CHAPTER-IV

GENDER IDENTITY FORMATION IN SIKH HISTORICAL LITERATURE (1750-1920)

1) Kesar Singh Chhibber’s ‘Bansavalinama’ :

With the hymns of Guru Nanak at its core, Sikh literature developed in two key ways: the doctrinal and the historical. Exegetical literature emerged from the belief that Sikh sacred hymns manifest the divine revelation, and that the foremost obligation of the members of the community was to understand and follow the theological and social ideas enshrined in them. Historical literature responded to the need to know how the Gurus actually lived out the contents of their teaching. These two strands in early literature developed as the Sikh tradition matured.¹ Chhibber’s Bansavalinama Dasan Patishahian (Genealogy of the ten masters), is the first attempt to write a comprehensive history of the community and includes information about the compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib.² In the early decade of Sikh rule we come upon the Bansavalinama of Kesar Singh Chhibber and the Mahima Parkash of Sarup Das Bhalla, the former written in 1769 and the latter in 1776.³

These works are the earliest major writings of the eighteenth century. Both the writers had a common connection with the Sikh Gurus through their ancestors and their search for patronage after the establishment of Sikh rule. Their approach to the past changes with the change in their purpose. They were familiar with the Bani of the Gurus, the Janamsakhis and also with the work of Sainapat. Both the works are written in verse and appear to have been influenced more by the Janamsakhi form than by the biographical Gurbilas.⁴ Kesar Singh Chhibbar belonged to the family of Chaupa Singh. His ancestors joined the Sikh community in the mid-seventeenth century and became influential members of the Sikh court in subsequent years. After the Sikh evacuation of Anandpur in 1704, the family lived in Delhi and Amritsar, eventually returning to their original home in Jammu in the middle of the eighteenth century. The Chhibbers had first-

¹ Gurinder Singh Mann, The Making of Sikh Scripture, New Delhi, 2006, p. 18.
³ Surjit Hans, A Reconstruction of Sikh History From Sikh Literature, Jalandhar, 1988, p. 281.
⁴ Loc.cit.
hand knowledge of events in Anandpur, and their stay in Amritsar must have exposed them to the traditions regarding the early Sikh history in Central Punjab.\(^5\) *Bansavalinama* is a very personal document.\(^6\)

It is a poeticized account of the lives of the Gurus by Kesar Singh Chhibber. The term *Bansavalinama* means a genealogy. Another term used in the text is "kursinama" which is Persian for "genealogy." But, strictly speaking, this work is not a genealogical table. It is a rapid account, in rather incipient Punjabi verse, of the ten Gurus and of Banda Singh Bahadur and some other Sikhs. Description of historical events and mythological elements occasionally overlap in this work. Its peculiar feature is the wealth of chronological detail it contains about the lives of the Gurus and the members of their families. But the reliability of the dates recorded by the author is not established.\(^7\)

The *Bansavali*, comprising 2,564 stanzas, is divided into fourteen chapters. The first ten deal with the Ten Gurus. There is a chapter each on Banda Singh Bahadur, Jit (Ajit) Singh, adopted son of Mata Sundri, and Mata Sahib Devan. The last chapter of the work, narrates the persecution suffered by the Sikhs at the hands of the ruling authority and their will to survival. A point especially stressed is about the bestowal of Guruship on the Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh before he passed away. He also mentions some other prescriptions for the Sikhs in the manner of *Rahitnamas* or Manuals of Sikh Code. But some of his assertions are not in conformity with Sikh belief and teachings.\(^8\)

The author has tried to prove the superiority of the Brahmans even among the Sikhs which may be due to his own Brahman ancestry. In any case, this is contrary to the principles of Sikhism which rejects caste.\(^9\) Chhibber’s picture of Sikh history is one of ‘confusion’.\(^10\) Hans further points out that Kesar Singh had inculcated love for scholarly pursuits in his childhood in the court of Guru Gobind Singh’s widow, Mata Sundri, of the Sikhs.\(^11\)

