

Bibi Bimal Kaur Khalsa



National Sikh Youth Federation

ਨਖ ਸਿਖ ਲਉ ਸਗਲ ਅੰਗ ਰੋਮ ਰੋਮ ਕਰਿ ਕਾਟਿ ਕਾਟਿ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੇ ਚਰਨ ਪਰ ਵਾਰੀਐ ॥

From [my] nails to [my] head cut all my limbs into the width of a hair, [these] are a sacrifice at
the feet of the Sikh

ਅਗਨਿ ਜਲਾਇ ਫੁਨਿ ਪੀਸਨ ਪਸਾਇ ਤਾਂਹਿ ਲੈ ਉਡੈ ਪਵਨ ਹੋਇ ਅਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰੀਐ ॥

Burn [these cut pieces] in the fire and grind the ashes with a millstone and let the wind carry
the ashes away in all directions

ਜਤ ਕਤ ਸਿਖ ਪਗ ਧਰੈ ਗੁਰ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਾਤ ਤਾਹੂ ਤਾਹੂ ਮਾਰਗ ਮਹਿ ਭਸਮ ਕੈ ਡਾਰੀਐ ॥

As the feet of the Sikh tread on those paths that are of the Guru let my ashes be carried that
way [accompanying the Sikh on that path].

ਤਿਹ ਪਦ ਪਾਦਕ ਚਰਨ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗੀ ਰਹੈ ਦਯਾ ਕੈ ਦਯਾਲ ਮੋਹਿ ਪਤਿਤ ਉਧਾਰੀਐ ॥

So I may remain joined [physically and my consciousness] to the feet of the Sikh walking on
the Path towards Guru, oh most merciful, giver of mercy! Carry this fallen one across!

Dedicated to those rare souls, like Shaheed Bibi Bimal Kaur Khalsa, who walk the
established path of Gursikhi, sacrificing their entire being to keep the soul of the Panth alive,
may we have the great good fortune to become the dust of the feet of such Gursikhs.

Dhan Guru Dhan Guru Piyare

Without the support of our panthic parivaar this project would not have been possible.





“It is correct that as a family we are no longer complete, the children are missing their father’s love and I am without my husband, however furthering the Sikh traditions, rooted in our history, is a great thing which cannot take place without the Hukam of the Guru.”

Bibi Bimal Kaur Ji Khalsa



*“The Sikh issue is in reality the issue of the freedom of Punjab.
If the issue is viewed and fought for as the issue of our freedom,
then the path is clear and victory can be attained.”*

- Bibi Bimal Kaur Khalsa
Interview in Paigam Magazine Nov 1989



ਕੌਮ ਦੀਆ ਸ਼ੀਂਹਣੀਆਂ ਮਾਂਵਾਂ Forever More Than “The Assassin’s Widow”

Bimal Devi was born on the 7th of November 1950 to a Hindu Punjabi family. She grew up in Goray village Hoshiarpur, where she studied at a nearby government collage, and like so many other children of Punjab, she was sheltered from Sikh struggle and the realities of Sikh existence within the oppressive colonial 'civilization' project of the indian state.

Bimal Kaur Khalsa, who was born from Khande-Ki-Phaul on 17th October 1984, would come to dominate Sikh political struggle and become a defiant and fierce advocate for the Sikhs of Punjab.

