

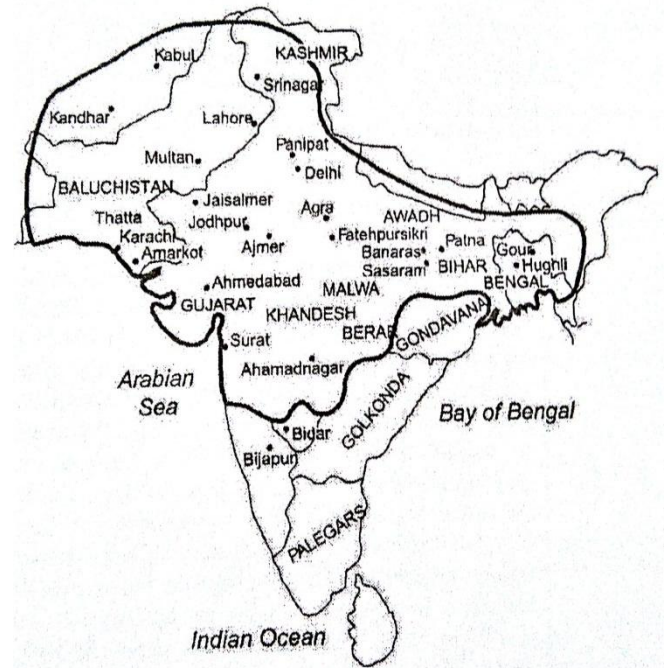
## GOLDEN PERIOD OF THE MUGHALS (1556-1707)

### Akbar (1556-1605)

The untimely demise of Humayun in 1556 left the task of consolidation of the empire to his 13-year-old son, Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar (1556-1605). After a decisive military victory at the **Second Battle of Panipat** in 1556, Akbar's regent Bairam Khan followed a vigorous policy of expansion on his behalf. As soon as Akbar became mature, he started freeing himself from the influences of ministers, court factions, and harem intrigues and showed his own capability for judgement and leadership. He was a 'workaholic' who seldom slept for more than 3 hours a day. He personally supervised the implementation of his administrative policies, which formed the backbone of the Mughal Empire for over two centuries. He followed the policy of conquering, annexing and consolidating his empire. It was bound by Kabul in the north-west, Kashmir in the north, Bengal in the east, and beyond the Narmada River in the south—an area that can be compared in size to the Mauryan territory.

### AKBAR'S ADMINISTRATIVE STYLE

Akbar introduced a bureaucracy and a system of autonomy for the imperial provinces to govern them with efficient administration. He appointed military governors, or mansabdars, in charge of each region. Each governor was responsible for the provincial military management. Abuse of power and mistreatment of the poor or weak were severely dealt with and could lead to punishments and death.



MAP 2.3 Akbar's Kingdom



### Notable facts about Jalal-ud- din Akbar

Akbar was the eldest son of Humayun, and he ascended the throne at the young age of 13 in the year 1556. His tutor Bairam Khan was appointed as regent.

**The Second Battle of Panipat** The battle was fought

between Hemu or Hemchandra and Bairam Khan. Bairam Khan defeated Hemu on 5 November 1556, and as a result Hemu was captured and slain by him. This battle put an end to the Mughal-Afghan contest for the throne of Delhi forever.

**Expansion of Akbar's Empire** Akbar put an end to the regency of Bairam Khan at the age of 18 and assumed the authority. He conquered various towns and forts such as Gwalior, Ajmer and Janapur. He had also annexed the kingdom of Malwa. This brought him close to

the Rajput kingdom. The Rajput kingdom of Mewar put up a powerful defence under Rana Uday Singh and his son Rana Pratap. Akbar invaded Gujarat (1572-1573), Bengal (1574-1576) and by 1595, he conquered, Kashmir, Sindh, Orissa, Central Asia and Kandahar (Afghanistan.)

**Akbar and the Rajputs** Akbar tried to win over Rajputs by inducting Rajput kings into Mughal service and treating them equal to Mughal nobility. He married Rajput princess Jodha Bai, daughter of Raja Mal of Jaipur in 1562, and displayed his secular policy towards Hindus. Most Rajput kings accepted his supremacy, barring Rana Pratap Singh and his son Amar Singh, of Mewar.

