

Theme 9 **Kings and Chronicles**

Introduction

The Mughal Kings commissioned court historians to write accounts of their achievements. These accounts recorded the events of the emperor's time. The writers collected vast amounts of information from the regions of the subcontinent to help the rulers govern their domain. Modern historians who write history in English have termed those accounts as chronicles; because the accounts give information in chronological order.

Chronicles are an indispensable source for any scholar wishing to write a history of the Mughals. They were a repository of factual information about the institution of the Mughal state. They were intended as conveyors of meanings that the Mughal rulers sought to impose on their domain.

The name “Mughal” and a brief political history of the Mughals

The term Mughal is derived from mongol. But the Mughal Kings did not call themselves as the Mughals. They called themselves as Timurids, the descendants of the Turkish ruler Timur. During the 16th century, Europeans used the term 'Mughal' to describe the branch of the family of Timur.

Zahiruddin Babur

Zahiruddin Babur was the founder of the Mughal Empire. He was expelled from his homeland (Fargana) by Uzbeks. He first established himself at Kabul and then in 1526 moved further into the Indian subcontinent in search of territories and resources to satisfy the needs of his clan.

Nasiruddin Humayun

Babur was succeeded by Humayun as the Mughal ruler in 1530. But Sher Shah Suri, an Afghan leader drove him to exile. Humayun took refuge in the court of the Safavid ruler of Iran. In 1555 Humayun defeated Sher Shah and regained his empire.

Jalaluddin Akbar

Akbar is considered to be a great ruler of the Mughals. He expanded his empire and made it as the largest, strongest and the richest kingdom at the time of his rule. He was able to expand his empire up to the Hindukush Mountains and prevented the Uzbeks and Safavids.

Successors of Akbar

Jahangir (1605-27), Shajahan (1628-58) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707)

Features of the Mughal imperial structure.

- The institutions of an imperial structure were created in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- It had effective methods of administration and taxation.
- The court was the centre of the Mughal power where political alliances and relationships were made and status and hierarchies were defined.
- The political system of the Mughals was based on a combination of military power accommodating various traditions of the subcontinent that the Mughals faced.

The reasons for the Production of Chronicles

The Chronicles written during the Mughal period are an important source to study the Mughal Empire. They were written,

- To convey a vision of enlightened kingdom to all those who came under its umbrella.
- To convey to those who resisted the rule of the Mughals that all resistance was destined to fail.
- To ensure that there was an account of their rule for posterity

The authors of the chronicles were court historians in the Mughal Empire. Histories written by them focused on events centred on the ruler, his family, the court and nobles, wars and administrative system.

The titles of the chronicles such as Akbar Nama,Shajahan Nama,and Alamgir Nama indicate that the history of the empire and the court was synonymous with that of the emperor.

Language used for writing Chronicles

(Importance of Persian language in Mughal India)

- The Mughals were chaghtai Turks by origin and Turkish was their mother tongue.
- The first ruler Babur wrote poetry and his memoirs BaburNama in Turkish language.
- Persian developed as a leading language at the time of the Mughal rule in India.
- Persian was a court language and literary writings of the Sultans of Delhi and flourished with local variants like Hindavi.
- It was Akbar who consciously developed Persian as a leading language in the Mughal court.
- Mughal official histories such as AkbarNama were written in Persian.
- Other chronicles such as Babur's memoirs were translated from the Turkish into Persian Babur Nama.
- The court historians of the Mughals translated Sanskrit texts such as Ramayana and Mahabharata into Persian.
- The Mahabharata was translated as the Razmnama(Book of Wars).
- Those who had command on Persian were conferred power and prestige.
- It was spoken by the king, the elite and people at the royal court.
- Persian language influenced other Indian languages such as Rajasthani, Marathi and Tamil.
- It became Indianised by observing idiom and vocabulary from the Indian languages.

The making of manuscripts

Books written in Mughal India were manuscripts that were hand written. The work of manuscript production was carried out by the imperial **Kitabhana** that could be translated as library but it was scriptorium that is, it was a place where emperor's collection of manuscript was kept and new manuscripts were produced.

