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## **Sikh Dharma and Kundalini Yoga**

*Here are some themes to explore. Not necessarily covered in this document, or in this order.*

- The story of how Yoga/Yogis and Sikh Dharma came together.
  - The conversation between Guru Naanak and the Siddha Yogis
  - The meeting between Baba Sri Chand and Guru Raam Daas.
    - What that story represents
    - Cleansing, and merger, of two corrupt strands of Bhakti and Shakti.
    - What happened next; genocide, British rule, modern politics.
- Did the Guru and Sikhs practice Kundalini Yoga
- Yogi Bhajan's connection to Guru Raam Daas.
- Your relation to, and identity as, Yogi and/or Sikh.
  - 'I do yoga' contrast to 'I am a yogi/ni'
  - Part time Yogi – full time Sikh
- Common elements between KY and Sikh Dharma
  - Cross References found in their texts
- Differences between KY and Sikh Dharma.
  - science and technology contrast to religious/devotional attitude.
- The conflicts, controversies, issues...
  - What are the issues with Kundalini Yoga, Yogi Bhajan, Sikh religious dogma?
  - your resistance to either Kundalini Yoga or Sikhi.
- Bringing Sikh Dharma to Yogis. Bringing Kundalini Yoga to Sikhs.
- Sikh fundamentalist. Their issues with yoga and YB
  - Yoga is Hindu, Sikhs are not Hindus, therefore Sikhs don't do yoga!
  - Use of name Khalsa

**The difference between yoga and religion:**

The first distinction to make might be between being a religious person (not meaning religious institutes or their dogma) and a Yoga practitioner. Some differences are just different ways to say the same thing.

(KUNDALINI) YOGA	SIKH DHARMA (religion in general)
A science and practice for health and , and mental, well being	Commitment to live life as a awaken mind while journeying through worldly challenges.
Shakti A science and technology to experience God	Bhakti; devotion Praise and worship God Note: worship can lead to experience
Yoga, Teacher – can be part time	Sikh is full time
Yoga can be lived just for self-gain	Sikh is to live to service
Tapa and Japa -	Sikh discipline is a tapasia
Ni/yamas	A life of virtue: soch, sat, santokh, etc.
Sadhana	Amrit Vela – see japji
10 Spiritual Bodies	10 Gurus
KY says meet your spiritual teacher once in this lifetime. alter is the alternative i.e. subject mind to something higher	Sikhi say you need a Guru To overcome effect of Maya Conquer mind to conquer the world - Japji
Yoga of Mantra, laya, naad, YB - KY & mantra Science of meridians, glands, nervous system	All in shabd guru, Naam and Keertan. Attitude and bhakti. Loving devotion to Shabd. Praise God.
Concept of karma and karma yoga Kriyas and meditations to cleanse subconscious	In Sikhi its Seva, Simran, to clear the karma
Gurdev in KY is the higher self, Golden Chain	Gurdev in Sikhi = mata/pita, and 4 <sup>th</sup> guru
Sat Naam – every breath Svadhaya. Contemplate self every breath	Jap man sat naam, sada sat naam. saas giraas...breath by breath Simran.

**Some common aspects:**

To ensure that the Shakti power of Kundalini Yoga would not be in the service of the ego it is important that the practice includes the attitude of Bhakti. One may find this in their own religious affiliation. Otherwise Yogi Bhajan has natural tapped into the background history of when Yogi Baba Sri Chand brought the throne of Raja Yoga to Guru Raam Daas. And with that reference the Teachings of the Shabd Guru (from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib) bring spiritual depth to the practice of Kundalini Yoga.

Focusing now on some of the basic understandings and the way of life of a Yogi/ni and a Sikh we find the following in common:

Recognition of the following:

- The world of Maya and the 3 gunas; tama, raja, sattva.
- The law of karma – cause and effect.
- The 4 yugas and that we are in the 4<sup>th</sup> age, the dark, or iron age, known as Kali Yuga.

