

Candidate Statement

Please email this statement to SSSC_Election@armaninoLLP.com by midnight Pacific Time on Friday, August 26, 2022. Please include a recent photo of yourself to be displayed to voters.

Instructions

1. Please respond to each question individually in the boxes provided.
2. Please answer each individual question. A general narrative/essay/story/letter will not be accepted.
3. Armanino will review your statement. If your statement is found to contain incomplete and/or inappropriate content, you will be asked to remove, revise, or update the content. "Inappropriate content" includes, but is not limited to, derogatory and/or inflammatory statements.
4. Several of the questions are identical to those asked of Candidates in previous elections. If you also submitted a statement in a different election, it is permissible to reuse your previous answers to those particular questions.

Personal Information

Name:	Awtar Kaur Khalsa
City & State/Country:	San Francisco CA USA
Email:	awtarkaur@khalsa.com
Name of Spouse:	Siri Datta Singh Khalsa
Occupation:	Retired
Length of Participation in 3HO/Sikh Dharma:	51 years
Length of time as an Ordained Minister of Sikh Dharma:	23 years
Are you a KRI certified teacher or trainer? If so, what is your certification level and when did you acquire your certification?	I am a level 2 certified mentoring lead trainer since the early 2000's.
Ashram Communities lived in:	Guru Ram Das Ashram, Portland OR USA 71-76; Guru Gobind Singh Shakti Sadan 76-79, Pomona CA

	USA; Siri Gurbani Sadan, Los Angeles CA USA 79-93 & Guru Ram Das Ashram, San Francisco USA 93 to present
3HO/Sikh Dharma Community Positions:	Trustee of the SSSC Board Khalsa Council Member Co-Director, Guru Ram Das Ashram, San Francisco for over 25 years. Mentoring lead trainer in the Aquarian Academy. Minister of Sikh Dharma

Questionnaire

1. Why do you feel called to serve on the SSSC Board?

I've been able to make a difference on the board for the past two years through advocacy and bridge-building. My work is not done. I feel called to continue to make a difference.

2. What relevant areas of experience and expertise qualify you for this position and will make you an asset to the board?

For the last two years I've devoted myself to studying the history and operation of the SSSC. I have grown up and served with the "1st generation" and am networked within most of the organizations. I have academic and work experience in restorative justice that I've been applying.

3. Please summarize your prior and current service to the Dharma. If you have served in leadership positions, please note them.

During the 70's & 80s I worked at the 3HO Los Angeles regional office, Sunshine Brass Beds, and the Secretariat.
Member, KRI Professional Development Committee & Teacher Training Executive Council.
SSSC Representative to the Core Compassionate Reconciliation Commission; Member, SSSC Governance Committee; Member, SSSC Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility Commission

4. Please describe your experience of the Siri Singh Sahib as a teacher and your

experience of his teachings.

Throughout my long and devoted relationship with him there were instances where I could sincerely quote the song lyric “You scare me when you do the things I just can’t understand.” Over the years my thinking about those things gradually, then sharply, evolved. I am not interested in denying or erasing the fact that he has been a major influence on my life. As his student and a member of the lineage he founded, I take responsibility for harm that he caused. Seeking accountability continues my experience of him and his teachings. Accountability is not shame. I have no desire to shame anyone.

5. Please describe what the Siri Singh Sahib’s saying means to you: “If you cannot see God in all, you cannot see God at all.” In practical terms:

- a) How would you apply this saying in your day-to-day service on the board?
- b) How would you apply this perspective to help our community and organizations move forward together?

- a. I see myself in all and I see all in myself. I especially seek to see those who have been marginalized and silenced. This is how I can honor trustees and constituents as we wrestle with intense issues. Some commonality brings us from very different places to the same table.
- b. With this perspective we can shape a dharma with a welcoming and inclusive culture that is dedicated to service, that is a safe and supportive harbor for past and current members of our community. One intention is to form a safe container where all of us who were in any way complicit with harming our siblings will be able to acknowledge and explore that in a restorative way. Beyond that, we’ll learn from those harmed what kind of actions or help they might welcome or request. We’ll learn from them how to discern dangerous environments and prevent harm.

