

## 1. The Mughals and Their Empire

- Mughals did not want to link with their descent—Mongols. They considered themselves as Timurids. As descendant of the Turkish ruler, Timur on the paternal side.
- Babur, the first Mughal ruler was related to Ghenghiz Khan from his mother side. He spoke Turkish and referred derisively to the Mongols as par barbaric hordes.
- During the 16th century, Europeans used the term Mughal to describe the Indian rulers of this branch of the family.
- Zahiruddin Babur came from his central Asian homeland, Farghana. He set himself at Kabul and pushed to Indian subcontinent in 1526. His son Humayun could not rule over the sub-continent for long.
- Jalaluddin Akbar (1556–1605) is considered as the greatest Mughal ruler. He expanded, consolidated and made his empire strongest and richest in his time. He extended frontiers of his empire to the Hindukush. He checked the expansionist plans of Uzbeks of Turan and Safavids of Iran.
- Three Mughal rulers kept and compacted the various instruments of governance. The observing centre of Mughal power was the court. Political coordinations and relationship were shaped, status and graded also defined.
- The political system was planned by the Mughals. It was based on the mixing of military power and rational policy to reconcile the different traditions.

## 2. The Production of Chronicles

- (i) Chronicles were commissioned by the Mughal emperors. They are important source to make study about the Mughal empire and its court.

(ii) Mughal chronicles were written by the courtiers. The histories written by them especially focused on the events associated to rulers, royal family, courts and nobles, war and administrative arrangements.

### 2.1 From Turkish to Persian

- Chronicles were written in Persian. Persian was grown as courts language and literary writings. North Indian languages as Hindavi and other regional were also in use in the Persian.
- Babur composed poetry and his memories in Persian. Akbar made Persian as the main language of the Mughal court. Most emperors were motivated to adopt this, by cultural and intellectual contacts with and from regular stream of Iranian and Central Asian migrants who wanted positions at the Mughal court. It became the language of administration.
- Whenever Persian was not directly used, its rich and sound vocabulary and idioms affected the language of official records in Rajasthani and Marathi and Tamil also. Persian was also adopted as an Indian language with local idioms. Urdu came in existence as new language mixing Persian with Hindavi.
- *Akbarnama* was written and Babur's memories were translated in Persian. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana were also translated into Persian by Mughal emperors.

### 2.2 The making of manuscripts

- In Mughal India, all books were manuscripts. Their production was done at the imperial Kitabkhana. All collection of manuscripts related to emperor was kept in Kitabkhana.
- A large number of people were engaged in performing different tasks. The calligraphers were assigned to make the copies of the texts and gilders were to embellish the pages. Painters used to adorn or designs the scenes from the text.
- People who were engaged in the production of manuscripts got the familiarity as they were titled and awarded by the state. Akbar liked the nastaliq style of calligraphy.

### 3. The Painted Image

- Painters played an important role in the production of Mughal manuscripts. Paintings or pictures enhance beauty of any book. Picture possessed special powers of communicating ideas about powers of king and kingdom that words were unable to do so.
- The Islamic prohibition of the description of human beings are cherished in the Quran as well as the hadis. It gave an account of the incident from the life of the Prophet Muhammad.
- Different social groups exposed the meaning regarding the body of Islamic tradition in various ways.
- The Safavid kings of Iran supported the finest artists. They were trained in workshops which were set up at court. Bihzad was a familiar artist. The Iranian artists made their



A folio in nastaliq, the work of Muhammad Husayn of Kashmir (c. 1575-1605), one of the finest calligraphers at Akbar's court, who was honoured with the title "zarrin qalam" (golden pen) in recognition of the perfectly proportioned curvature of his letters. The calligrapher has signed his name on the lower section of the page, taking up almost one-fourth of its space.

way to Mughal India, some of them were brought to the Mughal Court. Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad advanced to Delhi with Humayun.

#### 4. The Akbar Nama and The Badshah Nama

- Akbarnama and Badshahnama are the famous manuscript. They contained about 150 full or double page, various paintings of battles, sieges, hunts building construction, court scenes, etc.