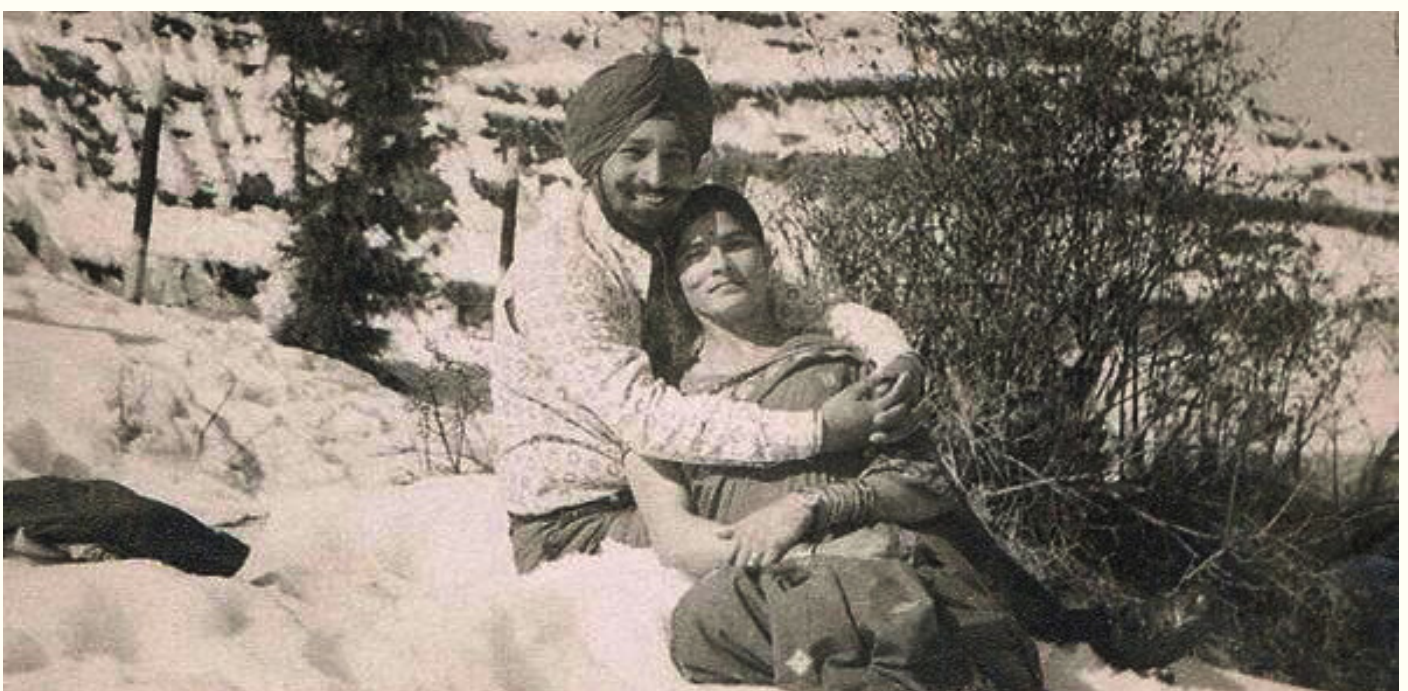
“Assassin’s Widow Charged With Murder After Rioting In Golden Temple” 5th June 1984, AP News headline

After the assassination of the indian prime minister, Indira Gandhi, on the 31st of October 1984, the india media, which acted as a branch of the indian state, would consistently refer to Bibi Bimal Kaur Khalsa as “the assassin’s widow”, erasing her voice, agency and role in Sikh struggle, turning Bimal Kaur from an active participant and a powerful leader into a passenger. The Shaheedi of Beant Singh had a profound impact on Bibi Bimal Kaur, and the entire Sikh Panth, Bimal Kaur launched herself into the center of the Sikh



liberation struggle. Willing to confront authority and challenge power directly, Bibi Bimal Kaur was a powerful and radical organiser, who went from prisoner to parliment, to Shaheed, she took the trust the people placed in her and exposed the reality of indian democracy at the cost of her life.

Bimal Devi was married to Beant Singh on January 23rd 1976, together they had 3 children, Amrit Kaur, Sarbjit Singh, and Jaswinder Singh, we are indebted to Bhai Jaswinder Singh for sharing his families account, corroborating our research, and providing us with images of his parents.



Beant Singh came from an amritdhari family, however the culture of the Indian security forces created a distance between Beant Singh and his practice of Sikhi, he left the discipline of a Sikh behind and became a loyal Indian officer. He was obliged to regularly drink with his colleagues to be accepted into the social circles of the Indian security forces. Beant Singh had more than ten years of service to the Indian state, he was committed to his life in Delhi as part of the elite unit guarding the Indian prime minister, this commitment was reflected in Indira's confidence in the loyalty of her guards.

