

# The Evolution Kundalini Yoga

## *In a Planetary Reboot of Consciousness*

by Jivan Mukta, PhD

“... how impressive these practical teachings are ... People claim to experience improved emotional and physical health and balance and integration ... These are key points to keep in mind in reflecting on the concerns that have been raised against Yogi Bhajan and 3HO Kundalini Yoga by some critics”

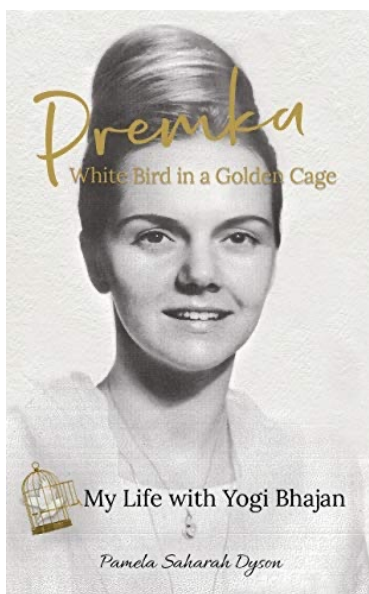
- Michel Stoeber, “3HO Kundalini Yoga and Sikh Dharma” (p. 357).

Twelve years ago, things were positive in the world of Kundalini Yoga “as Taught by Yogi Bhajan”, at least that is how a good number of people who study new religious movements and 3HO wrote back then. Doris Jackbosh agreed that this organization “has largely passed under the radar of research because the group has simply not been perceived as “controversial” enough, and has in many ways successfully integrated into society at large” (p. 386).

What has changed in the last weeks? What has happened to this movement that had “successfully integrated into society at large”? What has tilted the perception from positive to negative? What is the cause of the current chaos hitting the memory of the teacher and inspiration of the whole movement, Yogi Bhajan?

## “CREDIBLE ALLEGATIONS”

Back in 2011 C. Elsberg studied *violence* in the context of religious movements and published “*Strong as Steel, Steady as Stone: Skirting Pitfalls in 3HO/Sikh Dharma*”. Both, she concluded that there was a lack of evidence or significant conflict or violence in the community led by Yogi Bhajan, and that what stand out was the case of “*two female former members [who] accused Bhajan of assault and battery and a number of other crimes. Although several of the charges were dismissed, the assault charges were not. These cases were set out of court*” (p. 342). After that, everything went back to “normal” and it was only after the death of Yogi Bhajan in 2004 when conflict escalated up to several legal trials in relation to the different aspects of the management, ownership and money of the many corporations that he left to the organization and community of 3HO.



But in January 2020 things drastically changed. The previous problem that had affected the community of Kundalini Yoga had only involved the several directive and executive levels of the organization and with them the family of Yogi Bhajan. It was in the second half of January the reach of the discussion not only targeted Yogi Bhajan directly, but along with it, things became heated for almost everyone involved in Kundalini Yoga. One of the two former secretaries who had sued him, [Pamela Dyson](#), [came back and published “Premka: White Bird in a Golden Cage ~ My Life with Yogi Bhajan”](#).

Her story is in essence a disclosure of an old *secret*. The book, a personal account depicting her relationship with Yogi Bhajan, speaks about “secretive sex”, as she wrote, and other delicate and until then incredible and discarded allegations against the “man of God” and the “Guru’s messenger”, as Yogi Bhajan would himself say. The message delivered in “Premka” shook the minds and hearts of the lovers of Kundalini Yoga worldwide. How would not this

be the case? In the times of #metoo, the concept of zero tolerance to abuse is observed with a strict attention, alongside with the encouragement given to all women to speak up and to stop the abuse and injustice they have suffered. Not by any stretch of imagination does my cold analysis of these events about the family of Kundalini Yoga take away my sincere empathy and compassion for abused women and men.

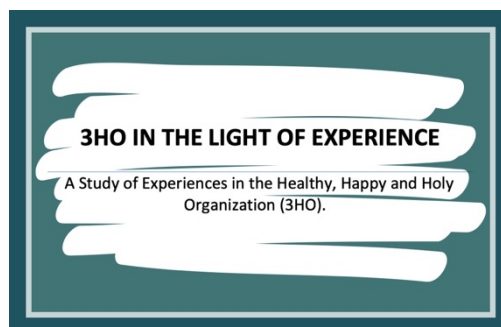
In the literary fascinating story of Pamela Dyson we read that she is or claims to be the initiator of important structures, narratives and the management of the eco-system of Yogi Bhajan. Her historical influence is a comeback that challenged the organization. A few days after the book was released, the [Collaborative Response Team](#) enunciated, in the first line of the document, an indefinite amount of “credible allegations” concerning the master’s sexual life which seems to imply more female staff members having similar allegations. Someone involved in the process defined to me “credible” as an allegation that “is worth researching further, it means it cannot be dismissed out of hand, it is worth looking into ... it cannot be dismissed, it has to be researched”. This “research” is now being conducted by [An Olive Branch](#), an independent third-party investigation office. At the time this article was written, An Olive Branch had received over hundreds of calls and emails. The estimate release of the conclusions of this investigation are expected to be in July 2020. For the *Collaborative Response Team* “the sole purpose of this investigation is to seek the truth...” (5th of March).

