

The Great Sikh Scholar Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha: Life And Works

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Saint warriors, scholars, explorers, philosophers, scientists, poets, etc. of any country form the basis of the fate of that country. Some nations that are born like this, are the unique creators of the fate of that nation. In the series of Sikh scholars, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, a unique personality, has special place. None of the Sikhs can ever forget his contribution to Sikhism. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha is the leader of the Sikh Panth scholars. Bhai Sahib's works prove his personality as a shrew scholar. Bhai Sahib wanted to establish Sikh religion academically in world religions. Therefore, with devotion, they adopt a logical viewpoint in their compositions. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha was born in 1861 and died in 1938. Bhai Sahib's first literary book was written in 1884 AD. He has compiled granths on many topic which include gurmat propaganda, politics, education, social reform, chhand, metaphor, kosh, astrology etc. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha's writing is directly effected by Singh Sabha movement. His compositions can be clearly seen in Sikh doctrine, Sikh identity, living and behavior of the Sikhs. According to the demand of time, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha worked for the Sikhs by creating great books.

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha was born in 1861 at his maternal house in village Sabaz-Banaira. This village was under the Patiala state. Bhai Sahib was a wise, intelligent, magnanimous and handsome person from the beginning. So he had great love for his parents. He had a great effect on the life of his father Baba Narain Singh and Mata Har Kaur. Bhai Sahib, who grew up in Gurbani and Kirtan lobbies, was stuck in the shade Gurmukhta from his childhood. He got Sikh faith in herited.

Bhai Kahn Singh was the owner of very quick intelligence. His education began at the age of five . At the age of four, he stayed with his mother at home; but then he went to gurdwara with his father and father taught him to do austerity. He slept on the floor at night, wake up early in the morning, and take bath etc. His first tutor was Bhai Bhup Singh, who taught him the lesson of 'One Oankar' on sand dunes. This childhood was the origin of Kahn Singh's education. He did not get education in any school; so nature was his school. At the age of six, Baba Kahn Singh started reciting the Guru Granth Sahib, which was completed in three years. At that time, he was 10 years old when he was taught Sanskrit alongside Baba Kalyan Das. After this he read books of Pandit Shree Dhar, Pandit Bansi Dhar, Bhai Vir Singh Lalke, Bhai Ram Singh, Bawa Parmanand etc. of grammar, Niyaya, Literature and Vedanta. Predicted poetry in Hindi from Shagird Bhagwan Singh Dug of popular Hindi poet Gwal and received music education from Mahant Raja Singh. Thus, after studying grammar, Sikh literature, Vedanta and music, when he was 20 years old he started learning Persian and English, which was strongly opposed by the ancient ideas of the Sikhs, Baba Narayan Singh had stopped him reading Persian. But Bhai Kahn Singh had become old enough to understand that every author should have knowledge of foreign literature and literature of his country. To understand our literature, knowledge of other languages becomes essential, whereas in Sikh scriptural texts there are many Persian words that can not be understood without knowing Persian. Most of Sikh history is found in Persian and English. One day silently, he left the house and started learning Persian after arriving in Delhi. From there, being Lucknow, in 1883 he arrived in Lahore where he studied Persian compositions related to Sikh literature, such as Zafarnamah, Jivanamah, Diwan Goya, from Bhai Sant Singh Dehra Sahib. He met there Prof. Gurmukh Singh of Oriental college who was a good scholar of English. While remaining in the

company of him, Bhai Sahib had also acquired the knowledge of English language. We could not find the description of his horse-riding and weapon learning masters, but he also mastered both of these qualities. He had a great deal of shooting. The shooting of Bhai Sahib was astonishing to his comrades he hunted only wild animals.

In 1884 Kahn Singh Nabha returned home after receiving education and at the age of 24 years. Parents were very happy to see their son and a desired to marry his son. Within a few days, he was married in a beautiful noble family of Dhoor village. After marriage, his mother died due to illness, and his wife also became dear to God after one year. Then his second marriage took place at Muktsar, but second wife also died. After the passage of the two wives, his third marriage was at village Ramgarh (Patiala) in Hardam Singh's family. His third wife name was Basant Kaur. His only son Bhai Bhagwant Singh (Hari) was born on 15 February 1892.