- The writer of Akbar Nama, Abul Fazl was grown up at Agra. He was a scholar of Arabic, Persian, Greek philosophy and sufism. He resisted the views of the conservative Ulama. Akbar was impressed by Abul Fazl and his wits. He worked on the Akbar Nama for 13 years.

- It has three volumes. The first two are chronicles. The third book is the Ain-i-Akbari. It described the Akbar's reign in the traditional diachronic sense of recording politically important.

- Abdul Hamid Lahori who was the pupil of Abul Fazl wrote Badshah Nama. Shah Jahan recruited him to write a history of his empire. Badshah Nama had three volume (daftar). Every volume consisted of information as of ten lunar years.

Lahori wrote first two volumes comprising the first 20 years of Shah Jahan's rule. Wazir Sadullah Khan revised these volumes. Due to old age Lahori could not write the third volume. It was written by historian Waris.

- Sir William Jones founded Asiatic Society of Bengal. It undertook the work of editing, printing and translation of different Indian manuscripts.

#### 5. The Ideal Kingdom

##### 5.1 A divine light

- Court historians tried to proved with many evidences that Mughal emperors got power directly from God. One of the traditional story was narrated by them. It was a story of Mongol Queen Alanqua who was impregnated by a ray of sunshine, when she was resting in her tent. Her child carried the divine light and this light was passed from generation to generation.

- Abul Fazl marked the highest place to Mughal kingship in the order of objects that got light from the God. He was motivated by an Iranian Sufi Shihabuddin Suhrawardi. According to the idea, the divine light was transferred to the king who used to be a source of spiritual guidance for his subjects.

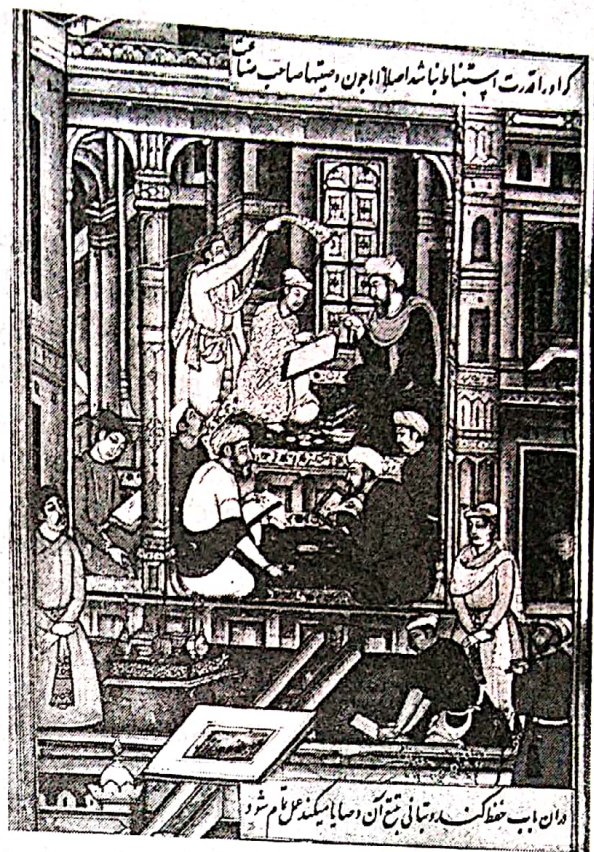
- From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Mughal artists began to portray kings wearing the halo. The halo were the symbols of divine light. The painters saw and observed the European paintings of Christ and the virgin Mary.

##### 5.2 A unifying force

- Mughal empire was dealt by Mughal chronicles. The empire was consisted by various ethnic and religious communities like Hindu, Jainas, Zoroastrians and Muslims.

- Emperor stood above all the groups as the source of all peace and stability. Emperor used to mediate among them and ensured that peace and justice could prevail in empire.

- The idea of Sulh-i-Kul was motivated by the unification and peace among all classes and racial and religious communities. All religious and schools of thought in Sulh-i-kul had the freedom of expression. They were expected that they did not undermine the authority of the state or fight among themselves.



