

Bootstraps and Turbans

Sustenance, Belief and Entrepreneurship in 3HO/Sikh Dharma

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ABSTRACT: Food—enjoying it, preparing it, serving it, distributing it, and using it for healing purposes—is central to life in the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization (3HO). In 3HO’s early years, food beliefs and practices were instrumental in creating community, shaping members’ identities, and establishing group boundaries. Over time, members created a variety of organizations linked to 3HO, and many members became Sikhs. They created businesses, several involving food production and sales, and some quite successful. In 2010 representatives of one of their organizations, Sikh Dharma International, sued the managers of one of the businesses, Golden Temple Bakery, accusing the managers of “misappropriation of valuable assets.” This paper examines the growth of 3HO businesses within the context of national food production and distribution, and it considers the internal stresses of 3HO institutions revealed via the trial.

KEYWORDS: 3HO, Sikh Dharma, Golden Temple Bakery, foodways, Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur Khalsa et al. v. Kartar Singh Khalsa et al., State of Oregon v. Siri Singh Sahib Corporation et al.

In December 2010 this excerpt from a Eugene, Oregon, newspaper informed readers of an upcoming court battle that would pit members of organizations founded by a Sikh leader, Harbhajan Singh Puri (1929–2004, familiarly known as Yogi Bhajan), against one another:

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A Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge ordered Friday that two separate lawsuits alleging wrongdoing by the managers overseeing Golden Temple, a Eugene natural foods business, should move forward as one. Judge Leslie Roberts granted a motion by ministers of the Sikh religious community founded by Yogi Bhanjan to consolidate their lawsuit with one filed by Oregon Attorney General John Kroger. Both lawsuits . . . allege that “Unto Infinity,” a four-member board charged with overseeing the religious community’s assets after Yogi Bhanjan’s death in 2004, broke their fiduciary duties to safeguard the assets of the Sikh Dharma religious organization.¹

The judge would refer to the organizations involved as a “nesting doll of nonprofit and for-profit entities, organized by and through Yogi Bhanjan beginning in the mid-1970s.”² These entities included Sikh Dharma International, intended to further Sikh worship and identity, and the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization (3HO), created to further the practice of Kundalini yoga. There were also a variety of offshoots from the original entities, a number of businesses, and organizations created to pursue philanthropic causes.

3HO, founded in 1969, was created soon after Bhanjan arrived in North America. His background was perhaps not what one would expect for a yoga teacher. Official websites and a volume published by his students in Bhanjan’s honor provide a standard biography. According to these sources, Bhanjan grew up in a village in what is now Pakistan. At the time of Partition, in 1947, he and his family joined the Sikh and Hindu migration to India, settling in Delhi. There he attended college and obtained a master’s degree in Economics, married Inderjit Kaur, had three children, and worked as a customs and security officer. Evidently he also pursued an ongoing interest in yoga.³ Then, for reasons that are not entirely clear, “in September of 1968, he left India for Canada to teach yoga at Toronto University, carrying a letter of recommendation from Sir James George, Canadian High Commissioner in New Delhi, who had been his student,” and when it transpired that Toronto University could not hire him, moved on to southern California in 1969.⁴ Beyond this outline there is much that is not entirely clear about Bhanjan’s background and influences. As Verne A. Dusenbery, a scholar of 3HO and its relation to Punjabi Sikhs, notes, a definitive biography of Bhanjan is needed.⁵

Bhanjan began to teach at the East West Cultural Center, and at other locations, in Los Angeles. His classes attracted members of the local hippie population, many of whom were looking for opportunities to explore yoga and meditation, and some of whom also became interested in Bhanjan’s Sikh religion and in his overall approach to life. Over time, a number of his original students became Sikhs, started to teach yoga, and created businesses. Among the businesses were some specializing in natural foods sales and manufacturing, several health food

restaurants, and organizations dedicated to teaching yoga, selling music and chants sung by 3HO members, and what over time became a major US security provider (Akal Security). Combining members' backgrounds and Bhajan's beliefs as they did, the organizations incorporated counterculture and New Age thinking, Sikh identity, and Hindu elements such as Ayurveda and vegetarianism, among other influences.

The varied and syncretic character of these organizations reflects the energy and creativity of Bhajan and his students, as well as what appears to have been a strong desire to institutionalize their values and insights. Over the years these organizations have provided members with a rich store of ideas and opportunities and modes of action. But by enthusiastically combining such disparate elements members also opened up potentially competing centers of power and identity. They created a situation in which, even though there is considerable overlap in participation, some members could find identity and meaning primarily in Sikh practices and beliefs, others in yoga practice and teaching, and others in careers, businesses, and community life. The different groupings could drift apart and intersect with various segments of the broader society. This process is evident when we look at 3HO beliefs and activities surrounding foodstuffs and entrepreneurship.

3HO and associated organizations have been shaped by traditional Indian foodways, which have contributed significantly to a sense of community and identity. They have also been affected by a changing food economy as market forces have opened unexpected opportunities. As 3HO and related organizations evolved, the world of food production and sales did as well. In the early years the counterculture and the environmental movement called into question the quality of products being sold in major supermarkets. Large-scale food producers were strongly criticized, and smaller enterprises favoring locally grown food were touted as an alternative. Organic and "whole food" suppliers multiplied. Some 3HO businesses grew out of this critique of "industrial food," with their founders aiming to provide foods that were carefully and caringly produced. As food marketing became increasingly competitive, food producers of all types worked to position themselves in the expanding marketplace, navigating between the lure of large-scale success and the possibilities of small niche production. This was true of 3HO companies, which were generally founded with the idea of being small and local, but some of whose managers came to think in terms of larger-scale production and profit. Thus the broader societal dynamic was enacted within the 3HO world, and it led to strains that figured dramatically in the previously mentioned trial that began in 2011. To understand how this came to be, it helps to look at some aspects of 3HO history.

EARLY YEARS: HEALTH, BALANCE, AND COMMUNITY

Bhajan's first students helped him to find housing in Los Angeles and to locate a center where he could teach. This happened within the context of the counterculture and New Age activities in which his students participated. Whole foods stores and restaurants served as gathering places, and as sites where people learned about yoga classes (including Bhajan's). Thus, an early member recalls,

I had helped Jim Baker open The Source Restaurant on Sunset and worked as the patio waitress when it opened. . . . [W]ith my tip money. . . I would stop at the health food store on the way home and buy whatever I had money for. I'd make dinner from whatever the earth had made available to us and somehow there was always enough for the many guests Yogiji invited or who stopped by, . . . loaves and fishes, or loaves and broccoli as it were. Many magical things happened in that kitchen.⁶

Bhajan and his students traveled to activities such as solstice celebrations, concerts, and talks by the eastern teachers who were becoming ever more popular. In fact, Bhajan appears to have led a peripatetic life at first, traveling to events and visiting students who lived in various parts of the country. His visits often meant that he stayed in someone's home, sharing food, cooking duties, and recipes. The following description is from an early member, now deceased, who was the author of a 3HO history website. In the early years he opened his home in Florida to Bhajan and fellow yoga students:

Hari Singh introduced Yogiji to a special rice dish that he perfected as a young teenager. . . . Yogiji could not get enough of this dish, and he requested, actually he ordered that Hari Singh prepare a batch of sopa whenever he visited Orlando. Yogiji in turn introduced everybody to things like his renowned Yogi Tea and beet and carrot casserole.⁷

From the earliest days, shared food and recipes expressed the pleasures of establishing a community and creating new lives.

