

# ***Tozuk-e-Jehangiri* Misquoted in Dr. Hari Ram Gupta's "History of the Sikhs"**

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\* Page Nos. 272-273 of *Tozuk-e-Jehangiri*. (1864 edition) are available with writer. (Reprint has not been possible)

The venerable historian, Dr. Hari Ram Gupta who, for many years, remained on the Editorial Advisory Board of ***The Sikh Review***, is best known for his monumental four-volume and widely acclaimed work "*History of the Sikhs*." He has written exhaustively on Sikhism's Guru period (1469-1708) and his work is regarded as a reference book, particularly for the period covering the epochal 18th century Sikh struggle.

With due regards to his vast knowledge of the Sikh history, his erudition and scholarship, I discuss, here, a quotation from "*Tozuk-e-Jehangiri*" given at pages 160-161 in "*History of the Sikhs*" in the context of incarceration or detention of Guru Hargobind Sahib in Gwalior Fort. It's verification from "*Tozuk-e-Jehangiri*" (pages 272-273) suggests that the reference is misquoted. In this article I discuss and analyse this discrepancy.

While describing and discussing the factors leading to the imprisonment of Guru Hargobind in Gwalior Fort, Dr. Gupta writes: "The reports against king-like and war-like activities of the Guru aroused the anger of Jehangeer. The emperor was persuaded to believe that Guru Hargobind intended to raise the standard of revolt. He had visited Punjab in 1606, 1607 and 1608 A.D. The Guru's enemies must have lodged complaints against him, personally. Jehangir ordered the Guru to pay the balance of fine of two lakhs imposed upon Guru Arjun, after deducting the amount realised by auctioning his property....."

Guru Hargobind Sahib was summoned to Delhi. Jehangir asked him several questions but he did not feel satisfied. With regard to the fine, Guru Hargobind advanced the old arguments of his father Guru Arjun Devji. He said, he had not committed any crime and would not pay any fine. As for his taking to hunting and wearing arms, no blanket restrictions had been imposed by the government on its subjects.

About his holding courts, the sixth Guru argued that such sessions concerned only religious matters. There was no politics behind it, and he did not preach anything *against* the emperor or his government...

Then the mellowed Mughal emperor took the Guru with him on a visit to Agra. At Agra Jehangir fell ill. Probably under Chandu Shah's instigation, the astrologers told Jehangir to 'imprison Hargobind to avert the serious consequences of the evil stars.' Guru Hargobind was therefore confined in the fort of Gwalior without specifying any duration.

Jehangir wrote in his diary: "I ordered that he should be produced in my court. He obeyed orders. He could not give proper replies to my questions. I found him without wisdom and sagacity and extremely arrogant (*bighayat, maghrur wa khudapasand*). I thought it was necessary to confine him for a few days in a disciplinary jail (*Zindan-e-adab*) so that his brain and temper may somewhat be rectified and the people's commotion may subside. I therefore, entrusted him to the stone-hearted (*sangdilan*), Bani Rae to keep him prisoner in the fort of Gwalior.

(Quoted by Dr. H.R. Gupta from *Tozuk-e-Jehangiri*, Aligarh 1864, p 273 in his "*History of the Sikhs*" pages 160-161, 1994 edition).

The most significant opening part of it (page 272) which forms the key to the entire paragraph. It therefore becomes necessary to reproduce here the entire note from Jehangir's diary, to lay open his intentions and to reveal the truth.

Jehangir wrote: "During these days, it was reported to me that a *shayyad* (a loud talker, a cheat) of the name of Sheikh Ahmed had spread the net of hypocrisy and deceit in Sirhind, and caught in it many of the apparent worshippers without spirituality, and had sent into every city and country one of his disciple, whom he called his deputy (*khalifa*) and whom he considered more skilled than others in the adorning of shops (of deceit) and selling of religious knowledge, and deceiving men. He had also written a number of idle tales to his disciples and his believers and had made them into a book which he called *Mukktubat* (letters). In that album (*jung*) of absurdities many unprofitable things had been written that drag people into infidelity and impiety. Amongst these he had written in a latter as follows: "In the court of my travels, I had come to the dwelling of the two lights (the sun and moon) and saw a very lofty and very splendid building. From there, I passed to the abode of discrimination (*Faruq*) and from there, I passed to the abode of truth (*siduq*) and to each I wrote a suitable description. From there I reached the abode of love, and I beheld a brilliant dwelling. It had diverse colours and lights and reflected glories."

