

U.S. Congress Honors Yogi Bhajan

“Whatever your faith, Yogi Bhajan had the right words, the right lesson, the right message. He spoke to us all. He inspired us. Around the world he was a powerful voice for peace. I am pleased that he has been honored by Congress today.”

U.S. Representative Tom Udall (D-NM)

In the history of the U.S. Congress, only a handful of spiritual leaders have ever inspired a Joint Resolution honoring their life and work. They include Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II, and Martin Luther King.

On Tuesday evening, April 5, 2005, around 7:00 p.m., the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.Con.Res.34, Rep. Tom Udall's (D-NM) resolution honoring the life and contributions of Yogi Bhajan. The next day, the U.S. Senate passed its version of the resolution sponsored by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) by unanimous consent.

On Wednesday, May 11 the Sikh Dharma Office of Public and Foreign Affairs hosted a special two-hour reception at the U.S. Capitol to celebrate the passage of the resolution. Daya Singh Khalsa, Senior VP of Akal Security, Inc., served as the Master of Ceremonies and many members of Sikh Dharma attended, including Yogi Bhajan's family. The reception brought together a unique blending of U.S. and Indian government representatives in a constant stream of comings and goings. The gift bag everyone received of course included Yogi Tea and the *Aquarian Times* Tribute issue honoring the life of Yogi Bhajan.

Members of Congress who knew Yogi Bhajan and appreciated his work spoke, and many were the amusing anecdotes. Senator Jeff Bingaman said, “Yogi Bhajan was the beloved spiritual leader of thousands of Western Sikhs. This Congressional Resolution recognizes his distinguished life and the importance of his teachings. Wherever the Yogi went, there was joy in the room... I can remember very distinctly when he came to my office over in the Hart Building here in the Senate. It created a little commotion in the Senate Office Building because he doesn't come alone.”

Senator Bingaman added that when he went home, he told his wife that Yogi Bhajan had come to his office and what an amazing event it was, and she said, “I believe it, because he also came to my office.” Senator Bingaman's wife practices law in downtown Washington. As reported by *India Abroad*, Yogi Bhajan had gone to her to tell her how important it was that she help her husband get his campaign organized.

Rep. Tom Udall and Senator Jeff Bingaman presented Bibiji and Ranbir Singh gold embossed originals of the House and Senate resolutions. Bibiji spoke of Yogi and how he came to America to share the values of equality, unity, community, and self-discipline. “I'd like to thank the U.S. Congress, and especially Representative Tom Udall, Senator Jeff Bingaman, and Senator Pete Domenici. We feel very honored and touched by the resolution,” she told the *India Journal*.

Rep. Tom Udall was accompanied by his father, Stewart Udall, former Congressman and ex-Secretary of the Interior. Rep. Udall told *India Abroad* that his father had visited with Yogi many times, “And he,

like I, feels very much that he was a world leader, a man of peace, and somebody that meant so much to our community in New Mexico. As I look at the Yogi's life and as I watched what he did, the thing that symbolized for me more than anything was that he was a man of peace.”

“This is a lasting tribute to an influential spiritual leader who contributed greatly to the promotion of peace,” Senator Pete Domenici told the *India Journal*. “Yogi Bhajan was an inspirational figure and a proud legacy for New Mexicans, who remember his hopeful message and practice his teachings of humanity.” ●●●