Institutionalization: Yoga and Ayurveda

Bhajan declared that his task was to create teachers, not followers, and accordingly he began to train people to teach his form of Kundalini Yoga.⁸ Soon he was sending teachers to different locations to establish ashrams, with two of the earliest being Washington, DC, in 1969, and Maharaj, outside Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1970.⁹ By 1972 there were 94 official ashrams, many quite small, and a number of teaching centers.¹⁰ Shared food was a source of community feeling in these centers. The founder and director of an ashram in Massachusetts (at Montague), who

wrote a dissertation based on his ashram experience, was very conscious of this:

Taking meals together fosters another sort of communion. The meals are unusually delicious compared to the fare in other communes. A great deal of love goes into the preparation of the food and only the most healthful ingredients are used. Eating outside the ashram is discouraged. . . . Ashram members are always on the lookout for reasons to have some sort of celebration, usually taking the form of feasts.¹¹

Bhajan encouraged his students to become vegetarians, and he endorsed a diet based on Ayurvedic principles. Given their countercultural background some of Bhajan's new students would already have been vegetarians and indeed would have found the organization particularly appealing for this reason. They were at least superficially acquainted with a variety of cuisines that could provide an appealing range of appropriate foods. Others had to learn how to maintain a healthy vegetarian diet and to cook new varieties of foodstuffs. What was probably new to many was the way that Bhajan placed cooking and eating in a spiritual context. The following quotation from a blog by Siri Ved Kaur, an early member still active today, captures this approach:

Yogiji invited me to serve in his household as his personal cook, which I did for several years in the early 1970s. He loved cooking too, and would often come into the kitchen to create amazing curries, paranthas, and other foods with his unique yogic flair and natural ayurvedic wisdom. He taught me the secret of yogic cooking, which is that the consciousness with which food is prepared matters more than anything else, and that it was important to be in a state of divine love and to bring that vibration into the food.¹²

This concern with the consciousness of the cook is an important piece of 3HO thought.¹³

Bhajan offered what he called a "technology" for living. Diet was a central aspect of the technology, as were yoga and meditation. The yoga was said to empower the individual by raising kundalini energy through the body's spiritual centers, or chakras, and, over time, lead to enlightenment. Meditation was employed to focus and clear the mind until the mind was "single-pointed" and able to view self and experience from a "neutral" disinterested vantage point. Diet was said to facilitate all of this by preparing the individual for meditation and yoga by balancing mind, body, and environment, and, via fasting, purging the body of the vestiges of any past excesses or poor health.

Although Bhajan clearly applied Ayurvedic principles in his food recommendations, he often spoke of a "yogic diet" rather than of Ayurveda. In 3HO, this diet excludes meat, fish, poultry, and eggs and is said to be a "balanced combination of fruits, nuts, vegetables, grains,

legumes, and dairy products.” The 3HO website refers to Ayurveda as “the sister science to yoga.”¹⁴ Central to Ayurveda is the idea of balance. One should balance aspects of one’s life (spiritual, psychological, social, physical, etc.), live in balance with nature, and eat a balanced diet of different food types. Disease is said to arise from imbalances, and healing is about restoring equilibrium.

Interpretations of Ayurveda can vary; the following is the 3HO version as described on their website. *Sattvic* (pure, clean) foods are considered “foods most beneficial to mind and body. These should comprise the greatest share of your yogic diet.”¹⁵ They are said to be conducive to clarity of mind and to meditation. They include most fruits, vegetables grown above ground, raw nuts and seeds, and cold-pressed oils. *Rajasic* (energetic) foods are said to encourage positive action and forcefulness. They include root vegetables, chocolate, coffee, and hot peppers and can be an important part of a diet. *Tamasic* (creating inertia) foods, however, can be harmful to mind or body. In the case of the mind they may interfere with clarity and with meditation. They include meat, fish, poultry, alcohol, and moldy and fermented foods. They can occasionally be helpful, but should generally be avoided.

Just as foods can be divided, so can people, who are said to fit into different categories or *doshas*. The *doshas* are associated with different elements, such as air and water, each with different qualities and functions. There are three: *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. We are all said to contain each, but in different proportions, and these proportions determine the optimal diet and lifestyle for an individual. An Ayurvedic practitioner is expected to spend time getting to know a client and determining a correct combination, and then recommend a diet based on these. Ayurveda is said to be a strengthening and healing modality that can ease physical and emotional problems and lead to optimal health. The early 3HO members could employ it for their own needs and teach it to their yoga students, and a few even trained as Ayurvedic practitioners. Founders of food businesses brought these principles to bear in the recipes they used.

An observer in 1975 found that 3HO members spoke often of positive and negative energies. Some of these energies came from social contacts, but they also were derived from “celestial bodies, air, water, minerals, food-stuffs.” Positive energy flows could be attained via proper yogic breathing, by choosing a healthy and “sustaining” diet, by maintaining a yoga practice, and thinking and acting positively.¹⁶ There were foods that were said to be especially good for women and others for men. Women should avoid acidic foods. Good choices included eggplant, fruits, green chillies, turmeric, and wheatberries. Foods recommended for men included banyan tree milk, or, more accessibly, nutmeg, ghee, garlic, figs, onions, and “p fruits” (any fruit whose name begins with a p).¹⁷ Food choices came to be tied to gender identity and to efforts

to become a clearer, more fully evolved self. They were also a means of erasing or altering past identities.

Institutionalization: Sikhism

In 1971, Bhajan made a trip to India with eighty-four of his students. The original intent was to visit a teacher of Bhajan's, a spiritual leader by the name of Virsa Singh, at his community, Gobind Sadan.¹⁸ But on this trip there appears to have been a break between the two teachers, and Bhajan and his students left Gobind Sadan abruptly. The focus of the trip changed "and despite no previous mentioned intention of Sikhism being a focus on the trip, day after day the group went to one Gudwara [*sic*] after another."¹⁹

After this, the group began to shift from being primarily centered on a yogic lifestyle to having a dual focus on yoga and Sikhism. By 1972 Sikh prayers had been added to morning devotions, and Guru Ram Das Ashram, their first *gurdwara* (Sikh place of worship), was established in Los Angeles in November of that year. Bhajan developed a set of vows, several clearly related to Sikh principles, specifically for his students. The students who took the vows agreed to earn a living honestly and share their earnings; rise before dawn to "chant and meditate on the Nam" (God's name); "live in service"; "stand up in defense of the weak or oppressed"; embrace the Guru Granth Sahib as sole guru; avoid narcotics, alcohol and tobacco; eat a vegetarian diet; refrain from cutting their hair and to cover it in public; and live as brothers and sisters.²⁰ 3HO members also adopted distinctive white clothing, and those who chose to become Sikhs (which was encouraged but not required of people affiliated with 3HO) adopted the "Five Ks" that are worn by Khalsa Sikhs.²¹ These include *kesh* or uncut hair; the *kangha*, a comb representing tidiness and order; the *kara*, a steel bracelet representing the bond to the guru; the *kirpan*, a short sword representing commitment to righteousness and the faith; and the *kacch*, shorts representing modesty.

