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## **KHUSHWANT SINGH AS AN ARTIST IN REALISM**

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Khushwant Singh was one of the famous, extraordinary and realistic writers compared to others. He was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1915 in Hadali, Punjab. He began his distinguished career as a journalist with All India Radio. Since then he was the founder and editor of Yojana and editor of the Illustrated Weekly of India, National Herald, Hindustan Times.

After his early education in Lahore and Delhi, he went to England and studied law at St Stephens college-Delhi and King's college in London. After working as a lawyer in Lahore High court for eight years his legal profession extended his knowledge and made him to see man and life in the raw benefit of all its external embellishment. As a writer, he was best known for his trechant secularism, humour, sarcasm and abiding love of poetry.

He served as the Member of Parliament in Rajyasabha, the upper house of the Parliament of India. His works of Fiction includes Train to Pakistan, I shall not hear the Nightingale, Delhi, The Company of Women and so on along with a wide collection of short stories and a number of translated works. Among other honours, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan by the President of India. But he returned the decoration in protest against the Union Government's siege of the Golden Temple in Amristar. His autobiography Truth, Love and Little Malice was a honest confession of his life.

Although Khushwnt Singh was versatile in his creative and historical writings and his range was wide extending from fiction to journalism there were certain basic qualities which govern his creative talent and the growth of his art. His writings, creatives as well as critical, fall into a pattern which emerged from and was

impercetably linked with the primary characteristic of his creative mind.

Khushwant Singh won the Grove Press Award for the novel - Train to Pakistan which gave Mercedes Benz, Rockfeller Award and later led to teaching comparative religions at Princeton, Hawaii and Oxford University. He was the author of seventy two books.

There were literary influences on Singh- Ahmed Shah Bokhari, a member of the staff of government college- Lahore, a couple of Urdu writers Tahseer and Imtiaz Ali Jay and Farz Ahmed Faiz whose poems were highly acclaimed by the critics. His association with retired professor F.S. Marvin with whom he stayed in a room and who had written several books, probably drew him towards literary world.

Singh's writings were characterized by a sense of realism and humour. His use of English in the novels were very distinctive as he employs colourful Punjabi expressions and idioms. His styles of hard and vigorous were notable for his comic spirit and gaiety.

Khushwant Singh's versality was brought out by his story telling ability. His short stories shows the felicity of his expression, his capacity for clear and realistic portrayal and unique lightness of touch. He had the qualities of the ideal short story writer such as ingenuity, compression, originality and also a touch of fantasy. He died of natural causes on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at the age of 99. According to his wishes, some of his ashes were brought and scattered in Hadali. He was best known as one of India's finest novelist, lawyer, journalist, politician and columnist.

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