A Mughal kitabkhana

- People of different groups and ethnic were awarded according to their positions and services. The composite consisting – Iranis, Turanis, Afghans, Rajputs and Deccanis.
- Akbar withdrew the tax, that was imposed on pilgrimage in 1563 and Jizya in 1564. Orders were passed and spread in the empire to follow the didactic orders of Sulh-i-kul in administration.
- Mughal emperors provided grants and support to build and maintain places of worship, whether temples were destroyed during war but grants were given for their repair, later. During the reign of Aurangzeb, Jizya was reimposed.

### 5.3 Just sovereignty as social contract

- Abul Fazl described sovereignty as a social contractor–Mughal Emperor used to protect life (jan), property (mal), honour (namus) and faith (din) of his subjects. He demanded obedience and a share of resources from his side.
- Artists used a symbol of harmony – The motif of the lion and the lamb lived together without violence – a realm where strong and weak could exist.

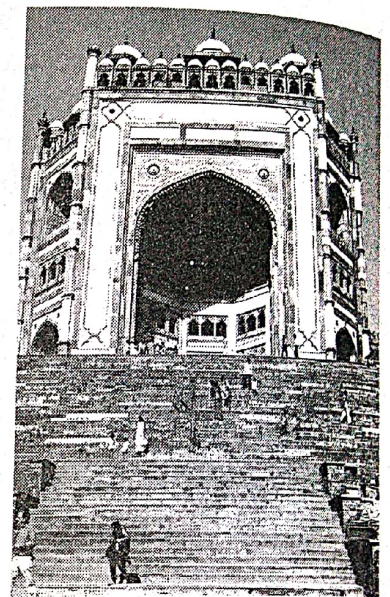
## 6. Capitals and Courts

### 6.1 Capital cities

- The heart of the Mughal Empire was the capital city. Always court was assembled there. Mughals used to change the capital during 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Babur captured Lodhi, Capital of Agra. In 1560 Akbar constructed a Red Fort in Agra. In 1570 new capital to be decided to develop. At Fatehpur Sikri, Dargah of Shaikh Salim Chishti is situated. It was constructed by Akbar.
- Lahore became the capital city of Mughal Empire in 1585 to keep close vigil and watch at the frontier for 13 years. Mughal emperor Shah Jahan had a passion for buildings.
- The court, army and household transferred from Agra to Shahjahanabad (Delhi) in 1648 as new imperial capital.

### 6.2 The Mughal Court

- The central point of activities and special occasions of Mughal court was the emperor, the throne or the *takht*. It gave physical form to the function of the supreme ruler as 'axis mundi'.
- The place of all courtiers was fixed by the emperor himself as he sat on the throne. Then no one was allowed to change or move his position or to leave without permission. If any violation was noticed punishment was given on the spot.
- The forms of greeting to the emperor pointed out the individual's status in the hierarchy. Deeper adoration represented higher status. The highest form of submission was *sajda* or complete prostration. These were replaced with *chahar taslim* and *zaminbos* under the reign of Shah Jahan.
- The diplomatic envoys at the mughal court were equally unreserved. The ambassador who presented to the Mughal ruler was expected to offer a pleasing form of greetings.
- The Emperor's activities were started at sunrise with individual religious prayers. Later *Jharokha darshan* was introduced by Akbar. It was started with an objective of broadening the acceptance of the imperial authority as part of popular faith.
- The emperor used to move towards *diwan-i-am* to meet the primary work of his government. In *diwan-i-khas* he discussed important as well as secret issues with ministers. Finance matters used to be presented by the in-charge officials.



The Buland Darwaza; Fatehpur Sikri

- In Mughal state, special occasions like anniversary of accession to the throne, Id, Shab-i-barat and holi, the court met in full swing and decoration was made. Kings used to celebrate three major festivals in a year – solar and lunar birthdays of monarch and Nauroz.