Another aspect of adopting a Sikh lifestyle was learning to cook and serve the shared meal known as *langar*.²² It is offered, free, to those who worship at any *gurdwara*, regardless of background or caste. This custom goes back to the earliest Sikh teacher, Baba (or Guru) Nanak (1469–1539). After years of travel and learning, he established a community where residents could farm, share their bounty at common meals, listen to Nanak's teachings and philosophy, and worship and sing his devotional compositions together. The custom of eating communally appears to have been more firmly established during the time of Guru Angad (1504–1552).²³ The American converts readily adopted it, and the meal quickly became a marker of Sikh identity and of participation in the worldwide Sikh *panth*.

Sikh practices were also incorporated into 3HO solstice celebrations. These had been held since 1969, and became important sites for enacting a shared identity. At solstice celebrations people took their initiation vows, they were ordained as ministers, they were married in Sikh ceremonies (often these marriages were arranged by Bhajan), and they spent time with friends from ashrams across the country. In 1977 Bhajan “purchased a large parcel of land in the Jemez Mountains. . . . and the annual 3HO Summer Solstice Sadhana and festivities have occurred there every summer since.”²⁴ A special solstice diet was said to contribute to the focused prayer and meditation that were practiced there. Today there is a standard diet designed by Bhajan and said to “change your body chemistry.”²⁵

Institutionalization: The “Countercuisine”

From its earliest years, food was a tool in 3HO members’ efforts to create an alternative lifestyle. Food was a source of identity, a link with Indian and Sikh culture, and the Ayurvedic diet was a means of healing the self from unhealthy aspects of American culture and of counterculture participation. 3HO recipes and foodstuffs were also viewed as a contribution to the larger society. An early adherent writes, “I honestly believe we had a HUGE impact on the New Age dietary habits . . . as a result of introducing food for healing into everything, he/we did!”²⁶

Warren J. Belasco, a pioneer in academic food studies, refers to a “countercuisine,” contemporaneous with the broader counterculture, which grew out of concerns about the nation’s food system. 3HO was imbedded in it. This countercuisine had, he says, three features: “a consumerist component . . . suggested what to avoid, especially processed ‘plastic’ food. . . . [T]he second, therapeutic component suggested ways to make food more fun—e.g. through a delight in improvisation, craftsmanship, ethnic, and regional cooking. Addressing issues of food production and distribution, the third element was the organic paradigm, which posited a radically decentralized infrastructure consisting of communal farms, cooperative groceries, and hip restaurants.”²⁷ Each of the elements Belasco discusses is represented in 3HO. On the “survivalist” track, 3HO specifies the safe and healthy foods that constitute a yogic diet. There are instructions for “mono-diets” (eating only one particular food) or other special diets in order to treat a health issue or to cleanse the body. There is a wealth of Ayurvedic lore. In a “therapeutic,” or “fun” vein, the interest and pleasure in food and in trying different recipes was, as we have seen, an early trait. Siri Ved Kaur, who cooked for Bhajan, says that he was an excellent chef, and could have cooked professionally. She notes that he did indeed cook for a restaurant when he was teaching yoga.²⁸ Another 3HO member described

him as “a foodie.”²⁹ He shared his pleasure in eating and cooking, and, following his lead, 3HO members explored various cuisines. One of the pleasures of entering a 3HO household in the early years was the scent of Yogi Tea permeating the air; this was Bhajan’s recipe, that included a mix of black tea, cloves, cardamom pods, black pepper, cinnamon, and ginger. As for Belasco’s “radically decentralized infrastructure,” as we shall see, over the course of their history 3HO members contributed to it by opening health food stores, restaurants, and businesses selling cereals, teas, and other foodstuffs.

Institutionalization: Embracing Entrepreneurship

Early ashrams were run cooperatively, some almost as communes. The following account of the role of a bakery business in the Boston ashram gives a sense of the arrangement, and, from the speaker’s point of view, the associated difficulties: “People would live in the ashram and work in the business. Their needs would be taken care of. Board and room. Doctor bills. . . . We had the business and we had the ashram and the two were connected. But because it wasn’t a lump sum check every month, they didn’t see it as a motivator. They didn’t feel they were being paid enough, ever.”³⁰

Bhajan told his students that Sikhs should live as “householders,” and he arranged and approved marriages for his students. The number of families grew rapidly. With a recession in the 1970s and the establishment of these young families, survival became a more complicated and pressing concern and strained the communal arrangements. One response was a series of workshops, classes, and meditations on the topic of “prosperity consciousness” offered in the mid-1970s and in the 1980s.³¹ Bhajan and other leaders also encouraged members to establish businesses, and to pursue further education and professional certificates. Bhajan spoke of entrepreneurship as a natural inclination for Sikhs. Echoing this sentiment, a 3HO member who worked for a family business for years recently spoke of an “ethic of independence” and mentioned the Sikh ideal of “working by the sweat of your brow,” and of entrepreneurship as being “in the Sikh blood.”³² An independent business was also a reasonable choice of vocation given that Khalsa Sikhs are unshaven and wear turbans. This external appearance can complicate a job search, and creating one’s own company was one response to potential discrimination. A small business also appealed as a way to work with friends, family, and others who shared one’s values and lifestyle.

Food was clearly a potential avenue for entrepreneurship, and by 1973 3HO was establishing vegetarian restaurants (Golden Temple Conscious Cookery). One woman recalled the circumstances giving rise to the first of these enterprises: when Bhajan arranged a marriage

for a member named Ganga “to the head of the Washington, DC, ashram, she opened the first Conscious Cookery and the menu was inspired by her time cooking with and for the Yogi. . . . We, as a growing community, introduced ‘gourmet’ health food into the marketplace—through the opening of Golden Temple Conscious Cookeries around the country.” She remembered restaurants in Atlanta, St. Louis, Santa Fe, and Los Angeles.³³

The early restaurants were built by ashram residents and low-paid labor. The same was true for several of the other businesses, often spoken of as “family businesses,” that followed. At some point it was determined that a portion of the profits from family businesses should go to Sikh Dharma International, which could use the funds to maintain its own activities and those of a number of associated nonprofits.

LATER YEARS

The move to found small businesses led to a variety of entrepreneurial experiments within 3HO. Once they had embraced Bhajan’s suggestion to explore business opportunities, members put a great deal of energy into their creations. By 1986 Kirpal Singh Khalsa, a 3HO member, was able to list a number of these:

3HO Foundation members are found nationwide in many professional and technical fields. Some have started manufacturing businesses such as health food products, furniture, and massage tools; others have become very successful in sales and distribution of products such as insurance, health food, shoes, and school supplies; and 3HO Foundation restaurants can be found in many cities in the country.³⁴

Over the years some of the businesses grew large enough to constitute more than small niche companies, while others folded.