**Battle of Haldighati** This battle of Haldighati was fought in 1576, between Rajput Rana Pratap Singh of Mewar and the Mughal army led by Man Singh of Amber. Rana Pratap Singh was defeated in the battle but he continued his struggle and did not submit. Akbar constructed a walled city near Agra, known as Fatehpur Sikri, However, he had to shift his capital to Agra again because of many administrative and political reasons.

### Din-i-Ilahi

Akber performed his role as a spiritual leader of his people quite seriously. He devoted much of his time and resources to find out the common truth in the religions he ruled over. Keeping this in his mind, he developed a new religion known as Din-i-ilahi, or 'The Religion of God'. Suggesting that every faith has the essential truth that God is unified and one, he tried to find the unifying aspects of all religions. He had begun this project much longer before he introduced Din-i-Ilahi. He conducted a series of debates at his court among spiritual leaders of the different

religions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Zoroastrians and Jews. Finally, he included members of the Ulama, but the debates could not go smoothly because of the intolerant behaviour of the Jesuits who tried to convert Akbar, and did not wish to discuss the creation of a universal religion. Akbar was a devout orthodox Sunni Muslim; still, aspects of his belief were in part derived from Shi'a Islam. Din-i-Ilahi, which expected to synthesise the world's religions into a single religion, was chiefly based on Islam. It was rationalistic and was based on one overriding doctrine, the doctrine of tawhid—God is one, singular and unified. Akbar also elevated the notion of wahdat-al-wujud, or 'unity of the real', to a central religious idea in his new religion. The world, as a creation of God, is a single and unified place that reflects the singularity and unity of its creator. There is little doubt that Akbar accepted Abu'l Fazl's notion that he was the Divine Light and was a Perfect Man. He adopted the title, 'Revealer of the Internal and Depictor of the Real' which defined his role as a disseminator of secret knowledge of God and his function of fashioning the world in the light of this knowledge. Apart from Islam, however, Din-i-Ilahi also involved the characteristics of Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism. Din-i-Ilahi deeply disturbed the ulama; they regarded it as outright heresy. The idea of divine kingship would last throughout the history of the Mughal Empire.

### Dagh and Chehra

Horses were usually provided with a special imperial mark known as Dagh. It was done to distinguish the horses of high breed from low breed horses. Chehra was a descriptive roll of the soldiers. It was done to make sure that the nobles recruited experienced and well mounted

sawars. It would also check any kind of proxy in the battlefield.

Collection of taxes was the most important responsibility of the bureaucracy. Akbar made many innovations in this regard. Like all the other states his tax was a land tax. He also collected one-third of the value of the crops produced on a piece of land each year. He made the arrangements that the tax was assessed equally on every member of the empire. It was a radically innovative idea as no other states in the sixteenth century taxed their nobility. He also eliminated the tax collected from non-Muslims. Traditionally Islamic states had been imposing a special tax called Jizya on non-believers.

All non-muslim communities bitterly resented this tax in India. Moreover, non-Muslims had to pay Pilgrimage tax for travelling to various Hindu pilgrimage sites. Akbar eliminated this tax in 1564. He used most of his administration in an effort to please the Hindu population. It made a calming effect on Rajput states who had never fully accepted Islamic supremacy. Akbar also involved large number of Hindus in the bureaucracy. By the end of Akbar's rule, nearly one-third of the imperial bureaucracy were Hindus. He consolidated relations with many Hindu states by marrying the daughters of the kings. It is said that during this process he had over 5000 wives, almost all of whom he married were for political reasons. However, his favourite wife was a Hindu who gave birth to his successor, Jahangir.

### **Highpoints of Akbar's Reign**

Humayun's heir, Akbar, was born in exile and was only 13 years old when his father died. Thanks to his exceptionally capable guardian, Bairam Khan, he survived to demonstrate his worth. Akbar's reign holds a certain prominence in history; he was the ruler who

actually fortified the foundations of the Mughal Empire. After a series of conquests, he managed to subdue most of India. The areas, not under the empire were designated as tributaries. He also adopted a conciliatory policy towards the Rajputs, hence reducing any threat from them. Akbar was only a great conqueror, but a capable organiser and great administrator as well. He set up a host of institutions that proved to be the foundation of an administrative system that operated even in British India. Akbar's rule also stands out because of his liberal policies towards non-Muslims, his religious innovations, the land revenue system and his famous Mansabdari system. The last became the basis of Mughal military organisation and civil administration.