- Yogic anatomy of nadis, vayus, tattvas, chakras and kundalini.
- The unity of creation, and of creation with the creator.
- The cycle of transmigration and reincarnation.
- The need for discipline to awaken and liberate from the cycle of transmigration.
- The power and significance of the 5 senses and need for control of these;  
5 passions, 5 thieves, 5 enemies, to become friends/helpers – pratayahaar.

Advise a practical way of life including:

- Keep the hair, keep it up, and cover it.  
Connection to kundalini as coil of hair, 10<sup>th</sup> gate etc.
- Live a life free of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, meat; healthy body is best for Naam.
- not patched coat, ashes of dead on body, pilgrimage, wearing dhoti, Austerities.
- No need for elaborate rituals, or a priest to stand between you and God.

Emphasize the importance of sangat – bridge between personal and impersonal.

- The company of the saints and Sadh sangat is very helpful and important.
- you become the company you keep.

Acknowledge the law of karma, reincarnation, and the powerful effect of Maya.

And propose a path to liberation from the cycle of transmigration.

The importance of overcoming, or conquering, the mind. So it becomes servant of the soul and heart.

Use of the tongue, the breath, the nabhi, in recitation of mantra/Naam.

Learning to see, experience, and serve, the Light of God within self, and within all. (A journey from seeker to disciple; from 'I am searching to I have found')

Committed to help anyone from any path to improve on their path

- Combining guidelines on lifestyle, communication and philosophy.

The potential for the state of Sahej – to naturally unfold to one's full potential and self-realization.

### **Examples of Yogi Bhajan building, enriching, Kundalini Yoga teachings from Sikhi:**

In Japji Sahib (multi-layered) can be found various sequences in KY

obey, serve, love, excel

7 steps to happiness

The 5 khands at end of Japji Sahib and the 5 stages of being a student, 5 blue ethers,

Mantras from the Shabd Guru, and yogic variations. Sat Nam every breath.

The mantras used in KY are first of all mantras from, and of, Sikh Dharma.

Meditations for qualities and states described in Shabd Guru of Sikh Dharma:

The state of Nirbhau (fearlessness),  
Nirvair (beyond anger/animosity)  
Connecting with the infinite – Akaal moort  
Gurprasaad.  
And more.....

Life-style: sadhana , amrit vela, Ishnaan, eat little sleep little,  
Seva, Simran, Bana, Bani.

Turban being explained scientifically – effect on cranial bones, filter for hair.

Teacher is not Guru; only channel for Guru.

Many of the greatest Quotes from YB can be found in the Shabd Guru

Meaning of word Sikh'. Student or disciple.

YB Sikh is a seeker

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### References from SGGs and from YB

Raj jog takhat Dian... 'The throne of Raaj Yoga was bestowed upon Guru Raam Daas'

Other shabds with reference to Kundalini or yoga, and addressing the yogis.

For example 'the kundalini rises in the sangat'

*The deep study and correct translation of these shabds is a whole other document.*

Sodarshan chakra kriya can be found in SGGs – by kabir, page to be confirmed.

Many references to all aspects of Sikhi in lectures of YB – can be collected and collated.

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### Some further differences between Kundalini Yoga and Sikh Dharma:

Emphasis in KY is the technology – in Sikhi it's the devotion/naam/shabd  
Shakti, empowerment, all is for me - Bhakti, I am nothing, all is thine, surrender,

- |                                |   |  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| KY is part time                | - | Dharma is full time                            |
| still a seeker                 | - | discovered and become a disciple               |
| KY student, practices          | - | Gurmukh is realized (teacher at level 3)       |
| fake it to make it             | - | many Sikhs fake it                             |
| emphasis to raise kundalini    | - | emphasis to be filled with the light of nectar |
| In KY you may have a teacher   | - | Sikhi there is the Guru                        |
| KY may lack sense of reverence | - | Sikhi is all about reverence.                  |

KY no obvious alter - Sikhi alter of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib  
 Alter of higher-self implied SGGs turns you to God within  
 Danger of bowing to teacher's ego. Sikhi: bow to no man yet be in company of holy.

