

Posted on the Facebook page of Yogi Bhajan Kundalini Abuse on June 17, 2023.

<https://www.facebook.com/yogi.bhajan.abuses>

IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ THIS–

–The author [of the letter below], Sahaj Singh Khalsa, who is currently listed as the President of the SSSC [Siri Singh Sahib Corporation], the board that administers all of 3HO's subsidiaries [3HO is the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization of Yogi Bhajan's Kundalini Yoga], has sent a very damning letter of resignation to that board.

He mentions that both he and his family have been attacked by hard liners in the group and calls out the lack of courage and accountability within the SSSC Trustees and the wider 3HO community and criticizes the tendency by some board members to deny and dismiss allegations of sexual and child abuse. He is urging for a change in attitude and a recognition of the harm caused. –

[Sahaj Singh Khalsa's letter sent on the day before the start of the summer solstice celebration of the 3HO community in Espanola, New Mexico.]

"Gur Fateh SSSC Trustees,

As we have been singing for many years, "Many speak of courage, but speaking cannot give it. It's in the face of death that we must live it."

I'm sorry to say that I don't see us living with the courage necessary to address the moment.

Organizationally, we haven't been living with courage. As a board, we aren't living with courage. Individuals on this board, and in this community, are not living with courage.

In my view, if we want to survive, we have to change that.

It takes no courage to imply that what has been revealed in the past three years is "fiction", that there is "no evidence" of the claims against the Siri Singh Sahib, or that we don't need to change.

It takes courage to acknowledge the harm, to recognize the voices of the women harmed (and the Second Gen) as evidence, and to accept the need to grow.

It takes no courage to argue for going back to the 'good old days', or to pretend that what has fractured trust in this community is people speaking up about their experiences as opposed to the experiences themselves and the actions (or inactions) of those who caused systemic harm.

It takes courage to advocate for change, to acknowledge the mistakes and harm of the past, and to recognize the good. It takes courage to value each of those experiences, the people who had them, and all the in between experiences, equally.

It takes courage to recognize and correct the unethical and dishonest behavior of some, including on this board and by other Ministers of Sikh Dharma, around the election, confidentiality (we have seen evidence of it in writing), communication, and abuse. Burying one's head in the sand and refusing to see is not leadership, it is cowardice. It is enabling.

It takes courage to acknowledge, stand up against, and correct the culture and environment of ongoing abuse on our board and in our community.

This board has lacked that courage for far too long.

It also takes courage on my part to put myself, my health, and the needs of my family first, before the needs of this spiritual "community". I have lacked that courage for far too long.

Today I'm taking a step towards correcting that.

Because of my service on this board, my children have been attacked, the sacred space of the Gurdwara has been violated, and we are no longer welcome there. My wife was attacked,

twisting confidential employment information, likely with the collusion of board members, and those lies were widely disseminated, EVEN AFTER THE COWARDLY ANONYMOUS AUTHORS KNEW THEY WERE LIES.

I have been attacked, threatened, and abused for telling the truth and advocating for change. They have been attacked simply for being related to me, and our board and organizations have sat in silent witness and done not a damn thing about it.

Hell, some on our board pretended, with heads firmly buried in the sand, that those things just didn't happen or that I was "wasting our time" by bringing them up and asking for corrective action.

That is not leadership, it is not courage, it is not acting with integrity.

Some in our community and on this board have justified these attacks, saying my teenage daughters "deserved it" because of what their father was doing.

That is some cowardly, chicken-shit, un-Khalsa, crap. It is also a continuation of the cycle of abusing children.

One of the things I have learned through this is that we apparently don't share values.

If you think this is all acceptable and deserved, we don't share core values.

If you think this is wrong, but refuse to meaningfully stand up against it, we have a significant disconnect in how we live our values.

If you think this is just the price to pay for stepping into a leadership role, you're wrong. In no other organization where I am a leader is this the cost of leadership.

If you think it is reasonable for Ministers of Sikh Dharma to author fraudulent recommendation letters for voter applications, to threaten "war" in public forums, to violate confidentiality on a regular basis, to mock examples of the Gurus and from Sikh history, to demean, gaslight, abuse and then lie about it, then we don't share core values and the Minister's vows mean nothing.

