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## The Great Escape of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

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### Abstract :

Getting rid of Agra is a very important and thrilling event in Shivaji Maharaj's career, but if we look at all the previous events that were the cause of it, we can see how diplomatically Chatrapati Shivaji confronted a diplomat like Mirza Maharaj. He escaped from the Agra dramatically and reached Raigad. This paper focuses on the how Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj escaped from Agra and how this escape is a great escape.

*Keywords : escape, Agra, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj*

### Introduction :

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, was the Indian warrior king and a member of the Maratha family. Chatrapati had established a capable and progressive civil rule with the help of disciplined military and well-structured administrative organisations. He also initiated new military tactics, pioneering guerrilla warfare methods, which used geography, speed, and surprise and focused pinpoint attacks to defeat enemies.

Shivaji was on a spree, occupying empires, and had taken over most of India. The Mughals on the other hand were trying to control the Shivaji's uncontrolled march. They were constantly planning methods to defeat and capture him.

Shivaji Maharaj used Guerilla method and got hold of Juvile area in 1646, with a small force of 16. Chatrapati was successful in occupying several forts. After he defeated Shaiste Khan, Mughal viceroy Aurangzeb sent army of 10,000 soldiers under the leadership of Maharaja Jai Singh in 1664. The Shaiste Khan attacked the fort of Purandar where Shivaji was residing along with family. Therefore a treaty of peace was signed that declared to hand over 23 out of 35 forts to the Mughal emperor. Jai Singh suggested Shivajiescort him to Agra to meet Aurangzeb for sanctioning the treaty and also assured him that his journey will be taken care of. Moreover, the



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Mughal emperor sent a letter on April 5, 1666, to Shivaji that he will be treated royally on arrival.

Shivajireached to Agra with his eldest son, Shambhuji, and a small contingent of soldiers on May 12, Aurangzeb's 50th birthday. Aurangzeb prisoned Shivaji for many days. Shivaji had plan to flee from Agra and he along with his small team left the Agra.

### **ChatrapatiShivajiMaharaj :**

“ChhatrapatiShivaji, founder of Maratha Empire in west Part of India in 1664, was well known for his forts; he was in possession of around 360 at the time of his death. Many, like Panhala and Rajgad existed before him but others, like Sindhudurg and Pratapgad, were built by him from scratch. Also, the Raigad was built as the place of throne, i.e., the capital fort of Maratha Empire by HirojiIndulkar on the orders of Shivaji.

ShivajiShahajiBhosale, means ChhatrapatiShivaji was born at Shivneri fort, in the year 1630. His mother JijabaiBhosale named him Shivaji in the integrity of Shivai Devi. Shivaji was keen to his mother Jijabai, who was extreme religious. This type of background had put extreme impact on ShivajiMaharaj. Holy Vedic & history books of the Hindu religious books read by Shivaji.

ChhatrapatiShivaji always used durable policy in each and every war campaign and war situation. His innovative war techniques always found successful against his offendend due to proper planning and study. Many scholars studied ChhatrapatiShivaji's innovative management techniques during the battle situation very forcefully.

His planning and behavior towards soldiers made him very popular among the military. Soldiers always appreciated ChhatrapatiShivaji's innovative ideas, practical work and his planning on the battle ground. He always presented new innovation in his workplace with proper management skill. He promoted to make innovation in art style of Maratha army.

### **Shivajiwho is threat to the Mughals**

The great Maratha king ShivajirajeBhosle, was a great warrior in the history and well known for his progressive civil rule with a disciplined military and well-structured administrative



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organisations. His guerrilla warfare tactics based on geography, speed, and surprise and focused pinpoint attacks to defeat enemies posed a big threat to the Mughals and Nizams who dominated northern and southern India. A great visionary, a fair minded leader, an impartial king, establishing “Swaraj” was Shivaji’s dream. He wanted the people in his motherland to lead a nonviolent life of dignity and content that was impossible in the rule of Mughals and Nizams.

The Mughals were constantly attempting to suppress Shivaji’s strength but after the defeat of Shaista Khan in Pune, the enraged Mughal emperor Aurangzeb sent another huge force of 10,000 soldiers under the command of Maharaja Jai Singh in the year 1664 to conquer Shivaji. Jai Singh’s army encircled the fort of Purandar where Shivaji was camping. Shivaji didn’t have choice to agree to a truce. Under a peace treaty Shivaji agreed to hand over the control of 23 out of the 35 forts held by him. He also agreed to be an ally of the Mughal forces in their battles against the Sultan of Bijapur. Jai Singh advised Shivaji to proceed to Agra and meet the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb to ratify the treaty.

Aurangzeb two sardars from north to control on Shivaji’s activities. Due to same both of them attacked on Purandar fort. Killedard Murarbaji fought very bravely, but unfortunately Marathas gone towards defeat. Many people died in battle finally Shivaji decided to settle the situation.

After the defeat of Shahistekhana, the kings took the lead in both nation building and national growth. Entered the Konkan region for national growth. If you want to keep the waterway in your hands, you have to build a water fort like Sindhudurg as a good water fort in the air. As 'Dharmasya Moolmarth:', a huge amount of money was required to transform Swarashtra into Surashtra. This money was looted from Surat.

