

The Sikh Missionary

“Burn worldly love, rub the ashes and make ink of it, make the heart the pen, the intellect the writer, write that which has no end or limit”

—Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Satpal Singh Kohli’s life has been an endless pursuit of excellence. Now he has taken things a notch higher and made it his eternal mission to propagate the truth. Today his life is an open book, and the chapters that fill them are embellished with limitless intellect and wisdom. Known as *Bhai Sahib*, a title bestowed upon him by the Jathedar of Patna Sahib, he freely shares his knowledge. It is a tribute to his evolving thoughtfulness, erudition and sagacity that he is the Sikh Dharma Ambassador in the Western Hemisphere.

Satpal Singh was born in 1956 in the southern Indian City of Madras and remembers growing up in a loving family, nourished abundantly with positive and happy emotions by his parents Sardar Malik Singh Kohli and Late Sardarni Rajinder Kaur Kohli. When the family moved to the Indian capital city of New Delhi, he attended Summer Fields High School. After graduating from there he went to Delhi’s St. Stephen’s College and earned himself a bachelor’s degree in Science. Sports and academics were like inseparable companions in college life for the athletic Satpal. He had a ubiquitous presence in the hockey field, on the running tracks, and even in the table tennis room. That made him a practitioner of outdoor and indoor games and he excelled in them. He also joined the National Cadets Corps (NCC), an army-administered outfit in India that recruits young volunteers, and prides itself in instilling discipline, character, comradeship, and the noble ideals of selfless service.

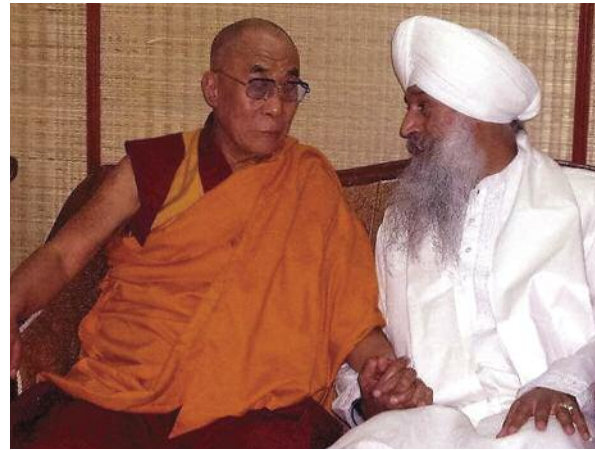
So at St. Stephen’s, Satpal Singh was shaping up to be a fine and well-groomed all-rounder, proficient at studies, sharp in games, a young man whose leadership skills were second to none.

MOVING WEST, DOING BUSINESS

After graduating from college, he decided it was time to head West. It was in 1978 that Satpal Singh arrived in the USA and attended another college at Santa Fe, taking up accounting, marketing and other business courses. In the same year he got married in Espanola, New Mexico, to the daughter



of Yogi Bhajan, who later became his spiritual guide and mentor. Soon, though, the West Coast was beckoning, and he moved to California and ventured into business, becoming a partner with GRD Enterprises, a marketing firm in Los Angeles. His academic orientation and experience with Yogiji came in handy. He rapidly helped expand the firm’s business across domains—soon they were running a travel agency, handling international trade, beauty products, providing school and office supplies, importing oriental carpets for sales in USA, doing check cashing business, direct mail advertisement and importing food products. If this wasn’t enough, Satpal Singh developed a taste for candies, America after all has developed the concept of candy stores like nowhere else. In 1986, some eight years after he had come to the USA, he moved to Canada and started a candy manufacturing and distribution business based out of Toronto and Montreal. He also started SPI Real Estate International, a property firm that tied up with top developers in India and marketed their brands across Canada and the USA. While he was helping NRIs invest in property back in India, he was also making a mark in selling real estate in Las Vegas, having tied-up with the



Pacific Group of companies. He also came to own a fine dining restaurant at the Rio Hotel and Casino in America's glamour city.

Success in business, though, was to become the bedrock of his spiritual life. Somewhere deep within he yearned to move into the higher realms of existence. And life would give him a chance that he grabbed with both hands. He found his spiritual mentor in Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji, also called Siri Singh Sahib. Satpal Singh would go on to call Yogi Bhajan his celestial father, and spiritual guide. Yogiji appointed him Assistant Chief of Protocol for the Sikh Dharma International. Satpal Singh also became involved with other institutions set up by Yogiji such as 3HO, Sikh Net, Miri Piri Academy and Khalsa Council International. His spiritual life gained momentum in a manner that he blissfully enjoyed. Satpal Singh would organize Yogiji's meetings with political and religious figures around the world, and began to accompany his mentor wherever he would speak. He also learnt Kundalini Yoga from Yogiji at his New Mexico ranch called *Hacienda de Guru Ram Das*. These days the Kundalini Research Institute helps promote this ancient yogic practice that helps in restoring health and intellect.