What is today Yogi Tea began when Bhajan’s tea recipe was used in the Golden Temple restaurants. Sikhs working at the Boston location decided to go a step further by assembling the ingredients in packets and offering them for sale in health food stores. This effort became official when a company was formed in the early 1980s. Yogi Bhajan’s son, Ranbir, was a cofounder and manager, and in 1989 he “donated Yogi Tea to Sikh Dharma . . . with no profit in [the] transaction.” Yogi Tea grew slowly but steadily and eventually became the country’s largest natural foods tea supplier. Ranbir Singh contributed further to this growth by founding Yogi Botanicals International in 1997 “to supply Yogi Tea with organic raw material from countries around the globe.”³⁵

Kettle Chips, which was originally called N.S. Khalsa Company, was another 3HO inspired business, founded by Cameron Healy (then Nirbhao Singh Khalsa), who became a Sikh in 1971. Healy originally

invested \$1,000 to start the ashram's Golden Temple Bakery in Eugene, Oregon, and it remained in ashram hands. He then went into food distribution and later into manufacturing, producing a natural foods version of potato chips.³⁶ The chips were sold in health food stores, and the business grew rapidly. In 1995 Healy left Sikh Dharma. His company, by then renamed Kettle Foods, had become a multimillion dollar enterprise, and it continued to expand into overseas markets.³⁷

Kettle Chips was legendary in 3HO as an example of successful entrepreneurship. The Golden Temple Bakery businesses that Healy turned over to the Sikh community in Eugene would also later add value. In the early years about a dozen ashram members worked for this bakery business. The head of the Eugene ashram declared that it should be jointly owned by the Sikhs. Gurumukh Singh Khalsa, who would become Chief Accounting Officer, remembers that as 3HO members began to get married and start families, employees sought market wages from the bakery. He describes the late 1970s as a "tight period." He stopped working at the bakery and went into grant administration for seven years. He remembers 3HO people going into many different fields as the organization "diversified" at this time. In fact, Bhajan suggested that he go back to school to obtain a CPA, which he did as a part time student. Bhajan also said he thought they would be needing him in the future.³⁸

They did. In 1976 a distribution business was combined with the bakery to create Golden Temple of Oregon Inc. "We were bootstrappers," Gurumukh remembers. They began with recipe books for granola, and experimented. They got to know other people in the business and in the companies that manufactured the necessary equipment. It was a case of "learn as you go."³⁹ This was not an uncommon approach for entrepreneurs in the natural foods world at that time.⁴⁰ In 1978 Kartar Singh Khalsa, who would later become CEO, began to work for the bakery. Through the 1980s Golden Temple grew and expanded into the California market. Gurumukh went back as Chief Accounting Officer, remaining in that position until 2010. He was there when, in the 1990s, the bakery experimented with combining its granola with corn flakes to create Peace Cereal, which sold well.⁴¹ An overseas tea company had been created, and it merged with Golden Temple Bakery. Bhajan's son, Ranbir Singh, became CEO of KIIT Global (Khalsa International Industries and Trades Companies), which developed markets around the globe for the tea and cereals.⁴²

Karam Singh Khalsa, who became CFO of Golden Temple, later testified that Kartar asked him to take on that position when the business was not making a profit and had "maxed out" on credit. Kartar, who had been helping to oversee all the businesses, asked Yogi Bhajan to allow him to focus only on Golden Temple, and he and Karam agreed to

“draw a line in the sand” and make \$1 million or resign. They made \$2 million and were then given more autonomy in running the business. By 2000 the company was worth \$25 million and the European branch another \$10 million.⁴³

As the businesses grew, Bhajan created an entity called the Core Management Team (CMT) to oversee and mentor them. Team members were assigned a variety of tasks, such as reviewing annual budgets and business plans, identifying the capable and skillful managers, providing support and training, and evaluating proposals for funds to go to 3HO-related nonprofits. As one member put it, they were charged with “getting the skinny” on the different businesses, both the for-profits and nonprofits.⁴⁴

Context: Growth of the Natural Foods Industry

While Sikh Dharma businesses were growing, food production and distribution in general were becoming ever more globalized and industrialized. Criticisms of the food system were spreading, and mainstream corporations were beginning to feel pressure to respond to growing concerns about food safety and quality. “The food companies got scared,” writes Belasco. People were not buying processed food products as readily as they had in the past, and “consumerist pressure was forcing the FDA to take a harder look at some of the chemicals going into new food products.”⁴⁵ In that environment there were opportunities for products that could be depicted as natural, traditional, safe, and healthy, such as Peace Cereal or Yogi Tea. They could fit into a growing marketing niche. While the majority of American consumers continued to buy the types of products they had purchased previously, either ignoring health concerns or finding their purchases constrained by finances, a segment of the buying public became increasingly conscious of food quality. Class was an important predictor. Belasco says that in 1975 “those most worried about additives tended to be higher educated, with middle to upper-middle income.”⁴⁶ Research in the 1980s indicated that a producer of natural foods could reasonably advertise to just a segment of the population, roughly 40 percent, who demonstrated they were most concerned about health and diet.⁴⁷ A receptive demographic was out there.

Established food companies responded with “acquisitions of the most profitable smaller companies.”⁴⁸ The big companies watched as small entrepreneurs innovated with new health foods and then snapped up some of their more successful new products and ideas. Kraft, for example, purchased Celestial Seasonings teas. In the natural foods world beyond 3HO, the 1980s saw the founding of many companies and considerable innovation, but also many failures and many companies

hanging on by a thread.⁴⁹ For managers of small companies seeking a spot in this marketplace the environment must have seemed alternately exhilarating and overwhelming.

Joe Dobrow, a food marketing executive who has also written about the industry, further describes the natural foods world at the time:

[I]n the late 1980s and early 1990s, hundreds of new products were launched, and big retail chains like Wild Oats and Fresh Fields were born. Then, once natural foods showed real signs of promise, money began pouring in. . . . Hedge funds, private equity firms, venture capitalists, and the investment wings of pension funds jumped in. . . . Now it was 1996, and the natural foods industry was simply *exploding*, as millions of consumers seemed to have awakened suddenly to the benefits of healthier eating.⁵⁰

3HO and its many associated enterprises rode this wave. Bhajan's inner circle of business people, the Core Management Team, typically served on boards and some worked for or with several different businesses. For example, over the course of her career Siri Karm Kaur worked with 3HO, Akal (a security firm), and various nonprofits, and was on the boards of Kundalini Research Institute, Amar, Sikh Dharma International, and Unto Infinity (all entities related to Bhajan and Sikh Dharma).⁵¹ The 3HO businesses benefited from access to more practical expertise.