### 6.3 Titles and gift

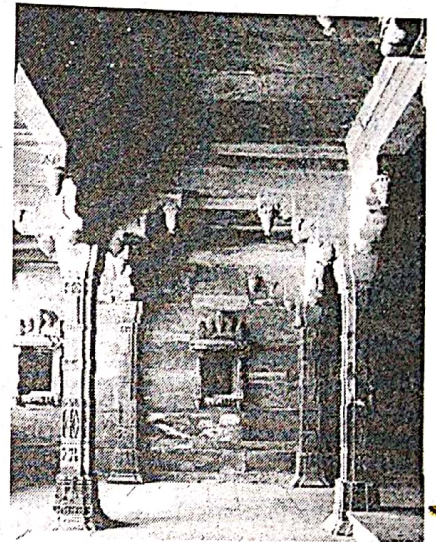
- Many grand titles were accepted by the Mughal emperors at the time of ceremony of crowning or after a victory over enemies.
- Important aspect of Mughal polity in the context of granting of title was merit.
- Courtiers never went to the king empty handed. Always they provided a small sum of money (nazr) or a large amount.
- In diplomatic relation, presents were considered as a symbol of dignity and estimation. Ambassadors executed the important tasks of negotiating treaties and relationship between striving political powers.



A Mughal turban box

### 7. The Imperial Household

- Mughal household made up of kings wives and concubines, his near and distant relatives, female servants and slaves. Polygamy was widely practised among the ruling groups.
- By establishing the marriage relationship with Rajput clans, Mughals cemented the political relationship and forging alliances.
- A distinction was made in Mughal household, between the wives who came from royal families (begums) and other wives (aghas), they were not from the noble families. The begums after receiving a huge amount of cash and other valuable as dowry were given the higher status than the aghas.
- Agha and aghacha could get higher status as begum. It was depended on the husband's will and told the facts that no four wives were there in his harem.



Part of the inner apartments in Fatehpur Sikri

- Lot of male and female slaves were included in the Mughal household. Different types of tasks were assigned to the slaves.
- After Nurjahan, Mughal queens and princesses started to control the important financial resources. Jahanara and Roshanara both were the daughters of Shah Jahan, entertained with an annual income equal to the mansabdar.
- Jahanara used to get the revenue from the city of Surat, which was port city and centre of overseas trade. Having control over resources, important women of the Mughal household built many buildings and gardens.
- The bazaar of Chandni Chowk was the palpitated centre of Shahjahanabad. It was designed by Jahanara.
- Gulbadan Begum was the daughter of Babur. She wrote Humayu Nama which gives us a glimpse into the domestic world of the Mughals. She could write in Turkish and Persian language.
- When Akbar appointed Abul Fazl to write a history of his kingdom, he requested his aunt Gulbadan to record her memories of previous age so that Abul Fazl could complete his task.
- No praise of Mughal kings was written by Gulbadan. She described the disputes and tensions among the princes and the kings and what role was played by elderly women of the family played to solve them.

## 8. The Imperial Officials

### 8.1 Recruitment and rank

- Corps of officers was one of the important pillars of the Mughal state. It was collectively referred to as the nobility by historians. The nobility was recruited from different ethnic and religious groups.
- It was kept in the mind that no faction was large enough to challenge the authority of the state. The officer corps was called as the *guldasta* or bouquet of flowers. It was held together by loyalty to the emperor.
- Turani and Iranian nobles were already present in Akbar's court from the beginning of the origin of Mughal empire. Some of them came to India with Humayun and some of them migrated to the Mughal court.
- The Rajputs and Indian Muslims who were of the Indian origin got the entry in imperial service. Raja Bhagmal Kachhawa of Amber joined first. Finance Minister of Akbar, Raja Todarmal belonged to Khatri caste.
- All government officials held ranks (mansab) with two numerical designations—*zat* and *sawar*. *Zat* was an indicator of salary and position of official in the imperial hierarchy.
- *Sawar* indicated the number of horsemen that he was required to maintain in his service.
- In 17<sup>th</sup> century Mansabdars of 1000 *zat* or above were ranked as nobles or *umara*.
- The troopers retained the best horses which were branded on the flank by the imperial sign or (*dagh*) ranks were re-examined by the emperor for changing.
- Mansab system was designed by Akbar. He set up spiritual relationship with a selected band of his nobility and treated them as his *murid*.
- Imperial service was a way to get the power, wealth and highest reputation. A person who was suited to join the service was petitioned by a noble art.
- Two important ministers were at centre—*diwan-i-ala* (finance minister) and *siyāh* *Sadr-us-Sudur* (Minister of grants or *Maddat-i-maash* and in charge of recruiting local judges or *qazis*).
- At the court (*taiyat-i-raikab*) a reserve force was kept which was to be posted to a province or for a military campaign. There were abided to appear two times in a day to show their obedience to the emperor at the public listeners hall.

