

A Study In Narcissism

Ekalaivan Singh

I could write over a thousand letters describing the horrible things my father, Prince Singh has done. I would like to express my deepest resentment towards the abuse and manipulation my family has had to deal with at the hands of this supposed righteous man of God. Also I want my disappointment in the recent lies and betrayals we have had to endure to be known.

Growing up in my household meant bearing witness to my father normalizing yelling and physical violence in a family environment. The psychological trauma I suffered repressed itself and only began to come out when I was in ninth grade. I suffered from frequent panic attacks and depression without any knowledge of what was causing it. When my father first found out I had depression he blamed me for it. I recall crying in the backseat of my mother's car in the driveway of one of our friend's houses. I told my dad I thought my friends did not care about me and nobody would care if I was gone. Naturally I wanted a caring response from my father. All he could say to me was "You're friends do not care about you! They don't care about you. The only people who will be there for you are your family." What an awful thing to say to your fourteen year old son who was experiencing a pain he could not explain. I felt alienated in my own house and stopped opening up to my parents about my mental health.

At the time I did not realize the extent this abuse would go to. In 9th grade, I heard him screaming at my mother using the word divorce. That caused me to not go home from school one day and instead seek shelter at my best friend's house. More and more memories began to flood my brain and I wasn't sure if they were true. Until I began to speak to my brother about our father's alcohol abuse. Every night my dad would start drinking wine as soon as he came home, sit in front of the TV until he passed out on our couch till 2 or 3 am. Sometimes it was gin, other times it was whiskey. I would hear him drunkenly yelling at our mother on multiple occasions. And I never did anything, because this behavior was normal for me to be around.

In the year 2019 I had gone through many therapy sessions breaking down my relationship with my father. I began to remember more about my childhood. Specifically one when I was eight and sleeping in my parents' room. My mom was in bed and my dad burst into the room screaming. He was holding our landline phone in his hands and raising his voice like an angry god. He then threw the phone at my mother, but it missed and hit me instead. That night I heard him tell my mother that she is arrogant and that he needed to end the marriage. Later I learned that my grandmother called him to complain about my mother.

I was learning about my childhood through asking questions to my mom and brother, the only other people who have lived in a house with him. I never risked having an argument with my father about any of this. And my father had never even been open about his own homelife when he was growing up in India. It was only from a sermon he had given in 2016 that I had heard him talk about his father. I found out that his father used to beat his mother and left them when he was eleven. I was so confused as to why I had to hear about it in a sermon in front of his peers. And the second time he told me about my grandfather was in a text message in 2020. In it he talked about the couple's therapy he was doing with my mom as if it was his idea even though my mom advocated for the idea of him going. He used the story of my grandad as a manipulation tactic to gain sympathy from me just as he did and continues to do with his fellow religious leaders. I received this text after my grandmother died. A woman whose image is totally different in my mind. My father hid behind the grief of her death and used it as a shield whenever any of us tried having a heart to heart with him. My father never normalized emotions and never humbled himself with tears with any of us. Till date he has not looked at us and apologized for anything. He would send texts saying sorry but then few hours later there would be a nasty text or yelling. Shortly after receiving this text I mention above, the pandemic hit. My parents and I had to isolate ourselves in our house.

This was the time when I had to act. I heard my mother talking to my father downstairs while I was in the upstairs hallway. I listened and heard that my mom wanted my father to be understanding as she tried so hard to make the marriage work. As usual my father wouldn't listen. Instead he used me as a bargaining chip. I remember him saying "Well what are we gonna tell Eklan? Because for your information he is on my side." I remember my heart sinking. He continued to say

“I wrote him a letter and while he didn’t respond I know what he is thinking.” The only letters I have gotten from my dad are sappy Christmas cards where he keeps talking about God’s grace and that he wants what’s best for me. I did not know what letter he was referring to. And then I realized he was talking about the text he sent me. I was furious and refused to let him believe I was on his side in any way. I wrote down every point I wanted to tell him. I wrote about how his alcoholism upset me, how he is horrible to my mother and how sexist and abusive he is as an individual. I told him he had to try and stop drinking and that I had caught him having a glass of gin late at night even after family therapy. I told him hard alcohol was especially bad and he tried to convince me that gin is not hard alcohol. Clearly he thinks I’m stupid!

