

To those who will listen,

I am about to be very open with you about some painful details regarding my family and the ways in which we suffered under my father. Please be advised, this is an account of domestic abuse. This past July, my parents' divorce papers were finalized. Rewinding: In February of 2021, my father sent a letter to every bishop, priest, leader, and parishioner in the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester stating that after thoughtful, mutual work: my parents chose to end their marriage as a team. In fact, he actually went as far as to say that my mother is the one who left. This is a lie. My dad left us. He left us after years of emotional abuse, physical abuse, and alcoholism. He has used the word divorce on my mother several times in the past 5-6 years.

The following are excerpts from the Rt. Rev. Prince Singh's February 2021 mailing with my commentary:

"After some intentional therapy and marriage counseling, Roja named the truth that our marriage is over."

In September 2019 my father told my mother that she needs to go, leave, and live her life because she had become too confident and independent. She had just come back from taking my brother to Venice which was his high school graduation present. She wanted to make that happen for him which my father was not interested in because he wanted to spend his sabbatical in Kerala, India.

Then, my grandmother was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2019. Her health began rapidly declining, and she passed away in January of 2020. This loss, combined with my father's stress in leading the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester through a pandemic; led to what I observed as another major turning point in my parents' marriage. Marriage counseling and personal therapy was suggested by my mother, but my father refused for years. At this point, she did finally convince him to go. However, this was after decades of a cycle of emotional abuse, alcoholism, physical abuse (towards me), occasionally throwing things at or by my mother, and a pattern of gaslighting that we grew all too familiar with growing up in the Singh household. My grandmother had just died. He was grieving. He was reacting, but he was not intentionally seeking out grief therapy when my mother asked him to get help with grief counselling before going for marriage counselling, he refused. They started marriage counselling in February 2020.

"Both of us did our best to work through things, and I was genuinely hopeful. Together, we grieve the end of a shared dream, each in our way. Please know that we are not taking this step due to hostility, resentment, abuse, or infidelity."

My father grew up in a physically abusive household. I heard stories of how my grandfather would throw things at my grandmother, bruising her. My father, at the age of 11, would get between the two of them to stop the fighting. As many know, victims of abuse often become perpetrators themselves. My father hit me often as a form of punishment growing up. He threw things at us. I had cell phones smashed in front of me, glass chess boards shattered, and video game systems ripped apart. Most of the physical violence was directed toward me punitively. I remember one day before school when he kicked me while I was on the ground screaming in pain because he was holding my crying baby brother at the time; so he could not use his hands. I was screamed at often. My mother was yelled at often. When my dad tried to spank my baby brother for the first time, I got between them and said, "No, not him." I would not see the cycle of abuse continue. When I asked my father (as an adult) why he used physical abuse as a form of punishment, his explanation was that I was "a difficult kid."

When the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester elected my dad to be Bishop, we knew we had no choice in the matter. We were moving. From the home and community that we had spent almost a decade

building in New Jersey. It didn't matter that my mom had an established career as a tenure track professor and friendships in Franklin Lakes, we were moving; and that was that. He chose the advancement of his career and image over the needs of his family.

The new job introduced new stresses into my dad's life and a lot of travel being on various committees. So continued the cycle of drinking and absentee parenting, under which my brother would suffer the most. Every day my dad would get home from work, whether 4 pm or 9 pm he would sit in front of the television for 5-6 hours consuming bottles upon bottles of wine, with scotch and whiskey to cap off the night. (I knew I couldn't talk to my father when he got like this, as it always ended in him yelling.) All the while, there would be little to no interaction with my mother. Between this and my father's travel, the expectations on my mother to entertain the numerous events and dinner parties that come with being the wife of the Bishop sky rocketed. My mother orchestrated and implemented fundraising of Dalit girl children's education without much help from my father. There is no "Bish-chef" (a popular nickname for my dad) without the uncredited work and support of my mom.

While there was no physical infidelity that we know of, we know that he has a history of flirting with other women. Based on our observations, we believe that he has had extramarital deep emotional affairs with several women including a member of his staff.

"Our attention and concern going forward will be out of deep respect for each other and care for Nived[han] and Eklan, who will remain our shared treasure, hope, and joy. "

I have seen the first draft of this letter. It didn't include my brother or me. That was added later. Throughout the marriage counseling process, I begged my dad to pursue personal grief counseling for the loss of his mother. Instead, he made a mission out of arranging the marriage of my cousin, Nishanthan Singh, in India. In less than three days and he did not like it when we expressed our disapproval. Yes you read that correctly: my father arranged a marriage. The full-on stereotypical, archaic, caste- based, misogynistic practice of arranged marriage. He spent months going back and forth to India making sure that his family *there* was taken care of. All the while, his wife and children in the USA awaited his return so that we could start the family counseling that we had finally convinced him to do.