Various tasks involved in creating manuscripts in the Mughal Empire.

The creation of manuscripts involved many tasks.

- **Papermakers** prepared folios of the manuscripts
- **Scribes or calligraphers** copied the text
- **Gilders** illuminated the pages.
- **Painters** illustrated scenes from the text
- **Book binders** gathered the individual folios and set them within ornamental covers.

The finished manuscript was considered as a precious object with intellectual work and beauty. The people who were involved in the production of manuscripts were recognized with titles and awards. The calligraphers and painters were held high in the status while the paper makers and book binders remained anonymous artisans.

Use of Calligraphy

Art of handwriting is called calligraphy. Manuscripts of the Mughal were handwritten. It was considered a skill of great importance. It was practiced with different styles. Akbar's favourite handwritten style was the nastaliq which was a fluid style with long horizontal strokes. It was written using a piece of trimmed reed which had a tip of five to 10 mm called qalam. The reed was dipped in carbon ink (siyahi). The nib of the qalam was split in the middle to facilitate the flow of ink.

The use of painted images in Mughal Chronicles

(The role of painters in the production of Mughal manuscripts)

- Painters were involved in the production of manuscripts.
- Chronicles that narrates the events of the Mughal Emperor had images, alongside the written text, that described events in visual form.
- The scribe left blank spaces wherever images were required and paintings were drawn separately by artists and inserted in proper place.
- Paintings enhanced the beauty of manuscripts and communicated ideas about kingdom and the power of kings.
- The historian Abul Fazl described paintings as "magical art".
- The paintings made the inanimate objects look as if they possessed life.
- The production of paintings portraying the emperor, his court and the people who were part of it, was a source of tension between rulers and representatives of the Muslim orthodoxy, the ulama.
- The latter did not fail to invoke the Islamic prohibition of the portrayal of human beings enshrined in the Quran as well as the hadis which described an incident from the life of the Prophet Muhammad.
- Here the Prophet is cited as having forbidden the depictions of living beings in a naturalistic manner as it would suggest that the artist was seeking to appropriate the power of creation.
- This was a function that was believed to belong exclusively to God.
- Yet; interpretations of the Sharia change with time.
- Various social groups interpreted the body of Islamic tradition in different ways.
- Each group put forward an understanding of tradition that would best suit their political needs.
- Muslim rulers in many Asian regions patronized artists to paint their images and court scenes.
- The artists were trained in workshops set up at court under the rule of Safavid kings.
- Artists such as Bihzad contributed to the spreading of the cultural fame of the safavid court far and wide.
- Artists from Iran came to India during the mughal rule.
- Artists like Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdal Samad accompanied Emperor Humayun to Delhi.
- Other artists migrated to Delhi in search of opportunities.

Abul Fazl and the Akbar Nama

- Abul Fazl was the author of Akbar Nama. He was well versed with Arabic, Persian, Greek philosophy and Sufism.
- Moreover, he was a forceful debater and independent thinker who consistently opposed the views of the conservative ulama.
- These qualities impressed Akbar, who found Abul Fazl ideally suited as an adviser and spokesperson for his policies.

- Emperor's objective was to free the state from the control of religious orthodoxy.
- In his role as court historian, Abul Fazl both shaped and articulated the ideas associated with the reign of Akbar.
- Abul Fazl was murdered by Bir Singh Bundela an accomplice of Prince Salim (Jahangir) who conspired the killing.

The Akbar Nama is one of the important illustrated official histories. The manuscript has an average of 150 full or double page paintings of battles, sieges, hunts, building construction and court scenes. In 1589, Abul Fazl worked on the Akbar Nama for thirteen years, repeatedly revising the draft. The chronicle is based on a range of sources, including actual records of events (waqai), official documents and oral testimonies of knowledgeable persons.

The Akbar Nama is divided into three books. The first two are chronicles and the third is Ain-i-Akbari. The first volume starts from the history of mankind from Adam to one celestial cycle of Akbar's life (30 years). The second volume closes in the forty sixth regnal year (1601) of Akbar. The Akbar Nama was written to provide detailed information of the political events of Akbar's reign.