## SEPARATE THE “WHEAT FROM THE SHAFT”

“Obscurity is dispelled by augmenting the light of discernment, not by attacking the darkness”

-Socrates

Between the years 2006 and 2016, I scholarly researched the teachings, the community, Yogi Bhajan, 3HO, etc. I did it from the perspective of *experience*. Why did I do that? Because since 2000 I have been in love with yoga, and especially with Kundalini Yoga. The experience of being a practitioner-student-teacher of Kundalini Yoga, as well as a social scientist that addresses things in a critical way, is behind the motivation why I am writing this. Critical does not mean negative or neutral, critical means to challenge the given facts and the given “truths” until they can be proved as evidently real or not. I do not claim to be unbiased, or to own the truth, but this is not an obstacle to conduct myself to the clarity I expected and I did not find anywhere within the world of Kundalini Yoga. While my experience spoke by itself, the perception I had about various issues did not entirely seem consistent with the speech and the content conveyed to me. So I became a “participant observer” developing a [doctoral project](#) that I defended in 2016 (at the Helsinki University). Due to my love for yoga and what it has given me in terms of inner experience and spiritual vision, I confidently but humbly feel the call to provide a few clues about the current times of crisis, disaffection and mayhem affecting the community of Kundalini Yoga “as taught by Yogi Bhajan”.



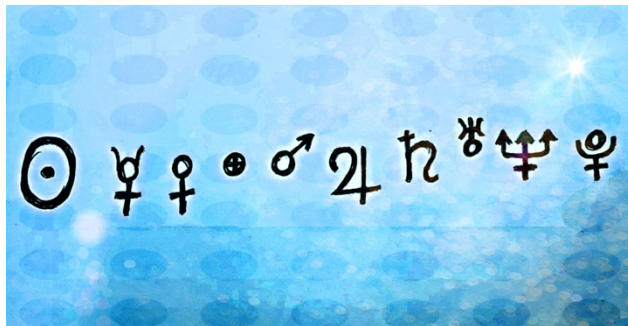
## THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS TO OLD STRUCTURES

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century no person or institution is beyond the public scrutiny and at some point, during the beginning of this crisis we, at Yoga Lafontaine, shared [our personal views](#) on this matter. The new times are particular in so that new students and spiritual searchers often show a powerful rejection to illegitimacy of any sort, as soon as they detect inconsistencies between the content and the external shape institutions and people have.

This strong feature of the newer generation of people and yogis cannot be ignored. The so called “millennials” and the generations who are young in spirit despise at least 5 “-isms” that they associated with the old ways of Kundalini Yoga:

1. *The dogmatism* of some teachings and how they are presented and expected to be applied or followed. This is not that *per se* they stand against rules or codes, but the dogmatism how things are conveyed
2. The resistance to *spiritual materialism* associated *consumerism* and *entertainment business in yoga* in general. Not always the concern is the yogic quality of the process and depth. This is sometimes eclipsed by selfish ambition that motivates materialistic interest around a spiritual teaching.
3. The *authoritarianism* of any alfa domineering leader who would be driven by interest that is not empowering each individual as an individual, rather, it sees individuals as assets or parrots of a single con-centric authority who controls the narratives and way to think of those students around.
4. The *egocentrism* and vanity exhibited by those who ought to be humble and wise, which goes against the basic yogic ethics to live a simple life as exposed in the Yama and Niyamas of master and classical author [Patañjali](#).
5. The taste of “*bhajanism*” that comes through some words, actions and practices present at multiple levels, altogether making people perceive or understand the ecosystem of Yogi Bhajan as having a “cultish” overtone.

These five “-isms” seem to have built up over decades, and I have witnessed these concerns throughout many hours discussing with students-in-training since 2004. These criticisms are openly shared in the several countries where I often travel to teach and it is most likely the case that it is an expression of the spirit of the Age.



Yogi Bhajan taught an Aquarian message and the whole movement is anchored in the mission to bring about the Aquarian Age. That view cannot be denied, at the same time what can also be argued that Yogi Bhajan was *pre-Aquarian* himself. Astrology, indeed, offers us another valuable angle to reconsider all this.

## A SATURNIAN TEACHER WITH AN INDIAN TWIST



As known in the community of Kundalini Yoga, Yogi Bhajan would identify himself as a Saturnian Teacher fitted to bring about discipline, structure and correction to a generation of hippies that were wild and idealist. This Saturnian element has to be seen along with Yogi Bhajan's cultural background... Having his origins steeped in the Indian culture, where for centuries (if not millennia) there has been a concept of masculinity intoxicated by a distorted view of power, sex and money, plus what at times appears to be a disturbing dominance of men over woman. Some of this shows, for example, in [his view about rape](#), as well as other dimensions of his teachings.

