

**SS Amar Atma Singh Khalsa**  
**Phoenix, AZ, USA**

**Candidate Statement**

**Personal Information**

Name:	Amar Atma Singh Khalsa
City & State/Country:	Phoenix, AZ, USA
Name of Spouse:	Siri Chand Kaur Khalsa
Occupation:	Board Certified Chaplain
Length of Participation in 3HO/Sikh Dharma:	17 years
Length of time as an Ordained Minister of Sikh Dharma:	8 years
Are you a KRI certified teacher or trainer? If so, what is your certification level and when did you acquire your certification?	KRI Level 1 - 2005 Authentic Relationships - 2006 Conscious Communication - 2012 21 stages of Meditation - 2014
Ashram Communities lived in:	Phoenix, AZ
3HO/Sikh Dharma Community Positions:	None.

**Questionnaire**

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

My professional background is in acute and critical care Chaplaincy. I've served alongside the code team at times of resuscitation when a patient has a cardiac arrest. I served and supported families during this very challenging time. In the hospital this is the most critical event. This community, right now, is coding.

There are times when resuscitation is futile. There are times when the patient is too

weak to survive the aggressive life saving measures. Chest compressions, shocking the heart and intensive medications sometimes are too much for body to respond. Sometimes, the disease process is too deep, the heart is too damaged, or the health of the patient before this critical moment was too unhealthy for them to survive.

There are times however, when people have remarkable recovery. There are times when people after valiant effort, intense therapy and support, have a beautiful and meaningful life.

I have witnessed the miracle of life and death. I do not believe this is the time of death for this community and this mission. There are many still connected to the Shabd Guru around the world that these organizations help facilitate, and in my opinion it's worth fighting for.

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

By Guru's Grace, I have served in professional ministry for over 10 years. I am one of few, if not the only, Board Certified Sikh Chaplains in the USA. Within this role I have served in leadership, managed a staff and mentored countless others in the specialized field of grief, bereavement, and end of life care. Within this experience I've served as an advisor to directors, executives and C-Suite for hospital systems regarding best practices for families at end of life. I have managed crisis situations, mediated conflict, and served alongside risk managements departments regarding settlements for scenarios of harm done from medical based error. I have certified training in Crisis and Prevention Intervention (CPI) and CANDOR (Compassion and Optimal Resolution) intervention.

By Guru's Grace, I have served in management/co-management/assistant management at Summer and Winter solstice including Yogi Tea for 5 years, SSS Cabin from 2 years, and Gurdwara 1 year.

By Guru's Grace, I have served the Amrit Sanchaars as either a head sevadar, Granthi, member of the Panj, or Jethadar of the Amrit Sanchaar at Summer Solstice from 2010 to 2019.

By Guru's Grace, I have participated in interfaith gatherings, advocating and educating on Sikhism including invitations to documentaries, several church settings, and hospitals.

By Guru's Grace, I served the local Guru Nanak Dwara helping to coordinate 40 sangat lead Akhand Paaths from 2014-2016. I also served on the community council during

this time.

Besides my ministry experience, I feel it's also important to share that I am part of this Sangat though I am not of this Sangat. I did not go to MPA. I did not go to school in India. I wasn't born into this community. I'm not white. I was born Punjabi Sikh and rejected Sikhi in my upbringing. I chose Sikhi after years of exploration and introspection.

I'm neither the pioneer generation nor the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation. I never met the Siri Singh Sahib and so have not been indoctrinated to him. I'm not a lead trainer and never entered the Aquarian Academy. Kundalini Yoga serves my relationship to Gurbani.

I have not accepted, served, or held any positions on Sikh Dharma boards, 3HO boards, SSSC board, or been employed to any dharmic business.

By Guru's Grace, I'm a student of Sikhi. I took Amrit in 2009 at Summer Solstice, Ministry Vows in 2012 at Summer Solstice, and married my beloved in 2013 at Summer Solstice. This community has been my community though I do not identify solely by this community.

I believe these are important elements for leadership. I believe objectivity is important right now. I believe fresh and new ideas are needed at this moment.

I believe there are many members of this community processing very heavily and experiencing a crisis of faith. Many are experiencing identity crisis as well and questioning decisions they have made in their life. Many are questioning their relationship to the Siri Singh Sahib and who they are.

