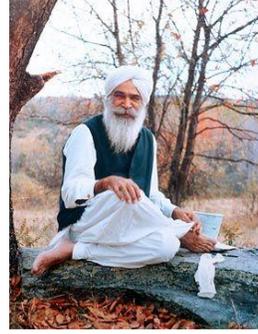


Sant Kirpal Singh

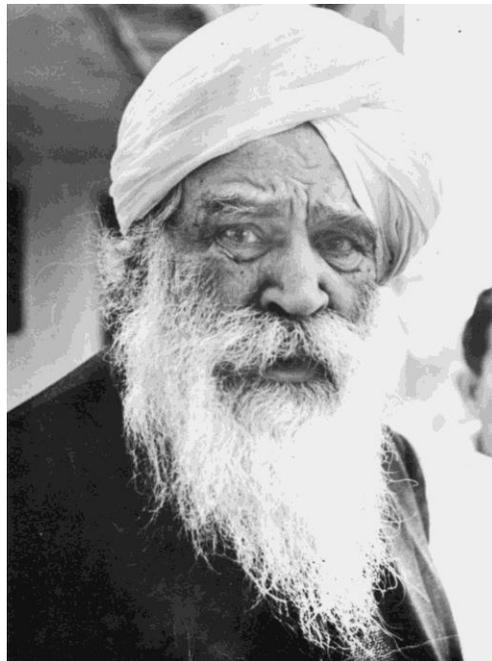
His Life and Teachings

by: Giovanni Vines



“Let the law of Love prevail amongst you, which should be radiated to all nations and races. Give up hatred, eradicate egoism and anger. Eschew violence. Abandon war. Abandon lust for power. Pledge yourself to love, sincerity, humility, forgiveness, and non-violence. Transform your nature by living a life of goodness. Manifest truth, purity, love, selflessness, and righteousness in every aspect of your life. Make a true religion of the heart as the ruling factor in your lives. Love all, serve all, and have respect for all, as God is immanent in all forms. Preach the gospel of oneness and live the life of oneness. This is the way to peace on earth. This is the mission of my life, and I pray that it may be fulfilled.”

Kirpal Singh



Kirpal Singh has been referred to as a 'perfect Master', an archetype guru. There are generally three benchmarks attributed to a perfect Master. One is their level of spiritual attainment; a fully liberated soul who has merged his individual soul with its source. We cannot know with any reasonable certainty what Kirpal's level of attainment was, any more than we can discern anyone else's attainment. The second benchmark is that they lived an ideal human life, and in that respect, we can say that he certainly led an extraordinary life, imbued with service and self-sacrifice. The third earmark of a perfect master is that, even after he leaves the world physically, he continues to work in the world directly through his disciples.

The life of Kirpal Singh has been well documented in a book entitled, "Love, Light, and Life", by Devinder Narendra and Eileen Wigg. He was born in Sayyad Kasran in the Punjab, now a part of Pakistan. He was an ardent student as a young boy and as a college student in religious studies, would read the entire contents of his school's library in his search for knowledge. As a child, he had extraordinary abilities, often knowing of events in advance. One day in school, he requested to leave at once as his grandmother had just died. His headmaster dismissed the request as an attempt to cut class. A short while later, Kirpal's uncle arrived to take the boy out of school due to the sudden death of his Grandmother. After this he was nicknamed, 'little saint'.

Even from a young age, Kirpal was committed to service and self-sacrifice. One poignant incident from his youth took place when his older brother had been promised to wed the daughter of a good Sikh family. Normally, the bride and groom are perfect strangers until their actual wedding day, but Kirpal's brother snuck over to her home to catch a glimpse of his bride-to-be. When he announced to his family that she was not to his liking and that he refused to wed her, his parents were in shock. To deny marriage in these circumstances was a great insult to the girl's family and a source of shame to his own. But Kirpal jumped in and agreed to marry the girl, saving the day for both families.

