



Sikh Dharma and Kundalini Yoga

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

NB: This document is merely a draft and will be updated over time. Compiled by SCS

- 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.

- The demise of Yoga within the Sikh Community of India.
 - The impact of the genocides, from Moghul to British rule, partition and modern politics.

- Did the Gurus and Sikhs practice (Kundalini) Yoga

- Yogi Bhajan's connection to Guru Raam Daas.

- Your relation to, and identity as, Yogi/ni 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...
 - Sikh fundamentalist. Their issues with yoga and YB
 - The Sikh Religious Dogma?
 - Resistance to either Kundalini Yoga or Sikhi.
 - Yoga is Hindu, Sikhs are not Hindus, therefore Sikhs don't do yoga!
 - Use of name Khalsa

- Bringing Sikh Dharma to Yogis. Bringing Kundalini Yoga to Sikhs.

YOGA AND RELIGION

Practicing modern-day yoga does not necessarily bring one to communion and union with the Divine. Living a religious life does not necessarily mean being committed to, or asserting the dogmatic and institutionalised version of any religion.

YOKE THE MIND TO UNITE THE SOUL	
Yoga: Yoke the mind. Subject it to higher guidance and principles	Religion : re – liege. Re-unite. The soul merges with the supreme soul
PART TIME PRACTICE OR FULL TIME IDENTITY	
Yoga as something i do, daily, weekly, or from time to time.	I am a Yogi/ni it defines me, my lifestyle and my philosophy
BY CHOICE OR CIRCUMSTANCE	
I do yoga because I choose to.	I was born into this religion
BODY, MIND AND SOUL	
Yoga is a science and practice for physical, emotional health, and mental, well being	Religion as a dedicated devotion. A journey of the soul. From God to God
WHERE THERE IS DHARMA THERE IS NO KARMA	
Yoga is a discipline. I am working out my karma	I am a disciple living my dharma . Gurumukh – turning to the Guru
SEEKING OR SEEING	
I am searching for a path. Yoga is part of my search. Spiritual Surfing. Ego does pick and mix	My path is established. I see. I witness the world play. Commitment
SHAKTI CAN SERVE THE BHAKTI	
Shakti Yoga is an empowering science and technology to experience God within. 'I am everything'	Religion works with Bhakti . It's an attitude of surrender in gratitude and praise of God. 'Oh God ! You are all, I am nothing'
FOR SELF AND/OR FOR OTHERS	
Self-empowering, student What I get from my practice. Personal benefit and gain	What I offer through my practice. A life of service to others. Teacher For benefit of humanity
DHARMA AS AN EMPTY EGO COCOON OR A MOLD FOR YOUR SOUL	
Practitioner may practice 'fake it to make it' ; 'Teach to master'	Yoga and religion includes fake gurus, fake priests, fake yogis, etc.
SEEK THE LIGHT - SEE THE LIGHT - BE THE LIGHT	
Emphasis to raise kundalini and benefit form its energy	Emphasis to be filled with the light of nectar / spirit
A QUESTION OF REFERENCE	
Without spiritual reference the ego may become the object of reverence/alter (or the teacher!)	Religion has reference of reverence; alter, scripture, Shabd Guru, the teachings.
SAME MESSAGE - DIFFERENT WORDS	
Sadhana, community, meditate, Rise before sunrise	Sadhana, sangat, simran, seva. Rise in the Amrit Vela

Some differences are just different ways to say the same thing

Sikh means student or disciple – often loosely referred to as a seeker

It is an evolution of identity [naam] to move from seeking truth to being a disciple of truth

Dharma implies a way of life. How you conduct yourself with yourself, in the world and with your Creator/God

(KUNDALINI) YOGA	SIKH DHARMA
A Sadhu has a sadhana [Practical discipline].	Commitment to live as an awakened being, while journeying through worldly challenges.
Yoga can be practiced just for self-gain	(Sikh) lives in service, charity....
Ni/yamas; systemised code of conduct Tapa and Japa – austerities, aesthetic,	A life of virtue: charity, soch, sat, Santokh ... Poetic and heart based sense of humanity.
10 Spiritual Bodies and associated virtues	10 Gurus their example; embodying Mul Mantra
KY says meet your spiritual teacher once in this lifetime. Spiritual reference. Concave mirror. Alter is the alternative. Teachings. i.e. subject mind to something higher	Sikhi say you need a Guru (concave mirror) To overcome effect of Maya Conquer mind to conquer the world – Japji Guide your way back to authentic, true, inner self
Yoga of Mantra, Laya, Naad, YB – KY & mantra: A science of meridians, glands, nervous system. Quantum Technology	All in shabd guru, Naam and Keertan. Attitude and Bhakti. Loving devotion to Shabd. Praise God. Merge with the infinite
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, and link/reference to the Golden Chain	Gurdev Mata [mother] Gurdev Pita [father] Sri Gurdevay Nameh = 4 th Guru; Raam Daas
Sat Naam – every breath Svadhaya. Contemplate true self with every breath	Jap man sat naam, sada sat naam. GRD saas giraas...breath by breath do Simran.

Something that stand out in the religious life and is often not so evident or mentioned in yoga traditions, is the need for our efforts to be met with God's grace [Prasaad], glance of mercy [Nadar], and compassion [Daya].

Perhaps yogic practices serve to raise the kundalini to open the chakras, heart being the most essential.

While the bhakti dimension calls in the grace and higher blessings.

And the lower and higher forces meet in the heart's alchemy, in the cup of prayer.