But Bhajan was not well, and in 2003, the ailing teacher sought to consolidate the many organizations he and his students had created and to plan for the future after his demise. Golden Temple Bakery, Akal Security, and the tea company had been contributing to the maintenance of nonprofits associated with Sikh Dharma and, in some cases, paying royalties to Yogi Bhajan for his picture on the product, some of which he in turn contributed to nonprofits associated with 3HO and Sikh Dharma. The expectation seems to have been that the for-profit companies would continue to contribute to nonprofit entities.

Bhajan created a California corporation, the Siri Singh Sahib of Sikh Dharma, to administer the business affairs and properties of Sikh Dharma International. In 2003 Sikh Dharma International (SDI) conveyed Golden Temple Inc. to Siri Singh Sahib of Sikh Dharma, which in turn passed it to Unto Infinity (UI) as the administrative authority. The idea was that Unto Infinity LLC would hold centralized control as Bhajan "took ownership of all the real and personal property . . . held by the various nonprofit entities and transferred that property to Unto Infinity. Unto Infinity then placed the for-profit businesses in a wholly owned for-profit holding company known as KIIT Company."⁵² Thus, resources had been centralized by the time the Bhajan died in 2004.

THE TRIAL

One of the business that prospered under Bhajan, and in the years after his death, was Akal Security. It was founded by a 3HO member and, just as the 3HO natural foods businesses grew along with that industry, Akal grew in the aftermath of September 11 with the accompanying demand for security services.⁵³ It has been financially successful, but in the past it has also been cited for pay and labor violations and faced a false claims lawsuit for failure to train employees.⁵⁴ In 2007 the Department of Justice announced that Akal Security would “pay the United States \$18 million to resolve allegations that it violated the terms of its contract to provide trained civilian guards at eight U.S. Army bases,” and Akal made it clear that, because it faced this large penalty, it could not afford to contribute to the nonprofit 3HO entities for some time.⁵⁵ Because of this, donated funds from the businesses to the Sikh Dharma nonprofits declined from about \$2 million to about \$600,000.⁵⁶

Akal’s misfortunes were treated as pivotal in the legal case involving Golden Temple Inc. and Sikh Dharma International. In their presentation to the court, the directors of Golden Temple Inc. placed their own actions in the context of this decline in funding for the nonprofits. They claimed that they looked for a way to continue to expand their own business, satisfy managers’ growing desire for higher pay and equity in the company, and meet Sikh Dharma International’s increased need for funds. According to their account, its managers offered to buy Golden Temple Inc., but this solution was rejected because of the tax burden that its holding company, Khalsa International Industries and Trades Companies, would face in its aftermath. Instead, Kartar and a lawyer who had served Bhajan and the corporations for years came up with a plan by which a new company, a joint venture, would be created. It would include KIIT and the management team of Golden Temple Inc. KIIT would contribute to it the value of the Golden Temple business as assessed by an appraiser and in return would receive “a preferred return on capital based on the value of the contributed business.”⁵⁷ For these purposes Golden Temple Inc. was valued at \$23 million (a figure that was later contested in court as too low) of which KIIT would receive 8 percent and a “membership interest” of 10 percent.⁵⁸ This arrangement was finalized in 2007, but without the knowledge or cooperation of Sikh Dharma International and other related entities. The agreement also provided that, in the event of a sale of all or part of Golden Temple Inc. (which became Golden Temple LLC after it was acquired by KIIT), Golden Temple’s managers would be entitled to 90 percent of the proceeds after Unto Infinity’s initial \$23 million contribution and certain corporate debt obligations were satisfied. This sale happened soon after the arrangement went into effect, though whether that was by design, or a lucky opportunity, as the managers claimed, is not entirely clear. In 2010 Golden

Temple management and Unto Infinity sold their cereal division to Hearthside Foods Solutions for an impressive \$71 million. The price was high enough to pay the \$23 million, pay off debt, terminate the preferred return, and net about \$10 million for the Golden Temple managers.

When these facts became known, Sikh Dharma International filed a lawsuit that was later joined by the state of Oregon. The plaintiffs argued that “two profitable companies and many pieces of real property were impressed with a trust for the benefit of Sikh Dharma,” but that trust was not honored, and the actions of the Golden Temple management were described as “impermissible self-dealing.”⁵⁹

Narratives

The narratives presented in court provide a sense of the conflicting values, perspectives, and priorities at stake.⁶⁰ A key legal question was whether the businesses, as organized by Yogi Bhajan in his last years, constituted a trust. If so, it could be argued that the joint venture, the way it was created, and the sale of the cereal company represented a failure to meet fiduciary duties. The plaintiffs made a point of saying that Bhajan had often spoken about the role of the businesses in supporting the work of the nonprofits and in spreading the values and message of Sikh Dharma. The defendants, on the other hand, spoke about the businesses in purely secular terms, indicating that Bhajan dealt with business matters in a practical, profit-oriented way and did not speak of a trust.

To support their contention, the plaintiffs had a minister speak about the nonprofit projects she had been involved in or was concerned to see continue. She served on the board of Sikh Dharma International and the Khalsa Council, an advisory board of Sikh ministers that meets twice yearly. She also served on a related organization, the Charitable Contributions Committee, where she was tasked with deciding how to allocate funds donated by the for-profit 3HO affiliated businesses to the 3HO nonprofits. She testified that the need she encountered in this work was “sobering, in the millions.”⁶¹ Another such speaker was Guru Amrit Kaur, now the Chief Spiritual Minister for Sikh Dharma and one of the plaintiffs. She had served as Secretary General of Sikh Dharma International for 20 years. She testified that Yogi Bhajan did indeed use the term “trust” and had spoken of holding assets in trust. From her point of view, the religion and Sikh Dharma International were the primary entities, and the businesses existed primarily to support them and spread goodwill. She portrayed Sikh Dharma International officers and ministers as people who had devoted their lives to “the dharma,” and as pious practitioners of the religion who were blocked in their efforts to serve by the actions of Unto Infinity and the Golden Temple management team.⁶²

The defense tried to undermine this argument, suggesting that Sikh Dharma International and the Khalsa Council were not the centerpieces of Bhajan's organization-building. In an opening statement their lawyer noted that 3HO, in its capacity as an organization for teaching yoga and training yoga teachers, represented the largest of Bhajan's institutional creations, rather than Sikh Dharma. The defense argued that 90 percent of Bhajan's teachings related to yoga, not Sikhism. The religious arm was, as one lawyer said, "using the court" to increase its status and power.⁶³ A member of the Core Management Team testified that Yogi Bhajan's policy was "not to have our religious arm involved in business transactions." Bhajan had told them not to share "excess" financial information with the religious wing. They shared, she said, "minimal information as per policy."⁶⁴ Another even testified that information about the for-profit entities was "never" shared with the rest of the community.⁶⁵ One of the members of the management team said that his interactions with Bhajan were always about money, and that Bhajan was "very concerned about the profitability of the business."⁶⁶ The suggestion is clearly that the businesses did not exist to serve religious purposes, but stood independently, and that, in fact, Bhajan did not trust the business judgement of the leaders of Sikh Dharma International and did not want them involved in corporate decisions.

