

Chapter 6

Critique of the RS Belief System

[First excerpt is Waking Now's response to a defender of the beliefs....]

Nothing that you have posted validates that there is a scientific method for God realization which the RS Cult, now called 'Science of the Soul' Fellowship, dispenses to its Initiates in return for the prescribed personal disciplines and rituals, such as meditation, attending lectures and sewa (monetary or physical service).

After about 50 years of promoting the Cult as a Science of the Soul, I find it sad that the Cult is unable to collect supportive evidence from its tens of thousands of members to validate its claims. Even the simple promise of the GIHF [*God in Human Form*] Guru becoming present in a Radiant Form in the disciple after Initiation remains uncorroborated.

Having to cite poems by a few Mystics of history as a validation of its science or mentioning relaxation response research as supportive, is grasping at straws.

These may be good for marketing the fantasy 'Science of the Soul', but science it is not.

I am no longer interested in mind cluttering intellectual discriminations.

RS Gurus-No Shows in Meditation

Yes, RSSB initiation has tantric association in its emphasis on hearing sound in a recommended posture. 'Tan' is the body, 'Tantric' is related to the body.

Admittedly, psycho-physical experiences can be induced by certain practices but one would need to be in intimate Guru-Chela setting to safely have them.

RSSB has no real interest in inducing these experiences in its followers. In my case, never once did the Guru I accepted for years, inquire how I was faring in that department.

[My insert-this is a very telling statement as the author was responsible for representing the Institution to a large audience.]

Lack of interest on their part is beneficial because by staying away from serious practice, without intimate supervision, many followers are likely saved from harm.

In any case, for me, all these practices are distractions from our everyday lives where we are experiencing the face of Reality all the time.

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RS Gurus-Sound distraction

My point of using the term life force, the power that gives us life, is that it includes the infinity of energy frequencies that support our life and therefore also includes sound vibrations (shabd, if you like) but is not limited to it. So for me, Shabd is not life force.

Therefore the experience of listening to sounds, inner or outer (and I encourage outer) is one of many possibilities of occupying our attention, nothing special.

However in the RS cult, this listening becomes the most important feature and all its explanations are directed to making it appear important. I have not found Surat Shabd Yoga as a branch of the Classical Yoga tradition. I feel the term is used by the RS cult to obtain importance by association to Yoga.

In Hatha Yoga, there is a mudra in which the facial openings are closed and during that mudra various sounds may be heard. I was surprised when I found this description in Yoga books because before that I had bought the propaganda line that this Surat Shabd Yoga was a very exclusive secret method.

Yes, a primary meaning of Surat is attention, changing its meaning in the RS literature to Spirit is a sleight of mind.

The term Yogi also implies that the person is following all the Yamas and Niyams (Regulations) into his lifestyle.

It is good that the ex-satsangis do not focus on the spiritual. This artificial separation of our life into spiritual and worldly is the cause of untold inner conflict in the RS cult members.

All of our human activities are imbued with the 'spiritual'.

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RS Guru-No Shows-at Death

One of the cornerstones of the RSS Beas Theology is that the Guru appears to the Disciple at the time of his death and takes his soul with him.

Sawan Singh is reported to have said in his Satsangs that if a Guru does not come to his disciple at the time of death, then one should bid farewell to such a Guru from afar.

(Thinking about this now, I wonder how any of his listeners could ever answer such a question to decide whether to stick to the Guru, but the effect of this statement must have been to accept that Sawan Singh was not one of those other Gurus.)

Because of this belief, a ritual has developed among some Satsangis to question a dying person whether Maharaj Ji has come, and if not, then to ask whether the person remembers his Guru.

I was at the Dera about the time when Bibi Ralli, a house helper of Sawan Singh died. She had high fever during her last days and I remember hearing that Daryai Lal used to visit her often and ask, “Has Maharaj Ji come”? I also remember that while I heard of his asking, I never heard that she had replied, “Yes”.

A few years ago, a VIP Dera lady, initiated by Sawan Singh at a young age, died. A relative of hers told me that at her deathbed her sister asked the lady whether Maharaj AJi had come. She replied, “There is no Maharaj Ji”.