The Akbar Nama was written to provide a detailed description of Akbar's reign in the traditional sense of recording politically significant events across time, as well as in the more novel sense of giving a synchronic picture of all aspects of Akbar's empire-geographic, social, administrative and cultural-without reference to chronology. In the Ain-i-Akbari the Mughal Empire is presented as having a diverse population consisting of Hindus, Jainas, Buddhists and Muslims and a composite culture.

Abul Fazl wrote in a language that was ornate and which attached importance to diction and rhythm, as texts were often read aloud. This Indo-Persian style was patronized at court, and there were a large number of writers who wanted to write like Abul Fazl.

The Badshah Nama

A pupil of Abul Fazl, Abdul Hamid Lahori is known as the author of the Badshah Nama. Emperor Shah Jahan, hearing of his talents, commissioned him to write a history of his reign modelled on the Akbar Nama.

The Badshah Nama is the official history in three volumes (daftars) of ten lunar years each. Lahori wrote the first and second daftars comprising the first two decades of the emperor's rule (1627-47). Sadullah Khan, Shah Jahan's wazir, later revised these volumes. The historian Waris chronicled third decade. British administrators began to study Indian history and to create an archive of knowledge about the subcontinent to help them better understand the people and the cultures of the empire they sought to rule.

British administrators and the study of Indian history

British administrators showed interest to study Indian history. They wanted to have an understanding about the subcontinent in order to understand the people and their cultures, so they could rule accordingly. Sir William Jones founded The Asiatic Society of Bengal and took the task of editing, printing and translation of many Indian manuscripts. The Asiatic Society of Bengal published and edited the versions of the Akbar Nama and Badshah Nama in the 19th century. The English translation of the Akbar Nama was published by Henry Beveridge. But the Badshah Nama has not been translated in English completely till date.

The ideal Kingdom

A divine light: Notions about Kingship

- Court chroniclers narrated that of the Mongol queen Alanqua, who was impregnated by a ray of sunshine while resting in her tent. The offspring she bore carried this Divine Light and passed it on from generation to generation.
- Abul Fazl placed Mughal kingship as the highest station in the hierarchy of objects receiving light emanating from God (farr-i izadi). Abul Fazl was inspired by a famous Iranian Sufi, Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (d.1191) who first developed this idea. According to this idea, there was a hierarchy in which the Divine Light was transmitted to the king who then became the source of spiritual guidance for his subjects.
- Paintings that accompanied the narrative of the chronicles transmitted these ideas in a way that left a lasting impression on the mind of viewers.
- Mughal artists, from the 17th century onwards, began to portray emperors wearing the halo, which they saw on European paintings of Christ and the Virgin Mary to symbolize the light of God.

Kingship-A social Contract

Abul Fazl defined sovereignty as a social contract: the emperor protects the four essence of his subjects, namely, life(jan), property(mal), honour(namus) and faith (din) and in return demands obedience and a share of resources. Only just sovereigns were thought to be able to honour the contract with power and divine Divine Guidance.

- A number of symbols were created for visual representation of the idea of justice that came to stand for the highest virtue of Mughal monarchy.
- One of the favorite symbols used by artists was the motif of the lion and the lamb (or cow) peacefully nestling next to each other. This was meant to signify a realm where both the strong and the weak.
- Court scenes from the illustrated Badshah Nama place such motifs in a niche directly below the emperor's throne. Mughal chronicles present the empire as comprising many different ethnic and religious communities-Hindus, Jainas, Zoroastrian and Muslims.
- As the source of all peace and stability the emperor stood above all religious and ethnic groups, mediated among them, and ensured that justice and peace provided.