The business managers and Unto Infinity board members described themselves as dedicated entrepreneurs who had put in years of hard and stressful work in order to build the businesses. Peraim Kaur Khalsa (Core Management, UI) described eighteen-hour workdays.⁶⁷ Ajeet Singh, Golden Temple's Director of Operations, said, "For thirty years it's been my vocation. I've basically poured my heart and soul into the business."⁶⁸ The entrepreneurs also depicted themselves as working in challenging circumstances. Rather than being the self-serving, plotting, well-off business people portrayed by the plaintiffs' lawyers, they said they were just trying to keep the businesses afloat in a difficult market. Singh testified that he had been growing dissatisfied with his pay and was considering leaving the company to form his own business. He pointed out that, as the company grew and management became more sophisticated and cooperated with the likes of Pepperidge Farm, Trader Joe's, and Safeway, he and the other managers became aware of compensation levels in the field and saw that they weren't being paid to industry standards.⁶⁹ Thus, he seemed to suggest, they were not taking advantage of others but were themselves giving up potentially higher pay and better rewards in order to serve on the management team.

Theirs was presented as a story of successful, dedicated, even self-sacrificing entrepreneurship. They seem to have embraced, or simply employed in their defense, the myth of the entrepreneur as a cultural hero. In his seminal critique of that myth, economist David Hamilton pointed out that entrepreneurs in the economic literature are said to

“perform miracles of production,” and by virtue of “extra powers they are able to foresee the economic future.” They are said to overcome resistance and routine, to inspire and create.⁷⁰ These attributes, he argues, are not necessarily associated with most real entrepreneurs. Rather, the myth justifies consumerism and reassures us “that buying and selling are of great social significance. By virtue of pecuniary accumulations, not only are fortunes acquired, but society is advanced.”⁷¹ Throughout the trial, that myth seemed to permeate the thinking and language of the defense.

Outcome

The case was long, dramatic, and costly. In the end, the judge sided with the plaintiffs, finding “clear and convincing evidence that a charitable trust existed. . . . The trust was dedicated to support and advance the religious tenets and practices espoused by Yogi Bhajan in Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere.”⁷² She also found that “Unto Infinity and KIIT, and the majority of their boards . . . acted consistently and knowingly after the sale to mislead and misinform persons and organizations who were intended beneficiaries of the charitable and religious purpose of the trust.”⁷³ They had “the fiduciary obligations of a trustee,” but “Unto Infinity and KIIT violated those obligations by disposing of the asset in an insider transaction at a fraction of its value.”⁷⁴ In the immediate aftermath of this decision the Golden Temple managers sought bankruptcy protection, anticipating claims against them. Indeed, the judge soon “ruled that the five executives must return more than \$36 million to a court-appointed receiver—Kartar Khalsa’s share was \$17.4 million, roughly half the total.”⁷⁵

Mediation led to a final settlement. The for-profit companies were to have new leadership. The East-West Tea Company LLC, which packages Yogi Tea, was placed in the hands of a receiver, Conrad Myers, who held his position until 2018. The company was quite successful under him. A new board was appointed to Unto Infinity. Departing board members received settlements, and Kartar was required to hand over his ownership interest in Golden Temple of Oregon.⁷⁶ The funds from the sale of the cereal company, which had been held in escrow, were deposited into the new Unto Infinity account.⁷⁷ All parties agreed “not to disparage each other, Yogi Bhajan, the Sikh Dharma religion, or its entities.”⁷⁸ The need for such an agreement indicates the depth of feeling evoked by this case.

CONCLUSION

Jill Ettinger, a food activist who once worked for Golden Temple, writes,

From a distance, this story has shades of a cult-like tragedy: Devotees of a spiritual leader eventually spiraling out of control upon his death. But to anyone in the organic foods industry, it was evident that yogic principles of balance, pragmatism, discipline and compassion were guiding forces at Golden Temple. For decades, the team members directing the company appeared as effective and reliable as the delicious organic teas and cereals they sold.⁷⁹

She goes on to ask, “If hardcore yogis can’t resist the lure of sacrificing decades of hard work by a small, dedicated spiritual community for a few million dollars, is any corporation really trustworthy? Is our food?”⁸⁰ It is a sobering question, but in the 3HO case more than the temptation of making a fortune may have been involved. Managers who might have been liberally rewarded by companies outside of the 3HO network were expected to donate their shares in the business to KIIT. This may have been in keeping with many 3HO values, but it was a great deal to ask in today’s overheated corporate atmosphere and in the face of culturally shared myths about the high value of entrepreneurial activity.

Popular accounts of organizations that attempt change can gloss over or forget the underside of events, internal conflicts, and the constant pushes and pulls embedded in them. For years the interlocking world of 3HO/Sikh Dharma and associated entities evolved. Different centers of effort and meaning, and of identity and prestige, worked side by side. But over time the changing worlds of food and marketing created new opportunities that challenged that cooperation. The language of corporate capitalism clashed with that of communalism and nonprofit organizations, the world of secular enterprise with that of religious and yogic tradition, and the expectations of the international marketplace competed with local loyalties. Profit and nonprofit entities competed. Even class differences figured in the conflict as many 3HO members worked hard or struggled for a middle-class lifestyle while some of the business directors grew rich.

In spite of the differences that emerged over the course of the trial, strong points were made by each side. While their activities were clearly self-serving, the managers *had* dedicated years of their lives to 3HO, the charities *did* benefit for years from the work of Golden Temple Management, and the religious arm could have stepped forward to help solve funding issues instead of leaving the problems solely in the hands of the business managers. On the other hand, in spite of managers’ protestations to the contrary, Bhajan had been concerned about the future of all of the entities that 3HO and Sikh Dharma had spawned, therefore the business people should have involved other entities in their decision making, and the joint venture was patently unfair.

Dobrow ends his book on the natural foods industry on a very hopeful note:

The natural foods movement has turned out not to be a fad . . . but an unprecedented and revolutionary movement whose growth has been sustained for decades. The revolution has held off the inexorable advance of Big Food and agribusiness; rolled back more than 2.5 million acres of cropland to organic; rewritten the agenda for health, diet, and sustainability, and established a nearly \$100 billion business that has already proven to be more influential on attitudes, consumer and business behavior, and the health of the planet, than any other industry in our lifetimes.⁸¹

This is clearly a very optimistic portrayal, and even mildly self-serving since Dobrow comes out of that industry. It may be too soon to celebrate; companies currently successful in the natural foods arena may yet find themselves taken over by larger and less public spirited entities. Still, he reminds us that even with many missteps, considerable opportunism, and less than perfect behavior, social movements and experiments do sometimes actually blossom and make significant contributions to our society.

In spite of her concerns, Ettinger expresses hope for 3HO's future. It is hope that is justified, in that Yogi Tea grew substantially under the turnaround expert who was hired to guide it after the trial. The parent company, East-West Tea Company, is opening a new larger plant in Eugene, Oregon. Of course, the quality of the new leadership will be tested, the company will encounter new trials and temptations, and the various entities created by Bhajan and his adherents will probably be pulled in different directions again. It is always worth remembering that entrepreneurship carries possibilities of "failure, fiasco and fraud," and a potential "kernel of pain, failure and business death."⁸² For now, though, it would seem that the entities are working together again, and organizational balance has been restored.

