

Primorske Novice (the main newspaper for the South-West region of Slovenia where are located 3 of the 11 Slovenian YIdl groups,) a long article has been published with the title "A revolution in the kingdom of a guru" and the subtitle: "A scandal of international magnitude is shaking the yoga association".

A scandal of international magnitude is shaking the yoga association

A revolution in the kingdom of a guru

The XXXXX association is shaken by women's accusations declaring that their guru swAmi the big Orange Mr. M. - swAmi-ji has sexually abused them. Following the testimony of a woman from Koper that significantly contributed to the publication of similar testimonies from guru's disciples from different parts of the world, in March, many instructors and members of the Koper's association has stepped down.

Many important members of this international organisation are continuing to resign in other countries too, while the guru and his followers are saying that this is a conspiracy from some individuals that want to destroy their organisation.

This is what the woman from Koper has told: "I have been a faithful Swami's disciple for 5 years. I was starting my yoga exercises everyday 4 a.m. in the morning. I was full of faith and love for my guru, very innocent and with high ideals. I was 14 years old when I got the mantra and 19 when I came to the Ashram in India. The first evening after the Satsang a girl whispered into my ears: "swAmi is calling you!" My heart was jumping out of my chest. Me? The girl accompanied me to his apartment. He took my hand and led me to the terrace. I was so happy. He was more than a mother, a father and a friend to me. He meant everything to me. The room was dark. Only a candle was burning. He sat on the bed and I sat down at his feet. He embraced me and said: "Look into my eyes." I wanted to melt down with him in this sight. Suddenly another girl stepped in the room. She sat at his feet. swAmi asked me: "What will you give to me?" "My mind." "Only this?" "My heart." "Only this?" "My soul and my body." He embraced me again. I was very confused. The other girl started to lick his toes. I was shocked. "This is what you wanted, isn't it?" he said to me. In the same time the woman was taking away my trousers. This was my first sexual experience. I was thinking that saints are not having sex and especially not my swAmi! He lied down on me. My god, what a disappointment! He asked me if I was a virgin. I said that I was, and then he changed his mind and didn't penetrate me. He pushed my head to his penis and said: "Drink it!" I thought I will vomit. The same thing happened three times more. Sometimes I'm asking myself why I didn't speak up earlier. But all my social net was in this organisation. And I was very confused too. Inside me I was feeling that it was an abuse and that what happened wasn't right. But some authorities that I trusted very much were saying differently. I spoke also to some other girls that had the same experience but everything was fine according to them. I confided also to some guys from the group. They were confused and angry. They asked me why I was telling them this. Many of the center's leaders knew what was going on. I quit yidl 12 years after the described fact - this year in spring, when I also reported the abuse to the police. They promised that a criminal officer will come to speak to me but it didn't happen yet."

At the Police Administrative Unit of Koper they confirmed that they have received in spring a report of sexual abuse that allegedly happened some years ago. The investigation is going on.

"It's true; I resigned from all my functions in the association beginning of March. Approximately a half of all active yoga instructors and other members of the association quit," has confirmed to us M.... M..., the former president of the Koper yidl association. We called as well to Nova Gorica, where the president of the association D.... Š.... told us to ask for a declaration his colleague from Maribor, D.... D....ski. He declares that the accusations didn't slim down their lines. "From my knowledge, not a single organiser, instructor or association leader in Slovenia, apart from some members from Koper, didn't leave yidl," D....ski is saying.

The allegations shocked them.

The case had the biggest repercussion in Koper, which is not a surprise, as the confessions

came to the now ex-members of the association from a woman that they know very well, they thrust and believe. D... F..., a long year's association member and yoga instructor, told us that listening to the allegations was a complete shock for him as even in his dreams he could not imagine that something like this could happen.

"This is not only a problem of sexual abuses but more a problem of abuse of the guru's position," F.... thinks. He thought that all the other members of yidl will support their colleague but it didn't happen. He called swAmi and informed him about the accusations. "He didn't let me speak. He started to tell that some negative forces are working that want to destroy the system."

M.... M... is saying too that the first weeks after the discovery, the situation in the Koper association was "quite dramatic", and the ones that resigned needed a lot of talks in order to process their feelings. The system yidl was representing a big part of their life that collapsed into dust in a minute. Apart from the regular exercises they were participating to swAmi's seminars in Europe - from six to ten per year - for which they were also giving away the majority of their savings.