After the invasion of Sri Darbar Sahib in June 1984 Indira was advised by her intelligence to remove any Sikh from her personal security, Indira was so confident the Sikhs in her service were completely isolated from Punjab and the Sikh struggle that she allowed her ego to best her judgment in mistakingly believing her own propaganda that the attack on Sri Darbar Sahib was not a 'Sikh issue', that it only affected a 'radical minority'. The 37 gun shots piercing her body broke the silence of Safdarjung Road on the morning of 31st October, forever proving Indira wrong and opening Delhi's ears and eyes to the reality of Sikh struggle.

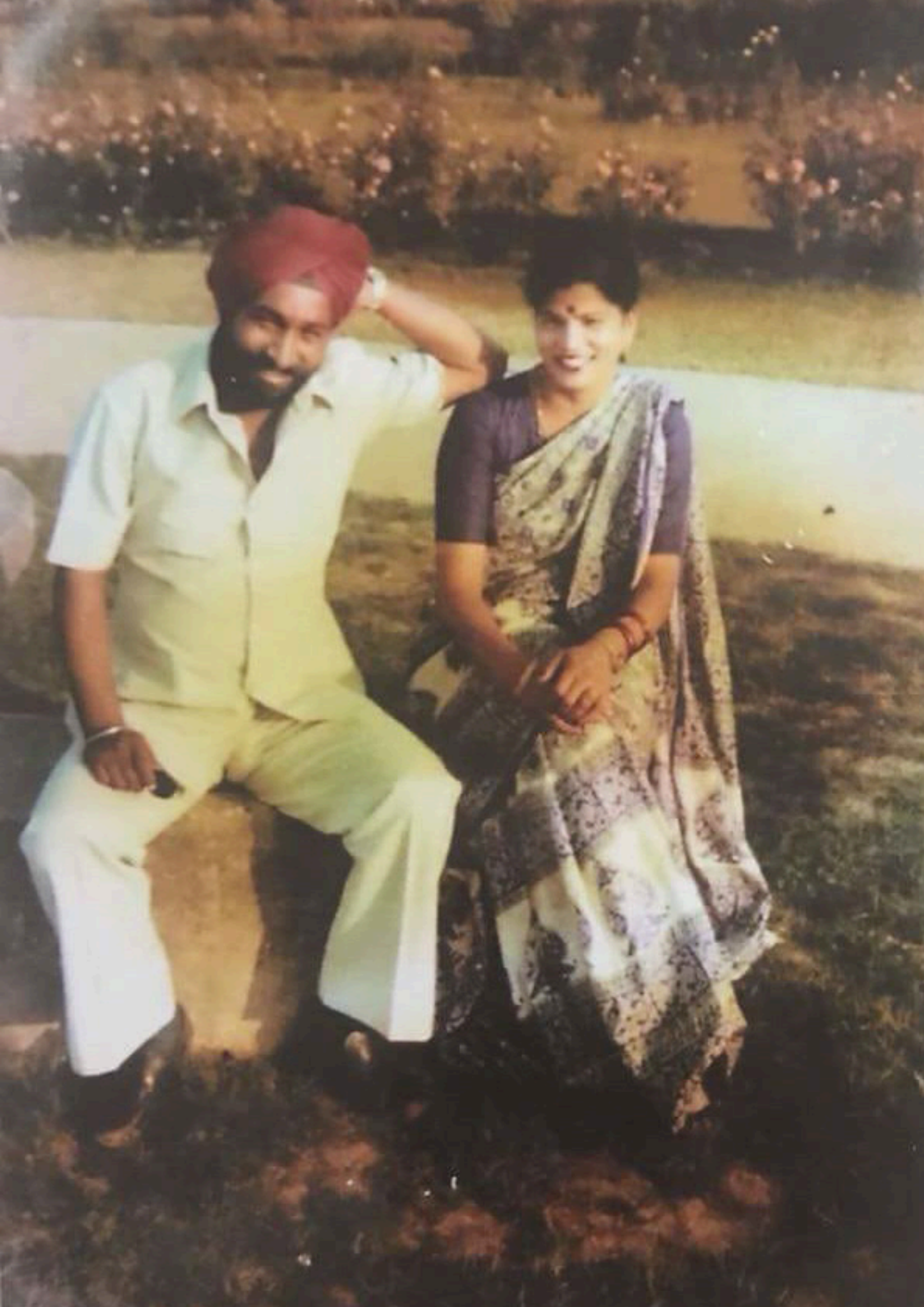
In an interview given to the influential grassroots panthic magazine 'Jantik Paigaam' in November

