

SHAHEED BHAI BEANT SINGH, SHAHEED BHAI SATWANT SINGH, AND SHAHEED BHAI KEHAR SINGH

Defenders of Faith and Courage



Beant Singh

Satwant Singh

Kehar Singh

The Attack on Sri Darbar Sahib – June 1984

In June 1984, on the sacred day remembering Guru Arjan Dev Ji's Shaheedi, the Indian Army attacked Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar and destroyed Sri Akal Takht Sahib, the highest seat of Sikh authority. Over forty other historic gurdwaras were also targeted. Thousands of pilgrims—men, women, and children—were killed, and the Sikh Reference Library was burned. For Sikhs around the world, this was not only an attack on buildings but on their faith and identity. Many compared it to the time of Massa Rangar, when two brave Sikhs, Bhai Sukha Singh and Bhai Mehtab Singh, risked their lives to defend the same sacred place centuries earlier.



A Conversation That Changed Everything

One Sikh deeply affected was Bhai Beant Singh, a bodyguard for Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Saddened and angry, he visited his uncle Bhai Kehar Singh, a wise and spiritual man. Beant Singh asked, "Uncle ji, will Vaheguru send another Sukha Singh and Mehtab Singh to protect the honour of the Golden Temple?" Kehar Singh replied, "My son, if you truly love Sikhi, then know that giving your head and taking a stand for the Guru's honour are equal acts of courage. The Khalsa must never tolerate injustice." These words touched Beant Singh's heart. He decided that he could not stay silent.

Two Lions Awaken

Bhai Beant Singh found a partner in his younger colleague Bhai Satwant Singh, also a Sikh bodyguard. Satwant Singh was only 21 years old but fearless. When Beant Singh explained what he hoped to do, Satwant Singh replied, "Elder brother, for this sacred cause, I would give not just this life but many lives." Together they travelled to Amritsar, saw the destruction of the Akal Takht, and did Ardas "O Akal Purakh Ji, give us the strength to stand for the truth." After returning to Delhi, they received the blessing of Amrit on October 24, 1984, dedicating themselves fully to Sikh discipline and faith.

The Plan and the Morning of October 31, 1984



Satwant Singh and Beant Singh worked on different shifts in the Prime Minister's security team. To be on duty together, Satwant Singh pretended to be sick and traded shifts. At about 9 a.m. on October 31, 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stepped out of her home on Safdarjung Road for her morning walk. Bhai Beant Singh fired first with his revolver. Bhai Satwant Singh followed with his automatic weapon. They shouted the Sikh

call, "Bole So Nihal! Sat Sri Akal!", placed their weapons down, and said, "We have done what we had to. Now you can do what you must." They were arrested immediately.

After the Shooting

The guards took them to a nearby room. There, heated words turned violent, and soldiers opened fire. Bhai Beant Singh was killed instantly; Bhai Satwant Singh was badly injured. In prison, Satwant Singh endured years of pain and torture. A bullet left in his spine caused him agony, but he stayed strong, reciting Gurbani and doing physical exercise every day. He told his father, "This pain is the Guru's test for me." He later said the bullet came out after prayer. He declared, "We acted alone for the honour of the Guru's house. I have no hatred toward Hindus, Muslims, or Christians. No Sikh should harm any innocent person. We did our duty and accept our fate."

Bhai Kehar Singh's Courage

Bhai Kehar Singh, Beant Singh's uncle, was arrested and falsely accused of helping with the plan. He was a government worker and a man of deep faith. In prison, he refused to fear death. He told his wife, "This is God's will. Sikhs have sacrificed before; this is our turn."



The Final Morning – January 6, 1989

Before dawn, at Amrit Vela, Bhai Satwant Singh and Bhai Kehar Singh walked calmly to the gallows in Tihar Jail, Delhi. Their final words were “Jo Bole So Nihal! Sat Sri Akal!”. Rain poured heavily as they were hanged, and many said nature itself was saluting them. Their bodies were secretly cremated inside the jail, and their ashes were taken under police guard to a river near Hardwar, where their families performed the final prayers.

Family and Legacy

Bhai Beant Singh (born 1950, Maloya village) had a degree from Punjab University and joined the Delhi Police in 1972. He married Bibi Bimal Kaur Khalsa in 1976, and they had three children: Amrit Kaur, Sarabjeet Singh, and Jaswinder Singh. After his death, Bibi Bimal Kaur faced arrests and interrogation but became politically active, later serving in Parliament (Lok Sabha). A Gurdwara named, ‘Shaheed Beant Singh Ji’ stands in his memory. She passed away in 1991, leaving behind their children, who continued to live with faith and humility. Bhai Satwant Singh (born 1962, Agwan Khurd, Gurdaspur) served in the Delhi Armed Police. While in prison, he married Surinder Kaur in a symbolic Anand Karaj ceremony. Bhai Kehar Singh (from Mustafabad near Fatehgarh Sahib) was remembered for his deep spirituality and fearless smile until his last breath.



How Sikhs Remember Them



In 2008, the Akal Takht Sahib officially recognized Beant Singh, Satwant Singh, and Kehar Singh as Shaheeds (Martyrs) of the Sikh Nation. Their death anniversaries are observed each year with prayers and Kirtan. Sikh leaders remind everyone that these men did not act out of hatred. They acted out of love for truth, justice, and the honour of their faith. They prayed before acting, harmed no innocents, and accepted punishment with dignity. Gurmat Center has been celebrating Shaheedi Smagam since 2004.

Lessons to Remember

Their story teaches that:

- Faith and courage can guide people through even the darkest times.
- Justice must never be mixed with hatred.
- Sacrifice is meaningful only when done with purity and truth.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

What happened during the attack on Sri Darbar Sahib in June 1984, and why was it such a painful event for Sikhs around the world?

What advice did Bhai Kehar Singh give to his nephew Bhai Beant Singh when Beant Singh asked if someone would defend the honour of the Golden Temple?

How did Bhai Beant Singh and Bhai Satwant Singh prepare themselves before carrying out their plan on October 31, 1984?

What were Bhai Satwant Singh's words and actions that showed his faith and strength while he was imprisoned?

What lessons do Sikhs learn from the lives and sacrifices of Bhai Beant Singh, Bhai Satwant Singh, and Bhai Kehar Singh?

Why is it important for Sikhs to NEVER FORGET 1984?

