



We Are Here

Yogi Bhanan was not a prophet, but he did prophesy and he did predict we would experience a good deal of chaos in our time and that the foundations of his work among us would be shaken.

Let us examine some of what is going on right now. We are going to break this analysis into eight parts: 1) The Appeal of Believing; 2) Interest Groups; 3) The Piling on of Trauma Victims; 4) Qualifications of the Olive Branch for this Investigation; 5) The Siri Singh Sahib: A Different Category of a Man; 6) The Curse of Ambivalence; 7) No Conviction Without Cross-Examination; 8) Summing Up.

The Appeal of Believing

Ordinarily, we like to believe what we hear. Historically, men were given more credence than women. This is still reflected in Muslim law where the testimony of one man equals the testimony of four women. Slave owners were believed over slaves. Whatever a king or queen said was law. The rich and famous have always been listened to with particular attention.

So it is a welcome change now that women in our culture are being heard and believed, and their voices respected in a way they have not been. This development has gone so far that a woman's word now is often given greater credence than the word of a man, and of course, if the man is deceased, there is no argument at all.

Interest Groups

Every situation affects different people differently. In the case of the allegations today being made against Yogi Bhanjan, we can count at least ten different groups with different sets of interests.

- 1) Disaffected young people, usually children of 3HO parents, who experienced neglect or abuse at some stage of their lives, and who resented having to be different from their peers outside 3HO, having to keep their hair, go to Gurdwara, to abstain from drugs and alcohol and pre-marital sex. From their presentations, it would appear that their wishes range from reform of the 3HO organizations to the utter repudiation of the legacy of Yogi Bhanjan and the destruction of 3HO and its affiliated organizations.
- 2) Employees and those with pensions, dependent on Yogi Bhanjan legacy corporations. This group wants to keep their positions and income. As a result, they are saying little and hoping that when this controversy blows over, they will not lose their privileges.
- 3) Third, fourth, and fifth generation Kundalini Yogis. This group had no personal connection with Yogi Bhanjan. Typically, they have not experienced vigorous sadhana and have no deep understanding or connection with Sikh Dharma. Many in this group see the allegations as an opportunity to free themselves from the yoke of a powerful male authority figure and his legacy.
- 4) Victims of sexual and other trauma. This group resonates powerfully with the allegations. They can have little or no connection with Kundalini Yoga, but their tribe, their primary affiliation is with other victims and they readily join in their cause with all their furor and indignation. A powerful nexus of this group is the Facebook group, "White Bird in a Golden Cage."
- 5) The Directors of the Kundalini Research Institute (KRI). This group is in a dilemma: its publications and archives are filled with the teachings of Yogi Bhanjan, but they may be tempted to disown his name because of the bad publicity of the allegations against him in order to keep their business going in some shape or form.
- 6) The employees and students of Miri Piri Academy (MPA). This school on the outskirts of the holy city of Amritsar is arguably the crown jewel of Yogi Bhanjan's work. It took him most of his working life to finally achieve it – a global school with a vigorous program of yoga instruction in the heartland of Guru Ram Das – in 1997. This group risks losing everything if the Siri Singh Sahib Corporation (SSSC) Board does not take vigorous measures to keep MPA going through the twin crisis of the coronavirus pandemic and campaign to defame Yogi Bhanjan and his legacy. (gurufathasingh.com/mpa)
- 7) Pamela Dyson (previously Sardarni Premka Kaur). Pamela Dyson has achieved a little fame and fortune with the publication of her book in January of this year. It has also made her a cult figure among women who have experienced sexual trauma.

- 8) Dedicated students of Yogi Bhajan. Students who are unmoved by the allegations against their teacher are of two types. One group does not believe the allegations. The other group considers the charges may be true, but irrelevant to their practice of Kundalini Yoga. Both groups are wary of the future course of KRI and SSSC.
- 9) Parents of India School Alumni. Whether their own children are making allegations or not, many parents of alumni of MPA and previous schools are divided between their love of their children and their desire to be helpful in the healing of their children's trauma, and their devotion to Yogi Bhajan and his legacy. Some clearly feel they are in an either-or situation.
- 10) Entertainers. For some students of Yogi Bhajan who have developed considerable fan bases, the decision to side with the accusers comes easily. Most of their fans are women - or men with particular sensitivity for women's issues - who see this as an open-and-shut case, so it serves their business. For others, to stand with Yogi Bhajan at a time like this may come at a cost.