Bhai Sahib spent a significant part of his life in the service of the state Nabha and worked for some time in the Patiala state. In 1884 Maharaja Hira Singh appointed him in his court. His loyalty and wisdom enabled the Maharaja to become his disciple, which led to a great increase in respect in the court. Being proud of his work and honesty, Bhai Sahib was appointed as a teacher of Tikka Ripudaman Singh. He was the son of Maharaja Hira Singh. By staying in Bhai Sahib's schooling, Tikka Sahib became a good literary scholar, a lawyer and a lover of Gurmat. In 1897 AD Bhai Sahib became the private secretary of Maharaja Hira Singh. In meantime, Bhai Sahib became the City Magistrate, Canal Najam, Najam District Dhanula, Deputy Commissioner of District Phule, and in a short period, his name became famous in the state. In 1897 AD, he wrote a book *Hum Hindu Nahi*, he became disillusioned with Maharaja Hira Singh and was removed from his job. After a lot of scrutiny, he was again invited to the job. In 1902 AD he went to the British government as a lawyer of state for settling two disputes of Nabha and succeeded in both disputes. After Maharaja Hira Singh, Tikka Ripudaman Singh occupied the throne of Nabha. Tikka Sahib gave him the post of High Court judge. But due to health problems, he quit the state and left for Kashmir. He did not want to get any more jobs, but his intention was not fulfilled.

1915 AD in the case of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh Patiala, he presented the post of Political Agency's advocacy which was accepted by him with emphasis. The relations between two states Nabha and Patiala were not good among themselves and in 1917 AD a dispute between the two states came out in clear form and was embroiled in dangerous form. Bhai Sahib resigned from the job of Maharaja Patiala and came to village Pitho. Soon, Maharajah Nabha's doubts were cleared, and he was reinstated in the royal's office by giving the post of 'Wazir Khas'. He started to take more interest in literary works.

Bhai Sahib performed very well in politics, he had done his duty even in the social sector. The other part of his life is related to community and social reforms. This was the time of Singh Sabha movement. He started the work of preaching Gurmat along with the Singh Sabha Lahore. He maintained academic movement, social reformer and unitary service for the glory of the Sikh Panth. Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Giani Ditt Singh, Narain Singh, Babu Teja Singh, etc. the members of the Singh Sabha movement and Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha had the soul status in it. In 1885 he helped Macauliffe in writing a book titled *Sikh Religion*, after 15 years of hard work it was completed. This book was published from Vaalayat. This first work of Bhai Kahn Singh for the Sikh Panth under the leadership of Singh Sabha, Lahore was special to the society.

The second concept of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha was, *Hum Hindu Nahi*. Obviously this makes it very tough and frustrating. But its backlash is a of the hypocrisy of Hinduism which had a special meaning in itself. The whole Singh Sabha movement worked only to remove the evils arising under the Hindu fanatics. But the publication of Bhai Kahn Singh is a special significance in this form of book, and at that time the book

also became a topic of great discussion. Thus, in order to present the uniqueness of the Sikhs, he talked on the basis of logic in the book.

The idols of many deities were kept in the Parikarma of Darbar Sahib. On being publicized in the Singh Sabha, the Sikhs could not tolerate this and started a struggle to remove the statues. Bhai Sahib's writings proved that worshipping deities was contrary to Gurmat at that time. Thus, the idols were removed from the orbits of the Darbar Sahib.

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha met the founder Sardar Attar Singh of Rahees Bhasaur to complete the dream of creating a Khalsa College and then he told a way to make a Khalsa College, Bhai Gurmukh Singh. Bhai Sahib had made a reconciliation between Bhai Atar Singh ji Bhadaur and Maharaja Hira Singh for the purpose of this work and then merged the heart of the state of Patiala with Sardar Attar Singh. Thus a reconstruction of these scholars resulted in a fortification for the establishment of the Khalsa College. The scholars were in favour of the formation of Khalsa College, Lahore, but due to the dispute, Amritsar was chosen to build a Khalsa College. In 1892 the foundation of the Khalsa College was laid. In this way Bhai Sahib worked very hard for the educational progress of the community and contributed in the establishment of Khalsa College.

The literary life of Bhai Sahib went under the influence of Singh Sabha, Lahore, whose seal has occupied place on his writings. All this time he escaped from his government service and spent most of his time preaching Gurmat, preaching Sikh literature or writing books in this regard. He wrote about 30 books on topics related to Sikh religion research, Gurbani interpretation, social reform, history, poetry criticism etc during the 1884 to 1938. The books of which Hum Hindu Nahi, Gurumat Sudhakar, Gurumat Prabhakar, Gur Gira Kasauti, Guruchand Diwakar, Guru Shalankar, Guru Shabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh etc. are very popular. Reading these books can easily be judged about his scholarship. The result of his hard work of fifteen years was Gur Shabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh. It is a great dictionary of Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit etc., which is not only an ancient Punjabi literature, Sikh literature but also an outstanding library of Punjabi culture.