### 8.2 Information and empire

- Mughal administration kept accurate and detailed records. The corps of court writers (*waqianawis*) were inspected by Mir Bakshi. He put all the records and applications in the court as well as imperial orders.
- The Akbarat had all types of information like attendance at the court, grant of offices and cities, diplomatic mission and gifts which they got.
- Important officials documents and news reports travelled across various regions of Mughal empire by imperial post. It was round-the-clock relays of foot runners (*qasid* or *pathmar*). They carried the papers which were rolled up in bamboo barrel.
- The emperor used to get reports from distant provincial capitals within few days. The emperor was linked by a very quick information loop for the public news.

### 8.3 Beyond the centre: provincial administration

- The governor (*subadar*) was the head of the provincial administration. He reported to the emperor directly. Each suba was divided into the *sarkars*. The *sarkar* overlapped with the jurisdiction of *faujdar*. He had heavy cavalry and musketeers.
- The local administration was set up at the *pargana* (sub-district). Even *pargana* was controlled by the *qanungo*, the *Chaudhari* and the *qazi*.
- Each department of administration managed a large support including accountants, clerks, messengers, auditors and other functionaries. They were skilled in technical fields and functioned as per the standardised rules and procedures.

• Persian was made the language of the administration in the entire kingdom. Local languages usually used to maintain village accounts.

## 9. Beyond the Frontiers

• Various high-sounding titles were accepted by the Mughal emperors, like—Shahenshah.

### 9.1 The Safavids and Qandahar

• Some frontier areas were captured to control in all respect the political and diplomatic relationship between the Mughal kings and other neighbouring countries.

• All the enemies had to pass the Hindukush to have the positive remark to get the easy accessibility to north India.

• Qandahar was considered as the back-bone of disputes between the Safavids and the Mughals. The fortress were under control of Humayun and recaptured by Akbar in 1595.

• Safavids court maintained the diplomatic relations with the Mughals. In 1622 Persian army defeated the Mughals and acquired Qandahar.

### 9.2 The Ottomans: pilgrimage and trade

• Mughals had good relations with the Ottoman. Mughal emperors mixed the religion and commerce in the exporting valuable things that were merchandised to Aden and Mokha which were the sea ports.

• Aurangzeb honoured Mecca as a house of God.

### 9.3 Jesuits at the Mughal court

• Indian knowledge was spread in Europe by the accounts of Jesuit missionaries, travellers, merchants and diplomats.

• Akbar was so eager about the Christian religion and sent an embassy to Goa to invite Jesuit priests. The Jesuits expressed the bases to Akbar and about the Christian religions and discussed its qualities with the Ulama.



*Jahangir's dream*

An inscription on this miniature records that Jahangir commissioned Abu'l Hasan to render in painting a dream the emperor had recently. Abu'l Hasan painted this scene portraying the two rulers – Jahangir and the Safavid Shah Abbas – in friendly embrace. Both kings are depicted in their traditional costumes. The figure of the Shah is based upon portraits made by Bishandas who accompanied the Mughal embassy to Iran in 1613. This gave a sense of authenticity to a scene which is fictional, as the two rulers had never met.

## 10. Question and Formal Religion:

• Akbar had a great respect to the members of Jesuit mission. Akbar's quest for the religious learnings led to interfaith discussion in the *ibadatkhana* at Fatehpur Sikri amongst the Muslims, Hindus, Jains, Parsis and Christians.



Blue tiles from a shrine in Multan, brought by migrant artisans from Iran