There are many also who are not questioning these things at all and desire to do business as normal. They feel this level of questioning is absurd and any allegation made against the SSS is nonsense. This is also a problem.

Objectivity matters right now. Perspective matters right now. Clear insight matters right now.

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

Please see above.

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

a) Please describe how your personal sadhana and spiritual discipline support

you to keep up.

It was the Siri Singh Sahib's teachings that deeply connected me to Sikhi. His lectures had a profound impact on me. Kundalini yoga was a way in which I healed many layers of pain, low self-worth and low self-value. I've felt his words pierce my heart and give me an experience of life beyond this life. I was excited about a new foundation of Sikhi from years of disappointment in Punjabi Sangats. However, I never met YB in person. He died the year after I found this community. My relationship to him has been ethereal.

I began distancing from him when I saw the community reel from the lawsuit in 2012. I felt the community's grief over the loss of their teacher and the seemingly overwhelming task of "filling his shoes." There was a nostalgia for what was and the present could never compete with it.

The branding of Yogi Bhan on all major dharmic outlets was too much for me. It started to look like a religion of Yogi Bhan rather than a Dharma of Sikhi. There was always an heir of superiority, and the rhetoric, cultish and insular behavior turned me off. From an outsider's perspective, the gain for numbers and commercialization seemed to have more importance than seva and the spirit of dharma.

When Premka's book came out, it felt perfect to me. It felt as if Guru began to regulate. My human experience was overwhelmed by the stories and firsthand accounts of sexual abuse, the AOB report, the trauma from those who went to school in India. It was at times more than I could handle. However, the spiritual part of me felt a sense of relief and gratitude that finally, some shift may come to regulate the deification of YB.

The entity of a teacher doesn't necessarily always sit in the container of being morally correct. Sometimes the teacher or the teachings itself, teaches us what not to do. To think he was above and beyond the human condition was to deny ourselves the love of our own humanity.

I remember thinking if this community is going to continue, we have to reframe its beliefs, its brand, and its reconnection to the foundations that exist beyond YB. In other words, he had to come off the pedestal.

To answer the question, my sadhana is about finding rhythms in my life that are sustainable and that support and protect my vitality. My sadhana is about nutritious plant-based diet, inspired by ayurvedic foundations, shopping at farmer's market and eating locally grown seasonal foods. It's about cultivating friendships with growers and spending time in the garden.

My sadhana is about a loving and safe relationship with Guru Sahib. I find my spirituality by deepening into Gurbani and through this daily bath, develop courageous introspection to challenge and face my limiting beliefs.

My sadhana is filled with journaling and reflecting, walks with my dog, loving relationships, and quality time with my wife. Mindfulness, qi gong, and sometimes kundalini yoga finds its way into my sadhana as well.

It's about fun and not taking things too seriously and sometimes a healthy portion of pizza.

Wonderment is my sadhana. Curiosity is my sadhana. Creative expression is my sadhana.

My spirituality is about wholesome openness to other's quest for spiritual connection.

Sometimes my sadhana is about embracing the suck, being irreverent and loving all of my humanness.

Practicing and learning to live the teachings is my highest sadhana and by Guru's grace exploring this awesome existence we call life as a Sikh of the Guru is a treasure.

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 apply this perspective to help our community and organizations move forward together?

When I read this line by YB, it again perpetuates the core issues that are existentially facing us as a community. I feel compelled to expand our awareness of where his teachings are derived from and share that there's a source behind the source that requires recognition. Can we not expand our horizons beyond one teacher to the eternal authority that has been given to us by the Siri Guru Granth and not solely to a fallible human being? When I consider this phrase I gain inspiration in part to its source, Bhagat Kabir Ji, Raag Parbhathi Ang 1350:

ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ॥

Prabhaatee:

ਅਵਲਿ ਅਲਹ ਨੂਰੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਬੰਦੇ ॥

First, Allah created the Light; then, by His Creative Power, He made all mortal beings.

ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੇ ਮੰਦੇ ॥੧॥

From the One Light, the entire universe welled up. So who is good, and who is bad? ||1||

ਲੋਗਾ ਭਰਮਿ ਨ ਭੂਲਹੁ ਭਾਈ ॥

O people, O Siblings of Destiny, do not wander deluded by doubt.

ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਖਲਕ ਖਲਕ ਮਹਿ ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸੁਬ ਠਾਂਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

The Creation is in the Creator, and the Creator is in the Creation, totally pervading and permeating all places.

||1||Pause||

ਮਾਟੀ ਏਕ ਅਨੇਕ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਾਜੀ ਸਾਜਨਹਾਰੈ ॥

The clay is the same, but the Fashioner has fashioned it in various ways.

ਨਾ ਕਛੁ ਪੋਚ ਮਾਟੀ ਕੇ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਨਾ ਕਛੁ ਪੋਚ ਕੁੰਭਾਰੈ ॥੨॥

There is nothing wrong with the pot of clay - there is nothing wrong with the Potter. ||2||

ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਸਚਾ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਕੀਆ ਸਭੁ ਕਛੁ ਹੋਈ ॥

The One True Lord abides in all; by His making, everything is made.

ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਨੈ ਸੁ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਨੈ ਬੰਦਾ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਈ ॥੩॥

Whoever realizes the Hukam of His Command, knows the One Lord. He alone is said to be the Lord's slave. ||3||

ਅਲਹੁ ਅਲਖੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ਗੁਰਿ ਗੁੜੁ ਦੀਨਾ ਮੀਠਾ ॥

The Lord Allah is Unseen; He cannot be seen. The Guru has blessed me with this sweet molasses.

ਕਹਿ ਕਬੀਰ ਮੇਰੀ ਸੰਕਾ ਨਾਸੀ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਡੀਠਾ ॥੪॥੩॥

Says Kabeer, my anxiety and fear have been taken away; I see the Immaculate Lord pervading everywhere.

||4||3||

This Shabd has been a foundation of my ministry as a Chaplain. I've had to practically apply this in sometimes the most heinous situations. The quest to support people in their own process, without judgment, in kindness and in love to their journey has not always been an easy task. I have failed at this many many times, though Guru has come through that many times as well.

Right now, I feel this question comes in our ability to serve each other with differing points of view. Can we see each other from a lens of spirituality unity amidst the divisiveness that exists?

I believe one of the first steps in accomplishing this is a very basic dose of self-awareness. The question I would pose is: *Can the members of this board differentiate their own personal process that includes the existential questioning and relationship to the Siri Singh Sahib amidst the uncovering of remarkable sexual abuse from their professional roles, responsibilities, and vision of leading a dharmic organization?*

This is a remarkably important question. In my opinion, everyone is allowed their own process. People are processing this newfound information about YB in their own way - each process right for their own growth as difficult as it may be.

However, when leading, especially a dharmic organization, the privilege of this Grace is not fully allowed. We are not responsible solely to our own process; we are responsible for the direction and focus for the future and the seva of humanity.

We must be honest with ourselves. If we DO NOT have the capacity to differentiate between the personal and the professional requires resignation from the board. This is not a failure in my opinion. This is an honest reflection that is courageous and serviceful. We must have leaders who can have clarity within themselves to serve the larger good. To not have this is an insult to the Sangat at large.

To see God in all, is to also see God within ourselves, which means exposing the darkness of our own limited capacities and beliefs. This level of ownership is few and far between in my observation of this community and has been a complaint I have heard about for years.

*Do we really have a relationship to the Guru beyond the SSS? Is our relationship to the Guru solely based on him and 'his' teachings?*

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

On a practical level, helping to serve the larger vision and strategic plan for the for profits and non-profits organizations.

On a spiritual level, to serve as a guiding inspiration for Sikh Dharma in the world.

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

- a) How you would like to build and enhance the relationship between the Sangat and the SSSC?
- b) How you will personally deal with the pressure of accountability while maintaining your spirit of service?
- c) How do you traditionally respond in a crisis or high tension situation?

The only guarantee in life is that we are going to die. We do not know the time or the place, nor will we know how this will happen, yet it is a truth for all of us.

One of my biggest fears is the feelings of regret. I've seen and been present to enough death to know conscious deaths are a rarity.

I want to know within my spirit the feeling of peace that I've done all that I can. This is my litmus to accountability and integrity.

I have participated in a number of situations that required a "war room" to trouble shoot and solve legal battles for organizations I have worked for. The achilles heel to each of these situations is how those who are in the war room communicate effectively out to the constituents.