Bhai Sahib lead a hard working and courageous life. He has come to be known as the great illustrator, theologian of Sikhism. Max Arthur Macauliffe and Maharaja Ripudaman Singh, Maharani Sarojini Devi (Maharani Ripudaman Singh), famous historian Shamsher Singh Ashok and Dr. Devinder Singh Vidharthy were influenced by Bhai Sahib. As a author Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha was also writing for a Singh Sabha movement.

Bhai Bishan Singh died on 27 November 1936, and seven months later, another brother, Meehan Singh, also died on 17 June 1937. Because of the sudden departure of them from the brothers, he became very sad, but he acted so patiently that he did not let this trouble ever appear from his face. On November 24, 1938, he died at Nabha without any disease at the age of seventyseven and a half year.

The works of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha

Bhai Sahib's first literary book was written in 1884 AD. He has compiled granths on many topics, including gurmat propaganda, politics, education, social reform, chhand, metaphor kosh, astrology etc. According to Shamsher Singh Ashok and Bibi Sukhjit Kaur, the number of books written by Bhai Sahib were reached 31 during the year 1884 to 1938. The detail of some of works are as follows:-

Raj Dharm (1884)

This book was written when he was an employee of Maharaja Hira Singh. This Granth was in two volumes. The book was distributed on government expenditure by Maharaja. The book is published under the title of Maharaja Hira Singh. The first section of the book is of 304 pages and the second part has 356 pages. This first publication of the book was 1896 by the Durga Press, Lahore. The book was written on the views of Maharaja Hira Singh.

Jamnie Ashwamedh (1890)

The book was published in 542 pages from Durga Press, Nabha, published in 1889 to 1890. In this granth, Bhai Sahib has described *sloka* and *chaupaiya*. In this granth he has commented on this summary on Jamini's granth, Jamini the disciple of Maharishi Veda Vyas has composed this granth.

Hum Hindu Nahi

This book was third writing of Bhai Sahib. In this book, the ideas of Sikhs are contradictory to Hindu written in 1893. Sikh, Hindu and Muslim are different according to Bhai Sahib. Babu Teja Singh the prominent leader of the Singh Sabha, Bhasaur, belonged to the Khalsa Diwan, Lahore, wrote the book with the consultation of Gurmukh Singh the head of Singh Sabha. The book was printed in 1898.

Gurmat Sudakar

The book was first published in 1899. The expressing lines of the book was compilation of verses made by ancient Indian historical books and religious rituals. This book is divided into 16 chapters. The has denial of miracles, rituals and superstitions related to Sikhism, and according to Gurmat, this attempt on has been made to remove the illusions of Sikhism.

Guru Gira Kasauti (1899)

The main motive of this book was to solve many things of Gurbani that are confused with the understanding of the contradictory subject, but in Gurmat there is no contradiction between anything. There are also contradiction in these episodes like Gurmukh-related, especially the Janam Sakhi, Bhai Bala, Gur Pratap Suraj Granth etc. The book was written during the period when Bhai Kahn Singh was working for the Singh Sabha movement. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha has clarified the doubts in the opposition of Gurbani, that Gurbani is a sweet juice. This book has remained unpublished for some reason. Later, Bhai Kahn Singh published this book along with Gurmat Prabhakar, Gurmat Sudhakar.

Gurmat Parbhakar

In this book Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha covered 843 subjects to clarify the topic and every subject has been explained in detail with references of the Guru Granth Sahib. Bhai Sahib gave detailed comments and footnotes so that Sikh principles and teachings could be understood properly.

Teeka Vishnu Purana (1902)

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha got this commentary in 1902 which was published by Durga Press, Nabha. This Teeka was published in 120 pages. Bibi Sukhjit Kaur published this book in the year 1903. The special significance of this Granth in the context of the State Nabha can be understood more because the first two kings of this state (Jaswant Singh and Devinder Singh) were devotees of the Vaishnava sect. The name of the book reveals that Bhai Sahib has commented on Vishnu Purana. In this commentary, the commentator has given a summary in a few pages of Purana, then has clarified the original idea in the comments, fully understood the interpretation of these lines and criticized the interpretation so that no illusion.

Pahad Yatra 1906(Mountain travel)

This journey relates to the journey of the hill kingdom Bydhar Kahn Singh Baba's Bydhar. In 1906 AD by visiting the hill states, he researched the contents of Sikh literature and history and wrote a travel experience as well.

Ghar Di Yukat 1906 (home remedies)

Bhai Sahib wrote many books for social reforms. This book was composed from 1906 to 1910. The Details of this book are listed on the list of Punjabi publications published by the Languages Department, Punjab. But this book is rare and is said to be of 62 pages.

