in darkness. You people are too selfish. God gave you the light. You don't even want to share that light. You have come up to these mountains to live."

## "Married Life"

We have an imagination. For us, married life is a happy life. Actually we marry to become unhappy. Marriage is to test the being of the being in a close social and physical relationship. It is a close mental and physical relationship with another in a binding.

Marriage is never meant to be happy. Who told you that? That is why these renunciates, they don't marry. They don't marry because they have no guts to face that.

You know if you have to go somewhere, then your wife has to go. And if you're all by yourself, you alone have to go. That is it. That is why they say we are all with God.

I asked one of these celibates if he knew God and knew him thoroughly well and he said, "Yes."

I said, "Do me a favor. Through meditating, you can talk to him?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Ask him why he gave you a male organ. Was it essential to give you this one pound and a half flesh extra?"

He said, "I don't understand you."

I said, "I am saying, when you got enlightened, why couldn't, through a miracle, your male organ get eliminated?"

He said, "That is not essential."

I said, "If that is not essential, why don't you use it?"

After twenty-five minutes, I cracked him down to one thing which he admitted and that was he cannot handle it. When the scriptures say "*Grist Ashraam, Mahaan Ashraam*, that the life of the householder is the greatest life of all lives" it is not because it is groovy. It is great because it is tested moment to moment. It is a yoke. It is a yoga in which two bulls pull together. If one becomes weak and puts the head down, the other one – "Ahaaa" – the life doesn't run at all.

Those who actually seek union have to seek union right on this planet and they must pull the cart of karma, and they must test their endurance, patience and delicacy of a sophisticated nature. A man is one who overcomes everything at any time. It isn't the life that matters. It is the courage you bring to it.

Somebody's mother died. Everybody came and said, "I am your mother. Don't feel lonely. I am your mother. Don't feel lonely."

After three years, his wife died. Everybody came and said, "Oh, we are sorry. She was a good lady." Nobody said, "I am your wife. Don't worry."

He got confused. He ran to a holy man. He said, "Sir, I have got one question. When my mother died, every woman came and told me, 'Don't worry. I am your mother.' But when my wife died, none came and said, 'Don't worry. I'm your wife.' What is all this about?"

The wise man said, "Mother is a constant giving and not return. Wife is a barter system. It is easy to give, but it is difficult to exchange. That is why no woman dared to say, 'I am your wife,' because it is an exchange."

The giving of the mother is one-sided. People think married life is just to live with a mother. The woman should give everything and they should not give anything. Psychological cases are there, mental cases.

In my three years of the study of this country, I have studied one thing – the defects in the growth of the people, male and female. These are the cause of the divorces and tragedies of married life in this country. There is a lot of impatience, a lot of lack of tolerance, a lot of lack of understanding, and the stage comes when they say, “Alright, get out of it!”

Get out of what? An onion is an onion whether you put it with squash or you put it with meat. It remains an onion anyway. Intolerance is intolerance. You may put it with anything. Have seen when they cook meat with onion, it becomes garlic? And when you put it in squash, it remains onion? Is that what happens anytime?

One man came to me. He said, “My previous married life was tragedy, but now I am very happy.”

After one year, his wife rang me up, the new wife with whom the life was great. She asked me a question. She said, “Sir, I have got one question. You know so-and-so?”

I said, “Thoroughly well.”

She said, “I am the one who married him the second time.”

I said, “I know that.”

She said, “I have got one question. When he gets into those hysterical fits where he even uses violence on me, what should I do?”

I said, “Honey, this was the same complaint his previous wife had.” So she came to see me. You will not believe me, but her body was covered with bruises. And she wanted to go through the entire tragedy, but not to break the marriage and she wanted me to help her. It reminded me that it was the same scene he created with his first wife. I told her, “This man is a sadist. He resents his mother. He loves to beat his woman to take subconscious revenge. You take him to a psychiatrist and give him this note. It will help.”

After three months of sincere work on him, the guy became alright and now their marriage is happy. So one day perchance we met and we just talked in private. I said, “How do you do?”

You know what he said? He said, “If I would have known that that was my defect, I would have surely and definitely made up with my first wife.”

And I laughed about it and said, “Now keep up. Don’t worry. It is alright.”

## “The Golden Chain”

A question was asked, “Is it that some people are temperamentally ready or not ready for kundalini yoga?” The answer I must give you. Kundalini yoga is the yoga of awareness. There is no man who has no temperament for awareness. None. Some have got higher blocks. Some have got lower blocks. With some, it takes a long time to break those blocks. With some, it is quick. Except that, there is no difference.

I have never seen a man who is not fit to sit in the aircraft and come to Los Angeles from New York. But I also see some people can come on a donkey too. It is a question of time. In one method, it takes a long time. In the other the time is short.

This is how it is: twelve years of mantra yoga, six years of raja yoga, three years of mantra yoga and one year of laya yoga is equal to one year of complete kundalini yoga. It is written in the scriptures. I have not written it, so don't blame me for it. It is a matter of choice.

But the difficulty is that kundalini yoga cannot be learned without a teacher. It cannot be learned from books. It is the psyche of the teacher which teaches it. That is why they call it the “path of gold.” Kundalini yoga is also known as the “path of gold” or they call it the “golden cord” or “golden link” because it comes from one to the other, another to another.

The moment you tune in your consciousness, “Ong Namō Guru Dayv Namō,” you tune in, then your psyche will protect the surrounding. That is the difference. There is no difference. Everything is groovy. All are great teachers. Even he who teaches negativity is a great teacher. Perhaps someday you will get fed up of that negativity and go to someone to seek positivity. So that is not the problem in life.

My personal belief is, if you ask my experiences, there are certain souls which have to study from certain souls. The contact of the psycho-magnetic field is already arranged. And once in a life, one soul must come into the orbit of that soul from where he is to learn.

In other words, each star in his lifetime after coming into the orbit of the sun, takes up the light and creates the rhythm; he gets enlightened. Otherwise, he goofs up. And that is because of the karma and sanskars.

By virtue of the previous incarnation, you always meet your Guru. Either you surrender your ego to him or you get out of him and when the Guru will meet you, he will punch your nose. That is for sure because the self must be realized, the life in you must be realized, so the Guru shakes you.

The scriptures are very clear about it. It says: “When I met my Guru, he pulled the arrow and bow, and pierced my heart. I fell on the ground and I became humble. In that humility, I realized the universe.”

Some people feel if you go to a Guru and he tells you you are very good, you are very bright, you are very beautiful, then they feel they are enlightened. You might have gone to a salesman, not to a Guru.

Baby, when you come out of the Guru's cave you are just sweating. And if you do not sweat, you have not yet met the Guru. Some people go and they come out after talking. They feel they have met a Guru. But when you will meet a Guru, your handkerchief will tell the story! There will be no need of telling anybody.

Set yourself now perfectly and calmly and do four inhales at the sound of "Waho", exhale at the sound of "Guroo". Keep the rhythm. I will chant for you for a while so that you can regulate your breath, and then you can be on your own.

And Yogi Bhajan began to chant, "Waho Waho Waho Waho" each word taking one beat, and "Guroo" taking one. "Waho Waho Waho Waho Guroo, Waho Waho Waho Waho Guroo, Waho Waho Waho Waho Guroo..." until everyone was breathing and mentally reciting the mantra in the rhythm Yogi Bhajan had given.

## **The Crucible of the 1970s**

*On the last day of the course, Yogi Bhajan shared his vision of the years immediately ahead and what he expected of his student teachers.*

"Now it is 1972, a very powerful year on a spiritual level. This year will freak out as many people as you can even imagine. From this summer solstice up to 1980, you will find people getting off the spiritual path as fast as you can believe it. Only those who have received the light of God consciousness in their hearts shall sustain themselves because the times are going to be very hard up, and they are going to be harder after harder. There is not going to be an end.

"That is why it is very essential to come out of the group consciousness for universal consciousness. What about those who are unable to come from individual consciousness? If one does not come out of the individual consciousness, what point is there to talk about group consciousness to him?

"So those who have to go, they have to go. Send them with grace. But at least the rest should get together and do it.

"The greatest study of the man is the man himself. It is out of the study of the man that man studies himself, and out of himself he knows who is he, and then he knows he's infinity and he acts like infinity; he becomes infinity.



“So dear ones, that is why we chant these mantras. Mantra is man's protection. Against what? So that he may not fall apart, his ego may not take him away; he may not fall, jump into the pit of darkness; he may not slip away from the road of destination; he may not pretend to be blind to the light. So we let the mantra keep going so that a man may keep going.

“Let us sit down and chant '*Aad sach, jugaad sach, hai bhee sach, Naanak hosee bhee sach*.' When you are chanting this mantra, don't start looking into the eyes of each other. Put your eyes into the eye of God, Infinity. This is the time when we want to dedicate to God. Relax your breath and remember this thing: this *sadhana* we are doing to relate to infinity, not to finite, not to any human being, not to any other thought. With each mantra: *Aad sach* – infinity is truth; *jugaad sach* – through time it is true; *hai bhee sach* – now it is true; *Naanak hosee bhee sach* – Nanak says it shall be true. You've got to relate to infinity. This time we are giving to infinity so we may be infinity. Whatever you give, the same you'll get. It is always a two-sided flow, so put your mind into infinity with each word. And practice it that way so you may enjoy the benefit and use of it.”

And everyone began to chant.

“Inhale! Exhale. Relax. It says in the scriptures, 'O Lord God Creator, thy Name is from infinity.' Thank you very much. Now you can relax.”

## Amsterdam

It was early in 1972 that Laurie and Jerome Leonard were dispatched from the teacher training center in Phoenix, Arizona to Amsterdam, the Netherlands. It was not easy. According to 3HO lore, in some countries people would stare at you when you appeared different. In others, they were merely polite. In still others, they would ask questions. In Holland, people often did not ask questions. Rather, they would laugh hysterically.

Fortunately, Amsterdam was a magnet at that time for seekers and travellers from all over Europe, the Americas, Australia, and Israel, and the 3HO lifestyle attracted curiosity. Renamed “Sat Kartar Kaur” and “Sat Kartar Singh,” the brave pioneers began teaching Kundalini Yoga classes in Vondel Park, opened the first Golden Temple restaurant in Europe, and managed a free kitchen.

At first, the growing community of Kundalini Yogis crowded together into a two-room apartment above the restaurant. Then, a student offered the down payment that allowed the *Sangat* to start Guru Ram Das Ashram at Den Texstraat 46.

Medically, the community was well provided for. A local doctor treated everybody without charge. His introduction had been through seeing Guru Ram Das in a dream.

Amsterdam became the 3HO teacher training center for all of Europe and also the incubator for Golden Temple Restaurants. A second opened in London, then a third in Hamburg, then yet another in Amsterdam, and a fifth in Copenhagen. These became centers for the new communities, offering employment for members, income for the centers, and growing awareness of Kundalini Yoga and the 3HO lifestyle.

## The Destiny of an Orange

Corinne Hammer first started to cook for Yogi Bhanan in 1971 and continued until 1974. She made his breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks, and served him his meals, teas, herbs and remedies. Whatever guests, staff or family members were around, she prepared their meals too. Hers was a job of chanting, chopping, cooking, and cleaning.

Yogi Bhanan's wife, Bibiji gave Corinne lessons in Indian cooking. She explained, as she helped her prepare vegetables, that she should chant "Sat Nam" with each chop of her knife. The food Bibiji made was always delicious. Corinne could feel it nourishing her body and spirit.

One day, Corinne reached blindly into a lower drawer of the refrigerator for a few oranges to make her teacher's morning juice. As she did so, one of her fingers pressed into an unexpected, fuzzy soft spot. Pulling the drawer all the way out, Corinne found the culprit: a Valencia orange with a moldy patch. She plucked it from the others to quickly discard it.

Just then, Yogi Bhanan happened to be passing through the kitchen. He registered both Corinne's grimace and the orange about to meet its fate in the garbage bin. He said to her, "There is nothing wrong with this orange. Give me a knife."

Corinne quickly located a sharp paring knife and handed it to Yogi Bhanan. Holding the orange in his left hand, as though it were something precious, he deftly trimmed away the bad spot.

His student marvelled at his precision and grace in accomplishing what to many would have been a mindless task. Even so, she wondered why he was making all this effort to save a moldy orange, when there were so many good ones in the fridge.

A few staff members gathered in the kitchen to watch. Within a few moments the Master completed his surgery on the lucky fruit and stated with satisfaction, "It is perfect!" He then went on to peel the remaining orange, break it into wedges, and serve everyone present a piece, popping the last into his own mouth.

"Gre-e-a-at!" said the Yogi, and everyone agreed. The orange, that Corinne had been so quick to judge and dismiss as rotten, had a special sweetness and destiny, recognized only by the Master.

## A Hard Lesson

Such was Shakti Parwaha Kaur's acclaim in the early days of 3HO, that for a time, the ashram in Staten Island, New York was named after her. By the spring of 1972 however, when Yogi Bhajan came to New York for a visit, the members of that center had moved to Guru Ram Das Ashram in Brooklyn, designated in honor of the fourth Sikh Guru, the ruler of the throne of raj yoga.

One of the New York students, named "Baba Sat" by Yogi Bhajan, had recently moved on from Brooklyn to Maha Dev Ashram in Tucson. He had written an upbeat letter to his yoga family in Brooklyn, so it came as a surprise when a phone call came from Tucson one evening saying Baba Sat had shot himself in the heart. Apparently, he had believed that in so doing, he could discard his physical body and remain in *samadhi*.

The following morning, Yogi Bhajan was much later than usual coming out of his bedroom. When he did, he invited his students in and told them that he had been looking for Baba Sat all through the ethers and couldn't find his soul anywhere. The Master said that this had never happened before. When he finally located his soul, he found it had entered a rock.

Yogi Bhajan advised his students that when one commits suicide, the entire cycle of 8.4 million incarnations begins again. He explained that he himself had just learned that the first of those incarnations was as a stone and that the soul does not move on until the stone erodes or is crushed in some other way.

## 3HO Paris

Early in 1972, the young Dutchman began to take Kundalini Yoga classes with Sat Kartar Singh at the Kosmos meditation center in Amsterdam. That summer, he and his wife participated in the first European White Tantric Yoga course, held in the English countryside. The experience of the ten-day course was so overwhelming that, as Guru Hans Singh, he decided to dedicate himself to the teachings.

Guru Hans Singh was one of the first and most enthusiastic students of Guru Ram Das Ashram in Amsterdam. By profession, he was an architect. The first White Tantric Yoga course on the European continent was held at his wife, Guru Hans Kaur's family's country home in 1974.

A few years later, Yogi Bhajan told them to open an ashram in Paris. To test the waters, Guru Hans Singh would drive from Amsterdam to Paris each weekend to teach. On one of those trips, his vehicle was hit by a train just as it was crossing the tracks. Miraculously, Guru Hans Singh survived, but required six months to recover from injuries.

As soon as he was well, Guru Hans quit his job. He and his wife and their two small sons, Param Purkh Singh and Siri Vashav Singh, moved into a small apartment in the heart of Paris, founding the first Guru Ram Das Ashram in France.

The adjustment was not easy. The bigoted French would not hire him as an architect with his turban, regardless of all the projects he had done in the Netherlands. But by the grace of Guru Ram Das, they persevered and prospered.

## **Osorio**

A certain Mexican named "Osorio" wanted to make a fortune fishing giant Alaska crabs, but fortune changed his course. Stopping in Los Angeles, he met Gerry Pond who introduced him to Yogi Bhanan and Kundalini Yoga.

Seeing him, Yogi Bhanan called him "Babaji" and said, "You should go and start an ashram in Mexico. All you need to do is chant to Guru Ram Das. Everything will happen."

Trusting in Yogi Bhanan, Babaji Osoria returned to Mexico City with virtually no money, but chanted day and night to Guru Ram Das. Soon after arriving, he saw a sign advertising a place to rent on a street with no pedestrian traffic in a nice part of town. In no time, he negotiated an affordable rent and moved into Maria Luisa #68, Col. Tlacopac, San Angel. After two weeks of chanting, his first two students came and began to take Kundalini Yoga classes.

After a time, a lady who lived nearby was attracted to classes. She quit smoking and announced to her children that they would be moving into the ashram. The woman would receive a new name from Yogi Bhanan, "Bhagwati Kaur," and eventually be married to Babaji Singh Osorio.

Slowly the community grew. The members established a thriving granola business in the kitchen of the ashram in 1974 that became the economic base of the community.

This was the beginning of Kundalini Yoga in Mexico.

## **"The Qualities of a Spiritual Teacher"**

The Guru is the word of devotion coming through a person who has attained the state of consciousness to speak the infinite truth under all circumstances. To call yourself "Guru" or "Sat Guru" is easy. To do the publicity and put out a poster is no problem. But to be a Guru is the heaviest possible job a human can undertake.

It is easier to be a god, because you have got all the power of a god. As a Guru, you do not have that power, yet you must direct others in the right consciousness.

You will experience a direct clash with the egos of other people, hundreds of them, face to face. That is the first requirement of a Guru. He must be able to withstand this clash.

Secondly, he teaches you how to yoke yourself to your higher consciousness and inspires you to do it. Finally, when you question your path, he is the one man on this planet who must face you selflessly.

The Guru must have the unlimited compassion of a god, yet he must also know how to grind you. If you go on questioning and doubting, he must turn you back toward the positive. If you go on negating, he must reverse the polarity of your thought patterns. If you go on running away, he must bring you back to one-pointedness.

That is the only one thing about yourself that you need to know: you are a part of infinity. That is what our life here is for, so that we may not know this one thing for the sake of knowing it, but for the sake of practicing it. That is all there is to know. You are a part of infinity.

At the time when Gurus were very prevalent in India, Europeans were not considered to be so technically great or mentally unique. Most of man's expanded wisdom at that time was concentrated in the area around the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean in countries like Iran, India, Burma, Thailand and China. And the highest focus of spiritual development was the concentrated effort of devotion in Japan.

I went to that whole area and studied it in detail. I went to find the old, old records of the doctors and hospitals where people were treated.

As a result of my search, I came to a surprising conclusion: mental turmoil was not in existence. Man had a tremendous sense of guidance in his life.

I studied the great Greek masters of medicine. I wanted to know one thing: Were they using tranquilizers to calm people down? There must have been some reason for the mental tranquility of the people at that time. But if they were using tranquilizers, it would mean that the Greek mind was not necessarily unique, nor steady, not in control.

Nothing should upset you. You are beautiful. You are not ugly at all. What upsets you is your own mind. It is the ugly mind that makes you ugly. But in fact, no human being is ugly. There is no such thing as ugliness. It doesn't exist. When the mind is behind the thought that you are ugly, it can take you to the lowest level of your consciousness, and under that spell you can get into certain undesirable actions.

I also studied with Tibetan teachers who were custodians of old Indian scriptures, and in remote areas where great ayurvedic teachings were in practice. I just wanted to know if tranquilizers or roots or some kind of medicine were used. If they were used, it would mean that men were as crazy then as they are now. But to my surprise, there was no mention of these things. And on the rare occasion that someone came who was half-insane, he was sent to learn hatha yoga.

It was surprising to me. Why hatha yoga? Why should a man who could not remember, or who sometimes had jumping fits and could not obey a righteous direction, be sent to practice hatha yoga?

What I found out was that certain people cannot have a direct established relationship with their mind. They do not even know whether they have a mind or not. The result that came out of my study was surprising. Many people do not know that their mental self exists within their physical self. All they think is "I am" and they are very physical in their understanding of their existence.

But from the first century to the sixteenth century, people were very content mentally. There were hardly any treatments mentioned in the treatment books of these old masters concerning problems of the mind. So we can conclude that there must have been a very proper guidance available to people that gave righteous insight.

In the life of every individual, two things can happen. One is that you forget your capability due to the circumstances and pressures of the time. If, under certain pressures, you cannot remember that stress is momentary, and at that moment you give in to the pressure, that is the start of mental depression. It is very fortunate.

This existence with its finite mind is at your command. If all the spiritual teachers stopped teaching faith in personalities and started teaching faith in the Self, this world would be heaven.

Suppose I am Mr. A. I talk a very good truth. I am very clever. I am beloved. People follow me. What does it matter? It will become a train. I will become the engine and all those who follow me will become bogies. The moment they start rolling on my words, they forget everything. But if every bogie had its own motor, it could drive itself. From time to time, it could come into a workshop where a head mechanic could just take care of it and let it go. Then it would be perfect.

These guruships and ashrams in ancient India used to be mental workshops where the minds of people were molded and taught to act righteously under all possible circumstances. For the first twenty-five years of his life, a person in India would study under a Guru away from his parents. The moment a child was five years old, the parents would go with a relative and hand him over to a Guru.

There, he would complete his entire education: scripture, how to deal in life, how to defend himself, how to offend, what to do, where to do it. His complete training would be under one roof, under one guidance. Not that there was only one person to teach. There were actually many people. There was one ashram that had a staff of over one thousand people. It is on record.

We call this kind of education and situation “brahmacharya”. It means celibate. But actually “Brahm” means “infinite God”. “Achar” means the “the action”. *Brahmacharya* is a person who learns godlike action, not “the one who is celibate”.

So they used to teach people to be *brahmacharya*. The people who were to rule in the future and people who were to sweep the grounds were both there together. The children of the poor and the children of the king would study under the same teacher in the same room. There were no discriminations. And a child was told that he was being handed over to a wise man to learn the life for which he had come to life.

In other words, the moment a child was out to study and relate to this planet Earth and to the life and condition of the land on which he was born, he was in the hand of an expert, calm, well-seasoned, perfectly beautiful individual. He was given his daily routine and his daily guidance.

This guru-disciple relationship was a relationship of total freedom. Any difficulty a person had, he could go and talk it out. These people used to have extreme patience, an unbiased mind, and no prejudice at all. You could talk about anything and it was totally confidential. A person’s natural social urge to confide in another person was totally catered to, and a relationship of total belonging was established between two individuals at the level of mental freedom and spiritual unity. There is no greater comfort than this.

It was a very comfortable state for the mind of a man. A man could say, “Alright, I am stuck. Let me go and talk to my Guru. Ji, here I am. This is my proposition.”

And the Guru, out of the wisdom of his experience, would say, “Under the given circumstances, you should do this because the righteousness is here.” It is a very positive, corrective method.

In Tibet, if a person who had committed a serious crime would admit his mistake and give himself to the monastery of the Lama so the Lama could undertake to repolish him, the law of the Tibetan state would not punish him. Not only they would not recognize such a man as a criminal, they would respect him. It is said in one of the scriptures that I had translated, that whenever a man goes and seeks abode with the Guru, his confession indicates how seriously he has repented. So, if the Guru at that time felt that a criminal could be totally improved, there was no reason for the state to intervene.

You must understand one thing: the punishment we give to people for their crimes, whether they have committed them or not, does not punish them at all. It doesn’t matter. By punishing them, we get nothing. It is just an effective method to create fear. No administration can run without fear. It is the fear that if you steal, you will go to jail.

Have you seen those billboards that say, “If you get caught, you will get matching bracelets.”? Shoplifting is a terrible crime in the United States of America. Millions and millions of

dollars get stolen in this way each year. And I know some very well-to-do people who wanted me to guide them to avoiding this habit.

With some people, it is a habit. They don't need it. They already have a lot of money.

There is one person who paid about \$60,000 in income tax. I do not know how much he was earning, but you can just imagine if his taxes were so high, even after deductions. Anyway, with all his money, still he had the habit to shoplift.

One day, he was caught for stealing a ten cent candy bar. He just passed by the counter without paying for it. He told me that it was not a candy bar for which he was ashamed, but for all the other things that he had stolen as well. He said, "I apologized to him and they let me go, but when I came home, I found in my pocket another little bottle that was worth about a dollar. Now why do I have so little control? Why do I want to do it?"

In one of the courses at 3HO North, we showed people colours to meditate on. Only two people could see green as green, red as red, yellow as yellow, blue as blue. Everybody came up with a story. And in the end, in summing up the experiment, I said, "How come you, as a human being, cannot see blue as blue?"

Don't you understand? It is the greatest gift that the Creator has given to man that blue should always look blue. Somebody told me, "Out of the blue, I saw the stars coming, and the people coming, and there was a cowherd coming out of that." Can you believe that? I do believe it. It happened.

And on the red, he saw all of Los Angeles going into the ocean, and fire, and all those stories, you know. I was meant to hear that, that is my job.

In the end, they wanted to know how close they were to realizing God. And when I summed it up, I said, "The closest to God are those who could see green simply as green, yellow as yellow, blue as blue." I could see the agony on their faces because they had told me all their stories, trying to out-do each other to prove that one was more divine than the other.

And then I gave a practical example. I said, "If you see your mother as your wife, what are you going to do? Or if you see your son as your father, what is going to happen?" As you project your personality in activity, so you are. No man should forget this.

Your projected personality in activity is what you are. Whether you have money or you have no money, whether you are healthy or you are unhealthy, whether you are a good person or you are a bad person, doesn't matter at all. But how you act in relation to another person: that is what matters.

All scriptures talk about it. When a person can communicate what he means with perfect spirit, his communication is complete and he can live up to his words. A God-conscious person is not one



who wears a turban like me and wears different clothes. That is only a beginning, sort of an introduction to God-consciousness.

The God-conscious man is he who can live up to his word under any circumstances. Your word is what you create, the creativity of your communication, your communion. If you say to somebody, "I love you," then live up to it to the last breath of your life. If you say to somebody, "I will help you," do it with your utmost. If you tell somebody you will stand by him, stand by.

For four years, I have studied what went wrong with spiritual teachers. Four years. I asked myself, "Why are these teachers who are all so well known unable to help people? What has gone wrong? They know the Vedas. They know the Puranas. They know Smritis. They live a very clean life. People believe in them and they have a discipleship of a hundred thousand people. So what is the matter? Has the faith been lost? Has there been some deterioration among the disciples? Has something gone wrong with the Guru?" I took these questions upon myself as a project.

It took me quite a while because it is a difficult subject to study. But in the end, I had to conclude that when a person comes to know what is wrong with himself, he needs to be faced with his polarity at that moment to totally shake him. His activity should be met with a totally opposite activity, a resistance. Something real should be done to him at that time, and later on he should be told what is right. The explanation must not be a *hukam* order. It should follow logic and reason.

These days, all over the world, people are competing to be an incarnation of God. "A" is the incarnation of God, and "B" is the incarnation of Saturn, and "C" of Mars. I don't know what this competition is, but a lot of money is being spent to persuade people to recognize certain Gurus as incarnations of God.

In the old book, it is said that at this time an incarnation has to take place, so everybody is trying to tell the world, "I am the incarnation!" That is the problem these days. But these Gurus who are on this kind of trip lack compassion.

If a person comes to you with problems, your duty is to listen to him. Then you have to sympathize with him. Then you must measure your capacity to help through your own meditative power, and after that you must talk with him. It is known as spiritual wrestling.

I will give you a specific example. Whenever you go to a real Guru, you have to have a workout with him. After a good exercise and relaxation, everything will feel fine. You will be very relaxed. So when you take your mental tension to a man of higher consciousness, you will pull him down and he will pull you up. It will be a good wrestle. In ten or fifteen minutes, you will give in. Your mind will be totally calm.

Nanak has said it very beautifully. He tells us that God created these dust bins for all of humanity to put their dirt. The humble of the humble is Nanak who is happy to get their dirt because

his Lord God has created him for that purpose.

That is why from the very beginning he was known as Sat Guru Nanak, the Guru of the Truth. He practiced total humility. If a miracle happened and it was attributed to him, he slipped away with a very clear tongue, "I am the dust of the feet of those who walk on this planet praising the Lord. How can I perform a miracle?"

We must understand. It is very righteous to inspire another being. It is God-conscious not to sit there like a dummy, but to do something to help the other person. But this is what the image has become. This is how we have been brainwashed, but it doesn't work at all!

I will tell you what works. When you go to a person with universal wisdom, whose mind is expanded within a body, and you talk to him about a problem which is limiting you, it is his honest duty to pick you up and expand you again. It is a yoke. He hooks your personality up with infinity again. That yoke is communion or yoga. That is what the Guru does. He opens the door to the cage of that problem and makes a man free so that he can fly again on his path. He shows him that he is a part of infinity, that he must relate to infinity, and that these shadows are only temporary. This is the job of the Guru. He is a garbage cleaner.

In America, we think that a man is so holy who can create miracles, has many disciples, is skinny, closes his eyes all the time, and has all kinds of other images that I cannot even relate to. It is a very strange world. In this country, people have been brainwashed so much that it is taken for granted.

One student of mine asked another student, "Does Yogi Bhajan eat?" Can you believe it?

When the first student asked me what answer he should give, I told her, "Do you think this 210 pound weight is roaming around on the street without food? I am just a normal human being. I take baths. I take water. I take food. I do everything that other people do. There is nothing special about me. And at night, I do not turn myself into a parrot and fly away. I am just a human being."

She said to me, "One morning, exactly at 3:30, I didn't want to get up, but you came and made me get up."

I said, "That can happen."

She said, "Could you explain to me exactly how this thing happened?"

I said, "My life is dedicated to one prayer: Lord God, all people should love you and should belong to you." These are my vibrations. This is what my frequency is. And whenever you have tuned into me, the only thing you can do is to praise the Lord, because that is what I stand for. So I asked her, "You tell me, my dear, on that night, did you promise to get up at 3:30 and have a cold shower?"

She said, "Yes."

I said, "Then, that's it. Where did you learn to do that?"

"From you," she said.

I said, "So then God appeared as my personality and bugged you to get out of bed, made you take a cold shower and feel good. It was not me. I may probably have been sleeping at that time. I never went to you at all. But I do know it can happen because whatever your mind tunes into and whenever your words go deep into yourself, the subconscious will use it to guide you to the universal mind. It is a very simple explanation. So don't attribute anything to me. I had nothing to do with it." These types of hallucinations are spread so much by teachers, it is unbelievable.

One of my students in Canada said, "Yogi Bhanjan, I love you very much, but I have to make a complaint today."

I said, "What is it?"

She said, "At 3:30, you came into my room through the outside window, put my blanket down, got me up, and went out through the back. If the police would have seen you, what would have happened?"

I said, "You just wait a minute. What time was it?"

She said, "3:30."

I said, "Are you sure? Did you check your watch?"

She said, "Yes."

I said, "I'll tell you where I was." I called the girl who was with me, and asked her, "Yesterday, at 3:30 a.m., where were we?"

She said, "Between Ottawa and Toronto. We were driving."

I asked the first girl if she believed her.

She said, "Yes."

I said, "After giving a lecture in Ottawa, I decided to come home, and we were returning in the car. I am not that kind of fool, nor do I love you that much that I would go in through your window and let a policeman come and bug us. I don't want that at all."

It is your mind in that ecstasy of consciousness that produces a projected astral self as a guide. The physical self is an earthbound object, but the soul has an astral self and it does travel. When your mind travels, it can take you anywhere you would like to go. You can imagine that you are in Rome, even though your physical self is sitting in Los Angeles, the smog capital of the universe. Sometimes, we are only here physically. Our minds can go anywhere, but when the relationship of the mental self to the physical self is totally understood, then it is not a miracle at all. You can be anywhere and everywhere. Then this whole universe is opened up to you in a moment because the mind has no barrier.

But we have never practiced these things. That's why we can't do them. Instead, we practice how much we can cheat and how we can avoid payments. These are our practices. These are our practices, and we are very expert in them. Our practice is to show off our riches to other people to show them that we are very happy, to show them that we are very great.

If you are great, you will be known anyway. There is no problem, but these are our practices.

When a man forgets his informal habits, he forgets life. In any situation where you cannot be informal, do you know how tense you are? Have you ever understood it? Have you ever calculated how much energy you waste on formalities? And when these spiritual people are formal, do you understand how little spirit is in them?

When you have realized the soul within you, you are very carefree and informal to everyone without discrimination. A *sadhak* is supposed to discriminate because he has to pursue a particular path. But what is his destination? "All my chains have fallen apart. Freely I float in the air of life. On king and beggar alike, I go. Over land and ocean, I do not know." This is the attitude of those who have felt that height.

Liberation is not going to God's Kingdom from this Earth. There is no such kingdom. The Kingdom of God is right where you are. And liberation is when you can be carefree and frank, when you are unable to be a hypocrite, when you say what you feel and you do not demean what you mean.

If ten percent of you can remain informal, thank God. You are a great person. Greatness does not come from giving your money, giving your wife and children away, running into the jungle, and wearing a loincloth.

It brought tears to my eyes when I saw American-born children who can get more welfare than an Indian can begging in the streets of New Delhi. It shocked me. It shook me from my very foundation. I asked them, "What are you doing here? Why don't you go back? What are you up to? Why are you wearing these shabby clothes?"

They told me, "We are getting *nirvana*."

Can you believe it? By begging on the street and wearing those torn clothes, how can they possibly think they will get *nirvana*? This begging is not God-consciousness. God-consciousness is the freedom that you get from getting out of your fear complex. When your fear complex leaves you, you are God. That is why one has to realize the Guru within.

When you share a problem with your Guru, his compassion will fill you up and it will pull you out of the problem forever because there is no better remedy than the flow of a compassionate word from one human being to another.

So who is a Guru and who is not? That is something each individual has to decide. One Guru will not suit everybody. That's not the situation. All minds are different. Some are *sattva* minds. Some are *rajas* minds. Some are *tamas* minds. These are the three kinds of minds. These are the three *gunas*: *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*.

A true Guru shall cater to all these three *gunas* at the level of each *guna*. This is something you must understand. The Guru will come down to all levels and still be a Guru. He will fit his activity to your express needs. He will respond.

If two cars are running down the freeway at the same speed, side by side, the drivers can exchange some things. They can create a state of communication. But if the Guru is driving 80 miles per hour in a Ford, and you are driving fifty miles per hour in a Volkswagen, who is going to catch whom? Where can any exchange take place? Nowhere.

So the Guru has to slow down to fifty miles per hour. If he has no capacity to slow down to 50 miles and hour and still be a Guru, he is a hypocrite.

The Guru is the most flexible man. He must cater at every level because he is a channel through which wisdom flows. He must be accessible everywhere. What flows through him is not his wisdom, but it is his responsibility.

You will read in books that the Guru is a guide. That is true, but he is not a director. The Guru guides by suggesting the truth, but not being attached to it.

You turn to him and tell him your problems. He will say, "Under the given circumstances, the righteous thing to do is this, but it is up to you to do it or not, because you are a God-conscious being."

Once, somebody said to a Guru, "Sir, O holy Sir, I am ashamed. I have made this same mistake over twenty times. I don't know why I do it."

And do you know what his reply was? He said, "If I were you, I would have done the same thing. Look, just try not to do it again."

Later on, I discussed his answer with him. I said, "What did you tell him that for?"

He said, "Because I have to be at his level. Should I tell him that he is dirty, that he is an idiot? What good would that do? He is already in pain. His very confession tells me he is feeling horrible. At this time, he has to be lifted."

I thought to myself, "It is a good deal. He can do it, whereas the ordinary man might not have that compassion." And the way that fellow was talking opened my heart.

You must understand, if these holy people are put before the court and they do not want to admit to something, they are not forced to do it. In every country in the world, this is a conventional law. If somebody confides in a holy man, the holy man cannot be made to betray that confidence.

Why has this privilege been given? Because human society has realized that it needs a person with whom a man may be totally free in all honesty. It is a natural instinct of a human being.

The Guru is like an ocean where you can totally merge yourself and come out washed clean. The Guru is a store of the technical know-how where you can go and get taken care of so you are fit again to take up the responsibility of this planet. The Guru is the secret chamber of your inner self where you can confide your greatest secrets and can be guided in the light of righteousness. Those who qualify according to these criteria are the blessed ones who are the real servants of humanity.

## **A Robe for The Master**

One evening, two priests arrived at Guru Ram Das Ashram in Los Angeles with a package and a mission. First of all, they wanted to meet with Yogi Bhajan. When the priests were introduced to the Master, they unwrapped their parcel to reveal a large robe. They informed the Siri Singh Sahib that the robe had been handmade by their bishop. Shortly after completing it, he had told the two priests that the vestment would fit a very pious man living in New Mexico. Their bishop then instructed them that when he died they were to take that robe and give it to that very holy individual.

Soon thereafter, the priests related, their religious superior passed away, and they had embarked on a quest to find the holy man their bishop had spoken of. The two had toured the whole of New Mexico searching for a fellow priest whom the robe might fit, but to no avail. Then, they had tried a well-known rabbi. After that, someone had directed them to a highly respected Muslim. They had made an appointment to meet with him, but it turned out the habit was far too big for the Muslim.

Finally, someone had told them about the Siri Singh Sahib. As soon as they came to know that he was staying in Los Angeles, they had set out to meet him there.

That night, Yogi Bhajan tried on the garment that had been lovingly sewn together by the bishop during the last days of his Earthly life. The robe fit as though it had been expressly made for this dedicated Sikh of Guru Nanak. Indeed, after they had remained for a time, and their beturbanned host had modelled it to their satisfaction, the priests agreed that their bishop must have made the robe with this Siri Singh Sahib in mind.

Somehow, the mysterious arrival of the two priests and the robe struck a chord in the master yogi. The next day, Yogi Bhajan announced that he would wear the gown the bishop had made.

It was not a popular decision. "No! No! No!" his staff objected, "We are not going to let you wear the habit!"

"Why not? It fits me. A man of God made it for me," Harbhajan Singh countered. "I have to honor his wish. You are being ridiculous!"

Sid and Jeanne Francis, an artistic couple who studied with Yogi Bhajan, also saw the sense in the mysterious course that events had taken. Jeanne obliged Yogi Bhajan by making robes in light colours and comfortable cotton fabrics, for him to wear.

No more would he be wearing a simple *kurta pajama* - Indian-style shirt and pants. Instead, the distinctive garb of a holy man had been bestowed on the Siri Singh Sahib, this Yogi Bhajan. It took some getting used to on both sides. At first, Yogi Bhajan would feel as though he were walking in a tent, naked. Still, he kept up, just to experience it.

There was a touch of timelessness in this new attire. People would say that since the visit of the priests, Yogi Bhajan never looked quite the same.

## **A Home in America**

In March of 1972, Harbhajan Singh's father, wife, and three children came to join him from India. Life in America presented each of them with different challenges and opportunities.

The Siri Singh Sahib's father caught on to the change without any apparent difficulty. "Papaji", as he came to be known, learned to play a valuable role teaching the Westerners how to read the Hymns of Siri Guru Granth Sahib in its original script.

Bibiji Inderjit Kaur, for her part, had to become accustomed to her new role as the consort of a dedicated holy man, a father figure to tens of thousands of spiritually orphaned Western youth, and the figurehead of an organization dedicated to what might have seemed an unlikely proposition to anyone newly arrived in North America: "health, happiness and holiness."

It was something of a shock to be transplanted so suddenly from her familiar circumstances, a situation which had been elegant, affluent and very comfortable, to this raw western frontier where she found herself a stranger, and her husband taken up by a consuming sense of mission.

Bibi Inderjit Kaur had been used to her husband's professional life in India, his obligations, his many appointments, the demands of his work as a government officer. But at the end of the day, she knew that he would always come home to her, to their children, to the home she had made. It was as though he was no longer hers. This was the most difficult thing to become accustomed to. There was no doubt that this was the most difficult thing.

Bibiji had brought with her dozens of exquisitely coloured saris made of pure silks, with fine gold and silken embroidery. She resigned herself to the knowledge that she would never have any opportunity of wearing most of them. Out of the lot, she realized there were only a very few would suit her new role, her new calling in America.

Bibiji wore her lighter coloured saris - in India, only widows wore pure white - with an intense pride and determination others would have found difficult to fathom as she taught Indian cooking classes and "Grace of God" courses to the turbaned, Western women, and served as hostess to an endless stream of guests and dignitaries, and a role model showing just how good and saintly a wife could be.

Yogi Bhajan's children did not come to America, so far from the friends they had known, without any reservations. No doubt, they had heard something about what it might be like to be a child of celebrated holy man. His daughter, Kamaljit, aged 13, had brought along a bag of salt, in case there wasn't going to be any at her spartan new home with the American yogis.

In the fall, Bibiji, Ranbir, Kamaljit and Kulbir arrived at Baba Siri Chand Ashram in Florida, run by John Twombly and Soorya Kaur, where they contributed to the small, but growing community.

## **Yoga Among the Redwoods**

The Summer Solstice Sadhana of 1972 was held outside of the small California town of Mendocino, one hundred and fifty miles up the coast from San Francisco. There, among the giant redwoods, not far from the vast Pacific, the yogis pitched their tents for what had become an annual tradition.

The Master told his hopeful young students to take inspiration from the trees towering overhead. Like the redwoods, they were to "talk tall", "walk tall", and develop "deep roots".

For five days of White Tantric Yoga, the Western yogis dedicated their highest energies to the



One God within and without. Incrementally, they chanted and sweated and focussed and slogged and meditated a new age into being.

Yogi Bhajan told his students of a seventy-two hour meditation that Tibetan monks, together with saints and sages all around the world were doing. He asked everyone to participate. This was a global meditation to help the Earth pass out of the consciousness of fear and paranoia into a new age of fearlessness and direct experience of the truth living in everyone.

At the appointed time, they built a huge bonfire in the middle of an open field and began to sing. Musicians joined in and everyone sang. They sang continuously for seventy-two hours without a break. Everyone sang the songs and mantras they knew and even invented new ones on the spot. They played drums and guitars and clapped their hands together. Some folks napped for a while in the blissful sound current, then reawakened to sing again. Musicians came and went in shifts organically through the night and the sound current was unbroken. It was their first *Rainsabhaee Kirtan*.

The Siri Singh Sahib spoke to the hundreds of Sikhs and yogis assembled there, "I am working day and night. I have a purpose to fulfil, and that purpose is to lay the foundations of the future so strong and so perfect that time should not be in a position to crumble the walls... A nation is not built like a miracle. It is built with the blood and sweat of the people. When it is built, then it lives. We are going to build that nation. We sincerely mean it. We have no duality about it."

It was here that the flag of Sikh Dharma in the West was raised for the first time. Together with the flag-raising, the Siri Singh Sahib arranged a large swearing-in ceremony for all those, the heads of ashrams and others he deemed fit to be considered ministers of Sikh Dharma. So far, there had been only a handful of designated ministers. Now, in one big swearing-in, there would be two hundred more.

The Siri Singh Sahib instructed them all in the brave and noble traditions of Sikh dharma. Then he had them commit to living for and serving others, in the spirit of Guru Nanak. Finally, the Siri Singh Sahib designated each man to be "Singh Sahib", meaning honourable lion. The women, often the co-heads of the ashrams with their husbands, were deemed to be "Sardarni Sahiba", gracious and honourable.

The Siri Singh Sahib shared with the newly ordained ministers a vision of a unique structure of authority, an inverted pyramid. New students were at the top. They were to consider the entire establishment of 3HO and every Sikh minister to be at their service. The yoga teachers were then assigned to serve their students with utmost humility and dedication. Beneath them, the Singh Sahibs and Sardarni Sahibas were to consider it their privilege to serve the needs of all the teachers and every student who needed any form of service, upliftment, or shelter. Finally, at the very bottom of this inverted command structure, it was the Siri Singh Sahib who, in his turn, lived and sacrificed for the well-being of all those above him.

## Tours, East and West

After the Mendocino Solstice, the Siri Singh Sahib set out with eight students on a tour of Europe. In England, they visited Singh Sahib John Singh Bliss and Sardarni Sahiba Leah Kaur, at Guru Ram Das Ashram on All Saints Road, in London. The new ashram was located three floors above a restaurant they had just opened. Guru Nanak's Conscious Cookery had a red brick wall with a beautiful, large picture of Guru Nanak and his disciple, Mardana. During his stay, the Siri Singh Sahib met with Giani Amolik Singh, whom he made a "Singh Sahib," and the large community of expatriate Sikhs.

The first immigrants had arrived in Britain nearly a hundred years before. Stymied by a conservative culture whose elitism and racial prejudices ran deep, the Punjabi Sikhs had clustered together in distinct ghettos. The men worked hard, taking any job they could get. The immigrants also compromised both the form and spirit of their religion in a desperate effort to gain acceptance and respect in Britain. Chairs and tables entered the Gurdwaras, and most of the Sikh men shed their noble turbans and beards for caps and hats and a certain bare-faced disposition.

When they heard of the arrival of the celebrated Siri Singh Sahib, some these "Sikh modernists" invited him to a function where they said they wanted him to speak. They did not tell him that there would also be another speaker at the event. She was an Englishwoman who had openly embraced the Sikh philosophy and written several widely-quoted articles about the virtues of Sikhism. Everywhere, the modernists feted her with honors and respect.

This Englishwoman was just what they felt they needed, an antithesis to the bigoted British cultural milieu, an inroad, a crack in the wall of racist intolerance they endured day by day. The armchair Sikhism of this liberal Englishwoman also provided the back-sliding Sikhs, who now had lost both the appearance and the discipline given them by their Guru, with what they hoped might be a convincing role-model, a living example of a new kind of religion, a sort of Sikh theosophy that dwelt on abstract philosophy and past accomplishments, while ignoring its reality and future promise.

The Siri Singh Sahib was less than impressed by the apostates and their newfound, English darling. He reminded them that Sikhism was far more than a belief system. He told them bluntly that one who considered themselves a Sikh needed to adopt a daily discipline, a *sadhana*, to polish and shine their inner selves to a state of perfection. Anyone who did not dedicate themselves to that hard inner work was not a Sikh.

The first European White Tantric Yoga course was held at a Sufi center southwest of London. There was a main dwelling and a good bit of land around it. The course lasted five days. Yogi Bhajan had personal appointments and offered to calculate people's astrological charts. He went to Birmingham after the course.

After England, the Siri Singh Sahib proceeded to Italy, where he met with Pope Paul VI and urged

him to hold a world conference of religious leaders, an idea which eventually bore fruit in Assisi under Pope John Paul II some years later. He continued on to Paris and to Holland, where the itinerant Master blessed the Guru Ram Das Ashram established by Singh Sahib Sat Kartar Singh and Sardarni Sahiba Sat Kartar Kaur. Then, he spoke to a gathering of European hippies at a place in Amsterdam called the "Kosmos".

"Four years ago, we started a way of life to be healthy, to be happy, to be holy. We started a foundation, and we call it '3HO.' Mainly, we worked with young people. Thousands and thousands of people followed me, but it was not possible to carry that load.

"One day, we declared and decided, those who want to prove that within my lifetime they can be ten times better and wiser than me, they should come on. Those who do not think they are capable, should go away. There was no mystery and no joke about it.

"Those who honestly feel they have to carry the weight of the Age of Aquarius, and they have to carry the weight and load of all the brothers and sisters of humanity, and they want to dig their heels in deep to carry that load, are most welcome to carry that load, are most welcome to share the technical know-how. In two years, we had a standard place, a standard self-community, a standard family.

"The next year, we gathered again, and we said again, 'Today, those who want to *find* God should leave. Only those who can be so beautiful, so loving, so enchanting, that God should find *them*, can stay.' Some left. Some stayed.

"Each year, we are continuing the filtering process. Truth is God and He is Omnipresent. We can't find the Guy. All we can do is be so magnetic that God can come and find us.

"Those are the real flower children, whose essence shall spread onto the world. They may be one. They may be eleven. They may be two. They may be nothing. My total trip may be a total zero, but those are the people I am seeking.

"We don't require thousands and thousands of people. There is hardly any festival where I have not been a guest. There is hardly any gathering where I was not on the stage. That was to know people, to introduce ourselves to people, and to give them a call.

"But now is a time of practice. It is a practical time where honesty, sincerity and truth are required. Now we do not need the disciples. Rather, now we need the teachers for the Age of Aquarius.

"Let us not forget that we are alive, but we are dead in this uptight society. We are not alive in this society, because it is not the society of God-consciousness. We went through the whole one hundred and eighty degree change. We suffered deeply. We are suffering even today under the same insanity.

"Don't forget those who died of drug overdoses. They are the martyrs of the age, because they wanted to do something to break down those barriers which were nothing but a nuisance of the time. The new culture was a challenge to the old darkness and had to go through those sacrifices.

"If you are alive today for any reason, don't forget that there are many who are not alive today. What kind of meditation do you do, and what is your God, if you do not remember your friends? What use is your meditation and your God and your Truth, if you have forgotten the reality for which you all started together?

"We look to that life on this Earth where there shall be a rule of God, not that a man shall rule in the Name of God. In the very beginning, in the very, very, green grounds of San Francisco, we became flower children. In the very beginning, we became acid children, then we became hippies, then we became yogis.

"Don't forget your history. And let us not forget those who were with us. Those who forget their comrades, cannot have any union with God, because God is nothing but a Comrade, a Friend, a Consciousness.

"In our individual way, we have to work our way, hand in hand, for *all*. Everyone knows how to live for oneself. It is only the God-conscious person who lives for others. That is the path of righteousness on which we started, and we are not going to give it up for any diversion.

"I hope none of you misunderstand your role in the society, and none of you will misunderstand your main object and goal. In my humble capacity, my idea is just to remind you. You were born in this time to bring in the Age of Aquarius and *that* you must accomplish. That is what the Will is. If that is possible for you, then you shall achieve all the happiness. If we lose that, then we will get into the pits of darkness from which we started, betraying all those who couldn't continue with us."

Returning briefly to Los Angeles, the Siri Singh Sahib set out with Bibiji and a handful of students on a tour of the Far East. In the bustling city of Tokyo, he taught a number of classes in Kundalini Yoga to the curious Japanese.

From Japan, the tireless Siri Singh Sahib continued on to Hong Kong and Singapore, two countries with Sikh temples and sizeable populations of transplanted Sikhs. The tour remained in Singapore for six days. During their stay, the Master agreed to teach classes at five a.m. each morning at the Guru Nanak Satsang Sabha temple. Returning by way of Hawaii, the Master gave a five day White Tantric Yoga course there.

## An American Sikh Gurdwara

While the Siri Singh Sahib of the Western Hemisphere was touring Europe and the East, some remarkable developments were taking place right in Los Angeles. Many of Yogi Bhajan's students there felt a cumulative sense of pride in their newfound identity as Sikhs of Guru Nanak. A number of them determined to organize their own Sunday morning Gurdwara service, modelled on those they had experienced in India and, closer to home, at the Sikh Study Circle.

On November twenty-sixth, in the five hundred and third year since the advent of Guru Nanak in the world, with a lot of joy, a little nervousness, and a tremendous feeling of accomplishment, those Sikhs of America bowed before their Guru, Siri Guru Granth Sahib. Then, using their new harmoniums, their old guitars, and a new set of Indian tablas, they sat and sang the Songs of their Guru in the sublime poetic form of Gurmukhi. They also sang those Songs in English.

"O my Mother, I am in ecstasy, for I have found the True Guru!  
Yes, in a flash, I found my Lord and my mind is filled with the Song of Bliss,  
Like every jeweled angel and the fairies of every region,  
All joined in chorus to sing the song of the Word.  
All who have Him enshrined in their minds, sing the Word of the Lord.  
Sayeth Nanak, I am truly in ecstasy, for I have realized my True Guru."

Some of the gifted musicians added songs of their own composing. One particular song, by Gurudass Singh from Puerto Rico, was designated "The Sikh National Anthem".

"Guru Nanak gave us the Word,  
Echoing through this earth to be heard.  
Guru Gobind Singh gave us the sword  
To protect the weak from the merciless foe.

"Guru Ram Das built a temple of gold -  
Gold and marble in the eyes of the soul,  
Strength to the fearful in the home of the brave,  
In grace united, praising God's Holy Name.

"Born into this world from the Universal Womb -  
'O Divine Mother, Lantern of Truth,  
That each lady is a goddess on this earth,  
In grace united, praising God's Holy Name.'

"Shining from the East came Harbhajan Singh,  
Opening hearts to the Aquarian Dream.  
The Age of Truth on this earth shall be known,

And victory to God by the Grace of the Sword.

Chanting "*Sat Naam...*"

Singing "*Sat Naam...*"

Chanting "*Sat Naam...*"

After a couple of hours of rousing *kirtan*, the congregation stood as Sikh *Sangats* have stood through time, to offer its collective prayer. The prayer leader read the prayer, including a blessing on the Siri Singh Sahib, from the recently published *Peace Lagoon*.

"Grant to our guide, Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogi Bhajan, who is Thy humble servant, the power to teach us the truth and lead us to Thy Power, unity and purity.

"O True King, O loved Father, by Thy Grace we have sung Thy Sweet Hymns, heard Thy life-giving Word, and have spoken of Thy manifold blessings. May these things find a loving place in our hearts and serve to draw our souls towards Thee. Bless this Guru's *Prashaad* which has been placed before Thee. May its sweetness remind us of the sweetness of Thy Name. Forgive us our sins. Help us that we may keep ourselves pure. Let us be in the company of men and women of love, that we may remember Thy Name in their presence.

"Through Nanak, may Thy Name forever increase, and the spirit be exalted, and may all prosper by Thy Grace. *Naanak Naam Chardee Kalaa, Taray Bhaanay Sarbat Daa Bhalaa. Waahayguroo Jee Kaa Khaalsaa! Waahayguroo Jee Kee Fatay!* The Pure Ones belong to God! Victory belongs to God!"

Next, everyone sat down, and someone read out the Order for the day, first in the original language of the "Shabad Guru", and then in English for everyone to understand. Finally, everyone was served a handful of the blessed, sweet pudding which has been every Sikh congregation's to enjoy from the time of Guru Nanak.

When the Siri Singh Sahib returned from the East to witness what these American students had achieved in his absence, he was deeply moved: "There are very few people who have had the experience of imagining a thing, and then one morning getting up and seeing that thing actually happening. This is not the privilege of all people.

"But sometimes it happens that a man like me, who never understood what God is, who perhaps only had a belief that there is a Guru, and the love of Guru may have been so strong, that God might have watched to show me He exists. So He has, in His Grace, created a creativity that is most astonishing for me to behold!"

## The Trials of a Yogi from Pomona

Elsewhere in California, one Michael J. Fowlis and his yoga students were just making do. They had been evicted from their ashram when the owners they had been renting from decided to move in themselves. For a week, the ashram assumed a motorized incarnation, as the four students and their teacher managed to live out of the "ashram car".

At last, a shack in the woods with running water, but no electricity, was found that was within their budget. The grateful students tidied up a bit and gave notice to the giant spiders who had been living there. Once more, they had a stationary place to practice their *sadhana*.

But Michael was not to stay with them in that rustic ashram. He managed to make his way to the East Coast, where he toured from tantric course to tantric course, and city to city, with Yogi Bhajan.

Some three months later, when he returned, everyone set out to find a new place to live and teach in. Using his intuitive sense, refined and sharpened through a regular practice of *sadhana*, Michael, soon to be "Gurucharan Singh", located a sprawling, overrun place that everyone else said was much too big. Somehow, though, it felt right to this Gurucharan.

Remarkably, five people had been trying for a year to negotiate a deal to buy the place. But when the Guru needed it, the property became his. It was aptly named "Guru Gobind Singh Shakti Sadan" - the abode of the power of Guru Gobind Singh.

There were a few problems. It was filthy. The new owners needed scrapers just to clear a path to walk on. The place also happened to be haunted. Until recently, it been a home for the elderly. The state had been forced to close the operation down after some of the inmates were found to have been tortured to death by their caretakers.

One of Gurucharan's long-suffering students complained that she was herself attacked by a ghoulish tormentor during their first night in the new ashram. The next morning, she decided that, after all, ashram living was not for her. After a round of sad good-byes, she moved away.

With a lot of chanting and prayer and blessing, things began to settle down and work out in the new place. After eight months, there were thirty students sharing that expansive new ashram in Pomona. Yogi Bhajan gave Gurucharan the job of compiling and publishing what he taught. To manage that, the Kundalini Research Institute took shape.

Soon, there was money coming. Classes were growing. Things were working out, all except for one thing: Gurucharan Singh's rising fortunes in Pomona made him a legitimate target for the formidable ego-crushing talents of Yogi Bhajan.

One day, there was to be a meeting of some of the senior yoga teachers. Yogi Bhajan was to address them, and they were to begin their activities at a pre-determined hour. When the time to start had rolled around, and Yogi Bhajan was still not to be seen, Gurucharan was not discouraged.

He announced to his fellow teachers who had assembled that, since it was time to begin, Yogi Bhajan *must* be there. Therefore, the program was begun, led by Gurucharan under what he felt was the intuitive guidance of his spiritual teacher. Then the phone rang.

It was Yogi Bhajan. He had called to say he would be late. And *what?* The program had already begun *without him?! So what did this Gurucharan Singh think he was doing?*

When the phone was returned to its receiver, all hell broke loose. Twenty or thirty full-grown male egos pounced with all their might on one lone Gurucharan relying on his all-too-fallible intuitive guidance. Who did he think he was, this Gurucharan Singh?

It was no secret that already succession rumours had been in circulation. Who would "take over 3HO" when Yogi Bhajan was no more? Handsome Lehri from Washington? Visionary Sat Nam from Tucson? Authoritarian Babadon from Phoenix? Charismatic Guru from L.A.? Athletic Wahe Guru from New Mexico? *It certainly wasn't going to be Gurucharan from K.R.I.!* Who did he think he was?

After a time, Yogi Bhajan arrived. What remained of Gurucharan Singh's savaged ego was a bloody pulp in a corner of the room. Pointedly, Yogi Bhajan asked the assembled teachers, "Is this any way to treat your brother?"

But that was not all. Word continued to circulate about that crazy Gurucharan in Pomona. He began to get phone calls. Letters started to come in. *What kind of ego-trip was he on?* Gurucharan found that even people he had considered his friends were gossiping behind his back.

Strangely, Gurucharan Singh realized that much of the slanderous gossip was originating *directly from Yogi Bhajan!* Again and again, he called Yogi Bhajan's office to try to speak with his spiritual teacher, to gain some understanding of what was going on. Yogi Bhajan, he was told, would not speak with him. Even when he went to Los Angeles to see Yogi Bhajan in person, somehow things did not work out. Through one happenstance or another, he was simply not enabled to enter the presence of his Master.

Some months later, the wisewoman of 3HO, Shakti Parwha Kaur, explained to the embattled Gurucharan Singh that it was all a test. Yogi Bhajan had seen that his student could not handle criticism well, and he had seen fit to deal with his deficiency. Gurucharan Singh was much relieved.



## Yoga U

The year 1972 closed out with a series of appearances at the halls of American academia. The Siri Singh Sahib attended a forum at Cornell University in October called "The Destiny of Man". He was joined there by representatives from all the other major religions, and received by an excited group of students, who had driven eight hours from Toronto, some of them to see him for the first time. First-time turbans bulged out, manners were slightly strained, questions were difficult (*"What, after all, does a person ask a Self-realized man of God?"*).

Yogi Bhajan sat his students down on the carpet of an emptied classroom and proceeded to teach them a whole new way of meditating. Unlike swamis and teachers of other persuasions, who might capitalize on one or two meditations, or perhaps a few dozen exercises - every day, with each new class, the Siri Singh Sahib revealed a motherlode of priceless and entirely original yogic lore. He hardly ever taught the same thing twice. So it was that his students needed always to be on the alert, tape recorder at the ready, pencil in hand, prepared to take down each new treasure, every nuance, lest it be lost to posterity.

The Master began, "Every element of the universe is in a constant state of vibration manifested to us as light, sound and energy. The human senses perceive only a fraction of the infinite range of vibration, so it is hard to comprehend that 'the Word' mentioned in the Bible is actually the totality of vibration which underlies and sustains all creation.

"A person can tune his own consciousness into the awareness of that totality with the use of a mantra. By vibrating in rhythm with the breath to a particular sound that is proportional to the creative sound, or sound current, one can expand one's sensitivity to the entire spectrum of vibration. It is similar to striking a note on a stringed instrument. In other words, as you vibrate, the universe vibrates with you.

"By practising a Mantra, you raise your awareness of yourself and your environment and work constructively to improve both. The mantra I teach is "*Sat Nam*", which means Truth manifested. The mantra of *Sat Nam* was given by Guru Nanak over 475 years ago. It is composed of five primal sounds which are proportional in their combined vibration to the totality of creation. "*Sa*" means totality, "*Ta*" means life, "*Na*" means death, and "*Ma*" means resurrection. The fifth sound is the "*ah*" sound which is common to these four. It is the creative sound of the universe.

"As you chant, the thumbs are touched to each fingertip in rhythm with the mantra in order to channelize the the energy through the nerve endings in the finger which are connected to the brain centers relating to intuition, patience, vitality, and communication. On the sound of *Sa*, touch the thumb to the first finger, with *Ta* to the second finger, *Na* to the third, and *Ma* to the fourth.

"Chant the mantra in three ways: out loud in the voice of the human being; whispering, in the voice of the lover; and in the silence of your own consciousness, the voice of God. From the depth of

your silent meditation, come back to the whisper and then to the full voice. Throughout the meditation, each syllable should be projected mentally from the back top of the head, down, and then straight out the third eye point, which is located between the eyebrows at the root of the nose.

"Sit in a comfortable posture with your legs crossed. Keep the spine straight. Chant the mantra out loud for five minutes; whisper for five minutes; and then silently meditate, internally repeating the syllables for ten minutes. Again chant in a whisper for five minutes, and then five minutes out loud. Now, inhale and stretch the arms up. Hold the position and exhale. Inhale again, exhale again. Relax. The total time will be thirty-one minutes.

"Using this technique, you can experience your own infinity. Exceeding the limitation of your own worldly experience, you can know the Unknown and see the Unseen. If you spend two hours per day in meditation, God will meditate on you the rest of the day."

At the conference, it was clear that there was a fundamental shift happening in the West. Religion had until recently been considered a subject to be avoided in polite conversation, and knowledge of non-Christian ways of being had been limited to a handful of scholars. Suddenly, it seemed, Westerners were asking about "those other religions." New books were being written to serve the popular interest. The media was on the prowl for legitimate gurus and swamis.

In December, the Siri Singh Sahib returned to the American Northeast to lecture at Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Massachusetts. Meanwhile, his students were beginning to teach regular courses in Kundalini Yoga at the University of Toronto and the University of Oregon.

## Denver

Yogi Bhanjan had first visited Colorado for the Holy Man Jam in Boulder in the summer of 1970, then returned for the Summer Solstice at Paonia the following year. There were now several ashrams in Aspen, Boulder, Brickenridge, Colorado Springs, Paonia, and Denver. In Denver, the ashram community had been running a popular vegetarian restaurant just around the corner from the university campus, since 1971. They had named it "Hanuman's Conscious Cookery" after the monkey god of Hindu mythology.

As it happened, the head teacher in Denver resigned in late 1972. The Master contacted Harry Bird at the Winter Solstice Sadhana and asked that he fly to that city to explore the possibility of moving there to fill that vacancy. Upon his return, Harry found that the Health Department office building where he had worked as a drug counsellor had burned to the ground. Moreover, the city of Orlando had no immediate plans to rebuild the structure. The Birds saw in this a sign of their future destiny. They sold their Orlando home and the four of them joined the community of ten waiting for

them at Guru Ram Das Ashram, 2073 S. Clayton Street in February of 1973.

When Yogi Bhajan visited later that year for a course, he told Harry and Diane that he was going to rename them. He wanted to establish some emotional distance before doing so, however, so he would be mailing their new names after forty days.

Forty days later, Harry and Diane Bird became Hari Singh and Hari Kaur Bird. Their restaurant was also renamed, like other 3HO eateries, "Golden Temple Conscious Cookery." The next year, their children, renamed "Ong Kar Kaur" and "Kartar Singh" would join Yogiji and Bibiji's children, Kamaljeet Kaur and Kulbir Singh, in going to Guru Nanak Fifth Centenary School, at Mussoorie, in the foothills of the Himalayas.

## India Revisited

Once Bibiji had somewhat settled herself in her new western surroundings, the Master gave her a challenge equal to her talents and aspirations. She was herself to lead a troop of eager Americans on a spiritual tour of Mother India.

In late February 1973, Bibi Inderjit Kaur set out along with seven other women and two men. They visited the sacred birthplace of the Khalsa at Anandpur Sahib, the ancient centers of yogis and swamis at Hardwar and Rishikesh, and the holy of holies, Siri Amritsar.

Everywhere, they were met by a Who's Who of Punjabi society. Movie stars, industrialists, famous poets, government ministers, all wanted to meet with the Sikhs from America. Overnight, the youthful Americans had achieved a celebrity status in a land they had never before visited! In his own way, Guru Ram Das had reshaped their destinies and rendered the ordinary simply divine.

## Letters from India

April 8, 1973

Dear Yogi Bhajan,

We have been enjoying our stay in Amritsar very much. It is our great good fortune to be here at such an historic time and be able to participate in this Kar Sewa. I think you are already aware that the tank had been drained and the mud is being removed from the bottom. Instead of using shovels and loading it onto trucks, people are carrying it on their heads out of the Golden Temple, far into the streets of the city.

We all feel it is a great blessing to have the dust of all the millions of Sikhs who have bathed here in the last fifty years on our heads. In fact, everyone loves it! People have come from miles and miles away to participate. Truckloads of people from the villages are continuously arriving night and day.

This is the spirit of the Sikhs. No where else (except on a small scale in 3HO) could you find women dressed in their best silk clothes, young mothers with infants in their arms, old crippled men using a stick for a crutch, old and very young, rich and poor, all carrying mud on their heads with huge smiles on their faces, chanting "*Sat Nam, Wahe Guru.*" It is a wondrous sight to see, and to actually take part in it and be amidst these selfless people is more wonderful.

We were greeted at the train station upon our arrival on April second by a group of distinguished Sikhs of the community, being led by Giani Mohinder Singh. He has been our host, as we have been staying in beautiful, uncrowded, accommodations at Guru Ram Das Nivas, across the street from the Golden Temple.

Many people have taken us on tours and sight-seeing. Many of us would have preferred to spend the entire day at the Golden Temple, but a schedule was worked out, and we were required to go from early morning to night participating in the things planned for us.

We visited Khalsa College. It is a great school, and we tried to talk Dale Singh into attending it. We gave a kirtan in the college Gurdwara and then visited with a few girls in the predominantly men's school. We had a relaxing time exchanging songs. We would sing an English song, and they would respond with one in Punjabi. We also visited the now-being-constructed Guru Nanak University, and an oriental carpet factory where we watched women and children as young as five or six years old hand-weaving the most beautiful carpets imaginable.

The list of Gurdwaras we visited is as follows:

1. Baba Buddha's Temple: This is where Guru Arjan's wife received the blessing of a son, and people come here to pray for a strong, brave son.
2. Guru Ki Wadali: Guru Har Gobind was born here.
3. Dham Dhama Sahib: Where Guru Hargobind released the curse placed by Baba Buddha when he killed the violent pig.
4. Sunh Sahib: Here we all crawled through the marble hole which is there in memory of the one made in the wall to gain admittance to Guru Amar Das.
5. Chhearta Sahib
6. Malakhara Sahib: We were told of Guru Angad's foresight of the need for strong children.
7. Gurdwara Tapiana
8. Baba Bachala Sahib: We bathed in the well and ate langar here in the first free kitchen. Dale Singh would like to go back there and recite the Japji at each of the 84 steps as has been instructed.
9. Angitha Sahib

10. Kasghar Sahib: This is such a history-packed place. Where three Gurus lived, two died, and one was born. We enjoyed hearing the stories of Bibi Bhani to inspire us as women.

11. Tarn Taran

Sikh history becomes alive when visiting these areas in Punjab.

There has been much publicity about us. After our appearance in Jullundur, we were written about in several newspapers with as many as three or four pictures. In Amritsar, the papers wrote that American girls had come to do Kar Sewa. Even a paper printed as far away as Bombay mentioned us. Some people have even come to film us! We would like to be able to quietly serve the Guru with no one noticing, but this does not seem to be our fate at this time. We have had to adjust to being stared at constantly wherever we go. If we stand in one place for even a minute, immediately a crowd forms around us. Even if only one or two of us are there, we cannot avoid being noticed.

We have given a couple of small kirtans, One at a children's school, one at an old people's rest home, and one at a factory to end the reading of Siri Guru Granth Sahib. We did not really want to do kirtan in Amritsar, but we agreed to do it on the last night we were scheduled to be here, Sunday. Enclosed is the flyer which was sent out as advertisement.

We were very nervous about it. There was no way to tell how many or what kind of people would attend. It was sponsored by the Chief Khalsa Diwan and was held in Bhai Vir Singh Memorial Hall. This was the most wonderful experience we have had in giving kirtan in India. The Sangat listened meditatively and sang along with us. There was a great feeling of love, and so much energy. It is difficult to describe. Dale Singh made a speech thanking the Sangat for being Sikhs, keeping the spirit alive, and for showing us so much kindness.

Everything is great as usual. There are intermittent cases of diarrhea and homesickness, but nothing fatal. Each of us has had an experience of growing faith in Sikh Dharma.

SAT SIRI AKAL!!

Gurucharn kaur

.....  
April 20, 1973

Dearest Yogi Bhajan,

Sat Nam, Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh. It is a very hot day here in the land of Darbar Sahib, and we are resting.

I'm listening to kirtan from the Jullundur concert. My favorite activity is listening and melting into the sweet Amrit of Gurbani Kirtan. I can imagine how you miss it, so I am recording as much as I can to bring to America. Especially Amarjit's kirtan stirs my heart so much that it feels as though it would burst through my chest.

My emotional nature is on the surface all the time now. Each time I go to the Golden Temple and listen to kirtan, or maybe just bow to the Guruji, I cry. Sometimes it leaves me very quiet and removed from my surroundings. It's a feeling that is very difficult to describe, but my heart is heavy and I pray to Guru Ram Das. I don't want anything, just that his presence forms a warm blanket over me.

This emotion merges into devotion, and I wish to serve in any way possible. Have never felt stronger, more fearless, more loving, more beautiful ever before in my life. All the glory, pomp, newspapers, photos, interviews, crowds of people touching my feet, pushing to get a glimpse of an American Sikh, has driven me closer to the Guru. I don't even know exactly what the Guru is, but there's this feeling of wanting to embrace the whole world and give "pani" to them all from my fingertips, healing all wounds with just a smile or a foot rub.

Can in all my life there be an opportunity to express my gratitude for life, hardships, calloused, burning feet, swollen intestines and rebelling liver? If I can be what I am now and a million times greater upon my return to America, then I will know my prayers are answered.

If you had not had the love and patience to guide me through my extreme negativity, hippie ways, perverted behavior and downright selfishness, where would I be today? From the bottom of my feet to infinity, thank you Wha Guru for creating Guru Ram Das and Yogi Bhajanji. My heart is flowing over and it's very frustrating that I can't sing shabads like a bird or speak to these Punjabi saints in Punjabi. People here are so beautiful, so inspiring, so devoted, selfless, sacrificing and serviceful that I feel like a slob compared to them. It only makes me work harder. Please send us to India again.

We saw the museum of the Golden Temple as well as the jewelery exhibition. Those Khalsa Sikhs were great examples of sacrifice, and I wonder now where is the sacrifice in my life, in any life there seems to be very little... Now I feel like a Nihung Singh - so fearless and strong - no task too big or small... Wahe Guru... Is this a dream? And when is the bubble going to burst?

My greatest experience of this mission so far is doing Kar Sewa in the Tank of Nectar... mud-walking through the streets of Amritsar with a bowl of mud on my head, chanting "Sat Nam, Wahe Guru" with people from villages, farms, banks, rich and poor alike... the whole Sangat working together out of love and devotion. Such spirit and brotherhood I have never witnessed in all my life or even conceived of actually happening. It's the fruit of our ideals ripening before our eyes, and we even tasted its sweetness!

Our travelling family here are really becoming closer. Some are experiencing extreme health hardships, mostly digestive, but we are pushing on. So far, I have been blessed with good health - relative to the others, anyway. We hope to stay in Amritsar as long as possible.

Do you think you could arrange to bring Harimandar Sahib by boat to California? Check into

your connections, please.

All love in Sat Nam,  
Ram Das Kaur

.....  
Dear Yogi Bhajan,

Sat Siri Akal! It is difficult to convey all the spirit and brotherhood that were felt throughout the Guru Gobind Singh Mahan Yatra. Nonetheless, I shall try to share this experience of group consciousness with you.

The Marg, or road, covers a distance of 640 kilometers, linking 91 historical places and 222 villages associated in some way with the life of Guru Gobind Singh.

As the Yatra began to take shape, grow and proceed forward, so did the feelings of devotion and purpose develop and unfold within our hearts. It really began for us with our early morning departure from Amritsar on Monday morning, April 9. Due to their ill health, Gurucharn Kaur and Sat Kirn Kaur stayed in Amritsar under the loving care of your relatives, Dr. Vijay Bedi and his beautiful family. We all wished they could be with us physically, but knew they were with us in spirit and purpose.

We were warmly received in Chandigarh by Giani Zail Singh, the Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Umrao Singh, the Minister of Education, and several other statesmen and educationalists. Later, we were the recipients of a rather zealous newspaper interview in which the question of why we became Sikhs was approached again and again from many sides.

The rest of the day was spent resting at Sardar Umrao's home, meeting his gracious family, and then attending the premier showing of a Punjabi movie. By this time, Bibiji and Sardar Umrao had finalized our arrangements for the Mahan Yatra, and we departed for Anandpur Sahib being blessed with a large bus complete with drivers, supervision, and the services of Mr. Narinder Singh, secretary to Sardar Umrao Singh. Late evening saw us arriving at the starting point for the Yatra at Anandpur Sahib, where we were given dinner and accommodations at the Gurdwara. Throughout our journey, the Guru always provided us with beautiful care.

As a prelude to the formal commencement of the Yatra on Tuesday morning, we visited Anandpur Sahib Gurdwara, where we had a close viewing of Guru Gobind Singh's weapons, and Bibiji and Ganga accepted saropas and prashad from the high priest on everyone's behalf. It was at this "Abode of Bliss" on Baisakhi Day in 1699 that the Panj Piaras and Guru Gobind Singh received Amrit and established the Khalsa.

For a moment, I stepped aside to overlook a ravine. To my wonder, Guru Gobind Singh's army was assembled below in full formation on horseback. Many times on this Yatra, I was pulled back in time, and felt some compassion and some understanding for the souls of those times - their devotion

and love for God, service and commitment to ideals.

By now, thousands of people were streaming into the assembly area. From a distance, the Gurdwara itself appeared densely dotted with people. Small planes were circling overhead, dropping flowers on the Gurdwara and the gathering procession. Following kirtan by ourselves and others, and speeches in praise of Guru Gobind Singh, his ideals, and this historic Yatra by Sikh, as well as Hindu and Muslim, leaders - five sardars perched on parapets, sounding trumpets, and a twenty-one gun salute signified the start of the procession.

Assisted by security guards, we were able to reach the head of the march in time to see the lead elephant and drummer, followed by hundreds of Nihung Singhs on horses, Guru Gobind Singh's weapons displayed in open vans, horses from Hazur Sahib which were of the same stock as Guru Gobind Singh's horse, the Panj Piaras, and Siri Guru Granth Sahib. After this devotional and spirited introduction, came the vehicles. The lead jeep, with Giani Zail Singh, was followed by ministers of the Education Department and other public officials of the Punjab. As the procession moved forward, it was joined by over one hundred buses.

The following three and one-half days saw us wending our way along the planned route. From the very beginning, there were people along the roads to offer us food and water. Being a caravan of several cars and over one hundred very large buses, you can imagine there were numerous stops and waits.

Our first formal stop was at Chamkaur Sahib to pay homage to the martyrdom of Guru Gobind Singh's two elder sons and thirty-seven other Sikhs who died in battle against Mughal forces. It was Bibi Saran Kaur who gathered up the bodies of these Sikhs from the battle area and brought them to the site of the Chamkaur Gurdwara, where they were cremated. You can understand how being at this physical place reminds us of their examples of devotion, courage, and commitment to righteousness.

Several hours later, we stopped at Machiwara, where Guru Gobind Singh rested on a march from Chamkaur. It was here that two Muslim brothers, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, came to his assistance. The night was spent near Ludhiana, in the home of the owner of the bus company. Even though it was very late, some of us partook of the warm vibrations of our gracious host as his wife prepared a meal in their village-style kitchen.

Wednesday morning, we rejoined the caravan and soon passed through a gate which was built in commemoration of those two devoted Muslim brothers who safely brought Guru Gobind Singh through this area, during a time of battle, by disguising his as a divine Muslim saint, a beautiful example of devotion beyond any limitations of religious differences. These brothers carried Guru Gobind Singh to Alamghir, which we visited next.

There is now a Holy Tank at this site. Though I know not why, as I bowed before the Siri Guru Granth Sahib at the site here where Guru Gobind Singh rested, my heart and soul were touched, and



my eyes became wet. Later in the day, we paid our respects at Takhtu Pura, which was visited by Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Nanak, and Guru Hargobind as well.

Wednesday evening, we stayed near Muktsar, the Gurdwara of the "forty saved ones". During difficult times, these Sikhs had resigned from Guru Gobind Singh's army at Anandpur Sahib and returned home to their wives. These women refused to cater to their husbands and said that they themselves would enter battle. This stance by the women inspired the men to return to battle. They were guided to the side of the Guru by a brave and devoted lady, Maaee Bhago. At Muktsar, these forty Sikhs laid down their lives against the Mughal offensive.

In the morning, Bibiji brought us a Punjabi newspaper containing a short announcement of Larry Singh Wentink's pending arrival for Baisakhi Day at Damdama Gurdwara, our final destination, as your representative. After confirmation of the notice by several of us, Ganga quietly entered the bliss!

At the Gurdwara, Bibiji received a saropa and we had a pleasant meeting with some members of the Punjab legislative assembly. This day's journey is again hot and dusty and, as always, the village people are along the road offering food, water, and beautiful positive vibrations. Each day, the calls of "Bole So Nihal", "Sat Siri Akal", "Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh!" took on more meaning, and I began to understand this was Guru Gobind Singh's modern army. Thursday night we stayed in a gracious private home near the Gurdwara Ramamandi.

Friday morning, the thirteenth, was Baisakhi Day. Our bus moved from position sixty to number one. The Guru had a little lesson in store for us in preparedness and attachment. Knowing that we had a few hours of very dusty travel before reaching Damdama Sahib, many of us were wearing dirty clothes and planned on changing into our last clean white clothes a little before Damdama Sahib, where we would be giving kirtan in front of a half million or so people.

Just before the bus was about to depart, we were wisked out and placed in a jeep and took a position near the head of the procession. Thousands of people lined the remaining few miles. Almost continuous "Bole So Nihal"s and "Sat Siri Akal"s rang forth. Any places were filled with chanting.

The beauty and devotion of these people was strongly felt, as well as their respect for the ministers and other dignitaries of the Punjab. Even the feeling of the Punjab land itself is one of high energy, with its vast fields of wheat. It is a source of pleasure to view these and the villages. These people are the real strength of the Punjab community.

Once we reached Damdama Sahib, everything moved very quickly. With assistance, we moved rapidly through the Sangat and found ourselves on a stage. There, we bowed before the Guru, Siri Guru Granth Sahibji, and offered our silent respect and prayers for the blessing of continued guidance. And now we had an extra blessing in the form of Larry Singh. We gave kirtan and received saropas. Truly we accepted these on behalf of all those whose service and devotion made the Yatra possible.

After a rest in a guest house, Bibiji, Larry Singh, Ganga Kaur, and Sat Want Kaur travelled with Sardar Umrao Singh back to Chandigarh. Dale Singh, Ronny, Ram Das Kaur, Bachitar Kaur, and myself travelled back by bus. Though there is no room for details, that return bus ride gave us the opportunity to live as members of Guru Gobind Singh's army. "Deg! Teg! Fateh!"

Very tired, but content and inwardly smiling at the ways God blesses us, I completed our return to Chandigarh with the silence of "Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru".

In the Name of the Cosmos which prevails through everyBODY and the Holy Nam which holds the world, with prayers for you perfect health, happiness and holiness.

Humbly yours,  
Wilma Kaur

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### **Bhai Sahib Dayal Singh Khalsa**

There is a strain of Sikh dharma which is youthful and very wise. It is a fact not generally known or appreciated that, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, six times out of ten, the leadership of the Sikhs was bestowed on their Guru while he was yet a teenager or a child. In this spirit, the Siri Singh Sahib for the West bestowed the title "Bhai Sahib", the highest religious designation next to his own, on one distinguished young man while he was still seventeen years old, at the 1973 Summer Solstice Sadhana.

Dale Sklar, who was soon to be Dayal Singh, had first met the Siri Singh Sahib when he came as Yogi Bhajan to give a lecture on Kundalini Yoga at his high school, near Los Angeles. He was fifteen years old at the time. From that time on, he adopted the Siri Singh Sahib as his spiritual teacher, and tried to apply every word of truth he heard him speak.

Dale Singh showed himself to be possessed by a rare sense of dedication and an infectious love of the details of the Sikh way of life. Early on, he had immersed himself in the study of the sacred language of Siri Guru Granth Sahib. He was genuinely delighted whenever there was an opportunity of doing *sewa*. Blessed with a brilliant mind and a pleasing disposition, Dale Singh was one of the more popular teachers of Kundalini Yoga in Los Angeles.

Dale Singh had been quick to take the opportunity of visiting the ancestral land of his Guru with Bibiji. Once there, he had amazed everyone by scrubbing the floors of the Baba Deep Singh Shaheedee Gurdwara and the Golden Temple from before midnight until two-thirty a.m. When they toured the Gurdwaras, and the women performed *kirtan*, it was young Dale Singh who stood to address the *Sangats*, with the help of an interpreter, on their behalf.

When Dale Singh returned, the Siri Singh Sahib gave him assigned him the duty of minding the Gurdwara at Guru Ram Das Estate. It was a task he cheerfully discharged, walking the three miles from his home to the Estate before sunrise and after sunset, and back again.

The new Bhai Sahib had a firm grasp of Sikh history, Sikh rites, and the language of the Songs of Guru Nanak. He also set an inspiring example. If anyone spoke against another in his presence, he would say, "I don't want to hear it," and change the topic to something more uplifting. Bhai Sahib Dayal Singh was never sanctimonious though, and cherished a lively sense of humour. People two and three times his age came to share the knowledge and enthusiasm of this jewel, this bright light of Guru Nanak.

### Summer Solstice 1973

In June of 1973, the Summer Solstice Sadhana returned to New Mexico. At an altitude of 7,500 feet in the Jemez Mountains, some mornings frost might sparkle on the hundreds of tents in the grassy meadow, shelters to about six hundred yogis, Sikhs, and adventurers.

Guru Singh, formerly "Gerry Pond," would rouse everyone with his familiar wake up song:

"Rise up! Rise up, sweet family dear!  
Time of the Lord and remembering his love is here.  
'Love,' 'love,' it's all you'll say  
If you awake and rise up right away, yeah!  
If you'll awake and rise up right away..."

Round about 3:10 am, he would begin walking, serenading the clusters of many-coloured tents to ensure everyone had time to wake and shower in the brisk mountain water before *sadhana*.

*Sadhana* would begin each morning with a loud, resounding "*Ong Namō Guru Dayv Namō*," and continue with invigorating exercises. Afterwards, everyone would wrap themselves in their blankets, seated on their sheepskins, for meditation: one hour of Long *Ek Ong Kar*, followed by thirty-one minutes of *Kirtan Kriya*. Bibiji would then take a random reading, a word of guidance, from the pages of *Peace Lagoon*. Every day, this would be followed by the raising of the American flag and the "flag of the Aquarian nation," a blue *Adi Shakti* on a background bisected by white and yellow triangles, and the singing of "God Bless America."

Yogi Bhajan's talks and sessions of rigorous White Tantric Yoga were the highlights each day. There were two meals: spicy vegetable soup with oranges and bananas in the morning, and mung bean and rice stew with hot sauce, beets, and lettuce for dinner. Everyone was expected to observe

silence, speaking only “*Sat Nam*” or “*Wahe Guru*” and pantomiming or writing notes to communicate.

By the final days, the numbers had grown to about a thousand participants. Alan Tobey, who came as a scholar and observer, estimated that two thirds were aged twenty to twenty-five and half lived in ashrams across the US. There were few children and people over thirty, and fewer than fifteen were not Caucasian.

After eight days of White Tantric Yoga and silence, days nine and ten were in a lighter mood. Participants could speak and usually there was lots to say. There was plenty of music and chanting, both scheduled and spontaneous, on and off the stage.

On day nine, after the morning meditations, those who felt called to do so, vowed to live their lives as Sikhs – meditating each day in the ambrosial hours, keeping their hair, abstaining from alcohol, living chaste or married lives, and sticking to a vegetarian diet. On day ten, new ministers took their vows to serve and uphold the principles of Sikh dharma. This was also the day of weddings, some of them arranged by Yogi Bhajan, and a simple wedding feast before everyone parted again for their homes and ashrams across North America and beyond.

### *Deh Shiva*

At every Solstice, Yogi Bhajan liked to challenge his students to the hilt. For eight days, they were asked to do what ordinarily they would have thought impossible. They sat and they sat. They chanted and they chanted. They kept their focus and kept their focus. They remained in challenging postures until the Master was satisfied that they had given their all.

After a long day of White Tantric Yoga, there would be *Pangat* - as everyone lined up for the traditional Solstice dinner of mung beans and rice, beets, carrots, lettuce, and hot sauce. For a time, regional ashrams would take turns offering evening entertainment afterwards on the Solstice stage. It might be drama – an enactment of Sikh history, comedy, dance. Often it was music. The musicians always carried the camp into the heavens.

The Puerto Rico community had a hit that always roused the camp to ecstasy. Led by Gian Singh and Gurudass Singh, they would sing, “*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam-eh Siree Wha Guru*” with an infectious Latin beat and several verses in Spanish, repeated over and over, their driving rhythm and melody on guitar and conga drums moving the camp to chant, to clap, to dance with joy.

Guru Singh was prolific. One song of his that touched many hearts one year was a delicate hymn to the brotherhood and sisterhood of Sikh dharma.

*“Looking bright as gold, doing only what God would,*

*Living our lives so boldly, Sikh Dharma Brotherhood.*

“Looking to the infinite. Any crisis can be met. Loving for the sake of love.  
Eyes of the hawk and the heart of a dove. We’re bound together by his love.

*“Looking bright as gold, doing only what God would,  
Living our lives so boldly, Sikh Dharma Brotherhood.*

“From within these ashram walls, answering the Guru’s call,  
Brothers and sisters, hand in hand, spreading light throughout the land,  
Bowling to God, and righteously we stand.

*“Looking bright as gold, doing only what God would,  
Living our lives so boldly, Sikh Dharma Brotherhood.*

“A man of love, Siri Singh Sahib, serving God right by our side.  
He gives his life to build us strong, so we can carry the banner on.  
Let’s carry the banner on! Let’s carry the banner on! Let’s carry the banner on!  
Let’s carry the banner on! Let’s carry the banner on!

*“Looking bright as gold, doing only what God would,  
Living our lives so boldly, Sikh Dharma Brotherhood.”*

After the evening’s program, the camp would to their tents, excepting the few tasked with remaining awake to ensure everyone’s security and the blessed souls reading overnight in the *Akhand Paath*. Bright moon and starlight shone over the saints in their tents.

The following day, the routine would resume with morning *sadhana*, then breakfast and announcements. Then, most of the camp would return to their places with their partners in the White Tantric Yoga lines, and once more, the Mahan Tantric would push everyone to their limit – and amazingly beyond!

By the end, everyone would be in a collective state of wonder and grace. Just then, the Master would call on everyone to line up for the “blind man’s walk,” where everyone would form in groups of ten and everyone but the leader would have their eyes closed. Forming a line, hand in hand, they would follow their leader, chanting one or another mantra, into the vast space surrounding the tantric shelter.

For an hour, the many groups would wander the fields listening intently to the sounds of the others, their feet carefully navigating the earth. Trusting and following, following and trusting, until the call to return to the tantric shelter, and with the return, the growing volume of voices joining from every direction, returning whence they had begun.

After a few announcements, the Long Time Sun song would be sung. It would resonate so clearly and purely on that last day of White Tantric Yoga. But that was not all...

About 1973, Yogi Bajan started the tradition of rousing everybody on the final day of White Tantric Yoga with one more ecstatic feat, one more victorious gesture, and for that he would tell the sound technician to play at full volume the rousing Sikh anthem, *Deh Shiva* sung by Mahendra Kapoor from the soundtrack of *Nanak Naam Jahaaz Hai*.

After the first time, everyone knew the routine. It was time to join up with anybody close by and energetically run and dance to the martial tune of *Deh Shiva* as long strings of yogis formed, hand in hand, leaping and snaking their way through the tantric shelter.

The anthem started with a powerful lead vocal calling out: "*Bolay so nihaal!*"

Then the chorus responding: "*Sat siree akaal!*"

And a flourish of trumpets.

The lead vocal continued, powerful, melodic: "*Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh ihai. Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron.*"

Then another flourish of brass.

The lead vocal, was now commanding: "*Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh ihai. Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron.*"

Marching drums started up, building compelling beat...

The chorus echoed: "*Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron.*"

The lead vocal continued, emphatically: "*Na daron ar so jab jaa-i laron. Nischai kar aapanee jeet karon.*"

The chorus rejoined: "*Nischai kar aapanee jeet karon.*"

And again: "*Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh.*"

Chorus: "*Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh.*"

A flourish of trumpets, emphatic, energetic.

Lead vocal: "*Ar sikh haa-o aapanay hee man ko. Ih laalach ha-o gun ta-o ucharon.*"

Chorus: "Ih laalach ha-o gun ta-o ucharon."

Lead vocal: "Jab aav kee audh nidhaan banai. At hee ran mai tab joojh maron."

Chorus: "At hee ran mai tab joojh maron. At hee ran mai tab joojh maron."

Lead vocal: "Bolay so nihaal!"

Chorus: "Sat siree akaal!"

Lead vocal: "Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh ihai. Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron."

Chorus: "Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron."

Lead vocal: "Na daron ar so jab jaa-i laron. Nischai kar aapanee jeet karon."

Chorus: "Nischai kar aapanee jeet karon."

Lead vocal: "Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh."

Chorus: "Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh."

Victorious trumpets.

Lead vocal: "Ja-o ta-o praym khaylan kaa chaa-o. Sir dhar talee galee mayree aa-o."

Chorus: "Sir dhar talee galee mayree aa-o."

Lead vocal: "It maarag pair dhareejai. Sir deejay kaan na keejai."

Chorus: "Sir deejay kaan na keejai. Sir deejay kaan na keejai."

Lead vocal: "Bolay so nihaal!"

Chorus: "Sat siree akaal!"

Lead vocal: "Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh ihai. Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron."

Chorus: "Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron."

Lead vocal: "Na daron ar so jab jaa-i laron. Nischai kar aapanee jeet karon. Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh."

Chorus: *"Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh."*

Rousing brass.

Lead vocal: *"Sooraa so pahichanee-ai, jo larai deen kay hayt."*

Chorus: *"Jo larai deen kay hayt."*

Lead vocal: *"Purjaa purjaa kat marai kabahoo na chhaadai khayt."*

Chorus: *"Kabahoo na chhaadai khayt. kabahoo na chhaadai khayt."*

Lead vocal: *"Bolay so nihaal!"*

Chorus: *"Sat siree akaal!"*

Lead vocal: *"Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh ihai. Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron."*

Chorus: *"Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron."*

Lead vocal: *"Na daron ar so jab jaa-i laron. Nischai kar aapanee jeet karon."*

Chorus: *"Nischai kar aapanee jeet karon."*

Lead vocal: *"Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh."*

Chorus: *"Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh."*

Royal trumpets rang out.

Lead vocal: *"Martaa martaa jag moo-aa, mar bhee na jaani-aa ko-i."*

Chorus: *"Mar bhee na jaani-aa ko-i."*

Lead vocal: *"Aisay maranay ho marai, bahur na maranaa ho-i."*

Chorus: *"Bahur na maranaa ho-i. bahur na maranaa ho-i."*

Lead vocal: *"Bolay so nihaal!"*

Chorus: *"Sat siree akaal!"*



Lead vocal: *“Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh ihai. Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron.”*

Chorus: *“Shub karaman tay kabahoon na taron.”*

Lead vocal: *“Na daron ar so jab jaa-i laron. Nischai kar aapanee jeet karon.”*

Chorus: *“Nischai kar aapanee jeet karon.”*

Lead vocal: *“Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh.”*

Chorus: *“Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh.”*

Lead vocal: *“Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh. Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh. Dayh shivaa bar mo-eh. Bolay so nihaal!”*

Chorus: *“Sat siree akaal!”*

Once the recording faded out, it was played again and again. Everything went on and on, ecstatically. Anyone who had been tired, lost their tiredness in the surge of the moment.

The Siri Singh Sahib did not bother with translating the *Gurbani* that had been set to music. Rather, he allowed it to speak for itself, a rousing, irresistible expression of continual victory. The following is a simple translation of this composition, written by Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Nanak, and Saint Kabir..

*Blessed is one who speaks! Truth is great and undying!*

Give me, O God, this blessing, that I might never shirk from a righteous act.  
May I fight fearlessly life's foes and confidently claim my victory.  
May your teachings be instilled in my mind and might I eagerly sing your praise.  
Then, when this life comes to its fruitful end, let me die fighting with limitless courage!

If you want to play the game of love, place your head in your hand and come onto my path.  
On this path, place your feet. Offer your head and have no fear.

Recognized as a hero, is one who fights for what is right.  
They may be cut limb from limb, but they never desert the battlefield.

Dying, dying, the world is dying, but none knows how to die.  
Let one who dies, die such a death that they should never have to die again!

## The Turban in England

In July, the Siri Singh Sahib proceeded to England to inform the Church of England's Archbishop of Canterbury about the traditions of Sikhs. In that country, legislation had been passed which required everyone who rode a motorcycle to wear a helmet. As a result of his efforts, and the work of other Sikh leaders, Sikh motorcyclists soon afterwards were exempted from the law, which discriminated against their right to wear their traditional turban.

Yogi Bhajan the Mahan Tantric, also gave a White Tantric Yoga course for twenty-five people in London, and toured a number of English Gurdwaras. He and Bibiji arranged a special dinner at Guru Ram Das Ashram for the priests of all the London Sikh temples. During this visit, the Siri Singh Sahib was feted at a reception given jointly for himself and General Jagjit Singh Aurora, freshly returned from a decisive victory over the Pakistani army in Bangladesh.

In Amsterdam, the Siri Singh Sahib gave another course. Then, in the scenic town of Grenoble, France he taught a class in Kundalini Yoga, which was promptly translated from Yogi Bhajan's Indian English to continental French.

## Sant Gurmukh Singh of Patiala

In August, a saintly man came from India to see for himself what wonders had been done by a certain messenger from his Guru's House. His name was Sant Gurmukh Singh. Santji had in fact never been born a Sikh, but had adopted the faith at a young age. Moreover, he had been a friend of the Siri Singh Sahib's family when Harbhajan was just a boy. The last time they had met, it had been Harbhajan Singh's eighth birthday in Dalhousie.

Santji did not dare hope for too much when he made arrangements to fly from New York City to visit Los Angeles. Being a man of principle, he insisted he would not make any commitments to attend any functions or sing *Gurbani kirtan* or speak until he had arrived and assessed the situation for himself. So it was that this outspoken and wise eighty-two-year-old met the Siri Singh Sahib, whom he had blessed at his home many years before, on his forty-fourth birthday.

The two had a great deal of respect for each other. Out of fun, they competed in touching each other's feet, a sign of humility in Indian culture. One day, as Sant Gurmukh Singh was sitting in his room, Harbhajan Singh came to sit and join him. The younger one began to say to the elder, "Look, what a coincidence, that when I was eight years old, you came and blessed me. Now I am forty-four years old, and you again came and you blessed me! Isn't it something beautiful?"

Sant Gurmukh Singh said, "Yeah, but there is something else that is beautiful that I have seen."

“What is that?”

“Your name is Yogi Bhajan,” continued Sant Gurmukh Singh.

“Yeah...”

He said, “Do you know anything about it?”

“These are the two reverse letters, second letters of the English alphabet. ‘Y’ is the second letter to ‘Z.’ And ‘B’ is the second letter to ‘A.’ It is reverse in the sense that Y comes first, B comes later, so it is ‘Yogi Bhajan.’ In India, they used to call me ‘Yogi Baba,’ but here it became Yogi Bhajan, the same nickname. No problem.”

Sant Gurmukh Singh replied, “No, no, no... Still I have to teach you!”

“Okay. I will learn. What is it?”

He continued, “It is a combination of a union, of a yoke, of a *bhajan* that is of the *Naam*. *Bhajan* means *Naam*, *simran* of a holy Word. That is what *bhajan* is. It is a Yogi Bhajan. It is one who has united himself with the power of the *bhajan*. That is the meaning of your name.”

“Okay. That is fine. I accept it.”

“Whosoever shall follow you, shall be named so,” finished the sant.

“Are you going to make a pope out of me?” And the two men, divided by many years, but joined in one consciousness, shared a big laugh.

Santji was greatly pleased by what he found in Los Angeles. During his visit, he frequently offered to perform *kirtan* and to speak, while the Siri Singh Sahib translated his words into English. He was all the more happy when he was taken on a tour of Sikh Dharma's western outposts in San Diego, Phoenix, Tucson, Santa Fe, Denver, and northern California.

### **“Homosexuality is a Latent Tendency in Everyone”**

*Coming to America when he did, Yogi Bhajan found Americans' sense of love and self and relationship troubling, especially in Los Angeles, where sexual “relationships” often lasted just a few hours or minutes. He was also surprised at the growing prevalence of gay relationships. Unlike some people of religious authority who treated homosexuality as a big sin, as he studied the people and the culture, the Master became increasingly tolerant of the practice. In his words, it was just a “little minor*

concern.” *The following is a statement from Winter Solstice 1973.*

Normally, I will like to be very respectful. You know, if you happen to see my mother, you will be just shivering. She is so powerful.

You see, the people who have gone to India, they started laughing? She is so powerful, she can squeeze you right like a cheese. That much strong she is.

I am grateful to her. Despite my all temptations to do something wrong, I couldn't do it. It is a graceful thing to do. You should never be discourteous, never be ungraceful with a woman. So long the born of a woman will not learn to respect a woman, there shall be no peace on this Earth.

Homosexuality or lesbianism, or fifty percent of bi-sexuality is a run away, is an escapism of communication between the polarities, if you want to put it totally in a scientific way. I will not call it an “ailment.” I will not call it a “disease.” I will call it a “wrong connection.”

Wrong connections can take place anywhere. What is wrong in that? Can it be? Our electronic system, our magnetic system, our all these systems, they get to have the wrong connection, and some time, because of certain experiences... Up to this time, it has not been discovered in the history of the man, that man is born homosexual. There have been tendencies and they are always there.

Tuberculosis, TB germs are in you. They are dormant in you. When they become active, you have TB. Kundalini is dormant in you. When it becomes active, you become an aware person. Homosexuality is dormant in you. When it becomes active, you become homosexual.

So what is wrong in that? It is a question of what you want to do with yourself. Every instinct is within you. It is not outside. But sometimes, certain environments, certain experiences, provoke it. Am I to the point?

That much I can go. Do you understand? But if you are, don't be so. Oh, yoga is a remedy for everything. Yoga is a yoke of consciousness between a finite unto his own infinity.

## **From Sick to Sikh**

By January, it was time for another tour of India, time for visas and inoculations and all the packing details. For one student, the difficulties of foreign travel visited him right at home in America a week before he was to set foot on the plane. After dutifully taking his prescribed vaccinations, Guru Singh found himself flat on his back with a case of cholera. The vibrant, young man had suddenly become very unwell. Each day, as the *yatra* loomed closer, his condition worsened. For three days, people came to say their goodbyes. They did not know if, or when, they might be seeing him

again. Guru Singh's wife asked the Siri Singh Sahib's advice.

"Well," he said, "it is better to go and die at the Guru's House than to die here. Besides, then we will have our first martyr to relate to right in Amritsar!"

Taking the Master's words as a challenge, Guru Singh joined the entourage for the long haul to Amritsar. Thirty-six hours flying. Nine hours on the train. Then, at last, Amritsar!

There was still a lot of concern about Guru Singh. Doctors were brought in to visit him at the guest quarters outside the Golden Temple. After a week, the Siri Singh Sahib arrived in Amritsar to join the tour. When he saw his student weak and dehydrated, he told him, "There is only a thin line between being sick and being a Sikh!"

Later on, he sent Guru Singh the best remedy he knew. It was a kind of traditional medicine. His American student, in his diminished condition, wondered at the glass of water that someone had scooped from the pool around the holy Golden Temple.

The next morning, Guru Singh said a special prayer of thanks. He was well again.

### The Golden Temple Song

Who ever thought we could find a holy man to take away our cares?  
Who ever thought we could find a holy man who never put on airs?  
Come with us just as quickly as you can! We'll take you there.

He had a beard just as long as you've ever seen or heard,  
Just to touch the dust of the feet of the people.  
He built his house rich to show you needn't live poor in the world,  
And on the top, he built a golden steeple.

He built a temple with doors open to all four winds.  
Instead of on a high place, he chose the ground where love begins.  
Your body is a temple entering into the Golden Age.  
The story is quite simple. It's been told by every sage.

*Take a hold of your Golden Temple!*  
*Take a hold of your Golden Temple!*  
*Take a hold of your Golden Temple!*

We've got a house built half of marble and half of gold.  
All around, the nectaral tank with its vibrations of old.  
We feed about ten thousand neighbours every day.

Rainbow light high in the sky to guide us on our way.

Blessed is the soul of a man who takes a sip and a dip in the water.  
Golden sun and marble moon will purify the water.  
Awake in the water, children! Think about the life that you're given.  
You are eternally livin' within the Lord...

*Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Guru Ram Das Guru  
Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Guru Ram Das Guru  
Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Guru Ram Das Guru*

## Pride and Prejudice

Many Western Sikhs who had left their parents' homes and the families into which they had been born, before eventually finding their way into the fold of Khalsa, deeply appreciated the warm hospitality and acceptance of their Eastern family. Everywhere they went in India, they found there were fellow Sikhs inviting them to visit, offering them the heart-felt hospitality of their homes.

However, they also came to learn that all Indian Sikhs were not alike. While the new Khalsa from America and other Western countries often made lasting relationships of love and mutual respect, at other times they found themselves at odds with bitter people who tried to challenge their integrity and the sincerity of their religious beliefs.

Someone in Amritsar confronted the Siri Singh Sahib, "How do we know if they are Sikhs or not?"

The Master responded, "Well, I'll show you whether they are Sikhs or not. Bhai Dayal Singh, come." Then he addressed the two of them, "This Sardarji is a born Indian and a Sikh. You sit down in *padmaasan*. He may sit in *padmaasan* or easy pose. You will chant '*Wahe Guru*' together for two and a half hours without stopping. Okay, Sardarji, you sit opposite him and tune in with him."

The contest lasted exactly forty minutes. After the man had fainted, someone massaged his body to revive him.

The Siri Singh Sahib chided the obnoxious gentleman, "You should be ashamed!" Pointing to young Bhai Dayal Singh, he said, "He is about sixteen or seventeen, and you look to me like you're about forty-five years old, and yet you cannot even chant the Guru Mantra, *Wahe Guru*. What do you think you are?"

## On Tour

With everyone well enough to travel, the entourage took in a number of the historic Gurdwaras of Punjab. Everywhere, there were reminders of a heroic and saintly heritage, and also people wanting to meet the pilgrims from the West.

On this tour, the women took pleasure in playing havoc with the sexist protocols they observed even in the Guru's heartland. The much sought-after duty of washing the floors of the great holy temples in the small hours of the morning was normally restricted to men. However, they managed with Bibiji's help, to secure permission to perform that *sewa* at the great Gurdwara of Anandpur Sahib. Bibiji was also given the privilege of cleaning the much-cherished weapons of Guru Gobind Singh, which were kept there. This was the first time in the known history that either the floors or the weapons had been cleaned by a woman.

That morning, the Guru blessed their efforts with the following Holy Pronouncement, or *Hukam*:

(Bilawal, Fifth Guru)

"The Transparent Guru has blessed me with all bliss.  
He has united His servant to His service.  
Contemplating the Incomprehensible and Inscrutable Lord,  
No obstacle befalls a person.  
Singing the Lord's praise, the soil of my soul is sanctified.  
Uttering the Name of God, sins are cleared away.  
*Pause and reflect.*  
The Lord Himself, Whose great glory has been manifest  
Since the very beginning, since the ages began,  
He is pervading all places.  
By the Guru's Grace, sorrow does not overtake the mortal,  
And the Guru's feet seem sweet to the mind.  
Without exception, the Lord lives in all places.  
When the True Guru is well pleased, I obtain all the comforts.  
The Transcendent Lord has become my Protector,  
And wherever I look, I see Him by my side.  
Nanak says, the Lord sustains His servants."  
(page 801)

Afterwards, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the president of the S.G.P.C., unofficially conceded that arrangements would duly be made so that women could do the cleaning of the floors right in the most sacred of shrines, the Golden Temple.

As it happened, the tour made its much-anticipated arrival at the Darbar Sahib not long

thereafter. Once they were inside, the lionesses from the West faced again the ingrained mores and prejudices of Punjabi culture. They found that the best seating, in front, by the Guru Granth Sahib and the *ragis*, was, by convention, reserved for the men. Women, it was explained, talked too much and tended to create a commotion rather than meditating.

Naturally, these American Khalsa would have none of this, and they began also to sit in the front, next to the Guru. After they had exerted their presence in this way a couple of times, the priests and *Sangat* began to make room for them at the front any time they saw them coming.

After that, another challenge faced these feisty freedom fighters. By custom, after the *Hukam* was read out, the sweet blessed food, the Guru *Prashaad*, would be first distributed, symbolically, to the Guru's Five Beloved Ones, then to the Guru, then to the *Sangat*. By custom, and because it had also been very convenient to do so, the *Prashaad* had always been distributed to five men seated in the front row.

Since the new Sikhs had positioned themselves there, the servers began to work around them in order to find five men further back in the *Sangat*. Each day, they did this, until one time a server gave one of the special portions to Ram Das Kaur. The women celebrated it as a small, but sweet and significant, victory.

The highlight of the tour came in February, when the Siri Singh Sahib of the West joined with an old acquaintance, Sant Kirpal Singh, in the first World Conference For The Unity of Man, held in New Delhi. Santji was the spiritual leader of the Ruhani Satsang, an organization which taught people around the world to meditate on the Name of God and experience the Light within.

Santji's universal outlook made him an ideal chairman for this historic conference. *Sadhus*, *yogis*, *pirs*, priests, monks and swamis in a lively assortment of costumes joined with Sant Kirpal Singh to affirm their basic goal of peace and harmony for all humanity. Each day, about fifty thousand people came to hear the wise and saintly speakers share their message of human unity.

Religion is political, and so it came as no surprise that the newly-elected Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi should be in attendance. So also was Sardar Hukam Singh, a kind octogenarian who served as Speaker in the Indian Parliament, and clearly took a shine to the rising sons and daughters of Sikh Dharma in the West.

After four days, when all had been said and done, the conference came to a close with the eighty-one year old Sant Kirpal Singh proposing many more such forums be held in different counties, and that the next one to be put on before long in the United States under the direction of his friend, the Siri Singh Sahib.



## The Amazing Ex-Policeman

A certain Santji wanted to see the Siri Singh Sahib during this tour. This saint had recently become well known. Nowadays, he had a following of numerous influential and celebrated people.

When he came to see the Siri Singh Sahib, the Master from the West recognized him immediately. This was the same ex-police inspector who had brought him water during his first tour! But now he had become famous.

People from everywhere came to see him. All he did was recite "*Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru*"! Miracles happened. Prayers were answered. People were amazed.

The Master had to laugh and marvel at the devotion of this dedicated man who had once been broken, dejected, and without work.

## The Irksome Customs officer

When the Siri Singh Sahib returned from India this time, a large number of people turned out at the Los Angeles airport to receive him. He was also met by one cantankerous customs officer.

The officer, in all seriousness, took Yogi Bhajan aside from the crowds of converging travellers, and proceeded to tell him his legal rights to retain a lawyer and keep silent. The indomitable Master responded, "Hi, kid! What can I do for you?"

"Well, I have to ask you certain questions."

"If you want to ask me if I am a smuggler, I am not. If you want to ask me if I have drugs in my luggage, I do not. Thirdly, I have done this job myself for many years, and you are obviously new to the job."

"How do you know?"

"There are two hundred people waiting to receive me, and they are all chanting and singing - and you think I have brought drugs?! I think you must be nuts. For eighteen years, people like you used to work under me. You have no intelligence at all. Anyway, go ahead and do the search!"

"I don't want to search you."

"You are the biggest fool on earth. You have to search me and fill in these papers. Do the

search. I will sign. Otherwise, you have detained me without cause. Then I can sue you, and your legs will be up and your head will be down. Understand that? Now do your search!"

The young officer reflected, then proceeded with the formality of the search and the signing of papers. Once everything had been said and done, he pulled out ten dollars and offered them to the Siri Singh Sahib.

"What is this for?"

"Please accept this for the inconvenience. Take it and buy some silver trim for your robe. To me, you look like an Arab who has lost the whole kingdom and come to the U.S."

"Are you Jewish?"

"Yes."

"Keep the ten dollars. I'll get gold robes next time, I promise you."

From then on, the Master's robes, which used to be simply made out of two cotton sheets, became quilted and embroidered and increasingly elegant in appearance. When people would ask about his regal appearance, the Siri Singh Sahib would say, "It is a matter of convenience. Time and space and the hand of God and the bounty of the Guru have coined me to be what I am today."

## **"Guru Ram Das"**

*Someone once asked the Siri Singh Sahib about his special relationship with Guru Ram Das.*

Well, I am a puzzle to many people. I love almost everything. My guru is that tree which is standing straight and tossing its head in the beauty of the air. I see God in that too. When the air touches my lips, that kiss is stronger than ever I have received a kiss from any beloved of mine.

In the finite world, in action, I may be a man, but in my consciousness, I see the Unseen with my two eyes and I feel it with the touch of my skin. But in the pursuit of my life, I have found this state of consciousness in the House of Guru Ram Das. And the experience is so beautiful that even denying it or explaining it is impossible. And you know, I am a very, very selfish man. I don't want a poor guru. And I don't want a guru with a tiny, junky house.

I love it. It is half marble and half gold-plated. Still there are rubies and diamonds in the ceiling of it. It is the cleanest of all homes I have seen and I have travelled around the world to all religions. And every day, over ten thousand people are always fed in the Name of the Lord, and within

twenty-four hours never a moment goes when the Lord's Name is not praised. Its beauty bewitched me and its spirit exalted me. And I found the joy of all joys right within me!

The beauty of Guru Granth Sahib, which is the Guru, because the Word was in the beginning, Word was with God, Word is God... Guru Granth Sahib is nothing but the God, the word of the people who have known God. So it is a Word. We bow to it. We shall bow to it, and it is the Guru of the time. But also, the same Guru tells me, "*Raaj jog takhat dee-an Gur Raamdaas.*" So the relationship is very clear.

I am a man. I cannot be your Guru. Truth is the guide. It is a help. Is it wrong to help you? So my relationship is very simple with you. I don't want this guru-trip. It doesn't suit me. I simply feel that God has blessed me with some knowledge, and if I can share with my brothers and sisters and men in faith, and they can enjoy the same ecstasy of consciousness, we all can enjoy the same joy.

I love sky because sky has a beauty. It covers everybody. It covers black. It covers white. It covers brown. And at night the stars shine in it like diamonds. And it doesn't discriminate against anybody. And it brings rain to every air. And everywhere, it's blue. What do you want to say to it? Is it not your sky, not my sky? It is our sky. We like it because when we look to it, we look to something higher. And it covers all equally in its excellence of existence.

When through a man, truth prevails, the time which follows decides who he is. Within his time, he's always a rebel, unwanted, unrealistic, a triangle in the square. It always happens. If within my breath of life I can serve people and I can give to them the consciousness which God wants them to have, it will be up to the time to decide what has happened. Man cannot decide who he is. It is his grace which always decides.

I have mopped the floor of that temple and I have found the richest riches of my soul, and in that honesty, I share with you all. I have tried everything. I have shared every knowledge. I have started my life as a beautiful, faithful Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Muslim, Jew, and all the sides of Buddhism in Japan, and God knows that. Every tantric of Tibet... If I learned about a holy man, I went to the farthest caves to search him out. And one day I got mad at myself. What am I doing? Where is God? And I heard it was right in the beat of my heart. That is why I always say, "*Love a man of God and be a man of God and only worship God!*" You shall not bow to anybody other than God even if you are cut limb to limb because no man can be slave to another man.

People touch my feet because they feel I am their father, they love me, they are my children. That's another relationship. Nobody loves me because I am their guru.

I am just a useless pipe! I was stinking somewhere, but a good plumber picked me up and now I quench the thirst of those who are thirsty. Isn't it a good expression? I say, "Hail! Hail! to Guru Ram Das, who picked up this meanest of the mean and made him a very meaningful person." If that clarifies my position, I think that will do for the time being.

Well, if you do not have any devotion to where you found something, you are an idiot. And I found it where I found it, and I love Guru Ram Das and I enjoy it and I say it. The Sikhs get uptight with me, "Why don't you worship Guru Nanak?"

I say, "What is wrong with him? He's alright. He's my Guru. Everybody's my guru. But, you know, one who gave me a cake, I am going to say it, *He gave me a cake!*" And if it bothers anyone, let him feel bothered. I don't worry about it. I am very personally impersonal. The truth is, I found it there, now I find it everywhere!

## ***Amrit in LA***

The Baisakhi of 1974 at Guru Ram Das Ashram in Los Angeles proved to be a most blessed and historic occasion. A distinguished Sikh named Sant Mihan Singh had come with his entourage to initiate Western Sikhs into the Order of Khalsa. A number of enthusiastic Americans took the opportunity to vow to rise early each day to meditate on God, to keep their hair and defend what is right, to abstain from meat and intoxicants and to live a life of grace and dignity as a Sikh of Siri Guru Granth Sahib.

Young Bhai Sahib Dayal Singh was honored at that ceremony as the first non-Indian Khalsa to participate in the baptismal rite of Khalsa. By the next Baisakhi, all five of the initiating "Panj Piaray" would be Western-born Sikhs.

## **East Tours West**

That summer, a delegation of Sikhs left India to tour the West in celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the Singh Sabha movement, the renaissance of the Sikh spirit in the Punjab. The "Sri Guru Singh Sabha Shatabadi Committee" tour consisted of Sardar Hukam Singh, President of the Committee, Sardar Gurcharn Singh Tohra, President of the S.G.P.C., Khalsaji Mahinder Singh Giani, Secretary of the S.G.P.C., and Sardar Surjit Singh Barnala, Secretary of the Akali Dal.

They had been intrigued by the Sikhs of non-Indian origin they had met in India and wanted to see for themselves the reality of these strange, but welcome, apparitions. For two generations, it had been usual for Sikhs who had emigrated to the West to complain that it was impossible to continue to keep their distinctive turbans and to live as Sikhs. Cutting their hair, they had said, and shedding the distinctive Sikh discipline was the price one had to pay if one wanted to live and work in an "advanced" Western culture.

The spread of the Sikh lifestyle among these enthusiastic Western youths was, in fact, a source

of considerable embarrassment to those who had readily discarded the defining aspects of their Sikh heritage. The fact that a new generation of Western-born Sikhs could live and thrive in America and elsewhere significantly contradicted their defeatist presumptions. Some feared the Siri Singh Sahib planned to take over their Gurdwaras. The committee hoped to build on the success of Harbhajan Singh's work, using it as a basis to inspire those emigrant Sikhs and to stress to them the importance of maintaining the defining discipline given the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh.

The delegation made their way to meet the Siri Singh Sahib by way of New York, where they saw their first Guru Ram Das Ashram, in Brooklyn. From there, they made their way to the American capital and to Houston, where they all spent the night at the local 3HO ashram.

When they arrived at the airport in Albuquerque, on their way to the Summer Solstice Sadhana, the four distinguished guests were received with all respect by *Panj Piaray* and about a hundred Western Sikh youngsters. At the Solstice site, the Siri Singh Sahib asked them to participate in a large *Amrit* ceremony, where eighty-five new Sikhs were going to dedicate themselves to the life of Khalsa. They also came to witness a wedding in which a total of forty-six couples were married.

Afterwards, the four were invited, as honored guests, to participate in a gala dinner with many leaders and influential people from around New Mexico. The large and lively event, on a lawn under the open New Mexico sky, was an inspiring and delightful event. Only the arrival of a melodramatic bank of thunderclouds and flashes of lightening, caused the hostess to show some sign of concern.

In the face of a certain soaking, Mrs. Thompson asked the imperturbable yogi, "Can't you please pray?" History does not tell us his response, but somehow, the spectacular light and sound show never dampened the enthusiasm of the guests, serving instead as a magnificent backdrop to that momentous gathering.

Afterwards, the Siri Singh Sahib joined the four on their tour. Together, they made their way up the Pacific coast, visiting Sikh communities in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Yuba City. In British Columbia, they combined forces with the talented members of the "Khalsa String Band", who played rousing Sikh songs and ballads for the Sikh youth using the tempo and instrumentation of a Western rock band. In Vancouver, the so-called "*ghoraa* Sikhs" took a symbolic stand at the door of the largest Gurdwara, where they handed out head-covers for the worshippers to wear inside.

Some of the Vancouver Sikhs, especially the Communist Sikhs who managed the "Ross Street Gurdwara," had discarded the time-honored custom of respectfully covering their heads in the presence of Siri Guru Granth Sahib. In the Sikh tradition, even if one did not honor the holy and ancient habit of keeping one's hair and beard, covering one's head was considered a minimal token of respect in a sacred place. But the Communists had been used to having things their way.

When the Western Khalsa took their stand to restore the sanctity of the Gurdwara and uphold the dignity of their Guru, the Communists resented the intrusion of the light-skinned

newcomers. When the Western Khalsa stood in a row of threes at the door of the Guru's House, handing out headcovers and requesting the congregation to cover their heads as they came in, the Gurdwara regulars tried to intimidate them by shouting threats. When they stood their ground, they were viciously attacked and beaten, their clothes torn as they were dragged from the door. Their faces and bodies bleeding, some of the group pleaded with the Siri Singh Sahib to be allowed to revenge themselves on their attackers.

"No," he said, "You put your hands behind and take the beating."

And they did, until they were, each one, forcibly removed by the larger number of ruffians. It was the first time anyone in Vancouver could remember anyone standing up to the communist bullies and their graceless ways. It also demonstrated for the S.G.P.G. President and other guests from the East the lengths this new Khalsa was willing to go to defend their Guru's honor.

Opposition also came from official quarters. The Indian consul general, Sardar Darshan Singh Khalsa, had given a statement to the Vancouver Police in the spring that "fighting occurs in Sikh temples all over the world". At the request of the local community, the Siri Singh Sahib took the consul general to task, and made him apologize and correct his unfortunate and ill-conceived pronouncement.

To continue the work that had been begun during this visit, a body of the young local Sikhs formed themselves into the "Sikh Youth Federation of Canada". With the Siri Singh Sahib as chief administrator, the Federation was to achieve numerous successes, including the establishment of the first radio program to offer *Gurbani* for an hour each Sunday, and countless legal victories against harassment and discrimination.

The tour continued on to Guru Ram Das Ashram in Toronto. After meeting with members of various other faiths at an inter-religious gathering called in their honor, they made their way to the city's single Gurdwara, the Shromani Sikh Society on Pape Avenue.

Jagjit Singh Chauhan, self-proclaimed President of an "independent Sikh state" awaited them there. The members of the tour and the Siri Singh Sahib responded to his challenge by speaking forcefully about the heritage of Sikh dharma and its destiny as a religion of the whole world. Sikhs had fought for India's freedom, but they would not be exclusively bound to the destiny of any one country. That was simply not the Khalsa way.

Near the end of the program, the Sikh leaders were given *Siropas* by a committee member who obviously violated the precepts of the Sikh faith with his cut hair and shaven beard. The Siri Singh Sahib said he would not accept a *Siropa* from this man. An ex-president of the Gurdwara who was turbaned was found to do the duty.

From Toronto, the five continued on to New York, then to the United Kingdom, where they visited Guru Ram Das Ashram and toured the large Gurdwaras of the immigrant Sikhs, then on the

European mainland, to Amsterdam and Paris.

It had been an impressive tour in many respects. For Surjit Singh Barnala, it had affected him personally. "After all," he thought, "if these Westerners can live like this, why can't I?" The next Baisakhi, he re-took his *Amrit* vows at Anandpur Sahib, promising to give up meat and alcohol.

## The Khalsa Council

At the celebration of the birthday of Guru Ram Das held in Los Angeles in 1974, the Siri Singh Sahib hand-picked a group of senior students and told them to meet at Shakti Parwaha Kaur's apartment to write up a body of *sadhana* guidelines and to establish a code of conduct for the growing number of Sikh ministers. His legal adviser, Ram Das Singh, plus Krishna Kaur, Guru Singh, Sat Santokh Singh and a few others were sequestered for a long weekend until they had delivered the code and guidelines to the Siri Singh Sahib.

When they had completed their important assignment, each member of that group was then each given the title "Mukhia Singh Sahib" or "Mukhia Sardarni Sahiba". They would form the nucleus of the "Khalsa Council", created to administer the affairs of the Khalsa in the West.

The Siri Singh Sahib was forty-five now, and self-consciously so. Mindful of the prediction of the astrologer he had met on his way to the cave at Vaishno Devi, that he would not survive his forty-eighth year, the Master had deliberately established this council to ensure that the work he had begun in the West would endure, with or without him.

## A Nation Lives by Its Songs

Besides being a great teacher, the Siri Singh Sahib was a gifted story-teller and master of ceremonies. At the Solstices, he had to be all these things as for many years, he was literally center stage with many eyes and ears fixated on every word he said.

The Master would entertain and enthrall his audience for hours at a time, his teachings intertwined with timely meditations. Sometimes, he also liked to step out of the way and let others carry the *Sangat's* inspiration.

Every so often, he would call on Sadhana Kaur from Houston, who with a golden voice like the finest opera singer would sing the words of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. She would sing solo and by heart from her place in the *Sangat*. Her performance would send a shiver up many a spine.

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.  
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.  
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword.  
His truth is marching on.

*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*His truth is marching on.*

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps.  
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps.  
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps.  
His day is marching on.

*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*His day is marching on.*

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel:  
'As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal.'  
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,  
Since God is marching on.

*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Since God is marching on.*

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat.  
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His Judgement Seat.  
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet!  
Our God is marching on.

*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Our God is marching on.*

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me.



As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free,  
While God is marching on.

By the end, everyone would be in on the chorus, but Sadhana Kaur also would finish on an astounding high note, to the amazement of all.

*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*Glory, glory, hallelujah!*  
*While God is marching on.*

Every couple of Solstices or so, Yogi Bhajan would call out from the stage, "Where is Krishna?" When he did that, everyone who had been there before would know what was coming, for the Master loved to hear Krishna Kaur sing her special song with her full and melodious voice.

*"You are my Lover, Lord.*  
*Yes, you are my Lover, Lord.*  
*You are my Lover, Lord,*  
*And you are my only friend.*

You are my mother and my father.  
You are my sister and my brother.  
You are always right beside me  
To teach me and to guide me.  
You never leave me alone,  
No matter where I may roam.  
You don't care if I am right or wrong,  
For to You, Lord, I belong.

*You are my Lover, Lord.*  
*Yes, you are my Lover, Lord.*  
*You are my Lover, Lord,*  
*And you are my only friend."*

In just a few words and a couple of verses, the song summed up much of Guru Nanak's teaching. It was an emotional tribute to those teachings and, indirectly, to Krishna Kaur's own resilience, which may have been why the Master and everyone else loved to hear her sing it at the 3HO Solstice family gathering.

## **In the Army Now**

Like a pebble dropped into a pond, the teachings brought westward by the dauntless Siri Sahib Sahib proved to have reverberations far and wide, even in unlooked-for and unexpected places. One bright young student of Yogi Bhajan, one Hari Nam Singh Elliot, decided to take his religion with him into the United States Army.

Hari Nam Singh was aware that, a year earlier, two U.S. Privates serving in Germany had taken Sikh vows and suffered consequences. Privates James Singh Broadwell and Richard Singh Fresco had been confined and charged with violating disobeying Army regulations. After a hurried trial, they had been deprived of their prayer books. Twice, they had had their hair and beards forcibly shaven off.

It was not until three months later, after a campaign of protest by Sikhs from around the world, that a United States Army judge issued a landmark decision in a similar case, declaring Private Walter Singh McNair not guilty of insubordination for wearing a turban and retaining his natural beard and long hair while serving in the Armed Forces. A few weeks later, the U.S. Army amended its dress code to accommodate those Sikhs who wished to serve in the military.

Despite those changes, it was not without some difficulty that Hari Nam Singh managed to enlist. His first challenge was finding a recruiter who did not think he was some kind of nut, and who was willing to assist, not resist his efforts. Next, he needed to appear before a board whose job it was to determine whether or not he was a bona fide member of the Sikh religion. The board decided against Hari Nam Singh, but fortunately the decision was not entirely up to them.

A month later, after his case had been reviewed by two more committees, Hari Nam Singh was given a stamp of approval. Still, there was a group of officers and sergeants determined to block his enlistment. After a day at the enlistment station, filled with urgent calls to and from higher authorities, finally Hari Nam Singh Elliot took the oath of enlistment on October thirty-first, 1974.

## **West Tours East**

In November of 1974, another entourage of students set off on a tour of the Sikh heartland. When the new Sikhs arrived in Amritsar, there were already large crowds gathered to celebrate the birthday of Guru Ram Das.

With all the crowding, sometimes it was difficult to make out what was the greater: the curiosity of the Westerners craning to see the holy sites around them, or the inquisitiveness of the people of Amritsar, straining for a glimpse of, or a word with, the curious-looking Sikhs from the West.

One member of the entourage who attracted particular attention was Ram Das Singh of San

Diego. His long, black beard made him appear as the very likeness of his namesake, the Fourth Sikh Guru. More than one Indian Sardarji was seen to vow that he would no longer hide his saintly beard into a colonial-era beardnet.

Everywhere the tour went, they were honored and appreciated, nowhere more so than at the Akal Takhat, the Immortal Throne of Sikh Dharma. There, on November thirteenth, the Head Priest conferred the honorific title of "Bhai Sahib" on the Siri Singh Sahib at a special ceremony.

The Siri Singh Sahib was further honored in a ceremony at the historic Gurdwara of Damdama Sahib, where he was entrusted with two precious, handwritten volumes of Siri Guru Granth Sahib. Then, at the holy Takhat of Keshgarh Sahib, he was given two priceless weapons of Guru Gobind Singh to take with him to the West.

The tour was a seemingly endless series of *kirtan*, crowds and awards, punctuated by a beautiful fireworks display over the Golden Temple. However, in one Gurdwara in the state capital of Chandigarh, blessed adversity raised its ugly head. There, one of the same self-possessed slanderers who had tried to create difficulties for the Siri Singh Sahib during his first *yatra* with Sikhs from America, launched into an impassioned tirade. At that very moment, the Guru Granth Sahib was rendering a verdict of its own.

"They who cherish friendship with the wicked and enmity with saints,  
They are drowned with their families and cause their entire lineage to perish.  
It is not good to speak ill of anyone. Only the foolish egocentrics do it.  
The faces of those maligners are blackened and they fall into a horrible hell.  
O Man, as you serve, so do you become, and so are the results of your actions.  
As you sow, so shall you eat. There is no more to be said in this regard.  
The pious speak out of some spiritual motive.  
They are brimful with ambrosia and have not even an iota of greed.  
The man of virtue accumulates virtue and gives instruction to others.  
Very fortunate are those who keep company with them.  
Day and night, they call on the Lord's Name.  
The One who created the world, sustains it.  
He alone is the Giver, and Himself, He is the True Master.  
He, the True Lord, is with you.  
Through the Guru's Grace, see Him with your own eyes.  
Forever meditate on that Lord, and He shall pardon you and make you His.  
Impure is this soul, and pure is He, the True Lord.  
How can it become one with Him?  
When the ego is burned away through the practice of the Name,  
The Lord accepts the soul as His Own, and so it remains hereafter.  
Cursed is the worldly life of the mortal who forgets the True Spouse.  
If man meditates on the Guru's instructions,  
The Lord takes pity on him and he does not forget the Lord."

## Bangla Sahib

The Siri Singh Sahib forged ahead, on to the busy Indian capital, New Delhi. At the Bangla Sahib Gurdwara, he spoke bluntly and forcefully against the destructive forces at work within the Sikh Panth, against *patits*, and those whose political agenda would divide the Panth into "secular" Sikhs and "religious" Sikhs, "Congress" Sikhs and "Akali" Sikhs, to serve their own personal ends. It was a courageous attack aimed at some disturbing trends and personalities who were attempting to subvert the original intention, the Mission, of Guru Nanak.

To some, what he said was shocking and offensive. He had broken the conspiracy of silence which had surrounded the underside of Sikh polity, masked in bravado and self-deception. There were no *jaikaras* after he had finished speaking.

A palpable tension hung in the air as the Siri Singh Sahib made his way out of the Gurdwara with the venerable Sardar Hukam Singh and his entourage of Sikhs from the West. Suddenly, in a narrow hall, a door swung open just behind everyone, and a man brandishing a naked sword leapt in the direction of the Master, landing forcefully on the group. From another direction, a second armed attacker gained momentum.

While the first struggled with the human wall surrounding the Siri Singh Sahib, his accomplice was seized by a very new Sikh from America, who just happened to be tall and agile, and a practised swordswoman. She grabbed the second assailant and threw him onto the crowd which surrounded them.

In no time, guided by her trained reflexes, she had clasped both her hands with a man assigned to the Siri Singh Sahib's security, and mown a swathe through the pressing crowd for the Master and his entourage to exit the building. The entourage from the West was then able to take its bearings, while the outside of the Bangla Sahib Gurdwara was secured.

Two would-be assassins had failed in executing Virsa Singh's murderous intention. God's protecting hand, and the courage and quick reflexes of a few, reduced to a minor scuffle what might have been a major tragedy. Even the frailness and small physical stature of Sardar Hukam Singh did not keep him from gallantry.

One of the assailants had managed to strike the Siri Singh Sahib with this sword on the top of his head. Rather than penetrating his skull, the blow had merely broken the Master's *kangha* and glanced off a small steel *kirpaan* attached to it. The only wound sustained was a small cut on the chin of the martial artist who one day would serve as Secretary General of the Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere, Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur Khalsa.

Afterwards, the Siri Singh Sahib addressed a press conference in a defiant tone. "Let not opposition stand in the way of our mission in life. In fact, we welcome it, feel grateful for it, as it only makes us fight harder for a cause that will create peace and harmony. Spiritualism was hatched in the

East, but as Guru Teg Bahadur meditated facing the West, and just as Guru Gobind Singh pointed to the West, there is now a stirring happening there.

"These young people have the insides of a saint and the outsides of a soldier, and they will not rest until they see the rightful destiny of joy and happiness shining on the faces of all their brothers and sisters. Behold their example!"

## World Parliament of Religions

It was hardly any time before the American entourage was involved in an entirely different set of circumstances. The Fifth Annual Conference of World Religions was being held in Delhi. Before the conference itself could get under way, a large procession was held through the streets of the ancient capital.

Tens of thousands of priests and monks and nuns of many sects, cultures and regions paraded together in a shared spirit of harmony and oneness of purpose. It was said that even the otherwise-isolated *sadhus* from the farther reaches of the Himalayas had come down to the bustling metropolis to take their rightful place in this momentous event.

The conference itself was chaired by the head of the Jain religion, Muni Sushil Kumar, and attended by numerous speakers from India's spiritual and religious scene. Naturally, the Siri Singh Sahib, who had visited many ashrams and hermitages of yogis and saints and swamis, knew many of them by name. India's Prime Minister, President, and Vice-President were also there.

Of all the speakers, the Siri Singh Sahib spoke the most passionately about the need for a united effort to confront and overpower the forces of irreligion. As a Sikh, he was painfully aware of the growing influence of the atheist Soviet Union in his homeland, the ancient country that had given birth to Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and the dharma of Guru Nanak. Unlike many of those attending the conference, he had also seen the ugly side of the American dream, its broken homes, its strip joints, its nuclear silos.

"There are only two religions in the world, theist and atheist. Atheists are very committed and theists are very divided, although they all worship one God. If we can make the theists equally committed, humanity will live in God-consciousness, peace and harmony."

The outcome of the conference was the establishment of a "World Parliament of Religions" to serve as a sort of "United Nations" of the world's religions. The gathering of distinguished and saintly souls then took a vote in which they elected the Siri Singh Sahib as that body's first chairman.

## The Master's *Sadhana*

One morning, at an ashram in the West, someone saw Yogi Bhajan and asked where he was going. The Master replied, "I am going to do my *sadhana*."

The person did not believe him. They said, "You are a Master. You are a Mahan Tantric. You are a Siri Singh Sahib. You have to do your *sadhana*?"

He replied, "Are you crazy? What are you trying to say?"

"Do you do *sadhana*?"

"Yes, I do my *sadhana*."

"Why? Isn't it true that you reach a stage when you..."

The Master interjected, "Isn't it true that, when you reach a certain stage, you should love *sadhana* more than anything else? This is the *sadhana* which brought me where I am, and you are telling me that it is not necessary? It is more necessary, it is more essential, than anything else in my whole life! Uneasy lies the head which wears a crown, and the higher you are, the higher you fall. Man, perhaps if you fall, some skeleton will be left. If I fall, I don't think there will be any sign left!"

## Morning *Sadhana* in Three Easy Steps

One young woman wanted to argue about *sadhana*. "I will never get up at three-thirty a.m. and sit among those smelly, dirty people crammed in one room!" she said.

Yogi Bhajan retorted, "You are not to do *sadhana* at all!"

"I am willing to do *sadhana* with you," she offered.

"You are not to do that either."

"What do I have to do, then?"

"Just get up at three-thirty, go to the bathroom, put a lot of cold water on your eyes, wash them, and go to bed again."

Some time later, she called the Master, "What should I do? Sometimes I don't sleep any more in the morning?"

He gave her a tape of "Asa di Var", a rousing morning Hymn by Guru Nanak. After that, she became a virtual fanatic Sikh. She began to explain the meaning of *Asa di Var* to the Siri Singh Sahib. He became her student! And it all began with a little cold water in her eyes.

## Sweet Victory

One day, when the Siri Singh Sahib's body had become very hot and feverish from his habit of long days and sleepless nights, a doctor was called to treat him. The doctor decided that the Master was badly in need of rest. He prescribed some medicine, and said, "This fever is because you are over-tired. You are fatigued. You should get some sleep."

"Okay, I will go to sleep," said the Master.

"No, I want to be sure you are sleeping," insisted the doctor as he plunged an injection into the listless Siri Singh Sahib's arm. Then, he said to someone, "He is going to sleep, and you will see he may not get up until tomorrow at six p.m. or so. Don't worry about it!"

The Master sank into a deep, timeless abyss. When at last he awoke, it was past three in the morning. He thought, "It is past three o'clock. I have to do my *Banis*." He tried to move, but the only part of his body that would respond was his hips. He pushed his hips, and rolled and rolled into the bathroom, and into the tub.

Finally, in the cold water of his bath, the paralysis began to go away. Afterwards, he dried and checked himself. Movement had been restored throughout his body. He went back to the bedroom, sat down, and began his *sadhana*.

The Master felt very happy, yet he was also very unhappy. He was sad that his body had betrayed him, but he was also happy that he had won a soulful victory. When he finished reading his *Banis*, he returned to his bed. He knew there was going to be an inspection.

About seven o'clock, the doctor appeared. He asked the person in charge, "Is he sleeping?"

"No, he's awake."

"He's awake!? You say he's awake??"

"You can go and check yourself. He is awake. That much I know. When I came in, he was awake, because he called to me, 'Hello. What time is it?' and I said, 'It is six o'clock.'"

The doctor came to see for himself. "Sir, didn't you sleep?"

The Master replied, "Doctor, you cannot understand. I had a wonderful sleep. You can't even believe it!"

The doctor touched his hand and felt the Master's pulse. "The fever is gone."

"Everything is gone!" replied the Siri Singh Sahib.

"Where did it go?"

"In the cold tub. You won't believe it. As a matter of habit, I got up early in the morning. I couldn't walk. I rolled into the tub, and after that, I had all the courage and I did my *Gurbanis*, and I am very happy, and I think I will just sleep now for an hour or two, then I will be ready for the day."

The doctor was stunned. "You... took... a... cold... shower?"

"Ye-es. I-took-a-cold-shower, and I-read-my-*Banis*, and I-am-okay!"

"Well, I don't believe it! I'll come in the evening, Sir. If you are still alive, then I will believe it."

"Okay," replied the mischievous Master.

That doctor came that evening, and many more evenings thereafter, but he never quite got over his surprise at this one most unusual patient of his.

## Teachers and Students

A vast variety of individuals came to the Siri Singh Sahib for his guidance and inspiration. Some of them had been negatively affected by their experiences with other spiritual teachers.

One renowned teacher was literally worshipped by hundreds of thousands of people because of his ability to materialize objects, seemingly out of thin air. Even so, each morning this supposed "avatar" performed the humiliating task of removing the beard stubble from his face by hand.

One teacher encouraged his students to fulfil their desires, no matter how outrageous or even criminal they might be. Another publicly railed against the use of garlic, while privately taking garlic supplements in capsulized form for its well-known health-giving properties. Many students were understandably confused.

Students, too, might manifest some bizarre behaviors. There were spiritual window shoppers, always browsing, never able to commit to any one discipline. There were cynics, who believed in



nothing and no one, least of all themselves. There were spiritual time bombs who, for a time, flattered and fawned and humbled themselves, then turned around and slandered and abused the one who had shown them kindness.

Some people came to the Master for all the wrong reasons. Power-mongers, angry young men and women, ego-trippers, sympathy-seekers... The master yogi learned to deal with them all. Often, he taught them to use their weaknesses to their own advantage.

The Siri Singh Sahib gave them challenging spiritual names. A defeatist might be named "Fateh," meaning victory. A deep, brooding personality might become "Tej," filled with splendour. Someone who needed to smile might be called "Smiling Kaur." There was also a "Christ Singh," a "Soul Singh," a "Sat Peter Singh." In the Khalsa tradition, each woman took the middle name "Kaur," meaning princess, while the man became a "Singh," or lion.

The Master told his students there were three kinds of spiritual teachers they might find. One catered to the egos of their students. They were very wishy-washy because they craved their students' love and admiration.

Another kind was cool and distant. They taught some truth, but did not care whether their students practised truthful living or not. They felt what their students did was not their business.

The third kind of teacher was called a "Saturn sage". They spared nothing to chisel, shape, and polish their student's undeveloped personality, and help them to realize their true potential. The Master left no doubt in his students' minds as to what sort of teacher he was. "When a teacher yells, God smiles," he was fond of reminding the faint of heart.

The Siri Singh Sahib also laid out the terrain of spiritual *sadhana* for his students to understand. There were five stages, he told them.

At "Saran Pad" you might be lucky enough to meet someone who is Self-realized and be accepted as their student. "Karam Pad" is where the student begins to remould their life habits by practising the discipline taught by the Master.

After that, comes the time of *Shakti Pad*, the period of trial and temptation. There, the student begins to gain some worldly advantage from their spiritual work. They may attract to themselves wealth, followers of beautiful appearance, or power of various kinds. In order to pass through this stage, the student must not be deterred by these temporal distractions. They must rededicate themselves to their teacher, their *sadhana*, and their end objective, their own Self-realization.

In *Sahaj Pad*, the student finds their discipline is becoming second nature to them. At this stage, their spiritual *sadhana* is no longer a struggle between their ego and their inspiration. Finally, in *Sat Pad*, Truth is realized. The student realizes the God within and without, and becomes a Master in their

own right.

Siri Singh Sahib, the Yogi, once said that he would not have been born into this life, except for a mistake he had made in his previous incarnation. Then, too, he had been a teacher. Someone had once come to learn from him, and the Master had refused to teach them, saying, "You don't deserve to be taught!"

God then promised him: "From now on, you shall have all undeserving students!"

## The Two Sides of God

One day, a man came to the Siri Singh Sahib, and said, "I want to know God. Give me an experience." The man went on to explain that he needed to leave the next day, so he needed that experience almost right away!

The Master sized him up, and said, "Well, I can give you an experience if you are willing to do something."

The man replied, "I am willing to do anything. If you want money, I can give it..."

"Forget it! Those things are just for earth. Let's talk of heavens. For one day, see God in everything as unkindness, as ugliness, as treachery, as debauchery, as ill will, and total insecurity, and be the opposite to it!"

"How come?"