\(^8\) *Loc.cit*.
\(^9\) *Loc.cit*.
J.S. Grewal writes that the Chhibber’s *Bansavalinama* has brahmanized the tradition, maintaining that Chhibber’s interest is primarily in ‘the lives’, which would explain his interest in the chain of kinship as well. According to Rattan Singh Jaggi, Chhibber’s work does not possess any poetic merit; it consists of mere versification rather than poetry. At places it acquires the tone of a *Rahitnama*. Chhibber’s purpose in writing the *Bansavalinama* is not clear. Chhibber is said to have resorted to the Puranic tradition and tended to relate the Sikh Gurus to that tradition. Moreover the contents of the *Bansavalinama* reveal that its author was possibly a religious man but not a man of letters. Despite its title, the *Bansavalinama* cannot be treated as a work of genealogy. Through this work Chhibber wanted to reveal his knowledge of the Sikh Gurus and the Sikh tradition. In an attempt to make his work inclusive rather than selective, he tended to relate everything that he knew, from hearsay or from texts. The heterogeneity of his work appears to spring from his desire to reveal his knowledge as a mark of his nearness to the Gurus and his understanding of their message.\(^{12}\)

The author forbids Sikhs to accept converts from the Muslims.\(^{13}\) Kesar Singh Chhibber lives existentially on the fringes of Sikh faith and Sikh history. Committed neither to a principle nor a party, the author, paradoxically gives a realistic picture of the ‘confused’ state of Guruship after the death of Guru Gobind Singh. Chhibber goes on to say that Banda was Guru for nine years, Ajit Singh, for sixteen years and Mata Sahib Devi for twenty five years.\(^{14}\) At the onset gender issues are not faced by the author. No insight is given into the plight of women of the period or general problems faced by them. However, names of the prominent women belonging to the family of some of the Gurus are provided.

For example, Mata Banarasi is named as Guru Nanak’s grandmother. His wife is named as Mata Sulakhani.\(^{15}\) Mata Ganga was the wife of Guru Arjan and the names of Guru Hargobind’s four wives are given as Mata Madodari, Mata Nanaki Lamma, Mata Mahadevi Marwahi and Mata Kaula. It is also mentioned in the *Bansavalinama* that Bibi

Viro, born to Mata Nanaki Lamma, was the only daughter of Guru Hargobind.\textsuperscript{16} Regarding Guru Gobind Singh, Chhibber’s interest in genealogies is virtually replaced by his interest in the chronology of the events in Guru Gobind’s life.\textsuperscript{17} General references are also found towards Mata Sahib Devi, Mata Sundri and Mata Jito.

Chhibber draws a clear distinction between \textit{Sikhi} as a religious faith and the practice of \textit{Varna-Dharma} in the social sphere. Consequently, the ideal of equality gets shorn of all its social meaning. The \textit{Varna} theory reintroduces the principle of inequality. The Sikh tradition of on single ethical principle for all its members is negated by Chhibber. Portraying the Khalsa as a political spearhead of the goddess, he appears to present an anti-thesis of the Khalsa as an egalitarian socio-political and moral order based on the monotheistic concept of Divinity. Grewal further states that Chhibber consciously or unconsciously makes a consistent and earnest attempt at brahmanizing the Khalsa tradition.\textsuperscript{18} Kesar Singh Chhibber is probably the first example of a ‘psychological’ author seeing things during his period, which the ordinary, normal men of faith would have missed. That is why his testimony on the eighteenth century Sikhs can be regarded as very remarkable indeed.\textsuperscript{19}

2) \textit{Sarup Das Bhalla’s ‘Mahima Parkash’}:

Chhibber’s account is followed by Sarup Das Bhalla’s, \textit{Mahima Parkash} (the Rise of Glory) written in 1776. The primary source of information for the writer must have been oral tradition, which was used creatively to construct their understanding of the compilation of Sikh scripture. The two centuries between the compilation of the Sikh text and the writing of these accounts were politically tumultuous and resulted in shifts in the centre of Sikh power from the town of Amritsar in the central Punjab to Anandpur in the Shivalik hills, and then back to Amritsar.\textsuperscript{20} Sarup Das Bhalla was more closely connected with the Sikh Gurus than Kesar Singh Chhiber. He was a descendent of Guru Amar Das.\textsuperscript{21} Since the middle of the sixteenth century, Bhalla’s family lived in Goidwal, and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Ibid}, p. 67.
\item \textit{Ibid}, pp. 85-86.
\item Gurinder Singh Mann, \textit{The Making of Sikh Scripture}, New Delhi, 2006, p. 18.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
his ancestors must have been immersed in the traditions regarding the early history of the community.²² His purpose in writing this work was to glorify his religiously distinguished ancestry in particular, and to celebrate the descendants of the Gurus in general. Sarup Das Bhalla is keen to establish the ‘sacred’ status of his ancestors, and thereby his own, in the eyes of his contemporaries, particularly the Sikh rulers.²³