When this reply was reported to her husband, he said, “Don’t talk about this to anyone, their faith will be affected”.

Some years ago, a distant Hindu Satsangi relative, about 70 years old, died. He felt unwell at home and lay down and asked his wife to send for a doctor. While a family member went to fetch the doctor, he told his wife that he was going, and would she fetch him his personal copy of the Gita (a sacred Hindu book). He clutched the Gita at his breast and peacefully died. His Guru Charan Singh did not come and he did not think of him at the time of his death.

I must add though that I have heard of a few cases where a dying person has claimed that Maharaj Ji has come, sat up in meditation posture and died.

I now understand such vision to be our own mental projections or hallucinations and not dependent on the Guru as touted in the theology.

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Not only does the Guru play upon the natural human fear of death but also entices blatantly by promising company on the 'Inner spiritual Journey'.

In the Preface of Charan Singh's Die to Live, it says:

“Satsangis, his initiates die daily to this world in their mediation. Daily they rehearse for that final departure. But now, with their Master always with them, they travel those regions of Light and Sound through the Celestial Spheres of the creation within, back to the level of the Father, back to the divine source”.

When the seeker is hooked and enters the fold, he or she finds innumerable qualifications which make the experience of 'the inner spiritual journey' with 'the Master always with them' almost unattainable.

Then starts the push to alternative group highs in ritual meetings and project activities.

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The notion that there are degrees of enlightenment is the seductive hook that the sellers of enlightenment use to trap the gullible.

“We offer you Level 7 enlightenment, the others only take you to level 2”.

“Come with us to Level 10, that's where your suffering will really end”. etc.,

All are selling false goods.

If someone says, “In my country we get mangoes. Only by eating them can you fulfill your human destiny”, we would likely respond that it is outrageous to link the eating of mangoes to the purpose of human life. Such a statement is false advertising.

The different “enlightenment experiences’ are just like that. Some may find and like mangoes. For other strawberries are heaven. But these experiences are not the objective of human life. A person who has experienced mangoes is no better as a human being than one who has tasted strawberries or even one who has tasted neither.

Whatever the experiences of Jiddu or UG [*Krishnamurti*], the important thing is that they pointed us towards experiencing our own life, fully, with open eyes.

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(A response to a question if the Gurus really believe what they preach...)

The Gurus have to speak for themselves but Charan and Gurinder’s [*Singh’s*] interests and activities in our mundane world suggest to me that the experience of sublime regions, which they preached, either did not touch them or did not enthrall them.

Regarding mediation, I am convinced the RS meditation chore is simply a way of getting lost for a while in a mental space which may be relaxing for short periods but does not increase our inherent capacity for being attentive and enjoying our ever flowing world. On the other hand the theology that goes with the RS meditation certainly makes our beautiful world insipid for the cult members and thereby deadens them. (Is this their ‘dying while living’?)

Of course the RS meditation chore can be used as the cult ritual but I know of people badly harmed by it. If someone is listening, I tell them to get away from it.

To the initial chagrin of some RS cult members, I am totally free of the ritual for many years.

But I would advise learning to be centered within oneself just by sitting quietly so that we can be in that wonderful open mental state in our daily ordinary life.

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(correspondence)

From knowing two others in this area who concentrated on meditation and took their lives, whenever I have an opportunity, I tell depressed satsangis to stay away from serious meditation and instead do things they enjoy.

About a year or two ago, I met a person who appeared suicidal on returning from the Dera and asked, tell me what activity would give you joy. The answer I got was, To see the radiant form of the Master in meditation. I told the person that would be just your own projection based on your memory and imagination.

Anyway, what can one say to people who have lost their taste of the simple joys of being alive, receiving the gift of each new day and being attentive to all the details of one's life.

About your conversation, it is amazing how the facts of ones life can be completely coloured by ones beliefs but beliefs can never reach the core of ones being in spite of the group effect and a sense of unease remains.

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(responding to confused satsangi)

The words you quote like 'I am a man like you' and 'see for yourself' are doublespeak.