"When you have a coin, you see one side. You have to see the other. What you think of God, is all positive. So think of God as all negative, and then be positive. It will test out whether you have found God or not."

In a couple of hours, he came back and said, "God... It is very difficult. I have been brainwashed!"

"Who told you?"

"I know I am brainwashed."

"With what? Soap? What did they use for your brain? How did they wash it? Did they take the skull out?"

"No. No. I don't mean that!"

"I will love to be brainwashed! If somebody can wash my brain, I will be great, because sometime you have to brainwash your self by yourself! You have to use self-discipline, self-hypnosis, self-knowledge, self-kindness, self-grace and self-understanding to understand one thing: It doesn't matter who you are. It does matter what you deliver!"

## **Do you know everything?**

Someone in New York once asked him, "Yogi Bhajan, do you know everything?"

Yogi Bhajan replied in the affirmative.

She asked, "How?"

"It works because when I talk to someone, I don't really talk to anyone. I pretend that I talk to someone, when actually I talk to myself!"

"Since when?"

"From the day I can remember that I started talking. You can shake me on many things, but you can't shake me from this habit. When I talk to someone, I never talk as if I were talking to another person. I am a good actor and I pretend. And I know it must work because what is more accurate and truthful to me than me? The subtle me in me is very well known to me, and the gross me in me is known to me. Whomever I am talking to, is my gross me. There are no two different beings. Where there is not oneness, there is not truth, and what is not truth is a lie!"

## **Heaven and Earth**

There was a kind of magic in the White Tantric Yoga courses given by Yogi Bhajan. Where else would you ever find such a mix of men and women, in such brief, intimate association, all for the exaltation of the spirit, for the inauguration of a new age, and for the health, happiness, and holiness of all?

When Yogi Bhajan directed a course, seated on a stage at one end of the rows and rows of beturbanned participants, (not all of them consciously Sikhs, but all of them with some type of head-cover, since it was a requirement of the course) a kind of tireless energy, a cosmic flow of inspiration, would flow through each gathering. Like a gifted conductor, the master yogi coaxed, humoured, and

demanded the best from the participants. It was usually intense. It might be difficult. It could be painful. Yet somehow, Yogi Bhajan managed to make people shine.

People would sit for hours in those lines. A course might go on for three or five or ten days at a time. Hardly anyone dropped out. Willingly, they lent their pliant spirits to the master artist as he followed the grain of his raw materials, as he sculpted exquisite karmic masterworks and conjured aural symphonies of light. They appreciated the toughness of the drill sergeant yogi. They also enjoyed when he appreciated their exertions: "Wow! Your auras are just turning bright blue and gold. Hold your arms straight! A little longer... Steady now! Look into the eyes of your partner. *KEEP UP!*"

Once, during a course, someone approached the Mahan Tantric and asked, since Yogi Bhajan often spoke about the auras of his students, just how big the aura of a group of a couple of hundred people doing White Tantric Yoga in the open air might be. Yogi Bhajan gestured overhead. With some difficulty, the student just made out the silvery train of a fighter jet scraping the limits of the upper stratosphere.

"It goes up that high," said the Master.

Even so, the efforts of the straining yogis on Earth set in motion consequences in the innermost reaches of the soul and high in the heavens that many participants could only guess at. After a time, some people noticed that a course in White Tantric Yoga usually brought with it some meteorological fallout. On the last day of a course, there was always a good chance of some kind of a downpour. Intense rain, even hailstorms, seemed to be precipitated by the celestial dynamics of a White Tantric Yoga course.

Once, in an open-air shelter under a sheet metal roof, about five or six hundred participants poured their hearts into the White Tantric experience. It had been a bright, cloudless, New Mexico day, high up the mountain of Ram Das Puri. They were chanting as one voice, "*Ek Ong Kaar, Sat Naam, Karta Purakh, Nirbhao, Nirvair, Akaal Moorat, Ajoonee Saibhang, Gur Prasaad, Jap! Aad Sach, Jugaad Sach, Hai Bhee Sach, Naanak Hosee Bhee Sach...*" It was Guru Nanak's basic mantra, the fundamental basis of all his teaching. It was liberating, elevating, and divine.

Unexpectedly, a dark storm gathered over the heads of the meditating yogis. The Mahan Tantric masterfully prepared them for the coming tempest, "The souls of thousands of your ancestors are coming for your blessing. They are coming to be released from this world."

A moment later, thunder roared and dust clouds whirled up into the sky. Suddenly, louder than anything, gigantic hailstones began to beat on the roof overhead. It was as though the course were being held in a gargantuan steel drum.

"*Chant louder!*" commanded the Mahan Tantric, and with all their hearts, they did, "*...Sat Naam,*

*Karta Purakh, Nirbhao, Nirvair, Akaal Moorat...* in an endless, liberating litany. Time-space, present-future, sky-earth, heaven-hail, clatter and mantra, all merged in one effortless, painless, endless, tantric harmony.

Then, as quickly as it had begun, the hailstorm came to a sudden halt. The clouds lifted away, and only the sound of these yogis of Guru Nanak remained. "*Inhale!*" commanded the Master. At least a thousand lungs inhaled. "*Stretch!*" Countless arms reached heavenwards. "Relax!"

Looking around them, they could see the storm had left a thin mud slick memento over the dusty mountainside. Large, diamond-like hailstones sparkled in the muck. Everywhere, the air was abuzz with a joyful, thankful electricity. Wisps of cerulean splendour wafted high overhead, while in the distance and plain for all to see, shone two radiant bows of iridescent glory.

## A Question of Timing

The majestic Siri Singh Sahib was known to have an uncommon sense of timing. Once, when he arrived at the Oakland airport, the customary reception party was there, waiting to drive him to the ashram in nearby Berkeley. A row of three cars waited outside, with a large Mercedes in the middle designated for the Siri Singh Sahib's comfort.

As the drivers of the vehicles saw the large form of the Siri Singh Sahib in his distinctive robe coming toward them, they went into gear. Being environmentally responsible, they had been waiting with their car engines turned off. Quickly, two of the engines leapt to life, but not the large Mercedes in the middle. Try as he might, the driver could not make it start. Quickly, the small Japanese car in the rear was brought in front to boost the Mercedes.

As the Siri Singh Sahib arrived on the scene, it quickly became apparent to the Master what needed to be done. Dispensing a few choice words of yogic advice to the flustered novices, he commandeered the humble Subaru, seating his six foot two inch beturbanned frame in the front passenger seat, and motioning his two secretaries to get in back. When the driver of the Subaru tried to use his walkie-talkie, the Master gave him a few more choice words and told him to hurry.

As he accelerated his vehicle on a direct course out of the airport and onto the Oakland-Berkeley bridge, the driver could not help wondering at the unexpected turn of events. As the hurtling Subaru approached a pileup of four or five cars that must have happened only moments earlier, a mishap that was just about to create an impassable backup of traffic on the bridge, the driver continued to wonder.

It was not until he had sped past the accident and was able to view the growing congestion in the diminishing perspective of his rear-view mirror, that the driver noticed the considerable bulk of the

Siri Singh Sahib seated beside him heave a significant sigh of relief. "So *that* was it!" breathed the Master.

## The World Comes To New Mexico

The Summer Solstice Sadhana of 1975 was held in the Pecos mountain wilderness of New Mexico at an altitude of about nine thousand feet, high enough to put a cool chill on the morning's mountainside *sadhana*. Nearly 1,500 people attended the site and participated in a series of events. Some of the events were clearly planned by the Solstice organizers. Many others could only have been managed in the creative Mind of God.

First of all, there were five challenging days of White Tantric Yoga. After that, there was an ordination ceremony for the Sikh ministers. Then there were Khalsa Council meetings, and a number of new couples to be engaged and married at another ceremony. After that, early on the sixth morning, one hundred and eight souls rose bright and early, to receive the sacrament of *Amrit*, and dedicate themselves to a life as Khalsa.

Sometimes the Siri Singh Sahib seemed to be everywhere at once. Here he was counselling someone who wanted to be married. There he was counselling two who wanted a divorce. Here he was lecturing, somehow answering a thousand people's unspoken questions all at once. There he was giving musicians feedback on a song they had written for him. Here he was reprimanding a guide for what they didn't do at children's camp. There he was talking to a Unitarian minister who had come for a visit. Here he was dispensing advice to the camp chef. There he was teaching a practised painter how to make his art the more inspiring. Here he was giving a name to a newborn in Atlanta. There he was welcoming a Congressman who happened to drop in unannounced. Here he was sending someone to open an ashram in Rome. By the Grace of Guru Ram Das, in a thousand ways, the undaunted Siri Singh Sahib managed to answer the call of duty.

Then, for the final three days of the Solstice, the Siri Singh Sahib hosted the second annual Unity of Man Conference, filling the role of Sant Kirpal Singh, who had recently passed away. Hindus, Jains, Amerindians, Jews, Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants and Muslims, came from around the world, each of them devoted to the cause of world peace and uplifting the consciousness of humankind. "*Love to all... Peace to all... Life to all...*" they sang as one resounding chorus.

## Mother of the Son

That summer came the news from India that Sardarni Harkrishan Kaur, the mother of the Siri Singh Sahib had passed away. He had been fond of relating stories of her large, commanding presence

and the role she played in his village when he was a boy.

"Once, in the middle of the night, she got up and I asked her where she was going. She told me that she was going to do a job. I couldn't believe that at midnight she had a job to do, but after about half an hour, I found three police constables walking in front of her. She had found them asleep, and had brought them to me so I would stand witness that these people were not patrolling the area, but rather they were found sleeping.

"In the morning, I said to her, 'This is not your job. It is the job of the local police officer in charge.'

"She replied, 'Well, he is my son, you are my son, and I see everybody as a son, and they are my sons too. If their officer had caught them asleep, they would have been dismissed. So I thought I would catch them and give them a lesson on the spot!'"

## Alaska

Just after the Summer Solstice of 1975, a couple named Nirvair Singh and Nirvair Kaur, who lived in Eugene, Oregon, were given a directive to set out and establish an ashram in Alaska without delay. As it was, they had been told to move to Alaska the previous year, but the death of Nirvair Singh's mother had necessitated their going to the East Coast instead, to tie up family affairs.

Now Nirvair Kaur was three and a half months pregnant, but as good students, they acknowledged the Master's call. Nirvair Singh, who had a job at the natural foods bakery in Eugene, and his faithful wife loaded their few possessions into their van and, with what little money they had managed to save, set off for Anchorage.

After their long drive, the Nirvairs checked into a motel in the mountainous coastal city. They decided to have some rest, then start their life in Alaska on a proper footing, with a vigorous morning *sadhana*. The next morning, they began bright and early by chanting "*Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wahe Guru*" for two and a half hours. They resolved to do this powerful meditation for the next forty days, and leave the rest to God.

Nirvair Kaur and Singh had spent most of the money they had left on the motel. They had been lucky to be able to stay that one night. Every other place they had checked had already been taken. But a second night at the motel was out of the question. Even if they had been able to afford it, someone else had already booked their room some time earlier.

Moreover, the city was overrun with migrant workers hoping for work on the large oil pipeline project being constructed at that time. It did not look as though finding work would be

easy. Unemployment in Anchorage was not an inspiring prospect.

The Nirvairs checked their dirty clothes into a laundromat and went to buy a few groceries. As they were paying for their purchases at the grocery store, they realized that they did not have money for everything. Quickly, the Nirvairs revised their priorities and left a few things with the cashier. Money was definitely becoming scarce.

After a time, Nirvair Singh went out from the motel to pick up their laundry, while his wife desperately scoured the Anchorage newspaper and phonebook for some kind of work and a place where they could stay the night. On his way, Nirvair Singh could not help noticing a small sign across from the laundromat advertising a health food store.

He stepped inside. The store was tiny. It only measured about eight by ten feet in all, but Nirvair Singh, with his background in natural foods, immediately felt right at home amid the granola, the soy-burger patties, and the "Wha Guru Chews".

"I eat food like this," he offered the long-haired man at the till.

"You'd better buy what you want today, because we're closing tomorrow," the man replied.

This was the first place in Anchorage where he had just briefly begun to feel a sense of belonging. How could it be closing? "Don't close! I'll buy it."

"No. Don't buy it," the counter man said, "I'll give it to you!"

As it turned out, the shop was a converted garage attached to a house. The house went along with the business. The rent for both was very reasonable.

When he returned to their room in the motel, Nirvair Singh, his arms loaded with laundry, had very good news for his expectant princess. After some phoning, they also found an empty apartment they could sleep in that night. Then, the very next day, they moved into the home next to the store.

The man who had run it gave them all the stock, the cash register, everything. He was just happy to see the business passing into good hands. And so it was that the first Guru Ram Das Ashram in Alaska was provided, purely by Waheguru's Grace.

## **The First "Ladies' Camp"**

After the Summer Solstice Sadhana of 1975 in New Mexico, Yogi Bhan directed the wives of the directors of the regional training centers to stay behind until his birthday, August 26. What a



surprise this was to everyone! It required juggling of childcare and work and finances and household responsibilities. Basically, everything fell on the men for eight weeks of the summer.

But the twenty-four women who remained with Yogi Bajan during the summer of that year were not going to have a vacation either. As women with long poles patrolled the perimeter, the Master conducted an historic training for the upliftment of the Western woman.

The two-month camp was held to provide inspiration, education and a spirited discipline to the acknowledged "fairer sex". This camp, which the following year was named "Khalsa Women's Training Camp," was dedicated to lifting the American "chick" up to the exalted status of the American eagle.

The women joined together to do *sadhana*, share their strengths, and conquer their weaknesses. There were workshops offered in various aspects of spirituality, healing arts and martial arts. Yogi Bajan regularly came and shared his dynamic vision of woman's rightful place in a self-respecting culture.

"You don't need more rights. You don't need less rights. In simple phraseology, you are called 'the better half'. That is what you are. Actually, there should be a woman's 'rightful-right amendment'. It should be a 'rightful right' that during pregnancy, man should pay her a bonus. When she cooks a meal, it should be computerized at four dollars an hour. When she takes care of and gives affection to the child, it should be about sixteen dollars an hour.

"What do these men know about raising children? When she turns her very blood into milk, it should be considered at about two hundred dollars a quart. What is this 'equal rights'? I don't understand. Who can give equal rights? Woman has not been given her proper right to work for a long time. She has been depressed and suppressed for a long time.

"I have moved among the men of America. I know what they believe. They think all men have wings and women have nothing, men can fly and women have to crawl. All women have to do to change that image is take scissors and clip those wings. Understand?

"What will equal rights give you? I will tell you what it is going to give you. It is not going to give you protection, but it will make you work to build roads and run heavy machinery. Just to make a showpiece, they will give a few women some prestigious jobs.

"How many women are in America? Are they just non-existent? How many Congressmen are women? Compute the proportion. How many Senators are women? How many times has the President of America been a woman? Have they ever nominated a woman for Attorney-General?

"What will be the cost of 'equal rights' to women? The cost is that she cannot raise her own children, she cannot give America men and women of worth, dignity and divinity, and men and women who can lead this nation to something. We will have a bunch of junks and jerks running the White House in a couple of years. Then you will know which way the wind blows.

"Sometimes I say jokingly, 'If every woman would train her son to be an obedient son, after twenty-one years, she won't need to campaign for votes. All obedient sons will vote for a mom, and there she goes into the White House!' It is a more simple way than all this paraphernalia.

"You have been taught to ignore your children. The environments have been provided. Children are bought and sold with toys. Children need to grow in their spiritual sense, to belong to something, and they cannot belong to dead stuff! That is why they get depressed. That is why they take drugs. That is why they leave home. And that is why this whole tragedy of murders, thefts, burglaries, and lack of law and order is happening - because the mother has failed.

"No institution can keep perfect law and order when it is subject to inharmonious rhythm. All problems arise from those insecure minds which did not get a graceful indication of the direction towards dignity and divinity.

"God lives in a cosy home. That is what is missing in America. That is what is gone. Junk food, junk relationships, junk TV, junk this, junk that... I say junk the whole thing and be a woman!"

## **Making the Punjabi Connection**

Keeping a view to retaining open communication and cooperation between the newly established Khalsa Council in the West and its sister bodies in India, the Council passed a resolution in August of 1975. The Khalsa Council resolved to invite representatives from India's main Sikh religious organizations, the S.G.P.C., the Chief Khalsa Diwan Society, the Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee, and the heads of the four historic seats of religious authority, known as "Takhats", to attend.

Another resolution called on each member of the Council to give or read a short speech in Punjabi at the next session, the following April. The Americans were notoriously uninterested in learning a second language, especially the language of a so-called "third world country." This was a sad legacy of America's racist legacy at home and abroad. It would limit the effectiveness of the Khalsa Council and its bodies in relations with the Punjabi community, comprising a majority of the world's Sikhs, in the coming years and decades.

## **The Bhai Sahib Goes Home**

On September twenty-second 1975, the entire *Sangat* of Sikh Dharma in the West, and their friends in the East, were surprised to hear that one young man had left his temporary earthly home to return to the home of all saints.

Bhai Sahib Dayal Singh Khalsa had inspired many by his selfless service, his good-humoured example, and his lively classes. His sudden death in an auto accident, at the age of twenty, was a lesson for everyone to take nothing for granted, and a challenge to fill the precocious shoes he had just left behind.

## The Family of Khalsa

On October the fifteenth, another entourage of fifty, fresh-faced Westerners set out to spend eight weeks in the mysterious East.

One of their first tasks was to take the ashes of Bhai Sahib Dayal Singh to the sacred site at Kiratpur where the remains of many saints and sages have traditionally been consigned. A barefoot procession carried the remains to the bank of the historic Sutlej. From there, his fiancée, Sardarni Sahiba Kirn Jot Kaur Khalsa, was rowed to the middle of the river, where she deposited the saint's remains to the still waters while five shots rang out in a final tribute.

While the new Sikhs immersed themselves in Eastern culture, learning the classical forms of Gurmukhi, the "language" of Siri Guru Granth Sahib, and the modern language of Punjabi, they were also called on to share their strengths. The Westerners were popular as teachers of yoga and meditation at the seventh Sikh Youth Camp of the Institute of Gurmat Studies. They offered classes as well at Khalsa College in Amritsar, then later in Delhi, where one hundred and fifty to two hundred would attend classes they gave at their residence there.

The new sons and daughters of Guru Gobind Singh happened to be in India during a very festive season. They were swept up in the spirit of celebration surrounding the ancient holiday of Diwali, the birthdays of Guru Ram Das and Guru Nanak, and the inauguration of Siri Guru Granth Sahib as Guru of all Sikhs. Several times, they found themselves on a stage, by popular request, singing the Songs of Guru Nanak to crowds of one hundred thousand and more.

This was a year of increased kinship and collaboration between Sikhs of East and West, and North and South. Sikhs of the Americas and Europe were visiting more often and staying for longer periods in India. A natural comradeship grew up between these brothers and sisters of various shades of complexion, children of one Guru, united by their beliefs, their spiritual heritage, their common code of conduct - and separated only by details of culture and geography. What delight they shared, like people long separated from their next of kin!

The devout Sikhs of Sant Bhindranwale and the Akhand Kirtani Jatha developed especially close ties with the Sikhs arriving from the West. There was a lively exchange of knowledge and experiences. Westerners picked up new tunes for the Shabads they had been learning to play with harmonium and tablas. Many of the Eastern women began to wear taller, American-style turbans beneath their gracious chunis. Yet, some of the Sikhs of Punjab were amazed to know that their

Western family avidly practiced yoga, a practice they had always shunned as a strange and unnatural preoccupation with occult powers.

The Sikhs from East and West found that they shared a common experience of hardship in the face of discrimination from the larger culture in which they lived. Each took courage from the other's example. They learned to overlook what were, after all, only minor differences between them. Together they shared a purposeful sense of discipline and destiny.

## A Feverish Blessing

The endless tours of courses and counselling and public relations took their toll on the body of the Siri Singh Sahib of the West. Once, while he was in San Francisco, his large frame was overcome by a high fever. Meanwhile, hearing of Yogi Bhajan, a Buddhist archbishop from Japan had asked to come to the local ashram for his blessing. Specifically, the venerable Kiriya Sensei knew the majestic Sikh was a master of kundalini yoga, and he wanted the experience of having his own kundalini raised.

When the robed form of the Buddhist arrived at the ashram, the Siri Singh Sahib's body was resting, sweaty and listless, on a bed. His every movement seemed to require an enormous effort. What was to be done?

The Master opened his eyes, and painstakingly motioned to the archbishop to take his feverish right hand and lay it on his own forehead. Kiriya Sensei came close and took the large hand of the Master to his brow. For a long time, he just held it there. When, at last, the Buddhist holy man slowly and respectfully allowed the hand to come to rest, his face was brimming with an expression of sublime Buddha-like satisfaction.

## The Sweetness of the Master

Baba Ram Das was a well-known teacher of the spiritual path. Born Jewish and trained as a psychologist, his journey had taken him to Harvard University where he taught in the early years of 1960's psychedelic culture. From Harvard, he went to India and spent a transformative time there at the ashram of a powerful master.

Leaving drugs behind, Baba Ram Das began to write books and give talks about his experiences and his insights into spirituality. On his speaking tours, he found he would inevitably find students of Yogi Bhajan in his audience who would challenge him and his beliefs and his practices. Principally, they wanted to know why he did not also practice a rigorous *sadhana* like they did.

One day, just as Baba Ram Das finished giving a talk, he was approached by one of Yogi Bhajan's secretaries with a note saying: "Come see me immediately," signed by the Master. Being already annoyed with Yogi Bhajan's students, Baba Ram Das ignored the note, hoping that would be the end of it.

Twenty minutes later, another secretary approached Baba Ram Das with another note. This one said, "I said to come see me immediately, (signed) Yogi Bhajan." Baba Ram Das's teacher had told him he should never refuse to selflessly serve a teacher who is practicing a spiritual *sadhana*, so this time he knew he had to go.

Baba Ram Das told his students that he had an errand to run and that he would be returning very soon. On the way, he went into a health food store, where he spent a long time selecting a nice melon to give Yogi Bhajan as a gift because he knew one does not approach a teacher empty-handed.

Reluctantly, Baba Ram Das continued on to the ashram where Yogi Bhajan was to be and knocked on the door. A woman answered the door and said, "Oh, we've been waiting for you," and yelled out, "Sir, it is Baba Ram Das!" She then took a hold of his arm and pulled him inside. Two more secretaries came. One gave him a back massage and the other read his palm.

After a time, they led Baba Ram Das, who by this time was much more relaxed, to the back yard. There was Yogi Bhajan, cooking veggie burgers on a grill. He walked up quietly and greeted him.

For his part, Yogi Bhajan put his arm around his guest and joked with him. Over the next hour or so, they had a wonderful time. Baba Ram Das started to see this Yogi as a very friendly, sweet man.

After a while, Baba Ram Das summoned his nerve and asked if he could pose an honest question, to which Harbhajan Singh answered, "Of course!"

He then went on to relate his experiences during his speaking tours. Almost inevitably, wherever he went, some of Yogi Bhajan's students would turn up and give him a hard time. "Why was that?" wondered Baba Ram Das.

Yogi Bhajan explained that in his last life, he had been a perfect master, but that he had made a mistake. He had refused to teach students whose destiny it had been to learn from him, but who were not respectful or grateful. In so doing, he had incurred the karma of having all those ungrateful students in this lifetime.

Baba Ram Das asked, "What should I do if this happens again?"

The Master replied, "Don't worry. It's all just father issues. They're just going through their stuff and it will take some time for them to come around."

## Roaring Practice

Twenty-three hundred years before, the Greek philosopher Aristotle had observed that anyone can become angry, but to be angry with the right person at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way, was not within everyone's power, and it was not easy. It was a fine art and Yogi Bhanan was determined to master it.

A new student was cleaning Yogi Bhanan's room one day, being as unobtrusive as she could be. For his part, the Master rose and went to the bathroom, where he began to yell loudly into the mirror.

The poor student was perplexed. "What is going on?" she wondered as she tried to slither away.

Yogi Bhanan noticed her and reassured his student that he was just practicing his technique, then went into the adjacent room and began to shout full force at a fortunate man in the group assembled there.

## Mexico

Yogi Bhanan began coming to Mexico in 1975. He really enjoyed his visits, saying that the country reminded him of India.

Harbhajan Singh was touched by the devotion of the common people of that country. During one visit, he found people coming to him saying, "Maestro, Maestro... heal us, heal us."

Yogi Bhanan was not familiar with the culture and asked a student for advice, "What do they do?"

He said, "They go into churches, they sit down and knee down, and they pray, and they are healed."

Yogi Bhanan replied, "Whoa, far out! Take that open space. Ask them to make a circle."

When everyone was seated, the Master told them, and it was translated for the people, "I am going to chant '*Sat Naam*.' You answer me back, '*Wahe Guru*.'"

They did that for about an hour. In the end, Yogi Bhanan told them, "You are all healed. Get up!"

Amazingly, they found they were indeed healed. They had come with crutches and bandages, and they just opened them right there, and they were all healed. Yogi Bhajan himself afterwards expressed relief and surprise.

One day, Sadhu Singh from Houston went to Mexico with Yogi Bhajan said, "These people are great. We treat you in America like nobody. These people love you."

Yogi Bhajan replied, "It is the mind. It is the purity of the mind. It is the urge of the soul. It is the hunger of the soul. In America, you have the hunger of the body, hunger of the mind. You have never even cared to invoke the hunger of the soul."

When he visited, the Siri Singh Sahib liked to challenge his students about money. He told Babaji Singh that it was not his destiny to be rich, but by giving him a one-ounce gold piece known as a "centario" each time they meet he would open the channel of prosperity.

There were two students of Yogi Bhajan named "Guru Dev" in Mexico. One was a healer. The other's family was involved in the dairy industry. One day, Gurudev Singh the dairy man told Yogi Bhajan, "I don't want to be in the yogurt business. I want to be a yogi."

Yogi Bhajan told him, "You need to go into business so one day I can retire."

So it was that Babaji Singh and Gurudev Singh started a natural foods company they called "Sat Nam Mexico." At its peak of operation there were 150 employees. Their main products were granola, granola bars and yogurt.

In the beginning, the milk they used came already packed for the consumer and sales of it were government regulated. They made forty litres of yogurt at a time and the whole 3HO community relied on the income of that production.

One time, the government limited the daily milk allotment to two liters per family. Gurudev Singh's father was a dairy expert and knew many people in the dairy industry, but he was helpless. The business was in crisis and yogurt production and sales shrank.

A few days later, Yogi Bhajan telephoned, "I am in Cozumel with Sat Simran and her parents. Why aren't you here?" Though his cash flow had evaporated, Babaji Singh flew to see the Master. When he arrived, Yogi Bhajan held out his hand for his customary present. Babaji Singh gave him a gold-plated lighter.

Yogi Bhajan accepted the gift, but said, "Not good enough," and had someone call Gurudev Singh.

"Why aren't you here?" There followed a ten-minute blast on phone.

At last, Gurudev Singh purchased a ticket and withdrew money from his shrinking account for the traditional gold coin offering. On receiving the centario, Yogi Bhajan, held it to his forehead, meditated, then pronounced, “Now you have milk.”

Two hours later, the milk distributor came to the ashram with some welcome news, “I figured out a way to get you the milk you need to make yogurt.” Problem solved.

## From Foodie to Yogi

At the White Tantric Yoga courses Yogi Bhajan gave in cities all over the US and beyond, it was customary for students with personal requests and problems to form a queue during breaks and see the Master.

At a course in Washington, DC, Karam Singh approached Yogi Bhajan and asked, “Sir, what will help me stay awake in the morning?”

Yogi Bhajan looked at him and said, “Broccoli.”

Karam Singh had been expecting the Master to prescribe a Kundalini Yoga set or meditation. Instead, he had dealt him a blow to his soft underside, right to his stomach. Karam Singh worked four days a week at the community’s restaurant on Connecticut Avenue and had ready access to its tasty desserts: goatmilk ice cream, muffins, cheesecake, and other sweets. Sometimes he had fasted on sweet juices – orange, apple, pineapple. At the time, he was overweight, weighing nearly one hundred and seventy pounds. Karam Singh was a foodie and he knew it. He felt as though Yogi Bhajan had read his mind.

“Steamed broccoli, Sir? Juice?”

“No, steamed till it’s mush. Nothing else. Forty days.” Once again, Yogi Bhajan had defied his student’s expectations. Lightly steamed, was how he liked his greens. This, from his Master, sounded like a sentence.

Karam Singh did not like his broccoli diet, but like a good student, he did what he was told. He ate a little bowl of mushy broccoli each day and drank lots of water. The diet was benefiting his *sadhana*, but his weight went from 167 to 137 pounds and he had little strength. The manager of the landscaping crew, where Karam Singh worked three days a week, said, “You can’t even lift a rake, let alone help us raking leaves. You need something for energy.”

Karam Singh phoned his teacher. Yogi Bhajan recommended he start eating a stew of mung beans and rice. Karam Singh had thought fruit would be called for. Wrong again.



After three weeks, Karam Singh called again and his teacher told him to add cottage cheese to his diet. Now, he was waking up and staying awake for *sadhana*.

When he had completed the entire forty days of the diet, Karam Singh called again.

“Mung beans and rice. One meal a day. And have a banana for dessert.”

Karam Singh’s mind revolted. His studying of food combining told him that fruits should always be consumed first. Still, he persevered. This was his teacher, after all. “Lots of water, Sir?”

“No water. Milk.”

Now Karam Singh was in shock. While his sensibilities tolerated goatsmilk ice cream and cheesecake, he had always looked at anyone who drank a glass of milk with utter revulsion. Step by step, Yogi Bhajan was giving Karam Singh a healthy body and an open mind.

## **New Roots**

Even as Americans celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of their republic, the Western Khalsa was formally establishing its roots in the U.S.A.. In January, the articles for the constitution of the Sikh Dharma ministry were openly declared and put into effect.

The Siri Singh Sahib himself became an American citizen that year. He had been sponsored back in 1971 by Johnny Rivers, an early student well known throughout the U.S. as a singer of popular music. The Siri Singh Sahib also legally changed his name from Harbhajan Singh Puri to "Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogi Bhajan".

Spring saw the tireless Siri Singh Sahib set out on another tour of East Asia. This time, he taught in Tokyo, Osaka, Hongkong, Bangkok, and Singapore.

Meanwhile, in Amritsar, the executive council of the S.G.P.C. discussed the progress of Sikh Dharma in the Western Hemisphere. Everyone there was enthused at the resurgence of Khalsa spirit outside of India that had been brought about through the work of the Siri Singh Sahib.

In a unanimous vote, the S.G.P.C. endorsed the Constitution and the Articles of Organization of Sikh Dharma on August the eleventh. Plans were also made to receive a large contingent of Sikhs from the West the following year.

## “Sadhana and Self-Identity”

It is a very astonishing factor of life, it is a very deep reality that the majority of us cannot take discipline because we cannot relate to our own mind, nor we have been trained to train our mind. The majority of people cannot keep their word, they cannot keep their promise, they cannot understand who they are, because they are not having any training of mind and they cannot create a relationship between self and mind. 99.9% of all human pain is because there is no relationship in self-identity, mind and soul. It is an amazing world!

Somebody said, “Sir, I cannot do *sadhana*!”

I said, “Sure, you should not do it. What do I lose?”

“Why?”

I said, “That’s all my training is. My entire training is people do *sadhana*. *Sadhana* is nothing but expansion of the self will. *Sadhana* is nothing but expansion of the self aura. *Sadhana* is nothing but expansion of the self mind. *Sadhana* is nothing but to bring prosperity home. *Sadhana* is nothing but to grow and become a human being. *Sadhana* is nothing but to experience God. Gentleman, if you don’t want to do it, you don’t want to do it. It is your doing, not mine. I do mine!”

Some guy told me once, “Sir, I think I am perfect. I should not do any more *sadhana*.”

I said, “Sure, you should not.”

“Oh yes, I thought you would say that!”

“...but I will tell you, I do mine.”

“Why do you have to do it?”

“Because I have to teach it. What I can teach, which I don’t do? I have to do my *sadhana* because I have to be a *sadhu*. I know the bundle of the karma, the huge load, and therefore I have to do a lot of *sadhana*.”

A thief has to learn better to tiptoe than an ordinary guest. A guest may not walk like an army soldier to offend his host, but the thief cannot afford even to wake up the sleeping dog. Therefore, if you want to be a man of a higher caliber, near to the light of God, you have to do more *sadhana* than the ordinary person, as the rich have to have more money than the poor.

*Sadhana* is what brings you the spirit of God. *Sadhana* is what expands your soul and mind. *Sadhana* is that which purifies your body and your caliber. *Sadhana* is that which can give you

total control of your own potential. And still you don't want to do it!? What more duality can there be?

How can you be a human being, how can you expand yourself if you do not know what is your reality? How you can meet the nonreality? It's a human essence. How can you be graceful if you do not know what disgrace is? And how you can meet the disgrace if you do not have grace? How can you meet the hungry if you are not fulfilled? How can you give something if you have nothing? Hypocrisy. Hypocrisy. Hypocrites. Hypocrites.

You think you are going to make it? That is life! And life is not today or yesterday or tomorrow. Life is now, now and now! Life is not your past, present and future. Life is your every now. As you sow, so shall you reap.

Now we ask everybody to get up early in the morning and everybody says, "This is very hard!"

Well, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." Is it an Indian saying? Does it sound Sanskrit?

"As you sow, so shall you reap." It is a Chinese saying? Does it sound Japanese?

What is it which you don't know which you are being told to know? But you are lazy frogs! You don't jump. That's all. Do you know when a frog has to die, what happens to it? It doesn't jump. That's all. The moment the frog stops jumping, that's it! You can't afford that. The human body is not meant to be that.

You can't afford to be sick all the time and be a drag on the sympathy of others: "I have a headache."

"Aspirin."

"I have more headache."

"Have two."

"I have very much headache!"

"Have three!"

"It is terrible!"

"Go to hell!"

You can make seven days of crying, "The wolf has come! The wolf has come!" – and people will run to you. On the eighth day, you will be left alone when there shall be a wolf.

Don't cry for help. Help yourself. Rise because the sun rises. And set an example because the sun sets. Be a guide because you are meant to be. Govern yourself because you are the Kingdom of God. Help yourself because you must share with others. Be radiant because you are a hope!

Somebody was asking me today, "Do I have to wear white?"

I said, "Mourn, and wear black!"

"Why do you have to wear white at all?"

"I prefer you should be naked all the time!" Well, what do I lose? I don't have a camera to go on making photographs.

All I am saying is what I am saying. I am not asking that what I am saying you must obey! You have a head, it is not a cantaloupe. Think! Think, think, think as many times as you can! Think again and again! Because truth belongs to all equally and forever. Knowing truth does not mean anything. Living means everything. Live it!

## World Symposium on Humanity

The Siri Singh Sahib had described "*Sat Naam*" as the Seed Mantra. So it was that all across the Guru's vast Domain, the creative inspiration of *Sat Naam* began to sprout, take root, and bear fruit. In Vancouver, blessed with a benign climate and a liberal, prosperous, and cosmopolitan culture, that inspiration took a distinctively Aquarian form.

Late in 1975, the inspired yogis at Guru Ram Das Ashram in Vancouver put on a "Symposium On The Healing Arts" featuring a number of leading figures in the field of holistic healing. One of the featured speakers was, of course, the Siri Singh Sahib. It was sold out, and a financial success. To keep the ball rolling, another Healing Symposium was held with Swami Satchidananda and Paul Horn and others. It was also successful.

Sensing they were on to something, Singh Sahib Guru Raj Singh Khalsa and his students in Vancouver planned a more ambitious event to be held in November of 1976. As a result of their efforts, thousands of Sikhs and seekers converged downtown at the Hyatt Regency Hotel for a big symposium featuring some of the brightest and best harbingers of New Age thinking and ideas.

For eight continuous days, eighteen hours each day, the event rolled on, duly taped and staffed

by two hundred volunteers, spearheaded by the people in distinctive white *bana*. Naturally, the Siri Singh Sahib was an active participant. So was the brilliant American engineer - Buckminster Fuller, and so were the Sufi leader - Pir Vilayat Khan, the singing Rabbi - Rabbi Schlomo Carlbach, David Spangler from Findhorn, Michio Kushi - the exponent of macrobiotics, Rolling Thunder - the Amerindian medicine man, Patricia Sun - the psychotherapist, Stephen Gaskin from the large Tennessee commune called "The Farm", Ina May Gaskin - an experienced hand at spiritual midwifery, Swami Kriyananda from the Ananda community, Dr. Bernard Jensen - the pioneer of iridology, Ken Keyes - the pioneer of New Age community, Theodore Roszak - the New Age historian, and many others. The "holy man jam" had come a long way since its humble beginnings at the University of Colorado in 1970.

During the conference, a dramatic synergy between two men, each of them gifted with a special genius, became apparent. Those who were close at hand during the couple of days both of them stayed at the Hyatt Regency Hotel could not help being moved by the warmth and respect that emanated between them: one an American scientist, highly individualistic, vivacious still at eighty-two, with an illustrious career as a designer and technologist of the physical universe; the other the organizer of an ambitious religious movement, and a redoubtable technologist of the human spirit.

At the Symposium itself, it was a delight to watch as the two expressed themselves in their distinctive styles. While Yogi Bhanan, the Siri Singh Sahib, spoke dramatically and informally, Buckminster Fuller spewed forth his scintillating insights in a dizzying monotone, all the while pacing and circling the platform. Yet, what the two shared in substance - an irrepressible optimism, a comprehension of whole systems, and a passionate sense of personal activism - far outweighed their outward dissimilarities. It was clearly apparent that many of Dr. Fuller's words during his address were directed to the Siri Singh Sahib, who occupied a place just at the edge of the stage. The following are some of the words they spoke on the last weekend of November, at that grand Symposium.

Yogi Bhanan: "Look through the eyes of your heart. You are always beautiful. You spend dollars and dollars to buy make-up. You make up for what? What are you trying to make up for? Where is the gap? You think you are ugly? You think a puff of powder will make you beautiful? No. You know it, and I know it, and we know it. It is a lack of circulation, and that cannot be substituted for by any rose colour and powder puff. We all know that. We know the lips are getting dead, and we're hiding it under red, beautiful, Revlon lipstick. It's not going to work out.

"You have to understand in what state of consciousness you want to be - just you. That is the beginning of the end we are talking about. Study with anybody, go anywhere, do anything - I don't care. Let us all be human. Then we can build Canada, we can build America, we can build anything. There has to be a micro-consciousness to express the macro-consciousness. That is the law.

"Even if you won't change, times are changing. And in that change, you will be gone. Earth cannot tolerate it any more. It is too much for it. It is up to you, and to your consciousness, what you want to do with it. It is beyond Earth's tolerance to have ungrateful people walking on it, day in and day out. Let us try to understand.

"We can still change the environment by changing ourselves. And there is one thing that can change us: to be kind. Kindness won't hurt you. Kindness will never degrade you. Kindness will never let you feel lonely and sick. Kindness is the best gift of God, which only flows through human beings. Let us be kind. Let us be kind to everything which God has created. Let us see God in everything. That is the only thing which we can lean on.

"Alright, how many of you promise to behave more kindly than you know you have been behaving? Raise your hands! Raise your hands straight - it is not broken hands I need. What I need is a few straight hands. Keep your hands up - what is wrong with these hands? Keep them up. Don't worry. Those who have not raised their hands, and have a second thought, and want to raise them, well, don't feel ashamed.

"It doesn't require yogis, swamis, or trips, humiliation, and salutation. It is the simple way of the Aquarian Age, the age when times and polarities are going to change. In the Piscean Age, we said, "I believe, therefore I know." In the Aquarian Age, we shall say, "I know, therefore I believe." It is the opposite law of polarity. Old scriptures won't fit in. It is a life and space for new dimensions. I'm sorry, it is the Will of God, not mine, not yours. See right, hear right, speak right, breathe right, eat right, eliminate right, and you will be *alright*. *Sat Naam*."

Later that day, Buckminster Fuller spoke to an especially receptive audience: "When I was young, people were inherently remote and deployed from one another. They thought and organized themselves in order to protect themselves in their respective wildernesses. But suddenly, completely unplanned, not put into operation by any human being, they were suddenly completely integrated. We have one hundred and forty-three nations in the United Nations - *one hundred and forty-three!* We have one big spaceship and one hundred and forty-three absolute admirals..."

Laughter.

"Getting nowhere."

Applause.

"All revolutions, up to now, have been on the basis that there's not enough to go around, so class warfare is necessary. It's you or me, and the revolution is going to bring the top down! What I'm saying now, the game is that, by design, we'll pull the *bottom up!*

"The most beautiful thing going on in this society is that whereas we used to have the older world telling us how to play the game, suddenly the young world has really broken away. The breakaway was not planned. When I was young, I was always told, 'Never mind what you think, this is what we're trying to teach you.'

I'd be continually told that life is very, very tough, and you have to get over all that sensitivity, 'If

*you're ever going to be able to protect your family, you're going to have to be tough, you're going to have to kill somebody or deprive someone else.'* Those horrid kinds of things were being taught. The young world of today is not accepting that.

"In the year 1965, the first students made the world news with protests at the University of California. They asked me to come and meet with that group, and I found they were born in the year that television came into the American home. So we have a young world saying, 'I see that Dad and Mom don't have anything to do with getting to the moon, and they don't have anything to do with the great war programs, so I've got to do my own thinking.'

"Suddenly, we have a young world with not much to go on, but nowhere near the amount of misinformation that I had to cope with, and with very much more reliable information. We have a young world coming along doing its own thinking. That's why I'm meeting with you here.

"This beautiful sensitivity is here, an enormous awareness of the *a priori* mystery of things. This love that we all feel is a pretty extraordinary thing. I can't get over how much the young world is sensitive, so really tender, realizing and accrediting great mysteries, and daring to do its own thinking. That's what's manifested at this meeting.

"We are going to make it on our planet, and I know we have the option to make it. If we make it, it's not going to happen through politics. You're going to coordinate spontaneously just because you love to work. Thank you."

All the while Buckminster Fuller was speaking, the Siri Singh Sahib had listened intently, smiling, marvelling, and shaking his head slowly at the beauty of Dr. Fuller's wisdom. As a powerful ovation shook the air, he rose to the stage to embrace the diminutive scientist, who beamed and put his head on the big man's shoulder.

Microphone in hand, the Siri Singh Sahib expressed the appreciation of the people gathered there, "You have talked in this short time more wisdom than could be found in a whole library of books. You have given us a lot of love, and have done so much for the young people. We owe you a lot."

## **Unwinding with the Master**

A new student had arrived in Los Angeles. After some reflection, he had decided to give up his father's business and his customary way of life in St. Louis, Missouri to devote himself to Yogi Bhanjan's teachings. After a six-week intensive course in Kundalini Yoga at the KRI center in Pomona, California, he settled down in Guru Arjan Dev ashram in Los Angeles.

The new guy did not have the hippie background that most of Yogi Bhanjan's students had in

those days and he was about ten years older than most, but he started right at the bottom of the social ladder. Together with other relative newcomers, he went to work each day at a SHO business selling school supplies over the phone.

Work started at 5 a.m. and finished at 10 a.m., so when he returned to the ashram after work, the only other person in the house was the ashram director's wife. He saw her in the kitchen one day and took the opportunity to let her know of a household duty which wasn't being done the way he felt it should. Then, thinking nothing of it, he returned to the single men's room where he lived, to shower and change for the rest of the day.

This new student had no idea what he was in for. His casual criticism had not been well taken by the ashram director's wife. Suddenly, the door to his room flew open and there she stood, as flushed and angry as a disturbed wildcat. What he'd said had made her livid. Not only was he stunned - he was stark naked. She didn't seem to notice as she railed on him for what seemed like an hour, but was probably less than minute. The only thing he could think of was covering up. Eventually, she slammed the door and left.

When he received a call that evening from one of the Siri Singh Sahib's secretaries telling him that he was wanted at the Estate immediately, the new guy was deeply concerned. He feared dire consequences. Perhaps, he thought, he had breached the protocol of the ashram without knowing it.

The new fellow arrived at the Estate and was ushered to the back bedroom. The Siri Singh Sahib was there, reclining on the bed, watching a nature program on television. Without saying a word, he motioned for him to sit down on the carpet next to him. A secretary brought in a plate of what was surely delicious Indian food, but he was so nervous he could barely taste it. Nevertheless, he forced it down as courtesy required.

When the program ended, the Master turned to his new student, who was trying to maintain some semblance of stability, and said with a determined face, "Isn't she absolutely nuts? Let's go to the movies." And so, to the movies they went.

This was the beginning, not the end, of a long relationship. In another year, the new guy, who was older than most of Yogi Bhanjan's other students and familiar with the finer points of social etiquette, became the Master's Chief of Protocol. The Siri Singh Sahib renamed him Hari Jiwan Singh Khalsa.

## **His Master's Voice**

With a good, hard-working staff and regular directives from Yogi Bhanjan, Gurucharan Singh's work at the Kundalini Research Institute was fruitful and inspired. K.R.I.'s publications of Yogi Bhanjan's



teachings were coming out with some regularity. Classes in Pomona were prospering. Students were even going out from Pomona, with Yogi Bhajan's blessing, to establish ashrams on their own.

Then, one late evening, the phone rang at the Pomona ashram. Gurucharan went from his bedroom to answer. At the other end was a very soft-spoken voice. It was barely recognizable as his Master.

"Yes, sir?"

"Can you tell me... Would you... Do you think you could move to Boston?" that familiar voice continued in an unaccustomed tone.

"Sir, uh, Boston? Massachusetts?"

"Yes. You know, where it snows a lot."

"I never even thought about it. Are you suggesting...? Is there some need?"

"I'd like you to... uh, consider it. Consider going there. There is a need in the *Sangat*. I think maybe... uh, I'd like it if..."

"Well, I have a few courses lined up for this summer. Classes have been going really well. When did you think..."

*"Tomorrow!!!"* The phone almost exploded in Gurucharan Singh's ear. *"Call me back!!!"*

For a few moments, Gurucharan Singh was stunned. He wondered whether he had really heard what he imagined he had heard. Boston? Really!? But it was so nice in Pomona. Classes were doing well. Boston?! He returned to his wife in their bedroom.

"Who was it?"

"It was Yogi Bhajan."

"Well, what did he say?"

"He wanted to know if we'd move to Boston."

*"No!!! What?!? There's no sun!"*

A discussion ensued. Gurucharan Kaur, wife of Gurucharan Singh, had lived all her life in Texas and California. This proposal of Yogi Bhajan's came as a devastating challenge to everything her

upbringing had taught her made life worth living: The sun. The warmth. The beach. The sun. The warmth. The outdoors. The sun... It seemed as though her world was going to come crashing down on this youthful California sun goddess. She could not willingly agree to forgo these things. She could not... but eventually, as a supreme sacrifice to God, Yogi Bhajan, and her new husband, she agreed.

Gurucharan Singh called back. He did not want to go. His wife did not want to go. Could his marriage stand it? How long did Yogi Bhajan want them to stay there? What about K.R.I.? What about the classes? The ashram?

Yogi Bhajan patiently explained the need for going to Boston to this American student of his, this Libra intellectual, in a number of ways. There was a need in the *Sangat* there in Boston for a man of Gurucharan's character and abilities. It was also a banishment from Pomona for all the things he had not done right. As well, he was to be a back-up for the man who was in charge of the Boston ashram, in case he should decide to leave. It would be a good challenge for Gurucharan. It would be good for Gurucharan Kaur, too. It would help the Boston *Sangat*. It would serve the need of the times.

Finally, it was agreed that the Gurucharans would leave for New England in three days. They auctioned off most of their earthly possessions, and when the appointed day arrived, they stuffed the rest into the back seat of their car and drove off. Providence kindly steered their course between two unseasonable May blizzards, until they arrived in Boston, freshly layered under a three-inch coat of snow.

Yogi Bhajan had, meanwhile, advised the director of the Boston ashram, a doctrinaire sort of personality, of Gurucharan's expected arrival. His mission was to straighten out the flake from California. Ahh, Boston!!!

## The Assignment

The first sewing assignment Yogi Bhajan gave Sarb Sarang Kaur in Phoenix was to make an outfit for his doctor's daughter, using a piece of Guatemalan fabric. When he saw it, he asked, "Why aren't you wealthy, woman?"

Sarb Sarang Kaur did not have an answer at the time. After testing her with a few more small projects, Yogi Bhajan asked her to make his robes. Thrilled by the honor to serve him in this way, she enthusiastically agreed. Then, to her surprise, he asked how much she charged. She had thought it such a blessing to do this as *sewa* that his question caught her off guard. She managed to answer with the amount she regularly charged for men's tunics.

"That's not enough!" he roared.

Thinking quickly, she doubled the amount.

He said “Okay,” and they shook hands.

Some time later, in Albuquerque, the Siri Singh Sahib gave Sarb Sarang Kaur a garment he had received and asked her to remake it. It was beautiful silk fabric with lots of gold woven into the design, but it was not his style of dress. She was prepared to drop what she was working on and start on it right away, but he wanted it done and delivered by the next morning for a wedding in Espanola.

“Sir!”, she exclaimed, “Even if I stay up all night, it will take many hours just to take the stitches out before it can be re-cut. I’ll need help.”

“Who would you like to have help you?” he asked.

Sarb Sarang Kaur gave her teacher a name, and he ordered her to help her. Fortunately, she was knowledgeable about tailoring and even more fortuitously, she had complementary fabric she was willing to give for the project. She came to Sarb Sarang Kaur’s house where her sewing space was in her bedroom.

First, they did a prayer, then Sarb Sarang Kaur’s helper ripped and she sewed. Later that night, something happened that had never occurred before. Her sewing machine broke. Work came to a halt and yet they were nowhere near finished. Quitting was not an option. Quickly, they gathered all the materials and went to a friend’s house to use her machine.

They called to tell the Siri Singh Sahib where they were and why they had moved locations. He laughed at their predicament. When they told him they would have to stay up all night in order to finish on time, he laughed even more, saying how they were being tested as he had been tested by his teacher.

Just after dawn, the two of them drove from Albuquerque to Espanola with the finished robe to present it to a member of Yogi Bhanjan’s staff. Then they sat for what seemed a long time across from the dome where the Master lived, waiting for him to come out, wearing it. “What if the staff gives him something else to wear? What if he isn’t wearing our creation?” they fretted.

When at last, the Master came wearing the robe they had crafted, it as though the sun had risen all over again, blinding them with its brilliance.

## **Ram Das Puri: Land of Destiny**

Around spring of 1977, the Sikhs of New Mexico were visited by another group of Hopi

elders. This time, they drove the Siri Singh Sahib and several others up a mountain to show them the vast lands that stretched further than the eye could see, where, in ancient times, millions of peoples of many nations had gathered to celebrate the sanctity of life and the oneness of all creation. They pointed to a meeting ground where the holy men of every tribe had joined together and prayed and deliberated over their future destinies. It happened that Yogi Bhajan had been considering purchasing a property where the Summer Solstice Sadhana might be held.

"We must prepare this place so that the Unified Supreme Spirit can once again be experienced by the great tribes, and spread through all the people in the world," the Hopis said. Then they turned and pointed over the other side of the mountain. From there, they said, a powerful dark force would come again, and try to destroy the light of human consciousness. The Hopi representatives stressed, once more, the importance of preparing this sacred land in order that humanity might have a hope and a possibility of survival.

The Siri Singh Sahib researched the possibility of acquiring the land of which the Hopis had spoken. Most of it was either state property or land belonging to the Pueblo Indian reservation. Real estate agents came and showed the Master and his staff their maps. Nothing seemed right.

Just then, a child came out from the kitchen. Yogi Bhajan said to that child, "Hi Angel! Which way will we buy the land?"

The innocent looked and pointed on the map, "Holy land is this way."

Yogi Bhajan asked the agents sitting there, "Is there any land available there?"

They all said there was only national forest there, and it could not be purchased.

Yogi Bhajan excused himself, saying, "I will go with you tomorrow. I am sorry. I have to listen to this kid."

The next day, the Siri Singh Sahib and a few members of his staff looked at the map. The road where the child had directed them led to the forest ranger's lookout.

"Let us go," Yogi Bhajan said, and they all piled into a car for a trip up the winding mountain road.

After they had gone some distance, they were forced to the side of the narrow road by a man bringing a big truckload of lumber down the mountain. Everybody stopped. The Master said, "Let us ask this man."

He then spoke to the driver of the truckload of lumber, "Hey man, is this all forest?"

"Yeah."

"Is there land available here?"

"Mine."

"What land? What land are you talking about?"

"I have land, once parcel of land, a quarter mile by one mile. I am the only one who has it. I got it for one dollar."

"Will you sell it to me?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"\$500,000."

"Oh my God! That's too much. I can't pay it. \$150,000."

"Done!"

"What about water there?"

"That, you find."

Yogi Bhan recalled that a Hopi holy man had told him that a sacred river flowed somewhere under this property. Before buying the one hundred and sixty acres of arid, mountain land, he went up to tour the site, but found there was none, only a small pond. Harbhajan Singh phoned the seller of the land. The previous owner insisted that there was water, and that a "man like you" should not be bothering about it.

A water diviner was brought to the site to determine whether there might be water somewhere beneath the earth. He could find none. Finally, the masterful Siri Singh Sahib found a spot and said, "There is water here, seven hundred and fifty feet down."

A deal was made with an old, experienced, water driller. He was to drill until he reached the water and be paid seven dollars per foot. Otherwise, if there was no water, he was to keep going to a depth of eight hundred feet and be paid twenty dollars for every foot that he had drilled.

After a couple of days of drilling, the old man made a call to the Siri Singh Sahib in Los Angeles. He was furious. "I trusted you," he said. "Come out here and look at this!"

Yogi Bhajan returned to the site. The old man had broken three drill bits to get to a depth of seven hundred feet. Still there was no water. "Look! What are you doing? Look at this sand! I trusted you!" he fumed.

The Siri Singh Sahib responded, "Look, my agreement with you is eight hundred feet!"

The old man objected, ""It doesn't make any money for me. All these bits I have broken! There is no money for me. My wife is going to leave me. My children are going to have no food."

"I'll pay, I'll pay, I'll pay, I'll pay. Just go right a little more."

"What more? Don't you understand? There's no sign of water even?"

"Yeah, I never had a sign either. I never thought I will come to America. I had no sign! Dig it!"

At a depth of seven hundred and forty-five feet, he stopped and again pleaded with Yogi Bhajan. The Master insisted that there was water at seven hundred and fifty feet and encouraged the old man to persevere.

After a few more feet of intensive drilling, that fourth bit finally smashed through the difficult rock formation into a huge subterranean basin. The large boulder had been blocking an ancient underground river and created a vast reservoir. A geyser gushed out of the drill hole, thirty feet into the air!

"Are you going to pay me twenty dollars a foot?"

"No. If it would not have come, then I would have paid twenty dollars."

"What about the broken equipment?"

"That's reasonable. I will pay. You must make money."

The old man was rewarded for his patience and paid ten dollars for each foot that he had drilled. Everyone celebrated and gave their thanks.

Though the land was covered in snow, those with the Siri Singh Sahib offered to take him further to see the lay of the land. They described how far the property, at seven thousand feet elevation, went in each direction.

Afterwards, Yogi Bhajan spoke of his experience of seeing a large colony of angels suspended above the property. As soon as he saw the angels, he knew it was good land.

For the development of the property, Yogi Bhajan contacted Guru Hans Singh Khalsa, the director of the 3HO Foundation in Paris, a visionary architect and city planner, to design a sanctuary and home for the future of the Khalsa. The Siri Singh Sahib named the place, Ram Das Puri. Though its full development might take generations, it would soon serve as the site for the regular Summer Solstice Sadhanas and Khalsa Children's Summer Camps.

## Oh, God!

It was Summer Solstice Sadhana, 1977. For the first time, everyone was celebrating on land they could call their own, beautiful Ram Das Puri. People were camped high on a meadow on a New Mexico mountainside in their tents, big, little and in-between sizes, bright green and blue and yellow and mauve.

The Master, during his lectures, scolded many of his senior teachers for making the survival setting into a resort with their trailers and wardrobes, boxes of store-bought cookies and bags of smuggled cashews. The offenders were recognizable by their pallid complexions and crisp, neatly-ironed attire. The observance of silence, which had been an important part of each camp, was also being largely ignored by this important group of participants.

But there was also magic on the land and in the sky. One day, dark, heavy clouds appeared from over the horizon. The sky turned red and blue, then suddenly the clouds burst on the desert encampment.

There was no real protection. Many tents collapsed in the heavy downpour. Suddenly, gullies of water were surging everywhere. And then, after a half hour, it was over as quickly as it had begun. The sun shone. Cactuses blossomed. Butterflies appeared as if out of nowhere. The normally dusty camp was in mud for three days.

Near the end of Summer Solstice, word swept through the entire camp that the Siri Singh Sahib would be going to see a movie, and anyone who wanted would be welcome to come along. But they needed to be ready in half an hour. Quickly, a groundswell of hearty enthusiasm translated into newly-tied turbans, freshly-washed faces, clean *kurtas*, and a swelling procession of dusty, mostly-white autos hugging the winding switchbacks past the dusty humps and hillocks into modern Santa Fe.

After eight days of splendid isolation in the semi-desert, the yogis disembarked onto the vast parking lot outside the shrine of the local film culture. Following their much-loved Master of movies inside, they busied themselves with small talk of tickets, popcorn and the film of the day.

As it happened, there were two offerings at the mall that evening. One was a slap-stick movie, fast, frantic, and eager to please. It was called *America's Greatest Lover*.

The other film starred a grand man of American comedy, droll, expert, and self-assured. It revolved around the trials of a grocery clerk who found himself talking to, and with, The Supreme Being Himself. The Big One just happened to take the shape of one dryly funny, eighty-year-old American comedian.

Everyone wondered, "What would the Siri Singh Sahib think of this film of American supermarket spirituality? What would he think of George Burns in the starring role? What, after all, would the Master have to say?"

Finally, five minutes before show time, the tickets were all bought and everyone filed into the dimly-lit theatre. The Siri Singh Sahib had been rumoured to spend a considerable time in America's cinema halls. Not only did it give him a quick take on the cutting edge of the American dream, all the obsessions and neuroses of Western culture. It was also an uncommon chance to escape the constant demands of the world at large.

Everyone settled into their seats. The lights would be going down any minute. They appreciated the privilege of sitting and seeing a movie, any movie, with his holiness, the Siri Singh Sahib. It would be interesting to hear if he had anything to say about this piece of cinematic fluff. Of course, the Master had already seen *Oh, God!* in the world's movie capital of Los Angeles.

## Money Yoga

At about the same time, an office building was purchased near to Guru Ram Das Ashram in Los Angeles, to serve as the administrative center for the expanding activities of the 3HO Foundation International and Sikh Dharma of the West. Known simply as "The Secretariat", it allowed Guru Ram Das Ashram to continue its public function as a place where *sadhana*, Gurdwaras, and yoga classes were held.

In order to finance all the purchases and the on-going expenses of the growing movement toward health, happiness, and higher consciousness, the Siri Singh Sahib encouraged the establishment of profitable, responsible, business enterprises.

Early on, twelve "Golden Temple Conscious Cookeries" serving tasty vegetarian fare, sprang up in a number of cities in North America and Europe.

In Los Angeles, the Sunshine Brass Bed Company and Sunshine Oils showed the way to business prosperity. In a half dozen centers, landscaping operations were set up, modelling their success on the original Nanak's Landscaping companies in Hartford and D.C..

In Oregon, the Golden Temple Bakery grew from its humble beginnings making sticky candies



called "Wha Guru Chews" to become the second-largest manufacturer of natural cereal products in the United States, priding itself on its ongoing spirit of creative innovation.

At the same time, Sikhs and yogis everywhere, taking the example of the Siri Singh Sahib as healer, set out to earn degrees and certificates in a variety of healing arts. Doctors and chiropractors, naturopaths, reflexologists, shiatsu therapists, acupuncturists, massage therapists, and dentists established their practices and set up clinics on both sides of the Atlantic.

Yoga teaching itself became an increasingly refined and business-wise occupation.

### ***'Allah ho Akbar!'***

The Siri Singh Sahib was invited to a gathering of black Muslims held at the Sports Arena in Los Angeles on August 7, 1977. At the time, Wallace Muhammed, the leader of the Muslims of American heritage, was making an effort to open doors to the people of other religious traditions. A number of guests from the East and West had been scheduled to speak.

First, the leader of the local Muslim community addressed the crowd. He spoke well and eloquently enough to impress the assembled faithful, some of whom had come a considerable distance to be there.

Then, a black Christian preacher spoke to the gathering. The rhythm and spirit of his message had an unmistakably familiar flavor. This man had soul, and he knew he had soul, and though they now professed Mohammed as their prophet, all the Muslims in that crowd who had been brought up in the traditions of the Southern Baptist and Pentecostal churches, also recognized that he had soul, and they hung on his every spirited cadence. "Yeah, brother! Right on!" they said as one.

Next came the Siri Singh Sahib's turn. Some who had accompanied him, wondered how he could win over this crowd of Afro-American Christians-turned-Muslim. They doubted whether he shared anything in common with these people at all.

As he approached the microphone in the center of the huge amphitheater which was the Sports Arena, the Siri Singh Sahib spread his arms wide. His large bodily frame, more than six feet in height, clothed in a white robe and crowned with a majestic turban, now seemed larger than life.

"My friends," he began, "I want you to know there is a very special place in my heart for Islam. I remember when I was a young boy in my village, which is now in Pakistan, I'd wake up every morning and I'd hear," now his voice rose in a commanding, tremulous cry, "*Allah ho Akbar! Allah ho Akbar!*" It sounded round and round the amphitheatre. God is great! God is great! There is no God but God! Instantly, he had won the favor of the crowd.

The Siri Singh Sahib went on to describe the noble traditions of Islam, as he knew them, and to speak of the oneness of all humanity under God. Finally, he addressed the crowd huddled together in the large arena, where most of the seats remained still empty, "I understand there are some people who are a little worried because we have this religious gathering, and there are not as many people here as they had expected. Well..." he paused for effect, then he said, "this is Los Angeles."

Someone smiled at the Siri Singh Sahib's remark. Someone else chuckled. A row of people caught the gist of the Master's humor. They began to laugh out loud. The joke caught on, and soon the whole assembled crowd was laughing and cheering and clapping at the wisdom and humor of that one-pointed observation.

There is one God. Truth is His Name.

## **The European Yoga Festival**

Later in August of 1977, the Siri Singh Sahib came to the third annual 3HO Europe Yoga Festival. It was held at a castle near the town of Loches, in the south of France. For days beforehand, a number of students had whitewashed the inner walls of the castle, rigged up showers, and laid straw on the stone floor for the participants to sleep on. People came from northernmost Scandinavia, from sunny Italy, and from the many countries and cultures in between, to learn and share in the festivities.

Once the Siri Singh Sahib arrived, he gave a three-day White Tantric Yoga course. He also taught a two-day course just for the women. The on-going exercise on simultaneous translation gave this European gathering a distinctly international flavor.

## **Time**

Just as the Siri Singh Sahib had a genius for creating powerful friends, his Aquarian principles earned for him some rather mighty enemies. A young American from Chicago, renamed Niringan Singh Khalsa, had a father who was involved with the underworld. His father clearly did not appreciate his son's choice of a healthy, happy, holy lifestyle. The father hired professional "deprogrammers" to kidnap his son and "return him to his senses."

Kidnap him they did, and with a powerful dose of highly hallucinogenic belladonna, they reduced poor Niringan Singh's mind to a helpless muddle. There was no question any longer of his holding to a divergent point of view. The young man could not even spell his name.

Yogi Bhanan addressed his students about the situation, "Today I'd like to share a thought with

you. Niringan Singh Khalsa has been picked up, and he has gone through the test of time and space as Khalsa, leaving a message to us that within the shortest possible time we must train ourselves in such a way that ten people may find themselves dead to handle us. Less than that, nothing will work.

"If he comes back to us alive, we'll be grateful to Guru Ram Das and to the spirit of Khalsa. If we never see him again, we shall commemorate this as a memory, that anybody who shall build the name after him should be fully equipped in a very qualifying manner that ten strong men should not be in a position to handle him by virtue of anything. Less than this, I don't think is feasible.

"We are not going to stop at this. We have the right to live because life is given to us by God, and life has to be taken away from us by God. Human beings for a couple thousand dollars cannot devour us from our existence and from our spirit.

"Whatever has happened is a very unfortunate situation, but from misery and from persecution we learn to live a better life. When you wear the *bana*, you wear the *bana* of Guru Gobind Singh. Don't be confused about it. Carry with you the responsibility of it. I think it is on your shoulders now to organize yourself in such a way, train yourself in such a manner, and equip yourself with such practices that we can stop this human mockery.

"It is not only illegal, it puts the entire United States of America and its people to its dirtiest shame, that people can be picked up and they can be put to torture, and no authority comes to the rescue. This must be an eye opener to all of you, what kind of state we are living in. However, we are peaceful people, we'll try to maintain the peace, and we'll try to go through all legal channels to find his body. Secondly, we must work out intelligence so that in the future we may not expose ourselves to go through it. You should be very intelligent to make arrangements if circumstances warrant.

"I have not read it yet, but we have got the manual of the deprogrammers. If you go through that, it is impossible in the human history to even understand that torture. Whereas today our president, Jimmy Carter, talks about human rights and he wants to be a leader and he wants to tell the whole world of human rights, here is his own land where he's the president and a man has been taken totally against his will. God knows where he is now. Nobody wants to answer. All we are asking is one thing: 'Where is he?'

"All they have done is send his *kara* back to us, and we shall keep that *kara* more dear to us than our own self. Fine, we have received the *kara*, but where is he? This is the situation, gentlemen. It is called the United States of America, and we Americans have to think about it. We have to give a very deep thought about the situation - *Where is he?*"

At the same time, one of America's most influential publications, Time magazine, sent a hard-nosed reporter with a cursory knowledge of the 3HO lifestyle, on the trail of the Siri Singh Sahib, looking up all the disaffected people, those who had anything negative to say about him, to write a slanderous piece of journalistic bunkum.

The reporter impugned the title "Siri Singh Sahib" and fabricated many of the "facts" he quoted. Others were twisted and taken out of context. The Master remembered well the glossy magazine's reactionary disposition from his early days in America.

"The cat is out of the bag. I just talked to India a minute ago. Guru Amrit Kaur was on the line. They have not done anything much wrong to us. To be slandered is a privilege. That's not what I'm worried about, but since TIME has quoted our friend Sardar Gurcharan Singh Torah totally out of context, there is a meeting in Delhi to talk to the central ministers to see what they can do with TIME magazine.

"This is the first time they have tackled with Sikhs and the Indian Sikhs, so let the situation be handled as it is to be handled. We should not even bother ourselves about it. As far as that slander is concerned, that I womanize and I take a lot of money and all that, it is a privilege. They have been saying it for eight years now, and TIME has said it. But I wish TIME had kept to its standard morale. Normally it is expected of a newspaper to be decent. At least when you write about a man, you can document the facts. I wish they would have said we were only a few hundred. They didn't. They have tried to balance their legal battle in an area.

"Remember one thing. Man is known by the opposition of his enemy. It is true that in this concept which we are, we are a very powerful challenge. It is the first amazingly amazing concept which we in America are creating. It is a great surprise in India too. How can a human being who never was this, this, this, do this, this, this? It is the start of the test of the time.

"Five years ago, I told you about this time to come. I said, 'One day I will do such nasty and absurd things that I do not know what power you will have to defend me and save your face.' I instigated it by refusing them an interview so that they would *really* come out negative. My idea was to let them come on as negative as possible.

"You must understand America. Because everybody womanizes, everything looks green to them. That is the tragedy. The difficulty is that people who actually womanize are not told about. It is only those who refuse it who get the brunt. It is a very good article and it gives us one insight, and that is that you have been thoroughly recognized.

"My ex-journalist friend was calculating that there are twenty-one negative lines and the rest are all positive lines. I told him that they have been written in such a way that the negative lines cover the entire positive line. Well, paper TIME has done a service to us, a very great service. It has tried to tell you one thing. They have tried to crucify your head, and they want to see how the body will react to it. This is where we can make capital out of the most negative situation.

"This has been done with one point of view, that a very powerful negative article be written about the man so that the parents can be reached by these deprogrammers to ask them if they want their child to be deprogrammed for twenty-five thousand dollars. It's a money-making process. It has

absolutely no reality in it.

"I'm recording it today, and I'm sharing it with you. The purpose behind this entire article was to let people know that there are deprogrammers who can help them to take their children out of 3HO for twenty thousand or forty thousand dollars. It has absolutely no meaning.

"First, they were sending handbills, then they were writing articles here and there, and finally they got hold of TIME magazine. And TIME magazine, if you'll look in the past, has a series of negative articles on every part of religion, and the worst article, which I couldn't even read, they wrote about Jesus Christ himself. I attempted to read the complete article three times. I couldn't. It was so nasty. Anyway, it is our privilege."

Sikhs everywhere rose to the defence of the Siri Singh Sahib. Telegrams and letters of support, denying the fanciful claims of the magazine, came from the highest Sikh offices in India, and from around the world. In London, two thousand demonstrators gathered to protest the article. Many picketed the Time-Life Building and burned copies of the magazine outside.

The executives at Time-Life Inc. had, no doubt, calculated that their well-paid battalion of lawyers allowed them to act with impunity, mindless of the truth and immune to any unpleasant legal repercussions.

The Chancellor to the Siri Singh Sahib, Singh Sahib Guru Terath Singh Khalsa, responded to the scurrilous provocation with an air of calm circumspection. "Time will tell," he said.

## **The Certificate of Life**

Seven years of service in America is more than many spiritual guides, swamis and gurus could take. But after seven years, the inveterate master, the Siri Singh Sahib was still hard at work serving his Guru's Mission, inspiring, teaching, and showing the way to a new age of grace and inner realization.

One day, someone noticed the years were telling in the hairs of his beard. One by one, the strands were turning from black to white. Wanting to be helpful, she said, "Yogi Bhajan, for a dollar and fifty cents you can cover the grey."

He replied, "My dear lady, it took me forty-seven years to become grey. Forty-seven years! And you are telling me for a dollar fifty expenditure I can be black again?"

"No, no. I mean to say you will look young!"

"I love to be old. I have earned it. I have gone through a lot of pain and pleasure. I have gone through lots of emotions, commotions, and neuroses. I have gone through the thick and thin of life. It

is a certificate hanging on my face. I am not going to tarnish it! My dear lady, I have a dollar fifty, but it is a matter of my consciousness. It reminds me every day - Yogi Bhanan, you are forty-seven years old. If you can't make it in forty-seven years, try again!"

### "The Pigeon's Promise"

There is a beautiful story. One day, Guru Gobind Singh was sitting in his peace and tranquility, and his falcon came - ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta - and brought in his claws a beautiful pigeon. So the Guru took the pigeon and loved it. Then slowly, slowly, the Guru took away his feathers, one by one, and told the falcon, "Eat it!"

Now the Guru was an ocean of mercy, known as a very compassionate kind of person. There was a disciple like me and you there, and he watched the whole thing. He said, "Eat it!? Guru Gobind Singh is the Protector of The Faith, Protector of The Weak, and now look! He is feeding this falcon. That the falcon would have eaten the pigeon is another matter, but the Guru pulled all his beautiful feathers and made him round and gave him to the falcon. Oh no, he is cruel!" The disciple got filled with hatred and disgust. Not even bowing to the Guru, he just sneaked away.

Then Guru Gobind Singh told Bhai Daya Singh, "Bhai Daya Singh, this guy who ran away, just silently go and fetch him. Bring him in."

"Okay, sir." And he went to the man and said, "Come on in!"

"No, I don't want to go. Forget it! I have found the truth. That's no Guru! When a pigeon cannot find protection, then what protection will we find?"

Bhai Daya Singh said, "Well, he wants you. Come on with me. I don't know what you found or what there is in it. We were there too. We saw it happening."

"Well, what was it? What was it? *You saw it too!?*"

He said, "Well, yeah, he pulled those feathers and just gave that pigeon to the falcon. He helped the falcon. There must be something. Why don't you ask him?"

"Oh no, I'm not going to ask."

"Come on, come on. He wants you. Come on!"

So the man came. He had no smile. He didn't bow. He just came in uptight, you know what I mean. So the Guru said, "What is wrong with you?"

"What is wrong with me? Just look at what is happening!"

The Guru said, "Okay, just wait a few more minutes. Let this falcon eat enough of this flesh, and then the whole story will be explained."

"You mean he is going to eat *more*?"

The Guru said, "Yes, he is going to eat more. He is going to take his due."

After a time had passed, the Guru came into his extreme radiance and said, "Falcon and pigeon, you have caused me a problem. Now I don't want to come in between. You both speak."

Then the pigeon spoke, "Yes sir, I was your Sikh when you were the Sixth Guru and I took money from this man. I told him "I'll return it to you." And I made you as my witness. Today when this falcon caught me, I asked him "What do you want?" He said "I want my money." And I told him "At least take me to the Guru's place. I know you are going to eat me up."

"It was my request that he bring me here. So now you are witness that he has eaten up that meat and his hunger has been quenched. I didn't have that money. I couldn't give it. All I had was my flesh. All he had was that hunger. I balanced the debt."

"Falcon, are you satisfied?"

"Yes, Lord."

"Pigeon, are you satisfied?"

"Yes, Lord."

"Bless you both." And they both closed their eyes right there and then, and the Guru called on the Sikh, "Singh Sahib, now you take these two bodies outside and with respect and all the rites, bury them."

Amazed was the Sikh. His anger was gone from his inner being.

## The Preface

After some work and preparation, a major book publisher of the time, Hawthorn Publishers, based in New York, was about to publish a book of Yogi Bhajan's teachings. Going by the typical book marketing routine, someone in the promotion department of the company contacted the Siri Singh

Sahib and told him, "We need someone to write the preface, some actress or important American. Then the book will sell more. Do you know anyone who can do that?"

Yogi Bajan was fully aware of the American culture of celebrity. He saw it up close in Hollywood and Beverly Hills. He saw its crassness and immaturity and its problems almost every day. It did not summon up any respect or inspiration in the Master.

The Master replied, "I am the only person to write that preface. These are my teachings and I am an important American."

*The Teachings of Yogi Bajan* was indeed the Siri Singh Sahib's book and he was not lacking in confidence. Moreover, it was a book of different values. The Master was not going to give it to the American public relations machine, not for money, not for fame, and not for sales.

## World Tour

In October of 1977, the Siri Singh Sahib made a promise that he would visit the globe on the occasion of Guru Ram Das's birthday, though the means to realize such an ambitious tour were far from certain. Within a week, by the Guru's Grace, tickets were provided. So it was that, after ten days of teaching in his beloved Mexico, Harbhajan Singh arrived in New York City for a meeting with the local Indian Sikh community and a day of rest, before setting off with Sat Simran Kaur, Guru Kaur, Sat Nam Singh, and Pepe Singh for an impromptu around-the-world adventure.

The first stop was London, where the Siri Singh Sahib met almost non-stop for four days with the Sikhs of the United Kingdom. In Britain, the imperial country that had defeated the Sikhs a century before, Sikhs felt they were persecuted and tested every day. The Siri Singh Sahib worked to inspire in them a sense of unity and common purpose. A film of that summer's Khalsa Women's Training Camp was enthusiastically received. When the visit was all but over, four hundred appreciative members of the community held a reception in the Sikh enclave of Southhall to honor the Siri Singh Sahib and his efforts.

Next, the Guru's ambassadors set foot in Tehran, where seven hundred and fifty Sikh families made their home. The Siri Singh Sahib and his companions toured the newly-constructed Gurdwara and school. In the evening, there was a reception with the Sikhs of Iran, where everyone joined together in the "Song of The Khalsa" and the Siri Singh Sahib spoke on the empowering aspects of the Sikh way of life. The film of Khalsa Women's Training Camp was a hit again.

The next stop of the tour was Kabul, Afghanistan, an historic stronghold of Sikh dharma. For three days, the Sikhs from the West took in the timeless ambience of ancient Kabul, visiting places where Sikhs had lived since the time of Guru Nanak. At Gurdwara Kartay Parvaan, the Siri Singh Sahib



shared the meaning of the Verses of the great Guru's *Japji Sahib*, a lesson which lasted the duration of their visit.

They found the Sikhs of Afghanistan to be very devoted. On the last evening, about fifteen hundred of the Sikhs of Afghanistan came to see the Sikhs from the West. The Master spoke for a time and showed their hosts the film of that summer's training camp for Khalsa women, which received a very enthusiastic response. The women especially were enthralled.

The tour had been advised that it would be difficult to receive them in Amritsar. The security situation there was unsettled and dangerous, they were told. Still, the pilgrims from the West were not discouraged. Knowing they were just an hour and a half from their beloved Golden Temple, they all boarded an Ariana Afghan Airlines flight for Amritsar and hoped for the best.

As it happened, Guru Ram Das had their best interests at heart. In the cockpit where he sat with the pilot, the Siri Singh Sahib witnessed this dialogue between the pilot and the control tower at the Palam International Airport in Delhi, just as they were crossing over Afghanistan into Pakistan:

Control tower: "You go to Palam."

Pilot: "I have a VIP visiting Amritsar on the birthday celebration of Guru Ram Das. May I be permitted to land direct?"

Control tower: "Charlie Vee Tee Four, so now you go to Palam and Charlie Dee This, you proceed to Amritsar."

So it was that in just ninety minutes, the Sikhs from America found themselves at the airport near the holy city of Guru Ram Das. Moreover, outside the plane, a large and altogether unexpected reception awaited them. The whole S.G.P.C. brass, and even a band, was at the airport to receive them. There were even a hundred Sikhs from America who had turned up for the occasion.

Siri Singh Sahib asked Giani Mahinder Singh, the S.G.P.C. secretary, what explanation there was for the elaborate reception. The secretary told him that a tour of Sikhs from Birmingham and London had been coming. For some unexplained reason, he said, their plane had abruptly been re-routed to Delhi. Mahinder Singh suggested the Siri Singh Sahib enjoy the reception anyway.

The police chief was approached and eventually security arrangements were been made for a visit to the sacred Harimandar. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the president of the S.G.P.C., led the motorcade through the bustling streets of Amritsar. The city was especially crowded. About a million people had come to celebrate Amritsar's four hundredth anniversary and the birthday of Guru Ram Das.

When they arrived at the entrance to the walkway leading to the center of the pool of nectar,

where the Golden Temple was situated, Gurcharan Singh, the S.G.P.C. President, said, "See how crowded it is! I advise you not to enter."

People had been waiting outside there since seven in the morning. But the tour was not about to be deterred. The Siri Singh Sahib decided to use unconventional measures to enter his beloved Harimandar. Slipping over the waist-high brass barriers, he and his entourage breezed through the teeming crowds along the nearly-empty middle section of the walkway used by *sewadars* for conveying heaping bowls of *Prashaad* into and empty bowls out from the inner sanctum of the Golden Temple.

"*Waheguru! Darshan Dayo!*" they chanted as they made their way past the crowds of standing people, "*Waheguru! Give us your Holy Vision!*" Finally inside, they put their foreheads to rest in the inner sanctum before the holy Guru Granth Sahib. Everyone had tears in their eyes. They were so overjoyed!

During their few minutes inside, the Siri Singh Sahib was given a *siropa*, while he, in turn, presented a basket that had been given by the Sikhs of Kabul. Then, the five each took a sip from the healing pool of Guru Ram Das, and made their way through the crowds along the inlaid marble walkway to the Akal Takhat Sahib, the Supreme Seat of Spiritual Authority. There, again, they bowed before the Siri Guru Granth. This time, while they were there, the priest read out a *Hukam* from the pages of the Granth Sahib.

*(Raag Gauree, Mahalaa 1)*

If a man does spiritual deeds, then alone is he true.  
What can the false man know about liberation?  
Such a man is a Yogi who thinks of the Way of Union with God.  
He destroys the five enemies of lust, anger, greed, pride, attachment,  
And keeps the True Lord clasped to his heart.  
*Pause and reflect.*  
He within whose mind God enshrines the Truth,  
He realizes the worth of the Way of Yoga.  
He sees the One Lord in the sun and moon, at home and in the wilderness.  
His senseless routine is drowned in the flood of singing God's Praise.  
He contemplates none other than the Name, and desires no other blessing.  
In wisdom, meditation and rightful living, he remains wakeful.  
He remains absorbed in God's Fear, and does not stray from it.  
He remains constant in the Lord's Love.  
Who can appraise the worth of such a one?  
God dispels his doubts, and unites him with Himself.  
With the Guru's Grace, he arrives at the highest state of awareness.  
Perform the Guru's service and reflect on God, O man!  
Still your ego and do divine deeds.

Divine meditation, self-sacrifice, the technology of spiritual awareness,  
And the recitation of the Puranas are all contained in worshipping God,  
The Beyond of the beyond.

Again, before leaving, the Siri Singh Sahib was honored with a *siropa*. Then, somewhere on the *parikarma*, they found their American security guard and made their way to the Guru Nanak University guest house, where they were met by an expectant group of local Sikhs, as well as more Sikhs from America, and a spirited contingent of bodyguards from the Akhand Kirtani Jatha.

Early the next morning, the entire entourage set off in a thirty-car caravan for the Pakistan border. At the border town of Atari, the five boarded a train for Lahore, Pakistan. As it happened, this was exactly thirty years, to the very day and hour, since the Siri Singh Sahib had left the then newly-created state of Pakistan with the people of his village under very different circumstances.

By the late afternoon, they had arrived at the large Gurdwara in Nanakana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak. Since partition, it had been largely abandoned. One Sikh remained to maintain the building as best he could. In all, they found three Sikh families living there. They maintained a school in honor of Guru Nanak. After listening to a small boy reading from Guru Granth Sahib, the Siri Singh Sahib distributed money to all the children.

The following day was the actual birthday of the Fourth Guru, Guru Ram Das. That evening, the five found their way to the very house where, four hundred and forty-four years earlier, the holy soul of the Guru had been born. In the filtered moonlight outside, surrounded by the sights and sounds of the old city of Lahore, they said a prayer of thanks, and continued to the temple which stood where the Fifth Guru had given his life in glorious martyrdom.

The next destination was Bangkok, Thailand. There, they found the Sikh community to be quite large. Each morning, it gathered at the Gurdwara at five o'clock. For three days, the Siri Singh Sahib addressed the *Sadh Sangat*. On the last day, they held a reception at which Harbhajan Singh spoke forcefully about the need to live to the spirit of one's religion. Afterwards, Sat Simran Kaur, in turban and *chuni* and resplendent white, stood and spoke of the importance of keeping one's hair uncut and one's beard untied.

At Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, they arrived at the airport to find there was no one to receive them, and with all their baggage, none of the taxi drivers wanted to take them. Finally, a Sikh driver came who recognized the Siri Singh Sahib and arranged for sufficient drivers to take them to a hotel. Settling into the hotel, the question of the hour was, "Where is the *Sangat*?"

Yogi Bhajan replied to his travel companions, "Don't worry, you think we will stay one day and continue. *Sangat* will come and they won't let us go for a week!" He then excused himself to meditate, giving strict instructions not to be disturbed. By the time the Master returned, a half dozen local Sikhs had arrived and were waiting.

During their stay, the Siri Singh Sahib spoke at four Gurdwaras, some of them twice. In his talks, he touched on the importance of retaining essential Sikh values in one's daily life. Not only his talks made people think, also the presence of his entourage of Sikhs from the West, dressed in distinctive white *bana*.

As the Siri Singh Sahib prepared to give this talk, someone was chanting and playing the harmonium, while the *Sangat* sat without following, immersed in their own thoughts.

*"Tayree Mehar da bolnaa, tуди aagay ardaas. Guru, Guru, Waheguru, Guru Ramdas Guru, Aad Guray Nameh, Jugaad Guray Nameh, Satguray Nameh, Siri Gurdevay Nameh. Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ke Fateh!"*

"You all should have sung along with the Bibi. You wouldn't have lost anything by singing with her. That is not a good approach. You came into a holy place. This is where we share together the Word of the Guru. When you came here and bowed your head, the lines of your forehead you placed before the Guru. The lines on the forehead are your karma. Whatever is written, will happen. If the lines say you will experience sorrow that will surely happen. That is why you bow before Guru Granth Sahib, that there is a possibility that the problems can be avoided and sorrow can pass from us easily. Where there is dharma, there is no karma.

"Once there was a girl born in a family, they were sad. Normally old ladies forget their experiences and start judging other women. These women started saying, 'Sardar ji, how unfortunate that a daughter was born!'

"When the girl grew up, her mother said 'You have to go to someone else's house, so learn how to do makeup, because if you don't keep your husband happy, there will be problems.'

"The mom pressured her daughter a lot, and whenever they needed to go out, she would tell her daughter to get ready three or four hours before hand to look good. The girl complained to her father that every time we have to go out, I have to spend four hours on makeup.

"Her father said, 'If you want to do makeup, then do the makeup of good deeds. Do that type of makeup that it doesn't fade. Decorate yourself in God's way.'

"The daughter said, 'Dad, that is very good advice.'

"The next time her mother said, 'Ok, lets go! Are you ready?'

"The girl came out and had covered her face with a shawl.

"The mother said, 'What have you done?'

"And the daughter replied, 'Today I talked to dad and he said to do that type of makeup which

cannot come off, so today I did the makeup of mothers and daughters.'

"The mother replied, 'If you want to listen to your dad, then go with him to the party, don't come with me.' The mom went and left the daughter at home.

"The girl's father came home and saw she was home and asked, 'What happened?'

"The girl said, 'I listened to my dad, and mom said that if I do his type of makeup, I can go with him to the party, and she left.'

"The father said, 'No worries, my dear. Let's go! We are going to the same place anyways.'

"The daughter covered herself with the shawl and greeted all the guests. The owner of the house who arranged the party then said to the parents, 'Congratulations! I wish all the young ladies looked like your daughter.'

"In the following days, everyone who met the daughter would give her blessings. She was happy and as Guru had blessed her, everyone liked her. In her heart, a realization of humble virtue of the Guru awakened. In this way, if you live a simple life the lines on your forehead can change for the better.

"After a time, someone came to her parents with a proposal of marriage for the girl. The mother was afraid and started asking astrologers, pandits, asking, 'This is the young man they are suggesting. What will happen? Will she be happy?'

"The astrologers said, 'We can't say for certain. It is going to be up to God.'

"In the end, the father's prayers were answered and the daughter was married. Ever since she, who was good and kind and who prayed regularly, set foot inside her husband's house, the couple experienced good luck and fortune. The daughter kept her faith in God and she lived her life in that way.

"One day, her mother said to the astrologer, 'You said with God's blessings, my daughter could be alright, though I thought she would have a lot of problems. It turned out that she's quite happy in her life.'

"The astrologer said, 'According to the constellations, her married life was supposed to be bad, but if God changed her fate what can we do?'

"When you guys are born, you are born to do good deeds and bad deeds. Your virtue comes and goes. It is all a game of luck. But when a Sikh bows their head in front of God, the game of luck finishes and God's hand is placed on your head in blessing.

“A life of a Sikh is a simple life, and his 'makeup' should be to make God happy, not to make the world happy. When you endeavor to make the world happy, then you cut off your Guru. This makeup can only make one side happy, not both sides.

“*Gurbani* says, ‘*Kasam visaaray, tay kaamjaat* – One who forgets the Lord, is a prostitute.’

“There is only one thing that Guru Gobind Singh gave you, that is the path of a Sikh. The object isn't to obtain heaven. That is wrong thinking. For those of you are thinking of this way, it is wrong.

“To have more money and servants, this isn't a sign of happiness. We have seen a lot of rich people lying in bed suffering in pain. To be very young and beautiful is also not a sign of happiness. People that become way too rich and powerful, their children are idiots and they suffer from their own children. People who have a lot of arrogance and pride, they also find a point in their life where they hang their head in shame.

“If you that think you can get all the materialistic things in the world and you'll be guaranteed happiness, you are wrong. The more fashionable you are, the more your heart will be outside and will doubt. Problems will come to you, and your family will suffer and experience misfortune. If a Sardar does cheating and politics, making those kinds of friends and eating meat and drinking alcohol, he will be sick with physical ailments and lie in bed. Half of the life will then be spent in the hospital.

“In this world, we should live a simple Life. Guru Gobind Ji said ‘*Rehit pi-aaray mohe ko, sikh pi-aaraa naahin* – I do not care for those who merely pay me lip service. It is the discipline of my true disciples I love.’

“So now you question me, ‘Why do you tell us to take a shower with cold water in the morning? We have hot water coming out of the faucet.’

“It is very easy to answer that. People who don't take a shower with cold water in the morning will never be physically fit. You can use all the techniques, but this is a very simple science. There are tiny capillaries in your body. Your blue blood runs through your veins, but if the capillaries get stopped up, that is where all the problems in your body start. There is no other treatment to open these capillaries.

“The only treatment to open the capillaries is to stand under a shower with cold water first thing in the morning. When your body gets hit with cold water, it has to protect itself and the blood starts rushing at very fast speed to protect the body to maintain the temperature. The faster the blood flows, the more the capillaries open. That means you have health insurance for that day.

“Also, when you are hit with cold water and start to shiver, and as a Sikh you remember God and say, ‘*Waheguru!*’ then your *Manipur*, your third chakra, starts to open. Then, after coming out of the bath, you should cover yourself with a blanket and sit down.

“In the human being, the most powerful thing is the life force. Why is the Sardar jumping up and down? Because his *Ji*, his life force, is not right. So if your *Ji* is not right, then read the sacred Word of undying Being. *Japji* will fix your *Ji*.

“If you don't want to do that, you can become like Westerners and be pushed around. You won't have anything in front or behind you and your *Ji* will go bad.

“You guys have nothing. Your Malaysian dollar compared to an American dollar is nothing. People with millions are running around in the USA, and they are the ones reading *Japji*.

“It's not that they are my relatives and I am doing it for them, no. It is because they have no other options and have tried all other fashions. They have done their hair up and down, red, blue, yellow - whatever the world told them to do - and then their hair became like nails and they started crying. Now they have skin cancer, scalp problems, sitting in the hospital with their heads down, legs up. And when you ask them, they have dye cancer because they kept coloring their hair.

“Don't take me wrong. Go there and take a look. A lot of women are sick with skin problems.

“One Sikh came to me and said, ‘I am a follower of the Guru and my head is always hurting.’

“I said, ‘Sardar Ji, I'm not a doctor. Go to a doctor.’

“And the Sikh said, ‘If you teach doctors, then you can teach me too, so tell me so that I can get rid of these headaches. Whatever you tell me, I'll do it.’

“So I said, ‘Sardar Ji, I hope you get more pain. You don't have enough.’

“He said, ‘Why?’

“I said, ‘You are the reason it is happening because you are dyeing your own beard! You don't think it has side effects?’

“He said, ‘No, there is no connection between the two.’

“And I said, ‘Don't dye your face and you will be fine. Even a donkey would experience pain after all of these chemicals! Your body has acknowledged your age, but you are trying to tell others that you are still young?’

“You want to wrestle Guru Gobind Singh Ji? He's given you the maturity of white hair to give you wisdom. Your past is gone and you have passed many steps, and you should be okay with the white beard. When I went to America from India, I couldn't do much work there and half of my beard also became white.

“A Sikh said, ‘You weren't that old when you went. It was black, and now that you are back it is half white.’

“I said to them, ‘What should I do? God gave me this beard. It is not in my control.’

“The Sikh said, ‘It only costs a few dollars. Just do it slowly and it will become black and everyone will believe you if you tell them it became black again.’

“Then I said, ‘If it is my beard, then maybe I could color it, but it is Guru Gobind Singh Ji's beard, so I will not color my face black. Now you sit down and let me ask you a question. Write it down, if you want. Now I'm forty-five years old. When I left, I was forty-one. Do the calculation. If I spent five dollars a day on myself, take five dollars time forty-five years times three hundred and sixty-five days, and tell me the amount. So now whatever the amount it is, that will be how much I'll spend to make my beard white over the years. So now you want me to turn it into black after all the years of investment? Who would say I'm bright?’

“When my beard was black everyone was making fun of me, that I was different from outside and inside. No one believes a man with a black beard. So the things that you do for the world...

“There are five elements inside of you: fire, water, earth, space and air. So the element that is going to go with you and attach to God is space. The element that you will use on this planet is earth. The things that you do for the Earth will attach you to this planet. The things that you do with the space element, that will attach you to God.

“This Earth is not a permanent place to stay. This is not our destination. A plane is a plane. It is not the airport. It is a very powerful thing and it takes you from one place to another at a high speed – five hundred kilometers an hour at a height of thirty-three thousand feet - but it is not an airport. The thing the plane does is it takes you from one place to another. But if the plane drops you in the middle of the two destinations, you won't even know what happened to you.

“You are always thankful. We give them money and pray to Guru Ram Das. In the heart, we hope that the plane will stop at the airport on the other end, not in the middle. This is what you understand. We are talking about Earth, planet Earth.

“After this life, where will you end up? This is only a sixty to sixty-five-year game. Do the calculation. It is easy.

“For twenty years, you think, 'I'm going to do this and that, day and night.' From twenty to forty years, you work hard to achieve all of your dreams. Then you start getting stressed around forty to sixty, and start dreaming again. And then around sixty, you get a letter from God that your time is up, and then you realize your visit is over and you stress, ‘How will I go back? With what face?’



“Then you call priests, and start praying at home, and then it is hard to recite God's name and say ‘Waheguru.’ All your young life, you watched movies and fooled around, drank scotch on the rocks.

“And people ask me, ‘Yogi, have you tried this type of alcohol?’

“I tell them, ‘The people who gave you birth, they died, and now you spent money from your pocket and make yourself a fool.’

“Once an Englishman asked me, ‘You are a holy man. Tell me why do people drink alcohol? Everyone's house you go to, they offer you booze and ask which proof of whiskey you want to drink.’

“I said, ‘Very simple. No one can trust another. Even at home, one doesn't believe in them, so they say, “Let’s get them drunk and make them show their real feelings.”’ So you spend two to three thousand dollars, feed them, and then make fun of them - that they were drunk, that they were falling. But, of course, they would fall because you gave them too much. They couldn't stand on their feet. They also drink too much because it is free.

“This kind of drinking – ‘*Nam Kamari Nanaka Chardi Rahe Din Raat*’ - those that have intoxication of God's name they always stay in the conscious mind.’ Those people, whatever happens good or bad, they see it all as a God's act. They do not do anything on their own. They stay in God's Will. That is what Guru ji has said is ‘*Jeevan Mukh*.’

“A Sikh does not look for God. It is just a saying of the *brahmins*. How do you find God?

“So imagine I'm in Kaula Lumpur and God is gone to another city. Then what? People are so stupid, they say God is everywhere, but then they go searching for him!

“Once I asked a Christian, ‘You guys say God is everywhere so why are you searching for him? That is so stupid.’

“The Christian said, ‘I never thought about it.’

“And I said ‘Yeah, because you didn't have someone born to help you understand.’

“Listen, God is in everyone. The person who is killing an animal, do you think he'll give you a blessing? If you catch a chicken that can't defend herself and twist her neck, would she like it? Try it yourself. Twist your own neck. You have a neck? Put the same seasonings on yourself that you put on the chicken. You'll be more tasty. Everyday, eat one of your family members.

“If you like your own life, then you should like everyone's life. If your glass is empty and you put

water in, the glass will only hold the water as big as the glass, then the leftover will fall over the glass. When you are kind to your own life, then you can be kind to other people's life also. If you aren't kind to yourself, then you can't be kind to others. If you don't love yourself, then you shouldn't lecture others.'

"Once a *ragi* Singh came, and one Sant came and they started a *katha* for four hours. After they came, the Sant came to sit with me and said, 'Yogi, you weren't there when we did the *katha*.'

"And I said, 'Yes, you are right. My mind wasn't in the *kirtan* today and you should consider yourself lucky that I didn't stop you during the *kirtan*. I was going to say in your ear that this *ragi* reading *Gurbani* should stop it. That would be for the best.'

"And he said, 'Waheguru, Waheguru... Why?'

"I said, 'While the *ragi* was reading *Gurbani* and was thinking that no one had given him any money, I didn't look at his body, I saw his soul. I don't recognize many people's bodies, but I recognize their souls. When I was young I used to look at bodies, but now I'm old, so I just look at their soul. Every time I listened to the *ragi*, I kept seeing a dollar in front of me. Then, I was so upset with that. This *ragi* came with you, and you are my guest, so what could I do? Your *Gurbani* was good, but that dollar didn't give me peace and I thought, "Lets call this guy inside and talk to him."'

"Then the sant said, 'No, no, he's been doing *kirtan* with us for a long time.'

"I came inside and said, 'Bhai Sahib, today you were thinking of dollars during each *Shabad*,'

"And the *ragi* said, 'Everyone has a stomach.'

"And I said, 'You are with Santji and you still have a stomach? When you didn't have teeth, God gave you milk. Now you have teeth and you think God won't give you food? *Guru da Singh*, this morning I had decided to give the *kirtan jatha* a check for five hundred dollars, and here it is, and now I've removed the two zeros and it is a check for five dollars only. You have lost four hundred and ninety-five dollars.'

At this point, the Siri Singh Sahib started to recite Mool Mantra for the *Sangat*.

"This is the mantra of all mantras. It is big, not small. If you do five great sacrificial worships, it is equal to one Mool Mantra. Shri Ram Chandra did one great sacrificial worship in his whole life.

"Sikh dharma is a religion of knowledge and arms, but you are leaving the Granth and focusing on fighting with others. That is not right. Arms should be used only when you need to protect the weak.

"After the Mool Mantra, Guru Nanak made the second Verse: '*Sochai soch na hova-ee, jay sochee lakh vaar.*' He's saying, 'Don't think. Don't stay in thoughts. Have faith.' We lose our inner strength by thinking. You will disturb the heart that had the faith, so don't think too much. It does not change any results. Just have faith in *Akaal Purakh*."

"Once a Singh said to me, 'You are blind!'"

"I replied, 'How can you say that? Do I not have two eyes?'"

"The Singh said, 'In after every talk, you say God does everything. By so saying, you are making a fool of other people. You do everything, not God.'

"I replied, 'I see God doing everything every day.'

"The Singh continued, 'Don't lie. So you are saying that your God is working and mine isn't? You are making the public into fools.'

"After a few days, both of us were traveling in a car with a driver, taking the Singh to the airport. The Singh complained to me, 'You have caused me to be late to get to the airport because you took so long to do your prayer today. Normally you take five minutes to do the prayer and today you took thirty minutes. That is why I'm late.'

"I said 'My heart wanted to do a longer prayer today, so I'm sorry it took longer'.

"In anger, the Singh said 'If that is the case, why don't we go back to do more prayer?'"

"I said, 'Don't stress. Sometimes planes can be five minutes late too.'

"They arrived at the airport and started taking the luggage out of the car.

"I said, 'Before you get the stuff out of the car, go find out if they will even let you go on the plane first.'

"The Singh went and checked. When he returned, he said, 'Take my stuff out of the car. My plane is an hour and a half late. It isn't even here yet.'

"So I said, 'Then I could have done an even longer prayer!'"

"You only think of yourself. Moods are not foolish. Moods exist in someone who has a brain but doesn't use it. In today's words, we are born in Guru Nanak's house, but we don't listen to him.

"Once my grandfather told me, 'Get ready this evening and you are going someplace with me.'

“I said 'okay.’

“In the evening, my grandfather came and said, ‘Are you ready?’

“And I said, ‘Yes, I'm ready.’ I was eight or nine years old at the time.

“My grandfather said, 'Today I'm going to show you something that will clear your mind.’

“When we got to the village, there was a function going on with the lower class people. They had caught a big pig and they were surrounding the pig. The pig was big and wouldn't let anyone come close to him.

“Then, after an hour we saw this drama take place. One young man used a sword and injured the pig seriously. Everyone celebrated, but I felt bad about what had happened.

“I thought, ‘If you want to kill an animal then just do it. Why do you taunt it for an hour and exhaust it and then injure it?’

The injured pig was screaming and crying and they tied him up and hung him on top of the fire and started rotating him. So just imagine, he was injured, crying in pain and being cooked alive, and everyone around him were laughing and celebrating. After a while, he died and was roasted.

“I turned to my grandfather and said, 'Why did you show me this? I will never forget this my whole life. Even if I do two *Kirtan Sohilas*, I still won't be able to sleep. Why did you show me this?’

“My grandfather was like a saint, and he said, 'I wanted to explain something to you. This pig was a Sikh in his last birth. The entire time he was being beaten and roasted, I reciting *Japji* for his soul. This Sikh had betrayed the Guru. He had betrayed all of these people in his past life. All of these people were also Sikhs in their past lives. This man-pig was in charge of all of these people in his past life and he took them away from God. He didn't guide them properly. So now these people have taken revenge on him in this life. Because he did some service of the Guru in his past life, this morning I was chosen to do this recitation so that he can die peacefully and go to his next life properly.’

“I said, 'You had an order from God to do this recitation for him, but I was terrified and chanting “*Waheguru, Waheguru*” the entire time too!’

“My grandfather said, 'Today he completed his life cycle as a pig. So now what will happen is he will take birth in the next village in a Sikh family.’

“I started thinking and kept thinking about it as we went home. When I got home, I told my mother, ‘You have a friend in the next village. Why don't you go visit your friend?’

“She said 'Why?’

“I said, 'Go, and I want to go too.’

“She said, 'It is my friend, so what is your problem? Why do you want to go see her? What’s going on?’ Finally she relented, ‘Fine, we can go tomorrow. Call the buggy service and we'll go there.’

“So the next day we got ready and left. When we got there, I asked my mom to find out if their daughter in law was pregnant.

“My mother said, ‘Are you crazy? Why would I ask that question?’

“And I said, 'Just ask the question and I'll explain later, but just ask the question please.’

“So my mother asked and they said, 'Yes, she is pregnant. We just finished the recitation for the hundred and twentieth day yesterday. According to our belief, after hundred and twenty days the soul comes into the body.’

“I said, 'Mom, tell them she's going to have a boy.’

“My mother said, 'No no, we can't say that. What if it's a girl?’

“I said, 'All the other babies born in the world will be girls, but this family will definitely have a boy. Believe me, and just tell them’.

“She said, ‘I'm not going to say anything. If you want to, go ahead yourself.’

“So then I said, ‘I think your oldest daughter-in-law will have a boy.’

“The lady was pleased and found some sweets and fed it to me to make my mouth sweet. Five months later, God blessed them with a son, so then I knew what my grandfather had said was true.

“Later on, my mother asked, 'How did you know that they were going to have a son?’

“I explained the whole story about the dead pig.

“My mother said, 'Okay, stay quiet now. Don't tell them the story or they'll be upset a dead pig has been born into their family. It will cause big problems. I shouldn't have asked to begin with! Now don't tell anyone.’

“On the occasion of the ceremony celebrating the coming out of the mother and child forty days after the birth, my mother tricked me and took me to a different village so I wouldn't cause problems.

“So *Sangat* ji, don't think this life is it. This is ongoing.

“If you cut a bit of your beard, then you are going away from the Guru. Your hair won't say anything and no one else is losing anything by your doing it. If you want to buy a bottle of liquor and you see the seal is broken, no one buys that bottle. You guys break your seals by cutting your hair and then you say, ‘Hey, God please bless me!’

“God will bless you, but your connection has been broken, right? He wants to bless you.

“All of these women that have their hair cut for fashion, when they get older, no one listens to them. So then they go to black magic people to figure out how to control their husbands, but it doesn't work.

“In the olden times, if a woman made two braids then she ended up with two marriages, and if you wanted one husband, she would make one braid. Now these women have their hair open and have thousands of hairs, so God bless them! You should sit quietly and reflect and think about what will happen in your life.

“*Antar guru aaraadhanaa, jehvaa jap gur naa-o. Naytree satiguru paykhnaa, sravnee sunnaa gur naa-o. Satigur saytee rati-aa, dargeh paa-ee-ai thaa-o. Kaaho naanak kirpaa karay, jis no eh vath day-i. Jag meh utam kaadhee-eh virlay kay-ee kay-ee.* – See the Guru within you and with your tongue recite the Guru's name. With your eyes, see the Guru. With your ears, hear the Guru's name. One absorbed in the Guru, obtains a place at God's court. Says Nanak, the one who is so blessed receives this gift. In this world, they are considered the highest, but they are few and far between.’

“After doing big deeds you were born as a human. And by doing bigger deeds you can find the Guru. All of this is the Guru's blessing. After studying for fourteen or fifteen years, you get a job that pays you a basic salary, then you do business for the next fourteen or fifteen years, then you think about getting your family married, and so on...

“This is the cycle of life, but this life is too earthly. You should think beyond this life. Everyone does grocery shopping, but don't forget the power of Guru Nanak's real bargain with God. What kind of bargain do you make with God?

“If you think that two or three hundred thousand people became Sikh because Yogiji did some type of magic, then you are wrong. That is not the case. Those people were miserable because they overdid fashion, eating, and the rest, but couldn't find peace. That is why they came to Sikh dharma.

“People are brought to me in cars built like a jail. When those people are brought to me, I say, 'What happened to him?'

"And they say, 'He's mentally upset. That is why he's here.'

“They brought him to me and now he's better and doing business in the US. They said, ‘You made him from a monkey to a man. What did you do?’

“A lot of people ask me why we keep a long beard. A professor came to me and he asked me this question actually. I told the professor to come the next day to meet with me. The next day we both met wearing shorts. I said, 'Lets go play badminton.'

“You know, badminton looks very easy, but it can be very tiring. After five or six sets, there is no juice left in your body. So we played five or six games together. After that, we picked up the tennis rackets and played a couple of games of tennis.

“The professor said, 'I'm hungry.'

“I told him, ‘Okay, lets go walk along the ocean and then we'll eat, but the agreement is whatever I do, you have to do the same thing.’ So we took off our shoes and kept walking along the sand. We kept walking and walking and it was almost 5 pm.

“Then the professor said, ‘Now what?’

“I said, 'Now we will take a bath in the ocean.'

“Then he said, ‘Now it is *Rehira*s time, so we will pray now.’

“We sat on the sand and recited *Rehira*s, and then he said, 'Now what? Are we going to walk back the five or six kilometers or are we taking a car back?’

“I said, ‘No, we will walk back.’ So we walked back. We arrived back to where the car was and sat in the car and went home.

“The professor said, 'I'm really tired.'

“I said, ‘Really? I was with you the whole time. Whatever you did, I did. Anyways, there is one last thing for two hours we are going to do.’

“The professor said, 'Really? I can't even move!'

“So I gave him a wooden comb and told him, ‘Comb your hair, half backwards and half front,’ even though he didn't have that many hair. I told him to do that fifteen to twenty times to his hair.

“The professor asked, 'What will this do?’

“I said, ‘Never mind. Just do it.’

“The professor did that and also washed his face with cold water as I instructed. Then he said, ‘I’m not tired anymore.’

“So I said, ‘Don't worry. We aren't going anywhere. Just think! After combing your short hair, you have so much energy. Imagine how much energy I have with my three feet of hair!’

“Nature has given us this power so a man doesn't get tired. This wooden comb in our hair helps our magnetic field. God is not a fool. He has given us a short life. He didn't give man anything to protect himself like sharp teeth or the like. Instead, God gave man intuition.

“If you have this intuition, you can achieve anything. It is a sixth sense that will tell you what is happening next. If in his left brain and right brain, there is a difference of one second delay, then he is even worse than an animal. If you look at the great beings for Christians, Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs, whenever they reach a higher level of consciousness, they are shown with longer hair and beards.

“Once, someone said to Rabindranath Tagore, ‘We hear you have found God. What is the first thing you did when you realized him?’ Rabindranath Tagore said, ‘The first thing I did was throw away my shaving kit.’

“Guru Gobind Singh Ji didn't force you to have hair. He knew all of this. That is why he did said: ‘*Jab lag khaalsaa rahay ni-aaraa, tab lag tayj dayo mai saaraa. Jab eh karay bipran kee reet, tab mein na karu in kee parteet* – So long as Khalsa lives distinctively, I will bestow on it all my glory. When they follow the way of the crowd, I will sever my connection.’

“From sheep, he took you and made you Sikhs and now you are known as lions. The lion is an animal that is more powerful and the leader of all animals. He can kill an elephant and a man. There is a beast hidden in every human being, but now you have surpassed that brutish nature.

“Guru Gobind Singh called a Sikh lady ‘Kaur’ because she walks and talk like a princess. You are Guru Gobind Singh Ji's daughters. But now these daughters have cut their hair and put dirt into their hair and their families. They are cheapening their bodies to deal them in the marketplace, still they say they are 'Sikh.’ Do you think the Guru would like that?

“In America, the ladies wanted to take *Amrit*. I said, ‘Listen, *bana* is very important. You should only wear the *bana* that Guru has given.’ So then they started wearing turbans. Now there are at least one hundred thousand Sikh women in the US.

“We will show the video. There are two to three hundred women, and they live with pride. They call themselves by names like 'Sardarni Premka Kaur Khalsa' because they consider Guru Gobind Singh ji as their father and Guru, but whoever has gone by the way of worldly fashion, they have lost everything.



“Now, you Non-Resident Indians, you have to start thinking very carefully. If you can't become true Sikhs, leave it alone. Go to a church or become Muslim. Do whatever you want to do. Just take one side. You can't be on both sides. It is not a good thing.

“I'm telling you as a friend. After thousands of years, people finally get to the stage of a human incarnation. To find a Guru is such a big thing, but you have a Guru and you don't appreciate him.

“So far as the world is concerned, all we need is to eat two *rotis*. I went to Canada. A relative of mine lives there. One day, I went to their house and said, ‘You are my friend, but you should regulate the food your children eat.’ And I said, ‘You will learn one day what I mean.’ All those children did was drink juice, eat eggs, and keep on eating, non-stop.

“The father said, ‘We came to Canada to work and eat. What else do you want?’

“They all became big and round and hard to pass through the doors, eight months in the hospital and four months at home. After a while, he came to Los Angeles with his whole family to see me. I didn't send a car to get them. I sent my people to go get them in taxi cabs.

“When they arrived, they said, ‘Why didn't you send your car to get us?’

“I said, ‘I didn't want to break the shocks of my car to pick you guys up. This car is for humans, not elephants.’

“His relative said, ‘We made a mistake. Everyone said they can't help us, so we've come to you for help.’ He had three daughters and one son that were all like baby elephants.

“I told him, ‘I'll help them. You go back to Canada. You've done your job and I'll do mine.’

“I called a truck and put all four in the truck and sent them to my farm house, and I called ahead, ‘I'm sending four elephant kids. Make them into deer kids.’

“The next morning, they were all so hungry and looking for food. There was nothing but trees and nothing to eat but water everywhere. They said, ‘We are hungry,’

“They were told, ‘Drink cold water and stay cool.’

“Over five months, they ate little and were given a lot of water. Eventually everybody started noticing their actual features, what they looked like before everything was wrong.

“These days, women are obsessed with eyebrow trimming. They forget what they are for. They don't know what the eyebrows are for. There is a nerve across these eyebrows and the hair protects the nerve. You women who rip off their hair, think carefully! It impacts your thinking. This is known

from Greek times when they captured women and intentionally took their eyebrows off to prevent women from thinking. You guys are screwing yourselves. One starts, the second starts, and so on. All they are doing is their eyebrows!

“The youngsters got better after five months and then we put them in my car and dropped them off at the airport and told them to eat *daal* and *roti* only. I gave them whole wheat *roti* with *dahi* all day. I told them, 'If you don't follow these instructions, I will send you a bill for keeping you here for the past six months.' Till now, they follow my instructions and are fine.

“Our body is a temple. God lives there. We need to take care of it. Consider your body God's property.

“Normally if people come to me, I charge them five thousand dollars to fix them. I said, ‘You are a Guru's Sikh and you are my relative. I did free treatment for you.’

“Up till now, they eat *roti* and yogurt and are healthy. All their lives, they had over stimulated their glands, and even if they made a small mistake they made the same mistake.

“This body is a temple. God lives inside. The angels pray to have a human body. It is not a small thing. God gave this body to us, but we need to think of it as his property. ‘*Gur kirpaa tay bhagat kamaa-ee, taa eh manas dayhee paa-ee* –By the grace of the Guru, this human body is obtained.’

“You think White people are more intelligent, but I don't agree with you. If you take a look into their homes, you'll realize how sad they are. You think I send them a letter to come to do yoga with me? No, they have no other place to go. Americans don't follow me because I have horns on my head. They don't have a choice. Their mind is so hard!

“I met a man once. They told me he was a president of some company. He was a very powerful man. I asked why he came to see me. He told me he couldn't sleep. He had tried everything, but still could not sleep. We did some treatments and he started be able to sleep. Now he recites *Kirtan Sohila* at night and then goes to sleep. *Kirtan Sohila* is our God's gift and we don't appreciate it because it is given to us.

“*Saabat soorat guru kee bhaanay beimaan. Us moorakh ko kyaa kahayay ko-I na kahay inso-an* – The body is God's temple. It is God's gift. Even angels pray for a human incarnation. Then why are you destroying this gift?’ If a mother is going to give birth, then give it to a proper child. Otherwise, just keep a dog or cat at home and take care of them. You are in this world and remember my word, in the coming twenty-five to thirty-six years, Guru Nanak's time is going to start from 2011.

“Right now, it is 1977. We've been on this planet for four billion years. So right now there are 4.2 billion people on the planet, and if everything goes alright and we don't destroy the planet, there should be 4.4 billion more people in the coming twenty-five to thirty-six years. That means by 2011,

you'll have 8.6 billion people on this planet and it will be so congested, half of those people will be mentally challenged. That means 2.1 billion people will have the body of the human, but will be like a ghost mentally.

“Where will they go? Why do you think all these White people have a beard and white turban? I haven't done any black magic on them. I'm not even happy talking to them. Sometimes, I kick these people out. Sikh dharma is not for everyone. If you can't keep up, then leave. You can go become Muslim, if you want.

“People here, wake up at 3 a.m., wash with cold water and say, '*Waheguru, Waheguru...*' They know they have nowhere else to go.

“For you this is a new fashion. I was in a hotel with Richard and said, 'What's happened? Everyone has become a ma'am.'

“He said, 'In the last ten years, this happened.'

“What will happen to them? If you show these women the US and what is happening to the women there, then they will learn. By leaving your and your God's culture, why are you following a crazy culture like theirs? Think, if you take a road from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok then it will take you to Bangkok, right?

“If you follow these folks, then you will get divorce, alcohol, arguments, sadness, cheating on each other, 'half dad' and 'step mom.' If you want to do this, we can't say anything to you.

“You want to cut your hair short? Go ahead! I don't care. You aren't doing me any favors!

“I tell them to their face that there are 25 million crazy people living here. If you want to join them, go ahead. There is no contract to keep you here with me. The people who have left the religion will do what suits them.

“If you have a Guru, then you follow your Guru and his teachings. The Guru's thinking connects you with your soul, and if you follow your own thinking, it connects you to the cycle of life.

“By saying this, forgive me if I hurt your feelings. Just remember, without Guru, there is no brain. Don't put your feet in two boats. Make a decision which path you want to follow. So if you wear a turban, but don't pray? You're not a Sikh. You call yourself 'Sikh' and you don't even know *Japji Sahib*?

“You guys were saying, 'I made this Gurdwara, blah blah...'

“And I said back, 'Then who made the Guru?'

“And they said 'Guru is Guru.’

“I said, ‘If you can make a Gurdwara, then you can make Guru also. You can make Guru out of wood. I should follow you. Why have I been praying to Guru Nanak my whole life?’

“Then they said, 'No, Yogi Ji, I just spent the money.’

“Then I said, 'How did the money come?’

“And they said, 'I earned it.’

“And I said again, ‘You had a machine at home to print the money? Can’t you be thankful for what you have? God gave it to you! Why do you have so much pride that YOU made the money and Gurdwara. Stay humble.’

“He said, 'Are you angry at me!?’

“And I said, 'Okay, you want to hear the truth? You were a donkey in your past life. Once a *sadhu* sat on you and traveled. That is why you became human in this life. Then I said to him, ‘You have two sons and one daughter, right?’

“And he said, 'Yes.’

“Then I said, 'You had three sons before and they died?’

“And he said, 'Yes.’

“So I said, 'They were from your past and that is why they died. Now I'm telling you, one of your body parts are going to die. When you were a donkey, you kicked a *sadhu* with your leg. That leg is going to die.’ That now the guy lives in the US and only has one leg and he is crying.

“I said, 'I told you what would happen. This is the circle of life. The *sadhu*'s blessings from your last birth helped you. Otherwise, you would never have had anything.

“Now the man says, ‘Have mercy on me!’

“And I tell him, 'Your leg is all dried up. It can't be fixed, but if your leg gets better, then I'll become your follower. You should show the world your leg and tell them not to have too much pride in what God gives you. I gave you a warning five years ago this is what would happen to you.’

“Now in the US, there are hundreds of thousands of people who come and pray to Guru Ram Das. I never told them to become Sikh or to wear a turban and didn't tell them what the Sikh religion

is. I'm sitting in God's temple. Not a single person can say that Yogi ji told me to become Sikh. They do two and a half hours of recitation of *Gurbani* every day in the morning, close their eyes and pray.

“Why, whenever you go to someone's funeral, you cry so loud, and when you have to recite God's Name then your mouth gets dry? Today, I will tell you what *simran* is and what it does for you. As long as this Bibi is doing *Naam Simran*, you do it with her. That is the only partnership we have.

“I'm from the U.S. You guys are from Malaysia. We have nothing in common. We enjoy the country that we live in. We don't need anything from you. We have more people there. We came because Sikh dharma is here from Guru Nanak's time. I had a directive to see how much Sikh dharma is out in the world and that is what I've come here to do. I didn't make an announcement here that you should come.

“You know, there is never a saint in Sikh dharma. Everyone is a saint. Whoever has Guru, they don't need anyone else. Guru is *Bani* and makes you become like Guru. Then there is no difference between you and our Fifth Guru. At that moment, you are joined with Guru. We all do good and bad deeds. How Guru Arjan Dev had his seventh chakra, that is how your head moves when you are in that state of mind during recitation of *Gurbani*.

“Last night, I said to put your life on the line. That is the fire sacrifice. In the regular fire ceremony, ghee goes into the fire, but this is not an ordinary sacrifice. In this case, it is the life that is given into that sacrifice.

“We do not translate *pavan* as wind. For us, it is the life force. If you don't give your life's energy to pray to God, that is why you have all of these joint problems. You can't pray or sit properly. Those are your problems during prayer. Instead of praying, you start thinking.

“Yesterday, you had two women sitting here and they were saying God's name by themselves. You guys go to learn meditation from outside, but it started from you and our culture. You guys were givers and now you are asking others to give it to you. The whole world was looking up to you and now you look up to the world?

“I don't have any horns, and I don't have a trunk like *Ganesha*. I tell people it is Guru Gobind Singh ji's blessings to keep our hair. If you don't want to, then get out.

“They say they will give me lots of money and they want to stay, but I say, ‘No, if you can't follow the rules then leave. Here there is *Bani* first, then *bana*, *sewa*, *simran*. If you agree to all four, then come to our Gurdwara, and if you don't follow it, then leave.’

“If you are so proud that you are Sikh, then come to Vancouver and see the Sikhism there. Once I asked Chemela Singh, ‘How much land do you own?’

“And he said, ‘Go all the way to the end and use a binocular, all the way to the end of the mountain is mine.’

“I said, ‘How about your kids?’

“And he said, ‘They all left me.’

“I said, ‘What happened?’

“I said, ‘They were drunk and got into fights and police arrested them. I have no one to make my dinner.’

“‘What about your wife?’

“‘Oh, she's sitting outside the jail in a tent waiting for my sons to come out.’

“That is the situation right now. They have a lot of money and land, but if you ask someone, ‘What is the Guru's name?’ then they say, ‘Which guy?’ They don't know who God is. If these women are not proud that they are Sikh, how will their children be proud?

“There are five or six *paathis* sitting here and if they open their mouth, the Gurdwara committee will kick them out because they don't like what they hear.

“This is why we are saying, ‘*Naam japo*’ - pray to God, and I'll show you how. If someone from the crazy, Western world can become Sikh, then why can't you become Sikh? You were born from the land of Sikh dharma.

“This lady is going to start singing a *Shabad* that everyone knows. I am asking all of you to follow her. It doesn't matter if you are seven or seventy. You are all children of God. Let's all join together and sing God's Name. Chant with them and your hearts will open. I learned Sikh dharma from these people. I wasn't a complete Sikh before and they taught me how to chant God's name. I came to teach them to chant, but they taught me. Now let us meditate and pray.”

During their stay in Kuala Lumpur, the Siri Singh Sahib also met with teenagers. Soon, he had them sitting straight, breathing deeply, and chanting “*Wahay Guroo*” long and powerfully! He taught a class to the children as well. In simple language, he explained to them the necessity of a meditative mind for finding fulfilment here and liberation hereafter.

The travellers accepted an invitation to visit the home of one of the richest families in the city. When they entered, they were attracted by the simple modesty of the decor. It reflected the character of the matriarch of that Sikh household, one Sardarni Gurcharn Kaur. When Sikhs from the West met her, they could see the devotion and respect that lit up this saintly woman's heart. The Siri

Singh Sahib honored their host's example, saying that, through the constant repetition of the Name, Sardarni Gurcharn Kaur had liberated herself in her own lifetime. Like a true saint, she had managed to remain detached from the world of attachments.

Next stop, Guru Ram Das Ashram in Hong Kong. Guruneel Singh and Gurjivan Kaur, who had first met at the 1973 Summer Solstice Sadhana in New Mexico, had arrived, newly married, in Hong Kong in the August of 1974. After three years teaching at the University of Hong Kong, Guruneel Singh was working as a clinical psychologist in private practice and Gurjivan Kaur was teaching classes in Kundalini Yoga. In the coming years, they would broaden the scope of their teaching to the Philippines and Australia.

Hong Kong, being the most densely populated place on Earth, produced a lot of stress. From the combination of the intensely competitive business culture and the harsh legacy of colonialism, people were hurting inside. Those who came for classes, appreciated them as an occasion where they could let their guard down, relax, and feel that someone cared about their well-being.

Once there, the Siri Singh Sahib taught a meditation class at the university. It was his second visit, having come with Sat Simran Kaur and Dr. Alan Singh Weiss, a year earlier. The Master enjoyed rough-housing with the Guruneel and Gurujivan's new daughter, Mukande Kaur. He also gave a talk at the Gurdwara, the Khalsa Diwan of Hong Kong. Many of the members of the congregation, used to the scorn and prejudices of the majority Chinese, were openly moved at the inspiring words of the Guru's messenger.

The group continued to Japan. There, they met Sat Want Kaur and Singh and accompanied the Siri Singh Sahib as he taught a two-day meditation course in Kobe. It was remarkable to hear everyone singing the Long Time Sun song in Japanese. In the evening, the Master treated everyone to his wonderful cooking, while engaging in some family counselling with a student and his wife. They then proceeded to give a three-day White Tantric Yoga course in Tokyo.

Next, it was on to Honolulu, Hawaii, where Guru Sewak Kaur and Singh graciously hosted everyone for a few days and helped them recover from their travel-weariness. After a couple of hours soaking in the ocean at Waikiki beach, the Siri Singh Sahib continued his work, teaching and counselling others into the early hours of each morning.

At last, the group continued on to northern North America, to Anchorage, Alaska, where they were met by Nirvair Kaur and Singh. Because their Guru Ram Das Ashram living quarters were rather small and they had a baby, the travellers stayed at the Captain Cook Inn. There, they found a restaurant that offered them a vegetarian "Buddhist feast," which the owner told them was more popular than their meat dishes.

Little Siri Bhagvati Kaur, just a few months old, was a center of attention. For his part, Nirvair Singh was fortunate to offer an accredited course in Kundalini Yoga at the University of Alaska, which

he had started shortly after arriving in Anchorage in July of 1975. Together, Nirvair Kaur and Singh ran a growing natural foods business.

The Siri Singh Sahib found the community very strong, the ashram perfect, and that everyone was well-respected. On Friday evening the White Tantric Yoga course began, then continued through Saturday and Sunday. With all that behind them, and a loving farewell, the world tour ended after nearly a month, with a final flight to Los Angeles.

Afterwards, the Siri Singh Sahib remarked, "Around the world, everybody was having problems, and they asked, 'How are these American Sikhs radiant? What do they do?'

"They get up in the morning, though they cheat most of the time, but still they get up in the morning and take a cold shower.'

"What else do they do?'

"Once in a while, under some pressure of Yogi Bhajanism or something, they do come to *sadhana*.'

"What else do they do?'

"Under social pressure, they have to wear white and when they don't, everyone looks and asks, "What? What? What?" and nobody wants to stand "What? What? What?" and that does help the radiance of the magnetic field and the aura.'

"What else do they do?'

"Somehow, once in a while, they may steal an egg here and there, but normally they are vegetarian.'

"And what else do they do?'

"They are just trying to do only one thing. They are trying to show the world that every American is not a nut.'"

## "Devotion"

Knowing you very well, I have learned one lesson: no knowledge works, no teaching works, no system works. Totally, it is a lie. Only one thing works and that is devotion. Nothing else works and that is the bitter truth which people do not want to learn. Good luck!



I still remember, and I ask myself sometime, had I not developed a devotion to “higher learning,” I could never have learned. Born in a rich family, having everything in the world, I would have been a nut. Yeah, you know, you want everything, you get everything. And later on, you want everything and you get nothing!

That’s how we spoil our American children. En bloc, every mother here should be shot by a firing squad consisting of forty people. Forty bullets should sit in her because as a mother, she is not teaching a child what is called “it’s time and space.” And that is a fundamental responsibility nobody else on this planet can teach. It is a tragedy.

Only the mother of the child can tell the child “Wait!” and “Stop!” and “Pl-ease !”

No, no... “John wants this. John wants that. John, I’ll get it for you. John, just wait. John...”  
The John expands like an idiot.

When a mother inflates the ego, only death can save the man. There is a wonderful story if you ever read the scriptures. There was a man. Finally, he reached to the point that he was ordered to be hanged. Now in India under British rule there was a situation where if a man was to be hanged and no appeal was left, he was asked three days in advance his last wish which reasonably can be meted out.

So this man was asked, “Is there any last wish of yours?”

He said, “Yeah. One.”

They said, “What?”

He said, “I want to talk to my mother and whisper in her ear.”

Clever as he was, he knew nothing more can happen, so when the mother came, he hugged her and said, “Mom,” and he took her ear in his both and chopped it off.

It was such a dreadful scene that everybody shivered. What, this man who is dying in seven more minutes, can do to his mother like this! So they got mad at him. They said, “What are you doing?”

He said, “This is the minimum I could do, and I have done it. If she would have stopped me a long ago, if she would have stopped me and not catered to my ego, I would not have been driven to this nuisance day. In five more minutes, I will be standing there, a rope around my neck, and you are going to say “Drop the platform!” and I’ll be hanging. This would not have come to me if she would have discharged her responsibility to tell me things do not always go my way.”

In America, you have been taught totally in reverse. You have been told just not to say to your

children anything. Thanks to these neurotic psychiatrists and psychologists in America, they have totally ruined you.

My fear is that in a couple more years, say in another century, we are going to fight somehow a war in Africa and a lot of lives will be lost and George Washington's prophesy must come true. Turn of the century is coming. You have forgotten all of the history. I remember it. Now if that happens and that tragedy engulfs us, life will not be easy here. Now, when the times are not easy, only one thing can make you stand and that is your faith, your devotion. A neurotic has everything in the world, but devotion.

## The Swinger

Somebody once said to the Master in a private conversation, "You know Yogi Bhanjan, I am in great pain. I am willing to do anything, even if I have to stand on my head for the rest of my life."

Yogi Bhanjan replied, "You are such a rich man. You have come in such a concealed, private manner in this party, and you want to see me. What are you afraid of? Why couldn't you call my ashram and get a direct appointment?"

He said, "I am not worthy of that. I just have no hope."

"Alright, what is your problem?"

"My problem is in this society I am known as a 'swinger' and now I am forty-six."

"Then what?"

"Now I want to settle down."

"Sure, you can do."

"I got everything I want, but this isn't going to serve me any more."

"For a person to erase his reputation and to move a larger area, twenty-five years are required. So forty-six and twenty-five... fifty, sixty, seventy-one. And by that time I don't think you will need a marriage."

"Almost right."

Yogi Bhanjan concluded by saying, "Well, too late. Next incarnation."

It takes forty days to get a reputation. It takes twenty-five years to get rid of it.

### **“First Is *Bana*”**

Spirituality is not a joke. It is the ultimate initiative of the man. Some of you are very good, very beautiful. At least you are doing a fundamental. Your *bana* is right. First is *bana*. You wear white, the beautiful color. Seven colours meet in it. Seven seas. Seven continents. Platform of levitation. Seven colours, they meet in one colour, white. It is the most difficult color, my friends, to wear.

I am not a joker. I know the science of humanology and I am going to be considered on this planet, the father of the science of humanology, and without that, the Aquarius Age will not live. See with what easiness and confidence I am saying this. Without it, human beings won't survive. It will be an essential course for all to learn.

And so I feel that it is right to wear white. White cotton clothing is one of the most beautiful adjuncts on the path of progress, fast progress. I want fast progress, reasonably fast progress for all the people and that is why I say “wear white.” Natural silk is off white. Cotton can be pure white. Beautiful, it is. It is not that I want a regiment on my name. I don't care. It is for your auric body. It is for your progress. It is for your intensivity within yourself so you can come out.

Then I gave you nothing but Kundalini Yoga which many of you are these days cheating on. And those yoga exercises made you basic yogis. From there, you could turn yourself to Sikhs or to turn to the Khalsa. Those are the processes of commitment, of your beauty, your grace, your intelligence. I didn't say to anybody, “do this,” “do that,” because I know that for your happiness, you need to have your emotions under your control, rather than you being under the control of your emotions.

### **“The Hamburger”**

I have seen things working and I know they work. Out of you all, even if five people will learn what is the methodology of commitment and how it adds progress to life, you will be perfect. To be very frank with you, I don't care what color you wear. I don't care what you eat.

Somebody once asked me, “Should I eat meat or not?”

I said, “My dear son, take the whole leg of a goat and hang it on your bed. When you get up in the morning, first put a bite into that leg and eat it. I won't bother myself. I have nothing to lose.”

“Sir, once in a while, wine will be alright?”

I said, "Why don't you make a bed of wine and sleep in it and get drunk at night? Fill in the tub with wine and get in and never see me again. Die in that wine."

What do I lose, folks? You want to eat a hamburger once in a while, cheatingly?

Once I caught somebody. I said, "Come here."

*"Sat Naam, Ji."*

I said, "Why did you eat hamburger today?"

"Sir, no, no, no Sir... I didn't eat it!"

I said, "Wait a minute. We are discussing, right?"

He said, "Yes, sir."

I said, "Were you driving towards that area and on the way you stopped and you felt hungry and you went to a burger stop and you ate hamburger? Is it true or not?"

"I have never eaten it, Sir! I've never eaten it, Sir! I will never eat it!"

"I know you have never eaten, you will never eat, but the question is today, within the last two hours. Did you eat hamburger or not?"

He said, "No, I just... I didn't eat the inner part of it. I just had the bun and the mustard and..."

I said, "Wait a minute. I want to tell you. You bought the hamburger? Is that true or not?"

He said, "Yeah."

I said, "You had one bite?"

He said, "That's true."

I said, "You couldn't eat it, and you threw it away. Is that true or not?"

"Sir, how do you know?"

I said, "That's not the question. I'm asking, 'Is that true or not?'"

He said, "Yeah."

I said, "Then you threw away the center part and you ate the whole bun, right?"

He said, "Right."

I said, "You have controlled half of your ego. That's all it is."

"Sir, I felt your presence."

I said, "Don't butter me up. You didn't feel my presence. Your consciousness fought with your ego. Only it could chop it in half. Son, hamburger doesn't bother me. What bothers me is how weak you are. That bites me. You cannot resist. That bothers me. You can flout your own commitment. That bothers me. You do not want to enrich yourself. That bothers me. Hamburger doesn't."

## **"Gerontocracy"**

These children are innocent. They are creatures of God. They have been failed at the hands of the mother and father. Two institutions have failed them. Then third was the social education. That has failed them.

Social education is so terrible here in this country. It accepts everything. You are perverted, you are diverted, you a murderer, the whole thing... It says, "Welcome!" because it is democracy.

They all need your votes. They don't even want you to die. You should not die at ninety-eight. You should live two hundred and fifty years so that you can vote!

You are not wanted. Your vote is wanted. The more senile you are, the more senile votes will be there, it will make the process easy.

You don't think I understand why there is this Medicare for people and keep them going on pills and on instruments and on all that? Why? Do you understand? So one nut can vote for another nut.

Youth is suffering. The whole system of youth is suffering. Youth is suffering. The system of youth is suffering. Why?

A woman, young and pretty, she is prostituting herself in Hollywood. Nobody wants to educate her. They want to arrest her.

Can you believe that? And they are spending tons of money on those whose eyes have to be opened with spatulas, you know?

“Mom!”

She answers, “Who is this?” Because that is a vote.

You are a vote too, but you are an untrusted vote. That’s a trusted vote. Therefore, you need to organize yourself. And organization needs what? Sacrifice.

Organization and discipline doesn’t mean two things. It is the same thing. It is the center of God. It is the “o” of God – G-o-d.

## The Celery Fast

There is an adage that the wise let their food be their medicine. It was not a point lost on Yogi Bhajan. At 6 p.m. on a balmy Los Angeles evening, Hari Jiwan Singh, his Chief of Protocol, newly married, received a call.

“Hari Jiwan,” the caller said. There was no mistaking who it was. The Siri Singh Sahib continued, “I’m sorry to have to tell you this, son, but you are to go on a celery fast for 90 days. Eat nothing but celery.”

“Raw or cooked, sir?” Hari Jiwan responded.

“Whatever you choose, that’s not my affair. I want you to lose some weight and strengthen your nervous system. You’ll need a strong nervous system when time is upon you.”

Hari Jiwan had only become a vegetarian a few years before. The foods he craved were heavy, difficult to digest and weight-inducing. Cheese, pizza, pasta, and more cheese if you please. Hari Jiwan Singh knew he was overweight. He wasn’t so sure about his nervous system, but soon he was on the fast.

It was not as though Hari Jiwan could stop thinking about his food cravings, but somehow he was able to stick to the menu: celery, celery, and more celery. His wife, Sat Bachan Kaur, was a big help. Whenever they would pass a restaurant or see a billboard with some dish that caught his fancy, she would write it down and put that note into the glove compartment. When the fast was over, they managed to eat their way through every one of those fantasies.

About seventy days into the fast, Hari Jiwan Singh’s teacher took pity on him and took him out

to eat occasionally. Even so, when the scheduled ninety days were up, Hari Jiwan had lost forty-five pounds. The strengthening of his nervous system became evident as he found himself better able to stand up under pressure.

From Yogi Bhajan's perspective, his student had satisfactorily passed the test. Hari Jiwan Singh had fasted for ninety days without cheating on the diet. Naturally, further tests would follow.

### ***Sarkar E Khalsa***

The Siri Singh Sahib thrived on big concepts, grand gestures, and a long-term focus. Through repeated visits to Amritsar by himself and by groups of Western Sikhs, his reputation as an unparalleled missionary and a foe of uninspired, bureaucratic religion spread. His words and actions challenged the complacency of his students. They also challenged born Sikhs everywhere. People not always friendly to his agenda were taking notice.

There were those in the Punjabi leadership in India and abroad who feared the rise of Sikh dharma in the West. Out of their fear and jealousy, they raised spurious issues to attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the man who had been designated "Siri Singh Sahib" by the leaders of the S.G.P.C. and Shiromani Akali Dal before the Akal Takhat, the foremost seat of Sikh religious authority. Vainly, they sputtered and fumed, until finally someone hit on an idea to curb the seemingly unstoppable Siri Singh Sahib.

In his love of Guru Ram Das, Harbhajan Singh cherished a vision of a western home of the Khalsa and a seat of Raj Yoga at Ram Das Puri. As far as anyone could remember, there had always been four seats of Sikh religious power, two in Punjab and one each in the Indian states of Bihar and Maharashtra. Political reactionaries rightly feared that the rising fortunes of the Khalsa in the West might occasion the establishment of a proper seat of religious authority outside India. To pre-empt this possibility and secure the perpetual dominance of Punjab in world Sikh affairs, they shifted the balance of power by creating a fifth seat of authority, known as a "*Takhat*," within their own political domain.

When the Siri Singh Sahib came to know of this action, he did not despair. What did it matter? "There are lot of *Takhats*. They made another *Takhat* at Guru-ki-Kanshi, Damdama Sahib and they said, 'It is a *Panthic* decision.'"

Though, this important decision was made without consulting the Sikh community outside Punjab, the reactionaries were framing it as a "*Panthic* decision," a resolution arrived at by the Sikh spiritual nation, and therefore irreversible and sacrosanct.

The Siri Singh Sahib replied, "Where Takhat Raj Yog which was given to Guru Ram Das has to

appear? Of which Siri Guru Granth talks about? This *Takhat* you have created, we have no objection to it, but it is a political *Takhat*.”

The reactionaries said, “No! No! No! Amritsar is the place of Guru Ram Das.”

In reply, the Siri Singh Sahib said, “The Akal Takhat is there already.”

In the end, the Siri Singh Sahib resolved, “What does it matter if there are five Takhats or six? What does it matter whether we call it a ‘*Takhat*’ – a Throne - or a ‘*Sarkar-E-Khalsa*’ – a Government of the Khalsa? It amounts to the same. We will have our center here in the West, only instead of calling it a *Takhat*, we will call it *Sarkar-E-Khalsa*. It will make no difference.”

Regardless of others’ efforts to undermine him, the Siri Singh Sahib was creating a new “*taksaal*” or mint, a science-based education and training system conveying the empowering teachings of Guru Nanak in a way they had never been taught before. While typical Sikh religious trainings involved immersion in Sikh tradition and scripture, this was less a religious, than a spiritual training. It was open to everyone, regardless of their belief system.

The core idea was to develop the individual capacity to relate to oneness and universal values, transcending culture, nation, and race, much as Guru Nanak had done five centuries before. Using this approach, the Siri Singh Sahib and the teachers he trained, managed to share basic Sikh teachings on six continents in countless languages. Rather than focusing on Sikh scripture, their system centered around core Sikh concepts: the *Mool Mantra* and *Sadhana, Aradhana, Prabhupati; Bana, Bani, Simran, Sewa*. Rather than merely passing on beliefs and traditions, it disseminated techniques designed to change the personal reality and life experiences of practitioners. In creating the Kundalini Research Institute, the Siri Singh Sahib demonstrated that, unlike many religious people, he was not afraid that scientific research into meditative practices would contradict or undermine his teachings. Rather, he encouraged it.

The Siri Singh Sahib’s unique approach set his work apart from other *taksaals*. The *taksaals* in India served exclusively Punjabi and Hindi-speaking males from Sikh families and conveyed Sikh tradition in an uncritical manner that limited their influence to Punjabi communities in India and abroad. While the Siri Singh Sahib would say it was the mission of the Khalsa to serve and save the world, and then set about creative ways of doing so, the old schools merely proclaimed “Khalsa will rule the world,” but continued teaching and preaching as they had in colonial times, blindly hoping and praying for the best.

### ***The Khalsa Way***

In order to fill the office of Bhai Sahib of Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere, the Khalsa



Council, over the cautionary remarks of the Siri Singh Sahib, elected one Guruliv Singh Khalsa from Phoenix, in the hope that he might continue the inspiring example of Bhai Sahib Dayal Singh.

Before the council adjourned, the members joined their voices together to the melody of a rousing song that Livtar Singh had only recently composed.

"Long ago and far away, a man sat like a stone  
On a burning seat of red hot iron. To him, it was a throne  
For he was Guru Arjun, King of this world and the next.  
When his time in this earthly world was through, he just smiled and left.  
As it was in the beginning, and shall be for all time,  
Those who live and die a fearless life, in the court of God, they shine!

"The Moghul king sent forth his word - 'No Sikh shall be left alive.  
We'll wipe this Khalsa from the face of the earth!' On each head, he put a price.  
So one brave Sikh stood in the road, knowing he wouldn't live long.  
In the name of the Guru, collected our toll. It shook that king to his throne.  
They tried to put the light of the Khalsa out, but now it's they who are gone,  
And through every test of time and space, Khalsa lives on!

"One by one, they shot us down as we read the Siri Guru  
'Til they had to stop - they'd never seen so many who would die for the Truth.  
And those who lay on the railway tracks, their bodies stopped the train.  
Those whose children were killed before their eyes, they saw God through their pain.  
And all those who stood their ground against impossible odds,  
In their courageous lives and fearlessness, we see the Power of God!

