

Alecia Buchanan

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Swami Ahimsadhara
Rocklyn Ashram
393 Dean Barkstead Rd
CRESWICK VIC 3364

Dear Ahimsadhara

Subject: Your letter of 26th March, 2014

I have received your letter and have forwarded it to the relevant contributors of the letter to Satyananda Yoga Directors.

First, you require some clarification of certain assumptions. The letter the Directors received from myself on behalf of a group of people contains no claim of formal representation on my part. It is a letter written by a group of concerned people (many of whom are direct survivors of sexual assault while in the care of the organisation) with a common response to Satyananda Organisation's recent actions. I authored it on their behalf with substantial contributions. There was an agreement that I would sign and send this letter, after which there were no further agreements regarding representation. Apart from forwarding them your letter I am not in a position to assist the Satyananda Organisation further in establishing relationships with others. This letter itself is from me only, to you.

I have no reason to doubt your sincere belief in what you have chosen to undertake. Reading between the lines, you appear to me to be truly seeking a positive healing way forward for both survivors of the abuse and the ashram itself. However the issue is much larger and runs much more deeply and historically than I believe you are aware of. I was a pawn in Akhandananda's self-serving lifestyle, and a recipient of SHISHY's physical assaults and emotional manipulation. But I am just one. Over the past 25 years I have supported others through traumas that were perpetrated not only at Mangrove Mountain but across Australia, New Zealand and in Monghyr, India. All with one common denominator: Satyananda Yoga.

As an individual survivor of and witness to extraordinary child sexual and physical abuse whilst in the care of the Satyananda Organisation, I believe (and I'm sure you would agree) that it is not my position to provide information or education to the organisation on what steps are required at this time. However I will point the following out as serious concerns of mine.

- Aside from your brief autobiography, there is no information regarding your professional background if any in providing support for survivors of sexual and physical assault that occurs within any institutional setting. I respect your claims re working with other victims of trauma, however the fact remains that working with child abuse survivors from within institutions is a specialized area, as well as the obvious issue of you being 'linked' with Mangrove.
- There is no clarity around the statement that you are separate but linked to Mangrove. This reads to me as a contradiction.
- Your aim is for the Satyananda Yoga community to work with me towards 'our common goal'? At no time has the Satyananda Ashram contacted me or consulted with me about what my goals are regarding the organization.
- I find it upsetting that you raise the issue of defamatory emails between you and some other parties in your letter, especially in terms of this being a most urgent matter. Are you suggesting I would be empathetic concerning possible damage to Satyananda Organisation's reputation before turning to the healing of others and myself? I have waited over 20 years for an acknowledgement process to begin, but you suggest this had to wait while organisational or brand reputation issues were managed. If this is the manner in which Satyananda Ashram means to engage with me, one who endured repeated sexual assaults as a child while in the Ashram's care, then working with the taskforce will not be possible.
- There are no clear or transparent processes in place that I have been advised of as a preliminary and vital step in engaging my trust. For instance, is this taskforce under the guidance or instruction of Swami Niranjana? How was it formed and by whom, and does it consist of people who are educated and experts in this field?
- Re the apology, and the apology day. Satyananda Ashram already has my views on this matter. As we now enter April 2014 the organisation shows an unfortunate lack of care and sensitivity as it only now forms its plans. There are so many people who cannot be meaningfully addressed and apologized to at such short notice. The Satyananda Ashram and its various entities has had over 20 years to reflect upon and plan for such a significant day in so many people's lives. Many years ago my mother and I walked alone into a Sydney courtroom and she sat there as I told my story to a jury about the most personal and degrading things that were done to me as a child. This was in 1989. During that time and since, not one person working for or representing Satyananda Ashram(s) has ever, ever so much as said a word of acknowledgement, regret or sorrow to either me or her. Until approximately 4 weeks ago when I received a Facebook post. I cannot in all conscience help make this rushed and convenient apology day a success for the organisation that has shunned me and my family for my entire adult life.

Yours Sincerely

Alecia Buchanan