Archetypically Saturn is about tradition and hard work. And, therefore, oriented to a disciplined life, organized task-management, the struggle through the test of time

and the fulfillment of the law of karma. This is why Saturn could be perceived as a hard and painful influence for the Uranian spirit of Aquarius. The spirit of Uranus, in turn, is spontaneous, innovative, creative, free and tends to brotherhood, sisterhood and equality. These features of Uranus easily suffocate under the pressure of Saturn; and Saturn cannot but condemn the lack of structure of Uranus. This astrological way to explain the dynamic between Yogi Bhajan and the future of the community of Kundalini Yoga should warn the people involved in this transition from a Saturn-oriented representation of the *Aquarian Teacher* (with Indian lights and shadows); into an Uranian-oriented representation of the *Aquarian Teachers* compose by the global, yet strongly westernized community of Kundalini Yogis.

This tension is contained in the inter-generational communications of the community of Kundalini Yoga. Therefore, a central issue is the way the transition and transmission of competencies, information and group spirit is passed into the new world emerging. This is the core issue triggered by the current situation of reconsiderations around Yogi Bhajan and his legacy. A transition of generations into a world naturally evolving towards innovative, rebellious, spirituality sharp and disruptive consciousness (Aquarian/Uranian) is inevitable; this new horizon is unfolding a consciousness and a new ethos that cannot but reject and run away from old dysfunctional structures, ideas and institutions. How can a teaching that is in essence and intent Aquarian move forward from its main, if not only, Saturnian model?

## WELCOMING AQUARIUS? THEN HEAL YOU MUST

Saturn is the last planet that can be seen with bare eyes. For seeing it, it would just be enough a clear night. Symbolically speaking, from the Sun to Saturn is where personal life is comprehended. What is beyond Saturn cannot be seen unless we use telescopes. Or if we engage meditation to see the unseen. From Saturn outward to the periphery of our solar system, we have a representation of the more impersonal as well as larger forces that mirror the collective events of life (this corresponds to the planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto). In order to step from the personal/individual, into that larger and more impersonal dimension of our development there is a step in between. This can be explained because between Saturn and Uranus there is a small planetoid that is key to understand: Chiron.



Chiron is an archetypal energy that represents the "wounded healer", or simply "a healing process" and the activation of consciousness (the ascendant movement of Kundalini). This is tremendously significant. The Saturnian model of the teacher is necessarily shifting into the Uranian model and this can only happen through an authentic process of healing as the type of healing symbolized by Chiron. According to Barbara Hand Clow in "Astrology and the Rising of Kundalini", the cycle of Chiron revolving around the Sun takes

approximately 50 years. In other words, an individual (as well as any collective body or institution) will have to meet “Chiron return” when reaching that maturity of age... This means that astrologically when someone is about 50, Chiron orbits returns to its original position and it brings a deep pull to heal the original dysfunctionalities of one’s story. And so, throughout this deep healing process, one is ready for *spiritual maturity*. How old is the history of “Kundalini Yoga as Taught by Yogi Bhajan”? 50 years old.



If the reader would not relate to the Astrological approach there is an alternative understanding given by Numerology. In the forecast of [this year 2020](#), which sums 4, there is an interesting similarity with what has been said about Chiron. The process in this year which is represented by the number 4, we can see the central theme of a deep healing process as well. What is a healing process? It is the deconstruction of psycho-emotional dysfunctionalities to produce a new balance and a new psycho-somatic order and performance. This means, symbolically and spiritually speaking, that there is no way to move forward with old structures of thought and carry on with unsolved issues and emotional wounds. The wounds of sorrows and pain of the past find a unique opportunity to be solved in 2020.

This is greater issue that is happening to everyone. Our world is going through a “planetary reboot”. The world is searching for a way to individual and collective redemption. Our humanity and world face different sorts of pandemic ailments consisting of structural abuse, collective trauma

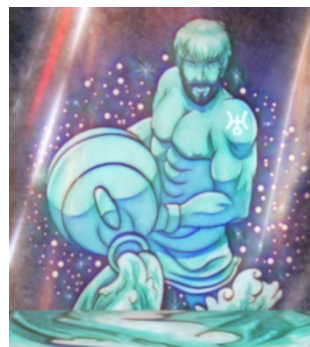
and infectious conditions spreading into the physical, the virtual and the psychological departments of life. For healing, we need to assume things as they are. And we will succeed when we seriously take healing as a wholistic task demanding deep self-exploration and meditation.

## CRITICAL BUT LOVING

Aquarius is symbolized by the “Water Bearer”, that is an archetypal figure that uses a simple, but effective technology for “watering” humanity... Aquarius is, in this sense, a servant who quenches the thirst of human spirit and it feeds the invisible roots of a new world order.

-Jivan Mukta, PhD

An “Aquarian Teacher” and everyone should know the energetic pulse of Aquarius since it is becoming the most stimulating bio-magnetic force to the planetary consciousness. How does this look like for an *Aquarian Teacher of Kundalini Yoga*? How would this look like in the community of Kundalini Yoga?



