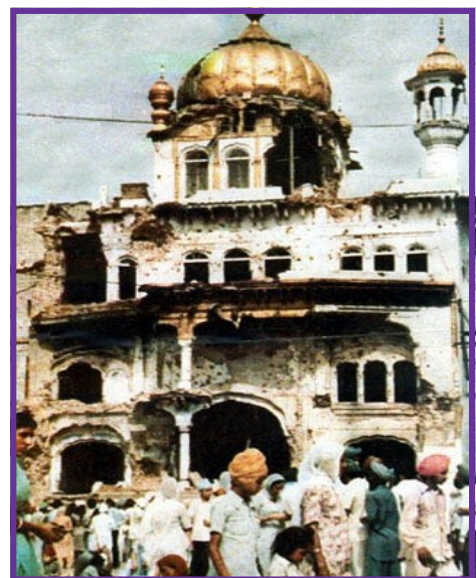




Mothers Sunday is about children throughout the globe showing gratitude to their mothers. Buying cards, baking cakes, treats and gift purchases, are of the moment. For most of us, our mother is our first provider of nourishment, first teacher and first human relation. A powerhouse of a figure, whom has a lasting impact upon us in childhood. Soft and loving, scolding and disciplining, coaching and cajoling her children to be the best. To work her magic with her children, is the mother's role and hence why we are so indebted and grateful to her.

Mothers Day is always of significance to me as a Sikh, as it is a time to be thankful to my spiritual and eternal mother, Mata Sahib Kaur Jee. But, this year in addition to my usual routine with Mata Sahib Kaur Jee, I'll also be reminiscing about the mothers I have encountered over the last 30 years, either in person or through my studies of 1984 to 2014. The 30 years anniversary of 1984 and the Sikh genocide are fresh in my mind, for this year's Mothers day.

In 1984 the Indian Government attacked Harmander Sahib (The Golden Temple) in Amritsar – killing thousands of innocent pilgrims and young male Sikhs were persecuted in a martial law situation, that prevailed throughout Punjab. Sikhs were raped, murdered and their homes and businesses looted in November 1984 after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Orchestrated mobs committed a genocide against Sikhs. In this one year, at least 25,000 Sikhs were killed by the Indian state.



The destroyed Akal Takhat after Operation Blue Star in 1984

This year, I think it is pertinent for us all to reflect on these events and especially the role of Sikh women,

both the deceased, and survivors. I will highlight a few cases of such women, who are a beacon for future generations. Their stories must be told and recorded in the annals of history, after 30 years we owe them this much, at least.

On Vaisakhi 1978 (13th April), thirteen Sikhs attained Shaheedi (martyrdom) whilst peacefully protesting against the fake Nirankari cult in Amritsar. The leading figure of these Sikhs was Bhai Fauja Singh. Bibi Amarjit Kaur, his wife became an influential figure after his martyrdom. Bibi Amarjit Kaur's sister Bibi Paramjeet Kaur was present in Harmander Sahib in 1984 during Operation Blue Star, but she refused to leave her Guru and save herself. She chose instead to remain alongside Guru Granth Sahib in a room in the complex, in an attempt to save any sacrilege occurring to her Guru – on the 5th June 1984 she was martyred doing so.



Shaheed Bibi Paramjeet Kaur

Bibi Pritam Kaur was also martyred in the attack on Harmander Sahib; she became Shaheed alongside her husband, Bhai Mohar Singh and two young daughters, Satnam Kaur and Vaheguru Kaur. The whole family were close to Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Prior to the commencement of the army attack, Sant Jee had asked Bhai Mohar Singh to leave Harmander Sahib with his family. The family had refused to leave and instead they said that they had already done Ardas (supplication prayers) that they should become martyrs, whilst defending the complex. Their resolve was immovable. Bibi Pritam Kaur treated the wounded during the attack



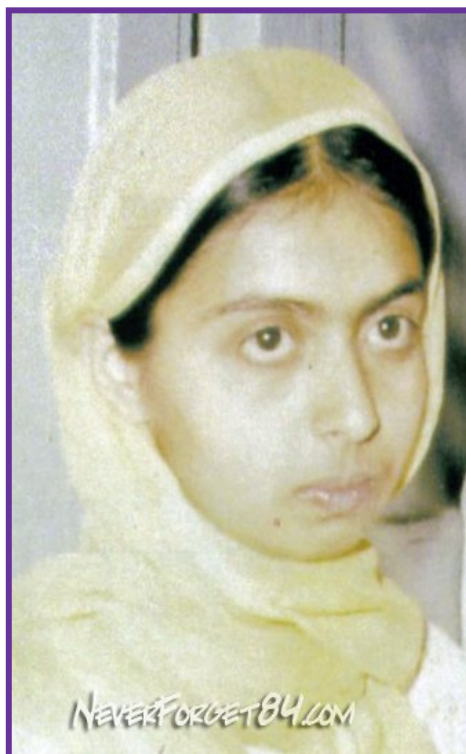
Shaheeds Family, Bhai Mohar Singh, Bibi Pritam Kaur Satnam Kaur & Vaheguru Kaur

and the family took up defensive positions at the Shaheed Ganj of Shaheed Baba Deep Singh Jee (the spot where Baba Deep Singh Jee had breathed his last). Legend has it that the family successfully halted a tank from going any further and had all attained martyrdom whilst doing so. This meant that the Indian army had to go around the parkarma (walkway) in the opposite direction in order to get to the Akaal Takhat, where the most fierce fighting took place. This tank was removed after the Indian army had occupied the complex. One daughter of this family who wasn't

present, lives on and was last heard to be residing in New Zealand.

