



## Spiritual Predators

**An important focus** for yoga and spiritual communities at large is to **empower our students and congregations everywhere with awareness and knowledge** about spiritual predators and how to recognize them and not fall prey to them. They thrive on power through ignorance of their students or congregants; often adoration from them; and sometimes blatant seduction from them.

The test of “power” is one of the last tests faced by yogis or anyone who walks on a spiritual path. Those who fail may become spiritual predators. **It is always a choice** to become an abusive predator, a submissive victim, or to consciously control our power *according to our own free will*. A spiritual predator may abuse their students in a myriad of ways, such as financially, mentally, emotionally, physically, or sexually.

In any case, **a victim can prevent and stop the abuse**. In general, it is not likely that a predator will ever stop since there is no motivation for them to do so. Victims have the motivation to stop being abused and can use their *free will* to stop allowing the abuse. **Ideally, we can stop the possibility of abuse from ever starting by educating our students and congregations** everywhere about how spiritual predators behave.

### EMPOWERING STUDENTS

I personally, fervently believe in self-help, self-correction, self-discipline, self-liberation, and self-illumination. Therefore, I have posted this page, as an initial resource for students everywhere to be aware, to love yourself and use your own intuitive awareness and divine consciousness within you to guide you, should you encounter a spiritual predator. I love yoga and meditation and wish the tainted behaviors of those who cannot manage the power it may bring were not a reality.

But the truth is, practicing yoga and meditation also serve as one of the best ways to create a powerful shield for self-protection when we educate ourselves and apply the technology of awareness.

Much of the following information is from *Sex and the Spiritual Teacher* by Scott Edelstein.

### *A Student's Reality Check*

## THE BOGUS REASONS SPIRITUAL TEACHERS SAY THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE SEX WITH THEM

This offering is just a beginning, and I encourage students of all spiritual paths to educate themselves about these behaviors and to **KNOW that you are always in charge of YOU**. Do not give away your power to any other human being ever.

- **“I’m filling you with deep spiritual energy” or “I’m opening you to Divine love.”** You’re already filled with deep spiritual energy and Divine love. This is why you got interested in spirituality in the first place. And—as spiritual teachers from all major traditions have pointed out for many centuries—you already have full access to these; you don’t need to get them from someone else. Either the teacher knows this and is exploiting your innocence, or he doesn’t and he’s a fraud.
- **“I’m enlightened. I’m not subject to the laws of karma like most people.”** Ask the teacher to demonstrate this by running naked across six lanes of heavy traffic. Or, if you’re in a more gracious mood, remind him or her that you are fully subject to the laws of karma—and, for the sake of your own karma, you need him or her to back off. (In any case, how does a teacher’s enlightenment—whether real or imagined—enable you to avoid cause and effect? It’s like saying, “I’m a brilliant mathematician, so you’re not subject to the laws of physics.”)
- **“I’m helping you break some of your deepest attachments.”** True. Attachments are typically broken by painful, disillusioning experiences, and the teacher is about to provide some. This teacher could also help you loosen your attachment to money by swiping your wallet, or to your health and appearance by pushing you in front of a moving car.
- **“I’m completing a big part of your karma.”** Perhaps. And add a big new piece to the karma pile.
- **“It’s a spiritual initiation.”** Spiritual initiations are fine, but they don’t need to involve sex with the teacher. Ask for the initiation without the sex; if the teacher insists that the two are inseparable, turn down both.
- **“It’s what God wants.”** When a teacher assures the student that sex with him or her has been approved by the Absolute, it takes two common variations: (1) “It’s okay for us to have sex—we were husband and wife in a previous life.” (Does this mean that if you were my servant in a previous life, I can order you around? Or, if I was your guard dog in a former life, I can come to your home and bite strangers?); (2) “I’ve prayed to God long and hard about this, and we have God’s blessing to sleep together.” (What if the teacher prays even longer and harder, and receives God’s gives blessings to have sex with your kids, too?)