With a transition and transmission of information, competencies and spirit that takes place and two generations meet and honor each other. All when the due healing of the collective and the individual wounds take place. Then the flow of Aquarius will fill the gaps in sudden and inventive ways. And inevitably things will naturally become more multicultural, scientific (empirical), global (international), interconnected, spiritually conscious (less dogmatic, less religious) and more authentically humane and fraternal. All these are the features of Aquarius that will hit right into the heart of our society and societies.

The “Old School” of doing things was effective and played a necessary role in the past. The new way is inevitable and it necessarily happens when there is a constructive discussion, over a three-folded-axis:

1. The update of the (mental, emotional and operational) structures that have led to this crisis of the world of Kundalini Yogis
2. The integration of the light and shadows in the spiritual lineage and the reconciliation with the history of Kundalini Yoga as taught throughout millennia and its rendering in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
3. A meditated reinterpretation of the teachings of Yogi Bhajan in the light of the empirical, experiential, historical, eschatological, global, multicultural and perennial truths and world. As a solid fact-based frame looking into the deeper spiritual grounds in Sikh Religion, Yogic and Tantric Lore and the contact of this with the Western culture in a world crossing significant astrological changes.

History is unfolding and it displays a certain mood, tone and direction. And one cannot anticipate what is going to come if the history of what happened is unknown. Which direction this goes is a matter of time and personal resolution.

In a way my view of this is both pessimistic and optimistic. I consider that as a collective phenomenon the situation at hand demands a “miracle”. At many levels. A miracle that perhaps does not come in a familiar way. A miracle is what people can always expect and perhaps in a way even manifest. But what will truly make the difference is the “asana”, this is the posture of each person. The openness of the heart. And the love that comes from it. Love is the most powerful way to meet the shadow, evolve and excel. The people who love Kundalini Yoga must step forward with true compassion and forgiveness. Love redeems, even from the worst wounds...

## “TEACHER-CENTRISM”

“Some of us students imagine that our spiritual teachers are less complex or more consistent than other folks. Some of us even imagine that our teachers are more (better) than human. We need to stop imagining all of this, because these delusions get us into big trouble. They also harm our spiritual teachers, by encouraging them to join us in those delusions”

- Scott Edelstein, “Sex and the Spiritual Teacher”, p. 29

Yogi Bhanan was by no means an ordinary man. In many respects he was for many awesome beyond match. Pamela Dyson herself portrays him as a powerful person: “it was his self-mastery, his power-filled approach to every situation” that captivated her. She even admitted that for her Yogi Bhanan was a “guru, spiritual teacher, provider, lover, father and essentially God” (Loc 966, 2527, Kindle).

I do not doubt for a moment that for a lot of people in the beginnings of Kundalini Yoga (between the years 1968 and 2004) and throughout all this initial period of the history, Yogi Bhanan was at the very center of absolutely everything... This is the root of many blessings as well as pain, mistakes and problems. And this is not in essence to do with a person, but rather with a philosophy that is contained in the teachings of Kundalini Yoga that has been for too long and too unquestionably “teacher-centric”.

This is the main reason for the collective crisis in the different structures, institutions, teachers and community created by Yogi Bhanan and especially for those who have followed his teaching literally and dogmatically. The situation has always been self-evident for those looking at things from a healthy critical distance. Any system that is teacher-centric and that goes through a problem in which the teacher’s credibility falls, the whole system sooner or later collapses with him. This is perhaps a possibility in the mind of those who are caught in this teacher-centric philosophy of Kundalini Yoga: they think that this is the end... and that without Yogi Bhanan there will be nothing left. For some of the first generation of students of Yogi Bhanan it is inconceivable to see Kundalini Yoga without Yogi Bhanan, while at the same time the newest generation didn’t even know who he was, well, until now...

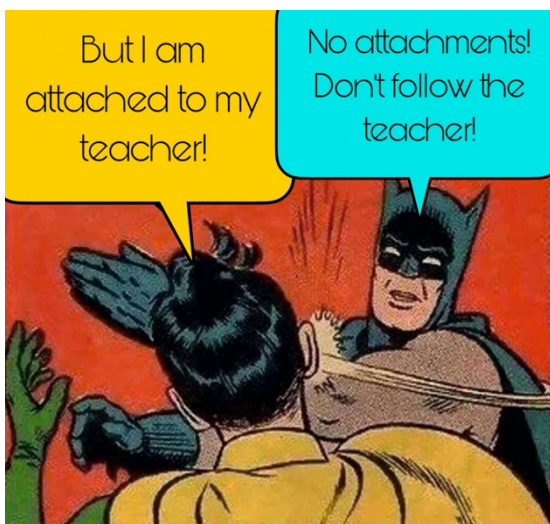
This is a huge generational discrepancy. The former students need to see the reality of the new ones with hope and faith. And the new ones need to see the old ones with compassion and gratitude. Still the main solution is to reconsider the teacher-centricism and allow oneself and others who love Kundalini Yoga to gravitate towards the practice, the technology, the community and the experience where a safe space is held with yogic ethics, elevation and for each other.