YB 'use the tools, to take the fools - to the Guru  
 Can be KY student all life - as KY teacher need dharma, sangat, Guru  
 KY student = personal gain - Sikhi is for benefit of humanity;  
 seva, prayers, healing, teaching, inspiring,

Sikhi has its own version of Ni/Yamas, asana, pranayama,  
 See YB's lecture on pratyahara; beyond all yogic commentaries, it is Sikhi.

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**Further observations and Questions:**

Can KY help one on the path of Sikhi to realise the true state of Saint-Warrior?  
 Can Sikhi provide the right crucible of devotion so the Shakti of KY will not be abused?  
 In some cases there will be an evolution from KY student, to KY instructor/Practitioner to Sikh.  
 Becoming a Teacher can play a large part in that transformation process.

<b>Ek OngKaar -&gt;</b>	<b>Sat Naam -&gt; Sri -&gt;</b>	<b>Wahe Guroo</b>
Student -> Instructor	Instructor -> Practitioner	Practitioner -> Teacher
Foundation, basic health	Transformation	Realisation / Gurmukh
Seeker / for self / taker		Finder / For others / Giver

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**Issues, controversies, conflicts:**

There are some strong attacks made that try to create and maintain a split between KY and Sikhi.

The true Warrior fights for and not against.  
 One fighting for the truth would be able to provide honest supporting references for their case. They would not be so busy making accusations, but would rather focus on sharing the wisdom that enlightens.

The truth needs no defence. However, attacks serve to create confusion. Therefore, some response to the common attacks and accusations may be helpful for those souls who are on the seekers journey of transformation and discovery.  
 Such a response needs to be intuitive, conscious and intelligent; and in no way does it need to attack the provocateur. Such a response will however ask for a higher standard and quality of communication.  
 Therefore, one should ask the accuser to provide the references, sources, and

exact quotes; from Yogi Bhajan's lectures and from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

In this way the so the context can be known and rightly understood.

In other words, if Kundalini Yoga is against Sikh then there should be some reference from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, or from the Rehit Marayada (sikh code of conduct) showing where it is against Sikhi. Likewise if Sikh teachings are against Kundalini Yoga then there should be some references to indicate it.

Until these things are provided then there is definitely no point in entering into any ongoing discussion with those that make claims and accusations.

Some, so called, controversies are directed at Yogi Bhajan and others are directed at Yoga. here is an example of how some of these queries could be addressed:

Note these responses also will need to be developed and researched so that a series of FAQs can be put on record.

**First and main issue is:** Kundalini Yoga is against Sikhi.

or: Sikhi says you should not do yoga.

Guru Naanak denounced yoga.

Response:

References to Yoga in Sri Guru Granth Sahib need to be correctly translated and studied

There is no injunction in SGGS 'do not do yoga'.

Guru Naanak challenged, questioned, denounced the extreme ascetic austerities practiced by some yogis, but not the basic practice of yoga itself.

By some ways of interpretation of Gurbani some would say that yoga is redefined. Certainly the potential egoistic attitude behind it is questioned, this does not mean that yoga is rejected.

No-one in the community of Kundalini Yoga practitioners is saying that Kundalini Yoga, or the 3HO lifestyle is true and original Sikhi. And we can equally say that the institutionalised version of Sikh Dharma lifestyle that is presented in the Sikh Code of Conduct (Rehit Maryada) is no more an accurate representation of how the majority of the Sikh Community lived their teachings up till the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the establishment of the SGPC (i.e. when Sikh became an official religion).

1. Yogi Bhajan taught that you had to make a connection with a living spiritual teacher.

Response:

The SGGS states the important of meeting the saints, the company of the holy.

Where does it say not to have a teacher?

Note: in our understanding teacher is not the same as guru (this can be expanded upon).

And there is no doubt to a KY student that SGGS is the Guru.

In the Teacher Training Level 1 Manual YB clearly says he is not a Guru.

Note: YB would also say never choose a teacher, but if you do then do not let them go.