A unifying force: The policy of Sulh-i-kul

- Abul Fazl describes the ideal of Sulh-i-kul(absolute peace) as the cornerstone of enlightend rule.
- In Sulh-i-kul all religions and schools of thought had freedom of expression but on condition that they did not undermine the authority of the state or fight among themselves.
- The ideal of Sulh-i-kul was implemented through state policies-the nobility under the Mughals was a composite one comprising Iranis, Turanis, Afghans, Rajaputs, and Deccanis-all of whom were given position and awards purely on the basis of their service and loyalty to the king.
- Akbar abolished the tax on pilgrimage in 1563 and jiziya in 1564 as the two were based on religious discrimination.
- Instructions were sent to officers of the empire to follow the precept of Sulh-i-kul in administration.
- All Mughal emperors gave grants to support the building and maintenance of places of worship.
- Even when temples were destroyed during war, grants were later issued for their repair-as we know from the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. However, during the reign of the later, the jiziya was reimposed on non-Muslim subjects.

Capitals and the courts of the Mughals

The Mughal Capitals

- The heart of the Mughal Empire was its capital city. The capital cities of the Mughals were frequently shifted during the 16th and 17th centuries.
- When Babur brought the Lodi capital of Agra, the court was changed within four years of rule in the capitals.
- The fort of Agra was constructed by Akbar during 1560s with red stone .In the 1570s ,he built a new capital Fatehpur Sikri.It was located on the direct road to Ajmer where the dargah of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti had become an important pilgrimage centre.The Mughal Emperors shared a close relationship with the sufis of the Chishti silsila.Akbar constructed a white marble tomb for Shaikh Salim Chishti near Friday mosque at Sikri.Akbar commissioned the construction of **Buland Darwaza**(arched gateway) to remind visitors of the Mughal victory in Gujarat.
- The capital was shifted to Lahore in 1585 in order to strengthen the control over north-west. Akbar monitored it closely for thirteen years.
- Shah Jahan pursued sound fiscal policies and accumulated enough money to indulge his passion for building. Building activity in monarchical cultures was the most visible and tangible sign of dynastic power, wealth and prestige. In the case of Muslim rulers it was also considered an act of piety. In 1648,the capital was shifted to **Shajahanabad**.It was a new addition to the old residential city of Delhi with **Red Fort,the Jami Masjid,a tree-lined esplanade with bazaars(Chandni Chowk)** and spacious homes for the nobility.Shajahan's ne city was appropriate to a more formal vision of a grand monarchy.

The Mughal court

- The Mughal emperor's court procedures reflected his status and power.
- The throne or takht was visualized as axis mundi i.e., pillar or pole supporting the earth.
- Canopy was a symbol of kingship
- The status of the courtiers was determined by spatial proximity to the king
- Once the emperor sat on the throne, no one was permitted to move from his position

Social control in the Mughal court

- Defined etiquette was to be followed in the court with respect to the form of address, courtesies, speech etc.
- The slightest infringement of etiquette was punishable on the spot.

The forms of salutation

- The forms of salutation were indicators of a person's status in the hierarchy.
- For example, deeper prostration was a symbol of higher status.
- Sijda or complete prostration was the highest form of submission.
- Chahar taslim and Zaminbos (kissing the earth)
- The diplomatic envoys also had to follow the norms of etiquettes at the Mughal court.
- It was expected from an ambassador presented to the Mughal emperor that he would greet the emperor in an acceptable form of greeting.
- These forms were: bowing deeply, kissing the ground or following the Persian custom of clasping one's hand in front of the chest.
- However, Thomas Roe the English envoy of James I greeted the Mughal emperor Jahangir according to European custom i.e., simply bowing before him.
- Moreover, he shocked the court by demanding a chair for sitting.

