

Hello Brian,

26 November 2007

YET ANOTHER DISILLUSIONED RSSB INITIATE

Firstly, many thanks for the great stuff on your weblog. I am slowly making my way through the wealth of info on RSSB.

The purpose of my note to you is twofold:

1. Just to give you an idea of why I left RSSB after 37 years
2. Quo vadis?

After 37 years as a devout satsangi, I have forsaken the path! Why the hell has it taken me so long to see the light?

It's not so much the philosophy that I have a problem with, but rather what it has become. I no longer believe the Masters are Param Sants; evolved souls perhaps, but not God-realised in human form. It worries me that in the past, mystics, gurus, sages, masters, call them what you like, had at most a handful of disciples – now suddenly, Charan Singh initiates 1.2 million! What has changed? With so many initiates comes the nightmare of administration. I am interested in mysticism, not mass administration. The essence of mysticism lies within the self, experienced by expanding our consciousness. Do I need a RSSB Master to find it? I doubt it.

Below are some of the problems I have with SM (Sant Mat):

SANT MAT IS AN ORGANISATION

I was initiated in December 1970 after a two-week visit to the Dera in July 1970 and have followed the SM path since then. Up till I retired, I went to satsang probably 2 to 3 times a year and was just too remote (Namib desert) from any centres to go at all for several years. With my retirement, I was quickly drawn into the small sangat here and asked to give satsang. I have given 12 satsangs over the last 2 years and attended satsang almost every Sunday. I have also given a talk to the Diverse Religions group of our local U3A. The more research I did in the RS books, the less I believed in the SM dogma.

I meditated regularly and did simran at every opportunity when my mind wasn't occupied with essential daily stuff. I will say though, now that I do no simran, I realise how quiet my mind has become – it is just empty, devoid of extraneous thoughts and mental clutter.

Constant simran has definitely given me the stillness required for withdrawing the mind to higher levels of consciousness – not that it ever withdrew even an inch upwards during the last 37 years on the path! But let me relate the following odd experience:

Two days in succession, I had a rather strange though not unpleasant experience during meditation. At the time, I was working in the Namib desert, living a near-nomadic life. After about an hour of concentrated simran, both times, I had a spontaneous orgasm, just as I felt I was going within. As this is not what I was meditating for, I gave the practice up for a while – a cool-off period you might say. I never achieved that level of concentration again!

Is it normal to experience heightened sexual awareness at some level of consciousness? Has this something to do with awakening the Kundalini?

Back to my story at our local sangat: (un)fortunately, *familiarity breeds contempt*. The more I got involved in the sangat's administration – book sales, setting up the hall before the faithful arrive, banking seva monies and of course, the never-ending research for my next satsang, keeping the sangat's book store at my wife's (also an initiate) school etc. – the more the whole thing became like any other organisation, almost a religious ritual.

SANT MAT IS NOT FREE OF RITUAL

SM is supposed to be free of ritual. I object to using the foreign greeting 'Radha Soami' with folded hands each time you start/end satsang or meet another satsangi – this is a ritual when used in the west; it may be OK in the Punjab, but is oddly out of place here in South Africa. I find the two photos of the current and previous Master that get put up during satsang a ritual – much like the Christian statues in churches. Put the previous Master on the left and some satsangis remind you that the current Master should be on the left – ritual: SM is becoming a quasi religion. I joined RS because I perceived it as being a spiritual/internal path, having no religious trappings (rites, rituals etc.).

I used to refer to my Master as Charan Singh in my satsangs and was politely reprimanded to show some more respect and use the

term Maharaj Charan Singh Ji! So please do not feel too upset that I do not address you as Blogmaster Brian Hines!

GURINDER KEEPS MOVING THE GOAL POSTS

I was also not much impressed with the current Master when he gave satsang in Johannesburg when last here. He seemed to be rewriting the rules: in an answer to a question about the four lives we have to clear our karmic load, he told the poor lady, "I never said that". Yet this 'four-year' story (odd as I find it) is mentioned by all his predecessors, as fact. In his reply, he also uses the word 'I', something I've not heard his predecessors do.

Then there was the new rule about no more serving of tea after satsang, after years of quaffing the stuff after the weekly meetings. A year or so later, the no-tea-after-satsang ruling was reversed. What changed?

GURUSHIP VIA NEPOTISM

What has also bothered me over the years is the nepotism in the succession – Charan Singh (my master) is Gurinder Singh's uncle, Charan Singh is Sawan Singh's grandson etc. This looks like a family (Singh) business.