Even without the direction of a competent master, Kirpal was able to leave the body at will and experience long states of samadhi. He counseled his wife about this and told her to be careful not to allow anyone into their home when he was in this state, and trained her to use pressure points to bring him back into physical consciousness. One day, some neighbors did find him in samadhi and cried out for a doctor, thinking that Kirpal had possibly died.

As a young man, Kirpal inquired into spiritual matters and received some training, but he longed for the day when he would meet a true spiritual master. He began seeing Sawan Singh in his meditations as early as 1917. Then, in 1924, he met Sawan in person and immediately realized that this was the master who had been guiding him within during the previous seven years.

As a disciple, Kirpal embodied the highest type of Bhakti, when the soul merges with the object of its devotion. Once he was satisfied that Sawan was a true master, he surrendered himself to his master and his meditations. He would have been very happy to remain in his role as disciple for the entirety of his life, if only his master could have somehow lived so long.

During partition in 1947, when Pakistan was formed out of Northwestern India, millions of people died due to the tremendous violence which erupted between Muslims and Sikhs. Muslims were slaughtered by marauding bands of Sikhs and Hindus, and Sikhs were slaughtered by marauding bands of Muslims. It was a sad time in the history of civilization. Kirpal put his own life at risk, inviting refugees from both sides, Muslim and Sikh alike, into Sawan's ashram, refusing to hand them over to the death squads. In one incident he even left the ashram, unarmed, to plead with a group of armed, bloodthirsty Sikhs to allow the Muslims who were hiding in the ashram, safe passage out of the area. To the amazement of many, the Sikh band did an about-face and escorted the Muslims to safety themselves. It is estimated that he saved the lives of thousands of innocent people during this period.

Later that year, Sawan called for Kirpal Singh and informed him that he would be leaving the work of spiritual initiation to him. Six months later, in April, 1948, Sawan called Kirpal to his bedside. Sawan gazed intently into Kirpal's eyes for several minutes, filling him with an overpowering, blissful intoxication. Then Sawan closed his eyes, not to open them again. Kirpal later explained that the mastership is passed through the eyes, and that this was the moment it was passed to him.

Kirpal retired to the Himalayas for six months of samadhi. While he didn't acknowledge this openly, he also needed time to mourn the loss of his close friend and teacher, Sawan Singh. Then Kirpal returned to Delhi, and with the help of some devoted associates, acquired some property, and founded an ashram. His work took place in two arenas. As a spiritual master, he took on the task of providing spiritual initiation to thousands of souls during his twenty-five-year mission. But he was also a founder and initiator of projects and organizations.

Partly as a result of Kirpal's involvement with these ambitious projects, and partly as a result of his career as India's deputy military accounts officer, he was connected at the highest levels of Indian government and society, giving him a unique entrée onto the world stage. In the 1950's, Kirpal developed a close relationship with Jawaharlal Nehru, becoming his confidante and spiritual advisor. Later, he served in the same capacity with Indira Gandhi, who attended some of Kirpal's special events during the time she served as Prime Minister.

Kirpal's first large undertaking was the World Fellowship of Religions. The WFR actually came about as the result of a combination of circumstances and influences. Sawan had earlier shared with Kirpal a concept he had for a symposium where world religious leaders could come together to meet and discuss each other's faiths and explore ways to cooperate with each other to help mitigate religious divisions and strife. Kirpal kept the idea in the forefront of his thinking and planning, and would occasionally share the idea with others whenever the opportunity arose. When he discussed it with the

prominent Jain leader, Muni Sushil Kumar Ji, he found an enthusiastic ally. Kumar Ji offered to host an international conference, and from there, the WFR was born.