1989 we have Bibi Bimal Kaur's first hand account. When Bimal Kaur reflected back on the months leading up to the assassination of Indira Gandhi, she told the editor of the changes she noticed in Beant Singh, how he was finding a deeper connection to his Sikhi, he stopped drinking and started regularly going to the Gurdwara, and once again he started keeping his Sikh discipline.

"I feel as if I'm going to become a Shaheed" Beant Singh told Bimal Kaur in July 1984, Bimal Kaur asked what would become of their children, Beant Singh replied "countless children just like ours were killed in Darbar Sahib, they will grow up just like that". At the time she dismissed it as anger that every Sikh must be feeling after the attack on Sri Darbar Sahib. Bimal Kaur was unaware of the exact impact seeing the demolished Akaal Takhat would have on Beant Singh, his inner Sikh would awaken, and Guru Sahib themselves would choose Beant Singh to alter Sikh history.

The renowned Sikh poet and philosopher Harinder Singh Mehboob, in a now famous poem, tried to channel this moment of realisation: *"when tearfully Beant looked up at the demolished Akaal Takhat, the skies bore down heavy with the tales of our three centuries, with immeasurable strength in its chest the eagle takes a divine flight into the heavens, oh the fine line of time care for the discipline of the Shaheed"*.







"Would you like to give any message to the people of Punjab?"

"Yes, everyday we say the same thing, that, against the oppression of the state, and for the struggle to liberate Punjab, it is necessary for the Sikh Panth and our Punjabi siblings to unite and fight."