SANT MAT IS PORTRAYED AS A SCIENCE

To sell RS in the west, the word 'science' was attached to it. At some stage, the Bush Hill property (Johannesburg) was renamed the 'Science of the Soul Study Centre'. It's a cool buzzword quite appealing to the western mind, but on closer examination, it is anything but a science. Science is the surest way of establishing the truth and is based on the Scientific Method:

THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD	SCIENCE OF THE SOUL
1. Ask a question	Is Master really God?
2. Make observations	Read all SM literature
3. Make a Hypothesis	Follow the Path and raise your level of consciousness to Sach Khand, within 4 lives
4. Test the hypothesis by doing an experiment	Meditate and live the SM way of life for up to 4 (?) lives. Have firm faith in the Master.
5. Analyse the data and draw a conclusion	Did you reach Sach Khand? Is Master really God? Did I experience divinity?

6. Communicate the results for peer review – publish or perish!	Discussion of inner experience is forbidden so as not to inflate one’s ego – not very scientific.
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We are told not to compare notes on inner progress (the code of silence) as this will inflate the ego! I think that this is a clever ploy to stop satsangis from comparing notes and finding out very few if any satsangis are making any significant inner progress. Have you heard of any satsangi who has made any inner progress? This reminds me of the story of "The Emperor's New Clothes"!

Gurinder’s approach is not scientific: he does not write or publish, he forbids you to take written notes or record any of his talks – what is he afraid of? I feel that accurate records would soon show up the inconsistencies in the SM fairytale, like the 4-lives issue mentioned above.

When we ask questions that delve too deeply, we are told that our limited intellect cannot understand the answer, and all will be revealed when we go inside. Little or no attempt is made to give even a semi-scientific explanation. What sort of a science is this? Sant Mat is not a science but a belief system.

My master, Charan Singh, preached Creationism, not evolution: I remember reading this in one of his Q&A books. At the time, I chose to ignore this scientific absurdity, as this was my naughty intellect hindering my spiritual progress. How out of step with mainstream scientific thought can you get?

SANT MAT HAS THE MAKINGS OF A CULT

SM is similar in several ways to a ‘benign’ cult: harmless perhaps, but cult-like nevertheless. Lets look at the characteristics of a cult (obtained from somewhere on the net):

Authoritarian: central, authoritarian leadership in one person or small group of individuals.	The Master
Oppositional: values, beliefs or practices at variance with the dominant culture or tradition	SM totally different from Christianity (western religion)
Exclusivistic: only the group has "the truth," usually based on new	Only SM has the method to reach Sach Khand

insights or revelation.	
Legalistic: a tightly structured framework which governs spirituality and the smallest details of daily life.	The four principles govern initiate's behaviour all 24 hours of the day
Subjective: undue emphasis on experience and emotions often resulting in anti-intellectualism.	The intellect must be subdued at all cost, the mind is our enemy.
Persecution-Conscious: the belief that their group is singled out for persecution	Not an issue in SM
Sanction-Oriented: stern sanctions issued for anything less than total obedience.	Not really an issue in SM
Esoteric: an emphasis on secret, hidden or inner truth.	Follow the principles and all will be revealed inside
Anti-Sacerdotal: lack of paid clergy and an emphasis on laity in leadership.	Not really an issue as the Master is the one and only leader, speakers are the mouth-piece of the Master

Perhaps it does not matter that SM is cult-like, nevertheless, just the thought conjures up a creepy feeling.

We recently had a speakers meeting where it was said that Gurinder prefers people to speak of the cuff and from the heart. This did it for me. If I were to speak from the heart, I would be quite critical of the philosophy, and being Dutch, would be quite tactless in the process. Within a week of that meeting, I officially asked to be taken off all seva duties as there were plenty of other 'followers' who would love to incur Gurinder's favour.

Brian, the above are some of my problems with the RSSB cult. I have (very easily) made a clean break, no more attending satsang, for now, no more simran or meditation, off the diet (except for red meat) and back to cider and red wine! What a relief to be normal again.

I still believe that the truth is out there, or should I say, within. As you have done so much research, where do I go from here?

I still believe that the route to higher truth is inside, into higher levels of consciousness. What is the best way to go within? Is the

road forward still best done through some form of mantra meditation? I like the idea of repeating a meaningless word. What do you think? Please give me some pointers to enable me to continue my inward (spiritual) progress.

Regards and many thanks again for your wonderful blog.

Fred.