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**Mughal Emperor Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar**

**Born:**

Akbar was born in 25 October, 1542 at the Rajput fortress of Amarkot in Rajputana. His father was Humayun and mother was Hamida Banu. During the extended period of Humayun's exile, Akbar was brought up in Kabul by the extended family of his paternal uncles, Kamran Mirza and Askari Mirza, and his aunts, in particular Kamran Mirza's wife. He spent his youth learning to hunt, run, and fight, making him a daring, powerful and brave warrior, but he never learned to read or write.

**Military Organization:**

Akbar organized his army as well as the nobility by means of a system called the mansabdari. Under this system, each officer in the army was assigned a rank (a mansabdar), and assigned a number of cavalries that he had to supply to the imperial army. The mansabdars were divided into 33 classes. The top three commanding ranks, ranging from 7,000 to 10,000 troops, were normally reserved for princes. Other ranks between 10 and 5,000 were assigned to other members of the nobility. The empire's permanent standing army was quite small and the imperial forces mostly consisted of contingents maintained by the mansabdars. Persons were normally appointed to a low mansab and then promoted, based on their merit as well as the favour of the emperor.

**Administration:**

1. The revenue department was headed by a wazir, responsible for all finances and management of jagir and inam lands.
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3. The mir saman was in charge of the imperial household, including the harems, and supervised the functioning of the court and royal bodyguard.
4. The judiciary was a separate organization headed by a chief Qazi, who was also responsible for religious beliefs and practices.

**Military Campaigns:**

Akbar’s army, led by Bairam Khan, defeated Hemu and the Sur army on 5 November 1556 at the Second Battle of Panipat. After that, Mughal forces occupied Delhi and then Agra. In the next six months, the Mughals won another major battle against Sikander Shah Suri, who fled east to Bengal. Akbar and his forces occupied Lahore and then seized Multan in the Punjab. In 1558, Akbar took possession of Ajmer, the aperture to Rajputana, after the defeat and flight of its Muslim ruler. The Mughals had also besieged and defeated the Sur forces in control of Gwalior Fort, the greatest stronghold north of the Narmada river. By 1559, the Mughals had launched a drive to the south into Rajputana and Malwa. After yet another dispute at court, Akbar finally dismissed Bairam Khan in the spring of 1560 and ordered him to leave on Hajj to Mecca. In 1961, Malwa became a province of the nascent imperial administration of Akbar's regime. When a powerful clan of Uzbek chiefs broke out in rebellion in 1564, Akbar decisively defeated and routed them in Malwa and then Bihar. In 1564, Mughal forces began the conquest of Garha, a thinly populated, hilly area in central India that was of interest to the Mughals because of its herd of wild elephants. The Mughals seized immense wealth, an uncalculated amount of gold and silver, jewels and 1000 elephants. Kamala Devi, a younger sister of Durgavati, was sent to the Mughal harem. In 1564, the assassination attempt was made when Akbar was returning from a visit to the dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin near Delhi. The assassin was apprehended and ordered beheaded by the emperor. Having established Mughal rule over northern India, Akbar turned his attention to the conquest of Rajputana. Beginning in 1561, the Mughals actively engaged the Rajput’s in warfare and diplomacy. Most Rajput states accepted Akbar's suzerainty; the rulers of Mewar and Marwar, Udai Singh and Chandrasen Rathore, however, remained outside the imperial fold. Rana Udai Singh was descended from the Sisodia ruler, Rana Sanga, who had fought Babur at the Battle of Khanwa in 1527. In 1567, Akbar moved to reduce the Chittor Fort in Mewar. The fortress-capital of Mewar was of great strategic importance as it lay on the shortest route from Agra to Gujarat and was also considered a key to holding the interior parts of Rajputana. Chittorgarh fell on February 1568 after a siege of four months. Akbar had the surviving defenders and 30,000 non-combatants massacred and their heads displayed upon towers erected throughout the region, in order to demonstrate his authority. The fall of Chittorgarh was followed up by a Mughal attack on the Ranthambore Fort in 1568. It fell only after a couple of months. Akbar's next military objectives were the conquest of Gujarat and Bengal, which connected India with the trading centres of Asia, Africa, and Europe through the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal respectively. Akbar first moved against Gujarat, which lay in the crook of the Mughal provinces of Rajputana and Malwa. Moreover, Akbar had received invitations from cliques in Gujarat to oust the reigning king, which served as justification for his military expedition. Having established his authority over Gujarat, Akbar returned to Fatehpur Sikiri, where he built the Buland Darwaza to commemorate his victories. The conquest and subjugation of Gujarat proved highly profitable for the Mughals; the territory yielded a revenue of more than five million rupees annually to Akbar's treasury, after expenses. In 1574, the Mughals seized Patna from Daud Khan, who fled to Bengal. The Mughal army was subsequently victorious at the Battle of Tukaroi in 1575, which led to the annexation of Bengal and parts of Bihar that had been under the dominion of Daud Khan. In 1586, Akbar negotiated a pact with Abdullah Khan in which the Mughals agreed to remain neutral during the Uzbek invasion of Safavid held Khorasan. In return, Abdullah Khan agreed to refrain from supporting, subsidizing, or offering refuge to the Afghan tribes hostile to the Mughals. Over the next six years, the Mughals contained the Yusufzai in the mountain valleys, and forced the submission of many chiefs in Swat and Bajaur. Dozens of forts were built and occupied to secure the region. Akbar's response demonstrated his ability to clamp firm military control over the Afghan tribes. In 1585, Mughal army conquest Kashmir. Akbar sends a Mughal army to besiege Sehwan, the river capital of the region. The outnumbered Mughal forces defeated the Sindhi forces at the Battle of Sehwan. After suffering further defeats, Jani Beg surrendered to the Mughals in 1591, and in 1593, paid homage to Akbar in Lahore. In 1595, Akbar conquered Baluchistan. In 1593, Akbar received the exiled Safavid prince, Rostam Mirza, after he had quarrelled with his family.[70] Rostam Mirza pledged allegiance to the Mughals; he was granted a rank (mansab) of commander of 5000 men and received Multan as a jagir. In 1593, Akbar began military operations against the Deccan Sultans who had not submitted to his authority. He besieged Ahmednagar Fort in 1595, forcing Chand Bibi to cede Berar. kbar then established the Subahs of Ahmadnagar, Berar and Khandesh under Prince Daniyal.