ENDNOTES

¹ Sherri Buri McDonald, "Golden Temple Suits Merged," *The Register-Guard* (Eugene, OR), 11 December 2010.

² Leslie M. Roberts, "Findings and Conclusions," *Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur Khalsa, et al. v. Kartar Singh Khalsa et al. and State of Oregon v. Siri Singh Sahib Corporation et al.*, 12 December 2011, 3. These two individual cases, hereafter referred to as *Khalsa* and *State of Oregon*, were merged. The Golden Temple Managers were represented by Lane Powell, PC of Portland, Oregon.

³ 3HO, "Yogi Bhajan's Biography," <https://www.3ho.org/yogi-bhajan/about-yogi-bhajan/yogi-bhajans-biography>, accessed 20 October 2018; Premka Kaur Khalsa, "Early History," in *The Man Called the Siri Singh Sahib*, eds. Sardarni Premka Kaur Khalsa and Sat Kirpal Kaur Khalsa (Los Angeles: Sikh Dharma, 1979): 18–33; Gurcharn Singh Khalsa, "The Torch Bearer of Sikhism," in Khalsa and Khalsa, *The Man Called the Siri Singh Sahib*, 34–43.

⁴ 3HO, “Yogi Bhajan’s Biography,” <https://www.3ho.org/yogi-bhajan/about-yogi-bhajan/yogi-bhajans-biography>, accessed 20 October 2018.

⁵ Verne A. Dusenbery, “3HO/Sikh Dharma: Some Issues for Consideration,” *Sikh Formations* 8, no. 3 (2012): 335–349. See also: Philip Deslippe, “From Maharaj to Mahan Tantric: The construction of Yogi Bhajan’s Kundalini Yoga,” *Sikh Formations* 8, no. 3 (2012): 369–387.

⁶ Ganga (Bhajan Kaur) Barrett, “The Yogi, the Savages, and Amazing Grace,” *True Tales*, 21 April 2007, <http://www.ourtruetales.com/2007/04/21/the-yogi-the-savages-and-amazing-grace/>.

⁷ 3HO History.com Presents, “Taste Treats with Yogi Bhajan,” <https://www.harisingh.com/3HOHistory.htm>, accessed 30 April 2019.

⁸ Although he phrased his intentions in these terms, one could equally argue that he was interested in creating an organizational presence and spreading his influence.

⁹ See Constance Waeber Elsberg, *Graceful Women: Gender and Identity in an American Sikh Community* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 75–76, 97, 143–44, 167; Hugh Gardner, *The Children of Prosperity: Thirteen Modern American Communes* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1978), 130–132.

¹⁰ Raleigh Eugene Bailey, Jr., “An Ethnographic Approach toward the Study of a Spiritually Oriented Communal Group in the USA: The Healthy Happy Holy Organization” (Ph.D. dissertation, Hartford Seminary, 1973), 81. An ashram could be quite small, even consisting of only a couple who opened their home to yoga students.

¹¹ Gurushabd Singh Josephs, “Education of the Spirit: The Dynamics Underlying Personal and Spiritual Growth in a Spiritual Commune” (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1974), 17.

¹² Siri-Ved Kaur Khalsa, “About,” *Conscious Cookery: Vegetarian and Yogic Cooking for Everyone*, <http://consciouscookery101.com/about/>, accessed 18 May 2018.

¹³ When I attended a 3HO camp for women in 1983 those of us who were preparing a communal meal chanted in order to maintain and transmit a loving and spiritual “vibration.” Recently, when I was talking to a 3HO Ayurvedic healer about healthy diets, I happened to mention that I am within walking distance of a Whole Foods Market and often pick up a healthy meal there. Her immediate response was, “But what about the consciousness of the cook?” That consideration had never crossed my mind, nor, probably, those of many other hurried customers hastily grabbing food to take home.

¹⁴ 3HO, “The Yogic Diet,” <https://www.3ho.org/3ho-lifestyle/yogic-diet>, accessed 20 October 2018.

¹⁵ Siri-Ved Kaur Khalsa, *From Vegetables, with Love: Recipes & Tales from a Yogi’s Kitchen*, 2nd ed. (Santa Cruz, NM: Kundalini Research Institute, 2016), 11.

¹⁶ Verne A. Dusenbery, “Straight Freak Yogi Sikh: A ‘Search for Meaning’ in Contemporary American Culture” (master’s thesis, University of Chicago, 1975), 20–23.

¹⁷ Gurubanda Singh Khalsa and Parmatma Singh Khalsa, eds., *Foods for Health and Healing: Remedies & Recipes* (San Bernadino, CA: Borgo Press, 1983), 49–50.

¹⁸ Gobind Sadan, "About Gobind Sadan," <https://www.gobindsadan.org/about-gobind-sadan/>, accessed 22 November 2018.

¹⁹ For a discussion of the role of Virsa Singh in Bhajan's early career see Deslippe, "From Maharaj to Mahan Tantric."

²⁰ Dusenbery, "Straight Freak Yogi Sikh"; Bailey, "An Ethnographic Approach," 112.

²¹ The Khalsa is a brotherhood created by the tenth Sikh Guru. Sikhs can choose initiation into it.

²² Langar specifically refers to the kitchen where the meal is cooked, but people in Sikh Dharma (and many other Sikhs) regularly use the word to refer to the kitchen and the meal. Today, it is a free vegetarian meal open to anyone and served following worship. At the Golden Temple in Amritsar it is served daily, and it consists of lentils, rice, vegetables, roti, and dessert.

²³ Doris R. Jakobsh, *Sikhism*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 23.

²⁴ 3HO History.com Presents, "Early History," <https://www.harisingh.com/3HOHistory.htm>, accessed 18 May 2018.

²⁵ 3HO History.com Presents, "Early History," <https://www.harisingh.com/3HOHistory.htm>, accessed 18 May 2018.

²⁶ Pamela Dyson, email to author, 20 January 2019.

²⁷ Warren J. Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 4.

²⁸ Siri-Ved Kaur Khalsa, telephone interview with author, 6 July 2018.

²⁹ Deva Kaur Khalsa, telephone interview with author, 15 May 2018.

³⁰ Quoted in Stephen Burns Power, *Spirit Warriors: Interviews with American Sikhs—the first generation* (New York: iUniverse Inc., 2003), 52. The speaker was Cameron Healy, an early 3HO entrepreneur.

³¹ I attended one of these in the 1980s in Washington, DC.

³² Gurmukh Singh Khalsa, telephone interview with author, 8 June 2018.

³³ Pamela Dyson, email to author, 20 January 2019.

³⁴ Kirpal Singh Khalsa, "New Religious Movements Turn to Worldly Success," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25 no. 2 (1986): 236.