The accounts of the compilation process of the Guru Granth Sahib are somewhat more detailed in the Mahima Parkash. Bhalla considers the creation of the sacred text as inevitable to the new community’s growth. He presents the creation of the sacred text as part and parcel of the organic development of the early community. Bhalla further states that Guru Gobind Singh commanded the community to recognize the Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru, and that the only way Sikhs could ever communicate with the ten Gurus was by reading the Guru Granth Sahib.²⁴ One of the basic idea of the work also is that the descendants of all the Gurus deserve to be honoured and patronized by the Sikh rulers. According to Hans, Sarup Das Bhalla, has neither a theological understanding of the ‘detractors’ nor a socio-historical insight into the role of the ‘rivals’ in Sikh history. His subscription to family sanctity incapacitates him even to see the problem. He has no idea of the most ‘historical’ Guru Gobind Singh. He underlines neither the significance of the foundation of the Khalsa nor the battles of Anandpur and their importance. He only stresses on the importance of the ‘Rahit’. Sarup Das Bhalla writes in the Janamsakhi genre. He also misunderstands the Sikh concept of Kaliyuga. The incompatible choice of a form along with a limited family purpose makes the Mahima Parkash ‘a fat book of thin verse’. Its historical significance is negatively outstanding. It marks the paradox of Sikh rule which betrays the vision of Guru Nanak, while seeking its origins in it.²⁵

With many important events being ignored, it is not surprising that these accounts chose to remain silent on the role of women in society, either on purpose or reference to this section of society was not considered worthy of any mention at all. However, amidst all the criticisms they derive, these accounts do throw valuable light in the re-construction of Sikh history in general.

3) Bhai Santokh Singh’s ‘Nanak Prakash’:

McLeod refers to Bhai Santokh Singh as the most prominent of all Sikh hagiographers. He wrote in a mixture of Punjabi and Braj. He was strongly influenced by the heretical ideas of the Hindalis and by the Vedantic doctrines of the Udasis and Nirmalas, but earned considerable popularity owing to the fact that he covered the complete range of Gurus.²⁶ Bhai Santokh Singh had connections with some of the old Sikh families which played a prominent role in the politics of the times.²⁷ Bhai Santokh Singh, a great Sikh poet of the early nineteenth century has a number of monumental works to his credit. Two of his noteworthy works are the *Sri Guru Nanak Prakash* and the *Gur Pratap Suraj Granth*. The latter is a sequel to the former. It narrates the history of the Sikh Gurus as well as the life of Banda Bahadur. Bhai Santokh Singh was a contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and therefore gives valuable insights into the life and times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.²⁸

Bhai Santokh Singh lived from 1788 to 1843, a period which saw the rise of Sikhs to political eminence in the Punjab.²⁹ Santokh Singh’s *Nanak Prakash* and *Gur Pratap Suraj Granth* are in the form of a *Katha*. He wrote in the literary tradition of the age. His commentary and his works on history have Vedantic elements. His merit lies in Sikh historiography. He surpasses Sarup Das Bhalla of *Mahima Parkash* and Kesar Singh Chhibber’s *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka*.³⁰ Santokh Singh was a linguist, a scholar, a theologian, a poet and a good prose writer – an awesome combination for any age. He was well-versed in Indian and semitic religious traditions.³¹ *Nanak Prakash*, a work in *Janamsakh* mode on Guru Nanak was compiled in 1823 A.D. It adopts largely the narrative pattern of the *Bala Janamsakhi*, wherein the whole account of Guru Nanak is narrated by Bhai Bala at the request of Guru Angad.³²

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Bhai Vir Singh edited this work in 1927. An account of Mata Sulakhani and her parents is given in canto 29 of *Nanak Prakash*. Bhai Santokh Singh has an orthodox faith in Sikhism. Information is provided on the various aspects of social life of the early nineteenth century Punjab. A major part of this work relates to people and their attitudes. It includes information on the class composition, religious life and social relations between Hindus and Muslims, occupations, economic conditions of the people, beggary, food, customs, medicinal science, geography, political life of the Sikhs and also reflects the intellectual conditions of the period.