The community of dedicated lifetime practitioners and new people who fall in love with Kundalini Yoga has the opportunity to navigate this crisis successfully, provided they direct the course of navigation away from the culture of teacher-centricism. The teacher-centricism is at the same time the cause of three phenomena:

1. The mindless following of the “teacher’s projection”, allowing the proselytism of followers, that can lead to disastrous consequences (“blind guiding the blind”)
2. The chance of dysfunctional personalities who are skilled in faking being great teachers whose main objective is to gather followers and become important
3. And the consequent fragmentation of the community into “tribes” around alpha teachers who care little about the rest of the Kundalini Yoga community or yoga in general.

By keeping the philosophy of teacher-centricism we risk to lose the perspective of how authentically effective and genuine some of the teachings of Kundalini Yoga are. Neither rhetoric, ordinary statements or the display of “crazy wisdom” can constitute a fundamental piece of information to base a whole project of Dharma or spiritual path.

In another way the teacher-centricism has impaired the capacity of the Kundalini Research Institute. Impaired in its capacity to lead, support and spread good research about Kundalini Yoga. Since this organization’s existence (1972) is being “teacher-centric” too. And this gives us the example so well materialized in the mission of KRI. According to the [website of KRI](#), the institute considers its mission “to uphold and preserve the authenticity, integrity, and accuracy of



*the Teachings of Yogi*". However, this institution is at the same time lacking the knowledge about the reach of this this teaching and its real origin.

In a world where knowledge keeps evolving and the interpretation of old and new sources of information is so critical in establishing responsibility and effective educational strategies, KRI has neither developed the a deeper look than what is already contained in the narrative of Yogi Bhajan, nor it has been enough critical to match the natural evolution of consciousness and science in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Instead, the teacher-centrism has been the one and unique source of truth and evidence for practically everything.

In the past decades there has been very little or marginal concern about the actual research of the history of Kundalini Yoga, the science of vital

energies, the brain circuitry, the wisdom of Kundalini Yoga rooted in the Vedas, the Upanishads and a long etc. A research institution is expected to develop a solid body of references, as well as to attract the resources and the scholars, historians, neuroscientists, specialists in the different fields to enrich the legacy that is supposed to "preserve". In this sense KRI is partly one of the responsible for the current situation. It is even paradoxical that the most important investigation (about the accusation against Yogi Bhajan) that somewhat dictates the future of Kundalini Yoga rests on an external hired investigation office. Proper research is a department completely abandoned in KRI and many people who love Kundalini Yoga are expecting fresh and solid information as an opportunity to trust "the teachings". They expect the guidance entrusted in this institution to neutralize the attacks against a yogic system that empirical evidence supports as effective and healthy in many ways. The public has long been waiting to see clearer the observable facts and evidence about Kundalini Yoga and its history.

This work of anchoring the practice and ethos is not going to consume a lifetime. This is not a process that will start from scratch. But it is based on the agreement to overcome the fallacy that the teaching was practically "written in stone". This fallacy will otherwise create new problems in the future. Traditions, as they meet time, they mutate even if they represent an eternal truth. Traditions are dynamic realities. All spiritual movements with their institutions and philosophies that try to resist the change and the passage of time risk disappearing. If they try to remain permanently still and changeless in the face of natural change, they simply cease to exist and get discontinued.

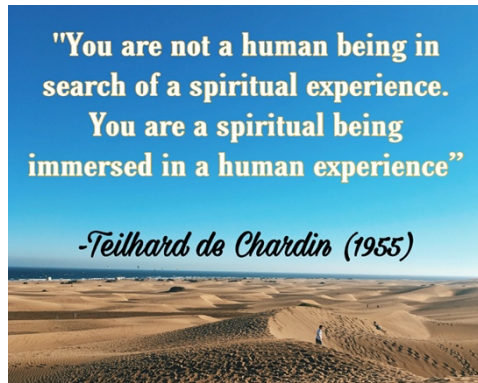
21<sup>st</sup> Century events are a call to adapt and change. Why so? Because today this Kundalini Yoga thing is really a global phenomenon and it is practiced by modern people. How could new generations believe the fallacy that these teachings have been "literally" the same for centuries or more? Let's not be naïve. Pamela Dyson wrote in her book a truth that no one in the leading position seems to consider. About Yogi Bhajan she wrote: "... his every word was received as truth, like scientific fact and such words formed the teachings that were the ground of the entire belief system" (Loc 1427- in Kindle).



## BREAKING TABOOS: RECONSIDERING “THE TEACHINGS”

The tradition and the legacy is a support that provides the security that Kundalini Yoga does not depend on a person or personality, an institution or a religion, but rests on a vast ocean of awareness and healing energy, ready to be accessed by those who have the know-how.

-Jivan Mukta, PhD



To reconsider something is to observe what is given to us with less attachment and to identify the intrinsic coherence that the ideas have or not. Discernment is not an act of disloyalty; it is rather an act of healthy criticism and genuine pursuit of truth. These times are a call for engaging in a profound meditation and act to separate the “wheat from the shaft”. To adopt the necessary discernment and challenge the illusion derived from a teacher-centric community and philosophy.