Daily routine and festivals connected with the Mughal court

- The emperor began his day at sunrise with personal religious devotions and prayers.
- He appeared on a small balcony, for jharokha darshan in the morning.
- A crowd of people (soldiers, merchants, crafts persons, peasants, and women with sick children) waited for the, darshan of the emperor.
- Akbar introduced this practice of jharokha darshan.
- The emperor walked to the public hall of audience (diwan-i am) to conduct the primary business of his government.
- State officials presented reports and made requests.
- The emperor was in the diwan-i khas to hold private audiences and discuss confidential matters.
- High ministers placed their petitions before him in diwan-i-khas.
- Tax officials presented their accounts in diwan-i-khas.
- Reputed artists presented their work.
- Building plans of the architects were viewed by the emperor.
- On special occasions such as the anniversary of accession to the throne, Id, Shab-i-barat and Holi, the court was full of life.
- Mughal rulers celebrated three festivals a year – the solar and lunar birthdays of the king and nauroz.
- The king was weighed against the commodities, on his birthdays, and they were distributed in charity.
- Perfumed candles set in rich holders and palace walls festooned with colourful hangings made a tremendous impression on visitors.
- Emperors adopted high sounding and rhythmic titles which were announced by ushers in the court and they created an atmosphere of awe in the audience.

Title and gifts

- The Mughal adopted grand titles at the time of coronation or victory in the war. These titles were mentioned on the Mughal coins. The Mughals granted titles to men of merit.
- A man's ascent in the court hierarchy could be traced through the titles he held.
- The title Asaf Khan was given to highest minister. The, Asaf Khan came from a legendary minister of the prophet king Sulaiman.
- The title of Mirza Raja was accorded by Aurangzeb to his two nobles of merit e.g Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh.
- The titles could be earned or paid for .For example; Mir Khan paid Rs.1 lack to Aurangzeb for the letter alif, i.e.A to be added to his name to make it Amir Khan.
- Other awards included robe of honour, which was a garment worn by the emperor (khilat),Sarapa(head to foot) consisted of a tunic,a turban and a sash(patka)and Jewellery were given by the emperor.
- On a rare occasion, the lotus blossom set with jewels (padma murassa) was given.
- A courtier while approaching the emperor, he offered either a small sum of money (nazr) or a large amount (peshkash).
- Offering gifts was regarded as a sign of honour and respect in diplomatic relations.
- The ambassadors performed the functions of negotiating treaties and establishing relationships between competing political powers. In such cases gifts had an important symbolic role.
- Thomas Roe, an English ambassador was disappointed to find that the *ring* presented by him as a gift to Asaf Khan was returned as it was worth merely 400 rupees.

The Royal Household

- The domestic world of the Mughal was referred to as 'harem'. It is a Persian word meaning a sacred place. Harem consisted of the wives of emperors and concubines, his relatives and other family members. It also had servants both male and female slaves.
- The Mughal rulers maintained a distinction between wives with aristocratic backgrounds (Begums) and other wives (aghas) who were not noble by birth. The Begums were married by the emperors after giving huge amounts of cash and other precious things as dowry (mahr). Concubines (agacha) were given monthly allowances and gifts according to their status. The aghas and aghachas could rise to the position of a begum depending upon the husband's will.
- There were a number of male and female slaves in the Mughal household. They performed various tasks which required skill, tact and intelligence. Slave eunuchs (Khwajasara) served as guards and servants and also as agents for women selling goods.

Role of Mughal Princesses in Commerce

- After Nur Jahan, the queens of Mughal rulers and princesses began to control important official resources. Jahanara and Roshanara, the daughters of Shah Jahan had annual incomes often equal to that of high imperial mansabdars. Besides, Jahanara received revenue from the port city of Surat which was a big centre of overseas trade. The resources enabled important women of the royal household to get constructed buildings and lay out gardens.

Contribution of Mughal Princesses in the field of architecture

- Jahanara took special interest in many architectural projects of Shah Jahan in founding new capital, Shajahanabad (Delhi). Among these projects was the construction of imposing double storeyed Caravanserai with a courtyard and a garden. The bazaar of Chandni Chowk, the main centre of trade in Shajahanabad, was designed by Jahanara.

Contribution of Mughal Princesses in the field of literature.

- Humayun's daughter Gulbadan wrote an interesting book giving glimpses of domestic world of the Mughals. She could write fluently in Turkish and Persian. When Akbar ordered Abul Fazl to write a history of his reign, he requested his aunt to record her memoirs of earlier times under Babur and Humayun. Gulbadan did not write the eulogy of the Mughal emperors. She rather described the conflicts and tensions among the princes and kings and the mediating role of the elderly women of the family played in resolving some of these conflicts.

