

Duration of Guru Hargobind Sahib's Detention in Gwalior Fort

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Factors leading to the internment:

The Sixth Guru's internment in the Gwalior Fort is a confirmed historical fact. The following factors are significant for the determination of the date of the Guru's imprisonment:

Recently a stone inscription in Persian was found in the fort of Gwalior which was discovered while a tank was being excavated near the Gurdwara within the Fort. The inscription runs:

1. 'One Perfect man, Pir-e-Hind, the sixth Nanak Hargobind was imprisoned by the orders of Emperor Nur-ud-Din Sultan-e-Hind, Jehangir. While in the fort of Gwalior, the son of Guru Arjun used to take his bath day and night in the Gangula Tank – Samvat 1670 Bikrami (Wazir Khan)

"There are two important deductions from the inscription. Firstly, the tank where the Guru used to take his bath had been built by Wazir Khan, the founder of Wazirabad, a flourishing town in the district of Gujranwala (Pakistan). He belonged to Chiniot, modern district of Jhang (Pakistan). He was a great builder, having built a beautiful mosque at Lahore, for which he is still remembered. He built baths, markets and other buildings at Lahore and a brick fort at Chiniot. According to Bhai Khan Singh, he was a great devotee of Guru Arjun and Guru Hargobind.

Secondly, the inscription gives the date, viz 1670 BK, corresponding to 1613 CE, which implies that Guru Hargobind was in Gwalior Fort in the year 1613 CE, or earlier.

2. "There are two significant clues in the "*Gur-bilas Patshahi Chhevin*," a work of 18th century. These clues implicitly give the date of the Guru's arrest. Firstly, Wazir Khan who brought the Guru's summons to Amritsar said to the emperor, "The emperor talked of the Guru and said that six years have passed since the martyrdom of Guru Arjun." Wazir Khan sighed and uttered that Guru Arjun was a manifestation of God."

"It clearly implies that the Guru was imprisoned six years after the martyrdom of Guru Arjun. That comes to 1612 CE as Guru Arjun was martyred in 1606 CE.

3. "The second important clue does not give the Bikrami Sammat but gives Lunar and Solar dates of the Guru's departure from Amritsar after receiving the summons. The exact wording is:

"After salutation (to his mother) the Guru set out after riding on the horse. That day was Sunday, fourth of Lunar month and two days of the month of Magh had passed. (page 161)

4. "With the help of these indications we have to find out the year. In an Indian Ephemeris, we have tried to find the year fulfilling three conditions – Sunday, Magh 3, and Chauth (4th) of Lunar date. It appears that the day of Sunday is not correct. These three

conditions are not fulfilled during the life of Guru Hargobind. The third of the month of Magh and fourth day of puranmassi was December 31, 1612 CE. Perhaps this is the date when the Guru set out from Amritsar towards Delhi. This leads to the conclusion that the Guru was arrested in early 1613 CE.

Mughal Documentation:

The order for the execution of Guru Arjun was given to Murtaza Khan who was his favourite courtier, it has been stated in Tuzak-i-Jehangiri.:

“I ordered them to produce him and handed over his houses, dwelling places and children to Murtaza Khan and having confiscated his property commanded that be put to death by yasa.”

“Murtaza Khan’s real name was Bakhshi Farid Khan and he was an ardent follower of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi of Naqashbandi order. It is evident from the letters of Sheikh Ahmed addressed to Bakshhi Farid and published in Maqtubat-i-Imam Rabbani. Jehangir gave him the title of Murtaza Khan which means praiseworthy. He was granted the jagir of Bhairawal on the right bank of Beas near Fatehabad where a battle had been fought against the army of Jehangir while he was pursuing the forces of rebel prince Khusrau. Murtaza Khan was appointed as governor of Punjab in the month of Tir 1020 Hijri, corresponding to July 1611 CE.

On account of the governor’s hostile attitude towards Guru Hargobind there appeared to be the adverse reporting. It was perhaps at his instance that the Guru was summoned to meet the emperor. Thus Murtaza Khan’s appointment as governor in the Suba of Lahore as mentioned in Tuzak-e-Jehangiri coincides with the date of the inscription recently found at the Gurdwara in the fort of Gwalior as well as with the indication and hints and clues mentioned in the chronogram relating to the internment of the Guru. Thus, it appears almost certain that the Guru was imprisoned in the first half of the year 1613 CE.

Release of the Guru:

The Sikh sources, like *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin* and *Mehma Prakash*, attribute the release of the Guru to the grave illness of Jehangir. He was advised to release the Guru in order to be cured of his illness, and he did accordingly. No specific date has been mentioned for indisposition of the emperor.

Twarikh Guru Khalsa, however, suggests that the Guru was released because of the intervention of the sufi saint, Mian Sheikh Mohammad Mir, popularly known as Mian Mir of Lahore. It may be mentioned here that the Sufi saint had known the House of the Guru as there has been a strong tradition among the Sikhs that the foundation stone of Harmandir Sahib was laid by Mian Mir at the request of Guru Arjun Dev – father of Guru Hargobind.

So it is very likely that Mian Mir would have spoken to the emperor when he met him. Jehangir met Mian Mir on Thursday, December 30, 1619 CE (3rd Bahman Hijri 1029). This meeting took place at Kalanaur. According to Bhatt Vahi Talaunda Pargana Jind, the Guru and Jehangir were at Kalanaur (modern district Gurdaspur) on 1 Phagan, 1675 BK, that is 1619-20 CE.

‘Bhatt Vahi Multani Sindhi’ states that the Guru reached Amritsar on the first of Magh 1767 BK, corresponding to January 28, 1620 CE. It may well be true – as Kalanaur and Amritsar are not very far. “Guru Kian Sakhian” gives 28 Katak, 1676 BK that is November 28, 1619 CE, the date of Guru’s release from Gwalior alongwith Hindu Rajas.

From the above analysis, it is evident that the Guru was released in 1678 BK (1619-20 CE). Consequently, Guru Hargobind Sahib had been confined to Gwalior Fort (as already mentioned) in the first half of 1613 CE, and was released in 1619-20 CE.

Thus the duration of the internment should be reckoned as about six years.