"That is to say, I passed from the abode of the Viceregents (*khulfa*) and attained to the highest rank. There were other presumptions expression which it would be contrary to good manners. I accordingly gave an order that they should bring him to the court that is based on justice. According to order, he came to pay his respect. To all that I asked him, he could not give proper replies. I found him without wisdom and sagacity and extremely arrogant (*bighayat, maghrur, wa khudpasand zahir shud*). I considered the best thing for him would be that he should remain for sometime in the prison of correction (*Zindan-e-adab*) until the heat of his temperament and confusion of brain may somewhat be rectified and peoples commotion may subside. I therefore entrusted him to Bani Rae *Sangdillan*, to keep him prisoner in the Gwalior Fort."

(*Tozuk-e-Jehangiri*, Alligarh, 1864, p. 272-273).

As per the above 'farman', issued by emperor Jehangir Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, who was a well known diarist and had adopted the title of "*Mujaddid-Alifsanī*", was sent to

Gwalior prison in May 1619 AD, where he remained for about one year. On being pardoned by Jehangir, he was released and produced before him.

Jehangir has recorded this incident also in his chronicle as follows:

"On this day 21st Khurdad 1029 Hijri (corresponding to May 1620 AD) Sheikh Ahmed of Sirhind, who had for some time been placed in the prison of correction on account of his pretentiousness and immoderate language, was summoned to my presence and I released him giving him a dress and Rs. 1000 for expenses and making him free to go or remain. He justly represented that his punishment had really been a valuable lesson to him and his desire was to wait on me."

(*Tozuk-e-Jehangiri*, p. 308)

From the scrutiny of the full text of Jehangir's notes above, the following points emerge:

- a) There is no mention of Guru Hargobind in the entire note. One wonders, what led Dr. Gupta to impute this episode to the Guru. The most surprising part of it is, that he has completely skipped over the opening lines of the note on page 272, where Sheikh Ahmed's name is clearly mentioned and his activities discussed.
- b) Presuming that page 272 was missing from the copy of *Tozuk-e-Jehangiri* which was available to Dr. Gupta for reference - and this portion escaped his notice - there is nothing such recorded on page 273 which could induce him to impute the harsh and intemperate remarks of Jehangir to Guru Hargobind Sahib, without any basis.
- c) Dr. Gupta has quoted selectively from the closing lines of Jehangir's note on page 273. Most part of the note on this page describes the activities of Sheikh Ahmed of Sirhind which Jehangir had severely criticised. He described him to be without wisdom and sagacity; and extremely arrogant (*bighayat, maghrur wa khudpasand zahir shud*). Therefore he ordered that Sheikh should be put into a correction prison at Gwalior for sometime.
- d) The above note was recorded by Jehangir in *Tozuk-e-Jehangiri* during fourteenth year of his succession, i.e. in May 1619 A.D. Simultaneous to this, Sheikh Ahmed was put in prison, and released in May 1620 A.D. Guru Hargobind Sahib is said to have been put in Gwalior prison some time during 1608-1609 A.D. and released in October 1619. The two events do not corroborate.

In fact, there is nothing recorded in whole of the *Tozuk* regarding Guru Hargobind, which could be quoted as the reason for his imprisonment. What seems most logical to believe is, that after Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom in 1607 A.D. Guru Hargobind revolutionised the Sikh way of life into a self-defending martial movement. This naturally

posed a challenge to the Mughal administration and Jehangir in a bid to ward off any uprising in Punjab, put the Guru in prison at Gwalior.

The conclusion arrived at, therefore, is that Dr. Hari Ram Gupta has probably misinterpreted the contents of page 273 of *Tozuk-e-Jehangiri* which are exclusively related to the person of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi. He has consequently misquoted it in his "*History of the Sikhs*" wrongly ascribing these lines to Guru Hargobind Sahib.

Unfortunately, another writer Dr. H.L. Agnihotri has repeated the same mistake in his book titled "*Guru Hargobind - His Life and Times*" without going into the veracity of the reference quoted by Dr. H.R. Gupta. In such view of the matter it would be most appropriate that the agency responsible for bringing out future editions of Dr. H.R. Gupta's "*History of the Sikhs*" takes note of this to make necessary emendations in the new editions.