"Twenty million started out. Only a few survived,  
But we stood together in the heart of the land against all their power and lies.  
They wished that we'd never been. They clubbed us in the streets.  
But our hearts were strong. The war was wrong. Our victory was peace.  
They waited for us all to disappear. They waited for our spirit to die,  
But they'll still be waiting when the sun burns out,  
For heroes and warriors, the saints and the martyrs, shall never die!

"Siri Singh Sahib left his home, answered the Guru's call.  
In the land of *Maya*, he planted a seed of a nation that would never fall.  
One by one, we came to him and we read the Siri Guru.  
We planted our roots in the soul of this land. Ram Das Puri grew.  
Now the future belongs to the daughters and sons of Guru Gobind Singh.  
We'll stand like steel through the test of the times - then Khalsa will reign!

*That is the Khalsa way! I don't mind dying and I won't go crying.  
That is the Khalsa way! When things look bad, we just keep on trying.  
That is the Khalsa way! If anyone falls, ten more will come in his place.  
That is our way.*





## PART FOUR

# THE TEST

### A Wife for Hari Jiwan

One day, Hari Jiwan Singh's secretary anxiously transferred a call to him, "The Siri Singh Sahib's on the line for you."

Hari Jiwan Singh knew the Siri Singh Sahib was teaching in New York at the time. When he picked up the phone, he was met by an unmistakable voice, "Hari Jiwan, I'm sitting here with your future wife from Toronto. What do you think?"

"Well," Hari Jiwan said nervously, "your will is my will."

His teacher continued, "Son, you know you get everything in life that you deserve, there's no doubt about it. But once in a while, if you have a spiritual teacher, you get a gift. That's what I'm giving you. And, if you don't marry her, I'll divorce Bibiji and marry her myself." Of course, this was his humorous way of lightening the situation. "Here, you talk to her," he said.

*"Wahe Guru ji Ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru ji Ki Fateh,"* said a woman on the other end of the line.

Hari Jiwan Singh nervously tried to muster a conversation, "So you're from Canada. I love hockey."

The woman the Siri Singh Sahib had selected for Hari Jiwan arrived in Los Angeles shortly thereafter. Sat Bachan Kaur was her name. She was slender, beturbaned, graceful, strong, good with children, and dedicated to Yogi Bhajan and the Sikh way of life. After a courtship of a week or so, Hari Jiwan Singh started to really like her, and a marriage was arranged. At their request, their spiritual teacher agreed to officiate.

As the day of the wedding approached and Sat Bachan and Hari Jiwan were sitting in Yogi Bhajan's living room, a thought came to Hari Jiwan. He knew of several couples who shared the same name, as in "Sat Jiwan Kaur and Singh" or "Ram Das Kaur and Singh," as a result of their marriages. He asked his teacher, "Sir, don't you think it would be great if we have the same name? She could become Hari Jiwan Kaur."

The Master looked at Hari Jiwan and said, "That's a great idea! How would you like to be Sat Bachan Singh?"

“Oh,” he quickly exclaimed, “Sat Bachan Kaur is a beautiful name and I’m good with it.”

## Resistance

At the age of seventeen, Suraj Kaur had already found her way to Guru Ram Das Ashram in Houston, Texas, with its co-directors, Sadhu Singh and Sadhana Kaur. At the time, Yogi Bhajan regularly traveled to Texas to give meditation courses. When he came to the ashram, Suraj Kaur took delight in watching him counsel people in the living room or watching television with him. Sometimes, she would help to rub his feet and braid his hair in the evening.

Yogi Bhajan told Suraj Kaur that he was aware of the pain of her past and that she was fortunate that her life had brought her to the Guru’s door. She belonged to the Guru’s house now, he assured her, where she would always be taken care of and protected. Yogi Bhajan called Suraj Kaur “his daughter” and said he would keep her “in his pocket.”

For the next couple of years, Suraj Kaur busied herself in the Houston ashram community, teaching children’s yoga, working at Nanak’s Landscaping and the Golden Temple Restaurant.

One day, she developed a very high fever. As one of the ashram ladies was administering a reflexology treatment to bring down the fever, Suraj Kaur blurted out, “But I don’t want to get married!” After the treatment, she fell into a deep sleep.

It was 1 a.m. when Suraj Kaur awakened, shouting, “No, no, no!”

Just then, the phone rang. It was Yogi Bhajan saying he had a husband for his spiritual daughter. Dr. Santokh Singh Khalsa was a promising, young chiropractor living in Altadena, California. He also gave her advice on how to treat the fever.

The next morning, with a strep throat, Suraj Kaur politely called Yogi Bhajan to tell him she did not think the marriage was a good idea.

The Master replied loudly and clearly, “I think you should do it!”

So it was that Suraj Kaur married Santokh Singh and settled in California. For spiritual support, she began routinely reading Siri Guru Granth Sahib, as it comforted and elevated her and reinforced her connection with the eternal Guru.

Over time, Suraj Kaur continued to serve Yogi Bhajan, ironing his robes or preparing his food. She also made numerous stained glass windows with dharmic motifs that still decorate Gurdwaras in Los Angeles and New Mexico. Suraj Kaur and Santokh Singh became blessed parents to

Guruprakash Kaur, Sarab Sarung Singh, and Updesh Kaur, and the grandparents of Ravijit Singh, Sukhprem Singh, and Amrita Devi Kaur.

## The Martyrs of Amritsar

April the thirteenth of 1978 was a painful day for lovers of Guru Nanak and the basic dignity of human life. On that Baisakhi Day, as a deliberate affront and provocation to all Sikhs, members of a government-supported cult calling themselves "Nirankaris" convened a large gathering of their sect in the most holy city of Amritsar. The Nirankaris were known to openly ridicule Sikh beliefs and practices. They encouraged a hedonistic lifestyle, while they heaped slander on Siri Guru Granth Sahib and promoted their own "Guru" Bachan Singh.

Some hundred Sikhs went on a peaceful procession, chanting "*Wahe Guru*" and singing their Guru's Songs, to protest the unwarranted tactics of Guru Bachan Singh and his followers. When they neared the building where the Nirankaris were gathered, a number of the cultists ambushed those brave Khalsa, killing several on the spot, and wounding many others.

The police were less than helpful. Instead of arranging first aid for the survivors, they piled the bodies of the dead and dying together in carts in order to clear the streets of any evidence of the vile massacre. By the time help arrived, thirteen of the marchers had passed away.

Among those martyred was Bhai Fauja Singh, the main organizer of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha. He had impressed many of his Western brothers and sisters by his dauntless courage and dedication. When the police had imprisoned him for his opposition to the central government's wanton disregard of human rights, Bhai Fauja Singh had corresponded with them from jail.

When they heard of the massacre, representatives from the Khalsa in the West came to Amritsar to express their solidarity and give condolences to their family in India. Of those marchers who had not been martyred, the many who had been hospitalized appreciated the visits and prayers of their brothers and sisters from America.

In October and November of 1978, news of further killings of innocent Sikhs reached the West. Around the same time, two survivors of the Amritsar massacre, Bhai Fauja Singh's wife, Bibi Amarjit Kaur, and one Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the charismatic head of a Sikh seminary, began to argue the recent events called for an armed and militant response. Then, some months later, a future Head Priest of the Akal Takhat, a man named Ranjit Singh, put an end to the defamatory career of the Nirankari Baba by shooting him dead in his Delhi headquarters. The Indian situation had clearly entered a dangerous new phase.



## Man to Man

Responding to repeated requests from his male students, Yogi Bhajan scheduled some teaching time exclusive to them, to instruct them in the fine art of living as a man. The first course was held in spring 1978 in Boston, followed soon after by a course in Los Angeles in September, then by several more through the years. Unlike the women's sessions, which ran for two months in the summer, the men's courses lasted just two days over a weekend.

Two hundred men gathered for the first course in Boston. Yogi Bhajan began his first lecture in the 1978 course with the following words:

"Lose everything on this planet, but hope. Hope is the last thing one should lose. If you want to build up what you need to build up, there's no magic which can help you, except *sadhana*.

"I know the majority of you are lazy in relation to *sadhana* for one reason or another, but that is not what I call 'laziness.' Nor do I call it 'negativity' or 'self-depression.' It is self-denial.

"Men do suffer from one thing, self-denial. While woman is very involved in recognizing herself and making herself to be recognized, man is equally good at self-denial and escapism.

"Today, we'll talk on a man to man basis. If man is man, there cannot be any problem. Any problem you face in life indicates how much minus man you are..."

The Siri Singh Sahib covered male and female psychology. He also put the men through vigorous Kundalini Yoga exercises for potency and potentiality. The Master gave his students detailed instruction in the psychology and physiology of intercourse fulfilling to both partners. In each course, the men were given time to ask Yogi Bhajan about blocks and issues their fathers never told them about.

"The first faculty of a man is that he must not react by all provocations of the universe, and he must not react to any and all the temptations of the universal Self, including God. You can call me an atheist, but it will not be true because God, through his nature, makes man to react. Therefore, where you will be tested, you never know. What you think is gold, may be only glitter. Every temptation has a very charming glitter to it that can make you blind, but that does not mean it is gold."

The Master also provided recipes and remedies to help the men retain their manhood through the years. Pistachio *parantha*, potent potatoes, garlic-saffron-almond rice, banana-nutmeg ice cream, restorative sesame-ginger drink, and banyan milk were some of the delicious and unusual formulas.



## To Solstice and Beyond...

Yogi Bhajan insisted on his students attending the Summer and Winter Solstices. They were great teaching events, wonderful opportunities for staying spiritually on track, and also grand family reunions.

While some had the luxury of flying to New Mexico or Florida, in the early days, most people drove as it was the most economical way of getting there. Travel could mean a day-long trip or a journey of a week, depending on the distance and circumstances. When possible, people travelled in caravans of several vehicles, stopping at ashrams along the way. For a time, there were converted school buses with bunks in the back and *Sat Nam* painted on the front.

Getting there was always an adventure, navigating, keeping on schedule, getting to know people close up. Up until 1978, many of these journeys involved long hours driving into the night.

That changed at the Summer Solstice of 1978. Early on in the festivities at Ram Das Puri, an announcement was made that there had been a terrible car crash. A vehicle traveling overnight from Los Angeles had struck a transport truck head on and there had been fatalities.

Fortunately for the group that had driven in an accompanying vehicle and had seen first-hand the carnage and participated in the preparation of the preparation of the bodies and the funeral, the congregation at Summer Solstice Sadhana was observing silence when they arrived. It meant there was no need to retell the story again and again. The dead could be truly left in peace.

By the time of the Solstice, Sat Anand Kaur and Akal Kaur had passed, while Karta Singh was still unconscious with severe spinal injuries in a Phoenix hospital. Sat Anand Kaur's two-year-old son, Hargobind Singh, was recovering in hospital with broken bones and a ruptured spleen, his father, Harkirat Singh at his side.

At Ram Das Puri, the Siri Singh Sahib said Akal Kaur and Sat Anand Kaur wanted to come back and be born into Sikh families. He asked all the thousand people at Solstice to chant for them long *Akaaaaaal*, so they could let go of this earth, pass through the blue ethers, and merge blissfully with the Infinite.

Yogi Bhajan discouraged everyone at Solstice from making any more overnight drives. He also gave them a meditation to help them stay safe while driving. The Master advised that before turning the key in the ignition of their car, everyone should join their hands in prayer pose and chant times, "*Aad guray nameh, jugaad guray nameh, sat guray nameh, siri gurdevay nameh.*" This practice, he said would provide a buffer around the vehicle of about nine feet, for protection from an accident.

The story continued. Little Hargobind was transferred to a hospital in Los Angeles where he had a full recovery. Karta Singh passed, without regaining consciousness, a couple of weeks after the

accident.

That fall, a *yatra* group of forty or so people took the ashes of Akal Kaur, Karta Singh, and Sat Anand Kaur to the Sutlej River at Kiratpur. It was customary for the cremated ashes of Sikhs to be interred in the flowing waters there. A couple of *sewadars* waded into the river with the three boxes of ashes and emptied them there while the rest of the entourage sang *Song of the Khalsa*.

After they were done, they went into a nearby office. Three officials there had large books full of the dates and names of people whose remains had previously been interred there. They duly recorded the names of the three saints, then they also wanted to know the names of their parents, as was the custom there. No one had any idea who their Earthly parents were, so their names were given as Mata Sahib Kaur and Guru Gobind Singh. The *sewadars* recorded the information as given and gave the group of Sikhs from the West big smiles of acknowledgement.

## The Teary Interview

Once, a girl came to Yogi Bhajan crying.

He said, "Alright, now here is a Kleenex. Clean yourself." But she was crying so much it was no use, so he said, "Alright, go to the bathroom please. Splash yourself with water please and come back."

After a couple of minutes, she returned.

The Master said to her, "Alright. Start again."

But now she couldn't speak at all.

Yogi Bhajan said, "Now you are not crying, right? Go in the kitchen, take one apple, and come in."

When she brought the apple, Yogi Bhajan said, "Eat it."

She ate the apple. Then he said, "Go now. Wash your mouth, wash your hands, and come clean. We'll talk."

She came before her teacher again.

He said, "Now say what you were going to say."

She said, "I forgot."

Yogi Bhan said, "Your crisis and your pain is worth one apple."

His student replied, "But how can I forget all that?"

He said, "You came crying, you laid it on me, and I did not move. Instead, I gave you affection. Affection, attention, that's all you want. Nobody can solve your problem. You have to solve your problem by yourself."

"But what can you tell me, Sir?"

He said, "Can I help you? I am here. I'll be here and nothing is going to go wrong."

Yogi Bhan understood that his student was alright and that after three or four months, she was going to come for another interview and cry and eat one more apple, and be alright again. She was like a car. To her, he was a gas station, and attention and affection were what she needed to fill up on.

## "Sex"

There is a big campaign going against me these days, "Why do I teach sex?" Well, I should not? Next year, I think every human being is going to grow out of the trees.

Can you believe the sickness? One respected Sikh wrote me, "Oh Yogiji, you are teaching Americans all these old sexual scriptures. Where is it accepted in Sikh dharma?" as if Guru Nanak grew out of a banana and Guru Gobind Singh got on Earth through a parachute.

What are they making of the Sikh religion? You go to a Catholic priest, and all he says is, "No, no, no," and we believe him.

We are so unlearned that there is no reason that we, as human beings, should be punished for anything because there is nothing we know! And everywhere in the scriptures, it is written, "Ignorance is the worst sin of a human life."

Now, just telling everybody this will solve the problem? No, it won't.

## “How America Kills Its Women”

It has been seen from time immemorial throughout the history of man - and it is a four million year history - that there is only one way to kill a woman: make her insecure. This is the first job a male does when he does not like a woman. Some women - what you call as women - think they need to feel "somebody loves me, somebody likes me, somebody will have sex with me, somebody supports me, somebody brings me flowers". It is all nothing but a white lie! Woman can eat, she can pluck the flower herself. The polarity of the male which woman requires is only because of the aura. The way the woman is grabbed and ruined is to make her insecure. And any man who makes a woman insecure doesn't know what a woman is.

This "love you" and "darling" and all that jazz is only on the surface, because the majority of the women do not know if they are women or not. The United States of America is a great country with a very high per capita income, but here woman is treated like a doormat. Come in, wipe your shoes, walk over it, go in, have your booze, have fun, and get out - that's it!

I see these ladies drinking four martinis, six martinis, to pass the evening when the sun energy is low. They have to think who they are, and they have to be themselves - women. And there is no warmth in the house, there's no love in the house. They are living phony, they are thinking phony, they are relating to the entire phony world around them. Then it will be nice to have a few martinis and be a pig.

"*Soor jeev*" - it means a life of a pig. You know that a pig can sit in any dirt, eat anything in the world? Now a woman is supposed to be the most delicate instrument ever created by God. She cannot only perceive the divine and experience the dignity and divinity, but can create. That part of a woman, nobody can imagine. She can create divinity!

She is just as beautiful as God is because once a woman wants to create the divinity, she can override God's Will. If you read all logical mythology - Greek, Indian, Chinese, anything - you'll find one thing very common: whenever the Goddess takes over, God gives in. But when the Goddess is a pig... "P.I.G." - do you know what that means? It has come to me right now: "Public Institutionalized Goodie". That's what the men think about the women in this country!

I am in pain. I am telling you the truth. They think she is a public thing: institutionalize her, put her behind doors, tell her she is Mrs. So-and-so - and then swap her! And if that is what you want to be - good luck! It's fine with me. I know you have gone through these nuts, but do you want your daughters to go through this? Do you want your daughters to be ping-pong balls that everybody with a bat can hit back and forth? Is this what you want your life to be? Is this what this country is - home of the brave and free and all this nonsense you talk about?

There is a characteristic, and that characteristic has a criterion. Woman *is* an institution, therefore she should be afraid to be "institutionalized". She is an institution which can give birth to the

Godhead. Therefore, she must be afraid to be a pig. She is the one who has to go through nine months of pregnancy, she is the one who is to carry the attachment of the emotion, she is the one who has to give her blood and her self to create another life. Therefore, she must know what she is up to. And if woman is not standard and stable, the children are all neurotic. That is it! Actually, to be very honest, when the father is shaky, the children are cowards, but when the mother is shaky, the children are neurotics. Disobedient, undisciplined, neurotic kids are the sign the mother is insecure.

As life comes, we must think what life is. First, you get born, then you grow, then they tell you: "Go and chase your own man! Find it out. Just go out in the market, go and find your man!" You are not even aware what a man is! When the girl is shoved out to find a man, she does not know what a man is. She only knows man is another instrument with which she can have sex or go to a movie, or go to dinner - that's all. Nothing more she understands of man.

That's why, in this country, every marriage falls apart. *There is no such system as marriage* because nobody understands the institution of marriage. The institution of marriage is a union of the two polarities to go through everything devotedly. Now, where there is emotional upset, what devotion is there?

It can happen that there is no difference between a human being and an animal. It has been observed, animals are more considerate because they are not rational. Animals are not rational, they are very irrational. Through their irrational approach, they have nothing but direct, straight devotion. Everybody knows that they have to hatch an egg, they have to feed the baby birds, they have to train them to fly until they can find their own food, and let them go.

We neither learn from birds nor we learn from animals. Animals do the same thing. They get in heat, they get pregnant, and they have their little ones and they raise them. The difference between an animal and a human being is that an animal does not know who is the sister, who is the mother. A male dog, when he grows up, can have intercourse with his own mother, with his own sister, so they do not have the chance of gene development. That is the difference.

I'll tell you a very strange story. I talked to a girl who had to leave 3HO because the circumstances were beyond her control. Now this lady married a man, and she had these three daughters from her previous husband. Now this is the United States of America, that great land, and this is the story of almost every house. This woman married the man and the daughters grew up in the eight years of that marriage. One became nineteen, another eighteen, the other fifteen years old. Now this man thought - and he was very sure of himself - that these daughters are also with the mother. So he raped one first, then he raped the second, and then he raped the third. And after having three daughters raped, still that woman never woke up. She never woke up!

There is another story. There is another child who left 3HO. I took care of her education for five or six years, and put her in the best school. At a time when she was going to pass her final school exams, her mother came with the sheriff to possess her. She didn't want to give her two days so that

girl could qualify herself through the examination! Somehow, between the sheriff and the state department, we wangled those two days, but now I understand the psychology. The psychology is: "When I have gone through the stripping, why should my daughter become educated and divine?"

If a man takes tons of heavy equipment and wants to build a cosy home, it will be impossible. Woman can build it with one needle! The beauty, the glory of woman, I can honestly say is forgotten in this land. The only priority for which woman is used in this country is as an emotional dump! Psychologically, logically, and socially, woman is a necessity in this country as a social dump, as the emotional and social dump of the male.

Do you understand that going from the Infinite Creativity of Godhood to the position of being an emotional and social dump of the neurosis of a male is low, low, low, lower than an ordinary animal relationship? And it is accepted publicly! Now, look what they are trying to do to a woman in this country. They are going to give her "equal rights" so when there is a war combat, the enemy can enjoy to rape our women!

Ask these men, what do they think a woman is? Every woman, whether she is creative or non-creative, her pelvic bone can open up to one foot maximum. But if a man's pelvic bone opens up three millimetres, he can't even walk! What is happening in this country is that the men are totally perverted. They don't enjoy the delicacy of the woman or the dignity of the sexual relationship. Now, they want those Romans who used to fight and kill, those gladiators, in their beds. They want women to drive heavy buses, heavy equipment, build roads, do the whole thing - become muscular. They want them to leave their feminine nature, and become totally insensitive to their delicate, intelligent approach, and they want to have boxing women.

You know, that's one of the main facts! Put a woman in the ring, and clap around her. Have your martini and drink and let them have black and blue eyes and get beaten up. In public! In public: topless! bottomless! They want to strip the woman of her moral dignity. The whole work is being arranged socially to strip the woman of her moral dignity - and when a woman does not have moral dignity and moral security, out of her shall come a breed of human beings that I don't want to name, but for the future generations, I will call them "chaotic". And that is being produced right now, a generation of people who will have no respect for life or values of life. This is the true story, and you do not have to believe my words. Just do a little bit of research.

In eight years, I have found so many things. I was reading in the newspaper today that one million children are added to the population every year through unwed mothers. One million! Now, thanks to the Catholic religion, they will not have even the possibility of having state funds, so even if they want an abortion, they won't be able to go through with it. First, it was a mistake on their part to get pregnant. Secondly, because it was an emotional pregnancy, the other guy doesn't take care of it.

Now look at this political stunt, this special God of the Christians! Why doesn't this church go out and see that no woman gets wrongly pregnant? They don't want to work for that. They don't want

to create clean environments and educated environments. They don't want to educate the people. All they want is your vote. Because Jesus Christ was never a woman, Mary has no part to play? Therefore, in 1977 no woman can be a minister? Look at the social insult! These are the means used by these neurotic men. Woman cannot be a minister! She cannot perform any holy performance!

In English, there is a word used to address the woman, and you all know that. Can anybody tell me? In gentleman's English, they call her "the better half". "She's my better half." Better half always comes to seventy percent. You can have the better half, my share of the property: this means seventy percent I can give to you. In gentle people's language, woman plays seventy percent of the part to build the human race. She's responsible for giving dignity and divinity and grace and peace and harmony and strength.

Cooking is not a small job. Who tells you cooking is an ordinary job? You are what you eat. To have a home is not a small job. To raise a child is not a small job. Who says the woman's part is small? It is the largest of all and surely, definitely, the most important!

But the entire psychology is being worked out in one way: destroy the woman, kill her! Why has she survived four million years? The male has a simple psychology: if you can't have it, destroy it! The only triumph this man has is: lay her in the bed and forget about it! That's one simple system. When they date you, they are different. Then, in the morning, when you call them, they say "I am in a conference."

Do you know what they think? Do you want to hear what they think? Five dollars on food, two dollars on gas, three dollars on a show... How much is it? Eight, ten bucks? And then they must lay you in bed, and then kick you out. That is their psychology.

Forty percent of the wealth of this country is through salesmen, and every salesman in every restaurant, in every hotel, has to have - now I call them "women". Massage parlors, call girl situations, entertainment, all that industry is filled with filth, and the whole industry is based on one thing: exploit the woman. They have one mantra: "exploit-the-woman, exploit-the-woman, exploit-the-woman, exploit-the-woman, exploit-the-woman, exploit-the-woman..." There is no bank transaction which can happen without a topless/bottomless woman coming, and booze drinking, and all that jazz. What is happening to the woman behind the scenes is so shameless, so inhuman, and so cruel that if it ever happens to animals, I think they will protest!

One night, everybody freaked out. What has gone wrong with me? At one o'clock in the morning, I started to watch a movie on television, and I wouldn't move. They had never seen me doing this *sadhana*, but I loved it! That movie opened my eyes. It was an old movie where they showed how a business executive, to get the contract, to get this, to get that, used his wife and his daughters. It was so low, so mean, so inhuman - and that actually happens! These homes with long driveways, where people have a summer home and a winter home and this wall-to-wall carpet, this whole bogus thing is all money earned out of prostitution!

You know, you must understand that when a salesman lands in town, he is picked up by a chick. I heard somebody saying, "I am mad at you! You did send me those two chicks, but what happened to that blonde chick of mine?" And the guy was explaining on the other side, "There was an emergency. Somebody had already insisted on her, so I..." They're pawns! They're nothing! They're not human beings! They're treated like zucchini! Even beets have some personalities, some value. They are weighed, they are bought, they are done. Damn this consciousness where woman is not even bought! The guy gets on the telephone, "Rosie, report to room number 116 at Holiday Inn." And she doesn't know what she is getting into.

It's a flesh market! It is a trading post where woman is used as a commodity and exploited worse than crude oil. And then, after giving her two, three children, they kick her out. Do you know what they give her? She gets fifty percent of the community property, through easy payments. And this foolish woman thinks, "At least, I got half the property!" She has gotten nothing!

When I see you sitting here and listening to me, in reality I am seeing a miracle that in the United States of America there can be some woman who still wants to learn to be a woman, and can have the capacity to face the reality. They want your cheeks to be red. It doesn't matter that those chemicals may burn your skin. They don't care! Your lips should be red, while all that poison keeps going in your body.

There's a beautiful statement which Rishi Kalpa made. In his verse, he said, "Woman - if you ever understand you are a woman, you are better than God. I need not worship God. I am only in search of a woman who just realizes that *she is a woman!*"

There's a whole systematic system happening in society to ruin this most valuable institution of the human race. There is a continuous process and ignorance. Woman *allows* the destruction of another woman! Don't you understand that if Mr. A is no good to you, he's never going to be good to B, he's never going to be good to C. If he is good to A, he is good to B, and he is good to C. However, the problem in psychology is when a woman becomes insecure, she becomes highly selfish. She wants the *whole* apple! And trying to get the whole apple, she never even ends up with the seed of the apple. In every realm of consciousness, there is one message for every woman: be a woman and find your place, because there is a place for every woman born on this Earth.

Once, a sage did a very great *tapas*. He became so one with God that God sent his angel to bring him to Him alive. So, in a human, sensitive body, this guy flew beyond the heavens and went in the presence of the great radiance called "God". And God said to him, "My son, I am very pleased with you. And behold! I allow you to be in My Presence with your mortal, human body."

And this sage said, "How wonderful is Thy Experience, O Lord. I am great. I am feeling very happy. It is beyond any expectations that I in my human mortal body could be in Your Presence."

And God said, "I have a question. Can you answer me?"



And the man said, "Yes."

God said, "I am very confused. What is wrong with these women? They can create Me through the part of their body called the womb, but they can't seem to appreciate that what can create God is *more than God!*"

Even Almighty God is confused! Why is the human being, created in the best Essence of the Divine, with the capacity to give the Infinite God a human form, still insecure? If you cannot answer this question, you will never know who you are.

It is a very fortunate situation. You have all come to grow, you have all come to understand what grace is, what divinity is, and what dignity is. But please find out why that institution which created Jesus Christ, which created Rama, which created Krishna, which created Buddha, which created Guru Nanak, which created Tao, is insecure. What has gone wrong? Where has it gone wrong, and how can it be corrected?

The time has come when this exploitation *must stop!* The time has come when a daughter should be treated as a daughter, a mother should be treated as a mother, a wife should be treated as a wife, and over and above all, a *woman should be treated as a woman!* I was just telling somebody that there are two types of paper: one is toilet paper, and one is the paper on which people write scriptures. They wrote the Bible and they wrote other *granth*s with it.

Let us forget to be toilet paper. If we have to be paper, then let us be scriptural paper. It takes the same amount of wood and the same amount of pulp to make both papers. I leave the choice with you, and thank you very much for being with me this evening. God bless you.

### **"The Legacy of The Sohaagan"**

There are a million stories in the scriptures. One of the stories, "Satyavaan and Savitri", is the greatest story, which happened in the realms of men. If you ever want to read this English epic, it is written by Sri Aurobindo. Savitri is available in two volumes. He did a wonderful job on that."

Savitri was a princess, the only daughter of a king. She was brave, courageous, conscious and committed. Her word was a law unto itself, and it was respected. Savitri was a pure being with an understanding of herself."

One day, she went riding in the forest and became separated from her guards. After a time, she became tired and hungry. Savitri climbed off her horse and rested under a large tree in the forest. Sitting there, nearly asleep and lost and without anything to eat, she heard a sound as though someone was chopping a tree."

With her feeble voice, she called for help. Satyavaan, the woodcutter, came and found her there beneath a spreading tree in the middle of the forest."

When Savitri looked at him, she saw something in him which only she could recognize, but she did not say anything. Meanwhile, Satyavaan gave her food and water and shelter, and when she was alright again, took her back to the outskirts of the forest, where her father's men were looking for her."

Then, Satyavaan returned to his simple life of chopping wood to sell in the city, in order to take care of himself and the needs of his parents. It was a virtuous life, a life of simple self-reliance."

When Savitri returned to her father's palace, she said to him, "My father, I have met a man and have told him in my mind that he's my man."

Her father, the king, said, "You mean to say that you went somewhere, you saw a man there, you gave your honorable word to him within yourself, and he doesn't know anything about it?"

"No. I wanted to talk to you first."

"What is it?"

"Well, you know, he's not a prince - but he is a prince of princes!"

"Where did you find such a man?"

"In the forest. He is a woodcutter."

"Oh, crazy girl! What are you doing? How can this be? You have fallen in love with a woodcutter?"

Actually, I'm not falling into anything. He doesn't know about this. I'm just telling you that, as my father, you should marry me to this man."

Okay, okay, okay. Just calm down. Rest. Don't worry about it. You're tired. We'll talk about it tomorrow." Fathers do this trick number thirty. They call it "give the slip". Savitri's father called the Grand Vizier to talk to her.

The Grand Vizier was a very compassionate and affectionate man. He had raised Savitri, and she respected him. He came to her and said, "Savitri, what's the matter? Do you know, darling, what it is you are doing? You know we need someone of substance to run this universe. This is a big kingdom, and you know you will one day inherit it. Your father is wanting to retire anyway. Now what is all this woodcutter business?"

"Yes, I know he's a woodcutter, but he should not be. He should be a prince."

"How do you know?"

"I read it on his forehead. The destiny written there says he shall be a prince."

"Crazy girl! If God had written that on his forehead, he would have been born in a king's house."

The divine right of kings was very prevalent in those days. Once, a child was born to a king, and the king was so happy that after eighteen years he had been blessed with a son, he died. So the one-day-old baby was crowned and everybody respected him as king. That was how it was in those days".

When the Grand Vizier realized that nothing he could say would change Savitri's thinking, he prayed to Naarad, the best devotee of Narayan. Narayan was very pleased at the Grand Vizier's worship, and he sent Naarad to see him."

When Naarad came to the palace, the Grand Vizier said, "My Lord, Savitri wants to marry a woodcutter."

Naarad looked at this virtuous daughter of the king, closed his eyes, and said, "Daughter, if you chose to marry him, within one year from the day you get married he shall die by a snake bite and you shall be a widow. But if you do not marry him, there is another man you can marry. He is very qualified. He can conquer all the neighboring kings and become a great king, but you have to make the choice."

"I choose the woodcutter."

"Alright, then."

"Naarad, you are the best devotee of Narayan, aren't you? I have one request to make."

"Granted. As you wish, my daughter."

When fifteen months have come and gone, please come and grace us with your presence, and let us have some food together."

"Yes, but what is this 'us'? What do you mean?"

"I mean with my husband."

"But there's not going to be a husband."

"I think you are mistaken. I think there still will be a husband."

"Do you mean that when he dies, you will marry the other man?"

"No, he will still be my husband, and he will be alive."

"But how?"

"You know that I am Savitri. I have read in the sacred scriptures that when a woman is '*Pirtapala*,' when she has devotion for her man like that of a god, no god can kill him, and she can never become a widow. I am going to marry this man, and it is going to be a real marriage."

"You may do whatever you wish, but what must be, must come to be."

"That is why I made you promise to celebrate with us after a year and a quarter have passed."

"Very well then. It is as you say."

After that, a message was sent to Satyavaan to come to the palace. He was decorated, everything was arranged, and the marriage took place according to Savitri's wishes. There was no more discussion or speculation.

They lived happily. Instead of cutting wood, they rode horses and ran freely in the forests. In their first year, they were never found at home, in the palace. During that enchanted time, their horses would tire, but not Savitri and Satyavaan. Their laughter was heard in the skies and in the heavens.

At last, somehow, that fateful day arrived. It was the last day of the year. In preparation, they had made a pool of water and put a floating bed for Satyavaan in the middle. That water had been potentized by the essence of certain herbs, so that no snake of any kind could enter.

From morning to evening, the entire area was sealed off. Then, when the evening worship, the "*Arti*", was sung at the temple of Shiva, the servant of that temple took one lotus and brought it out to where the prince was sleeping, and affectionately put that delicate lotus blossom in the water.

Now that lotus floated in the pool like a little boat, and in that boat was a tiny, poisonous snake. Somehow, before sunset, that lotus touched the bed where Satyavaan was resting. The snake jumped out and "tik!" Satyavaan was dead.

Savitri was told what had happened. It had been a simple case of human error. She took that *Arti* flower and said, "Don't worry. I'm not bothered. Just let him lie there in peace. There's nothing wrong. Soon he will be getting up."

"Get up with what? He's definitely dead!"

At that point, Savitri sat down in meditation. Her body and mind became as firm as stone. Nothing on this Earth could move her. In her meditation, she followed "Dharam Raj", the god of death, as he carried the soul of her Satyavaan. For a time, she followed behind. When they reached the magnetic light, which is called the "magnetic line", Dharam Raj had to decide what to do. He said, "Savitri, I am only allowed to take one soul across. I can't take two!"

"Why don't we compromise?"

"What compromise?"

"I'll let you take the soul of my husband, so long as you promise me one blessing."

Now Dharam Raj was short of time and under a lot of pressure. He said, "Just one, right?"

"Yes."

"Alright, so be it. Speak. So shall it be."

"I should have sons, grandsons, great grandsons and great, great, great grandsons."

"Fine," he said, "It shall be so." Dharam Raj wanted to go on, but he couldn't. Then he said, "What have you done?"

"A simple thing. You have blessed me that I should have sons, grandson, great grandson, right?"

"Yes."

"Then, how can you take away my husband?"

Now Dharam Raj understood what he had done. This, after all, was not America. But he protested, "You promised that I could go with the soul of your husband."

"It is true. I promised you could go, and I'm not saying to return him. If you want to go, you can go. But you gave your word. Who is going to fulfil that promise?"

"You are too clever. Let us go back."

Then Satyavaan got up from his bed in the middle of the pool, and he was brought to Savitri's father. Satyavaan bowed to him. The father was shocked.

Again, they prayed and Naarad came. The king said, "Naarad, do you see what I see?"

Naarad said, "What is there to see? She told me we will have a feast, so we will have a feast. No problem."

The king said, "You are Narayan's *bhakta*. You told me he would not live longer than one year, but he is right her, and he is alive!"

"I only told you what God had written. This is what she has written."

"She can write?"

"With her love and strength of spirit, she has re-written the destiny of Satyavaan. You see, when a devotee has such a purity and divine magnetism, even Almighty God must give in to their wishes."

"*Taa sohaagan jaanee-ai laagee jaa saaho dhaaray pi-aaro.*" You can read this *Shabad* by Guru Nanak. "Sohaagan" can re-write the destiny. The power of love is the prayer of the female in love, and with that prayer, she can re-write what is written. There's nothing to be confused about. In scientific way, you can create the psycho-magnetic field so creatively regulated to the harmony of that unisonness unto Infinity with the ability to cooperate and coincide to the time and space and then still be above it. Under these circumstances, the Divine will be yours.

Another story is about King Shutrugun, who came to the palace to meet his wife. The army was being defeated, and the king had to go for the final assault. The rule was that they gave a *tilak* and the woman, the wife or the beloved, gave the sword. When he came, he was fully decorated with his armour and everything."

Maharani had a very thin, silken robe. She put it on him, tied the knots all the way, put the hood on his head and fastened it, and said, "My Lord, today is your death day, I know, because I have set the pyre to burn myself alive. But before God's Will happens, I am giving you this. Come what may, don't remove it, and you will come back victorious. Instead of my burning on the pyre, we'll have a campfire."

Maharaja Shutrugun said, "Queen, your blessings are great, but the reports from the front are not very healthy. However, I give you my word, I'll fight like a brave man. I'll remember your prayer."

So the Maharaja went with whatever army he had arranged himself. At two ropes of the sun, which means about ten o'clock, the war was started. Both armies fought with the utmost bravery, but on the spur of the moment, the Maharaja's horse penetrated through the army and stood up right before the other king. With one blow, the other king was down in the dust. The war was settled, and defeat turned into victory.

When the king returned, the queen untied the robe and put it into the fire. The jubilations then began.

After a time, the Maharaja sat down with his queen and asked, "What was in that robe of silk?"

She said, "I've been married to you for a long time, but it has taken me seven years. From each cocoon, I took a strand of silk, and over each strand, I prayed to Lord Shiva that he might make it deathless. Then I wove it and made it myself. That robe which is now gone was never touched by anyone except myself. I did my prayer on every millimetre of it. I knew if I put it on you, you could not die."

### **Inscrutable Yogi Bhajan**

At Winter Solstice Sadhana, Yogi Bhajan called in a couple of his teachers, Livtar Singh and Sampuran Singh, to talk about a person's problem. At first, the Master speaks and Livtar says nothing.

After a time, Yogi Bhajan asks, "Livtar, what do you think?"

Livtar thinks: "You know what I think."

This happens four times as the discussion goes on. On the fourth time, Livtar begins to speak, "I think..."

Yogi Bhajan replies: "Shut up! I know what you think!"

### **The Girl from Malta**

She grew up in Indonesia and Spain, attended high school in Germany and went off to Malta to study. When she was sixteen and a TV program announced a documentary called "The Sikhs of Lahore," the hairs on the back of her neck stood up. Though she found the program boring, afterwards she felt it had been a connection between her teacher and herself.

By the time she returned to Germany from Malta, she had read *Siddharta* by Hermann Hesse, become vegetarian, started yoga, and begun dreaming of the spiritual path. In Hamburg, she gravitated to the Golden Temple Restaurant where she started waitressing. Her boss, Tarn Taran Singh, also the ashram director, invited her to free yoga classes as a team-building exercise. In those classes, she experienced spiritual bliss and asked to move into Guru Ram Das Ashram.

Tarn Taran Singh said, “Whoa, kiddo! Slow down! Come for forty days and we'll see how this all works out.”

As it happened, two weeks later Yogi Bhajan was conducting a White Tantric Yoga course in Amsterdam and the Hamburg 3HO community went as the hosting *Sangat*. Things moved very quickly. The gung-ho student had her first interview with the Master where he gave her a new name, prescribed a yogic cleanse and a few other choice recommendations. After that, this Pritam Hari Kaur moved right into the Ashram, which happened to be the 3HO European Headquarters. Though she was quite shy and introverted, soon she became the 3HO secretary for the region, communicating with all the teachers across Europe.

Pritam Hari Kaur managed to attend every Solstice Sadhana and Khalsa Women’s Training Camp in the 1980’s, helping out with cleaning and cooking for Yogi Bhajan, and transcribing lectures as they were given at camp. When the Siri Singh Sahib came to Germany, it was she who translated for him on stage. When he saw her devotion in translating the daily *Hukumnama* for the *Sangat*, he asked her to translate the entire Siri Guru Granth Sahib. Yogi Bhajan assigned her several books to write of his teachings, including the titles and all.

Once, with a loving twinkle in his eye, the Master called his student, “Pritam Bhagvati,” meaning “through whom God creates everything.”

Cheekily, his student replied, “Sir, you named me ‘Pritam Hari’- Beloved of the Creator.”

“You are her, too,” he said.

When Pritam Hari Kaur first met Yogi Bhajan, he told her not to get married without his input and said he would find her somebody who “could lift me with one finger.” Years later, he asked, “Are you still looking for a husband?”

Pritam Hari Kaur said, “No.”

“Fine, just be my girl. This opportunity comes just once in twelve years. Same like when my teacher told me I am a master, I am telling you now you are a yogi by nature and constitution.”

### **“You should be the leader”**

*The path of a sadhu is never easy and the path of a Khalsa is hard. Early rising, meditation, and exceptional virtues did not come naturally to the Siri Singh Sahib’s students. Of the many thousands who came to experience Kundalini Yoga and the Sikh way of life, thousands shrank back into their old, shallow values and earthly ways of living.*



Now as we stand today, we have lost two Mukhia Singh Sahibs, and I'm so glad we could lose them because we must learn to lose things, to gain things. We must get and study every possibility of our life. We must experience what a loss means. We must not be swallowed by the ego of gain.

This is to understand where we are going. We are going to be very practical, intelligent, balanced human beings. It is that thought which we project in America. We don't relate to Las Vegas because we do not want to gamble our well-earned freedom. We do not relate to prostitution of our society because we do not barter it with our modesty and our sincerity as Americans. We are refusing, as people of 3HO, to relate to unhealthy environments or to those things, which relate to or lead us to unhealthy environments.

We want to cut things at the sequence rather than at the consequence, because no human being is powerful enough to fight the consequence, but you are strong enough to turn away from the sequence so you can have a few happy moments in your life.

From every thought, when you proceed in action, you must ask one question: "What do you say, my soul?" because in the end, when you'll quit, you will answer to your soul. You will not answer to your teacher. You will not answer to your imagination of God. At the moment of going, one thing will be with you, which you have to answer to: soul. And we relate to everything except soul. We relate to friends. We relate to cocktail parties. We relate to intrigues. We relate to power trips and what not.

That is why they say there are only a few elementary souls. There are complementary and supplementary souls, but sayeth the scriptures: 'You can always transform yourself from supplementary and complementary to an elementary soul,' and it is that state of consciousness when the soul lives and dwells in the body in such an elementary way that it receives, perceives, and experiences God. Otherwise, there is no difference between you and the worm.

You can make yourself to change your pattern. Why, because you have a will. You don't have only intellect. There are two things given to you that you forget. You have a body and you have a soul. Your mind can be subject to the body. It can be subject to the soul.

I'm not asking you to follow me. I'm not asking you to study with me. I am asking you one simple question: 'Do you want to be happy or don't you want to be happy?' I will tell you how to be happy or you will tell me how to be happy, but somehow we are to sit together these ten days when the energy of the sun is at ninety degrees. Summer Solstice and Winter Solstice are not small things, remember that.

Two weeks ago, a lot of people telephoned me and I asked my appointment secretary to hold the telephone calls. I took one week of telephone calls and didn't answer them back. Out of them, I took fifty-two which were pretty serious according to the note. I called those fifty-two people back and asked one question: 'Are you doing your yoga or not?' 'On and off.' I said, 'Problem is all there.' The rest of the calls, seventeen were from those who were doing their yoga practices regularly and their

problems were simple and straight.

There was some sensitivity in us as human beings. There are some fundamental sensitivities that cannot be deprived. We cannot be under emotions. Emotions can be under us. You can pick and choose from your emotional life. Your emotional life cannot pick and choose from you. That is the law of God, therefore it is the law of the Earth.

Those who have more and give less, are not valued. They will lose the respect. They are not leaders, and a human being is meant and made to be the leader, and nothing less than that. Within your own sphere, you should be the leader.

### **Small Talk**

On one occasion, Yogi Bhajan went to visit the 3HO community in Puerto Rico together with Livtar Singh and his tour secretary, Sat Simran Kaur. Livtar and the Master passed a bar in their hotel and saw a man sitting alone. Following his teacher's lead, Livtar Singh went inside and they sat with the man, as Yogi Bhajan asked him about himself, and tried to lift his spirits for fifteen or twenty minutes.

On that same trip, the three of them were in a hotel room and Yogi Bhajan was sleepy.

"Why are you so sleepy?" inquired Livtar Singh.

"The trade winds. They are very relaxing."

"Why do people come here?" asked Sat Simran Kaur.

"For the women."

"Why?" she inquired.

"For acceptance," said Livtar Singh.

"That's right."

### **The Young Bride**

In January 1979, there was a large celebration of the ten-year anniversary since Yogi Bhajan's

first public lecture in Los Angeles in 1969. It was deemed the “Tenth Anniversary of the 3HO Foundation,” and many people came for the gala events. Babaji Singh and Bhagwati Kaur and her children, and Gurudev Singh came from Mexico City, bringing an expensive emerald ring for their teacher.

At an appropriate time, Babaji Singh, Bhagwati Kaur, her daughter Sat Kaur, and Gurudev Singh met with the Siri Singh Sahib in his personal quarters at the back of Guru Ram Das Ashram in Los Angeles. After receiving their gift, the Master looked at Gurudev Singh, motioning to Sat Kaur, and said, “What would you think of her as your wife?”

Gurudev Singh agreed. The Siri Singh Sahib then asked Sat Kaur, who replied, “Whatever you say, Sir.”

Yogi Bhajan replied, “No, you are my daughter. Tell me what you think.”

But Sat Kaur was too shy to speak and repeated, “Whatever you say, Sir.”

The Master then said, “Okay then, agreed,” and the engagement commences. It was to be a long engagement because Sat Kaur was quite young. It was thought that perhaps she and Gurudev Singh would marry in seven years, when she would be twenty-one.

Two years later, it is October, and Sat Kaur and Gurudev Singh were completing a ninety-day meditation together. In her mind, Sat Kaur was thinking continuously how to convince the Siri Singh Sahib to allow them to marry sooner.

It happened that the Master was coming to visit Mexico City. Sat Kaur was busy making an elaborate fruit platter for the Siri Singh Sahib. When she entered the room with platter, her mother was with Yogi Bhajan and he was complaining, “I cannot meditate. All the time I am getting bothered with Sat Kaur's thoughts about getting married.”

Then he asked Sat Kaur, “When do you want to get married?”

She almost dropped the fruit platter in surprise, then collected herself and said, “How about December?”

The Siri Singh Sahib consulted with Sat Simran Kaur, who had come as his appointment secretary. She said it was impossible because his schedule was full.

He confronted Sat Simran, “Even if you have to bring my dead body, I am going to marry these two. And if you cannot find a day we can do this, you are no secretary of mine!”

Sat Simran found three possibilities and one was chosen: December 1. They were married in

Mexico City on December 1, 1981.

## The Watch

In 1979, China had just opened its doors to Westerners and Hari Jiwan Singh and a business partner were at Canton Trade Fair to look for trade opportunities. Along the way, they were delighted to find that locating vegetarian food was delightfully easy. Old Buddhist restaurants provided dishes tastier than many in the West. They were also surprised at the effect of their *bana* on the Chinese crowds, as scores of people would follow them like rock stars, then tumble over each other like dominoes any time the Sikhs turned back to look.

On their way home, they stopped in Hong Kong where Hari Jiwan Singh's goal was to purchase a beautiful gold watch, duty free. He had saved up for months to afford a good gold watch and shopped very little in China so as not to deplete his resources. Hari Jiwan eventually found what he was looking for: a beautiful Baume & Mercier watch costing thousands of dollars. In his mind, he considered the watch to be a necessary adornment on the course of raj yoga, worldly and spiritual rulership.

When they returned to Los Angeles, Hari Jiwan Singh could hardly wait to show off his expensive purchase. He rushed back to the ashram and was escorted behind the Gurdwara to the living room where the Siri Singh Sahib was waiting in his chair with three secretaries nearby.

"Look, sir," Hari Jiwan exclaimed as he approached, pulling up his sleeve and showing off his watch.

The Siri Singh Sahib looked at his wrist and asked, "Are you proud of this, son?"

"Very proud, sir," he said, glancing between his teacher's eyes and his watch.

"Great," he said, "give it to her." He pointed towards one of his secretaries.

It took a few moments for the shock to evaporate, but in that interaction Hari Jiwan Singh came to see that detachment too was an integral part of the consciousness of raj yoga.

## Stand Your Ground!

*The following is a published account by Siri Atma Kaur Khalsa of her experience on the Khalsa Women's Training Camp drill team. The drill team, under the direction of former US Marine Lance Corporal Hari Singh Bird, was the pride and joy of the Siri Singh Sahib. They would often go on parade*

*to impress visitors to the camp. One time, all the women of the camp marched together, flags and banners unfurled, through downtown Espanola.*

I take my place, an arm's length distance from each lady on both sides of me. We are to line up by height and I think I should be before Prem Siri Kaur but her turban is such a smokestack it makes her about an inch taller than me. I am twelve years old.

"Eyes, Right!" the drillmaster calls.

We snap our heads to the right, adjusting ourselves ever so slightly so the only thing I see is my own shoulder and the next person's body at firm attention.

"Attention!" he calls.

We snap back, arms down and eyes front. Today we are starting the select drill team. Only fifteen ladies from the whole camp will work with Hari Singh for hours each day, learning tight maneuvers and fancy steps, how to follow orders on the clip, turn on a dime, and handle those beautiful white parade rifles. Every morning after sadhana, for the first week of camp, all the ladies march in formation to the call of Hari Singh's cadence. The Siri Singh Sahib says we should master this marching to get our minds disciplined and clear so we can follow orders precisely, without hesitation.

Most of the ladies hate it. I hear them groan and moan about the forced marches, sometimes at double time, up Shady Lane and down the dirt road from the ashram, over the dead frogs squashed by the tractor and through clouds of red dust. Yesterday, somebody even fainted while we were all standing in formation. I guess they think it's hard, either the physical exertion, or the mental focus. It's clear they don't like being ordered around, by "a man," no less. Hari Singh is the only man allowed in camp, other than the Siri Singh Sahib, that is. Maybe that's why they don't like it, because they have to take orders from a man during these sacred, women-only weeks.

I love it. I've finally found something in which I can excel at this camp. I'm good at precision, and I even like the discipline. If I know what I'm supposed to do I have no problem focusing and following through. I'm kind of scared of Hari Singh, but it makes me want to do my best. It feels so great to know that I'm looking good with my Khalsa sisters, so beautiful in our white bana, standing tall like soldier saints.

Marching all together, even though we are fifteen, it sounds like just one pair of feet. I even like that it's hard. I revel that I can do this; that I can push through the heat, the sweat, the exhaustion, and the challenge. I can coordinate the difficult moves, too – even with the rifles. My favorite is "With a turn, Left Shoulder, Right Shoulder with a slight hesitation. . . and Pre—sent Arms!" It took so many tries for all of us to get that move together but when we did, wow, it felt so great, like we were all part of one intricate machine, a Swiss timepiece, with each part moving exactly together. We knew we looked good. We were proud.

Every day, the select team, those fifteen of us that got to use the parade rifles, work with Hari Singh for an additional two hours. Usually it is during the morning classes. I don't mind missing Gurmukhi class. I can already sound out the phonetic script. I don't really get much out of the discussion groups with the other ladies either, they are always talking about how their husband does this, or their husband does that. I don't have a husband yet, and thank God, won't for a very long time. So I march. One day, Hari Singh has us marching up and down Shady Lane, even though it was the middle of the day, (not early morning after sadhana, when there aren't any cars). He orders me to stand guard, at attention, blocking the road so no cars can come by. The team is marching up and down the street moving to the complicated drill calls. Another lady is stationed at the far rear to block any traffic from the other direction.

I am incredibly nervous. "What if a car comes and wants to get through?" I think. These Espanola people won't put up with this. We're blocking traffic. We should get out of the street.

But my commander has given me an order and I have to stay firm. In parade stance, with my feet firmly planted, shoulder width apart I hold the rifle with both hands diagonally across my chest. I look straight ahead, focused on the horizon, down the street towards the intersection with the highway. Soon, a car turns our way. It is a purple low rider, crawling slowly towards me. I can hear the stereo pumping a low base. I can feel the surprise, incredulity; even hate seep from the occupants towards me.

"Stand your ground," I hear Hari Singh shout to me.

I continue my resolve. I don't look at the driver, just hold firm to the rifle. It is solid wood, but maybe the driver will think it is real. He blares his horn and yells at me. Will he run me over? Will Hari Singh come over and talk to him or move the ladies out of the way? The honking, the shouting, and my monkey mind keep going. My body is shaking with fear. After what seems like an eternity the purple car backs up, does a quick U-turn and speeds out of there leaving a cloud of dust. I stay at attention and let out a huge exhale of relief and gratitude.

Hari Singh calls the team to halt, and orders me back to the formation. At attention, we all listen as he praises my steadfastness, my focus, and how I caused the gangster, low riders to retreat since they knew they had no chance against a strong Khalsa woman. I feel eleven feet tall.

## Commando Training

*The Siri Singh Sahib left nothing to chance. In his mind, it seemed he prepared for every eventuality. In the event of an economic collapse, every ashram was encouraged to stock up on wheat, milk powder, and honey as survival food. In the event of nuclear war, so far as possible, there were plans for that. A conventional or civil war? At least the women at women's camp would be trained for*

that. The following is a published account by Gurutej Kaur Khalsa of the Toronto ashram, now living in Los Angeles.

Where do you go after military marching? In retrospect, I must say that the marching was supposed to align the hemispheres of our brains. It sounded good and no one asked, "Align it to what?" When our beloved teacher suggested an idea, he never suggested, he affirmed it. It was so. We proceeded to work with it. Understanding by doing; that is how we learned in those early days. Have the experience.

So what was next in this evolutionary phase of female empowerment, military style? He said, "Every woman needs to be able to play a musical instrument. This is important for her grace and creativity." I think at some point learning to use the weapon of your choice got added on to that.

Yet another military venture! Except this time I had run out of children, and thus excuses. So I grudgingly marched off in the grueling heat and dust of the high desert, in the middle of the day, in the dead of summer to learn how to shoot. Shoot rifles, handguns, and AK-47s.

A shooting range was created here on our land. In the dust and heat we learned to shoot and for some of us it was like a homecoming. Me, the pacifist, felt like Annie Oakley with the shotgun. I got why people would want to learn this. I got the power of it. I got what Guru Gobind Singh got. Why, he named the Sword "Bhagauti," which means princess. Meaning that, you had to treat these weapons with the same honor and respect that you would a princess.

Weapon training progressed to survival training, where we learned to ambush and to see and feel who was out there and if they were with us or against us. It opened my intuition and brought us all very close together as a group. The group got smaller as the training got more intense.

I remember one such four-day weekend. It rained, as only the desert can, with open-armed skies, creating a new oceanfront, or so it seemed. As we walked through what was usually a dry creek bed, the water filled our very tall boots. As we tried to find those tiny little catnaps, with someone else on watch, our wet clothing clung to us like eels, keeping us both cold and awake.

Our leader cheered us with, "This is nothing, in Nam, (that is *Vietnam* not *the Nam*) your sleeping bag was in the water and when you got up you were covered with leeches." Now that really sounded like fun. It made me think and long for a nice hot bath, not just any bath but a *bubble* bath.

Minds are wonderful things. They know no limits, and mine was having a field day with what could be, until we were ambushed; then it was move for your life. No, we didn't use real mortars, but even blanks don't feel good and no one wanted to get hit. We were the Khalsa Commandos and proud of it. Look at our camouflage, our face paint and our fatigues and you would know that we were serious about learning how we could defend this land, our way of life and each other if it came to that.

This was the summer we spent every weekend in survival mode. Coupled with other situations, I believe that we were complete with this phase, ready to move on to something challenging on another level after that summer. We knew our teacher would have the next phase outlined, we just didn't know what it was yet. But, these women in fatigues and face paint; they are really great women. Fearless and committed to each other and to stretching beyond what they thought possible. I know these women and I know I can trust them, even though they might look scary to you!

## Guru Dharma Kaur Khalsa

In Denmark on February 12, 1979 of the Christian calendar, the Khalsa won a small but very significant victory. With support in the form of letters from all over the world, Sat Raj Singh and Sat Raj Kaur were able to overcome an archaic Danish law that allowed newly born infants in that country to be named only from a select list of Christian names.

As a result of that consolidated effort, and through the blessings of Guru Ram Das, their second daughter, and the first to be born in Denmark, was rightly named - not christened - Guru Dharma Kaur Khalsa.

## “The Meaning of *Bana*”

*Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!*

Guru Gobind Singh, at the time of Baisakhi, is known to have asked for heads. The test was to see whether people who claimed that they belonged to the Guru came through or not. Five came and passed the test. To those who offered their heads, Guru Gobind Singh did not first give the *Amrit*. He first gave them the *bana*. It was the foundation stone laid for the beginning of the most beautiful consciousness, the Khalsa. Dress has a very unique power in it. It gives you confirmation in relation to the world around you. It gives you spirit and power to relate to your grace and your values to the values around you.

Sikh dharma is not a ritual or a philosophy. Sikh dharma is a living, practical *experience* of reality. Therefore, because of the values, which you valued very much in the past, it is possible that you may be afraid to stand out in society with the basic values on which Sikh dharma, the spirit of the Khalsa, stands. Our tolerance of this is not our acceptance. Don't misunderstand for a moment! We tolerate because we are compassionate, but that does not mean that we have accepted a person who calls himself a Sikh and does not wear the *bana* of the given father, Guru Gobind Singh, as his ultimate father on earth and in heaven, in order to walk on the path and thus make himself liberated.



In India, the Sikh religion has gone through many political upheavals and even today they survive as a minority. But, on the whole, the main body of the Sikhs are very decent, religious and honest people. I would suggest you not follow the few corrupt who have worn the skin of Khalsa with the mind of a donkey.

Guru Gobind Singh had mastery, therefore he cut through the mystery of time and space. He gave us the *bana*, then *Amrit*, later the Siri Guru Granth as *Bani*. Now this fact and eventful situation is twisted by different people to serve different purposes, and it is sometimes very confusing. However, we belong to the land of free people and our calibre cannot accept slavery. Therefore, we must not value social pressure. Social pressure is meant for those who are mentally bankrupt of their spirit and values. Sometimes, people think if you wear a three-piece suit that you will look socially impressive. I ask you, what social impression do you want to create when you are mentally a coward and spiritually bankrupt?

This world is a temporary place and it must be played that way. You have the right to enjoy this earth and its values, but don't forget it's a temporary place. A woman who cannot maintain her grace and values of grace is worse than an animal. She is a pawn of the game who can be played at the will of those who are her exploiters.

You must live with your values. If your children see you in duality with your concept of life, it is enough reason for them to hate you. Your generation could not live with bankruptcy of spirituality and truth. You could not live with demagoguery and clever moves. Learn from your own lesson. Live inside and outside alike, so that your own born may find the unison of your calibre as a human being and give you respect.”

The greatest philosophy on which this dharma lives is fearlessness. Normally, we can proudly say that the majority of the body of the Sikhs is still fearless. It is only a few politicians and professionals who, for the sake of their insecurity, have sold their souls, have lost their manners as pure beings, and have come out to sell their consciousness. You who have made it to the point of belonging to the House of the Guru, have to walk on the path very cautiously so that you may not end up with the same blunder.

Beyond national boundaries is the concept of the Khalsa. There is tremendous human misery, and if we have decided to take shelter in the House of the Guru and cross lines with the life of dust, then we must understand Harimandar is our point of worship and not Las Vegas, the Mecca of American sensuality and corruption. We have no political allegiance because we have no seat to win. Our mission is simply to serve humanity and to conquer every heart of every human being so that everybody on this earth can live healthy, happy and holy. As our extended goal does not recognize boundaries, so we do not recognize boundaries. Therefore, you must remember, when you fault in *bana* you devalue the sacrifice of the Five Beloved Ones.

You have to look distinct. Guru Gobind Singh has said it clearly. When there will be living in you

a very distinct, disciplined life, Guru Gobind Singh promises that he will inject in you the entire cosmic power of radiance and spirit. So it is in your hands how grateful you can be to live a wonderful human life. There is no use in living half-minded. Value not social pressures, my friends, they have always been exerted on all men of God.

Therefore, on this day, I'd like to let you know that we will serve everybody for all times to come, but in the House of Guru Gobind Singh, those alone shall be accepted who walk on the tenets of the *Rehit Maryada* given by the great Master. If you want to live as a liberated human being, which is called in the scriptures "*Jeevan Mukh*", follow the path very carefully, and gracefully, distinct enough that you can all the time feel that you belong to someone who is someone to God. I hope the few words I have shared with you from the depths of my heart shall be of value to you in the course, which you have adopted to live.

*Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ke fateh!*

### **The Janaanee**

Once, a young man from India married a 3HO girl. Over time, he convinced her that the turban is not for a woman. Although she had taken the *Amrit* of Guru Gobind Singh, she gave up her turban to please her husband.

When next the Siri Singh Sahib saw her, he said, "What happened to your head?"

She said, "*What!?*"

"It has become a cantaloupe. Somebody messed you up. You were alright."

### **The Swami's Orders**

One day Yogi Bhajan received as guests the five main directors of a swami friend's yoga organization. Both because they respected the Siri Singh Sahib and because they were well aware of the close and respectful relationship between him and their spiritual teacher, the five had flown to Los Angeles for his advice.

In private, they told their teacher's friend, whom they respected, "Swamiji has gone insane. He has given us these orders and they make no sense at all. If we follow through with this, it will be a disaster!"

The Siri Singh Sahib examined the papers minutely and replied, "The orders are wrong. Are you sure they are signed by him?"

"Yes, Yogi Bhajan. He's your friend. You call him and let him know this is not right."

The Master and friend reflected a moment. "No. I will not call him."

"Why not?"

"He's my friend, but he is your teacher. He has instructed you in writing to do this. Is that true?"

"Yes."

"Just go and do it."

"Yogi Bhajan, do you understand what it means?"

"Yes, I understand. It is wrong and very, very great damage will happen, I know. But you have come for counselling, is that true?"

"Yes."

"Then I advise you to go back and tell Swamiji, "We had a good meditation, and we have decided to obey your orders, and we are going to implement them."

A day later, there came a call from one of the directors, "Thank you for calling Swamiji!" The voice sounded relieved and truly grateful.

The Master replied, "I didn't call."

"But he tore up the paper! We did as you said, and Swamiji said, "Wait a minute. What did we write? Show me the paper." When he saw the order and saw it was not correct, he tore it up!"

"Did I ever lie to you guys? I told you I didn't call."

"Are you sure, Sir? He did it on his own?"

"Yep. God is a teacher too. He was testing you guys. If God would not have come at that moment, then the institution of a teacher would have fallen. That is not the Will of God."

## The King of Sleep

One day, a student met Yogi Bhajan after trying many times to arrange an appointment.

“What is your problem?” asked the Master.

“I cannot get a job. Without a job, I cannot make money. What can I do?”

“What do you do well?”

“Sleep.”

“Well, then sleep!”

The student returned home and slept. In his sleep, he had a dream, and in that dream he saw his grandfather. On awakening, he set out to meet with his grandfather. As it turned out, he had just died and left his grandson a fortune in his will, enough never to have to worry about work or money again.

## The Drum Girl

Once a woman told Yogi Bhajan that she was very upset, that she had been to every counselor and still she didn't know what to do. Yogi Bhajan gave her a pair of African drums, a big one and small one, and said, “Take these two fingers and use them as sticks and beat them, and just say ‘God, God, God, God and me, me and God, God and me...’”

She asked, “What will that do?”

Yogi Bhajan said, “It is none of your problem. Now you have told me you have gone to everything, right? You have come to me for what? You have come to me for hope. I am giving you a procedure. You follow the procedure. If it doesn't work, then let me know.”

She said, “When will I see you again?”

He said, “Maybe six months.”

The woman said, “That's too long. Why should I do something for six months if it doesn't work?”

Yogi Bhajan said, “I said, look lady, let's make a deal. The deal is if in six months it doesn't work,

call me all the names you can collect. But if in six months it works, don't call me. I don't want to hear from you."

She said, "Why that?"

He said, "Then I know it works. That's why. I don't want to hear anything from you."

She said, "Okay. Okay. What is the price of it?"

"I don't sell it. It is here. It belongs to somebody. I just give it to you. Take it as a gift. Get out of here."

After a while, her husband said, "You are feeling good. That I understand. What are you doing with this drum?"

She said, "No, no, somebody told me. A yogi."

He said, "What yogi told you?"

So they got into a big argument. She said, "Look, first you said I am getting better. I am getting better. Just relax. Let me do it."

He was so shocked because normally he expected she would throw that drum right at him. He had already removed all the carpeting from the house because he could not pay for the cleaning of it.

Three months later, Yogi Bhanan received a call, "You know me? I am that drum girl."

"What drum girl? I don't recognize. What drum?"

She told Yogi Bhanan the story and he knew who it was on the line. He said, "You seem very calm."

She said, "Thank you very much. You didn't give me that drum. You gave me a God. And I will play that drum for the rest of my life, I can assure you. But you told me half of the sentence. What is the rest of it?"

Yogi Bhanan said, "God and me, me and God, are one. That is the complete sentence."

She said, "Thank you very much. I remember it."

He said, "Repeat it."

She repeated it. “That’s all that’s needed?”

“I told you never call me, never see me again. That’s all is needed. When you and God and God and you are one, why do you need me? I don’t understand that.”

She said, “You are a very different person.”

“Don’t now cater to my ego. I am no different. I know a simple thing. I am telling you a simple thing, but keep on doing physically. It is called ‘*kar hath*’. *Kar hath* means: *kar* – with your self. From *kar hath* came *Kriya Kirtan*. *Kirtan* means doing something: *kir-tan*. “*Tan*” means body. “*Kar*” means hands. When hands and body – total self, body means here personality – when you and your personality praise the God, it is called *kirtan*.”

## A Gift from Mother

With the passage of time, Krishna Kaur’s ashram community on Broadway in Los Angeles had grown. There were eight couples living with her: eight men, eight women, and eight children. Of course, living at close quarters meant constant interaction and occasional conflict.

One day, Krishna Kaur complained to Yogi Bhajan. She made a list of the intolerable things in her life. “I’m tired of... And I’m tired of... And I’m tired of... And I’m tired of...” she proclaimed.

Yogi Bhajan was reading his paper. Without looking up, he said, “That’s your habit.”

Black Krishna interpreted her teacher’s remark as a sign that he did not understand her, so she continued, but louder.

Yogi Bhajan replied louder, “That’s your habit, dummy. Interview over.”

What could she do? Krishna Kaur went home, feeling as though she had not been heard or validated. On reflection however, Krishna Kaur realized that her attitude was indeed a habit. It was a habit she inherited from her mother.

## The Ladder of Spirituality

One day in March of 1979 as Hari Jiwan Singh was driving Yogi Bhajan to Jason’s Falafel House in Westwood he asked him, “Sir, how do you know when you become spiritual?”

His teacher answered, "What difference does it make? All you need to do is keep up practicing." After a brief pause, he continued, "Well, if you must judge yourself, spirituality is a progression to the subtle realm of existence where God works for you and through you.

"When your affairs are taken care of by God and when your teaching is provided by God, you've entered what is called 'entry level' spirituality. When you become aware of this, life becomes effortless. That's where true spirituality begins.

"If you're still complaining, you're not there; you're on the progression ladder. And like I said earlier, just keep up, the ladder becomes easier to climb with gifts along the steps."

### "God Relies on Khalsa"

*Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!*

The subject today is how to invoke God's Will and Divine Power. There is a very powerful word in the scriptural world. It is called "*tayk*". *Tayk* means help, leaning on, base. *Tayk* has so many meanings. What stands behind any creativity that stands is called *tayk*. *Tayk* is a power behind the throne.

For every power which exists on the surface, which is known as "*chittar*", there are equally many, many powers behind it, which are called "*gupt*". *Chittar-gupt* is the value and the play of this world. *Chittar* means what is visible, what can be seen, drawn, felt, understood. And *gupt* is what you cannot explain. *Gupt* is the *tayk* of the *chittar*.

If you want to confront a *chittar*, you must know the entire *gupt*. *Chittar* means the known. *Gupt* means the unknown. Fight with the unknown and known both if you ever want to fight, otherwise don't fight, because everything which is *chittar*, which is known, has multiple *gupt*.

You only look at one facet of something. That is why you get defeated. You do not know what to do and your life is a mess! There is no need to get into a mess

You must understand the world is nothing but an iceberg. Ninety percent of it is underwater, unknown, but there is a tip of the iceberg. Now, how big a ship are you going to have if you hit the iceberg? You are going to smash yourself! And not knowing the full extent of the *chittar* and *gupt* is a human problem.

Now, to invoke the Power of God, which is what you want to invoke, is not a matter of what you *do*, it is a matter of what you *rely on*. Do you rely on the Ultimate? That is your *tayk*. Is your *tayk* on Guru Ram Das and his embodiment, Siri Guru Granth Sahib? Or is your *tayk* in your arms, your head, in

your strength, your psychology, in your methodology? The *tayk* decides.

Some people are very sick. They think their career is their *tayk*. They think if they get a Ph.D. they'll be very happy. Rather, they may become miserable. We call it Ph.D.: Physical Death. You kill yourself doing things and you don't reach anywhere. Some people think getting a good salary and a good job in the government is a *tayk*. So what to do is our ultimate sense of reality, and similarly when we see where ultimately our reality lies, that is called *tayk*. Now, what is the *tayk* of the Sikhs?

Siri Guru Granth Sahib is our guide and our Guru, but our *tayk* is in the Khalsa. Our *tayk* is not even God, and if our *tayk* is not even God, how can Guru be our *tayk*? Now understand it - when we are learning as Sikhs, then our *tayk* is Guru. But when we merge in Guru, then our *tayk* is Khalsa. Because God's *tayk* is Khalsa, the living purity of essence in reality and in duality. In reality and duality, God has a *tayk*, and that *tayk* is Khalsa.

An Indian *patit*-Sikh will misinterpret my remarks, even say 'Yogi Bhajan said, "Guru is not *tayk*." So throw him out of the *Panth*!' These native Indian *patit* preachers who are taking certain liberties with Guru's Word and do not have direct experience of Guru's teachings or guidance, are going to interpret things, which brings up one main problem of yours.

You do not see the light of things. You think that every Indian who reaches America is another saint. That is not true. People come to America either to exploit America physically, emotionally or mentally. They do not come here to exploit Americans in their essence of spirit.

America wants to be exploited spiritually. For Americans, giving a few dollars and going through some hard *kriyas* doesn't mean anything, provided it gives them spiritual experience. America is ready for spiritual exploitation, provided the person who wants to do it is perfect.

What is happening is that many people come from India. In your naiveness, you used to touch the feet of anyone who had a long beard and a form in the shape of Guru Gobind Singh. I have seen it with my own eyes. Today, you want to check and enquire better than the F.B.I. - "Who is he?" "What is he?" "From where does he come?" "What is his motivation?" "What is his purpose?"

Secondly, there is a cultural difference. Indians think if somebody serves them, he is their servant. And Indians come here ordering you around, not knowing that you do not even listen to the orders of your own parents! Indians are very foolish in that respect. I have seen, they fail and they fall in their tracks.

Thirdly, in mentality you are different from Indians. Indians can keep their face, and the first job you would do is tear their mask. But there is one thing very unique in you. You want to achieve, and that is where lies the secret of your strength.

If you somehow can understand that your *tayk* is in Khalsa and can give this value to your



children, you will achieve something that nobody can even tell. If I am a man, and my *tayk* is in man, if I am a Sikh and my *tayk* is to be with Sikhs, then I should be friendly with all the *patits*, because they are in majority and majority rules things. No, my *tayk* is not in anybody. My wife may not like me, my children may not like me, my students may not like me, this government may not like me, this world may not like me - it doesn't affect me.

If I, as an individual, can understand that, I do not see why you should not. The elevation doesn't affect me because I have a *tayk* too, and my *tayk* is the Word of the Guru. I believe it, that my Guru said there shall be nine hundred and sixty million Khalsa and Khalsa shall rule this planet. I believe it, and that is where my *tayk* is. And my *tayk* along with that is that Khalsa will be unique. And also my *tayk* is that I shall not serve my wife, nor my children, nor my father, nor my relatives, nor my students. I am saying this in the presence of the Siri Guru Granth, my Guru. I don't owe them anything, I don't have anything, and whatever they want, they can have, but if they really want to have *me*, they have to share with me the *tayk* that I have.

Similarly, you who have studied with me and who have walked with me unto the Door of the Guru, and who have accepted who you are really and what you are really, have to understand one thing further. You have to convince yourself to get to that *tayk*, and you have to give these values to your coming generation and your children. Otherwise, there will be a tragedy, as in the coming five years tragedy will engulf the Indian Sikhs. Heavens will shower tragedy on them. I saw tremendous, awful things in my meditation today. Therefore, it is very essential that your *tayk* should be where Guru Gobind Singhji's *tayk* was - in the Khalsa. That's why Guru Gobind Singh said in true meaning and understanding, as our Father - "*Khaalsaa mayree jaan kee jaan. Khaalsaa mayree praan kee praan.*" - The very life in essence of me is Khalsa!"

You may not understand the meaning of these words. That is why I wanted to share with you, and make you understand. You are going to stand as unique. You are going to put your *tayk* where God's lies, or where your heavenly Father and earthly guide, Guru Gobind Singh, put *tayk*.

Towards that *tayk*, towards that elementary essence, Siri Guru Granth Sahib, as Guru, guides you, and that is the relationship which you have to understand as individual Khalsa and as a Body of the Khalsa. You will be opposed by many who have the body of a Gursikh, but the mind of a treacherer, and they will play political treacheries and games with you, but just remember that you have to put your essence on that *tayk*, as that is the Khalsa.

It has another facet of it too, I did see also in these twenty-five years. Now there will be many, many turmoils and trials on this land, yet the Body of the Khalsa will flourish here. These so-called "Sikhs" will see their utmost downfall in India, therefore there is a tremendous responsibility on your part to serve the Khalsa Panth around the world. But also remember, you as people of this land will be subjected to very hard times, and if your *tayk* will not be the Khalsa, you will not be absolved of the karmas. If Siri Guru Granth Sahib is your living Guru, all Siri Guru Granth Sahib says is one thing, that your *tayk* should be that of the Khalsa.

## Sovereign Khalsa Spiritual Nation

As the voices in opposition to the Siri Singh Sahib continued to be raised in Sikh religious circles in India and abroad, a learned scholar came from Amritsar to attend the Baisakhi meetings of the Khalsa Council in Los Angeles in April of 1979. Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh had been designated the "National Professor of Sikhism" by the S.G.P.C. They had sent Bhai Sahib to assess the situation in America. As it turned out, he was entirely sympathetic to the brothers and sisters he found at the Council.

The Professor addressed the Council, "*Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!*"

"Never in the history of Sikhism has it been demanded, or has it been accepted, by the body of the Khalsa that they should be put under police regimentation or that some central authority in charge of certain individuals should dictate to them how to behave. The only allegiance of a true Khalsa and of a true Sikh is to the doctrine and to God, to the Guru and to truth.

"Guru Gobind Singh, when he left this world, said, 'Henceforth the authority of the doctrine and the destiny rest with Guru Granth, and the determination of policy is with the body of the Khalsa' - not with any centralized, regimented body, but the body of the Khalsa.

"What is Khalsa? Guru Gobind Singh said 'Wherever five Sikhs who are fully committed to the doctrines of the Guru, and who live according to the teachings of the Guru, in their meditation concentrate on the Guru, that is Khalsa.'"

Then, Siri Singh Sahib addressed the Council, "Holy congregation of the Sat Guru, Siri Guru Granth Sahib, this is a day of liberty and a day of leaving the field of treachery to declare ourselves an independent spiritual nation of the Khalsa. We shall be what Guru Gobind Singh in his words said for us to be.

"Beyond national boundaries is the concept of Khalsa. We have no political allegiance because we have no seat to win. Our mission is simply to serve humanity, and to conquer the heart of every human being, so that the world can live healthy, happy, and holy. As our extended goal does not recognize national borders and restrictions, so we do not recognize boundaries. We are free."

Consequently, the Khalsa Council of the West took the unprecedented step of declaring Sikh Dharma in the Western Hemisphere to be a "Sovereign Khalsa Spiritual Nation". Its pledge of allegiance had a distinctly American ring to it, yet that pledge reflected the unique heritage of all Sikhs.

"I pledge allegiance to the Sovereign Khalsa Spiritual Nation, which shall live to obey the Will of God, serve humanity with love and peace, and spread the radiance of the Holy Naam as given by Guru Nanak through Guru Gobind Singh, and embodied in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, so that the children of the Khalsa, and all their generations to follow, may ever live in the spiritual sovereignty of Khalsa."

## The Spreading *Peepal* Tree

Before returning to Punjab, Sirdar Kapur Singh shared with the Khalsa Council many important details of Sikh history. None, perhaps was as striking as his account of a tree dating back to the time of Guru Gobind Singh.

"Now I will tell you the story of the spreading fig tree." The distinguished-looking professor paused for effect, as the members of the Council focussed their entire attention on him.

He wore an immaculate white suit. His white turban proudly wound around his head. The professor's pristine, white beard descending his robust chest completed the whole effect. From behind his glasses, fire sparked in Sirdar Kapur Singh's intelligent eyes.

"It is a long, long story, but I will try to repeat it as briefly as possible. To begin with, this story is recorded, and that record goes back to the first decade in which it happened. It was the year 1704. Round about 1714 or '15, it was recorded. It goes back as far as that. It is recorded in a small memoranda book prepared by a Sikh mendicant, *Udaasee*, in short, crisp language. The written manuscripts of this story remain confined to trans-Sutlej areas of the Punjab, which did not come under the dominion of Ranjit Singh.

"When Punjab was annexed by the British, this text remained preserved at various places in the private libraries of Sikh chiefs. One of the Sikh chiefs was Attar Singh of Bhadaur. He was a very able and a very learned man, universally accepted throughout India as a man of great learning, master of Arabic language and literature, and a master of Persian language and literature. He knew English very well. He knew Sanskrit and he knew French, and he had a huge library of manuscripts.

"After the annexation of the Punjab, he was heartily devoted in loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Empress of India. When the Empress of India wanted to solemnize her assumption of sovereignty over Punjab, she invited many bigwigs from India, naturally those people who were loyal to her, and those people of consequence, princes, landlords, and this and that. And this Attar Singh, he was also invited.

"It used to take about a month to reach London by sea surface. Before going, he took council with himself as to what present should be made to Her Imperial Majesty. Knowing his position as a man of letters, he took this small manuscript called "*Pothee Saakhee*". He took that. He translated it into English and presented it to the Queen. The Queen read through it and was very much impressed.

"She was also impressed by another thing. About ten years earlier, there had been Anglo-Sikh wars. That story is a long story. About a half-dozen battles took place between the British and the Sikhs. The histories say one thing, but now they admit, their own archives admit it, in every battle which took place between the Khalsa army and the British - although the Khalsa army was abandoned by its state, no rations were sent to it, no munitions were supplied to it - yet, in every battle without an

exception, six battles ranging over a period of one year, the British were beaten to their knees. And on two occasions, the British generals themselves admit that it is only through diplomatic courtesy that we say the British won. If the truth is told, it is otherwise than what they said. Well, Queen Victoria, Her Majesty, knew this was what had happened. The British writers themselves had admitted that nowhere in the world in the process of the expansion of the British Empire had they met a foe so mighty and so invincible as the Sikh soldier. They themselves recorded this.

"She wanted to know what was the secret of this invincibility. The general idea was that the British soldier, disciplined as he was, and the European methods of fighting, were always superior to the Asiatic soldier and the Asiatic ways of fighting, from which this species sprang up. It is true that Sikh soldiers were trained by Europeans in modern warfare. Most of their teachers were the retired generals of Napoleon Bonaparte, after the battle of Waterloo. Still, the fighters were the Sikhs, and they beat them! She wanted to know what was the secret of this invincibility, and she was told that the secret was in their commitment and their faith in their religion and in their prophets. Their commitment was so uncompromising that nobody could beat them! You could kill them, but you could not beat them!

"When she read this story from the "*Saakhee Pothee*", or memoranda of the travels, she had a story in there that hardly occupied two paragraphs. It is still there, in the British Museum. The story goes like this:

"Guru was travelling to the South to have an audience with the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb was busy subduing certain rebellious princelings in the South, and he had been busy there for about twenty years. And Aurangzeb wrote to the Guru, "I want to have direct talks with you. There has been some misunderstanding through which you have been harmed. I want to have talks with you. If you will be so good as to come to Deccan, we will discuss the things frankly."

"Before that, Guru had written to him in a challenging letter, saying, "Our meeting cannot be, not in Deccan or anywhere else, except on a battlefield." And he had said "I will make a proposal, if your Majesty will accept it. The proposal is that you bring your army. As strong as it is, it does not matter. I will also come with my followers. When there is a distance of about a mile between your armies, mighty armies, and my followers, then you halt, and so will I. Then by agreement, both of us at once, you come with two aides and I will come single-handedly. Then, I will talk with you and we will settle whatever matters of dispute exist between us, there. But I may add, you are only a prince. You have been born in a royal house. You have always been brought up in luxury. Your order has been obeyed. You have so many resources. You have a big empire at your disposal. In your life, you may have met with other difficulties, but one thing you have not met with is a real soldier. Him, you will meet for the first time."

"Aurangzeb wrote back, saying, "You know, Sire, there is some misunderstanding. I am truly repentant. If something wrong has been done, I want to know. Unfortunately, as it is, I cannot leave the South. My hands are too full here. Will you be so kind as to travel to the South, and I will see to it

that, at state expense, your travel arrangements are made.”

"This was the background. It was against this background that the Guru was travelling towards the South. He travelled, as was the custom during those days, about seven or eight or ten miles a day, with accoutrements and camp fixed at some suitable place, where the Guru would read in the evening with his followers, spend the night, and in the meantime, his next halting place was being prepared. This is the way in which travelling was done in India, and in the whole of the East, for thousands of years. And it is recorded that he went to the village of Sakhi, where a mendicant who was following with him, an *Udaasee sadhu*, an ascetic, recorded the events.

"The Guru was travelling through a district of eastern Punjab, and the chronicler says, 'The next halt was the village Sohevaa, where the spiritual Master laid his holy feet.' Still, the village is there. On the halting place where his camp had been prepared for the night, there was a cluster of *jand* trees, and just near his own tent was a big *jand* tree. In the trunk of that tree there was a sapling of the Brahmanic fig tree, which the Lord of the Two Worlds saw in a trance. A Sikh of the Guru discovered the actual sapling in the cleft of a *jand* tree when he climbed down from it to look for the Brahmanic fig (or *peepal* tree), as the Guru had requested.

"And the Guru said of it, 'Though usually the white saplings of the *peepal* tree do not grow here, because they are very tender and cannot grow in desert areas, this small *peepal* tree will grow into a mighty tree. It will grow as big as the *jand* tree itself. And not only will it become as big as the *jand* tree, but it will spread over it, over the whole tree. That is the time when my Khalsa will spread over the four corners of the world, and the sovereignty of Delhi will be the first prize which will fall into their laps. When the *peepal* tree spreads over the *jand* tree, then the spirit of the Order of the Khalsa, which I have enshrined under the command of the God Almighty will start to work to set up a world society which will last five thousand years. That divine society will enjoy peace and affluence.'

"These were the words, and when Her Majesty the Queen read these words, knowing there was something mystical behind the invincibility of the Sikh soldier, she wrote to the Governor-General at Calcutta: 'Please go ask somebody to find the village which is called Soheva, and see if there is a *peepal* sapling growing in a *jand* tree.'

"The reply came in two or three months, 'Yes, it is there, and under the *jand* tree has been built a mud platform, where an ascetic lives who is worshipping it.' So she was sure it was that exact place."

"So she wrote again, 'Please report the size of the *peepal* tree and the size of the *jand* tree.'

"Her orders were obeyed, and the report came forth, 'It is about a foot and a half in length, and the *jand* tree is such and such a height.'

"Then she referred the matter to the royal botanical professor who was an authority in these matters. He informed her, 'Your Majesty, the tree grows very slowly, and it will take the *peepal* sapling

at least one hundred years to grow to the height to which you refer.' Her Majesty's mind was at rest and she slept without any mental disturbance that night because, as far as she was concerned, one hundred years of uninterrupted British hegemony in the East, and India in particular, was guaranteed by the slow rate of growth of the *peepal* tree.

"For one hundred years, the British ruled, then there was again unrest in India, and the British decided they must leave India, and return it to the sovereignty and political power which had been usurped. During those days, I was a prefect, a British officer in one of the districts of Punjab, about sixty miles from Soheva. I was aware of this story and had seen in the India Office in London the official reports sent from India in the year 1858.

"In 1942, I made arrangements to travel on horseback to see this tree and what was happening to it. When I went, it was about two and a half yards lower than the highest pinnacle of the *jand* tree. And there was only a small platform, on which a *sadhu*, a swami of Sikh persuasion, was standing. And round about the village, folk who were Hindu used to come there and revere it with small offerings.

"Since 1942, I have not been there, but now I am told it has grown almost, not exactly, equal to the height of the *jand* tree. It has not yet spread over it, but it has become equal to it, and the Sikhs who were expelled from Pakistan areas have settled in those arid zones that were lying empty and have raised in that place a magnificent Gurdwara."

## What Scholars Said

A number of Sikh scholars appreciated the Siri Singh Sahib's pioneering work. Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh, National Professor of Sikhism, on the occasion of the Master's birthday, gave a long tribute, summed up by: "Glory be to the Guru who performs His work in the Western Hemisphere through this instrument... To pick holes in this Divine show and the Guru's Miracle is to turn one's back to the Guru and to mock at the appearance of the white hawk in the skies of the Western Hemisphere."

Dr. Fauja Singh, Professor and Director, Department of History and Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, praised his work, saying, "He has helped retrieve yoga from its distorted image of the medieval period and has restored it to its original and meaningful usage and purpose, that is to say, the desire to attain union with God through its agency."

Dr. Gobind Singh Mansukhani wrote, "The Sikhs, with their traditional humility, feel justly proud of his achievements and his selfless devotion to the mission of the Khalsa... May God bless Sardar Harbhajan Singh Yogi with long life and good health so he may continue his endeavours for the fulfillment of the noble aims of the Sikh Dharma."

Generally, Western religious scholars were slower to note the significance of the Siri Singh Sahib's mission. For many of them, it was not until the 1980s that they became aware of the Sikh religion, partly because of the relentless, high profile work of the Master, attending inter-religious conferences in the 1970s and 80s, and meeting with the heads of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. But there were exceptions too.

Alan Tobey attended the 1973 Summer Solstice Sadhana and wrote a published article, "The Summer Solstice of the Healthy-Happy-Holy Organization."

Verne Dusenbery, began his study of 3HO with his 1975 MA thesis, "Straight Freak Yogi Sikh." Afterward, he spent his career puzzling over his perceived Yogi/Sikh dichotomy, not appreciating that from early on, Yogi Bhajan had called his students "Sikhs," that he gave a talk on Baisakhi 1969 introducing his students to the Sikh tradition, and that Beads of Truth carried a series of comics, "The Life Story of Guru Nanak," beginning in issue #2 (March 1970).

Constance Elsberg and Dorothy Jakobsh would later on do interesting research writing on the lives and values of 3HO Sikh women.

## **Chile, Si!**

Pritam Pal Singh grew up in Chile, studied in Israel, and eventually made his way to Guru Ram Das Ashram in Amsterdam. It was a great learning experience for him. After three years, he sought out Yogi Bhajan and asked for his permission and blessing to take Kundalini Yoga and Sikh dharma to Chile.

The Master told Pritam Pal Singh he had to get married first. This was not unusual. Every 3HO centre was administered by a married couple.

When Pritam Pal Singh went to America to participate in the Summer Solstice Sadhana of 1979, his eyes were naturally primed for a likely *shakti* to fill the role of his wife. It just so happened that the single lady in the tent next to his spoke Spanish and seemed very competent and very nice. Pritam Pal Singh knew he would soon have to return to his home in South America where there was no Kundalini Yoga, thousands of miles from his new 3HO family, with or without a life companion. It was now or never.

Pritam Pal Singh introduced himself to Hari Nam Kaur, his neighbor, who had come to New Mexico from Austin, Texas with her teachers, Gurubachan Kaur and Singh. He sought out his spiritual teacher, explained his situation to him, telling him that he wished to marry Hari Nam Kaur and bring her to Chile with him. Listening intently, in the end, Yogi Bhajan said, "Bring her to me."

“Yogiji wants to see you,” said Pritam Pal Singh to Hari Nam Kaur.

This was serious now, she thought. Hari Nam Kaur had an appointment with her spiritual teacher. She went with an open mind, but when she saw the look on his face, she knew an engagement was coming, an engagement she did not desire.

“Do you know what you are doing?” she countered.

“I do,” answered the Yogi.

“You have so many students. Do you know who I am?”

“I do. Your karma here in the United States is over. Your destiny is in Chile...”

The discussion went on for some time, but Hari Nam Kaur trusted her teacher and accepted to go to Chile.

“You should write me once a month,” Yogi Bhajan said, “and anytime you can call me up.”

So, at last, Hari Nam Kaur, the devoted student gave in to the wishes of the Master and agreed to leave America and her life with the Gurubachans at the Austin ashram, and go to Chile as Pritam Pal Singh’s wife.

## **Fifty Years of Life**

According to his horoscope, he was not supposed to be alive for his fiftieth birthday. Yet on 26th of August 1979, people came from near and far to join in a festive celebration of the timeless man known as Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa, Yogi Bhajan, Siri Singh Sahib of Sikh Dharma in the West and Spiritual Director of the 3HO Foundation.

Every year, the students at his home base in Los Angeles and elsewhere had taken notice and marked their teacher's birthday in thankful celebration. The first party had been in the parking lot outside the original Guru Ram Das Ashram beside Jules Buccierra's antique store. Then, there had been open parties in public parks in the magnanimous southern California skies. Then, as time passed, the events began to become increasingly elaborate, dress-up occasions located in more and more stylish indoor settings.

The fiftieth birthday was combined with the anniversary celebration of ten years of the 3HO Foundation. The party was held in the posh Beverly Wiltshire Hotel on September the first. Some hundreds of students and well-wishers gathered in awe and appreciation of one humble man and his



work, his play in the Hands of the One Infinite Creator. On that occasion, he was presented with a large commemorative volume compiled by a dedicated staff of editors. It was entitled, *The Man Called the Siri Singh Sahib*.

The Siri Singh Sahib was clearly moved and grateful. What was his secret? How had he survived to the ripe age of fifty years despite his gruelling schedule and endless days of service? It was the power of prayer. He had been ready to go home, he said. Only the loving prayers of his students had kept him around, giving him an extension on life.

What did the future hold? The greatest challenges, the Master predicted, still lay ahead, and having said as much, he launched headlong into a non-stop schedule of counselling, preaching, entertaining, healing and giving the ever-popular White Tantric Yoga courses. The next twelve weeks would see him commuting in his accustomed style from Los Angeles to a different city every weekend: Toronto, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Boston, Calgary, and Houston in September; Mexico City, Portland, Des Moines, St. Louis, and Espanola in October; Washington D.C., Tucson, San Francisco in November.

## A Special Blessing

In September, history was made as another entourage of Sikhs from the West set out to share their inspiration with the eleven million Sikhs in the East. From village to village, and town to town, they travelled, meeting with many groups and associations of Sikhs. They even scaled the heights of Hemkunt Sahib, where the Tenth Guru had meditated in the Himalayas in his previous life.

Sometimes they gave talks in simple Punjabi, explaining the importance of keeping their hair and living to the principles laid out by Guru Gobind Singh. Other times, they simply sang the Guru's Songs and allowed their sweet, healing sounds to speak for themselves. On this trip, Sikhs from the West were for the first time accorded the honor of playing *Gurbani Kirtan*, the Sikh sacred music, at the Golden Temple. It happened to be Guru Ram Das's birthday that day.

The distinguished musicians were Mukhia Singh Sahib Vikram Singh Khalsa, Singh Sahib Guru Sangat Singh Khalsa and Ajit Singh Khalsa. Vikram Singh had prayed for years for this blessed opportunity. He had even imagined what *Shabad* he would play. "Great, Great is Guru Ram Das!"

## Their Holiness

In October 1979, Guru Ram Das Ashram in Los Angeles was host to a spiritual luminary from the East whose homeland was also subject to the predations of the unkind. When His Holiness, the Dalai

Lama met the saintly Siri Singh Sahib, he was assured of the Sikh people's friendship and their commitment to offer help whenever it was needed. He was also invited to attend the Sixth Unity of Man Conference scheduled for February in New Delhi.

When, at last, February came, the Siri Singh Sahib of the West made his way to New Delhi to participate in the Unity of Man Conference. Although they had landed in Delhi some minutes before midnight, he barely allowed his entourage time to unpack before setting out on an ambrosial hour tour of the historic Gurdwaras of Sis Ganj, Rakab Ganj, and Bangla Sahib.

After that, a reception area was hurriedly set up in the lobby of the Taj Hotel, where the congenial Siri Singh Sahib proceeded to meet with a nearly endless stream of well-wishers, dignitaries, and humble Gurusikhs.

After addressing the Conference, the Siri Singh Sahib then flew south to Bombay and continued on to the Holy Takhat of Siri Hazoor Sahib. It was there that the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, spent his final days before the Guruship passed on to Siri Guru Granth. The Siri Singh Sahib duly bowed his head at that holy place, and was himself honored with a *siropa*.

## On the Lam

One evening, Yogi Bhajan picked up the phone at Guru Ram Das Ashram. It was ten to eleven.

A voice introduced itself and said it was calling from Chicago. Then it said, "Do you have a backdoor to the ashram?"

The Master replied, "Yes."

"Get a car and split!"

"What?"

The voice said, "Two constables from the organized crime unit are coming to ask you to come. They will tell you that they want to take you to the police station to question you. Their plan is that on the way they will pick a fight and arrest you for attacking a police officer and you will be put in jail. I am telling you to get a car and go!"

Quickly, Sat Simran Kaur brought a car to the rear entrance and they left. For three months, they were on the road. Avoiding airports, where they might be spotted, they hid out. Some of that time, they spent in the town of Aurora, Colorado with Hari Singh and Hari Har Kaur. Yogi Bhajan would speak only cryptically to his staff on the phone so no one could figure out where he was holed

up.

At one point he was heard to tell Hari Har Kaur on the phone, "I'm at the house where the water flows under the table," referring to a uniquely made coffee table with an attached waterfall underneath. The Hari's even provided Yogi Bhajan with a key to their home in the event it was ever needed again as a Safe House. Yogi Bhajan commented at the time, "You know, Hari Singh, this is the only key I have to a home. I don't even have a key to my own."

After three months, 3HO lawyer Guru Terath Singh settled the matter at the district attorney's office. The police who were sent to pick up Yogi Bhajan begged not to be charged for their offence. According to them, they had instructions to pick up the Siri Singh Sahib because some influential people in Chicago did not find his work acceptable.

Afterwards, Yogi Bhajan said, "What we did is, we put our higher-ups, they put their higher-ups, and a deal was decided in Washington. And that's my personal experience of freedom, of everything. I think that day I was initiated into America. Then, later on, when I went to Washington, I was told if you want to do any work, either you have some godfather, or a Senator or a Congressman at your beck and call. I never understood still that is what it is, but I just wanted to explain to you that things are like that."

### Five *Patit* Sikhs

The Siri Singh Sahib continued his tireless effort of conveying the spirit of Guru Nanak to Sikh *Sangats*, wherever they might be. In the West, there was a particular difficulty as many misguided *patit* Sikhs had abandoned the discipline of Guru Gobind Singh and immersed themselves in western *maya*. Surrounded by the trappings of worldly success, they had cultivated a sense of smug self-satisfaction.

Once, on a visit to Calgary, five very wealthy Sikhs, all of them *patit*, were brought to see the Siri Singh Sahib. They said, "We are successful. We are millionaires. If it were really necessary to have beards and turbans and *kirpaans* and all that stuff, then why should God have blessed us with so much wealth?"

The Siri Singh Sahib responded, "I can't fight with five of you. Choose one leader among you. He can talk to me."

One said, "I am the leader."

"Fine. If your confidence is very healthy, walk in."

He came in, and they sat down. Then the Siri Singh Sahib looked in his eyes and asked, "Do you have a daughter?"

"Yes."

"She is seven or eight years old?"

"Yes."

"When she is fourteen, if she gets pregnant and comes home, what will you do?"

He looked at the Siri Singh Sahib and asked, "Are you cursing me?"

"No, I am asking you a question."

"I will kill her and kill myself."

"What?"

"How could she do it?"

"Wait a minute. Keep yourself low and calm. But ask yourself, 'Why not?' Just ask yourself, 'Why not?'"

### Poem: My Crosswinds

Living is good.  
I don't know why it should.  
There is nothing so bad,  
But everything is sad.  
I do just to do,  
It can be good or bad too.  
Who is pure,  
Who has sinned,  
One is caught in  
One's own crosswind.

I am lonely.  
Have no peer,  
Though all love me

As a sage or a seer.  
Cold, cold is the lonely one  
Waiting for the morning sun.

Dark, lonely, cold night,  
One's own lips there to bite,  
If in heart there is no light,  
What can be warm, cosy,  
And bright?  
Come like a sunbeam  
Bright and clear,  
Still unseen, very far, very near.  
With me,  
In me,  
Make the breath hot.  
Entangled, wrangled,  
Indulged and caught.  
At night I leave  
The body to meditate.  
I walk into every heart.  
So I relate;

Life is good.  
Good is God.  
Everyone is good  
So I thought.

## **A Gathering Storm**

On January eleventh, 1980, the Siri Singh Sahib for the Western Hemisphere issued a warning call to the Sikh leadership in Punjab. He advised them that, if they did not "unite, solidify and reorganize" within the next seven hundred days, there would be great and unfortunate consequences. If the leaders did not take positive steps, the price would be paid in terms of "terrible hardship and depression" for all Sikhs in India. This call was sent as a registered letter to two hundred and fifty Sikh leaders.

Hardly anyone bothered to respond to Siri Singh Sahib's grave premonition. Most of the leaders continued their short-sighted political maneuvering. They sloughed off his warning, saying, "Oh look, now Yogi Bhanjan is making prophesies..."

The Siri Singh Sahib had, by the Grace of Guru Ram Das, raised a spiritual nation, a nation of saint-soldiers in the West. He had instilled in them the teachings of Guru Gobind Singh and inspired in them a faith in Siri Guru Granth Sahib. But he had not versed them in the blood politics still prevalent in India, where once, not so very long before, the British *raj* had expertly connived their strategy of "divide and rule."

On Baisakhi of 1980, the members of the Khalsa Council gathered to deliberate over the affairs of Sikhs outside India. Yet, more and more, they found themselves affected by events over which they had no control, events, which seemed to be running a perilous, predetermined course in their spiritual homeland.

In the West, they witnessed a growing swell of Punjabi Sikh emigrants claiming religious persecution at the hands of the Indian government, the same government which, in the person of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (no relation to the "Mahatma") and Giani Zail Singh (Chief Minister of Punjab, and later President of India) had earlier extended warm hospitality to the Siri Singh Sahib and successive tours of non-Indian Sikhs.

At the same time, most of the Council members now had children attending school in India, a situation, which their spiritual teacher had repeatedly urged was much preferable to education in the materialistic West. Yet, there was hardly an American parent who did not shudder at the news of anti-Sikh violence in the Sikh homeland, not far from their children's school.

### **"Guru's Grace"**

There was once a teacher who taught about thirty or forty people. They had all qualified, and so one day he told them he was to give them Guru's Blessing.

So he brought them into the city and he let them see everything, and they freaked out! In other words, he wanted to change their consciousness for a while. So they had ice cream and cookies and whatever they could want. And then one day, he rented a suite on the thirtieth story of one building. Then, one by one, he asked them to come into one room.

When they entered that room, he would ask them if they felt they had learned from him, and whether they were prepared to demonstrate that they had sufficiently understood. When the student replied that he had learned, then he further asked, "Do you think that according to what I have taught you, you can obey me?"

The first student replied, "Yes, sir."

"Then jump out of that window."

Now everybody knew that they had come up by the elevator and they were on the thirtieth floor. So how can he jump out of that window? He said, "That window? Sir, I'll die!"

Teacher said, "Alright, don't die. Go in that room."

So, everybody had the same situation and the same request. All of them ended up in that room. And when they went in that room, they looked out the window and they were shocked to see that out of that window there was a platform on which there was a net to catch the person. So they were shocked and cursing themselves that they hadn't done it.

Finally, the last student came, and the teacher asked him, "Did I teach you? Do you understand the world, and can you do as I say?"

Student replied, "Yes, sir." And he went straight out and was caught in that net and he was alright. He just laughed. Then that net had an automatic system, which just put him in that room where all the others had gone.

So you see, Guru doesn't discriminate. He sent all into the room, although one of them had qualified. All others in the room were duly disqualified. The room was the same. That's called Guru's Grace. It is a very subtle proposition.

## **The Good Doctor**

The young man was studying medicine in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He had been practising Kundalini Yoga for a couple of years and it changed his life. He had begun to feel a very elevated state, mentally, physically, and spiritually, which felt very healing to him.

Being naturally curious and a good student, he had sought out the details of his teacher's teacher and his Sikh religion. He was aware that Yogi Bhanan was a kundalini yoga master and that he was Sikh. The more he saw of Sikh dharma, the more the medical student liked it. He liked its universality, its focus on helping others, its lack of a punitive, judgemental code, and its belief that happiness is akin to holiness, that they are not distinct states of being.

Before deciding to adopt the Sikh path, the young man decided to seek out the fabled Yogi Bhanan, who he had heard was a man of ultimate honesty, expecting that if Sikh dharma was not for him, the Master would tell him so.

The medical student drove to a house in Albuquerque where the Siri Singh Sahib happened to be staying. The Master was reclining on a couch amid a large group of people. In no time, the young man was at Yogi Bhanan's side, and before he could speak, the Master said to him, "Tell me, Doctor,

how much money you make?”

The young man was shocked and surprised at this introduction.

The Siri Singh Sahib then closed his eyes and seemed to meditate. Somehow, the medical student did not feel ignored, but that the Master was including him on a level much deeper than a host usually includes their guest. The young man expected Yogi Bhanan would next say something profound.

When he opened his eyes, the Siri Singh Sahib said, “Let’s go to the movies!”

A number of people found their rides, and off they went. In the restroom at the theatre, as the medical student was washing his hands, the Master emerged from one of the stalls. “We are together,” he said. Then, the young man heard him say, “Again.”

In response, he started to mouth the words, “Yes, again,” but he stopped. The young man realized that Yogi Bhanan had never actually said, “Again,” even though he had heard it as distinctly as the rest of his statement. He started to think. Did this fabled master mean “again” as in a previous life or “again” as today? The question stayed with him.

A couple of weeks later, the medical student set out for Yogi Bhanan’s base in Espanola. For the first time, he had on a turban and the traditional white clothing the Master’s students wore. There were so many questions he wanted to ask the Siri Singh Sahib!

Driving from Albuquerque to Espanola, the young man could not help but think about his father who had, he feared, died spiritually unfulfilled at the age of sixty-three from pancreatic cancer. He also thought about his two uncles, men of achievement, but maybe not fulfillment, dead also at sixty-three. On that day, sixty-three did not seem far away.

As he approached Yogi Bhanan, the Master noted his turban, “Do you think you can go before the public like that?”

“It may take some time.”

“Time,” he replied. “What is time? Do you think sixty-three years is a long time?”

The medical student began to say, “No” when he realized the Master had pulled the number sixty-three out of thin air, or out of his mind. It made him startled and amazed. In that moment, he felt suddenly capable of committing himself to a new destiny and a new name.

As was the routine, he wrote down his name and date and place of birth, and gave it to the Siri Singh Sahib. He did a quick calculation wrote his student’s new name, and handed the paper back. It said, “Dharma Singh: A pure lion on a victorious path.”



Over the years, Dr. Dharma Singh Khalsa would make valuable contributions to the understanding and teaching of Kundalini Yoga. His research would break new ground in understanding the effect of meditation on blood flow in the command centres of the brain. Through his numerous books, including *Meditation as Medicine* and *Food as Medicine*, both published by mainstream publishers, he would make the Master's invaluable teachings available around the world.

## Pander and Slander

During the Khalsa Council meetings of April 1980, the members gathered for a frank and informal discussion of some of the pressing issues of the day.

The Siri Singh Sahib addressed the council members, "When a Sikh starts living on approval, that is the one point where he is not living to the values of being a Sikh! That is a fundamental! So long as man needs approval from outside, he is a nut! And that is a very clear picture in my mind. That is the difference between you and me. I have used *everything* to make you to be a nation, but *I* never got used. *That* is the difference! And that difference is going to continue.

"First of all, I was made to understand there are a lot of questions, so I came on your lunch time. I love debate! Ask me questions! I will fix you!

"You are all the Khalsa body. Try to recognize your first right. You have every right to ask any question. It doesn't matter how nutty that question is. If we cannot answer you, then we will accept your question and try to change our policy. Yes?"

Someone addressed the Siri Singh Sahib, "This is a something I have heard bouncing around, but it is also a question I have. I don't understand why we should spend so much energy dealing with these people?"

"Eleven million ignorant people should be left to be doomed? And a couple of hundred dollars a year on correspondence, sending them certain letters, waking them up, bringing them to the gallows. Is it not worthwhile? That's what we do."

Another person asked, "What does it mean to be called before the Akal Takhat?"

"Oh, before Akal Takhat they are going to judge you whether you are right or wrong. If you are proven to be wrong, then they will give you punishment."

"Who is 'they'?"

"Then the Jathedar of Akal Takhat will preside. They will have the Head Priest of... all S.G.P.C.

employees! Five... six of them, they play this game very often, but we are actually trying to start a campaign to make Akal Takhat independent of S.G.P.C., and it is on its way. Kendri Singh Sabha and Sardar Hukam Singh have already passed a resolution. It is also in *The Sikh Review*. It has come out."

Someone asked, "How would it function then, if it were independent?"

"We want the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat to be elected from the entire *Sadh Sangat*. When the election of the S.G.P.C. happens, let there be one vote, or different bodies may select five known Gursikhs who should sit together and deliberate, just as we select a Pope, kind of person who is worthwhile, and then his salary and everything in his budget should be independent, not under S.G.P.C.

"The Jathedar stands before the line to get his salary! And when this was objected to, they said, 'No, we will send his salary to the Akal Takhat.' What does it matter whether you give him the envelope there when he comes, or you send his envelope there after a week?

"Where we are trying to provoke them is, there were four *takhats* before, as far as I know. What they did is they made the fifth *takhat*, so I said, 'Well, go ahead. Why not have the sixth one?'

"That is what they are bitter at. How can there be a sixth? When they said they are not going to have a sixth, I said, 'Why there will be a fifth?' And as far as we are concerned, we can call our place a 'Sarkar Khalsa' instead of saying a Takhat Khalsa, and it serves the same purpose. Sarkar means the Government of the Khalsa. And instead of saying a Takhat Khalsa, we will call it 'Darbar Khalsa,' Court of the Khalsa. Oh, we have many ways to go around! But it is fun to shake them in their boots a little bit here, a little bit there, and we have got to do it!

"According to the Akhand Kirtani Jatha, they feel the Americans are sick, they are from drugs, and they have come to be yogis, and now they are Sikhs. Now they should revolt against kundalini yoga and do their kind of thing. Then only, they are acceptable Sikhs!

"In other words, we should dissolve Khalsa Council, we should dissolve the whole thing and give them the control. You want it? Pass a resolution! Why are you asking me? I'll keep on teaching yoga, keep on making more Sikhs, keep on making other Khalsa Councils... You know, I am not upset! It is a political fight. It is a political ambition. It has got nothing to do with reality.

"When they do their mantra, '*Gur-r, Gur-r...*' Yesterday I noticed that, and Bhai Manmohan Singh protested to me. He said, 'Yogi Bhajan, from this mantra we got all that we have!'

I said, "From kundalini yoga, we got all we have. You abuse kundalini yoga. We don't abuse your Gur-r. That's how the shoe pinches! We have to be very reasonable.

"He said, 'Yeah, yeah, I understand the difficulty.' He was very effective and apologetic. It is the

same ego, 'Because we are born Sikh, we are Indian, therefore we are better Sikhs!'

"All we are telling is, we are not going to accept it. If they are going to betray our faith, we are going to expose them!"

Someone else spoke up, "When we talk about establishing Takhat Raj Yog, is it a throne of spiritual technology? Is it a temporal authority when we talk about the Government of the Khalsa, you know, is it on par with the Khalsa? But does it have anything to do with the *takhats* in India?"

"Did you ever think that you will have hair on your head and tie a turban?"

"No."

"Okay. Watch and see! We are going to live as a Nation. Let me make an explanation. We are going to live as a Nation. If we will not guard our temporal and spiritual authority by ourselves, we shall be betraying our future generations. And we cannot subject ourselves to India and Indian politics.

"Maharaja Ranjit Singh, when he built the Gurdwara of Hazur Sahib, he was told that Guru Gobind Singh had said that whosoever builds my memory, the entire family and generation of that man will be wiped out. Maharaja said, 'It is a very cheap bargain!' He built it. There is not a single member of Maharaja's blood family who is alive, and in thirty-five years the mightiest Darbar Khalsa fell, but Hazur Sahib still stands out and lives.

"I'll build it with my hands if all of you shall not be there! That's why I say to you dummies, 'Parting of the way has come. I have to go my way, and you have to do your thing, because I cannot carry on sick people with me any more, and I'll move with the bunch that thinks they are with God and Guru and not with a junk Khalsa!' I have to accomplish something. I have plans to do, and I am going to do them! How we do it is a matter to watch and see.

"There is a risk involved. Risk is, if you do not become a Nation tomorrow, which you will always be, then they will put the condemnation on every wall of their place. Well, what do I lose? But if you become a Nation, then they will crawl before you. So both ways, I win. I win in the glory of the Guru. I win in the glory of you.

"So, what is my risk? I have no risk. Nobody can take away my PhD. Nobody can take away my yoga. That I can teach anywhere I go. But I am not going to be cowed down by their, or your, duality! My job is very simple: poke, provoke, confront, and inspire. That's how I work!"

"They tell me, 'Yogi Bhajan, we are willing to love you. We are willing to respect you. We are willing to glorify you. You have really done a miracle!'

"I say, 'Then what? What's next? What is next? What glorification?' Glorification is that I

should close my eyes, I should leave everything, my children should suffer. I don't like their poaching on our students. I hate to tell you, but when I feel that they do not recognize you in your status of position, it bothers me the most.

"When they say 'your Sikhs...' They are Gursikhs, and our people, our Khalsa is 'my Sikhs!' *Ah-hah!* I am not going to take it! We call them 'President.' We call them 'Jathedar.' They are not willing to call 'the Siri Singh Sahib.' They are not going to write 'Secretary General.' They are not going to recognize us at the present moment. I think it is going to take ten years to force them.

"I'll tell you what their strategy is. Their strategy is: We are all drug addicts. We have come because of my miracle, and we are going to leave. Now they think we are not going to leave, but they can make us to come around them. Then after ten years, then they will think we are not going to come around, we are not going to leave. Then they are going to listen. So it is a twenty years battle. That is why I didn't leave at forty-eight, I think. I was eager to go.

"I know your problems, too. You are nuts! You don't fight them! There is difference of technology and culture. They are Punjabis. You do not know the language. They do not understand your English. They are going to say 'lezer.' Tell me what you mean by lezer? Leisure. So you have a pronunciation. We have spellings. You are American English. They are English English. Whole thing is a hodgepodge! It is going to go this way for a while. 'Schedule...' When I was told first time 'skedjewel,' I said, 'God, what is that? It is a "shedool!"' Yeah? You were asking a question."

Someone asked, "Does the Raj Yog Takhat embody all the yogic powers or skills?"

"Without this body of the yogic powers and skills, man is just an ordinary animal. He lives in the impulsion of time and space. Without uniting with Infinity, I don't think there is anything else. Otherwise, some of the people who have left 3HO or Sikh Dharma are those who used to read five *Banis*, used to wear almost two pounds more steel than the ordinary person. I have seen those people, some of them, wearing totally blue. I have seen them getting up at *Amrit Vela*, taking bath, even washing their hair, the only thing they didn't do is kundalini yoga, and all of you who have left are suffering one way or the other, because playing a tune on a guitar which is not totally tuned, you are not going to get music.

"You know, it is an honest tool or technology to make ourselves who we want to be. That is why we emphasize on kundalini yoga, not that, you know, it is something. We are not yet born traditional Sikhs by generations and we have not yet learned everything by habit, so we have to keep ourselves on guard because our mind has the capacity to flip, and I don't think we can afford it, can we?"

Someone asked, "Right now, we have this duality between Sikh dharma and kundalini yoga, and it seems like for the next I don't know how many thousands of years and generations they have got to be one, so why can't we at this time say Sikh dharma is kundalini yoga and kundalini yoga is Sikh dharma, and if you don't like it..."

The Siri Singh Sahib was quick to answer, "We know they don't like it, so telling them will not make any difference. Our people are not yet trained. It is the failure of the Khalsa Council, the Secretary General, the Secretariat... short of funds. People are not properly educated.

"Truth is truth! Let us admit our truth! We thought perhaps, there was a big perhaps, perhaps these guys are sincere. Perhaps these guys are good. Perhaps these guys are nice. Perhaps some kind of thing can work out. According to them, all of them, they were all very friendly. Bibi Amarjit Kaur told me how beautiful I am to my face, but what she told me I am just telling you now as evidence. This is how double-faced they all are!"

Someone spoke, "I, myself, felt confused for so many years that Sikh dharma is one thing and kundalini yoga is another thing."

"No, no, Sikh dharma is a roof. Kundalini yoga is a stairs. As simple as that! We are all yogis. *Gursikh jogee jaagday vich maya karan udaasee*. We are Sikhs of the Guru. We are Yogis, and we live in the *maya*, and we remain unattached. And also... *Jo jo disai so so rogee. Rog rahait mayraa Satguru jogee*. Everybody whom I see is diseased. The only one who is free from disease is my Yogi, who is my Satguru. This is *Gurbani*, too! *So jogee sahaij parvaan*. That Yogi ordinarily is acceptable, and there is a whole *Shabad* on it! *Raaj jog takhat deean Guru Raam Daas*. Guru Ram Das was given the throne of Raj Yog.

"Who is going to practise? Indians don't practise! We are the only ones who practise. That's why we carry Harimandar in our heart... 'til we build it, or occupy it. Either way! In our first song, we said, 'Take a hold of your Golden Temple!' Remember? Guru Singh wrote that? How can you forget things? They are all history."

Someone else spoke up, "Once, when you were talking about the lineage of Takhat Raj Yog, you mentioned Krishna was the second, and then..."

"Ask Jasbir to take it out, or ask Bhai Sahib. This is a spiritual matter!"

"Is it the same lineage for the Mahan Tantric?"

"Uh..." the Master struggled, embarrassed, to everyone's great delight.

"So, well, what I thought..."

"Let the historians find it out. I pass."

Singh Sahib Gurucharan Singh began, "In terms of our leadership when we went over there, we stayed up late, we ate late. Everything was more important than our morning *sadhana*. Everything was more important than our Kundalini Yoga classes and, I agree, in terms of our leadership when we

go to India, it has to become a priority, because we contributed to the problem by not living our lifestyle."

"My dear, those chapatis and *daal* freak us out! And I tell you, last night, Bibiji made *karee*. I ate *karee* and *chaul*, and she put a lot of ginger in it. I did everything in my yogic power to keep awake. I couldn't! I passed out! That *langar ki daal* and that *Guru ka langar* and those chapatis... God! All they have to do is go in under the throat, and you go totally relaxed. You don't remain American, German, French, anything! So *sadhana* and everything goes down the tubes! I have seen it happening! What should I do? I agree with you, but those chapatis and *cha*, and those *mithaaees* and *ras gulas* and all that sugar and everything... Yes, Mahan Singh..."

Singh Sahib Mahan Singh said, "Sir, you talk a lot about the threat of Communism in the whole area over there, and a lot of Indira Gandhi's reform policies seem to be pro-Russian..."

"I agree. I agree. It is only our personal friendship, which is a balance in between. Otherwise, forget it! It is almost twenty, thirty years of friendship. She was a child when I knew her father. We worked it out and, you know, that is the open door policy. And some people who are non-Sikhs have great, deep respect for me, what I am doing, therefore you all have that respect, and we have a lot of connections, so we are very safe. If it comes to Sikh politics, they will try to make us crawl and do anything possible to tell us that we are no good."

"So if the Sikhs start fighting the central government, will we support the central government?"

"No. We will remain silent. That's what is wrong with us. They want to fight. It is their grudge against them. Why should we participate? Is it America fighting against India? None of our problem. They can fight on anything."

"But we wouldn't support the Sikhs?"

"No, no, we will support a cause, not particular Sikhs. I mean, we are not going to become a part of their politics. We still support the martyrs of Amritsar. They don't. They absolutely don't. I think on this Baisakhi we should also have passed a resolution remembering the martyrs of Amritsar. Those ten, twelve people actually died for us, to stop these politicians to come and be with the *patits*. That's all that happened!

"They are very polite! Nirbhao Kaur is a victim of politeness. Ask her! Otherwise, what happened to our love? Didn't she know that person was talking against me? But they did it very politely, and she didn't know what to do. She could have politely said, 'Bibiji, you are slandering, and you are a bitch. *Too kutee hai. Ya eh kahnday dee Bibiji, aap jee kutee.*' Politely! '*Aap jee eh bak bak karnee band karo.*' *Bas!* That matter would have ended there and then. Yeah?"

Someone asked, "Sir, when we all go back to our ashrams, we might have opportunities where

we come into contact with the Akhand Kirtani Jatha people. How, basically, should we deal with them?"

"Our policy should be to protect our own sheep and our own herd, and let them not steal our wool. They will try their best! They are going to penetrate through our places, and they want some white-skinned people for their ego and *parchaar*. You have no value for them, though. They can't even socialize with you. They cannot understand you. They cannot understand your psychology. But one thing they want. They want you. We are good bait as a PR to collect people in villages.

"They are not interested in us. They are interested in their power, and if we can add ourselves to them and build them, then that is what they like. I am enough trained to see under the skin what is going on, and they don't like it!

"According to them, 'American Sikhs are dumb. And Yogi Bhajan has created it, therefore keep shut up, and the moment he dies, we will take it over.' According to me, American Sikhs need time. They will become strong enough, and they will take over everything and nobody will take over them. This is a game of chess we are playing.

"Where is Sadhu, from Houston? Ask him the true history. What happened in Houston should be an eye-opener to all of you. He should give an accurate account. These people went, built their Gurdwara, did the whole thing, nailed it down, built the whole thing. He was the one who provoked the whole thing. First thing they told him is, 'You cannot come to the Gurdwara.'

"We used to go in Los Angeles. We would go early in the morning, clean the whole Gurdwara, water the lawn, perfect it, start the tapes, start *Sukhmani*, open up the *kirtan*, and they would come at eleven o'clock, we would take care of the *langar*, serve the *langar*, clean the dishes, do the whole thing, clean the Gurdwara, five o'clock come back in... They would say, 'Hey, hippy! Hey hippy Sikh!' I have heard it with my own eyes! And somebody said, 'There is no milk for tea!' He said, 'Yogi's goats are there! Milk them!' We have gone through that insult."

Mukhia Sardarni Sahiba Shakti Parwha Kaur spoke up, "Someone asked a very good question. Knowing all this, he wants to know how to deal with..."

"*We are very compassionate. We have Guru in our hearts, therefore we don't want to condemn them. That is the truth.* And our people are yet weak. We are going through those forty years of reaching the Promised Land, and we want to tolerate this insult. We tolerate this conspiracy, tolerate these plots, and tolerate this slander, so that we can grow. We need time. Don't you understand that's a part of growth? I am not going to stop dealing with these nuts!

"We come from unloved families, and they do this injection business in a very loving way, and we forget who we are. That is the one thing that will always destroy us, and they will create traitors among us just with that one weakness.

"They are very good at it. 'Oh, you do not know... Yogi Bhajan doesn't tell you... He has to really tell you slowly... We understand. You are far away from being a Gursikh.'

"And then the American thinks, '*What!? What "far away"?* *Who am I? I should be right there! OH, PLEASE, TELL ME! What is a Gursikh?*'

"Gursikh is to live on thirty dollars a year, eat flies instead of clean food, smell and stink like a punk, have lice in your hair, and never change your *kachhera* also. Wear it and put it on again, put it on again...

"I am very grateful to their behavior. Now we will not take any chance. Tell me what they would have got by converting you to them?"

Nirbhao Kaur spoke, "They would have said, 'See! He doesn't have a hold on all of them!'"

"I don't have a hold on anybody."

"Well, they think you have a hold on everybody, that you won't let anybody go."

"Where? I mean to say, what we are discussing here is the most important thing. What hold do we have?"

"Well, they think that you want everybody to stay with you, and the second thing that adds fuel to the fire is that you want to set yourself up as a guru and you don't want to let anyone go to the True Guru."

"Which True Guru?"

"Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh."

"Have you been there?"

"Guru Gobind Singh?"

"Yeah."

"No."

"They didn't let you go either! So what is this, I am setting myself up as a guru? What is the problem? Are you dumb that you don't understand that?"

"No, I understand that."



"The spiritual teacher controls the heart chakra. It is the *ajnaa*, which the Guru controls. It is the *sahehshra*, which God controls. Dummy! You could have asked me on the telephone this question. What else did they say? Go ahead."

"That was it."

"If they said, 'Where is your spiritual teacher?' you could have said 'Here!' The Siri Singh Sahib gestured toward his heart. It is the beat of the life in the progression and polarity of consciousness! It is the gratitude for that learning through which experience of God is achieved, and I bow, I bow, I bow to Infinity that I met such a man who made me to see the True Guru. Yes?"

Sardarni Sahiba Guru Raj Kaur asked, "Sir, how about the handful of Sikhs, East Indian-born Sikhs, who support you 100 percent, support us 100 percent, defend us wherever they go, but are still unwilling to do yoga and to really practice..."

"That is called a cultural defect. It is called 'East Indian syndrome.' They can do any yoga. They may not do any yoga! They may jump from the roof! I don't care. They do have to do something to get to a stage where they can just receive *Naam*.

"Kundalini yoga is not a property of any religion! Tantric yoga is not a property of any person! You have to understand that! That's why we have an ordained ministry. They don't have an ordained ministry. What can you do about them?"

"Here there is a Mukhia Singh Sahib, there are Singh Sahibs. Somebody confronts somebody. Somebody talks to somebody. Somebody is responsible. They have no organization. Everybody is a Mukhia Singh Sahib there!"

The Siri Singh Sahib reflected for a moment, and went on, "I thought that you are very faithful and honest people, and very truthful. So I thought I will deal with the politics at my level and let you grow and enjoy to be Gursikhs. I never knew that you are bums and you can be misled! So far I hoped that, you know, you guys are great. But now we have a problem. We have to educate everybody and it's very painful. Yeah?"

Singh Sahib Mahan Singh replied, "Sir, it seems like one thing they keep bringing up is this thing about *Amrit*."

"What *Amrit*? *Amrit* is of Guru Gobind Singh. What *Amrit*? What are you bringing up? Their *Amrit*? Kesh kee? (Of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha?)"

"I mean personally, Sir, I don't care what you've done or if it's "*Amrit*" or what they call it or what anybody calls it, but it seems to be one thing that they're telling people that you're bad because you didn't take *Amrit*."

"Well, it is myself, and between me and my *Amrit* you are nobody to judge and I won't give you any right to do that. *Amrit* is a totally personal baptism. I am not obliged to take *Amrit* and I am not obliged to even explain to you whether I have taken it or not, and in the Guru's Words, "Other than the Guru, nobody can challenge a Sikh." So, whosoever challenges me insults the Guru, because he is becoming the Guru in challenging. Do you understand? That's what it is.

"Who are they to tell me I have not taken *Amrit*? There is no obligation on anybody! *Amrit* is a personal matter. It is a state of consciousness of whosoever wants to commit to the Khalsa.

"Do you think I am a joker? If I have not taken *Amrit*, why should I make people to take *Amrit*? For what? If I wanted to be a "Guru", why should I not have kept you as my students and totally away from this garbage? No, no, you have done business administration. Let us discuss it!"

"Sir, I don't have any problem with it."

"No, no, but there is a problem right there and then, that you don't have a problem!"

"Yeah, I realize that might be a problem." The assembly had become very quiet and intent. A number of people chuckled, obviously enjoying Mahan Singh's predicament.

"Let it be so known to you that *I am the Amrit* as far as you are concerned. If you think or imagine any other way, you will be ungrateful and you shall be punished before God for being ungrateful to the one who took you to the *Amrit*. You don't need to take *Amrit*. This all is *Amrit*! But, by the way, I took it when I was eight years old..."

The room suddenly exploded with laughter.

"...and I am grateful because that sword would have cut through myself if I would not have had this. It struck. My this *kangha* broke and my this sword bent and did not let my skull go! *Amrit paid me net service!*"

"If they are so against me, why don't they sit and talk to me? Because they catered to her, she forgot whom she belongs to? Is it not a treachery? From Gurusikhs, they want to create the treacherous? They want to separate us from the body of the Khalsa? Understand?"

"Do you know seventy percent of people are not *Amritdhari* in India? Twenty percent do not know *Nitnem*? And ten percent do not speak?"

"What they are trying to attack us for is we started saying, 'The youth is leaving the dharma, and you should do something!' So they started getting Nirbhao Kaur and this Kaur and that Kaur to create their inroads to know our strengths and our situation and divide us and to tell people that we are not united. That's the story.

"And it's very beautiful when she is here we tell her, 'Why didn't you do that? Why didn't you do that...?' But ask them, and they say, 'O you are Gurusikh... You look so good...' It is good to hear that.

"I go there, and they do the same thing to me. Didn't you see that? All those garlands around my neck? I didn't let them put it! If you will not act as a pilot light, a harbinger of truth, and stand to the values..." The Siri Singh Sahib turned to Guru Raj Kaur, "You deal with the East Indian Sikhs. They have great respect for you. How do you deal with it, that she couldn't deal?"

"Well, basically the image that we project in Vancouver is that if they want us, they get you too! We don't allow any slander to you because we are a result of your teaching."

### Poem: My Departure

Tomorrow I will be gone,  
You will be alone.  
On every turn of the time  
I come again like a radiant sun,  
You don't know.  
Life is a joy if you know to live.  
Live like a God's man,  
Control your emotions  
And build a dam,  
To not let go a flood.  
You can keep living forever.  
I say to you and you alone  
I will be gone tomorrow  
And you will be alone.

### The Temple of Steel

The Siri Singh Sahib had always appreciated the subtle magnetism of the site at Ram Das Puri, that ancient mountainside overlooking the arid, rolling hills of northern New Mexico. He said it lay on a transection of powerful electromagnetic grids.

At the Summer Solstice of 1980, the Master unveiled for the first time his vision of a bold new Gurdwara of stainless steel to amplify the region's already considerable cosmic ambience. Designed by Singh Sahib Guru Hans Singh of France, the Temple of Steel was intended to serve as a durable symbol

of spiritual sovereignty, as a signpost pointing to the indelible future, and a reminder to the coming generations of our present prayers and aspirations.

The Temple of Steel was projected to have a quarter mile base, and to rise in the classical form of a pyramid, eight hundred and forty feet into the sky, about the height of the Eiffel Tower, or twice the elevation of the Great Pyramid at Cheops. As well as giving form to a futuristic Gurdwara and providing a worthy seat for the Sarkar E Khalsa in the West, the structure was designed to include a conference facility, a healing centre, underground gardens, and facilities for study and education.

Once built, it would serve as a striking landmark, visible from horizon to horizon, a monument to the promise of the future, to the destiny of Khalsa and the Domain of Raj Yog.

Of this visionary development, the Siri Singh Sahib said, "The world will come. The Universe will come. This house, this land, this city of Guru Ram Das up there, and it will be ruled by the throne of Raj Jog Takhat which belongs to Guru Ram Das. We will build it. We have the plan. \$266 million, that is the basic cost. You will be rich enough to do that. Don't start being phobic about it. Where will the money come from? It will come. Lakshmi comes where God lives, Narayan lives. Don't worry about it."

## **Running on Empty**

Since the Western Khalsa was endowed with a large number of doctors and chiropractors, massage therapists and other kinds of healers, the Siri Singh Sahib kept an ongoing relationship of give and take. They would treat his body's ailments and he would provide them with insights into becoming better healers.

At the Khalsa Women's Training Camp, Siri Bandhu Kaur, a Registered Massage Therapist from Ottawa, Canada, was working on Yogi Bhanjan's tight shoulders while he conducted business. As she continued her work, he asked, "Why are my shoulders like that?"

Just then, another issue came up that required his attention, so the question hung in the air, unanswered.

Later, again he asked, "Why are my shoulders like that?"

There was an unending parade of matters needing his immediate input. Once again, the question went unanswered and Siri Bandhu Kaur silently continued massaging.

Later, a third time he asked, "Why are my shoulders like that?"

This time there was no distraction. She replied, "Well, Sir, you are the yogi. You should know."

Of course, the Master knew. He was pushing his body beyond what any other mortal could imagine. That winter in India, after a night of visiting Gurdwaras until 2 a.m., the Siri Singh Sahib found himself exhausted and warned his students, "Don't do this. You will become sick and die."

## A Note of Surprise

On September 28, 1980, another entourage departed America for the ancient land of saints. This time, they were seen off by the Siri Singh Sahib at Kennedy Airport in New York, as he was himself on his way to Los Angeles.

On the day when tens of thousands of pilgrims had gathered to observe the birth of Guru Ram Das, an *Akhand Paath* was being concluded in a dome in the uppermost part of the golden Harimandar Sahib, just below the sky. Mukhia Singh Sahib Vikram Singh Khalsa found his familiar place in the holy Harimandar, where he proceeded to celebrate in his typically robust musical style. It was no time at all before the *Sangat* had warmed up to the heart-centred *kirtan* of this *ragi* with the untypically pale complexion and yellow beard.

When Mukhia Singh Sahib had finished his turn, there was just a moment before the man who was organizing the tour nudged another talented *ragi* to take Vikram Singh's place at the microphone. That heroic Khalsa at first demurred, but sensing the importance of the occasion, and with Vikram Singh's repeated words of encouragement, they settled themselves before the microphone and prepared to sing.

Sensing what was about to happen and not readily accepting it, the attendant behind the Siri Guru Granth Sahib slowly started to stand as though he were about to interrupt it.

Just then, as destiny hung in the balance, one shining hero dressed in the distinctive royal blue *bana* of a saint-warrior of Guru Gobind Singh, entered smiling into the Guru's Court, with his stalwart attendants. For a month, Sant Baba Nihal Singh had played host to the Westerners, guiding through the Sikh historic sites of Punjab. As Baba Nihal Singh and his group bowed and took their places, Vikram Singh asked the Nihung leader if he was in accord with the plan. When he indicated he was, the Granthi decided that they, too, should simply relax and enjoy this unexpected turn of events.

Never before had a noble princess of the Khalsa taken the opportunity of performing *Gurbani Kirtan* in the most Holy of holies, the inner sanctum of the Siri Harimandar Sahib! So it was that Krishna Kaur Khalsa, now designated "Mukhia Sardarni Sahiba", became the first woman to play *Gurbani* in the Golden Temple on October 25, 1980.

## *Ardaas Bhaaee*

The Siri Singh Sahib, through his meditation and service, was an unending channel of creativity and inspiration. He once said that the difference between his thinking and an ordinary person's thinking was that while most people carried around with them the same old junk thoughts, month after month and year after year, the Master was blessed with shining new insights each day.

One day, the Siri Singh Sahib shared a mantra that had come to him in his meditation. The mantra depicted the relationship between Guru Amar Das, the Third Sikh Guru, and Guru Ram Das, the Fourth Guru: *"Ardaas Bhaaee, Amar Daas Guru, Amar Daas Guru, Ardaas Bhaaee. Raam Daas Guru, Raam Daas Guru, Raam Daas Guru, Sachee Sahee."*

The Third Guru only attained his status at the ripe age of seventy-two. The next thirty years, he spent teaching and praying for a worthy successor. At times, it may have appeared that there was no one anywhere able to take up the great responsibilities of Guru Amar Das in teaching and growing the spiritual community established by Guru Nanak. *"Ardaas Bhaaee, Amar Daas Guru"* meant the prayer went out from Guru Amar Das.

At last, in his nineties, Guru Amar Das recognized in the husband of his younger daughter, Bibi Bhani, a possible successor. Testing "Bhai Jetha," as he was known, the Guru found him to be true, then, in his ninety-fifth year, he made Jetha the Fourth Guru and named him "Raam Daas," servant of the Infinite. *"Raam Daas Guru, Sachee Sahee,"* meant Guru Ram Das was the truthful fulfilment of that prayer.

## **Noblesse Oblige**

For Hari Jiwan Singh, the Siri Singh Sahib's companion and Chief of Protocol, every day was a learning experience. India, in particular, was a study in social class and hierarchy. While in Delhi, Hari Jiwan enjoyed the opulence of Gaylord's Restaurant in Connaught Place, a favorite of Yogi Bhajan's. Opulence was something he had been accustomed to growing up in St. Louis.

One day as they were leaving the restaurant, a begging family approached. A flutter of uncertainty filled the air. Hari Jiwan Singh well knew that there were professional beggars in this country and all beggars seemed the same to him. He turned to the Siri Singh Sahib for guidance, "Sir, do I need to give to all those who ask for money?"

The Master replied, "No, son, you don't. But I do," and he did, and Hari Jiwan Singh did as well.

In their travels together, sometimes they would also meet a snobby person in a high position. In such a case, Yogi Bhajan would introduce his companion as, "Hari Jiwan Singh Khalsa, the Prince of

Utah," to which Hari Jiwan Singh would consent by gently nodding.

At first, they would be shocked. Then, their arrogance would melt away, revealing the gracious humility and manners of a gentleman.

## Touring with the Master - 1

On January 6, 1981, a group of about thirty students of the Siri Singh Sahib set out from New York City for a loving pilgrimage to the spiritual homeland of the Khalsa. The initial journey by plane took them through Bombay (Mumbai), Delhi, Shrinagar, arriving finally at Rajasansi Airport outside Amritsar.

Their first morning, the Siri Singh Sahib came out of his room at Guru Nanak Nivas at the periphery of the Golden Temple complex at 2:30, fully dressed and regal looking. In the stillness of the night, he and his small security detail checked their shoes, purchased a garland for the Guru, and made a walk around the waters of the holy Harimandir, the Master chanting, "*Ardaas bhaae, amar daas guru, amar daas guru, ardaas bhaae. Raam daas guru, raam daas guru, raam daas guru, sachee saachee...*" in a voice growing louder and more powerful.

The Master's voice cracked and broke however as they approached the glowing temple on a walkway across the sparkling, sacred waters through the morning mist. The group bowed before Siri Guru Granth Sahib, left their offering, received *Prashaad*, and continued clockwise around the empty Palki Sahib where the Guru was to be installed as the morning progressed.

As they did every morning, the musicians of the Guru's court, two harmonium players and a table player, launched into the rousing verses of the composition, Asa di Var.

With the arrival of the Guru, carried on a golden palanquin, the energy in the Harimandar stirred. Everyone stood, then bowed to offer their homage and respect. The *kirtan* continued until, at sunrise, the *Hukam* was received from the Guru.

The Siri Singh Sahib interpreted. He said the *Hukam* was truly "beautiful" and "perfectly fitting;" that if you chanted "*Gobind*" all your troubles would go away. A crow who wallowed in and fed upon human stool, once submerged in the Nectar Tank and emerged as a God-like being. So, we too, with all our shortcomings and dirt, could rise up anew by bathing in the Sacred Pool of Harimandar Sahib.

Afterwards, the Siri Singh Sahib was eager to give his students a tour of the city where he had lived for some years. Everyone piled into eight bicycle rickshaws for the tour through Amritsar's narrow streets where they obtained a sense of the flavor of life in the holy city and its closely-knit, historic neighborhoods.

Next, the Siri Singh Sahib took everyone to the place where *rotis* were made, outside the Baba Atal Gurdwara. In this smoke-filled, cave-like building, two men squatted way in the back, on top of an earth oven while Harbhajan Singh explained how everything was done. The group crowded together to watch as the men made several piles of *rotis*, which they then took to be blessed at the Gurdwara and to feed the congregation sitting outside in *langar* lines.

Later that first morning, everyone boarded a bus for Kadoor Sahib, the home of Guru Amar Das. They ate *langar* at the place where he began free kitchens. We visited the well that brings liberation to those who descend its eighty-four steps, reading *Japji* at each step. They prayed outside the room where Guru Arjan Dev was born. We touched the peg Guru Amar Das tied his hair onto to remain vigilant during his meditations. They entered Mohan's home, where he surrendered the *Shabads* to Guru Ram Das. They saw where Guru Amar Das walked to draw water for Guru Angad.

Next, they travelled to the beautiful Tarn Taran Sahib Gurdwara, surrounded by the largest pool of all the Sikh shrines. In its history, it had been a place where lepers came to be healed, and some lepers still came to experience its healing wonders. After, listening to *kirtan*, they took a sip from the Pool, and boarded their bus back to Amritsar.

The second morning with the Siri Singh Sahib began with a dip in the holy *sarovar* at 2:30. He had already advised the travellers, "Take a dip in the Nectar Tank to complete your *yatra*."

By this time, many in the group were sick with diarrhea. Measures were taken to keep it in check: more onions, garlic, bottled water.

After spending most of the morning at the Harimandar, the group was given a walking tour of Amritsar. They saw Guru Teg Bahadur's birthplace, the mud and steel fort of Guru Hargobind, and the Jallianwala Bagh park where the twelve hundred innocents were killed by General Dyer in 1919, a decisive event in the movement for Indian independence.

At the mud fort, the pilgrims handed out Wha Guru Chew candy bars to a group of twenty-five poor children. The Americans are surprised that the children did not grab and were very polite.

Cherished preconceptions about poverty and wealth began to reshape themselves in the minds of the Americans. Here, there was plenty of dignity for one and all. The wealth in the homeland of the Khalsa was a visible resilience and quality of being, not a capacity to oppress nor a quantity of marketable items.

The Westerners' education continued at breakfast on the third day as they were served by *sewadars* provided for them by the S.G.P.C. Those men cooked all the meals, served them, and cleaned up three times a day. It seemed to be as much a privilege as a job to them, and this came through in the food they served and in their abundant helpfulness.



Besides these *sewadars*, a group of about ten Nihungs were constantly at their service, helping with luggage, security, and miscellaneous things. Most were young, except for Baba Pritham Singh, a spirited old lion of a man. The principal Nihung helping set up our tour was a law student named Sat Nam Singh. The Nihungs travelled with them everywhere they went.

January 10 was celebrated as Guru Gobind Singh's birthday, and the Westerners were given a prominent place in the parade that wound its way through Amritsar that day.

The following day, the tour took the Westerners to the Akal Takhat with its beautiful frescoes inside. They also took in the Sikh Museum, a gallery of paintings of significant historic events and personalities.

The festivities continued the next day. The Harimandar Sahib and all the surrounding buildings were intricately decorated with colorful lights. In the evening, there was a large fireworks display.

On January 14, the group made their way to the Nihung heartland. Hariabelaa was the home of Baba Nihal Singh and the Taruna Dal. Thousands poured into the village from the surrounding area. They came on foot, by bicycle, by truck and tractor.

The Westerners performed *kirtan* and the Siri Singh Sahib then spoke briefly. The *langar* was fresh from the fields, as this was a fertile, farming region. Afterwards, the Master engaged the leaders from the surrounding area who had come for this special occasion.

At Hakimpur, two hours from Hariabelaa, there was another parade the next day, five hours of *kirtan* and boisterous fun along a road from the historic Gurdwara to the nearby village, and back. Toward the end, it was suggested that one of the group, a woman who knew the Nihung art of self-defence, demonstrate her swordcraft for the gathered crowds. As she danced jubilantly with her sword in the way of the Nihungs, the swordswoman ignited inspiration in the people, especially the women, who ran up to witness the spectacle.

Early the following morning, many Sikh leaders gathered to meet with the Siri Singh Sahib, including Sant Jarnail Singh, the Jathedar of Gurdwara Keshgarh Sahib, the president of the All India Sikh Youth Federation, and representatives from the S.G.P.C.. Many others also came.

The Hakimpur Gurdwara with its massive brick wall, turrets, and dome tops, was essentially a fortified castle. Right outside was the Siri Singh Sahib's humble hut with wooden windows, crude walls and floors, no lights, the only furniture being a rough wooden cot. This is where the leaders met.

As the festive, outdoor Gurdwara began, Sant Jarnail Singh and the Siri Singh Sahib emerged out of the hut from their discussion. There were balloons, Christmas tree lights, and brightly colored quilts put up around the perimeter of the outdoor area.

When the Siri Singh Sahib spoke that day, he spoke as a world leader. While many of the gathering had never ventured outside Punjab, he had gone to the fabled land of America and to Europe. He had met a pope and fostered a greater global recognition of the Sikhs.