These are the times when an attentive and a more rigorous exploration of “the teachings” are necessary in order to detect errors. The coming years will be a dynamic progression of the science, the philosophy and history of Kundalini Yoga. This means neither to force the change, nor to promote a weaker commitment to a discipline that actually performs well. As development takes place, one has to acknowledge that outside ourselves everything will always change! And it is already happening!

Reconsidering the “the teachings” is to look for a *deeper* foundation, not *another* foundation. All of which is available. There are sources that are solid rocks that will outlive us all. When the deeper levels of truth of this “new-ancient” philosophy of the Kundalini Yogis is clarified and transmitted loud and clear, the community can have a solid center to gravitate around for another generation or more... If this is not understood and the foundation of the teachings are not reconsidered, the risk is that either there will be an unnecessary loss and disaffection of teachers and students globally. Or maybe, even another teacher-idol personality can show up and fill the teacher-centric void.

## THE SYSTEM & THE EXPERIENCE: KUNDALINI YOGA WORKS.

“it is unrealistic to think that all of them were deluded, found no benefits through its practice or did not have a profound experience through it ... perhaps the individual experience of its practitioners ... is the most honest and fruitful vantage from which to view it [3HO, Kundalini Yoga and the teaching]

-Phillipe Deslippe, “From Maharaj to Mahan Tantric” (p. 384)

What is the science of Kundalini Yoga? What is the “Quantum Technology of the Shabad Guru”? How does it work the “technology of angles and triangles”? What about the ideas the Humanology? (and its roots in the “Book of Manu”?), What about the pearls of Yogic Philosophy and Yogic Psychology? What about the so many gems of wisdom, consciousness and meaning? And what about the actual experience that thousands of people have had with Kundalini Yoga?

These are some of the core building blocks of the system and the questions that are important to answer. As we address this “blocks” that construct the teaching, we can access traceable material to the deeper roots of the experience of Yoga. The important essential message is universal, very ancient but still in force.



However, the first generation and the newer generations will never understand Yogi Bhajan in the same way, it is impossible. Each one will interpret the history from their perspective, and because there are many perspectives of people and generations in a confrontation mood, it is very necessary to have an “Aquarian way” to interpret and build a common platform to co-exist and move forward. In this open dialogue and search for truth and depth, Kundalini Yoga will find a future. And so, the new yoga students will engage and perhaps also surrender their ego to the authentic path. If handled wisely, this crisis has the potential to lead us to a deeper acknowledgement of Kundalini Yoga as a Shastra (ancient teaching) and discover a deeper perennial wisdom that the one known so far.



As objectivity is not possible, the alternative is to discover a solid inter-subjective core. This, is to take a few steps backwards in order to be able to move forward. That is what the Aquarian spirit is all about: the inevitable progression of consciousness, moving from a mythological understanding of things shared as indoctrination and understood in a literal way - into the unshakable realm of certainties provided by the modern spirit of research and experimentation.

The future of Kundalini Yoga is a process of collective deconstruction of the myth and the collective dream. It is a wakeup call to the reality of humanity. It is not only an

institutional “top-down” process anymore, it is also a “bottom-up” inflow of wisdom (like the Kundalini) that can build an authentic and long-lasting understanding of the real journey of spiritual awakening. The current times are demanding all human beings of this planet to create

new frames to live with each other and for each other in this Earth. I personally would not want to walk a spiritual path that cares little about the “ordinary” truths of this world or that it is still attached to a distorted view of the past or a literal interpretation of how things should be. Wisdom and science; past and future; trauma and healing. These are more than ever the themes to address in our present times.

Without truth at all levels it is impossible to rethink and represent a higher standard of authenticity and why not, Dharma. Evolution is never an alternative, it is a fact. Any authentic dharma or institution entrusted with a piece of truth, responds to the universal profound pulsation of humanity to find, live and embody truth. And this is not exclusive for the mythical ancestors of the Eastern dharmas or Western spiritualities and religions. If a man or a woman has ever achieved the experience of godhead and truth within, then that means that it will be true for everyone and in anytime of history. *These times are not the exception.*

## GOLDEN CAGE, GOLDEN CHAIN & GOLDEN AGE

Sadāśivasamārambhām.	<i>“Beginning auspiciously with the Lord</i>
Śankarācāryamadhyamām.	<i>with Sankara in the middle</i>
asmadācāryaparyantām	<i>extending as far as my teacher</i>
vande guruparamparām.	<i>I salute the progression of teachers”</i>

- Dayananda. “Introduction to Vedanta”, p. 89

Experience is perhaps one of the most important sources of real knowledge and wisdom. Experience is a path followed by most people in the world of Kundalini Yoga. Some of the reasons and ideas why the experiential dimension of spirituality is so important can be read in an [article](#) published last year.

But how the Kundalini Yoga experience begins with? It begins with a mantra to salute the Divinity and the progression of teachers that has brought it forth. This experience of the recitation of a mantric formula creates the mood and mindset to deepen the process of self-awareness. In Kundalini Yoga the experience of this mantra that is used at the beginning of the practice, aims at generating a spiritual connection that can take a person beyond the ego, the blindness and the foolishness of the human conditioned thought.



