

Medieval India - (C) The Mughal Empire

SOURCES

The main sources of information about the Mughals are:

1. *Ain-i-Akbari*: It was written by Abul Fazl, the minister and one of the Nine jewels at Akbar's court. The *Ain-i-Akbari*, is divided into five books. The first book deals with the imperial household. The second book deals with the servants of the emperor, the military and civil services. The third book deals with the imperial administration. The second book deals with the servants of the emperor, the military and civil services. The third book deals with the imperial administration. The fourth book contains information about Hindu philosophy, science, social customs and literature. The fifth book contains the wise sayings of Akbar.

2. *The Taj Mahal, Agra*: It was built by Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. It is built at Agra on the banks of the River Yamuna. It was designed by Ustad Isha Khan and it is made of pure white marble.



3. *The Jama Masjid*: It was built by Shah Jahan and is the biggest mosque in India. Its courtyard has the capacity to accommodate thousands of people at a time. It has three gateways, four towers and two 40m high minarets constructed of red sandstone and white marble.

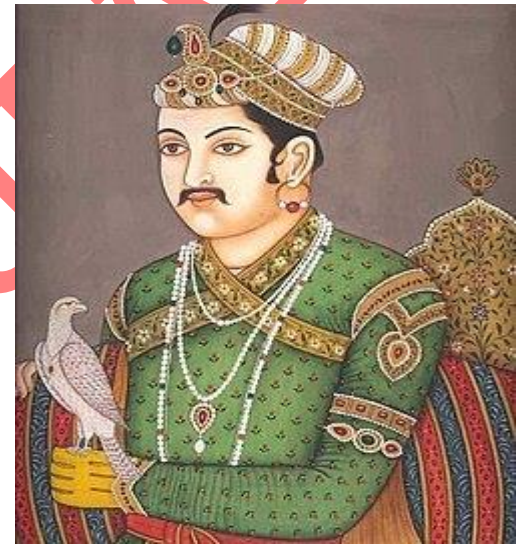


4. The Red Fort, Delhi: It was built by Shah Jahan after he decided to shift his capital to Delhi. It is located on the banks of the Yamuna. Red sandstone and marble were used in its construction. The fort has massive walls and two gateways. The Western Gateway is known as the Lahori Gate. The Red Fort is an important historical monument. Many historical events are connected with this fort. The Prime Minister of India every year unfurls the national flag from its ramparts on Independence Day (August 15).



AKBAR

He was only thirteen years old when he ascended the throne and was guided by his tutor, Bairam Khan. Second Battle of Panipat, the Mughal forces led by Bairam Khan defeated Hemu. Battle of Haldighati was fought in 1576 between Maharana Pratap, the ruler of Mewar, and the Mughal army led by Raja Man Singh.



Akbar's Rajput Policy: The Rajput policy of Akbar proved to be one of his greatest achievements. He entered into marriage alliances with the Rajput's. Bhara Mal, the ruler of Amber, married his younger daughter, Harkha Bai to Akbar. Akbar not only gave complete religious freedom to his wives who followed Hinduism but also gave an honoured place to their parents and relations in the nobility.



Steps Towards Integration: Akbar took a number of measures to promote greater understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims.

1. Akbar abolished the the poll tax or jizyah) which the non-Muslims were required to pay. He also abolished the pilgrim tax) on bathing at holy places such as Prayag and Benaras.
2. To strengthen the liberal principles, Akbar enrolled a number of Hindus into the nobility.
3. In 1575, Akbar built a hall called Ibadat Khana or the Hall of Prayer at Fatehpur Sikri. At this hall, he sun to call selected theologians of all religions, mystics and intellectuals and discuss religious and spiritual matters with them.
4. Akbar promulgated a new faith called Din-i-Ilahi. It was based on the principle of oneness of God. The new religion stressed on virtues like courage, loyalty and justice.

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

Akbar introduced a number of social and. educational reforms:

- 1 Akbar issued orders to the kotwals to check the forcible practice of Sati or the burning of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband.
2. Akbar legalised widow remarriage.
3. Akbar raised the age of marriage to 14 for girls and 16 for boys.

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE MUGHALS

The Mughal Emperors established a centralised State based on military power. It rested on two pillars - the absolute authority of the Emperor and the strength of the army.

Monarch: There are a number of references in the court chronicles of the Mughals which show that the power of the Mughal kings came directly from God. The Mughal Emperor endowed with the divine light was 36 regarded as the vice-regent of God on Earth. The Emperor was the head of the Executive, Legislature, Judiciary and the Army. He was the supreme commander of the armed forces and all other commanders were appointed and removed him.

Ministers: In the days of Babur and Humayun, there used to be a Prime Minister, known as wakil who was entrusted with large powers in civil and military affairs. The head of the revenue department was the wazir, known as diwan or diwan-i-ala. The head of the military department was called the mir bakhshi.

Judiciary: The judicial department was headed by the qazi. This post was sometimes combined with that of the chief sadar who was responsible for all charitable and religious matters.

Provincial Government: The empire was divided into twelve provinces or subahs, which was further subdivided into sarkars and each sarkar into parganas or mahals.