Anyone who sits on the Godman pedestal and says, I am a man like you, is telling a half-truth, which is a lie.

If he is on the Godman pedestal (set up by the Institutional propoganda), a truthful statement would be, I am a Godman like you, because we are all 'whole' as we are.

By proposing to make a distinction, the Godman sets up the ordinary man to buy the Godman's goods.

The 'See for Yourself' is the most entrapping statement made by the Godmen, because it implies that there is indeed some verifiable inner experience of God which we can have if we only go along with the Godman's directives.

This is false from the start because we all have our genetic predispositions and social conditioning and can never have the same visions (which are a worthless distraction anyway) as anyone else, neither the Godman nor the Mystic poets they quote.

But having bought the idea that there is an inner road with specific visions, we never clamber out of the guilt pit of our own inadequacies. (It is our karma, we are unworthy etc.) for not seeing the visions.

These Cult doublespeaks (lies) rob the members of trust in their own day to day experience as the only experience of 'God' they will ever have.

What is the price of taking away a person's trust in their own innate goodness (Godness)?

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(Response to a Satsangi statement that Seva is a part of the Indian religious heritage.)

Not when you consider India as a whole. The Sikhs do have a strong tradition of Langars (community kitchens) which was copied at the Dera. The Indian Seva tradition at the RS sites is due to indoctrination that Sewa to the Guru is good for the disciple. I have seen many Indian families neglecting their family members to join Seva teams.

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(correspondence)

It is only after one has been out of the cult for some time that one realizes the subtle mind control techniques one was subjected to.

It starts with the talks repeating endlessly that the God Incarnate Guru sitting before you in person or photograph is essential for achieving God realization, and doing Sewa (service) to Him in all the prescribed ways (including free labour and donations for property development) accumulates 'real' spiritual treasure whereas looking after family and community is to be endured as a karmic burden of the Negative power.

Then one learns to utter the cult code word as greeting to each other so one is recognized in the cult Family. No more good morning or good evening but RadhaSoami. Then, if anything good happens, one learns to say, it is Master's (Maharaj Ji's, Baba Ji's) Grace. If something bad happens, one learns to say, it is my bad Karma. (From His side, Heads I win, Tails you lose, how clever!)

If you ask a cult member, how are you?, He learns to say, I am well by Master's Grace. The cult member's gratitude for the gift of life no longer includes the infinite Cosmos (God) which supported all life including his own from the beginning of time.

In his meditation the cult member learns to pray to the Guru for his well being. So even when he is taken advantage of by the Guru and his Officers, he is habituated to praying to the Guru for relief. Like the little child who on being mistreated by a parent only knows to cry to help to the Mama or Papa.

After such indoctrination, it is not surprising that for most cult members the God Incarnate's Grace idea is so deeply imprinted that they are unable to accept that they are being taken advantage of in a worldly way.

I imagine that if such cult members are lucky, some great internal or external event will shake them out of mind control.

Otherwise, C'est la vie.

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The dependence of the followers on the immaculate God Incarnate Guru is encouraged and reinforced at every step of a cult member's life. It starts by naming the cult head, Mararaj Ji, the Great Respected Lord. This great Lord is touted to be the source of Grace for the lowly member. At initiation, the member is asked to think of the Great Lord during meditation. He is told to remember the Great Lord for help at time of worldly trouble.

He is asked to come to the Great Lord's public rallies as much as possible for receiving a glance of Grace and told to regularly attend the indoctrination sessions (satsangs). He is encouraged to contribute as much as possible (Sewa) to the Great Lord's work so that he receives 'cash' (that is, instant) spiritual benefits. (If he starts questioning where the touted benefits are, he is smothered by the explanations that he is to blame due to past karmas or due to not doing the full 2.5 hours meditation everyday, which would disqualify most of the members, or due to being on the first of his four lives for getting them. In any case, he can still enjoy the group highs at gatherings.)

Even when mistreated by the Great Lord or his minions, the cult member is encouraged to think that the Great Lord is clearing his past sins (karmas). After a few years, a member's mind is so filled with God Incarnate beliefs that it is no longer easy to see with an open mind.