- **“It will loosen you up, help you become more open.”** So will twenty minutes of yoga or ninety minutes of massage. So will a self-induced orgasm. If all the teacher can offer is loosening and opening, he or she is not much of a spiritual teacher—and a lousy lover.
- **“I’m acting from a higher plane.”** Maybe, but you’re getting exploited and manipulated on this plane. Encourage the teacher to have sex with someone on that other plane instead.
- **“I’m testing your faith. Do you trust me or not?”** Correct answer: “Not anymore.”
- **“I need to find out if I can trust you.”** Implication 1: the best (or only) way to find out if someone is trustworthy is to ask them to have sex with you. Implication 2: if the person does have sex with you, they’re trustworthy; if they don’t, they aren’t. This would make sex workers and their customers the most trustworthy people on the planet—and celibates and whistle-blowers the least. In saying this, the teacher has actually proven that he or she is not trustworthy.
- **“If you ever expect to learn from me, you must not question me or my actions.”** Don’t be like Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, Lady Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa, or the Dalai Lama—all of whom questioned spiritual authority.
- **“This is how it’s been done in my family tradition for many generations.”** Possibly true. But this justification has been used for centuries to support clitorectomies, widow burning, racism, anti-Semitism, the binding and crippling of young girls’ feet, the murder of newborn girls, and mass murder.
- **It looks like abuse or exploitation to you, but it’s not. You don’t see what’s really happening here, but I do.** Translation: “Don’t trust your own heart, mind, or gut. Instead, trust me.
- **“I’m acting out of nonduality.”** How does acting from nonduality justify exploitation or manipulation? Would it be okay if the teacher broke into your home, trashed it, and punched out your kids, so long as he or she did it out of nonduality?
- **“I’m worshipping the One in you.”** Worshipping the One in you (or anyone) is great, but it certainly doesn’t require sex. Say yes to the worship and no to the sex.
- **“I’m beyond lust” or “I have no desires.”** (1) This is probably a lie. (2) How does being “beyond lust” or “having no desires” justify sexual exploitation? Would it be okay for your teacher to spit on you if he assured you, he was beyond salivation? (3) What does being “beyond lust” even mean? (4) Especially when the speaker has an erection.
- **“It’s just energy going from one part of the universe to another.”** By this definition, so are pushing a pie into the teacher’s face, spraying him or her with seltzer, or putting a poisonous spider down his shirt. Ask him or her if it is okay for you to do these things.
- **“There’s no doer; there’s just doing. There is no ‘you’ or ‘I,’ so how can there be abuse or exploitation?”** This is the cheesiest excuse of all. True, in Absolute terms, there’s no doer or doing, no good or bad, no right or wrong, no life or death, no pain or pleasure—in fact, no specifics of any kind; everything is One. At the same time, though, we also live in the relative realm, where we need to pay our taxes and lock our doors; where people sometimes try to manipulate us; and where we need to protect and defend ourselves from such folks. This excuse is particularly transparent and truly foul—because it can be used to justify anything at all: rape, torture, genocide, even the destruction of all life on Earth.

## RECOGNIZING A PREDATOR IN A SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

Living in a **spiritually aware** community or **intentional** community can be a wonderful and elevating experience and a powerful way to enhance our individual and group impact through serving and healing our surrounding communities and world. Ideally, communities governed by councils can provide the best protection from a spiritual predator.