The next day, the group set out for the holy city of Anandpur, birthplace of the Khalsa. After disembarking from the bus for a welcoming *langar*, they set out, with the Siri Singh Sahib ahead of them, for Guru ka Lahore, up in the hills. This was the place where Guru Gobind Singh and Mata Jito were married.

According to Punjabi tradition, the groom would come to the bride's hometown for the marriage. In this case however, since the bride's family home was in the Mughal's provincial capital of Lahore and going there would have been very dangerous, the Guru created this Guru ka Lahore, the "Guru's Lahore," just twenty kilometres distant.

The next stop was Bhabour Sahib, high on a hill overlooking the Sutlej River, where Guru Gobind Singh stayed for thirteen months and wrote *Bentee Chaupee*. It was also the abode of a troop of about a hundred clamouring monkeys, fun for the Westerners to feed.

In the *langar* hall, the Siri Singh Sahib explained that this entire place was the result of a vast magnetic field. The subtle body of a great saint attracted everything. In that magnetic interplay, this person brought this, this person served that, this caused this, and so on, everything happening on the level of the subtle body. The gross body was simply a manifestation of all that.

Outside the *langar* hall, the Siri Singh Sahib continued his talk. He said that the purpose of life was to relax and let God give you all you need. It was not to hassle, but to enjoy and to feel blessed.

Back at Anandpur Sahib, they went up to the Keshgarh Sahib Gurdwara again to do *kirtan*, and were then presented with *siropas*, after which the Siri Singh Sahib gave a talk.

The next morning, the group came to hear *Asa di Var* at Keshgarh Sahib. After *langar* back at the fort, they set out for Patiala. Apparently, the scheduling was tight, so immediately on arriving, everyone got off the bus and did *kirtan* in the Gurdwara.

The next day entailed a three-hour ride to Ludhiana. In Ludhiana, they were the guests of the Chancellor of the Punjabi Agricultural University. Their quarters were ultra-modern compared with the Gurdwara roofs they had been accustomed to sleeping on. They had hot water, a rug on the floor, attached bath, only three people per room, even an electric heater! For some, the facilities felt like the first night away from a Solstice Sadhana. To others on the entourage, their indoor environments felt strangely stifling.

## Ludhiana Talk – January 18, 1981

*The Siri Singh Sahib began his talk in the Gurdwara, as he often did, with a short invocation:*

“I have not appreciated what you have done for me, Lord. Only you can make me worthy. I am unworthy. I have no worth or virtues at all. You have taken pity on me. You took pity on me, and blessed me with your Mercy, and I have met the true Guru, my friend. Oh Nanak, If I am blessed with the *Naam*, I live, and my mind blossoms forth. I bow to the primary Guru. I bow to the Guru of Ages. I bow to the true Guru. I bow to the Great, Divine Guru. *Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!*

“My sisters and brothers, in life you cross a path in which conscious mind starts to understand the unconscious and the unconscious starts to recognize the conscious mind. This is not a very high state of being, but in the Sikh religion it is very innate state of being. In other religions it may also be innate.

“Because righteous living gets rid of your karmas, those that don’t want to get entangled in their karmas and live peacefully, have no other option but to follow dharma. God gave humans a brain to think so that humans will serve god, but instead humans started to serve their minds instead.

“I have sat and written many poems and said many things. Today’s night and tomorrow’s morning if God willing I will take the plane and return. Some things while leaving people can talk openly about, and it is my habit that I have never differentiated between leaving and returning; I will talk to you openly.

“The thought that the Sikh religion is in trouble, is not something that I agree with. I think that the foundation of the transmission of Sikh teachings has been built now, the real Khalsa Nation and Sarkar e Khalsa have started now. Today, Khalsa has started to recognize and understand its *Bana* and *Bani*, *Simran* and *Sewa*. Today, with God’s grace that even across the seven oceans foreigners have adopted this dharma. Today, both white and black people are respectful towards one another. Today both educated and uneducated people try to live knowledgeable lives.

“Dharma is very sweet. I can say to you that you should drink till your hearts content. Take these five dollars and buy another bottle. What is it to me if you can’t take alcohol out of your mind through self-discipline, if you can’t take yourself out of disintegrative habits and develop an integrative routine? If don’t have an inner spirit, then go ahead and satisfy your outer spirit by drinking.

“A fool is a fool and a fool will remain a fool. These are the talks of a fool. When you can’t reach your inner spirit, then you start to satisfy their outer spirit. This is how a fool can be recognized.

“If you can’t strengthen your inner spirit, your outer spirit will become stronger and stronger. Drink and stay in bliss! What is it to me?

“You didn’t get this life for these reasons. These things don’t have anything to do with this life: status, money, beauty, clothes. They don’t have anything to do with your life.

“This life was given in visible form so that you can recognize the unconscious and unseen. For thousands and thousands of years even Nargus cried due to her incompetence. A solution still has not been found. Mankind has still not found a way to find the unseen in the manifest, visible form.

“In English I am able to explain this concept better, but I will try to explain it to you all the best I can. The Guru has found the solution. I am not the Guru but a follower of the Guru. The one who conspires and tries to use cleverness with the Guru’s name is not a follower of the Guru and is not good.

“I don’t use the word bad, instead I use ‘not good.’ One can go from becoming the follower of Guru, to a non-follower just by committing a small wrongdoing, even just the slightest. Even the slightest wrongdoing can be seen in the mirror and, like a monkey, you try to cover it by making yourself look better.

“The beauty you use to cover up the wrongdoing does not go beyond your mirror. That deceitful person’s conscious reality is just as far from the mirror as the person is. This is from science. The image in the mirror is opposite in angle to the object that is being reflected. You all have probably studied this. It is not a new concept, but the mirror of mankind is infinity. The Guru has said one thing: to make the conscious mind supremely conscious. For this reason, Guru Gobind Singh gave us discipline, *‘Rehit piaaree mujh ko, sikh pi-aaraa naahi - Guru loves the disciplined ones, not those who merely call themselves“Sikh.”’*

“Today in my presence there is this happiness. By passing and seeing many things, I realize there is a new life, new thoughts, colors, and new youth. The solution is very simple: today there are those that live the life of Sikh dharma. They may be one or two, or thousands today, but there are also many that are from far away and they have to go through many things, go through many pains, yet still keep walking toward the path of Guru Gobind whom people say was the Guru.

“Because of this, it is not a hard concept that today you love me and respect me, and tomorrow you may swear at and hit me as well. Though you may say bad things about me, I will stay thankful. I’ll thank my God, that at least you are able to speak.

“Your bad words seem good to me. You may call me a ‘CIA agent.’ You may say I am bad. You may say bad things about my yoga, even skin me alive, and I’ll still be your giver. Why? Because I’m a part of Khalsa. I cannot forget you, be apart from you, or leave you.”

Someone in the *Sangat* cried out: “*Bolay so Nihaal!*”

The *Sangat* responded: “*Sat Sri Akaal!*”

“I have slept in your trailers. We have had many discussions. You all look very good.

“I feel like my youth has come back. I have forgotten my tiredness. The paths of life have turned anew. In this life, the Guru has given me a purpose. The Guru’s Word has started to play the Sitar from inside. Already, I have passed many of life’s hurdles.

“Today I am again feeling alive, but my life is not very long now, that is why I am blessed that I have walked with Baba Nihal Singh in those villages where once the Gurus were and bowed my head on that land. I am very blessed and happy. Today in many places it is not I that am there physically, but I am in your heart. Recognize your heartbeat. Help me by listening to what I have to say. What I have to say is not difficult. It is very simple, it is not less. The one that drinks it will recognize it.

“In some way, get up for the community! Wake up! You are drinking, getting intoxicated with alcohol, having fun... Many thoughts have come from today and yesterday, but I am quiet and sad. I am looking to your maturity.

“Wake up! Have strength and make a decision! I come here for you so that you can remember that today the Guru is awake, the Guru’s congregation is awake. Today’s Khalsa is still is alive. No one could and no one will be able to kill it, therefore I will not accept your verdicts.

“I am a Sikh of rules. I am Sikh following the Guru’s discipline, that discipline and that Guru which no one could say anything to do.

“You my dear brothers, you all have very beautiful faces. I am blessed that you all are here today. I have visited many places in Punjab and you all have given me love and honor.

“Today I am saying that it is so wrong to say that I have contributed to Sikh dharma, Sikh dharma would have ended if Ragbir Singh hadn’t taken me in.

“Maybe you have a habit of lying but I don’t. In this age you say, ‘No, no, no,’ but what do you mean by this ‘No, no, no’? If it is true, say it. If it is not, then don’t.

“It would have ended then. Sikh dharma would have ended. I didn’t have money or clothes. I was in the worst condition. I didn’t have food for two days. You would have played the drums for Harbhajan Singh. You all can play them now. There was no one on the right, left, front or back. There was just one who helped me and took me in, so I could eat and have a place to sleep.

“I have come many times and you have all loved me because you are a part Guru Gobind Singh. I recognize you and I know you. So, my dear ones, you can only die if you are first alive. Let us together live for the love and honor of the Guru.”

*“Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa! Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!”*

## Touring with the Master - 2

The next morning, the journey continued with a stop at Nawashahr, first at a Gurdwara, then at a little spot in the village where Baba Nihal Singh and Nihungs were building a Gurdwara around a spot where Guru Teg Bahadur and Mata Gujri had stayed. There, the Siri Singh Sahib donned a blue Nihung turban around his regular turban and sat among one hundred of them in a little courtyard, like a blend between a saint and some beloved uncle returning from distant travels.

At 7:00 p.m., they arrived at the village of Talwaara. The Siri Singh Sahib joined everyone on the roof outside their quarters for about an hour. Some of his words: "In every area but one, there are people better than you. In money, there are people more wealthy. In power, there are people stronger than you. In wisdom, there are people more wise. In only one area can you excel: the area of morals. Excel in high morals, and your way shall be paved in front of you!"

On the road once more, they took a three-hour ride to Dabaaree, where thousands of people had gathered from all the surrounding villages. This place looked like Hakimpur, a temple and a few surrounding buildings located in the middle of thousands of hectares of green farmland.

The people were villagers, simple, sincere, and quite beautiful. Thousands of them were sitting close together to join in chanting God's name. Generously, they ambled up to give the Westerners donations while they were doing *kirtan*. The money went to a fund to help build Gurdwaras throughout Punjab.

Back on the bus, the group set out on the last leg of this tour, returning to the Harimandar. Four hours later, they arrived. The Siri Singh Sahib sat with them for a time, his energy apparently boundless.

Wake up for the group was at 2:30 a.m., a perfect time for a dip in the holy waters. Sitting in the Darbar Sahib allowed everyone time for reflection on the many lessons of the amazing pilgrimage.

After sitting in meditation, the group's morning walks around the *parikarma* were a special time, reflective, festive, and visually magnificent. Along the way, they bowed at the Akal Takhat and wrote down the page number of the *Hukam* for the day. Then the group stopped to meditate at the tree of Baba Buddha Sahib, take a sip from the water at the dipping station, give an offering at the Baba Siri Chand Gurdwara, before finally bowing once more to the Harimandar and leaving the *parikarma* to get their shoes.

The following morning, January 23, was a special treat. At 1 a.m., everyone was allowed in a little door of Harimandir Sahib. They then stood for *Ardaas*. Milk was poured onto the marble floor, then everyone took buckets filled with the water from the holy *sarovaar*, and washed down the entire inside and outside floors.

The Siri Singh Sahib arrived at 4:30 a.m. The *Hukam*, as he explained afterwards, was from Guru Amar Das, whom the Siri Singh Sahib said made everyone "very still" because he was so direct and uncompromising. The *Hukam* described how this body will be torn to shreds in the end. Therefore, we ought to become more enlightened and majestic than we think or imagine we can ever afford to be.

Later in the day, Sat Nam Singh told stories at dinner about Mai Bhago. She was the one who inspired the Forty Liberated Ones to return to the battle. In the fight that ensued, she was the only one to survive. Mai Bhago was the first woman instructed to wear a turban by Guru Gobind Singh. Many women copied her.

Sat Nam Singh went on to relate how the soldiers of the Indian Army used to shout "*Sat Siri Akal!*" to make the enemy think they were Sikhs. The British would never face Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They knew he had thousands of "suicide troops," Nihungs who would consider it an honor to die in battle.

At 4:00 p.m. the next day, the *yatra* group set out for Jallundar and arrived in the dark. The rain during the past two days had produced lots of mud. The water buffalo roaming the streets enjoyed it. They struggled to keep clean.

The entourage performed *kirtan* for a less than enthusiastic *Sangat*. When the Siri Singh Sahib rose to speak, he told them, "These people have come ten thousand miles to do *kirtan* for you, and you don't participate!" A man translated into English for the group. The words sounded oddly familiar.

The next morning, everyone did their exercise and meditation in their beds. They were eight to a room, with the Siri Singh Sahib in a room next to theirs. According to the schedule, there was an "optional" Gurdwara just around the corner. Everyone's chanting there was vibrant and alive. The Siri Singh Sahib was already there, and what is supposed to be a half-hour program turned into a delightful three-hour affair.

During the event, it began to thunder outside. The Siri Singh Sahib called it "Punjabi thunder" - huge, vast, megatons of sound - one thousand Guru Gobind Singh drums calling to humans to remember their powerlessness in the face of God's power.

Then, the group set out for Haryana, the state neighboring Punjab, along the way to Delhi. To get to the Gurdwara, they had to park the bus and walk the final distance through winding, narrow, cobbled streets. The homes were all constructed from small bricks, which showed they were hundreds of years old. This once prosperous, Mughal village was deserted during the partition of 1947 and refilled by Sikhs and Hindus retreating from Pakistan.

The entourage arrived at their destination in the rain at about 11:30 a.m. to find the program cancelled, since it was to have been an outdoor Gurdwara. Everyone took an unscheduled break in a little house and courtyard nearby. After a time, the Siri Singh Sahib came and began to relate how he was raised in the hill stations. This cosy, fatherly reminiscing slowly transformed into a talk about how,

as Westerners, his students had been damaged in their childhood and how the healthy, happy, holy way they now lived served to remedy the deficiencies of their upbringing. After a timeless hour of his speaking to the group, they broke up to attend Gurdwara.

The bus ride to Harkowal, where they were scheduled to stay for two days, was short. It was a community built around the leadership of a Sikh saint named Jawalla. The place - with its white-washed, neat buildings laid out around a central, open yard - looked like a cross between an Indian college campus and a Christian monastery.

They entered the large *langar* hall, dimly lit, smelling of wood smoke from the kitchen, all reminiscent of another medieval castle. The Siri Singh Sahib led everyone in a long round of powerful call and answer chanting: "*Gobinday, Mukanday, Udharay, Apaaray, Haree-ang, Karee-ang, Nirnaamay, Akaamay...*" The Siri Singh Sahib was at ease in an environment, which gave ample room for his robustness, his thundering, joyful, social self, completely in charge, yet making everyone around him alive.

On January 27, they returned to their home away from home at Guru Nanak Nivas in the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar.

### **"The Common Property of Guru Ram Das"**

*Before the Siri Singh Sahib was to leave Amritsar and return to America, the S.G.P.C. held a reception to honor him and the visiting Khalsa from the West. Many encouraging, kind words were said on both sides. The following words are the Siri Singh Sahib's.*

*Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!*

I am happy to understand that Guru Ram Das is pleased with us. And we don't feel you are different from what we are. We think of you as a part of the common property of Guru Ram Das, which includes us as well.

You honor us, you give us tokens, you give us food, you give us a place to stay, but this is our own father's house, and we understand that we own it. Just by serving us, you are honored in His Court. This is what we feel, this is what we believe, and this is what we say. We have never thought of you as separate under any circumstances.

We understand your political circumstances, and it is very unfortunate that you have to work under those circumstances, but we can assure you that in the West you cannot imagine the conditions, the circumstances, pressures and environments we have to work with. To preach religion in the West is to compete with very, very, rich, organized religions. They have money, they have experience, but



we have one thing: that Guru Ram Das loves us.

His house is in Amritsar, but his presence is there, and we feel it. That is why you will find that we sometimes get annoyed with you and wonder why you do not do what we say, while you may be wondering who do we think we are! We think that we are your future, we are your extension, we are you. Without you, we don't exist, and we know that.

I once told the President of the S.G.P.C. that as long as he is the President, I shall honor him and respect him beyond personality. He could not be the President if Guru Ram Das did not want him to be, and I have no interest in going against the working of Guru Ram Das. Therefore, I will accept anybody he puts there. I am not into personalities, I am not into individuals, and I am not into games, either. I am well qualified to play games, but I feel this is the domain of Guru Ram Das, and no game will work here.

You honored us today, you honored us yesterday, and you will honor us tomorrow. I remember the first time we came, and we sat in the garden outside and we chanted to Guru Ram Das. That chanting changed the minds, which had sent the message to us at Alamghir Gurdwara that we should not bring these Western people to Amritsar. You thought we were bogus and that the whole thing was a stunt. But I believed that we were going to Guru's House, and that we should go with that faith.

At that time when you first saw us, you saw our love and you saw our devotion. It was you as people, by the Grace of Guru Ram Das, who melted, and I remember you gave us small turbans to wear because some of us were wearing towels on our heads.

Today we are a spiritual, sovereign Khalsa Nation of the Western Hemisphere. We bow to none, we obey none, except the Guru. And we have our domain, we have our organization, and we have our facilities, faculties, and our power as a people, and we shall progress.

You are most welcome to join us as a humble servant of Guru. S.G.P.C. is a most honored guest for us. Don't misunderstand that you need an introduction, or that you need a special letter. You are part of us, we are part of you.

One thing you must learn from us is that we are very blunt and very open. But please understand we have great love and deep reverence for you. You might be sitting in a very small room with a broken typewriter, and we have self-erasing, self-correcting, self-typing machines. Our Secretariat is very fine. It shines like a jewel, is most modern, and is wonderful. But we have respect for you because of your sacrifice and the hardship you are enduring. We have a much smaller number to serve than you. You have eleven million Sikhs to relate to, including us, and still you carry on! Remember, it's not the salary that is important. It is the chance to serve the Guru's Mission.

I hope one day we will be in a position to invite you all, and take you through the Guru's Domain. It's very unfortunate that enemies have succeeded in making up the story that anybody who

talks to Yogi Bhajan, Yogi Bhajan has bought him. Well, that's not our fault, and that's not our way either.

God and Guru have blessed us with abundance and with love, and every evening when we do *Rehira*s we do understand you are going to do office work. We feel this place and we feel the presence of this place accurately. If *Naam Simran* has given us something, it is the capacity to reproduce the existence of this place in our mind much more practically and pictorially than you can even imagine! You might have sometimes felt our love and our presence too. It is not the gross, physical body, which is the only privilege of the man. The subtle body is the real privilege, and a Gursikh always enjoys travelling through that.

So please do not hesitate to call on us, to teach us, to be with us - because we are very, very proud of you that you do serve the House of the Guru in adverse circumstances with much love and much faith. Let us rejoice in what Guru has given us.

*Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!*

### Touring with the Master - 3

With a flight to Delhi and few *kirtan* performances over the next few days, the India tour drew to a close. Having immersed themselves in Punjabi culture for close to a month, the Westerners were mildly shocked to see again Caucasian people in western clothes in the bustling Indian metropolis.

It reminded them of the scale of the task at hand, the conversion of a global, materialistic mindset. 'Healthy, happy, holy' had just barely begun. To return to the capital of that heartless culture and be teachers and examples of this new, hopeful way of life, they really needed to dig deep and to dedicate and re-dedicate themselves to their highest principles and the deepest, most life-giving, wisdom of the ages.

The time in Delhi allowed for a slow re-entry into the Western way of life. Concepts of yesterday, today and tomorrow merged into one time. Daily, the visitors travelled back and forth between old and new Delhi, between ancient and modern models of life.

It was early in the morning on February 4 when the Siri Singh Sahib, his staff, and his security detail left their base at the Taj Hotel. On the steps, he was heard to say, "I am very grateful that this *yatra* was completed without casualty." In thanks to the Guru, the Master made a short detour from the drive to the airport to visit Bangla Sahib Gurdwara and once more pay his respects.

## A Letter to the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat

*The yatra to India has been fruitful for the unforgettable experiences had by the participants. It had also been valuable as a time of reflection for the relatively new Sikhs, a time also of discussion with relatively old Sikhs, about the status quo in Punjab, points of difference and the direction of the Panth as a whole. A subsequent letter from the Secretary General of the Khalsa Council to the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat, the official seat of Sikh temporal authority, summed up some of those discussions and expectations.*

February 26, 1981

Jathedar Gurdial Singh Ajnoha  
Jathedar of Akal Takhat  
Akal Takhat  
Amritsar, Punjab, India

Respected Jathedar Sahibji:

Wahe Guru ji ka Khalsa! Wahe Guru ji ki fateh! Greetings in the Name of God the Light of every soul and in the Name of Guru the life of every Sikh.

On behalf of all of the Khalsa of the Western Hemisphere, we wish to express our appreciation for all of your hospitality during our yatra to Amritsar during the month of January.

We wanted to express our appreciation for the opportunity, which you so graciously offered, to come and discuss with you some of the concerns, which we have in the Western Hemisphere. I would like to go over the items, which we discussed, to confirm our understanding, and will be looking forward to the implementation of some of these changes in the very near future.

1. We discussed the procedure for selecting and appointing the Jathedar of Akal Takhat, which you assured me had already undergone a major change. It is my understanding that the Executive Committee of the S.G.P.C. selects a temporary committee which appoints a panel of individuals who then select the Jathedar, based on his outstanding dedication to the Dharma and his exemplary adherence to the Rehit Maryada of Guru Gobind Singh, as well as his capacity for service to the Sadh Sangat, his honesty and integrity.

2. You further clarified that the Jathedar of Akal Takhat is independent of the pressure or influence of the officers of the S.G.P.C., and he no longer receives a salary from the S.G.P.C., and he cannot be dismissed or removed from office by the officers of the S.G.P.C..

3. It is my understanding that the Jathedar must resign or, due to failing health or severe and proven misconduct, may be removed.

4. You stated that all of these procedures are being set down to be followed in the future as well as the present. We would like to have a copy of such procedures for our records here.

5. We questioned the decision process for determining which issues are matters, which rightfully should be considered by the Akal Takhat, and you agreed that personal grievances are not the concern of the Akal Takhat, nor are matters which concern political events. Again, you stated that a clear definition of the realm of authority and concern of the Akal Takhat is being written down. We would like to have a copy of these procedures as well.

6. I expressed our concern that the S.G.P.C. has issued Nitnems during the past few years, which contain only the first five paurees and the fortieth pauree of Anand Sahib. We find this to be one of the most unfortunate misuses of its authority, when the Guru's Banee is being altered and the very Panj Banee of Guru Gobind Singh ji has been tampered with.

You indicated your concern over this, and stated that such policies are determined by a committee, which will meet again and this issue will be raised. You also indicated that we of Sikh Dharma in the Western Hemisphere could have representation on this committee.

We will look forward to the opportunity to participate on such a committee and we ask that we be informed of all of the particulars so that we can arrange to have a representative present.

7. We also raised the question as to why Rag Mala was not read during the Akhand Paath at the Akal Takhat. Your reply was that the Akhand Kirtani jatha has had an influence in this matter.

It is very disturbing to feel that such people could influence the Rehit being maintained and exemplified at the Akal Takhat. Clearly, there is a point of dispute, since a few hundred yards away, at Harimandar Sahib, the Rag Mala is read for the Akhand Paath.

8. We discussed various points of discrimination with regard to Khalsa women. You expressed agreement that Khalsa is Khalsa, and there should be no area of the Dharma, which should be restricted to women. However, you have the responsibility to see that no incidents take place between men and women, and that this concern causes a limitation in itself.

Therefore, you agreed that specific hours or days could be set aside for women to do sewa inside Harimandar Sahib. Will this only be set up during the visit of our Western jathas, or will this be an ongoing program? Please advise me of when this will go into effect.

It was also agreed that on the next visit of Western Sikhs to the Harimandar Sahib, you will schedule a jatha of women to recite Gurbani Kirtan inside Darbar Sahib. We will plan to send a well-prepared jatha, based upon this commitment.

We also discussed the possibility of having women hold Akhand Paaths inside Akal Takhat or

Harimandar Sahib, where only women read and they can act as sewadars for one another and a proper decorum can be maintained.

It is mutually agreed by us that the priests of Akal Takhat need to be educated to relate to serving the Panj Piaray Prashaad to Khalsa women as well as Khalsa men.

9. I also expressed the idea that it would be advisable to define the way that Gurdwaras should be functioning. Specifically, they should not be used as political platforms for individual personalities. Rather, that they should be modelled after the Harimandar Sahib, where only Gurbani Kirtan is performed 24 hours each day. Otherwise, Ardas is done, and the Hukam is taken, and other Banis are read.

Again, you indicated that such protocol is established by this selected committee and that we should have representation on this committee in the future. Please advise us regarding this.

10. In the matter of the practices of different sections of the Indian Sikh community, such as the alteration of the Rehit given by Guru Gobind Singh in the case of the Akhand Kirtani jatha stating that "keshki" is the fifth "K", rather than kesh, I felt it would be advisable to advise such jathas directly that any deviation from this clearly separates them from the recognized body of Khalsa Panth. This would serve to advise them of their error officially and would give them an opportunity to correct their procedures, rather than simply disclaiming their status as Sikhs.

I trust that the above is an accurate recounting of our discussion. Again, I was most grateful for this opportunity and I look forward to future opportunities where we can further clarify our mutual concerns regarding the spread of our Dharma.

In the Name of the Cosmos which prevails through everybody and the Holy Nam which holds the world.

Humbly yours,  
Mukhia Sardarni Sahiba Sardarni Premka Kaur Khalsa  
Secretary General  
Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere

### **When in Rome...**

After spending eight years in California pretending to study at college, but mostly doing Kundalini Yoga with Yogi Bhajan, Guru Meher Singh was sent on a mission by the Master: go to Rome and open an ashram so that people can experience Kundalini Yoga and do *sadhana*.

After taking some classes, Antonella Alegiani, a budding artist who would one day be named “Siri Kartar Kaur” by the Master, was completely sold into the idea of living there, doing *sadhana* every day, karma yoga and learning to be a vegetarian. She was not alone. Although Guru Meher Singh was from north Italy and a little stiff and shy, soon an unusual community was formed centered on Guru Ram Das Ashram in Via degli Spagnoli in Rome, near the Pantheon. The ashram was located on the second floor of a 17th Century three-story building, while the top floor was rented by Guru Meher Singh’s brother and his wife.

Guru Meher’s brother Paolo wanted very much to try the mysterious and powerful *sadhana*, but had to compromise with his wife. A plan was hatched: at night, Paolo would put a string around his big toe that would reach down his brother’s bed. When Guru Meher Singh would arise in the *Amrit Vela* he would tug the string and wake his brother without disturbing his wife.

Life in the Rome ashram was filled with many such escapades.

## The Fruit of the Teachings

While regular North Americans bumbled their way through parenthood, Yogi Bhajan had protocols and expectations that, while sometimes unconventional, were coherent and inspired. A father figure – loving, playful, but uncompromising in his desire to summon up greatness – to the children of the growing 3HO family, the Master guided the parents in the discipline of raising “great spiritual beings.”

When visiting, the Siri Singh Sahib might initiate a joyful game of catch with a mother, tossing her infant back and forth, a distance of six to eight feet between them. Besides being rollicking fun, the object of the game was to make the growing child fearless. Signs of bashfulness and timidity were not gladly tolerated.

When Yogi Bhajan came for a visit to the Brooklyn ashram in New York City, home to seventeen adults, including Sat Jivan Singh and Kaur and their daughter, Simran Kaur, about three years old, he sat down in a chair and motioned for her to come and greet him. That day, she decided to play a game, and hid behind her mother’s dress, playing shy.

“This is not how my Simran should behave,” he said, and told her parents they should send her to live in the children’s ashram in Washington, D.C. “Distance therapy” he called it. Send a child away while they are young and they will not leave their families when they grow older. For Simran Kaur, this was the beginning of a life-long adventure with traveling.

Away from her parents, Simran’s first acts in D.C. were childishly destructive. She found herself in trouble a few times. After that, Simran adapted well to life away from home. Being away from her parents never fazed her. Simran Kaur always knew they were her parents and, and they talked on the

phone often. The Sat Jiwans also came to visit regularly and came to many classes on the East Coast of the US when Yogi Bhajan taught.

In June 1981, the first large group of American Sikh children went to live in India to start school there. The girl's school, dubbed "Shangra-la," was at seven thousand feet and from it, they could see the beautiful, snow-capped Himalayan peaks. It was a boarding school much like the one in *Harry Potter*.

In no time, the school was reeling from the arrival of the group of freewheeling American children. Well-behaved Indian children who never stepped out of line were the norm. The Americans were rambunctious, rowdy, and often naughty - breaking curfew, sneaking around school, and being mischievous children. Their hijinks were never hurtful or dangerous, but terribly fun and unruly.

During the winter break when most of the students returned home to family in India, the American Sikh children stayed at the school and waited for the Siri Singh Sahib to come and visit. When he arrived, the students met him at his hotel, excited to see him. They all loved and respected him. They gathered around the Master as he talked to them about being good, obeying their teachers, growing strong, and becoming leaders. Himself a master of pranks, he said, with a wink, "Do mischief, but don't get caught."

## The Merciful Hand of God

For those who participated in the annual Summer Solstice Sadhanas, those ten days in the mountains were a sacred pilgrimage. High in the dry, rugged mountains the air was fresh, the water pure, and everywhere camped about were aspiring saints and sages and yogis. The days were hot and the showers cold, but there was music and inspiration abounding.

White Tantric Yoga at Summer Solstice in New Mexico developed a reputation for surprising weather. The forecast had been for seven days of clear, blue skies, but during the last day of tantric at the 1981 Solstice, an army of dark, heavy cumuli rolled across the horizon. The air became charged with electromagnetic tension. Even the ground appeared to tremble. To add to the spectacle, tendrils of lightning began to play across the sky.

Since the last downpour at the 1977 Summer Solstice, a large concrete foundation had been laid, covered by a corrugated steel roof as a form of protection for the hundreds of campers. Even so, Yogi Bhajan began to pray, "God, look, we are not going to get all this amount again and rebuild everything in your honor. And moreover, we are not bad people, so don't show your over-happiness by destroying all this structure. Look, we know your love and if you are going to show that kind of love, we are better with your hate than love and we will prefer the heat wave and hot sun than all this joy of yours, so kindly get over."

Lightning was striking the steel roof, so the whole structure was vibrating above the meditating congregation. The Siri Singh Sahib said to Gurushabad Singh, “Go outside and see, is it going to go or is it going to sit on us?”

When Gurushabad returned, he said, “It’s moving very slowly, but surely.”

The Mahan Tantric told everyone, “Pray! Pray! Pray! Pray! The power of prayer is the only power man has got. It is the highest power.”

This time, the heavens were merciful. It trickled here, trickled there, and finally the clouds passed away into the mountains and burst some miles away. Everyone could tell because all the rivers nearby were gushing with rainwater.

## The Sada Sats

Sada Sat Singh worked at the Golden Temple Conscious Cookery in Washington, D.C. He was dutiful. He worked hard, but his work frustrated him – the same routine every day. People said his father was an admiral in the US Navy. What was Sada Sat doing working in a restaurant?

Thinking of leaving the community and the way of life he had been practising for some years, Sada Sat Singh signed on to read an hour shift of an *Akhand Paath*, a continuous reading of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. He arrived a few minutes early for his 1 a.m. reading, washed his hands, and bowing his head before the Granth Sahib, gradually took over the seat of the person reading before him and started to read for himself.

The Word of the Guru has a way of addressing all the ills and all the wonders in the world. There are passages about the futility of worldliness, the heartache of separation, the mysteries of meditation, the essence of happiness, and the sheer wonder of existence. Reading in an *Akhand Paath* presents the reader with a counselling session appropriate to just about whatever happens to be going on in their life.

After his allotted hour of reading, Sada Sat Singh felt good and ready to go home, but it was two in the morning, and as sometimes happened at that very early hour, his replacement was nowhere in sight. Being an unbroken reading, and Sada Sat Singh being a dutiful Sikh, he continued the reading, delving for another hour into the challenges, the wonders, the heartaches of his life.

By now, it was 3 a.m. Sada Sat Singh felt he had done well. He had read for two hours without any relief. His legs and back were a little sore now. Otherwise, he was fine. But just where was his replacement?



When the next reader arrived at four o'clock, Sada Sat Singh had been immersed in the wisdom of the saints for three straight hours. In that time, he had resolved that he would stay in the community and abide by the challenging, spiritual lifestyle he had been blessed with.

Soon thereafter, a fresh wind stirred up and blew Sada Sat Singh and his wife, Sada Sat Kaur, to the West Coast. The Los Angeles 3HO community had purchased some land and built its own Golden Temple Conscious Cookery. They needed experienced workers, so a carload from Ahimsa Ashram in Washington, D.C. set out across the US to be of service, weeklong drive.

As it happened, the new cookery was planning to hold a free kitchen, open to one and all, to launch their new enterprise. Krishna Kaur was in charge and she was expectantly awaiting help to arrive from nearby Pomona, so when a car full of turbaned 3HO-ers pulled up, she immediately put them to work, mopping and cleaning in preparation for the opening. The help from D.C., a little stiff from their journey but no worse for wear, energetically set to work. It is not until later that Krishna Kaur realized her mistake.

Over the course of several years, the Siri Singh Sahib recognized Sada Sat Singh's abilities and gave him responsibilities with the family businesses in southern California. One day, Yogi Bhajan was standing on the sidewalk in front of Guru Ram Das Ashram with a few others, as he often did, with people enjoying his energy and attention. The Master placed one of arms on the shoulders of Sada Sat Singh and the other on Guru Simran Singh. He took a moment and then exclaimed with great enthusiasm, "We are going to start a Yogi Tea company!"

Their response was, "Yes, Sir." They did not have any idea what starting a tea company would be like, but Sada Sat Singh and Guru Simran Singh worked hard to make Yogi Bhajan's vision come to life. At first, they blended the spices by rolling barrels in the driveway. To gain knowledge of the industry, they traveled to every food product fair they could around the country. Little by little, that spark ignited a flame and the Yogi Tea company was off and running.

At one point, when Sada Sat Singh was responsible for the company known as "Sunshine Oils," Yogi Bhajan did what he often did, and shook things up, giving Krishna Kaur his position and sending Sada Sat to take over as Regional Director of 3HO for Southern California.

Often, Yogi Bhajan with a cane, and Sada Sat Singh as his security detail, might be sighted going for a brisk morning walk on Preuss Road in Los Angeles. On one occasion, they were walking with a few others in a park near the Ashram when a crazed attacker came rushing at them swinging a golf club. The attacker was subdued, but the fiberglass handle of the attacker's golf club broke across Sada Sat's palm as he deflected the blows, cutting his hand deeply. Sada Sat Singh needed to be taken to the hospital to be stitched up.

When he returned, the Siri Singh Sahib had tears in his eyes and said with gratitude, "I never got to bleed for my teacher."

## **“Guru Angad”**

That Guru Nanak who was so popular, who at that time of his life as a single-handed person, traveled very much and enriched very many people, and was very blessed, when it came to settle down in Kartarpur, he became so harsh that only one man was in a position to stand him – that was Lehna, which became Guru Angad.

A time came when only seven people could follow him. And there was a dead body, and they were all very hungry, hungry to death. And he turned around and he said, “You are all very hungry. Is that a fact?”

“Yes.”

He said, “Eat this dead body.”

Six of them told him, “No. That’s not human.”

And Guru Nanak replied to them, “To become a man of God is not human. It is above human.”

But Lehna said, “Master, should I start eating it from the feet, or start from the head?” He said, “You understand it. You deserve it. You will be my successor.”

## **“Perfection”**

What is Kundalini yoga? A kind of yoga, which eliminates all discrepancies which relate to the personality.

Look, now listen to this. Kundalini yoga is supposed to enlighten in you silently and calmly the dormant power so that you can find your union with God.

Is that true or not? Is that true or not? It is not what I am saying. It is something, which already has been said.

So if you have to have a union with God, God is perfect. You have to be perfect!

## **Fast Tracks with the Siri Singh Sahib**

In January 1982, the Siri Singh Sahib embarked, once more, on a *yatra* to the spiritual homeland

of Punjab. One of his first priorities was to visit the school in the Himalayan foothills where forty-two youngsters from the West had been attending Guru Nanak Fifth Centenary School.

While seventy Westerners took in a slower, less extensive itinerary, the Siri Singh Sahib and a few others jetted and drove half the length of India, from the snowy heights of Musoorie to Harianbela and Hakimpur, Bombay and Bangalore, meeting and networking everywhere they went, pausing only briefly in the Indian capital to take in the sumptuous Republic Day celebrations with India's new Sikh President, their old acquaintance, Giani Zail Singh.

On his return to America, the Master stopped to conduct a White Tantric Yoga course in Hamburg. Just in passing, he asked Pritam Hari Kaur to do a count of how many teachers of Kundalini Yoga there were in Europe. By her reckoning, there was already a total of sixty-one in Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Amsterdam, The Hague, Paris, Bordeaux, Barcelona, London, and Rome.

### “God in a Thief”

If God is all good, then why is there a thief? Now, why the necessity of a thief? To pay the policeman. Polarity is there. Somehow the concept of polarity got lost and it was pushed so bad by Christianity that almost in the religious realms we forgot that everything is in balance.

There is good, there is bad, and there is neutral. Complementary, supplementary, and elementary people, we forgot that there is a choice. We can be elementary, we can be complementary, and we can be supplementary. It is not that fixed in who we are. And this is the whole difference between the tribal religion and the religions of consciousness, or you may call it the “Western religion” and the “Eastern religion.”

We have a consciousness, and in that consciousness, there are chakras: the seventh, the sixth, the fifth, the fourth, the third, the second, the one. We act and react, and in our action and reaction, where our consciousness is, that is the frequency of our level of consciousness.

If we act through the heart centre, it doesn't matter what it is, we are compassionate. If we are acting through *ajnaa*, sixth centre, it doesn't matter what reaction is required, we are going to be very peaceful and very intelligently wise. If it is from *shashra*, it doesn't matter what it is, we have a thousand reasons to tell God is. We are going to be very divine. But somehow, if we are going to act through our aura, then we are just acting like a god. That is the eighth, powerful centre we have got. You can totally act like God; totally, completely, and perfectly. And it is possible.

So, when they say “the man is born in the image of God,” it is a clever way of saying man is God. They didn't say that because in those days, if you say “man is God,” they used to put you on a cross and burn you. You know what I mean? It is very difficult.

A lot of people were declared as satans and crucified, though they were very holy people and very divine people because their experience became so one with God.

Where we got messed up, we had a Roman Empire and Christianity got along with the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire got spread. They had their own nonsense. That nonsense took care of the Christian principles and the guilt consciousness came out of it. The theory of sin came out quite later.

Man is not born to live in sin. Man is not committing any sin. Man is living in faith of God. Man is living in trust of God. Man is God. It is very difficult even to understand other than God, what else is!

And the outcome of this whole theory is, let us go and find God. Find God where, folks? On the one hand, you say "God is everywhere." On the second hand, you say "Go and find God." I can understand you are ignorant and you want to go to somebody and say, "Please, talk to me about God." That is understandable, but where are you going to find God?

Christianity pushed this idea to find God, worship God... God is there! And Islam did the worst to it. They say "Worship Mecca!" If you are on the East side, bow to the West. If you are on the West side, bow to the East. Mecca. The centre of the Earth is in that Arabia, that town, that place.

Now, if you ask a Muslim, "What are you doing?" he will kill you. If you tell a Christian, he will never forgive you. Because at that time, a unity was to be created among the religious groups, that theory of one God was essential. It was a political move. It had nothing to do with God.

Try to understand, this theory of one God has nothing to do with God. God is always one and everything else.

Once I was talking in a conference. They said, "Hindus are statue-worshippers, idol-worshippers."

I said, "What is wrong with them?"

They said, "They worship many gods."

I said, "They are so great, they take a piece of stone and they made God out of it. Can anybody among you do that? What is the difference? You go to church on Sunday. It is all stone. Is God there dancing on the altar which you see, and it is not anywhere else?"

Man's power in imagination to confine God to a space on a longitude and latitude is so ridiculous! And that is the only ignorance. That is the only destruction of man's faith in God, because if God can be felt everywhere, then you can't do anything wrong.

No, God is in Guru Ram Das Ashram, right? Let us take it that way. It is here, therefore three blocks from here, you can do anything you want. Well, that is what you want.

### **“The Glory of the Siri Guru Granth”**

If a person writes one line of poetry, we say, “Look at this! Bah, bah, bah! Wonderful!”

Guru Arjan and all these Gurus compiled Siri Guru Granth, 1,430 pages of pure Naad. By reading it, you become divine. You may not understand it. It is a compilation of the sound system between your tongue and upper palate. Reciting those words makes you divine. The permutation and combination which happens between the tongue and the meridian points on the upper palate make you divine. There is no *granth* like it. That is what it is called “Siri Ved” or “Siri Guru Granth.” That is the glory.

And when it is compiled and it is installed as Guru, Guru writes in it, “*Tayraa keetaa jaato nahee* – Oh God, I cannot even estimate your grace. You have made me competent to do this.”

### **The Husband Collector**

As a spiritual teacher, Yogi Bhajan might be called on to offer wisdom at any time and under any circumstance. On a flight from New York to Los Angeles, he was in a line-up for the washroom when a woman started a conversation with him. She said she was coming to Los Angeles to meet her boyfriend.

Looking at her apparent age, the word “boyfriend” struck Yogi Bhajan, so he said, “You mean you never got married? This is the first time? You seem so eager about it.”

She said, “No, this is my seventeenth marriage.” Yogi Bhajan had never heard anybody so politely say, “This is my seventeenth marriage.”

He said, “What do you do? You collect husbands?”

She said, “That’s kind of my hobby,” and she went on to explain that she would tell each man that she did not intend to marry him more than two years. Still, she said she has a long list. Then, she asked Yogi Bhajan a question, “If I ask you to marry me, how you will feel?”

The Siri Singh Sahib said, “I will vomit.” The Master knew it was very offensive to say that to a woman, but he thought, “In one line, let me fix her up. Let there be one man at least to let her know

how he feels. Collecting husbands! God bless this country!”

### **“What is a Marriage?”**

What is a friendship? The goodness toward any person from you is the basis of every friendship. Not emotionalism. Not demands. Not this. Not that. It is totally wrong. You want friends? You can only have on one term, and that is your goodness.

What is a marriage? Marriage is not sex. What is sex? If you want to call right now, I will give you a number and they will deliver the girl to you. Or you need a boy, they will deliver... You can describe the size. You can discuss the whole bargain. They are very good at it. You can have a whole sex.

You want security? Why not to take a very heavy, big bully and hire him for your protection? You can get everything with money. Everything you need, you will get with money. Only one thing you will not get. You will never be married because of money.

What is a marriage then? Is it sex? No. Is it relationship? No. What is a marriage? Marriage is a consciousness of two people. It is a conscious act on the part of two people to supplement and complement each other to achieve the infinity of God. That is why marriage is performed before God. You guys have forgotten the basic formula of what a marriage is. It is a conscious commitment.

### **“Why We Have Hair”**

You guys are making a mockery of this human life! Human life is a very wonderful, wonderful, beautiful thing to live – and you make a mess of it! “Unclean living,” they call it.

Sometimes you have matted hair. Sometimes you have bushy hair. Sometimes you have Sassoon hair. Sometimes you have it short. As you don’t know how to handle hairs, you go to a barber and say, “Change my style.”

Poor man! What he can do? He cuts here, cuts there, brushes it, says it is so beautiful.

“What is it?”

“Fifty dollars.”

“Alright. Here’s a ten dollar tip.”

What is going on? Finally, you have like a boar, those bristles on your head. Your hair can't stand it.

One girl asked me in New York, "Why we have hair? Why you are against cutting it?"

I said, "It is a very simple thing. It is the purest protein of the body. It is called 'heavy protein.' It grows on the scalp, nowhere else. And it grows only to a specific length with a specific age. When you cut it, it starts growing again. That heavy protein which the physical body needs later, and this is the reserve outlet of it, to relate to your central vagus nervous system, is consumed by cutting and growing, cutting and growing, cutting and growing. That's all it is.

"Almighty God gave a human being a certain faculty of electromagnetic field and to give that electro-magnetic field to his brain, he produced hair in the male on the beard to cover his moon centre or moon meridian, and on his head to cover his solar meridian. That's all that is the purpose of hair. There's nothing more, nothing less."

She said, "Was there any substitute with God?"

I said, "Yes. He could have grown a tree."

The other thing which also works like hair is wood. That is why when holy men decided that, they started wearing wood shoes. Have you seen those sandals? The wood sandals, between the toes and the big toe, they have a knob kind of thing. And they wear them. They are not very convenient to wear, but they found out the only way they can totally protect their magnetic field is if they do not wear under their feet anything other than wood.

But the problem is you never wanted to study it even. It doesn't concern you. It is your hair. I am not saying you can't make a bagel out of it. What do I lose?

I have not seen one single person who is satisfied with his or her hairdo. You can't be because this is one energy you do not know how to handle.

It is very simple if you are a conscious person. At night, comb them and braid them downward. In the morning, tie them up on the solar centre and cover it up. I am not saying you should do it. I am telling you the system if you ever want to do it.

There is a purpose in human skin. That is why we were not given any cover for it except very teeny, tiny hairs to augment our magnetic field and our sensitivity so that our entire body can become a total antenna and our computer, the brain, can work and visualize in the very smallest sense the total infinity of God. This human body has been made to consciously receive the totality and infinity in sensitivity in visualization and in verbalization of one thing that is called "God." It is not made here to become an "executive."

## To Help a Child

One day, the Siri Singh Sahib received a call from a nine-year-old child. The boy said, "My spiritual name was so-and-so. Sir, you gave it to me, but my parents gave me this name. I know you will not remember me. My parents left from such-and-such ashram." He described the whole thing.

The Master said, "I recollect. What can I do for you?"

He said, "I have come to my friend's house to call you."

"What is the emergency?"

He said, "No emergency. I have a question." The question was about an ugly situation surrounding his mother. The child wanted to know what was required to be done.

Yogi Bhan advised the boy as properly and truthfully as he could. The situation was heart-wrenching, but he also felt satisfied that the child had remembered he had a right to independent counsel and that he had acted on that right. This right, he thought, should be fundamental to the entire human race, as it safeguards the most vulnerable members of our humanity.

### "Sikh dharma is an ocean"

There is not a single person on this Earth born who will like to corrupt or do certain things which are wrong, but those who do things which are wrong are because their inner voice is very weak, very feeble. It is almost to the extent of nonexistence because they don't feed the soul. The soul is hungry. It is in a totally feeble state. It is just merely existing.

And you might be seeing in America, one thing is very common: "I got to do what I got to do. I got to do it my way." Now "my way" is not God's way. It is a very simple revolt.

I look churchy to you as if I am speaking from a church pedestal, but that is what they say in the church. They say in the church that you've got to listen to the inner voice of God and you've got to listen to the commandments of God. But they do not tell which way you can listen to the commandment of God because they do not tell you how to meditate. They do not tell you to do *sadhana*. They do not tell you anything!

The result is, now you have become so neurotically revolting against the whole thing... "What God?" "What inner voice?" "What is going on?" So, anything the priest might tell you, if anyone will even tell you, you say, "Forget it! I don't want to deal with it. It is no good."



I mean to say, it is very surprising that it doesn't matter how beautiful you are, but once you have been told you are living in sin - that's the main principle of the Catholic religion – it doesn't matter how good you live, still you are sinning. And now, in the Catholic religion, the prospect of God and the religion of Sikh dharma, the prospect of God is the same, but the polarity is opposite.

Here is the concept of *chardi kalaa*, always in the higher spirit, and there it is always sin, just negative – South Pole, North Pole. So, it is very unfortunate.

Today, somebody was asking, "What is Sikh dharma?"

I said, "Sikh dharma is an ocean. It is a dharma. It is a life of discipline, *masakat ghaal*. To praise the Lord through hard labor to purify the self. It is a life of spiritual sweat, very, very tiring, but very comforting, very relaxing, and very beautiful."

It is just like an ocean, and every religion will come into it, like rivers. All rivers lead their path to the ocean, so every spiritual seeker will come to dharma.

It is not that it is an Indian religion. That is wrong. In India, how many Sikhs are so spiritual? How many wear *bana*? How many read *Bani*? How many come to *sadhana*? How many meditate?

So it is a new birth of dharma. It is for all those religions. It is not for one religion. It is not only for Sikhs. Khalsa is not for Sikhs. Khalsa is not for Hindus. Khalsa is not for Muslims. Khalsa is not for Christians. Khalsa is for everybody. Whosoever wants to be purified, sanctified, and elevated, has to come like all water from the mountains, from the snow, from the tributaries, walks slowly and gradually, and walks into the ocean.

## The Sacred Arrow

On May 18, 1982 there was a blaze in the Guru Ram Das Estate, Los Angeles, where the Siri Singh Sahib made his home when he was not on tour. It was being renovated and painted at the time, so no one was injured, but the damage was considerable and extensive.

Only one thing of value survived the blaze. Over a doorframe, in a place of honor, had reposed the sacred arrow the Hopis had given the Siri Singh Sahib as a sign of the responsibility entrusted to him, to preserve and defend the One Supreme Spirit of All. That priceless keepsake had miraculously emerged with all its feathers completely unsinged.

## The Master's Gift

Sewa Singh was a young artist and a craftsman living in Guru Ram Das Ashram, Seattle, surrounded by some of his creative efforts. One day, the Siri Singh Sahib came for a visit. He had an uncanny sense which made housecleaning very challenging for any host or hostess. The Yogi always seemed to find the unpolished frame, the undusted cranny, the unfinished what-have-you.

During his tour of the ashram, the Siri Singh Sahib examined a carved wooden shrine resting on the mantel in the *sadhana* room. Without warning, he turned and screamed at Sewa Singh, "Why did you break this?"

Sewa Singh nervously replied that in fact, someone else had broken the piece while dusting it. The Master's response was to glare at him with an intensity that was chilling, "I don't mean that break." His voice softened only a little, "Why did you break it here?" Yogi Bhajan pointed away from the obvious break to a tiny area that Sewa Singh had completely forgotten.

Years before, while sitting alone carving the piece, Sewa Singh's mind had wandered, his hand had slipped and he had cut a tiny detail into two pieces. He had been quite angry with myself, since it was the only slip in the piece, which had taken months to complete. Since the grain was very fine, Sewa Singh had been able to repair the piece and was pleased that there was no visible sign of the damage. He had never mentioned this mishap to anyone and never expected it to come up again. As the shock of having his psyche so fully blasted wore off, Sewa Singh began to realize that the future was going to unfold in ways that he could never have imagined.

As his relationship with the Master grew, and Sewa Singh presented him with gifts of his artwork, he praised him beyond his imagination. Being young and full of himself, Sewa Singh ate up every drop of tasty bait in this trap. When the Siri Singh Sahib knew his student was well stuffed with his own self-importance, he asked him to do a special and very sacred painting for him. Sewa Singh's ego continued to swell.

Yogi Bhajan told him to do a painting exactly like a smaller one he had seen, in white and burnt umber, but to do it much larger. Sewa Singh followed his directions exactly. He was then instructed him to bring the work to Summer Solstice Sadhana in New Mexico. The stage was set for the next lesson in Sewa Singh's spiritual development.

At a break in the White Tantric Yoga meditations, the Master decided to unwrap the painting in front of the entire gathering of a thousand arranged in neat rows beneath the steel roof of the tantric shelter. It was the most delicious treat for Sewa Singh's ego. Concealed inside, was a razor sharp, multi-pointed hook.

The Mahan Tantric shouted out his name, mispronouncing it as "Sewak Singh," even though his name was Sewa Singh. "Sewak" meant servant of God, while "Sewa" meant devotional service. When he heard this, he knew he was in for some very painful yoga.

Yogi Bhajan asked Sewa Singh if he had painted that picture. While his voice boomed over the sound system, Sewa Singh had to scream his reply because he was at the direct opposite end of the meditation space. While everyone else was seated, he had to stand up.

Then a rain of very public insults began to shower down upon Sewa Singh's being. The Master said he had insulted him, dishonored and abused Guru Ram Das and Almighty God Himself. All in all, thundered the Mahan Tantric, Sewa Singh's monstrous effort had served to curse him and his entire lineage for generations back into the past and forward into the future.

The great sin of which Sewa Singh stood accused was using black in the painting. In reality, he had never touched the painting with black, only white and burnt umber, but that did not matter any more. It was a perfect set-up, and though it angered him at first, even Sewa Singh could see it for what it was.

At first, Sewa Singh was angry with his spiritual teacher, but that anger did not last. In time, he came to see this ordeal as the kindest and most loving gift Yogi Bhajan could have ever given for him. He realized that the greatest pain and limitation in life comes from attachment to ego. The Master had so completely challenged that attachment that when Sewa Singh finally emerged on the other side, he realized he had not been living life at all, had not been seeing God at all, he had not been loving other people at all, he had been just a child in spirit and as a human. No other gift gave him more freedom, joy, and power to create.

## The Rescue

One day, Yogi Bhajan heard a commotion in the alleyway behind Guru Ram Das Ashram and decided to go out and investigate. There, he found a big man with a three-foot iron bar sitting on a young woman. He said, "I will put this through your heart. Otherwise, agree."

When the man saw Harbhajan Singh, he warned him, "I'll kill you! Leave me alone!"

The Master replied, "No. You are doing something wrong. I can't."

He threatened, "You are risking your life."

The next minute, the man was on the ground and the iron was in the Master's hand. "No, Son, you had risked already. You did not see under my kind, innocent face the determination of a lightning thunder. You thought that you are talking to an old man who has already spent years and does not have the strength. But my life is guided by principle. It is not for any other purpose. Now tell me, what capacity you are in?"

The would-be rapist realized that his strength, his arms, his whole situation has turned against him.

For the Siri Singh Sahib's part, he realized that his lightning action was totally through the strength of God and Guru. It was also inevitable. There was no way he could have bypassed the situation. Despite his age, he could not leave a young woman lying down, a man sitting threateningly on her with a 3-foot long iron. He could not do it.

## The Simple Art of Healing

Yogi Bhajan was known as a healer of the human spirit, but his real ambition was to help his students realize their own innate healing power. A teacher and therapist once called Yogi Bhajan and said, "I have a patient here walking at Ram Das Guru Ashram."

The Master said, "Describe his position."

He described the physical and mental situation of the person.

The Siri Singh Sahib said, "It is very simple."

"What should I do?"

"Just do one thing. Is there any cup of Yogi Tea around?"

"Yuh."

"Give him one glass of Yogi Tea."

"The person is damned depressed. I don't think he will drink it."

"Then put a lot more honey in it. That's all. Everybody will drink for sweetness. Give him that."

So, he gave it to him and he said, "Well Sir, he drank it."

"Then do one thing. Ask him to sit in front of you and do nothing. Just sit in front of him."

So, the teacher put the person in front of him and just sat in front of him for half an hour, after which the man started laughing, then he became sombre, then he cried. After that, he calmed down and asked, "Can I sleep?" and he lay down and he slept. After three hours, he got up.

The teacher called again and said, "What should I do?"

"Give him a beautiful bath, massage him, let him rest, give him a meal, and tell him to go home."

The next day, the patient came and thanked the teacher. The teacher asked Yogi Bhajan, "Sir, it worked wonderful but what was it?"

"It was nothing. It is called 'body language hypnosis.' Under my instruction, you just sat down and just sat down as a calm, sane human being in front of some emotional wreck. And finally, looking at you and seeing you and understanding you, his vibrations became calm and serene. And that's all it takes."

### **"Wearing White"**

There is no need of chaos in life. We have a wonderful discipline and about sixty percent of us really do it. And one hundred percent of us are in a very good discipline. On that, we cheat from five to fifteen percent.

Sometimes, we do not understand why we wear white. Sometimes, we do not understand why we wear cotton. And sometimes we do not understand why we wear *bana*.

And I have explained to you many times. I will explain to you again today, we wear white because of color therapy. It guarantees to build in you a neutral mind. In the old science, it is no big deal. White contains all the seven rays and it is a constituent of bringing you the neutral mind. It helps.

You may be in any adverse state of mind, wrap yourself in a white sheet and lay yourself flat. See in fifteen minutes what it does for you. Exactly fifteen minutes by the watch. Take it.

We wear cotton because it is the best absorbent to create an air around us. And we wear *bana*. It brings out of us the faculty of endurance. The faculty of endurance is the only human quality which matters in you. So basically, when we were all running around, we decided, "Well, alright, we will wear a *bana* and we will come out as an absolute self."

You saw, there were 85,000 people in that place, in the Rose Bowl? You could be seen from anywhere, like patches.

A normal human being who is healthy and very radiant, requires nine feet of aura on each side. An animal has a three-foot-and-a-half aura. And every other thing has a foot-and-a-half aura. That is the fundamental projection.

We have animal nature in us. If we are in a *bana*, we can never, ever be reduced to three-and-a-half-feet. It will give us six inches to a foot edge on our normal weakness. That's why we can be sometimes irrational, but can never be brute. We can be uncrazy, but cannot be totally crazy. That is the faculty which gives us the edge over other things because we have to survive.

## Who Are You?

A young woman in New York told Yogi Bajan, "I want to wear white. I want to wear cotton. I tried it three days. I went berserk!"

The Master replied, "What happened? Tell me what happened."

"Everybody wanted to know, 'Who are you?'"

"That's all we want. The whole circle is going on to do something so somebody asks you who you are. It happened to you and you freaked out?"

She said, "I never wanted that much!"

"When you wear white cotton and you dress up properly, it extends your aura, and everyone who is weaker magnetically will come and say, 'Who are you?' That is the price you pay.

"Actually, nobody wants to know who you are. It is that radiance which attracts people. It's not you. It is that which is coming out of you."

## "Stop"

*At the 1982 Summer Solstice at Ram Das Puri, the Siri Singh Sahib spoke strongly against the U.S. government's role in the nuclear arms race with the U.S.S.R. His criticism extended to the failings of American democracy and finished with instructions to his students to become politically engaged in opposing the arms race in America.*

We are committed spiritual people. As such, we are both fortunate and unfortunate: fortunate in that we are spiritually committed and that we are trying to be healthy, happy and holy: unfortunate in that we cannot tolerate the bizarre situation that is happening to our country or that will happen to our people. We are protesting against nuclear war. We are, as a part of our faith, warriors. We are known as martial people. We are not hiding the fact that we are fighters, but we fight for a cause. The cause we are fighting for is this: we declare war on nuclear death!

Nuclear war is not any kind of human war, nor does it observe any rule or any law. Period. They are lying to us! They are telling us that there's a possibility that we can go to the hills. We are in the hills! And just a few miles from here, they are building the atom bomb.

We have reached the point of destruction! I said to you yesterday that those who die in the atomic blast will be very fortunate and beloved of God, and those who survive will be the sinners. Imagine what this war will mean to us! Neither there will be any United States, nor will there be a U.S.S.R. - nor will there be anybody on the planet! There will be no more Rome, no more Golden Temple, and there will be no more Mecca. There will be no more you and there will be no more me. There will be no more us and there will be no more we.

Ronald Reagan will fly in the special plane up there and he will have no more place to land. And this is a fact.

As Americans, you are very unfortunate. You are fortunate because you are all aliens. You came here, you became nationals. In two hundred years, you have seen every pleasantness of the world. You are very sexy. You are very obnoxious. You run around. You screw everything that comes in your way. You don't care. You take no responsibility. Everybody is pregnant. Nobody is a virgin. Everybody is married. Everybody is divorced. You have made a biggest mess of your life!

You are going to pay back for it, but all we are trying to ask is one thing: we don't want to pay back in a furnace and that is what Earth will be. In a simple description, if you want to know what will happen to this planet Earth if the war completes itself and all the switches are pressed and war takes place, it doesn't matter who strikes first, who strikes later. This planet Earth will become a furnace. It will take exactly thirty-six hours and seventeen minutes for the ozone layer of the Earth to give up, and after that "Adios!"

No more bombs will be required, first of all. No more death required, no more defense mechanism required. You are not trying to understand the basic fact. Once the atomic energy eats up the ozone layer, Earth will not be an inhabitable planet! Period.

Do you understand what I am saying? Did it hit you right somewhere? Can you imagine this? There will be absolutely no defense mechanism required, no more war required.

I asked this question to one of the biggest men in the army here. I said, "Well, the President will go in the command plane and when the ozone layer will be gone, what will happen to him?"

He said, "He will melt in the space."

They know about it. I told you what is going to happen. The debt around us is so heavy and we are so aware of it, that our generations are not going to come out to work at all. Work for what? To make atom bombs? Make eighty megaton hydrogen bomb? You must be kidding! That is what is

happening. That is what we have brought ourselves up to.

There is a way out... Blockades and publicity and everything is alright.

You are asking whether the Congressmen are with us or the Senators are with us. I'll tell you something: *everybody* is with us! But there is one job thing in this United States which is very sickening. Americans have no religion and they are not conscious. You can mess up an American by only giving her or him a better job. It is the job. It is the lobby pressure. It is the job pressure. It is the money pressure which is going on, and according to that, everything is going on according to plan, but people are getting slowly aware.

That day is going to be not far away when there will be no jobs, no lobbying, no children, no family. What for? That is what is waking up Americans, not that we have become religious and pious overnight. Still you take a booking to Las Vegas because you don't need a reservation.

Don't misunderstand! Our national character has not changed. We are still temperamental, sexual, and sensual people. We have not become very religious overnight because the eighty-megaton hydrogen bomb has been built. That is not true. We are still gambling. We are still drinking. We are still enjoying. We are still seeing the dances. You know, still Mickey Mouse is our Shiva. We don't have Lord Shiva to worship.

Don't misunderstand who we are. But the problem is there is a concurrent consciousness awakening in all of us that this planet is not going to be there. That is what "No Nukes!" is about. There is an acknowledged understanding that if atomic war between Trinidad, between any country, breaks out...

On the Falkland Islands, the "Malvinas," whatever you want to call it, or some island you have not heard about, anywhere where the national or international war will break out with an atomic bomb or the kind of hydrogen bomb we have got now, you better forget it! There is no chance!

So, what is the policy now? Alright, so the policy is to make yourself so strong that the other party won't attack us because of the dread, the fear.

Now is that a guarantee that there will be no war? It is not, "Let us sit heart to heart and work it out and forget about it." It is not that something should happen to work it out. That is not true. And you must understand how impotent we are.

On the Falkland Islands, the Empire struck back and Argentina struck those little islands which nobody ever heard of. Neither the United Nations, nor the Security Council, nor America, nor Russia, nobody could do a thing! There was a war. It was fought. For six hundred and some people, for sixteen thousand sheep, one thousand people died!



War is never a sane process. War is the outcome of total human insanity.

Don't forget, when the first war, Mahabharata, was fought, Lord Krishna, the Godhead, was in the centre of it. He couldn't stop it. All he told them was, "Fight well!"

What is the Gita. Gita is nothing, but it explains to you when the evil strikes the goodness, goodness has to fight back. But the fact is, war was fought. And if you read the Bhagavad Gita, you'll be surprised: fire bombs were used, atom bomb was used, napalm was used, and missiles were used. Thousands of people in one sector were burned to ashes by just such a strike.

They used some kind of power and the after-effect was that three thousand years ago, you find all these Red Indians here. If you see their food, their color, their genes, you will be surprised, they have all the habits of India because at that time, all around the area about three to five million people walked away from the war zone and they took their small boats, came through Alaska. Via Alaska, they all came to what you call the United States or South America and all that area. This area was not inhabited at that time.

We have been fighting cruel wars and destroying ourselves many times and this is the time that we are trying to appeal to ourselves. There is nothing more you can do. You will be surprised that seventy-five percent of people in America don't want war, especially nuclear war. But seventy-five percent of the people are not being heard and we have to do blockades and all that to protest. Why? Do you understand?

This is the corruptest democracy in the world. We are always very proud we are the greatest democracy in the world, but we don't say certain things. We are the corruptest democracy in the world! You haven't read political science.

When democracy is channelized, it becomes corrupt, it becomes power blocks. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. And it is an absolute power block democracy, therefore it is the corruptest democracy on the planet Earth!

Everybody in the Congress, you call and say, "What about your nuclear power policy?"

They say, "Who wants it?"

"Well, why are you voting for this budget?"

"What else can we do?"

They have passed a budget, right before your eyes, which is the biggest military spending budget, and they did absolutely everything they could to cut civilian people out. It is right before you. And these are all people we have voted for!

You talk to them and they will tell you, "What can I do?"

So I am trying to tell you, that this country is run by eighteen corporations and by their multinational interests. You don't count! They put before you one donkey and one elephant, and you have a choice to vote for either one. One is a war monkey and one is a mad elephant. I do not know what the hell you can do. I mean, you must be crazy.

The donkey is insane. The elephant is mad. Choose between the two evils. That is your choice! And you think, "I have voted!" Democracy. Forget it! There is no choice. There is no chance.

Sixty thousand dollar salary of a Congressman, plus under the table. God bless him!

If he doesn't take under the table, I don't know what he takes. The situation is very tight and very bad and very unfortunate, but there are a lot of things which can be or really should be done. Let us be practical about it.

First of all, we have weighed the situation, we have studied the situation, and we have avoided the situation. And it has taken us ten years to decide to come out openly. We never talked about it. But we know when we start talking, forget it! We are the biggest ducks in the United States. When we start quacking... because we stand out. That is the only advantage we have over others. We stand out and we know how to talk. And we want to talk now. We want to tell people that our first fundamental right is that this country and people in this country, came here to live and not to die.

Don't misunderstand me. Don't believe the Russian myth of peace, either. The difference is we have a free society and we talk very freely, and they are a regimented society and they have an oriental brain. They are the cunningest and the cleverest peace sellers and they are trying their best to achieve first superiority and first strike. The most dishonest, godless society existing on this planet is Russia. And I agree with MacArthur when he said, "Don't stop! Let us go all the way." And I think our President at that time pooped. I think if we would have finished then, it would have been much better than it is today.

Actually, to be honest, they are trying to prove the point that we are the war-mongers. But the fact is that they have never slept in the last twenty years, day and night, to create anything they can create, steal anything they can steal, to make themselves a first striking nation.

So, don't misunderstand that they are beautiful and we are ugly. That is not possible.

What I am mad about is a very simple fact. *Where is our propaganda machine?* We have a Europe One, Europe Two, the two strongest radio systems. We do not do anything in spite of the fact that we have radio broadcasts that can be heard all over Russia, right from Vladivostok to any town. The Russians jam it, we know it, but we know we can break that jam and still communicate. Still, nothing much is being done. We have to understand that we have to create a public opinion.

I don't care if Ronnie says we have to spend two hundred billion dollars on the atomic war. Alright, you get even. It is your problem. He was saying on the television, "If by walking in the street and doing the blockade, war can be avoided, I would have been the first." Well he may not be the first. Let him send Nancy for it, at least. Let him co-operate so we may understand there is a righteous division in the first family – some for the war, some against the war. But, you know, he is saying it because it is good to say. He is a very good actor, you must understand. All his old movies are running now. So he is trying to make his point that there is a very serious situation and we have to meet it.

We say, "Fine." If there would have been in this budget at least three billion dollars to make a propaganda against nuclear war and one billion dollars to propagate a freeze to the nuclear arms race, I would think it worthwhile.

I have done an experiment for the last six months. Whenever I call somebody on the phone, or talk to somebody, or write a letter, I just add two or three lines: "Do you want to live into the future? Do something about nuclear war!" Advocate! Educate another person! Let them have your view! If there is an atomic war, neither Democrats or Republicans will be left. We will all evaporate at the same time!

We are waking up and trying to control our own house. I am not asking you to start any agitation. I am asking you to start creating *public opinion*. There are at least a thousand people here. At least each one of you has one relative that you can write to. Urge them to write to one relative. Start a chain reaction. Calm, quiet, peaceful, nice - but start saying things, and don't stop until we stop it all!

We find this coincidence. Here they made the bomb - at nearby Los Alamos - and here we are sitting and saying, "We don't want it, we don't want the atomic war!" God is making the destiny of the United States as He wishes. This country was started with the slogan, "In God We Trust."

Start talking and start writing, and also start making up your mind that you don't believe what is being told and said. You *do* believe in one thing: "*We don't want a nuclear war!*" Make a contribution. Call all the religious groups and give them a talk. In your office or business, put a sign, "We don't want nuclear war."

These little funny things may look very little to you, but they are very effective. Simple things, simple methods, and simple gestures can bring a flood of people on your side. Do whatever you can if you love this planet Earth. Trust in God and start doing something from this minute!

## “The Story of Guru-ka-Bagh”

*Their role in India’s movement for independence is a point of pride for all Sikhs. The Siri Singh Sahib recounted one chapter of that story at the Summer Solstice Sadhana of 1982 as he rallied his students to oppose the nuclear armed race. He may also have been thinking, as many people in Punjab at that time were thinking, of the challenges facing Sikhs as they struggled non-violently for justice in their historic homeland.*

India wanted freedom. Britain knew that if they give freedom to India, the empire where the sun never sets, will never see the sun. They knew it. There were no two opinions about it. The British Empire never got established before India, so they knew they can’t afford to give freedom.

Unfortunately, a hundred years before, the Lahore Darbar, the Sikh Empire, was free and independent. Out of treachery and manipulation, we lost our freedom. But we were the last to fall in the subcontinent.

After a hundred years, we were the originators of civil disobedience. Mahatma Gandhi – Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi – became only the champion of it later. He studied it the first time in Amritsar and the war started on a very small issue.

The Golden Temple does feed about eight to ten thousand people a day. Free kitchen is the process of our religious service and by right of degree, we had the right to bring wood from Guru-ka-Bagh, which was a kind of forest a few miles away from Amritsar.

Somehow, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar ordered that Sikhs are not entitled, without paying a toll, to bring wood from Guru-ka-Bagh, and Sikhs protested. They started agitation, peaceful agitation, it is called “Guru-ka-Bagh *morchaa*.” *Morchaa* means peaceful agitation.

What would happen... In batches of five... because more than four people, if you go, then you break the law of assembly and they can arrest you... So they will go, one by one, from all sides, make a batch of five, and proceed to the garden to fetch the wood. And the police will lathi-charge, tear gas, and fight them and break their bones and run horses on them.

This painful situation started and continued for a couple of months. After that, it became so national and so big that, even at that time, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Babu Mohan Rai, and every other leader, known and unknown, came to watch. They were shocked and surprised that hundreds of Sikhs, educated, uneducated, poor, rich, children, ladies will keep on walking day in and day out and night and they were so brutally and so treacherously beaten that it even brought tears to the eyes of those who were beating them. So if she was handcuffed and later on released, it is a common thing. After all, how stone-hearted a duty may be, a man is a man in general.

After a couple of months, the Government of India gave in. Guru-ka-bagh was again released to

the Sikhs and wood could be taken from there for the free kitchen of the Golden Temple.

That was the start of the peaceful movement, and after that, it never stopped till in 1947, the British Government was compelled to give us the independence and we walked away with it.

### **“Woman doesn’t need liberation”**

I want to tell you something. Woman doesn’t need liberation. Now, I am going to reverse all that I have taught you in six courses and you are going to be worried about it, but if you listen to me carefully, you will understand it.

It is not required for a woman to seek liberation because she cannot seek liberation. She is the liberator. She cannot seek strength because she is the strength. Her strength is in her qualified personality which is very classified and secret.

She has the capacity to merge and stay submerged in the ego of the male she loves. She sits there. Any woman who sits in herself is a failure, a tomboy. She is not a woman. There is no difference between that kind of a woman and a rubber dummy.

A woman who cannot qualify to submerge into the ego of the male and sit there, cannot be qualified to be fulfilled. Do you understand it? No, you don’t. I know you don’t.

Why should a woman seek liberation? All she has to do is get fulfilled and be infinite. Certain women did it. They ate up the ego of the male.

One was Miriam. She ate up the earthly ego of her own son Jesu and convinced him that he was not a bastard, that he was a direct son of God. It is not Jesus’s own concept. It was the mother’s concept.

She totally nailed and riveted it in him, “Your father is God. You have no earthly father. You were conceived in immaculate honesty.” She said it again and again and again.

When he was still very young, eleven or twelve, he couldn’t even stay in his home town. The kids would totally torture him. So she sent him away to the higher wise men to study. He couldn’t live with everybody saying, “Who’s your dad? What are you talking about? We know your story.”

He would stand to that nonsense and say, “My God is my Father.”

“You live in poverty.”

“My Father has infinite dimensions and mansions.” Do you see in those words the mother speaking? A mother can give values to a child to make him perfect.

## **Tantric First Aid**

It was hot White Tantric Yoga course inside a Los Angeles auditorium in November, 1982. The exercises, always challenging, were unusually physical during this course.

Monitors roamed the rows of participants, encouraging them to go beyond their customary levels of endurance. People learned to really pray. People learned to suffer in the true sense of the word. This was a *maha tapasia* – a great exercise in self-purification. All things considered, everybody was doing great. There were new students of Kundalini Yoga, but there was also a sizeable number of teachers and others who had been doing this for years.

During a break in the exercises, something unusual happened. A man was sitting, visibly moving and speaking incoherently. The Mahan Tantric was on the stage at the time, greeting a line of students. He directed his attention to the man as a bevy of monitors gathered around him.

Gracefully, Yogi Bhajan arose and went to survey the situation. Along the way, he picked up an orange from a basket of fruit on the stage.

“Oh, he’s alright,” he declared. The Master then closed his eyes as he held the orange at waist level. After meditating a few seconds, he said, “Here, give him this to eat.”

One of the monitors did so, and the gentleman in distress was able to eat a few sections of the orange. The Siri Singh Sahib returned to the stage. Through the grace of Guru Ram Das, his healing energy had been infused into the orange and he had been able to convey it to the overwhelmed course participant. The drama was over in just a few minutes and everything returned to normal, including the man in question.

## **“The Failure of American Democracy”**

*The year 1982 marked a significant downturn in the American economy. In November of that year, the Siri Singh Sahib shared his feelings about the tragedy affecting millions in that country.*

You know, we are sitting here today. We are doing what we are doing, but do you understand? What happened is from the past six months, I get up in the morning with a feeling: “I have lost my job. What will I do? I have nothing to eat. Where will I go?”

You know it is a vision. I don't dream, but it was so real, so I will get up in the morning and put the chant *Har Bolo, Har Bolo* and listen to it, but the feeling was very sure, very deep.

One day in the afternoon, I was sitting in Guru Ram Das Ashram and I said, "What job? Who am I? What is going on?" So I decided next morning when I meditate, I will keep myself in an awakened stage rather than just in the constant infinity in which we meditate.

So I meditated as a human. I saw surprisingly millions of people who have been unemployed in this country who are praying and I was getting the effect of it. And the feeling was so real and so painful... and these are very graceful people.

I went through it. I saw families praying together in one of the wildernesses. I saw it. And they are living in the wilderness.

They are not living in the city because they are ashamed they have even sometimes food. And these are graceful, honorable Americans. These are not bums who want to live off this and live off that. And it is continuous.

I sometimes feel there is a fun to block it. What is the idea? But then sometimes I feel very happy about it and I start praying myself. And then if you read my 1972 notes, you will be shocked. There are a couple of paragraphs about this.

What bothers me is that it is not '84 yet. What is it? '82? And next year we are getting into '83. And look at the beautiful statement our president made. He said, 'I am convinced the economy shall change. I am convinced, but there are little hardships.'

Now from an economy like the United States of America where \$500 billion are being taken away from the economy just to build new warheads... We already have enough. We can destroy the USSR and its allies and everybody else, almost we can destroy the whole world twenty-eight times over. And they can destroy us fourteen times over.

Now what we are going to do? We are going to revise the whole destructive course. We are going to rebuild the whole system. For what?

I mean to say, if you could destroy half of the world, and now you want to destroy the whole world, I can understand spending the money. You already have the capacity. You already can do it twenty-eight times over and you are not satisfied!

That is why our democracy has failed. It is the lobby of the corporations. It takes millions of dollars to become a president. It is no more an honest, simple democracy. Television ads and PR and papers and news and this and that. And that money has to come from donations. Donations come through lobbies.

Lobbies, vested interests... Vested interests have corrupted the whole country. The nation is suffering. Twenty million people at this time are without jobs today, so the situation is very rough.

### Poem: The Knight of the Dungeon of The Rib Cage

*In the early morning of December 6, 1982, the Siri Singh Sahib took down a poem which came to him, and which he shared in his class that evening. It was also published in the following issue of Beads of Truth. As commentary, he said, "Blessed are those who feel very lonely and feel the tremendous pain of that loneliness, that they can understand that they have to find a companionship with their manifested Self and connect it with the Infinite Self. They are the ones who feel the path, who feel the God, who feel the human, who feel the compassion and goodness of their visit to the planet Earth."*

I am me...  
    myself...  
    my projection...  
    my parallel...  
    my perpendicular...  
    and my principle.

That many I am.

And if all that many of me are  
    not understood  
    not felt  
    not taken care of  
    not loved  
    and not put together,  
I will just die as an unknown mystery...  
unremembered and forgotten.

That is the story of every man  
    or woman  
    born in the rib cage -  
    the Dungeon of Karma.

In my ecstasy of consciousness  
    I see the skies,  
    I see the stars.

And I know  
    and I feel the movement  
    and the Infinity,



and the light  
and the darkness.

But in that culture of  
so much happening  
Still, I am  
very, very, very extremely  
very, very lonely  
A slave of the Dungeon of the Rib Cage.

I hear music  
I create music  
I know rhythm  
I know voices  
I hear the birds  
I hear even the fishes talking

And I am trying to see and feel  
everything in the world I know  
And I know the sounds  
and the sounds which I can't hear,  
But still, I am the slave of the rib cage,  
Nearest to me is my heart,  
and I do not recognize its  
very sound  
So arrogant  
So ignorant  
So much in duality  
I keep living

Each day gives me the message  
of beauty  
of bounty  
of prosperity  
of flourishness  
of blossom

I'm going  
and going  
and going, and going  
On the path of Infinity  
cycle after cycle

prayer after prayer  
grace after grace  
rosary after rosary  
feast after feast  
and fast after fast,  
I've gone through the passage of life,  
But still,  
I am the slave of the Dungeon of the Rib Cage.

Many have called me human  
Many have called me beast  
Many have called me a lower being  
Some people have called me a higher being.

Sometime I do experience the Infinity of God  
and the light of heaven sheds through me.

Sometimes I spoke the Word of Truth  
which God gave  
me to be  
I am a channel.  
I am a channel.

Many times I'm just lowest of the low  
The creature in the dungeon of the dirt of the dirt  
of the human calibre and behavior.  
I, in that duality, keep on living.  
But still,  
I am the Slave of the Dungeon of the Rib Cage.

Now I feel the touch of God  
has touched me  
and I am free.  
In that freedom I feel the ecstasy  
I'm polite  
I'm good  
I'm God.

## The U.S. Army vs. The Sikhs

Increasingly, the Sovereign Khalsa Spiritual Nation took confident, defiant stands against powerful status quos in India and the West. Godless communists, "Sikhs" without principles, exploiters of women, and now, governments dedicated to mindless nuclear power games... no vested interest was beyond reproach, no foe was too big to be upbraided.

In America, home to the world's largest nuclear arsenal, Sikhs were taking increasingly high-profile stands with well-known Democratic and anti-establishment figures. It was becoming more and more common to see the Siri Singh Sahib or other prominent Sikhs challenge the wisdom of the Republican government's apocalyptic defence policies at large rallies and to see phalanxes of distinctive white turbans and tunics at anti-nuclear marches.

Daniel Ellsberg, who had played a crucial role in the downfall of Richard Nixon's administration by exposing how the American government systematically lied to its citizens to sustain its Viet Nam policy, and who had spent time in prison for his opposition to the Reagan government's continued stock-piling of nuclear arms, had been invited as a guest speaker to the 1982 Summer Solstice Sadhana.

Thus, it should not have surprised the Khalsa of the West when their hard-earned right to serve in the American armed forces was rescinded by the army under the Republican administration of President Ronald Reagan. As it happened, one student, a graduate of Harding Military Academy and crack marksman participating in the try-outs for the 1984 U.S. Olympic team, was directly affected by the army's decision.

The army's sudden reversal, when there were already a number of Sikhs serving with distinction and several more in training at various military colleges in the U.S., was certain to inspire a reaction. On December 7, 1982, protests were held outside government buildings in Los Angeles, New York, Washington, D.C., and Phoenix which received world-wide media coverage. The American Civil Liberties Union also came forward with its support.

The Siri Singh Sahib, for his part, declared the Baisakhi week of April 13-19 1983 to be "International Religious Freedom Week." Mayor Tom Bradley issued a proclamation officially recognizing International Religious Freedom Week on behalf of the city of Los Angeles.

Despite all the support and all the expressions of goodwill from other religious communities and people concerned with civil and human rights, the US Army managed to uphold its reversal. While the new discriminatory policy did not affect those Sikhs already in the service, it effectively closed the door on the recruitment of new Sikhs.

## 3HO Togo

While politics were heating up in Punjab and America, one humble couple made their way to Togo, in West Africa, where they remained for three years. Theirs was the first 3HO venture on the great continent. Siri Gian Singh and Kaur came from northern California. His main objective in coming to Lomé, Togo was to study the traditional medicines of the region, but their stay proved mutually beneficial.

Many years after the departure of the Siri Gian's from Togo, Krishna Kaur would find 3HO Togo still very much alive and well, a volume of Siri Guru Granth Sahib respectfully installed at the door.

### 'Alive'

A twenty-two-year-old woman once came to see Yogi Bhajan. She not well and she looked more like forty-five. He told her, "I can't tell you what it is. What your doctor has told you is right and your doctor has given you two to three years to live and they are unable to diagnose what is eating you up, but the fact is you are being eaten up."

She said, "That is true."

The Master asked her, "Do you want to live?"

The young woman said, "Why not? I really want to live."

Yogi Bhajan told her, "Then just do one word mantra."

The woman may have thought he was going to pull out some Indian mantra and charge \$650 plus sales tax, but she asked, "What is the mantra?"

He said, "Just one word. Simple. But you have to say it minimum 11,000 time a day."

"I will do it! I will do it!"

"All you have to say is 'Alive, alive, alive,' and say it in three voices: 'Alive, alive, alive; alive, alive, alive; alive, alive, alive.'"

Over the following months, as the Master watched, the woman went from being on the verge of dying to becoming a most beautiful, absolutely radiant human being.

## The Healing Art of the Medicine Ladies

Yogi Bhajan was an excellent student of the human condition. Being exceptionally compassionate, he did his best to help people improve their conditions, to heal themselves, to come out of their dis-ease. He might do this hundreds of times in a day.

The Master had a simple model of disease: “When the body is in rhythm, there is ease. When the body, or any part of the body, goes out of rhythm, there is dis-ease. You call it ‘disease.’ This disease is nothing but an out-of-rhythm body. When the mind is out of rhythm, there is neither a body nor a soul because without the mind, there is no reality.”

The Siri Singh Sahib once described his situation as running a hospital, “but there are no doctors and nurses in this hospital. The patients themselves are running everything.”

Through the Kundalini Yoga he taught and the dharma he instilled, through the Sat Nam Rasayan and White Tantric Yoga and nutritional teachings and counseling that filled his life, Yogi Bhajan helped people become healthier, happier, holier. In his travels, he also studied the medical practices of other cultures, always expanding his knowledge base.

A number of the Master’s students were influenced by his example to take up various healing arts and he would teach and inspire them to be better healers. For many years, the master Yogi would attend the Khalsa Chiropractic Association’s biannual meetings. Over long weekends, he would teach those in attendance unique healing practices for many hours each day. One of these special teachings involved Chinese “medicine ladies,” also known as “doctor ladies.”

In traditional Chinese culture, a woman did not disrobe in front of a doctor. Instead, the doctor would have an ivory carving of a naked woman. The ivory “medicine lady” might be anywhere from three inches to two feet in length. The doctor would ask his patient, “Where is the problem?” and she would point to the carving and say, “Well, here and there.” That was the typical understanding of the carvings.

The Siri Singh Sahib instructed his students in a more sophisticated use for the artful ivory representations. During a healing session, a doctor would have their patient rest comfortably with a medicine lady on their stomach. The doctor would then direct their patient into a deep meditation to enhance their subtle self-awareness and request that they feel the doctor lady with their hands and go to the areas where they had symptoms and describe them in detail. The patient would then tell the doctor about the history, meridians, regions, body parts, signs and symptoms in enough detail to allow them to make a diagnosis and prescribe a remedy.

Even with the best diagnosis and most promising treatment, however, the Master knew that a doctor had no power to heal. In his words, “A doctor can treat you, but he can’t cure you. You cure yourself. Who is that doctor who can cure us? None. When the doctor treats us and we cure

ourselves, we get cured.”

### For the *Panth*

In January, the Siri Singh Sahib made a point of paying his homage to the historic Gurdwaras of India, while meeting with leaders in an increasingly tense political situation. Since Zail Singh, the world's only serving Sikh President, had just recovered from illness, a Gurdwara was held in the President's mansion to celebrate his getting well. Since India had never before had a President who was a Sikh, this was the first occasion for *Gurbani kirtan* to be performed in the "Rashtapati Bhavan".

After the usual round of meetings and chance encounters, the Siri Singh Sahib and a small group continued on to the mysterious land of Burma. About five thousand Sikhs lived in Burma, but visas to visit them had been very difficult to obtain. The country's culture was Buddhist, and the government tried to preserve its unique values by shunning western influences, and especially missionaries.

When their Khalsa guests arrived, the local community was most appreciative. Although their harmoniums had been confiscated at the border, still there was *kirtan* every morning and evening for the week they were there. The Sikhs from the West, for their part were amazed at the keep up spirit of the local *Sadh Sangat* who had managed in such isolation, even while intermarrying with the local populace, to maintain their own unique dharmic heritage. It was a privilege to serve the Burmese Sikh *Sangat*.

Afterwards, the Siri Singh Sahib spoke in Los Angeles about his trip to India and Burma:

“Those of us who sit here and discuss and dictate things, we know we are very worried. I was in India for two weeks. I went to Burma for one week. I had the privilege to talk with the government and as well with the Panthic leaders, but it is very astonishing. It is extremely astonishing. There is absolutely no arrangement. There is absolutely nothing going on, but there are always two thousand people ready, and surprisingly, there were two thousand people ready who could not explain to me why they are going to jail that evening.

“I asked them. I asked them very point blank. I picked out of the group, two people. I said, ‘Come here.’

“They said, ‘Yogi Bhajan, *Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh! Han jee. Hukam karo jee.*’

“‘Today, I want to know one thing. Today, you are going to court arrest. Do you know what for?’

“They said, ‘No.’

“I said, ‘Well, why you are going to court arrest?’

“They said, ‘Yogi Bhajan, that is what we need to do.’

“I said, ‘Hey, you don’t even look like Sikhs. Where is your hair?’

“One of them said, ‘I know, I know, I know you are going to tell me that. They are gone. I am a totally rotten Sikh, but I am going.’

“I said, ‘What for?’

“He said, ‘Just for the *Panth*.’

“I said, ‘What is a *Panth*?’

“He said, ‘God has given you to explain that. I have no adjectives.’

“I said, ‘Tell me something about *Panth*. Something!’

“He said, ‘Ji, *Panth* gave us Yogi Bhajan. Yogi Bhajan discusses *Panth* and *Panth* discusses Yogi Bhajan. I have got to go.’ And he left.

“I felt somewhere there is a relationship between a soul and God. And that relationship is beyond the body. Body is important like a car, but car does not go in the living room. It doesn’t matter how costly a car is, it is left out.

“And it is my feeling today... I have come to this understanding that it doesn’t matter who works, how much work, and how much we put our scene together, the spirit of Guru Gobind Singh shall always guide the Khalsa in its extreme difficulties, in its extreme down days, and its extreme up days.”

### **“Either You Belong to Guru or You Don’t”**

Sometimes people do ask me, “Why there is so much anger in you?”

I know it. I am angry because I feel my Guru Gobind Singh has been betrayed. He has not been explained. He is being explained by the cheats and the thugs who could not even imagine his spirit, and they have become the “defenders of the faith.”

I fully realize, I fully understand it, but I also want to tell you, time has not gone by. Time is still

now. You can still decide that this a time to graduate in the knowledge and in the school of Guru Gobind Singh. There is a time to acknowledge, to get a PhD in the school of Guru Gobind Singh. There is a time to acquire the practical attributes which Guru Gobind Singh gave to us.

I know a lot of people are saying these days, "Guru lives in my heart." Guru must be highly suffocating because it can't come out!

Some people say, "I know Guru better than anybody. How you can tell me anything?" I can understand this logic and argument, but I can tell you something. This is nothing but an individual deviation from truth and it has nothing to do with the spirit of the Guru.

The relationship is simple. Either you belong to Guru or you don't. If you belong to Guru, "you" don't exist. If "you" exist, then you don't belong to Guru. It is a very clear situation and that has to be understood with all the depth. And that has to be understood with all the prices you have to pay. And that has to be understood with all the time we have at our disposal under the Will of God and under the direction of the Guru.

And that is what will keep Khalsa alive. That is what is keeping Khalsa alive because its guide, its guardian, its defender of the faith is Guru Gobind Singh and no one else! That is why Guru Gobind Singh, in his divine consciousness, gave us to Siri Guru Granth so that we always can understand the Word.

Some people are saying, "We need an individual to explain to us Siri Guru Granth."

Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! Nobody can explain to you Siri Guru Granth! It is a personal counsellor. It a personal omni-ego manifestation. Guru Granth can explain itself to you.

You have to have a direct relationship between you and the Guru. Just remember, that is the spirit of the Khalsa and that is what Guru Gobind Singh stands by. And all of those who feel that they can get to individual gurus or semi-gurus and demigods, there are "chauvee krur," two hundred thousand, something like that, and there is nothing to confuse yourself with it.

Just get to the *Shabad*, and get to the *Shabad* so well, and don't try to find out something wrong. *Japji* says, "*Ant na siphatee, kehan na ant.*" There is no limit to anything. Guru is unlimited and through the Word of Guru, you can find the relationship between you and your soul. Your soul can find a relationship with you and God and you will live and be blessed with the spirit of Khalsa.

## The Character of Innocence

It was April 24, 1983 and searching through drawers and cupboards, Guru Kudrat Kaur - "the Princess of the Guru's Omnipotence" -found just one dollar. It was all the money she had in the



house. "Should we give this to the Guru, or should we save it for something?" she asked her children.

"I will give it to the Guru," said Nihal Singh, aged two. He put it in his pocket.

They arrived at Gurdwara in Los Angeles as the Siri Singh Sahib was speaking to the *Sadh Sangat* gathered there. He described how the Catholic Church required three miracles before someone could be declared a saint. He then enumerated three miracles the Khalsa had already performed in the West. Firstly, through the prayer of the Khalsa, the life of the man who had guided them to the Guru's Feet had been extended. Secondly, the Khalsa had brought the horny American mind under control by embracing *bana, Bani, simran* and *sewa*. Thirdly, the Khalsa had given its children spiritual values, rather than treating them like pieces of living room furniture.

After the Siri Singh Sahib had finished his talk and sat down among the *Sangat*, Guru Kudrat Kaur came to bow her head before the Guru. Young Nihal Singh came behind her, his offering firmly in his little hand. Somehow, as he neared the Palki Sahib, the Throne of the Siri Guru Granth, he sensed the presence of that saintly human who served the Guru more and better than anyone could. Without a thought, he turned aside and graciously placed his precious dollar in a hand of the Siri Singh Sahib.

Nihal Singh's innocent gesture created quite a stir among the saints who were gathered there. Everyone smiled, while some chuckled softly to themselves. For his part, the Siri Singh Sahib took the dollar he had been given and added ten of his own, then handed eleven dollars to the little Khalsa. Nihal Singh accordingly came before the Guru Granth Sahib, bowed his head to the floor, placed the entire offering there, then with a great deal of dignity, rose and sat beside his mother.

The Siri Singh Sahib stood up to speak again, "*Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!*"

"I have asked Wahe Guru Singh to record this incident today - how the training, how the feeling can go into the act of a child. This child is most innocent. And for this, his innocent act, from this month to the end of this year, one hundred and eight dollars shall be rewarded to this young child, Nihal Singh, from the Siri Singh Sahib estate, so he can learn better, and facilities may be provided with that money to make him understand *Gurmat*, Guru's Way of Life and Reality in values which he has demonstrated.

"And I want you to understand that. Try to understand what I am saying to you! If we teach our children to learn to relate with higher consciousness rather than to learn all the tricks of the trade, they will always act absolutely saintly and divinely without any second thought. And that's what we saw today. We saw a very accommodating parable, and we saw a very divine action with the absolute innocence of a child. I just wanted this to go on record, and I will like the Secretary General to act on it within twenty-four hours, and this is an order, not a request. *Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh*".

## Keeping Going

The first she had seen of Yogi Bhajan was a *tratakam* photo posted on a bulletin board in the student union building at Brooklyn College in New York City in early 1973. It was a look she could not forget and she made her way to Los Angeles later that year, determined to learn from the Master.

In 1982, she moved to New Mexico to be of service in the Espanola community. The change was not easy on Sat Nirmal Kaur.

One day, she received a directive to pick up the Siri Singh Sahib from the airport. Sat Nirmal Kaur was not feeling well, but managed her best to keep up.

The Master poked at her slightly swollen throat and said, "I promised you 'healthy, happy, and holy.' I never said 'easy.'"

## Montana-bound

In 1975, Yogi Bir Singh had thought he had it made. After living in a Zen Buddhist community in Cottage Grove, Oregon, he and his wife had become acquainted with some members of Guru Ram Das Ashram in Eugene, thirty miles away. After three or four months of yoga classes, they had moved in to the Ashram, received new names and met Yogi Bhajan at a White Tantric Yoga course in San Francisco. At the following Winter Solstice Sadhana in Daytona, Florida, the Yogi Birs had taken the *Amrit* of Guru Gobind Singh and became full-fledged Khalsa.

With Yogi Bir Singh's work experience – ten years of middle management at a commercial bank in Phoenix – he had landed a job managing the accounts payable for Golden Temple Bakery, the Ashram community's business. The business made bread, granola and sticky candy bars known as "Wha Guru Chews." With the community life, yoga, and nice work environment, life was very sweet.

Then came a major shuffle in the company. It was growing by leaps and bounds, and the consensus was that it needed an experienced hand at the top. Yogi Bir Singh, with his experience in banking, seemed the ideal candidate. Besides, at thirty-two, he was ten years older than most of the rest of the workers at Golden Temple Bakery. The grownup in the room got the job: President of Golden Temple Bakery.

This was not what Yogi Bir Singh had signed up for when he started Kundalini Yoga and then became a Khalsa Sikh. He had "dropped out" of the corporate world with no intention of ever going back. Moreover, his experience in commercial banking had done nothing to prepare him to manage a bakery and distribution network with tentacles reaching across the U.S. and into Canada.

The Siri Singh Sahib had told him he was a Yogi and a divine messenger. Instead, he found

himself sitting in a windowless office in downtown Eugene. First, Yogi Bir Singh's *sadhana* started slipping. Then, he began to question his involvement in the community and the business. This went on for a year.

That was when the Mahan Tantric arrived for a White Tantric Yoga course in Eugene. One evening, during a casual discussion with the community members, the talk turned toward the business. Yogi Bhajan was a fan of the Wha Guru Chews and took an interest in how well the sticky candy bars were doing. When he came to know that Yogi Bir Singh, with no real experience in the health food business, had been made president, he was appalled. Moreover, he stressed the importance of giving the new community member time to mature in the dharma and to focus on his *sadhana*. That, luckily for Yogi Bir Singh, was that!

Happy to be relieved of his established role at Golden Temple, Yogi Bir Singh and his wife decided to set out for Montana. They were given a great going away party. By phone, the Siri Singh Sahib encouraged him to start classes as soon as he arrived.

With help from the community in Eugene, the Yogi Bir's were able to start a health food distribution business, and then also a bakery named, naturally, "Golden Temple Bakery" in Bozeman, Montana. Yogi Bir Singh also started teaching Kundalini Yoga through Montana State University and independently through the Ashram. His goal was to develop a teaching ashram fashioned after Eugene, with live in students and a business to employ and support them.

Within a couple of years, they were blessed with a thriving business and a flourishing yoga community. It was early spring of 1983 when the Siri Singh Sahib came to Bozeman for a White Tantric Yoga course. People came from hundreds of miles around, from Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Montana, about one hundred people in all. It was big crowd of people all in white and turbans for Bozeman, Montana.

For the Yogi Birs' son, Hari Parkash Singh, aged three at the time, the highlight of the visit was going with the Siri Singh Sahib to see a stuffed and lifelike grizzly bear at the workshop of a local taxidermist. Who can say what may have passed between that bear and the sage Mahan Tantric?

## The Job

One day, Yogi Bhajan asked a student, "What are you doing?"

He replied, "I am looking to a job."

The Master said, "There is a great job available. Are you willing to do it?"

He said, "What?"

Yogi Bhajan said, "Meditate on God."

He said, "That can't fulfil my body. That can't give me clothing. That can't give me shelter. It's not my day today."

"How many days you think you can survive?"

He said, "Five days maximum."

"That's one working week. Is that true?"

He said, "Yuh."

"Alright, one working week, eight hours a day, dedicate to God. Meditate! Do nothing else!"

In faith, the student began this special *sadhana*. One day, while he was meditating, a friend called.

His wife answered and she said, "I am sorry to tell you, my husband has met a crazy yogi and this man is from India. God, Jesus, bless this guy! I do not know what I think of it. I used to think he is a friend of us and of my family. And I used to do a kind of yoga and my husband got introduced to him. I don't know what he has done to my husband. My husband goes eight hours in a room and sits. What he does, I can't believe, but I can tell you it's weird. And I know I am a part of it. But when he gets up, I'll ask him to call you."

When that man did not hear from his yogi friend, he called back and yelled at his friend's wife, "It is very important! You don't understand. You make him call!"

She said, "I told him when he came out. He said, 'I don't have to call anybody. I'm just calling the One and One alone, which is my God.' It looked so weird, I can't explain to you. I don't want to break up my family. I don't want to pick a fight with him. He comes with glassy eyes when he comes out of the room. He doesn't want to talk to anybody, and especially he doesn't want to talk to me."

On the fifth day, this friend came and caught Yogi Bhajan's student in the bed early in the morning. His eight hours started at eight a.m., so he caught him early and told him, "I have been calling you, calling you!"

Yogi Bhajan's student replied, "Wait! You are my friend. You have come into my bedroom. It is fine, but just so you know, this is my last day. I have promised that yogi that I am going to meditate eight hours a day for five days. Tomorrow, forget it! I'll go with you to a bar, to dance, to eat out,

whatever you want. Just don't bother me today!"

His friend said, "I have not come to bother you. There is a job for \$60,000. You are the only one qualified. They are on my neck. Are you going to take it or not?"

He said, "What job?"

His friend said, "It is a working job. Do you understand? Have you gone crazy? Your wife is right. That is what she told me. 'Job' means job. Work work work work! Understand? Anyway, when you come out of this, this is the address. Call me and you can report to work straight away. I have convinced them."

After his five days of meditation, the student was happy. He had a job. He asked Yogi Bhajan, "What do I owe to God who gave me this job?"

The Master said, "If possible, eight minutes. Eight seconds. Eight days. Eight hours. Something in eight." It was the Siri Singh Sahib's deep belief that God who can rotate the Earth, can take care of anyone's routine also, if they entrust themselves to God. A typical person does not have the guts, the trust, the faculty, the training to give anything to God.

### **"God is what you represent"**

God is what you represent. You have not been trained to take that responsibility therefore you are not mentally trained to relate to God. It is so simple. God created you. God created you to represent God. Now tell me, is it true or not? Then represent God! God created you to represent God. You created God to represent yourself...

I know you are very beautiful people and you know how to make an excuse, but you have not read what I said. I am not interested in the excuses. I am interested in the job done.

You and I can never meet. You love to give an excuse. I have been trained never to excuse. I have never excused myself. I don't know how to do it because the first step to God and Infinity and consciousness is never, ever, ask for forgiveness. Don't be sorry.

Has ever God spoken to you saying, "Folks, I am sorry."? Has he ever talked to you, "My Lucifer had done wrong. I will regret. I'll change it."? Is there any record of written history where God has come down and said, "Folks, I was deranged yesterday. I freaked out. Sorry, I'll do it tomorrow."?

Don't you understand that as people of God you have no chance of forming or situating an excuse? You are not living by the spirit of God. You are living by the spirit of excusing yourself.

When I have to penetrate through a rush, I never say "Please excuse me." I never say that. I say, "Kindly give the way." That's it. That's what I want. That's what I need. That's a fact. You have to learn to be learned.

Every wrong done in life is a wrong done to yourself and it is totally a perpetuated, pre-planned, meditative, self-murderous excuse. God is perfect. God made you perfect. God believes in perfection. There cannot be a lie. *And lies are being lived every day.* You are the creation of God. God is omnipresent. God is omniscient. God is beautiful. God is everywhere. And you are nowhere. What are you talking about?

Are you really honestly serious to learn anything about love, about kindness, about God, about cleanliness, about radiance? It is a joke...

The man by nature an energy to the potential of the polarity wants to live, that much man in polarity wants to destroy. It is called the life of balance. We know that. And if self-living and self-destruction can be unequalized, life becomes happy. Otherwise, it is a sad story. We know the secret.

We are not going to go to the heavens and sit down and Lord Shiva is going to appear before us and we are going to say, "Lord, make us happy!" And he will say, "So be it." That is difficult to digest. It is ridiculous.

There is no Shiva, Shiva business. There is no God even! You are totally lying to yourself. God is what you represent. What, are you going to build tomorrow by the scientific laboratory in Knoxville a huge telescope through which we are going to see God? What are you going to do? What are the possibilities? What is your imagination about God? It doesn't work that way? People have tried for centuries and it doesn't work.

Guru Nanak said a very simple thing: *Ekongkar Satnaam Kartapurkh.* Just understand that. *Ekongkar Satnaam Kartapurkh.* You are the One. *Ek.* One. *Ongkar.* You are the created of that One. You are the One. *Ek.* Read the first basic mantra. *Ek. Ongkar.* You are one and you are the creation of the One. *Satnaam.* Your identity is truth. *Kartapurkh.* You are the Doer of everything. This is the faculty of God. *Nirbhao. Nirvair.* That is another thing. *Nirbhao. Nirvair.* You are fearless and you are revengeless. Why? You are *Akaal Moorat.* That is because you are a personified God. *Akaal Moorat.* And when you reach that faculty of realization, then comes the other sentence. *Ajoonee saibhang gurprasaad.* You are self-born because you are the product of the karma. *Ajoonee.* You didn't come. You didn't go. You are here. Here and now. You always talk "here and now." *Ajoonee* means which does not come, which does not go. That's you. This identity is here. Soul came. Soul will go. Subtle body came. Subtle body will go. You won't. Your identity here is here now. *Saibhang.* By your own grace. By your own karma. By your own individuality. By your own essence. By your own consciousness. By your own corruption. By your own honesty. You are you are. Nobody will tell you who you are. Nobody can tell you who you are. People can only help you.

Therefore, just remember in the end it said if you do not know all that then you know by one virtue and that virtue is *Gur Prasaad*. Identify with the identity of the acknowledged learned. You will become learned. In simple western English, you say "pick somebody's brain". *Gur* means formula. Any life which can be unknotted can only be unknotted with the essence of the technology of that essentialness through which unknottedting can be done.

There is no place in life for emotions, commotions, sentiments and rituals and all that stuff. They are just to pass time. You play cards. There is nothing in cards. Passing of the time. You want to earn and lose, then you start betting with the playing of cards. Dollar a point. Because you want to make something or lose something with it.

So long as you make something, lose something, you are an idiot. When you can learn to be learned, you lose nothing, you gain nothing. You become you. The proposition of life is not to gain, not to lose. To be, to be. And what is the formula to be, to be? *Jap aad such jugaad such hai bhee such Nanak hosee bhee such*. It requires an essential truth. Acknowledged truth in your own caliber.

## **Mexican Times**

The Siri Singh Sahib liked to go to the Princess Hotel in Acapulco. He enjoyed sitting about and gathering an audience of dozens of students and non-students at the pool. The Master also loved to stand under the waterfall and allow the water to massage his shoulders.

Yogi Bhajan was constantly teaching and testing. One day, he asked Babaji Singh for some sourdough bread of which there was none in Mexico at that time. Babaji went to the kitchen, squeezed a lemon, and poured the juice onto some regular white bread, which he then presented to the Siri Singh Sahib to his uproarious laughter.

The Master once asked Gurudev Singh for a guava, which was not in season at the time. Rather than offer a negative response, he went to a store and bought a jar of guava jam which he presented to the Siri Singh Sahib. The Master smiled, "Now you are learning!"

Yogi Bhajan would teach his students in Mexico how a yogi should eat tropical fruits, even fruits that did not exist in India. For the mango, he said they should bite into the bitter part where the mango meets the stem first as this was the most nutritious. Then, he instructed, they should massage the pulp and juice of the mango and suck it out through the hole they had made where the mango joined the stem.

All kinds of people would see the Siri Singh Sahib. Guru Dev Singh would receive them. One student was very emotional. He was married and had three children. The man threw himself at the Master's feet. Holding his feet so he could not move, he cried, "I am sorry! I have messed up! Please

forgive me!”

Yogi Bhajan laughed, “You are going to marry four times!”

Years later, the same man came with his third wife. Again, he fell at the Siri Singh Sahib's feet and cried. The Master laughed and said, “You have more wife to go!”

The unfortunate student pleaded, “Oh no, I love this wife!”

When an egomaniac came to see the Siri Singh Sahib, the Master sat on the floor and motioned for the student to sit on a chair.

The man said, “I feel uncomfortable.”

Yogi Bhajan replied, “When I see an ego your size, the only thing I can do is humble myself.”

A politician came and asked, “Am I going to be President of Mexico?”

The Siri Singh Sahib closed his eyes and for half an hour describes how the man would become president. The man then left with his fragile and potentially dangerous ego utterly inflated, but also rendered harmless.

## **The Soviet Hand**

As Khalsa established its roots firmly in the West, political events continued their intractable course in the Sikh homeland. Punjab, peopled forty-eight percent by Hindus and fifty-two percent by Sikhs, continued to be denied its rights by the central government.

Following the activist tradition of their forebears, who had opposed Mughal despotism and the injustice of the British raj, Sikhs gathered in the holy city of Anandpur to demand the rights of all Punjabis. They demanded a constitutional amendment that acknowledged Sikhs' separate identity from Hindus and upheld their rights as Indian citizens. They insisted the farmers of Punjab be allowed a rightful share of the waters flowing through their "land of five rivers" according to international conventions. They demanded an end to oppressive interference in state affairs by the central government, and increased autonomy for the states of India. They insisted the central government, which allotted factories to the Indian states, should give Punjab, which had India's highest rate of educated unemployed, a fair share of industrial development. The Sikh gathering also demanded that Punjab be given a state capital like every other Indian state, and that the city of Amritsar be designated a "holy city", just as certain Hindu cities had been, thereby restricting the sale of alcohol and tobacco in the city limits.



Through 1981 and 1982, Sikhs in Punjab conducted negotiations with the Indian government to redress their long-standing grievances. The New Delhi government hedged. It dickered. It played the minuscule percentage of Indian Sikhs against the majority Hindus, to their national electoral advantage. When a deal with the Indira Gandhi's central government was finally reached, it was scuttled overnight by the communist leader, Harkrishan Singh Surjeet.

Sikh disappointment and frustration was tangible and difficult to contain. A quarter million Sikhs peacefully courted arrest to press their demands. The atmosphere heated up. Jails were filled to overflowing. Meanwhile, the Punjab began to take on the appearance of a police state, as the New Delhi government deployed fifty thousand troops in India's grain basket state.

Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale openly blamed the "Hindu" central government. Accompanied by his band of armed followers, he roved the Punjabi countryside, fomenting discontent, unobstructed by police.

When, on October 5, 1983, a bus was hijacked and its Hindu passengers shot in cold blood, the press pointed an accusing finger at Bhindranwale and "Sikh terrorists". Under the circumstances, the Siri Singh Sahib advised an end to the Sikh pressure tactics. "Just say, 'Because innocent Hindus have been killed by this armed attack, we are willing to stop this agitation.' and later on, after a year or two, we will do it again."

But the leadership in Punjab would not listen. Instead, they lectured the Siri Singh Sahib that it was the Sikhs who had taught nonviolent resistance to the Gandhi "Mahatma", and that they would not be deterred from their current strategy. "How could the government-controlled media speak of 'Sikh terrorists'?" they argued. "Sikhs had never been terrorists, nor could they be!"

The Siri Singh Sahib persisted. He shared his insights based on the secret Soviet dispatch he had intercepted seventeen years earlier. The Soviets wanted the Sikhs and their leadership destroyed. They wanted to bring the peaceful agitation to violence, to discredit the Sikhs, to brand them as terrorists, to marginalize and minimalize and, ultimately, to wipe them out.

The Soviets had no use for the Sikhs in India. They well knew that Sikhs with their buoyant spirits, heroic legacy, and egalitarian practices, were their foremost enemies. The K.G.B., with its base in Ambala, on the main road from Punjab to the national capital, was bent on the secularization of India. They intended to convince people that India's religious fatalism made it a backward country. The Soviets had planted agents among the Sikhs, in the army, and government. Their advisors influenced decisions made in the highest office in the land.

Moreover, how could the Sikh leadership credibly claim to be non-violent while Sant Bhindranwale was sitting in their midst, advocating the use of violence? The Russians were skilful masters of the art of political annihilation. The Sikh leaders in Punjab, on the other hand, seemed to be sleepwalking their way to disaster.

During his last visit to Amritsar before the coming disaster, the Siri Singh Sahib spoke at Khalsa College. After his talk, a student came up to him and said, "You know how ignorant and non-Sikh I am? Today you have awakened my soul."

The young man said he was being paid by the Communist party to create chaos in Punjab and undermine Sikh influence. He went on to say that Communists had infiltrated Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's organization, that even his secretary was a Communist plant.

The next time the Siri Singh Sahib met with Sant Jarnail Singh, he told him, "You are totally being guided by the Russians. You are a Sikh. You should withdraw from the Harimandar. If you do not, it will destroy the Golden Temple, it will destroy the Sikhs, and I can bet on that."

Naturally, Sant Bhindranwale resisted. If he left the Golden Temple complex, he fully expected to be arrested. Moreover, it was his belief that should the Indian government launch an attack on the Harimandar Sahib, Sikhs would gather from all around and put a stop to it.

The Siri Singh Sahib replied, "I might not be wrong, but I wrote the letter warning the Sikh leadership in 1980. Now, it is seven hundred days after and I am telling you my report is factual. I am going to leave India, go back to United States and we will never meet again."

### **"We will build a museum"**

*From the beginning, Yogi Bhajan had insisted his students bring some form of offering to class as an exchange of energy for the blessing of the teachings. With the passage of time and with growing prosperity, presents and offerings continued to pour in. Before a class in Los Angeles, after his students had honored him with various gifts, the Master spoke appreciatively:*

Do you know, all these presents, little by little you spend money on out of love and affection... Do you know when we will build a museum and dedicate it to our coming generation of the Khalsa, and when they will look at them, what they will feel?

They will feel that you were very hard-working, very caring, and very loving people who left all that for them. And when they will think about me, they will think of a lot of jewelry which I will leave to them, and that will make them work hard.

It is good to leave something which inspires people to be pretty. And when you bring very pretty things, nice things, they are added to one memorial of our own future.

Nothing goes to waste. These things will be appreciated for centuries to centuries to centuries. We should see that everything is preserved and not plundered because every little present,

how tiny it may be, it may be just a drawing on a paper, does tell us a story.

There is always a hidden story of love and devotion and state of mind in every present. That's why I value them very much and I keep them with a lot of regard because they are the heritage of our future and our tomorrow.

## The Cure

Prem Kaur had lived in Mexico when she discovered Kundalini Yoga and began to study with Guru Dev Singh. When she heard her teacher speaking of the greatness of his own teacher, she decided to stop in Los Angeles for a day and take a class on her way to some other pressing port of call.

After Prem Kaur found Yogi Bhajan, she changed her plans and decided to stay in the Los Angeles community centred around Guru Ram Das Ashram at 1620 Preuss Road. Prem Kaur made herself useful as Gurdwara *sewadar* and secretariat receptionist. Her ability to speak several languages fluently was an asset.

Out of the blue, Prem Kaur developed a case of severe acne. She tried various diets to treat the malady: beets for her liver, bananas for her digestive tract, cucumber juice for her kidneys. Nothing worked.

One day, in passing, the Siri Singh Sahib said to her, "You must get rid of this. You must clean the walls of Guru Ram Das Ashram chanting '*Guru Guru Wahe Guru Guru Ram Das Guru.*'"

Prem Kaur gratefully set to work, energetically chanting and cleaning the walls of the Ashram. In a matter of days, she was healed.

## "What is *Sadh Sangat*?"

The beauty of Siri Guru Granth is not that it is the Guru. The beauty is that in any problem, if you call on it, it will come through. It is a computerized source of happiness.

I don't agree with the Indian Sikhs' politics that Gurdwara should be run by election and "*Sadh Sangat*" should be given a priority.

What is *Sadh Sangat*? That means the company of the *sadhu*. How many Indians are *sadhus*? The definition of a *sadhu* is in *Sukhmani Sahib*.

Let everybody come and stand before the Guru and, according to that definition, agree to be a *sadhu*. Then, that is a *Sadh Sangat*.

And in Guru Gobind Singh's path of life, you can get a good Sikh, "*rehitee* Sikh," one who obeys the commandments of this Guru.

Bring him before Siri Guru Granth. Charge him and clean him. That is called "sodhna." And such five Gurusikhs can decide and give a verdict. So, that is *Sadh Sangat*.

Now, anybody who is a drunkard, anybody who eats meat, anybody who doesn't do his *Gurbanis*, anybody who doesn't do his *rehit*, anybody who lies in and out, anybody who sells Guru for his personal, physical benefit, anybody who does not do the *Naam*, how can he be a *Sadh Sangat*? So, we who trust such people are not right.

Guru says, "*Aapnee hathee aapnaa, aapnaa kaaj savaaree-ay* – With your own hands, take care of your work and domain yourself." And '*savaaree-ay*' means: put it in order.

One day, I will be gone. You will miss the physical body, but it will be a wonderful day. By my molecule psyche, I will be infinite. I will not be gone.

Your generations will rule for a long time on this Earth. Your children and your grandchildren and your great grandchildren will be happy and rich, and they shall have all the peace of the world. They shall have the nearness of God and their hunger and thirst for their spirituality and divinity shall be quenched.

For that, I speak to you. You have work to do. Develop a direct understanding with the Siri Guru and bring it to your heart. You will save the Earth, and that is the purpose of you. *Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!*

## The Spectre of Terrorism

The Siri Singh Sahib would not let up. He continued to press all sides, Hindus, Sikhs, central government, state authorities, to beware of the coming cataclysm. There were repercussions of the unfolding events in India even in far-off North America and Europe, as thousands of young men fled the increasingly violent atmosphere of Punjab. More and more Sikhs took up the cry of religious persecution, and the claim for refugee status in the West.

When the Siri Singh Sahib visited Vancouver, he met a young Sikh who wanted his advice. Should he remain in Canada, or return to his familiar life in Punjab? The Master advised the youth to return to Punjab and help as many young Sikhs as possible come over to Canada, where it was

safe, before they could be killed in the coming bloodbath.

Meanwhile, the refrain "Sikh terrorist" caught on. To the astonishment of the Sikh leadership in Punjab, and Sikhs everywhere, they had overnight gained a reputation in the minds of people around the world as cold-blooded perpetrators of senseless death and destruction.

Attendance at yoga classes dropped noticeably. "Are you really a Sikh?" students would ask.

A teacher might attempt some sort of awkward explanation. "I am a Sikh, but I'm not a terrorist. Sikhs aren't really terrorists, at least most of them aren't..."

Usually, nothing they could say would undo the devastating effect of the K.G.B.-directed smear campaign. Through the pervasive influence of the media, it had become "common knowledge" that Sikhs were mean and dangerous people. You certainly wouldn't want to take a yoga class from a Sikh!

The fundamentalist preacher, with his six hundred followers, toyed with his newfound notoriety, impervious to the destructive impact of what he might say in the media at home and abroad. "Do I make bombs? Yes. Every Sikh I initiate as Khalsa is a walking bomb!"

When three nervous Hindu shopkeepers went to see Sant Bhindranwale amid a crowd of armed men on the roof of a building inside the Golden Temple complex, to complain that two of his men had extorted money from them at gunpoint, the Sikh *sant's* face reddened. He apologized profusely, saying he did not need money and he had never authorized anyone to fleece money from the people.

When the businessmen identified the two who had victimized them from amid the crowd of onlookers, Jarnail Singh had the young men stripped to their *kachheras* and mercilessly beaten before their eyes. He gave orders that the offenders should be hung upside down from a tree by the walkway around the Golden Temple for five minutes and given a further beating. They were to clean the utensils in the free kitchen for fifteen hours daily and be given only bread and water to eat for a month.

Two guards were assigned to see the young men did not escape. Santji stated his doubts as to whether these youths had acted on their own or at someone else's bidding. He advised the guards that if the young men should try to escape, or if they should appear to receive any outside assistance, they should be shot without hesitation.

The incident had plunged Bhindranwale deep into thought. He explained to those assembled there that most of the widely-reported extortions were being carried out by government agents in such a way as to create misgivings about him in the minds of the public. In future, he said, anyone committing such mischief would be "eliminated."

Bhindranwale was clearly disturbed by the course of events. He thanked the Hindus for coming forward and exposing the young criminals and offered that he would pay them any amount they might claim as compensation for their ordeal. Then, he called the session to an early close and withdrew to

his private quarters.

There must have been government agents or media people in the crowd with Sant Bhindranwale. The very next day, newspapers throughout India loudly proclaimed that Hindu shopkeepers had once again been victimized by "Sikh terrorists." Significantly, they omitted the rest of the story.

Where did the young men say they received the inspiration to extort money from the Hindus? According to them, they had read in the Government-controlled media that Bhindranwale's men were doing just that. They had only borrowed a revolver from one of their leader's bodyguards so they too could play their part.

The spectre of "Sikh terrorism," once it had been loosed on the public imagination, had obviously become totally beyond anyone's ability to control.

## Europe on Tour

During the summer of 1983, thirty-five Sikhs from America spent a carefree month touring the fabled capitals of Europe with the Master. They saw the Eiffel Tower, the Colosseum, the Mediterranean coast, and the Norwegian fjords. Every evening, they would sit together, in the lobby of whichever hotel they happened to be staying at and, joined by an occasional curious European, they would listen to the Siri Singh Sahib recount some incident of the life of the Gurus, or his own experiences, or some insightful gem he considered appropriate to that time and situation.

The Gursikh teacher and his entourage took this chance to have an "audience" with the tough-minded Cardinal who had fought the menace of soul-less authoritarianism in his native Poland, then become Pope, been felled by a Turkish assassin's bullet, and lived to tell about it. It was with a tangible sense of pleasure that the two heroes of God and goodwill met. Scheduled to see each other for just three or four minutes, they spent a half hour talking. In the end, they exchanged blessings and prayers for the struggles of each other's people.

The tour was comprised of a million incidents, a thousand little tests, and at least ten million inspirations. Europe, no doubt, was very charming. Once, ten of the well-to-do students took a stroll with the inscrutable Master through the shopping district of classical Florence. Time found them in front of the window of a very expensive jewelry store, gawking and dreaming over an array of particularly fabulous rings and necklaces. Each seemed more gorgeous than the next. Then, someone interrupted their gemstruck reverie, "*Where is the Siri Singh Sahib?*"

Long ago, he had parted company with the group, vanishing down the street and around a corner, no longer to be seen!

## “We are the Khalsa First and the Khalsa Last”

Have no misunderstanding in my relationship with anybody. I love Guru and I have found it and I am going to go for it. America I can buy and sell. I have no problem, but it is my responsibility to establish the *Gurmat* and *Gurmat* in the way Guru has established it.

I am not willing to bow an inch to this hypocritical religion which has become a feudal religion and it is called Sikh dharam. If somebody is rich, he is Sardarji, it doesn't matter the guy even gets up in the morning, meditates or not.

And I am warning you in the West that all this camouflage, 'Oh, he is a *patit* and he is going to be alright. And he is perfect, and you know, we should deal with love and all that...' I tell you there is not a single saint I have met in fourteen years who loves a *patit* who doesn't have money. So the *patit* with money is acceptable and the poor Sikh with no money is: 'Go, go, go. You know, you are not required.'

So let us do one thing. If we have stood out in America and it is the day of the Siri Guru Granth, let us understand very clearly what our intentions are. Our intentions are to go by the teachings of our Father, Siri Guru Granth, and not budge an inch. We are not British. We are not German. We are not American. We are the Khalsa first and the Khalsa last.

## Cityscape

Hari Jiwan Singh came out of a movie with Yogi Bhajan. His teacher said, "Aren't we hungry?"

Hari Jiwan politely replied, "Where would you like to eat?" knowing the Master usually left it to him to decide.

That day, the Siri Singh Sahib surprised him and said, "Come with me!"

They climbed into the car, and Yogi Bhajan directed him toward Hollywood and a Chinese pagoda-styled restaurant, high in the hills overlooking Los Angeles. They were seated and before dinner had a couple of non-alcoholic pina coladas. Sitting there, Hari Jiwan reflected that it was a truly magnificent setting reminiscent of a long gone era of Hollywood. He felt happy to see such a place before it, too, was gone.

Yogi Bhajan looked at him and said, "Let's drink these out on the veranda."

They walked to the overhanging balcony. It was a magnificent evening, a sunset which could only be seen, not described. The warm summer air was cooled by the time of day and elevation of the hills. Hari Jiwan Singh reflected on how blessed he was to be standing with his teacher in this beautiful

setting, overlooking Los Angeles just as the evening lights were appearing, and breathing the cool air and ocean smell. It seemed surreal to him.

Just then, the Master spoke, "Son, you see that basin down there?" He was referring to the Los Angeles Basin in full view below their feet, stretching from the ocean at Santa Monica to Mount Washington beyond downtown.

"Some live as poorly as you will find in this country," Yogi Bhanan said as he pointed to Chevez Ravine, toward downtown.

"Still others live as lavishly as this world can afford," pointing to Beverly Hills and Bel Air.

"And still others, like us, live in the middle." He now pointed to Preuss Road, where they lived.

The Siri Singh Sahib continued, "It doesn't matter where you live. All these people have one thing in common. They are all in pain, whether they recognize it or not. It's recognizing this, that makes the difference."

## **"Guru, Dharma and Destiny"**

*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!*

I don't have a great urge to teach you much about me because, after all, what is important is the source from where I have learned. I have learned from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, and you can learn from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib as well.

The progressive way to become great is very straightforward then. The biggest power on this Earth is thought, and Siri Guru Granth gives you all thoughts, all sorts of thoughts on every aspect. So where is the strength? Strength is when you have a negative thought and immediately your consciousness releases a positive thought. And from where can positive thought come? From some teacher? From some experience? The positive thought can come from Siri Guru Granth Sahib because that is only positive thoughts.

There may be hundreds of thousands of suns and hundreds of thousands of moons, but without the Guru there is total darkness. The question is: "Why Guru?" Because Guru's Word can be trusted. Man's words, we cannot trust. I'm not going to automatically trust anything that anybody says. I always hear a person, and then I put the touchstone of the Siri Guru Granth against that saying. Then I realize that if it is according to what Guru says, fine. If not, fine for him.

My inspiration is that the guardian of this dharma is Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Nanak, and the Guru of this dharma is Siri Guru Granth. I'm not inspiring you today, and I don't want to inspire



you. And the reality is that you are equally created by God and blessed by the Guru as I am created by God and blessed by the Guru.

I have very exactly seen this growing process. In 1969 and 1469 there is a difference of five hundred years, but there is not a difference between the concept and the flow of the concept. In 1969 we were clubbed down, we were gunned down, we were insulted, we were totally abused and looked down upon by the society, and we were labelled corrupt, as protestors, et cetera. And in 1469 there was not a single difference of events. Today, they don't want us to be in the Army, they don't want us in the streets, they don't want us anywhere. And it was the same then.

Our soul has not changed, so has our destiny not changed. We were leaders then, we are leaders now. We made a nation then, we are making a nation now, and we will be a nation. Nothing can stop it. Nothing ever did then, nothing will ever do it now. Guru Nanak was called a madman, he was called a ghost, he was called a devil. What is it that we are not being called now? So what is the difference? Five hundred years in between? That is no big deal. It is nothing to worry about. Those who are trying to worry are just wasting their time.

You must understand that dharma is not the property of the individual. Please write it on your forehead, in your heart, and on your toes. Dharma is not the property of the individual. Dharma is the property and the priority of God. It comes to people through the virtue of the Guru, and we have a very, very exalted Guru, Siri Guru Granth! And if you really keep those words with you, you will be happy.

It is very beautiful that I have Guru as my friend, and my friend shall continue to be my Guru. And that is the only relationship which I seek and I shall seek, with the Word of Truth. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word, I worship, and to the Word, I bow. The Word, I remember, and the Word, I chant, and the Word is all my life. My beginning and my now and my end is the Word.

Emotionally, on the earth, we have feelings between us. We wish that people who started with us should have continued to the end. But I just want to let you know that it is better that we walk straight toward the Guru and let God walk straight toward us. The finite walks to the finite, and Infinite walks to the finite, and the higher finite for a man is the Guru, and the higher Infinite for God is the Guru. So, it is the consciousness which we are practicing today, and which we will continue to practice. We are siblings of destiny, and always in the family there are problems, there are competitions, there are questions, there are answers, there is negativity, there is positivity, and that is the healthiest sign, and it should continue.

We are entering a period where people who are mature, who are sober, who have experience, shall join us. It is an era when we should be ready to shed off childishness. Embezzling of the spirit is not a required activity with all of us, and it is not our path of life. Those who think they can get away with anything they want to should understand that it is a flow of spirit, and there is nothing you can do

about it. And when you take your spirit away from you, then nothing remains.

There is no unpleasantness between you and me, and between the Guru and you as a *Sangat*. Neither Guru likes negativity, nor I like negativity. Sikh dharma believes in eating negativity for breakfast. We don't like anything else!

Why should I inspire you? It was very funny that I was asked, "What should be the agenda of the Khalsa Council?"

For five hundred years, we have laid down the agenda so well, and it is so open to us, and now we are fixing up what the agenda should be. I will tell you what the agenda is: how to shed the scalp and not shed a tear; how to let your seven and nine year old children be bricked alive and not give an inch; how your fourteen and sixteen year old sons can hold the enemy for the whole day along with four other Sikhs; how you can be tied with the tree and be sawed down the middle and keep on reciting the *Sukhmani*; how to be boiled alive and still chant *Wahe Guru*. And I will tell you the main item of the agenda: how to sit on a hot plate and have hot sand poured over you, and you still smile. Please discuss this, and let me know what are the technologies and methods you are going to use.

My word, my agendas, my thinking, my imagination, are very passionately in love with the Guru. I may not be a great lover, but I am a very passionate lover. That is in my genes and in my blood.

I am a living monument of five hundred years of history. Every scratch ever caused is still on my body! I am no different than five hundred fourteen years of beautiful history and I am a living memory and I am a commemorative volume to that. And that's the way Sikhs are going to be.

Historically, we are a very practical phenomenon. If you have been on the *parikarma* of Harimandar, then you know when you reach the place of Baba Deep Singh, it is there to remind you that you have fought headless. That is what the spirit in us is. That is what the manifestation of *chardee kalaa* is. Today, I have not to tell anything special.

There are some people who we will get rid of. There are certain ego-maniac islands of sand who have created a lot of dirt. We will never need them because it is not the bodies which matter, it is not the leadership which matters. No, that person is not good for us who does not give us the touch of the Guru. Those environments are not healthy for us which do not remind us of the Grace of the Guru. That system is no good which does not exalt the Guru.

This dharma was established in the West by the Will of God and by the Grace of Guru. Neither you nor I have played any part whatsoever. It is the destiny of the planet Earth for which interrogatingly, questioningly, and demonstrably, the penetrating energy will prevail into the psyche and the birth of the Khalsa shall be celebrated. It will expand, it will grow, it will establish the Rule of

Truth. There is nothing a human has to say or do. What can a mortal do about the Will of the Immortal? One day, we will depart from each other forever, leaving behind a legend which will be picked up and shall be followed by those who have to follow us in the time to come.

*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!*

## **The Guru Comes First**

In the fall of 1983, the Siri Singh Sahib went to British Columbia. There, he was taken out of Vancouver, into the interior of the vast province. To his eyes, the scenery was beautiful, more splendid than Kashmir.

Nestled in this land was a community of thirty Sikh families. When Harbhajan Singh saw their beautiful Gurdwara, he was amazed. He had never seen such a small community create such a lovely Gurdwara.

“How,” he asked them, “can thirty families make such a beautiful Gurdwara?”

They answered that their principle was that the Guru comes first and they come second. “Our Gurdwara,” they explained, “should be big enough and beautiful enough and wonderful enough that any house we have, this house will be better. One of us is very rich. He has a big house, so we decided our Guru’s house would be ten times bigger and that is how we built the Gurdwara. We all give one tenth of our income and this is our life and this is our meditation centre and this is where we are totally focussing.”

The Siri Singh Sahib inquired, “Just explain to me why you are focusing. Nobody focuses.”

They replied, “The situation is, we are Sikhs. We are alright, but our children are not going to be Sikhs if we do not focus ourselves.”

“Very surprising. Where did you learn that?”

They replied, “In 1972, you came to Vancouver and you gave a lecture. And in that lecture, you said there are ten Gurus because the Guru wanted to teach by example. So we thought, we are also teachers to our children, so we should teach them by example.”

## Blessed Food in Trinidad

Trinidad, as a former British colony, carried with it a proud and tormented history of colonial rule. Many of the original Trinidadians' ancestors came as slaves from Africa to work the sugar plantations. Others, all men, were exiled from British India for their actions there in opposition to colonial rule. Generations later, Indian and African traditions were still practiced and celebrated.

When Yogi Bhajan first came to Trinidad in 1983, he stayed at the Hilton Hotel, but his food – traditional Caribbean *roti* and curries – was provided by devoted Hindu families. Meaning to preserve Yogi Bhajan's health, Sat Simran Kaur told him, "Sir, you're not supposed to eat this. It's too spicy."

Yogi Bhajan replied, "When in Trinidad, I am not on a diet. I will eat whatever they bring." The Master was also mindful of the Indian tradition that those who are served food by their disciples should leave some on their plate to then be eaten by their devotees as blessed food. He always left some of the delicious food on his plate.

In Trinidad, the yoga students and other guests brought all kinds of tasty local food, tropical fruits, curries, beverages and sweetbreads. A can of grapefruit juice caught Sat Simran's attention. Canned juices were not supposed to be good for his health. Yogi Bhajan ate and drank everything with gusto.

## The Guru's Growing Audience

During the Siri Singh Sahib's first visit to Trinidad with his tireless travelling appointment secretary, Sat Simran Kaur, they found a tiny Gurdwara which had been standing for one hundred and twenty-five years. Some good *Gursikh* had brought the Guru Granth Sahib, and since then, the Guru had existed in its own glory, managing its own affairs.

On the day they came, there was no *Sangat*. It was only a little house in which there was barely room for the Guru and an attendant to sit. Inside, were pictures of Guru Nanak, Guru Ram Das, and Guru Gobind Singh. Outside was a kind of veranda.

When the Master and his secretary arrived, a lady and her mother made the blessed pudding, the *Guru Prashaad*. There was more than anyone could eat! Those two could not read the language Siri Guru Granth Sahib was written in. Still, they showed the Guru every possible respect and observed every decorum

A young woman came to do the *kirtan*. The Siri Singh offered the prayer. Sat Simran read the Order for the day. Afterwards, the Siri Singh Sahib asked, "Why has that new veranda been added?"

One of the ladies answered, "Now these 'American Sikhs' have started coming, and now there is a *Sangat*, and on Guru Nanak's birthday, we hadn't enough room, so we had to extend it. Now we know that the Guru has got his own audience."

### **"Quantity for Quality"**

You have to understand the positive sense of existence. That is the secret of life. You are not going to be honest. You are honest. You are not going to know how to speak the truth. You were born with the truth. Your make up is not going to make you beautiful. You are born beautiful in the essence of your creativity and your presentation to yourself.

Guru Gobind Singh is very fine on this. He was asked this question, "Why you have given this *bana* to people?"

His answer was very simple, "*Jab lag Khaalsaa rahay niaraa, tab lag taaj deeo mai saaraa.* - I shall provide them all the strength and light when they will stand out."

And what makes you stand out? Dress. *Pairaawaa*. You know with this dress we wear, if a woman wants to be corrupt, do you know how much time it takes to get out of it? And if every day we dress ourselves into honesty and in one moment we get so weak that we have to undress ourself for dishonesty, how dishonored at that time we are required to be! Then we have to be totally, passionately blind. And it is that blindness which I want to get rid of.

I know you sometimes don't like the way I speak to you. I am sick of your blindness. Momentary blindness. That is not a reality of life. And the problem is religion tolerates you because religion needs people. Quality is never the quantity. The law is, you have to sacrifice the quantity to have the quality.

### **"In tomorrow's space age..."**

In tomorrow's space age, when we shall live in colonies, where there shall be no weight, in the state of weightlessness, physical weightlessness and having no gravity – nothing to root ourselves with *maya* – there we will not be in a position other than to be flirt around mentally or physically as we do here. There, we will mentally and physically experience that flirtiness. There, that consistent and constant and self-acquired association will be required.

That is where the path of Guru Nanak will be there for relief, for peace, for joy, for self and for health.

## *Aap Saha-ee Ho-aa*

When the formidable Siri Singh Sahib went to Punjab again, he met with his acquaintances on all sides of the conflict. At a meeting in the S.G.P.C. headquarters, the now-beleaguered leadership asked him what they might do to escape the unhappy fate he said lay in store for them.

The Siri Singh Sahib made one proposal. "Make Baba Nihal Singh the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat." Bhai Gurdial Singh Ajnoha had recently passed away. Nihal Singh was known as a brave and noble leader of a band of orthodox Nihung Sikhs. He was not a politician. The seasoned politicians in the group hardly missed a beat. They just smiled at one another, and continued with their other business.

Help came from an unexpected source. One old man, a well-known sant who had rendered years of service to the Sikh Panth, approached the Siri Singh Sahib. Baba Kharak Singh gave him a mantra he said had been revealed to him. It went, "*Aap saha-ee ho-a, sachay da sach a dho-a, Har Har Har.*" It meant, "Your Divine Protection has been established. The Truth of truths is our support. God, God, God."

The old sage advised, "Do this, and ask every Sikh to do it because it will help us to go through this time which is coming with grace on our side." Soon after, chanting "*Aap saha-ee ho-aa...*" was added to the routine of those Sikhs and seekers who were inspired by, and dedicated to, the peaceful example of the Siri Singh Sahib.

Evenings, mornings, and throughout the day and night, this prayerful sound began to echo from the mouths and the tape decks of thousands of Sikhs outside the deeply troubled Punjab.

## **Affairs of State**

In January, again the Siri Singh Sahib went to India to plead for the cause of peaceful co-existence. Then, on the first day of February, he sent a letter to Indira Gandhi's son, Rajiv, warning, "Election could be fatal." Later that month, Jarnail Singh's people began to fortify the Harimandar complex. The S.G.P.C. stood by, helplessly caught up in a vortex of events over which they had lost control.

Sensing the urgency of the situation, the Siri Singh Sahib paid a rare call to the American capital. There, he made a round of visits to a number of elected representatives. A few of them, such as New Mexico's bright Congressman, and long-time acquaintance, Bill Richardson, were aware of the difficulties Sikhs were facing in Punjab. The Siri Singh Sahib updated them on recent developments, and the forces at work there, behind the scenes.

Others had never seen a bona fide Sikh before. Through him, they came to know what a Sikh is, and what a Sikh stands for. The Master knew that when the powder keg finally exploded, all these politicians might play a useful role in helping restore peace and human rights in the embattled Punjab.

Meanwhile, India's figurehead President, vilified by Sant Bhindranwale and overshadowed by a skilful and domineering Prime Minister, came for a brief tour of Mexico and the U.S.. While in Mexico City, Giani Zail Singh visited the Guru Ram Das Ashram there, where he was deeply moved by his reception, and surprised to hear for the first time Sikhs reciting their *Ardas* in Spanish.

Afterwards, the flamboyant President, dressed in perfect white, and accompanied by an entourage of secret service men, paid his homage to Siri Guru Granth Sahib at Guru Ram Das Estate in Los Angeles. There, he met with the Siri Singh Sahib and saw many of the Sikhs from the West he was accustomed to receiving, officially and otherwise, at home in India.

## Musical Wonders

Don Cooper was a gifted, warm-hearted musician based in Connecticut. Through a friend named Albert Ellis, he was introduced to Yogi Bhanan and the 3HO community in Los Angeles. One day, the Master assigned Don the task of putting Guru Nanak's *Bara Maha* to music.

It was no small task, but with love and devotion, Don accepted the challenge and took it home with him. At first, he worked at rendering the English translation into musical poetry, while remaining true to the spirit of the original. He first played *Bara Maha* for the Siri Singh Sahib on Baisakhi, when the composing phase was completed. Later that evening, the Master told him that the songs themselves were secondary to the task as, "it was the only way I could get you to study Siri Guru Granth Sahib."

With the generous support and encouragement of his friend, Albert, and his musical friends in Boston, Don Cooper recorded composition in time for the 1983 Summer Solstice Sadhana. Since *Bara Maha* described the twelve months of the year as the changing relations between the soul and God, Lover and Beloved, Don had created twelve unique melodies using various popular musical styles and a variety of instrumentation. The following is his depiction of the month of *Maghar*.

*Light-hearted whistling...*

Singing to my God. Meditate on the Name.  
Pray to the joyful Lord in this world where all else is changing, He's remaining.

*Guitar bridge.*

Serving in worship, merged with wisdom and grace,  
The bride, virtuous and so open-hearted, sings love songs.  
No poems can replace them or name Him.

*Guitar bridge.*

Dispeller of sorrow, Provider of rain, Nectar words fall upon me, dissolving all pain.

*Clarinet interlude*

Dispeller of sorrow, Provider of rain, Nectar words fall upon me, dissolving all pain.  
Singing to my God. Meditate on the Name.  
Pray to the joyful Lord in this world where all else is changing,  
He's remaining. His love is remaining

*Clarinet fade out.*

Yogi Bhajan so appreciated Don Cooper's recording of Guru Nanak's *Bara Maha*, that he used it in a yoga set, "Kundalini Yoga for the Frontal Brain" at that Solstice. Playing the music, he required all his students to stand up, close their eyes, and dance, flowing with the rhythm and mirroring the notes and words of Don Cooper's *Bara Maha* with their bodies.

The Master described this as an exercise of the "natural dancing instinct," giving the body a chance to release toxins and the psyche the opportunity to express itself through the movements of the body.

The next task given by the Master was to record an interpretation of Guru Gobind Singh's *Jaap Sahib*. Once again, Don returned home and meditated on just the right words to use in his rendering. He was fortunate to have ambient sound recordings he had made during previous visits to Harimandar Sahib that he could use. This time, Krishna Kaur collaborated on the vocals with him and even the majestic Siri Singh Sahib allowed himself to be recorded for this work, which Don called *Thou Art*.

It went something like this:

*Dreamy keyboards, followed by hanging bass motif, percussion, bird cries...*

Krishna:       Thou art - the Nectar of goodness.  
                  Thou art - the Origin of praise.  
                  Thou art - Eternal desire  
                  Thou art - free of *rajas, tamas, sattwa*,



Don:           Thou art - the primal *Ong Ong Ong*  
                  Thou art - Bestower of all fortune.  
                  Thou art - All-loving and Deathless.

Krishna/Don: None can make a sketch describing Thee.