6. What do you understand the Role of the SSSC to be? How do you see the SSSC carrying out that role on a:

- a) Practical level
- b) Spiritual level

- a) The SSSC is the apex fiduciary for all its constituent for-profit and non-profit organizations. It appoints the boards for those organizations. It discerns priorities, gives direction, and allocates resources.

b) It is responsible for balancing the karma of our history with dharmic integrity.

7. As an SSSC Trustee you are accountable to the Sangat.

a) How would you build and enhance the relationship between the Sangat and the SSSC?

b) The SSSC is part of a close-knit community. Given that board members are likely to have strong connections to that community, explain how you will be able to adhere to the SSSC confidentiality policies that apply to board members?

a) The [Compassionate Reconciliation Commission](#) includes all facets of the sangat who wish to be involved, including the SSSC board. I've been honored to represent the board on the Core CRC. I am involved in promoting the relationship between the SSSC and the CRC and in having hard conversations across divisions between sangat members.

b) Adhering to SSSC board confidentiality policies requires vigilance and discipline, which I have practiced. I cultivate opportunities for discussion with other board members where that is the appropriate arena. There are also plenty of public decisions to share with our close-knit community.

8. The SSSC strives to practice diversity, equity, and inclusion.

a) What experience do you have incorporating these practices into your personal and professional life?

b) How would you incorporate them into our Organizations?

c) How will you advance the organizational goals of diversity, equity and inclusion?

a) I have graduate school training in inclusion, anti-bias and anti-racism work. I've explored and shared this work with Kundalini Yoga teachers, trainers-in-training and at the whole spectrum of dharmic events. I've served on the Kundalini Yoga Diversity & Inclusion Committee and the SSSC's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility Commission.

b) I am working with the ThinkDEI firm hired by SSSC to consult on how to incorporate best practices in our organizations.

c) I'm helping to supervise ThinkDEI as they begin with a survey and focus groups to audit and report on our current situation. We will then advance to training and goal setting.

9. How do you see the 3HO/Sikh Dharma family of Nonprofit and For-profit organizations serving humanity in these times?

a) What do you see as the three (3) greatest challenges facing the Sikh Dharma/3HO Community and the family of For-profit and Nonprofit entities?

b) What would you do as a Trustee to overcome these challenges?

c) What skills, tools, and techniques will you bring to the SSSC Board of Trustees to help it move toward the vision you described above?

a) Challenges:

1. Recognizing needs in our current and historic community, including women Yogi Bhajan harmed and 2nd Gen.
2. Figuring out how to address those needs with other healing programs in addition to financial Reparations
3. Getting as many community members as possible to "share one house," even if we live in different rooms

b) I will continue to engage in Compassionate Reconciliation in a spirit of care and respect for everyone.

c) I bring willingness and skill to have uncomfortable conversations. I bring ongoing training and practice in circle practice and restorative justice. I bring patience and deep respect for all my fellow board members.

10. Board service regularly requires 20 to 40 hours per month (or more) in evening and weekend board and committee meetings. These meetings are generally held at 8:00 pm Eastern time (20:00 hours). In addition, there may be multiple Face-to-Face meetings per year.

a. Can you fulfill these requirements?

b. If so, how will you balance these requirements with your other personal and professional responsibilities?

c. What do you anticipate being the most difficult part of serving as a Trustee on the SSSC Board?

a. Yes

b. For the last two years I've spent more than 40 hours per month in board activities. I am retired so I have a flexible schedule. Since I am on the West coast of the USA, the meeting time does not impinge too much on my ability to rise in the early hours.

c. The most difficult part of serving as a trustee has been conflict with and between people whom I love and respect.

11. Are you related by blood or marriage to an officer, director, employee, or paid contractor of any of the constituent organizations (nonprofit or for-profit) including all subsidiaries?

a. If yes, to whom are you related, how are you related to them, and what is their position?

Hargobind Singh Khalsa, who served as Reparations Outreach Coordinator for the IHRP, is my son-in-law.