His most successful administrative coup, however, was allowing Hindu territories to retain a large degree of autonomy. In all other Muslim kingdoms, non-Muslims came under the same law, the Shari'a, as all Muslims. Akbar, however, allowed the Hindus to remain under their own law, called the Dharmashastra, and to retain their own courts. This loose style of government, in which territories, were under the control of the emperor but still largely independent, became the model that the British would emulate as they slowly built the colonial model of government in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

**THE POLITICAL THEORY OF AKBAR'S STATE** There was considerable disagreement during the reigns of Babur, Humayun and Akbar over the nature of monarchy and its place in Islamic society. Many Islamic scholars under Babur and Akbar believed that Indian monarchies were fundamentally un-Islamic. At the heart of the problem was the fact that none of the invading monarchs were approved by the Caliph, but rather were acting solely on their

own. The majority of Islamic scholars, however, concluded that the monarch was divinely appointed by God to serve humanity and that the Indian Sultanate or the Mughal Padshah was acting in the place of the Caliph. The political theorists and Islamic scholars surrounding Akbar were deeply influenced by Shi'ite Islam. In particular, they subscribed to the Shi'ite notion that God had created a Divine Light that is passed down in an individual from generation to generation; this individual is known as the Imam. The central theorist of Akbar's reign was Abul Fazl, who joined Akbar's court in 1574, and is considered one of the greatest political theorists in Islamic history. He believed that the Imamate existed in the form of just rulers. The Imam, in the form of a just ruler, had secret knowledge of God, was free from sin, and was primarily responsible for the spiritual guidance of humanity. This, to a certain extent, made the padshah superior to the Sharia, or Islamic law, and the Islamic scholars who interpreted it. Needless to say, orthodox Islamic scholars bitterly opposed, this political theory, and instead advocated a close partnership between the ulama, or Islamic religious and legal scholars, and the Sultan or padshah. Abu'l Fazl was also deeply influenced by Plato's philosophy, as it had been handed down by Muslim philosophers. In particular, he argued for Plato's concept of the philosopher-king, who, by virtue of his talent, wisdom and learning, deserved to be obeyed by all others. He saw Akbar as the embodiment of the perfect philosopher-king. From a religious standpoint, Akbar's state was built on the principle of sulh-kul, or universal tolerance. All religions were to be equally tolerated in the administration of the state hence the repeal of the jizya and the pilgrimage taxes. In Akbar's theory of government, the ruler's duty is to ensure justice

for all the people in his care no matter what their religion.

### **Mansabdari System**

Akbar organised the nobility and his army by means of the Mansabdari system. Under this system, every officer was assigned a rank or mansab, divided into *Zat* and *Sawar*. *Zat* indicated the personal status of a person and the salary due to him, whereas *Sawar* meant the number of cavalryman a person was required to maintain.

### **Fatehpur Sikri**

Akbar's closest and most beloved religious advisor was an Islamic Sufi mystic, Sheikh Salim Chishti. After years of having not son and heir, the birth of Jahangir seemed to fulfil one of Salim Chishti's prophecies. In gratitude to his former religious advisor, and to Allah, Akbar set about building what he theorised as the perfect city—one that would represent the power of his empire, the meaning of God's message to humanity, and would ensure perfect Harmony. Above all, the city would represent Islam.

He completed his new city, Fatehpur Sikri, in 1578. The city contains a mosque, a palace, a lavish and huge garden, a worship hall for Dargah-i-Ibnul, and, finally, a tomb for Sheikh Salim Chishti in the great mosque itself. The city served for a while as Akbar's capital and lavish court. It was, however, placed far from any fountain of water and the perfect city, and the perfect symbol of Islam was abandoned forever shortly after Akbar's death.

### **SOCIAL REFORMS**

An astute ruler who genuinely appreciated the challenges of administering so



vast an empire, Akbar introduced a policy of reconciliation and assimilation of Hindus (including Maryam al-Zamani, the Hindu Rajput mother of his son and heir, Jahangir), who represented the majority of the population. He recruited and rewarded Hindu chiefs with the highest ranks in government; encouraged intermarriages between Mughal and Rajput aristocracy; allowed new temples to be built; personally participated in celebrating Hindu festivals such as Dipavali, or Diwali, the festival of lights; and abolished the Jizya (poll tax) imposed on non-Muslims. Akbar came up with his own theory of 'rulership as a divine illumination', enshrined in his new religion Din-i-Ilahi (Divine Faith), incorporating if the principle of acceptance of all religions and sects. He encouraged widow remarriage, discouraged child marriage outlawed the practice of sati and persuaded Delhi merchants to set up special market days for women who otherwise were secluded at home. By the end of Akbar's reign, the Mughal Empire extended throughout most of India, North of the Godavari River. The exceptions were Gondwana in Central India, which paid tribute to the Mughal and Assam, in the north-east.