If you are aware or suspect you have become part of a community that is controlled by a predator, or associate with those who are, then you may be told that your concerns about the leader or predator are negative thinking or simply not true. The following are a few examples of some of the comments you may hear:

- **“He or She is a powerful and charismatic leader. Sex is an expression of that spiritual power. You can’t have one without the other.”** The issue isn’t the teacher’s expression of sexuality, but sexual involvement with his or her own students. Unless the teacher has vowed celibacy, he or she is free—and, indeed, encouraged—to be a sexual powerhouse with a partner who is not a student.
- **“He or she is human like the rest of us. We all make mistakes.”** True. If we’re wise, though, we publicly acknowledge them, apologize for them, learn from them, accept their consequences, and don’t repeat them.
- **“So, he or she made some mistakes. You have to balance the damage done against all the good done.”** This is a legitimate way to review the life of someone who has died. But someone who is still alive has the potential to do further good—and further damage. We need to continue to hold ourselves, and each other, accountable for our present and future actions. No matter how much good someone has done, that doesn’t entitle them to exploit others, now or in the future.
- **“What’s the problem? It is a fair trade. He or she gets sex; we get to be around him or her all the time. We love basking in his or her aura. And now the other students treat us like royalty.”** This may indeed be a fair trade, as long as the teacher, the students, and their spiritual community transparently and honestly recognize the polygamous relationships.
- **“You have no right to judge him or her. Stop judging people. Judging isn’t spiritual. Look at yourself instead.”** In fact, we all have a right—and an obligation—to judge ourselves and others’ motives and actions, and to decide how to respond to them. That’s why we give money to certain charities (and certain panhandlers) but not others; why we smile at some strangers but not at others; and why we choose our sexual partners instead of having sex with everyone who asks us to. Judging—i.e., being discerning—is not only spiritual, but necessary. Looking at your own actions and decisions and habits of mind and knowing that you carefully discern the behaviors of those in whom you place your trust is always a good practice for all of us.

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## REPORT ABUSE

Within our 3HO Kundalini Yoga and Sikh Dharma community, we have an office of **Ethics & Professional Standards (EPS)** that responds to reports of abuse and actively works to uphold the ethics and integrity of all Kundalini Yoga Teachers, Teacher Trainers and Sikh Dharma Ministers. *If you have experience or have knowledge of abuse of any kind, we encourage you to contact the EPS Office:*

<https://epsweb.org/helpline/>

It is incumbent upon us in spiritual communities to identify spiritual predators who may exist and to take action to protect our students and communities from harm.

If harm occurs, we are committed to providing protection and support and healing to those harmed and prevent spiritual predators from doing any further harm. This includes reporting them to the authorities and providing support for their own recovery and healing. I am certain that educating and empowering our students and congregations and all our surrounding communities and friends is one of the most important steps we can take to illuminate our awareness and achieve transparency in our actions so that everyone can keep themselves safe and protected. Sat Nam.

On the following page you will find the Code of Excellence that Yogi Bhajan gave to all Kundalini Yoga teachers. Every Kundalini Yoga teacher signs their name in a promise to live by this code at the time of their certification as a teacher. If you observe a Kundalini Teacher who is not living up to this promise, tell them “shame on you” and if necessary, to prevent them from harming anyone, report the teacher to EPS.



# CODE OF EXCELLENCE

of the **3HO International Kundalini Yoga Teachers Association (IKYTA)**  
& **Kundalini Research Institute (KRI)**



PO Box 1560, Santa Cruz, New Mexico 87567 • ikytaadmin@3ho.org • IKYTA: www.ikyta.org • KRI: www.KRITeachings.org



We recognize that as Kundalini Yoga Teachers we are committed to living in our higher consciousness. We conduct our lives in a spirit of integrity. In *The Teachers Oath, The Definition of a Yogi, and The 16 Facets of Perfection of a Kundalini Yoga Teacher*, Yogi Bhajan gives us the guidelines for this journey of consciousness, the daily practice of which will support us as Kundalini Yoga Teachers.