Amongst the occupations existing during the time, the occupation of dancing girls is mentioned, who were in great demand at the time of marriages. It is stated that this profession was looked down upon by the society. At one place, the performers of *Ras* are roundly abused for their license. There is a mention of both a class of servants as well as the institution of slavery, in the early nineteenth century. Women were an integral part of both these professions. There is reference to poor parents selling their children, and at times even grown up girls were sold. They had to obey their masters in every respect. Another interesting aspect is that these slaves were also given away as dowry. The parents of a girl were considered ‘poor’ in comparison with boy’s parents.

The condition of women is stated as being quite oppressive. The poet laments to God as to why he created women on earth. A woman was the most exploited creature in the society and her exploitation was anthropologically sanctioned. The welfare of a woman lay in being a slave of man. Women were served food after the men in marriage ceremonies. The status of a girl’s family was considered as indicative of her status too. The image of women in *Nanak Prakash* is repulsive. She was visualized as nature which is illusion and led a man to nescience. Regarding the sexual portrayal of women, their description in the *Nanak Prakash*, to some extent bears the impact of *Treya Charitra* of

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34 Ibid., p. 38.
36 Ibid., p. 88.
37 Loc.cit.
38 Ibid., p. 94.
39 Ibid., p. 95.
40 Ibid., p. 96.
41 Ibid., pp. 99-100.
the *Dasam Granth*. Marriage ceremonies are described in great details in the *Nanak Prakash*. Set social standards made a social evil like dowry a burden on the girl’s family. Patriarchal family set-up existed wherein a father as head of the family was totally authoritarian.

Santokh Singh’s work is a continuation of the literary tradition of the times. His interest in factual elements makes *Nanak Prakash* an account of Guru Nanak’s life. He lacks narrative skill and creative imagination. Hierarchy of religious communities also means their social and political hierarchy. His picture of contemporary nineteenth-century Punjab is partial. A major part of the social evidence of the work is related to the rituals and ceremony of the Sikhs as he seems to be less concerned about the dynamism of social life. Overall the work lacks the vision of the author.

Bhai Santokh Singh composed his *magnum opus*, the *Gurpartap Suryoudai Granth*, also known as the *Suraj Prakash*. He probably started work on it in 1834. According to the evidence of Gopal Singh Sadhu, who was a student of Bhai Santokh Singh, he was distrusted and derided by the Hindu population of Kaithal when he was composing the *Suraj Prakash*. Apparently this work was composed in an atmosphere of extreme hostility and under tremendous stress. His son, Ajai Singh, who was brahmically inclined is believed to have compelled him at sword-point to include the Durga episode in the *Suraj Prakash*. The work was completed in 1843. In a variety of ways, the author brings out the continuity of the new Order of the Khalsa with the earlier teaching of Sikhism. One aspect of the creation of the Khalsa is the restoration of the pristine purity of the faith.

4) *Rattan Singh Bhangoo’s ‘Panth Prakash’*:

S. Rattan Singh Bhangoo’s family is originally from village Mirankot in Amritsar district. The grandfather of S. Rattan Singh Bhangoo was Bhai Mehtab Singh
Bhangu s/o S. Hara Singh. The book was born out of the desire of the 19th Century British colonisers to examine whether the Sikh political power in Punjab was legitimate. Sensing that danger, Rattan Singh Bhangu took upon himself the task of proving that the Sikh political power was perfectly legitimate. He begins by reiterating the basic Sikh theory of polity. It must be considered authentic because it is in accord with the religious text and coming from Rattan Singh Bhangu, who himself belonged to the ruling aristocracy, it perhaps also represents its thought on the subject. Numerous examples of martyrs are given in the *Guru Panth Prakash.*

Rattan Singh Bhangu expounds his own philosophy or metaphysics of martyrdom. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, the fact and the concept of martyrdom were central to the Khalsa tradition.

Rattan Singh Bhangu’s only available work, is *Pracheen Panth Prakash,* which traces the Sikh history right from Guru Nanak to Sikh Misls. In the few introductory pages, he gives a short description of the ten Sikh Gurus, but in the main work he deals in detail with the Sikh Misls. Most of the episodes described by him in the *Pracheen Panth Prakash* relate to his own family and can be regarded as first hand information and contemporary evidence of the facts. The *Pracheen Panth Prakash* is therefore, one of the most important and useful sources on the Afghan-Sikh struggle for supremacy in the Punjab, during the eighteenth century. Though some dates are disputable, yet his work is a valuable contribution towards major events of the Sikh history of the eighteenth century.