I wonder why I have tolerated such egregiously unacceptable behavior for so long. All I can come back to is that I have been socialized to expect it in this community. I've been trained my entire life that this is what it takes to be successful, to develop grit, to 'burn karma', and to be a leader.

I've recently come to see the toxicity of that perspective, the destructiveness of it, and how abusive it is. Despite what some, including on this board, have argued, abusive behavior does not stop when it is ignored. Instead, the abusers are emboldened, their behavior is validated, and they continue and escalate. They WANT us to ignore their behavior. They know their behavior is cowardly, they know it lacks integrity, they would crumble if confronted, so they thrive in our collective apathy and unwillingness to demand and enforce change.

If we want to understand what allowed so much abuse to go on for so long, we should recognize that it is exactly what we are doing (nothing) about abuse right now.

Despite everything that has been revealed the past three years, we have STILL REMAINED SILENT when abuse is happening, right in front of our faces, on a regular basis. And when I point it out, I am told doing so is inappropriate, or that I am "too invested" in the "fight between generations".

Nonsense.

In the past three years, we have denied, minimized, rationalized, and justified abuse of children. Board members defended Ministers who sexually abused multiple young girls and labeled the bravery of the girls in standing up against that abuse as "complaining". We have seen valued members of our community, and our team, chased away and some SSSC staff refuse to interact with our board BECAUSE OF HOW TOXIC WE ARE AND OUR ENVIRONMENT IS.

And somehow we STILL DENY this happened in our past?!

It's time for us to grow up, and that includes me.

The culture on this board, and in this community, that some of us have encouraged, fostered, participated in, or ignored, is wildly unacceptable and abusive. The abuse is largely focused on the Second Generation and women. The pattern is crystal clear.

I'm a slow learner, so I am just now recognizing and assessing the impacts on me personally, and on my physical and mental health. I won't share any details here, because I know bad actors on this board won't hesitate to weaponize them against me, but they are significant. The unfortunate part of all of this is there is so much beauty in our Sangat. People have been, and continue to be, helped by Kundalini Yoga. People's lives have been changed for the better by their participation in and engagement with our community. Leaders and yoga teachers are doing amazing work serving their communities around the globe, including in unbelievably challenging circumstances in Ukraine.

They are not served by our selfish refusal to grow, our continued fights amongst ourselves, and a selective application of ethics to swing policy one way or another. They are not served by people who claim they are fighting to "save the legacy of Yogi Bhajan", which is utterly dishonest.

Instead, those people are fighting to protect themselves, because they lack the courage to acknowledge reality. This is best exemplified by an individual who said, "When the allegations came out, I took a look at them and realized it would destroy me to accept them as true, so I decided not to." While the protective impulse is understandable, given the magnitude of the revelations, that isn't an acceptable perspective from somebody in leadership. It is a perspective that is not about anybody other than themselves, and has no place in the leadership of a vast worldwide community.

So, today I draw a line. No more.

I will no longer voluntarily associate myself with organizations and individuals that either encourage or ignore abuse and toxic behavior. I will not continue to be part of a structure minimizing the incredible harm experienced by so many, including hundreds of children. I will step away from a system, and people, who are mean, abusive, bullies, toxic, regressive, and too scared to grow.

No longer will bad actors be able to justify their abusive behavior by saying "Sahaj is tough, he can take it", or minimize the harm caused to so many in India (me among them) by pointing to me and saying, "It couldn't have been that bad, Sahaj turned out OK". I refuse to continue to serve as a Second Generation exemplar that it was all worth it. It wasn't.

I resign as a Trustee of the Siri Singh Sahib Corporation, and as a Minister of Sikh Dharma International, effective immediately. I will no longer be a candidate to serve on this Board and will not stand for election in July. I will not participate in the Town Halls that are being scheduled and my candidate statement, picture, name, and any reference to me as a candidate or Trustee must be removed from the SSSC website as soon as possible.

I remain a Sikh of the Gurus and will do my best to live those values as I understand them, which we have collectively failed to do.

My hope is that the 'leaders' on this board, and around the world, are able to find the courage to do the difficult work necessary to grow, to change, and to learn. I hope you find the courage to acknowledge, in very real and concrete terms, both the harm and the beauty around us.

I hope you learn to not only speak of courage, but to actually live it."

Sahaj Singh Khalsa