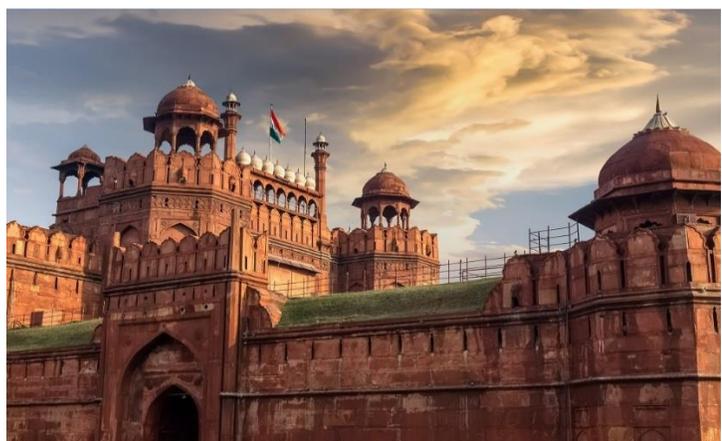


Coincidentally, at that same time, India was experiencing some internal problems, stirred up by fanatical religious entities. They were making certain demands, and some had organized belligerent gangs who were threatening to riot. The situation became so dire that the government had to send in the Indian Army to help maintain order.

Nehru called in Kirpal for help. He asked him to intervene with religious leaders, in the hopes of garnering their support in quelling the unrest. Kirpal spent the next two months, crisscrossing the subcontinent, by car and by train, visiting with religious leaders. During these meetings, he promoted the upcoming WFR conference. Kirpal won them over. They pitched in to help settle the unrest, and later, became delegates to Kirpal's WFR.



Kirpal with Nehru and Indira Gandhi



The Red Fort in Old Delhi

The first WFR conference was held at the Red Fort in Old Delhi in November, 1957, drawing an estimated 200,000 participants. Attending dignitaries included the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, plus the Indian President, Vice President, and Education Minister. Kirpal was elected unanimously as its first president, a position he occupied for the next 17 years. The first conference focused on a number of issues, including: 1) tolerance, 2) fellowship, 3) understanding, 4) parallels in teachings, 5) acknowledgement of one common Supreme Being. While the concept for the WFR drew many skeptics and opponents, it was a rousing success, and laid the groundwork for a vital entity going forward, which would continue to convene and work together, even beyond Kirpal's passing.

The fourth WFR conference was held at the Ramlila Grounds in New Delhi in 1970. The conference adopted four resolutions and a Universal Charter of Religions, as follows:

Resolution No. 1

This conference of the WFR resolves to establish an International Institute for the unbiased and systematic study of comparative religions.

Resolution No. 2

The basic fundamentals underlying all religious faiths are essentially the same, those being; non-violence, justice, compassion and equality, eternal love, service, and truth.

Resolution No. 3

The WFR will establish a delegation to collaborate and cooperate with the United Nations and UNESCO, to help transmute the moral, spiritual, and religious vacuum which currently retards the spiritual evolution of humanity.

Resolution No. 4

The WFR will cooperate with scientists in finding ways to create a synthesis and common ground for sharing knowledge and information on matters related to the upliftment of humanity.

Universal Charter of Religions

We solemnly affirm and declare that:

1. It is our sacred duty to promote peace, human relations and understanding, through non-violent means on the basis of equality, friendship, compassion and love.
2. It is our sacred duty to assist all individuals in their attempts to develop themselves spiritually.
3. It is our sacred duty to strengthen the universal principles of religion and their application to human life.
4. It is our sacred duty to help facilitate the educational, economic, cultural and moral development of all human beings.
5. It is our sacred duty to enhance the dignity of man.
6. It is our sacred duty to render selfless service to all human beings regardless of their caste, creed, race and nationality.
7. It is our sacred duty to work to quell tensions and misunderstandings amongst various religious entities, social groups, and nations.
8. It is our sacred duty to promote religious pluralism in order to foster human unity and brotherhood.
9. It is our sacred duty to promote environmental purity and reverence for life, including clean air, water, land and food.
10. It is our sacred duty to promote a higher standard of living for all people
11. It is our sacred duty to help curb problems associated with overpopulation.