I continued to try and make him understand the error of his ways in that talk. He asked me why I was getting angry when in reality my voice was calm and steady. I was only saying what hurt me and he wasn’t listening. Then he told me that I was to blame for letting this behavior happen. His exact words to me were “You chose to stay silent for nineteen years!” I was nineteen years old when I confronted him on this matter. It is no child’s choice to stay silent in their household when it is being run like a dictatorship. At that point I stopped trying to be calm. I was so hurt that I yelled at him louder than I have ever yelled before. Again he asked me why I was getting angry. I can say now that the behavior of anger is the only thing my father has modeled authentically for me. He would talk about peace, understanding and love every Sunday morning in church and then return home only to practice anger, abuse and misogyny. In every event I described observing he told me it was not true. For no other reason than he did not remember them. He denied the truth that I had learned because he doesn’t see any abnormality in his behavior. It was only in this discussion where I had discovered he had tried going to therapy. He said it didn’t work for him. I had told him what I wanted from him. I wanted him to stop drinking, stop yelling, prioritize us and try therapy again. Going to therapy is not the same thing as doing therapy. He stormed upstairs and shut himself in his room. Us boys are still not his priority since he has spent time and energy for months (maybe years) reconnecting with his old girlfriend while he has not made any sincere efforts to reconcile with his sons in a humble loving way.

My father never tried rebuilding a relationship with me after that. I was hoping for a loving hug and a heartfelt humbling of himself. He came up to me the next day, stood behind me at the dining table and said that he didn't know how I had hurt him or where to start in making things better. When I reiterated all the things I had mentioned the day before he scoffed, smiled and walked away.

I had hoped for a new leaf in him when my parents announced to me and my brother that they were getting a divorce. To my dismay my eyes fall upon an email he sent out to his entire church which humanizes him in the divorce and demonizes my mother. He made sure that his friends and colleagues believed that the divorce was her fault when in actuality he did not want to face the facts. Again I remember him screaming at my mother that he is through with her and that the marriage is over on numerous occasions. Then the cycle of horrors continues. Our house burned down in the summer of 2020. My mother and I had already left, but our belongings were still in the house. Thankfully my father got out in time and he is the only person who received support, condolences and love from the church. Specifically from members of a church we have dedicated so much of our lives to. And the fact that this is all because he lied and continues to lie makes me wonder. What would good Christian people do if they realized the truth? Maybe nothing, I can't control anyone's perception. I can only write down and analyze what I have observed. I even recall him watching a News Report about a girl who had been raped and he made very sexist appalling remarks regarding rape desire and he was blaming the victim.

And now today my father is in India. Seeking a celebration of reconnecting with his seminary sweetheart whom he could not marry because her father opposed. Then he met my mother through arranged marriage knowing she is Dalit and dark. Maybe this made him "feel" good. He gave her grief for those very same identities. Now, he simply couldn't wait to strengthen his reconnecting and rekindling an old flame and is parading her by his side saying that God has been good to him and has allowed him to move on. This is the lie he tells his "religious" friends as if my mom, brother and I were such a problem. He even told me that we have mental problems. I wonder where I got that from, dad? Maybe it's because you brought your generational trauma into our house and let it grow. He needs psychiatric help. He told us that each of us three are depressed and we need psychological help.

Prince Singh will say that my mother has turned me against him. Perhaps he does not actually respect me enough to believe that I have fancy and personal experiences and am capable of advocating for myself. I am sickened by the lies and lack of compassion from people who claimed to be friends of mine and my family. I write all this down to do nothing but share my truth. I had to write all of this down so I never forget to recognize this narcissism again. There is a lot more I can write, and I will. I refuse to stay silent anymore. This is what happened. My story does not end with a lie.

Sincerely,

Ekalaivan Singh