## The Teachers Oath

*"I am not a woman."* (Mercury finger down)

*"I am not a man."* (Sun finger down)

*"I am not a person."* (Saturn finger down)

*"I am not myself."* (Jupiter finger down)

*"I am a teacher."* (Thumb stays up)

## The 16 Facets of Perfection of a Kundalini Yoga Teacher

*Sola Kalyan Sumpuran* Yogi Bhajan, September 1995

1. A Teacher will never alter the teachings because of personal opinion. You will teach by example.
2. The higher you grow as a Teacher, the more humble you have to be.
3. The Teacher always serves the students, so they can become ten times stronger than you, because every student is a Teacher for tomorrow.
4. A Teacher has to be extremely kind, caring, compassionate, and forgiving.
5. As a Teacher you should always poke, provoke, confront, and elevate your students to excellence.
6. As a Teacher you have to continuously imagine, visualize, believe, expand in all directions, connect to everything, meditate, practice, and project that you are *Ang Sang Wahe Guru* ("With every limb, every part of me, I belong to the Divine."), and that the energy of Guru Ram Das is flowing through you.
7. As a Teacher you will always be in *Chardi Kala* (elevated spirits) and connected to your higher self, never caught in emotional turmoil. Count your blessings, not your curses. Always be graceful. Glow and grow.
8. As a Teacher you will continuously graduate towards the Divinity and Infinity that is the essence of your existence. You are not a human born for a spiritual search, you are a spirit, an Atma (soul), born for an experience as a human. Your purity and piety as an Atma is always maintained, protected, exalted, projected, as a priority over everything and kept in sight mentally, physically, and spiritually.
9. As a Teacher listen to, and obey all righteous teachings. If you read something, you will know it; if you write something, you will understand it; if you teach something, you will master it.

It is **mastery** of your deliverance that gives you grace as a Teacher. Your success as a Teacher lies not in what you know, but in what your student receives.

A Teacher is measured by the growth, dignity, and excellence of the student. If you find any talent, nurture it, teach it, exalt it to the best of your ability and divinity.

10. As a Teacher do not relate to ego or politics. Always relate to the spirit, soul, and essence of a person. Always relate to the intelligence, talent, and consciousness of a person. Always relate to the manners, methods, and mentality of a person. Pure thoughts are the way to universal knowledge and will make you bountiful, blissful, and beautiful.

## The Definition of a Yogi

The Yogi is not affected by the opposite polarities of life—neither by praise nor by slander, neither by riches nor by poverty, neither by health nor by illness, neither by life nor by death.

The Will of God is the will of the Yogi. He or she surrenders his or her personal will to the Will of God.

When Kundalini, the primal force of the Prana (life energy), penetrates and prevails throughout the chakras, the Yogi remains stable to the odds of Karma and walks the even path of Dharma.

The Raj Yogi is a sage and a king in the face of all temptations, situations, events, and environments.

Those who meditate on Guru Ram Das are blessed through miracles to be royal sages throughout the ages.

*Yogi Bhajan, September 1995*

11. God and Guru have blessed you with Karma (law of cause and effect). As a Teacher you must offer yourself in Dharma (lifestyle of righteousness) to honor the gift of God of life. Never create a drift or rift between you and your Atma.

12. A Teacher wears white cotton clothing while teaching. White clothing makes you as a Teacher look divine and represent light. The color white represents the seven colors. Cotton is the flower of the Earth. It is good for your psyche, your energy, and your nervous system. Your way of dressing should be saintly and make you glow with grace. You should look like a sage and a prince or princess of peace and divinity. A Teacher is a Ph.D.—Prince or Princess of High Divinity.

13. Just as a seed has to wither to become a tree and bear fruit, Teachers who do not become perfect students do not become perfect Masters.

14. The Universal Spirit that rotates the Earth can take care of all your problems. As a Teacher you have to learn trust and faith. Regard every breath of life as a gift. Strive for conscious breathing, breathing one breath a minute.

15. The banner of a Teacher is: "In God I dwell." The standard of arms of a Teacher is: "God within me I trust."

The honor of a Teacher is: "In the Name of God I serve."

The motto of a Teacher is: "Peace of mind and peace within the material world."