Yogi Bhajan: The Form of all three worlds, form beyond all comprehension.  
                  Thou are the Union, youthless, limbless, boundless Being.  
                  All-seeing, Praiseless, Changeless, everlasting is Thy splendor,  
                  Thou art Unfathomable, from work and bondage free,  
                  *Wahe Guru.*

                  Controlling mind and passion, self-existent,  
                  Ever-present, Thou art Unseen with no beginning and no end.  
                  All-caring companion, Fountainhead of all religion,  
                  Thou art love. Painless death is being absorbed by Thee.  
                  *Wahe Guru.*

                  The dazzling one, the bravest Master of the Earth and the Heavens,  
                  Purest, boundless, light of every soul  
                  Destroyer of all mortals, Thou, infinitely expansive,  
                  Thou art the unborn particles of land and sea.  
                  *Wahe Guru.*

Krishna/Don: Thou art. Thou art. Thou art.  
                  Thou art. Thou art. Thou art.

Krishna:       Thou art - our Mother and Father,  
                  Thou art - Revealer of all scriptures,  
                  Thou art - the Pathless and the Constant  
                  Thou art - Friendless, Foeless, Unrelated.  
                  Thou art - Forgiver, Releaser.  
                  Thou art - most gracious Light of beauty  
                  Thou art - Bestower of honor.  
                  Thou art - All-inspiring, Doer of all deeds.

All:            *Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru...“*

*Fade with keyboards...*

## Three Years in Punjab

Baba Nam Singh was thirty-two when the Siri Singh Sahib sent him to live in Punjab with Baba Nihal Singh and his community in 1980. The Taruna Dal of the Nihung leader was centred in the village of Hariavela. Baba Nam Singh was given a room on the roof of a small Gurdwara in the village of Hakimpur in the district of Jalandhar. It was a rigorous life of *gatka* practice and very simple living at close quarters with the other members. After six months, Baba Nam Singh decided it was not for him and moved to Amritsar where he settled in on the top floor of Guru Nanak Nivas, one of the pilgrim rest houses situated around the Golden Temple.

Baba Nam Singh was there a year later, in July 1982, when Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale moved in with about thirty men. For security reasons, Jarnail Singh did not want anyone else on the same floor. He asked Baba Nam Singh to move out, but by speaking in Punjabi, which he had studied during the eighteen months he had already spent in Punjab, Baba Nam Singh somehow convinced the Sikh dissident to let him stay.

Through the following months at Guru Nanak Nivas, Baba Nam Singh saw the Siri Singh Sahib once a year, when he came to visit the Harimandar. He had no contact with his life in America, except for care packages from his wife, which were fully ransacked by customs officials by the time he received them. Baba Nam Singh bonded with Sant Jarnail Singh's men. As his Punjabi improved, he enrolled in a *giani* correspondence course. He also taught an upper-secondary English class at a local secondary school. As tensions escalated in Punjab, the Siri Singh Sahib asked Baba Nam Singh to cut out local newspapers articles about the political situation and mail them to him.

In October of 1982, three Sikhs from California came to Amritsar for a *yatra*. Baba Nam Singh took them for a tour of Sikh historic sites and the Nihung community in Punjab. On their tour, they saw large tent-prisons in the countryside. They also heard bullets flying at night during their stay in Amritsar.

One of the Sikhs on the *yatra* had graduated from a military academy and was an expert marksman who had often served as the Siri Singh Sahib's bodyguard. He wanted to stay and fight with Sant Bhindranwale and his men. He phoned Los Angeles and left a message for the Master, "There are lots of things going on here. They are fighting for freedom, and I want to stay here and help."

The Siri Singh Sahib replied, "Absolutely not! Get back to the U.S."

At the end of their *yatra*, they returned to America and left Baba Nam Singh at the *nivas*, studying to be a *giani*.

By December 1983, Amritsar began to be fortified. Heavily-armed Gurkha soldiers of the Indian Army set up several checkpoints of sandbags surrounding the Darbar Sahib complex. At that point, Jarnail Singh and his men also started to station armed guards on the roof of Guru Nanak Nivas.

The following April, Baba Nam Singh was told by the Indian government that he had to leave right the country away. It was the end of a long stay in Punjab. Returning to California, he was a different person. He had learned a good deal from his Punjabi experience, but he had also left his *sadhana*, his yogic roots. In time, both he and the marksman would leave the Siri Singh Sahib and the Sikh Dharma community.

## Holocaust

In the Punjab, late in the month of May, the Sikh leadership played what it considered its trump card. It announced to the central government that if its demands were not met, Sikh farmers in Punjab, who produced seventy percent of India's wheat, would not be shipping it out of the state to feed India's masses.

Indira Gandhi, whose eldest son had married a Sikh and who relied on Sikhs as her personal bodyguards, no doubt sensed the terrible implications of the impasse. Humanity required that she restrain her hand, that she exercise patience and work towards a reasonable compromise. Her influential advisors from the K.G.B. and the Communist Party chief Harkrishan Surjeet, however played on her worst fears. They urged her to throw the entire weight of the Indian military at the Sikh nation. If she did not strike the Sikhs hard, they said, the Sikhs would never give her peace.

For nine months, units of the Indian army had trained and prepared for this outcome. On the second of June, they sealed off the state of Punjab with tanks and heavy guns. The word was out in the complex surrounding the Harimandar, that the army would descend there June fourth, the traditional martyrdom day of Guru Arjun Dev. Soon, the sky was abuzz with the sound of the army's helicopters, and the streets were congested with trucks, tanks, troops, and the heavy equipment of war.

A state-wide curfew was imposed. Anyone who stepped out of doors was to be shot on sight. Some cheered what they saw as Indira Gandhi taking the Sikh insurgency in hand, but all media people were ordered out of Punjab, and for anyone who remained, such a massive deployment of arms and men was a dark and ominous development.

As the news of the army's convergence at the Golden Temple spread through the countryside, crowds of tens of thousands of common people streamed into the roads and highways to try to avert the desecration of their holy Harimandar. Despite their bravery, these ordinary Sikhs were forced back by the overwhelming firepower of the Indian Army.

For three long days and nights, the angry sounds of gun and rocket fire ricocheted around the Golden Temple, where the Songs of a Compassionate God once had filled the air. In a matter of hours, smoke and flames had consumed the five-hundred-year heritage of priceless relics, paintings, and manuscripts of the archives, the library, and the museum.

Sant Bhindranwale's two hundred fighters put up a stubborn defence, killing many soldiers, but by the end of the third day, those who remained alive were rounded up and the Akal Takhat, which they had made their command post, was a devastated ruin. Finally, Bhindranwale's bullet-ridden body was carried out and laid on blocks of ice in the sweltering June heat, while the government's propaganda men continued their grisly assignment

Across Punjab, dozens of other shrines were also stormed by government soldiers. Secretly, they cremated the bodies of the hundreds of militants and thousands of innocents they had killed. Tens of thousands of people, even young children, were taken from their Gurdwaras and homes, to be confined in the government's jails and torture camps. For what? Most of them, just because they happened to be Sikhs.

## **Death and Devastation**

The Siri Singh Sahib for the West was deeply affected by the tragic events in Amritsar. With tearful eyes, he described for his students the devastation of the Akal Takhat.

"Akal Takhat is not bricks and mortar, hands and money, government and bombardment, or destruction and construction. That is not Akal Takhat. The Akal Takhat is the nerve centre of the universe that keeps the central rotation of the magnetic shield of the planet. They have damaged that place, and they do not know what they have done."

He mourned also the loss of thousands of young Sikh lives in the holocaust.

"Do you know what happened in the Punjab? The young people got excited, wound up, but no one prepared them. Now, a block of one age group is totally eliminated. A link from the page of history has been taken away. If Communism has succeeded anywhere, it has succeeded among Sikhs. They took our youthful intelligentsia and put it to death."

## **The President's Choice**

In all the carnage and devastation, one man stood starkly alone, deeply anguished and, he felt, fundamentally betrayed. The Sikh President of India had not been informed by the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, of her crushing designs on Sikhs in his home state of Punjab. There were those who said she cherished a grudge against Sikhs dating from their outspoken opposition to her period of harsh, authoritarian rule in the mid-1970's, an opposition which had been instrumental in her dramatic electoral defeat in 1977.

It had been customary for the state's highest holder of executive office, the Prime Minister, and the holder of the vital post of President to consult informally over the nation's pressing concerns. A week before she unleashed the fury of India's armed forces on the Golden Temple in particular, and Punjab in general, Prime Minister Gandhi had casually mentioned to President Zail Singh that she was considering sending the army after Sant Bhindranwale.

The President had cautioned her against that course of action, saying it would have untold repercussions and that there were more peaceful, less destructive, ways of apprehending the Sikh extremist leader. The Prime Minister had replied that she would think over what the President had said. Nothing more was spoken on the subject in the ensuing days.

There followed the invasion of the Golden Temple complex, the desecration of dozens of other Gurdwaras, and the wholesale slaughter and imprisonment of Sikhs beginning on a high holiday, the martyrdom day of Guru Arjun.

The next time the President spoke with Prime Minister Gandhi, he was bitterly critical of her actions. "Why had she unleashed such a wholesale wave of death and destruction throughout the Punjab?" "Why had her intelligence people allowed the Golden Temple to become so heavily fortified in the first place?" "Why had no one in the Indian intelligence service been reprimanded for this tragic oversight?" "Why had she not arranged to have Bhindranwale arrested some months earlier, when he would have been relatively easy to apprehend?" "Why did she have the army attack the Golden Temple on a holiday, when it was filled with pilgrims?" "Why did she not instead use a media campaign to put public pressure on Bhindranwale to quit the Golden Temple?"

Some elements of the central government seemed intent on isolating the President and keeping him from knowing the whole truth of the tragedy at the sacred Harimandar. A high official who had just returned from Amritsar informed President Zail Singh that the Akal Takhat had been only "slightly damaged".

The President insisted on going to see for himself. On June the eighth, he arrived and personally witnessed the bullet marks on the Golden Temple and the smouldering ruins, which were all that remained of the stately Akal Takhat. When he heard the Head Priest of the Harimandar explain to him in detail the horror and outrage of the preceding days, the President was deeply shaken.

There were many who advised the Sikh President that he should resign to protest the atrocities committed against the Sikh people, and the wanton destruction in the Golden Temple complex. Already, a number of distinguished Sikhs had returned to the New Delhi government medals and citations awarded to them in a more harmonious time. A growing list of government office holders had tendered their resignations. There was news that groups of Sikh soldiers had mutinied from some army units. Several hundred men in a convoy of trucks had even tried to force their way from a base some five hundred miles east of Delhi, to the Golden Temple.

Yet, in all the tumult, there were others, including the Siri Singh Sahib for the West, who advised the President that he must stay on. The Siri Singh Sahib told Giani Zail Singh that if he were to quit, he would be falling into a cleverly set trap, and that much more anguish and bloodshed would result.

The President was the titular head of the armed forces. Moreover, Sikhs had always played a prominent role in India's military. There were whole regiments that were entirely Sikh. If President Zail Singh were to resign, those loyal men and women would feel a strong pressure to withdraw their services, to quit or mutiny themselves.

If there were large-scale insurrection among the Sikh contingents, anti-Sikh elements in the "secular, socialist republic of India" would argue that Sikhs were not trustworthy, and that they should be barred from military service. Since ten percent of the armed forces, and some of the best fighting units were Sikh, this would be disastrous for the Sikhs and for India.

If there were insubordination in the Indian armed forces, it might also furnish an opportunity for India's archenemy, Pakistan, to launch an attack on India's weakened western front, the Punjab. Under the circumstances, Punjabis who had vigorously resisted Pakistani invasions in 1965 and '71, might have no will to fight. They might rather welcome the enemy. If that happened, the anti-Sikh repercussions throughout the whole of India would only be magnified. Sikhs would be considered traitors and legitimate targets for all sorts of retaliation.

Moreover, the President had to consider that he was not merely the President of the Sikhs of India. People of every community looked to his example as a leader and a unifying force.

After some consideration, President Zail Singh issued a public statement openly critical of both sides in the disastrous confrontation. Despite a rising chorus of shrill and anguished cries for his resignation, the more the President looked at it, the more he realized that quitting was simply not an option.

## **Grief and Alienation**

The Siri Singh Sahib of the West reminded people that when any ruler dared to attack the holy Golden Temple, it always marked the end of their lineage. He condemned the outrageous use of force and encouraged the leaders of the Punjabi Sikhs who had settled in the West, to join together for a meeting in New Mexico to discuss the situation and plan a well thought out response.

If the intent of the assault on the Golden Temple had been to alienate Sikhs, the pain and grief inflicted on them ensured the success of the evil strategy. Outside India, where Sikhs enjoyed a degree of political self-expression denied their relations at home, some took up the desperate cry for "Khalistan," a land of their own. It was a cry of deep-rooted despair over the terrible course of events

in Punjab. For some, unfortunately, that cry also contained in it an unSikh-like lust for revenge.

The Siri Singh Sahib's call for a cool, spiritual, all-embracing strategy, and his insistence that the real enemy was neither Hindus nor the central government, received only limited support among Punjabi Sikhs abroad. Many found the retribution offered by the Khalistan "solution" more appealing.

At a hastily-organized conference held at Madison Square Gardens in New York, one man boldly announced that he would himself "go and bring a platter with fifty thousand Hindu heads on it." It did not seem to matter that the man had arthritis and could barely walk. In Vancouver, funds were being collected to buy a tank to oppose the Indian Army, a pathetic gesture at best.

### **K. Y. O. N. A.**

In Toronto, Canada a student of Yogi Bhanjan's had heard and followed his teacher's example and directive to help the youth of immigrant Sikhs find truth and inspiration in their spiritual heritage. In reality, North America and Europe were abysmally racist in the 1970s and 80s. The best many brown-complexioned immigrant children hoped for was not to be overly teased or harassed.

Running against the social grain, but with the Guru's will, this student joined together with some teen immigrant Sikhs and started to plan a camp for young Sikhs all over Ontario and beyond to allow them to come, learn their heritage, and have fun together. With that end in mind, starting in December of 1983, they went from Gurdwara to Gurdwara, doing *kirtan* and raising money for the proposed camp.

It is not that there had never been a Sikh youth camp in Ontario. A group from outside Canada had held one the previous summer. It had been huge, but it had also been a catastrophe. Participants had complained that the program was boring and the food terrible. Some campers had been so put off that they had hitchhiked back home. This new camp was going to have fun programming and pizza!

When the Siri Singh Sahib's student phoned him about the work he was doing and asked for a name for the project, he aptly dubbed it "Khalsa Youth of North America." The Master wanted his student to think big picture, it seemed. After a few minutes, it had sunk in that in Punjabi, the acronym "KYONA" meant "Why not?" and so "Why not?" became the group's slogan.

With trips to Montreal and Windsor, Ottawa, and London, Ontario, the group raised awareness of their aims and money for the coming camp. They also found volunteers to help and youngsters eager to come. A perfect location was found just outside of Toronto. A date in March was set. The program started to be put together.

Knowing the Siri Singh Sahib's busy schedule, the students were hesitant to call and ask him to

come. After all, by the time the camp had been booked and paid for, it was just three weeks to go. The student called anyway.

Everyone was of one mind, that it would be the greatest blessing if Yogi Bhajan would come. When they heard he would be coming, everyone realized the Master must have put aside his regularly scheduled commitments to come to the camp. His coming at such short notice spoke volumes of how he valued work to help Punjabi youth in particular, and to bring together Sikhs of East and West generally.

It was a fun camp. The Siri Singh Sahib also brought his Secretary of Religion who was a master of the martial art of *gatka*. Between them, they gave great classes. The camp was fun. The food was great. There was even pizza twice in the course of the week.

Afterwards, everyone immediately began to plan and raise money for a bigger camp in August. By July, brochures had been printed, a big camp site had been booked, and the program was being set. But overhanging the whole enterprise there was the spectre of events in Punjab. Outside Punjab, Sikh families grieved and worried about who might next be killed, imprisoned, tortured or dishonored. Many wanted revenge, "blood for blood."

When the Siri Singh Sahib spoke words of conciliation and peace, most Sikhs vehemently opposed him, calling him a traitor of the Sikh nation. It was in this light that one day, his student in Toronto received a telephone call, his first direct communication from the Master, "In order not to divide Sikhs, we must cancel this camp. It is important that Sikhs remain as one, undivided."

Once again, the Siri Singh Sahib had shown his heart. It was his deep prayer that the Panth be unbroken regardless of anyone's personal loss, and so it was that, with a heavy heart, the KYONA summer camp was cancelled in the summer of 1984.

## Unity

There were certain mischievous forces at work in several large Sikh communities in the West. Though they were few in numbers, they managed to exert a disproportionate influence, splitting and weakening and betraying the interests of all Sikhs. Many of them were paid from abroad for their nefarious services. Despite their outward appearances, they could hardly be called "Sikhs". All they did and stood for betrayed the gentle, all-embracing spirit of Guru Nanak.

In this light, the Siri Singh Sahib issued a public proclamation on July the twenty-second:

*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!*



The Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere, including Siri Singh Sahib, has condemned *outright* all those who have brought the attack on the Golden Temple and the destruction of the Akal Takhat. The Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere has always believed in the freedom of the Khalsa, and has supported the Khalsa as a sovereign spiritual nation within the nations comprising the domain of the Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere.

Under the circumstances, we have issued a call for Sikh unity. Please don't take any step which may divide the Sikh community in this adversity. Any act to divide the Sikhs into East or West, into Indian or American, into European or Canadian, will be an act of treachery. Therefore we pray that all Sikhs should unite under the banner of Guru Gobind Singh and build up the strength and grace of the Khalsa.

In the Name of the Cosmos which prevails through everyBODY and the Holy Naam that holds the world,

Humbly yours,

Siri Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Yogi Bhajan

Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere

## **A Gift for the Pope**

In August, the Siri Singh Sahib paid a visit of thanks to the Pope of some eight hundred million Christians of the Catholic faith. Two months earlier, while innocent Sikhs were being put to death in the holy Harimandir, John Paul II had issued a thoughtful statement on their behalf:

"In these days, the news has followed the ever more serious events in the state of the state of Punjab. I do not want to go into the delicate and complex motives behind these disturbances in a great nation. But the sad fact is that the place where so many people met a tragic death is a temple where men gather in prayer. I address an immediate sentiment of human pity for all victims with a call that a way to resolve the current strife can be found in a mutual understanding."

In the large square in front of Saint Peter's Basilica, the Siri Singh Sahib of the West and a handful of Sikhs presented John Paul II with a seven-foot silver crucifix with an ivory image of the Christ. The pontiff, for his part, gave the group a medallion with his image on it, and rosaries for everyone. More significantly, he extended his prayers to the Sikh people, and offered some words of support.

## The Yogi's Sense

In Amritsar, meanwhile, the Indian Army seemed to show no inclination to withdraw from the Golden Temple. When they could not find anyone to play the Songs of the Guru in the Harimandar, military men took the place of the regular temple *ragis*. In an attempt to cover up the tell-tale evidence of its wanton devastation, the army organized a hasty reconstruction of the Akal Takhat, an effort opposed by thoughtful Sikhs everywhere.

The government seemed to be trying to compensate for its earlier incompetence by exercising an iron-fisted authority. Even after the Harimandar complex was reopened to the public, armed soldiers continued to exert their very conspicuous presence. A curfew remained in effect for two weeks after the attack. Even months later, tens of thousands of Sikhs, including infants, continued to languish under horrible conditions in India's infamous prisons and torture centres.

On September twenty-ninth, when the Yogi in Harbhajan Singh heard that Indira Gandhi had suddenly taken the bold initiative of returning the Harimandar to the Sikhs without condition, something told him that Indira Gandhi would not be much longer. Her Soviet handlers would prefer a weak Rajiv as Prime Minister over a still powerful Indira.

## The Gilded Gift of Destiny

Newly married Gurudev Singh and Sat Kaur planned to go to the White Tantric Yoga course coming up in Houston, so he went to a shopping centre to find a present for the Siri Singh Sahib. Someone recommended an ostrich egg artistically mounted on a stand of silver and gold.

Gurudev Singh purchased it and they flew to the course, where he and his wife presented the ostrich egg to Yogi Bhajan. The Master was taken aback and kept looking at the gift. After a time, he spoke, "Because you have given me this gift, you will have a very successful son."

The Siri Singh Sahib then addressed the Mukhi Singh Sahib responsible for the Espanola community who was observing the exchange, "You must get this egg to Espanola. If it breaks, your destiny will break."

After the course, the Siri Singh Sahib's representative put the gift in a paper bag. He was seen to casually swing it in the air as the passengers embarked on their flight. Once on board with Gurudev Singh, the Mukhia placed the bag on his seat and sat on it, crushing the ornate gift under his weight. Two months later, the man left both his responsibilities and his spiritual teacher.

## The Master's Request

For many years, Aftab Singh was the Siri Singh Sahib's main teacher and contact on the island nation of Trinidad and Tobago. Yogi Bhajan insisted that his student should also serve as his driver whenever he visited. In 1984, Aftab Singh was able, through a government connection, to arrange a red carpet reception at the airport when the Master arrived.

With all formalities dispensed with, the Master sat as was his habit, in the front seat with Aftab across from him at the wheel, his secretary behind them. It was late. It was eleven o'clock.

Yogi Bhajan said to his student, "Do you remember that grapefruit juice somebody brought me last time I came, the one in the can? I would like another one like that."

Aftab Singh thought. Most of the grocery stores in the city were already closed, the rest would soon be closing. He drove quickly to the nearest food store and went in. They did not have it. He went to another. That store did not have it either. A couple of stores later, Aftab entered a large supermarket and asked the grocery manager about the drink. The manager told him that the company did not make that juice any more. Aftab went back to the car and told his teacher. Yogi Bhajan was unfazed, "Don't come back till you have it."

Aftab kept up his effort. He went to another store and another, just as they were closing. It was past midnight by now. The shopkeepers were eager to go home. At one little shop, the owner was dumping the water and remaining ice from his simple refrigeration system into the street. When Aftab Singh asked if he had the canned grapefruit juice, the man said, "I might," and went inside to check. A couple of minutes later, he returned with a rusty can of the juice which he gave to Aftab, graciously refusing payment.

Holding the rusty old can of juice, Aftab Singh felt like he was in heaven, juice heaven anyway. At last, he had the satisfaction of delivering the can of grapefruit juice to the Master, who received it with a wink. Aftab Singh also felt the satisfaction of having not questioned his teacher, the one who had told him to never doubt the power of his own mind.

## The Squeeze

During his stay in Trinidad, Yogi Bhajan tested Aftab Singh more than once. One time, when they were driving, the Master applied his powerful forefinger and thumb to his driver's thigh. It was an excruciating pinch, but Yogi Bhajan feigned ignorance, all the while looking calmly out the window.

Aftab Singh remembered hearing of this yogic technique to develop non-attachment. What could he do? What might happen? It was very, very painful. After what seemed like a very long time,

Aftab Singh decided the worst thing that might happen is a part of his thigh might lose its circulation and die. It wouldn't be the end of the world, after all. "Squeeze away!" he thought, "I don't care." With that thought and his intention to endure the pain regardless of how long it went on, Aftab noticed that the pressure immediately went away.

Yogi Bhajan turned and looked at him and raised his eyebrows, but never said a word.

## **The Pooja**

Yogi Bhajan received much respect in Trinidad. While Sikhs were few in that country, Hindus were many, and they loved to see and hear and serve him. Between talks and media interviews, this made for a tightly compressed schedule.

One day, Yogi Bhajan gave a talk at the Mahatma Gandhi Temple. After the lecture, his hosts invited him to their house. It was getting late and, while wanting to be gracious, Aftab Singh protested, "We can just come for a few minutes. We have appointments in the morning."

As Aftab Singh waited outside in the car for Yogi Bhajan to return, a man came and invited them to come to his house, saying, "There are not many of us, but we will be so happy!"

Aftab's security-mindedness assessed this man whom he has never seen before. He was poorly dressed. Aftab Singh tried to put him off, but the man would not easily be put off.

When Yogi Bhajan finally came outside, he heard their raised voices. "What is going on?"

"This man wants us to visit his house for a *pooja*, but it is getting late," replied Aftab Singh, his driver, host and security detail.

"Okay, let's go!" said the Master.

Off they went, following carefully the car of the man who had invited them as it took roads and sideroads out into the countryside. At last, they arrived at the man's house, where thirty or forty people are waiting for them. They were farm workers, labourers, simple people with little money, but much devotion.

The people who were now their hosts begin to sing and perform *Arti*, the musical composition of Guru Nanak. Their only instruments were a half inch square rod, a drum and a pair of cymbals, but soon everyone was in a state of rapture.

For his part, Yogi Bhajan was so moved at the depth of their worship that tears begin to roll down his cheeks. Seeing his teacher moved to tears, Aftab Singh too felt the power of these people's

devotion. He also felt gratitude for his teacher's trust of these pure souls, regardless of their simple appearance.

## Change of Guard

At the end of a yoga class in Los Angeles on October 24, 1984, the Siri Singh Sahib addressed his students, "I have a very humble announcement to make. Mukhia Sardarni Sahiba Sardarni Premka Kaur, who has served the Sikh Dharma for a very long time as the Secretary General, has taken over a very beautiful job to translate and research *Gurbani* – which I should have done myself. But when the community is ready to write off the bills, which are thanks to our inflation coming up and up and up, I intend to do too.

"In sequence of the constitution and the rights, we have requested and ordained Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur Khalsa to take over as Secretary General. And Mukhia Sardarni Sahiba Premka Kaur will be housing herself in Eugene, Oregon to act and take the help of the university to exclusively work on a project which will be very beautiful. You have seen that *Nitnem*, that blue "*Peace Lagoon*" which has come. It is a very creative and very authentic work.

"She will be leaving next Monday, so I think it will be obligatory if the Secretary of Religion, Sardarni Ram Das Kaur creates a special service at the Gurdwara next Sunday. And she may join her and herself to have *kirtan* and we will say the prayer and send her on this missionary job to take care of what she has promised to take care.

"I will like to explain that it was her long-felt desire that that was all she wanted to do and I feel that the time has come when people can go for their higher self and higher feelings as freely as they should. And also there will be a general policy at the offices of Sikh Dharma that we will be trying to rehabilitate people in their heart-felt desires of some kind of dharmic activities where they want to feel they fit in better."

The Siri Singh Sahib also spoke of Sardarni Premka Kaur's unflagging support in the early years, how she had sold her prized record collection to provide food for the ashram and carried their luggage as his tour secretary when there was no money to pay a porter. In reality, this was a sad parting, for soon the former Secretary General would be joining with moneyed people determined to bring down the Siri Singh Sahib and his mission.

For her part, Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur's credentials were known. Besides once saving the Siri Singh Sahib's life from assailants at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, she had been the Assistant Secretary-General of the Khalsa Council and a constant and reliable member of the Siri Singh Sahib's staff. The future beckoned under a new Secretary General. A few years into her new role, new title, "Siri Sikdar Sahiba" was given to Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur.

## The Wake Up

With 3HO couples, morning *sadhana* involved a spiritual triangulation of wife, husband and the 3HO teachings. Often, the teachings were represented in person by Yogi Bhajan in consultation. The following is an interaction described by the Master.

A wife tried to wake up her husband, "Darling, it is 3 o'clock. It is time for *sadhana*."

"Yeah, yeah, *sadhana*? What *sadhana*?" he mumbled.

The wife thought her husband was going crazy. He had been going to *sadhana* for ten years. Then she reflected that 3 o'clock on the East Coast was midnight in Los Angeles, so she called the 3HO number. Luckily, Yogi Bhajan was working and he received the call, thinking, "Who could be calling at midnight?"

She said, "Is it you, Sir?"

He said, "Yeah."

"Am I talking to Siri Singh Sahib?"

"Sure. What is wrong? What is happening?"

She said, "I never dreamed that you will be on the line."

"Luckily, I am. Now what is the matter?"

She said, "Should I touch my husband?"

"What is wrong?"

She said, "It is 3 o'clock. I woke him up and what he is doing is unbelievable. He doesn't even know that it is *sadhana* time. Is he dreaming? Should I touch him? Should I leave him? Or should I go? I don't know. I don't know this guy."

He said, "Well, for a couple of hours, you are sleeping with him."

She said, "That's true. This guy is not now the same guy I was sleeping with a couple of hours ago. I don't know what to do! Please help me!"

He said, "Okay, it is a simple formula. Where are you standing?"

When she had described her physical situation, Yogi Bhajan said, "Turn around. Move. Go into

the kitchen and take a glass and fill it with absolutely, extra-cold water. Bring it over and start dripping it at him at a good frequency so it can just *tick-tick* hit him, and choose either his forehead or hairline. And when you do that..."

She said, "I don't want to disconnect. I want to keep the phone on."

He said, "Okay, if you are that scared, keep the phone. I don't mind."

She started doing it and the reaction was fine. Her husband was alright. He woke up and he said, "What are you doing?"

She said, "Are you alright?"

He said, "What was I doing?" Soon the husband was up and they were on their way to another morning *sadhana*, by Guru's grace.

## The Guru's Generous Spirit

On the last day in October, when the Prime Minister of India was killed as she faced a crucial election, the Soviet press was quick to blame the C.I.A.. The best response the U.S. could manage was a "strong diplomatic protest" about the Soviet accusations. It was a feeble statement, really, of the utter inadequacy of American intelligence in that region. The Indian press, for its part, was eager to direct the finger of blame at her alleged Sikh assassins.

The Siri Singh Sahib pointed to the ineptitude of America's foreign intelligence. Why had the great American democracy abandoned the world's largest democracy and forced it into the Soviet camp? For Pakistan?

He was equally scathing in his criticism of those who considered Pakistan to be the great friend of Sikh self-determination. Pakistan's endgame was to gain control of Kashmir. It had nothing to do with Sikhs. The Pakistani Government would use the Sikhs and "Khalistan" so long as it served its own interests. Pakistan would not help the Sikhs, even if the U.S. pressured it to do so. It had separatist movements of its own to contend with.

When certain Sikhs in New York celebrated Indira Gandhi's death for the benefit of television cameras with champagne and dancing in the streets, the Siri Singh Sahib condemned it as a non-Sikh act. Guru Nanak's fundamental belief was that "you have to be fearless and you have to be revengeless." Those misguided Sikhs had committed a widely publicized act of vengeance.

Asked whether he mourned the passing of the Prime Minister, he answered that he especially

mourned her death because by the time the next day arrived, some thousand Sikhs would also be dead. Surely enough, in the ensuing days, organized gangs of hooligans took Indira Gandhi's revenge in the Sikh enclaves of Delhi, killing some 2,500 Sikhs, and leaving 10,000 homeless widows and orphans.

Through all those difficult circumstances, the Siri Singh Sahib advised an approach that combined self-respect and conciliation. He knew that his own house in Delhi had been protected from the pillaging mob by the neighbour women who happened to be Hindus. There was no point in villainizing all Hindus, as in their acute pain, some Sikhs had done. It did not suit the generous spirit of Guru Nanak.

He advised the new Prime Minister to make amends with the Sikhs, to withdraw the army, to close the torture camps, and let the western press in. The excessive situation in Punjab needed to be opened up. It was very non-Indian in spirit.

Responding to criticism that India would fragment if the central government took a conciliatory approach with those regions, like Punjab, that desired greater autonomy, the Siri Singh Sahib said, "India is not going to fragment. Rather, Russians are going to roll up their baggage! They should learn from Egypt where they are no more. They should learn from Somalia where they are no more, and they are not going to be in India if this violence does not stop. Hindus in India are going to realize that Sikhs are the integral part of India's strength!"

In the midst of so much evil slaughter, the Siri Singh Sahib himself was not untouched by the violent intentions of others. His moderate approach was incompatible with the strategy of the Communists who wanted the Sikhs, their leadership especially, wiped out. It also aggravated the pro-Pakistan advocates of Khalistan. It was well known that he was on a hit list along with the President of India, the generals who had taken part in the assault on the Golden Temple, and the former Prime Minister.

In that highly charged atmosphere, those who pursued a course of moderation led a dangerous existence. Sometimes their intentions were imputed by both sides. At least once, the majestic Siri Singh Sahib of the West seemed close to becoming a martyr to the cause of peaceful coexistence.

**“Oh, Winter Solstice!”**

*The Winter Solstice Sadhana of 1983 had been the coldest ever, with frost many mornings. It was not the “sunny Florida” billboards had promised. It had been hard for everybody – children, women, everybody. With memories fresh, the attendance dropped significantly the following year.*

We have come here. Many people have not come here. Many people could not come in this



beautiful congregation. Why? "Oh, we do not have money..." "Oh, my wife cannot take the cold..."

Look, there is no cold! It's not going to be cold.

My idea and your idea is different. I think that Winter Solstice should be so miserably, horrible and so painful that we should shrink, and in that shrinkage, we should make ourselves to be atoms and purify ourselves in saying, God, God, God, God, God, God, God...

Let the entire universe... But this is so beautiful, so sunny, so warm. The Year of the Guru is just in play. It is a blessing, but everybody got scared, "Oh, *Winter Solstice!!* How can I go?"

Why you can't go? Guru says if there is a storm and rivers are swelling, the land is destroyed and absolutely it is dark and it is stormy and there is a hail and there is a snow, there is no possibility to go, but when there is a call for *Sangat*, Gursikh goes.

Gursikh goes. Why he goes? Because he will meet those who will bring him to the warmth and the ecstasy and infinity of the Guru. And it's the memory to remember. And it is the moment to forget the *tattwas*. Rather, it is the essence and the nectar among the *tattwas* which a yogi drinks and Gursikh enjoys. And that is the life of a Sikh of the Guru.

## Papaji

Since his son's seventh year, Dr. Kartar Singh Puri, the father of the Siri Singh Sahib, had recited the sacred *Sukhmani* once each day for his well-being. In his infancy too, this proud father had indulged the spirit of his precious first-born son. He had taken young Harbhajan around his neck and gone with him to countless holy pilgrimage sites. That entire trek took a year and nine months.

At each temple or pilgrimage place, there was a river or a pool of holy water, where they would take a sip and Harbhajan's father would immerse his infant body in the sacred waters. Afterwards, his mother would say, "You have taken so many cold baths, I don't think anything can happen to you!"

In 1973, Dr. Kartar Singh had followed his son to America, along with Bibiji and her children. He had spent some years in the New Mexico whose rolling, dry landscape reminded him of his old Punjab. There, he passed on what he knew, his devotion, and his steadfast commitment, to the new generation of Khalsa.

Often, his son would say, "Now is the time for you to rest."

But "Papaji", as he was known, would respond, "*You* don't rest! Why should *I* rest? I like to be with them as much as I can. It is very exciting. You don't understand. When they asked me, 'How was

Guru Nanak?' - I had to figure out *how was Guru Nanak*. And all my life, there was never before such a chance to figure out how was Guru Nanak. Now I have not only figured it out, but to tell them how was Guru Nanak makes it just as if I am sitting in the lap of Guru Nanak! So don't you ever interfere with my affairs!"

"Well, my only approach is that the doctor said he doesn't want you to work that much."

Papaji would then say, "Well, doctor is doctor, and I am myself! You don't rest. Doctor has told you to rest many times."

When Papaji's son would return to stay for a few days in their family home in Delhi during his periodic visits to India, Harbhajan the Siri Singh Sahib would spend the first morning visiting the Gurdwaras, then end up with breakfast at Papaji's house. The father would then say, "I would have come to meet you!" and his son would reply, "*No*, I have come here to pay my homage *to you!*"

Papaji would say, "I'm very grateful that I came to America. I learned the *sadhana*. I learned to chant the *Naam*. I learned to understand that Americans who never knew or heard the Word of Guru before could do what they do - and when I did it with them, that was all I wanted to know about! I am grateful to them forever and shall go by way of the blessing of their prayers."

In early February, his devoted son phoned Papaji and asked whether he might like to return to America for a time. He said, "Now the time has come for me to go to the bigger America, not to you."

In after another seven days, it happened just as he had said.

## Keeping Up in Chile

During her time in Chile, Hari Nam Kaur was mindful not to overburden Yogi Bhajan, but call him she did. Under the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet, Chile was a very conservative, Christian country. Few people showed any interest in yoga there. Under the martial law, students also had to be very careful to return home on time before the curfew. Anyone out after 11 p.m. was liable to be picked up by the police and taken to a detention centre.

The Siri Singh Sahib counselled Hari Nam Kaur. He told her to talk to the Guru. He told her to do a five-mile meditative walk each day, meditating "Har Har." He told her to chant "*Ardaas Bhaa-ee*" daily for one hour a day.

Life in Chile was not easy. Hari Nam Kaur often felt the need to return to the United States because she missed Yogi Bhajan. One time, he told her, "We are always together."

Still Hari Nam Kaur asked, "Why did you send me to Chile?"

Yogi Bhajan would tell her, "I had no choice. Your karma in the States had ended. Your destiny was in Chile. You can never ever live anywhere other than Santiago, Chile."

The first years were very difficult financially. And when Hari Nam Kaur spoke of this with the Siri Singh Sahib, he once said, "It was difficult when I came to the United States."

When his student spoke of the great difficulty of keeping going, the Master would reply, "Do you think it was any different when I first came to the United States?"

"But I'm not you! I don't have your strength. I'm not a spiritual teacher."

"Yes, you have the same strength right inside of you."

On one occasion, Yogi Bhajan told his student, "Look, if you can't get it off the ground, I will pick up the Secretariat and move it there. South America is the salvation of the world, and Chile is the key!"

Hearing words like these, his student resolved to persevere. And persevere she did.

### **"Dialogue with My Beard"**

I didn't grow my beard. It grew. I washed it. I was sixteen years old. It started coming out like little golden stuff, something here, something there, and I just started looking at the mirror. I said, "What is going to be happening here?"

And then I was about seventeen. It showed up and I said, "Oh my God! Now it is not going to be a baby-boy, kid thing."

Somebody else would have taken a razor and shaved it off, but I said, "I can't do it." *Akaal Moorat.*

I read *Japjee*. God made me. What is it growing for? Let me study it!

So I studied it and it grew. It was pretty black and it came out and it was quite a mess, you know. It was there, and it scared me. And then I said, "Why God has grown this beard?"

One day, I asked, and beard said, "Why God has grown your nose?"

I said, "Well, Beard, nose is there. When I was born, I saw it."

And it said, "I just came late."

And I said, "Why you came late, my beard?"

And Beard said, "Wait a minute! Your top hair also grows. They didn't come that long? What are you talking about?"

I said, "Well, they were there and they grew. You were not there at all!"

And it said, "It is better late, than never!"

And I said, "Tell me the reason."

And the beard said, "Your heart and head, through the psychomagnetic intertransmission of the neurochemical situation needs the chemical exchange through the mental source of vibratory effect of the meridian of the moon, which is your chin, and I am growing to put that psyche around it and cover it. My name is Beard and I only grow with men. And when I grow with women, I grow just to punish them sometime. Otherwise, I don't touch woman folks, but I am just with you."

I said, "Well, that looks like a science to me."

And the beard said, "What else this can be? It is a science. The solar energy in the meridian psyche of the brain in the western and eastern hemispheres, or the left and right brains, or the initial and projective brain, and to the neurochemical communication has absolutely meridian vibratory counter-effect. And in that counter-effect, your moon centre is in the chin and that needs to be covered all along. Do you accept it?"

I said, "Yeah."

And she said, "Why do you accept it?"

I said, "The problem is, if I shave you off, you are going to grow right the next minute. You don't stop. So why not let it grow?"

And then the beard said, "Do you know why you have the long, long hair on your head and you tie them up and put them down? Do you understand that?"

I said, "No."

It said, "Well, why you do it?"

I said, "Well, I was told to do it."

She said, "That's not enough. Develop the relationship with you, why you do whatever you do with it, and what is the essence in it."

And I started learning my own essence. I started learning with Beard because Beard was something which was telling that now I am a man. Then I have to act like a man. I have to behave like a man. I have to be a man. I have to face everything like a man.

And then the funny part. The most funny part in my whole chronology: when it started going gray.

One day, I said to Beard, "Look, you were good. You were quite black and very youthful and all that. Why now you are getting gray, huh?"

And the beard said, "Look, I am a hanging billboard saying to you, 'Stop acting foolish!' Time has come to quit. And, hair by hair, I will turn myself gray so that you, Harbhajan, should understand what is going on. Whenever you look before the mirror, you will see it, that each day I turn myself to be gray, so each purified gray hair is a message to you. Do you want to accept it?"

I said, "Thank you. It is free."

Now that gray beard is hanging on my face telling me, "You have lived over half a century, and now shape up! The time has come to ship you out."

And when I talk to you like that, you say, "We love you. Stay here!"

What do you mean by "Stay here!"? Are you going to stay here? No, it's a motor inn. It's a come and go.

## **Peace Prayer Day**

On his doctor's advice, the Siri Singh Sahib's three-day White Tantric marathons were condensed to a one day format. They were newly advertised as courses in the "Life Force Experience". All the while, the relentless Master spent his days teaching and counselling his students in the West, and his nights on the phone, hearing the horrible news from India.

Still, out of all the darkness and despair came a positive innovation. June 22, 1985 marked the date of the first annual "Peace Prayer Day" at Ram Das Puri.

Outside of Punjab also, there was lots to pray for. Civil wars were consuming Lebanon, El Salvador, Sri Lanka, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Sudan, while 100,000s of soldiers were killing

each other in Iran and Iraq, 100,000 Soviets were fighting in Afghanistan, and Vietnamese soldiers were fighting neighbours China and Cambodia. Globally, there were about 200,000 battle-related deaths that year.

Meanwhile, the nuclear arms race persisted. Globally, more than 60,000 potentially devastating nuclear weapons were built and ready to be deployed. The US, USSR, France, United Kingdom, and China all were testing new weapons with massive explosions underground, in deserts, or on remote Pacific islands.

But there was hope also. The leaders of the two biggest nuclear weapons states, the U.S. and U.S.S.R., President Reagan and President Gorbachev, were planning a first meeting for nuclear disarmament to be held in Iceland. And Pope John Paul II was planning an unprecedented international gathering of religious leaders in Assisi, Italy for a World Day of Prayer for Peace to be held the next year. Fittingly, the United Nations had in 1981 declared that 1986 should be the UN's "Year of Peace."

So it was that, under the shadow of the genocide in Punjab and wars in dozens of countries, two thousand people of many faiths joined together at Ram Das Puri in a powerful prayer for peace around the world.

### *"Ek Ong Kar"*

We should be grateful if we are good and we should be grateful if we are bad. Good and bad, we are the creation of that one God. Good and bad is a secondary situation.

One God is the first situation. That is why Nanak the Guru, the founder of this path of life, created "one" first. "Ik!"

"Om" *Shabad* was there before him for millions and millions of years. Om always will live. Om will live, shall continue living. Nobody can take it away. Whenever *praan* and *apaan* will meet in the body of the *tattwaa*, Om can be created.

It is very funny. Last time I went to India, I went to a very beautiful congregation of the holy. There were about less than a hundred, more than eighty people of high calibre. And in a very ordinary way, I just said, "How many of us today teach Om?" Just a common expression, the way I talk, the way I explain myself.

Later on, the discussion went hot and cold in many ways. And I was surprised, none of them knew how to chant Om, period. And barring those who have learnt it, there are 700 million Indians today. I will be lucky if I can count them on my fingertips, those who can correctly chant Om in the

land of the Guru, the home of the sages and the saints and the *rishis*, India.

I was shocked. I couldn't believe it. And, sitting among them, I said, "Hey, did I drop from the sky? I was one among you for forty years. I learned it."

One of the old men, with tears in his eyes, told me, "You are lucky."

I couldn't speak further. That was the end of my communication. And the entire session turned itself to learn how to chant Om. These are those people whom thousands and hundreds of thousands of people bow to in the morning as men of God. And I just looked at myself. I asked myself, "What is going on? What I am doing here?"

I came to see these people. I came to touch the dust of their feet on my forehead. I thought I was very fortunate to be in this very sacred and most secret and exclusive company. I thought it was a very far out occasion for me, but "What I am doing here? Teaching them to chant Om?"

And then I looked back and I said, "Look what Guru Nanak did! A layman chanted Om correctly. *Ik Onnnnnnng Kaar.*"

There's no effort. But if you ever have to tell your generation how the word Om is to be chanted, it has to be chanted in the very body of your body which is called 'triveni.' *Triveni* means where Ganga, Jamna, and Saraswati the river of knowledge, meet.

These three *nadis* are in the body too. And these three *nadis*... Ommmmm. That is where the three meet. That sound is creative. It is within itself. It is where a human meets the Saraswati, the river of knowledge.

Without that, all knowledge is fake, unreal. Without that, all experiences are dreams, unreal. Without that, life has no meaning. Unreal.

We live unreal in the real world. We live unrealistically in the dream world. We are not willing to sacrifice to take this opportunity which God has given us to be one with God. And that is where Sikh dharma explains as a dharma, as a base, to all of us, that you are the creation of One and to help you feel that you are the creation of One. It is very difficult, extremely difficult, to experience it, but it's not impossible.

When something comes and it is bad, you will accept it as bad. I have seen people practising religion and they say, I cannot talk to so-and-so. I cannot communicate with such-and-such. I cannot do it. Do you know what a weakness that is?

You cannot talk to somebody because you do not see God in the other person. You see the devil, for which you have no right, which is not Sikh dharma. *Ek Ong Kar.*

All bad and good is the creation of that one God. And you who practice it, must see God in all under all circumstances, at all times. You never will go wrong.

### **“What are we afraid of?”**

What are we afraid of? Heavens are not gonna fall. What are we afraid of? These earthly creatures will condemn us? That’s what we are afraid of?

Whom they have not condemned? Rama didn’t get condemned? Spent fourteen years in the jungle. Krishna didn’t get condemned? Lord Buddha didn’t get condemned? Hazarat Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was not condemned? Jesus was not condemned? Guru Arjan was not condemned? Guru Nanak was not put in a jail as a condemned man? Is there anyone who was not condemned and who didn’t excel?

What are you afraid of? It can happen to you or it can happen to Guru Tegh Bahadur. They can behead you. Great deal!

Who cares? What are you afraid of? This body booster? Don’t you see every day in the news, the shuttle goes with the rocket and the booster falls?

Are you blind? In the world of science today and yesterday and tomorrow, this body booster, the five *tattwa*-body, the body meant to elevate you as an identity, after taking you to that height, it shall fall.

### **The Master Mourns His Lost Students**

For some of those who had studied with the Siri Singh Sahib, but had not put down such deep roots in the Sikh tradition, the tragic course of events unfolding in Punjab - and broadcast around the world - was more than they could take. In the face of a terrible onslaught of anti-Sikh "news", their immature sense of identity with Sikh dharma, the religion of Punjab, was uprooted and lost. Some of them fell in with individuals who had their own personal axes to grind with the actions or the image of the Siri Singh Sahib. The recently-elected Bhai Sahib and some others, took off their turbans, cut their hair, and tried to submerge themselves in "ordinary" life.

Siri Singh Sahib, the Master, could see the price of that "ordinary-ness". He knew the cost of a human life, the value of having a spiritual teacher, the price of an opportunity not taken.

Whenever a student went, the Master grieved their parting. One of his students tried to cheer him up, "Sir, with this sadness and mourning, everything is going to hell."



The Master replied, "My God, do you think I am so insensitive? This person has left. I know the soul of this person. Multiply thirty-three million light years by 8.4 million life years. That is how long this person has meditated to be redeemed at the feet of the Guru, and you don't even want me to mourn it?"

## The Scorpion and the Saint

The Siri Singh Sahib once related a story of a saint who tried to lift a scorpion out of a stream in which it was drowning. Every time he rescued the feisty, little invertebrate, it instinctively stung the saint's hand and tumbled back into the water of the stream. This happened repeatedly.

A passer-by noticed the saint's strange preoccupation and asked him why he persisted in his painful exercise.

The holy man smiled and told them, "Watch and see! There are two possibilities. Either he stops biting and crosses the stream, or I faint and fall into the stream, and he drowns."

"But why do you continue like this?" implored the traveller.

"It is the scorpion's habit, out of his fearful nature, to want to sting me and try to scuttle away. As a man of God, it is my nature to want to help him. This is just a contest of wills in which we are engaged. In the end we will see which is the more powerful, his fear or my compassion. That's all this is about."

## *"Sadh Sangat"*

In the *Sangat*, let the great and the small sit together and pray to the one Guru. That is *Sangat*, *Sadh Sangat*, the disciplined ones. This why, my Friend, we come and touch the dust. Perhaps someone better than me has walked in. And then we put it on the forehead.

We don't do this as a drama. It's not a ritual. And it's not non-American. It is to heal our own destiny so that fate may not take its toll. That is the hard reality. We made somebody sit here to wash everybody's feet. That washing will wash God knows what.

*"Sat Guru dee sewa safal hai.* The service of the True Guru is perfect. It is rewarded." *"Jay ko karay man layee. Chit layee. Man Layee.* With mind, with heart." It is up to you. Dharm is not to take away from you anything.

You know, in the beginning, when I used to go to the Indian's houses very much, I thought this is a whole drama. I can't do it. They make a big *langar* and then, before my coming, they serve everybody drinks.

Now, who wants to go there? They are already at just half their brain. And then they made the *langar* to, you know, get all the friends and all that.

One place I went, he said, "For you, we have made *sattvic* food, vegetarian food. And for the people who have come, for them, you know, we are responsible to provide them with meat. We didn't do much. We didn't get the red meat. We brought the chicken and all that. But you do the prayer on this part and leave that."

I said, "Then let us not do the prayer. Just eat, as it is."

Guru Nanak taught us Bhai Lalo's simple *roti* was sweeter because that was toward God and Malak Bhago's feast was no good because that was toward ego.

I said, "We who are the Gurusikhs or pretend to be the Gurusikhs or try to be Gurusikhs... Whatever you want to call me... I know what you all call me in my absence, so I am calling in your presence. Pretty that much Guru is with me."

I said, "You idiot, you think you can call me and do this whole insanity and get all your friends in my name. You have used me for that? And you didn't even have the courtesy, the manners, that at least if you ask me to do *Ardaas*, let it then be *Guru-ka-Langar*, let it be made as it is made in Guru's house? You expect me to do on these dead bodies, Guru's *Ardaas*? *Aray*, you have invited me to a graveyard? Let it be so, then! Let it be a graveyard! You shall never have a son! That is what you called me for? And you shall never have it! You have made a mockery of the Guru and Guru's tradition! Let the word stand today. With all your money and with your palace and everything, you will not bear a son."

"Huhaa... You have become angry."

I could have been insulted. I could have taken care of it. But you made a mockery of the Guru's tradition. You called me to do the *Ardaas*. Your wife told me, "*Kirpaa ho-ay. Guru Ram Das kirpaa ho-ay.*" You did all this lobbying to me for a month and then I came. And look what a joke you have made out of me and of you and the whole thing!

"Huhuhuhay..."

Huhuhuhu. *Hohohoho!* You people think God and men of God are so cheap. *Hohohohoho!* Behold, thou shalt not see me through the eye of the Earth. Thou hast to open the third eye, the eye of the divine, so that your divided consciousness and loyalty may leave you, so that you may surprisingly see me in everything.

That's the way to go. And that's the spirit. That is dharma.

### **"To Be in Hell and Teaching Kundalini Yoga"**

There is nothing better than to be in hell and teaching Kundalini Yoga! A lot of students shall be available. Just don't worry.

### **"The Story of Naarad Moonee, the Great Sage"**

I will tell you a story of spirituality and let you learn from this. Naarad came to Lord Krishna and went back after meeting and being received. Again, he came to Lord Krishna, again he was received and went very happily. Everything was fine. One day, he came and he was received, but he started walking around. He saw that immediately they dug out the earth where he had been sitting and threw it away.

He went in and asked Lord Krishna, "What's wrong with me? I am Naarad Moonee. I am a direct *bhagata* of Narayan, a devotee of God. There's no difference between us."

Lord Krishna said, "There is. We receive you, Moonee Raaj. We are in debt to you. You visit us. We are grateful to you. You can sit anywhere. But where you sit, that becomes soiled, impure, and I have to change that dirt."

"Why?"

Krishna said, "You have no Teacher. You are teacherless, great man."

Naarad said, "Nobody told me."

Krishna said, "Yes, its true. I just never bothered. All we do is, when you come, we sit, receive you, treat you very well and, after that, take the earth and throw it away. That's all we do to get rid of those vibrations. Otherwise, I myself will be polluted and the satisfaction, fulfillment and divinity will go away. I can't deal with it. *Too nirguraa*. You have no Guru. *Nirguraa daa naa(n) buraa*. Even taking your name, Naarad, is a sin.

Naarad got very puzzled. "My God, I used to think I am direct between God and me. I am direct. But this is an indirect situation! Lord Krishna, do me a favor and tell me where to find a Guru."

Krishna said, "Moonee Raaj, you already know everything. Find out who your Guru can be!"

Naarad said, "This is not an easy situation. Please help me. You have helped me by digging my earth and throwing it away, and making me to feel so depressed, and telling me what really you think about me. I want to solve it right now. I want to find a guru right now, right this minute!"

Krishna said, "Not right this minute. Get up in the morning, do your meditation, then go and find whichever person you see. Adopt him. That will do."

Naarad said, "What are you talking about?"

"I'm not talking about anything. I'm just telling you that's the only way you can find a Guru. Otherwise, finding a Guru is impossible."

Naarad said, "*You* become my Guru!"

"No. I am not competent to be your Guru."

"Tell me why."

"I'll tell you later."

So Naarad went, sat down, had fun, got up in the morning, meditated, prayed, "Narayan, Narayan, Narayan, Narayan." He did the whole stuff, came out, and met a fisherman. Now, the Pandit Naarad met a fisherman who was stinking. You know how fragrant fishes are! And he said, "Who are you?"

He said, "I am So-and-so."

"What do you do?"

"I am a fisherman."

"I have to adopt you as a guru. I am Naarad."

"Forget it! Guru of Naarad? What's wrong with you? Are you real?"

"Yes, I am real. I am Naarad Moonee. I can show you anything you want."

"Prove it to me."

"What do you want to see?"

"This tree becomes gold."

"So be it." The tree became gold.

"Now I want to see what catch I am going to make."

Naarad showed the fisherman all he was going to catch that day. He said, "Anything else?"

"One more thing. I want to see what I am."

And Naarad showed him, and he came to understand that he really was Naarad's Guru. He said, "Alright, I'm your Guru. Now I have seen it, and I can't get out of it, but I'm a fisherman and I don't know what to do!"

Naarad said, "No, no, no. This is my *bhayṭaa*, this is my offering, and I am your disciple... There, see, I touch your feet! And here I am Naarad."

The fisherman protested, "No, no, no. You are Naarad! You showed me I am your Guru, but no, no, no, I can't be!"

And Naarad was also thinking at that time, "How can this fisherman be my Guru? I have shown him three miracles, but this guy is just a baboon. He is admitting it himself!" He said to the fisherman, "Okay, okay, okay. You just take care of yourself. I'll take care of myself."

Naarad came home, but he felt restless. There was no peace. Things did not work out. He realized it was because of his ego. He went to Krishna, and said, "Lord Krishna, I am back. Tell me why you don't want to be my Guru?"

Lord Krishna replied, "*You* want me as your Guru. *That* is your *ego*. You want to say, 'Lord Krishna is my Guru!' Forget it! Rishi Vyaasaa is my Guru. I have a Guru, but you don't. I told you *your* Guru would be the first person you saw."

"But that was a fisherman. He stinks! I showed him three miracles. He didn't get it. He's just a baboon. He admitted so himself!"

"He is a baboon, it is true. But for you, he is your Guru. Now go, go to him. Otherwise this situation will not be resolved."

"Well, what should I do?"

"Just go and accept him as your Guru."

"I did! I accepted him. I gave him money. I bowed to him. I touched his feet. I went through all the formalities."

"No. I was all just ego. You showed him the miracles out of your ego. You could have just honestly dealt with him. Naarad, humility is the way to God. There is nothing else. Games just don't work out."

"But you *are* my Guru. You are teaching me!"

"No. I am just explaining to you. You so badly want me to be your Guru because I am Lord Krishna. Don't you understand? That fisherman is your Guru!"

So Naarad went and knocked at the door of the fisherman, and whatever he told him his catch would be, that catch was there, and there was more stinking. And Naarad was cleaning the bellies of the fish and taking their heads off and doing the whole thing. And he said, "Well, fisherman, you are my Guru and there's no way out. I've come back to you, and you've got to help me!"

"Naarad, look, how can I help you? You know what God can do, what He cannot do, whatever is happening, what has happened... You have knowledge of the three universes. You have everything in the world, and you are Naarad Moonee. Kings rise when you come in. You appear and disappear like "Beam me up! Beam me down!" Time and space is like nothing to you. You are immortal. How can I... What are you talking about?"

"Let's not discuss that, Sir. You are my Guru, and I humbly ask you how, having a Guru, I can solve this problem?"

"What's the problem?"

"When I go to see Lord Krishna, he receives me. Everything is fine. But then they dig out the earth and throw it out because I don't have a Guru. But now I have you as Guru. How can I solve the problem? Suppose I go and he does it again? And *he will*, I *know* him!"

"It's very simple. It's so simple. You have no idea. Krishna respects you, right?"

"Yeah."

"Go and sit in his lap, then. He is not going to dig out his own lap! When he tells you where to sit, just tell him, 'I am going to sit in your lap,' and then sit there. Simple. Matter ends. Don't sit on the Earth where every man sits. Sit in his lap. It's so simple! Don't you understand? It's just simple common sense. All he does is dig out the earth where you sit because he says it is polluted, right?"

"Yeah."

"Well, if they dig out the lap, there will be no Lord Krishna. Matter will be solved. Nobody will insult you like that! Besides, if you are my disciple, I cannot tolerate your insult." That's one thing a spiritual teacher cannot tolerate. He can tolerate his insult, but not the insult of his student. That is purely true.

So Naarad did his *sadhana*, "Naarayan, Naarayan, Naarayan..." then went to see Lord Krishna.

Krishna said to him, "Welcome, Moonee Raaj! Come in... How are you?"

"I have found a Teacher!"

"Oh, fine. Now, now. Let's hear about it. Please sit down."

"No. You sit down first. I am going to sit in your lap."

"You've found a Teacher. Now there's no need. We won't dig up the earth any more. It's over! Don't even think about it any more."

"You were right. I was blinded by my ego, I was blinded by my power, I was blinded by my right as a great Moonee, but I did not have the privilege of dealing consciously."

### ***"Bana is the Guru's Shield"***

I am not against what you wear. Wear what you want to wear, but if you have no reverence for Guru's *bana*, then you have no reverence for God's protection also.

Try to get up and dress up and feel the light of God is around you. That is why we say "the pure light within you guide your way on."

*Bana* is the Guru's shield. It is an armor. So don't try to be a fifth columnist and sabotage everything. And over and above that, don't sabotage your values.

You have come a long way to be a friend of your own soul. Complete it. Finish it so that you can go home with absolute grace.

### **I feel it!**

Shiva Singh had not been feeling well. Inexplicable sadness had come over him and he had been

crying uncontrollably, on and off, for a number of weeks. At the time, he was working at sales and marketing for 3HO family businesses and other natural food companies. Shiva Singh's position required visiting retail accounts. He would drive to an account, weeping all the way, stop, do his job, and drive away to the next location weeping.

Now, at a trade show in Los Angeles, Yogi Bhajan called a meeting of all the sales people. The meeting was in the basement of a nice house in Los Angeles. There were about fifteen people there, men and women employed by the family businesses. The Siri Singh Sahib was in relaxed mode, wearing a casual orange house turban, a tee shirt, a shawl and *kachheras*. As the meeting progressed he looked at Shiva Singh and asked what was wrong.

When Shiva Singh started to babble a response, Yogi Bhajan said, "I want to talk to you, come with me," and led him to a private room where he closed the door and Shiva Singh immediately started bawling.

In response, the Master got up and touched Shiva Singh with his fingers at the brow point. Instantly, all his sorrow evaporated. There was no emotion whatsoever, aside from a profound feeling of thankfulness. Shiva Singh felt he was in *samadhi* like he had read about in books on mystical experiences.

They rejoined the meeting in progress. Afterwards, Shiva Singh followed the people on their way outside, but with no thought process. His mind was in suspended animation.

Everyone stood in the driveway as the Siri Singh Sahib prepared to enter his car to leave. Before doing so, he called out, "Shiva, do you feel it?"

Vacantly, his student responded, "I think so."

The Master, all of six feet and four inches, two hundred and eighty pounds, walked over and emphatically struck Shiva Singh on the chest with his open palm. His student slowly recoiled from the power of the loving whack to his heart centre.

Shiva Singh blurted out, laughing, "I feel it! I feel it!" and this time he truly did.

Shiva Singh, still not quite himself, found himself graciously being helped from place to place by his co-workers as he saw past, present and future all at once, all around. After a few days, Shiva Singh returned to normal consciousness, but ever grateful for the loving intervention of the Siri Singh Sahib.



## To Laugh or to Cry

Hari Jiwan Singh was driving Yogi Bhajan to Santa Barbara for a meeting. He was accustomed to asking Yogi Bhajan anything and everything. In innocence and ignorance, Hari Jiwan turned to his teacher and said, "Sir, what do you do when you get out of bed on the wrong side?"

The Master replied, "What's this wrong side of the bed?"

Hari Jiwan went on to explain the idiom, "Well, Sir, it's when you wake up and stub your toe getting out of bed, struggle to the bathroom, and there's nothing left in the toothpaste. Eventually, you make it to the car, and the battery is dead, and it gets worse with each successive occurrence."

"Oh, that's easy," he said, "Just laugh!"

"Laugh?!" Hari Jiwan exclaimed, "With all due respect, Sir, maybe you didn't hear me correctly," and he went on to say, "It means everything in the day is going wrong and it keeps getting worse."

"Okay," his teacher replied, "Then cry."

## Truth

Once, the indomitable Siri Singh Sahib was making his rounds at a session of the Khalsa Council. The meetings were being held in an expensive Los Angeles hotel. Gorgeous chandeliers hung from above. Beautiful paintings adorned the walls. The floors were gleaming and beautifully carpeted.

All the participants were dressed in their finest white attire. The Siri Singh Sahib's staff was typically immaculate and distinctly radiant. The Master himself sported the most fascinating jewelry. An *Adi Shakti* pendant inlaid with precious gems hung down his robust chest. A child's ransom in precious stones adorned his large, manicured fingers.

The hotel was embellished with many delightful fountains. The day's events were punctuated by cut up melons, grapes, tasteful dinners and sparkling mineral water. Like a king, the Siri Singh Sahib toured his domain.

A huddle of young Khalsa, recently arrived from India, lounged around a marble table in a bright, well-appointed atrium. The teenagers looked up just as the Master was descending on them, a medley of staff and hangers-on in tow. They exchanged a few words, he taking their pulse, they groping with their angst and inexperience in the august presence of the Master.

After a few minutes of gentle repartee, the Siri Singh Sahib paused and smiled. He took one

finger and magnificently tucked it behind an ear, beneath his regal, white turban.

"Do you know what sex is?" he quizzed them, and before they could say, he answered for them, "It is like this." Drawing his finger out from behind his ear, he informed them frankly, "Like this finger. It has a smell like this. If you ever want to think of sex, just do this." He motioned once more with his finger. "It is no more than this."

## Knowledge

Somehow, everyone who ever came to know the Siri Singh Sahib had their own unique relationship with the Master. He could be distant as a star or near as their own heartbeat. He might be a father, mother, brother, sister, friend or god. Often, there was some aspect of the relationship that simply baffled ordinary common sense.

Kapil Mohan Singh had grown up in a typical Sikh family in New Delhi. In his youth, he moved along with his parents to America. His college days found him in the city of Syracuse, New York. There, he became friends with an American Sikh named Kartar Singh Khalsa and his wife Hari Kaur. Through them, Kapil Mohan Singh developed a new appreciation of his Sikh heritage, and a particular interest in the teachings of the Siri Singh Sahib.

Kapil Mohan Singh practised morning *sadhana* with Kartar Singh and Hari Kaur. They also had fun and did all the things good friends do together. They would discuss the life of a Sikh and the implications of the Siri Singh Sahib's teachings. Moreover, Kapil Mohan managed to read Kartar Singh's every article and every book pertaining to yoga and Sikhism, and to eagerly await every newsletter from Shakti Parwha Kaur with its pearls of wisdom from the Master. In America, Kapil Mohan Singh had become a serious student of his religion.

One summer, he went to the Summer Solstice Sadhana at Ram Das Puri. It was there that Kapil Mohan Singh first had an opportunity to hear and actually speak with the Siri Singh Sahib. Kapil Mohan Singh felt so inspired by the whole experience that he resolved to take *Amrit* at the ceremony scheduled near the end of the event. He also decided that, like the new Sikhs, he would apply to the Siri Singh Sahib for a new "spiritual name". He was growing tired of his name. It did not inspire him with spiritual associations.

To his surprise, the hopeful young man received a written reply from the Master explaining that his name could not be changed since it had been been taken, in the traditional way, from the first letter of a *Hukam*. Only this particular Order had been given at the holiest of holies for all Sikhs, the very Harimandar Sahib.

The Siri Singh Sahib was right. Kapil Mohan Singh had been born in Amritsar. His grandmother

had named him after the first character of the *Hukam* on the day of his birth.

What amazed Kapil Mohan Singh the more was that when he explained what had just happened to some of his friends at the Solstice, they were not even surprised! Each of them had at least one story of their own. All of them defied logic or reason. Many were in some way deeply personal. All were at least slightly incredible - or so they thought.

## **SikhNet**

Since Spring of 1974, Guruka Kaur and Singh had been in Columbus Ohio serving as the Ashram Directors there. Proximity to the University of Ohio opened a number of opportunities, including training its swim team in Kundalini Yoga through the far-sighted, holistic approach of trainer Mary Jo Ruggieri.

During the summer of 1985, Siri Ram Kaur, the Ashram secretary, came to Guruka Singh and asked if she could buy a personal computer to track ashram finances and activities. She, along with all the other women in the ashram including Guruka Kaur, were about to leave for Khalsa Women's Training Camp for eight weeks. The computer arrived while all the ladies were in New Mexico, and Guruka Singh set it up in the ashram office. One thing led to another and within a few weeks Guruka Singh had purchased a modem and connected the computer to Compuserve which was an early networking hub people used to connect with one another in a common virtual space. This was ten years before the Internet went public and the first web browser, called "Mosaic," which made it accessible to many people for the first time.

Guruka Singh's excitement at being able to chat in real-time with people sharing common interests all around the world was tremendous. The next time he saw the Siri Singh Sahib was that autumn when he came to the Midwest to teach. Excitedly, he described his computer adventures on Compuserve to him ending with, "It's amazing! I can be in a chat room with people from Tokyo, London and Rio de Janeiro at the same time and we can all talk to each other online."

The Master closed his eyes. Half a minute passed. Then he opened his eyes and said. "We should have a Sikh Network."

That was all Guruka Singh needed to hear. SikhNet went online with two phone lines and two modems later that Fall. By 1992 it had grown to eight phone lines and eight modems and had about two hundred users. The Siri Singh Sahib continued to encourage Guruka Singh and the members of the Khalsa Council to communicate through SikhNet. Five years later, with the popularity of the World Wide Web rising fast, SikhNet was reincarnated as a website, soon to have millions of unique users annually.

## 1986 New Year's Statement to Khalsa Council

*Tayree Meher daa bolanaa. Tudhi Agay Ardaas. Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das. Aad Guray Nameh, Jugaad Guray Nameh, Sat Guray Nameh, Siri Guru Dayvay Nameh. Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!*

We are very happy that we are in the year 1986, but we are very sad that we have entered 1986. We are totally assessing our caliber and our consciousness and if you look at the last fifteen years, you will be surprised to know that right from up north, back to Boston we have lost leaders – but the *Sangat* remains intact because there is no place for ego in Sikh Dharma. Personal leadership will never survive. Collective leadership, yes. It is not our tradition to lose people, but it is a necessity that whatever stage you reach, you have to go higher.

My whole subject on which I was going to speak has just changed now with one telephone call which I conversed today. And when I was discussing with logic, reason, with all my spiritual strength, the lady said to me in reply, “Why couldn't we live as we were – unknown, whatever poor or not – unattached?”

I didn't answer. I said, “You've got to change your attitude.” That was the simplest escape reply I could get because I was supposed to be here and I didn't want to counsel there. But I am asking you one thing today. If you really cannot change for the positive, you have to change for the negative because change is a living experience. So what we are trying to do is to put people through the positive change, it doesn't matter what. And this does bother a lot of people.

They think – and normally all the people have exploited religion with this idea – that religion is a refuge. Religion is never a refuge. It never was and never can be. Religion is a way of experiencing one's excellence. Religion is not a refuge and it cannot be used as a refuge. And those who feel they have reached a stage and they need a refuge, have to go.

There is nothing which can happen. The soul has to evolve. It must develop. It is a simple law of life and it cannot be sacrificed.

Yesterday I happened to go to a congregation where there was a very direct question asked in a very offensive way. But I had opened myself to the situation, so I thought it is better to reply. The question was, “All these Americans are following you, why not the Indians?”

Indians will love to follow, Americans will love to follow, so long as my part as a religious person is there – and that is compassionate, forgiving, tolerating everything. Our main conflict with Indian Sikhs is when my role as an administrative authority of Sikh Dharma comes in.

I cannot come to a house of a person who has a shaven beard, who has insulted my Guru openly and publicly because he happens to be rich. God has given us enough. We cannot compromise. It is

the conflict and the conflict only is at the administrative role. And I cannot practice that duality. It means American Sikhs have to be in *rehit* (living a disciplined life) and with the Indian Sikhs we have to tolerate everything. It is a double standard! It is not possible.

Forget about that part. In life itself, we want everybody to come to his excellence. Whether you are a Sikh or you are not, our attitude is the same. People take it differently. They think that by pulling them out of their rut and telling them to walk, we have done something dangerous to them. We have not done anything dangerous. We believe in this universe only one thing lives, and that is the excellence. The way to cut your depression and your stress is to make a day to live in your excellence.

Either I should revise the entire teachings of the Gurus, or I should totally follow it. Or at least try to follow it.

What we are doing in the West is a very simple experiment. First of all, we are not going to divide ourselves: "This is an African Sikh; this is an American Sikh; this is an Indian Sikh; and then this is a Jat Sikh and that is a Papa Sikh; and that is a..." You know we don't believe in the variety. We believe in one Guru, one Sikh, and every Sikh is a Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh, whether he likes it or not. And today we believe every Sikh is a Sikh belonging to the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. It is nobody's property to interfere in anybody.

Now the question is: Do we command or do we suggest? If our suggestion is so strong it looks like a command and irritates you, then you are not a Sikh to begin with because somebody somewhere in this life has to say 'Hey, you are wrong!' And if Indian Sikhs cannot take that route, God bless them! Wrong is wrong, wherever you practice it, it is going to be the same wrong.

My point of view is very clear on certain subjects and time will prove what I say today. There shall be a time when people will break your doors and ask for being a Sikh because it is a very practical religion. It is a way of life of excellence and I have yet to see one dumb person who doesn't want to live in his or her excellence.

All we are doing now is preparing the ground. And when you prepare the ground, you have to set a line of action. All I say is, we have laid down the blueprint of the Khalsa Nation and we should be proud of it. And let Guru guide it and let the excellence of God complete it. And that's all it is about.

I understand psychologically it is very difficult to stand out with all what you know. Most of the people are dead against me. One person talked to me yesterday and I tell you the funniest talk was, "Sir, I love you."

I said, "But you are never around. You never believe. You never... You know, what is this, 'love you' business? This goes on every day."

She said, "You have totally enraptured me." And the word she used was "criminally."

I become a little cautious on these kinds of words. I said, "What I did criminally to you?"

She said, "You have brought in so much knowledge that it is impossible to live in garbage, but it is impossible to come out of it."

And I said, "Why?"

She answered very funny. She said, "You know, in the garbage nobody knows what you are doing. Sir, as a Sikh everybody knows what you are doing."

I said, "This is the best PR. That's what everybody wants."

It is the human integrity which is very important. God made you very important. God wants you very important. And actually, to be very honest, it doesn't matter whom you belong to, if you ever want to belong to God, God only cares if you really become very important. And that is the only glory God wants. God wants his people, each one of you, to be excellently important. That's what God wants.

Who is that artist among us who wants to create a piece of art and doesn't want to be excellent? That's what God wants. The problem is we have gone through the year '85 which was the thirteen ( $8+5=13$ ) and now we are entering the year of excellence or "exaltation" or "resurrection" where everybody who wants to be happy has to go upward. So you have to build your boosters. A lot of you have a lot of problems in your life because you don't build your boosters and work never stops. The challenge of life never goes away.

You know, you are like those pigeons. There was a one pigeon, he was sitting on the edge of the house feeling very safe. The other pigeon said, "Let us fly away."

He said, "No, no. I am tired. I am not going to fly. I am going to sit here. I will bask in the sun. I want to just relax," which you normally say.

And the other pigeon said, "I am just telling you that the cat is coming and you are lazy and the cat is hungry. It is going to create a drama. So why don't you fly away and let us go to the other side of the building and it will take the cat a long time to come there?"

The he-pigeon said, "You are an idiot. Close your eyes. Don't look at the cat and it will go away."

After a while, the cat was hungry and did attack. And the she-pigeon came to the other side where the other pigeon was with a broken wing and all bleeding and in a bad shape. She said to the pigeon, "Hey, how about relaxing and closing your eyes?"

And he said, "It didn't work."

And she said to him, "My dear pigeon, I hate to tell you it didn't work then and nothing is going to work out now because you don't have a wing. You lost your wing in that closing your eyes."

So, if anybody of you wants to close the eyes and do feel the time will go away, time won't. Sometimes you feel very belittled when you are injured. You don't want to come and even want to counsel because you know you are foolish and you have been. Having no guts to face a mistake and manipulate life around the circumstances and environments and challenges is nothing but a tragedy of a human life.

The entire Sikh teachings warns us against that. When Guru says, "*Jab lag Khaalsa rahay niaraa, tab lag taaj deeo mai saaraa*" he calls you for a unique excellence. So long as the Sikh of the Guru shall live in a unique excellence, Guru Gobind Singh promises that he shall give all the light, all the power and all the energy.

Listen, we all have to die. Why die at the bottom of the totem pole? Why not to be on the top? It is my prayer that you may rise to the top of your own excellence.

And those who have left us, we are sad and we are in a prayerful mood that they found their Guru in their life and they betrayed their Guru. Between their treachery and their betrayal, the relationship is direct with the Guru and it has nothing to do with us. As far as we are concerned, we will keep on praying and keep on carrying them. And it does apply to the Indian Sikhs, it does apply to the African Sikhs, it does apply to the English Sikhs, and if somebody is on the South Pole, it applies to the South Pole Sikhs and to the North Pole Sikhs. Sikhs are Sikhs and Sikhs belong to the Guru.

With these few words sharing with you, I hope you will reach your excellence in the resurrection of the year 1986 for which we waited so long. And we shall grow, it doesn't matter what. It isn't the life that matters. It is the courage you bring to it.

*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!*

## **The Prescription of the Saint Soldier**

Somebody once phoned the Siri Singh Sahib and said, "I am in trouble! I am in trouble, Sir! I am in trouble! I want an answer! I can't reach you. You are not reachable."

"Could you calm down?"

"Yes, I am calmed down," said the voice.

“Are you listening?”

“Yes, I am listening. What I should listen? I am in pain! I am in trouble. Nobody bothers. Nobody cares...” she continued.

“Wait a minute. Just do me a favor. Take one hour and write the profile of a saint and soldier. And call me in exactly one hour or I will call you.”

Even before an hour was up, she had left a message. The Siri Singh Sahib called her back and said, “Read it back to me.”

What he heard was a most beautiful profile of a saint and an exact profile of a soldier. He said to her, “Put them together, and that is your definition.”

“What should I do?” she demanded.

“You are still asking? Act as a soldier under the wisdom and profile of a saint. And problem will be over.”

“You are not going to tell me anything?” she continued.

“I am telling you the best thing in the world. Just act.”

## **Round and Round the Pole**

Louis Russell grew up in a poor, dangerous neighbourhood of South Bronx, New York City. He was the eldest of three children of a broken-hearted single mother. Little Louis, as the “man” of the family did what best he could. He took on his mother’s broken heart. It was not easy.

When Louis was in grade school, his mother enrolled him in a program that gave disadvantaged children an experience of life in a peaceful, rural setting. Through the Fresh Air program, he became a regular guest of a Caucasian family in New Hampshire from the time he was eight years old.

Those visits were the time of his young life and the sensitive young man yearned for each visit with what would become for him his substitute family. There were a dad and a mom, structure, stability, positivity, and there were no drugs, gangs, or violence.

The problem was that as little Louis began to grow into a happy, young Black man, Caucasian people started seeing Louis as a “Black man,” and as such, as someone to be feared. They had been inundated with stories and images of Black men as criminals and political firebrands calling for radical social change and burning blocks in cities across the US. It was the early 1970’s.



As a young man, Louis was conflicted and, again, broken-hearted. When he graduated from the esteemed Bronx High School of Science, he moved to faraway Fairbanks to continue his studies at the University of Alaska.

In his first year in Alaska, Louis began to question what was expected of him and where exactly he was headed. After a year of university, he dropped out, and began a period of self-exploration. It was 1977.

Louis read beat and psychedelic authors. His reading led him to experiment with peyote, mescaline and LSD. He also began practising Kundalini Yoga, taking classes with Devta Kaur and Jai Inder Kaur in their home in Fairbanks. He explored Reichian bioenergetics and Gestalt therapy, and spent some time with the indigenous teacher Rolling Thunder, all in an effort to become more authentic, to be more himself, and to heal his broken heart.

In 1982, he revisited Kundalini Yoga. By this time, there was an ashram community in Fairbanks. Louis found they were real people. They ordered pizza and watched videos. Louis felt he could be with these people. He was invited to read from their Siri Guru Granth Granth. It's words made sense to his normally wary mind. Day by day, a bond started to develop between Louis and the 3HO community in Fairbanks.

In 1986, Yogi Bhanjan came to give a White Tantric Yoga course in Fairbanks. People came from miles around for the course. Louis came, hungry for change. On the first day of the course, he met a red-haired yogi who had been named "Dharam Singh" by the Master. Louis asked what it meant.

"One who is committed to righteousness and duty," he was told.

Louis reflected. These seemed to be the very qualities he had been privately aspiring toward. He said, "I bet you I get the same name."

The next day, Louis had a personal audience with Yogi Bhanjan. He scribbled his name and birthdate on a sheet of paper and handed it to the Master. Yogi Bhanjan's first words to Louis were, "You don't need to read a book to know what it is about." He continued, "You have seen a lot of negativity."

Dharam Singh's teacher, Guru Meher Singh then engaged their visiting teacher, "Louis is trying to figure out what he should be doing. He works as a deejay at a couple of radio stations, playing jazz and reggae music."

The Siri Singh Sahib was not impressed. He responded, "That's bullshit. Do you know how to use a gun?"

"Yes."

“Have you ever lived in New Mexico?”

“No.”

After a few moments, the Siri Singh Sahib commented, “You have a tremendous commitment phobia...”

At that point, the Master slipped into an altered state of awareness, nodding off to his left. Louis worried that he had bored the Master to sleep.

Yogi Bhanjan then came to and began to write and speak to the assembled community members, “If this person cannot commit himself to something, blindfold him. Give him sixteen feet of rope and have him walk around a post until he drops.”

It was a unique remedy being proposed. Louis was transfixed. Half of him was saying, “Is he kidding?” and the other half was saying, “Thank you so much!” He also received a new identity, “Dharam Singh,” as he had predicted.

It was the last day of May and Louis, now Dharam Singh was almost without money as he had been for many months, living in a rent-free cabin in the woods. Somehow, he managed a ticket to Seattle. From Seattle, he caught a ride to New Mexico for the Summer Solstice Sadhana. Deeply, more than anything, he wanted to apply himself to the remedy prescribed for him by the Master – and he wanted to do it at Summer Solstice.

Arriving in New Mexico, Dharam Singh stayed overnight at the home of Guru Meher Singh’s mother-in-law, Siri Gian Kaur. Finding a suitable post and a rope, he made his way up to the Solstice site and set them up. The day before White Tantric Yoga, Guru Meher Singh drove his student back up to Ram Das Puri at 5 a.m. and blindfolded him. Dharam Singh began to walk clockwise around the post, round and round and round. Moving without the use of his two eyes.

Listening, Dharam Singh could hear the sounds of people coming and going. Some people meditated among the junipers nearby, then their meditation ended and they went away. A distance away, at the tantric shelter, he could hear the sound of workshops being given and meals being served. Listening, he could hear as people went about their business, setting up their tents, meeting friends, finding their way around the expansive site.

After what seemed like half the day, feeling bored and emotionally exhausted, Dharam Singh stopped walking and knelt on the ground. Just at that point, Guru Meher Singh magically appeared, giving him some water and timely encouragement.

Round and round, Dharam Singh continued, blind to the world around him. A couple of hours later, Siri Gian Kaur came and set up her tent a short distance away. She walked and talked with

Dharam Singh for about twenty minutes.

Dharm Singh asked Siri Gian Kaur, "Is there a stick on the ground?"

She replied, "Yes, there is. Are you feeling irritated?"

"Yes. Would you give me the stick?"

Receiving the stick in his hands, Dharam Singh snapped it in half and threw it to the ground. A few tears came to his eyes. Then energy came from nowhere, boundless energy...

He started walking fast. Round and round and round.

Watching him, Siri Gian said, "I think you are in good shape. Call me if you need me."

Dharam Singh was thirty years old and feeling high. As he walked, he chanted, "Wahe Guru!" Guided by an inner light, he marched deep into the night, round and round and round.

Dharam Singh caught himself just as he was about to crash face-first, into the ground. He had fallen asleep on his feet. He asked himself, "Wasn't this what I was waiting for? Hadn't Yogi Bhajan said I should walk until I dropped?" But he still had energy, so he continued. Then it happened again, and he saved himself just before planting his face in the dust of Ram Das Puri.

Dharam Singh picked himself up and continued. This was new territory now. The energy was different. The feeling was different. For the first time, he started to feel afraid. The third time Dharam Singh collapsed to the ground, he thought, "I think I'm done." He called out to Siri Gian Kaur.

She replied, "Are you sure?"

"Yeah, I think I'm sure." It was four in the morning now. He had been doing this for twenty-three hours.

Dharam Singh removed his blindfold and Siri Gian Kaur took him to his tent in the valley of the Solstice site. Three hours later, he woke up just in time for the day's White Tantric Yoga meditations with the Master. He felt fantastic.

## **Return of the Hopi Sacred Healing Walk to Ram Das Puri**

Near the end of the Summer Solstice Sadhana of 1986, Yogi Bhajan acted on a request by a Hopi elder, made several years earlier, to fulfill a prophesy of his tribe. That prayer was that the "warriors of

spirit” conduct a “sacred healing walk” at the site of Ram Das Puri, once a Hopi sacred site.

Going by the ancient tradition, everyone walked barefoot on their heels over a prescribed course, a spiral of three and a half undulations marked out in a vast field away from the tantric shelter. As the participants walked on the dry earth of the holy land, they chanted words provided by Yogi Bhajan and put to music.

God’s Spirit  
God’s Soul  
Divine Spirit  
Make Me Whole.  
Heal Me, Heal Me, My God.  
Break Me, Break Me  
through *Maya*’s façade.  
You are merciful. You are All.  
Thou art the Spirit.  
On Thee I call.  
My faith in “Ya”  
My faith in “Ha”  
My faith in “La”  
My faith in “Ra”  
Come through me, my Lord of “Sa.”  
Heal Me and Heal My World.  
Thou art Divine. I call through Thy Word.

It was a universal chant invoking the element of water and the tradition of Judaism in “Ya.” “Ha,” the Master explained, invoked the air element and Christianity. “La” invoked earth and the tradition of Islam. “Ra” called on fire and the Eastern traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Shintoism. “Sa” invoked the element of space and the tradition of Guru Nanak.

After the ceremony, with the sun’s rays gradually fading from the sky, everyone gathered together in the tantric shelter. There, they celebrated in ecstatic music and dance the day, the conclusion of the days of White Tantric Yoga, and the many, many blessings of being at that holy gathering at that special, holy time.

## The Law of Dharma and the Law of the Suits

The Siri Singh Sahib's freewheeling, free-dealing, freely dispensing ways blazed a mighty swath in the tangled undergrowth of America's tragically unhealthy, unhappy, unholy human landscape. By

healing hearts and homes, and inspiring simple common sense and ordinary decency in a land where people were more accustomed to buying a semblance of wellness from pricey doctors, psychiatrists and lawyers, the Master had given countless Westerners a profound sense of real strength and inner self-reliance.

But when the scourge of *shakti pad* hit even the best of his students, there were certain to be repercussions. Some of those who had leaned the most on the unfailing Siri Singh Sahib, and ordered the details of their lives according to his holistic prescription, rebounded after a time with lawyers and expensive lawsuits, claiming damages for the goodness he had done.

"What wrong did I ever say to anyone? You can't tell people to eat beets. You can't tell people to go to college and finish their degree. You can't tell people just to work if you want to run your household!

"We have been sued by nobody else but people who we loved, so we have no hatred even now. Actually, it is not that I am being sued. I am just one person. Every officer of every corporation of ours has been sued. Every asset has been sued and every belief of ours has been sued. And that's how dangerous this lawsuit is!

"It's a trial and a test in which they want to prove that we are not a religious organization. Secondly, they say we don't exist. Thirdly, they say we do everything badly and rotten. And that's how a network works. If you want to look at that, that's how it is. We know it is not true. We know it doesn't make any sense except that we have to pay one hundred and seventy dollars an hour to defend ourselves.

"These people are not going to win. They just do not want you to exist. They cannot tolerate American Sikhs practising everything in prosperity and the fact that this man who calls himself a great Sikh is not joining them. A Sikh is never a terrorist. A Sikh never takes offence to harm anybody. It is our history. I shall not go against our history. This suffering is better than total suffering and going away.

"This Peace Prayer Day, we were threatened. We were told it was going to be blasted. It was going to be bombarded. There were going to be casualties. There was going to be a lawsuit, and it was going to hurt everybody. But you got to do what you got to do.

"Bad only brings the good out. And good only shines because there's a bad. Take away Aurangzeb, and Guru Gobind Singh would have stayed in Anandpur and have enjoyed it. There was no problem. Take Jahangir out of the life of Guru Arjun Dev - my God - everything is fine! You have to understand that.

"It's a funny thing. Six years ago, a few top leaders sat down to discuss how to retire Siri Singh Sahib and install the new Siri Singh Sahib. I called them. I said, 'Look, Mukhias, there is no trouble. It's

only a question of who can earn enough to run the show. If you can run the show, take it! I want to retire myself.'

"I just had a very real communication with someone. They said, 'Are you not afraid you will lose your Siri Singh Sahibship?'

"I said, 'I am not even afraid if I lose my shirt!'

"They said, 'The whole of New Mexico will read it!'

"I said, 'When have they not? We have already prepared our press release: "Please forgive us for this nuisance. It is a part of the territory."'

"Each one of you who goes from here, just remember this tape we have played. We should all continue it, meditating and playing with this tape till we come out of this mud and Guru clears us and God helps us to be cleared. I'm now asking you, I am asking those who left camp earlier, and everybody, to continue this meditation throughout, till our boats come to the shore.

"One innocent prayer can change the path of time. So, in your innocence and in your love and in your grace - "*Rakhay rakhahaar aap ubaarian*" - keep it going in your heart, in your mind, in your home, and everywhere. And thank you very much and God bless you. May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the pure light within you guide your way on, guide your way on.

*"Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!"*

So it was that, after a number of fits and starts, those who wished to humble the impressive majesty of the Siri Singh Sahib, themselves went down to ignominious defeat. All their expensive lawyers could not prevail over the power of prayer, the protective hand of Guru Ram Das, and the manifest course of destiny.

## **"From Fake to Real"**

You must understand one thing. If you drop everything in life and from a Sikh be a Khalsa, everything will fall in your way. I will explain to you how it works scientifically. I may not know religiously because I cannot pull the *Tuks* (Verses) from the Siri Guru Granth to convince I am a great scholar, but I am a very practical, aware person. Grassroots, I know.

Our path is a very marked path. From *Sat Nam*, we have to travel to *Wahe Guru*, that's all. There is no big deal. From heart we have to go to head and bring head to heart. Head is where head is. Heart is where heart is. Bring head to heart.



about. You don't understand. Because tomorrow the time is going to call on people and there is a requirement that there should be some people whose presence should work. Not speeches. That is what tomorrow wants.

## "To Be Somebody"

*Bana* is to think in the terms of the Guru. *Pehraawaa* is think of the Guru. *Wiwhaar* is think of the Guru.

Sometimes you are all mad at me these days that I come from India, brought you Indian dress, and I want you to look Indian. My God, it's not true! I am sitting in the House of the Guru. It is not true. For me, if you walk in your birth suit, who cares? I don't run a boutique shop. It's none of my problem.

But when you wear a *bana*, you think of the Guru. That's why when Guru gave *Amrit*, he gave *Amrit* later. He gave *bana* first. I have never forgotten this. I can't forget it and I just want to make you remember it. And that is why Guru Gobind Singh said, "*Jab lag Khaalsaa rahay niaraa, tab lag...*"

People think perhaps I have some motive. I have no motive. I have just one motive: your happiness. And there is no other way I know that you can be happy.

I know the people were just like you in the time of Guru Gobind Singh and he found out the formula and he gave to it the people. And from there, he made them the most superior people.

My honest feeling is, I may know nothing. Perhaps I can't do something. But if that something I know worked in Guru Gobind Singh's time can work now and people can become happy, why not?

I asked once an Indian Sikh, "Why could you not wear *bana*?"

He said, "*Bana*? I can't go to a job."

I said, "I can go to that job. Why can't you go to the job?"

He said, "That's not the purpose."

Do you know what he told me? A very funny thing! He said, "I feel very inferior if I wear *bana* and I meet an American three-piece-suit."

I said, "I would feel very inferior if I wore a three-piece-suit. I don't feel anything special in it. I feel like I am a salesman. I can't do it! It is just a matter of thinking."



He said, "You are right. I never thought that way."

I said, "You never thought that way or this way. You should have thought Guru's way. There's no other way! Think about it. A man may not like you on the first shake of hands when you are wearing *bana*. You may look weird. But that guy is never, ever going to forget you. Never!" It is better to be a weirdo than to be nothing! It is good to be somebody, rather than being lost in a crowd.

## What is Guru Gobind Singh?

The Siri Singh Sahib always encouraged his students to rise to their highest destiny. Sikhs, he taught to live as the Guru had lived. One day a man who appeared as a Khalsa Sikh came with an unusual request.

"Yogi Bhajan, I want to see Guru Gobind Singh."

"Very easy. Why you are asking me? Why don't you see Guru Gobind Singh?"

"No, no, no, no, I can't see Guru Gobind Singh."

"Are you *Amritdhari* Sikh?"

"Yes."

"Do you chant your *Naam*?"

"Yes."

"Do you read your *Banis*?"

"Yes."

"Do you live good?"

"Right."

"Alright, sit down then. Do you consider yourself a Khalsa?"

"Yes."

"Do you still want to see Guru Gobind Singh?"

“Yes.”

“Alright, come with me.” The Siri Singh Sahib took him to a mirror hanging on the wall. “Look in it.”

“This is me. What is Guru Gobind Singh? Am I Guru Gobind Singh?”

“Yes. You are and you are looking at Guru Gobind Singh. The fact is you don’t believe it. Guru Gobind Singh said that to you. You are his *jaan*. You are his *praan*. You are his *roop*. You are his *anoop*. You are in the will of God. Do you believe it?”

“I think I should believe it because you are saying it.”

“The same problem has come. Doubt has come in you right this minute. You do all the *Banis*. You do all the *Naam*. You do the whole thing. You live like a Sikh. I have tested you out. Everything is fine with you, but when I put you right on the spot, you say ‘Because I said.’ Who is I? Who do you think I am?”

The Master then put the Sikh in front of the mirror and stood behind him. “What do you see now?”

“I see me and I see you.”

“No, see Guru Gobind Singh! If we all stand, eighteen million of us, all stand in one line, we only become one, Guru Gobind Singh. Neither we are beyond, nor we are under, nor we are yonder, nor we are below, nor we are above. We are just one *roop*, one *saroop*. We are in our own *Mool Mantra*, *Akaal Moorat* and beyond that, there is nothing.”

## Love is Real

With his thousands of students the world around, the marvellous Siri Singh Sahib still managed to recognize each one, to appreciate their challenges, and to make gestures that could only be appreciated as deeply personal.

It was early morning in Espanola. The sun was shining as Krishna Kaur from Toronto, Canada cleaned out her tent at Khalsa Women’s Training Camp, for she was to leave that day. As she was breaking her tent down, Krishna looked outside, and there was an arrangement of beautiful flowers sitting in a vase.

Having no idea whom they were from, Krishna Kaur looked at the card which read, “Love is

Real.” There was no signature. She thought possibly her husband, Hari Darshan Singh had sent them, although this was not his nature.

Krishna phoned and Hari Darshan said he had not sent them. Her next thought was they were from her sister. Calling her, she found they were not from her either. Finally, as she was driving out of Espanola, Krishna Kaur stopped to call the florist to see if they could give her a clue. They put her on hold and then came back on line and said they were sorry but the card was supposed to have been signed “from Yogi Bhajan”.

Krishna Kaur’s immediate thought was that the flowers had been sent to the wrong person. They must have been meant for someone else and were left at her tent by mistake, she reasoned. Mystified and deeply curious, Krishna called the Siri Singh Sahib’s secretary to check whether they were really meant for her. They were.

Krishna was flabbergasted. What had she done to deserve this beautiful gesture? Why would the Siri Singh Sahib remember her at a time when his health was in peril? She knew that he had unexpectedly left camp to return to Los Angeles for health reasons. Later, she found that just before he went into surgery, the Siri Singh Sahib had asked his secretary to send her flowers.

Thinking herself unworthy and inconsequential, Krishna Kaur could not rid herself of the idea that the Master had really meant the bouquet for somebody else.

The all-wise Yogi must have been aware of his student’s disbelief because when she arrived home in Toronto, there was another surprise. A second bouquet, a dozen red roses, was delivered to her home. The card said, “Keep up, Keep going, Keep growing. Hail Guru Ram Das and Heal the World.” Apparently, when the Siri Singh Sahib had come out of surgery, he had again asked his secretary to send his Canadian Krishna flowers.

Finally, it sank in. *Love is real!* And the Master had appreciated her more than just once. Krishna Kaur was deeply touched and grateful.

## **The Life-Giving Power of Students’ Devotion**

One day in September of 1986, the unfailing Siri Singh Sahib was rushed to Cedar Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles. Quickly, he was taken to the operating table and surrounded by attentive medical staff.

Despite their modern equipment and their experience, they thought they had lost Yogi Bhajan. But they had not.

Deep inside himself, the Master was listening to the chanting of his students at Guru Ram Das

Ashram.

They gave him electric shock and shouted, “Yogi Bhajan, come back!”

He replied, “I am not gone. I am here. They are not letting me go. Do your other thing. Don’t worry about me!”

“We lost you!”

The Yogi said, “I knew that. I know, Doctor. Do your job.”

Once in hospital, the Siri Singh Sahib was not a model, compliant patient. Though he requested that he not be injected with morphine, the medical staff dosed him with the opiate as a matter of routine. The Master’s body was subjected to hourly tests and injections as the medical staff fussed over his well-being.

Early one morning the Yogi woke himself and rose to meditate, as was his routine. A battery of wires and devices he was attached to sounded a loud alarm.

One of Yogi Bhajan’s staff sadly observed, “He is not dying. You are killing him!”

### **White Tantric Yoga: A New Phase**

After his operation, the Siri Singh Sahib’s doctors strictly forbade his travel and counselled him not to work, but to rest and recuperate – a difficult task.

Always mindful of his responsibilities, as soon as he was able, Yogi Bhajan set out to reconfigure the White Tantric Yoga courses that he had, up to then, always presided over through his physical presence. The courses were invaluable to his students, helping them to cleanse their subconscious minds and progress spiritually. They also served an important function in the finances of the 3HO Foundation.

To keep the courses going, the Mahan Tantric arranged to have himself filmed giving directions and commentary for a full day’s course, much as he would have done in person. His stated intention was to record twenty-six unique courses. He called them “Renew to Be New.” With the passage of time, he was able to record a total of 126 day-long courses.

The Siri Singh Sahib then picked five senior members of his staff - Sat Simran Kaur, Nirinjan Kaur, Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur, Sopurkh Kaur, and Shakti Parwha Kaur - to go out in his stead and facilitate the next courses, essentially supplementing his pre-recorded presentation and directing the activities of the group. He explained that his subtle energy would still be present at the course, even after he

left his physical body.

Many students at first were sceptical and numbers at the courses were down at the beginning. Sat Simran Kaur facilitated the first video White Tantric Yoga course in Herndon, Virginia. The following week, she went as facilitator to Boulder, Colorado, then to Berkeley, California. Each time, she used the same video-recording. At each course, Sat Simran Kaur phoned Yogi Bajan several times during the day for input and feedback.

While the attendance did not return to previous levels for some time, those who attended generally experienced the same course as when Yogi Bajan was physically present.

## Healing the Great Healer

Many times, the Siri Singh Sahib for the West had reminded those who loved him that it was only because of their prayers that he continued to be among them. It had been said that this Harbhajan Singh, born on the twenty-sixth of August in 1929, was not destined to live past his forty-eighth year; that only because of their prayers, God had mercifully extended his life.

The remarkably durable heart of the saint had continued to exert, continued to love, continued to hope. It had not missed a beat through years of trial and temptation, slander, abuse, and betrayal. At the same time, he had advised everyone around him that his days among them were numbered, that they themselves would soon have to carry his load, that they should not be dependent on him.

When, finally, that supple instrument, that servant of so much God, could no longer cope with the task at hand, the doctors with their blades and prescriptions were called in. There followed a long period of recuperation. Untypically, there were no classes and no tours, as the great Master rested in Los Angeles, slowly recovering from the cutting art of the doctors.

Few people aside from his physician, Dr. Soram Singh, and his immediate staff and family, had the privilege of seeing the Master during that time, though he spent a considerable time on the phone, as usual, caring, sharing, advising, and keeping in touch with Sikhs and seekers everywhere.

As months passed by, word circulated that the Master was becoming increasingly restless. He had become visibly impatient with his confinement. Some people wondered. Other people prayed. Finally, one student in Los Angeles had an inspiration. Why not use the many healing meditations the Master had taught to heal the Master himself?

A community healing meditation was instituted. Dozens of students began to come each day to help the reclusive Master in his recovery. Word went out, and students in other cities also began to

focus their healing energies on their teacher. Soon, hundreds of students had returned some measure of the great kindness bestowed on them by the Guru's messenger. Remarkably, within a few days, Yogi Bhajan was again on his feet, smiling, and teaching classes with his usual healthful exuberance, often despite his doctor's orders.

At about the same time, the Siri Singh Sahib's devoted wife, was voted to take on the post first filled by Bhai Sahib Dayal Singh Khalsa. In recognition of her resourcefulness and tireless dedication, Bibiji Inderjit Kaur Khalsa, now elegantly attired in a turban and the distinctive *bana* of Khalsa, was designated the Bhai Sahiba of Sikh Dharma of the West, and respectfully given the additional title of "Siri Sardarni Kaur".

### **"I took a calculated risk"**

I took a calculated risk of overexerting myself. I know also that the body is meant to walk four miles an hour, and that is what it is meant to do. It is not meant to fly 600 miles per hour, 34,000 feet high every day. I know that – and jet lag is known as the lag caused by the jet.

Alright, I overdid it, I suffer! I am not sorry for it. Please, I am not asking for your sympathy.

I had a purpose, a motivation, and whenever you get attached to a purpose, you pay the price. And I paid the price and I am very honorable about it. I don't care.

I don't need your care for that. And now if I am going through all this "medical syndrome pain," I call it, it is only because I want to do something for the little children.

They have done nothing wrong. They need a hand. They need a help. And if I can extend myself, I want to leave something for the little ones.

### **Last Words**

With all the pressure and strain on the Siri Singh Sahib's health, many people worried that they might lose him. One student asked, "If you were to die and you wanted to give a last message, what message would you give?"

The Master replied to her, "First of all, I am not dying. That is very difficult, because I myself have realized death is not within my hands and neither in the hands of God now. It is stuck with the fibre of the prayers of those who have mastered their mind and their prayerful process and they control the electromagnetic psyche. I don't and God doesn't. According to the law of God, at forty-eight I should have gone and now I do not know when."

“Alright. Then what is the message?” insisted the student.

“My message is: ‘Even if the Golden Temple is attacked, don’t go berserk and lose your daily *sadhana*. Keep that up. And look at me. In four years, my physical body went astray because I went berserk. It hurt me so much in my heart I ended up with clogged arteries. Sometimes what you feel outside comes inside, what you feel inside comes outside.’”

“What else would you say?”

“I will say: ‘Never miss your *sadhana*.’ I will say: ‘Keep your Guru in you, not outside of you.’ And I will say: ‘Keep up!’”

“But suppose you have only one line to say and nothing else.”

“I will say: ‘Keep up. You shall be kept up. That is the law of God. God even cannot fail it. Guru vouches for it and Earth lives by it.’”

“Too long. I will take only one line.”

“Keep up and you will be kept up!”

“No. That is too long too. I will just say: ‘Keep up!’”

“Well, say whatever you want to say. Yes,” continued the Master, “Guru says the same: ‘*Naanak Naam chardee kala tayray bhanay sarbat da bhala*’. You cannot do good to all if you are not up and up. And if you chant the Naam, if you are holy, if you are of any virtue, if you are near God, if you have any radiance, if you are at all spiritual, one thing will come out of you. You will do good to all.”

## “Changing Routines”

*In March of 1987, the Master spoke in Los Angeles of the changes in the community dynamic that had taken place since his illness and, of course, he challenged the community to do better.*

I used to come after a tantric course and the next minute I have to teach a class, the next minute I have to counsel somebody. My day used to be full like a full basket of things.

Finally, the handle cracked off. Now, who should I blame? Nobody.

I had to pay the bills. I was worried. I didn’t want to drop the image of Sikh Dharma. I wanted it to live as graciously as it could. I worked hard. I made a lot of money.

Now that half a million dollars is on your shoulders. Now see how difficult it is to cheat on *das vandh* now. You can't. If you start doing that, the checks will bounce.

Now we are making the case that the tantric course is better without me because there is no personality involved, right? Now, you are not having the guts to even go to these tantric courses. Fifty people showed up only in Berkeley. The course was very beautiful.

“Oh yeah, the people will get to know about it.”

No, people are not sure. They need that energy. They forget how good it was. How it kept them so well. How the psyche worked. I was discussing with Sat Simran that day. She said for Baisakhi the course is being prepared.

I said, “Would you do something to tell people? It may be a last chance I can give them something. This may be the only thing that is left with you. Ask them to start believing themselves.”

“No Sir, those people who have gone to these courses feel they are great. They are better. They cannot handle it.”

I said, “Far out! Then spread the word around!”

But it is not true. You are lucky. You are very happy. For you, I am dead. I am not there. No Siri Singh Sahib is on your head and shoulders now to tell you to do it right. You are free.

Twice a week, you used to wear *bana* to come to that class at least. Now, walk in your underpants, you know. Run around!

That most beautiful grip that you belonged to somebody and you could meditate and you could dress up for somebody at least twice a week is over with. Twice a week, somebody used to talk to you face to face and tell you how great you are. If you would have had any loyalty to yourself, you would pulled out all the old tapes and would have asked Dharm Singh to play it for you. You could have done the re-runs. You could have done something that has done for you something continually. This called “Japa.”

### **“Build the *Takhat of Raaj Jog*”**

Remember, your plans are very high and heavy, but when you build the Takhat Raj Jog of Guru Ram Das at Ram Das Puri with your selected land, remember one thing: If I do not physically share with you anything at this moment, I share it with you today.



Let that place be built to the beauty that there shall be nothing in the world which can even try to equal it. Do not gold plate it. Put the very bricks of gold.

Somebody was telling me that soft gold gets taken away. I said, "Well, blessed are those feet which will take it away!"

They said, "What will you do then?"

I said, "We'll replace it. It is very easy."

Build a befitting glory to the throne of Guru Ram Das, and the day you shall complete it, that day, you and your generations shall rule the planet Earth. If it comes not true, wherever my ashes are, spit at them. Therefore, worry not, children of the Guru, the time of Khalsa has begun.

## The Hand of Geopolitics

In April of 1987, the Siri Singh Sahib, the wounded lion, lamented from afar the violence that roiled the countryside in the historic homeland of the Sikhs. He pointed out that there had been an important march for peace by leaders of all Hindu denominations. They had walked from the sacred city of Haridwar to the holy Harimandar, but nowhere had it been reported in the Indian media. The Indian media, it seemed, was an echo chamber for violence and extremism. The government wanted war on its Sikh population, so that is what the media submissively reported on.

The Master lauded President Reagan, who had known the fall of Afghanistan to a government dominated by Moscow was a defeat for the US. Knowing this, Reagan had supported the Afghan insurgency to push the Russians out.

The Siri Singh Sahib reminded the *Sangat* that he had first come to know in 1966 of a secret Soviet communique saying the Sikhs needed first to be neutralized so India could become a Russian colony. He told them that the United States and China had banded together against the expansionist USSR.

The Siri Singh Sahib said that when Indira Gandhi had refused the advice of her Soviet advisers to bomb Pakistan after it was first found to have a nuclear bomb, the K.G.B. had decided to dispose of her. They had felt it would serve the interests of the Soviet Union better to have a weak Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister, than a strong Indira Gandhi. To this end, she had been killed, and her Sikh bodyguards framed as her assassins.

On another occasion, the Master lauded the work of journalists Zuhair Kashmeri and Brian McAndrew, investigating the covert operations of the Indian government in the Canadian Sikh

community. Their research, which they published in *Soft Target: How the Indian Intelligence Service Penetrated Canada*, showed how the Government of India worked to create chaos and smear the reputation of the Sikhs. It was such a high stakes game that its agents even planted a bomb on an Air India jetliner, killing its 329 passengers over the Irish Sea on June 23, 1985 because it served their objective, which was to create an impression in the general public that Sikhs were heartless terrorists.

### **“The Fishes that Found a Yogi”**

One day, I went to a restaurant. It was beautiful, marvellous and all fine. We had spaghetti and all that kind of stuff. It was not a problem.

When I meditated at night, every fish was around me. I was just in a water pool with tons of fishes. And I did not understand what the hell I am going through fishes for.

Where do fishes come in? Today, I never went to Sea World, I never saw any pictures. On TV, I didn't see fishes... And I said, “Oh my God, I went to that restaurant – and there was nothing like a fish!”

I sent somebody to investigate. The spaghetti got a mixed fish oil that day and it was a mistake. Instead of olive oil, a mistake happened. And I ended up with an ocean of fishes and I did everything to get rid of them.

And the fishes were so great! They found a yogi. They said, “We won't go. We can't let you say 'Wahe Guru.' You've got to redeem us now! No tomorrow. No yesterday, man. We are here.”

And it was such a crazy world in the meditation world. I cried to Guru Ram Das. I said, “I am very sorry. It happens every day, but why not today? Get them over!” It didn't work! It was too painful!

Then, I just sat down like an angry boy and I said, “All fishes, unto the *sarovar* of Guru Ram Das, unto the water tank of Guru Ram Das, the base of my Guru” – and they all redeemed into the angel light.

### **“Bana”**

We have a *Mool Mantra*, and in that *Mool Mantra* the most important part is *Akaal Moorat*: You are the picture of deathless God. That is exactly what literally it means. Guru Nanak said it and Guru Gobind Singh gave it. Guru Nanak said it. It was said by Guru Nanak. *Akaal Moorat*. It is in the *Mool*

*Mantra*. It is the very root lesson of us. *Akaal Moorat*. And Guru Gobind Singh gave it to us. And we in the West call it "bana."

Now the question has been asked, "When we wear *bana*, we separate ourselves and we freak out a lot of people." And I am going to answer those two questions.

We separate ourselves, true. We separate ourselves because Guru says for us to be separated, not to harass people, but to serve people. You only want to remember one part of it. You do not want to remember the second part of it. You have been dictated, you have been told, to separate yourself to serve, to love, to elevate others. You have not to be told to separate yourself to bug others, to play holier than thou with others, to put down others, and to insult others.

If what I am saying is not true, then why a priest should wear the habit? "Habit" means this is his daily way of life. Habit means habit. Habit means, "It is my habit" and he wears a habit. His habit is to wear that habit so everybody knows he is a padre, he is a Father, so everybody can talk to him freely and understand that this man is separate. He is not a man. He is a Father living in the body of a man. And it is a habit he is wearing so that the entire congregation may know where he is.

So when you wear *bana*, you are in great difficulty. I appreciate that. Because you are separate and people approach you with the idea, "What are you doing?"

Some student of ours wore *bana* and he didn't have the commitment of the dharma yet, but he just tried, "Let's see how it goes." And he went to Las Vegas and he was in those machine things, whatever they do there.

And somebody came to him and said, "*Sat Nam!*"

He said, "*Sat Nam!*" He was very happy somebody recognized him.

They said, "Are you a Sikh?"

He said, "Not yet."

They said, "Oh, that's why!"

He said, "What do you mean by 'That's why!'?"

They said, "Sikhs don't come and gamble. What are you doing here?"

He said, "No, no, no, I am trying to be a Sikh."

The next day, not only I got a phone call, I got a letter that I am your yoga student and I saw one

Sikh in the slot machine gambling. “Has this been permitted to the Sikhs?” That was the question.

I called up this guy. I said, “What happened?”

He said, “Well, you know, I thought just to go there for fun...”

I said, “Did you explain that you are there for fun, you are seeing the negative part of it?”

He said, “Well, I am not trained that way.”

I said, “Look, this is the letter.”

That *bana* which you do not want to wear sometimes is your state of mind, because you do not want to be committed to your own self. *Bana* has a very powerful effect. It commits a person to itself. It is self-indoctrination. *Bana* is a self-indoctrination. *Bana* is a self-hypnosis. *Bana* is a self-analysis. *Bana*.

I can bet with you, my dear daughters, the day your mind is not very clean, you cannot tie your turban correct, though you may try. I know it myself. I am fifty-eight years old. The day I am disturbed, when I tie my turban, it is always hanky-panky and I always never like it. Then what I do is, I sit down, I take a shower, I take cold water, I calm myself down, and after that, I come and tie my turban and it always comes correct.

Now is the turban my psychologist and psychiatrist? Yes, it is! It is a practical thing which tells me right on the spot, “Put your mind straight. Then tie the turban. You will come out all right.”

What is a turban? Turban is nothing, but you are crowning yourself for the day. It is self-crowning. It is that “*Jab lag Khaalsaa rahay niaraa, tab lag taaj deeo mai saaraa.*” It is that crowning you do in the morning. For that, there has to be a purity of heart behind it. If you put on *bana* with a purity of heart, the world shall bow to you because the world does bow to purity, not to impurity, and that is always misunderstood.

People think they can dress like a lion and talk like a donkey. Now, that will work for a while, it won't work for a long time. That is why we have lost so many Mukhia Singh Sahibs. I mean to say, this dharma is a slaughterhouse of Mukhia Singh Sahibs!

### “Religious Hypocrisy”

Creative intelligence is a gift. It is not a right. It can't be learned. It cannot be shared. It is the most personal, private, individual asset.

You can teach people how to make things. That is called “technology”. You can teach people how to trade things, but you cannot share with people the experience. How sweet is sugar, you can’t tell. But you can tell, “This is sugar.” And you can tell, “It is made from the sugar cane.” And you can tell that it is sweet. But how sweet, that you can’t tell.

The unfortunate part in life is the religious hypocrisy. The most debauched thing I have experienced is the religious life. I wish I should have understood what a debauchery religion is.

When I see that the Communists say that religion is the opium of man and takes away from man the ego, the will, the personality, they misinterpret it. But the fact is religion and reality is so badly misunderstood by all people and is so shallowly practised and so hopelessly understood, that if people are suffering today, they are not suffering because God wills it that way. It is not true. It’s we who will it that way.

Basically, you have to understand life is based in the spirit, the strength, the grit. Three things are very important: manners, morals and morale. You can have very high morals. You can write it all over the billboards and you can write it on your forehead. You can wear clothes and you can look very saintly and you can talk very saintly. Your manners can be very saintly. You can be the most beautiful actress and have a beautiful saintdom. People may just fall in love with you. But if you don’t have morale to keep it up, you will fall on your face.

Morals are not morale, and morals are not manners. Morale is morale. It is the continuous truthfulness of your own trust within your own self towards the goal you have set and thought to achieve to walk unto. Do you know what that means? That means you shall never be sick. If you ever fall sick because of some physical interference, you will recuperate very fast.

There is a lot of strength. A human has equivalent strength to make God surrender before it. I am not saying it happens every day, but human history proves that God took the incarnation of the imagination of the human and appeared and obeyed. Almighty God, I am not talking of “a god”, that little god somewhere. And this is the recorded history of the man. It is not that I am making it up.

But the problem that we face today in life is called “psychological intervention.” Either you be creative and keep on being creative and become more divine and more divine - or become more divided and more divided. But if you want to understand that between divine and divided there is any difference, the difference is only which tendency and frequency you are working for.

Some people say, “I have worked enough!” That is the point where you want to destroy yourself. Enough is never enough. Never say “never.” Either you are on a gear called “constructive institutionalization of your personality projection,” or you are on a destructive institutionalization of your personality projection. There is no other way that your neurons in the brain even work or can think.

Do you understand what I am saying? The problem is that I have taught at UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles) and I have taught in the United States and I have taught in the international world, and I am a recognized international spiritual leader or whatever you call me. But it is a very funny thing when I see people are not being taught basic definitions of ability of a human structure and a possibility of human work capacity. I have met Jews. I have met Sikhs. I have met Moslems. I have met Hindus, Buddhists. But none knows!

A Jew doesn't know he has the same brain and brainwaves as those of a Hindu. The Jew feels he has a Jewish brain. Hindu feels he has a Hindu brain. And a Moslem feels he has a Moslem brain. And over all of that, a Sikh feels he has a Sikh brain. A brain is a brain, and it has a certain workability, a certain capacity. And it is made in God. And its utilization and workable capacity has an interrelation and interconnection, and are exactly the way which is in a Jew, which is in a Buddhist, which is in a Moslem, which is in a Christian.

The God the everywhere, the God the nowhere, the God the almighty, the God the nomighty, is just your imagination. It's not your reality. You actually use, abuse and misuse God and its definition. You are never serious about it. But basically, you are it. That means you use, abuse and misuse yourself.

Now if you totally misuse, abuse and use all the energy which you have got, how can you be successful? And what kind of success is there when you become successful, reach the optimum point, and you start destroying yourself? What is this game we are playing in life? We are part of infinity. Therefore, we should be infinity. There is no stopping now. That is the life. Life is meant to be given, given and given.

Whenever you want to create in you the energy which cannot be defeated, pick up a set of Kundalini Yoga and do it. Surprisingly, you can tune yourself up. That's all it takes.

Those great sages and saints who made this science and called it "kundalini," were not out for the market. They were out for the experience of the glory of the infinite. That's why this science has no attributes to itself, no adjectives to itself. It is very straight.

With hatha yoga you can build up your stamina and your muscle and all that, but you can't build up your intuition. Do you understand? In raj yoga, you can build up your knowledge and wisdom, but you can't build up your intuition. In karma yoga, you can build up your goodwill and love, but you can't build your intuition.

There are twenty-two minor and major yoga lines of activity. You may do all, but you can never be intuitive. You can be psychic all right, but never intuitive.

And without intuition, you are as naked as a dead rat is, because you have no hooves, no horns, nothing. There is no protection with you. Your protection is, as a human being, you should be one

step ahead of time. Woman who is not one step ahead of a man, and man who is not one step ahead of time, have already failed. They don't need to practice time and do time to get that.

### **"Guru Gaddi Day Vision"**

We are celebrating Guru Gaddi Day. Today, you are carrying the Guru on your shoulder from Guru Arjan Dev Ashram to Guru Ram Das Ashram. There shall be a day when on a great cannon carriage, the Guru will go in all his honor and hundreds and thousands of you will walk. Things are always established little. They grow by their own virtue, by their own grace.

I saw a vision that in the city called Santa Fe, New Mexico a huge procession of the Guru marched with such a pomp and show, and that it came all the way to Guru Ram Das Puri, saluting on its way where Guru Ram Das Ashram is. Today you can tell me I am a daydreamer. You can tell me I am insane. You can tell me I am visualizing something which will never happen.

You can tell me anything you want. But what I saw, I saw with the same eyes. With the same eyes, today I don't see that. The future of the Khalsa and the future of the establishment of Siri Guru Granth and its domain has started. It shall not end.

There is nothing to worry. Some sacrifices have to be made, calmly, quietly. Just remember, when you give an offering, you don't make a big mess with it. There is a way of salutation to the grace of God and to the self.









## PART FIVE

# GURU, DHARMA, AND DESTINY

### “How to Teach Stupid Parents”

*The Siri Singh Sahib would frequently address parents about the need to raise their children consciously. He also never tired of promoting the education program in India. The following words were spoken by him shortly after the students returned from school in India for their interim break in December of 1987.*

Just imagine today the two sons of Guru Gobind Singh, five years and seven years old, being bricked alive inch by inch, and they kept smiling. How many of you here will not flip out on your child? How many of you even have the guts? Rather, you are very cruel and corrupt! You use your children for your commotions. You use them as bait.

A lot of people I have seen like to say, “Oh, my child is studying in India.”

I say, “Thank God, he is not studying on the moon.” I thought we Americans had decided to have the first school on the moon. Isn't it possible?

You cannot treat your children as independent. You cannot treat your children as though they are also made in God. They have their own life to live and you can only help them to live. You treat them as a piece of furniture. You think you know everything and your child doesn't know anything. Actually, your child thinks you are the most stupid parents and he is not supposed to offend you! That's what they think.

A child came and told me. He said, “Siri Singh Sahib, I am very, very mad at my papa and my mama.”

I said, “Alright, what is the problem?”

“They are stupid! They are so stupid, I can't tell them anything.”

I said, “You are doing a good thing, but there is a good news and a bad news. You know they are stupid. You realize it. That is wonderful. It is true that you can't tell them, but the worst thing is that you are angry.” He said, “I am mad! I am angry! Should I not be?”

I said, “No.” He said, “Why not?”

I said, "They are stupid. You are not. That's why not. They are stupid, okay. You recognize it. You don't want to tell them because that will get you spanks and all that. You don't want to get into a fight."

"Yes."

I said, "Then at that time, you can do a great favor."

He said, "What?"

I said, "Is there an altar in your house?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Then immediately go, sit cross-legged, and start meditating and meditating, and utter '*Wahe Guru*' loud and loud and loud so that *Wahe Guru* can penetrate through their abusive, coerciveness on each other and they may just learn from you that spitting at each other is affecting the child. Be practical."

He said, "Thank you very much. I never get to see you very much."

I said, "I do not get to see you very much either, but listen, your problem has been solved. You have come very recently and your parents have paid for your coming back and they must be very happy to have you home, but they have forgotten one thing, that they are stupid. Just don't worry about it. When you were not with them, they were stupid then too. Nothing has changed, so don't feel so upset that within three days, now you have to take a banner out and get rid of this stupidity. It won't go away like that, but there is a way to deal with that stupidity. Don't participate in it and don't react to it."

And he said, "*Sat Nam*." But I saw his eyes becoming so big and so bright, and he felt very lucky that he could find me while walking and he could talk and, luckily, he was running around on a playground. But what I am explain to you is that we not only do this to our children. We do it to ourselves.

### **"The Marriage of Rajanee"**

Marriage with any reservation, good or bad, is not marriage. It will never be. It is my personal opinion that people who marry and have any reservations, good or bad, are not doing it right. Marriage is one proposition in which there is absolutely no reservation whatsoever.

Today, I'll tell you the story of Rajanee. The Golden Temple stands on this story, and the grace and the fatherhood and the most healing part of Guru Ram Das stands on this story. There were seven daughters of this landlord. When he would come home, they would say, "Father, you have provided everything for us."

But the youngest daughter, named Rajanee, said, "God has provided you with everything, Father. Be grateful."

The father got so mad that he said, "This little weasel in my family doesn't acknowledge me at all! What does she think she is?"

So one day, a leper came to the town, and this father out of his pure madness, married young Rajanee to this leper. The leper couldn't walk, couldn't eat, and had wounds all over his body. It was a kind of gun-in-the-back marriage. The girl couldn't refuse because she was young. The marriage took place. Then the whole family took this leper and put him in a basket, and put him on her head, This is the dowry. This is the farewell. Never come back to us again.

Rajanee said, "Can I have ten minutes in this house to do prayer?"

The father said, "*No, eight! Cut it short! Get out! That's it! I would like to see the God who gives you what I gave to you. I'm sick and tired of you telling me that I do nothing for you and God does everything!*"

The painful story is that Rajanee did pray. In her prayer, she said, "God Almighty, I am very grateful to You. I am very virtuous, and You have given me the man that I deserve. I have given you all my graces. You have given me all the poverty, all the pain, and all the weight. But all I ask is that my love for You be eternal. Now give me the hand to carry this responsibility with the utmost grace."

Now, you American girls sitting here, who are married and unmarried, just understand that this story of Rajanee is our root. And if you ever expect me to deviate or divert myself in a detour, I can't do it.

Rajanee took the leper in the basket, and then she realized that the wounds were many. The flies and other things were coming so heavily that she asked for a cover. Her father refused to give her the cover. It is said that her mother took off her *chuni* and gave it to Rajanee. Then the father beat up the mother. There was a beating right at the scene!

"You have no right," said Rajanee, and she covered her leper husband with the *chuni*, and took him up onto her head and walked out. Walking, going from village to village, and getting some food for herself and for her husband, she thus started married life.

Finally, Rajanee, thirsty for water, came to a place in Amritsar where today the Golden Temple

tank of Nectar is located. It was a very small pond. Under a *bayr* tree, she unloaded her husband, covered him, gave him water, washed his face and hands. She said, "You please stay here. I am going to this adjoining village to ask for some alms or food so that we can survive. Be peaceful in this basket." Rajanee then left for the town.

Meanwhile, this young man who was a leper had a vision. He saw something very funny. He saw blackbirds come and dive into the water and fly out white like angels. He watched them for a long time, and then he thought, "Maybe I can do something." So he shook himself out of the basket and rolled himself right into that pond of water at the place now called "Dukh Bhanjaneer Bayr." That tree is still there.

When he went and dipped himself, he found he was totally healed. And even today, thousands of people a year, lepers and others, are healed just dipping in the Nectar tank of the Golden Temple. It is not something new. It has happened for centuries. So the husband dipped, but he kept his pinky out of the water for a reason. He thought, "If she comes and I'm so good and handsome and sweet, she will not recognize me. I'll show her the wounds on my pinky."

Rajanee came back, and she found a beautiful young man, smarter than ever, sitting there. She said, "Where is my husband?"

He said, "I am your husband."

She said, "*Oh no, you creep! That's not true.* You have killed that unfortunate leper just because you want something from me. No way! I am married to him, and just understand, I'll defend his honor with my life!"

"Calm down! Calm down! I am the same person. I just look pretty now. Don't you recognize the clothes?"

*"Clothes!?"* You must be wearing his clothes!"

"I am just healed. I just dived into that pond. Look at this pinky of mine. It still has wounds. Watch me." So he went and dipped the pinky, and the pinky came out perfect.

She said, "*No, no, no, no! This can't be! What can this water do to you? I don't believe it! I am married to someone else!*"

"Alright. In this town lives Guru Ram Das. Let us go there, present ourselves, and let him decide. Neither you are going to agree, nor I am going to agree. I say I'm your husband: You say you don't believe it. I say I'm cured. I put my pinky in the pond and it was healed: You don't believe anything. You're just pure paranoia!"

So they went to Guru Ram Das, and he looked at them and told Rajanee, "Rajanee, this is your husband. For centuries, we have been trying to find this place. We have already dug Santokhsar, so now there will be Amritsar."

Guru Ram Das came with the entire *Sangat* to the pond and blessed the couple. Circumstances were such that Rajanee's father and mother also came. Not only the land which they had, but many, many more lands joined together, and Rajanee and her husband lived and ruled that entire area. It was at that time that Chak Guru Ram Das (the expanded *sarovaar* or pool of healing water) was made, where Guru Ram Das started building the Golden Temple.

This story is true. It's a story known to millions of people, and it didn't happen two hundred thousand years ago. It happened, and it is verifiable. Each spot where Rajanee sat, each spot where she passed a night, is there, alive and well, and villages still tell the folklore and the song of Rajanee's story.

### "Kundalini is an Energy"

Kundalini is an energy, a dormant energy which is in all of us. If awakened and used, it will give us the strength to surmount all weaknesses, weak moments, weak situations, and weak elements.

Vitamins are good. Food is good. You can get good injections. You can get good counselling. I am not against anybody. But they are all not either the science or the art of invoking in you your own dormant energy. I can make that statement very clear.

I didn't learn kundalini yoga because I was freaking out and I wanted some powers. Not at all! I understood the science and art of life. And I understood it very deeply.

And I understood that Maha-atma Buddha put his life as Buddha to find out why there is a pain. I said to myself, 'Wait a minute! If there is a pleasure, there is a pain! There are two sides of it. They can't go away. If there is a day, there is a night. There are two sides to it. If there is a happiness, there is a sadness, two sides of it. Buddha wasted his time!' But I couldn't say it because I don't want everybody who believes in Buddha to put a stick on my head.

Jesus said, 'Love of forgiveness is divine in essence.' Not a Christian speaks about it.

Muhammad says, 'When I shall become nothing...' Islam means I salute the Self. It means I become nothing. 'I have become light.' Not one Muslim I have seen talking about it.

When a Sikh says, 'I learned the will of God as my salvation and salvation of all,' he starts to take his first steps as a Sikh. Nobody wants to talk about it. Human rights... Country politics... Psychology



of the today... You all discuss all paraphernalia. You are discussing all this, for what when you do not have the reserve and the energy?

## Two Saints

The Khalsa consists of many faces, and many graces, too. While the great Gursikh was achieving his recovery, he was fortunate to have two wonderful saints of Guru Gobind Singh as his constant companions.

One, the indomitable Baba Nihal Singh, himself had only recently recuperated from a harrowing experience of the ultimate frailty of flesh and bones. In his case that awareness had been forced on him by the tortures inflicted by the Indian government's so-called "security forces". Now substantially healed, he was regularly to be found in the company of the Siri Singh Sahib. Baba Nihal Singhji also gave his time and energies to the Khalsa youth at their interim camp in America during their school break, and contributed his positivity to the Summer Solstice Sadhana, Peace Prayer Day, and Khalsa Women's Training Camp - which he had earlier attended in 1980.

Another great *sewadar* and inspiring presence was Bhai Sahib Bhai Jiwan Singh, the irrepressible *ragi* and *jathedar* of the Akhand Kirtani group. The Siri Singh Sahib had been well known to him since they had met in Canada in the mid-1970's. Now, with his white beard, his distinctive black *bana*, and his sparkling personality, he immersed himself in the Summer Solstice activities, participating in the White Tantric Yoga experience and the annual "Healing Walk", and contributing to countless Akhand Paaths and *kirtans*, both in Los Angeles and at K.W.T.C.

At the Siri Singh Sahib's request, Bhai Sahib began to record the entire Siri Guru Granth Sahib as *kirtan* in a videocassette format. Around this time, he also started to serve a valuable role at numerous Sikh gatherings, inspiring unity and healing where rancour and personalities had had their day.

### "If Guru Ram Das's kundalini can *surjh* itself..."

There is a possibility to create thoughtlessness, and the *shashra* through the intellectual intelligence which creates a thousand thoughts per wink of the eye can be brought to silence and that *shunya* shall be forever. There is a technology in the mind of all of us and there is a practical reality in us available because when you say 'God is in me, and I am in God,' that also means that in the definite form of today of me, the Infinity of God also lives.

It lives in a very dormant way and you may call it 'kundalini shakti' or you may you call it 'power of the Infinity' or Guru Gobind Singh said in a very clear word '*chardi kala*.' *Chardi kala* is nothing but



how to make that energy to curl up and penetrate and make a hole in the black hole...

My extension in life is going to be dedicated to give you that knowledge before I leave. I have not yet started teaching kundalini yoga in its real form or I am not to just shut up the Indian Sikhs once and for all, I have not yet started the science of the *chardj kala* in the real form. There is no difference between the two.

If Guru Ram Das's kundalini can *surjh* itself, all his Sikhs can also enjoy that status. It is that elevation of a conscious being to exercise to create a purity of the *pranic* field which can be shared, understood, and worked out as a unison-ness, and all thoughts can be totally in tune with that peace. That peace, which is ultimate reality of today, tomorrow and all the time is called in our English language 'God.'

There is no such thing as God. Actually, it is when you totally sacrifice yourself, you come out absolutely with no reservations and bow towards harmony, bow towards your higher self, bow towards your entire being and confirm within you that even your life is no risk to you.

We have a very common saying in the English language: 'over my dead body.' There shall be disharmony over my dead body. Any person other than me shall suffer over my dead body. My love shall live, and if not, over my dead body. Do you understand what I am saying? This statement clears the issue that when a person is totally dedicated towards peace, peace within us, around us and all of us is a very practical, desirable war to win. It is a war for peace.

### The Powers of *Furmaan Khalsa*

On Baisakhi of 1987, it was announced at the meeting of the Khalsa Council in Los Angeles that the Siri Singh Sahib's poetry would be published in book form. However, the Master cautioned, this *Furmaan Khalsa* would not be merely a book.

Written in the elevated poetic style of Guru Nanak, and in the yogic excellence of *Naad*, the Siri Singh Sahib's poetry transcended the parameters of ordinary poetics. Each poem was, in effect, a mantra designed to vibrate the *ida*, *pingala* and *sushmana* of the listener, and waken them to their highest glory.

#### Poem (Punjabi/English): *Sehraa*

*Mayray antar hirday day andar.*

*Aa vasi-aa hai harimandir.*

*Jad mai(n) akaal purakh noo(n) mani-aa.*

*Akaal takhat vee antar bani-aa.*

*Guroo raamdaas daa hai peh<sup>ra</sup>aa.  
Panth khaalsay ditta<sup>a</sup> seh<sup>ra</sup>aa.  
Akaal purakh nay jot jagaa-ee.  
Praan-apaan, sushmanaa cha<sup>r</sup>aa-ee.  
Prakaash bhi-o anand sabh thaa(n)ee.  
Antar baahar brahm ho jaa-ee.  
Har vasi-aa, mai(n) vasi-aa, hari andar.  
Yogi! Yog ba<sup>n</sup>i-aa harimandir.*

## **Honor**

In my heart of hearts,  
Harimandar has come to dwell.  
When I honored eternal Being,  
The Akal Takhat itself was created within me.  
In the time of Guru Ram Das,  
The Khalsa *Panth* has honored me.  
Eternal Being has ignited the light of my soul.  
*Praana* and *apaana* join and my being rises through *sushmanaa*.  
Realization has come. Bliss is everywhere.  
Inside and outside, everything has turned to God.  
God dwells. I dwell in God.  
O Yogi, I am one with Harimandar!

## **Poem (Punjabi/English): Lohay daa Mandar**

*Lohay daa mandar usari-aa  
Gi-aan aa chaana<sup>n</sup> pasari-aa  
Paapee aj bhaimaan hai.  
Aj sarkaaray khaalsaa  
Keetaa ih ailaan hai.  
Dharmee purash hee jee-ongay  
Mari-aa aj shaitaan hai  
Sarab-dharam dee kaum eh  
Sidhaa ih furmaan hai.  
Joon mukaa-ee paap dee  
Aj sach hee parvaan hai  
Aj naa ko-ee hayrkhaa  
D<sup>r</sup>irtaa aj balvaan hai.  
Maalkay do jahaan to(n)  
Janami-aa aj insaan hai.*

*Lohay varгаа khaalsaa  
Lohay vargee jaan hai.  
Moo(n) to(n) amrit tilhkdaa  
Dasdaa aatam-maan hai  
Jagat jalanda taarnaa  
Ayhee andat taan hai.  
Sach daa jhandaa jhoolnaa  
Jhooth daa honaa ghaan hai.  
Praym daa raah sidhaa jhaa.  
Is vich laabh naa haan hai.  
Lohaa laal bhakhaa li-aa,  
Mastak tay sach ukari-aa.  
Lohay daa mandar usari-aa.  
Gi-aan daa chaanan pasari-aa.  
Suchaa jeevan jee-aygaa  
Guroo daa ih vardaana hai.*

## **The Temple of Steel**

The Temple of Steel is built.  
The light of wisdom sheds its brilliance.  
Today, the wrongdoers are fearful.  
Today, the Khalsa Nation  
Has made the proclamation.  
The conscientious being will certainly live.  
Today, the evil-doer has died.  
This is the Nation of all religions.  
There is simplicity and grace in this order.  
This is the end of wrong living.  
Today, only truth is acknowledged.  
Today, there is no weakness.  
Today, steadfastness rules supreme.  
From the Master of the two worlds,  
Humanity is born.  
Through the test of steel, Khalsa is born.  
Through the test of steel, comes the vigour of a life well-lived.  
The face shines the radiance of spirit  
And speaks of self-respect  
To carry others across the fire of the world.  
This itself is the inner music.  
The flag of truth is hoisted.  
Untrue living is put to death.

The path of love is straight and true.  
On this path, there is no loss or gain.  
The steel has become red hot.  
It has branded truth on our foreheads.  
The Temple of Steel is built.  
The light of wisdom sheds its brilliance.  
We shall live our lives in truth.  
This is the Guru's blessing.

## **The Mother's Complaint**

Out of his kindness, Yogi Bhajan adopted a girl in California and paid for her education and all her expenses through the years. To everyone's surprise, at the time of her final high school exams, a sheriff arrived at Guru Ram Das Ashram with a warrant stating the Master was keeping the girl against the will of the parents.

The Siri Singh Sahib protested, "What wrong I have done?"

The sheriff replied, "Wrong and right, it doesn't matter. It is the mother who is complaining and the girl has to go."

The Master called the mother and she said to him, "What I have been, my daughter has to be. How come my daughter is getting educated to have a career and have a life? She has to do exactly what I went through."

The Siri Singh Sahib then told the sheriff what the mother had said and requested, "Give me two days and I will get her back." Two days later, when the girl had finished her exams, he delivered her to her parents as promised. What the mother did to her daughter after that, even the Master, ever compassionate, had never expected.

## **"The Immortal Story of Balmiki the Thief"**

You speak of "relationship." There is no such thing as relationship. This is an organic world. It is an organism and each one lives on each one. Everybody has antennae of ego to suck out of you your life.

Don't learn from me. Balmiki, before the birth of Ram, who wrote Ramayana, wrote the entire thing, learned that way. He was a highway robber. He wouldn't let anybody go.

There came a *sadhu*. Nobody knows the name of that *sadhu*, but there was a *sadhu*, a real *sadhu*. I think God had to come himself because the guy was too bad.

Before Rishi Balmiki, the world bows, and he wrote Ramayana before the time of Lord Rama. I am talking of that guy.

A man came, a *sadhu*, and he caught him. Tied him to a tree. Took away his loincloth, took away his water jug, took away his staff, took everything. He said, "Hey, this is not worth much."

The *sadhu* said, "It doesn't matter. Little, little, makes much. In the same way, a little, little sin every day will sink your boat."

Balmiki said, "Shut up! Don't talk to me like that!"

"Well, why do you do it?"

"I have to. I have a wife. I have children. I have respect. I have a village. I have to feed a lot of people."

"What do you think all this gets?"

"A little money."

"Then what are you going to do to me?"

He said, "I am going to kill you."

He said, "Why?"

He said, "I don't want to loot anybody who goes and tell a story, so you have to die."

He said, "Why?"

He said, "That's my decision. That's how I operate. I catch anybody who comes here. And many people come here. This is a short cut. Nobody can go any other way. It is very tedious. One has to go over mountains and all that. It is a direct path. People come and normally the king sends the army with it, and I let them go. But when it is like you, anybody comes, that's it. I catch them, take away everything, tie them to a tree, and kill them."

He said, "Okay, I am a *sadhu* though."

He said, "Well, what I can do for you? I can't change my rule."

He said, "Well, do me one favor, and the favor is, go back in your home and find one person who is willing to die for you."

"Well, I'll die for me. How it will go?"

"Say, 'I have got a *sadhu*. I have taken his everything. I have to kill him and he says, "Don't kill me! I'll grant you *muktee*, liberation of your soul, but get somebody who loves you the most and kill him.' So I need somebody who loves me the most and I have to kill them today."

So, first he went to his wife. She said, "You are crazy!"

And then he thought he will call his son. His wife had already spoken with his son. They brought big sticks and they said, "Get out of this house!"

The whole village stood against this man. They said, "You want one of us to die for that damn *sadhu*?!"

He said, "I fed you! I raised you! I killed people for you! I did this for you..."

They said, "Well, you did what you did. We know what you did, but now we know what we are doing. We are not dying."

He said, "You all have to die without me."

They said, "That will take time. We will try to hassle, but not right now. Get out of the village!"

They threw him out. He came back and the *sadhu* said, "What happened?"

He said, "Well, this is what happened. You sent me."

He said, "What you have learned?"

"They are not mine. They let me down. I called them mine. I thought they were mine. They let me down."

"What do you want?"

"I want to be crowned. I know God now through you. These are the sons I called my own. They let me down. And let God now crown."

The *sadhu* said, "So be it."

Balmiki, the highway killer, the highway looter, became Rishi Balmiki and reached to the point that he could write the entire what was coming, he wrote Ramayana before the birth of Lord Rama. That is called intuition.

Intuition when it joins with the infinite, *tat* joins with *tattwa*, *tat* joins with the *sat*, man becomes God. And that's why you are in the image of God. When you find that reality, you become that reality. And that is the beginning of a Sikh, not all this paraphernalia and all this emotional nonsense, covered in white clothes. It's white in, white out, white everywhere. It's a light of man.

## The Next Generation

Meanwhile, unseen and far away, the significant details of the dreams and visions of Khalsa in the West were taking shape.

Some two hundred young men and women, aged six to sixteen, found comfort and courage in each other's company in the foothills of the Himalayas. It was the Siri Singh Sahib's far-sighted vision that they should be educated in that pristine environment, free from peer pressures of sex and drugs, and unmolested by the depravity of American pop culture.

It was expensive, sending and keeping all those young people in distant India. In Los Angeles, one young Sarib Singh needed about two thousand dollars to go, so he worked hard. When the ambitious ten-year-old had earned two hundred dollars, he bowed and offered it all before Siri Guru Granth Sahib, trusting the Guru to make good his shortfall. Those who saw that boy's dedication were so moved that they raised the money for him to stay in India for three years, about seven thousand dollars in all.

Going to school in India was not always easy. There was the culture shock and all the things the children had to become used to: the climate, the air, the water, the food, the language, the style of education. There were the things they could no longer have: American pizza and ice cream and TV. Parents and younger siblings became distant memories punctuated by vacations and letters, parcels and long distance calls over the rustic Indian phone system.

Eventually, though, most of the young Khalsa made friends, settled in, and accustomed themselves to their international education amid the breath-taking scenery of their home away from home.

When, later on, the school moved to Amritsar, they soon became masters of their new terrain. Moreover, in their distinctive white turbans, kurtas and churidas, they exerted a highly conspicuous presence. Those who were aware of the comings and goings around the Golden Temple, knew that the whole school, some hundred and fifty youngsters, descended on the Harimandar

complex at five on Friday mornings, and that they were rarely to be found there after seven a.m..

The sewadars, the shopkeepers, and rickshaw drivers of Amritsar all knew about the young Western Khalsa taking their education at their school near Maharaja Ranjit Singh's former summer residence. Not that anyone took advantage of these youngsters. They were well-tutored in the ways of doing business in the East. They knew where you could find the video arcade and the chocolate bars and the good, tasty Indian food made with real ghee. They knew their way around well enough, and their Punjabi was proficient enough, that most of them could provide a visiting mother with invaluable assistance finding what she wanted and haggling for a reasonable price in the bazaar.

Sure, most of them resisted getting up so early in the morning, and many of them dozed through their compulsory daily *sadhana*, but out of the whole experience, they developed a striking spirit of self-confidence, a wholly unAmerican tendency to stick together and share with one another, and a priceless sense that the world was so much more than what their peers in the West might ever have imagined.

While they were still being educated at Mussoorie, in the picturesque highlands of Himachal Pradesh, some of the schoolers wrote a poem (which was later made into a song) of their experience for their family and friends in the West. It was entitled *On Top of the World*:

Guru Gobind Singh, they tried to take everything.  
His children, his soldiers, his home. Everything was gone.  
He sent to the king his message of victory.  
In the heart of his darkest night, invincible majesty!