"The other association members could check themselves if our community colleague is really schizophrenic as some of them are accusing her now. I can't understand why they are not doing it. There are also other testimonies from women from different parts of the world that don't know each other, so they couldn't make up any conspiracy," M... said.

Less yoga, more personal cult

If the member's resigning in Koper was an exception between the 11 yidl associations in Slovenia, in Serbia a real chain reaction took place. From the system yidl went out the complete associations in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kikinda and Sombor. The main reason is probably that S..... M....vić or svami Ć.....d from Novi Sad, who was swAmi's long years close collaborator and was very popular and well respected between the yidl disciples, especially in Serbia, has left him publicly.

"In the last years I couldn't close my ears and eyes in front of my guru's growing arrogance, manipulation, vanity and greed. Yidl was becoming less and less yoga and more a personal cult. "

M....vić wrote down in his open letter. When it became clear that he is moving out from swAmi, some of the disciples told him about the guru's sexual abusive behaviour. "This came to the majority of us as an unexpected shock", M....vić is saying, even if he admits that he has heard about some accusations of sexual abuses for the first time in 1982. "swAmi in that occasion - in front of them - has easily rejected their confused and scared declarations. The majority - including myself - decided to believe to our guru instead to the victim's tears, scare and shame."

After this fact he has never heard about abuses again for which, he now believes were going on all the time wherever swAmi was holding his seminars - including in Slovenia. "Now many disciples has spoke up about what happened to them or about what they knew that happened to others. I heard about women that slept with swAmi willingly. With pain and disgust I learned that behind the scenes of the yidl seminars a porno movie was running with victims and volunteers."M....vić wrote.

A conspiracy from a small number of people

"In yidl associations we are convinced, that the accusations are false, made up by a small group of people coordinated by S..... M....vić," D.... D....ski declares. M....vić would like to take over the yidl organisation and business for his own interests but he didn't succeed. From the circle of several thousands of yidl members from all over the world, he managed to gain on his side some supporters with whom he is now directing a media and internet campaign, D....ski thinks adding: "We don't care anymore about this internet campaign that is going on from March and has already faded. We are realising our mission- the quality training for our instructors and the teaching of yoga. The accusations are without evidences, without any legal actions and apart from this small group of people, that can make up whatever they want, there are no legitimate witnesses that could confirm what was said."

The members of the Presidency of Yoga Association of Slovenia wrote down in the declaration they prepared for our newspaper that these kind of accusations is the worst thing that can happen

to everyone of us and at the same time the most effective tool to defame not only swAmi's work but also the work of thousands that invested a lot of their efforts and energy in the yidl development in the last 40 years. "We can only defend ourselves by rejection," they are saying at the association: "We could mention in our answer other facts too, for instance about the life of an ex-member that was on swami's side for 30 years with one of the alleged victims, about some irregularities in connection with monetary funds etc. But swAmi as well as everyone else at yidl, we are not doing this because it would mean for us to step down to their level."

SwAmi too is rejecting all allegations. At the time when the first testimonies of the alleged victims appeared on the internet, he was travelling from Europe to Canada, where the 17th of March he said on the yogic radio in Vancouver that this is a dirty policy and jealousy from people that wish to destroy his good work. "There is no truth in these allegations." He declared. He didn't come back to Europe from this time so his usual summer seminars on this continent didn't take place. Now he is allegedly in his ashram in India.

The dogs are barking, the caravan is pursuing its way

Following unconfirmed information, important members has resigned from yidl from all over the world, not only from M.....vič circle. In his letter he is mentioning that the president of yidl Salzburg and the promoter of the organisation at the United Nations have resigned too. Our editorial board has obtained documents about the resignation of many yidl members in Australia, Croatia as well as the statement from R.... P....., who was one of the initiators of all yidl activities in the USA. He resigned from the organisation already in 2001 and stepped forward when the scandal spread around. He declared that he didn't know about swAmi's sexual abuses. He had only heard rumors that swAmi sleeps with some of his female disciples. "Now I can understand why many times I would encounter some young females sitting on the side with empty stare in their eyes and when you tried to talk to them they would not be really coherent. I am sorry, thousand and thousand times sorry for what you had to go through." P..... wrote.