12. It is our sacred duty to help eliminate outdated religious practices, including superstitions and factional prejudices.
13. It is our sacred duty to strive to keep religion free from political influences.
14. It is our sacred duty to work to manifest the foregoing affirmations through all available means at our disposal.

In his remarks to the delegation, Kirpal said:

“We have with us here, friends, both from the East and the West, to whom we extend our welcome. We have great appreciation and love for you all, especially as you come for the cause of God. All of us should join the army of God...Truly speaking, religion is the expression of divinity already existing in man, and there we are all one. So, those who realize this one reality, they see from the level of the soul that the same reality is working throughout all creation...We should look to this one reality and to the ultimate goal of knowing God, that has been set before us.

The purpose of religion is to enable man to advance toward perfection: to make him a complete human being...To sum up, the message that religion has for modern man is, let him be an ideal man. Let man’s body be in full blossom, and his soul be full of glory, intoxicated with the ringing radiance of God, radiating all around to the whole creation; and wish that, ‘Peace be unto all the world over, under thy will, O God’.”

1974 was a busy year for Kirpal. He organized and convened the first World Conference on the Unity of Man, attended by hundreds of thousands of delegates from across the globe.



World Conference on the Unity of Man

He also continued construction work on the five ‘Man Centers’, scattered around India. These centers were self-sufficient communities, designed to provide services to the needy, including:

1. A place of universal worship, which would accommodate the requirements of all religious faiths.
2. Assistance and accommodations for the indigent in the elderly population.
3. Free medical care and a free kitchen for the indigent.
4. Agricultural husbandry, to supply vegetarian foods for the center.
5. Language education, aimed at fostering communication between varied social and religious groups.

That same year, Kirpal organized the ‘National Unity Conference’ in conjunction with the ‘Kumba Mela’. The mission of the conference was to attempt to consolidate the efforts and resources of many of India’s sadhus, holy men, and spiritual leaders toward improving the economic plight of the poor and needy and toward the elimination of religious strife. It was the first time that anyone had ever been able to bring this many holy men together at the same place and time, for any reason.

On August 1, 1974, Kirpal was asked by Indira Gandhi to address the Indian Parliament to explain the concept of his ‘Man Centers’. As an impoverished nation, India has few resources to devote

toward social services and they hoped that some of the master's ideas could be applied in other areas of the country.



Kirpal's writings and recorded talks have been carefully preserved in electronic and published formats. He is the author of no less than fourteen books and numerous other writings. Digesting such a sizeable library of teachings is a large undertaking, but they can be looked at within six general themes:

1. Man-Making – *“There are basically two stages to be gone through before the struggling disciple rises above body consciousness and begins to enjoy the spiritual disciplines and to firmly tread the Path of Spirituality. The first stage is where the disciple has little or no knowledge of self-introspection and is in a state of abysmal ignorance. The second stage is when the disciple begins to realize that he has innumerable faults and failings which must be corrected before he can hope to rise above body consciousness, at which state this Path really begins. This second stage, which is for most a long, drawn-out struggle with lower tendencies of the mind, is known as ‘man-making’. Spirituality, or rising from the lower realms of existence to higher realms of untold bliss and harmony, is not difficult. It is the ‘man-making’ which is difficult.”*

2. Finding a Competent Teacher – *“As like attracts like, man must of necessity have a human teacher, for nothing else can teach him. The way to God, therefore, lies through man. When people see the Guru living like an ordinary human being, eating, drinking, etc., they become careless in thought and perception. You should always remember that a Master’s life is two-in-one. He is the son of man, accepting all as brothers, having no ill thought for anyone, living like a true human being, sharing happiness and misery with others. He also suffers in the sadness of others, and sometimes sheds tears of sympathy too. But as his true Self, he leads the souls within and up. Those unfortunate people, who consider him merely a man, remain at the level of man and lose a golden opportunity.”*