### **Jahangir (1605-1627)**

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the Mughal Empire had acquired unparalleled military strength and economic prosperity. Jahangir was an educated and able administrator. He continued Akbar's policy and earned respect from all spheres of the society. The Mughal rule under Jahangir was noted for political stability, brisk economic activity beautiful paintings and monumental buildings.

### **Notable Facts about Jalal-Ud-Din**

#### **Akbar II**

**Fatehpur Sikri** A place near Agra. It is said

that Akbar did not have a son for a long time. Shaikh Salim Chisli of Fatehpur Sikri, a Sufi Saint, blessed Akbar with a son. He was named Salim (Jahangir) in honour of Sheikh Salim Chisti. Akbar shifted his court from Agra to Fatehpur Sikri, the city he had created to commemorate Chisli.

**Din-i-Ilahi** As a revolt against the orthodoxy and bigotry of religious priests, Akbar proclaimed a new religion, Din-i-Ilahi, in 1581. The new religion was based on a synthesis of values taken from several religions like Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and Christianity. It did not recognise the Prophet Birbal was the only Hindu among the 18 persons who followed this new religion. Din-i-Ilahi, however, did not become popular.

**Architecture, Art and Literature** Akbar built Fatehpur Sikri, forts at Agra, Lahore and Allahabad and Humayun's tomb at Delhi. He was patron of the arts and in his court, scholars and statesmen like Abul Fazl, Faizi, Tadar Mai, the witty administrator Birbal and great musicians like Tansen flourished. Tulsidas, the great Hindi poet, who wrote Ramcharitmanas also lived during Akbar's period,

**Sikandra** When Akbar died, he was buried at Sikandra, near Agra.

**Significance of Akbar's Reign** Akbar is considered as the real founder of the Mughal Empire in India because Babur and Humayun could not consolidate the empire as Akbar successfully did. He was the first Muslim ruler who divorced religion from politics. His attitude towards Hindus was very conciliatory.

Soon after he came to throne in 1605, his son Khusrau revolted against him with the help of Hussain Baig of Agra and Diwan Abdul Rahim of Lahore. But the revolt was crushed by Jahangir's strong army at Lahore, in 1606. Jahangir liked Hindu festivals but promoted

mass conversion to Islam; he persecuted the followers of Jainism and even executed Guru Aijun Dev, the fifth guru of the Sikhs, in 1606. This made the Sikhs hostile towards the throne. Jahangir married the Persian princess—whom he renamed Nur Jahan (Light of the World)—who emerged as the most powerful individual in the court besides the emperor. As a result, Persian poets, artists, scholars and officers—including her own family members—lured by the Mughal court's brilliance and luxury, found asylum in India. The number of unproductive, time-serving officers mushroomed, as did corruption, while the excessive Persian representation upset the delicate balance of impartiality at the court.

Jahangir's son Khurram, was pivotal in most of the Jahangir's conquests. Jahangir's conquest in the south was stubbornly resisted by the independent kingdoms of Ahmednagar and Asirgar. It was Khurram, who conquered Mewar (in 1614) and the Deccan states of Ahmednagar and Asirgar for Jahangir. Jahangir conferred the title of Shahjahan upon Khurram in appreciation of his bravery. Nur Jahan had four sons from Jahangir—Khusrau, Pervez, Khurram and Shahriyar—and one daughter, Ladilee from her earlier husband. Ladilee was married to Shahriyar. Nur Jahan's abortive schemes to secure the throne for Shahriyar (her son and son-in-law) led Shahjahan (Khurram) to rebel in 1622. The revolt was curbed by Nur Jahan with the able support of Mahobat Khan.