The Piling on of Trauma Victims

It is a characteristic of people who have experienced trauma, that they are easily triggered. To a sex abuse survivor, the mere mention of sexual harassment or abuse can send their brain back to the primordial fight-or-flight regions of the amygdala. Moreover, victims of sexual trauma constitute a large part – ten to thirty percent – of American society, and misery loves company. Not only that, in a society with a history of being unsympathetic or unbelieving to victims of gendered violence, sticking together can seem like a good survival strategy.

The Premka Facebook page is a good example of a lot of wounded people, mostly women, getting together and sharing their stories. Unfortunately, there is little remedy for these women. As someone I know who has participated in that forum observed, "It's beginning to be apparent that women who've really suffered rape and abuse who are sharing in that group are not getting anything really healing from it. Sharing your story into basically 'thin air' is possibly one of the worst things to do."

Ironically, according to new research in successfully treating the long-term psychological effects of trauma, the best treatment is body-mind therapy and especially Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan. Of course, to even mention "Yogi Bhajan" on that FB page would be traumatizing for just about everybody.

Qualifications of the Olive Branch for this Investigation

While appreciating the dilemma of the Board members of the Siri Singh Sahib Corporation when they first heard of the allegations of abuse, and their hoping to diffuse and

resolve the situation by appointing a third party to investigate, the qualifications of that organization may be called into question.

For one thing, there is no published history of the cases they have taken on and the results of their investigations. In the case of a judge, an accused can know by examining their record if they are being tried by a “hanging judge” or not. In the case of the Olive Branch, there is no way of knowing whether they have a history of siding with the plaintiff(s) or the accused.

Of course, the Olive Branch is known as an organization that specializes in allegations of sexual abuse in spiritual organizations. That has been their bread and butter. But what if, in fact, there has been no sexual assault? Are the investigators of the Olive Branch equipped and prepared to admit as much?

Lastly, an obvious shortcoming of the Olive Branch team is that there seem to be no men in it. That, in itself, is problematic.

The Siri Singh Sahib: A Different Category of a Man

While wishing the good people of the Olive Branch well in their investigation, I personally want to share one bit of my interview with a couple of people from their team the other day.

To their credit, they let me blather on quite a bit, taking from it what they considered relevant to the case. What surprised me was that they had no previous knowledge of Yogi Bhanjan’s role in the founding of the Grace of God movement (1971) and (Khalsa) Women’s Training Camp (1975).

I also pointed out the extraordinary sensitivity of the Master which he attributed to his ability to see our auras – and which Dr. Alan Singh Weiss vouched for by telling me how in the early days Yogiji would frequently congratulate women on their pregnancies before they could tell, but he could – by their auras. Yogiji was also an advocate for children and young people, regularly lecturing their parents to take better care of them, even adopting a troubled young woman and paying her way through school.

When he arrived in our culture of death in 1968 or shortly thereafter, he took on the whole misogynistic mess practically single-handedly. He proposed, and taught, instead a culture of life, and woman and Adi Shakti were at the centre of his mission.

I think what the people in the Olive Branch investigation and the fans of the Premka FB page are expecting is just another defrocked priest, another abbot who could not control his passions, another cog in some spiritual organization taking liberties at the trough.

Yogi Bhanjan himself founded these feminist movement – and he did it with adroit sensitivity. It was with that sensitivity that he made fun of the institution of celibate monks. It

was with that profound compassion that he lambasted the “right to life movement” and offered up in its stead the 120th Day Celebration and 40 days care for the new mother. It was with that deep respect for life and the Giver of Life, that he encouraged Western women, forever fretting about their appearance to calm down and acknowledge their bodies as holy temples, perfect vessels of the divine.

Yogi Bhajan was no rogue monk, no hedonistic shambala, no besotted yogi. He dedicated his life to the good of all. In doing so, he sacrificed his own family life and his own personal time and space.

Yogiji’s methods were unconventional and fearless and open to misinterpretation, as one quote of his about rape has been misconstrued and made the centre of a campaign of slander - paying no mind to 185 other quotes readily available now at libraryofteachings.com, and being utterly unmindful of his basic teaching that a woman should live in her strength, grace and divinity.

The Curse of Ambivalence

I am trained as an academic to see both sides of any situation, to not take sides, to be ambivalent, to be patient, to wait and see what others say. There is a place for that, but sometimes it can also be a curse.

This ambivalence gave us the tobacco lobby that for years argued that smoking did no harm, and pointed to scientific evidence to prop up their point. It gave us climate change deniers who for precious years told us: a) the climate wasn’t changing or b) that human activity played no part or c) that it is too late to do anything anyway, Hallelujah!