In the slovenian yidl organisation they said that they can't react to the provocative declarations from internet forums. "We didn't initiate any internal investigation because we didn't receive any request or well-founded allegation. The yidl caravan is pursuing its way despite some barking coming time to time from dogs beside the way" D....ski says.

ALJA TASI

The guru's sperm is a wonderful gift. Why I can't enjoy it?

Ulrike Schiesser , psychologist and psychotherapist at the Federal Department for religious sects in Vienna collects information about spiritual groups and warn the public about potential dangers. If some of the members contact her, she gives advice and professional help. She is in contact with several women from YIDL, among them some from Slovenia who went public with their testimonies as well as others that don't want to be exposed.

Question: You know very well the case of a Slovenian disciple that has accused YIDL's guru of sexual abuse. Do you think that if her case wouldn't be too old it could be brought to a Court?

Answer: The Austrian Law forbids sexual contacts between people in a relationship of dependency. This refers to medical doctors, psychologist, psychotherapist, priests and also spiritual leaders. Even a voluntary sexual relation between a spiritual leader and his devotee is a criminal act.

I think that mister XXXXX belongs to this category. I therefore believe that this case in Austria would surely be brought to a Court. The result would be nevertheless uncertain. The problem is evidences.

Question: May the credibility of the victims also be a problem as they are often accused of being crazy?

It is difficult to believe for them that the relation was forced in the case of adult females. But in cults the balance of power is quite special. The role of the guru in Yldl is similar to the role of a family father. The group members depend on him. They believe that he has supernatural powers; that he can read their minds, perform miracles... etc... ; That he can free them from bad karmas or he can punish them. And not only in this life but also in the next one.

Journalist's comment: Oy Oy...

I know it may sound strange. But at the beginning the guru is a lovely man, the father that everyone would like to have. This is the reason why – step by step- you are willing to accept from him every kind of things. If you want to be a good disciple, you have to dedicate a lot of time to meditation, singing, meetings.

Some of them even decide that they don't want to have children in order to give all their energies to their guru. And, as for them, he is like god; they feel very well doing this.

Question: When the process of healing starts for the victims?

When someone really listen to them. The victims are saying that they tried to talk about their experience but no one wanted to listen. They were confused. You don't want your father to be your lover. But if you have doubts about your guru, you are a bad disciple. Whatever he is doing is right. Even if he beats me, he is freeing me from my bad karma. I probably deserve it and I'll get some benefits later on. If not in this life, it will be the next one.

Question: Why are the victims remaining in the group for years: why they can't simply leave?

In abuse cases this is completely normal, especially if the victim is a child. And in groups like Yldl this is often a disguised father and child relation, therefore the sexual abuse is like incest. The victim feels what is going on is not right but can't leave.

The guru's sperm that I have to swallow is a wonderful gift. Why I can't enjoy it? Probably is something wrong with me. The person is completely attached to the group. Imagine a tree that has only one branch and you sit on it. You can't just cut it off.

Question: How can you define a cult?

We don't have a legal definition. A political party or a football club can be also a cult. In the spiritual groups these group dynamics are more destructive. In cults people believe that the leader is absolutely right and that the world is white and black. You are good and all the others are bad. You feel that you are special. This group can be wonderful for you.

This is the reason why we are working with individuals. Even in Yldl some people are very happy. They don't have bad experiences with their guru or they don't feel it being bad. There are a lot of people for whom a cult can be very dangerous though.

Question: For instance?

One of the reactions in such groups – as we can see it in Yldl – is that the members judge the women, saying they are against swAmi or crazy; that they lie or that this is all a big conspiracy. A cult is not a company where people are reacting rationally. In the cult every minor doubt about the master represents a danger to the whole system. You can't accuse god that he is doing something wrong.

The disciples believe that the guru is an asexual being. He doesn't have such needs. If therefore sleeps with someone, this is because he wants to do something good to the person. Even if he rapes someone, this is good because he is taking away some bad karma. There is no room for doubts. The guru is always right. Therefore, the women who spoke up must be crazy. Or at least evil. Consequently they are unbelievably cruel with the victims. Many of them are not coming forward because they know what is waiting for them. Only now that some of the victims got connected via internet, some more found the courage to speak up.