SPIRITUAL STRIVING

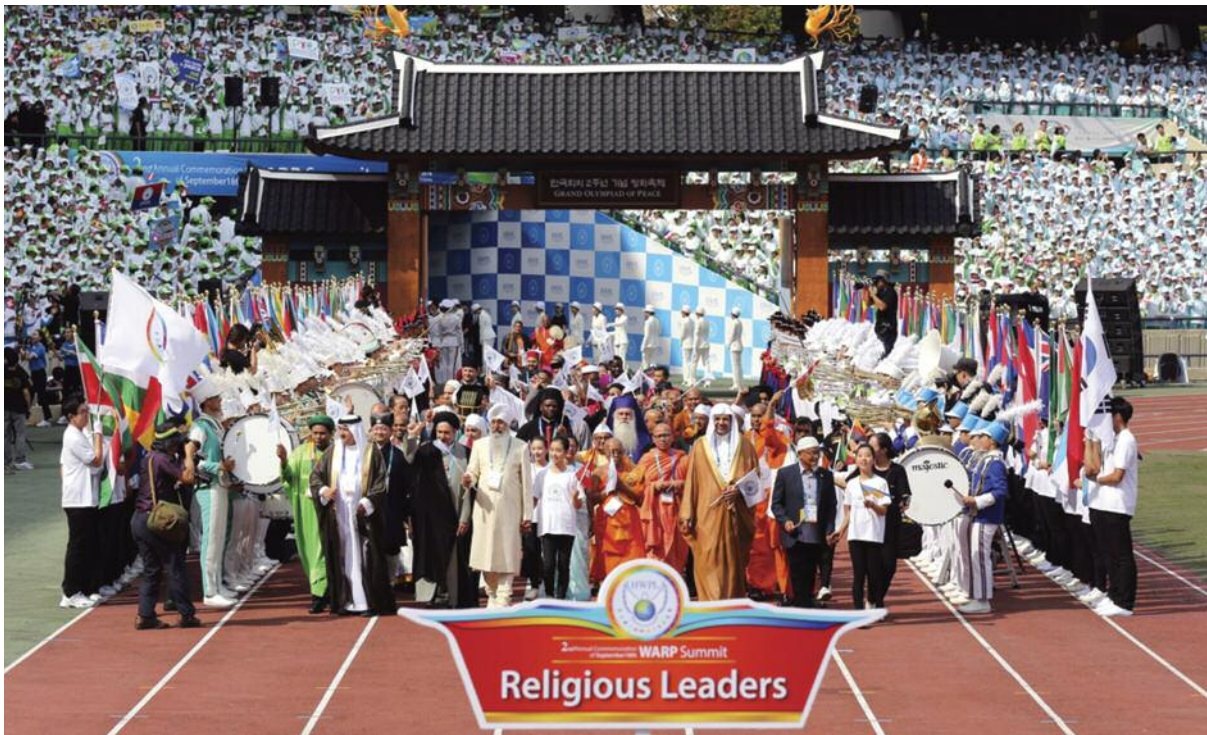
Satpal Singh's dedication and surrender won over Yogiji's heart, and in no small measure. Yogiji gave the hand of his daughter, Kamaljit Kaur, in marriage to Satpal Singh. Yogi Bhajan left his body in 2004, a point in time when Satpal Singh became even more determined to keep striving on the spiritual path. He started going on extensive lecture tours, carrying books on Sikhism, and translations of the *Japni Sahib* and other *Banis* from the *Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*. Bhai Sahib Satpal Singh has dedicated his life to



preserve, protect and spread the teachings of Yogi Bhajan and to bring the technology of Kundalini Yoga all around the world.

Today Satpal Singh Khalsa is the Chairman of the Guru Ram Das Sikh Mission of America based out of New Mexico. He is also Secretary, International Affairs, at the Akal Takht of Sikh Dharma, and a Director in Miri Piri Academy, Amritsar. He is also a member of ACT and Sikh Dharma 13. Several recognitions and honours have come his way. For his untiring efforts to propagate the Sikh way of life in the Western world, the Sikh clergy have given him the title of *Bhai Sahib*. The Jathedar of Patna Sahib Ji—the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Sikh Guru—has anointed him with the honorific *Ambassador of Sikh Dharma*, one that he carries around the world with a great deal of dignity and grace. His tireless striving for the Sikh cause has been recognized by Jathedars of all five Sikh Takhts—the great seats of learning. The high Sikh clergy in India appointed Bhai Sahib Satpal Singh as the “Chief Religious and Spiritual Authority of Sikh Dharma in the Western Hemisphere”.

BHAI SAHIB SATPAL SINGH



Satpal Singh travels the world promoting peace, diversity, Sikh teachings, a healthy happy and holy lifestyle through the Teachings of Yogi Bhajan and Kundalini Yoga, and is selflessly dedicated to the welfare of all. He participates in world peace and inter-faith events and travels the globe bringing love, light of wisdom, unity and inspires many towards the path of the divine Almighty.

Bhai Sahib Satpal Singh is a Peace Ambassador for HWPL (a Peace organization in South Korea dedicated for cessation of wars around the world); Ambassador for the Parliament of World Religions; member of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (the world's first inter-faith initiative for clean water and hygiene); a Deputy Sherrif in New Mexico; a Knight appointed by the Government of Philippines, and involved with many other organizations around the world including United Nations, World Bank, Religions for Peace and others making efforts for establishing communal harmony in the world. For his service to humanity, Satpal Singh has received many awards and recognitions from the USA House of Congress and the US Senate.

Satpal Singh is a true missionary in action, living and walking the words of his master, and the Great Gurus. He sums up his own journey thus, "It is my mission and blessing to promote diversity and culture as taught by Guru Nanak Dev Ji... to better facilitate the current worldwide shift in global consciousness



from tribalism, instability, and extremism, to harmony, cooperation and enduring peace. In addition, I welcome and support other organizations that promote the transformation of consciousness as taught by Guru Nanak Dev Ji throughout his life and travels."

The boy from Chennai who started business in Los Angeles, discovered his mentor in New Mexico, and now traverses the world, is someone who preaches what he practices in his own life. In spirit he remains a galactic traveller, one that has made his intellect the writer, and continues to do so with freedom in the now and beyond. ■