

SS Ek Ong Kaar Khalsa Michaud
Plano, TX, USA

Candidate Statement



Personal Information

Name:	Ek Ong Kaar Khalsa Michaud
City & State/Country:	Plano, TX and Espanola, NM USA
Name of Spouse:	Patrick Michaud
Occupation:	Teacher, Writer, Translator, Business Consultant
Length of Participation in 3HO/Sikh Dharma:	28 years
Length of time as an Ordained Minister of Sikh Dharma:	17 years
Are you a KRI certified teacher or trainer? If so, what is your certification level and when did you acquire your certification?	Yes. Level 2 Certification. Certified Level 1 in 1996. Certified Level 2 in 2015
Ashram Communities lived in:	Houston, Texas. Espanola, NM. USA.
3HO/Sikh Dharma Community Positions:	Listed in question 3 below

Questionnaire

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

I feel called to serve because members of the community have literally “called” me on the phone and approached me in other ways, asking me to run.

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

If the Ministry elects me to serve on the SSS C Board, I would bring the following:

- My experiences and memories serving the Siri Singh Sahib, the mission, and the various for-profit and not-for-profit entities over the course of 20+ years.
- Insight and skills I have developed as a translator of Gurbani and a scholar of Sikh history.
- An intuitive feel for how to manifest projects through group consciousness and diagonal processes.

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

1996: Certified Kundalini Yoga Teacher (Level1)

1998: Marketing Assistant for Yogi Tea, Golden Temple and Sunshine Oils

2000: Marketing for 3HO Foundation

2002: Marketing and Communications for SikhNet.com, in the post 9-11 environment. This includes SikhNet's process of working in tandem with other Sikh organizations to protect and defend the Sikh identity.

2003: Gurbani Translator: collaborated with the Siri Singh Sahib on a translation of Guru Nanak's *Japji Sahib*, which was then published in 2004.

2003: Program Developer: Japji Sahib course offered through Sikh Dharma International

2004: PR and communications after the Siri Singh Sahib left his physical body.

2005-2012: Creative Director for Sikh Dharma International including:

- Project Manager for Siri Singh Sahib Gurdwara Broadcast Lecture Series
- Dasvandh Assistant
- Brand and Website Developer
- Marketing and Communications for the 300th Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh's Joti Jot
- Senior Editor *Success and the Spirit*

2006-2008: Chair for the Secretariat section of the International Khalsa Council

2008: Published translation of Guru Amar Das Dev ji's *Anand Sahib*

2008-current: KRI Teacher Trainer specializing in Sikh Dharma-related topics

2010: Entered the Aquarian Academy.

2012: Associate Trainer in the Aquarian Academy

2013-2019: Program Director and Learning Center Director for SikhNet.com. Projects included:

- SikhNet's website and brand redesign
- KAUR animation
- SikhNet Learning Center
- Gurbani White Board series

2014-2017: Secretary of the Board for SikhNet.com

2015: Level 2 Certified Kundalini Yoga Teacher

2015: Published translation of Guru Arjan Dev ji's *Sukhmani Sahib*

2018-Present: Assistant Editor for the rewrite of KRI's Level 2 Teacher Training Modules.

2019: *Dewdrops of Light* - A collection of inspirational essays

2019: Professional Trainer in the Aquarian Academy

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 my blessing to begin studying Kundalini Yoga in 1991 at the Guru Ram Das ashram in Houston, Texas; to study directly with the Siri Singh Sahib from 1996 until his passing in 2004; and to continue working deeply with the Teachings through my work as a translator, minister, teacher and teacher trainer ever since.

To describe my experience of the Siri Singh Sahib and the Teachings would probably take a novel. What I can say succinctly is that I deeply value the time I spent with him, and I continue to learn and grow from the Teachings.

(a) What I appreciate about the Teachings is their vastness. No matter what I may be going through in my personal life, there is always a Kriya, meditation or Shabad that helps me keep up.

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?

This phrase, "If you cannot see God in all, you cannot see God at all" is, to me, the cliff notes version of *Sukhmani Sahib*. It speaks to the non-dualistic perspective that accepts and surrenders to the Will of the Divine.