The idea of a mantra to connect to a teaching and a lineage of teachers goes as far back as the Upanishads. Swami Dayanada wrote that, “traditional study generally begins with a tribute to the teaching and to the teachers -to those who focus the light that dispels the ignorance concealing the nature of oneself” (p. 29). This is the same as the idea of the Golden Chain in Kundalini.

This similar idea is also presented in Patañjali’s fifth Niyama of the Yoga Sutras: *Ishvara Pranidhana*, which means “surrender to the Lord”. The beginning of the experience in Kundalini Yoga starts with the mantric formula that authentically echoes the best of the yogic and the spiritual Indian tradition: “Ong Namō Guru Dev Namō” is a synthesis of 2 languages (Gurmukhi and Sanskrit) that transcends the personalities of all those who have contributed to this mantric formula: “Ong” was a word/mantra first uttered by Guru Nanak in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. “Om Namō” as well “Gurudev Namō” are as old as the Vedas. “Ong Namō” is in all right a legitimate formula that combines the power of mantras of Vedic origins and the utterance of Guru Nanak, rendered in a simple, short and pronounceable way.

Similar things happen with the mantra “Ek Ong Kar Sat Nam Siri Wha He Guru”, which is, in my opinion, one of the most important mantras to properly understand and practice in Kundalini Yoga. This mantra links us to the often misjudged and distorted figure of [Baba Virsa Singh](#) (1934-2007), who was Yogi Bhajan’s main and direct teacher and the most gravitational referential point for him until they split in 1971.

Baba Virsa Singh taught Yogi Bhajan this powerful mantra, and it was told that this mantra was given by Baba Siri Chand and Guru Nanak themselves to Yogi Bhajan’s teacher, Baba Virsa Singh. This mantra connects the practitioner of Kundalini Yoga to the esoteric and subtle wisdom that is only possible to catch in the mysterious relationship between souls. The teaching of Baba Virsa Singh is a foundation to be studied by all serious Kundalini Yoga practitioners who want to develop the yogic capacities passed down from Baba Siri Chand to us. Unfortunately, this Yogi, the eldest son of Guru Nanak has too been ignored and his influence in the evolution of Sikhi has been minimized. However, his impact is gigantic. Similarly, as Baba Virsa Singh has been ignored and downplayed by most of the students of Yogi Bhajan.

The “Golden Chain” is the label in Kundalini Yoga of something that has already been present in spiritual India for thousands of years. It becomes very difficult to transmit in full depth the nature and experience associated with the “Golden Chain” as it is in essence something purely spiritual. It is therefore a mistake to understand it as a historical lineage. Only those who have taught Kundalini Yoga after proper instruction and with the necessary sensitivity can truly represent the experience in ways that are not dogmatic or religio-centric. A “lineage” with the experience of this sort cannot truly be historically or personally manipulated. No one can truly stop the free inflow of the spirit of God between people of different generations.

The current (and official) interpretation of the “Golden Chain” has been superficial, and again, biased by the teacher-centrism that does not allow a clear impersonal understanding of the consciousness that it stems from. When I find a moment, I’ll dedicate the time to write about Baba Virsa Singh and his teachings, especially in how they feed the “The Teachings” of Yogi Bhajan, as well as how they refer to Baba Siri Chand and his connection to Guru Ramdas. This is a bigger task that can be left for the future.

Baba Siri Chand, The Yogi, is one of the most important spiritual links who ignites the spark of Sadhana and the yogic esoteric lore at the heart of the Kundalini Yoga tradition. Baba Siri Chand has also exalted the spiritual consciousness of Guru Ramdas, the author of the hymn without which Kundalini Yoga cannot be understood: “*kundlanee surjhee satsangat parmaanand guroo mukh machaa*” (The Kundalini rises in the Sat Sangat, the True Congregation; through the Word of the Guru, they enjoy the Lord of Supreme Bliss”) (SGGS 1402-9).

What is the pursuit of the yogic path? What is the pursue of Sikhi? That the human soul liberates, that it achieves *moksha* (liberation). The three-folded streams that feeds the path of a Kundalini Yogi is a syncretic unity that takes the cultural base of India, the essence of Sikhism, Yoga/Tantrism and the fundamental views of Aquarian Age narrative. The functional elements of these three streams of wisdom when put together create a harmonic unit to boost the quest for liberation, and a “Golden Era” for humanity.

## ALL RELIGIONS ARE ONE. ALL TRADITIONS CHANGE.

“You will see such Light and happenings that you could have never had believed. As I have said, again and again I will work even greater deeds through you. All will join you in this mission. Do not despair. I am always with you to bring joy. Let there be no sadness. The pin of separation is for those attached to the body. My spirit always has been and always will be with all of you. Recite the Nam”

- Baba Virsa Singh. “Arrows of Light” (p. 234)



The lovers of Kundalini Yoga have to understand that traditions change and they are always a combination of elements put together by those who take the path of self-realization and mastery as their life purpose. Neither ancient traditions, nor modern traditions are purely the direct “revelation” of God without interpretation and adjustment of the message at the human level and social context. Literal interpretations only lead to dogmatic views and fundamentalism, which paralyzes, contracts or disintegrates any movement or system. This has always happened.