16. A Teacher needs to commit to Nam, the God-given identity. Without Nam, you cannot have the purity of self and the divine projected grace to master all the elements.

Without commitment there is no character.

Without character there is no dignity.

Without dignity there is no divinity.

Without divinity there is no grace.

Without grace you cannot sacrifice or serve others. Your compassion and presence will not work, and you cannot be happy.

Remember once and for all, happiness is your birthright, and it is always right to be happy. So be happy, be healthy, and be holy.

We are all holy, because we all have nine holes. Adding two arms and two legs makes thirteen. You are born with thirteen, you will live with thirteen, you will die with thirteen. Thirteen (three and one) makes four—Cup of Prayer. Prayer is your power, your protector, and your provider. *Sat Nam*

# THE CODE OF ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF A KUNDALINI YOGA TEACHER

## TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

It is the responsibility of the Teacher to maintain a conscious and professional relationship with students and with other Teachers. A Teacher recognizes that the teacher-student relationship involves a power imbalance. This is true even with a student who is no longer studying with the Teacher.

1. A Teacher recognizes the implicit trust placed in him or her because of the unique power of the teacher-student relationship. A Teacher consciously avoids any relationship with a student that is exploitive in any way, i.e., he or she never uses such a relationship for personal gain or benefit.
2. All forms of sexual involvement with students are unethical, even when a student invites or consents to such behavior. Sexual behavior includes, but is not limited to, all forms of overt and covert seductive speech, gestures, and actions.
3. All forms of financial involvement with students are discouraged and may be subject to a disciplinary review. Financial involvement includes but is not limited to loans, gifts and business relationships. Payment for teaching services is acceptable. If you have any question about financial involvement, contact the Executive Director of IKYTA.
4. The above points shall be in effect as long as the Teacher is in a teacher-student relationship and for not less than 6 months after the student has ceased taking any classes or trainings from the Teacher.
5. A Teacher never engages in harassment, abusive words or actions, or coercion of students or former students.
6. A Teacher shows sensitive regard for the moral, social, and religious standards of students, and avoids imposing his or her personal beliefs on others.
7. A Teacher will not advise a student to go against the advice of his or her health care provider.
8. A Teacher realizes that he or she is a vehicle for these Teachings, never their source. A Kundalini Yoga Teacher does not initiate anyone as a disciple.
9. A Teacher strives to build the student's connection to the teachings and to his or her own soul, rather than to any personality.
10. If a Teacher is unable to continue the teacher-student relationship, the Teacher will, upon the request of the student, connect the student to other appropriate Teacher resources in the 3HO Global Community.
11. A Teacher treats all communication with students with respectful and appropriate confidentiality.

## CLASS STRUCTURE

1. A Teacher teaches kriyas (which includes postures, mantras, meditations or sets) as they were taught by Yogi Bhajan, with the exception of reducing the timing of postures, or providing variations of postures when necessary to accommodate physical limitations of students.
2. A Teacher does not create kriyas (postures, mantras, meditations or sets.) A Teacher does not combine teachings or practices from other paths into a Kundalini Yoga kriya as taught by Yogi Bhajan.
3. A Teacher acknowledges that they are part of the Golden Chain by beginning every class with the Adi Mantra, chanting "Ong Namoh Guru Dev Namoh" at least 3 times. Every class ends with the "Long Time Sun" song.
4. A Teacher is responsible to maintain the integrity and sacredness of the Kundalini Yoga Teachings.
5. A Teacher does not exaggerate or misrepresent the benefits of Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan®.
6. In a Kundalini Yoga class, a Teacher wears appropriate, modest, clean white clothing. A head covering is strongly recommended.
7. A Teacher upholds the yogic law "If you come empty handed, you will leave empty handed" by encouraging students to make an offering.