What does non-duality mean? Giving people their sovereignty. And maintaining one's own sovereignty. It doesn't mean that everything looks good or feels good all the time. On the contrary, the Divine Gaze embraces the totality of life - the darkest, the lightest, the highest, the lowest. Non-duality acknowledges the messiness and doesn't try to change it. Rather, it flows with the messiness and trusts that the creative process is Divinely guided. The Divine Intelligence knows what It is doing even when we cannot see where the road leads.

(a) and (b) In terms of how I would apply this - it would be to stay engaged and present with whatever unfolds within our boards, communities and organizations. Being present with what is, including with my own intuitive sensibilities and my own voice as part of the process. Holding my sovereignty while giving others their sovereignty. Not trying to control anything yet participating authentically.

This is, of course, an ideal view. I will strive to maintain that perspective the best I can.

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

To oversee the judicious management of the Yogi Bhajan Legacy financial assets. This includes both intellectual and physical property as well as for-profit and not-for-profit business.

Practical level

Practically speaking, I think the Board would benefit from a paid group of administrators. And that the role of the Board is to provide advice and guidance to those administrators. From what I have heard, it seems like the current administrative staff for the SSS Corp Board is overtaxed. It is possible that the Board is picking up duties that are better handled by a day-to-day staff.

Spiritual level

The members of the SSS Corp board have a responsibility to act ethically. I think ethics is a very universal concept, and that every religious tradition has its way of expressing ethics. Ideals such as: honoring one's word; treating people respectfully; making decisions that are in the best interests of the whole, rather than the few or an individual.

I also see the SSS Corp Board setting policy across the for-profit and not-for-profit entities, based on the values enshrined in the Teachings of Yogi Bhajan. The International Khalsa Council has an important role to play in articulating those values, and advising the SSS Corp Board on policy issues.

In terms of Spiritual Authority: when the Siri Singh Sahib ji left his physical body, he stated that there would be no Siri Singh Sahib to succeed him. Instead, he divided his spiritual authority into three separate offices: two offices for Sikh Dharma and one office for 3HO and KRI. These offices are:

For Sikh Dharma: The Chief Religious Authority on the teachings of the Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji on the practice of Sikh Dharma given as a joint responsibility to:

- Office of the Bhai Sahib/a
- Office of the Siri Sikdar Sahib/a

Each of these offices has their unique roles and realms of responsibility as recorded in the 2003 Sikh Dharma International Bylaws.

For 3HO and KRI: Director of the Spiritual Trust

To oversee the integrity of the Golden Chain and to coordinate the work of KRI and 3HO.

It has been fifteen years since the Siri Singh Sahib left his physical body. Yet, to date, these offices are not fully functioning according to his vision. One of the offices, the Director of the Spiritual Trust, has never been set up.

I would like to see all three of these offices functioning according to the original vision that the Siri Singh Sahib articulated for them. And I would like to see each of these offices having a permanent seat on the SSS Corp Board in order to advise in spiritual matters when needed.

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?

How you would like to build and enhance the relationship between the Sangat and the SSSC?

Our first job is to understand who the sangat is. In the last decade, we have seen tremendous growth in our Kundalini Yoga community. We need to update our understanding of sangat with data.

Who identifies themselves as belonging to the Yogi Bhajan/Siri Singh Sahib Legacy Community? Is that even the proper name for the sangat? Are they Sikhs? Yoga students? Teachers? Ministers? Sat Nam Rasayan practitioners? Are they the drinkers of Yogi Tea?

Where do these people live? What languages do they speak? Why do they identify themselves as part of "the sangat"? What do they need from this community connection?

I would like us to do a census of some kind through all possible channels to get clear, global, data helping us understand the true make-up of the sangat.

The census will help us know: (1) Who these people are (2) Why they see themselves as part of this community (3) What they need as members of this community and (4) What they have to give.

Once we have this information in hand, then the issue of building and enhancing relationships will be easier to answer. It will also be easier to be accountable to the sangat when we know who they are and what they need from us.

In the last couple of years, we have watched Kundalini Yoga Teachers using Facebook to organize themselves and express their grievances around Akal Security's contracts with ICE. This offers one example of the communication disconnect between our central structure and our grass roots. We can create better systems for intra-community dialogue. First, we need data to know what these people need and how to reach them.