### Highpoints of Jahangir's Reign

Jahangir was renowned for administering impartial justice to his people, irrespective of their religious faith. Around this time, European traders had started coming to India. The English were able to find favour with Jahangir and cultivated him through works of art, of which Jahangir was a connoisseur. The first English ambassador to the Mughal court

was Sir Thomas Roe. He was able to secure many trading facilities for his countrymen. The Mughal rule reached its climax during Jahangir's reign. In the history of Mughal architecture, Jahangir's reign marks the period of transition between its two grand phases, namely, the phase of Akbar and that of his grandson, Shahjahan. The most important feature of this period is the substitution of red sandstone with white marble. Jahangir had a deep love for colour. The system of pietra dura, that is, the inlaid mosaic work of precious stones of various shades, gained popularity towards the end of his reign. He was also fond of laying gardens. One of the most famous gardens laid by him was the Shalimar Bagh in Lahore. The Mughal style of art was greatly developed during his reign. The most important feature of the paintings of this era was the decline of the Persian and enhancement of the Indian cultural influence. Mughal paintings lost much of their glamour and refinement after Jahangir's death in 1627.

### ★ Notable Facts about Jahangir

★ **Salim**, son of Akbar came to the throne after Akbar's death, in 1605. He is known for his strict administration of justice.

★ **Nur Jahan** In May 1611, Jahangir married Mehr-un-nisa, widow of Sher Afghan, a Persian nobleman of Bengal. Later on she was given the title Nur Jahan. Nur Jahan took an active interest in matters of the state and also ruled the empire for a long time when Jahangir was ill. Jahangir issued coins in both Nur Jahan's and his own name.

**Relations with the Foreigners** In 1608, Captain William Hawkins, a representative of the East India Company came to Jahangir's court. In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe, an ambassador of King James of England, also came to his

court. Though initially Jahangir resisted, he later on granted permission to the English to establish a trading post at Surat.

**Revolts** His reign was marked by several revolts. Guru Arjan Dev was martyred during his period, thus alienating the Sikh community.

**Political Success** A political triumph during Jahangir's reign was the Submission of Rana Amar Singh of Mewar (1615). Jahangir captured the fort of Kangra (1620) after a long siege. A part of Ahmednagar was also annexed. Malik Ambar ceded to the Mughals the territory of Balghal to the Mughals.

Shahjahan was expelled but Mahabat Khan backed Prince Pervez for the throne. When attempts were made to sideline Mahabat Khan from the active affairs of the empire, he revolted in 1626. He arrested Jahangir and Nur Jahan and released them on promises in favour of Prince Pervez.

However, in 1627, Prince Pervez died of excessive alcoholism and Mahabat Khan joined Shahjahan. Jahangir died in 1627, and this was the moment Shahjahan was waiting for. He rushed to Delhi with his forces to claim the throne. In the same year, the Persians took over Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, an event that struck a serious blow to Mughal prestige.

### Art and Culture under Akbar

The reign of Akbar was a period of renaissance of Persian literature. The Ain-i-Akbari gives the names of 59 great Persian poets, of Akbar's court. History was the most important branch of Persian prose. Abul Fazl's Akbarnama and Ain-i-Akbari were complementary works. Akbar and his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan greatly contributed to the development of Indian music. Tansen was the most accomplished musician of the age, Ain-i-Akbari gives the names of 36 first-rate

musicians of Akbar's court where Hindu and Muslim styles of music mingled freely. The Mughal architectural style began as a definite movement under his rule. Akbar's most ambitious and magnificent architectural undertaking was the new capital city he built on the ridge at Sikri near Agra. The city was named as Fatehpur to commemorate Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in 1572. The most impressive creation of this new capital is the grand Jamia Masjid. The southern entrance to the Jamia Masjid is an impressive gateway known as Buland Darwaza. Like most other buildings at Fatehpur Sikri, the fabric of this impressive gateway is of red sandstone decorated by carvings and discreet inlaying of white marble. Of all the Mughals, Akbar's reign was the most peaceful and powerful. With his death in 1605, ended a glorious epoch in Indian history,

### **Shahjahan (1628-1658)**

Shahjahan was Jahangir's son. He ascended the throne in 1628 after his father's death. He was best known for his Deccan and foreign policies. He faced two major revolts during the early part of his rule. First, the revolt by Khan Jahan Lodhi (1628-1630), and revolt by Jujhar Singh of Bundelkhand in 1630-1631. During 1630-1632 he faced famine and plague in a large part of Gujarat, Khandesh and Deccan, in which thousands of people died. Shahjahan, with his brilliant administrative skills, came out successful against these adversities and went on to consolidate his empire. Abdul Hamid Lahori described, in his accounts, the strategies adopted by Shahjahan to control situations of famine and plague.