In this divorce process there has been no respect shown towards my mother, my brother or me but instead, he chose to slander her name by convincing the world that he is the victim and that my mother walked out on him when it was him who used the word divorce and other words to ask her to leave the house for over ten years, but more intensely the past five years. The yelling and anger still continues as I experienced it during my thanksgiving visit with him in 2022.

"I have personally informed the Presiding Bishop, the Bishop for Pastoral Development, our Standing Committee, and many leaders about our decision. We have their prayers, blessing, and support as we proceed in this direction."

This is just untrue. Specifically, the *"We" have their prayers*. Our family gave so much to the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester; to the Episcopal Church as a whole. My mother, brother and I left behind a community of friends. My mom left a job as well. I performed at many church events with my bands, Eklan and I both were active in youth group events. We went to every General Convention where we volunteered extensively. I even worked the front desk at diocese office for months after I graduated college. None of this measures up to the daily work of my mother to support my dad's lifestyle and work. Bearing all of this in mind, I would like to point out that not one person from the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester has said a word to my brother, me, or my mother since my father sent this letter. Like so many of my father's communications, this letter is an attempt to steer the narrative. He makes it seem as though, just because my mom stated that she couldn't take it

anymore, he makes it seem that he is the victim. Like many times before, on April 22nd 2022 he looked at my mother and said we should get a divorce but my mother told him that she wanted to continue working on the marriage and since my father had discontinued marriage counselling, she continued marriage counselling by herself.

A Diocese and a faith that teaches us to love and support each other unconditionally has completely sided with the male perspective here. Not once was my mother thanked for her service to the community in Rochester. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said nothing to my mother, my brother, or myself until we reached out ourselves in December 2022. Many people in the church were under the impression that we did not want support, that we wanted privacy. This was a strategy to isolate us. I want to be perfectly clear on this point: not once did my mother, brother, or myself ask for privacy in this matter. If there was any messaging around respecting our privacy and cutting us off from the support of the church, it was generated by someone else. My father said that we are the ones who left, when in reality: we were forced out due to his alcohol consumption, workplace flirtations, and anger issues. No one asked for our truth. We weren't given a voice.

"I will continue to serve as your bishop and intend to take some time off as soon as possible for self-care, lament, reflection, and prayer. I wish Roja only the best in her future. I am heartbroken but believe we will be okay by the grace of God. We are genuinely sorry to share such news, especially while we are in a global pandemic. I do so with the desire to be transparent."

First, in my opinion he has not done any reflection but merely three weeks after the divorce was finalized, called me to ask my permission to date! There is no transparency because he has not stated in the letter that in the past six years he has very often told my mother that this marriage is over and has asked her to leave. Second, why did this need to be public knowledge? Why does an entire faith community need to know about this very private matter? Despite my dad's first name, we are not royalty.

There was a family friend's wedding soon after this letter went out. Some life-long friends that went to seminary with my dad back in India. I wanted to be there to support my friend, but how could I? How could I show my face knowing that all anyone there was going to do was stare and ask questions about what was going on? Only two of my parents' friends from that wedding of hundreds have spoken to my mother, after a lifetime of friendship and ministry together. Aren't we supposed to care for the misrepresented person, the immigrant, the mother and her children? Isn't the question most Christians ask "What would Jesus do?"

I hate that my father wrote this letter. I hate even more that he felt that he needed to. That what only needed to be a programmatic update became the misogynistic shunning that it was. It makes me sick that you all know some stylized, one-sided version of my family's private business. On top of it, no one from the church ever even bothered to pick up the phone and ask me how I was doing. To sit there at my father's farewell Zoom Service and see the complete redaction of my mother's face. To see us "cropped- out" as though we never existed. He leads in dialogues about the Doctrine of discovery that erased Native Americans but has managed to erase us from the history of the Diocese of Rochester.

Considering all the above, it has indirectly come to my attention that my father has started a new relationship with a prior deep love interest in India during his seminary days and is having celebrations already. This further reinforces that healing his relationship with me or my brother is not a priority and he would rather clear his name under the guise of "God's plan" and jump into a new marriage to uphold his name in the eyes of the church.

What has happened in my family is far from amicable, anything to the contrary is a bold-faced lie. I'm disappointed in the Episcopal church. I'm disappointed in my father. I'm disappointed in myself for remaining silent on this subject for so long. I have shared my truth, what you choose to do with it is up to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nivedhan Singh', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nivedhan Singh