The *Panth Prakash* upholds the supremacy of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and Rattan Singh Bhangu nowhere talks of the *Dasam Granth.* Rattan Singh Bhangu completed his work, the *Guru Panth Prakash,* in the Bunga of Shiam Singh at Amritsar in 1841. Bhai Vir Singh chanced upon a copy dated 1858 that appeared to have been prepared in haste.

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50 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rattan_Singh_Bhangu  
55 Datta Amarendra, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature,* Vol.I, (Internet Source- http://books.google.co.in/books?id=ObFCT5_taSgC&pg=PA439&lpg=PA439&dq=Panth+Pra kash+by+Rattan+Singh+Bhangu&source=bl&ots=mUC15vFUr1&sig=t6WspR9gxiDqiaNTl 4AU8I9JNM&hl=en&ei=2IzYSbm_BsilKQWQvLnLBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result& resnum=6#PPA439,M1  
He corrected what he regarded as the mistakes of the copyist and published it in 1914. He came upon another manuscript of 1866 and used it to make improvements in the second edition in 1939. He gave the title Prachin Panth Prakash to his work, probably because the Panth Prakash of Giani Gian Singh was already known to the readers of Punjabi.\footnote{J.S. Grewal (ed.), \textit{Op.cit.}, p. 104.}

Regarding the editing of the Panth Prakash by Bhai Vir Singh, Harinder Singh writes that there is no denying the fact that Rattan Singh was not a competent poet. Bhai Vir Singh felt that Bhangoo as a poet needed some help in removing mistakes and superfluous words. The author, Rattan Singh Bhangoo, has used a number of words which are not helpful in the smooth flow of rhythmic poetry.\footnote{Harinder Singh, \textit{Bhai Vir Singh’s Editing of Panth Prakash by Rattan Singh Bhangoo}, Ph.d Thesis, Department Of History, Vol.I & II, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1990, p.xLvi.} In an attempt to correct the metre, Bhai Vir Singh has spoiled the poetic form at several places.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. Lii.}

Not only action but also sentiments, beliefs, ideas and emotions come into play to make the Prachin Panth Prakash a rare kind of document. It embodies an understanding of the Khalsa tradition by a respectable member of the Khalsa who was deeply religious in his feelings and acutely political in his outlook on the world.\footnote{J.S. Grewal (ed.), \textit{Op.cit.}, p. 119.} There is scanty information on the composition of the Sikh society during the period of Sikh struggle but women’s issues are not addressed even by this work. It may be concluded here that there is no information about the views of these authors on gender issues.

5) Giani Gian Singh’s Works :

Giani Gian Singh is regarded as a forerunner in giving certain important and specific information to us concerning various aspects of Sikh history.\footnote{Sukhdial Singh, \textit{Historical Analysis of Giani Gian Singh’s Writings}, UICS (P) Ltd., Jalandhar, 1996.}\footnote{Ibid., p. 18.} Giani Gian Singh was born in the year 1822 in the family of Sardar Bhag Singh to Mata Desaan in Longowal, a famous village in Punjab.\footnote{Ibid., p. 18.} Giani Gian Singh claimed descent from the brother of Bhai Mani Singh Shahid, Nagahia Singh. He learnt Gurumukhi in his village from Bhai Bholo Singh and Sanskrit from Pandit Atma Ram. He was gifted with a melodious voice and recitation of gurbani earned him popularity in the village. At the age
of twelve, he was taken to Lahore by his maternal uncle, Karam Singh, who was a Subedar in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Dhanna Singh Malvai introduced him to the Maharaja who employed him to recite the Sukhmani Sahib to him every morning.\textsuperscript{63}