Shahjahan loved his wife. Mumtaz Mahal (daughter of Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jahan) and was devastated by her death in 1631.

The world-famous Taj Mahal was built in Agra during Shahjahan's reign as a tomb for his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. It symbolises both Mughal artistic achievement and excessive financial expenditure when resources were shrinking. In 1632 he passed stern instructions to Kasim Khan, the Governor of Bengal, to suppress the Portugal preachers who were preaching Christianity in Hoogly and other Parts of Bengal. More than 5000 Christians were forced to accept Islam and it is said that more than 4000 of them were killed for denying Islam.

### Notable Facts about Shahjahan

**Death of Mumtaz Mahal** Three years after his accession his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal died, in 1631. To perpetuate her memory, he built the Taj Mahal at Agra in 1632-1653.

**Extent of Empire** In addition, to Jahangir's Empire Shahjahan annexed Ahmednagar into Mughal Empire and consigned Hussain Shah to life imprisonment (1633), ending Nizam Shahi's dynasty. The Deccan Sultanate of Bijapur and Golconda accepted his Suzerainty in 1636. He reconquered Kandahar (Afghanistan) in 1638 and routed the Uzbeks at Balkha in 1647. He also annexed the region of Kamarpura in Assam.

**Significance of Shahjahan's Reign** Shahjahan's reign is said to have marked the pinnacle of the Mughal dynasty and empire. He is known for the promotion of art, culture and architecture during his time. The Red Fort, Jama Masjid and Taj Mahal are some of the magnificent structures built during his reign.

**Imprisonment** Shahjahan's falling health set off the war of succession among his four sons in 1657. His son, Aurangzeb emerged the Victor and crowne himself emperor in July 1658. Shahjahan was imprisoned, by his son

Aurangzeb, in the Agra Fort where he died in Captivity in 1666.

Between 1636 and 1646, Shahjahan sent Mughal armies to conquer the Deccan and the northwest, beyond the Khyber Pass. In the Deccan, he defeated Adil Shah of Bijapur and Kutub Shah of Golkonda and appointed his son Aurangzeb as Governor in charge of Deccan affairs. In 1658, Aurangzeb expanded the empire by capturing Daulatabad, TelcngUna, Khandesh and Bidar. Shahjahan was ably supported by his four sons who were also governors of important divisions of the empire—Dara Shikoh of Punjab and the north-west provinces; Shuja of Bengal and Orissa; Aurangzeb of Deccan and Murad of Gujarat. Even though they demonstrated Mughal military strength, these campaigns consumed the imperial treasury. As the state became a huge military machine whose nobles and their contingents multiplied almost four-fold, so did its demands for more revenue from the peasantry. Political unification and maintenance of law and order over wide areas encouraged the emergence of large centres of commerce and craft—such as Lahore, Delhi, Agra and Ahmedabad—linked by roads and waterways to distant cities and ports.

### Ibrahim Adil Shah

Ibrahim Adil Shah II was the ruler of the Sultanate of Bijapur and a member of the Adil Shahi dynasty. He reverted to the Sunni sect of Islam but remained tolerant of other religions including Christianity. He is known in Indian History as 'Jagadguru Badshah' and tried to create cultural harmony between the shias and the Sunnis and between Hindus and Muslims through music. He loved the art form, played musical instruments, song and composed praises of Hindu deities Saraswati and



Ganapati. He publically declared that all he wanted was Vidya or learning, music and Guruseva. He was a devotee of Hazrat Banda Nawaz, the Sufi Saint of Gulbarga. He spoke Marathi, Dakhani, Urdu and Kannada languages fluently and like his predecessors, employed several Hindu in top posts. He also wrote the book kitab-e-Navras (Book of Nine Rasas) in Dakhani to introduce the theory of nine Rasa, which occupies an important place in Indian aesthetics, acquaint people who knew only the Persian ethos.

However, the economic position of peasants and artisans did not improve because the administration failed to produce any lasting change in the existing social structure. There was no incentive for the revenue officials, whose primary concerns were personal or familial gain, to generate resources independent of dominant Hindu zamindars and village leaders, whose self-interest and local dominance prevented them from handing over the full amount of revenue to the imperial treasury. In their ever-increasing dependence on land revenue, the Mughals unwittingly nurtured forces that eventually led to the break-up of their empire.