³⁵ 3HOHistory.com Presents, "Ranbir Singh Bhai: Personal Profile," <https://www.harisingh.com/3HOHistoryRanbirSingh.htm>, accessed 5 May 2019. See also Yogi Botanicals, "Company Profile," <http://www.yogibotanicals.com/company-profile.php>.

³⁶ Funding Universe.com, "Kettle Foods Inc. History," <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/kettle-foods-inc-history/>, accessed 1 July 2018. The website acknowledges *The International Directory of Company Histories*, v. 48 (St. James Press, 2003).

³⁷ James V. Hillegas-Elting, "Kettle Foods, Inc." In *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, last updated 17 March 2018, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/kettle_foods_inc/.

³⁸ Gurmukh Singh Khalsa, telephone interview with author, 8 June 2018.

³⁹ Gurmukh Singh Khalsa, telephone interview with author, 8 June 2018.

⁴⁰ For some examples, see Joe Dobrow, *Natural Prophets: From Health Foods to Whole Foods—How the Pioneers of the Industry Changed the Way We Eat and Reshaped American Business* (New York: Rodale, 2014).

⁴¹ Gurmukh Singh Khalsa, telephone interview with author, 8 June 2018.

⁴² 3HOHistory.com Presents, “Ranbir Singh Bhai: Personal Profile,” <https://www.harisingh.com/3HOHistoryRanbirSingh.htm>., accessed 7 May 2019.

⁴³ Testimony of Karam Singh Khalsa, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 7 June 2011.

⁴⁴ Testimony of Siri Karm Kaur Khalsa, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 8 June 2011.

⁴⁵ Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, 188.

⁴⁶ Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, 194.

⁴⁷ Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, 194–196. This research was based on the VALS typology, which was intended to understand consumers based on their “values and lifestyles” rather than on economic demographics.

⁴⁸ Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, 188.

⁴⁹ Belasco, *Appetite for Change*, 213.

⁵⁰ Joe Dobrow, *Natural Prophets*, x-xi.

⁵¹ Testimony of Siri Karm Kaur Khalsa, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 8 June 2011.

⁵² Golden Temple Management Defendants’ Trial Brief, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, Circuit Court of Oregon, Multnomah County, (18 May 2011) 3–4, <https://www.courts.oregon.gov/services/online/pages/ojcin.aspx>.

⁵³ Bhajan had a security detail that included specially trained 3HO members. They were present at the women’s camp when I attended. Presumably this requirement was related to events in India, but there was also firearms training available to 3HO members in the early years, so security was an early concern. Today most Akal employees are not Sikhs, and Akal Security provides services to courthouses, government facilities, and military installations. Akal has a subsidiary, Coastal International Security, which advertises that it specializes in collecting intelligence, managing emergency response, and doing crisis management. It also provides security for a number of government-related sites in the Washington, DC, area, including the Ronald Reagan Building. See their websites at <https://akalglobal.com/akal-security/> and <https://akalglobal.com/coastal-international-security>. See also: “DOJ OIG Releases Report on USMS Contract with Akal Security, Inc.,” 20 September 2016, <https://oig.justice.gov/press/2016/2016-09-20.pdf>.

⁵⁴ For one example, see T. Albert, “Troubled Akal Security Loses Federal Courts Contracts After Federal Fraud Settlements,” Stand for Security (blog), 17 August 2016, <http://standforsecurity.org/2016/08/17/troubled-akal-security-loses-federal-courts-contracts-after-federal-fraud-settlements/>.

⁵⁵ Department of Justice, “Security Firm to Pay U.S. \$18 Million to Resolve Allegations that Firm Failed to Provide Qualified Guards for Amy Bases,” 13 July 2007, http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2007/July/07_civ_500.html.

⁵⁶ Golden Temple Management, Defendants’ Trial Brief, 5–6.

⁵⁷ Golden Temple Management, Defendants’ Trial Brief, 4–6.

⁵⁸ Golden Temple Management, Defendants’ Trial Brief, 7.

- ⁵⁹ Plaintiffs' Trial Memorandum, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, Circuit Court of Oregon, Multnomah County (18 May 2011) 1, <https://www.courts.oregon.gov/services/online/pages/ojcin.aspx>.
- ⁶⁰ This author attended one week of the trial, from 23 May 2011 to 27 May 2011, then watched the rest via video supplied by Courtroom View Video. The trial lasted four weeks, and on 2 June 2011 the judge asked the lawyers to stick to the pivotal issues and "save the rest for the novel."
- ⁶¹ Author's notes, testimony of Guru Raj Kaur Khalsa, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 6 June 2011.
- ⁶² *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, trial testimony of Guru Amrit Kaur, 6 June 2011.
- ⁶³ Opening argument, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 23 May 2011.
- ⁶⁴ Testimony of Sopurkh Kaur Khalsa, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 25 May 2011.
- ⁶⁵ Testimony of Siri Karm Kaur, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 8 June 2011.
- ⁶⁶ Testimony of Ajeet Singh Khalsa, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 8 June 2011.
- ⁶⁷ Testimony of Peraim Kaur Khalsa, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 24 May 2011.
- ⁶⁸ Testimony of Ajeet Singh Khalsa, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 8 June 2011.
- ⁶⁹ Testimony of Ajeet Singh Khalsa, *Khalsa and State of Oregon*, 8 June 2011.
- ⁷⁰ David Hamilton, "The Entrepreneur as Cultural Hero," *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (1957): 250.
- ⁷¹ Hamilton, "The Entrepreneur as Cultural Hero," 256.
- ⁷² Roberts, "Findings and Conclusions," 30.
- ⁷³ Roberts, "Findings and Conclusions," 29.
- ⁷⁴ Roberts, "Findings and Conclusions," 34.
- ⁷⁵ Sherri Buri McDonald, "Pact Ends Dispute Over Sikh Company," *Register-Guard* (Eugene, OR), 6 November 2012.
- ⁷⁶ McDonald, "Pact Ends Dispute."
- ⁷⁷ Gurujot Kaur Khalsa, "Legal Update: Settlement of Litigation Reached," Sikh Dharma International, 18 August 2012, <https://sikhdharmaworldwide.wordpress.com/>, and Gurujot Kaur Khalsa, "Legal Update: Settlement Closing Official," Sikh Dharma International, 26 November 2012, <https://sikhdharmaworldwide.wordpress.com/> [content no longer available].
- ⁷⁸ McDonald, "Pact Ends Dispute."
- ⁷⁹ Jill Ettinger, "The Cup Runneth Over: Yogi Tea's Colossal Collapse," Organic Authority, 27 June 2012 (updated 7 Feb 2019), at www.organicauthority.com/foodie-buzz/yogi-teas-collapse-future-of-corporate-food.html.
- ⁸⁰ Ettinger, "The Cup Runneth Over."
- ⁸¹ Joe Dobrow, *Natural Prophets*, 268.
- ⁸² Lena Olaison and Bent Meier Sorensen, "The Abject of Entrepreneurship: Failure, Fiasco, Fraud," *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 20, no. 2 (2014): 193, 204.