To be honest, leadership is not my desire. I prefer to be in the trenches and do the work on the ground. I appreciate the challenges that come from leadership roles. It's an unenviable task. Money, politics and power always get in the way. The human condition is very fragile to these forces. I've seen good people become corrupt and I've seen relationships lost due to paternalistic thinking. To do this in the name of the Guru is a profound test of character, one that frankly I never feel I can live up to.

In this time and with this organization amidst the critical nature we are in, ownership, transparency and accountability are huge. There's never enough humility in the process.

The responsibility can be cosmic and overwhelming. However, this is where this fear of regret can be paralyzing. My wife and I call this "the fortress of integrity." It's my imposter syndrome. It's my experience of "needing to be perfect" and the shame of not being enough or doing enough.

When I found this path, it was during a profoundly sorrowful time in my life. Life was not guaranteed for me. I was on the brink of death. Guru came into my heart. By Guru's grace, a wellspring opened in me. I could feel experiences and depths that transcended this life. An internal consistency developed.

I'm not the most intelligent Sikh. I'm not the most studied. I don't have the Guru memorized and my pronunciation of Gurbani will always need work. But I make the effort. I grow. I feel my limitations, and I grow. Humility is my foundation. Not the fake humility, but the God's honest truth humility in which the line between life and death are blurred. All by Guru's Grace.

8. The SSSC practices inclusion, transparency, and accountability.

a) What experience do you have incorporating these practices into your



personal and professional life, and

b) How would you incorporate them into our Organizations?

This community is under pressure to transform and realize its true potential. The stakes are high and the potential outcomes even higher. We are now moving into a deeper component of destruction and reorganization. Perhaps this community exists as the microcosm to the macrocosm of the planet and humanity.

This last year, we've all been asked to be present to the staggering depth of pressure. Hope lies with the Guru who has delivered countless times. Have we developed the relationship with Guru Sahib to let the majesty come through? Are we secure enough to let go trust the deep abiding principles of seva that are felt in Sikhi? We are charged in this time to meet that challenge. It's a time in the planet that we are finally facing hope, reconciliation and passages of transformation.

I've shared my background and experience. I'm willing to be a doula to this birthing process. Are we ready for this growth and change?

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 Dharma (Sikh Dharma-3HO and the family of For-profit and Nonprofit entities)? What would you do as a Trustee to overcome these challenges?

b) What skills, tools, and techniques can you bring to the SSSC Board of Trustees to help us move toward the vision you described above?

Are we an organization of the Siri Singh Sahib or are we an organization of the Guru?  
Are we a cult or are we an organization that shares a Dharma of conscious living?  
Can this organization continue if its leaders are experiencing crisis of faith or existential crisis?

I believe there are people who know the truth behind the sexual misconduct of YB, will they be held accountable?

What is the future of this Dharma going to look like now that the world knows that its leader sexually abused its followers?

Where is the stance on Sikh Dharma, 3ho, KRI in association with YB?

Will KY continue to be separated from the teachings of Sikh Dharma? How will you respond to attacks of cultural appropriation using Sikh mantras? How will there be the component of wearing a turban without cultural and historical representation to sacrifices made from Sikhs of the past?

Where are we at with the pending lawsuits?

What about potential class action lawsuits from those trained in KY through the

Aquarian Academy?

Will the name Siri Singh Sahib Corporation be the name of the future?

Will there continue to be separate non-profits, or will the non-profits begin to merge to save costs and exist as one body of seva?

Ang 68

ਭਾਈ ਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਹਜੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

O Siblings of Destiny, without the Guru, intuitive balance is not obtained.

ਸਬਦੈ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਸਹਜੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਚੁ ਸੋਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Through the Word of the Shabad, intuitive peace and poise wells up, and that True Lord is obtained. ||1||Pause||

10. Board service regularly requires 10 to 20 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 are three Face-to-Face meetings per year (two in New Mexico following the International Khalsa Council Meetings (end of April and end of September) and a third in January or February in Los Angeles or one of our Ashram communities). The Face-to-Face meetings are two days in April and September and three days in January/February. *Note: One day of each Face-to-Face meeting period is always on Monday.*

- 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?

Yes. I have business and work ventures that also require my time. Time management will be very important for me. I will at times have to make strong boundaries at times, however, I would not accept the nomination if I could not apply my consciousness, heart, and effort into it.

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?

No.