Having a teacher does not mean bowing to, Idealizing or worshiping the teacher. Therefore in what way is this against Sikhi.

The Shabds teach us that there is a need for Guru to counter the effects of Maya.

2. Yogi Bhajan taught that you should meditate on his photograph.

Response:

Not that you should, but that you could. And so what!  
He never said it had anything to do with sikhi.  
It is a yoga technique and nothing more.  
He spoke of the neutral gaze in a specific photo.  
Can anyone prove it to be true or untrue?

3. Yogi Bhajan taught that the reason that Sikhs wear turbans is to adjust the plates in your skull and thus regulate your electro-magnetic energy.

Response:

YB said a lot more about turbans, and bana, including turbans. (References...)  
This data needs to be gathered and shared with others.

And so what if he said that, it may even have some truth in it.  
Can it be shown that it is not true?  
The skull does have plates.  
Allopathic medicine and Osteopathy confirms these can be adjusted.  
And that their adjustment can and does impact on health.  
Who can say that a turban does not contribute to that?  
And how is this against Sikhi? It is not Sikhi, nor is it against it.  
We do have an electro-magnetic field; much research confirms it.  
So until one studies the nature of the EMF, how can we refute YB's words?

4. Yogi Bhajan taught that the reason that Sikhs wear Kacha is that the pressure of the Kachera on your thighs stimulates your liver.

Response:

Again YB has said more about Kachera, and all the 5 K's of Sikhi.  
This information needs to be brought together.

And what if there are meridian points of the liver above the thigh.  
Study Chinese medicine and acupuncture and see if it is true first.  
Then if it is true it means YB's word are not for or against Sikhi.

Note: facts are facts. And as such cannot be against Sikh – a path of truth.

Also - it is dishonourable to imply that this is all he said about the 5 K's of Sikhi.

5. Yogi Bhajan taught that you should have a photo of the golden idol of Sri Chand, that is outside the Gurdwara in Espanola, in your home.

Response:

Where and when did he say that one must/should do this?  
References and directly sourced quotes needed to verify this.

Many times he may have implied the good benefits of a variety of things one could have in one's environment. It could be compared to the science of Feng-Shui.

Having a statue or a photo of any kind of Yogi, Guru or Saint, in one's environment does not imply worship of such a thing, nor does it imply one is against Sikhi. It can be for aesthetic purposes, or it may be inspiring and a reminder, or for the beauty, and so on.

Many Gurdwaras and Sikh homes have pictures of the Gurus and other Saints in them. So what?

This is neither for nor against Sikhi. So long as the picture or statue is not worshiped.

6. Yogi Bhajan taught that chanting certain Shabads bring certain results:

Response:

The SGGS gives a lot of values that chanting keertan Shabd and Gurbani brings. Only the Guru does not give specific values of specific Shabds.

Where is the evidence that it could not be true.

Note: The actual meaning of the Shabds themselves already implies their value.

Examples can be given where Sikhs sing certain Shabds on certain occasions, including the reading of Banis at different times of the day.

Quotes can be given from guru gobind singh implying effects of certain of his shabds.

7. Yogi Bhajan taught that Gurmukhi is a magical, mystical language in that by chanting, reciting, or singing, your tongue is pressing on certain pressure points in your upper palate and thus certain glands in your brain are stimulated to secrete hormones, resulting in a kundalini high.

Response:

What if it is true? Perhaps one day it will be shown to be the case.

And anyway so what! This is neither for or against Sikhi.

And it is not that YB said Gurmukhi is magical.

Rather he said the Shabd Guru is a special technology.

Surely most Sikhs would agree that Shabd Guru is different from modern Panjabi, even though both use the same Gurmukhi alphabet.

There are references in Gurbani of SGGS where the lotus flowers of different chakras seem to be referred to. And where the outpouring of nectar is referred to.

Who can say that this is not, amongst other things, a mystical reference to actual glandular chemistry of the body and its organs?

And the result is not really referred to a kundalini high.

One should fully understand the whole process and purpose of KY.

And the raising of the Kundalini in order to open the chakras.