The role of All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) needs to be highlighted, in particular that of Upkar Kaur and Paramjeet Kaur. Bibi Upkar Kaur was the President of the Girls Wing of the Federation and hailed from Karnal in Haryana – she was an outspoken member of the Federation and a leading female icon of Sikh rights. She became Shaheed on 6th June 1984 in Harmander Sahib.

Bibi Paramjeet Kaur was married to Bhai Harminder Singh Sandhu who was the General Secretary of the AISSF in 1984. Not long before the army attack, they got married on top of the Guru Ram Das Langar building in the complex, . Bibi Paramjeet Kaur also became Shaheed in the attack, whilst her husband was arrested and imprisoned for a number of years. Bhai Amrik Singh was the president of the Federation, he became Shaheed at the Akaal Takhat on the 6th June 1984 – he is survived by two daughters, a son and wife.



Shaheed Bibi Upkar Kaur



Shaheed Bibi Paramjeet Kaur (left), being blessed by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale on her wedding day (right)

There were numerous other women who undoubtedly died in the attack, but their names have been lost in the annals of history. One brave young lady that needs mentioning was a student who got trapped in the complex. She survived the attack and was urged by Bhai Amrik Singh (AISSF) to leave the complex and tell the world what really happened and how depraved the Indian army were in the attack. She was ferried to safety by Bhai Amrik Singh and narrated her eye-witness account in a book that was banned called “Oppression in Punjab” – the book can be read online at <http://www.shaheed-khalsa.com/oip.html>. She details how innocent Sikhs were killed in cold blood and how innocent Sikh pilgrims were duped into surrendering by the army, only to be massacred.

Some 300 years ago, Mata Sahib Kaur Jee and Mata Sundar Kaur Jee, the consorts of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee were ordered to leave Anandpur Sahib and go to Delhi for their own safety. They were accompanied by Shaheed Bhai Mani Singh Jee – as Delhi was seen as a safe haven. In modern India, in the same Delhi that Mata Sahib Kaur Jee and Mata Sundar Kaur Jee were cremated (at Bala Sahib Gurdwara) – Sikhs were openly burnt alive, raped and made refugees in country they saw as their own. After the assassination of Indira Gandhi – Sikhs were openly and systematically attacked across India in areas of control of the Congress-I party. Their homes and businesses were attacked and looted. Widows were the common survivors and female family members who were victims of gang rape. These brave women have endured the nightmares of this genocide for 30 years, with the chances of any justice in legal terms evaporating day by day. The criminals of these crimes roam freely and have in most cases been protected and promoted by the Indian state.



Widows of Tirlokpuri, in an estate also known as the Widows Colony

Shaheed Bhai Beant Singh Jee was one of the assassins of Indira Gandhi, after his death, his wife became an outspoken leader. Bibi Bimal Kaur Khalsa was elected to parliament and continued to speak up against state oppression. She died under suspicious circumstances on 2nd September 1990. Unfortunately, little data is available on Bibi Jee – a short clip of her can be viewed here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=es6P9gdhMAw> I urge others who have any further information and videos of her speeches to please share, so her glorious history isn't lost. When talking of her husband's Shaheedi she said,

I'm very proud of being his wife, the government can say what they want, because at the time of Shaheed Bhagat Singh he was treated as a terrorist by his own government. They did not support him then, but today there are statues of him all across India, and government ministers queue up to adorn him with garlands of flowers.

I believe everyone in Punjab should join together and join the movement. The Indian government is an oppressive regime, despite what is said in its constitution, false imprisonment, torture and illegal killings are rife ...The Congress government has amended the constitution 65 times yet it cannot change it once to acknowledge the Sikhs as a separate religion. (<http://www.neverforget84.com/shaheeds/shaheed-bhai-beant-singh>)

Mata Sahib Kaur Jee is at our side at all times, she is our eternal mother. If we remember her with heartfelt desire, she like our Father Guru Gobind Singh Jee, will guide us at all times. This year on Mother's Day, let us all be grateful for our Panthic Mothers, Mothers of the Sikh Nation, whose sweat, blood and torture has allowed us to live on as a race. These Mothers cry out at us, to strive on, against all odds, their stories, teachings and lives, inspire us to continue to keep the flame of righteousness burning. Say a prayer in their memory and live a life that they would be proud of. I'm happy on this Mothers Day to have had such glorious Mothers.

www.akaalpublishers.com

Facebook.com/akaalpublishers

Twitter, Akaal Publishers

Ask.fm/akaalpublishers

