

The Date of First Parkash of Guru Granth Sahib

Different authors appear to have different opinion over the date of completion and the date of first First Parkash of Granth Sahib Ji at Harmandir Sahib.

Kavi Santokh Singh in Suraj Parkash gives the completion date as Bhadon sudi 1[i], 1661 Bikrami[ii].

Giani Gian Singh in Twarikh Guru Khalsa gives Bhadon sudi 1, 1661 Bikrami as the first parkash date, but month of Sawan as the completion month[iii].

According to Dr. Gurbachan Singh Talib, "The writing out of the sacred volume was completed on the first of the bright half of the month of Bhadon [sudi 1] in the year 1661 of the Bikrami Era .. "[iv]. It appears that Dr. Talib followed Kavi Santokh Singh in this instance.

But there shouldn't have been this confusion, because in the Kartarpuri Beerh the following entry is found along with the table of contents:

"Sammat 1661 miti Bhadon vadi 1 pothi likh pahunche" [v] which is clear, unambiguous, and lends itself to only one interpretation - that the Granth Sahib was completed on the first day of the dark paksh (vadi 1 - one day after pooranmashi), of Bhadon in Sammat 1661 Bikrami.

Prof. Sahib Singh correctly gives the date of completion as Bhadon vadi 1, 1661 Bikrami, and Bhadon Sudi 1 for First Parkash.[vi] The equivalent Julian date of the completion of the 'Granth Sahib' is 31 July 1604 CE - on that day it was also 1 Bhadon[vii](solar Bikrami calendar), meaning it was Sangrand of Bhadon. Obviously, the Sangat would have known for quite some time that the compilation of Granth Sahib Ji was taking place. In fact, it took about a year for the compilation[viii]. It appears that the completion was planned for the 'sangrand' day, because Sangat in large numbers used to visit Guru Sahib on the first day of the month to seek his blessings. This gives the completion date as Bhadon 1 viz Sangrand of Bhadon.

The binding was got done at Lahore according to some authors, which took about two weeks, though Prof. Sahib Singh argues that it must have been done at Amritsar, and the gap of about two weeks between the completion and the First Parkash was utilized for the preparation of the table of contents (tatkra). It is generally accepted that the First Parkash at Harmandir Sahib took place about two weeks after the completion date given above. The Bikrami date given in most books for First Parkash is: 'Bhadon sudi 1, 1661 Bikrami' meaning the first day of bright 'paksha' of the lunar month, i.e. the first day after amavasya.

There is one 'paksha' difference between the two dates. Each 'paksha' is usually of 15 days but sometimes there is a dropped (khshya) tithi in the paksha and it then consists of 14 days. Occasionally there is an 'adhika' (extra) tithi in the paksha and then it becomes 16 days long. In extreme cases it could be of 13 days or 17 days. In the dates we are considering the 'vadi paksha' had 16 days, tithi panchami occurring on 2 days.

So, Bhadon sudi 1, 1661 BK occurred 16 days after the completion on 16 August, 1604 CE (Julian Calendar)[ix], and it was 17 Bhadon according to the solar calendar i.e. 16 days after the 'sangrand' of Bhadon. This is the date of First Parkash, and this is the date used in Nanakshahi Calendar for First Parkash. But the readers must not forget that the date 16 August is of the Julian Calendar, which is not the one we are using these days. In the present century 16th August of the Julian Calendar occurs on 29th August of Gregorian.

In the Nanakshahi calendar, we gave preference to the solar dates over the Bikrami lunar ones (tithis), and over the dates of the now defunct Julian Calendar.. Therefore, Bhadon 17 (the original solar Bikrami date - 16 days after the 'sangrand' of Bhadon) was chosen for this 'purb'. And in Nanakshahi Calendar 17 Bhadon shall always fall on September 1 of the Gregorian Calendar that we are using, while according to the

sudi/vadi system it will always fluctuate and along with the solar dates of the Bikrami calendar will drift in the Gregorian Calendar. So, in Nanakshahi calendar the date of 'first parkash' will always be 17 Bhadon, 1 September.

The reasons why we should not use the dates of the Julian Calendar for Gurburbs:

1. The original dates were not recorded in now defunct Julian Calendar.

2. Julian Calendar being inaccurate, had been discarded in 1752CE by the British, and Gregorian calendar was adopted. In the present century the Julian dates differ by 13 dates from the Gregorian. For example, when it is 16th August of Julian then it is 29th August of Gregorian, and conversely when it is 16th of Gregorian then it is 3rd August of Julian. If we fix the Gurburb on 16th August then we shall in reality be celebrating on the 3rd August of Julian, which is not the correct date.

3. If 16th August of the Julian is adopted for First Parkash of Granth Sahib then 27th or 29th of March will have to be adopted for Vaisakhi for the same reason, because Vaisakhi in 1469 CE was on 27th March and in 1699CE on 29th March.

The same causes which resulted in the shifting of Vaisakhi date from 27 March 1469 or 29 March 1699 Julian to 13/14 April Gregorian in the present times, have resulted in the shifting of 17 Bhadon from 16 August 1604 Julian to 1 September Gregorian in Nanakshahi Calendar. We should celebrate the First Parkash Gurburb on 17 Bhadon NS (1 September) for the same reason by which we celebrate 1 Vaisakh /Vaisakhi/Khalsa Parkash/ on 13/14 April[x].

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Nanakshahi Calendar

Jantri 500 Years (1469 - 1969CE, with appendix from 1960-2000CE)

Indian Calendars for the 21st Century (unpublished)

Hijri Calendar from 1 AH to 1500 AH for Mecca, Baghdad, Cairo and Delhi (unpublished)
and some research papers.

Foot Notes:

[i] Usually, vadi (dark) paksh of waning moon starts on the first day after pooranmashi (full moon), and the sudi (bright) paksh of waxing moon on the first day after amavasya (new moon).

[ii] Singh, Kavi Bhai Santokh, Gurpartap Suraj Granth (Suraj Parkash) Punjabi, vol. VI, Ras 3, Ansu 50 p. 2140, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1954

[iii] Singh, Giani Gian, Twarikh Guru Khalsa (Punjabi), p.420, Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, 1993

[iv] Talib, Gurbachan Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (In English Translation), vol one, p.xxx, Punjabi University, Patiala,

[v] Singh, Bhai Jodh, Siri Kartarpuri Beerh de Darshan (Punjabi), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968

[vi] Singh, Prof Sahib, Aad Beerh Varay (Punjabi), p. Singh Brothers, Amritsar.

[vii] Purewal, Pal Singh, Jantri 500 Years, Punjab School Education Board, Chandigarh, 1994

Pillai, Swamikannu, Indian Ephemeris, vol vi,, Agam Parkashan, Delhi, 1982 (reprint)

[viii] Talib, Gurbachan Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (In English Translation), vol one, p.xxx, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1984 CE.

[ix] During the Guru period Julian Calendar was used in most of the Europe though some countries had adopted the new Gregorian Calendar. The British adopted this new calendar in 1752 CE. English Calendar (Julian) was not in use in Punjab during the Guru period, not until after Maharajah Ranjit Singh's rule, but then it was Gregorian Calendar, (Maharajah's agreements with the English show Bikrami solar or / and Hijri dates with Gregorian dates.)

[x] In Nanakshahi Calendar Vaisakhi has been fixed on 14 April.