But these progress of Shivaji Maharaj had created a new crisis. Aurangzeb was in search of a similar chief to end the growing power of the kings and he saw such a chief. The Jaipur dynasty of the Kachwah dynasty of the Rajput dynasty was a loyal servant of the Mughals. Akbar had given the book 'Mirza' meaning prince to his general Mansingh. Mirza Raje of such a dynasty joined the service of Jahagir at the age of eight. He was instrumental in bringing Aurangzeb to the throne. After being defeated by Mahavir Shivaji Maharaj, Aurangzeb chose Mirza Raja. At his



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request, Aurangzeb authorized Mirza Raja to keep his prisoners in a large fort like Nagar, Parinda, and to withdraw as much money as he wanted from the Deccan treasury. In addition to the silver, gold, and diamond-studded ambari, two elephants and a diamond medal, he also handed over the Kaaba and the pearl necklace to Mirza Raja.

Treaty of purander took place on the same incidence between Shivaji and Mughal. Shivaji lost his major 23 forts and major province. He promised to work on behalf of Mughals.

### **The Escape of Chatrapati from Agra :**

Shivaji Maharaj was assured a treatment in accord to his royal status both by Maharaja Jai Singh and Aurangzeb himself. Accordingly, Shivaji set out for Agra with a small contingent of his forces and his son Sambhaji by his side and reached Agra on 11<sup>th</sup> Of May 1666. As promised by Maharaja Jai Singh, his son Ram Singh welcomed Shivaji befittingly. But, when Shivaji was taken to the royal court, to his surprise, Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb did not even look at him. Moreover, he was made to stand in the third row of the courtiers which was an insult to his status and stature as a king. Shivaji was ruffled and angry with this dishonour and disgrace. He walked out of the royal court to display his disagreement with the same.

Shivaji was then put under a house arrest by the Mughal Emperor in the royal guest house. On his request however, a few of his fellowmen were released. But, later neither the Emperor arranged any meeting with him, nor was he allowed to leave Agra for the next few months. Three months passed by and the situation did not change a bit. Shivaji Maharaj realised that it was high time, he had to master an escape.

Shivaji reached Agra on June 11, 1666, accompanied by his son and a small force. When he reached the Mughal durbar, Aurangzeb ignored him. He was made to stand in courtiers' row and this angered Shivaji and when he made his move he realised he was under house arrest. On Shivaji's request, few of his companions were left. Though Shivaji was never kept in prison he was not allowed to leave Agra for three months.



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On the ground of purander treaty, Shivaji received invitation from Mughal durbar for the 50th birth anniversary of badshaha Aurangjeb. He moved to Agra for meeting but in Mughal durbar aurangjeb stood him in the last row. Shivaji was insulted by Aurangjeb. He got angry and left Mughal durbar.

In August, Shivaji alleged to have suffered from stomach ache and for his treatment doctors were called. After a three-day treatment, he was declared fit. Shivaji asked for sweets and money to distribute among doctors, Brahmins, and poor people. And hence sweets were made in huge quantities and were transported in large bamboo baskets. A strict inspection was carried and after few days the security persons passed the basket without inspection.

Shivaji realised that this was the right moment for escape and on August 19, he along with his son broke out hiding inside huge baskets of sweets.

Aurangjeb blocked Shivaji to kill but Shivaji made extreme plan and ran from Agra. He escaped from Agra fort through sweetbox.

On moving out of the durbar instead of moving towards Maharashtra, the two moved towards Mathura. Before moving, Shivaji dressed up two of his courtiers like himself and his son. And so when an informer informed in the durbar of seeing Shivaji and his son, the emperor replied no such getaway was made.

After reaching Mathura, the father-son and their followers shaved off their usual beard and mustache and applied ash on their face, posing like beggars. From Mathura, they proceeded to Prayag (Allahabad) and then to Bundelkhand (Madhya Pradesh) and then to Golconda (Andhra Pradesh) and with a journey of 60 days reached Raigarh in October 1666.

On June 6, 1674, Shivaji was coronated with the title 'Chhatrapati' in Raigarh fort.

Shivaji reached *Rajgad* in September 1666 and immersed himself totally in re-organizing his government and its policies, repairing and provisioning for his forts and recuperating his power. He set out on a re-conquest of his lost forts and territories and eight years later on June 6, 1674 was coronated as the Chhatrapati.

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## The Escape Route

Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had taken three probable routes. He took one route out of these three route on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1666.

Till today no one knows the exact route which Shivaji took for reaching Rajgarh after a successful and sensational escape through six rings of guards as shown in the adjoining sketch. Rajgarh is 670 miles from Agra in a straight line but he must have covered nearly a thousand miles in reaching the safety of his home. The *Akhabarat* of 4th November 1666 mentions the news received from the Deccan that Shivaji and his son had reached Rajgarh.

The following diagram shows the routes which different sources suggest Shivaji took in returning safely to Maharashtra.