To then have them filled with the amrit nectar, so that true service can be done.  
Without fully understanding this, any Quote about Kundalini is out of context.

Note: SGGS itself refers to the Kundalini raising in the Sat Sangat.  
Therefore a Kundalini high is implied.

8. Yogi Bhajan taught that Anand Sahib was the ultimate kundalini experience because for each 5 Paurees, your kundalini would pass through a corresponding chakra. 40 Paurees divided by 5 equals the 8 chakras. This also holds true for Jap Ji.

Response:

What if it is true.  
SGGS says the kundalini will rise in the sat sangat. What about that?  
And other references to the kundalini as well as pranayama in the SGGS.

Can anyone confirm that it is not the case?

Jap Ji refers to the worm that aspires to climb the ladder. What does this refer to?

9. Yogi Bhajan taught that abortion was all right if it was done before the 120th day, when the soul entered the womb.

Response:

And so.....?  
Again what has this got to do with being a distortion of Sikhi.  
Sikhi says nothing about these things  
Therefore it is neither against , nor a distortion of, Sikhi.  
Where in Sikhi does it say that such an idea is wrong or against Sikhi.

medical science itself shows that the fetus is only fully formed after 3 to 4 months, i.e. around 120 days.

SGGS, (Anand Sahib for example) refers to the time, or passage of the soul in the womb.

10. Yogi Bhajan taught that you could be liberated in 40 days if you practiced kundalini yoga.

Response:

SGGS says in one moment chanting the naam one could be liberated.  
KY is nothing other than support to help one chant the naam.  
YB says KY without mantra/Naam is not KY.  
So where is the conflict?

11. Yogi Bhajan taught that he would take on all the karma of his students and that the reason that he was so sick was that his students had a lot of bad karma.

references please.

YB did acknowledge that too much travelling was a stress on his body.

12. Yogi Bhajan taught he should name everyone, not by consulting the Guru, but by using astrology and numerology.

Response:

YB never said he 'should' name everyone.

He did name those that asked. And who knows the method he really used? Who knows to what extent he was guided by astrology, numerology and the SGGS? Where and when did YB say that consulting SGGS for a name was wrong?

13. Yogi Bhajan taught that he could read auras and even read your destiny.

Response:

Many people can see auras. so what.

Where is this against sikhi?

It has nothing to do with sikhi, but it does not distort sikhi either.

note: that SGGS says that the unseen can be seen through sincere loving practice of naam. And other claims of ridhis and sidhis.

14. Yogi Bhajan taught that when he died, only his physical body would be gone. His soul would then reside in his subtle body which would hover over his students, while he still taught and led tantric. To his students he would not be dead but immortal.

Response:

It is true for us all, that only the physical body will be gone when we die.

The SGGS says that it is possible to reach a state where we no longer die, and are immortal.

So who is qualified to say if this was or was not true for YB.

There is a Shabd that says we may become as angels.

Re the soul still being there.

Well all our souls go on, even if it is to be reborn.

So this is not against sikhi, but actually confirmed by it.

Re tantra and subtle body.

This is not for or against Sikhi.

And who knows if it is true or not.

Can anyone prove it to be false?

And where in Sikhi does it say that it is not possible. And so on.....

15. Yogi Bhajan has so many titles. He claims to have titles that in fact were not given to him.

Response:

He was a remarkable soul. If he did not have these titles then he would have had others. The Akaal Takhat have never denounced YB nor denied giving him one of those

titles. In fact they have placed his picture and plaque of honour in one building on the Golden Temple complex.

Note: people that are pointing out these things are trying hard to find something to attack YB for and they are finding crumbs.

Guru Angad, in Asa Di Vaar says do not waste time discussing with fools.

We can see that these are petty remarks from someone that is desperate to find some straw against YB. And that none of these points are really against sikhi.