The world will try to break you and make you feel alone,  
But its only when you forget your soul that you feel far from home.  
In the heart of Guru Ram Das, there is a special place  
For those who stand to their duty and never run away.

*The life of Khalsa is happy.*  
*The life of Khalsa is pure.*  
*The life of Khalsa is simple.*  
*The life of Khalsa is sure.*

Guru Gobind Singh has picked you for this special thing.  
Many souls will come to you to lead them to their Guru.  
Your soul is a precious jewel that loves when you sacrifice.  
It longs to belong to a man whose consciousness has no price.

*The life of Khalsa is bountiful.*  
*The life of Khalsa is sweet.*



*Peace, trust and protection  
Are found at the Guru's Feet.*

You were born to live for the Guru alone.  
Millions of lives and tears and pain to get back to your True Home.  
We stand each new day before our Guru and pray  
To live as Khalsa so the winds of time can never blow us away!

*On top of the world, we live like a lotus on the water.  
Hand in hand, we'll never stop. Walk lightly and stay together.  
On top of the world, we live where the mountains meet the sky.  
In the excellence of Khalsa, a man can never die!*

### **Notes from a School Teacher Abroad**

Thirty-two fifth grade boys look at me with bright expectation. I have just erased the board and turned to face them, ready to begin the day's lesson. I pause for a moment, for dramatic effect, and to muster the appropriate motivational techniques. I'll need every trick in the book today: eleven years of teaching English have taught me that the intricacies of nouns are not particularly high on the list of a nine-year-old's interest's.

Just as I open my mouth to begin the lesson (with a humorous - I hope - story to capture their attention and interest) there is a tremendous crashing on the roof overhead. The racket is deafening. I look at my boys questioningly.

"Monkeys, Singh Sahib," Gurusimran Singh volunteers helpfully.

"Monkeys," the other boys chime in.

I stand and wait. Years of working in New York City's "blackboard jungle" conditioned me to meet any "interruption of regular classroom routine" with forbearance. Patience seems particularly in order here as well, especially when the interruption is in the form of a troupe of large, powerful, grey langours.

The boys sit quietly. I smile to myself. Back in Brooklyn, such an interruption, in fact any interruption, would have been an excuse for total havoc to erupt in the classroom. These Indian, American and Thai Sikh boys are sitting, not making a sound, waiting for the noise above to abate and for the lesson to continue. I am impressed. My colleagues back in America would be astonished. So would I have been, a year earlier.

Frankly, I didn't know what to expect when I arrived last year at Guru Nanak Fifth Centenary School in Mussoorie with my wife, Hari Kaur. Our week's stay in Delhi prior to coming up to the school had taught us that any resemblance between life as we knew it and life in India was purely coincidental. At school, culture shock vanished as we were both very quickly absorbed into the daily routines: I as English teacher and assistant to the principal, and she as the school nurse. The demands of daily school life left little time for reflection.

Looking back now, somewhat surprisingly, I have to say that there are more similarities than differences between our school systems here and those in America. The basic formulas still hold true: teachers teach and learners learn - usually with the teacher's help, sometimes despite their efforts; things rarely go as expected or planned; the supplies you absolutely must have that day (and were promised you would have) are, even weeks later, "just now coming"; students need to be motivated, directed, pushed, corrected and supported; teachers need to be supervised; lessons have to be planned, homework checked, test papers marked; programs and schedules need to be drawn up, revised and abandoned; disputes need to be settled, disputants counselled and consoled; parents have to be communicated with; students' individual needs have to be met while class goals are also attained; and, of course, teachers are licensed to make corny jokes and students are required to laugh obligingly, or moan in mock-pain.

While the school business is very much the same, the overall dynamics of going to school in India make it a really extraordinary experience for our children. (And just how extraordinary an experience it is, I believe, neither they nor their parents will truly appreciate for some years.) To begin with, the environment is beautiful and free of the drugs and sex-obsessiveness that threaten our youth in America. Then, the positive challenges of living in a foreign culture create tremendous growth in our boys and girls. Moreover, the benefits of living in what Siri Singh Sahib called "the spiritual psyche of the world" simply cannot be calculated. But for those students whose destinies brought them to school here, those benefits will manifest.

All this is not to say our program in India is easy. It's an education that challenges students inside the classroom and outside of it. But the challenge, whatever form it might take, is invariably within the child's capacities and potentialities. Learning to rise to the occasion, to take responsibility for sequences and consequences, and to make intelligent choices, are critical lessons for a child to learn. Learning them in a setting where trust in the Guru and faith in God are accepted realities, and where being a Sikh has a long and honored tradition, is a priceless experience and one which America simply cannot offer at this point in time.

We American Sikhs are generally well-liked and respected here, although our "Americanisms" are sometimes a puzzlement and often a source of amusement to our Indian peers. The cultural gap has narrowed, and we have been accepted. One important measure of our acceptance is the fact that Americans have been appointed to a number of key positions in the school: myself, as vice-principal; Hari Kaur as nurse and dorm supervisor at Shangrila, the girls' campus; Gurupreet Kaur and Singh as house master and house mistress; Adi Singh as dorm supervisor at Vincent Hill, the boy's

campus. As more staff join us, they too will assume positions of trust and responsibility and by Guru Grace, we will continue to improve those areas we have targeted: school diet, dorm living conditions, students' academic performance, sports programs and dharmic training.

Still the monkeys clatter and clamour overhead. And still the boys sit quietly and wait. No paper airplanes wing their way across the room. No spit balls smack into the blackboard. How refreshing it is to be in an environment where education is esteemed, and where teachers are respected, not necessarily for who they are, but for what they have to offer. This is what it must have been like in the old days. When I tell my American colleagues that students here address their teachers as "Sir" or "Ma'am" (as opposed to "Yo, Teach!") they can scarcely believe it. When I go on to describe how students stand up in class to answer a question, they think I'm lying. I don't even attempt to talk about the Principal, Air Commodore Rajinder Singh (Ret'd) - what would they make of the head of a school who describes his work as "just a few years of serving the Guru"?

Learning the real meaning of service and sacrifice are two more of India's intrinsic lessons, because those qualities are, with faith, the underpinnings of the entire culture. No people are more serviceful, no friend will be as sacrificing. As we teachers are want to say, these are excellent role models. And role models, most modern educators agree, are among the most powerful teachers of children. Actions really do speak louder than words. And in a child's mind, adult actions, especially those of his parents, speak loudest of all. Having worked with so many children with problems over the years, I've often wonder how many parents consciously carry out their responsibility to be who they say they are, and pondered how different my job would be if they actually lived the values they claimed to hold.

There is a story told here in Mussoorie about a notorious highwayman who terrorized the countryside during the last century. He was finally captured, tried, and sentenced to hang. The night before his execution, his mother came to visit him in his prison cell. As soon as she entered his cell, he attacked her violently, punching, kicking and even biting her. The guards rushed in and subdued him. Crying, his mother asked, "My son, why have you done this to me?" The highwayman looked at his mother and replied, "Mother, if you had done that to me the first time I stole, I would not be here today."

The monkeys move on. The room is quiet. Time for teaching proper and common nouns. First, though, homage must be paid.

"My compliments, gentlemen, on waiting so patiently and quietly," I say.

"Thank you, Sir," they chorus in reply.

I can't resist adding, "This is the first time in all my years of teaching that I can honestly say all the monkeys are outside the classroom."

They laugh, and we're in business.

Singh Sahib Siri Akal Singh Khalsa  
Vice Principal, Guru Nanak Fifth Centenary School  
Mussoorie, India

### **“Bana and Business”**

Many of you do not want to wear *bana*. You do not like to wear it. You don't want to stand out and say, “I am, I am.” I agree. I understand your weakness. But one who knows, that one has no rejection of self.

*Bana* doesn't make anything, but it freaks out a lot of people who would like to flirt with you.

I was asked a question yesterday: “Why the Sikh dharma ladies are not very kind?”

I said, “No, they are very kind, but they are not flirting because they have gone through a lot of pain. They have found dharma and they don't want to go another route like that. Therefore, they are not willing to flirt. They may be poor, but they don't bargain for benefits. They want to be fit. And when a Khalsa woman wears *bana* and stands out, it is a deterrent.”

And most of you say: “How will we do business? How people will come to us?”

Come to Hollywood. I invite you. Stand there and see how the prostitute attracts everybody, and in that attraction, they get AIDS too. And if you know that kind of aid, that kind of help, go ahead! Sikh dharma has no vacancy for that.

One who cannot deal with you as a Sikh of the Guru, has no dealing with you at all, and you will never be happy out of those dealings. Remember it for a while.

### **“The Woman Who Couldn't Sleep”**

There was a girl. She said she had not slept in nine months. I asked her, “Did you go to a doctor?”

She said, “Yes.”

“What did he prescribe?”

She told all the sleeping things, Tylenol and what not. And finally, it had become so painful that the whole night she was exercising, jumping, doing any kind of thing, thinking perhaps out of tiredness she can get sleep. And after working out for five, six hours – her body is very healthy – she could only sleep about an hour or so and then got up again.

It came to me, “Why don’t you read Kirtan Sohila?”

She said, “I don’t know it. What is it? Is it the name of a medicine? Can I write it down?”

I said, “No, it is not a medicine. Go to somebody and ask them to let you know what Kirtan Sohila is, and then just read it.”

Now, she went to take that Nitnem which those Sindhis have given us and in that Kirtan Sohila is also in the Roman. Luckily, she got it and she could pronounce it and she started reading it day after day.

Day after day, day after day, she was more sleepy, she was more calm, she was more quiet, and now she enjoys it. Now, we can call it a matter of faith, we can call it a miracle. We can call it anything, but I don’t call it a matter of faith. I don’t call it a miracle. I call it a desperate effort to reach reality.

## “The Companion”

Somebody said to me that day, “I need a companion in my life.”

I said, “I found it. You can find it too.”

And the person said, “What is your companion? Your life is full of misery. Your life is full of questioning. Your life is full of this...”

I said, “Alright, have you finished that long list? But still I am smiling. I am talking to you. Don’t you feel there is a calmness in my sound?”

“Oh, yeah. How do you do that?”

I said, “I do it because I have a companion and my companion is a companion with miracles. I have no explanation with my companion. Just remember, there is one line: *Dhan dhan Raam Daas Gur, Jin siriaa tinai savaariaa, Pooree hoee kaaramaat aap sirjanhaaray dhaariaa.*”

And she said, “Read further.” And I said, “That’s enough. Miracle is a miracle.”

## **“The Sikh Who Wanted Psychoanalysis”**

Once a Sikh wanted psychoanalysis. God, it freaked me out! Now, professionally I can't say it. I had to do the psychoanalysis. The person wanted it.

I sat down. Yes, yes, question “a,” question “b,” ...

“My mother is wrong... My father is wrong... And this is wrong... This happened... Life is this...” The whole thing.

After hearing all that, I said, “What is your name?”

His name was so spiritual, I got out of my chair and I bowed. It shocked him. I knew the shock treatment would work if nothing else.

“What is this?” he asked.

I said, “I bow to your identity name which you have never recognized. Your name is very great. Your identity is very great. This identity is given to you by Siri Guru Granth. It was not given by me. I just computed it for you, but this is your destiny and this is your identity and you have not recognized your identity, but as you have spoken the identity, I bow to the identity and that is my reality. Now you want me to advise you?”

He said, “No. Now I don't need your advice. Now I know who I am and now I will work it out. Siri Singh Sahib, believe me or not, from today onwards, never, ever again this person who is alive before you will ever need help.”

I said, “What are you going to do?”

He said, “I am going to help others. I am going to create a fountain. This is me. This is my self.”

In spite of the fact that we have been given an identity and we are called by that identity and we are known by that identity, we do not become that identity. We do not value that identity.

## **“The Mind has Become Your Playmate”**

The problem is you love your weakness so much that you can't get rid of it. Your mind has become your Playmate.

I was just somewhere and a guy, a friend of mine – I'm not giving you the situation – he was a

good student and he was looking at this Playboy magazine.

Seeing me, he immediately hid it and – you know me – I walked into it and I pulled it out and I said, “Let us see who is the bunny tonight, and how does she look.” I started discussing with him.

I said, “Her angle is right. If she would have had this angle, it would have been a very impressive position.” I could see his embarrassment, but I was enjoying it really, letting him know photographically how beautiful I could be.

And he said to me, “I am sorry that I have this.”

And I said, “No, what is there to be sorry for? The whole world has it. Half of the world is a woman. Every woman has it. What you are looking at is a very common thing. Why do you pay five-six dollars for it? It’s alright. Well, let us discuss it now that you have it! Why you are so shy to discuss it? Don’t you think if she had been angled like that, it would have been pretty?”

He is a good student of mine, but he doesn’t understand that everything is mind. It’s not the picture. It’s not the Playboy. It’s not the guilt. It’s not the action. It’s not the reaction. It’s the mind. The mind has become your Playmate.

### **3HO Brasil**

In 1987, the Siri Singh Sahib sent his students Guru Sewak Singh and Subagh Kaur to establish a 3HO Foundation in the great country of Brazil. Yogi Bhajan had attended the Ninth Annual Human Unity Conference held in Foz de Iguaco five years earlier.

The couple taught their first classes of Kundalini Yoga in the living room of their small apartment in the neighborhood Pq. Mandaqui in the North Zone of São Paulo. They were well received and soon a headquarters was established in Rua Apinajés in the neighborhood of Sumaré. Slowly, but surely, the Brazilian community grew to become an important part of the international 3HO community.

### **"Let Your Presence Work."**

*Through all the struggle and strife, the Siri Singh Sahib for the West inspired others, Sikhs and seekers alike, to remain focussed on the truths Guru Nanak had taught from the beginning, the fundamental truths from which Sikh dharma had originally come into being.*

The present religion of the man is God is everywhere... and you are nowhere! And find it

out! There comes the era of yogis and swamis. They say through meditation you can find God. There are twenty-two religions on this earth. Eight are important, and all the eight religions, including Sikhism, are out to promise that if you follow this path, you will find God.

Now, it is so anti what Guru Nanak said, that sometimes I wonder, are Sikhs are falling victim to the peer pressure? Is Sikhism is as real as it was, or is it going to end up in the same tunnel with everything which has gone ahead of it? If it is true that Sikhism has to follow exactly what others are saying, what is the use to be a Sikh then?

Look! You do not know what a Sikh is! *Hindoo daa rishee hai. Mussalmaan daa peer. Naanak shaah fakeer. Hindoo daa guroo. Muslim daa peer...* (Wiseman of the Hindu, holy man of the Muslim, Nanak the royal ascetic, guru of the Hindu, holy man of Islam...) and now, neither you are a guru, nor you are a *pir*! Who will let you live? Dollars... or Swiss francs?

You don't have a chance! If you say you are a Sikh, you do not hide your identity. And if you do not hide your identity, you have to explain yourself. And if you look like an idiot while explaining yourself, people will not only hate you, they will hate your guru! And that's your problem!

In spite of the kindness of the Guru, that Guru which gave you the *Gur* (know-how) to earn the *Satya* (Reality) as *Satguru* (a Realized Being), to understand the Universality, to understand the Infinity of God which is everywhere through the Guru, Siri Guru Granth, which gave you the *Guru Mantra*, *Waheguru* - still you don't have time!

Marvellous! What do you want to earn? Build up a home? You have to have wall to wall carpet, decorations, jewelry... all that stuff? Don't you understand that without being alive, everything is useless?! And to keep yourself rightfully alive, you have to have a balanced combination of soul, mind, and body? Is it that in these modern days these things are supposed to be learned? And how can anybody of you be powerfully satisfied and content? "*Bina santokh nahee koe raj hai.* - Without contentment, there is nobody a king." And how you are going to be content if you don't have a balance inside, there is a hollowness and shallowness about you, within you?

As a human being, the Guru has given you the blueprint of the greatest consciousness, to be *Waheguru*! And the Guru you worship says, "*Khalsa mayraa Satguroo poora* - Khalsa is my perfect True Guru." It gives you the position of True Guru, and if I ask any of you "Are you a Gursikh?"

"No, *ji*! *Waheguru Waheguru Waheguru...* No, no... I am... I am just nobody..."

God bless you! So be it! Then be nobody! Let your generations be nobody! Let you not suffer! Let your seed suffer! You don't have a faith in God and in Guru, being a Sikh of the Guru?!

If some ordinary person on the street asks, "Are you a Sikh?" you are afraid to say so? You are so afraid of your identity, and you call yourself "son and daughter of Guru Gobind Singh"? *Then you do*



*not deserve to be a Sikh!*

It doesn't matter how many religions you invent, and how many messiahs come in, and how many temples and churches you build and it doesn't matter what else you do... the purpose of the total sum of that Creative Consciousness is that You, as a You within you, learn to be You... and that's the purity! *That's God!*

This hanky-panky won't work! Diplomacy with God doesn't work! The God has not created yet embassies, neither he gives visas. Man, when His permit comes, you don't stay a second, you go! You go, you go!

Your attorneys can't work in the court of 'Dharam Raj'. Please me, Lord. This man has not yet finished cheating three hundred and fifty more people which he obligated last year in his budget... It doesn't work! You go, you go! And he has not yet completed six more marriages, seventy new sex relationships he was creating, and thirty new children which are just as good as neurotics, but he wanted to see whether they are better neurotics than him or not...

I mean, what are you doing? Where are you? What do you think you are?

That is why this question was asked Guru Nanak exactly, directly like that. Well, you know, everything is in a mess! *Nanak dukhia sabh sansaar* - The whole world is in shambles! Guru Nanak said very simply, in a simple monotone, *Amrit vaylaa Sacha Naao vadiaaee veechaara. Karmee aavai kaparaa nadree mokha duaara.* (Rise up in the early hours of the dawn. Meditate on the True Name and the meaning of greatness. Your actions will be clothed in modesty, and the Door of Liberation will come into sight.)

Look at the language! Such a beautiful man! God as a man, and so beautiful...

The secret of a Sikh is that the Sikh should not bother. Let his presence work. Let your radiance work. When a Sikh walks into something, let the Divine, the entire psyche refigure itself, recompute itself, to harmonize the environments. Sikh is a psyche which creates harmony in everyone.

There is a story of Kabir. Kabir passed through a village, and the village people ran after him.

“Sir, don't you want to stay in my village?”

He said, “What is your problem?”

They said, “Well, you know, the village is very upset, very uptight. This time the crop didn't come through. Water is not good. Things are not good.”

He asked those village leaders, “Do you know I am Kabir?”

They said, "Yes."

He said, "Is it a fact that I have passed through your village?"

"It is a fact."

He said, "If my passing through your village does not change the things, my staying there won't either!"

And that's what it is. When the presence of a Sikh does not work, Sikh has to work to create that presence. When a man's presence does not work, man is incomplete and man has to work to complete himself and herself. That's the Law of Nature! That's what this life is about!

### **"They shall lead this world"**

One day, someone came and spoke to the Siri Singh Sahib, "I understand you are dying."

"I hope so. I am just waiting for the day. I've gotta go home. I am dying and people are trying to kill me outside. It is all going on. I understand it."

"Well, who is going to take over?"

"What do I have that somebody has to take over? Somebody wants to die for me? I am dying. Somebody wants to take over. Let him die for me?" the Master chuckles, "That's all I want."

"Don't you understand? When you will go, what will happen to these Sikhs?"

"Whose Sikhs? What will happen to which Sikhs? What are you talking about? These American Sikhs?" the Siri Singh Sahib laughs again, "What will happen to them? Somebody will take away their Guru Gobind Singh? Somebody will take away their Guru Granth Sahib? Somebody will take away their Guru Ram Das Ashram? What will happen to them? They will be fine."

"I mean to say, who will lead them?"

Finally, the Master gave a full-hearted laugh, "When I am going to leave the world, who is going to lead them? Nobody will lead them. They shall lead this world. Their generations shall rule this world. There will not be a spot on this planet where the flag of Guru Gobind Singh shall not fly. Do you understand, only two thousand years ago, if you just answered you are a Christian, you were burned at the stake? Did you at that time imagine that all over here, Christ shall rule?"

“No.”

“Why can’t you just develop your eyes. These eyes are to see and read the traffic signs and sometimes you have to put on glasses to read, but just take those eyes and see two thousand years, three thousand years, four thousand years, five thousand years from now.”

“Are you sure?”

“Are you sure that in a little seed there is a whole tree?”

“How you can say it?”

“I see it, therefore I say it. *Jaisay aa-ay khasam kee baanee taisaa karee giaanvai laalo!* I am saying to you all, you and your generations shall rule this planet forever, and if five thousand years you continue to survive, you shall survive in God’s own grace. Let you forget not that you become the undying throne of this planet. Don’t forget that!”

## **They *are* Guru Nanak!**

Somebody once came to the Siri Singh Sahib and said,, “I want to teach American Sikhs *Naam simran.*”

The Siri Singh Sahib replied, “You should learn from them. Are you out of your wits? They all get up in the morning and they do *Naam simran.* What do you think they do? They dance there?”

“No, no. I want to teach them,” they persisted.

“Come at 3:30. They are all there doing *Naam simran.*”

“How to do it?” they asked.

“There is a special technology.”

“They will be blessed. They will be in bliss. They will see Guru Nanak!” they said.

“They *are* Guru Nanak! Why on this planet we have to see Guru Nanak? We are Guru Nanak! The same thing, Guru Gobind Singh said: *‘Khalsa mera roop hai khaas. Khalsa mai hau karo nivaas.’* You are telling me that my Guru told me wrong? You want me not to use a harsh language? You idiot! You come here and make a mockery of the Guru’s Word?”

“Haven’t you heard: ‘*Gur kee nindaa sunai na kaam. Nindak bhaito sant kirpaan.*’? Don’t hear the slander of the Guru. Offer him to your sword. You come and tell me this Brahmanism that I’m gonna meditate and I’m gonna see Guru Nanak? Forget it! We are being flooded by this *Naam simran*. It is overflowing us. We are drowned in it. We don’t exist.”

“Then what do you do in the morning?” they inquired.

“We just keep awake. We just go to bow to Guru. We have an excuse.”

“Why you chant *kirtan*?” they asked.

“That’s our excuse, like a child has an excuse to hug the mother, a Sikh has an excuse to see the Guru through that excuse. Don’t blow my excuse! Sikh and Guru, Guru and Sikh is just one huge excuse, but they are one. That is why Siri Guru Granth Sahib starts with one letter. One.”

“But there are some bad Sikhs,” they objected.

“That is Guru’s responsibility. Why you are upset about it? Then Guru will take care of them. So long a Sikh believes, sees, and feels he is a Sikh, it is Guru’s ward. It is Guru’s territory. I am not going to discuss it. Tomorrow they are going to celebrate the martyrdom of the Akal Takhat. Come and see the feeling.”

“But what do you mean?” they asked.

“Love has no question. Where there is a question, there is no love. Period. We are not questioning why we are celebrating in Los Angeles the martyrdom of the Akal Takhat. We are only making an excuse to remember and be with the Guru and find and live in the spirit of the Hargobind, the Guru. You can’t take away that right of ours.

“We will always be nurtured by that spirit. We are always hungry to be more, to be more, to be more. And that is what a Sikh is about. If you do not want to understand that, don’t worry about these Sikhs. They are not ‘American Sikhs.’ They are the Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh. They are the Sikhs of Guru Granth Sahib. So long they will live, they will live with one word, and that is their world – w-o-r-l-d. And their one word is their identity is true, *Sat Naam.*”

## On Nuclear War

Since 1982, Sikhs of the West had been involved in a significant way in the effort to raise public awareness about the issue of senseless stockpiling nuclear arms. As well as writing letters, signing petitions, and attending rallies, Peace Prayer Day had been an outcome of the struggle to achieve some

measure of sanity and security on a global scale. The activist streak which had led many young Americans to fight the American war apparatus during the Viet Nam era was easily deployed by a new generation of Sikhs, now a little older and wiser, and with tender families of their own to safeguard and protect.

Many of the inter-religious gatherings which the Siri Singh Sahib regularly participated in, themselves became platforms on which the cause of peace and sensible disarmament were openly acknowledged as pressing issues of the utmost urgency for all people everywhere. Thus, it was with a deep sense of gratitude, that political initiatives taken in Moscow and Washington by the Soviet and American political leaders were seen.

"Nobody can afford an atomic war. Everybody knows we can start it. We'll not end it. You can only deliver the atomic war thirty percent accurately and seventy percent will fall in your own land. And if the enemy thirty percent falls with the seventy percent your own, you get one hundred percent your own.

"That's why that Russian bear came to the American elephant to say, "Hello, we are both friends." And stupid they both are. They have spent tons and tons of money just to cater to their ego - *"We are the warlords!"*

"They are not the war. Neither they are lords. They know they can't do a thing. And they both have learned when the nuclear energy stations, our Three Mile Island and their Chernobyl, have had their disasters. Even today, they are throwing milk down the drains!

"Everybody knows what an atomic war will be. Everybody knows what a cutthroat world it will be. And you who are a Sikh as a community at the feet of the Guru must not forget outside you there lives a cutthroat world. Their consciousness doesn't survive. Greed does."

## **Crisis and Response**

By February 28, 1988, the Siri Singh Sahib had not been giving courses for eight months. At a class he gave in Los Angeles, he thanked those who had contributed \$10,000 a week to finance the operations of the growing organization.

There was also surprising news that Mukhi Singh Sahib Gurujot Singh Khalsa had been arrested by the US Drug Enforcement Agency. As yet, there were few details. The Master managed the crisis, knowing full well its potential impact on the community. He asked everyone to spare the gossip and give the money they would otherwise be spending on long distance phone calls to *dasvandh*.

"I am not associating myself with the whole episode. I am just, as a religious man, asking you to

waste no time on the gossip because this dharma has an organized situation and it will be taken care of in an organized manner. Is that understood?"

Everyone replied, "*Wahe Guru! Yes, Sir!*"

"So, what other news you want? It is raining today, right? You can go home and meditate. Hey, by the way, is it possible that some people can give me a little assurance to boost my ego that many of you have never come to *sadhana* for all these days for one reason or another, will start coming from tomorrow?"

No one speaks.

"I didn't see anything very solid. I am just, uh... Okay, Guru Singh, *aah* for hundred twenty days, lead *sadhana* and report to me every day in the evening how many people came."

Someone responds, "*Bolay So Nihaal!*"

The *Sangat* replies, "*Sat Siri Akaal!*"

"It is not my job to honor my trusted friend with a situation which I feel he has done successfully before by experience, correct? And I am not asking you to agree or not agree. Okay, my prayers and my blessings and my satisfaction is with you." In the early years of the Los Angeles 3HO community, Guru Singh had tirelessly led the morning *sadhana* of one hour yoga, one hour chanting meditation, and one hour *kirtan* for four years non-stop.

A court order for Gurujot Singh's solitary confinement to keep him safe was obtained by his defense attorney. Few details were ever made public. He and Albert Ellis, it was alleged had been trying to smuggle drugs and had sought to obtain illegal weapons. Weapons may have been for the Sikh struggle in Punjab – or not. No guilt was ever admitted. In a few months, they were released.

Gurujot Singh went on to launch a successful medical transcription service using the internet and transcribers based in Bangalore. His original proposal to base the business in Chandigarh was rejected by the Punjab government.

### **There's no fake for God's sake!**

A young woman met the Siri Singh Sahib one day. She said to him, "You don't love me any more."

"I do."

"Nobody loves me any more."

"They do."

"Nobody treats me, writes me, phones me, all that... because I have left 3HO."

"Not at all."

"I don't believe you."

"Do you want to test me out?"

"Yuh."

"What day is it?"

"Wednesday."

"This Sunday, come fully dressed up. Have you something, some old stuff with you?"

"Yuh. Everything. I rather worship it."

"For the sake of it, one day just dress up Sunday and come to the Gurdwara, and see what happens."

"Oh, they will hate me! They won't let me in! They will throw me out!"

"Why don't you try it? That is your way. Do my way!"

Next Sunday, she came and everybody hugged her, and she felt so guilty she couldn't even wait for the Guru Prashad. She just ran!

Later, she called the Siri Singh Sahib and said, "I never knew that you people have so much love in abundance that you do not even know who is fake and who is real!"

The Siri Singh Sahib laughed. "I have learned a first lesson from you: There is no fake for God's sake!"

## Nothing: A Poem

*On June 26, 1988 the Siri Singh Sahib shared a poem that had come to him. It clearly spoke of his experience of the betrayal of students near and dear to him. To his listeners, he described the poem as based on the theme "All things come from God,"*

They told me they loved me.  
They knew nothing. They couldn't even spell.  
Instead of love, they created hell.  
They love their neurosis and their insecurity.  
In the name of love, they play dirty. Dirt to dirt.  
And that is all that they know.

I took a long route. I took a long way.  
I was slow to give them a time of their destiny  
To make them understand the symphony.  
It is the harmony of every note which creates the essence of life.  
Which cannot be wasted in strife.  
Instead of growing up, they learned to throw up the great lotus of life.  
Theirs was a visit to Earth. It was for nothing.  
My prayer is they should achieve something.

They hurt me. They hurt me. They hurt me again.  
But for me, pain and pleasure is the same.  
They enjoy hurting and causing suffering.  
They thought they achieved something.  
It was nothing. It was nothing. It was nothing.  
They prosecuted me. They prostituted me.  
They were out for a grab.  
They thought they stabbed me deep enough.  
My wounds won't have a scab.  
They hurled the insult. They called me a 'cult'.  
They called me names to shadow my fame  
Without knowing they are hurting the shadow  
And I live in God's meadow.

They cannot reach it. They cannot reach it.  
They are not humble. Time cannot teach it.  
They cannot learn from me and my kindness.  
They love their blindness.  
For nothing. For nothing. For nothing.



There were some whom I called my own.  
They let me down.  
They spoke lies with which they will die  
In their spiritual realm and in the spiritual world.  
For nothing. For nothing. For nothing.

Let us pray to the sun's shining ray that they may realize in their deep  
That this life is a chance to keep  
Up and up they have to grow.  
Up and up they have to keep.  
The lotus of life they can't throw.  
For nothing. For nothing. For nothing.

What a waste and with what a haste they are forgetting.  
They are Earthlings of God's creation.  
They have to see it through crystallization.  
They have to achieve purity through sublimation.  
They have to let the animosity go through meditation.  
With the heat of the sunshine, they can see the great light.  
In prayer. In prayer. In prayer.  
There is no might which is alright.  
To be humble. To be humble. To be humble.  
You don't stumble.  
You walk the path of life with everything noble,  
But you have to fight the lance of the knight  
With its golden bullets' bite.  
I pray when they come back again  
It may not be for nothing. For nothing. For nothing.

Yogi rejoices. The seeds have grown  
And the Guru shall crown the victory of the purity.  
Kind nobility. Great divinity.  
It is beautiful and something, instead of nothing.

## Thanks to Celery!

Most days, Yogi Bhajan would be counselling people of all walks of life. Some cases were relatively easy. Others were not.

In one case, the Siri Singh Sahib found that it took two hours to discuss and bring their reality

home to an individual. It was pretty terrible.

When they came for a second session, the Master first asked Krishna to keep two glasses of celery juice ready. When the fellow arrived, Yogi Bhajan told him, "You have to drink these two glasses of celery juice before you discuss anything with me," so he drank.

Next, the Siri Singh Sahib told the man, "Sit down and do long breathing for fifteen minutes," so he did that.

Afterwards, the Master asked him, "What is your question?"

The man said, "I have no question."

Yogi Bhajan said, "You came to discuss. Yesterday, you were bugging me left and right."

He said, "Now I am fully aware I was wrong yesterday. I was angry. Now I have no anger. I think the whole problem with me is I am a very angry man. There is nothing to discuss with you, Sir. You can't tell me a thing. I know where I am wrong."

Such a result even the Master did not expect. Afterwards, he went into the kitchen, took a little piece of celery, and I kissed it. "My God, why I had to discuss yesterday with this guy two and half hours and break my head against a stone and didn't reach him at all? Thanks to celery!"

## **True Leadership**

One day, Yogi Bhajan visited an ashram community on the East Coast of the United States. Wherever he went, there were always classes to give and people to counsel.

Some community members were seated in the quarters of the ashram head, when the head teacher complained to the Master about a student, "Sir, I can't talk to her anymore. She's so disrespectful, abusive and accusatory that she's not worth talking to. She's negative about both me and you. I don't have to hear that negativity." The ashram head was clearly hoping to eliminate this student from his life.

"You're right," his teacher agreed, "she's totally obnoxious." The Master was developing rapport with his student before continuing, "Like her or not, she's your student. Yes, she doesn't listen and only talks nonsense as well, but you're the leader, you're the adult. This is one situation which defines you as a true leader, and I'm not training you to be a false one. A leader in this dharma must be able to endure the unendurable. This is really a rather minor challenge."

No one said it was easy to be a true leader.

## The Woman Who Wanted Instant Enlightenment

Yogi Bhajan was on a plane in a line waiting for the bathroom. A woman came and stood behind him and said, "Aren't you Yogi Bhajan?"

I said, "I think so."

"I want to talk to you."

"Here?"

"Where I can get you? This is the best place."

"Well, my dear, you know..."

"Don't worry. Nobody will bother... I want to talk to you about one thing."

"What is it?"

"I want instant enlightenment."

"Go to Mahesh Yogi. He does that kind of stuff."

"I have been to him."

"Go to this Kriya Yoga. There are a lot of people who do this. I don't do anything instant except instant tea."

"No, no, no... Now you are joking. Could you be straight with me? I don't want to accept you as guru. I don't want to get initiated more. I don't want to give you anything. I have been ripped off enough."

"Everybody has been ripped off enough. You are not the only one. I got ripped off also."

"How did you get ripped off?"

"You are ripping me off. You are not paying my fee. You are taking my time. I am waiting for the bathroom and you want a whole lecture right now on instant enlightenment. This is too much! It

costs money, maybe ten thousand, twenty thousand dollars.”

“No, no, no. I am not going to pay a penny!”

“I agree with you. You have paid my friends. Thank you very much!”

“Alright.”

“I will like to compensate the situation like this.”

“What?”

“Just feel your spine is a tube light. Just imagine it.”

“What kind?”

“A tube light. And your two eyes are like lighthouse lights or the airport lights. Keep imagining this.”

“What will happen?”

“I don’t know. Something instant will happen when you perfect this imagination.”

“How?”

“When you fake to look real, the real gets ashamed and walks in.”

## **The Mother Connection**

Prem Kaur had a challenging relationship with her Swedish mother, so when she heard the Siri Singh Sahib was going to Norway and Sweden, she went along, hoping to introduce her mother to her spiritual teacher. In Stockholm, she saw posters advertising the class her teacher was giving widely distributed and her hopes are lifted.

When her mother did not come, Prem Kaur’s mood became very sad. Telling the Master about the situation, he said, “Have her come and meet me at the hotel.”

This was great news and Prem Kaur contacted her mother again. This time, she came with friend. Yogi Bhanjan received them outside, resplendent in a full-length, white mink coat, “SSS” in gold on the lapel, with his ivory cane. Leaning very casually on the cane, he said to Prem Kaur’s mother,

“When a child needs something from us, it is our obligation as a parent to do our utmost to fulfill their need.”

Thoughtful as always, the Master remained in touch, sending Prem Kaur’s mother letters occasionally.

## The “Prince”

When Yogi Bhajan visited Rome, he always remained a few days, sometimes a week. For his students, it was a wonderful opportunity to participate in lectures and be with him all day. It was beautiful and tiring, as the Master could meet people for twenty hours a day, for days.

There had to be food for everyone. The food was never enough. Sometimes community members would run down the street with pots of *kicheree* to take it from their homes to his home.

That day in 1989, the house where the Master stayed was full of people. Hari Simran Singh wanted to see Yogi Bhajan, but the person assigned to security did not know him, and since there were so many people, did not let him pass.

In the next house, lived Hari Simran Singh’s first yoga teacher, also a student of the Master. He asked his teacher, Guru Meher Singh for permission to meditate in a small, L-shaped study in his house. Hari Simran felt sure the Master would hear his intimate request to meet him and, if he wanted, would come to see him.

It had been a long time. Hari Simran Singh had been one of Yogi Bhajan’s first students in Italy. At eighteen, he had started Kundalini Yoga. The next year, 1980, Hari Simran moved into Guru Ram Das Ashram in Rome with Guru Meher Singh. He had been the first Italian student to go to school in full *bana*. But Hari Simran Singh had not seen the Master for years. Aside from meditating, he could not think of any other way of contacting the Siri Singh Sahib.

Permission being granted, Hari Simran Singh started to meditate. A long time passed. It must have been hours, when at last someone came in through the door. Hari Simran could hear their steps and feel their presence, though because of the L-shape of the study, he could not see them.

Hari Simran Singh opened his eyes, but kept his gaze on the ground, a meter away from him. Then he heard the Master’s voice: "Who is here? Ah, it's you! You finally arrived!"

Hari Simran’s mind was empty of himself and full of the Master’s presence. Then, Yogi Bhajan came into view and began to circle around him, all the while talking about his student’s being and his life. Leaning behind him, the Master placed Hari Simran’s shoulders between his legs and rocked him

in a deeply soothing figure-eight movement.

After that, the Siri Singh Sahib sat down and they talked. In that time, Yogi Bhajan told Hari Simran more about himself and gave him a personal *sadhana*. Then, it was time to get up and they started for the door.

Turning around, the Master asked Har Simran Singh: "When does your restaurant close?"

"It never closes," his student replied.

"Tell me the truth," he insisted.

"Tomorrow is a day of rest but for you it's always open."

"Thank you. Then I'll come the day after tomorrow."

"It will be a privilege to have you as a guest."

The Siri Singh Sahib asked me with innocent eyes, "Can I bring someone?"

"You can bring everyone!"

"Ten people will suffice."

"All those you will feel right to bring."

"We'll be eleven."

Two days later Yogi Bhajan and his ten guests came to Hari Simran Singh's restaurant, thirty miles from there, on Lake Bracciano. At the end of lunch, he called Hari Simran and told him, "Look, your invitation for me and ten people was written not only in my travel book. This day will be remembered for centuries, forever."

Hari Simran Singh smiled at his kindness. He was still in high school when he had first met his teacher. Hari Simran could have been his son, and Yogi Bhajan treated him like a son.

Hari Simran recognized the great love in the Master's words and in his gestures. Afterwards, they went out together to walk around the village and along the lake. They had spent a lot of time in Rome, visiting the shops in the streets of the city, but it was the first time that he was walking with him in a country village.

Over time, Hari Simran Singh had lost the habit of wearing a turban and had gone back to

cutting his hair. When later on, during that visit, the Siri Singh Sahib gave him a turquoise-colored fabric for a turban, Hari Simran immediately wrapped it in front of him.

From that moment, Yogi Bhajan said he was a prince and started calling him “Prince,” and Hari Simran Singh returned to wearing a turban, and letting his hair and beard grow, like a true son.

### “Gurmukhi Lesson”

“*Jinee naam dhi-aa-i-aa ga-ay masakat ghaal.*” Those who have meditated on the Name. Name is the noun or the name of a person, a place or a thing. That means the total identity, and that is God. *Dhi-aa-i-aa* – those who have paid attention to this faculty, that *Ekongkar* - it comes to the basic same thing. The entire creation is created by the One and those who meditated on the One... That is originally what it meant.

“*Jinee naam dhi-aa-i-aa ga-ay masakat ghaal.*” *Ghaal, ghaalnaa* means beyond sweat. When the horse you ride, sometime it sweats to the point that you see all over, it becomes white, like it has been given a cream all over. *Ih ghaal hai.* *Ghaal* also means when the heat is to such a point when the highest melts before it. That is also called *ghaal*. *Ghaal* when you work hard and you sweat at your brow and you earn something. That is also called *ghaal*. The other word with *ghaal* is *daal*. *Daal* means protection, shield. *Ghaal, daal, and paal*. God protects and he shields and he brings you the best of it.

Sometime, you know, you have to learn Gurmukhi not because it’s a language. That is the tragedy of you. It is the Guru’s language. It will bring near to you what you otherwise cannot be. I am not laying a language on you because it happens to be the Punjabi, it happens to be of India... That is your nonsense. I am not participating in that, but it is the Guru’s language. Your Guru is written in it. There is something to it. There is something in the permutation and combination of this language which does what it does.

“*Jinee naam dhi-aa-i-aa ga-ay masakat ghaal. Naanak tay mukh ujalay kaytee chhuṭee naal.* There, the whole thing is all resolved. *Naanak tay mukh ujalay kaytee chhuṭee naal.*” Their face is clean and divine, bright. Eyes don’t tell lies and bright eyes are the message of God.

### “The Two Legs of Character and Commitment”

*Did the new generation have any problem adapting to life in America, while retaining their distinctive Khalsa lifestyle? Did they have any challenges adhering to the high ideals instilled by the Siri Singh Sahib outside the rather idyllic circumstances of their education in the Himalayan foothills? Did*

*they experience any of the pitfalls common to young people in America coming of age?*

*The Siri Singh Sahib joined with a gathering of teenagers for a week in August of 1989. They had come together in New Mexico for a month-long interim program during their summer school break. The following are some of the Master's frank and loving words of guidance to that significant young group of Sikhs.*

You might be exploiting your parents, you might be exploiting the feelings and attachment with you, but one thing is, I tell you, you can't exploit the time and space. That will get you.

I am very shocked at certain people who I used to hug and love and raise and play with. They came out beautiful. They showed up with great character, but some of you are mean. You are liars. You play games. You are not even aware to understand that tomorrow's challenge will break your teeth and wash them and put them in your hand. And that hurts the people who love you, the people who know you, and the people who are with you through thick and thin.

Psychologically, we are not supposed to talk negative. Psychologically, we are not supposed to say negative things. Psychologically, we should appreciate you. Tell me honestly, if I appreciate you and appreciate you and appreciate you, and the time and space doesn't, what kind of a lie am I telling? And what kind of a lie are you living? Do you understand what I am saying?

And moreover, you are very honest, you are extremely honest. Your honesty is, whatever you hurts are, you say it. Whatever you have done, you say it. You do not honor any promise, any commitment, any mutual behaviour, any relationship, any understanding. You are dishonest to the hilt, and you call yourself honest. You are sick! You speak truth to hurt each other. You are not honest. Truth doesn't hurt anybody. Truth uplifts you. Truth is a force not to be used to hurt people. You tell on each other, play games with each other, do your number... how long?

Alright, today you are young. One day, you will be grown up. Twenty-five, twenty-seven, thirty. Naturally, somebody's going to tell you, "Good-bye!"

You can develop offensive behaviour by being clever. I tell you why. When you are clever, you play the games. Two, three, four times, you enjoy the game because you are never caught. Finally, you get caught, you become defensive.

(Speaking to someone in the *Sangat*) Oh, you came?

This guy has been with me for eighteen years. He doesn't know time, space, me. And I put it on record, I'm getting to the point of getting tired. But anyway, he's out of the discussion. Let us talk what we are talking. The effectiveness of your life will lose strength.



It is not that I don't have enemies, and it is not that I won't have enemies. It is not that I have not been abused and crossed with the most corrupt and bizarre and pornographic attitude. It's not that I've not been betrayed and tortured. Rather, I tell you, I have it in my will that anyone who wants to make my picture or my painting or my statue, should make it with the shells, outer shells, of the peanut, that looks like a scab. That many knives by these loving creatures are in my body. And that many wounds I have got.

The amount of insult, disrespect and abuse I have enjoyed in this country in twenty years, no man could have survived it. But I am a missionary. I am true to my mission, I am not true to myself. So when my self is endangered, it doesn't hurt. Not that I don't have self-respect, not that I don't have muscles, not that you can abuse me and I can't kick the face of that person. Not that I don't have the authority to fire anybody. But I am setting an example. "No 'say no' when you have to say no." That is Nanak. I heard it, I remembered it, and I am practising it.

You think religion is a joke. No, religion is self-crowning yourself. Kaur is a princess and Singh is a lion who has conquered the beast in himself. Otherwise, you are just a circus joker. You come here, you play games, you go away, you forget about it. We love you, but we don't trust you. You trust us, but you don't love us. That's the relationship. And we painfully know it, but we are not stupid. We are trying to save the harvest as much as we can, but some of you will be lost.

I know, once I had the experience when people just left, left and right, and one day in meditation I just got mad at God. I said, "Why so? Why people who have destiny, cannot make it? What's wrong?"

I never had an answer then, but Fate came before me and said, "Do you know me?"

I said, "Who are you?"

She said, "I am Fate. I am the sister of Destiny. Why are you so deadly against me? I need something, too. I take away those who do not aspire to be the friends of their souls, and who are the slaves of their minds."

In three weeks - this course is for what? Three weeks? This is your fourth week, third week? You have known each other now. That is not what I am worried about. In these three weeks, or in this week, you are going to go through, you have also come to know who you are. You have also come to know what calibre each one has. You also can very well judge who is giving you a pudding in the name of shit, and who is giving you shit in the name of pudding.

Try to know this: don't try to be false and very kiss, kiss, kiss business. No, no, no. There are a lot of people who are human, but they are snakes. There are people who are nothing but mosquitoes. They will sting you and get you malaria, and you'll die your own death, because you are blind. You have more emotions and feelings than reality and principles.

So don't get nervous here. Learn one thing: how to read between the lines, how to see behind the seen, how to read a face. You may not read the aura, but you can read a face. Eyes never lie. Look into the eyes of people, and you'll find out where they're at.

When somebody tells you, "I love you," just say, "Raise your eyes and look in my eyes," and you know how they will look? They will stare at you. They are the worst enemies you have got. A person who has deadliness to look into your eyes and look straight, without any warmth, that person is your deadly enemy. That person will dump you where you will never come out of. Don't look at blond hairs and blue eyes.

I will tell you something: romance, it never cooks the food, and love, it never pays the bills. It has not so far. And you in yourself, if you don't mind leaking, you will be abused. You will get empty soon.

Some of you will not like to wear *bana*. Maybe majority of you will not like to wear *bana*. And I know it in my heart that you don't want to. Because *bana* is an unfortunate thing. It takes away from you the chances of being corrupt and chances of playing games. It takes it away, right away.

I once asked a person, "Why don't you tie turban?"

She said, "I can't. I'm afraid I won't have any friends."

I said, "Are you a fisherwoman, that you make your body like a net, and you have to have a catch every day? What a corrupt mind, corrupt personality, and what a lower, mean, mental intelligence!"

Can you believe this? Somebody waits her whole life and may not have one friend. If you ever want to have a friend, 'a friend in need is a friend indeed.' That is a Western saying.

And we ask you to do *sadhana*. You say, "Oh God, this old man is crazy! Why is he saying it?"

Don't talk with me like that. Just listen to me, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy and wealthy and wise." Did I write that? Your papa wrote it? It is from the time to time, this truth shall stand.

Guru Nanak said that, "*Amrit vaylaa sach naao vadi-aa-ee veechaar. Karmee aavai kapraa nadree mokh duaar.*" The exact translation of it is: Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise. *Naanak ayvai jaanee-ai* - Nanak has known that way. And you? You cannot get up!

You don't want to wear *bana* because it identifies you. You love to have shallow friends and a shallow life. You do not want to have excellent friends and an excellent life, because you think popularity is in quantity. No, life in popularity is quality, not quantity. Quality has many followers. Quantity makes you a follower! That's the difference! Enjoy your way.

I have not come here to tell you something. I have come to tell you my own story. Whatever I taught and talked and taught, I have my own story. I am the most hurt man. I see the destiny. I see the goodness. I tell the people.

They tell me, "Shut up! You are from a third world country! You don't know what you are talking about!" Some people have abused me. I wish they should have been in India, and they should dare to do one tenth of it. I would have shredded them in a mincemeat machine. No, God has given me the guts, quality and capacity to stand the abuse so that I can keep going for the mission I came here for.

I'll tell you the quality of a teacher. Take your hand and put it like this. (The pointing and middle fingers become like two legs.) This is what my teacher taught. I'm not teaching you. I am just sharing with you. You understand? I'm not teaching you! I am not influencing you! Please! You can all go to hell and to heaven, that's your decision. Your legs, which are character and commitment, shall walk you to wherever you want to go. Neither your money nor your parents nor your education can take you there. I can bet with you! There are two legs on which you walk: commitment and character. Everything beyond that is a pure load.

He said to me, "You are not a woman. You are not a man. You are not a person." Is it a truth, or a lie? Does it look like truth? You understand that? Okay... You are not a woman... That is exactly how it happened. I was alone with him. He said, "You are not a woman. You are not a man. You are not a person." I was half an inch up than he was.

Then he said, "You are not great." Well, he is a teacher. He can say it. And you are not nothing. And then he made a fist. He said, "Why don't you ask me who you are?"

I said, "My Master, you have already told me I am not a woman, I am not a man, I am not a person, I am not great, I am not nothing, so you will tell me what I am."

He said, "Clever." I didn't move an inch. He said, "You are a teacher."

You are personally to be impersonal, and impersonally to be personal. Personally and impersonally... so when you meet somebody, be very personal, but when you decide something, be very impersonal.

Just understand, whenever you say, "I, I, I..." you forget the Thou. Thou is the Totality. I is only the personal reality. Personal reality is very limited. It doesn't make any sense. Never it will. You will never grow, you will just go and go. God is G-o-d: God, and ego is e-g-o: ego. Drop the "e", drop the "d": all that's left is go-go!

You can keep living, you can keep lying, and you can keep living. You can keep living, you can keep lying. You won't make any sense. Neither to yourself, nor therefore can you make any sense to anybody.

There are only two legs you can walk on, and Americans are very rare who admit they have two legs. They just jump up... hop, stop, and jump. Commitment they know, but character they don't. So they jump, hop, stop on one leg and they think, "Make it!" But they always fall on their faces. They lick the ground and lick the dust.

And that's why your life is not unhappy or happy, because you don't know what is unhappy and happy. Because you have never achieved, you are never fulfilled. Nobody told you. That's why we took the responsibility to come here and tell you everything nasty which life can offer.

It's not that I don't love you. But I hate it when you hate yourself - and you really, really hate yourself!

Once, a young girl whom I loved and I raised and I sent her to India to educate, and I was very much in love with her, she took a little scissor and she cut her hair. Her mother called me, her father called me. I told them, "She cannot be saved."

They were very shocked, "Why?"

I said, "She cut her hair."

"You should make her understand."

"Why you brought it to me? If you as parents have not made her understand, why should I make her understand?"

"No Sir, no Sir, no Sir..."

I talked to her. She said, "I am willing to change." She was so happy to change!

They called me, "Sir, what is your report?"

I said, "Well, temporarily she is willing to change, but permanently we have lost her. And that is true. She is lost into the wilderness of fashion, life and temperament because we couldn't temper her."

Once, I asked a person. I said, "Why this girl doesn't wear a turban?"

She said, "Sir, she hates you. She thinks if she wears a turban, then she represents Siri Singh Sahib. She hates Siri Singh Sahib, therefore she doesn't want to wear turban."

I said, "No, no. She wants to show her hair to people because the magnetic fields of hair are very sensual and sexual. She doesn't know where she is going. I don't want to say a thing."

Your body behaviour can very well predict your future. You think all these people who are rich and multi-millionaires, and these Americans are happy? If they are happy, why there's a fifty percent divorce and sixty percent corruption? You know why there is so much problem? Because people are not personally impersonal and impersonally personal.

God bless you with your honesty, with your truth, with your deceit, and with your corruption. It doesn't matter. They are sides of the same coin. You can make a choice. You can make a choice. If you give distance to your destiny, you will fall in the lap of fate, and fate is nothing but self-hate!

Remember this: It is not the man that matters, it is the manners of the man. It is not the age that matters, it is the etiquette. It is not the charisma of yours that matters, it is the character of yours. When wealth is gone, nothing is gone. When health is gone, some thing is gone. When character is gone, everything is gone. These are all Western teachings. I didn't make them up.

I hope and pray that you'll wake up. Awakening of the kundalini is opening of the third eye. It means seeing the unseen. It means being practical and calculating, imaginative and realistic, and being truthful and self-loving.

You know, you are all teen-agers. You love each other. You are the most corrupt of all. You are the biggest liars, and you are absolutely fake.

First, learn to love yourself. An empty glass doesn't quench anybody's thirst. First, love yourself and show how much you love yourself, and then let people bask in the radiance and sunshine of yours. Then love somebody, and you will always live in heavens while on Earth.

This commotional, free, unpaid prostitution which you do behind the windows and in the valleys, in the trees and in the cars, and all that - and you think you can play smug and nobody cares? And you bother your parents and make them nervous, you kill their pride, you take away their facilities, you give them doubt and you give them the shock - you call it a pride? You call it an honor? No, my dear, that's self-hatred! It will come back to you tenfold.

I hope I'll be with you for the week and we'll talk practical things. That's why I'm dedicating this week to it. I'm not trying to convince you. I'm not your leader and I'm not your father, and I'm not your teacher. You have to ask for it. And some of you are so cheap, you hate me and then tell you papa and mama also - and I get the phone calls. But just understand, these dramas you can play and the trauma you can create, but one day you will have to stand on your own legs of commitment and character, and that day if those legs will be shaky, you will realize - why didn't you learn?

I have seen once a young man, beautiful and wonderful, he was lying down on the sofa, and I asked the mother, I said, "Is he sleeping?"

She said, "No, that's the way he is."

“Does he do anything?”

She said, “No.”

“Doesn't he eat?”

She said, “Once a day.”

“When?”

“I don't know,” she said.

“So what is there?”

She said, “Food.”

“Why?”

“Maybe he may eat.”

“What he does?”

“He lies down on the sofa.”

“Does he do anything else?”

“No. Once in a while, when it is a good day, he watches TV.”

I said, “God bless you, and for your patience.”

If you do not take the courage in hand and you do not build your character, and you do not come through your intelligence and consciousness, you can be that boy. Depression makes you commit self-vengeance, inferiority complex makes you miserable, and self-deceit makes you a failure. Just remember those three things. The opposite of that is excellence, success and victory.

God bless you. Good night. Sat Nam.

## Madrid

Sarabjit Kaur had studied Kundalini Yoga in San Diego with Ram Das Singh and Kaur since 1971

when she was fourteen years old. At sixteen, she wrote the Siri Singh Sahib, asking to become his student, and he agreed to accept her.

A few years later, in 1979 Yogi Bajan sent Sarabjit Kaur to Barcelona to join the ashram begun there by Gurudass Kaur and Singh the previous year. While Gurudass Kaur worked at the American Children's School, Sarabjit Kaur looked after their young son, Nirankar Singh.

With the arrival of the Gurudasses in Barcelona, the Master started to come there each year, partly as a vacation for his staff and partly to show his support of the local *Sangat*. They always stayed for about a week at the Park Hotel in the Costa Brava area, famous for its sunny, sandy beaches, about an hour north of the city. It was a nice hotel, not luxurious, but very clean. And on a beautiful balcony overlooking the ocean, everyone would sing spiritual songs every night.

The owner of the hotel was a scowling German who didn't like them or understand their needs. At check-in, he would watch like a hawk, hoping to find excuses to refuse them service. He demanded that they pay their whole bill in advance. And even though meals were included in the price of lodging, he never consented to serving them vegetarian meals.

The owner's rude and prejudiced behaviour made those in the Siri Singh Sahib's entourage wish never to return, but it was, he who insisted they return each year. As it happened, in the course of those years, the owner of the hotel softened and became the most solicitous gentleman and host. He began to accommodate their every need down to their vegetarian meals and went out of his way to see that they were comfortable and satisfied. In fact, the man with the gruff exterior enjoyed the Siri Singh Sahib so much that he became somewhat of a student, asking him for guidance.

It was at the Park Hotel, as Yogi Bajan sat with his secretaries, that he said to Sarabjit Kaur, "I know all about you."

In truth, Sarabjit Kaur had been having doubts about her teacher. After all, why in the world would he send her all the way to Barcelona? To be a baby-sitter? Didn't he think she was capable of more than that? In her mind, she said, "Only God knows all about me."

As though hearing her reply, the Siri Singh Sahib repeated, "I know all about you." To Sarabjit Kaur's astonishment, he then went on to tell her the four things she had secretly prayed for each day for the past five years.

One day, Gurudass Singh phoned the Siri Singh Sahib with news from Spain, "There has been a military coup." For good measure, he added, "They will probably not allow us to live as Khalsa." In reality, the little 3HO community in Barcelona was struggling spiritually and financially. They were a tiny enclave in a large, Catholic culture and everybody was homesick for the US.

The Siri Singh Sahib's reply might have been expected, "If they will not allow you to live as

Khalsa, at least you should die as Khalsa.”

A short time later, Sarabjit Kaur sold everything she owned to afford a ticket back to America. She returned to her family home in San Diego and wrote Yogi Bhajan: “I am no longer in Barcelona. Please do not send me back to Barcelona.”

In reply, the Siri Singh Sahib wrote: “My dear daughter in divine, you do not have to go to Barcelona. Go to Madrid.” He proceeded to bug her about going to Madrid whenever he saw her, which was every few months.

Sarabjit Kaur was a good student. Over the next five years, she saved her money and paid for a flight to go to Madrid. Sarbjit Kaur also managed to save five hundred dollars to start her new life in the capital of Spain. She was nervous enough however that she asked someone drive her to the airport so she did not change her mind.

Once in Madrid, Sarbjit Kaur found that her five hundred dollars were gone in the first month, but fortunately she was given a job teaching English. Her first crisis came three months after arriving, when she became very sick. Sarabjit Kaur’s landlady called a doctor. The young doctor checked her vital signs, then he noticed her collection of yoga books.

“I do yoga too,” he said, and showed her a few poses. A conversation ensued about their respective journeys. The doctor then invited Sarabjit Kaur to move into his apartment, which she accepted. He was to become her first yoga student in Spain.

## **A Cane in Spain**

The Siri Singh Sahib increasingly took the opportunity of visiting the Guru Ram Das Ashrams of Europe. Since the early 1970s, when there was only one ashram in Amsterdam and one in London, 3HO Europe had grown to include numerous centers in Germany, France, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Spain.

A Sikh in Spain once remarked that she had a younger brother who had difficulty with his eyes. The Siri Singh Sahib hardly let her finish the sentence before pronouncing his diagnosis. "It's not his eyes. It's his mother! She is not letting her baby go. He needs to assert himself. Then he will see!" After some reflection, the Sikh realized this was absolutely so.

Another time, he emerged from a Mediterranean resort near Barcelona in a roughly-tied house turban and very informal-looking robe. He asked his host, Guru Das Singh, whether he would take him downtown. Of course, there was never any question. His secretaries objected, however, that his attire was not suitable for a trip into the very cosmopolitan city of Barcelona. He shrugged them off and



went alone with his host.

Once downtown, they looked for a place where he might find a cane. After some looking, a certain cane caught the Master's eye. Using his uncanny powers of persuasion, Siri Singh Sahib began to bargain with the shopkeeper.

Before long, the owner was exasperated. He could not believe that he was offering to sell a cane to this unusually shrewd customer for less than it had actually cost him! Still, a deal was eventually clinched that somehow satisfied them both. Then, to show his fair-mindedness, the Siri Singh Sahib turned to Gurudass Singh, and instructed him to buy a large number of things in that shop, at their regular price, from the amazed shopkeeper.

### **A Price for the Priceless**

In Copenhagen was a favorite antique shop the Siri Singh Sahib liked to visit whenever he came to that city.

Once, he was touring the city with a large entourage of students. They simply wanted to be with him, wherever he happened to be. Eventually, they wound their way back to the hotel where Yogi Bhajan was staying, along with Swaran Singh and the two tour secretaries.

The question of which route should be taken to the antique shop came up for discussion. Some of the hangers-on took issue with the route chosen by Siri Singh Sahib's driver. It was not the way they would have chosen to go. Many of them didn't want to go to an antique shop anyway. It didn't sound very exciting.

At this point, Siri Singh Sahib Ji, normally a mountain of patient reserve, said angrily that he did not want everyone following along. As a result, only the one car set off for the favorite antique shop.

Along, the way, the Master confided in his driver, Sardar Singh, that he did not really like telling people what to do. It was an unfortunate misconception people had developed about him. Siri Singh Sahib really preferred to simply tell people the truth about a given situation and let them make up their own minds.

The shop, run by a Danish gentleman, had an intriguing assortment of collectibles. Many military memorabilia of various descriptions from far and near, some of them more contemporary, others more ancient, could be found. An authentic portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte hung from the wall.

The Siri Singh Sahib and the shopkeeper exchanged pleasantries. In time, the Master's eyes fell

on a group of not very well-preserved swords. They were old and rusty, he said, but he might take them anyway. The owner quoted him a price of several thousand dollars.

Bargaining over a price is not a Scandinavian tradition. Still, the Master had seen nothing else that interested him, and he began to ply his negotiating skills with the shopkeeper. The keeper was not keen to negotiate, though the Master humored and cajoled him with great skill. "I came all the way to Copenhagen to see you. Don't you want to sell me anything?"

In the end, a deal was struck, a hard bargain. The shopkeeper had come down a little on the price. Both gained something. Their pride and their good relationship remained intact for another visit, another day, another opportunity of doing business.

Once they left the shop, the Master pointed out that the "rusted, old swords" were more than two hundred and fifty years old. He had recognized them as rare relics from the kingdom of Maharajah Ranjit Singh, the great ruler of the Punjab. One could say they were practically priceless, and well worth the money spent.

## **A Gurdwara in Guadalajara**

The Siri Singh Sahib also enjoyed his visits to Mexico. Wherever he went, he praised the devotional attitude of the Sikhs of Mexico.

Once, he came to Guadalajara. It was very hot. Since the facilities at the small local ashram were not considered adequate, the Siri Singh Sahib booked into the air-conditioned Hyatt Regency Hotel.

When his host, the director of the local ashram, discovered where the Siri Singh Sahib was staying, he insisted that the room that had been arranged was not suitable, and that larger, more luxurious accommodation should be arranged. "It is not possible!" he said, "What are you staying in this little room for?"

The Master replied, "What is a room? Room and grave have no more feeling than just to lie in rest. One is temporary. The other is permanent."

Finally, the host had his way, and a very large suite was taken for the Siri Singh Sahib and his travelling secretary.

On Sunday, it was decided to hold a Gurdwara. The Siri Singh Sahib offered that his suite would be very suitable for that function. Everyone agreed, and arrangements were made.

The entire floor of the hotel was set aside for the purpose. The staff of the hotel were made busy cleaning, organizing and fixing everything up. All the students and Sikhs dressed themselves in perfect white. Then finally the Guru was brought in with a lot of pomp and ceremony. The musicians led everyone in singing the Songs of Guru Nanak, sometimes in their original form and sometimes in Spanish. This went on for two or three hours. Then there was the Guru's *Langar* to share and to serve. In all, a wonderful time was had by everyone.

Afterward, the hotel manager approached the Siri Singh Sahib, and asked, "Sir, are you coming again, next year?"

He replied, "I don't know. What do you mean?"

The manager said, "I am willing to give any concession you want. We didn't understand what happened, but it did give us some feeling of the unknown, and I'll guarantee you that if you come next year, we'll give you fifty per cent off!"

The Siri Singh Sahib then replied, "No, no, I don't make my schedule. Somebody else makes it. I just humbly follow it."

The manager was amazed, "You have somebody above you?"

The Siri Singh Sahib, the Master, explained, "Are you kidding? Everybody is above me! Everything is above me!"

## **The Healing Touch of the Maestro**

Another time, a middle-aged Mexican woman haltingly approached the Siri Singh Sahib, saying, over and over, "Maestro, Maestro, please touch me."

It was not clear what she wanted, but the Maestro allowed her to humbly kneel in front of him and take his two hands and place them on her forehead. She did not ask anything more. After a time, she got up and left.

The next day, the woman's daughter wanted to see the Master. She brought a big basket of fruit, presents, and some Mexican gold coins.

Harbhajan the Yogi said, "Thank you very much. What is this for?"

She replied, "My mother was very, very sick, Siri Singh Sahib, and yesterday you cured her."

The Master did not remember making any effort to cure that woman. He wanted to see her for himself, so he arranged with the daughter that her mother might visit the next day, before he was scheduled to return to the U.S.

When the two women came, it was clear that the one who had been crippled two days earlier was now entirely healthy. Such was the enormous strength of her own will and conviction!

## **“The Sixth”**

*Since the attack on Akal Takhat in 1984, the Siri Singh Sahib had pledged to remember that serious violation at Gurdwara on the sixth of every month. He kept his pledge, year after year.*

So long as the Earth rotates, we will never forget the Akal Takhat was attacked by the Indian Army on the Indian soil because it is the breaking of a pledge. Army is to defend the temples and the faith of the people. Army is not to attack the faith of the people. And there is no reason that the fourth biggest and strongest army in the world as to attack a temple for a certain couple of hundred people.

If it is true that they were not desirable, it can also be true that there can be many methods to take them out without attacking the temple. The idea to attack the temple was premeditated. It was to show the Sikhs all over the world that either they have to toe the line or they have to be slaves. The attack was not about India or the Indian government. The attack – let it be recorded once and for all – was by those Communist Sikhs who were the agents and double-agents and who provoked the government, letting them know that on such-and-such a day independence is being declared from the Akal Takhat.

Our concern today is not why the Akal Takhat was attacked. Our concern today is that we all, everywhere were attacked and our concern today is that we have to build ourselves slowly, gradually, and practically that it may never happen again.

## **“We have to come to the realization of who we are”**

There are eighteen million Sikhs on the planet Earth at this time, recorded and unrecorded, and we are one among them. But I don't agree that Sikh religion has yet started.

I think we have been hired by time and space to carry Siri Guru Granth from generation to generation. Beyond this, I don't think we even understand what Sikh dharma is.

Yes indeed, in the crossing of the next century, it will be very elaborately understood and then it will be practiced. Timing so calculated through the heavenly force and the earthly force, the calculation comes to 2038, so there are a lot of years. We have to go through the prosperity now and then we have to come to the realization of who we are...

It is very difficult for a man to even conceive the idea that there is something which is nothing and responsible for everything. The concept of God is not yet understood...

The bottom line of Siri Guru Granth is: "Don't be an idiot! Don't waste your time. You are God. Just live it! You are not subject to time. You are not subject to space. You are here!"

## A New Teaching

It was December in Rome and the redoubtable Siri Singh Sahib was in the city of Saint Peter sharing the sacred methodology of Kundalini Yoga. The Master was sitting in a living room with thirty or forty teachers of this yoga.

Hari Simran Singh had come late, and was sitting in a waiting room outside. In his mind, he recited, "*Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru,*" again and again. It was two in the morning, but in the next room, Yogi Bhajan was in full stream, his inspiration unending.

After a few minutes, a woman in *bana* appeared from the living room. Recognizing Hari Simran Singh, she explained that the person responsible for the Siri Singh Sahib's appointments had forgotten to tell the Master that he was outside. She then invited him into the living room.

On sighting Hari Simran Singh, aged just twenty-nine at the time, Yogi Bhajan greeted him and engaged in some light-hearted banter. Then, he shifted to a serious mood and said, "You have four chances in your life. You have to become a mullah, a rabbi, or a monk." As he spoke, the Master touched his thumb to his little finger, then his ring finger, then his middle finger, one after the other.

His student smiled and asked, "What is the fourth chance?"

The Master looked straight into Hari Simran's eyes and, joining his thumb and forefinger in *gyan mudra*, said, "You have to become a teacher of Kundalini Yoga."

When the teachers gathered around the living room heard those words, they became very animated. Everyone, it seemed, had an opinion about Hari Simran Singh.

One said, "I told him to practice more Kundalini Yoga!"

Another pronounced, "I told him to practice with me!"

A third said he should practice this. Another said he should practice that. Others said he should practice this way or that way.

The Master quietly took in their appraisals. After fifteen or twenty seconds, he sat very straight. Forming his right hand into a fist with his index finger pointing straight up, he extended it high into the air, making a sign for silence. He had heard enough put-downs from the teachers.

"Shut up, idiots!" he roared, "I never said he has to practice Kundalini Yoga." Then, slowly he addressed them, word for word, "I told him to *become* Kundalini Yoga."

The Master had spoken. A new teaching had just been given for the teacher's manual.

To be an effective Kundalini Yoga teacher, as Yogi Bhajan was, meant not practising endless *kriyas*, not even practising the necessary *kriyas* correctly. It meant giving one's soul to the teachings. It meant embodying the very best of Kundalini Yoga. It meant, as the Siri Singh Sahib said, *becoming* Kundalini Yoga.

Hari Simran Singh had come with the idea that he wanted to realize himself by developing his relationship with Yogi Bhajan, through his personal *sadhana*, and with his yogic lifestyle. In that moment, he realized that to reach his goal he needed to become a mentor, a teacher, and a shining light for others in his own right.

## Embracing the Russian Bear

In 1989, the Siri Singh Sahib was invited to a conference on global environmental issues, being held in Moscow. When he arrived there with his Secretary General, Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur Khalsa, and his Chief of Staff, Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa, the following winter, they marvelled at the endurance and generosity of the Russian people. While the Muscovites celebrated the snow, the Master from the West, like all the other delegates from abroad, could not help covering himself with layers and layers of clothing, hoping to stay warm. Even under a fur coat, and several coats of woollens, the cold still managed to make itself felt.

The Siri Singh Sahib reflected over how Napoleon had not been able to win Russia for want of supplies, how even the Germans with their secure lines of supply had been unsuccessful. The unbearable Muscovite winter had done them in.

He looked and saw the wide avenues of the Russian capital, as wide as ordinary runways, and the long line-ups outside the department stores, where hundreds of people might wait hours just to

get inside and find a lot of half-empty shelves and maybe a total of seventeen different kinds of products, where an American store might have seventeen hundred, or thousands. People never even knew just exactly what kinds of things they might find inside, but the good-natured Russians did not mind. They were used to this. If there was nothing they themselves cared for or needed, they might still buy something for a relative or a friend.

The Siri Singh Sahib watched as a line of twenty Russians lined up for what must have been just three cups of coffee. He watched to see if, like Americans, they would fight each other to be first in line. They did not. These Russians had long ago learned to cope with the daily indignities of a hugely dehumanizing culture without sacrificing their essential human dignity.

During their visit, the three Americans were hosted by a gracious family in Moscow. By now, they were all experienced international travellers, always interested to learn the local ways of speaking, living and eating. While in Russia, they were treated to a simple diet of fruits and cheeses. There were grapes and pears, peaches, plums and apples, and cheeses hard and soft and fragrant, which their hosts freely plied them with whenever they were together in their modest apartment. Of course, most Russians would have preferred meat and borscht, but the fruits and cheeses were delicious.

Only later, did Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur learn from a Russian acquaintance that their ever-smiling hosts must have spent an entire month's income just to provide them with fresh fruit and cheese during their stay of three days.

In those days, all the world had its eyes on the unfolding events in the Soviet Union, as its innovative president simultaneously set the agenda for world nuclear disarmament and worked to create a kinder, gentler U.S.S.R.

At the conference were hundreds of delegates from many parts of the globe. America was represented by senators and congressmen and the Democrat's vice presidential candidate, Al Gore. There was also a corps of spiritual dignitaries, all vying for their place in the limelight, many of them intensely jealous of the others. The Siri Singh Sahib played his role, at times pretending not to notice.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, the charming Soviet president made his way through a large crowd of on-lookers and well-wishers toward the white-robed Siri Singh Sahib and his staff.

"I know you," exclaimed Mr. Gorbachev, through an interpreter. "You're the man on the tea box!" The president went on to say that, some months earlier, he had received an unsolicited gift from the Yogi Tea Company.

Responding to information that the U.S. president's wife, Nancy Reagan, had been seen sipping Yogi Tea in the White House with Raisa Gorbachev, the Yogi Tea Company had sent Mr. Gorbachev several boxes of the tea, with a picture of the inimitable yogi imprinted on each one.

It turned out that Mr. Gorbachev also enjoyed listening to the deeply relaxing sounds of meditation tapes inspired by the Songs of Guru Nanak, which he had obtained during a visit to America. It all just went to prove that everyone, even the Sikh yogi and the Communist president, shared a place in the new global village, and that Guru Nanak - himself an inspired wanderer - had a significant, if not fully understood, part to play in this new world order.

## The Job of a Teacher

*On April 22, 1990, the Master gave a defining course in being a teacher in Los Angeles.*

"I have been given to understand you want to become teachers. Is that true?"

*"Yes, sir."*

"My job is to let you know what a teacher is, and then to tell you what a teacher's definition is, and then you can very well understand what kind of teacher you want to become.

"In the spiritual world, teacher is a guide and it's a water-bearer, it is a carrier of the nectar of life. Whatever you say, it should be true, and it should be in the interest of another person to uplift him or her. Whatever you do, that will be a deadly thing if there will be any interest of you served in any communication, direct or indirect - body signal or any other.

"You shall not do anything which directly or indirectly, through any sign, symptom or persuasion serves you or your any purpose. Do you understand that?"

"It should be totally for uplifting and upstaging the other person who has given you the trust as a student, and if you care not, then just learn a lesson from the cockroach. Do you know what a cockroach is? When you betray your student, whether he is dumb or he is wise - I am not talking about that. When you betray your student, that is your next incarnation. So, it is a very, very difficult job to *even call yourself* a teacher, or become a teacher, and after calling or becoming, then cheating on yourself and not acting up to its fundamental rule and law. I know in the Western world you don't even understand what I'm saying.

"You think that cheating is fine which suits your emotions and feelings. Cheating is what somebody said or lied to you, or what somebody said and didn't lie to you, or somebody promised you, or it can be your imagination, it is your criss-cross and all these kinds of things, *but anything and everything which you do, it must upgrade the other person.* You can live your life. You can be husband and wife, but not teacher and student. You can be father and son, not teacher and student. You can be brother and brother, not teacher and student. I'm not going into the philosophy of everything. I'm going into the reality of everything. It is a very realistic, simple thing.



"There is a law in this yoga. A student must not come to you empty-handed. Even bring a leaf, or he may bring a million dollars, but he must not come to the teacher without a present or a gift or - what you call it? - an offering. And that offering is not for you! That offering must go on the altar, and you must pray.

"It means for the sake of that gift, you are hired. It is not your personal property. Never was, never is, never shall be. It will always be used for noble causes. Do you understand? It is called '*Gurudakshina*.' At the sight of the teacher, before uttering a word, you offer a present. Why? It is a very selfish act.

"What I have figured out is it is the most selfish thing a student can do. When you bring him a present, he has to receive it. It is obligatory. He has to see it. That is *darshan*. He has to speak something, that is *baykree*, and that can only be a blessing! So, you meet him under a very elevated condition. That is what the gift does! The gift fits for you the elevated state.

"You think the teacher does nothing. Actually, there is nothing that happens without a teacher. A person who doesn't have a teacher, has no life! Period. Now the question is, whatever is the frequency and scope and, ultimately, whatever is the standard of your teacher, that shall be yours! Or there is a permanent teacher. It is called Mr. Time. The psychology of the teacher is it is a vehicle, it is a person who has totally dissolved himself and herself to let the nectar of life flow to nurture another human being so they can understand the love and the realization of Infinity without any reference to fear.

"Sometimes teachers become showpieces, like in any business. 'How many students you have got?' - 'So many.' - "How many students are there? How much money is there? How many ashrams are there?' There may be a sense of communication, but it is not a science of communication. That is not how a teacher is judged or understood.

"You have a right to meet your teacher and quiz him, and answer his question, and get your doubts done at that time. You have one chance in a life, but God promises you two things. When the soul was asked to go to the earth, to have the body - at that time, the soul cried and asked God, 'In this separation, suppose I leave my attachment to you and get into the cycle of birth and death? I don't want to do that, and besides, this is my final trip. Why do I have to lose sight of that?' At that moment, God gave the mind.

"The human mind is very absolutely impulsive, and also very intuitive. You have the sense of intuition for your protection. The animal has a sense of impulse intuitively. You don't have that. You are impulsive for action only, not for strategy. You have intuition for strategy, therefore your mind is intuitive and impulsive both. Where the animal mind is impulsively intuitive and intuitively impulsive, that has a combination you don't have. You are two separate areas, so you intuitively can think and guide your life. That's your personality, but without intuition, you are just a normal rut, like a herd of sheep going in the direction, going. You cannot separate yourself because you have no hooves, no

claws, no horns, no skin, no kicking power, nothing!

"You can't defend yourself. Your skin is so scratchable and so mild. It is a breathing skin. So the human skin is very sensitive and a breathing skin. It has no protection. That's why we always have to protect ourselves. We wear mails and we wear all that stuff, and even today we have to have different kinds of suits to protect ourselves, and different types of clothes to show our sensuality and sexuality and impressiveness.

"'Pehraavaa' they call it, and *pehraavaa* is very important to a man, and it is ingrained in us. You are what you eat, and you can absolutely project by what you wear - what you wear as a behaviour, what you wear as clothes, what you wear as a habit... whatever you have on you as a personal person. What you don't wear, it's not you! So, make yourself disciplined in any way you like.

"The personality of a teacher is beyond time and space. Never say to anybody something which suits now, or pleases now! Sometimes you have to say things which are hurtful and very, very painful. The only thing you can do is say them with a smile.

"All a student can do is accept you as a teacher, that's it! You are stuck! The day after, he has no obligation, except obedience. You tell him thirty years something, if he won't listen, that's alright. Or else, you see your student wrong and you don't have the guts or the courage to say, 'You are doing a dirty job. You idiot! You are going to get into the hell!' you have goofed, he has not.

"Sometimes, you don't know what is your responsibility. You think a teacher is one who comes into yoga class, puts his legs up, head down. You call it 'head stand.' No, my dear. That is just a momentary exercise.

"You have two options. When a student accepts you as teacher, you have an obligation to see his morals, his ethics, and his understanding become Infinite - not universal - and it is only under the Infinite circumstances the person will be kind and compassionate, courageous and noble, gracious and giving, and that only you can achieve by being direct. In other words, whatever you have to say, psychologically speaking, say it simple, say it straight, and say it with a smile.

"It doesn't matter how ugly it is. You are in a business, but you are not in a show business where you have to act like somebody else. You have to act like you, and from the very soul of you with a definite, honest grip! And you cannot do this, 'This is a rich student. This is a poor student. This is an ugly student. This is a beautiful student...'

"You are not marrying somebody or taking somebody on a date. You are teaching. For you, you are a teacher and everybody else is a student, irrespective of their caste, creed, color, money, status, or anything! You shall not differentiate or diffuse.

"If you don't know the destiny of a person, help him to find it himself or herself. If you know it,

say so, and stick with it. People come and people go. You must understand they come with the Will of God and they go with the Will of God. This is how it happens.

"God has promised every soul they shall meet their spiritual teacher once in their lifetime. He didn't promise the teacher will accept them and they will recognize them. There's only one promise: soul got mind. And one more promise: it will meet its guide. Period.

"As long as you do not meet your guide, you cannot graduate in this lifetime. That is the law. People go to school, they sell drugs. They sit in the motel, hotel, they do things, they remain in their dormitory. They never go to school. They never attend a class. They do a lot of things.

"So, we do on the earth the same things. We sometimes go... What they call it? AWOL.

"What happens? The people who AWOL and the people who hooky, they never go to school and go somewhere else. All that what happened between school and college and teacher happens in the world also, but as a teacher, you got to be, you ought to be, you have to be, and you should be.

"As a student, student has the right to goof, to do whatever they do. You shall not respond, except what is in the interest of the student. You will never deal with a student on the same level. You will never react to a student. If a student abuses you, and two hours later the student calls you, you shall answer as nothing has happened. You have no right of vindictiveness, and you have no right of revenge, and you cannot also throw a student away, 'Get out of my sight!' You can't do that either because you are debarred from any reaction whatsoever.

"Just look at your oath: 'I am not a woman. I am not a man. I am not a person. I am not myself...' *Now what are you?* 'I am a teacher.' Can you believe this? So, you give up your all human known and unknown rights to begin with!

"The only thing which I see in the machinery is that fork thing. What they call it? Forklift! That fits in with what I understood of a teacher. The guy goes into the ground with his prongs, picks up the thing, puts it on the line, gets it going, isn't it? Burns his own gas, keeps his things moving, oils his pulleys and levers and chains, and gets the thing done. It is a very unique relationship. It is what love actually means.

"These sexual, sensual personal gains and losses are beautiful. I appreciate you can have them all, but they are on this earth. They don't go with you. They don't move. Teacher and teachings are the deciding factor which remains with you.

"Question is very simple. You are the shoe shine man, and you have to shine the soul of another person. If there is some tip along the way, fine. If not, okay.

"All the other person does in the airport I have seen is goes, jumps up, sits in that chair, puts his

shoes out. He doesn't even ask what you want. He knows what to do. That is the status of the teacher.

"The best position of a teacher is that shoe shine man in the airport. He doesn't care if a Black man sits. He doesn't care if a White sits. He doesn't care if you have dubbin shoes. He doesn't care if you have ordinary shoes.

"If you have simply sneakers, he knows he is not going to polish sneakers. He knows it. He will just dust them and let the guy go. Some people always wear sneakers and come and sit there. Don't waste much of your time.

"If somebody is full of shit, somebody is full of shit, and you see it, still you can't say it! Let me tell you in American language. It's none of your job to find out a person's mistake and tell him *'You are full of shit! You are dirty! You are ugly! You are dumb! You are a whore! You are a pimp!'* All this abusive language you can use, as a human, you can. But you cannot tell any such defect, however truthful it may be, to your student. *No way!* You are supposed to correct it.

"By saying it, by bringing it to someone's notice... It is not a con talk. It's a responsible talk. Otherwise you are causing a confrontation, and you shall not be in confrontation with your student, doesn't matter what it costs you, and anything said in confidence between you and your student, you should not reveal it at the point of your death.

"A certain nobility you should carry. Whatever a student shall give you, you shall not use it for personal purposes, but for prayer purposes. It doesn't matter, it may be anything. Anything that comes to you as a teacher, comes to God directly. You are the custodian, and whatever defect you see in a student, it is your job to correct it, not confront it, not to lay it out.

"You cannot curse your student, it doesn't matter how deadly wrong they are to you. You may not pray for those who are studying with you, but there is a moment in your prayers when you must say - these are the words which are normally used, and please write it down: 'Those who I was supposed to teach and who are unable to learn for my faults or their faults, I ask Thee, O Lord, to forgive me and serve them in my place!' That is your prayer. 'Protect them and grace them by Thy Visit, help them and elevate them by Thy Spirit, and make them prosperous and happy so they can recognize Thee.' This you say every day. You may pray for your students who are studying with you, or not. That has nothing to do with this prayer! This prayer is a part of you because you are nothing but a human being used for the well-being of a person who calls himself a 'student'.

"It is X,B,Y,Z... It has nothing to do with you. Like a doctor, you diagnose. A visitor comes, then you diagnose, then you understand, you check the history, you do the whole thing, you keep the records sacred, you try to help keep everything going, you try to help, and you try to help, and you try to help. It is just a profession of professions, it is a moral of morals, it is an ethic of ethics, and it is a teaching of teachings because, just remember, you are also called 'spiritual teacher', so you are dealing

with the spirit of the person. *Do not dim it! Brighten it!* It is a very powerful responsibility. The teacher is above God, sorry to say that.

"It is a very simple couplet which I will tell you. '*Guru Krishan dono karay, kis kaa lagoo pa-ay? Balihaaree guroo apanay jis Raam dee-o milaa-ay.*' Now that is the question. *Ram* and Guru, my teacher and my God are standing together. Whose feet should I touch first as a matter of respect? I am gracefully overloaded with the grace of my Guru who made me to meet *Raam*. That is, the teacher!

"It is a way, but it is a toll road in Kundalini Yoga. You pay first, you enter later, or you draw the ticket. You enter yourself, you draw the ticket yourself, and you pay. '*Idhar ashtan, tidhar gashtan.*' If you ever want to come empty-handed, you shall go empty-handed. So it is a law. It is never to be broken.

"However, when I came here we used to have the kind of students who never had money and never believed in those days, you know. So, I used to have some rich students, also the rich were very rich and the poor were very poor, and that's the kind of class I used to have. So I will take always the money from that account and cash it into coins and throw it around on the ground, for when they come at the gate and they would say, "Hey man, I can't pay. I don't believe in this shit! This is bullshit! What is this? He is spiritual. How can he ask for money?"

"I will hear it within my ears. I can hear it. 'Do this to him, and do that and what the fuckin' is this? What the shit is this? What is this whole business? Why must we pay?'

"I will hear all those abuses, and the gate man will say, 'Why don't you go out and find some money?'

"Where will I find it from? From your mother? From your father?' Angry man.

"The gate man will say, 'No, no, no. Just look and try to find it.' Then they will go out, and they will find it. They will find about two, three dollars. It was a dollar fifty or something. The rest they will keep in their pocket, and they will put in the basket that money, but we stuck by that principle.

"You must understand, fifteen such people out of fifty will be in the class. They will use the filthiest language and abusive connotations and insult, and it just used to be a privilege to stand at the gate. But we kept our rule, calmly, quietly, without reaction.

"One man after the class caught hold of me. He said, 'I understand, man, you are a big macho dude.'

"I said, 'What is the problem?'

"He said, "'You throw the money and make us to pick it up and pay you. What is this trip that's going on?'"

"I said, 'It's not for my sake. It's so that you can have the grace that you earned the teachings.'

"You have to be very diplomatic. Dip low on the mat. Don't break your bones and be nice to these people. A student has the right to be angry, to be nasty, to be abusive, to be treacherous, to betray, to be shitty, to be violent. He has all the rights and you have no right, except one, and write it down forever. *You shall elevate his or her consciousness.* That's it!

"The student has all the rights! He can accuse you, abuse you, tell you what he wants, do whatever he wants. If you ever raise your hand, you will raise it to bless him, and that is the obligation. That is the first standard rule to be a teacher. You shall not protect yourself. Let the Hand of God protect you. If you don't believe in that, forget it! Is that understood? Is that *clearly* understood? If you ever raise your hand, you shall raise your hand in blessing. You shall not under any direct or indirect means protect yourself, and should cause no harm and injury directly or indirectly. You shall not reveal any secret given to you in confidence by a student, and you shall always uplift the spirit and the surroundings and the environment of your student without any cause of injury to his and her future, present or past.

"If you are true to certain things, there is no knowledge in the world... That is, the entire knowledge of the universe is to give you this characteristic which I am explaining, and you will have it all. All you have to do is sit down, tune in '*Ong Namu Guru Dayv Namu*' and there you go! It will be very foolish on the part of a teacher if he expects from students anything. You have the right to expect from God, whose servant you are. Ask God.

"I will give you my example. It happened today. Yesterday I was on notice from my accounts section that, out of my nature, I have spent money... 'free spent,' whatever you want to call it, kind of a very fun jazz in which normally I don't involve myself. I never deal with it, but sometimes, you know, I am also very impulsive and there was a situation, and I said 'Okay, this is the way it is, this is the way it is!' So, my accounts section gave me a notice that I have goofed.

"I had till Monday to face at twelve o'clock the reality, so I knew about it, but the circumstances led to this morning, and somebody said, 'I want to do something.'

"I said, 'Well, if you want to do a noble thing, this is it.'

"He said, 'Done.' I didn't have to bother. So, Monday will come tomorrow. Job was done, so when I met my accuser, I just asked forgiveness and said the job is done. Matter is over, and I don't have to raise a pinky. Because, just remember, every noble cause has its own power to solve itself. You are just a vehicle. Your touch is required.

"Don't worry. It is all predestined. Goodness does not need recommendation. Remember this. Good behaviour, good personality, good manners, good methods, good speaking, all what is good contains God in it. It's just 'God' plus 'o.' 'G-O-D,' God. 'G-O-O-D,' good. It's just God plus 'o'! Simply he has to organize on this Earth, so it can be just nice.

"So, very briefly I am just giving you the ABC of a spiritual teacher, and in relation to the kundalini yoga which is a source of life and happiness, prosperity, nobility and courage. It is effective. It is practical. It does change. But there is a little trouble. It widens your scope. It makes you big! It's as simple as that. It makes the dormant active. That's what kundalini yoga does. It uncoils your watch of time to tick right.

"It's the ultimate science. There is no discipline in it that you have to be celibate the rest of your life or you have to not marry, not to have children. Actually, it is the yoga of the householder who wants to be a saint and a soldier and successful, at the same time, prosperous and taking care of the things and everything.

"It has created miracles in twenty years in the United States, and this is what I see is true. '*Dhan Dhan Raam Daas Gur, jin siri-aa tinai savaari-aa. Pooree ho-ee karaamaat, aap sirjanhaaraai dhaari-aa.*' Great, great is Guru Ram Das! *Jin siri-aa tinai savaari-aa.* Whosoever has heard of him has become perfect. *Pooree ho-ee karaamaat.* The miracles have perfected it! *Aap sirjanhaaraai dhaari-aa.* That God Himself has come in and prevailed to manifest it.' And it's not a gossip! It is not to 'inspire' you. It is not to butter you up. It is not to cheer you up. This is the truth, as gospel truth as it is!

"So please remember, however beautiful you look in your mirror or to your boyfriend and girlfriend, or husband and relative or to your situation and environment - that is all to you, but as teacher, you have to only look to one commitment, that is you are a forklift for that space, and for that time, and for that person who is before you. It's not wrong to become emotional, commotional, a little angry sometime, yell and scream, and do one thing. Your job is to keep the person awake. That's it!

"It's a yoga of awareness. Keep him awake! Hey, do you know what they do in the hospital? They start slapping the cheeks, '*Hey John! Hey John! Hey John! Look guy! Look! Please look at me! Open your eyes! Open it! Hear me! Hear me!*' You know it is nothing more than that. They know that if in the next ten minutes this guy doesn't close his eyes and doesn't sink in, he is going to make it. This moment confronts a teacher all the time!

"What do they call those emergency people, they come on a bus? Paramedics, right? Paramedics? You are the paramedics of the existent soul to deliver it to its own glory - *own glory* - as they deliver a man to his own life. You control nothing and you claim nothing! Whenever you will control and claim, you will be blamed and disreputed!

"All a doctor wants is that somebody may go home, so he can go home to his family and say 'Hello', and he may go and dance and drink and make a party that he is happy, which is anti-medical

advice, but he does it. But all he wants is let him go home. He doesn't want a person to remain in hospital the rest of his life and die with bedsores! Do you follow?

"And there should be no ego. *'I am a teacher!'* No. You are just a messenger of the teachings, whatever they are. Has the postman always delivered your letters and come in the living room, and had intercourse with your wife and slapped your kids, and eaten your food and stolen your things and done anything like that? Why do you think you have the right? You have absolutely no right!

"You have one privilege, that you will polish the soul like a shoe-man polishes the shoes, and you will deliver the message as a postman delivers it. There is already a ticket on it! Stamp is already on it! None of your business! God is sending it to you, and also remember, it is not the student only, it is your test too. Don't feel superior. Superior is the student who has come to you. Superior are you when you deliver him! So, baby, you have a long way to go.

"Take the honest responsibility. You have seen me teaching. I just see when the arc lines become golden blue and the crystal-clear white comes through, it doesn't matter where I am, I just stop it. That's enough. But I must deliver to that point, and I have done it when I am very, very sick myself, and all I wanted to do was go home and sleep. No! Now this to a man is a very engaging word: 'Thou shalt answer the call of duty.' You have not said 'you shall'. That is one place where you are God. *'Thou shalt answer the call of duty...'* and you will do it beautifully!

"Now, after this introduction, how many of you wants to be a teacher? I just wanted to be very sure with you, that you should understand what is involved as a teacher. And I also wanted to show you if you once develop this personality what I have said and done to you, there is nothing you shall not enjoy. Your life will be fulfilled, and you shall enjoy every bit of it. Real life is that life! Rest is a hassle.

"So, don't understand that, without this, there is something better or best. If the Hand of God has guided you to become a teacher, take this privilege and carry it on to the hilt, and don't stop for any other temptation. Man has his mission, his manners and the magnitude, and that has to be completed.

"Normally, we are human beings. We become very personal in things. We involve ourselves, over-involve ourselves, under-involve ourselves. We have standards of judgement, hatred, love, affection. All these human weaknesses are in us, those you can use as a human. But just keep your teachership out!

"It's just like when you wear the gown of a judge and - what do you call it? - the wig, and you sit and you listen to the whole thing. You are a judge, not a murderer. You are not a 'murderee'. You are not a murdered. That is not your job. You sit and listen, and listen, and listen. You let everybody have a fair trial, a fair chance, and then you deliver the judgement.



"So, it is very important that the student can run away and come back, and run away and come back, say and not do, do and not say, and all that. It is all admissible, but for you, you only have three things. As they say in real estate, real estate has three things: location, location, location... For you, there are three things: to be consistent, to be consistent, to be consistent. You have absolutely no choice to vary yourself. Do you understand that? Now, I will ask you to ask any question you have so that I can answer you. Please feel free.

Student: "Sir, can you differentiate, is there a differentiation in the description between a Master and a teacher?"

"Teacher is basically a Master. Master is when he practises as a teacher and has no goofing to his record. It becomes a Master. Some people become Masters in one second. Some do not become Masters for many, many lifetimes, so the differentiation is simply when your attitude becomes ultimate that you are just to uplift and uplift and uplift. That is what a Master does, and does it with a Master's touch!

"But when you start doing it with a low-key hustle and, you know, your inverted con-ness, and you do the PR and that kind of stuff, you are just trying to promote the teachings as a teacher, but you are not very sure that you are who you are... Actually, the difference between a teacher and a Master is self-assurance, how much you trust yourself. If you trust yourself ultimately, you are a Master! If you don't, you have some little doubt here and there, then you will be variable. Am I clear?"

"If you have another question to ask, don't hesitate."

Student: "You said a teacher cannot protect themselves. In what capacity? Is it physically or emotionally or spiritually?"

"You don't protect yourself, period! You can verify yourself in thirty-six hundred accounts..."

Student: "I don't understand."

"Well, stand under one thing. Stand under this fact, that, as a teacher, you shall not protect yourself, because if you protect yourself, you protect at your level, your capacity. Let the Hand of God protect you. And if you interfere with that Hand, then you will be at your capacity and your frequency and your power - which is too meagre. It is not worthwhile. But it also needs faith. It needs trust. It needs will to sacrifice, no matter what. It happens. You shall not fail when you understand this principle!"

Student: "How do you maintain the purity if it becomes one of the ways you make a living?"

"It is very easy. You remain pure. You mean, how will you live?"

Student: "No. How when the money comes..."

"Oh, wealth comes to you too much. Money is not the problem. You get money for your things. People give you money for your jobs, too. People give money for many things. Money is a medium. Money is not something that... If you go to teach a class, there *will* be money!"

Student: "I know, but then somehow it loses its purity of..."

"No no no no no! Money doesn't lose the purity. No, no, it is not. If it is too greedy or, you know, you are doing all that kind of stuff, then it is different. Within the balance, it doesn't lose anything. No. You can teach, money will come. Everything will come. Money... Things come beyond money."

Student: "Yeah, I know. It's when it becomes your profession..."

"Well, when you become a professional teacher, kings come and bow and take the privilege to kiss your feet. If you are understanding, imagining a teacher..."

"I will tell you the definition of a teacher. Teacher is one person where God comes Himself and bows! I am not exaggerating the definition.

"You are talking of money or privileges or chances? Who prevails through a teacher? God. Teacher is a vehicle. It is not the pipe, it is the water through it which nurtures the life. So? If you have a water line in your house, won't you protect it? What do you say?"

"Teacher is not a lonely personality. It is the elementary identity. It shall be provided all atmospheres and hemispheres. That is the Law which God shall serve. No human can serve a teacher, because they are His Agents.

"They are not human beings. They have taken an oath: 'I am not a woman. I am not a man.' What are you? 'I am not a person. I am not myself. I am a teacher.' Do you understand that? And after that, if God doesn't come through, shame on him! It's none of our job!

"We have taken an ultimate oath, an infinite oath. Let the Infinite come through. Where is the duality? Duality is in our own fear. May not come. Let Him not. Who cares? Set your sail, and let it go! See if it comes or not. Check it out.

"One day, we were collecting some funds. Sada Sat gave me six hundred and some dollars. I said, 'What are you talking about?'

"He said, 'Well, everybody is playing poor.'

"I said, 'These people are not poor! They are all very rich.' I went to everybody's pocket. I said, 'Put your money on the table. Give it to me.' And I took what I wanted, and none was poor. They were playing poor, that's true. But his job was not to believe them. He believed them. I didn't.

"I know they cannot be poor, and why should not I go out and ask somebody to participate in a noble cause? It is for his benefit or her benefit. Why should I have the right to deprive anybody? It is not my thing?

"Make it your lifestyle. See what comes. Be careful. Keep the accounts accurate. That sometimes is the trouble of the teacher. So many things come! So many people come! So many temptations! So many, so much... It's load after load after load after load. Be careful that you do not get under it! Keep above it. Teacher and opportunity, that's the test of the *maya*! Just fly a little up! You will be fine. Trust me. I went through it.

"Yes, dear..."

Student: "From what I understand, when you decided to come to the West..."

The Siri Singh Sahib chuckles, "I was pushed."

Everyone laughs.

"When I decided to come... You can't believe it! They sat on me for two years. Canadian High Commissioner, George, was my student."

Student: "So was the consensus that you would, that you could enlighten or show the way to the Western world or..."

"No, no. My Western world is Tokyo. I had absolutely no idea to become a teacher. Also, I did not want to become a teacher in the West, and your dollars didn't... I am very poor here! Nothing attracted me. I mean to say, I had tanned girls and not all these tan-less girls, and I had all the money in the world, and I had the authority. You cannot even believe it! I had no problem with my life.

Student: "What if people told you that they didn't think that you could teach us, because we wouldn't be able to..."

"Nobody is born yet. No woman had that delivery yet, so that anybody... Nobody tells a teacher, 'You cannot teach.' if one is a teacher!"

Student: "So if I have a desire to teach..."

"No, no. Desire is a different thing."

Student: "Is it?"

"Desire is to desire. Teacher is a teacher. Teacher has no desire!"

Student: "So is it... destiny?"

"It is a writ. Yeah. It is a writ. It is just it as it is. I am I am. That's the fundamental base."

Student: "So if you have a calling, you feel some kind of destiny?"

"No, you don't feel. You don't have a calling. It happens. Don't you understand? There is a framework of mould you get in. I'll tell you my own story, why you are upset about it.

"This is how it is. I was, had never an idea that I will come to the West ever. Question does not arise. I know the West very well. When you work in customs, you know the West so well, and East so well, and South so well that you must be crazy to move, because everybody comes to you. Why you should go to anybody? You understand that?

"It was one day in my horoscope that I will go to the West. I will do this, this, this, and I will become this, and where I will go to the bathroom, people will build temples, and ba-ba-ba, and I used to joke at it! Sometime at night, we will sleep outside on our *chaarpaaee*, then I would tell my wife, 'Okay, the day is coming when I will lecture to all the Westerners!'

"She will say, 'How will that happen?'

"I will say, 'Oh yeah, I will go to Palam Airport and visit, and the airport will go red. All the planes will get tied in because, at midnight all planes come there. So, all these people will be in the transit lounge, and I will sit on the bar and give them a lecture to calm them down! Don't you think that's what it meant?'

"And she said, 'Yeah, it looks like it.'

"And I said, 'That's the only way I can sit on a higher place and teach these Westerners. What else am I going to teach? They are not going to come into the Humayun Ground to learn yoga from me, and I am not going to go to some academy to lecture. I am a uniformed officer!'

"That's how we used to talk. Believe me or not, it came exactly true. In a cave in New Mexico, they made a big mound of earth and stones, and they put a blanket on it, and made me sit on it, and when I taught my first yoga class, it was exactly on that day, exactly twelve hours difference, not one second wrong!

Student: "Did all this just happen?"

"It happened! And I saw then when I was asking them to do cow and cat pose, one man went over a young woman and did full intercourse before I could get up from my seat, because it is very difficult not to slip. I was careful. I went to him and said, 'What are you doing?'

"He said, 'She didn't mind. Why are you minding?'

"'Okay.'" I never knew what I was teaching! So, anyway, that is my first experience, and Shakti is a witness to it. Once, I was in a tepee. I went at three o'clock to take a bath in a cold river. When I came in, there were two or three couples doing something. I said, 'Shakti, hell is happening inside!' I mean to say, we were who we were! 'Excuse me!' I went through all this.

Shakti, in a lilting tone: "Those were the good old days..."

"It doesn't matter. I used to walk in this Hollywood, West Hollywood. They used to say, '*Do you believe in Jesus Christ!*'"

"I said, 'Yes, I do!'

"'How?'

"'Every way. Please leave me alone!'

"'No. I believe, and I'm gonna go to heaven. You don't!'

"'How do you know I don't?'

"'Well, who was he?'

"I said, 'He was the Son, sat on the right side of the Father.'

"'Where do you sit?'

The Master smiles, "'On top of the Father!'

"I mean, a big deal it's not. I mean people do things and they tell you, and it goes out. Ultimately, the end is to sacrifice for others and go on the cross. It's not...

"You always burn in the end on a stake. There's no way out. End is definite. Either you have to die in the hands of sickness and displeasures and all that, and personal worries, or you just do it for others! Choice is yours, but that's the highest choice! If you accept in the Name of God to be for others, that's all.

"That makes you a teacher. That's what is my experience. But if you have your own damn personal thing in it, then you are in trouble. That's all. No big deal. And for me, there was only one thing. Go to Tashkent and teach the Russians parapsychology and endurance and intuition and all that, so I told my friend, George. I said, 'I am in trouble. The Government is going to do this to me, and I don't want to go.'

"And he said, 'Resign and go to Canada.' So, he made all the arrangements, and I came to Canada to become a very good professor in all of that stuff. But nothing happened. I was left with nothing!

"When I started, I didn't have shoes. I made paper and glued it and put a string around it, to wear in forty-five minus centigrade temperature. Toronto was cold like death! But I didn't have any trouble. I used to sing this, 'One day, the day shall come when all the glory shall be Thine. People shall say it is yours. I shall deny, "Not mine!"' I used to sing it, and make phrases, and keep going and going.

"You understand, in Canada there is a town called 'Hamilton'. There is a town called 'Montreal'. There is a town called 'Toronto', you understand that? And there is a town called 'London'. Toronto, London, you understand all this stuff I am telling? And then there is their capital in Quebec, in Ottawa. I used to drive all this to teach a yoga class. I did a good job?"

Student: "If destiny is going to happen, though, then how do you know? I mean..."

"I don't want to know. Teacher doesn't want to know!"

Student: "But, I mean, do you just sit there?"

"Yeah, uh-hah, that's it! You are right. You said it! You see there is a teacher in you. You just *sit* there. You become the hub, and everything comes.

Student: "But you don't have to try, to try and find it?"

"A lot of people have tried. I didn't see them going anywhere. Let God try it for you, and you just deliver. Honey, when labour pains come, delivery is not far away! That is the law. That is the law, and nobody can deny it, and that is the way the world happens, and that's the way delivery happens, and that is the way we are all born, and when that itch comes to become a teacher, you become a teacher!

"My wife has not forgiven me, even today. No way, Jose! Forget it! She can't understand what I am doing. She says, 'You were a teacher there. What's the need of being a teacher here?' But it's not in my hands. She doesn't understand why I have to leave that country and come here. She doesn't have any idea! She goes along because she happens to be here, and so does my staff!

"They don't know what I do, why I do what I do. Most of the time, they think they have the most thankless job, to guard me and tell me... I used to say, 'Come on, we'll take care of that person who will show up with their baggage and say "Take care of me.'"

"And Shakti will say, 'Where are the funds?'

"And I would say, 'Find it out. I was just invited to teach. I did not want to pay the payments!'

"And she said, 'Don't you ever say that to anybody again!'

"I said, 'Well, you know, I don't know the language. I don't speak English!'

"All I just see in somebody is a progressive sense and possibility, and I do know the destiny, and I just invite somebody to enjoy the destiny. Now, it is a sin? Happens, not happens.

"You see me when I go to the temple. I ask somebody to give me a dollar. I go and bow before the Guru because I can't go empty-handed. That's it. I have no pocket. I don't believe in it. Everything is there for some purpose. When my expenses come, I also know payment is coming. Whenever somebody pays me, I know the expenses are on the corner somewhere. So, it all balances out.

"It is normal, human to worry and after that song... What is that song? 'Don't worry! Be happy!' Are you not? That is the best-selling song. These two lines sold itself, and Guru Nanak said, '*Sabnaa chhaalaa maari-aa kaartaa karay so ho-ay*. Everybody has tried to jump higher and higher, but what God does, that happens!'

"Jumping doesn't make sense. Jumping makes us only jumping beans. That's all it is, but it is a concept. You have to realize that.

"One who can rotate this earth, can take care of your routine! How many gallons of gasoline you require to make the earth go one round? Think of that. How many horsepower do you require? Eight point four million horsepower per second, cubic root to two. Calculate and see if it is correct. And while you do anything or nothing, you move at three hundred miles per hour without even shaking yourself.

"So, it is all happening. Just recognize it! First, we had the 'Med. fly'. Now, we have stinger bee. Now, we have visiting killer bee! Things are happening. They are coming. We are not that isolated from the world now!

"There is a Japanese saying, 'You can do what you want. So will the typhoon!'

"So, when the typhoon comes, it does whatever it wants and there is no power to protect yourself. Do you know why they make those paper houses? So, when the earthquake comes, and

typhoon comes and takes away the house, they think, 'Well, His Wrath is taken away, but we are okay.' They get into their tub holes. That is why the Japanese baths are just like a ditch, it is just like this down, square thing, or round thing where a man can just sit so the whole thing can flow away. They just don't want to flow with it!

"California is an earthquake place. Here, we always build very beautiful homes, and when the earthquake comes, all of these homes were made to just tilt one way, and they won't tilt more than thirty degrees, because then the other wall, or the other debris becomes a bracket to it. But then, we have second story and third story. Now we go to the sky!

"But, you know, when Mother Earth shakes, it really moves. Have you ever seen sometimes when mamma really goes mad, what it does then? Well, it's nobody's fault, just our greed because man always wants to touch the sky. Funny thing! Flying has not done for them anything. Have you seen a man walking, and he says, 'Where do you live? Come to such and such a building. I live in a penthouse!' He may not be wearing pants, but he lives in a *pent* house.. You know what I am saying? It is always an idea to live higher and higher. That is our nature. That is the nature of the soul. Nothing wrong in it.

"When the itch is there to be a teacher, just don't goof. Just become! That's it! Don't look left. Don't look right. Don't look up. Don't look down. Just become so.

"Yeah. Who else? Yes?"

Student: "How do you know who your students are, as a teacher?"

"You never have to know. Students always know where the teacher is. Teacher doesn't know where students are. They come. They want to know what it is. Put honey somewhere. See how many flies come, and where they come, walk their track. You will need a lifetime to do it. When teacher will appear, students shall come. Yeah?"

Student: "Can you mention some of the ways the teacher has to uplift people?"

"Uplift? Keep up, and uplift! What else do you want to know in that? Just when you do personally impersonal things, it is very uplifting. You must understand. '*Beej mantar sarab ko gi-aan.*' In the very seed, everybody has the knowledge.

"A student knows whether you are talking personally or talking impersonally for that person's purpose. If that is a personal purpose of that person that you are talking impersonally, you will be talking personally. When you start talking personally, that is where the mess is. Talk personal things impersonally, and you will serve the purpose, but when you talk personal things personally, that is where you mess it up! Then you are at the same level as the student. Now, who is the teacher? When you talk as a teacher, you are talking personally impersonal stuff because you have it. The other



person doesn't have it. You are going to give it. So, until the other person experiences it, it is very foreign to that person. Yeah, Sadhu?"

Sadhu Singh: "Are you the teacher to everyone you talk to in that concept you are presenting as a teacher?"

"The one word for that is 'akashic record'. Those files are in the 'akashic record': who is teacher and who is student. That office is not on the planet Earth, or in its vicinity! '*Azrael frishtaa baytaa kaa dohee* - The angel Azrael keeps those accounts.'

"Yeah, you call it 'Azrael' or you call it *Dharam Raji*. It is the same word. Expressions have different meanings. It is called 'the angel of judgement'."

Student: "Can you talk about the concept that it takes the same amount of energy to do something as not to do it?"

"That is correct. Well, it is a very simple thing. When you are driving a car, you press the pedal and give the gas, or press the pedal and brake it. Both are pedals. Or sometime, when you have to give it the gas, apply the brake, or when you apply the brake, give it a pedal. See what a beautiful accident you cause! Both are pedals.

"There is an 'x' amount of energy in you, and there is an 'x' amount of requirement. Distribute it equally. It will be harmonious. Distribute it aggressively, it will be a disaster. If you distribute it discriminatively, it will be totally a depression! Yesterday is already gone. Today is already going. Tomorrow is the only thing you can relate to and welcome.

"Come on, this is the last chance! You may ask as many questions as you want. Later on, you may not get so many answers. Yes?"

Student: "In the teachers' training course, you talked about three levels: instructor, practitioner, and teacher. Can you mention some more about these?"

"Instructors are those who are trying to find the experience. Practitioners are those who have the experience, and are instructing. The Masters are those who know all and do very little. You must understand, a Master will become personally involved very little, and in very rare promises which are done in the heavens and executed on the earth.

"He normally doesn't get involved, and you will find him very ambiguous and talking in parables, because they cannot interfere directly, because you must understand before a master there is a fate and destiny, standing side by side, on which the life of the student runs. Their job is to keep it on destiny, avoid the fate, but they cannot eliminate the fate. If they eliminate the fate, the student has to die, because he is liberated. Liberated means "drop the body". It is a one second job. He has not to

kill anybody. He has not to curse anybody. He has not to kiss anybody. All he has to say is 'Fate, fall apart!' and the person is liberated.

"Those two words are very easy to say, but that drama is not over, so you have to carry the responsibility between destiny and the fate. The distance has to be travelled. That's why suicide or murder or killing is called wrong. *Apaar avagun*. They say it is 'a sin of the sin of the sin.' Multiple sin – '*apaar avagun*.' It is not a good thing because life is given, 'x' amount of life is given as a *praanic* gift. *Praanic* gift has to be consumed.

"You know, when I had all those powers, I was very funny myself. One day, I just did a beautiful mistake. I mean to say, we were sitting in a congregation and, all of a sudden, rain clouds came and there was rain. But, you know, on those two acres area where we were sitting, not one drop came! That made them very happy. They appreciated Yogi Baba very much. They knew he is a 'great *sadhu*', or whatever, and when we were finished, we were eating *langar*, this old man, very, very old man came to me.

"He said, 'You did this?'

"I said, 'What? I didn't do anything!'

"I mean to say *you wished*,' he said, 'that there should not be rain?'

"I said, 'It was an inconvenience. We were so much leaning into God, and so happy and so much in ecstasy!'

"He said, 'You see these trees and plants? You took away their water. Why you did that?'

"I said, 'I didn't *do* anything. I *did* wish. Yes, I'm not denying this. I did wish it should not rain here. Yeah, I did wish.'

"He said, 'Do you see there is so much rain all around, only it is not here?'

"I do see. What did I do? I just wished. It could have been granted. You mean my wish got granted?"

"He said, 'Don't you know that?'

"I said, 'I don't know.'

"He said, 'You better know it. See it for yourself! Are you blind? *See it!*'

"I said, 'Yeah, but I'll ask my men... You know, I have so many thousands of men. I'll tell them

tomorrow to water the whole thing. I can tell them *now*. I have so much manpower. What is there? It is nothing. It is just saying one word. It will all happen.'

"He said, 'Ah, that's good. So, you have some control over water?'

"I said, 'Kind of.'

"He said, 'Then when your soul will be free, it shall go to the water.'

"I said, 'Well, if it takes a bath, what difference will it make?'

"He said, 'Half of the lives live in the water. You shall go through all those incarnations. You want that?'

"I said, 'Wait a minute! What are you saying?'

"He said, 'I am saying what you do not understand. If you have a *sidhi*, you have control of an element, you have to go through that element!'

"I said, 'Okay, I understand.' And that was the last day. I won't care if I get whole drenched myself. Forget it! What for?'

"I came to Amritsar. I stood before the Harimandar Gate. I said, 'Blessed are You who has taught me all. Blessed is me who shall never learn again all this hanky-panky.' And I gave it all up. That's it!

"Intervening in the Will of God, for the better, you are admissible, for the worse, you are wrong. Yes, if you are uplifting, that's divine. Any other control - direct, indirect, mental, verbal, is all impractical. You are causing a cause, you are starting a sequence for which you have to face the consequences.

"As a teacher, you cannot have consequences. Therefore, you don't start the sequence. That's the law in life. You don't cross that law.

"As a teacher, just imagine you are taking a big basket filled with frogs, and if somebody jumps out, it is their permission. You carry on the basket and all the frogs. Beyond that, if you think I can give you any other imagination, you are dead wrong! A big basket loaded with frogs, and loaded to the bottom, one hundred over. Understand that? Well, however many you can reach to the destination, just be careful.

"Don't even estimate! Those who stick to that basket will be on there. Those who jump out, it is their privilege. You owe no obligation to it.

"One day, I got very mad myself. I said, 'People have destiny. I have to cover the destiny! *Destiny, where are you?*'"

"Just then, Destiny stood before me, and along with it stood the Fate. She said, 'Yogi Bhajan, what is wrong with me? You don't like me? We are sisters. We are Siamese twins. You can't separate us. Don't you try. What she loses, I gain. Please let us play the game.'

"She never cared. So don't worry. You always think students are your investment. Absolutely not! It is your karma! It is a privilege to teach. It is not a right. It is absolutely a privilege to teach. It is the highest honor!

"You teach irrespective of who knows you are a teacher or not, who pays you respect or not. It doesn't matter. None of your business! When the sun shines, does it say, 'How much income tax you paid last year, that much heat I'll give you.'? No. The sun shines on the poor and rich and bad and good all equal. That is the law. Yes, dear?"

Student: "So if your destiny is to be a teacher, then you'll be a teacher, and the students will come. They may recognize you or not. It's not for you to wake up one morning and say, 'I am a teacher!'"

"I did it the same, yeah. I just came out and said, 'I am the teacher because my Master told me.' It can happen that way, too. There is no rule and law and declaration.

"When I became a Master, I was not expecting it. One day, I was asked to see him at a certain hour. I didn't believe it. I said, 'What kind of meeting is this?'

"He said, 'This is an audience.'

"I said, 'Uh-oh. It must be something terrible because you are only granted an audience after twelve years, and I had my admission just a year ago. So, it was not very fair to hear that kind of news.' I said, 'Oh God's Will will prevail. I am going to sit with him. Just this audience doesn't sound right.'

"He said, 'What do you expect?'

"I said, 'Something really unbelievably heavy.' That's what I believed.

"He said, 'Okay.'

"So, the next day, I sat down. I bowed. I sat and sat and sat, and then he opened his eyes. He said, 'Bhajan, heavens have so far told me the truth. Heavens shall tell me all truth. Heavens shall know the truth.'

"And I know these phrases he always says when he wants to do something unbearable, so I said, '*Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru...*' In my mind I was saying, 'I don't know what he is going to say.' I mean to say, I understand when he closes his half eye open and half eye this way. Otherwise, we were friends! You know, we would run around with everything. But then I said to myself, 'Wait a minute. Today Mr. Yogi Baba is in trouble, direct and complete.' But I just kept my mouth shut and I said, 'Yes, sir! Yes, sir! Yes, sir!' I was just 'Yes, sir! Yes, sir! Yes sir!'

"Finally, he said, 'You are the Master now, with one condition.'

"I said, 'Oh, what is that condition?'

"He said, 'You shall not live in this land. Neither I shall. But in the other land, you shall not come to see me because I shall live a very sinful, ugly and dirty life, to which you shall not be a part. You will even not come to see me for my blessing or my audience. Clear?'

"I said, 'Yes, sir!' It was a habit. Everything was 'Yes, sir!'

"So, I came out, and those who were standing there like this class is here were saying, 'What happened? What happened?'

"I said, 'He declared me a Master.'

"They said, 'What does that mean?'

"I said, 'Don't you hear me? Bow!' And everybody knelt down and bowed. I said, 'I am the Master. That's it. He said so. You all hear it.'

"Nothing else happened, but there was a habit to obey. That is what the law is: '*to obey, to serve, to love and to excel.*' It's not that I made that law. It's a law from Infinity to Infinity, and all the virtues are in those who obey. '*Manay kee gati kahee na ja-ay. Jay ko kahai pichhai pachhuta-ay.*' Those who obey, their grace cannot even be written! If somebody even tries it, he fails! These are the words of Guru Nanak, not mine. You can read right in his *Japji*. You can see. After seeing that, I don't think there is any question left. It is true!

"For a Westerner, obedience is a kind of slavery. It is a hassle. It is out of your chartered commission. Out of your planning day. That kind of thing.

"For us, obeying the impossible is the test of our wisdom, our endurance, our grit, our virtue, our accomplishment, our achievement, a chance of grace. It is just to prove to myself that I have done it. It is an elevating experience.

"I mean, you must understand I was the son of a great man, and I was a great man myself. My

teacher told me, 'How fast you can go up this tree?' I went up there, and he stuck me there, and he said, 'When I come back, you will come down.' Then he came back three days later!

"Now, lady, just understand, what you can do on a tree, and what you can't do, and for three days and nights straight on! When he came back, he laughed. He said, 'Hey, you have survived! Come down! Let's go!' He never even cared to say, 'How was it? How you did it? What happened to you? You must have been miserable!' or 'I'm sorry I did it. I didn't come.' There was no apology, nothing. He said, 'Ah, so you have survived! Come down! Let's go!'

"I came down and I went, but I learned in those three days more than I would have learned in three hundred years. At first, it was horrible. Then it was terrible. Then it was miserable. Then it became fun! Then I was waiting: when somebody comes that is really terrible, I am going to shit on that person! You know, it was a fun.

"Can you believe, sitting on a tree thirty feet up? Normally, your habit is, even if you are caught on the road or something, you find some bush or something. Now we don't do it under the bush. We do it behind the trees because our President is Bush. So, I mean, we don't use Bush for those purposes. We are very respected, patriotic. We are Americans, you know. What I am saying is that - can you believe you are stuck on a tree thirty feet up, and there you are, and you have to pee and poop, and you have to eat and drink, and you have to live and be fresh. You have to meditate and sleep. These are normal, ordinary requirements. You can't go on... Yes, Siri Bhrosa?"

Siri Bhrosa Kaur: "Well, what if you don't do what you are asked to do? Do you still keep getting more and more chances?"

"You don't. No. You don't. You don't. Nobody is after your blood. You don't. You don't. But just normally understand, a thing asked shall never be repeated. Nobody is lucky enough to be asked a second time. That's my experience. I do not know if somebody has a different experience they can vouch for.

"Normally, it depends on the circumstances of the interaction between you and your teacher. He will demand something of you, and that is for your benefit at that time in his judgement. So you are standing before a judgement at that time. It shall never be repeated! I don't think so. Either you can accept it, or you can deny it. That's all the choice. Am I right? What can you do? Yes, dear?"

Student: "After finishing the Teachers' Training Course in Salt Springs, and it was a wonderful experience, I have been teaching Kundalini Yoga in Santa Barbara for a couple of years, and coming to the yoga center for about eight years prior to Santa Barbara, and I have seen you speak many times, but I have never taken a name or taken a step..."

"I didn't ask."

Student: "Yuh, no, I need to ask! What my question is... Can I still be a Kundalini Yoga teacher?"

"Nobody has questioned you. Why you are questioning yourself? Are you a Catholic?"

Student: "No."

"So why you are playing this guilt? Nobody will ever ask you. You must understand we have no right to invoke or provoke. We have no privilege to ask or demand. You have to initiate yourself.

"If I ask you to take a name and then become a teacher, it is then an initiation. It will never happen in your lifetime. It can't be. It is not the rule. It is not the law. It is not the privilege. You have to ask yourself. When you will be ready, you will ask yourself. You took an earthly name. That is it. When you will be ready, you will take a spiritual name."

Student: "I wanted to ask you today."

"What is a spiritual name? Spiritual name is the designated destiny. That is become your identity, rather your identity on the earth. Spiritual name is a heavenly identity. That is all it is. You may not live to it. You may live to it, but it is the guiding force, and it is a prayer.

"When somebody calls me 'Yogi Bhajan', it means 'someone who is united with the greater soul', or somebody calls me 'Bhajan', it means 'a Divine Song', and somebody calls me 'Harbhajan Singh', it means 'the lion who sings the Divine Song'. It is just a prayer, a prayer in another man's words.

"What is a prayer? It is a calling. That's it. When you answer the calling, you get uplifted. It is a plus. It is a way to get other people's blessings. It is no big deal.

"Nobody will tell you to wear clothes, too. Nobody will tell you to do this. Nobody will tell you to do that. Why we wear white is because we are *satumbar*. *Satambar* means we wear white, our projection is white. Our life is white. It is a help. It doesn't make any difference. Other colors are not bad, but white has seven colors in it. So, big deal. It is a science and art to inspire yourself.

"We always tie our hair up. That is for the energy. It is a very selfish act. It has nothing to do with it. You can put them down. You can shave them off. Who cares? There is nothing you cannot do in your life. If you don't want to, don't do it! What you want to do, go ahead.

"It all comes down to one thing. A saint has a profile, and it will be proven by the saint himself. Nobody can make anyone a saint. You can't canonize a saint! A saint is a saint, and everybody can become a saint.

"Don't you hear me say 'Everybody has nine holes.'? Whosoever cares what comes in and what goes out, and takes care of the holes... All you need is a consciousness to watch over your holes! You

are holy! Say nothing but God's Words, and you are a saint! What is 'God's Words'? Is it what is in the scriptures? No. God's Words in the scripture are *also* meant to uplift another person. It may be that you may be most irritated, but when you want to put your furniture on the trailer, you don't mind the 'grrr-grrr' of the fork-lift. It doesn't annoy you because it is doing much more good than that little noise it is creating. Your cars are not absolutely silent, but they make you go sixty miles per hour. You tolerate it."

Student: "I would like to ask you for a name."

"That is a situation which I will deal with the moment I finish my class. So, you have exactly... no time. It is five o'clock.

*"May the long time sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the pure light within you, guide your way on. Saaaaaat Nam."*

## Growing Up in India

*The Siri Singh Sahib regularly emphasized the importance of his students sending their children to school in India. It was "distance therapy," which he had long advocated. An education at one of the schools in the Himalayas selected by the Master also broadened their horizons. The American children in particular benefited from being removed from the insular bubble of USA. They learned new languages. They sometimes struggled as a minority in the Indian culture. They benefited from being distanced from the corruption that often passed for "growing up" in America - alcohol, drugs, and teenage sex.*

*But they did not grow up naïve. Among the children at Guru Ram Das Academy at Dera Dun, Devi Kirn Kaur was an avid participant in the theatre class. While in Class XI, she penned a poignant essay published in the school yearbook, called "A Maelstrom Life."*

### A Maelstrom Life

The little boy looked up to me with tears in his eloquent eyes, his sandy blond hair blowing in the wind and his arms outstretched to me. An emotion welled up inside of me so strong that I could not control myself. I grabbed the boy up into my arms and began crying, sharing with him his misery, his starvation not only for food, but also for love, love that his mother never gave him.

I walked down the street with the little boy in my arms, still crying. Soon crowded around me were numerous little emaciated bodies of starving children. I fell to my knees and broke out into a sob. How could God let this be?



It starts generations back... first the family breaks, the mother uneducated, cannot work, and father has left, preferring the bottle. The unstable mother does not know what to do so she sells herself to the streets and feeds her child with the little money she gets and starves herself. Then on it goes, continuing down the line, down, down to ruination.

Big men in their big cars and their big homes buy, use and sell these helpless miserable wanderers. They have no one to turn to, no one to love them, no one to feed them.

Love is the food of life. The pup grows with the nourishing love of its mother, the cub is the same. But the child I held in my arms was crying, dear Lord! It did not have the love it needed. As I looked around, half blinded by the tears in my eyes, I could see that none of these children had the love they needed to live. What is life if it is only filled with pain? What is the use of calling ourselves human beings if we don't have even enough flesh to prove it? Only the emotion of these poverty stricken children prove them to be human.

As I walk away from those outstretched arms, from those unheard cries, the pain tears my heart as if it would be ripped out of my chest. Walking on, I see a girl with bruises and cuts all over her face and body – too full of pain to cry. A man pulls her by the hair and through a door and out of my sight, yet I can see her face so full of emotion. I control myself, not to run through that door and kill him, with the thought that I'd probably never walk out that door again.

What hellish place is this? Three policemen walk by me laughing at their own jokes, not bothering what's going on around them. I feel a rage rushing through my body – an uncomfortable burn of agony, feelings for these miserable people.

I read through the papers how the President of the USA just met the President of India and how they ate and drank tea and how they get paid for posing as the protectors of their countries. Will they not worry about these suffering children... children of God!

Oh, so and so just won the championship of the world's tennis competitions and so and so's son married the princess of Persia... it's all publicized and known about. But does no one take notice that there are people dying of starvation, starvation of food, love, and attention. Their pain is as inveterate as anything could possibly be, and no one cares.

Blind me so that I won't see it, paralyze me so that I may not feel it, make me deaf so that I may not hear it! I cannot do anything about it. I am so loved, so protected and so well cared for, can I not share my happiness with these lost and dying souls?

## The Life of a Sikh in the West

The tireless Siri Singh Sahib continued to make appearances at Gurdwaras in California, England, British Columbia, and elsewhere, lecturing expatriate Indians about their newfound situation in the West. He chided them on their self-centeredness. Rather than building a future in the West based on Guru Nanak's forward-looking, universal vision, many of them had established Gurdwaras founded on antiquated feudal distinctions.

When crisis had struck in the form of the attack on the Golden Temple, many overseas Sikhs had elected to use seventeenth century fighting tactics to win a sophisticated, twentieth-century, battle of minds. Rather than refuting the charge of terrorism outright and mounting a vigorous media campaign to gain international sympathy for their cause, many of these Sikhs had supported an ugly and unwinnable war of bloody retribution. Misled by short-sighted leaders and infiltrated by unSikh elements, their efforts had been terribly misdirected.

Alcohol and meat-ism had reached epidemic proportions among these original descendants of the Guru's House. Meanwhile, the eruption of occasional, and well-publicized, interfactional brawls in a few Gurdwaras brought disgrace to the entire community and disrepute to the good name of Guru Nanak. The Siri Singh Sahib rebuked those who had abandoned the ideals of Guru Nanak to become "third class immigrants" and just "fifth class human beings".

The Siri Singh Sahib related how, in England, he had spoken with some Sikh gentlemen who were still in the habit of tying their beards up in a "beardnet", a habit their fathers had learned during the raj of the British, when it had been a requirement of all Sikh men in the colonial government's service. Even the cowed-down Sikh aristocracy had adopted the humiliating custom to appease the British and keep their vestigial privileges. But now what was the problem of free Sikhs in modern-day England?

### Answering the Call - 1

In April of 1992, the Siri Singh Sahib responded to an invitation to visit the Guru Har Rai Sikh Temple in Bromwich, England. With him, were his wife, Bibiji serving in her role as the Bhai Sahiba, Nirinjan Kaur - his Chief of Staff, Nanak Dev Singh, Mata Mandir Singh and Shanti Kaur. They had heard reports that Sikh youth in England were in trouble and they came to see for themselves and to help. The following is from their dialogue:

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Chalo ji, Bhai. Daykho Bhai, you can have your own political views. Aapnay tuhaaday political kyaal aapnay. Aapnay aapnay jathaybandee, the way you want to conduct yourself free, I have nothing to add to that. The basic question about Sikhism if you want to ask, we are willing to answer. Sikhi dee gal kar lo! Mayraa main subject hai, how to live as a Sikh. You*

all know English or you have a problem with that?”

There is an awkward silence, then Shanti Kaur said: “English, please.”

There was some laughter. Clearly, there was a significant Punjabi presence in the gathering.

Siri Singh Sahib: “The concept being a Sikh is not good enough. The conception being a Sikh is right, and you do not know the conception being a Sikh. You are just born in the concept of a Sikh. That’s why you cannot be Sikhs. That’s why we fall apart. That’s why things happen, and this will continue happening if we do not change our understanding and our attitude. It is for sure.

“So you ask me the questions and I’ll tell you why it is right, and why it is wrong, and why is right is being done as wrong, and wrong is being conceived as right and where we are being misled. Because you have to survive tomorrow as Sikhs, and you have to survive. Nobody is going to survive for you. It is totally your personal concept, and if the concept does not have a conception, you will not remain Sikh, doesn’t matter what you do.

“You will not have inner vitality which a Sikh is required to have, therefore in the long run of life problems will eat us up. And that’s what actually happens all over. The concept of being a Sikh is a very easy way to look at it, but if we do not have a conception, experience what is a Sikh, then you won’t last. Do you understand that? If you don’t, please ask me and I’ll explain.”

Someone spoke: “I do understand it. What is conception?”

Siri Singh Sahib: “Concept is: ‘I am a Sikh. I have a *rehit*, I am a Sikh. I do my five *banis*, I am a Sikh. I have my *Shabad-Surat*, I am a Sikh.’

“These are all concepts. It is a façade. It is a structure. In that structure, you can survive, but there’s no depth and experience that you are a Sikh.

“And if you say you are a Sikh, you’re going to be tested as a Sikh. And there’s a certain expectation from you as a Sikh, then there is certain behaviour you have to be a Sikh, then there are certain values you have to be a Sikh. And all that should come automatically.

“There should be no variance, there should be no shadow, there should be no weakness. It should be natural with you what a Sikh is. And that is a conception. That’s not a concept. That’s not a theory. That’s a living experience.

“You can have an example. There is a water, there are clouds, it’s going to rain. This is a concept.

“But conception is when rain starts happening. It is as it is.

“You have been deprived of that as Sikhs. You’ve never been taught. Neither by your parents, nor by your preachers, and not by Sikh organizations. You have been misled.

“I am very grateful to you that you are still Sikhs, or that you call yourselves Sikhs. You have not been handled, been taken care of, you have been lied from Day One to this day.

“That’s why I started All India Sikh Student Federation. It was purely my idea. We became the strongest organization in India among Sikhs. We were in every college and school, and we saved a lot of Sikh youth.

“We were very spoiled. We came from landlord families. We had tons of money. We could have had done anything. But when we changed, everybody followed the line. They wanted to know why.

“We gave them the conception. We sat with them. We chanted *Naam* as it should be. We said to each other, ‘Let us sit ten of us, let us work it today. Let us see what this damn thing is. Why they chant *Wahe Guru*? Why they chant *Sat Nam*? What is *Japji*? Let us do it!’ We did it!

“No damn *granthi* came and told us what to do. And no Sikh man with a white beard came and said, ‘Wait a minute, I’ll give you this’. Nobody gave us anything.

“We were just young people. We sat and sat. We did, we did. And we conceived it, then we became pregnant with it, then we delivered it. And they were touched everybody. We became leaders. And we were very effective leaders.

“We were young. We were teenagers. The only person who understood us was Giani Kartar Singh. He understood us. He said, ‘You are brains.’

“We said, ‘Well, we are also arms. We are strong. We want Sikh politics not this way. We want it that way.’

“We were betrayed every step of the way, so that’s why I said, ‘These Sikhs are not Sikhs.’ I know them. I’m not a sixty-two-year-old just running on the roads. I have dealt with Sikh leadership from Day One, and I know they are thieves.

“If you are going to follow that kind of stuff, you’re going to be dissatisfied, frustrated, and you’re going to fall apart. I’m telling you, instead of keeping you Sikh, they will try to destroy your Faith. They will take your youth and stick you into a situation, you will never come back safe.

“I know they did it with us. They did it with us. This whole Sikh leadership betrayed us four times. We all understood it. They got us in trouble. They lied to us. They sat in Teja Singh Samundri

Hall of S.G.P.C. They sat with our representatives. My people came back and said, 'Well, we have decided this.'

"I said, 'Well, they lied to you. Let us test it out.' I was also in charge of the intelligence unit. We told them, 'No, these Sikhs have already made agreement, they're not telling you the truth, you'll find it out.'

"Three days later, we found out we had been betrayed. The whole Sikh nation had been betrayed. They told Master Tara Singh something different. It was not true. They set him up, then they withdrew it. He fell on his face!

"It was agreed that from the Ravi River to this boundary of the whole Punjab will be a Sikh state, under the British domain for fifty years, and then it will be a common domain of Pakistan and India. We thought in fifty years we'll be strong. We'll work it out.

"They betrayed. They shall betray you because they only had a concept of Sikh. But, 'My boy's having a beard, he's having a turban, he reads his *Bani*.' This all is an ordinary thing. Everybody can do it. It doesn't make you a Sikh.

"If your presence doesn't work, you're not a Sikh. If your conception cannot penetrate, you're not a Sikh. If you cannot just solidify your position before a person and be solid, you're not a Sikh.

"This is *Akaal Moorat*. Where you stand, your presence should speak, and you must be one step ahead of an ordinary person. You can't be a yo-yo. You can't, 'Maybe shall be...'

"These words are not your vocabulary as a Sikh. What you say is exact. It must go to heart. Head must bow before you. Then you are a Sikh.

"And our purity, Khalsa... What is a Khalsa? Khalsa is not all these titles you are talking about. It is the purity and piety of the self which must work. And you have been misled. I tell you why you are being betrayed.

"We can easily train you. We have grounds. We have legal authority. We have everything. We requested these leaderships, 'Send your youth to us and we'll train them.' They never sent one person. They lied to us. They are lying to you.

"*Aray!* They betrayed Singh Sahib Jarnail Singh. We were with him. We were training him. His boys were with us. Our boys were with him. He got betrayed.

"There was no need for him getting *shaheed* and all that thing. It could have all been successful. They betrayed him. They cornered him. They betrayed him. They let him die. That was the Sikh leadership.

“In 1947, they betrayed you, all of you who were not born then. They betrayed you. They are the biggest traitors you are dealing with. They have the concept of a Sikh. They have no conception of a Sikh. They sell out, and then last minute they say, ‘Well, it is *Satguru daa bhaanaa jee.*’

“We are not willing to concede that ‘*Satguru daa bhaanaa.*’ *Khaalsaa mayraa Satguru poora* - We have perfect, true Gurus ourselves. There is no damn *Satguru daa bhaanaa* as far as we are concerned.

“We Sikhs decided something. We sat down and we gave power to our five, and we told them go discuss these way and that’s what *Sat Sangat* wants. They go and discuss everything and they betray us. Every time you read Sikh history from page to page, you’ll find the treachery on every step of the way. How can you survive, young people? They won’t let you survive.”

Someone asked: “What’s the way out then?”

Siri Singh Sahib: “The way is, sit down together. Sit down, as you have come here. Sit down and be together. Sit down and hold each other’s hand, and don’t forgot whose son is who, whose father is who, whose mother is who.

“Just say, ‘You are my brother. I am your brother.’ That’s the only way we survived. No damn person is your father. No damn person is your mother.

“We all decided, ‘Guru Gobind Singh is my Father, Mata Sahib Deva is my Mother, and we are two brothers of the same Khalsa.’

“That’s how this movement started, and luckily I had a tons of money, so I said, ‘Doesn’t matter whatever the bill comes, let’s do it!’ And that’s how little we started.

“We all started with five people. They used to go Lahore with the prostitutes. All these young rich boys, they used to do it. We just went separated, ‘No, no we’re not going to do that. We are going to understand why Siri Guru Granth is our Guru? Why we are Sikhs? What is this? Why we have to have a beard? Why we have to look like that?’

“We started asking each other. And we tied in and we tied in so strongly, we became a fist. And we became a thorn in their neck. They couldn’t dodge us.”

Someone said: “There has to be some leader. You can’t say all leadership is bad.”

Siri Singh Sahib: “It is, it is bad. That’s what I’m telling you. You sit down together, hand in hand, as one unit, and be together and whenever you are told something, sit together and listen. Even what I’m telling you, listen to this, but decide what your consciousness tells you is right.

“Don’t ever follow anybody, except your own consciousness. And the consciousness of the Brotherhood of the Khalsa, the Order of the Khalsa. Sit all of you, and look into each other’s eyes, and just feel it. Don’t play games!

“No leadership is right! You are the leadership! You are the tomorrow! Decide it that way. Take the responsibility. Put your shoulders under it. That’s how we survived.

“They told us a lot of stuff, ‘Oh, this is this. Oh, you are wrong. Oh, that...’

“Then we consulted among ourselves, ‘Is it right what you heard? Did you hear that? What he said to you? What did he say? How he was talking to you? What is it? Alright, let’s pen it down. Alright now, let us sit down discuss it.’ And then we always came out with the right answer.

“At Patiala, All India Sikh Students Federation executive meeting, we all decided something. Do you know what they did? They formed another executive council to form another resolution.

“I said, ‘Wait a minute! What’s going on?’

“People said, ‘Well, we do not know, I think this resolution is real, and this is a façade, ...’

“I said, ‘Wait a minute! That’s not real. We are Sikhs. It’s against our character. We’re not going to say something different, do something different. Who’s telling us to lie?’

“They said, ‘Oh, the leadership.’

“I said, ‘What the damn, that leadership! We’re not going to go for it.’ We sat down, we decided, we passed another resolution. Immediately, the Punjab government agreed.

“We had no trouble. But we were as one! We were all bodies but our soul, and our concept, our conception, our thoughts, our trust for each other, *bhrosaa dhaan*. It was just One. And we decided we may be weak, we may be sorry. This guy maybe just can’t get up in the morning. That guy cannot... That guy is after that girl. We knew everybody’s every affair. But we supported each other and we helped and we brought them to that same strength.

“That’s the only way you can do it. You have to cover each other. You have to love each other. You have to understand each other. You have to trust each other. You have to go for each other.

“And there will be odds in your life. You’re not going to be all in one day perfect. You’d not going to do that.”

Someone spoke: "Could I just make a couple of points, please? Basically, I think, you know, we've got youths from different parts of West Midlands here, partly to show that we are together, that we're trying to do things. We recognize that maybe we haven't got the support we should have had from the adult population, from the Gurdwaras and what other Sikh organizations there are. We are concerned about what is happening to the youth over here as well. There are bunch of us that are together and united and try to support each other's events.

"What I'm really interested in is how do we move forward? We don't get much support from other people. We're trying to support each other. But you're aware of the problems over here with youth. They're turning away from Sikhism.

"What, if anything, can you give in terms of help or guidance? I mean, we've met some of your people. We know Matamandir and Nanak Dev, you know, getting into *gatka* and things like that. But what else can you help us with?

Siri Singh Sahib: "We can not only help you, we can even be with you. The tragedy is that we have been working our way for last twenty-two years, but there's a very organized intention that you should not meet us and we should not meet you. And we are aware of it. It is not that we are not aware of it. We are not aware of it only to the extent we pretend we are not aware. There's an organized intention from the adult population that you should not meet with 'White Sikhs.' And we are aware of it. We are aware of its basics."

Someone spoke: "There's so much *Sangat* when did *kirtan* in gurdwara. If that had been the case, then nobody would have turned up in the Gurdwara and listened to the *kirtan*."

Siri Singh Sahib: "You do not understand, my boy. This is a problem you should understand. This is what I'm trying to tell you. In the beginning, when we were turning to be Sikhs and we were trying to be Sikhs, at that time everyday there was a fight. Every day, there was an arrogance. Every day, there was a slander. Every day, there was something or the other. Do you know we have fought six law court cases just to remain Sikhs from the adult Sikh population? It's on record.

"Do you know we hold that summer... What is that camp? What do you call it? That one week?"

Someone spoke: "Survival camp."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Survival camp. Do you know we invite from all over the world anybody can come for one week? They can't send you? There has been a very qualified barrier which we were unable at that time to break for one reason only. We didn't want to offend them by taking a position in total opposition.

"Now we are set in a position. Now we have budgeted ourselves. Now we fully



understand. Now we're going to attack and we're going to break those barriers!

"You must understand, we are not all independent. I say, and it happens. Not true.

"There's a Khalsa Council, there is a committee on everything, and it's a kind of Parliament of the Sikhs. We discuss things, we budget ourselves, we understand. And, you know, this is how we work: act, then support, then cover, and then, what is the retreat? Where do we have to take our casualties? That's how we function.

"They came to us three years ago. We decided, alright we are going to work together, we're going to do all this. We set up the whole thing. We spent all the basic amount of the money we wanted to and we were ready. Not a single person showed up, and only we were expecting twenty-five young people. Not a single one person came. So, there was a setback.

"Question is, if you rely on the relationship with the *Gurdwaras*, it's not going to happen. If you rely on the adults, it's not going to happen. You have to put your own one-tenth together. That's first thing.