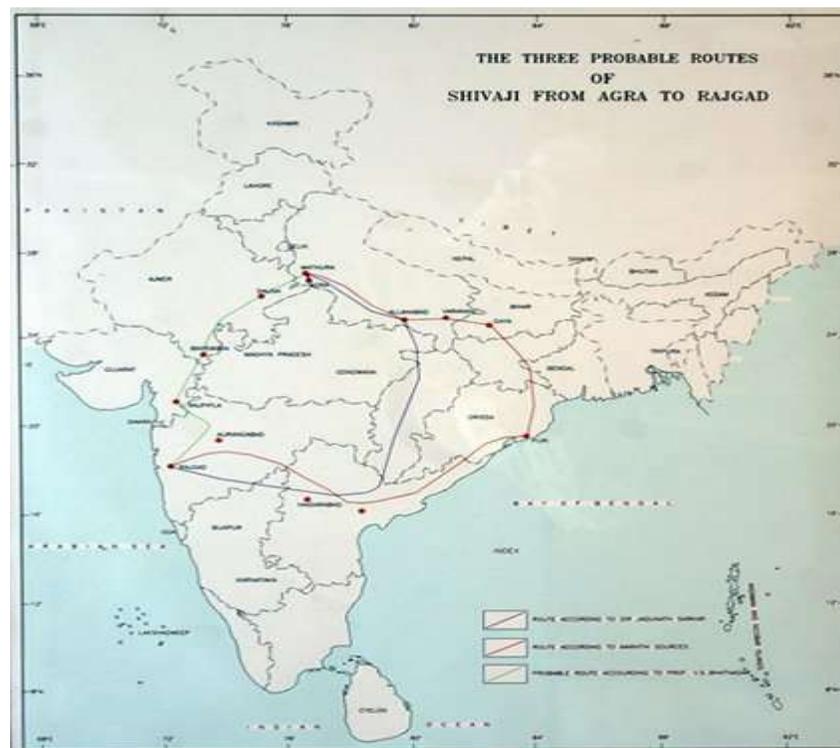


Fig : Shivaji's home coming from Agra (18th August-September 1666). The possible routes of the Great escape

(Source : <http://hero-for-modern-india.blogspot.com/2009/02/shivajis-home-coming-from-agra-18th.html>)



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**Route No.I** shown in **Red** is the one suggested by Sir JadunathSarkar. According to him, from Agra Shivaji first went in the opposite direction to Mathura to confuse his pursuers. Here he left his son (Shambhaji) under the care of trusted Maratha priests, reached Allahabad and then passing through Gondwana and the less inhabited areas of Golkonda and Bijapur, reached Rajgarh (12th September 1666) to the great surprise and happiness of JijaBai, his mother.

**Route No.II** shown in **Blue** incorporates the information from the Marathi sources and is merely an extension of the first. According to it Shivaji also visited Varanasi, Gaya and Puri on the way and thereafter the route which he took passed through territories of Golkonda and Bijapur and ended at Rajgarh.

**Route No.III** shown in **Green** seems, the more likely route taken by Shivaji. It passed through Mathura, Dausa, Shahpura, Banswara, Rajpipla and Saler. About fifteen years later (1681 AD), when DurgadasRathor escorted Prince Akbar (rebel son of Aurangzeb), to Shambhaji, he had taken the route which passed through Banswara, "BharvargarGhat" on the Narmada, Rajpipla and reached Saler on *JyesthaVadi* 5, V.S. 1737 (29 April 1681) in "Shambhaji's *mulak*". This was the safest and the shortest route, the only dangerous area being that around Ahmedabad.

This route was safest as travelling through Rajasthan, even in the disguise of a *Bairagi* was more safe than covering more than 462 km. – the distance from Mathura to Allahabad in a straight line – **and passing through three Mughal provinces, and then through none too friendly Golkonda and Bijapur States, to reach Rajgad.** Shivaji had immense goodwill and respect for him among the Rajputs and who knows what arrangements Kunwar Ram Singh had made to facilitate Shivaji's escape and his safe return to his home land, to keep the '*tek*' or pledge of his father, about which he was extremely sensitive, as the contemporary letters of Parkaldas from Agra amply show.

### Conclusion :

ChhatrapatiShivaji was successful king, shown his impact on the next generation till at present in the various part of the world.ChhatrapatiShivaji proved himself as a best king and warrior. He



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found very strong skill in the skill vision and preparation for any kind of war and campaigning against the enemy. He was the discover of new techniques on the battle ground which was known as GanimiKawa. Chatrapati had successfully flee from Agra with full planning.

Chatrapati had specific logic of the selection of route by Shivaji. One major and significant reason to select this route is that Shivaji and his men had come by this route and new the terrain, the towns, camping places, etc. Also, this is the direct and fastest route to the south, and in the monsoon season, when it rains heavily in the midlands of India, this is the most safe and most used route! The other route may expose Shivaji to many other unknown dangers and uncertainties. After 60 days journey; Shivaji Maharaj reached to Raigarh. On June 6, 1674, Shivaji was coronated with the title 'Chhatrapati' in Raigarh fort. This coronation of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj initiated the 'SWARAJ' in the history of India. Thus, the fee of Shivaji from Agra became a great escape of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in the Indian history.

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