

SS Awtar Kaur Khalsa

San Francisco, CA, USA

Candidate Statement

Personal Information

Name:	Awtar Kaur Khalsa
City & State/Country:	San Francisco CA USA
Name of Spouse:	Siri Datta Singh Khalsa
Occupation:	Retired
Length of Participation in 3HO/Sikh Dharma:	49 years
Length of time as an Ordained Minister of Sikh Dharma:	21 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.
Ashram Communities lived in:	Guru Ram Das Ashram, Portland OR USA; Guru Gobind Singh Shakti Sadan, Pomona CA USA; Siri Gurbani Sadan, Los Angeles CA USA & Guru Ram Das Ashram, San Francisco USA
3HO/Sikh Dharma Community Positions:	<i>For the last two years I've been active on the Kundalini Yoga Diversity and Inclusion Committee. I have co-led Guru Ram Das Ashram in San Francisco for almost 25 years. I'm a mentoring lead trainer in the Aquarian Academy. I've done seva for KRI on the Professional Development Committee & Teacher Training Executive Council.</i>

	<i>I've been a Nominee and observer at Khalsa Council.</i>
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Questionnaire

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

This is what I want to do now. It's more important than anything else I've done or could do. It is an extension of my spiritual practice and a practice in itself. I see an opportunity to make a difference and I don't want to sit back and wait for others to do it. At this point I can't turn away or be in the background. I want to know that I did my part, did my best, put in my all, and showed up.

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

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 the area of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. I've applied this to connecting with 2nd generation, and those who have been marginalized on the basis of joining later, living in outposts, race, ability, etc.

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

For the last two years I've been active on the Kundalini Yoga Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

I have co-led Guru Ram Das Ashram in San Francisco for almost 25 years.

I'm a mentoring lead trainer in the Aquarian Academy.

I've done seva for KRI on the Professional Development Committee, Teacher Training Executive Council.

I've been a Nominee and observer at Khalsa Council.

During the 70's & 80s I worked at LA's regional office, Sunshine Brass Beds, and the Secretariat.

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

a) Please describe how your personal sadhana and spiritual discipline support you to keep up.

I sat at his feet taking notes. I was enchanted by his charisma. I measured myself against his teachings and made them the fabric of my life. I represented and shared them to the best of my ability.

I also felt (as he had us sing over and over during White Tantric Yoga) "You scare me when you do the things I just can't understand." I just couldn't understand why he was confusing, insulting, authoritarian and opaque. These days it takes every bit of courage, grounding & discernment that yoga and meditation have given me to confront emerging revelations about him.

A) Daily Japji, ongoing Sahaj Path participation and yoga practice mark the dawn for me. They connect me to vastness. They care for my body, mind and spirit.

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?

a. I see myself in all and I see all in myself. I especially seek to really see and hear 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) I'd like to shape a dharma that is known for its service, that is a safe and supportive harbor for past and current members of our community. I want 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 whom YB 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 discerns priorities for all of its constituent organizations. It gives direction and allocates resources accordingly.

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. 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?

a. I am regularly in touch with many sangat members. I am reaching out to former sangat members to knit together the severed ends in my lost relationships. I would like to do this on a larger scale through Just Outcomes and other initiatives. Through justice, equity, diversity &

inclusion (JEDI) work I envision the sangat better reflecting the demographics of the population.

b. Accountability is pressure but also my salvation. It gives me a sense of purpose and direction.

c. Traditionally I've escaped from crisis. Now I'm writing, communicating, reaching out for expert support and ready to act.

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?

a) I have academic training in inclusion, anti-bias and anti-racism work. I've continued to explore and share this work with Kundalini Yoga teacher trainers in training and at the whole spectrum of dharmic events. In the last two years working on the Kundalini Yoga Diversity & Inclusion Committee has focused and deepened my effort to bring inclusion, transparency and accountability into our organizations.

b) I would incorporate these practices through consulting with experts, instituting training, and goal-setting. Collecting and sharing quantitative and qualitative data will give us a baseline and way to measure progress.

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?

a. Challenges:

1. *Naming and recognizing wrongs that need to be righted in our organization as well as in society as a whole*
2. *Finding agreement and will to address them*
3. *Finding the ways to right the wrongs*

I would marshal all of the spiritual and material resources at our disposal to overcome these challenges.

- b. I have skills & practice having uncomfortable conversations. I've begun restorative conversations with neglected siblings of destiny. This includes those whom YB assaulted. It includes those who left or were shunned or shamed. It includes 2nd generation survivors of neglect and abuse. It includes those who've been marginalized on the basis of race, or sexual identity.*

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?

- a. Yes*
- b. I've retired from most of my teaching and training responsibilities so I have a flexible schedule and can devote 10-20 hours per month or more to meetings. Since I am on the West coast of the USA, the meeting time will not impinge too much on my ability to rise in the dawn hours.*
- c. I expect the most difficult part of serving as a trustee will be experiencing 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?

No