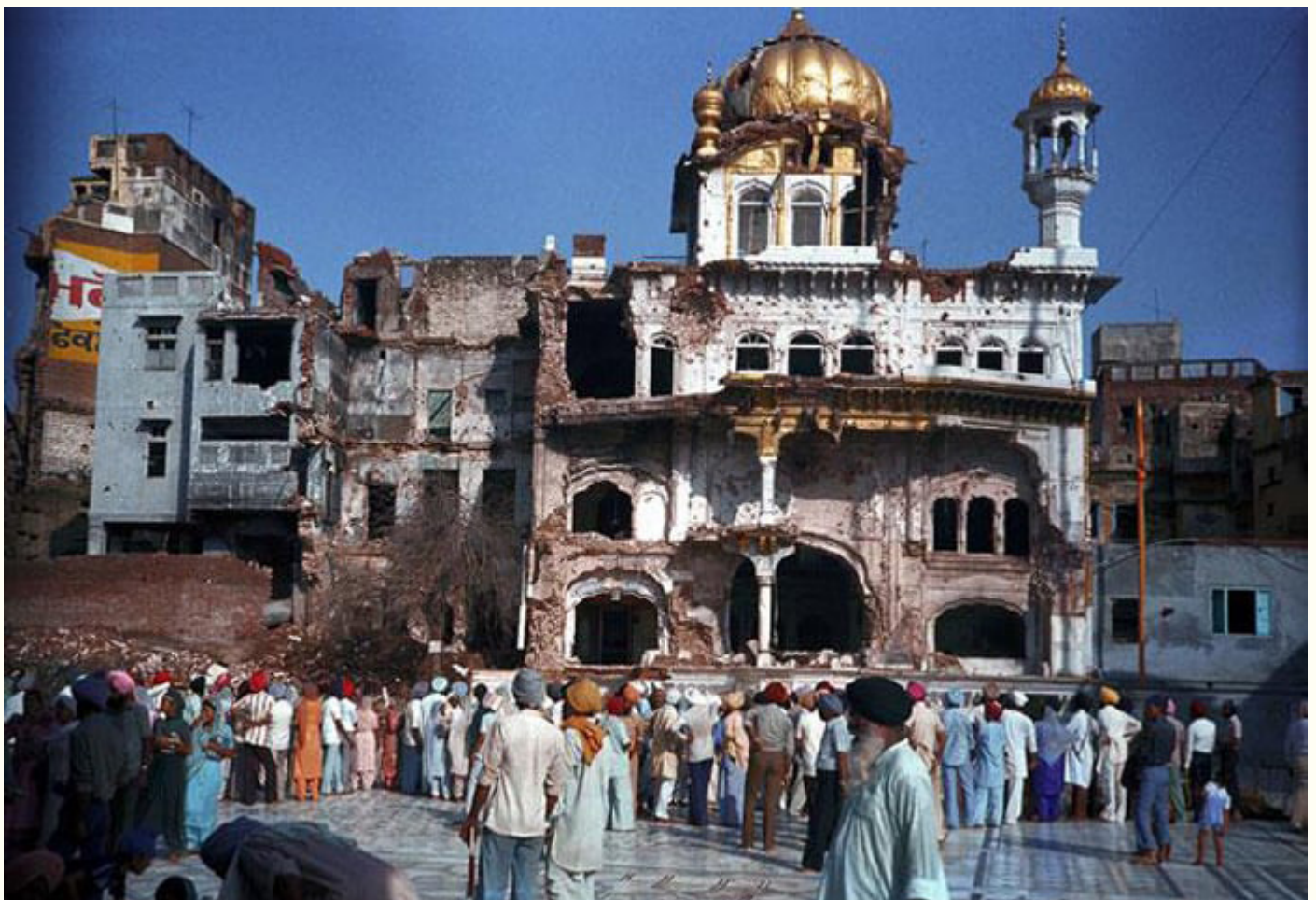
- Bibi Bimal Kaur Khalsa
Interview in Paigam Magazine Nov 1989

In her last recorded speech in Slough, UK in summer 1991, Bibi Bimal Kaur said "Sant Jarnail Singh jolted the sleeping Sikh Quam awake, and because of this awakening the Sikh Quam is aware of its rights, and because of this awakening we are speaking of our rights today, their Jeevan for us is a tower of light". The Shaheedia of June 1984 opened Beant Singh's eyes, and illuminated his soul, in the months between June and October Beant Singh would make a huge effort to reconnect with Sikhi. Bimal Kaur noticed a profound spiritual change in Beant Singh, it began with Beant Singh saying that he wanted to keep his rehit and take Amrit again. Bimal Kaur would say "first you were not interested in these things, at least we should talk about it" Beant Singh told Bimal Kaur that "you know I used to drink with my work friends and I know it upset you, we argued about it, I thought at least from that aspect you would welcome the change". Beant Singh would go to the Gurdwara daily and he made multiple trips to Sri Darbar Sahib, to do Ardaas for Guru to show them the way.

Beant Singh reconnected with his uncle Kehar Singh to understand the Sikh struggle, he was wrestling with his history altering decision. Beant Singh met Satwant Singh and the two struck a friendship, for the month leading up to the

assassination Satwant Singh would come to their house every day and spend hours engrossed in conversation with Beant Singh. At the time Bimal

