

Areas of Discussion for Speaking with International Trainers and Constituents Regarding Recent Media Coverage of the Yogi Bhanjan Allegations

NOTE: If contacted by any media directly to provide comment, please kindly follow our media gateway policy.

Preface: *These areas of discussion are provided to assist you in speaking with trainers and constituents who may have questions or concerns about recent media coverage in L.A. Magazine about allegations of misconduct against Yogi Bhanjan. We urge you to consider your communication carefully because you may be understood as a person of influence and authority representing our organizations.*

- Early this year, a number of allegations of harm surfaced on social media and through other communications following the release of a book published by a former secretary of Yogi Bhanjan. These allegations created a great deal of concern throughout our entire community, and they have elicited the interest of media, resulting in the recent L.A. Magazine story.
- Please know that as nonprofit and religious organizations with a commitment to righteous action and the highest ethical standards, we took immediate and formal steps to address the allegations. We formed a Collaborative Response Team (CRT) of six representatives of our nonprofit and for-profit organizations with the goal of seeking the truth in all areas of this urgent and sensitive situation.
- The CRT engaged an impartial and independent team, An Olive Branch (AOB), to conduct a fact-finding mission. For the past several months, AOB has been gathering accounts from more than 300 witnesses, including reporters of harm and their supporters as well as reporters supporting Yogi Bhanjan and witnesses refuting allegations. The purpose is to determine whether based on relevant and sufficient evidence, it is more likely than not that the alleged behavior occurred. This process will allow our organizations to examine current policies and procedures and to determine how best to move forward.
- AOB is expected to deliver a report of their findings in late July or early August. In the interim, we have made confidential professional counseling available, at no cost, to any individual asserting harm from the misconduct they have reported. Our decision to offer these counseling services is not an indication of any conclusions being drawn by those involved in the fact-finding mission or by any of our organizations; the services are simply offered out of compassion for individuals who may find them helpful.
- Once the current fact-finding mission, conducted by AOB, is complete and the report is published, we will work with our Office of Ethics and Professional Standards (EPS) and the Office of Dharmic Counsel (ODC) to conduct a close review of the report findings. Our objective will be to ensure any abuse of power within our organization is identified and addressed. We will also explore various options for a program of compassionate reconciliation which we will work with reporters of harm to design.
- Our organizations stand united against abuse of any type and any conduct that harms or exploits anyone. We are committed to a safe environment for anyone who participates in any of our activities. We will continue to address any allegations of misconduct promptly and to provide accurate and timely information as we seek truth and move towards healing.
- The process in responding to the allegations against Yogi Bhanjan has been difficult and challenging for all, but the way forward is to continue to act in accordance with our values of truth and trustworthiness by sharing the information that comes out of the investigation and continuing to take appropriate actions. This approach gives the teachings, which have enriched and elevated so many lives, the best chance to continue to grow and serve the world.
- Regardless of AOB's findings, the report will likely be a challenge for all to absorb and process, and we expect it to spur heightened emotions, many questions and the need for dialogue and support. We see a very important goal to be helping our constituents find their own avenues toward healing, preserving trust and continuing to assure the future of the yogic and dharmic teachings, which are the basis of our spirituality and the foundation of our communities.