Sat Sandesh, Sept. 1972

3. The Path of the Masters; Surat Shabd Yoga – *“The references to Light and Sound, say the Masters of the Surat Shabd Yoga, are not figurative but literal, referring not to the outer illuminations or sounds of this world, but to inner transcendent ones. They teach that the transcendent Sound and Light are the primal manifestations of God when he projects Himself into creation. In His Nameless state He is neither light nor darkness, neither sound nor silence, but when He assumes shape and form, Light and Sound emerge as His primary attributes. The course of Surat Shabd Yoga, as described and taught by Guru Nanak, is the most natural one. Even a child can practice with ease. It is designed by God Himself and not by any human process, and therefore is complete in itself, not requiring addition, alteration, or modification.”*

Spiritual Elixir

4. Meditation – *“God is not found in books, as only statements about Him are given there. Nor can He be found in temples made of stone by the hand of man. In these we gather together only to pray to God or to thank Him for all that He has given. He resides within you. The*

body is the true temple of God. When you have understood this, then where do you go to find Him? First within your own self. Withdraw from outside, withdraw from the mind and outgoing faculties and come up to the seat of the soul at the back of the eyes. Once you are able to rise above body consciousness, you enter into an awareness of the higher order, which lies beyond the reach of all philosophies and psychologies, for then you are on your way to the Causeless Cause, the Mother of all causes, knowing which everything else becomes known of itself, like an open book. The whole of this life's purpose is to become still – to withdraw from outer environments, and to concentrate. You have great strength in you; you are the child of a Lion.”

Morning Talks

5. Detachment – *“So all true Masters say that realizing God is a simple matter – what is there to realizing the Lord? Just uproot the attention from here and plant it there. It is simply a matter of withdrawing and gathering together the scattered attention, which is the outward expression of your soul. Wherever you keep it engaged or attached, those very thoughts will always be reverberating within you. If we can only attach our soul to something higher within us, we would be alright. But if our attention is diverted through the outgoing faculties, so much so that it becomes identified with the outer things, what is the result? You cannot withdraw your attention from them. It is a question of the attention or surat, whether you keep it engaged toward the outside things or invert and attach it to your Overself.”*

Morning Talks

6. Initiation – *“It is the ‘Word’ personified or the Master Power that gives initiation, and it does not matter where the Master is physically at the time of initiation. Regardless of whether the Master himself is near at hand, or far away overseas, the Master Power always works. In case of distance, the authorized representative conveys the Initiation instructions, generally*

in the morning hours. At the time of Initiation, the Master takes His seat at the Third Eye of the initiate and looks after him henceforth. The accepted aspirants, who are sincere and receptive during initiation, do have a perceptive first-hand inner spiritual experience at which time the spiritual eye is opened to see the Light of God and the inner ear is opened to hear the Voice of God – the Creative Sound of the Beyond which has a soothing and healing effect. The instructions in the esoteric teachings consist of the exposition of Bhajan (Sound Practice) and Simran (Light Practice), including the repetition of the words (mantra), which are charged with the power of the Master; concentration or meditation, by fixing the inner gaze at the center of the two eyebrows; and then linking the spirit with the saving lifeline within, ever reverberating in the form of the perennial Sound Current, the very life-breath of the Universe, of which the Master himself is the living embodiment. As soon as a devotee is able to transcend the physical body, the Radiant Form of the Master (Guru Dev) appears in the subtle realm, bringing him back to the True Home of his Father.”

Naam or Word

During his life, Kirpal Singh conducted three world tours, exposing thousands of souls on five continents to the age-old spiritual science. Spirituality, once the prized, exclusive gem of Central Asia was now global. What began five hundred years earlier with Guru Nanak and his roaming band of minstrels, singing Nanak’s hymns and providing esoteric instructions; this same teaching was now available to anyone, virtually anywhere in the world.