



Panth Ratan

Siri Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa

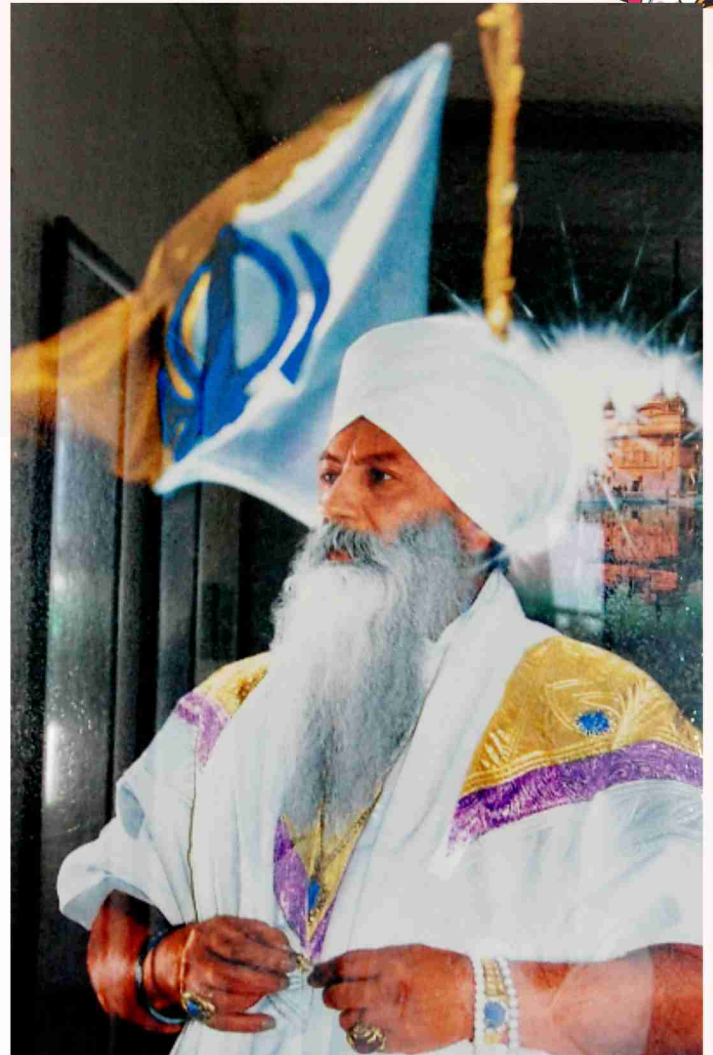
“Yogi Bhajan”

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In every society, there are out standing individuals whose life work is dedicated to the greater good. In Sikhism, we honor those people with title of *Panth Rattan*. Meaning "The Jewel of the Nation", this honorific denotes great appreciation for service given to the Sikh panth. It is a title seldom granted, and then only after serious consideration.

He said, "Each person must deeply understand why he is a human being and what it means to be human being. Once you have seen the joy of being a human being and have enjoyed the beauty of it, this is an experience of wisdom. You have a right to be Healthy. You have a right to be Happy. You have a right to be Holy. It is your birthright!" With that premise, he started the **3HO Foundation** (Happy, Healthy, Holy Organization) and taught daily classes in Kundalini Yoga. The vision that brought Yogi Bhajan to teach in the West was a deep faith that Sikhism was a vital key to the future of humanity. For the most part, people were not looking for a new religion when they came to his yoga classes. But as their lives began to change and their hearts were opened, they yearned to experience the spiritual nature of life. It wasn't long before these yoga students wanted to know about Sikhism. They had listened to the stories Yogi Bhajan told about the brave and glorious Sikh saints and heroes, and they too longed to belong



to that glorious heritage.

Yogi Bhajan was born *Harbhajan Singh Puri* on August 26, 1929. He founded the organization known as Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere more than 40 years ago that has had a remarkable impact on the face of Sikhism. For the first time in history, the Sikh philosophy and lifestyle has spread in unprecedented numbers to people outside the boundaries of the Punjab, India. In the heavy pressure and hectic pace of life in the western world, the simple peace of Sikhism has found fertile ground to grow and emerged as a religion for the modern world.

Yogi Bhajan left a successful civil service career in India in September 1968 to take a position teaching yoga at Toronto University. Within a few



**Bhai Sahib Satpal Singh Khalsa
with Sri Singh Sahib
Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogi Ji**

months, *Yogi Bhajan* took a trip to visit Los Angeles - a trip that affected the rest of his life.

In 1969, California was the heartland of America's cultural revolution and *Yogi Bhajan* found himself right in the middle of it. *Yogi Bhajan* saw through the confusion and chaos of the prevailing hippie movement into the hearts and souls of beautiful young people.

He was deeply touched by their sincerity and genuine yearning for spirituality. He threw himself headlong into a life of serving and teaching these young people. *Yogi Bhajan* delivered his first lecture in Los Angeles on January 5, 1969, the fifth centenary anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of the Sikh faith.

His words dramatically awakened the young people who heard him. He brought them an inspiring message of hope and truth.

In 1971 *Yogi Bhajan* returned to India with a group of 84 western students, many of whom had taken the vow to live as Sikhs. When these new western Sikhs came to the Golden Temple, it was transformational experience locking the destiny of Sikhism in the west.

The Sikh leadership in Amritsar was stunned to see the flower of Sikhism blooming afresh in the west, far from the borders of the Punjab. In acknowledgment of his service to humanity, the Akal Takhat honored *Yogi Bhajan*. In front of thousands, he was presented with a saropa and the title "Bhai Sahib" for his missionary work in the west. *Sant Fateh Singh*, President of the Shiromani Akali Dal and *Sant Chanan Singh*, president of the SGPC said to him, "Since this one *Harbhajan Singh* will create many Singh Sahibs, we will call him Siri Singh Sahib!" And so he was known from that day onwards. The Western Sikh communities have grown in peace and grace to more than three hundred centers on Six continents.

Classes in Sikhism are taught all throughout the Americas and Europe, continuing to instill in hundreds of people the simple and graceful technology of Sikh Dharma. Westerners who have become Sikhs and their generations are seen everywhere in their white turbans and are accepted as part of the continually changing panorama of the Khalsa. In acknowledgment of a lifetime of *seva*, *Yogi Bhajan* was honored with a beautiful silver plate declaring bestowal of the title Panth Rattan during the tercentenary of the Khalsa in Anandpur Sahib, 1999.

Panth Ratan Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa "Yogi Ji" will be fondly missed for his courage, humour, and contribution to the Sikh Panth.