For many, it is a social support issue. The cult community is the only one they have since after joining they have become alienated from all normal relations with the world outside of their God

Incarnate circle. Also, as vegetarians and teetotalers, they are no longer comfortable in situations where people eat and drink.

Having become a dependent vine, it is difficult to transform into a self-supporting tree but, than God, not impossible. The first step is to try standing and walking on ones own.

Chapter 7 Charan Singh's Mortal Life

Charan Singh-Very unhappy in last days

In the RSS Beas book, Tales of the Mysic East, there are stories of King Alexander and King Mahmud of Ghazani who on their death beds regretted how they had spent their lives and left messages for mankind to not follow their example.

I went to the Dera some weeks after Maharaj Charan Singh died, and in addition to paying respects to the Successor, met some people.

One official told me that Maharaj Ji had to go. That startled me.

“Why”, I asked.

“He was facing insurmountable problems:

Some financial irregularities had been discovered,

A dispute about the use of the Commons riverside lands with a neighboring village had led to a shooting,

A politician visited him (in relation to the land dispute, I think) and had been abrasive.”

An Insider told me of his unhappiness because at the time Harjit [*Charan Singh's wife*] had left the Dera without informing him.

He had asked a Confidant to arrange a visit of a woman friend from a long time.

(He had met her as a young woman and had wanted to marry her, but the Family Patriarch Sawan Singh had overruled him and insisted that he marry the Raja's daughter).

He had been unable to get out of his feudal responsibility of obeying the Head for the good of the House, but he had met his friend, explained his situation and promised to remain helpful to her and her widowed mother (as I remember) for the rest of his life.

(He had continued to meet her socially, out of public view, with help of Confidants. Their meetings were always very poignant.)

Corruption in transcript-words lost

“That's not possible, Maharaj Ji”.

Later, I learnt that he repeatedly told his Confidant that he was very unhappy.

It did not appear that his heart problem was that serious but, in retrospect, it seems that his mental dissatisfactions had something to do with his quick death.

Louise Hilger told me that a few days before he died he had asked her to destroy all his confidential correspondence, which she did.

Maharaj Charan Singh, the Guru of a million followers, was very unhappy during his last days.

Is there a lesson in this for those he left behind?

Addressing God Incarnate attitudes toward subjects (followers)

Yes, they do enjoy using their power over their subjects.

The Courtiers, being close to them, have to bear public humiliation in their Circle, but complaints, particularly in public, are forbidden. Even privately if one says more than a hint, he is in danger of being ousted from the inner circle.

A King learns these feudal techniques of ensuring submission by his Courtiers quickly.

That's how after some time of such condition, the Courtiers lose their own inherent sense of justice and compassion and are willing to allow their fellow Satsangis to suffer, as in the Sawan Sadan case, in the name of the King.

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I don't think he [*my insert-Charan*] was interested in his Satsangis' lives individually at all.

He was interested in the growth of a congregation that sat before him, bowed to him and did his bidding on various projects.

He was not a straight forward person at all, he spoke politically.

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Charan Singh liked to collect woman's jewelry.

A satsangi woman told me that once Charan Singh pressured her to accompany him on a satsang trip to a city in Rajasthan. When they reached there, he prepared to go to give satsang but told her to go and look for antique jewelry for him. She went looking and found some good deals from villagers who brought jewelry for sale in the market.

When Charan Singh and his party returned from the satsang, a Dera official told her that he had seen her come with Maharaj Ji but had not seen her at the satsang. She said she had some work to do, but did not disclose what the assignment from Maharaj Ji was. That secrecy of not disclosing any personal interaction with Maharaj Ji was part of the Dera culture to which adherence was necessary for all inner circle people.

In a family if some members had an engagement with Maharaj Ji, they were expected not to disclose this even to their satsangi family members. This was a loyalty test used by Maharaj Ji to select the privileged ones. I myself have been a guest in a relative's home who told me they had an evening engagement and later at night talked of their Royal visit during which I had figured in some conversation.