***The purpose of this Code is to help Teachers serve in their purest consciousness and to protect our students, communities and organizations. If a Teacher is in breach of this Code he or she may be subject to review by the 3HO IKYTA KRI Ethics and Professional Standards Committee. Substantial violations of this Code (including changing the teachings, actions that may be harmful to students, or substance use or abuse) can result in discipline, including being prohibited from representing 3HO IKYTA, KRI and Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan®, in any capacity as a Kundalini Yoga Teacher, termination as a KRI Teacher Trainer and Termination of IKYTA Membership (Good Standing.) By signing this Code of Ethics and Professional Standards I understand and agree that any final decision involving a suspension or termination will be a public document.***

***A Teacher is responsible for compliance with the most current Code found at [ikyta.org](http://ikyta.org).***

I hereby agree to live and teach in compliance with the above 3HO IKYTA KRI Code of Ethics and Professional Standards of a Kundalini Yoga Teacher.

## PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

These guidelines are designed to uphold the quality of the Teachings and to be in compliance with all legal guidelines for appropriate representation of our services.

1. A Teacher accurately represents his or her professional qualifications and certifications along with his or her affiliations and/or sponsorships from any organization(s).
2. Announcements and brochures promoting classes or courses based on the Teachings of Yogi Bhajan shall describe them and picture them with accuracy and grace.
3. A Teacher will represent himself or herself, 3HO, IKYTA, KRI, and Yogi Bhajan truthfully and accurately in all public communications. Promotional communications will follow guidelines set by 3HO, IKYTA or KRI that correctly reflect these organizations' missions.

## TEACHERS IN COMMUNITY

1. A Teacher supports the service of other Teachers through conscious communication that avoids negativity or wrongful attributions regarding the efforts of other Teachers.
2. A Teacher speaks and acts respectfully to other Kundalini Yoga Teachers, as well as Teachers of other yoga traditions (and health modalities).
3. A Teacher does not knowingly solicit another Teacher's students.
4. A Teacher builds the unity of the 3HO Global Community by embracing diversity, willingness to collaborate and a commitment to act for the benefit of all.
5. A Teacher acts as an integral contributing member of all International (and national, where appropriate) teaching organizations: 3HO, IKYTA, KRI. He or she acts as a representative of the professional and ethical policies of these organizations.
6. A Teacher cultivates the ethical integrity of our culture as Teachers by being alert to and seeking assistance for a Teacher involved in what appears to be a breach of these standards by providing assistance directly or by using the appropriate organizational channel.
7. At all times a Teacher's behavior represents the purity and integrity that Yogi Bhajan taught.
8. At all times a Teacher shall acknowledge the lineage of the Golden Chain and the Teachings with respect and reverence.
9. Any Teacher found liable or guilty in a civil or criminal court in which findings of fact or a judgement have been entered for moral turpitude, felony or fraud is subject to discipline by the 3HO IKYTA KRI Ethics and Professional Standards Committee.
10. Any Teacher whose actions are against the interests of 3HO, IKYTA, KRI, Yogi Bhajan or the entities which support their services, and which involve breach of fiduciary (acting for or holding in trust) responsibility or financial misconduct is subject to discipline by the 3HO IKYTA KRI Ethics and Professional Standards Committee.

## PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

1. A Teacher commits to and maintains a regular, daily spiritual practice that includes Kundalini Yoga and meditation as taught by Yogi Bhajan®.
2. A Teacher commits to the continuous improvement of his or her professional knowledge and skills. He or she fulfills all training requirements developed and presented by 3HO IKYTA and the KRI Aquarian Trainer Academy (and National Associations, where appropriate.)
3. A Teacher abstains from the use of, or dependency on, alcohol, tobacco, or drugs (except for medical purposes.) A Teacher does not permit the use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs at any Kundalini Yoga course, class, or event.
4. In the yogic tradition, a Teacher eats a vegetarian diet. A Teacher insures that a vegetarian diet is served at any Kundalini Yoga course, class or event.
5. A Teacher conducts his/her Yoga teaching services in accordance with recognized business and accounting procedures.