Recruitment of Imperial officials in the Mughal Empire (Mughal Nobility)

The Akbar Nama of Abul Fazl provides detailed information about the recruitments of imperial officials. The corps of officers, known as nobility, in the Mughal Empire was recruited from diverse ethnic and religious groups in order to prevent any faction that would challenge the state. The imperial officers were described by the court historians as a bouquet of flowers (guldasta). During the rule of Akbar, for the imperial service, Iranian and Turani nobles were recruited.

The two groups of Indian nobles in Mughal Empire

- Two ruling groups of Indian origin entered the imperial service from 1560 onwards: The Rajaputs and the Indian Muslims (Shai khzadas).
- The first to join was a Rajput chief, Raja Bharmal Kachhwaha of Amber, to whose daughter Akbar got married.
- Aurangzeb appointed Rajputs to high positions, and under him the Marathas accounted for a sizeable number within the body of officers.

Ranks of the holders of government offices (Refer Mansabdari system)

- The recruited officers for the service in the Mughal Empire were given ranks (mansabs) with two numerical designations.
- Zat which was an indicator of the position in the imperial hierarchy and the salary of the official (mansabdar).
- Another term used to indicate the number of horsemen was sawar. In the 17th century, a mansabdar with 1,000 zat was ranked as noble (umara, a plural term for amir)

Nobles and their military services to the Kings

- The nobles sent their armies and participated in the military campaigns and served in the offices of the empire in the provinces.
- The military commanders recruited, equipped and trained the main wing of the Mughal army, i.e, the cavalry.
- He maintained horses which were branded on the flank by the imperial mark (dagh). By serving in the imperial offices the nobles acquired power, wealth and reputation.

Selection of a person to the military service

- A person who wanted to enter in service petitioned to the emperor through a noble. If his application was selected, a mansab was granted to him. The pay master general (mir bakshi) stood in the open court nearby the emperor and gave away the appointments or promotion orders which had its office seal and signature as well as those of the emperor.
- There were two other important ministers at the centre: the diwan-i ala (finance minister) and Sadr-us sudur (minister of grants or madad-i-maash, and in charge of appointing local judges or qazis). The three ministers occasionally came together as an advisory body, but were independent of each other. Akbar with these and other advisors shaped the administrative, fiscal and monetary institutions of the empire.

Documentation of court proceedings

- The keeping of exact and detailed records was a major concern of the Mughal administration. The mir bakshi supervised the corps of court writers (waqia nawis) who recorded all applications and documents presented to the court, and all imperial orders (farman).
- Agents (wakil) of nobles and regional rulers recorded the entire proceedings of the court under the heading "News from the Exalted Court" (Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla) with the date of the court session (pahar).
- The akhbarat contained all kinds of information such as attendance at the court, grant of others and titles, diplomatic missions, presents received, or the enquiries made by the emperor about the health of an officer.
- News reports and important official documents travelled across the length and breadth of the regions under Mughal rule by imperial post.
- Round the clock relays of foot-runners (gasid or pathmar) carried paper rolled up in bamboo containers. The emperor received reports from even distant provincial capitals within few days. Agents of nobles posted outside the capital and Rajput princes and tributary rulers.

Provincial administration of the Mughals

- The administration system of the provinces (subhas) also had the same method like that of the centre.
- In the provinces ministers were assisted by their subordinates such as diwan, bakshi and sadr.
- The governor or the subadar was the head of the provincial administration. He had to report to the emperor directly.
- Each subha was divided into sarkars with the jurisdiction of faujdars (commandants).

- The local administration was looked after at the level of pargana(sub-district)by three officers-the qanungo,keeper of revenue records, the chaudhari-in charge of revenue collection and the qazi.
- The administration of each department was maintained by many staff of clerks, accountants, auditors, messengers and other functionaries with good technical skills with highly standardized rules and procedures.
- Persian was the language of administration, but local languages were used for village administration.