This is encapsulated in the mantra: EKONGKAR SAT GUR PRASAAD

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.

KY as taught by Yogi Bhajan taps 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) brings spiritual depth to the practice of Kundalini Yoga.

Here are some of the basic and common understandings between Yogic teaching and the Sikh Dharma and the way of life shared by of a Yogi/ni and a Sikh we find the common recognition of the following:

Basic concepts:

- The distorting effect of the world of Maya and the 3 gunas; tama, raja, sattva.
- The true Yogi [Gurmukh] reaches the 4th State, Turiya, beyond the 3 gunas
- The 4 yugas: We are currently in the 4th age, the dark, or iron age, known as Kali Yuga.
- Yogic anatomy of nadis, vayus, tattvas, chakras and kundalini.
- The unity of creation, and unity of the creation with the Creator. Ekongkar.
- The law of karma – cause and effect. Action has a reaction. Our action counts.
- 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, also known as thieves, enemies, demons, 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, 10th gate etc.
- Live a life free of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, meat; healthy body is best for Naam.
- not need for patched coat, ashes of dead on body, pilgrimage, wearing dhoti, other austerities.
- No need for elaborate rituals, or a priest to stand between you and God. (Guru is not priest)

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

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

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

- Ashtanga; 8 limbs of yoga
- simran, keertan, seva, sangat, sadhana

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

- become a teacher. Not remain a student your whole life. Pass on the tools/legacy.
- 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 heard of in KY. Examples include:
obey, serve, love, excel
7 steps to happiness

The 5 khands/realms at end of Japji Sahib may correspond to the 5 stages of being a student and the 5 blue ethers.

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

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

The Bhakti of the mantra is to recite as the Guru gave it; *[obey, serve, love, excel]*

The Shakti aspect of the mantras is when yogic insight and technology is applied.

Meditations for the 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, live light – be the light
Bana, Bani, Seva, Simran.

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

Inner alter of higher-self is implied. SGGs turns you to God within (concave mirror)

Danger of bowing to teacher’s ego. Sikhi: bow to no person yet be in company of holy.

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Other 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.

So darshan chakra kriya can be found in SGGs p1106 – by Kabir.

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:

Sikhi has its own version of Ni/Yamas, asana, pranayama,

See YB's lecture on pratyahara; beyond all yogic commentaries, it is Sikhi.

YB 'use the tools, to take the fools - to the Guru' – naad, naam, Shabd

One can be KY student all life. becoming a teacher is to move the focus from being a taker to being a giver.

Teacher serves and needs the support of dharma, sangat, Guru.

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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.

Ek OngKaar ->	Sat Naam -> Sri ->	Wahe Guroo
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; for example from Yogi Bhajan's lectures and from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. In this way the context of any statement can be known and rightly understood.

Some, so called, controversies are directed at Yogi Bhajan and others are directed at Yoga itself.

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 impact of colonial rule and, after that, 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.

The SGGS does not say do not have a teacher?

Teacher is not the same as Guru. Teacher may help us understand the teachings of the Guru.

To a Sikh the SGGS is the Guru. This is made clear to students training to be KY teachers.

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. It is optional.

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.

It is based on the yogic technique of Tratakam.

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.

This can be researched on the 'Library of Teachings'.

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.

4. Yogi Bhajan taught that the reason that Sikhs wear Kacha [special type of underwear] 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.
Also - it is dishonourable to imply that this is all he said about the 5 K's of Sikhi.

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 words are not for or against Sikhi.

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

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

And 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.

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 certain type of 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 IS SAID TO enter 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.

This is approximately the time when the first kick of the baby is felt by the mother.

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 of lovingly chanting the True 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 extend 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 though 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.....

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, KY, 3HO. And that none of these points are really against Sikhi.

Note: in 2020, long after YB passed away in 2004, some students made allegations about YB's abuse of power, money and sex. Nothing said in this document is intended to defend or condemn him on account of the allegations.

About the need for some distinction between Sikhi and Kundalini Yoga.

The Sikh way of life is neither 'for' or 'against' Kundalini Yoga. Neither it includes or excludes it.

There no injunction, rule, in Sikh dharma [Sikhi] that says a Sikh must not do yoga.

Kundalini Yoga is not against Sikhi. It is a practice of a technology that may serve Sikhs or anyone else to deepen their own commitment and experience of their chosen spiritual path.

There is a lot about Kundalini Yoga, [as taught by Yogi Bhajan] that is very supportive of Sikhi and even inspires some practitioners to become Sikhs. As they are not antagonistic to each other, there is no reason why Kundalini Yoga and Sikhi cannot be present within the same environment, or practiced by the same person.

A true Sikhi appreciates and respects 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 within city of the body.

The Sikh Gurus were clearly well versed in Yoga. The Shabds make many references to yogic terms, practices, metaphors and symbolic indications. Giving guidance as to the true attitude, nature and purpose of yoga. As well as warnings about how the ego-pride can corrupt the true practice and purpose.

The physical and practical aspects of yoga can be used or abused just like many other practices, and medicines, that have benefits to people's well-being yet can also be detrimental. 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. May the Guru's grace serve us towards the latter.

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Kundalini Yoga is not about superstition, gaining sidhis [occult powers], wearing patched coat, performing rituals, begging, rubbing the ashes of the dead on your body, making pilgrimage to any holy place, worshipping any idol or person.

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

maintain their simran [meditation] 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.

WAHE GURU JI KA KHALSA WAHE GURU JI KI FATEH

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The author does not claim to be an authority on the matter but is committed to research and continue learning.