"Second is, you all have to dress up yourself, all of you. That's what we did. We all have to decide, 'At least once a week, we're going to meet for three hours,' something like that. And we have to talk to each other as truthfully as we can, to trust each other.

"They won't let you do it. We have done that. We know how they get shaken, these adults. I know how much poison they tried to sting in us. But we survived it only with one condition: we will meet once a week, all of us. We were not twenty-five or thirty. We were thousands. So we divided ourselves into circles. Then we had a one leader of the circle whose job was not anything but to communicate.

"And then the circles started getting into, into the executive of the three. Then three have to be answerable to us. We were asking them, as the bosses, 'What is the position?' They would give us the accurate position. And we knew that in that area our youth is under attack, so we'll go and support them. That's the way! We played that role. And that's the only way.

"And that's why in the entire system, Khalsa was divided into *missals*. Each *missal* has a *jathedar*. They all sat together. Then all the *missals* had *panj piaras* and they decided finally what is the interest of the Khalsa. And they were very pure people. That's why we could win. And that's the same thing you have to do.

"You have to decide yourself not by caste, creed or anything. You have to decide yourself by *missal*. And each *missal* should have a duty, it should have a *jathedar*, it should have a leader. And all *jathedars* should sit together subject to the five selected ones, from the whole group, people whom you consider to be *Gurmukhs*.

“I could never be selected in *panj piaras*. Never. I wanted it very much, I tell you right today. Because I was so aggressive, they never trusted me. I wanted it. I actually wanted to be among those five to decide things. But I was so aggressive, they said, ‘No’. It’s okay.

“They never made me General Secretary, though I was the most deserving one. They said, ‘No, you are Propaganda Secretary. You go and fight and create this ruckus for us, and destroy everything, and build everything. That’s your job. But as Secretary General, we want somebody who can sit and think right. And you’re not that type.’

“I accepted it. I’m telling you what I wanted. I wanted actually to run the whole show. And they said, ‘No. You’re not going to do anything. You sit in one corner and you do whatever you are doing. You are a fuss creator. Create fuss. Fine. We’ll support you, but when decision comes you are not among those five.’

“And I think they were right. I created a lot of trouble for them. But my idea was, ‘I’m not going to wait,’ though now I teach that patience pays. Now I teach that patience is one of the best things in the world, but at that time, I wanted everything immediately, right on the spot.

“I was very effective, very convincing, and very persuasive and I - *Ang Sang Wahe Guru*, I used to come with a lot of energy and ideas, but this never worked. And believe me or not, among those five, one was only fourteen years old. He was the *jathedar* of the *panch piara*. Fourteen years old.

“He would say, ‘Well, Singh Sahib, what do you say?’

“And I would say, ‘This.’

“And he would ask another, ‘And what do you say?’ Then the five will sit and he always sit like this. I can tell you his posture. And they will talk and talk hours to him. And he’ll not budge an inch.

“In the end he’ll say, ‘Well, we’re not gonna insult anybody.’

“Then everyone said, ‘What shall we do?’

“He said, ‘We’ll not participate, we all will go away.’

“A plan was hatched. We decided to meet in the fields two miles from the big hall where the Akali Party conference was to be held. On the designated day, tens of thousand young people will sit in those fields and start to chant, ‘*Sat Nam Sat Nam Sat Nam Ji*,’ like this. And well, people bypassing will see what the young people are doing. In a couple of hours, there will be nobody in the hall. Everybody will be there, and we will dump them.

“We never offended anybody. And we’d chant like this, in this very posture, ‘*Sat Nam, Sat Nam,*

*Sat...*’ as though we are all drunk, you know, we have no sense, we make no sense. But the posture was so perfect. And people going by, you know, they’d say, ‘Do you see what’s happening there? Do you see? Do you see?’

“Everyone was whispering in the hall. For fifty, a hundred thousand dollars they had a big Akali conference and all that. After two hours they’ll find there’s not a one person in the hall. Everybody is in those fields, and ‘*Sat Nam...*’

“And the big leaders came and say, ‘Why you did this?’

“We said, ‘You didn’t agree. We told you your way is not Guru’s way, that it is wrong. You tried to impress us with your pomp and show. We are just humble people...’

“You must understand, you are their children. They can’t live without you. We knew it the first day. We are the kith and kin. And we knew, one concept you have to believe, and conception you have to receive, that Guru is in you.

“Bad and good as you are don’t worry about it. Just feel the spirit of Guru Gobind Singh is in you. And just feel that you’re his son. And then decide. It looks like imagery, it looks like hypnosis, but that is the best you can do.

“This is what we used to think. We never could carry even Siri Guru Granth everywhere. Do you know what we used to say? We used to take a bigger stone and fix it on a higher place.

“We would say, ‘Well this is the Spirit of Guru Gobind Singh. Now let us all get the spirit in ourselves. Let us all hold hands with each other. Let us decide who’s true.’

“And the person who’ll be wrong says, ‘Wait a minute. I lied. I’m not going to tell you all, but I’m going to tell you I lied, I betrayed, and that’s the truth.’

“We would never ask him why he did it. We will say, ‘Okay, we’re all brothers, let us not do it again.’

“And this is slowly, slowly how we built an organization and a conception in which we’re all real.

“You have to be trained in martial arts, for the sake of the spirit. You have to be trained in self defense. You have to be trained... *Dekho!* If you don’t know anything, one thing you all can do, you can put a tape of *Jaap Sahib* and you can sit in a *matha thekan* posture, ‘rock pose’ they call it. And when they say ‘*Namastang.*’ touch the forehead to the floor, get up again, and follow it like that, read the whole *Jaap Sahib* like that. You won’t need anybody. You’ll have the spirit you need.

“You have to do something, technically and personally, something which can give you the

arousal, which can give you the spirit of the Khalsa, which can give you the *drib drishti*, the concept to see. You must not live in the fear of tomorrow. You have to put your scene together. You have to put your money together. You have to put your time together. You have to put each other together.

“If you want to put together something, you’ve got to put yourself together, and you have to put yourself on the line. That’s the only way the youth can work.

“You cannot go with oldies. They have their set habits. Now I have my set habits. I’m not going to change. But I never tell my young people to follow me. You understand that? Our youth wing is not under our direct command. We let them have the freedom and the choice as they feel.

“And sometimes there’s a conflict, and some people say, ‘Well, these young people are not listening.’

“I say, ‘Oh, sure, they’re not supposed to listen. They’re going to face their own tomorrow. I’m not going to tell them today, “Be as I am.” No, I am what I am. You are what you are. Tomorrow is yours. Carry it as best you can. And we will watch. That’s the way it goes.

“My whole staff sitting here, fight every day. They say, ‘Well, you tell us what to do.’

“I say, ‘I don’t know. You do it. I’ll watch.’

“That was the Sikh way. Let the children grow. With the support and the supervision. And not sit on them.”

## Answering the Call - 2

Someone asks: “The kids that have fallen away from Sikhism, that are taking drugs and booze and all that, how to can we re-inspire them to come back into Sikhism?”

Siri Singh Sahib: “Oh, that you tell. Americans who were not even Sikhs, they were all into drugs. We took them out. That’s very easy.

“Why people take drugs to begin with? When you feel very empty and very lonely and very left out and you just have that fear and you want to space out, drugs are the only outlet. Why not? I mean, it’s true.

“I saw at *Gurdwara* last night, three people were standing there, outside that round thing by the Guru Har Rai Gurdwara. Three people were drinking beer. They were non-Sikh and they were urinating there, too. They were enjoying it. There’s a one little corner. I was going to ask them to put some light there at night. That corner has become urination place for all these kids. The were doing it last

night there.

“And those three can be converted to be the greatest Sikhs. Those who can urinate in a corner together, at least there’s one act of togetherness. No, no, let’s not laugh! The fact is they can do something together. And that’s all we need! Something together. Then what together they will do, that is tomorrow our job.

“I mean, all these people who hang like gangs and they do things, they can be the perfect citizens, the most strong citizen you can ever have. Any person who knows how to hang together, has to have the ability to hang together in adversity or in the best of reality. And as Sikhs we can show them the path of best of reality.

“What I did in America? Nothing. I tell you what I did. They told me, ‘Drugs is the experience. Drugs is this. Drugs is...’

“I said, ‘Well, drugs is the drag. You’re not going to go anywhere with these.’

“‘Well what do you mean?’

“I said, ‘Oh, I mean nothing. Let us sit together. Let us do it.’ And we did certain things. And we experienced. And five per cent only followed, not everybody. But we kept doing, kept doing. Now we are a sovereign Sikh nation of the Khalsa.

“How it become in twenty years? It was that concept and conception both. That’s what I’m trying to explain to you.

“They tell you, ‘Oh, you don’t have a flag, you have a different flag.’

“We don’t have a different flag. We have a flag of the Khalsa nation. We fly it.

“‘*Oh tuhaadaa kaysree jhandaa naaheen.*’

“That is our Guru’s flag. We fly that too. But we have a state flag different than that. We have a flag of Siri Singh Sahib different than that. We have a Khalsa Council flag, totally different. We are not thieves. We are not cheaters. We understand tomorrow there’s going to be a Nation and everything needed has to be set up now. We set them up.

“We wanted non-Sikhs to join us, so we made *Sutantar, Sikhdari, Sikhian Sarb Loh...* We’ve started a totally new organization and we wanted everybody to come, doesn’t matter from which walk of life, from which religion they are. We’re not going to teach them Sikh religion. We are going to teach them how to be good humans. The moment a person will experience how good a human he can be, he’ll become a Sikh automatically. We’re not going to tell them do this and don’t do that. Not a

person in whole world who has come with me can say I told him to become a Sikh. No, never. Never will.

“And I was younger than you when I started. Believe me or not, my improper behaviour and ideas was very well known. I was a rebel. And I am even rebel today. Nothing has changed. Simply I polished my self. That’s it.

“I will never talk in a plural word. Never. You will never find me doing that. I think that’s a lie. That’s a basic concept of lying to each other. Talk always ‘I,’ ‘you,’ and ‘us.’ Never talk ‘we’. We is a very fake word. We, what? I am I, you are you, and when we become like one, then we are us. This ‘we’ is a very common term to sway everybody. ‘We,’ the Sikhs. No! ‘Us,’ the Sikhs.

“Look, eleven years they have never let me come on any stage. Did I lose something? No. We gained. We never lost. Why not? I will tell you why not.

“They’re all lying to you. The fact is, I speak whatever I speak. I speak on one subject only. They know it. *‘Rehit pi-aaree mujh ko. Sikh pi-aaraa naheen* – The discipline is dear to me. I don’t care for those who just say they are my follower. (Guru Gobind Singh)’ And I disturb them so bad they don’t want me.

“That Secretary with a tied beard. What is the idea of a tied beard? Cut it out! Big difference. I don’t see any difference. And I tell them on their face. This damn secretary I have to get time from. Damn shame it is! Totally ridiculous!

“And they call themselves ‘President of the Gurdwara.’ These bloody bastards! President of the Gurdwara where Siri Guru Granth presides! I mean, who the hell will ever forgive them?

“I don’t go to their Gurdwaras. They don’t have Gurdwaras! They can’t to a church, so they have to have a Gurdwara. What are you talking about these people? I know them inside out. I talk to them on their face they are so scared.

“But I do believe that Gurdwara is where Guru presides. And everybody listens. And everybody serves. And there’s a one spirit. That’s the Gurdwara I’m talking about.

“We sit and we make a Gurdwara under the trees. We don’t care. You have to exactly go that way. You cannot...

“*Dekho!* One thing you must understand. There are some among you who are weak. They will continue. Make them strong. And then you’ll find some more weak. Make them strong.

“What you can do to make it? Just sit with a person! Just sit. Don’t say one word. Just sit. Ask him to put his eyes in your eyes, and sit! And pray in the heart that that person becomes strong. You’ll

get the answers. That's what we did. We built up a brotherhood of the Khalsa, so tight.

"Among us there were women too, young teenage women. We treated them exactly as we treated ourselves.

"That's why our enemies couldn't... They wanted to know a story. They wanted to know something. They were always around. They couldn't find one thing to nail us.

"But we made up our mind. There's no woman, there's no man. We are all Khalsa. And our concept is nothing but purity and piety. With that we'll win. And we won!

"And you gotta do the same. You have to do the same. Otherwise, there's no way you'll survive.

"We used to go play a hockey game. After we finished the game, we all put our hockey sticks together and got out in the groves, and we sat down there and chanted the *Naam* as we knew. We all did it together. We all learned how to cook. We all learned how to sit. We all learned how to pray. We all learned how to trust each other. The heaviest thing of all this is to trust each other. And worse than that is to forgive. And much worse than that is to admit to something publicly.

"Once I lied. I didn't bring the ration myself. But I sent it through somebody. And I was supposed to bring it myself. Can you believe that in the company of five hundred, I had to admit, 'Yes, I neglected.'

"And you know what the five hundred did? They said, 'We'll chant until you bring the food.'

"Can you believe that? I had to go fifteen miles back, bring the whole load of food, come there, cook it, feed them. It was 4 a.m. when we were done.

"I learned my lesson. I said, 'Never I'll do it again,' but that's the way it was.

"I thought, I'll tell these people. There'll go there. Everything'll be set. We'll go. I just became a leader for a moment. Sometimes you get tired, you want it that way. It was a mistake on my part.

"The *Sangat* was never disturbed, never said one word. The *jathedar* said, 'Well, you were supposed to bring the food.'

"I said, 'Well I sent it!'

"He said, 'No, what you sent it is sitting there. Did you hear the orders? You were supposed to bring the food!'

"I said, 'That's true, but I sent it.'

"He said, 'But that's sitting there.'

"Now I said, 'What is the command now?'

"He said, 'Go back, and you are supposed to bring the food. Bring the food!'

"I said, 'Are we idiots? Look, food is there! We can eat, and we can...'

"He said, 'That's not the way. The way is, you are told by the executive to bring the food. Is true or not?'

"I said, 'That's true.'

"Then go and bring the food.'

"Fifteen miles I had to walk back, and I had to bring the food. And then they sat. They never said a word. They just ate.

"And I was grumbling, 'You wasted time, you bunch of freaks! You're all fanatic! You don't understand. A nation doesn't move that way.'

"He said, 'That's why nobody wants you as General Secretary, that's why you're Propaganda Secretary. What the hell you're talking about? You were told to bring the food. Is that order clear to you? You do not know how to obey, therefore you cannot command. Period.'

"I said, 'Yeah, yeah... that's a philosophy, but you know we have wasted so much time.'

"He said, 'Yeah, yeah, that's okay.'

"But I tell you I learned such a lesson. Afterwards, when they said, 'You gotta do this,' I really opened up my ears.

"What did you say?'

"You do this.'

"And I would say, 'Okay, I'll exactly do that,' and I understood they would not tolerate or accept any alternative. And that's where I learned, where's there an altar there's no alternative. And don't play that game!



“You can be perfect Sikhs. One speaks, the other obeys.

“The law of spirituality is: obey, love, serve, excel. These are four things.

“Sikhism is based on four things: *Bana, Bani, Sewa, Simran*.

“*Bana* is identify yourself. Identify with who? With me? No. With anybody? No. Identify with the Guru.

“*Bani*. *Bani* is with you. Your *Bani* should be exactly like that.

“*Sewa*. Serve even the enemy. You’ll have a territory which you can never be taken away from you.

“And *Simran*. That’s for your own purity and strength.

“*Bana, Bani, Sewa, Simran*. The fifth is you.

“How many of you have taken *Amrit*? Anybody? One, two, three, four, five.. Okay.

“How you chant your *Wahe Guru*? Do you give the one-tenth, that’s two and a half hours?”

Someone answered: “We do our *Nitnem* and...”

Siri Singh Sahib: “That is extra.”

Same person: “No, but like, do you have to sit down for two-and-a-half hours and do it? You can go round doing it? You can do your work, whatever?”

Siri Singh Sahib: “We don’t go around anything. We get up three o’clock in the morning, whether it’s right or wrong. And we sit, whether we can do it or not. Whether we faint doing it or not. That’s nothing. We’ll fake it, we’ll make it.

“Man, I’m not going to lie to you. There’s no in-between. That’s the best we can do.

“Five *banis*, we read it for the daily protection. What *Banis* we read? We read *Japji*, right? That is for brightening our soul.

“We read *Shabad Hazare* so that we want money. And we read *Jaap Sahib* for our protection shield, so our radiant body becomes always more better than anything else. That’s what *Jaap Sahib*’s all about. And we read *Anand Sahib* so that we can see the concept. If a man is disturbed, you will know it intuitively if you’ll have read *Anand Sahib* right. And in the evening we read *Rehiras*. That’s

true. Isn't that what it is?"

A discussion follows about which the correct Banis are to be read each day. The Siri Singh Sahib lists them as: *Japji Sahib*, *Shabad Hazaare*, *Jaap Sahib*, *Swaye*, *Benti Chaupai*, *Rehrias Sahib*, *Kirtan Sohila*. When others offer differing views, he suggests they research the old Sikh tradition to find what is true.

Siri Singh Sahib: "You have been trained differently. We are not challenging your training. We are not asking you to change your ideas because of us. Please don't take us wrong. You can pursue what you pursue but you'll meet a dead end. We have gone through these pursuits. And we met dead end. We have a history of it. What you have been told, you have been told. Why don't you all sit together and research what was the time of Guru Gobind Singh, and what was the real thing going on then?"

"But as a body of the Khalsa as a whole there's a concept too, and there's a conception of that too. You can agree anything you want to agree. I can agree anything I want to agree. But that agreement will not fit in with the general concept. And it won't fit in. That's why I'm trying to understand. Everybody has the right to be what they want to be. But as a body of the Khalsa, that is different.

"You should form a body to research what was prevalent at the time of Siri Guru Gobind Singh. It should be your research, not what I say, not what others say. You should rise as a Khalsa to that concept. Each one of you have the responsibility. Each one of you should participate. You must understand, that's in the beginning I said, you all have to participate, little by little, to become that which you want to be.

"We rose from the ashes, we rose from the drugs, we rose from the concept of living our lives. We understand it. We're not asking you to understand it. We say, find it out. We don't want you to be convinced by us. That's the one fundamental concept with which we have come. We are not willing to convince you. All we are asking you to do is find it out."

"Everyone has their own research. We're not trying to go into their research. This is what we are saying: 'Whatever others say, accept it. But meanwhile do your own research and come to conclude what is right.'

"That's what I'm saying. That will make you, you as you. If you are not you, and you are not within you, and you cannot offer yourself, you're not access of you, you are of no use. Then you're all a herd. They can herd you out this way. They can herd you out that way.

"I've not come here to convince you that become my herd. Not at all. Please don't misunderstand. Don't come with pre-notions. I have come to ask you to be you. That's what the last time I was telling them. Be yourself. A federation, an organization, a *jatha*... whatever you are. Be

your own *missal*. Don't follow our order.

"And when we have to fight under one common cause, then let's all put forward our best. That's what I was saying. I was not saying them, to follow any order of mine.

"Now what they were saying was, 'We want a *Maha Pursha*.'

"I said, 'I'm not going to be the leader. I will never lead you. And I don't want your appreciation.'

"What you can do for us?"

"I said, 'I can give you what is what. I can let you know what is going on. You make your own study, you follow your way. That's your way of life. I can serve you in one way. I can tell you what is going on. And that too, you should find it out.'

"The Government of India has one policy, that in this little Punjab, which was only five districts, now they will make eleven, twelve, whatever they do with it. They took away Himachal. They took away Haryana. And they separate you in a very little corner. In this Punjab, they wanted to change the population to 70:30 or 60:40 at least.

"So they have a plan: anybody who's a Sikh should be killed, they should be humiliated, they should be destroyed, or they should be made to run away. And these *Biharis* should be got settled, and habituated and acclimatized into Punjab, so that Punjab should become a totally their own province. This policy we know.

"And everybody said, 'Oh how it can be?'"

"Well, as far as we're concerned we know it's happening. And if you ask them, this leadership of ours, 'It can't be right.'

"Well, I'm wrong. Okay. Set me free, please.'

"But the fact is, what I said in 1982, what I said in 1972, and what I'm saying in 1992 is right. And it will be this way.

"They tell me, 'Oh, we are doing for the nation!' And I know their RAW file number and sometimes when I get upset I pull it out.

"That's why I say, don't trust me. Because when you start trusting then you are betrayed. Then you feel humiliated. You feel low. Whatever anybody says to you, sit together and ask your own consciousness, and find out the truth, and then make a decision, and then follow that. That's the way for the youth to go. Listen to everybody. Do what your heart says. That's what I have been asking, all

along. Our people - they look so organized and everything - they are absolutely independent.

“There’s little Nirinjan sitting here. How many times she agrees with me? Never. We yell at each other like... If you see us fighting... You might have heard us. She says, ‘This is the way.’

“I said, ‘No!’

“She said, ‘No! This is the way!’

“I say, ‘What I can do?’ Two, three, times I yell. The third time I say, ‘Okay, do what you whatever you want,’ because I love that independence. I love when people stand up and they say, ‘No! You are wrong!’

“Sure, sometimes I say wrong things to find it out if are they alert. Now, with all these twenty years, they know I can damn plug them anywhere I want. I’m very dangerous, so they just listen carefully.

“I must tell you, I’ll go tomorrow and they are the tomorrow. And they must be strong today, otherwise I’ll have no tomorrow. It’ll be all gone. And that’s what all of you have to think like. You have to learn, experience, and think and be authentic. Forget about which *Bani* they tell you read and what time! You have to know exactly what was happening, so you can tell your own son, not what you heard.

“He’ll then say, ‘Where did you hear it?’

“You will say, ‘I heard from so and so.’

“And he will say, ‘No! I heard from that and that this.’

“Then there’ll be a conflict in the family, a split. You’re not going to go for that. You have to sit and speak as a father.

“I sat with my family one day, and I said, ‘Well, I happen to be a father. If I’m wrong, I’m right. If I’m right, I’m right, anyway. Thank God!’

“What they can say? Because I did my research. I had an authentic knowledge of certain things. I said it after all that what I said, and everybody said, ‘Alright if you say that way, you’re right, you’re right.’

“Your question, sir?”

Someone asked: “I have a *Panj Bani* question.”

Siri Singh Sahib: "We're not going to discuss it."

Someone persisted: "Please hear me at least."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Go ahead!"

Someone continued: "You said *Panj Bani* is notas what we understand *Panj Bani* to be, yeah? When you had *Amrit Sanchar*, the *Panj Piaray* told you the *Panj Bania*. Which were they? Second part: As American Sikhs, as *Panj Piaray* do the *Amrit Sanchar*, which *Panj Bani* do they say?"

Siri Singh Sahib: "You please ask them. Whenever the *Panj Piaray*... First of all, at this moment, there's no *Panj Piara*. When the *Panj Piara* are qualified, then they are *Panj Piaras*. And please be there and ask them. Every Sikh is not a *Panj Piara*."

Someone continued: "So, why did you mix the *Panj Bania* in the first place then?"

Siri Singh Sahib: "Pardon?"

Shanti Kaur: "You know, when we took *Amrit*, we've all taken *Amrit* from all kinds of people. We've taken *Amrit* at *Akal Takhat*. We've taken *Amrit* from *jathas* that have come over. We've taken *Amrit* from *Akhand Kirtanee* people that have come over. *Amrit's Amrit*. And at different times, different things are said, but the point is, is that when you meet, you know in your own Soul what your *Banis* are. You know what's right amongst yourselves. We meet together. We talk with each other, and we do what's right. And different things are said.

Someone continued: "Well, that's very general, isn't it?"

Shanti Kaur: "It's very general..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "We took *Amrit* from these *sant jathas*, we took *Amrit* from everybody. We are a mixture of everything."

Bhai Sahiba: Can I answer this question? When we do *Amrit*, when American Sikhs do *Amrit* ceremony, and they are Five *Piaras*, we do the same with the way you all do it. The Granthi qualifies and challenges them, then they become the Five *Piaras*. Before that they are not Five *Piaras*. And then, the *Banis* we read are the same you all read: *Japji Sahib*, *Jaap Sahib*, *Swayaj*, *Benti Chaupai*, full *Anand Sahib*...

Siri Singh Sahib: "She's taking the liberty. I'll say 'We do not know.'"

Everyone laughed.

Nirinjan Kaur: "I think the point is, is that, do what's right in your own consciousness and don't judge others."

Someone continued: "All the students are trying to find out what we're doing."

Siri Singh Sahib: "You can very well find out. I tell you, I tell you the way you can find out. When the Granthi is sitting in the presence of Siri Guru Granth and has straightened out the five and declared them as *Panj Piaras*, you sit down among them and ask them the question. Whatever they answer you, please take it seriously. I can't speak for them.

"You research it, that's what I said in the beginning. As a young man, search it out. Don't believe me at all, and trust anybody else. Search it. You are Sikh by your right as a Sikh. That's what I'm trying to tell you. As a Sikh youth leader, I have been betrayed more the time I can count. I'm not going to get betrayed by any Tom, Dick and Harry now. I'll do my research. And I want you to do it too.

"Part of the Sikh history... I know what they say. I know what they do. When the Congress side won the S.G.P.C., everything changed. When Akalis came back, everything changed. When one *Jethadar* became Akal Takhat, everything changed. When the other become, then everything changed. I have seen changes more than I can every record them.

"That's what I'm telling you. Do not go by what you have been told. Do your own research, you have the right to tell your friend, eye to eye, 'This is the Truth!'

"If he says, 'Where it says so?' then you can prove it to him. That's why I'm invoking research.

"You have to tell your son, 'This is this.'

"If he says, 'Where it says so?' then you can tell him.

"That's the way we worked it out. We never had *Panj Piaras*. We took any *Panj Piaras*. First *Panj Piaras* who came were with Baba Mihan Singh. They gave us all *Amrit*. Then we found the Akhand Kirtanee Jatha. They gave us all *Amrit*. They told us what they know.

"Then one other Sant came. We had a mixture of so many. Then Babbars gave us *Amrit*. We took it from everybody. We took *Amrit* from *Akal Takhat*. When we were going there, we were taking it there.

"We are asking you don't follow us. And don't believe us. And don't trust us. We're asking again and again. We're asking you to do your own search.

"We learned *gatka*. We are learning it. We printed first book on *gatka*. Right and wrong, we

did it. We are trying to learn it as a science. We're not asking anybody. We are learning from everybody.

"And you know I'm the best teacher? I won't teach them. No, I won't teach them. I just invoke the idea. I told them to learn. But, look at my fingers. You can find a yogi in one way: from his ankles. And you can find a *gatka* master from these two fingers. They go into the sword.

"You cannot keep on lying all your life. And keep on pretending you are a leader and you are a *Gursikh* and you are a *Gurmukh*, when you're not. Find it out! Go deep!

"If you don't have relationship between you and soul, *atma* and *paratma*, if you don't have your soul with you, you have nothing with you. I can tell you two hundred things, and they're not going to be right. That's what I'm trying to explain to you. We are not a herd of sheep to be led. We are lions. We shall walk our way. And we shall roar our own strength. And that's what I want you all to be.

"Beauty is this. One day they're be a common fight. Like forty. Mahan Singh left. He said, 'You're not our Guru. We are not your Sikhs.'

"Guru Gobind Singh said, 'Okay, go, but do one favor. Write it down'. They wrote it down. He kept it.

"When they came back, they turned the whole war around.

"Sikh history is the guideline to us. Let us follow that, not people, not men, not the *sants*, not God even. If God tells me what to do, I'm going to say, 'Wait a minute, let me talk to the Guru.' If nothing else I'll take the *Hukam* quickly.

"That is what I'm saying to your guys, if you want to survive. If not, it's fine. They shall exploit you, they shall mislead, I'm using the word 'shall'. They will use you. The only way to save the future of the Khalsa is do your research, be yourself, and march on.

"Now how you're gonna believe when the greatest philosopher we can ever produce in Sikhism changes the meaning of the first line of Guru Nanak. How you can justify that? The first line they have changed. They have changed the meaning too. I was shocked when I was doing my research.

"I asked my wife to read, and she read Bhai Vir Singh. And Bhai Vir Singh says all that in the fourth, third page..."

Bhai Sahiba: "He has given both of them."

Siri Singh Sahib: "On the fourth page he said, 'In the old times the meaning was this.' Can you believe that? Who can deny and will not have respect and honor of Bhai Vir Singh? Everybody.

Everybody. Should, will and maybe. I have no respect for that man at all!

“I don’t want you to follow me. But we, as a Khalsa, condemn him, and will continue condemning him for doing this mistake. And anybody who will follow in that lineage. If a man of Bhai Vir Singh’s calibre will tell you such a thing, who can you trust? Me? Not at all? You should trust Bhai Vir Singh, and stab your head!

“Today’s philosopher couldn’t say, ‘The intellect releases one thousand thoughts in the wink of an eye. They become emotions, feelings, desires, and you pursue all that. This is man’s biggest waste of energy. Guru Nanak said, you can think a hundred thousand times. It is not going to work out. *Gurbani* is very well written. You cannot change it.”

“The concept of a Sikh is that God does all. We just have to work in that divine design. For that, you require an intuitive mind. The *Panj Piaray* must educate Khalsa candidates in the three minds, the ten bodies, the five elements, the seven chakras, the ten trillion cells.”

Someone asked: “Is that the duty of the *Panj Piaray*?”

Siri Singh Sahib: “Did any of the *Panj Piaray* tell you that you have three minds? Did they tell you that you have ten bodies? Did they tell you that your body is made of five elements and you have seven chakras, that you are made of ten trillion cells and all your cells are changed in seventy-two hours. If not, then who authorizes them to be in a position to distribute *Amrit*?”

“There is a responsibility to purify you, to make you understand everything, to explain to you about your body and spirituality. Also, to examine you and to make your body and mind one.

“I went to get *Amrit* and whatever they made me go through... *Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru...* In those days, when you prepare to receive *Amrit*, you have to sit on a slab of rock for two hours and recite “*Wahe Guru,*” and they will try everything to distract you. If you fail, you don’t get *Amrit*. You don’t deserve *Amrit*.

“And here, first they give *kachheraa* and *kirpaan*. “Here you go! You can have *Amrit*.” No one even examines if you deserve it or not. They even don’t tell you what is your body, where are your seven chakras, even told you how your cells work, what are your three nervous systems, and how they work. What is your participation in regression and projection.

“Oh my child! They gave you *Amrit*, but they did not tell you anything and told you, ‘Read five *Banis* every day and you are *Amritdhari*.’ Guru ji also wrote, ‘*Paṛ paṛ pothee lodhiyay paṛ paṛ.*’”

Someone asked: “After we become *Amritdhari*, and with His grace, we should discover ourselves.”



Siri Singh Sahib: "That's what I'm trying to explain to you people. You should awaken your self to learn about body and mind. There are forty different *jathas* who distributed *Amrit* to us. Whoever we found, we requested them to distribute *Amrit*."

Someone said: "So you are saying, whoever you found, you asked them to distribute *Amrit*?"

Siri Singh Sahib: "We are growing Sikhs there and if you want to have *Amrit*, you have to find five *Piaray* from anywhere. Whoever we found, we took as *Panj Piaray*."

Someone says: "*Kurehitee*? So did you not receive *Amrit* from any people who did not keep to the Guru's discipline?"

Siri Singh Sahib: "What are you saying? Why are you asking false questions to create problems? We did not deviate from the Guru's discipline. Whoever we found, who were designated as *Panj Piaray*, and they were willing to distribute, we took it from them. Most of the time there, you wouldn't be able to find and *Panj Piaray*. In all Los Angeles, we couldn't find any *Panj Piaray* for three years. We even asked them to take our money to do it, and still we could not find any."

Someone speaks: "It sounds like it was hard."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Now, if any will come to be *Panj Piaray*, we ask them to sit on a slab of stone and recite '*Wahe Guru*' for two hours. Only then, you can be *Panj Piaray*."

"In my lifetime, I saw only one person who did that – Bhai Jiwan Singh – and we sat together to eat dinner and started to recite '*Wahe Guru*.' We were gone in deep meditation. He started playing tabla, and we continued until four in the morning.

"Everyone went into deep sleep after dinner. No one knew what happened. I woke the other Singhs and *Panj Piaray* at 4 a.m. to sit in Guru's presence, and told them, 'I am leaving.'

"They asked me, 'Where are you going?'

"I said (sarcastically), 'To earn dollars.'

"That's what I am telling you all. Start researching and start finding facts. What was Sikh history? Don't believe these guys. They gave false information that Guru Gobind Singh ji ate opium every day. The Guru who wrote that big Granth, they did not spare him. I know everything. If I don't say it, that doesn't mean that I don't know what big liars they are."

## Answering the Call - 3

“In the face of everything negative, we have become a very living force. That is what I want you to do. We have done it. We want you to do it. The time has come as a nation when we have to sit and face each other and talk with each other with utmost honesty. Let us stop blaming each other and work with what we have. And there is not one tactic in the book which they have not used on us. And we have survived.

“We came to Birmingham to check out the intelligence report of the Khalsa Council that seventy percent of the youth have gone from the salient feature of Sikh dharm and they have no hairs and they don't intend to have it. We came to see it ourselves. That's what we came for.

“We are grateful to this Randhir Singh. He made the arrangements, and we are grateful to him for letting us stay at Randhawa's house. We found them very neutral, very good. And we wanted to meet everybody, we wanted to go everywhere, we wanted to do *kirtan*, and I wanted to do the same damn nonsense which I have been doing for the last twenty-two years: to tell them to wake up. And I am not hiding behind any rules or ritual, or whether it is right or wrong. If I am wrong, I am right. If I am right, I am right.

“*Toosee jaago!* - You should wake up. Don't worry about me. I am not asking them. Now they created this problem.

“They gave me this bait: ‘*Toosee leader ban jaa-o!* - You take the leadership position.’

“And I said, ‘*Na, no ko-ee leadership banna. Bilkul nahin.* - No, I don't want to be a leader, absolutely not.’

“We said to them, ‘We will give you full support. If we back down, you can blame us. Then they asked for proof and I provided proof, but they ran away and we stayed there. That's why they don't talk to us. We have all the proofs that they said something, then did the opposite.

“We asked, ‘Why did you guys run away?’

“They made an excuse, ‘My wife called me.’

“There was an agreement. What if my wife called me? I am not one of those guys who makes an excuse to leave in the middle of something.

“That's how we kid each other. How is that the way to go? They are not going to find any place in the future and they will get frustrated and *Sangat* will turn against them and they will be left with no choice. They will have to come back and talk to us. Right now, they have turned their back, and you watch. Soon, they will come back soon to talk.

Someone spoke: "*Kaum day frustration taa hai gi-ai* – There is much frustration in the Sikh nation, no doubt."

Siri Singh Sahib: "*Oh hee taa faa-idaa hai!* That's the best thing! That's best for us."

Someone continued: "This frustration might be best for you may not be for the Sikh Nation as a whole. People are looking for some kind of support, if you can give them moral support."

Siri Singh Sahib: "We are always giving moral support. That's what we did in our whole life. Let's everyone sing together. (Sings) *We are the Khalsa...*

The Siri Singh Sahib's entourage sang together: "*Mighty mighty Khalsa! Everywhere we go, people want to know who we are, so we tell them...*"

Someone continued: "I understand that, but why are we not together and united?"

Siri Singh Sahib: "We are not united because we don't want to join a bunch of hoodlums. We are Sikhs who work honestly. We believe in our Guru. If you speak truth, we stand beside you. If you lie, we won't support you. We are not ready to be hurt any more, Son. They hurt us in the past, but they are not going to any more. Our wounds are still not healed from what they did to us in the last three years. They are not very honest people. They are extremely dishonest and they lied to us as a Khalsa Nation.

"We agreed. We made a decision as a *Sarkar-e-Khalsa*. They ran away. We didn't. They are thieves! What we actually want is, let's forget everything from the past and move on. You forgive us, we forgive you. Now tell us what you have in hand. They are asking us to chant slogans with them. We are not going to do that. We know too much."

Someone else spoke: "So what you are saying, I think most of them, including myself, don't know what you are talking about. What happened in three years... If it's not a security reason or some other reason..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "That is the predicament. There is a security reason. Otherwise, I would start telling you more details, but that will be more damaging to the Sikhs as a nation than explaining and keeping you informed.

"I want you to search it out. You will find it out. You can read any book on traitorism in history or any book on the word, 'traitor.' May a list of all the kinds of betrayal and see what they have not tried on us. Forget about trusting us. Leave that aside.

Man from *Sangat*: "People who are fighting for Khalistan or for justice or dignity and rights,

what do you think about them?”

Siri Singh Sahib: “We really respect them from the bottom of our heart.”

Same man: “Do you believe they are fighting for the truth?”

Siri Singh Sahib: “Why don’t you ask them? They will tell you.”

Same man: “They are saying they are fighting for a cause, for truth.”

Siri Singh Sahib: “That’s it! You got your answer. You don’t need to ask us. That’s fine that you got your answer from Sikhs fighting, but why don’t you go ask those people who are hiding in their homes? Ask them if the people fighting for Khalistan are right? Ask the people who are saying, ‘We will fight till we die,’ and now they are hiding in their homes. Ask them!

“Why are you picking our wounds? Please don’t do that. Ask the people who take money and hide behind their wives in their homes.”

Someone: “Sir, we have come to know that your organization in the USA has supported financially not in the thousands, but in millions, someone told us. Is this true?”

Siri Singh Sahib: “Must be. Whoever must have told you, must have told the truth. I am a person devoted to the Guru’s name. I don’t know. He must have told the truth. Ask him.

Someone: “Do you all know that...”

Siri Singh Sahib: “They are not supposed to know. No, we deny! We deny anything! *Daykho jee, Khalsa ji!*

“Let it be recorded: We have done nothing. What we did, we did. We did not know at that time we were fools. What we did, we did. We never knew that we have been deceived. We have been, and that is a very sad, sore spot with us. We have been betrayed very badly and we are sorry for that. It was our foolishness. We are not going to admit it. Why should we admit it? It is our bad experience. It was a nightmare.”

Someone: “Nobody should be in doubt that they have not supported you. I want to make this a basis to carry further so that we can have some more useful discussion for our benefit and for our information so that we can get together, even in separate groups as Yogiji said, in different areas: one *jatha* from Birmingham, one from London, the other one from Darby... Every town should get together and discuss, and see what future lies ahead of us. And then all come together from all areas, then if there is difference, we will discuss and put our differences right for ourselves, for our nation.

Siri Singh Sahib: "Act as a nation. Act as Khalsa. Act together. Don't act as individuals. Don't act as groups.

Someone else: "In discussing the current Sikhs crisis, you can't separate the Sikhism from politics."

Siri Singh Sahib: "I'm not separating anything. I'm not separating anything! But I'm not going to be a fool again. I was a fool once. I'm not going to be a fool again. That's what I am saying. Now I am asking you not to become fools too!

"I am a sixty-two year old person, a yogi who has the power to see the future. I said to that Singh, 'I am old. I don't know how long I will live. I am sick at this time. You bow your head to Guru Granth Sahib ji too. Let us affirm that this agreement will go through.'

"He said, 'My hands are on Guru Granth Sahib. This will happen exactly as we decided,' but then he never showed up. It was daylight robbery. We don't like it. And we are not going to fall into it again, it doesn't matter what.

"We did come through. And we are much better now. We not only kept our word, we covered it. We did everything, then we said, 'Wait, a minute! Where are you?'

"They said, 'No, my wife has a stomach ache.'

"'Where was that man?'

"'Oh, that man had an obligation to sign a contract. And *that* man? That man couldn't catch a plane. You know, it is not his fault.'

"'Well, the hell with you!'

The purpose of Gurdwaras came up in the discussion. The Siri Singh Sahib said they should serve as *dharamsalas* for education in the principles of dharma. When the difficulties of organizing dharmic programs in the Gurdwaras was brought forward, the Siri Singh Sahib said, "The majority of Sikhs want their children to be Gursikhs. And the majority of those who have gone *patit* want their children to be Gursikhs. You can have them all."

One young person said that young people had been thrown out of every Gurdwara and that seniors had suggested they take over a temple. Siri Singh Sahib advised against that approach, saying it would create annoyance and hardship. Rather, he suggested young people engage in service and slowly grow into leadership.

A couple of young people presented a poster in the Yorkshire Post advertising a *gatka*

demonstration. The Siri Singh Sahib expressed his appreciation and directed that it should be kept in the Sikh Dharma archives in Espanola.

Some asked: "I want to ask a controversial question, nothing personal against you or any of the Western Singhs, if you don't mind I ask."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Sure. Feel free!"

They continued: "I heard that when the Western Singhs sing the names of the ten Gurus, they sing your name on the side."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Wait, wait, Wait! It is a damn lie and whoever said it is a bastard."

Someone: "It's okay. It's okay then."

Siri Singh Sahib: "No, I am just replying. That mother so-and-so is a pure bastard, and that bastard has spoken, and that bastard must be told by you, if we find him, we will see that his mother doesn't give another birth to another bastard. Just tell him my message."

Someone: "Thank you."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Thank you."

When one of the youths asked for material or other support, the Siri Singh Sahib replied, "We can help you in any way you want, without condition. But if you are willing to accept that help without condition, that is the only thing which has kept us apart. We don't come with conditions. You have conditions. We don't have conditions."

Youth leader: "Are we talking about the youth have conditions or the older generation?"

Siri Singh Sahib: "The older, the hell with them!"

Youth leader: "Yeah, then okay, we are talking about the youth."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Well, that's what it is. The youth has been also seasoned to be conditioned, and that's why we are waiting. The olders have promised and betrayed us. They never sent the youth. They don't want them to learn our technology. We have methodology and technology by which we became Sikhs. We would like to share with you when you are ready."

Someone asked about publications. The Siri Singh Sahib listed the many magazines, newsletters, books, and recordings, and told them to order them. He also encouraged them to connect with Sikhnet.

Someone asked: "Is doing yoga in Sikhism?"

Siri Singh Sahib: "Guru Gobind Singh said, '*Ray man ayh bidh jog kamaa-o* – Oh mind, practice yoga in this way...'

Someone else said: "Isn't yoga a part of Hinduism?"

Siri Singh Sahib: "No."

Someone else: "It's good for your health, so you should try to do it."

Siri Singh Sahib: "No, yoga is not for the body, not for the mind, not for the soul. It is for union with *Brahm*. Sikh dharma is an institution of Raj Jog. *Har bantar da antar hai. Har jantar da mantar hai. Har mantar da nucleus hai ga. Har nucleus da projection hai gee, oh da patantar hai.* This is nothing new. From mantra comes *shakti* and from *shakti* comes *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is the disciplined path, the *sadhana*, the path of yoga. One who practices yoga, joins their *atma* and *parmatma*.

"The Communists and Harkrishan Surjeet had a budget of \$5 million to undermine our work. We came to Khalsa through yoga. Guru Nanak used mantra to make his mind perfect. In the same way, we use yoga as a tool. Without a tool, everybody is a fool."

Someone: "Yoga is just one thing, one way?"

Siri Singh Sahib: "No, I am not going to discuss it. It is too insulting to say that "Yoga is but one avenue." Everything is a yoga. We are not going to define anything in a limited way."

The Siri Singh Sahib went on to describe the workings of the three minds, the arcline, the aura, and the other aspects, considered the "ten bodies." He also described *So Darshan Chakra kriya*, described in Siri Guru Granth Sahib, as the "highest *kriya*." He went on to say, "You can ask me any rude question. You can insult me any way. I can also nail you so bad that you will never get up. We are all equal. There is no problem. The problem is that you come with a prejudiced mind, pre-set mind. That I hate. That I hate you for. And that is not, I hate you.

"I hate those bastards who have spent so much money to ask you to hate me so that you can start hating yourself so that you can never remain Sikhs, because they saw those who have never heard of Sikhs have become Khalsa. They spent tons of money to tell you what a wrong man I am, so they took away from you the happiness and the knowledge. They insult me even today. That's their known professional thing. They are debauched, shameless people.

"I do my own prayer, 'Oh True King, I pray at your door. Please show kindness to Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogi. Allow me the blessing of serving at your feet."

Someone: “Why do you need to use all those names - ‘Siri Singh Sahib, Bhai Sahib’?”

Siri Singh Sahib: “We are a Khalsa Nation. We have a *Sarkar-e-Khalsa*. I am *Sahib-e-Sarkar*. We have a whole organization. We live as a government, we rule as a government, and we are the government.

“It is not me. It is the institution. I just serve the institution. When I will not be competent, then somebody else will be, and that’s the way we are.

“Do you ask the United States President, ‘Why do you call yourself “President”?’ Because he *is* the president. If he is a bogus President, he is a bogus President. If he is a right President, he is a right President.

“I have all these titles. They gave them to me. They can’t deny it. It is documented.”

People offered their opinions.

Siri Singh Sahib: “Why they did it, I don’t understand even today.”

Someone says: “But we don’t know if even you got that title, what they were thinking or that you created yourself this title.

Siri Singh Sahib: “Well, thank God I have created this title! You should create it too!

Shanti Kaur: “We were at the Golden Temple...”

Siri Singh Sahib: “Oh no, no, why we are explaining it to them? Leave it alone!”

People offered their opinions.

Siri Singh Sahib: “This is the most ridiculous thing they do to us. That is how they insult us. It is a cheap, insulting method they have been trained in.

“I am Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji. Take me or not! Love me or leave me! That’s the way it is. You’ve got to accept it, if not today, tomorrow. Someday. You shall and will.

“And I want you to... Some of you, damn it! Come out and take that job! It is going to be free soon.”

Nervous laughter.



Siri Singh Sahib: “They gave me all these titles. They never knew what it meant. Now, they see it. They can’t take it back. We’ll keep it.

“One time, somebody came to me. He had a problem and he brought a few leaders and others with him. He asked, ‘Please, Siri Singh Sahib, tell us how to resolve our problem.’

“I said, ‘There is just one way. You and all your family (thirty-five members) should take *Amrit*.’ Then, they realized they made a big mistake in giving me the designation ‘Siri Singh Sahib.’ What could he do? What I told him was just the fact.

“Once our yoga students went to a Gurdwara where people used to sit on chairs and go bare-headed and there was financial corruption. They were beaten up, but they never fought back. We have twenty-two years of fighting with every Sikh organization in the United States and Canada, believe me or not, and we will continue fighting for certain causes.

“You know they thought they thought they would fix the situation by giving me the title of ‘Bhai Sahib’ from Akal Takhat, assuming I will drop the ‘Siri Singh Sahib’ title, but those clever American Sikhs we love me so much, just added that title as well. They started calling me, ‘His Holiness, Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji.’”

The Siri Singh Sahib then described his world tour of 1977 in which he visited Southall, Iran, Afghanistan, and making a miraculous visit the Amritsar, then continuing to Pakistan, Malaysia, Hongkong, Japan, Hawaii, and Alaska. He continued by explaining the importance of pronouncing *Gurbani* accurately. The Siri Singh Sahib also described the damage done by anti-Panthic elements in North America.

“So be aware of their policies and your union with us. They are not honest. They are paid crooks and they are fifth columnists, though we don’t brand them for spoiling the future of many. But we are not going to follow these crooks any more. We did once. We wasted a lot of money, a lot of manpower, and a lot of status, and we are sorry we did it, but we are not going any further. When they will come and sit down, we will talk face to face.

“Let us see what comes out. We are not gone. We live by their side. They know us. They will not let us live. We will not attack them. I can assure them. But we are very well organized. We know we can protect ourselves. We don’t need them also. We are set. And similarly, as in twenty-two years, as we have sat with every negativity, we want you to do the same.”

The Siri Singh Sahib spoke of the benefit of chanting the Guru mantra while sitting in *veeraasan*, mentioning that Muslims also adopt certain postures for their daily meditations.

The meeting ended Siri Singh Sahib inviting their hosts to the various camps – youth camps, children’s camps, ladies’ camps, Solstices in America, as well as the European Yoga Festival.

## The Lesson of Children

The Siri Singh Sahib was always acutely attuned to the needs of children. On May 29, 1992, he issued a directive that at each formal, full-length Gurdwara program, the children of the congregation should sing a Sikh dharma song, which should be presented before the *Song of the Khalsa, Anand Sahib*, and the closing prayer. Later in the year, he spoke of the importance of this training for children.

“Children are supposed to come and be on the stage. It is their time. They are to sit like saints. That is the first lesson.

“If we let our children be shy of coming to the stage and do not train them in ‘M.C. life’ they will suffer very badly. Let us take stage fright away from children. Those who are shy of coming on the stage and facing everyone can never be leaders. Try to understand, a leader has to be a good Master of Ceremonies and have a good impact. And then, the guidance has to be perfect, like the Infinity of God.

“These are the three values we can give our children, and we’ll save lots of trouble in tomorrow. Give your children the stage, give them the characteristics, and give them the character to confront. And give them the best of them, so they can elevate. If you can share this with your children, you can have your children ten times better than you are.

“If my grandfather had said, ‘Hold my hand. I’ll walk with you,’ I would have been nuts, too. But he said, ‘Walk in front of me. You are my future.’ I learned my impact is in the future.”

In *Baal Updaysh* (The Lesson of Children), the Master laid out the characteristics of a strong spiritual training for children, while tucking the names of his own children neatly inside the poem.

*Bachay akaal purkh dee dayn.  
Grihst yog kay kamal nain.  
Parivaar sansaar kay sajjan sain.  
Bindoo beej kaa raah chlain.  
Bachay mastak dee takdeer.  
Bachay ranbeer kamal kulbeer.  
Bachay mehar dain akaal.  
Bachay pun dharam satipaal.*

*Bachay ik onkaar kee kaar.  
Bachay satinaam kee sarkaar.  
Bachay mai(n) daykho kartaa purkh.  
Shaanti jeevani milay sukh.  
Bachay kudarat kay hath pair.*

*Nirbha-o bhay hot nirvair.  
Jo bachay hai(n) saabat soorat.  
So parvaan akaal kee moorati.  
Bachay dharam karam kaa sangi.  
Gurprasaadee ajoonee saibhang.*

*Bachay ko sadaa sach sikhaa-o.  
Akaal purkh kee fauj banaa-o.  
Inay sikhaa-o sadaa satisangi.  
Raaj yog naam kaa rangi.  
Deejee-o bachay ko sikh gurbaanee.  
Naam nidhaan sati saarangpaanee.  
Bachay ko gurmati seekh sikhaa-o.  
Sukhee sansaar anand ko paa-o.  
Yogee bandanaa karay ardaas.  
Sukh parivaar anand parkaash.*

Children are a gift of eternal Being.  
The lotus eyes of the householder's life.  
In the world of family, they are our friends,  
Keeping going the path of egg and seed.  
Children come by the destiny written on the forehead.  
Children, brave in battle, sublime lotus, hero of the clan.  
Children, the gracious gift of the Eternal.  
Children, the virtuous guardians of truth and conscientious living.

Children, the creation of the one Creator.  
Children, the realm of true being.  
In children, look and see Being at play!  
Peaceful living brings spiritual bliss.  
Children are the hands and feet of divine nature.  
With fearlessness comes lack of hatred.  
Who lives as a child, retains their God-given attributes,  
Living graciously as an embodiment of Eternal Being.  
Children are entwined with conscientiousness and the need of action.  
Sweet blessing, known as unborn and self-existent.

Ever teach your children.  
Make them staunch guardians of Eternal Being.  
Teach them to remain always allied with truth  
And through Raj Yoga, imbued with the color of divine identity.  
Give your children the study of *Gurbani*,

The wealth of the Naam and elixir of life.  
Teach your children to be disciples of the Guru's Way  
And they will realize peace and bliss in this world.  
The Yogi humbly offers this prayer,  
May your family enjoy peace and realize bliss.

### **Kundalini Yoga, *Da!***

Dr. Jakov Marshak was part of a group of doctors and psychologists invited to learn about drug and alcohol addiction rehabilitation methods in the United States in 1989. Dr. Marshak had himself struggled with alcoholism in his youth until his discovery of hatha yoga. Since then, he had studied psycho-endocrinology under a leading specialist, Dr. Aaron Isaakovich Balkin, and himself researched the physiological effects of many yoga exercises. At the time of his visit to America, Dr. Marshak worked as a yoga therapist in a Moscow medical center.

During a subsequent visit to the US in 1991, Dr. Marshak took great interest in the work being done at 3HO SuperHealth in Tucson by Mukta Kaur Khalsa under the supervision of Yogi Bhajan. A few months after returning to Russia, with the blessing of Yogi Bhajan, Dr. Mashak started teaching Kundalini Yoga to young people with drug addictions.

The following winter, the Siri Singh Sahib came to Moscow with Mukta Kaur and a number of others. For a week, he lived with a student next door and gave Dr. Mashak intensive instruction in Kundalini Yoga. The Master then gave him the name, Guru Jivan Singh, "teacher of the liberated soul," and encouraged him to teach, saying soon the teachings would flourish in Russia. To help with the Russian problem of alcoholism, a presentation of the 3HO drug treatment program, "3HO SuperHealth" was given in one of the biggest psychiatric hospitals in Moscow.

Dr. Juni, the director of the first privately organized psychiatric cooperative in Russia, attended the presentation and was so inspired that he invited the Siri Singh Sahib and his companions to visit his clinic in the countryside. The Master gave him spiritual guidance and a new name, "Har Dass Singh" – one who serves God. Just before leaving Moscow, Yogi Bhajan established "3HO Moscow," with Dr. Vladimir Shustikov - whom he had met in Moscow during his visit in 1990 – as President, Dr. Guru Jivan Singh and Dr. Hari Dass Singh as directors, and their three translators – Ira, Helen and Helen – as secretaries.

In August 1992, Dr. Guru Jivan Singh hosted a yoga festival at a holiday resort about an hour from Moscow, attended by numerous teachers from Europe. He went on to establish a drug rehabilitation center for drug-dependent young people in 1996. From that center came teachers who would eventually spread the teachings of Kundalini Yoga all over Russia.

## A Bloody War in Punjab

As a messenger from the Guru's House and a son of the soil of Punjab, the Siri Singh Sahib was concerned about unfolding events in the historic homeland of the Sikhs. The extent of his involvement in the form of financial aid, and whom that support went to, is unknown, though it was hinted at in his talk at the Bromwich Gurdwara on April 25, 1992.

Far from being ground down by the horrific attack on the Golden Temple and imposition of martial law, many thousands of radicalized Sikhs came out on January 26, 1986, India's Republic Day, and set to work demolishing the structure of the Akal Takhat built up by the Indian government after its army had destroyed it in 1984. Their intention was that Sikhs themselves should perform the restoration of the Akal Takhat as *sewa* without government involvement.

This radicalism, in opposition to the Indian state and its security forces, grew until by the spring of 1992, the militants' influence was felt throughout Punjab. Sikhs aligned themselves with a number of organizations, some wanting the government to grant Punjab more rights, others wanting an independent Sikh state. Schools and the state-run media changed over from using Hindi and English to using exclusively Punjabi. The government bureaucracy was paralyzed and confined itself to heavily-guarded offices in the state capital of Chandigarh. People throughout Punjab found themselves caught in a bloody war for physical control of the state between the militants and the police.

Elected, virtually unopposed – because radicals had called for a boycott of the state election – in February of 1992, Chief Minister Beant Singh set about “solving the Punjab problem.” His main approach was to give Punjab police chief, K.P.S. Gill absolute power to fight the militants without government interference. The free hand he gave them included the escalated use of torture, “faked police encounters,” seizing the financial assets of families of militants, and arresting or killing the relatives of suspected Sikh militants to force them to surrender.

By the summer, the hardened police tactics began to bear fruit with police killings of a several high ranking militant commanders. When others took up the roles of the dead leaders, sometimes they were also killed within days. Sometimes, the new commanders lacked the personal charisma and aura of accomplishment attached to their predecessors.

The police successes had two effects on the militant groups known by names such as Khalistan Commando Force, Khalistan Liberation Force, Bhindranwale Tiger Force of Khalistan, and Babbar Khalsa. Firstly, it put the militants into a state of fear, confusion, and suspicion because they could not be sure who the informers and moles might be within their ranks. This led to an escalating spiral of killing both within and between militant organizations in the summer of 1992. The second effect was that, for the first time during the entire “Punjab crisis,” the groups found it increasingly difficult to attract new recruits into their ranks, thus shrinking the number of active armed men and women in the field.

The situation in Punjab which had begun to descend into chaos ten years earlier, returned to law and order within months. By early spring of 1993, people in government and media began to say the separatist movement had been crushed.

## Blessed Return

Since it had unloosed its campaign of terror against the Sikhs, the New Delhi government had been maintaining a tight control over the media and all travel in and out of Punjab. For eight long years, the government restrictions meant that the Siri Singh Sahib and Sikhs from the West were not allowed even to make an innocent pilgrimage to the Golden Temple.

It was not until the winter of 1992, that the political masters in the Indian central government gave indications that they might issue visas for another *yatra* from the West. Finally, in March of 1993, an anxious group of 160 pilgrims joined the Siri Singh Sahib on his return trip to the historical homeland of all Sikhs.

Once the group landed in India, they travelled almost nonstop, on and off planes and buses and trains. The group toured historic sites in Delhi, met with former President Giani Zail Singh, and visited the Sis Ganj Gurdwara. At Amritsar, everyone paid their respects, some for the first time, at the Golden Temple. They also visited the Khalsa Diwan Orphanage and historic Ram Bagh and Khalsa College, where the Siri Singh Sahib was honored.

For anyone with eyes to see, it was not only a visit to drink from the traditional wellsprings of Sikh inspiration. It was also a trip to assess the extent of the damage incurred by years of brutal martial law and inept leadership. Not surprisingly, most people were demoralized and intimidated. Thousands of homes had been looted. Countless family members had been abducted. Rich and poor, farmer and shopkeeper, everyone had their story to tell.

Sikhs everywhere had been targeted and bullied or killed by the army and the police, and even by so-called "freedom fighters". Some twenty-five thousand people, mostly young men, had been martyred in one way or another. Thousands more had been inhumanly tortured. After fifteen years of bloody repression, many people had lost their fighting spirit. They could hardly say "*Sat Siri Akal!*" For them, the sight of the visitors from America with a sign of hopeful things to come.

From Amritsar, the group continued to Ludhiana where there was a large congregation organized by Sant Sucha Singh. At train stops in Jalandar, Ludhiana, and Ambala, the Master addressed jubilant crowds who nearly crushed him with affectionate hugs and hundreds of garlands.

The Siri Singh Sahib later reflected, "The eagerness and joy you brought to the Khalsa made the Khalsa open their hearts to you. It is my prayer that you will fulfill the prophecy, each one of you, as a

representative. Let His will prevail now, and this planet will not be the same again. The whole Punjab woke up. The people had hope again.”

They continued on to New Delhi, the capital, where the Siri Singh Sahib met personally with Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao to discuss Indian unity and economic development. The Master also spoke at the Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan on “The Impact of Indian Culture Abroad.”

After that, it was on to Rishikesh, in the Himalayan foothills, where everyone was hosted by Swami Chidananda at Parmarth Ashram. After Rishikesh, for many of the travellers, the high point was meeting with the students and dedicated staff at Guru Ram Das Academy in Dehra Dun. Then, very quickly, just ten days after their departure, the Siri Singh Sahib and his entourage returned to Los Angeles.

## The Banquet

On one of his world tours, the Siri Singh Sahib arrived in Thailand after a 25-hour journey. He was accompanied by his security and several of his staff members. Everyone was tired from the long flight and slow processing through customs and immigration. Several of the entourage were seen to lean on their luggage, eyes closed, as they struggled through line after line.

As the airport doors opened, the hot Bangkok air shook them awake and they were greeted by the local Sikh community. Although the group could hardly stand up from fatigue, their gracious and generous hosts had a banquet planned. The Master commanded everyone to go, and it started immediately.

It was a funny sight to witness the Americans falling asleep sitting up at the banquet. One of the Master’s personal secretaries lost consciousness while leaning on her arm and crashed down into a water glass, splashing water everywhere. No one was hurt, but she was greatly embarrassed. The Chief of Protocol, Hari Jiwan Singh, managed only slightly better.

The next day, everyone met for lunch in the hotel restaurant. Someone in the group suggested that while it was nice of the local *Sangat* to arrange the meal, they should have understood their tired condition and postponed it for that night.

“You Americans,” the Master replied, “you have the manners of a rebellious society. That is good sometimes, but do you know these people have been planning this meal for over two months? They wanted everything to be to our standard, our liking, and our grace. They changed the menu several times, ordered special waiters, had a special cook at work, and all in our honor. Their only hope was that we would recognize their service as humble Sikhs who do their duty with care. And it is our duty is to participate and recognize this duty. And, do it with a smile.”

## Into Yoga

For a century, America had largely looked at yoga from the outside in. It was a curiosity. It was something other people did. In major universities, it was an Indian philosophy to be taught and studied. Ordinary folk did not make a connection with yoga, nor did they see any reason to be engaged.

Two of Swami Satchidananda's students, Sarah McLanahan and Dean Ornish, both medical doctors, worked to change all that. For twenty years, they packaged the main ingredients of their teacher's lifestyle – healthy diet combined with *asanas* which they called “stretching,” *praanayama* or “breathing exercises,” and meditation which they called “stress management” – into a program for heart patients. In 1990, their study “Can lifestyle changes reverse coronary heart disease?” was published in the respected medical journal *Lancet*. Three years later, they Mutual of Omaha, a major insurer, announced it would reimburse patients participating in their program.

1993 proved to be a watershed year for yoga generally in America. The number of practitioners had increased slowly since the 70's, partly through the influence of popular TV shows *Lilies! Yoga and You* and Richard Hittleman's *Yoga for Health*. By 1990, the reported number of Americans doing yoga had reached one million. Four years later, that number jumped to six million and continued to grow.

This development affected all yoga enterprises in the US. For some, though not for 3HO which retained its service-based orientation and was largely decentralized, it became a lucrative path to fame and fortune. With America being a global trend-setter, it began a powerful wave that emanated outside North America, affecting some places more quickly than others. In some places, it set apart kundalini yoga as an honest yoga and not a business yoga.

## The Technician

A professional gymnast and coach found his way to Kundalini Yoga and Yogi Bhanjan about 1980. From Dan Millman, the gifted Stanford University gymnastics coach, he had encountered the Eastern philosophical idea that the purpose of practicing physical discipline was not just to develop the body and mind, but also to awaken the soul. The Master named him Guru Prem Singh and mentored him with many yoga assignments to practice. He affectionately called him “the technician” and “Posture Master ” because of his pursuit of technical skill and proper alignment.

At the time, Guru Prem Singh was experiencing difficulties in his personal life, so to distract himself, he started a simple recording studio and began to record other people's music, mantras and meditations. As news of his efforts began to circulate around the Los Angeles 3HO community, they eventually found their way to the ears of Yogi Bhanjan. The Master asked about these recordings and how he made them. Guru Prem Singh explained that he was practicing piano and guitar and had built a



small recording studio in the garage of the ashram where he was living. Yogi Bhajan's interest increased regarding his hobby and its potential.

A short time later, in his living room, the Master sang the melody for '*Ong Namō Gur Dayv Namō.*' Yogi Bhajan only sang it once, but the template was captured on a small cassette recorder. Guru Prem Singh was instructed that he should make a thirty-one minute version of the *Ong Namō* mantra and that Nirinjan Kaur, one of his senior staff, should sing the vocal. So, he went home and made a simple recording with a few instruments and Nirinjan Kaur then added her voice. Soon after, Guru Prem Singh brought a cassette back for the Master's comments. At first listen, he seemed delighted with the results.

Thus began their musical collaboration. It continued for about five years, from 1988 until 1993. Nirinjan Kaur continued to bring Guru Prem Singh more of Yogi Bhajan's poems and mantras, often with very specific instructions. It was not unusual for him to be asked to write, record and deliver a finished cassette tape in as little as a day. The recording, *Tantric Har*, often used in classes, was such a one-day production.

There were light moments also in their relationship. Guru Prem Singh was an accomplished skier. The Master did not care for skiing at all. He would say, "You go up. You go down. You break your leg. What's good about it?" Eventually the Siri Singh Sahib changed his view and accompanied his students to watch them at the ski basin in Santa Fe.

Guru Prem Singh's collaborations gave him numerous opportunities over the years to speak directly with the Master. Often, he would ask for clarification and even make suggestions, such as adding extra verses or a mantra to the Siri Singh Sahib's poems. With few exceptions, Nirinjan Kaur sang the lead vocals on what became known as: *The Songs for the Aquarian Age*. In all, with the Master's guidance, Guru Prem Singh recorded over thirty poems and mantras.

## **The Beginnings of Sat Nam Rasayan**

One humble man was born in Puebla, Mexico in 1948. Born into an indigenous family, he felt drawn to study the healing traditions native to his country. As it happened, a shaman chose him as a disciple and began to teach him "to look," to see reality through understanding the connectivity among all the things existing in the cosmos.

In accord with the Mexican Totonaca tradition, the teaching happened in silence. The student followed everywhere the teacher, until he arrived at an understanding.

People said the man from Puebla developed the ability to "make magic," heal, and even drive out demons. In his next stage of life, he began to practice Kundalini Yoga with Babaji Singh in Mexico

City in 1971. Five years later, he met Yogi Bhajan who said he would teach the man if he would live for a year without using his powers.

Guru Dev Singh's subtle discipleship under Yogi Bhajan echoed his shamanic training, as it was taught in silence. Like the shaman who had taught him before, the Master worked to help his student change his perception of reality. Unlike the shaman, Yogi Bhajan taught Guru Dev Singh to access the state of *shuniyaa*, the neutral mind.

As a Mexican, Guru Dev Singh adopted the Siri Singh Sahib as a grandfather figure. In the Mexican culture, the grandfather presents what is to be done. To Guru Dev, obedience came naturally. When the Master asked for something to be done, he would do it.

After some years of this training, Guru Dev Singh's mind entered *shuniyaa* with increasing ease and regularity. In 1981, he took up the Sikh way of life. Some time later, with increasing instruction, he became at home and stable in his neutral mind, and he realized the transcendence of it. That is when the silent stage of his discipleship ended.

Next came a practical stage of study in which the Master instructed him to "Heal this person" and "Solve this." Passing this final period of trial and testing, Yogi Bhajan spoke to his student about their experience of connection to the sacred space within, "You and I are the only two people on the planet, who know it." He then instructed Guru Dev Singh to teach what he had taught him so others might learn it.

Guru Dev Singh moved to Rome in 1989 and started a school. In 1992, Yogi Bhajan traveled there to see him. On that visit, the Master stated that the method he had taught him would be officially known as "Sat Nam Rasayan," and that from that moment forward Guru Dev Singh would be responsible to uphold its name and lineage. At a Summer Solstice Sadhana at Ram Das Puri in the late 1990s, the Siri Singh Sahib proclaimed his student from Puebla a saint, the first and only time he ever did that with anyone.

Thus, began Guru Dev Singh's teaching mission, which would touch many hearts and take him to five continents over the coming years and decades.

## **You are healed!**

One day in Germany, after a class, the Master and his students were speaking. As they spoke, a man arrived and said to someone, "I understand you are a Sikh."

He said, "Yes."

The man said, "I was told to go to some Sikh and my headache would go away."

The fellow said, "No, no, no, no. Yogi Bhajan has arrived. You can ask him."

The Siri Singh Sahib poked his student and said, "He is asking you. Trust in Guru Ram Das and just say, 'You are healed!' Why you are doing this to him? Don't you think the God is everywhere? I mean, you have no trust, no feeling, no touch. He is asking you! It is your test. Guru has directed this man who has never heard of you, never heard of us. He has never heard of me. Why you are just passing the buck? What is wrong with you?"

Confused, he said, "What should I do?"

His teacher said, "Tell him 'You are healed!' That's all."

At that, he put his hand on the shoulder of the man and said, "You are healed already. It shouldn't bother you any more."

The man exclaimed, "Yes, yes, I am healed! Yes, you Sikhs can do it."

In satisfaction, the Master said, "Just look at it! The inner, simple, honest, conscious communication is all what the divine is. That's all what God is."

## **A Very Private Conference**

The Siri Singh Sahib was a master of counselling, but his methods of communication could be unorthodox, blunt, and open to misinterpretation. Not everyone in the mainstream Sikh community could appreciate his art.

"There was a very private conference. I want to go on record. They said, 'Yogi Bhajan, we five Sikhs have come to you and we fold our hands. Don't start abusing when people they come to you. We want to make a deal.'

"I said, 'Tell me the terms of the deal first. Come on, whether I acknowledge it or not.'

"He said, 'The deal is, you don't use abusive language to the people who come to you, be nice to them, and we will just propagate that you are a saint.'

"I said, 'I don't want it. I am going to abuse.'

"'Why? It is a bad language, and sometimes you really abuse.'

“I said, ‘Yeah, I take a big sweeper and clean out somebody in two minutes and wake them up. I tell him who really he is!’

“‘Well, you tell people they are bastards.’

“I said, ‘They are. Those who turn their backs on Guru Gobind Singh, they are bastards, and I do tell them.’

“‘People are very angry.’

“I said, ‘Then what? Telling a bastard that he is a bastard is a service. It is a real service. It takes a lot of guts, a lot of energy! You should thank me for that!’

“‘But we then cannot make you a saint.’

“‘Who wants to be a ‘saint’? I can put five gunmen behind me and start walking. I shall be a saint? That’s the standard of a saint you have got? You want to hear my standard of a saint? *‘Bhaag ho-aa gur sant mila-iaa. Prabh abhinaasee ghar meh paa-i-aa. Sayv karee pal chasaa na vichhuraa. Jan naanak daas tumaaray jee-o. Hau gholee jee-o ghol ghumaa-ee. Jan naanak daas tumaaray jee-o.’* That’s a saint!

“Guru Arjan Dev as Arjan Mal wrote three letters and Guru Ram Das said, ‘Complete the fourth letter.’ He wrote the fourth letter, he got the guruship. And then Guru Ram Das, out of the blessing of his heart - God bless his heart! - said, ‘Whosoever who will read these four letters, shall become my soul, my projection, shall heal people, shall have places. Wealth will go after him, again and again. There will be nothing in the life of that man, he will fall short of.’

“‘Can anybody write a love letter like that? Nobody can. There are four biggest, most beautiful and penetrating love letters in the Siri Guru Granth. That is called ‘love’! Just see the longing! See the profile! See the power in those letters. I know who a saint is. My standard of saint is Guru Ram Das. Arjan Dev said so. Why do you want to make me a saint?’

“‘No, no, we want you not to abuse.’

“I said, ‘What is to abuse? Telling a bastard he is a bastard is a service. Now, if you go to Boston and say Boston is New York, are you speaking the truth? When you are in Boston, call it ‘Boston.’ When you are in New York, call it ‘New York.’ I have a job to do. I don’t want to be a ‘saint.’ I want to love my father. I want to serve my father. I want to be something with my father. And I want to tell those who have forgotten and who have become bastards, ‘Forget it! Don’t come back again! Wake up, man! Recognize! Understand! *Praanas* are going away. You have a limited *praana*. You don’t have unlimited *shakti*! Don’t waste it on the body! Don’t waste it on the game of mind! Don’t waste it! Do something for the soul.’”

## The Right Communication at the Right Frequency

Babaji Singh and Gurudev Singh were often in conflict over Babaji's business practices, which his business partner considered irresponsible. When the Siri Singh Sahib came to Mexico City, Gurudev Singh began to tell him about Babaji's doings.

After ten minutes, the Master stopped him and said, "I'm your father, not your teacher. You can't talk to me like that." Gurudev Singh digested that information and began to speak to Yogi Bhajan again, but as a son.

After ten minutes, the Siri Singh Sahib stopped him again and said, "I'm not your father. I'm your teacher. You can't be successful like this. Talk to me like a businessman." Gurudev Singh paused and attempted to process this new information, before beginning again. There was so much to tell about Babaji Singh's misbehaviours!

After another ten minutes, the Siri Singh Sahib stopped him again and said, "I'm your father, not your teacher. You can't talk to me like that." Gurudev Singh tried to digest that information and began to speak to the Master again as a son.

After another ten minutes, Yogi Bhajan stopped Gurudev Singh again and told him, "I'm not your father. I'm your teacher. You can't be successful like this. Talk to me like a businessman."

This continued for about an hour, a very intense, frustrating hour for Gurudev Singh, after which he concluded that the Siri Singh Sahib was teaching him the need to communicate correctly at the right frequency and stay in his center.

## The Two Conditions

A twenty-year-old man set out by train from his hometown of Valencos to find work in Spain's large capital. On the way, an attractive German woman told him about a doctor performing surgery in Senegal, Africa for free, offering his patients free flights and free meals. The young man was so impressed, he went to meet Dr. Pablo Furelos in Madrid.

The next year, the man returned to Madrid. He asked to stay with the doctor and three American women in his apartment. The doctor agreed.

1992 was a big year in Spain with both the Olympics and the World Fair. Dr. Furelos asked the young man for money as he had not paid rent for three or four months, not even the deposit. It was Friday evening and the rent was overdue. When the young man paid, the doctor gratefully gave him his room.

The young man found there were now four American women and they were not as pretty as the woman he had met on the train. For their part, they were not pleased at the new arrangement either.

Despite their differences, the Spaniard came to know Sarabjit Kaur, one of the American women. Two weeks later, he returned to Valencos leaving a letter under her door professing his love for her.

The young man returned a week later and asked Sarabjit Kaur's response. She said to him, "You are crazy! You need permission from my Master!"

Two months later, the Siri Singh Sahib came to a place outside Barcelona. The two of them lined up for an interview. There were six people in front of them. The atmosphere was busy. Two separate people were administering foot massages to the Master. The phone was ringing. There was discussion. Finally, the Spaniard asked to marry Sarabjit Kaur.

The Master, who had visibly been relaxed, suddenly sat up and says him, "What! To her?" Then to Sarabjit Kaur, he said, "What? You got so lonely, you went out to the streets to look for a man?"

Sarabjit Kaur replied, "No Sir. He fell from the sky."

The Siri Singh Sahib continued, "So we'll see how well he bounces!" The Master and all present discussed the situation for a half hour. It was like ping pong. Finally, Master said, "No problem. But there are two conditions. First you must marry me. Second, you must pass the test of time."

## **Wha Wha, White Cat, and Other Animal Wonders**

The Siri Singh Sahib had a heart for animals. Early on, he had the family dog, Nasi, flown to America from India. She arrived pregnant and with one eye!

One day, as Yogi Bhanan was being driven through the city of London by the local teacher, Gurudain Singh, he directed him to turn the car around and go back around the block to a pet store they had just driven by. The Master went inside with one of his secretaries. They emerged a short while later with a tiny white ball of a dog, the light of whose little soul he had recognized in the window.

He named him "Wha Wha" on the spot and had him brought to Los Angeles. The relationship between the devoted little West Highland terrier and the Siri Singh Sahib was poetic, so much so that he composed a poem about the grateful little soul.

Wha Wha loves me.  
Wha Wha – great is God!  
Chanting Wha Wha I became majestic,  
Acquired great wealth, all debts paid.  
Great, great I say, again and again,  
Naam has nourished my soul.  
Wha Wha loves me.  
Wha Wha great is God...

White Cat was a big long-haired white cat. Yogi Bhanan had told his students that White Cat was a saint who came back as a cat to have one more chance to sit at Guru's feet. Sometimes he participated in yoga classes, attempting poses together with the students. He also liked to leap unexpectedly on the Siri Singh Sahib's lap, where he was assured of his affectionate attention. Mostly, White Cat loved napping in Guru Ram Das Ashram, either on the teacher's bench or under the *palki sahib* during the *Akhand Paath*.

As the Master's presence transferred to Espanola, he fostered a growing community of snouted, feathered and horned companions. One day, he returned from the Santa Fe Flea Market with a couple of tiny pigs. In a few years, they became colossal.

A student who bred Rotweillers, presented one to Yogi Bhanan as a guard dog for the ashram. Over time, cats, emus, goats, horses, peacocks, ducks, and more dogs joined the ashram community.

## **Making It Work in Santiago**

The embattled 3HO mission in Santiago, Chile, persevered against all odds. Then, in 1992, a Chilean relative gave Hari Nam Kaur and Pritam Pal Singh tickets to visit Yogi Bhanan in the US with their eighteen-month-old son.

On meeting with them, the Master he decided that Pritam Pal Singh should remain in Los Angeles. The Siri Singh Sahib spoke to Pritam Pal Singh, "She will go back with this child by herself and she will be successful!"

The shock of the Master's decision was large and palpable. The father looked longingly at his darling son. Yogi Bhanan was immovable. A divorce would follow in three years, and Pritam Pal Singh would go on to marry again and to teach in Mexico.

That meeting also made for a big change, a new beginning, and another challenge for Hari Nam Kaur, now the mother of a small child. Returning to Santiago, she began to work with her business

partner Amrit Kaur to bring White Tantric Yoga and Sat Nam Rasayan to Chile.

Together, they worked to establish and consolidate the teachings of Yogi Bhajan in that country. With the passing of years, Amrit Kaur and Hari Nam Kaur became increasingly inseparable. From partners, to friends, they become a couple.

When Hari Nam Kaur sought out Yogi Bhajan at Winter Solstice in Florida and spoke to him about her relationship, he very kindly said, "It is fine. Just keep it quiet."

Touched by his understanding and openness, she took her teacher's hand in hers and thanked him for his love and kindness.

"Where there is love, there is no need of thanks," said the Master.

"What will my decision mean for 3HO in Chile?"

Yogi Bhajan replied, "You are in charge of 3HO in Chile. It is all up to you."

"What about Sikh Dharma in Chile?"

"You are in charge there too. You are the authority. It is up to you."

In 1994 Hari Nam Kaur began the first Kundalini Teacher Training in Chile. The teachings, the dharma, and Kundalini Yoga spread. In time, there were more teachers giving their own trainings, spreading the teachings all over Chile.

In Chile and the international Kundalini Yoga community, not everybody was as accepting of Hari Nam Kaur and Amrit's relationship as Yogi Bhajan. There were times of slander and unkindness, but with characteristic courage and dedication, Hari Nam Kaur and her new partner in life ignored the slanderers and focused on developing their own personal excellence. That, surely, was the Khalsa way.

### **"Summer Solstice 1993 Talk"**

You have come here from all the lands, and you will keep on coming here from all the lands for centuries to come. This land has its karma and this land has its dharma to enrich you whenever you come here, as it has done for centuries. It has a practice. It has a habit. And it has its blessings. It is the dwelling place of the guardian souls of this planet.

This path belongs to those who are not cold, whose hearts have not become stone, and whose heads have not become so swollen that they can't hear the voice of the soul. The path will belong to



those who, with all their strengths and weaknesses, will still serve others. And I promise you that those who shall serve others, the Almighty God shall have no power but to serve them. That is the only way.

Your power is not in your strength and weakness, in your show and your capacity, in your titles and achievements, in your money and in your playing games. Your power is to uplift others. Those who uplift others, God shall uplift them because it is God's will to uplift everybody. When you live in your godliness, He will not let you fail.

We are all pioneers of the Age of Aquarius. No man can give a man anything other than love. No man can give a man anything other than hope. No man can give a man anything but service. The only thing you can do is act like a forklift. Go into the dirt and lift the other person and put him on track, so he can proceed.

You will ask me the question, "If I start doing that all the time, what will happen to me?" Then, the big forklift called "God" will come and he will go into the dirt and lift *you* up. Is there a better deal than that?

Please remember, we are here to start an era, to start an Age, to celebrate the transition from the Piscean Age into the Aquarian Age. We are here to celebrate that. We are the pioneers. We are the pioneers of the dharma.

Let's bow our heads in prayer and let us open our hearts. Let us walk on this land for a few blessed days in spirit. With these words, with your likes and dislikes, your loves and hatreds, your affection and understanding, I hope you will carry the Guru's Words to all the lands, cross the boundaries which have never been crossed, touch the boundaries which have never been touched, walk into hearts which have never been open, shake hands which hate to be shaken, go and bring people out of their holes so they can be holy, and pull people out of their heights, so they can claim their height in the eyes of God.

You should be smart. Learn the art and go across the world and heal God's creation. This is your job, and what you are actually going to say is, "Hail, hail Guru Ram Das and heal the world!" Your job is to heal the world and elevate and uplift everybody. Everybody shall be healed.

Take a person from his lower self, from his ditch, and raise the pitch so he can be uplifted. The mantra of the Aquarian Age is "Keep up!" Help keep everybody up. When you never let yourself down and never let anybody else down, God shall serve you. He shall never let you down.

May God guide you on this path. May you understand that you are blessed children and you have a job to do. May you know in your heart that God belongs to you always, within and without. May your sorrows never touch your tomorrow. May your blessings be for all. May your happiness be shared. And may your smiles give hope to others.

## “The Disease of the Computer Age”

We are all not superhuman, but basically people who pretend to practice should look after not only their physical needs and not only should they feel spiritual, they should be mentally clear. The greatest tragedy which on this planet is, is that you have got philosophy about religion, about spirituality, but you do not have mental clarity. What we do is we try to clarify ourselves mentally. Meditation has never been a priority to some people but technologically, if you don't meditate every day, it will be just equal to that you do not take a shower every day or a bath every day, or you will not clean your home every day. Sooner or later, it will show up in your behavior.

As far as we are concerned, we may not seriously take the teachings, but soon you will find a tremendous amount of emptiness in people. People will be more confused not because there will be no wealth, but because there shall be tremendous amount of availability of knowledge.

The world is going to be computerized and everything will be available to everybody. It's amazing what the future will offer you through the technology. And if that technology is all available, all information will be available, and life will become unbearable. It will be a good thing that information will be available, but it will be a terrible thing, what to do with that information. And that is going to affect every mind.

It looks great. “Oh, at the press of the button, I can know anything!” That's fine.

But on the other hand, it will press all your buttons. And how you will deal with this, it will be the subject of your own self-indulgence: how much self you control, how much positive you are, how much reality you have, how much self-discipline you have.

You see, if we make a car tomorrow which can go say, two hundred miles an hour, it will be our responsibility also to create brakes which can stop the car at two hundred miles an hour. But what is going to happen is that we are going to create a car, which will go ten thousand miles an hour. Human are going to have a huge amount of information. And it's going to boggle every mind and blow everybody off because, with all that information, there is no system where the individual is also aware that they have to have self control and self-discipline. They should have totally their personality into their own self-control.

It's not only going to give us all the lies of the world. We can also have the truth of the world. But on the other hand, to digest that truth should be our responsibility.

Even today, the computer games children play, adults can't play them. Even today, to the question your child can ask you, you have no answers. So, if you look into all the detail, towards the trend of the world, the trend of the world is going towards the fact that you shall be challenged in your own self.

This is all right. In the Piscean Age, you have a fear and you have prejudice and you have sad experience and you can go to a psychiatrist and a psychologist and you can do those kinds of funny things. But sooner or later, this all will be obsolete. You shall be in a position either to clean yourself and keep yourself clean, or you will be just a mess. It doesn't matter.

Already now, the people who work in a high-tech computer have developed diseases for which there is no medical answer. They are all highly mental. So, the whole world is going to become a computer. And you can have in a couple years, fifty-seven movies in your house at the press of the button. Just pay, though you don't go anywhere. No, just stay home, get on your wall the screen in your room and just play. Anything you want will be available.

Similarly, all amount of knowledge will be with you. You don't have to come here to have Winter Solstice. You can have it at home. But will you do it at home? That's my question.

You can have it at home, but you will do it? No, you won't do it. You will have knowledge, will you digest it? No, you won't. And that chaos will be very powerful.

You see, a hundred or so years ago, mankind was very simple. Two hundred years ago... You still love those Western cowboy movies, don't you? You always know who is going to win. You always know who is going to lose. You always know the horse is going to ride and there goes the posse, and there go the people. There go the bad people. There go the good people...

This is a kind of a thing which even still you enjoy. But when you go into a very psychological movie, some can take it and some cannot take it. Now there are no horses. Now there are cars, there are helicopters. Now there is no dog sled to run. Now it is the machine. Things have changed.

Similarly, the mentality will change. It will be difficult for mankind to have the information and not to digest the information. It will be very chaotic and it will make life very difficult to bear. To cover that area, humans will have to develop a technology.

I think there must have been a time in the world where people were having this kind of information. Mentally, they knew it better and that's why it was developed. Some kind of exercise, some kind of practice where totally you can clear yourself in seconds, where you can get all strength in seconds, where you can be very much together in no time.

It is not a question of 'Why should I do that?' This question you can be doing for another twenty-five years. After that, as a mankind, you will have no choice. So, if you can, learn these practices now and become capable. And pass them on to your children and your neighbors and your friends. This is what the world needs today.

## *“Sadhana is Self”*

We used to have religion. Religion told us what to do, and we followed. That has stopped. Then we had a new age. We decided what to do. We decided to find in our self our own spirit. And we have stopped doing that.

The majority of you do not understand that *sadhana* is not a joke. *Sadhana* is self. So, any day you don't do *sadhana*, that day you have lost yourself to yourself. *Sadhana* we never do for neighbors. *Sadhana* we never do for pleasing God, *sadhana* we never do for anything. *Sadhana* we do only so that we can be clearheaded and clear conscious.

Everybody knows what *sadhana* is. But very few people do it. And when you don't do your *sadhana*, then you blame circumstances, bad luck and good luck and God knows what. What is going to come, folks, is going to come. That you cannot stop.

Sometime you have karma of the previous life. Sometime you have karma of this life. Things do happen. Good and bad are two things which will continue to happen.

If you have a clear head, you will go through it gracefully. If you have a clear head, you will understand it very well and you will be in a position to confront and be clear about things. That's what *sadhana* means to people.

Mankind is not born to be slave. Mankind is born in the very image of God and the perfect God has made you perfectly well. You can take it or leave it. Today few of you are listening to me, that might be one day, the whole world will listen what I am saying, but still, I'll say the same thing. *Sadhana, aradhana* and *Prabhupati*. I'll say exactly the same thing. Those who do not do their *sadhana*, they are premature and they are prematurely born. Their weakness shall continue like a prematurely born child. They will live but will not enjoy life. That's the tragic part of it. And it's a very sad story that a person can live all right, but cannot enjoy all right. And that is what people don't understand where they are being, they are hurting.

Somebody was telling me that day, “What is wrong doing *sadhana* at eleven a.m.?”

I said, “There is nothing wrong in it, but what is wrong in jumping from the seventh floor and not coming through the lift or staircases? There is nothing wrong, you will come down,” you know, but that's not the way. I mean to say, easy is, get to the window, one, two, three, go down, you will come down! Nobody can deny that fact. But when you come down what will happen?

I wish eleven o'clock *sadhana* should be the time, but it is not. You can do *sadhana* at eleven o'clock. It is better than nothing, but as far as result is concerned, you will get exactly what you get jumping out of the window.

There is a time for everything. And as the world is going to confront, as the age, Age of Aquarius is come in, people who pretend to be students, it is a bad news for them. Because today you pretend to be student, tomorrow you are supposed to be the masters, if you are supposed to face the world tomorrow.

### **“Self-cure with Ginger, Garlic, and Pepper”**

You know when I came to Florida, I bloated up, everything swelled up. Naturally I had to call my doctor. I called him and he said, “Oh, this medicine won't work. We already given you this medicine...”

I mean, it was a kind of lecture, which I was not prepared to hear. And next morning I got up, my feet were swelled up, my hands were swelled up, and body was just bloated like a tank of water. And the answer to me was, “Okay Yogiji, we told you not to fly, now you have flown, I mean, when you come back, we”ll take care of you.”

So I said to myself fifteen days I am going to live like that? No. That”s not my question. So I end up asking at the house, I said, “You please take care of one pound of ginger and one pound of garlic and I think quarter pound of black pepper. And sauté it together.”

So, I ate yesterday and I have eaten today and I am fine. Now I, I am going to go to the doctor, he is going to say, “Let us check you up.” Check me up for what? He can check you up. Same way a teacher can tell you what to do, you got to do it. And you got to feel yourself, sometime it will help yourself. And you have to be right. Your destiny is you. It can't be imported from the yonderland. And life is just a living experience. It's an experience of everybody.

Death is inevitable. Now look at me, I am sixty-five years old. I shall never die. This body will die. Body does not make any sense. It's the work, which this body has done. Similarly, you can do the same for yourself. You can work, you can create a work through which you can become deathless.

Please change your trend of life. The energy you are wasting in feelings and emotions and commotions, okay, it's no bother to me. But when you take that energy in feeling and emotions and commotions, there shall not be intuition and intelligence. Pay the price. Pay the price as you please. Either you have that or you have that. You can't have both.

I understand man is a social animal and we need to have a social relationship and we need friends and we need relatives. But on the other hand, we need our self. Self is very important.

## The Quake and the Aftermath

A large earthquake of 6.7 magnitude, struck Los Angeles at 4:31 am on January 17, 1994. It was the biggest recorded quake ever to strike an urban area in North America. Fortunately, the damage at Guru Ram Das Ashram, where the 3HO community gathered, was minimal.

As the tremor struck, the person attending the Siri Singh Sahib tried to grab and pull him outside, to no avail. The Master held this person and kept him in the doorway, knowing that to be the most secure place in the building. After the forty-five seconds of quake, the person was exhausted and they both went outside, Yogi Bhan sitting in a chair and taking command, "Check around. See what's happening. But be careful. It's not stopping."

A first aid station was put together. As there were no physical injuries in the community, the treatment was oranges and bananas and apples. Everyone who came, was asked to eat as a simple therapy to recover from the shock of the event.

Bearing in mind that the Siri Singh Sahib had just undergone triple by-pass heart surgery on July 15, 1993, Shakti Parwha Kaur, for one, was relieved when commitments took him to New Mexico, away from the stress and strains of California in the aftermath of the big quake. Not long afterwards, the headquarters of 3HO and Sikh Dharma were moved from Los Angeles to Espanola, New Mexico.

The Master's students constructed for him a geodesic dome as his personal living space and meditation. A sound system played *Gurbani Kirtan* day and night.

Yogi Bhan settled well into his new home. Not being bound by time, he did what he needed to do when he needed to do it. The Siri Singh Sahib worked deep into the night, made phone calls to various time zones, sat at his altar to pray and meditate, before going to bed around 4:30 am. He only slept for a couple of hours, if at all.

A regular stream of healers – doctors, chiropractors, massage therapists, acupuncturists – would arrive each morning to work on the Master's health. As they treated him, they would receive get lessons in how to treat themselves, and how to treat their patients.

Guests to the dome might appreciate the Siri Singh Sahib's collections of antique swords and other items. They were also invariably struck by the frigid conditions there. The Master's body temperature always ran hot, so that atmosphere suited him best.

## The Statement

Hari Jiwan Singh, the Siri Singh Sahib's Chief of Protocol and frequent companion, enjoyed

studying the manners and protocols that presented themselves between his teacher and other spiritual leaders. One time, he watched as Yogi Bhajan called Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of the Transcendental Meditation movement. A student on the Maharishi's personal staff wanted to be accepted as a student of the Sikh Yogi. The Maharishi gave his approval. This was the diplomacy of spiritual elegance. It was straightforward. It was respectful, and it worked both ways. The underlying understanding was that a spiritual teacher does not poach on another teacher's students.

Another situation was not so straightforward and summoned from the Siri Singh Sahib a masterful act of showmanship. The teacher concerned had first met Yogi Bhajan at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, a couple of years earlier. Since then, that teacher had made a habit of calling him every morning to consult and to share.

This teacher was a very good person. She served her students and humanity with vigor. She led them to do difficult work no one else wanted to do. She was faithful and fearless in that pursuit. She was unconventional, she was real, and she made a positive difference in people's lives.

Some of Yogi Bhajan's students took notice of this shining star in a familiar orbit. Some liked that she was a woman. Some liked the work she inspired. Some liked the unorthodox presentation of her following. Tattoos and piercings were accepted. Early morning *sadhana* did not seem to be part of the package. Some students did more than take notice. They started to follow her without the Master's knowledge or permission.

On this occasion, the teacher had sent her secretary ahead to Espanola, several days in advance of her coming, to ensure her accommodations were properly outfitted. Shortly before the teacher's arrival, Yogi Bhajan then convinced the secretary, over her objection, to dress in perfect *bana*, white from head to foot, with an elegant turban and *chuni*. She was helped into this unfamiliar outfit. After an appropriate time, the Master summoned, "Bring her straight here. I want to see the look of a perfect Guru Sikh!"

Obediently, she appeared in *bana* and presented herself. Her expression was in duality. On the one hand, she looked radiant. On the other, she looked sheepish, not knowing if what she was wearing was appropriate.

"Turn around," the Master continued in his ever-familiar accent, and the lady did as requested. "Perfect, now go and wait in the other room."

Scene two. A few minutes later, the teacher and her ragtag entourage entered the ranch living room. Pleasantries were exchanged, then everyone sat and intermingled with a few yogis seated around the Master. The small living room was crowded, so that some people were sitting on the floor.

When the Master said, "Bring her here," in walked the secretary in perfect Sikh *bana*. The teacher could not contain her shock. She could not laugh. She could not smile. She couldn't hide her

dismay. All present began to feel very uncomfortable.

For his part, the Master continued to show off the secretary's new look as though he were completely unaware of, or insensitive to, how the other teacher was reacting. Of course, he knew exactly what was going on, and he did not care. He was making a statement.

Hari Jiwan Singh was shocked with everyone else. It took him some years to understand the Siri Singh Sahib's piece of theater about boundaries and the trespass of boundaries between teachers and their followings. Time showed that the lesson was learned. The relationship between the teachers continued, albeit somewhat less intimately.

### **A Couple of Firsts in Madrid**

Sarabjit Kaur and her fiancé had been hard at work making arrangements for the first White Tantric Yoga course ever in Madrid. Her good friend had particularly been working on himself. At his last meeting with Yogi Bhajan, the Master had told him that in order to marry Sarabjit Kaur, he would have to first "marry me and pass the test of time."

A couple of years had passed. The young Spaniard was a little older and a little wiser. He had received a new name from the Siri Singh Sahib and was now known as Devta Singh. He and Sarabjit Kaur had also been working on their daily *sadhana*.

Sixty-three people came out to the White Tantric Yoga course and it was considered a big success. Sat Simran Kaur, the tantric course facilitator, and Guru Hans Kaur, the senior teacher, reported approvingly on Sarabjit Kaur and Devta Singh's relationship to the Siri Singh Sahib.

With their permission, their marriage was arranged for later that year. On August 28, 1994, together with their 3HO family and Sarabjit Kaur's relations, the blessed couple celebrated the first Sikh marriage ever in Spain.

### **Yoga Teacher to the Stars**

Gurmukh Kaur was a yoga teacher to the stars. By association, she was famous too. The money was fabulous. The publicity was great. The work was easy.

Gurmukh would visit the stars in their Beverly Hills mansions. Very impressive indeed. Sometimes she would lead the famous movie stars, musicians, and celebrities through exercises and meditations she had learned from Yogi Bhajan.



A couple of her clients would like to push their limits and do hard yoga. Others she had to be careful with, not to push them too hard. After all, they were paying her a lot of money to do this easy work.

Now and again, it would be eleven o'clock and the celeb she had come to instruct would not even want to get out of bed. All she wanted to do was eat toast. So that's what they would do. Gurmukh Kaur and the celeb would eat toast and chat that day – and that would be the class.

One day, Yogi Bhajan said to Gurmukh, "I am going to New Mexico tomorrow and you are coming with me,"

"Yes, sir," she managed to say, and packed her things to go.

Once they had arrived at the Ashram at Espanola, New Mexico, Yogi Bhajan introduced Gurmukh Kaur to the head gardener of the Guru Ram Das estate. He told the head gardener to put Gurmukh to work on the grounds, which is what he did.

Day after day, Gurmukh Kaur found herself confronting a vast yard of weeds needing picking, plants needing watering, gardens needing hoeing. It was simple, sobering, humble work.

Many a time, she wished to be back home in Los Angeles. Life was easy there. There were no weeds to pick or rows to hoe. There was no backbreaking work in the scorching sun. All she had to do was go out and visit with beautiful, famous people. Of course, they could be neurotic and there weren't really very good students...

Then she thought of her life with Yogi Bhajan. The things she had been through with him as her teacher. She thought of his majesty, his kindness, his purpose in bringing her here – whatever it was.

One day, it rained. As Gurmukh had not packed a raincoat, a raincoat was improvised with a garbage bag and three holes – one for her head and two for her arms at the sides.

Yogi Bhajan came by that day to inspect the gardens with a guest. With a broad expansive gesture, the Master indicated the domain of the Guru's estate. Then he paused and indicated toward Gurmukh Kaur, stooped among the weeds in her garbage bag smock. "And she," spoke Yogi Bhajan, "is a yoga teacher to the stars."

Gurmukh blushed. She was embarrassed now, very embarrassed. The Master had done what masters had been known to do all the ages through. He had cut her down to size. Like an out-of-control shrub, her ego with its delusions of fame and fortune had taken over her life. Yogi Bhajan had trimmed it back so that she might yet serve some useful purpose.

A few days later, the Master released Gurmukh Kaur and gave her permission to return

home. When she arrived back in Los Angeles, Gurmukh was a star, but never again a yoga teacher to the stars.

## More Mexican Times

The Siri Singh Sahib continued to look forward to his visits to Mexico. At an interreligious gathering coinciding with the annual Guadalajara book fair, he decided to put everyone in their place. There were six religious representatives other than Yogi Bhanan. Gurudev Singh of Austin provided the translation.

To the Hare Krishna man, the Master said that the problem with religion was its turf wars – who has how many centers, how many followers they have, how much literature they publish.

The Siri Singh Sahib then asked a Tibetan lama to explain the essence of Buddhism, to which the lama replied with a longish scholarly answer. The Master cut him short, “No, Buddhism teaches you how to sit. If you know how to sit, you can stand. If you know how to stand, you understand.” In this way, he continued through all the other representatives.

A certain man habitually cheated and lied in the Mexico City ashram. When Yogi Bhanan came, he saw the man and forcefully lectured Gurudev Singh on why not to cheat or steal. Listening to the Master’s words, Gurudev came to assume that the man was too fragile to take the criticism, so the Siri Singh Sahib was lecturing the man through him.

The Princess Hotel in Acapulco had a special attraction for Yogi Bhanan, but hosting him could be a test. A house was rented near the hotel where his food was cooked. The hotel also did not allow food to be brought in, moreover most of the people in the pool were not hotel guests, contrary to hotel policy. Moreover, the bill at the end was also a test.

One time, the Siri Singh Sahib brought the governor of New Mexico and eighty associates. Sat Nam Mexico, the yogurt business run by Babaji Singh and Gurudev Singh, rented a mansion and paid for the entertainment and food, \$70,000. A few months later, it went out of business.

Babaji Singh was often in trouble. One time, he had a terrible accident in a remote jungle at night. Babaji always drove over the speed limit though he was blind in one eye and could hardly see in the other. In the jungle accident, he must have been going sixty miles per hour and drove into and under the back of a large truck. Babaji should have been decapitated. He had cancer and nearly died many times.

Once, Babaji was on an operating table, about to have a kidney operation. The doctor, getting ready to make an incision, felt his hand freeze – so cold that he couldn’t move it. Three or four

seconds passed, and the doctor realized that by making his planned cut he would have hit a major artery, compromising Babaji's life. Later, when Babaji asked about the experience, Yogi Bhanjan explained that in a direct line from his third eye to the hand of the doctor, he froze everything and kept him alive to translate the Shabad Guru.

Babaji Singh divorced and eventually remarried. Through everything, he continued on his mission to translate Siri Guru Granth Sahib into Spanish. The work was being printed just as Babaji finally passed, surrounded by the people he had been kind and unkind to. Guru Ram Das allowed him to have a graceful end and his spirit to be healed.

## The Land of Enchantment

After two angioplasty treatments in 1986, and triple bypass heart surgery in July of 1993, the Siri Singh Sahib took increasingly to doing his work in the vital little community of Espanola, New Mexico. With the Siri Singh Sahib, many of the staff and functions of the Sikh Dharma Secretariat and Khalsa Council also migrated to the friendly *Sangat* in Espanola.

The water and air were good in New Mexico, and the streets were safe. Although he took his customary regimen of long days and nights of meetings, counselling, phoning, lecturing and organizing with him, the climate in New Mexico was considerably healthier for the Siri Singh Sahib and his dedicated staff than the sultry air of Los Angeles.

Over time, a considerable community had grown up an hour's drive down the mountain from Ram Das Puri, in the peaceful Espanola valley. It had a rich history.

Some of the old-timers could trace their history to a day back around 1972, when the then fledgling community had been displaced from its home in nearby Santa Fe and was having difficulty locating a new place to settle. It had been a common practice in those days to call Yogi Bhanjan with any problem you might be having, so the inevitable phone call was made.

Yogi Bhanjan listened carefully, then he offered some simple advice, "Go to where you find the sun is shining. Make your home there. It will be nice."

The weather was overcast that day, but it happened exactly as Yogi Bhanjan had said. The magnificent sun managed to burst through the clouds just as the homeless wanderers were passing an old farm house. Some of the buildings only had dirt floors, and there was a lot of renovation and improvement needed, but the owners were willing to sell their home for a reasonable price. In a short time, a deal was made, and the new ashram was begun.

After that, more people moved to New Mexico every year. Some were whole-earthers from the

surrounding area who took a shine to the yoga, the music, and the timeless wisdom of the Sikhs' way of life. More of them came some distance, from the East Coast, the West Coast, and Europe. Some arrived on their own. Others came at Yogi Bhajan's urging. He told everyone that even the dust in that place was imbued with a certain healing virtue.

One gifted artist followed the invisible thread of his destiny to the rustic ashram in the "land of enchantment". Through the course of a year, he served as a humble channel for a lofty five-thousand-year panorama. That vision encompassed the historic roots of Sikh dharma in the East, the restless messenger from the Guru's House, and the promising future of Khalsa in the West.

Through his magical brushes and pallet, Ed O'Brien's inner revelation took the form of a vast, awe-inspiring mural, spanning an entire wall of the ashram's *sadhana* room. This prodigious work of art was, in fact, the last before the creative spirit of Ed O'Brien merged once more in the Creative Spirit of all.

With people, came opportunities and businesses of various kinds. A Khalsa garage opened its doors. Then came a Khalsa construction company, and a health food store, and a restaurant, and a health snack manufacturing business. Some members of the community even took up the expensive business of breeding and raising horses as a way of earning their livelihood. Eventually, a distinctive Khalsa security firm also came to be.

With growth and prosperity, came the attendant temptation and egotism. An entire segment of the community entered the realm of *shakti pad*, and in so doing, left the blessed company of the holy *Sangat*. They took with them a significant part of the ashram's economic base.

Some members of the community were stunned as they saw their local leader, together with his wife and a number of core people, abandon them. The Siri Singh Sahib counselled those who remained to hold fast, to help one another, to renew their commitment to their *sadhana*, and to commence a practice of reading two *Akhand Paaths* every week. Those who remained, pulled together and moved on, and the community continued to grow.

The august Siri Singh Sahib's presence in Espanola each summer was a much anticipated and appreciated occasion. First, there was a week or more of Summer Solstice Sadhana up at Ram Das Puri. Then, came about six weeks of Khalsa Women's Training Camp under the cottonwoods, down the road from the ashram. Simultaneously, there were camps for children and youths, based at the Solstice site.

All of these events drew a nearly endless stream of students and guests from around the world who came to learn from, or just to be with, the magnetic Siri Singh Sahib, as he lectured, counselled, exemplified, and more or less held court.

Bibiji, the Siri Sardarni Sahiba, also played her part as hostess, counsellor, author, and director of

dharmic protocol. Her years in America had not been idle. Like her husband, she had earned a Ph.D. in psychology. She also served at the United Nations as a representative of Sikh Dharma specializing in women's issues. Then, there was the time-honored business of grandmothering, as both Kamaljit Kaur and Ranbir Singh had married and begun raising families.

Religious dignitaries, well-wishers, tourists, and political hopefuls all found their place in the busy schedule of the Siri Singh Sahib. People brought their problems and their prayers. Everyone was received with equanimity and grace.

### **“Spread the Guru’s Word!”**

Your have to let specially these Indian Sikhs know, that you are not Sikhs because of me! You are Sikhs because you love the Guru! The problem is that normally we are very graceful, and we do not discuss a lot of things, and we don't yell and scream, and do not have elections, and we do not do the political stunt. They think we are dumb, because that is all they know.

But there are Indian Sikhs who have a lot of love for you. They really appreciate you, and they are Sikhs, not Indian. They happen to be Indian. You happen to be American. So get rid of that rut! Sikh is a Sikh, so those who call themselves Indian Sikhs are not Sikhs, and those of you who shall call yourselves as American Sikhs will not be Sikh either!

So have no misunderstanding, because when we sit in the Court of the Guru, we belong to the Guru. It is the highest virtue. I understand, and I apologize, you have been thrown out of the Gurdwara, you have been mistreated, you have been slandered. A lot of plots have been made against you. A lot of times you have been ridiculed and insulted for your values and for your love of Guru. For that, I apologize. But I also want to let you know, don't fall into that pit in which they are!

*Daya dharam ka poot hai* - Mercy is the son of dharma. So anybody who is a dharmic person, religious person, has to be kind. It cannot be separated. Kindness, compassion are two virtues are two virtues on which you will always win and succeed, then you can say '*Kirpa Akaal Tayree bayjeetumayree*. - O Infinite God, by Thy Blessing my victory has come home!'

We shall win! We shall not lose! All these people who have been funded to destroy Sikh dharma to get the breadbasket of the Punjab, and we happen to be in their way... And all these people who are playing in the hands of those people, and getting all the youth among the Sikhs killed... And all those who have gone and with their own hands have destroyed the Akal Takhat. All those who have the vicinity of the whole India to spread the Word of the Guru, who do not feel they can even cross the River Sutlej ...

There is something among Sikhs. They do not want to cross Sutlej. Maharaja Ranjit Singh never

even crossed! But now you, who are not bound by Sutlej, must spread the Word of Guru anywhere and everywhere you go!

I'll tell you how the Word of the Guru can be spread, not by your technology and not by becoming a great preacher or a great talker. Not at all! If you listen to anybody kindly and compassionately, he will like to know where you learned, and when he will find out that this facility in you is because you are a Sikh of the Guru, he shall become a Sikh of the Guru on the spot! If anyone can know that your goodness is because you are a Sikh of the Guru, he will like to know who your Guru is.

## Emissary from the West

Israel is an ancient land well-known for its religious associations. Three major religions consider that much-cherished region their own. Some call it their "Judea". Some say it is their "Palestine". Some claim it as their "Promised Land".

Religious identity might be considered more significant in Israel than anywhere else in the world. In that place, a great deal depends on which faith, which sect, which denomination, a person belongs to. There are long, deep fissures in the human topography based entirely on matters of religious identity. People in Israel have lived and died for thousands of years according to which religion they belonged, or did not belong to.

Israel's fame as a land of religion can have its weird, even comical, aspect. Just ask the Jerusalem police, who every week are called in to cope with another three or four "Messiahs" setting out, each in their determined way, to save the world and gather self-acclaim.

Sardarni Sahiba Hari Kaur Khalsa did not visit this land for its disputed religious associations. Rather, she arrived in Jerusalem, the "City of Peace", with one primary objective: to attend the Yoga For Peace Conference being held there, as a representative of the 3HO Foundation.

Yet everywhere Hari Kaur went in this land of typically self-proclaimed religious identity, people stopped her to ask who she was and where she was from. In her dignified-looking turban and otherwise radiant white attire, she clearly represented something special and very dear to God. But people could not place her in their usual religious catalogue of references. They would stop this modern-day Nefertiti at the conference and on the street, everywhere she went. Each had their own way of asking "Are you one of us?" Some surmised she was a Marionite Christian from Syria. Others conceived she was a nun of the Pope. Hassidic Jewish women approached her, saying "*Shalom!*" - thinking she must be one of them. When Muslims recognized her, they would say "*Salaam allaykum!*" - assuming she was a Shia from Iran, or possibly a Sunni from Tunisia or somewhere further West.

Everywhere, she thanked the people she met. Everywhere she told the people she *was one of them*. She was all of the things anyone imagined she was! God, after all, was one and only one, pervading all peoples and every religion. And she was also a Sikh - not a "Sheikh" - from America.

While the people wondered at what she told them - after all, none of them had ever imagined she might be an *American*, and they had certainly never met a *Sikh* - Hari Kaur said a silent prayer of thanks to the radiant heart of Guru Nanak, the Spirit of universality, who had made possible her wholly unexpected mission of peace and goodwill to this much-weathered land of so much holiness.

### **"A Healthy, Happy, Holy Way of Life"**

*In the course of time, national Kundalini Yoga teacher associations emerged in Mexico, Germany, and elsewhere. In 1994, Yogi Bhanan announced the founding of an international body, an organization to include all teachers of Kundalini Yoga everywhere. He named it, the "International Kundalini Yoga Teachers Association," acronym IKYTA, which he pronounced "iktaa," meaning oneness in Punjabi, saying "the fundamental principle of Kundalini Yoga is to unite."*

*That year, the twenty-fifth anniversary of his teaching mission in America, he spoke of the legacy of the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization.*

We started a healthy, happy, holy way of life, and that became 3HO. It is a dream come true. It is a very pure path in which every human was worshipped equally. Everybody is a potential teacher. There is no 'yes' and 'no', rather there is a set discipline to follow.

We built a foundation called the 3HO Foundation: a Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization of people. The first song I sang was, 'We are the people, the people of love, let us people love today.' Certain little things started happening in a very unique way with all of you. All of those who have left, all who are with me, who shall be with me, or who shall leave me, all play a very important role in the development of 3HO—a lifestyle of the Age of Aquarius where humans shall be first and foremost purely human, and will do everything graciously.

I came with nothing and I shall leave with nothing. I own everything as though I own nothing. It shall all belong to the generations now and to come. I have just played a role as a custodian and a caretaker. I have taken ownership with a great perfection. My basic idea is very simple: don't let anybody down, don't let yourself down, and don't participate directly or indirectly in any letdown.

That shall be the legacy of 3HO. A group of young people had the will to conquer the times, and made a space for themselves in history. Time could not conquer them. And this is not a small thing, in spite of what you may think. This 3HO shall be the most important legacy on this planet for the Age of Aquarius. Sooner or later, people will experience a tremendous amount of emptiness which always

brings a void. A void brings unhappiness. Then people will want to find a place where they can be healthy, happy, and holy. It all fits in.

Who could have dreamt that after twenty-five years we would be what we are today? With all the heaven and hell we have gone through, we have survived with a very unique pride with which we have walked tall in the face of the entire universe. Today, anywhere you go, you will find that this is a living legacy which is not only for now, not only for the next one hundred years, but for the coming two thousand years of the Age of Aquarius, when mankind will find shelter in the 3HO way of life. And then, you who are here now, who are just considered to be a handful of people, shall be considered as the most divine. Isn't it amazing?

This small little thing, which was started to give people a way of life, with love and dedication, shall prevail in the coming change of the Age. All the energy which poured in to build this foundation, to me is a wonderful experience.

### **Mission in the *Kali Jug***

On his return from a trip to India, the Master stopped in the imperial city of Rome. His teachers from Spain and elsewhere in Europe were in high spirits seeing the Siri Singh Sahib, as he related a visit he had received from a sage while in India.

The sage had shown him a scroll detailing everything he had accomplished. The seer went on to say that Yogi Bhajan had been a great king in a previous lifetime, a raj yogi, and his students had been his courtiers. According to the sage, in that lifetime they had all agreed to be reborn in this lifetime to help with their monarch's mission in the *Kali Jug*.

The Siri Singh Sahib also related how when students announced their decision to leave him, he would cry because he recognized they were breaking the sacred vow they had made long before to help him in his future work.

### **3HO Japan**

The young man had been an exchange student in Japan in 1968, an exchange between Stanford and Keio Universities. It had been only twenty-two years since the atomic bombing of Japan by the US and almost every day, there were protest demonstrations by people from all sections of Japanese society against their government's complicity in the Vietnam war. For the young American, it had been an eye-opener and he had responded by becoming involved in the anti-war movement. Japan had also awakened in him his first experience of spirituality, finding himself bowing before an altar at a Buddhist



temple. Five years later, back in the US, he started his practice of Kundalini Yoga and began the journey of becoming a Sikh.

Some years later, when Yogi Bhajan found that the student he had named "Sada Anand Singh" had been to Japan and was interested in going there to do business, he grabbed him by the collar and said, "You should have left six months ago. Leave today!"

When Sada Anand Singh asked, "Where should I go?" the Master replied, "Why are you asking me?" and that was the end of it. Giving his blessing in this way, the Siri Singh Sahib also encouraged his student to seek out Buddhist Archbishop Kiriama, who had visited him in California from Japan some years before, for his assistance.

Once Sada Anand Singh arrived in Japan, he visited the beautiful city of Kobe as he had heard there were many Sikhs there. Wandering down the street, he saw a large six-story apartment building with an *Ek Ong Kar* symbol on it and another with *Sat Naam* as its name. Recognizing these, he started to feel strangely at home in Kobe. During a hike on nearby Mount Rokko, Sada Anand Singh became rather lost. When he finally found his way out of the forest, he met a young American. The man had stepped out of his apartment which happened to be right next to the forest. As they spoke, Sada Anand Singh came to know that the young man was vegetarian, practiced yoga, and had to leave for the States the next week because his father was quite ill. It seemed Guru Ram Das was looking after his devotee in far off Japan.

So it happened that Sada Anand Singh had an inexpensive home in Kobe where he stayed for a couple years. The rent was only \$500 a month. He started teaching Kundalini Yoga with a translator introduced to him by the next door neighbor. In time, Sada Anand was giving two classes each day of the week in various locations. That is when he moved to a large and spacious three-bedroom house high on the mountain with a large living room and room for others and the first Guru Ram Das Ashram was founded.

Several gracious teachers came to help Sada Anand Singh share the teachings. Guru Terath Kaur and Siri Gian Kaur came several times, teaching to the women and doing healing sessions. Yogi Bhajan also assigned Dr. Kartar Singh "go with that guy over there to Japan." In 1994, they went to Summer Solstice Sadhana in New Mexico with fifteen Japanese students. With Guru Terath Kaur, Sada Anand Singh started a two hundred hour teacher training course. As might have been expected, most students did not go on to become teachers, but some did. Sada Sat Singh married a Japanese lady, Kudrat Kaur, in October 1994.

As it happened, on January 17, 1995, a devastating earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale hit Kobe. 6,500 people were killed and 250,000 buildings destroyed or damaged beyond repair, including every building Sada Anand Singh had taught in. Guru Terath Kaur and Dr. Kartar Singh were there during the quake. It was just before the last session of the teacher training course. Most of the students left the area with their families or returned to their home towns.

It was almost impossible to live in Kobe at that point. The yogis did some small amount of service teaching yoga and volunteering at the local community center, but could no longer afford to live in their expensive apartment as the whole city was being cleared of debris and being rebuilt. Sada Anand Singh and Kudrat Kaur moved to a retreat center in Nara, situated in the mountains about two hours away, where they held several yoga intensives with their Kobe students.

Those were challenging days. While Nara was a peaceful and beautiful locale, it was also very conservative, a difficult place to start classes. It also happened that Japan was gripped at that time by a certain hysteria after a Sarin Nerve attack in the Tokyo subway by a cultist in white clothes with long hair and a beard who taught kundalini meditation. Yoga groups across Japan experienced a huge drop in students. It hit 3HO Japan students especially hard because of the Kundalini association and his appearance.

But there was good news also. Kudrat Kaur became pregnant. On the day of the birth, they were snowed in on their mountain along with their midwife. The cable car had stopped running by the time labor had started in the night.

Sada Anand Singh called the Siri Singh Sahib three times during the thirty-three hour labor. The Master was supportive and encouraging throughout. When the baby was finally born, a 4:17 in the morning, he named her "Siri Amrita Kaur- great sweetness of God forever"- and called her "the first Japanese Sikh."

## Sikhs of the World - 1

For many months, the Siri Singh Sahib worked with Professor Manjit Singh, Acting Jathedar of Akal Takhat and S.G.P.C. President Gurcharan Singh Tohra to plan a global Sikh conference, the likes of which the world had never before seen. It was to be an internal exercise in bringing together the many factions of the Sikh nation. It was also to be an exercise in public relations. After many years of being maligned in the public media, being called "terrorists," and "anti-India," it was designed as an opportunity to show India and the world a picture of Sikhs from around the world, united and peaceful and optimistic for the future.

One special project of the Siri Singh Sahib was to reach out to the Namdhari Sikh community. The history of the Sikhs known as "Namdhari" went back to the years of British rule, when they had stood up, at tremendous sacrifice, against the rulers of the land. Rather than assimilate, they had set up their own schools, boycotted British justice, and vowed to wear distinctive, home-spun white cotton *bana*. They had also focussed on keeping the traditions of *Gurbani kirtan* vibrant and alive, without modern instruments or influences. Over time, the Namdharis had developed their unique traditions which had made mainstream Sikhs consider them outcastes from the Sikh nation. In the name of unity, the Siri Singh Sahib made a special effort to invite the Namdhari leader, Baba Jagjit

Singh, and his followers to the World Sikh Conference.

Another aim of the Master was to gain wider acceptance and understanding for those Sikhs from abroad who had come into the Sikh fold by the Guru's grace, through his efforts in the West. As with the Namdharis, there were significant gaps between the mainstream Sikh community and the "3HO" Sikhs. Most challenging was the fact that – despite the Siri Singh Sahib and the Bhai Sahiba's encouragement – almost none of them could speak any Punjabi. Tied to this linguistic weakness, Western-born Sikhs sometimes experienced difficulties with unfamiliar Punjabi cultural values and traditions.

Also significant were the differing approaches to Sikh dharma. While for many Sikhs, their religion was a matter of faith and tradition, the Yogi Bhajan school taught Sikh lifestyle from an experiential and scientific perspective. For them, the point of being a Khalsa was not to continue a lineage or to please Guru Gobind Singh, but to live a happy life of self-realization through meditation and service. They were Sikh Yogis and their Kundalini Research Institute was dedicated to pushing back the boundaries of scientific knowledge about health, happiness, and well-being. They were fixated on legacy, not lineage. Like the Namdharis, the Western-born Sikhs were also strikingly distinct in their white *bana*.

Those who did not wish a peaceful outcome for the Sikhs continued their murderous work. On August 31, just days before the start of the World Sikh Conference, the Chief Minister of Punjab, Beant Singh was assassinated, blown up by a car bomb. A couple of weeks later, human rights campaigner, Jaswant Singh Khalra was taken in broad daylight from his home at Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, never to be seen again. But the conference and its work would not be distracted.

Despite many foreign Sikhs being denied visas, and regardless of the presence of tens of thousands of armed soldiers, meant to intimidate those who had gathered there, the many participants, who came from near and far, shared a sense of oneness and confidence for the future. Around the Golden Temple complex, they could see the extent of the vast devastation inflicted by the army some twelve years ago. New guest houses, Gurdwaras, and offices were rising up from the rubble.

The opening of the conference at Guru Nanak Dev University started appropriately with the singing of "Deh Shiva," the Hymn asking for God's guidance and inspiration. The hundreds squeezed into the small hall were all touched by the spirit of the occasion.

The Siri Singh Sahib recognized one of the musicians. Afterwards, he asked, "Are you the son of Ustad Bhajan Lal?" Ustad Bhajan Lal was a famous classical musician.

"Yes, I am." The son's name was Ustad Dr. Murli Manohar and he taught at the university.

The Siri Singh Sahib said to him, pointing to the teenagers, Harimandirjot Singh, Jagat Guru

Singh, and Sada Sat Simran Singh, studying in Amritsar, "Teach these kids," pausing, he said, "Teach them strictly."

The Ustad agreed. It was the beginning of a fruitful education. In their study with Ustad Dr. Murli Manohar and Ustad Narinder Singh Sandhu, they would meet at any hour of the day or night to squeeze out some class time. Slowly, they improved and became known around the world as the "Chardi Kala Jatha."

For several days, in seminars and on the streets, there was talk of international cooperation, a world council of Sikhs, a world Sikh university, human rights, and a determination to prevent a recurrence of the fateful events of 1984. At the closing gathering at Manji Sahib Gurdwara, in the presence of Siri Guru Granth Sahib, the martyrs and heroes of the recent past were honored, in spite of the daunting signs of repression and censorship visible just outside the conference.

From the West, came a vision of a promising, holistic future of self-empowerment and Self-realization combining elements of *Gurbani*, cutting-edge science, and the poetic vision of the Siri Singh Sahib. A shiny, ground-breaking tract entitled *Shabd Guru: Quantum Technology for Awareness* spoke of the need of "education for leadership and spiritual fitness in the Aquarian Age". It described in scientific detail the vital healing significance of the *Shabd Guru*, Siri Guru Granth Sahib, the essential Songs of Guru Nanak, in this age of chronic stress and uncertainty. It showed how the *Shabd Guru* and the healthful, blissful, sacred life of a Sikh held a hopeful promise for the whole of humanity.

Wherever the hundreds of thousands of participants gathered - at the large Ram Bagh park, the new Guru Nanak Bhavan conference center, and in the pedestrian mall of the Golden Temple complex, Sikhs from the West handed out thousands of pamphlets and hundreds of copies of the glossy, new treatise.

Outstretched hands eagerly snapped them up, though some readers asked for versions in Punjabi. Others did not care. They wanted the literature as precious mementos of the conference and of their meeting, however briefly, with the remarkable fair-skinned Sikhs from abroad.

## Sikhs of the World - 2

In a press interview, the Siri Singh Sahib stressed the need of a peaceful Punjab in a world of peace brokered by the United Nations. Moreover, he was not sparing in his appreciation of S.G.P.C. President Gurcharan Singh Tohra for his efforts in making the conference happen, "Tohra is to be congratulated for organizing and providing the facilities for the conference, not because he is S.G.P.C. President, but because everyone has agreed to honor him. Everyone was thinking it was not possible to do this work, but he did it.

“When I came to India, Congress members told me it didn’t matter how much security we had, there would be no point in going to Punjab because of the unrest there. All the people in Delhi thought Tohra and I would be unsuccessful.

“Today he is successful. That is why we are holding this conference today. Up till 11 o’clock yesterday, there was no talk of this, but we were thinking that if we were successful, we will honor him publicly.

“Now it is our responsibility to go to all the Western countries and tell them that their thinking – that Punjab is a house of terrorism – is wrong. The old thinking is that Punjab is a house of terrorism. Whatever happened in the past, happened because of circumstances.

“Now, let us think about the future. We are going to talk to the governments about the false criminal records accorded innocent Sikhs in Punjab to have them removed so these innocents may live in honor and dignity.

“We are also grateful Shiromani Jathedar Manjit Singh and Jathedar Tohra for doing their best to bring this conference about peacefully. We are going to take the message to western newspapers and governments that what they were thinking impossible has been done.”

Reporter asks: “Where the money for this campaign is going to come from?”

“Even if every Sikh gives just \$1, we are a global community of 36 million. We can do this. If people spend money on luxuries and other things, why would they not donate for the work we are doing to improve our image, to bring Sikhism to a global level?

“America spends \$10 billion for drug rehabilitation and we did this peacefully. Now our Sikh Council is established. This is not a long-term proposition. It is going to be done quickly. The whole world is striving for peace, so we are on the right track. We are a world religion. We are setting up this council to set an example for the world. Our Khalsa Council has been working for the last fifteen years and we are responsible for all our expenses. We certainly can afford this advertising.”

### **Sikhs of the World - 3**

One the final day of the World Sikh Conference, the conference that hardly anybody believed could happen, there was an assembly of tens of thousands in the presence of Siri Guru Granth Sahib at Gurdwara Manji Sahib. Gathered there, were Sikhs from all over India and the emigrant communities, as well as a representation of Namdharis and about a hundred Western Sikhs who were studying at Sukha Singh Santa Singh School in Amritsar or taking part in a pilgrimage with the Siri Singh Sahib.

The Siri Singh Sahib was in fine form. His objective was to inspire and unite the many, many Sikhs gathered there. He began, "*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!*"

"Respected Jathedar of Akal Takhat, in the constitution of Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere, the Jathedar of Akal Takhat is the highest legal authority. The majority of Sikhs are Punjabi, but delegates from twenty-two countries have come here, so I am representing them. It is the Jathedar's love, that he invited Sikhs from all different countries. That is why they are all here.

"We are part of the *Panth Khalsa*. We are Sikhs of the *Shabad Guru*. We honor the authority of Akal Takhat. Although we are not many today, tomorrow we will be countless Khalsa, universal Khalsa.

"You may say, 'This is an American Sikh. This is a foreign Sikh. They don't know our language.' We are tolerating this because we know it is part of your *saag*-eating culture."

The *Sadh Sangat* erupted in self-depreciating laughter.

"But they know your language. They know your Guru. They know your *Panth*. And they know your *Guru Mantra*..."

The *Sangat* erupted again as one person cried out, "*Bolay so nihaal!* – Blessed is the one who speaks!" and everyone responded, "*Sat Siri Akaal!* – True Being is great and ever-living!"

The Siri Singh Sahib continued, "They will become an important part of the *Panth*. In future, if the world powers do not bow down to their power, you can change my name from Harbhajan Singh Yogi.

Again, "*Bolay so nihaal!* – Blessed is the one who speaks!" and everyone responded, "*Sat Siri Akaal!* – True Being is great and ever-living!"

He then continued, "I don't have words for what you did yesterday. You proved to the world that we are the union of saint and soldier. We are going to tell the world that we practice raj yoga and we are peaceful people. We are going to counter others' false accusations.

"All the Sikhs you invited are going to say a few words in their language. Compassion is a very big thing in everyone Sikh's life. I want that every Sikh should be forgiven and accepted into the *Panth* despite their past misdeeds.

"I am happy... Every human makes a mistake. Even I make a mistake... that there is a hope we will be accepted back into this *Panth*.

"Someone told me, 'You have done such a good job of spreading Sikh teachings. You should stop putting "Yogi" in your name.'

“If I now do something wrong, you can say, ‘He was a Yogi. He wasn’t a Sikh.’

Laughter from the *Sadh Sangat*.

The Siri Singh Sahib resumed, “If, however, I am successful, you can say, ‘Yogi was a good Sikh.’ Thanks to Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Jathedar Akal Takhat Manjit Singh and we received a message from the Namdharis. Let us show our appreciation.”

“*Bolay so nihaal!* – Blessed is the one who speaks!” and everyone responded, “*Sat Siri Akaal!* – True Being is great and ever-living!”

The Siri Singh Sahib continued speaking, “This is why I don’t come to the stage. They say I take too much time on the stage. Now I am giving the stage to the next speaker.”

“*Bolay so nihaal!* – Blessed is the one who speaks!” and everyone responded, “*Sat Siri Akaal!* – True Being is great and ever-living!”

The program continued. An alderman who had been elected in England was called to the microphone and spoke a few words. Then, the master of ceremonies, Sardar Manjeet Singh Calcutta called for Livtar Singh Khalsa from Atlanta, Georgia.

Livtar Singh came to the mike and said, “*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh...*” He looked across to the Siri Singh Sahib.

Sitting, his teacher of some twenty-five years told Livtar to recite Song of the Khalsa, line by line.

“Livtar began, “Many speak of courage. Speaking cannot give it. It’s in the face of death, we must live it...” Sensing something was wrong, he started again, “Many speak of courage. Speaking...” But there was no reciprocation. The large congregation wanted to be moved, but they were not picking it up. They sat impassively.

The Siri Singh Sahib spoke in Punjabi, off-mike as he rose, “Sit down! Look, this is not working.”

Harbhajan Singh, the Yogi, walked over and took the mike. Unlike Livtar Singh, he was speaking the language of the *Sadh Sangat*. His Punjabi went straight to their hearts, “This brother... Five and a half billion people live in this world. This child, with the grace of Guru, wrote Song of the Khalsa. In this song, we appreciate the importance of Anandpur Sahib and the character of Khalsa and *Guru Maryada*. He wrote it and he never read a word in Punjabi. When he wrote *Song of the Khalsa*, he didn’t know a word of *Guru Maryada*. So in any of our Gurdwaras, we don’t do the *Bhog* until we play this song.

“We were given twenty-two minutes for our group. I took already fifteen minutes. It will take

another twenty minutes. If *Sangat* will allow us, we will sing this song today..."

"*Bolay so nihaal!* – Blessed is the one who speaks!" and everyone responded, "*Sat Siri Akaal!* – True Being is great and ever-living!"

The Siri Singh Sahib roused his students, "Come, all should stand up and let us sing the Song of the Khalsa with one voice. Come on. *Idar Aa!* Sing it! You will sing from there! He will start, okay? Right! Let us start it..." and again seated himself beside Jathedar Manjit Singh.

"Many speak of courage, speaking cannot give it.  
It's in the face of death, we must live it.  
When things are down and darkest, that's when we stand tallest.  
Until the last star falls, we won't give an inch at all.  
Stand as the Khalsa, strong as steel, steady as stone,  
We give our lives to God and Guru, mind and soul, breath and bone.

"Guru Arjun gave his life to stand for what was right.  
He was burned and tortured for five long days and nights.  
He could have stopped it any time just by giving in.  
His strength a solid wall, he never gave an inch at all.  
Sons of the Khalsa, remember those who died,  
Stood their ground until their last breath so we who live now might live free lives.

"A princess is not royal by her birth or blood inside,  
But if her family's home is Anandpur Sahib,  
She'll walk with such a grace and strength the world will bow in awe.  
Until the last star falls, she'll never give an inch at all.  
Daughters of the Khalsa! In your strength our future lies.  
Give our children fearless minds to see the world through the Guru's eyes.

"Baisakhi Day we were thousands. Only five had the courage for dying.  
Then one brave man, one flashing sword turned us all to lions  
And now we live his legacy, to die before we fall,  
And like the five who answered his call, we can't turn back at all.  
Stand as the Khalsa, strong as steel, steady as stone,  
We give our lives to God and Guru, mind and soul, breath and bone.

"The tenth Guru gave even his sons to give the Khalsa life  
And his words stand like mountains against the winds of time.  
Khalsa will rule the world and all will be safe in its fold  
But if the Khalsa falls, there won't be a world at all.  
Stand as the Khalsa, strong as steel, steady as stone,



We give our lives to God and Guru, mind and soul, breath and bone.

“Many speak of courage, speaking cannot give it.  
It’s in the face of death, we must live it.  
When things are down and darkest, that’s when we stand tallest.  
Until the last star falls, we won’t give an inch at all.  
Stand as the Khalsa, strong as steel, steady as stone,  
We give our lives to God and Guru, mind and soul, breath and bone.  
Sons of the Khalsa, remember those who died,  
Stood their ground until their last breath so we who live now might live free lives.  
Daughters of the Khalsa! In your strength our future lies.  
Give our children fearless minds to see the world through the Guru’s eyes.  
Stand as the Khalsa, strong as steel, steady as stone,  
We give our lives to God and Guru, mind and soul, breath and bone.  
Mind and soul, are his alone.”

“*Bolay so nihaal!* – Blessed is the one who speaks!” and everyone responded, “*Sat Siri Akaal!* – True Being is great and ever-living!”

The Siri Singh Sahib rose and spoke in English, “He will speak in English and I will translate in Punjabi.”

Livtar Singh: “Many speak of courage...”

Siri Singh Sahib: “*Ka-ee banday aapnee himmat dee-aan galaan karday han*”

Livtar Singh: “Speaking cannot give it...”

Siri Singh Sahib: “*Inaan galaan naal bandaa kujh naheen*”

Livtar Singh: “It’s in the face of death, we must live it...”

Siri Singh Sahib: “*Maut day saamnay rahi kay, jee-on daa naan hai*”

Livtar Singh: “When things are down and darkest...”

Siri Singh Sahib: “*Jadon saaree-aa galaan dhahidee-aan kalaa wal tur jaan*”

Livtar Singh: “That’s when we stand tallest...”

Siri Singh Sahib: “*Udo asean sabh ton utaanh ho kay turday haan*”

Livtar Singh: "Until the last star falls..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Jinaan chir akheerlaa sitaaraa ki-o na dig pavai"

Livtar Singh: "We won't give an inch at all..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Aseen ik inch vee ko-ee vee chhai aapnay dharam utay dayn la-ee ti-aar naheen"

Livtar Singh: "Stand as the Khalsa..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Khaalsaa panth, kharay ho ja-o"

Livtar Singh: "Strong as steel, steady as stone..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Is taraan takray ho jaa-o jis taraan lohaan hunday"

Livtar Singh: "We give our lives to God and Guru..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Aapnee zindgee guroo atay rab noon day di-o"

Livtar Singh: "Mind and soul..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Aapnaa man atay aapnaa aatmaa"

Livtar Singh: "Breath and bone..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Breath and bone. Aapnaa svaas tay aapnee-aan hade-aan"

Livtar Singh: "Guru Arjun gave his life..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Guroo arjan nay aapnee zindgee ditee"

Livtar Singh: "To stand for what was right..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Is karkay ki jo sach see us utay khalo jaan"

Livtar Singh: "He was burned and tortured..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Oh panj din jalaa-ay ga-ay tay tang keetay ga-ay"

Livtar Singh: "For five long days and nights..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Panj din tay panj raatan"*

Livtar Singh: "He could have stopped it any time..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Oh kisay vaylay vee is noon band kar sakday san"*

Livtar Singh: "Just by giving in..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Ih kehin naal ki tuseen theek ho"*

Livtar Singh: "His strength a solid wall..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Ih kandh dee kandh ban kay khalo ga-ay"*

Livtar Singh: "He never gave an inch at all..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Ohnaa bilkul ik inch naheen ditaa"*

Livtar Singh: "Sons of the Khalsa..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Khaalsay day putro"*

Livtar Singh: "Remember those who died..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Unaan noon chaytay rakhay jihray tuhaaday ton pehilaan Shaheed ho-ay"*

Livtar Singh: "Stood their ground until their last breath..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Unaan aapnee zameer noon bilkul naheen chadi-aa akheerlay swaas tak"*

Livtar Singh: "So we who live now might live free lives..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Hun jihray asean ji-onday haan sutantar ho kay ji-o-ee-ay"*

Livtar Singh: "A princess is not royal..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Oh shehizaadee, shehizaadee naheen"*

Livtar Singh: "By her birth or blood inside..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Jis da aapnaa khoon shehizaadee-aa vaalaa naheen jisam shehizaadee-aa vaalaa hai"*

Livtar Singh: "But if her family's home is Anandpur Sahib..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Oh shehizaadee, shehizaadee hai jis daa ghar Anandpur saahib"

Livtar Singh: "She'll walk with such a grace and strength..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Oh is shaan naal turaygee"

Livtar Singh: "The world will bow in awe..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Saaree dune-aa us noon jhukaygee"

Livtar Singh: "Until the last star falls..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Jinaa chir akheerlaa sitaaraa naheen jhuch jaandaa"

Livtar Singh: "She'll never give an inch at all..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Oh vee ik inch thahaan naheen hovaygee"

Livtar Singh: "Daughters of the Khalsa..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Khaalsay dee-aa shahizaadi-o"

Livtar Singh: "In your strength our future lies..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Tuhaadee taakat day vich saadaa bhavikh hai"

Livtar Singh: "Give our children fearless minds..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Saadaay bachi-aa noon nirbhau banan dayo"

Livtar Singh: "To see the world through the Guru's eyes..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Taa kay oho duni-aa noon guroo dee-aa akhaan naal vaykh sakan"

Livtar Singh: "Baisakhi Day we were thousands..."

Siri Singh Sahib: "Baisakhee vaalay din aseen hazaaraan saan"

Livtar Singh: "Only five had the courage for dying..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Panj vaali-aan noon taakat milee ko oho aapnay aap noon shaheed karaa sakan"*

Livtar Singh: "One brave man, one flashing sword..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Ik baraa taakatvar banda tay oh dee talvaar nay"*

Livtar Singh: "Turned us all to lions..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Saanoon bandi-aan ton shayr banaa ditaa"*

Livtar Singh: "And now we live his legacy..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Aseen hun us dee prabhataa vich ji-onday haan"*

Livtar Singh: "To die before we fall..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Digan ton pehilaa saanoon marnaa kabool hain"*

Livtar Singh: "And like the five who answered his call..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Oh panj din jinaan nay us dee avaaaz day javaaab vich aapnaa Jeevan baleedaan keetaa"*

Livtar Singh: "We can't turn back at all..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Hun adeen pichhay naheen hat sakday"*

Livtar Singh: "The tenth Guru gave even his sons..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Dasvay paatshaah nay aapnay bachay vee vaar ditay"*

Livtar Singh: "To give the Khalsa life..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Taa kay khaalsaa noon Jeevan mil sakai"*

Livtar Singh: "And his words stand like mountains..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *"Onaan day shabad pahaaraan dee-aan kataaraan vaangaan khalotay ho-ay nay"*

Livtar Singh: "Against the winds of time..."

Siri Singh Sahib: *“Vakat dee-aan havaavaan noono rokday rehingay”*

Livtar Singh: “Khalsa will rule the world...”

Siri Singh Sahib: *“Khaalsaa dunee-aan tay raaj karaygaa”*

The Sadh Sangat erupted, *“Bolay so nihaal! – Blessed is the one who speaks!”* and everyone responded, *“Sat Siri Akaal! – True Being is great and ever-living!”*

Livtar Singh: “And all will be safe in its fold...”

Siri Singh Sahib: *“Saaray banday us dee hakoomat thalay khush tay bahaal hongee”*

Livtar Singh: “But if the Khalsa falls, there won’t be a world at all.”

Siri Singh Sahib: *“Jay khaalsaa dig pi-aa tay dunee-aa nahen rehinee. Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!”*

*“Bolay so nihaal! – Blessed is the one who speaks!”* and everyone responded, *“Sat Siri Akaal! – True Being is great and ever-living!”*

It was a happy day for the master bridge builder. Later that evening, he said to his staff, "That was the best thing! If Vishnu, Shiva, and all the Gurus and Saints came to me now and said, 'We will give you anything you want if you trade that experience,' I would tell them to go away. If I live to be a thousand years old, I will never experience anything that great."

## Sikhs of the World - 4

During a TV interview at the end of the World Sikh Conference, The Siri Singh Sahib confessed his relief that things had gone as well as they had, “Before coming, I was disappointed. Every day, there was news that there would be riots or there would be violence and there would be no conference. Then there was a big tragedy. (Punjab Chief Minister assassinated August 31.) That killing was not acceptable in the Western world regardless of whatever he was.

“I don’t know the viewpoint of people here, but it is giving Sikhs the image of terrorism. There were many opinions, but I was thinking we should not go. The security forces could arrest me. But today I have awarded Gurcharan Singh Tohra, and up to today, I have not had any feeling that I am not welcome.”

Summing up, the Master said, “Nobody wants to fall from grace. Moreover, God was with us.”

Then he predicted, “There is going to be an international bomb of mega-information which will make people go crazy. People will go empty. People will go informally rude. It will be a period of rudeness.” As antidote, he prescribed the “peace from Siri Guru Granth Sahib.”

The Siri Singh Sahib encouraged his countrymen to revisit their glorious heritage and bring it forward into the present time. He spoke particularly to Punjabis, “Punjabi is a root of languages. The Punjabi is very adventurous. Anywhere you go, you will find a Punjabi. And Punjabis like to develop themselves. But in organization, Punjabis fail.

“Let us change our tactics. Let us change our strategy. Let us change our outlook and we can have a Golden Age again. And what I am telling Punjabis, damn it, believe me or not, this is your birthright!”

## **Born at Zero**

To the surprise of many, the Siri Singh Sahib had a large headstone erected on his ranch in Espanola. Though Sikhs are cremated and not buried, the memorial stone should not have come as such a big surprise. Yogis have traditionally loved the peace of cemeteries. Moreover, Yogi Bhajan had spoken of his departure for many years.

That carved stone summed up the life philosophy of the Master. “Siri Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji,” it said. Then, underneath, it stated simply, “Born: Zero, Died at One” and presented his favorite couplet from *Japji Sahib*: “*Ketiaa dukh bhukh sadh maar eh bhee daat tayree dataar*” – meaning “Whatever suffering, hunger or constant abuse might come my way, these too are your blessings, O Bountiful One!

On the back of the great slab were the timeless words of the Song of the Khalsa.

## **Connected with the Master**

The Mahan Tantric liked to say that White Tantric Yoga could not be learned or taught. It could only be experienced. Imagine the situation of the gentle ladies sent out to facilitate the courses! Nothing could have prepared them for their surprising experiences overseeing hundreds of meditating yogis.

One day, Sat Simran Kaur was facilitating a course when her ankle started to bother her. At lunch, she had a therapist work on it. After the course, Yogi Bhajan loudly asked, “What did you do with my ankle?”

Dr. Sat Kaur was facilitating a White Tantric Yoga course at a hotel. A group next door to the course was very loud. From somewhere, she heard a voice telling her to turn up the audio for the course. This voice repeated itself and she turned the volume up several times.