Here is a different kind of letter from another concerned Sikh and a response that was offered:

“After visiting your website, I have the impression that your centre is propagating Kundalini Yoga as part of Sikh teaching. That is completely wrong. Sikhism has nothing to do with yoga or its practice. If you must teach Yoga, do it independently and not under the shelter of Sikhism or under the auspices of the Prakash of Guru Granth Sahib. Mainstream Sikh Panth will be most offended by your misuse/misinterpretation of Sikhism. The Sikh Way of Life as you call it, does not include Kundalini Yoga, I assure you.!

WAHE GURU JI KA KHALSA WAHE GURU JI KI FATEH

Dear ..... Ji . Thank you for visiting the website.

We do understand your concern and the need for some distinction between Sikhi and Kundalini Yoga.

We certainly do not see the Sikh way of life as 'for' or 'against' Kundalini Yoga.

And we do not see Kundalini Yoga as against Sikhi. In fact there is a lot about Kundalini Yoga, as Yogi Bhajan has been teaching it that is very supportive of Sikhi and even inspires some practitioners to become Sikhs. Therefore we see no reason why Kundalini Yoga and Sikhi cannot be present within the same environment. In other words they are not antagonistic to each other.

We know of no Statement in the Rehit Marayada stating that Sikhs must not do Kundalini Yoga.

Please do let us know if we have overlooked some passage there.

It could be said that Sikhi would appreciate any practice done in the right spirit, i.e. from the love of God and not ego, as a sacrifice of body, mind and soul to Guru , fearlessly, without enmity, and that supports the possibility to find the treasure of Naam that is buried deep with in city of the body.

There are of course mentions of Kundalini [we could say in positive and negative terms] in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

There also many mentions of Yoga - again both in terms of guidance as to what yoga is not and what is the true Yoga. In addition there are cautions in the way that, with ego, yoga can be a very misguided and a false path. This concerns us deeply and we wish to inspire people to the true way of yoga - as best as Guru Ji can bless us to understand it.

If Kundalini Yoga should not be taught within a Dharamsala of the Guru then why might other activities that also benefit the general well-being of the people be taking place there? It seems that the Guru's encouraged the development of services that helped alleviate people's suffering. Of course the Loving Japa of the Naam is the ultimate medicine but the Guru's seemed to recognise the need of mundane approaches to caring for oneself and others. Yoga like many other medicines can be used or abused. Just like a scripture can be turned into a mere book to

be picked up and strike out at others, or it can be recognised as the rock against which to break one's ego. And surely only the Grace of Guru can make the difference.

Guru Ram Das was praised as the one who sat on the Throne of Raj Yoga [Raaj Jog Takhat Dian Guru Ram Das] [kundalini Yoga is also known as Raaj Yoga]

Clearly it is a matter that needs some study, and cannot be resolved by a quick reaction or our own interpretations.

Of course we do not claim to be an authority on the matter but we are committed to research the best balance of all views.

And beyond views to really discover what the True teaching of Guru Ji is. We know of no definite statement in Sri Guru Granth Sahib that could be read as an injunction - "thou shalt not do yoga".

Perhaps you are also aware of the fact that more and more people are finding their way to the Guru from the experience of Kundalini Yoga that is taught in a way that emphasises the meditation on the True Naam (Sat Naam) breath by breath. We wonder why you find this disturbing.

If you would like to discuss this further we would be grateful for your ideas and informed input.

WAHE GURU JI KA KHALSA WAHE GURU JI KI FATEH

Further Note: about Kundalini Yoga, as we are inspired to teach it.

We agree and actively point out that it is not about superstition, gaining sidhis, wearing patched coat, performing rituals, begging, and so many of the other traditional practices that we fully acknowledge the Guru exposes the hypocrisy of.

It is about supporting the possibility of the human being to be able to:

maintain their simran of God's Name breath by breath.

earn an honest living,

be humble and serve God in all,

Students are encouraged to keep their hair and body as it was made by the creator, to rise early and take Ishnaan and meditate on their true nature, to praise God, to live by faith rather than the mind, to keep company of good people (sangat) and to become givers in the world rather than takers.

if any of this is against the Path of Gurmukh and sikh Dharam please do point it out to us with any references that might help us to become clearer.

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