During his tours to different places in India, he commenced writing \textit{Sri Guru Panth Prakash} popularly known as \textit{Panth Prakash} in 1865.\textsuperscript{64} Giani Gian Singh was launched on his own distinguished career as a writer with the publication in 1880 of his Panth Prakash, a history of the Sikhs in Braj verse. He now planned another ambitious work, the Twarikh Guru Khalsa, which was to be published in five parts. The first three parts were lithographed in 1892 by Baba Rajinder Singh, proprietor Guru Gobind Singh Press, Sialkot. Urdu editions of these three volumes entitled Twarikh Guru Khalsa, Shamsher Khalsa and Raj Khalsa, respectively, were also published.\textsuperscript{65}

Thus, his works serve as a transitional stage of writing history in prose, as prior to him only the poetic form of writing was in vogue. In fact, the Sikhs started writing their history in prose only from the days of Giani Gian Singh. He was the first to write the history of the Sikhs under the title of \textit{Twarikh Guru Khalsa} in three volumes in Gurumukhi prose.\textsuperscript{66} The \textit{Panth Prakash} and \textit{Twarikh Guru Khalsa} are the most important but not the only works of Giani Gian Singh. His other books are: \textit{Suraj Prakash Vartak}, an abridged version in prose of Bhai Santokh Singh's \textit{Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth}; \textit{Ramayan Bhai Mani Singh Ji Di}; \textit{Twarikh Amritsar} (Urdu); \textit{Twarikh Lahore} (Urdu); \textit{Patit Pavan}; \textit{Gurdham Sarigrah}; \textit{Bhupendranand}; \textit{Itihas Bagarian} and \textit{Ripudaman Prakash}.\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Twarikh Guru Khalsa} a voluminous prose narrative delineating the history of the Sikhs from their origin to the time when they lost the Punjab to the British. The author, Giani Gian Singh (1822-1921), claimed descent from the brother of Bhai Mani Singh, the martyr, who was a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh. The work is divided into five parts \textit{Janam Sakhi Dasan Guraan}, \textit{Shamsher Khalsa}, \textit{Raj Khalsa}, \textit{Sardar Khalsa}, and \textit{Panth Khalsa}.\textsuperscript{68}

In the first part the author presents biographies of the Ten Gurus and sketches the evolution of the community culminating in the emergence of the Khalsa. The second

\textsuperscript{63} http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Giani_Gian_Singh
\textsuperscript{65} http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Giani_Gian_Singh
\textsuperscript{67} http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Giani_Gian_Singh
\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Loc.cit}.
part deals with the career of Banda Singh Bahadur, the sustained struggle Sikhs waged against the Mughals in face of fierce persecution, their reorganization in the form of the Dal Khalsa and the running battle between Ahmad Shah Durrani and the Sikhs. The third part describes the rise of the twelve Misls or independencies and of the sovereign kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and ends with the annexation of the Punjab by the British. The fourth part contained accounts of Sikh principalities which did not form part of Ranjit Singh's kingdom. The fifth part treats of Sikh sects, Gurdwaras and preaching centres. As Giani Gian Singh himself relates in the book, he spent more than fifteen years collecting information, mainly verbal. His sources were his own elders, Nagahia Singh, Raghu Singh and Bakhta Singh who had served Guru Gobind Singh, Banda Singh Bahadur and the eighteenth-century Sardars such as Nawab Kapur Singh and Baba Ala Singh. Besides, he travelled extensively in quest of materials. Two of the older works he admits to having made use of were those by Ratan Singh Bhangu and Bute Shah. He received encouragement from his mentor, Tara Singh Narotam, a Nirmala scholar, and completed in 1867 his first work, the famed Panth Prakash which was a connected history of the Sikhs in Punjabi verse. The Twarikh Guru Khalsa was its expansion in prose.  

The Twarikh Guru Khalsa can be studied under two parts, namely, mythical or unhistorical and historical events for a better understanding. His motive in indulging in mythical writings seems to be to uphold Sikh Guruship. Giani Gian Singh, is one of the first writer to initiate the writing of Sikh history from a historical perspective. One of the chief merits of the Twarikh Guru Khalsa, is the detail given as regards the years of the birth and death of all the Sikh Gurus, from Guru Angad Dev to Guru Gobind Singh. Although this work contains numerous mythological, traditional and unhistorical references, the fact remains that it is very informative and as such can be used as a reference book for a study of the early nineteenth century Sikh history.

70  Sukhdial Singh, Historical Analysis of Giani Gian Singh’s Writings, Jalandhar, 1996, p. 29.
71  Ibid, p. 31.
72  Ibid, p. 38.
73  Ibid, p. 41.