Today, we have journalists in Washington carefully clinging to their code of impartiality while the mad emperor plays havoc with the health of his nation through inaction, ineptitude, and utter dishonesty.

When an extraordinary man - and we only call him extraordinary because of the extraordinary things he has done, the hundreds of thousands of people he has helped – is the subject of a social media lynching party and the organizations he founded are in disarray, it is time for every true believer to stand and be counted. It is fine to give our testimony to the good people at the Olive Branch – and I have encouraged hundreds of you to do the same. But I deeply believe we need these testimonials to be heard far and wide, to the north and south, the east and west today.

No Conviction Without Cross-Examination

As our former Chancellor, Guru Terath Singh stated some weeks ago, there can be no proper determination of innocence or guilt without a proper cross-examination of those who are making allegations. People say things for any number of reasons. People can unknowingly speak truth. They can unknowingly make accusations which are false. Just collecting testimonials – pro and con - as the Olive Branch is doing cannot provide any final sense of closure, any realistic sense of the truth. The best that can be expected is imperfect allegations by imperfect people about someone who – dare we say it? – was perfect.

Summing Up

In speaking of perfection, let us consult the words of Guru Arjan in *Peace Lagoon* (Sukhmani Sahib) as translated by Pam Dyson in her earlier incarnation as Sardarni Premka Kaur:

The God-awakened man lives in the world without attachment,
As is the lotus unaffected by the touch of water.
The man of God is not bound by evil.
His gaze falls on each man the same,
As the sun gives warmth to all things alike,
As the wind blows the same on the beggar and the king.
He holds himself uniformly in patience,
As the earth is dug up by one and by another sandalpasted.
The man of God, has limitless value, O Nanak,
Like the fire whose perfect nature radiates its good to all. (1)

The man of God is the purest of the pure,
As is water that admits of no pollution.
His mind is illumined,
As is the sky spread above the earth.
He regards a friend and a foe alike,
Being himself free of all divisive ego.
The man of God is the highest of the high,
But he is ever humble in spirit.
He alone can attain this stage, O Nanak,
Who is visited by the Lord's perfect grace. (2)

The God-awakened man makes himself the dust of all men's feet,

Yet he alone knows the essence of the self.
He extends his kindness to all,
For he is incapable of doing evil to anyone.
He makes no distinction between man and man:
His eyes rain nectar on whomever they fall.
He is free from all entanglement,
And he knows the way of purity.
Wisdom is his food and drink, O Nanak,
And God alone is the object of his contemplation. (3)

He takes as his support the One alone, this God-awakened man.
He is imperishable.
With his mind, he seeks humility.
His only pleasure is in doing what is good.
The man of God is not held by bonds,
But he keeps control over his wandering mind.
Whatever proceeds from him is good.
All those who are drawn into his company are saved.
O Nanak, such a man of God is the support of the world. (4)

The God-awakened man loves only the One,
And God lives and communes with him.
The Name of the Lord is his only shelter,
The Lord's Name is his only kin.
This Godly man is always awake to the approaches of his Beloved.
He banishes his own thought of self,
And lives in supreme bliss.
Bliss pervades his home forever.
Men of God live in eternal harmony.
Nanak, such men of God die not ever. (5)

The God-awakened man knows the ways of God,
And his love is for Him alone.
Like his God, he is carefree,
And his teachings are the purest.
Great is the glory of such a one,
Whom God has instructed in His Own will.
Great is his glory,
And great the fortune of him who has a sight of Him.

I would pour my life at the feet of such a one.
He is the quest of gods like Shiva.
O Nanak, the man of God is himself the God of gods. (6)

No one can appraise the worth of a man of God,
For all that is, is contained in his mind.
Who can fathom the depths of his mystery?
Therefore, bow to him in reverence!
None is capable of reciting his praises.
He is the master of all.
Who can measure the extent of his greatness?
Only another as perfect as he could measure the reaches of his soul.
Infinite, incomprehensible is the man of God.
Nanak stands in eternal reverence before such a one. (7)

The man of the Lord is the creator of this universe;
He lives forever.
It is through the Lord's holy men that one realizes true life and the pathway to liberation.
He is the ideal man, and he shapes our destiny.
He is the shelter of the homeless.
He offers support to all.
This universe of form belongs to the man of God,
And his is at one with the formless One.
He alone can know his own praise,
Nanak, He is the master of all. (8)