Shrab Nished 1907(Alcohol prohibition)

This book is published from Mufid General Press, Lahore and its composition is in 1907 AD. There are 26 pages in this book. Devinder Singh Vidharthy consider that book for the first time was published in 42 pages from Durga Press, Nabha, and after that, published from Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar. The origin of this book was to make Punjabis aware of the adverse effects of alcohol intoxicants and to remove them from the drug addiction. The book has been revealed the pitfalls of drinking alcohol and instructions have been given to avoid it. Shamsheer Singh Ashok has registered its name Liquor Prohibition, in his book.

Vaalayat Yatra (1907-10)

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha travelled three times in 1907, 1908 and 1910 to England. Travel trip of these travels is not published as a mountain travel. Shamsheer Singh Ashok has also mentioned another unpublished granth '*England*'. In style and language, there is no difference between 'mountain travel' and 'vaalayat yatra', in which the author has described his experiences with very insignificance. It contains a detailed description of the culture of the people of Vaalayat. These books are published by Bibi Rachpal Kaur, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha's son-in-law, as a book under the title of the unpublished travelogue of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha. It was published from Brijesh Prakashan, Nabha in 1984 AD.

Gurchand Diwakar (1924)

Bhai Sahib wrote this book examining the criteria used in Sikh literature on the criteria of Pingal. This book was published by Nabha Darbar in 1921. Now it is published by the Languages Department. In this book, there are detailed descriptions of mantra and varanik etc. In the book, Bhai Sahib has explored the form and structure of the chaos by exploring the monuments used in the major religious texts related to Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Sikhism. The entire hymn is composed in verses. Gaining knowledge of the verses recorded in this book is of great help in doing the correct and sweet recitation of Gurbani. This is the first scientific attempt of the Chhand Shastra in Punjabi of its kind. It has been described very carefully in terms of classical organs, quantities, miniature, guru, diastolic character, Varanic count, mantragan. Almost all the verses prevailing in Punjabi have been recorded in this book. The book is described in a very efficient way, from which it is easy to guess that besides being an interpreter, he was also an expert scholar of Chhand Shastra.

Guru Shabd Alankar (1925)

It is a book depicting the importance of metaphors by taking examples from the Guru Granth Sahib and many of the major Sikh creations. This book was written by Bhai Sahib in 1925. In the creation of Bhai Sahib selected metaphors used in Sikh poetry and brought out the mythical feature of Sikh poetry. This book was written by Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha in 1924 and in the same year it was published by Sadarshan

Press, Amritsar. This book was published by Darbar Nabha has in 203 pages. As it is described in Gurchhand Diwakar by the verses and this the book has been explained the metaphors. Metaphor in Punjabi literature is used as an essential part of any composition. It is said that the rhythm of creation is eloquent and it is very important to know what metaphors are used when selecting words With the study of this book, knowledge of Gurbani and Sikh poetry is articulated and also helps to clarify the subject.

MahanKosh (1930)

The full name of this book is Gurushabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh, but it is generally known as its brief name, Mahan Kosh. This dictionary really is a great work of Bhai Sahib, which is the result of his 14-15 years of hard work. In fact, the motive of writing Mahan Kosh was written by the Guru Granth Kosh (1895), Pandit Tara Singh Nirotam, and Hazara Singh's Sri Guru Granth Kosh (1899). He thought that alphabets, in order to form a great dictionary, should be prepared. Kahn Singh started works on this on May 10, 1912 and completed the work on February 6, 1926, after 14 years of intense struggle. Firstly, for the publication of this Granth, Maharaja Briginder Singh was responsible for the publication of this Granth, but in 1918 he died. Later, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala printed this Granth on the royal expenditure. The publication of this granth was started in 1927 and completed on 13 April 1930. Sundarshan Press, Amritsar published this Granth. The first edition of this Granth was published in four volumes of 3338 pages and later it was published by Language Department, Punjab, Patiala in one volume. The last edition of this book was published in 1981.

In short, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha clearly accepts the then cultural, political and religious influence of Punjab. These effects are explained by his writing. This was a conscious Sikh born in Sikhism, who stood out to compete with outside and internal influences. He was oriented towards the intellectual interpretation of his religious beliefs so that the beliefs can be kept at the intellectual level in comparison to new situations. He considered Sikhism more intellectually progressive than other religions. In this context, he forms his composition. His works Hum Hindu Nahi, Gurmat Sudhakar, Gurmat Prabhakar and Gurmat Martand, are a special ideology. In these, the attempt to set up Sikh religion as a fundamental religion appears clearly. The number of his works gives us proof of his dynamic personality. He is a typical in the form of a historian, treasurer, illustrator, Chhand Shastri, literary, etc. in many different forms. It encourages foreign researchers to write about Sikhism, from which large-scale forms of Sikhism come into existence. His devotion was in sikh religion and Gurbani. Works like Mahan Kosh show his linguists.

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