Afterwards, Dr. Sat Kaur found that at the exact time of the incident, Yogi Bhajan had been driving with his staff between Espanola and Albuquerque. During their drive, he had repeatedly called for the volume to be turned up, until it became almost intolerable.

## Equality

On February 9, 1996 a storm that had been brewing for twenty years or more came to a head. Sikh women coming from the West generally assumed their equality with men in all things, and yet that equality was not acknowledged in specific holy functions among many influential guardians of Sikh orthodoxy.

One of the main objections of the Khalsa women was that they were never allowed to perform the *sewa* of cleaning the Harimandir Sahib in the early hours of the morning. Fortunately, the women had allies in Amritsar.

After marathon meetings with various *panthic* organizations and taking then S.G.P.C. chief Gurcharan Singh Tohra into confidence, Prof. Manjit Singh, Acting Jathedar of Akal Takhat, issued the following directive, co-signed by Giani Joginder Singh Vedanti, Giani Mohan Singh and others:

“There is no gender discrimination in Sikhism. Both men and women are treated equally as per Sikh tenets. Manager, Darbar Sahib, is hereby directed to ensure that baptised Sikh women are allowed to perform *sewa* at the Golden Temple.”

Early the next morning, Bhai Sahiba Inderjit Kaur Khalsa, together with Bibi Amarjit Kaur of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha, Jaswinder Singh Advocate of the S.G.P.C. and his wife, a *jatha* of American Sikh women, then Jathedar of Gurdwara Damdama Sahib Giani Kewal Singh, and Acting Jathedar Manjit Singh went to the Golden Temple to do *kar sewa*. They were opposed, however, by a loud and threatening male group which would not allow them to enter.

At last, a compromise was reached. The group would be allowed to do the *sewa*, but just that one morning.

The controversy was officially resolved on March 10, by a S.G.P.C. endorsement of the principle that women could perform all types of *sewa* and be enlisted as *granthis*, *ragis* and *parcharaks*, all roles not taken up by women earlier because “no such situation had arisen.” And in the S.G.P.C. elections in the fall of 1996, for the first time 30 of the 190 seats were set aside for women.



Despite the official resolution, women remained excluded from the early morning *sewaat* Darbar Sahib. Manjit Singh, the Acting Jathedar of Akal Takhat was invited to California by the Siri Singh Sahib, where his efforts were appreciated at a number of Gurdwaras. This chapter was closed the following year when the Acting Jathedar was replaced by Jathedar Ranjit Singh.

## The Student Who Wanted More

The Master had a beautiful student who, himself was masterful in many facets of his life. The problem was, the student did not feel beautiful or masterful. For this reason, he would regularly return to Yogi Bhajan for counseling, thinking there was something about them that needed fixing.

It was a difficult situation for the Siri Singh Sahib. What could he do? When the beautiful young man came for counseling, as he did repeatedly over the years, the Master would tell his student that his arc line was fine, then change the subject.

This went on. The student did not completely believe in himself. Yogi Bhajan was unable to inspire that belief. Once day, at Summer Solstice Sadhana, the two of them were sitting together in the Master's cabin and he turned to his student. Addressing him by name, he said, "You want to know the truth?" His eyes were deeply penetrating and piercing.

"Sure," said his student, though not so sure.

"Your wife and children, are they beautiful?"

"Yes they are."

Looking deep into his dear student's eyes the Siri Singh Sahib said, "They were your students and they followed you into this life. You were a saint in your past life and something went wrong with the Big Computer and you didn't forgive God. That is why you are back here to learn to forgive God."

It was a stunning revelation for his student, but it did not resolve his self-doubt. Could anything resolve his self-doubt? Their conversation continued for a few years. Any time he had a chance, the beautiful student asked the Master for counseling. The hole, the emptiness inside, would not be filled.

One day, Yogi Bhajan said to his doubting student, "You know what is wrong with you?"

"No Sir, please tell me."

"Well, the problem is that you were not just a saint, but you were a big, big saint and you were a hoity toity saint. Well, everything you ever did wrong, you have to pay back this lifetime, for this is

your last lifetime.”

The Master’s beloved student replied, “Okay,” then continued, “Well Sir, it is nice to know all this, but I am still where I am and I would still like to have counseling with you.”

This was hard. The Master had an idea, a desperate idea. It might work. It might not. He said, “Okay, come,” and took his student into his bedroom. He sat on the bed and had his student sit in front of him on the bed. The Yogi did not say anything, but started to do all different exercises, breath of fire, moving his arms, making different *mudras*.

His student was at a loss because he did not know what was expected of him. He thought, “Well maybe I should copy his *mudra* and do breath of fire also,” but he just sat there.

This went on for quite a few minutes and then Yogi Bhajan extended his arm out and placed his right forefinger on his student’s third eye and seemed to go into a deep meditation. He kept his forefinger on his student’s forehead for about eleven minutes. When he finished, he opened his student’s mouth and pressed his thumb on his upper palate. He was a very strong person and he pressed very hard and with his other hand he pressed down on his student’s crown chakra.

When the Master finished doing, that he said, “Well I did the initiation. You are initiated.” It was a desperate ploy to help his student.

Yogi Bhajan never actually initiated anyone. He knew that and his student knew it. It was also known that the Master had the power to stimulate a student’s third eye in a matter of seconds, not minutes. This, he did not do, as he wanted this precious student to develop his inner power and felt he was fully capable to doing so, if not at that time, then one day.

## **The Man at the U.N.**

Alfredo Sfeir Younis had been an economist in the government of Salvadore Allende when it was overthrown in a coup in 1973. He managed to escape his native Chile and take up a job teaching at the University of Minnesota. A few years later, he joined the prestigious World Bank as its first environmental economist.

With the passage of time, Alfred Sfeir Younis had worked his way up through the World Bank to have an office high up in the United Nations building in New York, where he served as the bank’s Special Representative to the UN and the World Trade Organization. He moved in circles of power and was respected for his work.

One day, his secretary informed him that someone had come without an appointment to see

him. The protocol was that no one saw Dr. Sfeir Younis without an appointment. That his secretary should bother him with this, annoyed him ever so slightly.

“Tell them to book an appointment,” he said through the intercom.

In no time, the door to Alfredo Sfeir Younis’s office opened and there before him stood a man of equal stature, bejeweled and all in white, with a commanding turban and beard, and a secretary, in graceful white, at his side. The Siri Singh Sahib introduced himself and put the economist at ease.

The Master then went on to tell the Chilean things about himself that even he did not know. It was one of the most fascinating meetings of his life. Yogi Bhanjan went on to encourage Alfredo Sfeir Younis to use his status and connections among people of authority for the best and to serve as a role model.

It was the beginning of a fruitful relationship. The economist did what he could to influence the worldly people at the United Nations to engage their souls. One thing he learned was that any event where the word “spirituality” was used was liable to be unattended. Spirituality had a bad name in these circles. For the people who travelled there, it represented the “airy fairy” and unrealistic. But when he advertised an event using pragmatic words like “integration” and “harmony,” there was a much better chance of people turning up.

Alfredo Sfeir Younis went to Germany with the Master. As his health declined, Yogi Bhanjan visited a healer at a spa there who had a machine designed to help the body summon its regenerative powers. What impressed the Chilean most on that trip was being with Yogi Bhanjan as he leafed through a book with a hundred different gemstones, expertly describing their properties for healing and empowerment, one by one.

## **The Wisdom of the Parrot**

On one occasion, the Siri Singh Sahib and five staff members were staying at an interesting hotel in Hawaii. It was a welcome break from their demanding schedules, especially for the Master, whose health was becoming increasingly fragile with the passing years.

This hotel was perfect for him. It was isolated and there was not much to do outside the hotel complex, so relaxation was mandatory. Yogi Bhanjan would spend the day talking with local students, dipping in the beautiful, winding pool facilities, riding with Hari Jiwan Singh as he played a round of golf, hanging out at the beach next door, or generally just “being.”

Each morning, the Siri Singh Sahib and his entourage would gather at the romantic poolside restaurant for breakfast. Yogi Bhanjan was a man of routine, so they would request the same table

every day of their stay. The table was towards the back wall overlooking a beautiful ocean vista.

Close to their table was a large perch on which a multicolored parrot stood. There was no cage, no guard, just the perch and the parrot that stayed there all day.

About every half hour, as if on schedule, the parrot would say, "Let me out! Let me out!"

The Siri Singh Sahib found it hilarious. No matter how many times they heard it, he would still laugh each time. And not just a cursory chuckle; he would belt out a belly laugh straight from the heart. Everyone was happy as they knew laughing was good for their teacher's health.

The day before they left they were sitting by the pool and Hari Jiwan Singh mentioned to the Master that he'd be sorry to not see the parrot again. He said, "You really got a kick out of that parrot, didn't you, sir?"

The Master replied, "I love that parrot! That parrot sees more than most humans. At least he knows he's in a cage when apparently he's not. Very few humans realize the same thing."

## The 'Sant'

In his travels, the Siri Singh Sahib still enjoyed visiting saints and supposed saints. One day, he was invited to come to the *dera* of a well-known *sant* of Punjab.

The visit turned out to be a guided tour of the sant's properties – his *dera*, his buildings, his fields, his irrigation, his more buildings...

After an hour's tour of the supposed holy man's real estate and other possessions, the Siri Singh Sahib found it difficult to contain his deep annoyance. He said to the man, "*Santji*, how much is this whole thing worth? The whole thing."

*Santji* paused and gave a figure which to him must have seemed very significant indeed.

The Siri Singh Sahib removed a jeweled ring from his hand and offered it to the proud "holy man". "Sell it! It is three times the price."

The old *sant* replied, "I don't understand, Yogi Bhajan. Have I offended you?"

"No. You have raped me! You are the most obnoxious son of a bitch! You are an old, dirty dog. I came to you just to be with a saint. I came to you with my humility. I came to have a good time. All you are telling me is your achievement, as if you are a construction engineer. What are you talking about? Do you know what you are talking about?"

“You are a Sikh. Look what Guru Nanak said: ‘If one were to live for ages four or for tens of ages more, with your fame spread across the nine continents, followed, honored and sought by all, yet if he were to fall from His Grace, he would be counted as a worm among worms, and even sinners would blame him.’”

It was the end of the visit.

### **From Self-Pity to Self-Sovereignty**

In Mexico, the Siri Singh Sahib would test Sat Kaur’s husband, Guru Dev Singh, in numerous ways. He would ask Guru Dev Singh to do something, then deny he had asked him to do it. The Master would say one thing, when he meant another. For a time, his student felt betrayed by Yogi Bhajan and lived in a bubble of self-pity. Eventually, he realized that the Siri Singh Sahib would do anything necessary to ensure his growth. Realizing this, Guru Dev Singh found his strength and sovereignty.

One day in 1997 at the Guadalajara book fair, people were lined up at a hotel to see Yogi Bhajan. The Master retreated to his room and told the crowd of people, “Guru Dev Singh will see you.”

### **Farewell, Toronto!**

Toronto, where Harbhajan Singh had first arrived in North America, had its own Guru Ram Das Ashram by 1971. 3HO lore says a fellow named “Sandy Schweitzer” started things. Then a pair of newly-weds, two couples took charge until one of the couples, Margaret and Michael, she pregnant with her first child, drove across the continent to start an ashram in Vancouver with Yogi Bhajan’s blessing.

When the ashram community needed a new home in 1973, Yogi Bhajan bought the property at 333 Palmerston Boulevard, which became the new Guru Ram Das Ashram. The Master made a habit of coming twice a year, usually in the spring and in the fall. He would give weekend-long White Tantric Yoga courses, beginning Friday at 6 and going to about 10, then resuming Saturday morning at 9 and going to 5. Sundays, the Siri Singh Sahib made a habit of first visiting one of the pioneers of the Punjabi Sikh community, Sardar Ishar Singh, where he would – together with an entourage of his students – take part in a recitation of Sukhmani Sahib, the peace-giving Bani of Guru Arjun. After that, everyone would come to Guru Ram Das Ashram for a Gurdwara service, then quickly set out for the historic Church of the Holy Trinity downtown, for the last portion of the tantric course, from about 1:30 to 5.

At first, the community of immigrant Sikhs outside Guru Ram Das Ashram consisted of only

about a hundred people. When the native-born 3HOers from nearby states and Ontario came together with the Master at the Shiromani Sikh Society Gurdwara on Pape Avenue, they easily made up half the *Sangat*.

With the help of Ruth Cohen, the massage therapist who had hosted Yogi Bhanjan when he first arrived, the 3HO community started a school of massage, the 3HO Center for the Healing Arts, at 732 Spadina Avenue. A little health food store nearby was purchased, renovated, and renamed “Golden Temple Conscious Foods.” It was only the third natural foods store in the city. Soon business was booming.

Students joined the 3HO community not only locally but from Arizona, Connecticut, Texas, Vermont, the Netherlands, England, Australia, and Ottawa. They were attracted not only by the possibility of training as a massage therapist, but also by the work opportunities at the store and Nanak’s Landscaping, even in the administration of the growing community.

Toronto was also famous in the 3HO universe for a splendid and regular morning *sadhana*. Musicians were abundant, so there was always live accompaniment to the chants of the morning. Often, the *sadhana* room would be burgeoning with thirty people in various states of wakefulness, while a kitchen crew of three prepared the meals for the day.

In the early days of the ashram, there was a forty day “try out” period. A novice would be required to come for *sadhana* for that long before being given a living space, usually a shared room, in Guru Ram Das Ashram. If you missed three days in a row, you were out. Later, there were *sadhana* attendance charts to be filled out. Then, there was a *missal* system. Everyone belonged to a group of seven or eight members and each group was responsible to see every member was present or accounted for, before *sadhana* could begin.

The community was recognized as a cutting-edge experiment in many ways. There were regular articles in the media about the 3HO lifestyle. Galen Weston, the multi-millionaire food magnate dropped by to see how Golden Temple honey ice cream was made. Significant human rights cases were won by members of the community. One established the right of a Sikh to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces. The other created a precedent for bearded members of any religious faith to be employed as drivers in the taxi industry.

All kinds of blessed folk came and went. Sat Bir Singh Khalsa, who would go on to become an expert in the scientific study of yoga and an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School, spent several years in the community. Dayal Kaur Khalsa, author and illustrator of award-winning children’s books, had her start at Guru Ram Das Ashram. Kirtan Singh, who would make a small fortune as publisher of *The Computer Paper* and then start Yoga West in Vancouver, was married and had children in the Toronto community with his wife, Hari Atma Kaur. Musician, Sangeet Kaur, was a regular *ragi* in the Toronto *Sangat* before finding fame with her recordings of *Dhan dhan raam daas gur* and *Raga Sadhana* while living in the US. Sat Bachan Kaur, Hari Jiwan Singh’s future wife, started her practice at

Guru Ram Das Ashram.

Up to the early 80s, Guru Ram Das Ashram was growing and prospering. The community purchased and renovated a large building across from the original ashram, which became the new Guru Ram Das Ashram. The Siri Singh Sahib's house, still filled with eager Kundalini Yogis, was renamed Guru Nanak Nivas. Kundalini Yoga had still not caught on widely as it would in another generation, but accredited courses were being offered through the University of Toronto and George Brown College, and there were classes here and there in the city.

Then hard times came. The university cut the well-paying Kundalini Yoga course from its curriculum. The Healing Arts Center started having problems staying afloat. The ashram, it was found, was eating all the profits from the health food store. About this time, Gurutej Kaur co-head of the ashram, left to live in Los Angeles, no explanation given. Their two young children pursued their education in India.

It was known that the Siri Singh Sahib would often rattle the walls in his private consultations with the head of the ashram. The next time the Master came, he brought members of his staff to attempt a re-set of the community situation. Sardarni Premka Kaur came and interviewed community members to gain their perspectives. Sopurkh Kaur, the financial mind, looked into the accounts. Nirinjan Kaur, his Chief of Staff, also came for her evaluation.

By the time everyone returned to Los Angeles, the basics of a community council had been established and an ombudsperson put in place. The ombudsperson lasted about a month, the weight of her responsibilities was that heavy. Over the years, it had been the ashram head's habit to physically rough up anyone who opposed him. They would then, without fail leave the community in disgrace. As a woman, the ombudsperson was spared physical attack, but verbal bullying could be no less intimidating.

For a time, the Toronto ashram served a useful role as neutral ground when the representatives of Gurdwaras in the growing Punjabi community made plans for yearly Khalsa Day parades, the first of which was held downtown in 1981. The Master came for the parade the next year, walking from Central Technical School along Bloor Street to the Ontario legislature, wearing a bullet-proof vest. Threats were being made on his life and security was high. No one wanted to lose the Siri Singh Sahib.

As the situation in Punjab further intensified, the Gurdwara committees bypassed the ashram, finding other venues for their parade planning. And as the Punjab unraveled, some people in the Khalsa of the West also lost their spiritual moorings. A number of Mukhia Singh Sahibs appointed by the Siri Singh Sahib took off their turbans and left the *Panth*.

The head of the Toronto ashram, himself now a Mukhia Singh Sahib, made it known among the community that he was in communication with those who had left, who had betrayed the trust of the

Master. He also dismissed the secretary who had served in Toronto for several years, whose job it was to issue monthly reports to the Siri Singh Sahib, and replaced her with an ally, a beauty queen, recently graduated with a degree in psychology.

The Mukhia Singh Sahib's new "regional secretary," for she was responsible for "region #9," which included Canada from the Rocky Mountains east, was not only an ally, but an advisor and confidant in what would prove to be difficult times. In fact, the media honeymoon that the ashram head had managed through his good relations with various writers and reporters, was over. Glowing stories of sunrise meditations were replaced by propaganda about "Sikh terrorists."

Then, strange things started to happen. The Toronto ashram head's right-hand man casually mentioned that he and the Mukhia Singh Sahib had been on the same flight to Montreal with a man who earlier that year had been refused entry to the US because he was considered a threat to the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The Siri Singh Sahib was known to be on the same hit list as Mrs. Gandhi. Had security not been tightened at the subsequent Montreal White Tantric Yoga course, it is difficult to imagine what might have occurred.

At the Siri Singh Sahib's next Toronto visit, he took the occasion to speak at the metropolis's largest Gurdwara. There were several Gurdwaras now, serving the expanding Punjabi Sikh community, many of them refugees from the increasingly oppressive and violent situation in India. Most had banners demanding a Sikh homeland, a "Khalistan." The largest was the Ontario Khalsa Darbar.

The Master showed great courage, as a man of peace, a wisher of goodwill to all, in going to a hotbed of extremism. Before being given the microphone to speak to the gathered *Sangat*, he was told what he should say, that he should demand a separate Sikh state.

Harbhajan Singh knew better than most the atrocities being committed against Sikhs in India and he acutely felt their pain. His intelligence told him however that Khalistan was not a Sikh demand, it was a demand of the Indian government. If Sikhs would rise up for Khalistan, they could then be thrown out of the armed forces and crushed as a community and the sovietisation of India could then begin. So, he was also extraordinarily brave in speaking the truth and not what many of the people there, freshly wounded and vengeful, wanted to hear.

After his talk, the Siri Singh Sahib went to the *langar* hall of the Gurdwara, followed all the way by a very angry and abusive man. Though he spoke in Punjabi, it was clear that what he was saying should not be spoken in a Gurdwara, not to a person of profound wisdom and goodwill. A few people gathered around the Master, still standing, the ashram head among them. This went on for some time. Then, unexpectedly, the Mukhia Singh Sahib struck the face of the offending speaker with his fist.

There was a stunned silence. The Siri Singh Sahib ushered everyone out quickly.



The next day, the Master gave instructions that an apology should be published in the largest Punjabi Sikh newspaper for his Mukhia Singh Sahib's action. The Siri Singh Sahib never returned to Toronto again.

In the following months, the ashram director joined a "men's group" for group psychoanalysis and "male bonding." He encouraged all the men of Guru Ram Das to join the group with him. Being a persuasive teacher, most of them did. Sometimes, they would have their meetings at the ashram.

The man who had been in charge of Guru Ram Das Ashram for fourteen or so years became more and more irregular in his appearance at morning *sadhana* – and to viciously ridicule anyone with a consistent *sadhana*. Soon, hardly anyone was coming out for *sadhana* any more.

The situation continued to deteriorate. Even at a distance, the Master could feel the damage being done to the fabric of the *Sangat*. At last, he sent a deputation of five senior teachers, members of the Khalsa Council, to Toronto. Singh Sahib Gurujohn Singh Khalsa from Hartford, Singh Sahib Sat Jivan Singh Khalsa from New York City, Mukhia Singh Sahib Gurucharan Singh Khalsa from Millis, Mukhia Singh Sahib Mahan Singh from Millis, and Singh Sahib Gurudhan Singh Khalsa from New York City. They privately delivered an ultimatum to the ashram director and met openly with the community. Within a month, the director had left 3HO and moved back to the US, where he was originally from.

The ashram culture in Toronto, once firmly grounded in daily *sadhana*, never recovered. For those who were ambitious to teach Kundalini Yoga, but had lost their footing in *sadhana*, the Kundalini Research Institute, based in faraway New Mexico, provided them an organizational legitimacy which they used to start teacher trainings in Toronto.

The Siri Singh Sahib did not give up on Toronto, however. As late as 1996, he sent Guru Roop Kaur from Phoenix to meet with the remaining community members and chart a way forward as a *Sangat*. The final resolution was that all members should live within a half hour of Guru Ram Das Ashram. Within a year, most of them had dispersed many miles from the historic center of the 3HO Toronto community.

Despite repeated requests from members of the 3HO Toronto council that Yogi Bhajan re-visit, he never returned to eastern Canada. Around 1997, Guru Nanak Nivas, the Master's Canadian property, was sold and the money re-invested in the new school, Miri Piri Academy, being built outside Amritsar.

## **Miri Piri Academy Founding**

After many years of prayers and hard work, on November 19, 1997, a vision of the Siri Singh

Sahib came into reality at Chheharta Sahib, a few miles outside of Amritsar. Kulbir Singh, his son, had been busily engaged organizing the creation of an international Khalsa school named, “Miri Piri Academy” after the sixth Guru’s principles that both spiritual and worldly sovereignty should be embraced.

In attendance for this happy occasion were the Siri Singh Sahib, together with Singh Sahib Ranjit Singh - the Akal Takhat Jathedar, the Punjab Education Minister – Sardar Tota Singh, Dilbir Singh – the Chairman of Miri Piri Academy, Birgadier K.S. Virk – Chief Administrator, and long-time staffer, Dr. Kirpal Singh Khalsa – Director of the Science Department.

## The Great Sword of the Khalsa Sovereign Spiritual Nation

Jot Singh and his wife Harbhajan Kaur lived at Guru Ram Das Ashram in the village of Millis, Massachusetts. They had come to be students of the Yogi Bhajan in the early 1970s and served regularly on the Khalsa Council. Jot Singh was an expert craftsman and jeweler.

At the Winter Solstice Sadhana of 1997, the Siri Singh Sahib told Jot Singh, “Son, I want you to create a very royal sword.” The piece of art was to be offered at the holy place where the Khalsa had been founded by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. The 300 year anniversary of that historic event was to be celebrated at Anandpur Sahib, in the foothills of the Himalayas on April 14th, 1999.

This was not the first time Yogi Bhajan had called on Jot Singh to create a thing of inspiration. Years ago, the Master had said to him, “Son, you have artistic gifts. Create things that uplift and inspire people.” Over the years, Jot Singh had developed a reputation as an artisan of high standards and gifted execution. Using gold, silver, steel, and precious and semi-precious gems, he had made hundreds of decorative brooches and pendants, sacred *kirpaans* and ornamental egrets, quite a number of them destined for the Sikh Dharma Museum in Espanola, New Mexico.

When next the Siri Singh Sahib visited the ashram community at Millis, Massachusetts, the exact form of the sacred sword, or *Siri Sahib*, began to materialize. The commission to create this royal commemorative piece was Jot Singh’s most ambitious endeavor. At thirty-six inches in length, it would be the largest and the last nickel Damascus steel sword Jot Singh would personally forge. Damascus steel swords were famously labor-intensive, durable and sharp; forged, hammered, and tempered in many stages.

The Master plied Jot Singh with spiritual and material assistance. Over the coming months, he instructed his student in some of the design elements of the special sword. The entire *Jaap Sahib* was to be laser-engraved on both sides of the scabbard. One side of the blade was to feature the words: “Sovereign Spiritual Khalsa Nation,” in fine calligraphy, while the other side was to say: “Sikh Dharma – Western Hemisphere,” “Great, great, great, great Guru Gobind Singh – Father of the Nation,” “Mata

Sahib Kaur Dewan – Mother of the Khalsa,” and list as well the names of the *Panj Piaray*, and the four sons of the Tenth Master. To help Jot Singh procure precious stones for the inlay and to hire skilled artisans to contribute their special talents to this project, the Siri Singh Sahib summoned \$5,000 in donations and offerings of fine jewels from a number of his students.

Jot Singh hired the most gifted artisans to assist him in this special project. Bladesmith colleague Vince Evans of Hawaii cut stylized panels into the blade to give it a three-dimensional quality. Julie Warenski-Erickson of Utah, an expert engraver and stone setter, inlaid 24 karat gold design work around these panels, and from the panels up to the handle. Ron Skaggs, an engraver/sculptor from Illinois, carved a falcon’s head out of the back of the handle. Cast in solid white gold, large rhodolite garnet eyes were set in the eye sockets. Slabs of Alaskan jade were shaped, fitted and fastened into the handle forward of the falcon.

In October, during another visit to the Millis ashram, Jot Singh presented artistic depictions of several scenes from Guru Gobind Singh’s life, of which the Siri Singh Sahib selected six. These would be hand engraved in oval panels cast in yellow gold to contrast with their white gold frames. Fine amethysts and peridots that had been donated for the project, were selected to complement the jade, gold, and nickel alloy in the scabbard. In all, over one thousand diamonds and about seventy-five ounces of gold would be used.

The project did not proceed seamlessly. Many times, the writing of *Jaap Sahib* needed to be proof-read and corrected. A case that was made for the sword was found to be inadequate. A fine box was made from seasoned flame birch wood. In all, \$80,000 was raised. No expense was spared. By one estimate, the completed *Siri Sahib* was assessed at \$280,000. In reality, it was priceless.

Meanwhile, in Punjab, preparations were underway to organize and host a massive gathering of Sikhs from all over India and abroad. Out of his generosity, the Siri Singh Sahib loaned five members of his personal staff to the organizers to represent him and help in any way possible.

After many months, Jot Singh and Harbhajan Kaur brought their precious cargo with them from America to India. Their first stop was the Siri Singh Sahib’s home in Delhi. Humbly and proudly, Jot Singh revealed the work of beauty the Master had requested a year and a half earlier. The Siri Singh Sahib said, “A thousand blessings on you, my Son!” for his student finishing the sword. Jot Singh left it with the Master overnight for his inspection.

On the momentous occasion of the three hundredth birthday of Khalsa, at least a million pilgrims thronged the town of Anandpur Sahib. The entourage from Sikh Dharma of the West, including the students of Miri Piri Academy, filled up a school. In all, they numbered four hundred.

The *Siri Sahib* attracted attention in the media. Newspaper and television reporters sought out Jot Singh for the story of the amazing sword from the Khalsa in the West.

Finally, a palanquin ceremoniously bore the *Siri Sahib* slowly through the burgeoning crowds to the stage at Anandpur Sahib for its presentation to the Takhat Sahib and the *jathedar* in charge of that holy place.

The Master had been greatly looking forward to this great celebration. Though he was ailing, and his feet so swollen he could not sit or stand without intense pain, the Siri Singh Sahib soldiered on. Before returning to America, he and another pillar of the Sikh Nation were appreciated for their life's contributions.

Sardar Inderjit Singh had founded the Punjab & Sindh Bank at the time of India's partition. Through it, he had offered employment to thousands of turban-wearing Sikhs and helped the community rebound from the struggles of 1947. Inderjit Singh had also funded numerous charitable causes to keep the spirit of the Sikhs strong through good years and bad.

So it was that the Harbhajan Singh Khalsa and Sardar Inderjit Singh were both given the unique and unprecedented title, "*Panth Rattan* - Jewel of the Sikh Nation."

## **Pushing the Boundaries of the New Medical Science**

David Shannahoff experienced his first Kundalini yoga class in the summer of 1974 when he was twenty-six years of age. The experience was so compelling that he immediately began a daily practice of Kundalini Yoga and within weeks decided to teach it. Five months later he met Yogi Bajan in person.

As David Shannahoff learned more about the ancient technology of mind taught by Yogi Bajan, he recognized its critical importance for our times. David decided then to do all he could to help bring to it the awareness and credibility in the psychiatric and the broader scientific community.

Over the years, David Shannahoff-Khalsa did a number of research studies. One of the best-known, explored Yogi Bajan's teaching that people typically breathe through one nostril more than the other, and that this dominance between the "sun" nostril (right) and the "moon" nostril (left) alternates every few hours throughout the day.

Combining his work with that of others in the field, David Shannahoff-Khalsa found electroencephalogram (EEG) evidence that "the nasal cycle is a marker for the ultradian rhythm of alternating cerebral hemispheric activity during both waking and sleep." He also found evidence that the interplay of the nostrils affected the neurochemistry of the left and right sides of the body. With further testing, David was able to establish that right nostril dominance correlated with rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and left nostril dominance correlated with non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep. He was also able to theorize an evolutionary function to the alternating right-left, dominance of the nostrils and the function of the hypothalamus in regulating the physiological states of rest and

activity. Lastly, through his work, David Shannahoff-Khalsa was able to demonstrate the effect of plugging one nostril and breathing through the other in stimulating the hemispheres of the brain and the corresponding sympathetic nervous system. Prior to his work, Western neuroscientists were unaware of the importance of the nose for therapeutic purposes and how it was hard-wired and a marker for observing and altering mind-body states.

With the guidance of Guru Ram Das, David Shannahoff-Khalsa was also able to use Yogi Bhanan's teachings to help patients with a particularly challenging mental disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). In a randomized control study, the results of which were published in 1999, David met with participants each week for a two-hour session of eight to eleven kundalini yoga exercises for fifteen months. A comparison group met and practiced relatively passive techniques, known as Relaxation Response (RR) and Mindfulness Meditation (MM).

Four months into the study, David asked Yogi Bhanan what he thought of the protocol he had developed. The Master replied, "What's to worry? It is fantastic!"

Indeed, the results were very promising. At the end of the study, while there was no noticeable improvement in the RR and MM group, the Kundalini Yoga group outperformed the control group on all measures, and with statistical significance on four of the six measures.

David recognized that in applying yogic techniques to psychiatric problems, he was blazing a new path into the future, but also that practices in the medical establishment change only very slowly. Yogi Bhanan himself had said, regarding a meditation he gave for conquering addictive behaviors, "This meditation is one of a class of meditations that will become well-known to the future medical society. Meditation will be used to alleviate all kinds of mental and physical afflictions, but it may be as many as five hundred years before the new medical science will understand the effects of this kind of meditation well enough to delineate all of its parameters in measurable factors."

## **Just Beautiful**

In Los Angeles a sixty-year-old man known to Yogi Bhanan decided one day that he did not look handsome anymore. As cosmetic surgery was readily available in that motion picture town, he went for a face-lift.

Unfortunately, that surgery did not improve his appearance, but rather made him appear quite grotesque. There was a large scar under his chin. His jaw went off. Now his face actually appeared like that of a baboon. The poor man was in a miserable state.

Naturally, the man was very annoyed with the procedure, so he went for corrective surgery. Eventually, it worked out and he looked his normal self. The whole process took six months.

Afterwards, when Yogi Bhajan saw him, he said, “I didn’t see you anywhere. What happened to you?”

“I was just a fool,” replied the man and went on to tell his story.

“You used to look beautiful,” said Yogi Bhajan.

“Yes, that I know now after this whole thing,” said the man in a regretful tone.

No one had told the man he did not look beautiful. Yet one thought, his own thought, had undermined his self-confidence and put him through six months plus of ordeal. This was the lesson he learned.

## **The New Hire**

In 1999, the Siri Singh Sahib made a destiny-changing hiring for Miri Piri Academy. Through his son, Kulbir Singh, he had learned that a decorated and highly qualified officer with forty years service in the Indian government’s security agency was available. Without an interview, Mr. Bedi was hired as Director General of MPA and immediately set to work.

Mr. Bedi’s main assignment was to set up systems to make Miri Piri Academy corruption-proof. This was necessary because MPA, at the beginning, was notoriously being embezzled. Fortunately, Mr. Bedi had a reputation for scrupulous integrity.

Mr. Bedi and the Siri Singh Sahib first met when he came to Espanola for a week in 2001. He quickly learned to respect his boss as a man who “called a spade a spade” and for his “spiritual powers.”

Many a morning at about 2:30 Amritsar time, Mr. Bedi would receive a call from the Master. “What are you doing?” he would ask.

“Sleeping, Sir,” Mr. Bedi would answer.

Aside from his daily checks of the log book, detailing everyone’s comings and goings, he screened all outings by the school’s students to see they were appropriate and secure. Mr. Bedi also kept the Siri Singh Sahib informed of ever-changing developments in the Punjab government. MPA made a fortunate find in Mr. Bedi.

## **A Visitor to Cape Town**

It was 1985 in South Africa and Har Bhajan Singh had just been robbed of everything of value

that he owned. Things looked pretty grim.

As a privileged, young, Caucasian during apartheid, he had ten years earlier gone on lengthy expeditions across the Atlantic and up and down South America, telling his family he would never return to South Africa. He had once served as a military conscript propping up the privileges of the Caucasian minority, and that had been enough.

Destiny had other ideas. In time, the South African found Kundalini Yoga through a French student of Yogi Bhanan at a place appropriately named "Union Island" in the Caribbean. From there, he made his way to the San Fernando Valley in California, where he attended weekly classes taught by Aradhana Singh.

Hearing that Yogi Bhanan was teaching in nearby Los Angeles, the young yogi gleefully made his way to Preuss Road for his first class with the Master. He arrived a little early, a travelling hippie with blue jeans and a blue pullover with rainbow stripes down the arms, his hair and beard growing out. When he opened his eyes, he found himself surrounded by a sea of white-clad yogis. Despite their visible differences, the South African felt that at last he had come "home," that he had found his tribe.

Next, the musicians arrived and began to lead the chanting in anticipation of Yogi Bhanan's arrival. The Siri Singh Sahib and his entourage appeared a few minutes later. As was customary, there were a number of gifts from various members of the *Sangat* awaiting him. Each was, by turn, appreciated and admired. The young man's eyes were attracted by a singular red rose that someone had brought as an offering. Then the class began.

During the singing of the Long Time Sun song at the end of the class, the young man, with his eyes closed, felt something hit his head and land on the floor in front of him. He opened his eyes and saw the red rose lying there on the floor in front of him. Looking up, he caught the mischievous eyes of the Master who had launched the rose at him.

During his ensuing time in Los Angeles, the South African befriended Tej Kaur who one night hurriedly shoved a piece of paper and a pen into his hand, then pushed him toward Yogi Bhanan, and told him to ask for a spiritual name. The Master beheld him with his piercing gaze, wrote on the paper, and handed it back with the words "Har Bhanan Singh" written on it, and with it, the gift of a lifetime of learning the "Bhanan of Har".

Before his visa time drew to an end, Har Bhanan Singh requested an appointment with Yogi Bhanan. Knees shaking, he told his teacher that he was leaving the United States and wished his blessing on his further travels, which he had mapped out as a stint in Europe, followed by some time at a kibbutz, then on to India.

To the Master's question, "Where are you from?" he answered that he was from South Africa.

Without hesitation, Yogi Bhajan replied, "Go back and open an ashram."

This was not the kind of blessing Har Bhajan Singh had wanted or expected. Not only had he told his family that he would not be returning to South Africa, in his home country there would be the constant threat of being called into service in the army of the apartheid regime. Though deep down he understood that he could not run away from his karma, it took a while before Har Bhajan Singh was able to accept the Siri Singh Sahib's directive. Then, after some months of preparation, he set out with his faith, his guitar, his prized auto-reverse cassette player, his invaluable collection of mantra cassettes, and \$1,000 to start a Guru Ram Das Ashram in Cape Town, South Africa.

Up until his robbery, Har Bhajan Singh had been fortunate. He had not been called up by the army. Classes had started to catch on. Then, just a few days after his entire collection of inspiring mantra music had disappeared, a packet came in the mail. It had been travelling from Los Angeles for about three weeks, a cassette of mantra music from Yogi Bhajan. With that and the loan of a cassette player from a student, classes continued by Guru's grace.

From his classes in South Africa, Har Bhajan Singh managed to save enough money to attend the European Yoga Festival in the summer of 1986. When Yogi Bhajan arrived, he made an appointment to see his teacher for a check-in.

"How is it going?" asked the Master.

"Fine, I just struggle a little with the nurturing that the students need to allow them to flourish."

From behind Har Bhajan Singh came the voice of Sat Simran Kaur, "Oh, he needs a wife!"

"Do we have someone in mind?"

The question was followed by much mischievous rolling of the eyes.

"Pritam Hari Kaur, yes you! Come over here, come and stand next to this man." She had been cleaning Yogi Bhajan's cabin and was surprised to be called by the Master. She took her place, standing beside the soft-spoken South African.

"Ah, you look good together. Go out and have a walk and discuss it between you, then let me know".

The two of them were both in shock, but the energy between them was good and with a deep prayer to Guru Ram Das, they wrapped their heads and hearts around Yogi Bhajan's proposition.

Engaged there and then, Pritam Hari Kaur and Har Bhajan Singh married in Hamburg in February 1987. The Siri Singh Sahib was not able to attend because of serious health issues, but the German



*Sangat* gave them a beautiful send off and soon they were off on their shared teaching mission in South Africa. A little over a year later, their son, Hari Bhajan, was born.

Har Bhajan Singh and Pritam Hari Kaur worked very hard. Aside from their Kundalini Yoga classes, they started a health food store and vegetarian restaurant that attracted a wonderful, avant garde and artistic clientele. They also had open door *sadhanas* on weekends and fed homeless people in the park.

Pritam Hari Kaur dearly missed seeing the Siri Singh Sahib and they managed trips for her to see him and their 3HO family in New Mexico and in Europe. When Har Bhajan Singh's spirits began to flag, she flew to Hamburg. The Master was always inspiring to her, and this was no exception. He told Pritam Hari Kaur she should return and be a smiling leader. She also obtained from Yogi Bhajan a signed, hand-written note for her husband, saying, "Har Bhajan is invited to come and spend one month with me."

Months and years passed, time Har Bhajan Singh would afterwards regret, without his once taking up the Master's invitation. And then it was December 1999. The World Parliament of Religions was coming to Cape Town, and so was the Siri Singh Sahib – against the advice of his doctors.

Hearing that his teacher was coming, Har Bhajan Singh sprang into gear, and when the Siri Singh Sahib arrived at Cape Town International Airport in December, he was there to greet and receive him.

On seeing Har Bhajan Singh, the first thing the Master said was, "I invited you to come. You never came, so I came to you."

Whatever doubt or misgivings remained in Har Bhajan's heart, quickly melted away at his teacher's humble presentation. The following days were a whirlwind of appointments, conversations, talks, classes, lectures, picking up guests at the airport, and touring the beautiful Cape Peninsula – the two of them in the front seats of the bus, talking and sharing, then Har Bhajan driving and the Master napping.

On that visit, Yogi Bhajan showed his childlike, mischievous side, which endeared him to his namesake. During a visit to a flea market, the Siri Singh Sahib sent everyone off shopping, so that he could get at the slab of chocolate which had been supplied to Har Bhajan Singh as part of lunch. During lunch, he said to his student, "You eat like a bird," and started to feed him so he would hurry up and open the chocolate bar. After a modest, but illegal portion, a contented grin covered the elder Harbhajan Singh's face. The pleasure was two-fold, knowing he had tricked his well-meaning staff who would have refused him this treat because of his diabetic condition.

The Master was full of compliments for both Pritam Hari Kaur and Har Bhajan Singh. At their first-ever teacher training course, he remarked, "You are the teacher of us all!" Yogi Bhajan also appreciated their innovative restaurant, saying it was the cleanest, nicest, little place he had ever seen.

One afternoon during the Parliament, Har Bhajan Singh was on his way to meet up with the Siri Singh Sahib when he was asked by a photographer to pose for a photo with two other gentlemen participants. They were all beautifully dressed in their various white garments.

Har Bhajan Singh forgot about that little detail in his day until the next morning when he entered Yogi Bhajan's hotel room. As was his habit, the Master had just been reading the morning newspapers, and there on the front page in Cape Town's leading morning paper was a photograph of his student with the two gentlemen on either side. The Master pulled him aside, indicating the newspaper, and said, "You see, you are the leader." As a forklift, he was without equal.

## **Aquarian Times: The Magazine**

It had been a few years since the 3HO Foundation had a glossy public relations piece. The last issue of Beads of Truth, with Soorya Kaur as editor-in-chief and Gurujivan Kaur as editor, had come out in 1991. Since the early days, Beads had served an invaluable role in connecting and keeping the growing 3HO family informed of new developments.

So it was that round about 2000, the Siri Singh Sahib said to Siri Ram Kaur, "You will create a magazine. It will be called 'Aquarian Times.'" And she did.

The first issue of Aquarian Times came out in spring of 2001. Its design was attractive and contemporary. Like Beads of Truth before it, the new magazine featured lectures of Yogi Bhajan, updates of his travel and teaching, and community events all over the world. Unlike Beads, it reached out to several writers who were not Khalsa, for their articles and inspiration. Alfredo Sfeir Younis, once an executive of the World Bank in New York, became a frequent contributor.

The presentation of the magazine became more striking with each issue, and continued, sharing the teachings and legacy of the Master around the world, four times annually, for several years to come.

## **The Healing**

In spring of 1999, Karam Singh began to feel a burning sensation in his lungs. His doctor diagnosed his condition – not breathing to full potential - as idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), a condition of unknown cause where the lungs are filled with destructive fibers and scar tissue.

Karam Singh asked his doctor if there was a treatment. He said there was, but there seemed no urgency. They agreed to meet again in six months.

Six months later, after a serious time with a flu virus, Karam Singh returned and the diagnosis was confirmed. The treatment offered was a high dose of steroids, followed by a lung transplant.

Karam Singh was aware of the side effects of steroids and transplants. He thanked the doctor and over the following months consulted numerous alternative health specialists. From January to June, he lost sixty pounds, going from 260 to 200 pounds, under the guidance of an Ayurvedic doctor. Other therapies included vitamin therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic, massage, Qi Gong, naturopathy, and homeopathy.

Karam Singh visited Dr. Maureen Horton, a specialist in IPF, at John Hopkins University. On his first visit, she scolded him, "You should not be doing all those things. They are not standardized." He continued to see her every four to six weeks.

Before Summer Solstice 2000, Karam Singh wrote Yogi Bhanan. After writing, the disease stopped progressing. The tests of his lungs' functioning at John Hopkins showed improvement.

Karam Singh secured an interview with Yogi Bhanan after Summer Solstice. Yogi Bhanan squinted, the better to take in his student, and asked "Why do you have this?"

"I don't know, Sir."

The Master looked at Karam Singh again, "Mung beans."

Karam Singh was standing, Yogi Bhanan sitting. Karam Singh asked, "Mung beans and rice?"

"No rice. Make a mung bean soup."

"Anything else, Sir?" asked Karam Singh hopefully.

"Onions, garlic and ginger."

"Anything else, Sir?"

"Lemon."

"Anything else, Sir?" asked Karam Singh, still hopeful.

"Indian mango pickle. 120 days."

That was it. Having asked for help with his diet before, Karam Singh knew the finality of the Master's last statement. Karam Singh started the diet weighing 200 pounds. In reality, he felt that his teacher had healed him through the power of his projection as he sat with him and that the diet was just a nourishing discipline, a consolidation of the healing.

By the end of the diet, Karam Singh was a fit 180 pounds. He continued his visits to Dr. Morton. At last visit, she acknowledged, "Whatever you did, worked." The expert in her field, Dr. Morton showed her bafflement, saying, "People don't get better from this disease."

The CATSCAN had shown that the scar tissue in his lungs had not gone away, but its appearance had changed. Moreover, Karam Singh's lungs were improving in their function. They had improved so much that Dr. Morton changed her diagnosis to "interstitial lung disease."

## **On the Go with the Siri Singh Sahib**

On March 1, 2000, the Siri Singh Sahib returned to India to celebrate the appointment of his long-time friend, Sardar Tarlochan Singh, as Chairman of the Minorities Commission for India. With such a diverse and potentially fractious population, the role was important for the country's future and an honor for the Sikhs of India.

Afterward, the Master and his entourage traveled to Chandigarh to take part in the World Punjabi Conference. While widely recognized as a religious personality, the Siri Singh Sahib also recognized the vital importance of keeping languages and cultures vibrant and alive. He was joined at the conference by many cultural luminaries, as well as the Punjab Chief Minister, Prakash Singh Badal and Baba Jagjit Singh of the Namdhari Jatha.

From there, the group made its way to nearby Anandpur Sahib for the International Conference on Alternative Systems of Medicine, where the Siri Singh Sahib was the keynote speaker. In his address, he spoke of the need for lifestyle programs with side benefits, not side effects, to combat the hazards of hypertension and stress on the nervous system. He also encouraged doctors to explore new ways to rebalance themselves and heal the wounds of modern society.

The Siri Singh Sahib returned to his home in Espanola, New Mexico at the end of March for a period of recuperation before a busy summer of Solstice and guests and camps, culminating with his birthday on August 26.

The next day, the Master set out for New York to participate in the Millennium World Peace Summit at the United Nations. The Siri Singh Sahib was given the distinctive honor of leading the invocation for the two thousand spiritual and religious heads gathered from around the globe. As a representative of the Sikh religion and a champion of religious diversity and peace, he urged those present to recognize their bonds as creatures of the same Creator. He urged the assembly to transform religion in the twenty-first century into a force to empower individuals to realize the God within. "We have a working God," he said, "Not a worshipping God."

In December, Yogi Bhanjan returned to India, where he received a "Man of the Millennium"

award from the Shiromani Committee of New Delhi for his ground-breaking efforts in the field of religion. He shared the podium with contemporary Indian stars in the fields of art, literature, music, and leadership.

From there, it was off to Anandpur Sahib to celebrate the opening of the new 3HO/Sikh Dharma teaching center at Dasmesh Sadan, the home of the Siri Singh Sahib. When he had heard that a piece of property on top of a hill directly across from Takhat Keshgarh Sahib had come up for sale, he had purchased it sight unseen. With his guidance, Soorya Kaur had worked for five years to build a residence and teaching center for him. Now, at its launch, the Master gave an extraordinary meditation course for the students of Miri Piri Academy that included music and chanting to welcome the new year, 2001.

### **Teach Kundalini Yoga in Person**

The Master called a student of his late one night to ask her to help another Kundalini Yoga teacher who had gotten herself in trouble by teaching meditations over the phone in tele-classes she held. As a result of those classes, her energy was off.

The Master asked his student if she did this.

She said, "No."

"Good, because Kundalini Yoga cannot be taught through the telephone or through the computer." Yogi Bhajan went on to explain that having a conversation, explaining or describing a teaching or doing counseling were okay.

He emphasized again that Kundalini Yoga and Meditation cannot be taught over the phone or through the internet, "Kundalini Yoga is not taught. It is transmitted through the arc line and auric body of the teacher. You cannot train teachers over the phone. You cannot teach over the phone or by the computer. The electromagnetic field does not work that way."

While the Siri Singh Sahib encouraged Guruka Singh and Sikhnet in their work of communicating and networking online, he made a clear distinction between that kind of activity and the teaching of Kundalini Yoga through electronic media. Similar conversations with a few other Kundalini Yoga teachers and trainers around that time conveyed the same message. The Master mentioned it again at a meeting of the Khalsa Council. For this reason, the Kundalini Research Institute avoided electronic media for any training purposes.

## September 11, 2001: A Call to Action

When tragedy struck New York City on September 11, 2001 as hijacked jetliners filled with passengers struck the city's landmark World Trade Center, the Master watched events unfolding from his home in Espanola, New Mexico. To his teachers in New York, where many thousands were reeling from shock and grief, he gave specific instructions to teach their students the calming and centering one-minute breath, and to serve them the 3HO family recipe of mung beans and rice as a comfort and tonic for their overtaxed systems.

A patriotic American, Yogi Bhajan spoke to the community in Espanola that day and urged his students to action.

"... You must have watched the tragedy, right?"

"Yes sir."

"So it comes to this, that one thought can make an enemy and it can make a friend. What we have witnessed is a thought of animosity against the openness of United States. We do not know how many people have died, but actually the heading on TV that 'America is under attack,' was correct.

"This is first time in the world the civilians have been attacked. Every rule has been crossed. They have attacked our symbol of trade, they have attacked our symbol of strength. Had that plane not fallen apart they would have attacked the White House. So, there might have been no Superpower.

"A handful of people when they put their life at stake they can do all this. It is not amazing what reaction there will be tomorrow, but I personally feel that the world at large, they do not understand America or Americans. And with a grit and a consolidated strength when we'll wake up, there will be a very severe tragedy which people who have been doing this will face.

"It is true that we have a collective responsibility. That is why Nanak gave credit to *Sangat*. We are one, we also will suffer as one and we'll act as one.

"All these people who have died had not even a thought. Their only crime was they were Americans, you understand? And it was a well-planned attack, hijacking our own planes, civilian planes, full of gasoline, going a long distance, but diverted and put into the action of terrorism.

"Now you figure it out when I am crying that age of Aquarian is coming this is a period of insanity. In between, you believe it?"

"No, you don't. See what has happened. And many more things are expected. It's a tragedy which we have to face. Tomorrow, when they will count everything, it will be a bigger tragedy than it's

today.

“What we can offer is one minute of prayer. Just in our silence, our head bowed to Almighty, seeking His protection and kindness and compassion for those left behind, seeking the healing energy for those who are injured. Let us send our this prayer from our heart unto God Almighty. Thank you.

“We know America will react, let there be no doubt about it. But our prayer is let America react systematically. It is natural that the language which terrorists understand is not the language of a civilized person.

“Now you understand what happened in Punjab? There was a paid terrorism and people used to ask me why I don't declare it. I didn't declare anything because at that time it was a paid movement.

“There are a lot of things I know more than you or many people. It has taken me almost all these years to play dumb and I do very well. What do we know? What do I know? It is no matter, but we know.

“Intelligence reports are very accurate, but there should be a patience. Though America was patient so far, they knew all this, but they never knew at the same time four planes will be hijacked, our planes, our flights. Now you understand how important security is? And they took all those flights which had maximum gasoline in them. So you can see what they were out to do.

“Attacking the Pentagon is nothing, but that was the symbol of the strength of our army. Blowing up the World Towers of trade was nothing, but that was to just let us know that we are also open to danger. Now it is up to us not to react, not to root it out by just filling a cavity of this tooth. That way, the temporary pain will go, but the danger shall be there. Sometimes it is better to root out the tooth. That is the way the America will go.

“In World War II, it was Japan who attacked Pearl Harbor, right? We could have pocketed it, but we didn't. That's what I am trying to tell you. It's a faculty of every American to keep on pocketing a lot of things till it goes overhead, then they pocket nothing. Pearl Harbor brought World War II, made us to participate. Our whole lifestyle changed, we were not the same again and we are not going to be the same again.

“Similarly, this attack has done it, this attack is going to change our lifestyle. America will never be the same again. You have to go two hours earlier to the airport at least. Things will look rough. The policy in the domestic world will be changed and everything within the domestic policy will be searched out. Similarly, in the foreign world everything will be changed that way.

“That is what religion is all about. Search your inside. Give yourself a chance. Eliminate your fantasies and your imaginations. Don't live in a dream world. Things can happen and that is what has

happened.

“When the Trade Center was attacked a couple years ago, it was not much damage, but then the method was not very sophisticated also. So they have been planning. Remember, the enemies do plan all the time. You have to defend a thousand times.

“The enemy wants one chance, which they got it today. Now it is of the nation to respond. If America does not respond, these kinds of things will be repeated again.

“It's very unfortunate that whole country is not divided at all. It is very unfortunate for those people who have done this, because everything has been blown together. America will act with one voice, with one determination, and with one strength which is humongous.

“This is called ‘wrong calculated acts.’ Those who have done it, they have been very successful, but our spirit of America does not lie in those towers and that side of the Pentagon. Those were symbols which have been disturbed. Now there is a time for reaction.

“That's why the concept which was given our saints and soldiers comes handy. Now you understand. People used to say what we have to be a soldier for? We have to be a soldier for this insanity. We have to be a saint, a saint for this kind of insanity.

“What was laid down by Guru Gobind Singh was not a joke. All he said is, ‘There can be a possibility where you have to defend yourself but in a very saintly firm way.’

“I am not criticizing anybody but there are lot of religions who say, ‘If somebody hits your left cheek, turn your right and get hit on it.’

“And I used to say, ‘If somebody hit your left cheek, hit his right cheek that much that there should be no cheek. Otherwise, some other poor fellow will get it!’

“We must have a planned spiritual strength. It is called ‘applied spiritual strength.’ And now you have to give up your etcetera, etcetera, etcetera activities. Time is on us and we are walking into that time where we have to relate to our inner and outer strength both.

“I understand you'll be hearing in the next few days a lot of talk on it, but I can assure you from the information we have, they are planning quite a big number. And don't get into your hippie mood. They will put you behind the bars that you will never be heard again. Some of us have long big tongue and big ego and I don't know where they come from. Everything is on a candid camera, every word said, will be seen.

“TV cameras were at Albuquerque ashram. They were questioning, so I will like you to be very cautious. Learn in sympathy that life is a commended sense of coordination, cooperation and



projection. You have to survive as an individual and you have to survive as a collective individual. So when you do not find the cohesiveness, exclusiveness and strength, you can't survive.

“The circumstances which are going to face us will tell us that really the world has changed. You can learn it hard way, or you can learn it by collective way. It is all up to us whether we have peace of mind and we can face the tragedy and we can live collectively to face the tragedy or we have to be shattered individuals.

“My feeling is it's a very condemnable effect. This act is no good. But when you leave tomorrow for your offices or for work or sit down and talk with your colleagues, keep your spirit high and be effective. At this time with the sorrow there is a great anger. Throughout the world, there is a frustration and this act has triggered that frustration.

“And sometime in our being naïve, we start talking something which is not responsible. Please avoid such conversation, discussion, that will be no benefit to you; rather it may put you into jeopardy. This whole thing has hurt every American. Whether we like it or not, there shall be reaction. Don't become victim to that reaction. It has to happen. World shall act insane. There is no sanity in what has happened. Nobody could among you believe that this will happen. Still it has happened. You understand what I am saying?”

“Yes sir!”

“Unknowingly people are attacked personally, collectively and nationally for no reason. We should send the healing energy to those who are still in pain, like a fried fish. We should show our oneness of that heart. Let us fold our hands, close our eyes.”

Yogi Bajan then directed his students in a healing meditation to a prerecording of the mantra, “*Ra Ma Dha Sa, Sa Say So Hung*,” aloud, in a whisper, and then in silence.

“Inhale deep! Give this breath to those who need it. Exhale... Let us sing God bless America together.”

His students then sang the American anthem.

“We owe our thoughts to the land we live, many times we may have differences in our concepts, but when comes the time we must stay together. This is not a small tragedy. A bunch of terrorists can attack a superpower in such a diversity way and plan it to the extent that there is no second to it. The state we live in, if that could have been attacked it could caused the entire world annihilation.

“Sometime you don't have any understanding of who you are. I feel the time has come when you must trust that the insanity is around the corner and we have to act right. Fearlessly being alert we have to face the terrorist enemy.

“All this peace, and this ‘Islam is a peaceful thing,’ and all this is just to put salt in your eyes. It's not true. Whenever they will get a chance, they will make a hole in your most powerful ship in Aden or they will blow up your barracks. They believe today in violence and this propaganda which you hear, ‘there is one God and we are in the Name of one God’ and all that, is just to keep you pacified and give you a lollypop.

“Please write a letter to your senator, ask them to act to root out the possibility of this cowardly act and prove it to us as voters. The pressure from your side will make them answerable. And nobody should be a coward not to write a letter. Send a letter with your feeling. We are district three in congress.

“You know who is our congressman? One who used to play with us, right? So he is no foreigner to us, therefore you should write letters to him. And who is our senator, do you know? Jeff Bingaman. But do not forget to send a copy to Pete Domenici.

“All right. And do me a favor. Each one of you should write letter to the president. They need this time help. It is a test of the will of the people. Don't hesitate.”

The class concluded with the Long Time Sun song and a happy birthday for someone whose birthday it was.

“This is a birthday which has created a history. I was talking to Ranbir, my older son, I said, ‘What you have done today on your birthday?’

“He said, ‘Well, I am watching the same TV you are watching.’

“There is no surprise that events can take place beyond human imaginations. So, some volunteers will serve you the cookies and Gurumehar Kaur is going to be blessed anyway. Get some volunteers! What they are doing there?

“We have *missals* and we have *jathedars* of the *missals*, so every individual has to write an individual letter, not collectively. But if somebody does need a guidance, people will be available for that.”

### **A Special *Kirtan* in Amritsar**

It was Guru Ram Das's birthday, October 2001 in Amritsar. The holy city was festive with brightly colored lights and decorations. This was a special day for the Siri Singh Sahib. His favorite group of *ragis*, the Chardi Kala Jatha – Jagat Guru Singh, Sada Sat Simran Singh, and Harimandir Jot Singh – had been honored by being requested to perform in the Golden Temple that day.

The three had begun their study of *kirtan* years earlier as students of Miri Piri Academy. They continued their studies in Amritsar under the expert guidance of Ustad Narinder Singh Sandhu and Ustad Dr. Murli Manohar.

Now, on the birthday of the founder of Amritsar, their dreams were to come true with a performance in the Sikh holy of holies. To ensure the great son of Guru Ram Das enjoyed this historic *kirtan*, Gurubachan Singh, Harimandir Jot's father, brought a cell phone inside the Darbar Sahib and broadcast the performance direct to the Siri Singh Sahib in Espanola.

“Great, great is Ram Das the Guru. The One Who created you has also decorated you. Complete is the miracle. The Creator Himself is your support.”

It was to be the first of several performances by the *jatha*, sent by cell phone and thoroughly enjoyed by the Siri Singh Sahib in his dome in Espanola.

## The Girl Who Couldn't

It was December 2, 2001, a date Mahan Kirn Kaur would long remember. Four years before, she had twisted her right ankle while jogging on a sunny beach in Mexico. That sprain had slowly grown to affect her entire being with pain. She had visited an endless stream of two hundred doctors and specialists in six states of the US. The best they could manage was to attach a name to her condition: Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy. RSD, they said, affected the sympathetic nervous system, stopping blood flow to the extremities, causing them to gradually deteriorate due to lack of circulation.

Eventually, they said, Mahan Kirn, who had once been a college athlete, would be a cripple confined to a wheelchair. She had begun to accept and surrender to the reality of her new situation. Doctors had assured her they could insert a \$30,000 nerve pump to lessen the excruciating pain in her right leg.

Mahan Kirn Kaur was twenty-six years old. The day before, she had prayed for a miracle. Now, as she entered Yogi Bhajan's room, she felt his quiet, intent gaze and felt that he had heard her prayer. Suddenly, he spoke like a thunderbolt, “What is wrong with you? You do not want to get better?”

In the depths of her soul, Mahan Kirn Kaur shook. She offered no excuse to her teacher's challenge and opened her heart to his direction.

Yogi Bhajan said, “You do not do enough yoga.” He then instructed her to put her body into Bound Lotus pose and challenged her to stay in the position for 31 minutes. “You must do this *kriya* and master it in your lifetime. It is the only thing that will heal you.”

Mahan Kirn had never heard of this pose, had never tried it in her life. As she was assisted into the pose, she felt as though her every fibre and muscle was being torn apart. Once in the pose, with her feet painfully scrunched up onto opposite thighs, her hands tightly wrapped behind her, fingers grasping her big toes from behind, and her forehead on the floor, she resolved to remain there for the full 31 minutes. After all, she felt there was nothing to lose. And so, she did.

After that, Mahan Kirn resolved to continue her practice every day without fail.

## One More Time to India

In December of 2001, the Siri Singh Sahib made an effort to return yet once more to his beloved Harimandar Sahib. He went with his trusty aide, Gurubachan Singh, his wife Bibiji, his daughter Kamaljeet Kaur and her husband, Satpal Singh, and his security detail, including Shanti Kaur.

After a meeting with the newly-elected President of the S.G.P.C., Singh Sahib Kirpal Singh Bodnagar, in Chandigarh, the Siri Singh Sahib proceeded to the holy city of Amritsar. Given his situation of being wheelchair-bound, he was provided with one of several new wheelchairs specially fitted for pilgrims with mobility issues to do their circling of Harimandar Sahib on the surrounding marble walkway. Also, in Amritsar, the Master, together with Sardar Tarlochan Singh and renowned singer, Surinder Kaur, was given an honorary degree at Guru Nanak Dev University. After receiving his honorary doctorate in philosophy and religious studies, the Siri Singh Sahib addressed the students there.

From Amritsar, the group travelled to Ludhiana, where they attended a Raag Kirtan Darbar, a festival of *Gurbani* Kirtan practised in the classical style. The event attracted hundred of kirtan groups from all over India to the Javadi Taksaal of Sant Sucha Singh. Among the kirtan groups was a jatha from Miri Piri Academy. The Siri Singh Sahib spoke to the *Sangat* inspiring words that appealed for unity and strength among Sikhs.

After Ludhiana, the group was bound for Rishikesh, ancient city of sages and seers, on the banks of the Ganga River. The International Conference on Ayurveda, sponsored by the Siri Singh Sahib's daughter, drew numerous leading healers of the Ayurvedic tradition, such as Dr. P. N. V. Kurup, Dr. D. Triguna, and Dr. V. Lad. The Master inaugurated the conference and lent his voice in support to India's unique, timeless system of medicine.

All duties done, the Siri Singh Sahib and his companions settled in his home in Anandpur Sahib to relax and welcome the turning of the calendar year.

## Baisakhi 2002 Khalsa Council Address

Sometimes we misunderstand the strength. If you look back at the history of the world, as many years as you can go back, there came one man – Jesus, Muhammad, Guru Nanak, Buddha – with one thought, and that one thought changed the entire world. A section of the world, let us put it that way.

Yesterday, I said we should treat our children as our students. It is a learning process for the teacher to understand the impulses, projection and rejection of each child, so he or she can understand the child's feelings, thoughts, needs, and dreams. That's the way we've got to grow.

Our spirits are strong. We have to watch that our *sadhana*, daily spiritual practice, is to be strong. *Sadhana* creates a spiritual balance, which we can share with all the people who we relate to. And it's very important.

As you have come to these meetings, conscious and beautiful as you are, you have made a personal, mental, physical, and spiritual effort to be here. So, you are ready to carry the weight of the coming future. We can walk into this coming age together, helping each other, loving each other, talking to each other, telling each other stories about our great experiences. We have to cherish a great brotherhood and sisterhood so we can conquer our own ego.

This universe is with us. Fifty years ago, who thought there would be a Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere? Who thought we'd have our temples, our prayers, our worship?

I'm not saying that there are no difficulties. There are difficulties. But when there's a difficulty, go inside, meditate, face it. When there's happiness, go outside and share it. These are a few human fundamentals that we have to follow, strictly by the code. Never feel anybody is inferior, and you will become great. Remember, there's nobody without God, and you will have God all around you.

It is very beautiful to watch you working together, bonding with each other, understanding, and creating a relationship which shall last forever. May we walk into this Age of Aquarius with success in our hearts. We have come a long way, and we are willing to go a long way with love, affection, and peace.

## The Song Lives On

It started with a phone call from his wife. Sarab Shakti Kaur was at a pay phone at the Khalsa women's camp in New Mexico and she was calling her husband, Guru Shabad Singh at their home in Eugene, Oregon. The year was 1989.

"Hi, Honey," she said, "the Siri Singh Sahib has taught us this mantra that is the most beautiful I

have ever heard. You have to write it down!" It was a command, not a request.

Guru Shabad Singh quickly grabbed a pen and paper from the kitchen drawer and took down the mantra as his wife read it to him, syllable by syllable, as Yogi Bhajan had taught it earlier. She began chanting, "*Sa ray sa sa, sa ray sa sa, sa ray sa sa sa rang. Har ray har har, har ray har har, har ray har har har rang.*"

"Whoa, that is really cool!" he said, "I've never heard one like this before. It's long!"

In no time, Guru Shabad Singh had picked up his guitar and begun strumming and singing a melody. Soon thereafter, he was in a studio with a producer, determining how it should be recorded. Then, they were doing it. For thirty-one minutes straight, blistered fingers and all, they recorded the song.

The next day, Guru Shabad Singh sent the newly-recorded cassette tape to the Master through his wife, who ran it to his quarters as soon as she received it. When Sarab Shakti Kaur played it for him, he said, "This is perfect!" Without hesitation, he continued, "Now, here are two more I want put to music. I need them done quickly. Write this down..." And the work continued.

That afternoon, the Siri Singh Sahib began playing the mantra as it had been recorded, and he continued playing it for the remainder of the camp and beyond. He said, "This is the path of Kundalini music. This tape shall live forever. It brings peace to those on whose forehead peace is not written. It will bring prosperity to those who do not know how to spell it. It will bring you good luck when you have done nothing good, not even in a dream. This is the opening of the lotus which turns the divine Mother back to the navel point."

Some years later, when Yogi Bhajan was visiting Eugene, he asked that Guru Shabad Singh come to see him. When he arrived, the Master asked, "What is the best-selling mantra in 3HO?"

*"Rakhay rakhanhaar?"*

*"Nope, it's Sa Ray Sa Sa."*

His student was puzzled. *Sa Ray Sa Sa* had been available for sale for years and Singh Kaur's music was trendy at the time.

The Siri Singh Sahib went on to explain that some yoga students from Europe had taken *Sa Ray Sa Sa* and turned it into a number one hit on the disco charts in Italy. Sure enough, Guru Shabad Singh purchased a copy of the song and they heard it done surprisingly to a Euro beat.

In a private meeting around Summer Solstice in 2002, Yogi Bhajan advised his student that he was going to "die in two years."

Shortly thereafter, at a yoga class in Espanola, the Master told his recording engineer, Siri Ved Singh, to play another recording Guru Shabad Singh had made, *Ajai Alai* from *Jaap Sahib*. As the night went on, he asked Siri Ved to turn the volume up louder... and louder... and louder still, with the *Sangat* singing at full volume. The thundrous chorus filled the room, the intensity growing by the second.

At one point, it struck Guru Shabad Singh that this might be the last time he would see his teacher. With that thought, came a profound sense of him saying, "Thank you for your music." It was all too much for Guru Shabad Singh. Tears began to well up and he felt the need to leave the room. Before doing so, he stole one last look at the Master. When he cleared his eyes enough to see him, he looked at his radiant face and saw that he too was crying. It was a beautiful, musical end to their relationship on the physical plane.

## The Gambler

During the last years of his life, the Siri Singh Sahib was pretty much confined to his quarters. His illness curtailed his "out and about" nature. Since his enjoyment of the world was on hold, Hari Jiwan Singh, his regular companion, brought a part of the world to him. They watched a lot of movies on TV.

The Siri Singh Sahib especially loved John Wayne movies for the values they usually included. It was a great lesson to see that their teacher only judged by evaluating the good in someone or something. He explained to Hari Jiwan that everyone comes as a mixed bag. "I help them work on the improper portion," he said, "and I enjoy the correct version." Whether it was John Wayne or a student was not the issue.

Some days, for fun, Hari Jiwan Singh would bring in jewelry to sell to the Master. They both enjoyed their time haggling, jostling, and having bluff arguments over value. Moreover, the price agreed on was always more than Hari Jiwan had originally paid for the goods. The Chief of Protocol, who was used to being tested by the Master, felt that perhaps they had entered into a new phase of their relationship, a profitable one at that, now that he was selling to the Siri Singh Sahib.

One afternoon as they were sitting in the Dome, the secretary of the Siri Singh Sahib's accountant came in and announced, "Sir, our bill to Hari Jiwan is getting up there."

He asked, "How much?"

"Oh, its \$38,850."

"How much?" he exclaimed in beautifully feigned amazement.

She repeated the amount in a much lower tone.

“Pay him \$6,000,” he said, flicking his hand as if he were ever so generous.

Hari Jiwan pretended to be astonished, as if he had not been expecting this, and smiled. They both felt satisfied at the exchange.

It was the summer of 2002. The Master had recently had a kidney transplant, but there were other issues and his condition deteriorated further. He was no longer able to walk and at times was in great pain.

Hari Jiwan Singh rarely saw him in this condition. On this particular day, he was the only one present in the room with his teacher as he was perched on the edge of his bed, rocking in pain. Knowing that in the Indian culture the ill appreciate company, Hari Jiwan left the couch and joined him on the bed. He gently asked if there was anything he could do.

“No,” said the Master, shaking his head.

Hari Jiwan felt compassion for this teacher who had served so many for so long. Knowing he was bound for Infinity, he said, “Sir, you don’t have to stick around for us. We’ll be fine.”

“Shut up,” the Master countered, motioning with his hand in the familiar offhand gesture he used when gracefully correcting his student. “That’s not why I’m still here.”

Hari Jiwan Singh had assumed his teacher was staying around to keep things under control, perhaps because he felt his students were as yet unable to carry the considerable weight of responsibility the Siri Singh Sahib had been shouldering for many years. Even if they were not prepared as yet to do without him, telling the Master they were seemed the right thing to say, given the pain he was experiencing.

The Master continued, “I’m paying off the karma I created in forcing others to do what they weren’t capable of performing. I wanted so badly to help them that I went beyond my jurisdiction as a teacher. Some people must succeed and others you must let fail. I pushed some loved ones beyond my specific duty.” Then he added, “But, you know me, I’ve always been a risk taker.”

Indeed, in the course of thirty-plus years, the Master had pulled the best out of people by challenging them to do far better than they could imagine. Since the beginning, he had encouraged his students to be ten times better than himself. He had been relentless, first with himself, then with his students. Yogi Bhajan, while always compassionate, never gave anyone an excuse to be just second-rate.

At times, people were sent into the wilderness to set up ashrams. When they had faith, they prospered. Without it, they fell apart. Sometimes he married people who were exact opposites,



knowing that in the rare likelihood their marriage survived, they would become extraordinary teachers of humanity.

The Master's technique had polished his students, those who remained. Over the years, they grew and were able to overcome adversities, and to excel many times over. But there was also a heavy rate of attrition. Many, many tried the path and found the standards too high, the discipline too exacting, and after a few months or a few years, they left. It was in remembrance of them, that the Siri Singh Sahib felt he suffered, and oh, he suffered righteously!

## *"Japji"*

Despite his considerable pain and discomfort, the Siri Singh Sahib soldiered on. In June of 2003, he hosted a course on one of his favorite subjects: the *Japji* of Guru Nanak. Seated, uncharacteristically, in a wheelchair, with a weakened voice punctuated by the steady beat of his oxygen pump, he spoke:

"Mother Nature creates environments and circumstances in which you must pay for your karma. Karma we must do and whatever we do for ourselves is a karma; whatever we do for others is a dharma. There is no such thing as dharma prescribed by such and such person or people, or God spoke to you from the heavens. It doesn't work that way.

"Dharma is when you consciously put yourself together to work for others, for their happiness, for their benefit, for taking away their pain, giving them a life, serving them. It doesn't exclude your spouse and your children. It saves others, anybody other than you. If you are sweet, kind, compassionate, serviceful, it is an act of dharma and it will be accounted for.

*"Japji* introduces you to yourself. Study it that way, in small lines. There is a stone at the ranch that I put my memory line on. It says, '*Ketia dukh bukh sadh maar eh be dat teree dataar.* - So many endure distress, deprivation, and abuse. Even these are your gifts, oh great Giver.'

"Nanak is you, in you, around you; in your action, in your thought, in your imagination, in your projection. Nanak makes your karma into dharma.

"And you will find that outside you and inside you, every word of *Japji* is true. Then you can declare anything you want—blessed God has blessed you. His hand is guiding you. Calm down. Don't fight with personality. Follow the reality.

"Clear is your consciousness, self-kindness is your virtue. And you are looking forward to that tranquility and peace which is your wealth. Who can match up with you? You may not value yourself. That is a separate issue. But fact is a fact. That is what *Japji* is all about. Each sutra is

complete, and in my whole life, this one line was the guiding line for this one life: '*Ketiaa dukh bukh sadh maar eh bhee daat tayree dataar.*'

“Then you can live very happily. Then, there is no conflict left. There is no ego heard. Then you can never become a victim of depression. Then you can slide through *desh* and *kaal*. That is the highest achievement of a human—to slip through time and space.

“In *Japji* you will be surprised, even the thieves have a place. They are all accounted for because *Japji* doesn't provide any barrier to any human. It is like an ocean which has rivers coming into it. It is the solution of a life of peace and tranquility, and union of a creature with the Creator.

“If you understand even one sutra of *Japji*, that is more than enough. It should become your guiding guide. You should realize that is what you liked and that is what Nanak said for you.

“This is my prayer: that you learn *Japji* by heart. You can sing it thoroughly well. If you want to master something, teach that. It shall be true. Nanak spoke *Japji* for those who today don't value it.

“You have picked it up. Spread it! It will open up many doors for you. For those who are walking in darkness, by the self-realization, it is the simplest way, very simple. I am hopeful that you will remember it.”

## Messenger from the Guru's House

The writer in question had been given the blessed task of writing a biography of the Siri Singh Sahib at Guru Nanak Nivas in Toronto back in 1983. Many years later, he would be told by a seasoned member of Yogi Bhajan's staff that, over the years, the Master had given many people projects to do. It didn't mean they were actually expected to complete them.

The humble writer's wife did the housework for the Siri Singh Sahib when he came to Toronto, and therefore saw him regularly during his visits. About the time he had been told to write the Siri Singh Sahib's life story and that it was to be titled “Messenger from the Guru's House,” she graciously gave his copy of *Peace Lagoon* to the Master for his signature. In it, Yogi Bhajan had written, “Those who spread Guru's Word are Blessed. You are one of them.”

The Siri Singh Sahib and the writer had already established a relationship. They were monthly “pen pals.” On an earlier visit, Yogi Bhajan had told his student, “You are German. Your word should be like German steel.” The integrity the Master called out in his student gave him no choice other than to dive headlong into the story of the Siri Singh Sahib's life. But how?

The Master had also directed his student to start a business around that time. The business was slow going. It was just a bit player in the Canadian health food industry, importing Yogi Tea, Nanak's

Cookies, Sunshine Oils, and Golden Temple granola from 3HO-inspired enterprises in the US. One time, when his credit line had been used up with the tea company, he was surprised to find a two thousand dollar bill had simply been forgiven. He did not ask, but assumed it was the intervention of the loving Siri Singh Sahib.

When a brave young son, whom the Master named “Himmat Singh” was born, it meant lots of joyful play and fun. But it also infused a new seriousness into the project. The biography was a legacy work for this generation and coming generations. It needed to be done.

In 1994, a fax arrived from Yogi Bhajan: “How is my biography coming? Let me see the first draft.” The World Sikh Conference was coming and he wanted a history of his mission to show. Within months, a first draft was sent to his office. And so began this blessed work.

A few years later, the writer made his way to Summer Solstice Sadhana. There, to his surprise and delight, the Siri Singh Sahib had a member of his staff read a couple of chapters of the biography from the stage to the appreciation of the thousands in attendance at Ram Das Puri.

It took another twenty years for *Messenger from the Guru’s House* to take its present form. The obstacles were many. Surely, the Master wanted it that way.

## The Girl Who Could

Since her meeting with Yogi Bhajan, Mahan Kirn Kaur had continued her practice of Bound Lotus Kriya with lots of pillows for props, plenty of epsom salt baths, and on the days when she was not able to practice in the morning, two alarms and a note on her pillow to ensure she never missed a day. She was aiming to complete one thousand days, as Yogi Bhajan had said it took that long to master something.

After two years of steady practicing, Mahan Kirn Kaur had already made great progress. She could walk and move without pain. The *kriya* had healed not only her body, but her mind and heart as well.

Amazed and grateful, Mahan Kirn informed her teacher of these developments. As a teacher of teachers, Yogi Bhajan asked that she start teaching Bound Lotus, “Let them know it will serve them in their future.” And she did.

## Blessed to Teach in China

For Angad Kaur, it all started at a cozy graduation gathering after her Level One Kundalini Yoga Teacher Training in Toronto, Canada. It was May, 2003. She was with her fellow graduates at the home of their trainers, Krishna Kaur and Hari Darshan Singh. Angad was the only Chinese student in the class.

Like thousands of others, she and her husband had moved to Canada when Hong Kong returned to China in 1997. With uncertainty about what life would be like in Hong Kong under Chinese rule, they came to Toronto to fulfill the requirements of Canadian citizenship, which included staying in the country for five years.

At Hari Darshan and Krishna's home, everyone was sitting in a circle, sharing their experiences and personal visions for the future of Kundalini Yoga in their lives. As it was a teacher training course, many in that circle expressed their hope and desire to share the technology of Kundalini Yoga as teachers.

Angad Kaur's mind went blank. She had only taken the training to improve her personal practice. When it came her turn to speak, she was shocked to hear herself say, "Kundalini Yoga is such a beautiful thing, I am going to share with my country's people."

The next month, Angad Kaur flew to Shanghai for a vacation. During her stay, she fell in love with the city. In July, Angad moved from Toronto to Shanghai to stay. At the time, there was a voice inside her that said, "Teaching Kundalini Yoga in Shanghai could be a good idea. It could keep me busy."

Angad Kaur wrote to Yogi Bhajan and asked if she should teach Kundalini Yoga in China.

Within a month, she received the Master's reply: "You are blessed to teach in China. Be steady and slow and you will win the world."

When Angad Kaur shared her plans with her friends, many told her that her white head cover and the Kundalini Yoga chanting might make the Chinese general public and government think she is part of a cult and put her in danger.

A strong voice inside told her, "The fact is we are not a cult. Why should we be afraid?"

Angad Kaur's husband was shocked to see his wife changed from a "party animal" and seafood lover to a teetotaler and vegetarian. Rather than staying up late and going to bars with him, she was going to bed early, and rising for a cold shower and 4 a.m. *sadhana*. He was also surprised at her chanting the mantras of the Aquarian *sadhana* in their bedroom. Good man that he was, he could see Angad Kaur – her new name – was happy and his attitude was that when she was happy, so was he.

At this time, Angad Kaur's husband asked her to talk to the tenant of their business property in Shanghai about their rental contract. As soon as she walked onto the property, which she had never before visited, Angad could see two words in her third eye: "Yoga Center!" That evening, she convinced her husband with a business plan for renting this property as the first Kundalini Yoga center in China.

Since the Chinese government was very sensitive about spirituality at that time - as reflected in its repression of the Falun Gong movement and its disputes with the Roman Catholic Church - Angad Kaur made sure all Kundalini Yoga activities were legal so that the name "Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan" could be protected in China.

Things moved very quickly. Within three months of the graduation party, Angad Kaur had created the "Yoga Asia Kundalini Yoga Center" and a company registered with the Chinese government to run all the Kundalini Yoga activities in the country legally. Angad had used her personal savings of 1.1 million Hongkong dollars as the legal requirement for the initial capital for the company and promised herself the classes would be open to even one student. She had also begun teaching out of her home. Angad Kaur's first Kundalini Yoga student was a neighbor named Rachel.

The Yoga Asia Kundalini Yoga Center was renovated and adorned with a large picture of the Golden Temple. It was also equipped with an excellent gong. Sheep skins and white head covers were purchased for every student. Once everything was in place, an ad was placed in the most popular Shanghai magazine for people living there from abroad. That was in November.

A forty-day Aquarian *Sadhana*, starting with *Japji Sahib* at 4 a.m. and ending each morning with the Long Time Sun song at 6:30 started the center on a powerful footing. The first day, Angad Kaur was the only person there, but she felt one with God, joyful, and cozy. *Sadhana* continued, with or without students, from then on.

Angad Kaur found unexpected support in her mission from Adarsh Singh Khalsa. He had accompanied his garment engineer wife and their two young children from Germany to Shanghai in 1999, and subsequently learned Kundalini Yoga from another German house-husband, Sat Mandir Singh. After inviting a Kundalini Yoga teacher from Germany to train them to teach, they had been giving classes almost every day. When Sat Mandir Singh moved with his family to the US, Adarsh Singh remained teaching in Shanghai.

Soon, the students began to arrive, mainly Spanish, Italian and French. Some Japanese wives brought their babies to class. The first Chinese student, named Amy, came from a foreign investment company, General Motors.

One interesting group were stock market speculators. They would come to morning *sadhana* whenever they had lost money and keep coming for a week or so, then Angad Kaur would not see them for a while. Eventually, the same group would turn up, telling Angad how much money they had

lost. She wondered that with all the money flowing through their hands, they never once came to a regular yoga class. This stingy group of investors came to morning *sadhana* partly because it was free and partly because they felt it gave them luck.

One student confidentially told Angad Kaur she saw Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva by her left side and the Buddha by her right side while she was teaching. “You must be the expressive image of these great beings,” she said.

When Angad Kaur denied her student’s claims and told her she was just an ordinary person, she whispered, “I know. This is the secret of the heaven.”

Once again, Angad insisted, “I am an ordinary person only.”

But to Angad Kaur’s amusement, her student would not believe her. “I know. It is the secret of the heaven. We cannot say. We cannot say,” she continued to whisper.

With the passage of time, Angad Kaur and her husband learned to adapt to each other’s differing habits. He found out how to cook Chinese vegetarian dishes for her and she was not bothered when he ate meat at the same table with her. Her husband continued to support Angad Kaur in her practice, his thinking being that Kundalini Yoga was good for his wife, but not for him.

Yoga Asia could not afford to pay rent to Angad Kaur’s husband for five years, but slowly interest in Kundalini Yoga grew, as did the number of students from China and abroad. Ever grateful for the blessing of introducing Kundalini Yoga to mainland China, Angad Kaur gleaned a few lessons from her early years in Shanghai. The first thing she learned was to follow the teachings purely – nothing more, nothing less. Whoever was meant to be there would come and there was no need to change the teachings to please the students. Early on, she also learned not to expect to earn her living from sharing the technology of Kundalini Yoga, but to share the teachings with love and reverence – and sufficient financial resources.

## **The Gentleman’s Report**

As the Master’s fame spread, it is said that a well-known gentleman came from India to pay his respects. The man was duly granted visiting privileges and stayed for a number of days. As he was being escorted to his car to leave a final time, the gentleman turned around, looked at the dome and remarked, “This is truly a saint.”

His escort asked him what he meant.

The gentleman explained: “I have seen him for the past few days. And I could see he was in a

terrible pain, but he never complained. I have visited many people in India who claimed to be saints, yogis and *babaji*'s. But when they got sick, they all complained: 'Oh God, why is this happening to me?' and so on. But Yogi Bhajan never uttered a complaint even once. He is a true saint."

### ***Japji Sahib: A New Translation***

The Siri Singh Sahib kept going. When his condition did not allow him to go out, sometimes he would invite select people to come in. His *sewa* was unending. In his final months, he took some time to mentor Ek Ong Kaar Kaur in translating the spirit of *Japji Sahib* into English. Naturally, the result was alive with inspiration.

It started:

"One Spirit Beyond  
Moves within the Creation -  
Coordinating  
Consolidating  
Continually  
Creating,

And this Spirit  
Within me  
Is my True Identity.

It Does All  
And Causes All  
To be done.

It Protects me  
Through all incidents  
Of Time and Space.

It fears nothing  
And knows nothing  
Of vengeance  
Or anger.

Deathless  
It comes into Form.  
In Itself, It has  
Never been born.

Flowing through the cycles  
Of Birth and Death  
It moves  
By Its Own  
Purity and Projection.

This understanding  
Shall come to you  
As a sweet blessing,  
As a gift.

In every moment  
Continue  
In Its Continual  
Remembrance.

From the start  
This Truth was True.

All through Time and Space is True.  
Even now, this Truth is True.

Nanak says  
Ever shall be True..."

## **Service, Far and Away**

As the Siri Singh Sahib's physical sojourn on Earth became less and less, some of his long time students made serious efforts to to be of service in countries far from America. Building on her work helping to establish the Black Yoga Teachers Association a couple of years earlier, in November 2003, Krishna Kaur set out with Black teachers of various schools of yoga for Ghana, an English-speaking Black-majority country on the west coast of Africa.

With her fellow teachers, she assessed the needs, resources and challenges particular to that country and its people. Krishna Kaur made connections and laid the groundwork for a possible Kundalini Yoga teacher training there in the next couple of years. She also made plans to visit Togo and pick up the work there of Siri Gian Singh, twenty years before.

Meanwhile, Mukta Kaur was busy responding to a request from the Indian Government that



3HO run a ninety-day pilot SuperHealth Drug Rehabilitation Program in Amritsar, starting October 8, 2004. In collaboration with Sat Bir Singh Khalsa and Sat Sat Kaur Khalsa, a study was designed that would measure the effectiveness of the program.

As the date approached, a wing of the Dr. Vidya Sagar Mental Hospital, a state-run psychiatric hospital in Amritsar, was dedicated to the program. Dr. B. L. Goyal was to be their liaison with the hospital. While Mukta Kaur assembled a team of eight yoga therapists, ten Punjabi men were enlisted into the program.

### **“Assess Your Life”**

We have come here to pay our previous karmas and leave happily from this Earth. But when we forget that purpose, we end up committing mistakes and playing clever games, thinking we are free and clear – sovereign. Actually, that is not so, and if that habit continues, ultimately life becomes miserable. There is no way out. That is why Guru Nanak said, “Come, all my friends, let us be together.”

All that is born in you, out of you, and with you, is the account for which you have to pay. All your friends and associates are the accounts with which you have to deal. All the people that you hate and dislike and wish would depart, are those who want to tear apart your flow of luck and destiny. See how the universe works. It goes into its own circles and triangles, and our prayer is that they should not clash.

The triangle has three very strong edges. The circle has a very smooth, round existence. But do you see what can happen when they clash?

Good and bad is all the creation of God. Choose the smooth way, and walk tall with a smile and grace, so you can reach the pedestal of dignity and divinity where people can trust you. That is how it is. That is how it was. And that is how it shall be.

Many times in my life cycle, I have been deprived of rightful earnings and possessions. I didn't put any wrinkle on my forehead. I let the destiny work it out. But I cannot work with everybody to teach them not to be greedy, but to be patient. This practice doesn't suit some people, because where there is “I,” there is no “we.” And where there is no “we,” there is no “all of us.” The real power of a man lies in all of us. The ball always returns to your court.

All goodwill and conscious deeds should be brought home. Hands should be extended to those to whom you have not extended a hand. Love should be given to those who you have never known how to love. This world, where you were born on a certain longitude and latitude, has a purpose to it, and that purpose must be taken into account. Take the best of it and pray that everybody should have

the opportunity to grow out of their own shallowness.

It's alright. You can be shallow and belittle yourself, but you know what it will do? It will keep coming back to you, again and again. Then you will blame God, "Oh, I never wanted it," but it comes anyway.

It is always good to be good. But it is something you cannot be taught. It has to come out of your *sadhana* and come into your behavior like a fountain of goodwill. That is the only way to reach the heavens.

You can assess your life now. You have closed the doors on your own self and lost the key. Now you are putting the wrong key into the door to open it, but it won't open.

My dear ones, this is the time to look to your purity, piety, and prosperity. Share, care, and be daring by letting God decide for you. Your own brain doesn't work with His vastness. Let Him and Him alone hold your hands and take you to the heights.

## The Master's Call

It was Summer Solstice of 2004. Sunder Singh, born "Tzu Ping," in Taiwan, had come to America with his parents at the age of eleven and had been a student of Yogi Bhanan's since finding him at the Summer Solstice of 1971. He had married and raised three beautiful children in the Sikh way of life while working successfully as a jeweler and teaching Kundalini Yoga.

As Sunder Singh walked into Yogi Bhanan's room, he felt like crying. He had been a long time with the Master, but this time felt like it might be the last time. Cleverly, his student asked the Siri Singh Sahib for a *hukam*, thinking if the Master gave him something that would take years to accomplish, it would be a source of guidance for him after he left this physical realm.

Yogi Bhanan looked at him and said, "Make me a mala."

Sunder Singh thought, "Oh, Jesus! I give him malas all the time. Almost every time I see him, I give him something. It is like giving someone a *chuni*. No big deal."

They talked about the mala a little bit. Sunder Singh wanted to make him a special mala, a big mala all of gold. It would be costly and take about one month to make. But he didn't want to make it because he felt that when he finished making it, his teacher would be leaving his physical body. It took Sunder from Summer Solstice until the fall session of the Khalsa Council in Espanola in October of that year to finish. He just didn't want to do it.

When Sunder arrived in Espanola for Khalsa Council meetings, he heard that the Siri Singh Sahib had toured the grounds in his wheelchair, smiling and speaking with people, the day before. That was a good sign because the Master had not been seen in public since the *Japji* course the past June. People were happy. They thought he was doing better.

Feeling slightly apprehensive that he might have missed his chance to see Yogi Bhajan, Sunder Singh waited outside his quarters each day to see him and yet was not able to. Yogi Bhajan was said to be in a coma. The grounds had an eerie sense of prescience about them. The peacocks which lived at Guru Ram Das Estate, a considerable distance from the Siri Singh Sahib's quarters In the Dome, had for several weeks been turning up at eight in the morning, circling the Dome, as though to feel the waning presence of the Master.

On Sunday, Sunder Singh was sitting outside the dome during Gurdwara. Sometimes, he had been told, the Master would wake up for Gurdwara. Suddenly, Hari Nam Kaur, the Siri Singh Sahib's personal attendant, came rushing out and said, "You, right now!"

The Master was lying on his back. He had stopped eating three days before. His eyes were closed when his student walked in. His attendant and Sunder stood in front of him holding the gift he had made, a gold mala about twelve feet long.

Hari Nam Kaur said, "Sir, Sunder Singh is here to honor you with a mala. He finished his assignment."

The Master's eyes closed, his hand came out of the bedcover and grabbed the mala like a striking snake.

Later on, Sunder thought, how did he know where the mala was? His eyes were closed. Also, whenever Sunder had seen him, his hands had been shaky. This time, his hand was totally steady.

Then Hari Nam said, "Sir, we'll put this on your altar." Instead, the Siri Singh Sahib held on to the mala and would not let go.

He spoke a few words which were difficult to make out because his speech had become slurred.

Hari Nam Kaur translated, "What he said was, 'God bless Sunder!'"

Then he opened his eyes and looked straight into Sunder's eyes. There was no pain, no weakness, no sickness in his eyes, only the Master. After a few seconds which felt like eternity, Sunder Singh said "Sat Nam" with folded hands and walked out of the dome.

The next few days felt to Sunder Singh like a dream. A big storm arrived on Monday. The sky went black and red, and giant hailstones came raining down. It was weather Sunder had never

seen. He could not sleep that night and spent the whole night doing a healing meditation – “*Ra Ma Dha Sa Sa Say So Hung*” – for his teacher. Sunder Singh felt like cradling Harbhajan Singh’s head in his arms.

On Tuesday was a teachers’ forum. Sunder had planned to fly out after lunch on Wednesday, the last day of forum. His intuition told him to wait till after dinner, then to stay the night. Sunder Singh felt captive, that he could not leave.

Sunder Singh went to the local hot springs, Ojo Calente to relax and soak. As it began to storm around 7:30 in the evening, everyone had to come out of the water.

Sitting there waiting for the storm to pass, Sunder suddenly found himself going into a deep meditation connecting with the subtle body of the Master. Since he had formed no intention of meditating, Sunder felt this was telling him the hour had come.

Coming out of the meditation, Sunder immediately returned to where he was staying, changed into his *bana*, and walked to the Siri Singh Sahib’s house. Bibiji and Kulbir Singh were there. Krishna Kaur was there. He sat down with them.

\* \* \* \* \*

At Miri Piri Academy, just the other side of the planet, the students had been told the Siri Singh Sahib was very sick and might die. They were sitting and chanting, “*Guru Guru Wahe Guru, Guru Ram Das Guru...*” for the Master.

One thirteen-year-old girl from Espanola, named Dharma Kaur had a vision that she was with a group of people and the spirit of Yogi Bhajan was escaping from them, rising up to the sky. They stretched their arms toward him, trying to bring him back. The first time, they succeeded in pulling him back. Then, he rose a second time and, again, they were able to pull him back. The third time, he did not come back. He disappeared into the ethers...

\* \* \* \* \*

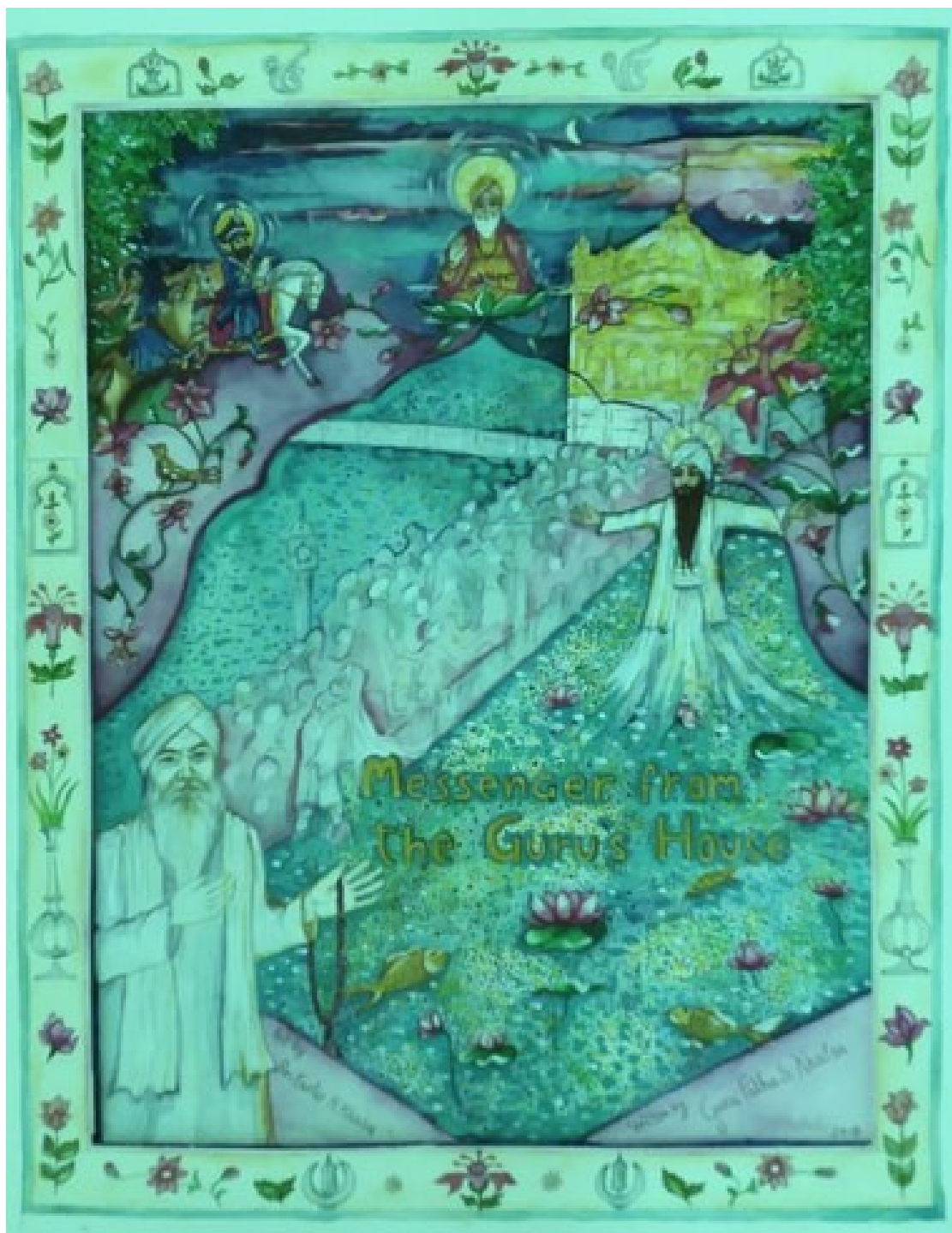
Ten minutes later, Harbhajan Singh’s daughter, Kamaljit Kaur came running in, “Kulbir and Bibiji, you have to come right now!” They rushed out.

A few minutes later, Kulbir came walking in. Sunder Singh looked at him and said, “Well?”

Kulbir Singh replied, “He just passed.” Sunder gave him a hug and he started to cry.

Sunder Singh felt a sense of completion. Grateful he was to have listened to his intuition to stay, and thankful to have finished his final *hukam* from the Master.





# APPENDIX

1. Partial Name Index: People whose names change in the course of the story  
One Name, Two People
2. Glossary

## Partial Name Index

### People Whose Names Change in the Course of the Story

From:	To:
Baba Nam Singh	Norman Kreisman
Baba Bert	Santokh Singh Khalsa
Barry Rippens	Gurupreet Singh Khalsa
Bob	Sat Jiwan Singh Khalsa
Corinne Hammer	Siri Ved Kaur Khalsa
Dale Singh	Dayal Singh Khalsa
Debbie Briggs	Vikram Kaur Khalsa
Diane Bird	Hari Kaur Bird
Erica	Gurupreet Kaur Khalsa
Gerry Pond	Guru Singh Khalsa
Guru Ke Kaur	Katherine Felt
Harry Bird	Hari Singh Bird
Hari Atma Kaur	Kathryn Alexander Alder
John Singh Bliss	Gurudain Singh Khalsa
Kirtan Singh	Douglas Alder
Laurie Leonard	Sat Kartar Kaur Khalsa
Lawton Boseman	Livtar Singh Khalsa
Leah Kaur Bliss	Gurudain Kaur Khalsa
Louis Russell	Dharam Singh Khalsa
Margaret	Guru Raj Kaur Khalsa
Michael Fowlis	Gurucharan Singh Khalsa
Osorio	Babaji Singh Khalsa
Osu	Shakti Parwha Kaur Khalsa
Richard Lasser	Baba Singh Khalsa
Rose	Livtar Kaur Khalsa
Sandy Cohen	Sat Nam Singh Khalsa
Sardarni Premka Kaur Khalsa	Pam Dyson
Thelma Oliver	Krishna Kaur Khalsa, Los Angeles CA
Vic Briggs	Vikram Singh Khalsa
William Steen	Wha Guru Singh Khalsa
Wilma Kaur	Sat Kirpal Kaur Khalsa

## One Name, Two People

Name:	Home City:	Distinguishing Characteristics:
Dharam Singh Khalsa	Fairbanks AK, Millis MA	In "Round and Round the Pole"
Dharm Singh Khalsa	Los Angeles CA	In "Changing Routines"
Guru Dev Singh Khalsa	Mexico, Rome	Master of Sat Nam Rasayan
Gurudev Singh Khalsa	Mexico, Austin TX	Businessman-yogi
Guru Meher Singh Khalsa	Fairbanks AK, Los Angeles CA	In "Round and Round the Pole"
Guru Meher Singh Khalsa	Rome	In "When in Rome"
Krishna Kaur Khalsa	Los Angeles CA	In many chapters
Krishna Kaur Khalsa	Toronto, Placerville CA	In "Love is Real" & "Blessed to Teach in China"

## Glossary

### AAAAA

#### **Adi Shakti**

1. The original inspiration of the cosmos, feminine in nature; 2. The symbol comprising a double-edged sword, a halo, and two protective swords, also known as *Khanda Keerpaan*. *Aa-dee Shak-tee*

#### ***Aap saha-ee ho-a, sachay da sach a dho-a, Har Har Har***

Your Divine Protection has been established. The Truth of truths is our support. God, God, God.

#### **Ahmaddiya**

School of Islamic thought. *Ah-mad-diya*

#### ***ajnaa***

The sixth chakra, commonly called the "third eye", and related to the pituitary gland. *aj-naa*

#### ***Akaal***

Deathless. *a-kaal*

#### ***Akaal Moorat***

Form of the Ever-living. *A-kaal Moor-at*

#### ***Akaal Purkh***

Ever-living Being. *A-kaal Pur-akh*



### **Akal Takhat**

The traditional seat of Sikh political authority, founded by the sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind; It is situated in the Golden Temple complex, facing the holy Harimandar. *A-kaal Takh-at*

### **Akali Dal**

Sikh political party. *A-kaal-ee Daal*

### **Akhand Kirtani Jatha**

The community inspired by the example of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh, and dedicated to living by the discipline of Khalsa; They are known especially for their all-night sessions of singing Gurbani.

*A-khand Keer-tan-ee Ja-tha*

### **Akhand Paath**

A continuous reading of the 1430 pages of Siri GuruGranth by a series of readers; The complete reading ordinarily takes two or three days and nights. *A-khand Paa-th*

### **Amrit**

The "immortalizing nectar." *Am-rit.*

### **Amrit Sanchar**

The sacrament used in the initiation of Khalsa. *Am-rit San-chaar*

### **Amritdhari**

One who has "taken the *amrit*" – Sikh vows. *am-rit-dhaa-ree*

### **amrit vela**

The three hours before sunrise. *am-rit vay-laa*

***Amrit vaylaa sacha naao vadiaaee veechaara. Karmee aavai kaparaa nadree mokha duaara.***

In the *amrit vela*, the ambrosial hours before dawn, Chant the true name, and contemplate his glorious Greatness. By the karma of past actions, the robe of this physical body is obtained. By his grace, the gate of liberation is found. — Guru Nanak, from the 4th pauri of Japji Sahib

### **Angsang Waheguru**

"God and me, me and God, are One!" *ang-sang wa-hay-gu-roo*

### **anoop**

Unique, incomparable beauty. *an-ooop*

### **apaan, apaana**

Eliminative force of the body. *a-paan, a-paan-a*

## **Aquarian Age**

The cosmic age that is dawning today, an era of first-hand experience of the Divine; the age of Khalsa.

## **Aquarian Sadhana**

Yogi Bhajan gave his students the Aquarian *Sadhana* in 1992 for the transition into the Aquarian Age. This *sadhana* prepares the psyche to excel in the new environments of the coming decades.

## **aradhana**

An habitual discipline ; *a-raa-dha-na*.

## **Aray**

Hey. *a-ray*

## **Ardaas**

Sikh Prayer. *Ar-daas*

*Ardaas bhaee, amar daas guru, amar daas guru, ardaas bhaee. Raam daas guru, raam daas guru, raam daas guru, sachee saahee.*

A prayer by Guru Amar Das guaranteed by Guru Ram Das. It is a mantra for fulfillment.

## **Arti**

1. Hindu ritual to express gratitude to the deity with incense and ghee candles. 2. A Shabad composed by Guru Nanak. *Aar-tee*

## **atma**

Soul. *at-maa*

## **BBBBB**

## **Baba**

A title of respect for an elder, or holy, man. *Baa-baa*.

## **Baisakhi, Vaisakhi**

The foremost Sikh annual holiday, commemorating the founding of the order of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. *Bai-saa-khee, Vai-saa-khee*

## **bal-yogi**

A yogi who appears ever youthful (*bal*). *bal-yogee*

## **Bana**

Distinctive uniform, or type of dress; the traditional *bana* of the Khalsa consists of turban, tunic, *churidas*, and *chuni* for women. *baa-naa*

## **Bani**

The "Word"; the sacred Songs of Sikh Dharma. *Baa-nee*

## **bayr tree**

Jujube tree. *bayr tree*

## **baykree**

Sound made with the tip of the tongue. i.e., aloud. *bayk-ree*

***'Bhaag ho-aa gur sant mila-iaa. Prabh abhinaasee ghar meh paa-i-aa. Sayv karee phal chasaa na vichharaa. Jan naanak daas tumaaray jee-o. Hau gholee jee-o gholi ghumaa-ee. Jan naanak daas tumaaray jee-o.***

My mind longs for the vision of the Guru's Darshan. It cries out like the thirsty song bird for the nectar of your name. My thirst is not quenched, and I cannot find peace Until I receive the Darshan the beloved saint.

I give myself, and my soul for your Darshan, my beloved Guru!

Your face is so beautiful, and the sound of your words is so filled with inner wisdom. It has been too long since this rainbird has had even a glimpse of water. Blessed is the land, where you live, my friend and loved one, my Divine teacher. I give myself, and my soul, to my beloved, my Divine Guru.

An instant away from you, brings darkness When will I meet You, my beloved Waheguru? I cannot endure this night, sleep eludes me too Until I see your home, my beloved Guru! I give myself, and my soul to your true home, my beloved Guru!

By good fortune, I met my Saint Guru and I have found that the immortal creator is within the home my own self and so I will always serve you and never be separated from you even for an instant. Guru Nanak says, I am your slave, my beloved Lord. I give myself and my soul. Servant Nanak lives to serve you. - From Shabad Harazay, composed by Guru Arjan Dev ji

## **Beej Mantra**

The Seed Mantra, Sat Naam. *beej mantra*

## **Beej mantar sarab ko gi-aan**

The Beej Mantra, the Seed Mantra, is spiritual wisdom for everyone.

From Sukhmani Sahib Asthapadee 09 Pauree 5-6.

## **Bhaanaa**

Divine will. *Bhaanaa*

## **Bhabi**

Brother's wife, sister-in-law. *bha-bee*

**Bhabour Sahib.**

A Gurdwara overlooking the Sutlej River, where Guru Gobind Singh stayed for thirteen months and wrote *Bentee Chaupee*. *Bha-bour Sa-hib*

***bhagata, bhakta***

Devotee. *bhug-ata, bhak-ta*

**Bhai**

Literally means "brother"; It is a title of respect. *bhaa-ee*.

**Bhai Sahib**

"Honoured brother." It is a title of great respect. *bhaa-ee saa-hib*.

**Bhai Sahiba**

A woman "Bhai Sahib." It means "respected sister." An innovative title of great respect in what in some respects is a patriarchal culture still. Bibiji Inderjit Kaur Khalsa is the first Bhai Sahiba in the short history of the office of Bhai Sahib in Sikh Dharma International. She was preceded by Bhai Sahib Dayal Singh Khalsa and Bhai Sahib Guruliv Singh Khalsa. *bhaa-ee saa-hi-ba*.

***Bhog***

Observances that are fulfilled at the end of an *Akhand Paath* (continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib)

**Bibi**

Term of respect for a lady. *Beebee*

***Bolay so Nihaal! Sat Sri Akaal!***

"Whoever utters, shall be fulfilled." A clarion call of Sikhs given by the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh.

***braajee***

brother. *braa-jee*

**Brahma, Brahm**

The creator god in Hinduism. *Brah-maa, Brahm*

***brahmin***

Brahmin is a class in Hinduism specializing as priests, teachers and protectors of sacred learning across generations. *brah-min*

**breath of fire**

A rapid, energizing breathing technique.

CCCCC

***cha, chaaee, chai***

Indian-style tea. *chaa, chaa-ee*

***chaarpaaee***

Cot. *chaar-paa-ee*

***chaardee kalaa***

Buoyant spirits. *chaar-dee ka-laa*

***chaul***

Rice. *chaul*

***chittar***

Conscious mind, as opposed to *gupt* which is the unconscious mind. *chittar*

***chuni***

A graceful head scarf that may be worn by women in addition to their turban. *chu-nee*

***churidas***

Cotton pants with baggy thighs, narrow ankles, and a drawstring at the waist. *chu-ri-daas*

***contemner***

One who treats another with contempt, disdain or scorn. *con-tem-ner*

DDDDD

***da***

"Yes" in Russian. *daa*

***daadee keertan***

A distinctive form of heroic ballad designed to instill courage in the listener and to celebrate Sikh history that originated in the time of Guru Hargobind. *daa-dee keer-tan*

***daadee keertanyaas***

Performers of *daadee keertan*. *daa-dee keertanyaas*

***daal***

Indian-style bean soup. *daal*

### ***dahi***

Yogurt. *deh-hee*

### **Darbar Khalsa**

The Khalsa of the Guru's Court. *Daar-baar Khaal-saa*

### ***darshan***

The vision and experience of being in the presence of the Guru or a saint. *dar-shan*

### **Darshan Deori**

The archway that leads to the pathway to the Harimandar Sahib, the Golden Temple. *Darshan Dee-oree*

### ***dastaar bandee***

A coming of age ceremony for an eldest son; Literally, it is a "turban tying". *das-taar ban-dee*

### ***dasvandh***

Tithing. The Sikh tradition of giving one tenth of one's earnings to the Guru. *das-vandh*

### ***Daydaa day lainday thak paahay. Jugaa jugantar khahee khahay. Hukamee hukam chalaay-ay raah. Naanak vigaasai vayparvaah***

The Great Giver keeps on giving, the receivers grow weary of receiving. Throughout the ages, the consumers keep on consuming. The Commander, by His Command, leads us to walk on the Path. O Nanak, only He blossoms forth, carefree and untroubled. - From the third *Pauree* of *Japji*.

### ***dehra***

Community centered around a holy person. *dayh-raa*

### ***desh***

A person's or a people's native land. *day-sh*

### ***Dhan dhan raam daas gur, jin siriaa tinai savaaria. Pooree hoee kaaramaat aap sirjanhaaray***

***dhaariaa***. Blessed, blessed is Guru Ram Das; the One who created You, has also exalted You. Perfect is Your miracle; the Creator Lord Himself has installed You on the Throne. - Refrain of *Shabad* written by Bhatt (Bard) Sathaa and Balvand, page 968 in Siri Guru Granth Sahib, that creates miracles.

### ***dharm, dharm***

A God-directed way of life, more than a religion. *dhar-maa, dhar-m*

### **Dharam Raj**

1. The one who judges our actions; 2. The "god of death." *Dha-ram Raaj*

## **Draupadi**

Character in the Mahabharata and Bhagavadgita, wife of the Pandava brothers. *Drau-pa-dee*

## **Duryodhan**

Character in the Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita, instigator of the epic war in those accounts. *Dur-yo-dhan*

**EEEE**

## ***Ek Ong Kar***

Oneness; There is One Creator of the creation and One Spirit moves throughout all creation. *Ayk ong kaar*

## ***Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wahe Guru***

God is the One! Truth is God's Name. Great is this indescribable wisdom! *Ayk ong kaar sat naam siree wa-hay guru*

**FFFF**

## ***Fateh***

Victory. *fa-tay*

## ***Furmaan Khalsa***

Command of the Khalsa. *Fur-maan Khaal-saa*

**GGGG**

## ***gatka***

A form of martial arts practised and taught mainly by Nihung Sikhs. It focuses on physical, mental, and spiritual training. The word Gatka literally translates from the Punjabi to "one whose freedom belongs to grace." It is also the name given to the practice stick used in the martial art. The practice is no longer used in combat, but like many other martial arts, has become a form of competition. *gat-kaa*

## ***Giani***

Scholar, especially a scholar in Punjabi or Sikh studies. *gi-aa-nee*

## ***ghoraa Sikh***

Caucasian Sikh *gho-raa Sikh*

**Gobinday, Mukanday, Udaaray, Apaaray, Haree-ang Karee-ang, Nirnaamay, Akaamay.**

Sustainer, Liberator, Generous, Infinite, Destroyer, Creator, Nameless, Desireless.

- Spoken by Guru Gobind Singh and part of *Jaap Sahib*

### **Golden Temple**

*Harimandar*, temple of the Sikhs in Amritsar, India.

### ***gopis***

Lord Krishna's most dedicated devotees; a group of spirited milkmaids. *go-pees*

### **Gorakh yogi**

Followers of the great Hindu yogi and saint, Gorakhnath. *go-rakh yo-gee*

### ***granth***

A center of distilled knowledge or energy, literally a "knot." Sometimes in the form of a book. *Granth*

### ***gulab jaman***

A dessert made of balls of dough soaked in sugary syrup. *gu-laab jaa-man*

### ***guna***

Quality or virtue. *Gunaa*

### ***gupt***

Unconscious mind, as opposed to *chittar*, conscious mind. *gupt*

### ***Gurbani***

The "Word" of the Guru; the sacred Songs of Sikh dharma. *Gur-baa-nee*

### **Gurdwara**

A Sikh place of worship. *Gur-dwaa-raa*

### ***Gurmat***

The principles of living established by the Guru. *Gur-mat*

### ***Gursikh***

A disciple, or "Sikh," of the Guru; *Gur-sikh*

### ***Guru***

One who dispels the darkness of ignorance (*gu*), and brings enlightenment and vision (*ru*): *gu-ru, gu-roo*

### **Guru Angad**

Second Sikh Guru (1504-1552) *Gu-roo Ang-ad*



**Guru Amar Das**

Third Sikh Guru (1479-1574) *Gu-roo A-maar Daas*

**Guru Arjun**

Fifth Sikh Guru (1563-1606) *Gu-roo Ar-jun*

***Guru da Singh***

Singh of the Guru. *Guru daa Singh*

**Guru Gobind Singh**

Tenth Sikh Guru (1666-1708) *Gu-roo Go-bind Singh*

**Guru Granth Sahib**

See: **Siri Guru Granth Sahib**

***Guru guru wahay guru, guru raam daas guru***

Great is the wisdom that flows through the one who serves the Infinite. Yogi Bhajan Singh received this mantra from Guru Ram Das in answer to his prayer.

**Guru Hargobind**

Sixth Sikh Guru (1595-1644) *Gu-roo Haar-gobind*

**Guru Har Krishan**

Eight Sikh Guru (1656-1603) *Gu-roo Haar Kri-shan*

**Guru Har Rai**

Seventh Sikh Guru (1630-1661) *Gu-roo Haar Raa-ee*

***Guru ka langar***

A meal served in the Guru's name where all are served equally. *Gu-roo kaa lan-gar*

***Guru Mantra***

The (primary) mantra given to a disciple by their Guru. *Gu-roo Man-tra*

***Guru Maryada***

The code of conduct given by the Guru. *gu-roo mar-yaa-daa*

**Guru Nanak**

First Sikh Guru (1469-1538) *Gu-roo Naa-nak*

### ***Guru Prashaad***

A sweet pudding that has been specially blessed, and is distributed to a Sikh congregation at the end of a Gurdwara service. *Gu-roo Pra-shaad*

### **Guru Ram Das**

Fourth Sikh Guru and Master of Raj Yoga 1534-1581) *Gu-roo Raam Daas*

### **Guru Tegh Bahadur**

Ninth Sikh Guru (1621-1675) *Gu-roo Tegh Baa-ha-dur*

### ***Gyan Mudra***

Hand position that imparts the energy of knowledge. The index finger touches the thumb while the rest of the fingers are held straight. *gee-aan moo-draa*

HHHHH

### ***halwa***

Indian-style sweets. *hal-waa*

### **Hanuman**

Monkey God servant of Lord Rama. *Han-u-maan*

### **Harimandar, Harimandir**

"The temple of Hari (God)," the usual name for the Golden Temple. *ha-ree-man-dar*

### **Hemkunt Sahib**

A pilgrimage site in the Himalayas that marks the location where the Tenth Guru meditated in his previous life. *Hem-kunt Saa-hib*

### **Hola Mohalla**

A one-day Sikh festival that falls one day after the Hindu holiday of Holi, a Spring festival. *Hola Mo-ha-laa*

### ***Hukam, hukam, Hukamnama***

A directive from a spiritual teacher, usually Siri Guru Granth Sahib. *Hu-kam, Hu-kam-na-maa*

IIIIII

### ***Ida***

The left psychic nerve channel that curls around the spine from its base to the root of the nose. *Ee-daa*

***ishtistaan***

Holy place. *isht-is-taan*

JJJJ

***jaan***

Life. *jaan*

***Sri Ram! Jai Ram!***

A Hindu mantra in praise of Ram (God). *Sr-ee Raam Jai Raam*

***jaikara***

The traditional Sikh cry of acclaim or victory. It consists of two parts. One person calls out, "*Bolay so nihaal!*" The congregation responds, "*Sat Siree Akaal!*"

***janaanee***

Woman or wife. *jan-aan-ee*

***jand tree***

A type of banyan tree (*prosopis cineria*). *jand tree*

***japa***

Repetition mantra or *Shabad*. *jaa-paa*

***Japji***

Guru Nanak's basic composition, in which he relates his Vision of the nature of the universe. *Jap-jee*

***Japji Sahib***

See: *Japji*. "*Sahib*" is a title of respect. *Jap-jee Saa-hib*

***jatha***

A band or group. *ja-tha*

***jathedar***

Leader, facilitator, or person of authority. *ja-thay-daar*

***jeevan mukt***

To live as a liberated human being. *jee-van mukt*

***Ji, ji***

1. Soul; 2. A respectful term of address. *jee*

### ***Jeevan Muk***

Someone who is 'liberated(enlightened) while still alive'. *Jee-van Muk-t*

### ***Jagat Guru***

The Guru of the whole world. *Jag-at Gu-roo*

KKKKK

### ***Kaakaa, toosee kithay luk ho-ay see?***

Child, where were you hiding?

### ***kal***

Time or death. *kal*

### ***kabaddi***

A vigorous South Asian team sport. *ka-baddee*

### ***kachhera***

One of the five *kakkars* of the Sikhs. Knee-length, cotton undershorts. It represents modest dress to uphold high moral character and to control desires. *kachh-ayr-aa*

### ***kakkars***

The five articles of faith worn by all baptised Sikhs: *kesh* (uncut hair), *khanga* (wooden comb), *kara* (steel bracelet), *kachhera* (cotton underwear), *kirpan* (a small sword). *kak-kaars*

### ***Kalijug, Kali Jug***

The cosmic "Age of Chaos" in which we live. *Ka-lee Yug*

### ***kangha***

A wooden comb, the keeping of which is a distinctive characteristic of a Khalsa. It is a reminder to regularly maintain the body and mind in a clean and healthy state. *kan-ghaa*

### ***kara***

One of the five *kakkars* of the Sikhs – a steel bracelet. The *kara* symbolizes the soul's connection to the Infinite. *ka-raa*

### ***karee***

A curry made of yogurt and spices. *ka-ree*

### ***karma***

Action or effect of some action. *kar-ma*

### ***Kar Sewa, kar sewa***

Selfless service, often an organized community effort. *Kar Say-wa*

### ***katha***

Religious or spiritual talk. *ka-thaa*

***Kayti-aa dookh bhookh sad maar, ayeh bhi daat tayree daataar.***

***Band khalaasee bhaanai ho-i, hor aakh na sakai ko-i,***

***Jay ko khaa-ik aakhan paa-i, oho jaanai jaytee-aa mu-eh khaa-i,***

***Aapay jaanai aapay day-i, aakheh si bhi kayee kay-i,***

***Jis no bakhsay sifaa saalaah, Naanak paatishaahe paatishaaho.***

God gives and gives. He is not hoarding anything. Humans take and take.

Pain, hunger and abuse are God's gifts, also.

Slavery and freedom both come from God.

God himself knows. God himself gives. Very few recognize this.

The one who is blessed to speak with gratitude is the King of Kings.

- Twenty-Fifth *Pauree* of *Japji Sahib*

### ***kesh***

Long uncut hair. This is of the five *kakkars* of the Khalsa. It is to honour and accept the perfection of Gold's creation. *kaysh*

### **Khalistan**

A proposed nation-state encompassing the present Indian state of Punjab and all Punjabi-speaking areas around its borders. *Khaa-lee-staan*

### **Khalsa**

Literally means "sovereign;" the Order of Khalsa is the living continuation of the spiritual lineage begun by Guru Nanak. It was founded by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. *khaal-saa*

### **Khalsa Council**

An international body of Ministers of Sikh Dharma originally appointed by the Siri Singh Sahib, and committed to serving and upholding the spirit of Khalsa in service to humanity. It is headquartered in Espanola, New Mexico, USA. There is also a European Khalsa Council.

### ***kirpaan***

A small sword. One of the five *kakkars* worn by baptised Sikhs. *Kirpaa* means an act of kindness. *Aan* means honour or respect. *kir-paan*

***Kirpaa ho-ay. Guru Ram Das kirpaa ho-ay.***

Blessing has happened. Guru Ram Das has shown his kindness.

***Kirtam naam kathay tayray jebhaa. Sat naam tayra paraa poorbalaa.***

You are called many names according to your attributes, but Sat Nam is your foremost, essential name.

***Kirtan, kirtan***

Devotional music. *keer-tan*

***Kirtan Sohila***

Sikh prayer, *Bani* recited before bed, *Keer-tan So-hi-la*

***kicheree***

Mung beans and rice dish. *ki-che-ree*

***Kot Harkarn***

Village in district of Gujranwala, in the province of Punjab, British India (now Pakistan), where the Siri Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji was born on August 26th, 1929. *Koṭ Har-karn*

***kriya***

Exercise. *kri-yaa*

***kundalini yoga***

The “yoga of awareness”; this yoga encompasses all the technologies of every other kind of yoga (raja yoga, hatha yoga, mantra yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, etc.) for the sole purpose of achieving a state of living enlightenment. *kun-da-lee-nee yo-ga*

***kurta***

a tunic. *kur-taa*

LLLLL

***langar, Guru ka langar***

A Sikh community meal. The Guru's langar. *lang-ar*

***langar ki daal***

*Daal* served in the Guru's langar. *lan-gar kee daal*

***laya yoga***

The meaning of the word “laya” means to dissolve and *laya yoga* aims to dissolve the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. *laa-yaa yoga*

MMMMM

***mala***

Rosary. *maa-laa*

***Maghar***

*Maghar* is the ninth month of the Sikh calendar, which coincides with November and December in the Gregorian and Julian calendars. *Maa-ghar*

***Maha Pursha***

Literally 'great being'. *Maa-ha Pur-sha*

***maha bandh***

The great lock. It combines the three main locks – *mool bandh*, *uddiyana bandh* and *jaladhara bandh*.  
*ma-haa bandh*

**Mahan Tantric**

A designated master of White Tantric Yoga. *ma-haan tan-tric*

**Maharaja Ranjit Singh**

The maharaja of a large Sikh kingdom; He reigned from 1801 to 1839. *Ma-haa-raa-jaa Ran-jeet Singh*

***maki roti***

Corn flatbread. *ma-kee ro-tee*

***Maha Mantra***

Great mantra. *Mahaa Mantra*

**Mahesh**

Shiva, god of the Hindu trinity. *Ma-haysh*

***Manay kee gati kahee na ja-ay. Jay ko kahai pichhai pachhataa-ay.***

The state of the Believer cannot be described. That One who tries shall regret the attempt.

- *Japji Sahib*, first 2 lines of 12th Pauree.

**mantra yoga**

Yoga of chanting. *man-tra yoga*

***Mata Bhaarat***

Mother India. *Maa-taa Bhaa-rat*

**Mata Sahib Deva**

The Mother of the Khalsa; As Guru Gobind Singh is the Father. *Maa-ta Saa-hib Day-vaa*

***maya***

Illusion. *maa-i-aa*

**Métis**

Person of mixed Caucasian and First Nation ancestry. *May-tees*

***missal***

Brigade, service unit. *missal*

***mithaaees***

Indian sweets. *mi-thaa-ees*

***mool bandh***

The root lock, *mool bandh*, is a forceful contraction of muscles to redirect sexual energy into creativity and healing energy. *mool bandh*

***Mool Mantra***

Guru Nanak gave the world the *Mool Mantra*. It is the first stanza of *Japji*. *Mool Man-tra*

***mudra***

Hand and finger positions technique for giving clear messages to the mind-body energy system. *mu-draa*

**Mukhia Sardani Sahiba**

Title for a senior female minister in Sikh Dharma. *Mukh-yaa Saar-daar-nee Saa-hi-baa*

**Mukhia Singh Sahib**

Title for a senior male minister in Sikh Dharma. *Mukh-yaa Singh Saa-hib*

***munshee***

Record keeper. *mun-shee*

**NNNNN*****naad***

The yogic science of sound. *Naa-d*



**Naam, Nam**

The vibrant manifestation of God in Creation. *Naam*

***nadi***

Meridian channel in the body. *naa-dee*

**Namdhari**

Namdhari is a Sikh community that formed in resistance to British rule in India. Members today believe that the line of human Sikh Gurus did not end with Guru Gobind Singh, but continues through the Namdhari leaders. *naam-dhaa-ree*

***Naanak naam chardee kalaa tayray bhaanay sarbat daa bhala***

Nanak asks for Naam through which comes well-being, happiness and positive spirit and with your blessings, Lord may everyone in the world prosper and be in peace. - From Ardaas – asking for the welfare of all.

**Nihung**

An Order of Khalsa trained in traditional martial arts. *Ni-hung*

**Nirankari**

A cult that encourages libertine living and ridicules and degrades Sikh beliefs and traditions. *nir-an-kaa-ree*

***nirgun***

Without qualities. *neer-gun*

***Nirguraa daa naa(n) buraa.***

The name of a person without a guru is loathsome.

***nirvana***

The liberated state. *nir-vaa-naa*

***Nitnem***

A Sikh's daily recitation of Gurbani, the "Guru's Word." *nit-naym*

***nivas***

Residence. *ni-vaas*

OOOOO

***ojas***

1. Virility; 2. Cerebrospinal fluid. *o-jas*

***Om***

A sacred Hindu manta that calls on the ultimate reality.

***Ong Namō Guru Dayv Namō***

This mantra attunes the chanter to their highest divine wisdom and the Golden Chain in Kundalini Yoga.

PPPPP

***paathee***

Someone who reads *Gurbani*. *paa-thee*

***pad***

A stage of spiritual development. *pad*

***padmaasan***

A seated meditation posture called “lotus pose.” *pad-maa-san*

***pairaawaa***

Attire. *peh-raa-waa*

***pakorās***

Fried vegetables in chickpea flour batter *pa-kaur-as*

**Palam International Airport**

Delhi, India airport where Yogi Bajan was posted as a senior customs officer before being invited to Canada. The former name for Indira Gandhi International Airport.

**Pan Am**

An American airline that operated in the 1970s. *Pan Am*

**Pandavas**

Characters in the Mahabharata and Bhagavadgita, the five husbands of Draupadi. *Pan-da-vaz*

***pangat***

The Sikh practice of sitting together for the serving of a meal. *p(an)-gat*

**Panth**

The Sikh Nation. *pun-th*

***Paramatman, parmaatmaa***

The primal force, the supreme soul, God. *pa-ram-at-maan, parm-aatmaa*

***parantha***

An Indian flatbread. *par-an-tha*

***parchaar***

Preaching. *par-chaar*

***parikarma***

The marble walkway around Harimandar Sahib. *pa-ri-kar-ma*

***patit***

Someone who has stopped practising Guru Nanak's teachings; *pat-it*

***pauree***

A paragraph, section or verse in the Siri Guru Granth. Means "step." *pau-ree*

***Peace Lagoon***

The name of a book that is an English compilation of Sikh *banis* and passages from the Siri Guru Granth.

***peepal tree***

Sacred fig tree (*ficus religiosa*) *pee-pal tree*

***pingala***

The right psychic nerve channel that curls around the spine from its base to the root of the nose. *ping-gala*

***pir***

A Sufi Master. *peer*

***pooja***

A Hindu term for "worship." *Pooja*

***praana, praan***

Life force. *praana, praan*

***praanayam***

Breathing exercises. *Praa-na-yam*

***Prabhupati***

The state of conscious union with God; *pra-bhoo-pa-tee*

***prashaad***

Blessed food distributed to the congregation at the end of Sikh worship service; gift of the Guru. *pra-shaad*

***Pritham Bhagavati***

The Mother or Creative Principle of the Universe. *Pri-tham Bhag-va-tee*

***pukka***

Real. *pak-kaa*

**RRRRR*****raajas***

Quality of being energetic. *Raa-jas*

**Raam**

God *Raam*

***ragi***

Performer of Sikh sacred music. *raa-gee*

***Rainsbaaee Keertan***

All-night singing of divine praises. *Rans-er-baaee Keer-tan*

***raj***

Rule or Government. *raaj*

**raj yoga, Raj Yog**

The yoga of success and prosperity; the soulful sovereignty of the Divine. *raaj yo-ga*

***Rakhay rakhanhaar aap ubaarian.***

A protective *Shabad* mantra in Siri Guru Granth Sahib, the last lines *Rehiras*, the evening prayer of the Sikhs written by Guru Arjan.

**Ramayana**

Epic Hindu scripture said to have been written by Rishi Valmiki/Balmiki. *Raam-a-yan-aa*

**Ram Das Puri**

The location for Summer Solstice celebration in the New Mexico mountains. *Raam Daas Poo-ri*

***ras gula***

Sweet soaked in syrup. *ras gool-aa*

**RAW**

Research and Analysis Wing - the Indian government's secret service.

***Rehiraas***

Sikh evening prayer written by Guru Arjan Dev ji. *Reh-he-raas*

***Rehit Maryada***

The lifestyle of Khalsa Sikh. *Reh-hit Mar-yaa-da*

***rehittee Sikh***

One who lives by the teachings of the Guru. *reh-hit-ee Sikh*

***rishi***

A sage. *ri-shee*

***rishi knot***

A topknot made by combing one's head hair up and gathering it into a knot on top of one's head, a practice of sages in many cultures through time. *ri-shee not*

***roop***

Form, beauty. *Roop*

***roti***

The Punjabi word for a round flatbread native to the Indian subcontinent made from wholemeal flour, known in Hindi as "chapati." *ro-tee*

**SSSSS**

***saag paneer***

A curry made of greens and fresh milk curds. *saag pa-neer*

***Sach Khand***

Realm of Truth, the Inner Court of God. *Such Khaand*

***Sadh Sangat***

A gathering of saintly people. *Saadh San-gat*

***sadhak***

A person who does sadhana. *saa-dhak*

***sadhana***

A disciplined practice dedicated to achieving a certain outcome; a spiritual discipline. *saa-dha-naa*

***sadhu***

One who practises a *sadhana*. *saa-dhoo*

***sahehshra***

Thousand-petalled lotus, the seventh chakra. *sahehsh-ra*

***Salaam allaykum***

The Arabic greeting meaning "Peace be unto you". *sal-aam al-ai-kum*

***samadhi***

The experience of Self-realization. *sa-maa-dhee*

***samosa***

Spiced vegetables or meat in a pastry shell. *sa-mo-saa*

***samskara***

Cause originating in some action of a previous lifetime. *Sams-kaa-raa*

***Sangat***

A community or holy congregation. *San-gat*.

***sant***

Saint. In Sikh tradition a person may be considered a saint while still alive. *sant*

***Santji***

"Respected Saint." A title of deference referring to a holy man. A holy woman might be called "Mataji" or "Holy Mother." *Sant-jee*

***Santokhsar***

An historical Sikh shrine situated 700 Meters from Harimandar Sahib. When Ram Das, had not yet become Guru, he came there looking for a place to dig a pool for the early morning bathing of the Sikhs. When Ram Das was having the place dug, he found a yogi, meditating. After sometime the yogi opened his eyes and told Guru Ram Das that he had been meditating here for a long time, waiting for a Guru to give him salvation. He disclosed his name as Santakha and then breathed his last. The tank was then named as "Santokhsar." *San-tokh-saar*

***Sardar, Sardarji***

Title of respect for a Sikh gentleman. *Sardaar, Sar-daar-jee*

***Sardarni***

Title of respect for Sikh lady. *Sar-daar-nee*

***Sardarni Sahiba***

Female Minister of Sikh Dharma. *Sar-daar-nee Saa-hi-baa*

***sargun***

With qualities. *sar-gun*

***Sarkar E Khalsa***

The Government of the Khalsa. *Saar-kaar Ay Khaal-saa*

***saroop***

Divine form *sa-roop*

***sarovar***

Pool of sacred water. *sa-ro-var*

***Satguru***

A teacher of truth *Sat-gu-roo*

***Sat Guru dee seva safal hai. Je ko karay man layee.***

*The service of the True Guru is fruitful when it is practiced with one's heart.*

***Sat Nam, Sat Naam***

Sat means Truth—the reality of one's existence. Nam means name or identity. Sat Nam is the *beej mantra*. It is the seed of Self-realization. *Sat Naam*

***Sat Nam Rasayan***

A healing art taught by Yogi Bhajan. *Saat Naam Raa-saa-yan*

***Sat Siri Akal***

A common Sikh form of greeting; Literally, it means "Truth is Ever-Living!" *Sat Si-ree A-kaal*

***sattva***

Quality of goodness. *sat-vaa*

***Satya***

Reality. *sat-yaa*

***sewa***

An exercise of self-less service. *say-va*

***sewadar***

Someone who does selfless service. *say-va-daar*

***Shabad Guru***

"The Word Guru", Siri Guru Granth Sahib, the Guru of all Sikhs. *sha-bad gu-ru*

***Shabad-Surat***

The Divine Word to elevate consciousness. *Sha-baad Soo-raat*

***Shakti***

Power; a spiritual term sometimes used to designate a woman as an instance of the original inspirational force, or "Adi Shakti", underlying all Creation. *shak-tee*

***Shaktiman***

One who honours, or enjoys, the "shakti," the feminine force. *shak-tee-maan*

***Shakti Pad***

The step on the spiritual path where one is dogged by illusion of personal power; At this stage, the student of Self has to overcome the temptations of egotistical pride and spiritual laziness, and rededicate themselves to their discipline, their teacher, and the ultimate goal of Self-realization. *Shak-tee Paad*

***Shalom***

Used as salutation by Jews at meeting or parting, meaning "peace". *Sha-loam*

***Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.)***

The main organization in India responsible for the management of Gurdwaras. *Shiro-man-ee Gurd-waa-ra Paar-baand-hak*

***Shiva***

God; also, the great ascetic god of the Hindu trinity. *Shee-va*

***Shuniyaa***

A state of the mind and consciousness where the ego is brought to zero or complete stillness. There a power exists. It is the fundamental power of a Kundalini Yoga teacher. When you become shuniaa then the One will carry you. You do not grasp or act. With folded hands you "are not." It is then that Nature acts for you.

*shun-ee-yaa*



***Sí***

“Yes” in Spanish. See

***siddhi***

Spiritual power. *Sid-hee*

***Sidh Gosht***

A passage in *Peace Lagoon* in which Guru Nanak converses with the yogis(*Sidhs*). *Sid-h Go-sht*

***Sikh Panth***

Sikh Nation. *Sikh Panth*

***Simran***

Meditation on a Divine Name. *Sim-ran*

***Sindhis***

People from the Sindh province of Pakistan. *Sin-dhees*

***Singh Sahib***

Male Minister of Sikh Dharma. *Singh Saa-hib*

***Siri Guru Granth Sahib***

The Songs of Guru Nanak and other saints, compiled by Guru Arjun, and designated the Guru of all Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 CE. *Si-ree Gu-roo Granth Saa-hib*

***Siri Sahib***

A symbolic sword of honor. *Si-ree Sa-hib*

***Siri Sardarni Kaur***

Secondary title given to Bibiji Inderjit Kaur Khalsa, the Bhai Sahiba of Sikh Dharma of the West; a respectful title for the position. *Si-ree Sar-dar-nee Kaur*

***Siri Singh Sahib***

Harbhajan Singh aka Yogi Bhajan was given the Ministerial title of "Siri Singh Sahib" by the central governing body of the Sikh religion, the Akal Takhat, in recognition of his unceasing missionary work in the Western world. *Siree Singh Saa-hib*

***siropa***

A piece of turban cloth given as a symbol of honor. *sih-ro-paa*

***sohaagan***

Devoted wife. *so-haa-gan*

### ***Sohung***

Mantra meaning 'I am Thou'. *So-hang*

### ***Sukhmani***

The "Pearl of Peace", a Composition of Guru Arjun, known for its power of healing and for giving a deep sense of serenity those who meditate on it. *Sukh-ma-nee*

### ***sushmana***

The central psychic nerve channel, around which the ida and pingala entwine. *sush-ma-na*

### **Sutlej River**

The eastern boundary of the 19th c. Sikh state, across which lay the British tributary states. One of the important rivers of Punjab. *Sut-lej*

### **TTTTT**

***Taa sohaagan jaanee-ai laagee jaa saaho dhaaray pi-aaro . (Guru Nanak, ang 722)***

Then, you shall be known as a devoted and committed soul-bride, when you enshrine love for your Husband Lord.

### ***Takhat***

Throne, one of the centers of Sikh religious authority. Until the 1970s, they were Akal Takhat Sahib in Amritsar, Takhat Keshgarh Sahib in Anandpur, Takhat Patna Sahib in Bihar, and Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib in Maharashtra. In the 1970s, Takhat Damdama Sahib in Talwandi Sabo was added. *Takh-at*

### **Takhat Raj Yog**

The throne of raj yoga. *Takh-at Raaj Yog*

### ***taksaal***

School for dharmic instruction. *tak-saal*

### ***tamas***

Quality of decay. One of the three gunas. *ta-mas*

### ***tapas***

Hardship or spiritual sadhanas. *ta-pas*

### ***tat***

Essential element. *tat*

### ***tattwas***

The elements of creations, usually thought of as ether, air, fire, water, and earth. *tat-was*

*tayk*

Support. *tayk*

*Tayree meher daa bolanaa. Tudhi agay ardaas. Guru guru wahay guru, guru raam daas. Aad Guray Nameh, Jugaad Guray Nameh, Sat Guray Nameh, Siree Guru Dayvay Nameh. Waheguru ji ka Khalsa! Waheguru ji ki Fateh!*

This prayer calls on the wisdom of the ages, the great Divine and transparent Guru, the True Guru. It tunes in to Guru Ram Das and the Golden Chain of Teacher that have passed wisdom down on this planet for millennia.

### **3HO North**

An administrative region of the 3HO Foundation, comprising the north-western United States and British Columbia, based in Eugene, Oregon.

*tilak*

A ritual marking on the forehead. *ti-lak*

*tratakam*

Gazing meditation. *traa-ta-kam*

*Tuks*

Verses from the Siri Guru Granth. *Tuks*

**TWA**

An American airline that operated in the 1970s. *Tee Dub-bal-yoo Ay*

UUUUU

*Udaasee*

A yogi of the lineage of Guru Nanak's son, Baba Siri Chand. *Oo-daa-see*

WWW

*virasan, veeraasan*

Warrior pose. Sitting on left heel, directly on the perineum, between the two sitz bones. Right knee up toward the chest, pacing the foot on the ground. Hands in Prayer pose at the Heart Center. It is the seat of the Warrior Saint. According to some traditions, the left knee is brought up toward the chest and the right heel is sat upon. *veer-aas-an*

## **Vishnu**

Hindu God, second of the triumvirate Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Vishnu is the preserver and protector of the universe. *Vish-noo*

## **WWWWW**

### ***Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!***

The Khalsa belongs to God! The Victory belongs to God!

This is the traditional Khalsa/Sikh greeting.

*Wa-hay-gu-roo-jee kaa Khaal-saa! Wa-hay-gu-roo-jee kee Fa-tay!*

### ***Wahe Guru, Wha Guru***

The Guru Mantra given by Guru Gobind Singh ji at the first Amrit ceremony. It is the first mantra of the Sikhs. In his first years of teaching in the West, Yogi Bhajan used the form "Wha Guru." *Waa-hay guru, Whaa Guru*

### ***wiwhaar***

Behaviour. *wiw-haar*

## **YYYYY**

### ***yatra***

Spiritual pilgrimage. *ya-traa*





# “DON'T MISS ME. FIND ME!”

## ONLINE CONNECTIONS

### More from the Messenger

Audio talks in English and Punjabi by the Siri Singh Sahib, "Yogi Bhajan" - downloadable  
[sikhnet.com/gurbani/artist/yogibhajan](http://sikhnet.com/gurbani/artist/yogibhajan)

Video and audio talks by the Siri Singh Sahib, "Yogi Bhajan," in English & Spanish  
[sikhdharma.org/lectures-and-videos](http://sikhdharma.org/lectures-and-videos)

Audio and video talks in English by the Siri Singh Sahib, "Yogi Bhajan"  
[libraryofteachings.com](http://libraryofteachings.com)

### More about the Guru's House

Website of Sikh Dharma International, based in New Mexico, U.S.A. - English & Spanish  
[sikhdharma.org](http://sikhdharma.org)

Website of the S.G.P.C., based in Amritsar, India - Punjabi & English  
[sgpc.net](http://sgpc.net)

Website of the Sikh Dharma Ministry, based in New Mexico, U.S.A. - English  
[sdministry.org](http://sdministry.org)

### Legacy

International Kundalini Yoga Teachers Association  
[ikyta.org](http://ikyta.org)

Kundalini Research Institute  
[kundaliniresearchinstitute.org](http://kundaliniresearchinstitute.org)

Miri Piri Academy  
[miripiriacademy.org](http://miripiriacademy.org)

Sikhnet  
[sikhnet.com](http://sikhnet.com)

3HO Foundation  
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