Kaur didn't know Satwant Singh's name, she assumed their conversation was about security matters. On 14th of October Beant Singh came home wearing a kurta, with his beard flowing, and wearing his Panj Kakkar, Bimal Kaur was slightly surprised, "you went to Moti Bagh Gurdwara and took Amrit didn't you". Beant Singh smiled and asked if Bimal Kaur wanted to take Amrit, on the 17th of October 1984 Bibi Bimal Kaur Khalsa took Khande-Ki-Phaul and joined the Khalsa Panth. Three days later the whole family went to Amritsar and spent the day doing seva in the Langar hall, Beant Singh and Kehar Singh stood and did an Ardaas in front Sri Akal Takhat Sahib. On the 24th of October Beant Singh come home and told Bimal Kaur how he had refused a Diwali gift of cash and sweets from his senior officers. These last few months were happy and peaceful and gave Bimal Kaur new sense of meaning. On the 30th of October she saw her husband for the last time. They spent the entire day together, Beant Singh wanted to meet his friend Paramjit who worked in the telephone exchange, they went to his house together where Bimal Kaur overheard Beant Singh



telling Paramjit's mother that in 10 or 15 days there is going to be a huge assault on Sikhs, and that it's a government scheme from the top.

Bimal Kaur was a nurse at Lady Hardinge Medical College in New Delhi, on 31st of October at work she heard that Indira Gandhi had been shot, she was worried about Beant Singh as he was always with Indira. When she returned from lunch she found the hospital superintendent and the police in her office, "is Beant Singh alright?" the police said nothing, just told her to come with them. She was taken back to her house where she found her entire home surrounded by police, the whole house had been searched and all their belongings were thrown everywhere.

"During this time I was so worried, I asked about my husband and they wouldn't say anything. In the evening a lady police inspector came and told me to put my belongings away, I asked her if Beant Singh was OK, she said nothing, she just started helping me put stuff away. When we were alone for

a moment the lady inspector quietly told me Beant Singh and Satwant Singh had killed Indira Gandhi". Bimal Kaur asked who Satwant Singh was and if he was also part of Indira's security, when the lady inspector said yes, the realization dropped on her, that it was the same man who would come to their home every day.

That evening Bibi Bimal Kaur was taken to an interrogation centre, their children were left with Beant Singh's mother. Bibi Bimal Kaur was interrogated for 2 weeks. She was deprived of sleep the entire time. The police kept asking her the same questions, "who did you meet between operation blue star and 30th October and what did you talk about?", "you must have known what Beant Singh was planning before it happened". The police threatened her with life imprisonment, they threatened to kill her and her entire family, the interrogators told her that she was the child of a snake and that her children would be hanged in front of her.



Shaheed Bhai Beant Singh did not share his plans with Bimal Kaur, being part of the Indian state machinery for so long, he knew how it operated and made sure to never share any information with her, other than his desire to become a Shaheed for the Panth. After her interrogation Bibi Bimal Kaur was released and placed under house arrest.

The police made sure to keep a constant watch on her home and her whole family. The police wanted to keep Bimal Kaur isolated and in constant fear, the atmosphere in Delhi was tense, the Indian ruling classes were eager to put into action their plan to punish the Sikh community and used Indira Gandhi's death as the pretext to launch the next phase of the assault on Sikhs. Congress politicians led mobs of Hindus to attack Sikh homes, businesses, schools, and Gurdwarah. Sikh men were brutally killed in the streets of Delhi and other towns where the Congress party had power. Sikh women were gang raped, and children were killed.

Bibi Bimal Kaur felt alone and lived through November and December in constant fear, she had been deliberately separated from any support, she felt helpless and afraid listening to reports of violence that her husband was being blamed for.

On the 28th of December 1984 the bhog ceremony for Shaheed Bhai Beant Singh was to be held in

their ancestral village of Moliya, Bimal Kaur was worried about the arrangements and attending the Bhog alone with her small children, she worried for the safety, she felt no one would be there how would she carry out the Bhog alone. When Bimal Kaur arrived at Shaheed Bhai Beant Singh's village thousands of Sikhs had gathered at the village of Moliya to pay their respects to Shaheed Bhai Beant Singh and Bibi Bimal Kaur.

Seeing this sight of the love and respect that was shown to her Bimal Kaur felt an overwhelming sense of strength and resolved to live her life in service of the Khalsa Panth.





Part 2

coming soon