How you will personally deal with the pressure of accountability while maintaining your spirit of service?

Accountability is the core of service. The only way to serve is to be accountable in words and deeds towards a higher vision. Practically speaking, accountability means being true to my values. Being honest about the positions that I take. And communicating transparently with the community.

How do you traditionally respond in a crisis or high tension situation?

Show up. Speak honestly. Hold my values. Dialogue where possible. Give it to the Guru.

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?

I would call into question whether the SSSC practices inclusion, transparency and accountability. In my humble experience, this is not accurate.

One example: I nominated someone to run for SSS Corp Board who accepted the nomination. Yet through some vetting process relating to how that person was living their Minister Vows, the person was blocked from running even though that person is a current Minister. Neither this vetting process around the Minister Vows was communicated to the community. Nor do we know how many people were blocked from running for the Board because of it.

The process around running for SSSC Board and voting for Board members is very exclusive and somewhat opaque. We need to make these processes more accessible and inclusive. At a minimum, Professional and Lead trainers in the Aquarian Academy need a seat at the table.

What experience do you have incorporating these practices into your personal and professional life, and

Ways I practice this in my own life:

Inclusion: The main way I practice inclusion is by listening to and dialoguing with people from various facets from our community.

Transparency: I practice vulnerable, authentic writing. Often writing essays that come from a very personal and transparent place. My intention is to share my process in empowering and uplifting ways.

Accountability: I have various mentors I work with in my life who help me stay accountable to my values, direction and discipline.

How would you incorporate them into our Organizations?

First is to know to whom we are accountable. The census that I mentioned previously would help us discover that.

Second is to look at our own biases within our organizational leadership structures. And examine if some of our practices exclude certain groups from “coming up” into leadership roles.

Third is to look at the different facets of our community: Kundalini Yogis, Sikhs, Sikh Dharma Ministers, Sat Nam Rasayan practitioners. Is there a need to forge a sense of belonging to a greater whole?

Fourth - how are we going to handle our organizational processes as the Teachings continue spreading into multiple languages? Much of our communications are in English. What are we going to do about that?

I have been live blogging this process of running for SSS Corp Board. In the spirit of transparency, I will continue blogging about my experiences of being on the board if elected.

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?

We need to affirm and support our organizations to do the work of their core missions:

- 3HO spreads the technology of Kundalini Yoga.
- Sikh Dharma spreads the technology of Sikh Dharma.
- KRI holds the Teachings and trains Teachers.
- The for-profit businesses serve the dual purpose of providing employment opportunities for community members while tithing their Dasvandh back to the non-profit entities.

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?

1. Identifying who our sangat it.
2. Building an effective bridge between the Kundalini Yoga and Sikh Dharma communities, in the spirit of the Aquarian Age. To nurture Sikh Dharma Ministry leadership among some of our newer community members who feel drawn to the Guru.
3. To establish the flow of prosperity among community members through sangat-owned businesses.

Issue 1 can begin to be addressed through a community census.

Issue 2 can begin to be addressed by having the Offices of the Bhai Sahib/a, Siri Sikdar Sahib/a and Director of Spiritual Trust functioning according to their unique roles and responsibilities.

Issue 3 can begin to be addressed by reconnecting to the Siri Singh Sahib's business teachings. To read them, dialogue about them. And to examine how our organizational culture is currently aligned or misaligned with those teachings.

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?

See answers number 2 and 3.

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. Can you fulfill these requirements?

I can reasonably commit to 3-5 hours per week for board work for the next five years.

I can also commit to the face to face meetings.

More than 3-5 hours a week on a regular basis is not realistic for me. If there is an emergency, of course that would make sense. But not as a regular occurrence.

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

My health and my husband come first. If service on the SSS Corp Board compromises either my health or my relationship with my husband, I will step down.

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

I think this board needs financial experts. People with Management, Accounting and Economic degrees. I am researching getting an MBA myself to have the skills to understand the economic complexities of our financial eco-system.

Understanding what we have and how to grow it will probably be the most difficult part of serving.

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.