Beyond the frontiers (Diplomatic relations of the Mughal Emperors)

- The Mughal Emperors assumed many high sounding titles such as Shahenshah(King of kings).
- The title adopted by individual kings were such as Jahangir (world Seizer), Shah Jahan (king of world) and Aurangzeb Alamgir(ruler of the world).
- These titles indicate the claims of the Mughal Emperors to uncontested territorial and political control.
- The contemporary historians in their accounts describe the political relations and conflicts of the Mughal rulers with their neighbouring political powers.

Qandahar-A bone of contention between the Safavids and the Mughals

- The fortress town of Qandahar was always a bone of contention between the Safavids of Iran and the Mughals.
- Initially Qandahar had been in the possession of Humayun.It was reconquered by Akbar in 1595.
- While the safavid rulers staked claims on Qandahar but they did not break their diplomatic relations with the Mughals.
- Jahangir sent a diplomatic mission to the court of Shah Abbas, the ruler of Iran, to plead the case for retaining Qandahar but the mission returned disappointed.
- In 1622,the Safavid ruler of Iran recovered Qandahar.

Ottomans

The Mughal relations with Ottomans were marked by the concern to ensure free movements for merchants and pilgrims in the territories under Ottoman (Turkish) control. It was especially true of Hijaz which was situated in the ottoman Arabia where Mecca and Medina were located.The Mughal rulers combined religion and commerce by exporting valuable articles to Aden and Mokha, both Red sea ports and distributed proceeds of the sales in charity to the keepers of shrines and religious me there.

Visits of the Jesuits to the Mughal court

- With the discovery of a new sea route to India at the end of the 15th century, Portuguese merchants were able to establish trading stations in Indian coastal cities. The king of Portugal was interested in trade with India as well as in spreading Christianity with the help of missionaries of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits).
- During the 16th century the missionaries came to India.Mughal Emperor Akbar was interested in knowing about Christianity and dispatched an embassy to Goa to invite Jesuit priests. The mission of Jesuit under the leadership of monserrate visited the Mughal court in 1580 at Fatehpur Sikri.The Jesuits discussed with Akbar about the virtues of Christianity and with the ulama.Two more missions visited in the Mughal court at Lahore in 1591 and 1595.
- The Jesuits wrote their accounts based on their personal observation and gave detailed information about the character and mind of the emperor. They were given very close seat very near to the emperor at public assemblies. They went along with the emperor at the time of campaigns and accompanied him during his leisure time.

Questioning formal religion (Religious view of Akbar)

Akbar participated in the debates held in the Ibadat khana at Fatehpur Sikri in order to have a clear understanding of religions. Debates were between learned Muslims, Hindus, Jainas, Parsis, and Christians. Akbar's religious views matured by questioning the scholars of different religions and sects and gathered knowledge about their doctrines. In course of time, he moved away from the orthodox Islamic ways of understanding religions and followed a self-conceived eclectic form of worship focusing on light and the sun.

Sample Questions

1. What do you mean by chronicles? Assess the reasons why the Mughals commissioned the writing of chronicles.
2. Describe briefly the various tasks involved in creating manuscripts in the Mughal Empire.
3. "The production of painting in Mughal Chronicles was a source of constant tension between rulers and the Muslim orthodoxy." Do you agree with the statement? Substantiate.
4. Akbar Nama and Badshah Nama are among the most important Mughal chronicles. How far these chronicles are so important for the history of Mughal India? Give a brief description of translation work initiated by British administrators.
5. 'Abul Fazl attempted to place the Mughal Emperors close to God'. Do you agree with the statement? Substantiate your answer in the light of the Mughal notion of Kingship.
6. Analyze the information provided by the Mughal chronicles about the concept of the ideal ruler with reference to the concepts of farr-i-izadi, sulh-i-kul, and sovereignty as a social contract.
7. Evaluate the role played by the women of the Mughal imperial household.
8. Discuss the ways in which the nobles were recruited into the Mughal administration. Mention the major ranks that were granted and explain the duties that were to be performed by the nobles.