**Taxation:**

Akbar's dahsala system (also known as zabti) is credited to Raja Todar Mal, who also served as a revenue officer under Sher Shah Suri, and the structure of the revenue administration was set out by the latter in a detailed memorandum submitted to the emperor in 1582–83. Under the new system, revenue was calculated as one-third of the average produce of the previous ten years, to be paid to the state in cash. This system was later refined, taking into account local prices, and grouping areas with similar productivity into assessment circles. Remission was given to peasants when the harvest failed during times of flood or drought.

**Trade:**

The reign of Akbar was characterized by commercial expansion. The Mughal government encouraged traders, provided protection and security for transactions, and levied a very low custom duty to stimulate foreign trade. Furthermore, it strived to foster a climate conductive to commerce by requiring local administrators to provide restitution to traders for goods stolen while in their territory. To minimize such incidents, bands of highway police called rahdars were enlisted to patrol roads and ensure safety of traders. Other active measures taken included the construction and protection of routes of commerce and communications.

**Diplomacy:**

In the year 1572 the Mughal Empire annexed Gujarat and acquired its first access to the sea after local officials informed Akbar that the Portuguese had begun to exert control in the Indian Ocean. Akbar accepted the offer of diplomacy, but the Portuguese continually asserted their authority and power in the Indian Ocean. Mughal-Ottoman trade also flourished during this period – in fact merchants loyal to Akbar are known to have reached Aleppo after journeying upriver through the port of Basra. The Safavids and the Mughals had a long history of diplomatic relationship, with the Safavid ruler Tahmasp I having provided refuge to Humayun when he had to flee the Indian subcontinent following his defeat by Sher Shah Suri. Diplomatic relations continued to be maintained between the Safavid and Mughal courts until the end of Akbar's reign. Akbar was also visited by the French explorer Pierre Malherbe.

**Religious Policy:**

Akbar, as well as his mother and other members of his family, are believed to have been Sunni Hanafi Muslims. Akbar was deeply interested in religious and philosophical matters. An orthodox Muslim at the outset, he later came to be influenced by Sufi mysticism that was being preached in the country at that time, and moved away from orthodoxy, appointing to his court several talented people with liberal ideas, including Abul Fazl, Faizi and Birbal. However, his interaction with various religious theologians had convinced him that despite their differences, all religions had several good practices, which he sought to combine into a new religious movement known as Din-i-Ilahi. He removed poll taxes on Hindus.

**Marriage:**

Akbar's first wife and one of the chief consorts was his cousin, Princess Ruqaiya Sultan Begum, the only daughter of his paternal uncle, Prince Hindal Mirza, and his wife Sultanam Begum. His second wife was the daughter of Abdullah Khan Mughal. His third wife was his cousin, Salima Sultan Begum. His fourth wife was the beautiful daughter of Raja Bharmal, ruler of Amer whom he married in the year 1562. She gradually became his favorite and most influential consort. She became his chief consort soon after and is the only wife of Akbar buried close to him being his most devoted and favorite wife.

**Death:**

On 3 October 1605, Akbar fell ill with an attack of dysentery from which he never recovered. He is believed to have died on 27 October 1605, after which his body was buried at his mausoleum in Sikandra, Agra which lies a kilometer next to the tomb of Mariam-uz-Zamani, his favorite and most devoted wife and stands as the only wife having the honor to be buried closed to him.