Syncretism has been the essential act conducted by all initiators of a path. Syncretism is not a negative thing; it is rather a matter of fact in the process of formation present in all traditions. Syncretism can be understood on the basis of Carsten Colpe’s ideas (1930-2) explaining that any movement that is subjected to historical forces has gone through a journey with syncretic elements, that at least show in 3 senses:

1. *Symbiosis*, in the sense of principles or elements “living together” for mutual benefit. For example, the practical and spiritual elements of group sadhana as understood in Kundalini Yoga.
2. *Addition*, this is the inclusion of other elements that produce the result that “the dividing line between diverse elements is removed”, creating another new unit (Like the system of Kundalini Yoga itself)
3. *Equivalence*, “when unities or elements of them are assigned different values and are conceived of as ways to reach the same goal, with the stipulation that one of them leads to the goal more effectively than the others” (like the importance that is given to “breath of fire” compared to the recitation of the Japji in the pursuit of spiritual liberation)

## THE ASSET OF AN EXPERIENCED AND FORWARD-THINKING COMMUNITY

“When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds; your mind transcends limitations; your consciousness expands in every direction; and you find yourself in a great, new and wonderful world.”

- Patanjali

Instructors, teachers, trainers and mentors of Kundalini Yoga have brought a lot of joy, healing, consciousness and dharma to the 4 corners of the planet. This cannot be denied or eclipsed much longer. At the same time, some of the ways how this has been done do not entirely speak to the consciousness of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the ethical awareness distinguishing the path of Yoga (Yoga Darshana). That is why the times we are living in expect from us a quick change of attitude and perspective. And change of what *does not work*, I would say.

This is not an opportunistic motivation; this is a necessity of adaptation, given the crisis at hand. This adaptation has already been initiated by an Indian man who lived 35 years in the western culture and was able to produce translations, interpretations, adaptations and who figured out how to create a community of Kundalini Yoga teachers and students beyond the borders of the country where he lived and passed away on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October in 2004.



Along with the experiences we have, a vast number of teachings, great practices of a tremendous transformative power and life-style recommendations are the most powerful legacies of those 35 years of building the community of Kundalini Yogis. Looking at the good part of this spiritual project initiated by Yogi Bhajan implies to admit that the system has touched over hundreds of thousands of lives. Witnessing or being a participant of this positive events in the life of many people by no means signifies that this community of Kundalini Yoga is free of karma and shadows to face and heal. However, in my opinion this current crisis is not a karma that can destroy the life of the community. It is a karma with essentially a healing and educative purpose, not a punitive one. I deem this as a [“Collective Shakti Pad”](#), this is, a painful collective spiritual

crisis with the potential to break everything apart or elevate those who can stand the storm provided that their feet are well planted in the grounds of truth...

We seriously need to contemplate the larger phenomenon of other modern western and global communities originated around Indian or spiritual teachers. We need the discernment to spot the errors in the system of our thought or soul that have allowed that these issues concerning the abuse of power, money or sex scandals happen, while having the compassionate



understanding to deal with the abused people and help them to overcome their trauma. Other communities, which have also undergone similar pain, chaos and struggle derived from accusations of this kind, have gracefully been available to update the structures, institutions and notions that led them or their teachers astray.

The Kundalini Yoga community has to be ready but calmed. Itself has a life that is self-sustaining. The potential scenarios derived from the report of An Olive Branch can be very complex and everyone in this community should be ready for the worse. Be calmed to not be caught in the recriminations and conflict. If the worse fears about Yogi Bhajan's sexual conduct are confirmed, some people will have to explain things while the great majority of

practitioners must stay calmed. Like an authentic yogi or yogini.

What is unfolding this a year is a journey of deep meditation, change and healing. It is a possibility to create a better bond with the deeper roots of the path. And the articulation of a new group energy and future. Those who one day fell in love with Kundalini Yoga can be sure that from now on the road is new and full of potential. Be prepared.

We are going through one of the darkest moments on Earth, and nature wants us to function differently. This way of practicing Yoga has the call and the power to raise the energy, consciousness and Kundalini.

This is not the only and exclusive way to achieve this, but it is still a way that can help many. Whether or not to use it, that is your own choice. Be free and don't let anyone tell you what to do and what to believe. Follow your intuition.

People will be known for their experience and service. We all carry a wounded humanity that needs to be healed in this process. And finally, people will be known for how they support each other with their abilities and merits. This is a global and planetary process for the Kundalini Yoga community and for many it feels as a Shakti Pad, that is, as a decisive test ... Some things will be destroyed to serve the soul and the God within. Earth is ready to re-establish a new paradigm. The paradigm that has held us together cannot sustain the old structures any longer. Prepare to change. This is the dawn of a new consciousness in each sensitive individual ... It is a profound planetary change. And this could be the rebirth of a new Kundalini Yoga Sangat in harmony with the new world and humanity.

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