### Mujaddid Alf Sani

During the reign of Akbar, Islam faced overwhelming threats. The infallibility Decree in 1579 and Din-i-Ilahi in 1581 were considered to be grave threats to the religion by orthodox Muslims. The Din-i-Ilahi, as propounded by Akbar, was a mixture of various religions. The new religion combined mysticism, philosophy and nature worship. It recognised no gods or prophets and the emperor was its chief exponent. To believe in revelation was considered as 'taqlid' (following authority blindly) or a low kind of morality, fit only for the uneducated and the illiterate. Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi had literally made the

orthodox Muslims outcasts in the affairs of the state, Akbar was actually influenced by the Bhakti Movement that had started during the Sutanafe period. This philosophy propounded Hindu-Muslim unity. Many sufis, including Qozi Mulla Muhammad of Jaunpur and Qozi Mir Yaqoob of Bengal, condemned his religious innovations. However, the man who took it upon himself to revive Islam was Sheikh Ahmad of Sarhind, commonly known as Mujaddid Alf Sani, or 'the reformer of the second millennium'. Sheikh Ahmad was born in Sarhind on 26 June 1564. He joined the Naqshbandiya Silsiba as the disciple of Khawaja Baqi Bilbb. He gave the philosophy of Wahdat-ush-Shuhud. Mujaddid Alf Sani wrote Itliba-af-Nubuwwah.

### **Aurangzeb (1659-1707)**

Aurangzeb had three rival brothers, who were well placed to stake their claim, so his accession to the throne was not smooth. But his growing popularity, especially after his conquests in the Deccan, helped him to put down his brothers' claims. The wars of succession in the ever growing Mughal Empire were beginning to show their ill-effects. After imprisoning Shahjahan, his son Aurangzeb was crowned at Delhi and assumed the title of Atamgir. He ruled for 50 years till his death in February 1707, in Ahmednagar. During his 50-year reign, the empire reached its utmost physical limit, but also witnessed the unmistakable symptoms of decline. The bureaucracy had bloated and grown excessively corrupt, and the huge and unwieldy army demonstrated outdated weaponry and tactics. Aurangzeb was not the ruler to restore the dynasty's declining fortunes or glory. Awe-inspiring but lacking in the charisma needed to attract outstanding lieutenants, he was driven to extend Mughal rule over most of South Asia and

to re-establish Islamic orthodoxy by adopting a reactionary attitude toward Muslims whom he had suspected of compromising their faith.

Aurangzeb was involved in a series of protracted wars—against the Pathans in Afghanistan, the sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda in the Deccan, and the Marathas in Maharashtra. Peasant uprisings and revolts by local leaders became all too common, as did the conniving of the nobles to preserve their own status at the expense of a steadily weakening empire. Aurangzeb's Empire extended from Kashmir in the north to Jinji in the south and from Hindukush in the west to Chittagong in the east; During the first 23 years of the rule (1658-1681) Aurangzeb concentrated on North India. During this period the Marathas, under Shivaji, rose to power) and were a force to reckon with. As a result, Aurangzeb left the north and for the next 25 years (1682-1707) made desperate bids to crush the Marathas. The execution of Sambhaji in 1689 saw the collapse of the Maratha Empire. Aurangzeb's Empire now extended from Afghanistan to Bengal and from Kashmir to Karnataka. But in certain parts of South India (Mysore, Madhya Pradesh, etc.) he was not entirely successful in thwarting his enemies. Aurangzeb never returned to the north and died in Ahmednagar in February 1707.

The increasing association of his government with Islam further drove a wedge between the ruler and his Hindu subjects. Aurangzeb forbade the building of new temples, destroyed a number of them, and reimposed the jizya. He was a Muslim fanatic and thus was an intolerant autocrat. Many Hindu temples were demolished and religious festivals, idol worship and pilgrimages were banned during his reign. A puritan and a censor of morals, he banned music at court, abolished ceremonies, and persecuted the Sikhs in Punjab. These measures alienated so

many that even before he died challenges for power had already begun to escalate. Contenders for the Mughal throne fought each other, and the short-lived reigns of Aurangzeb's successors were strife-filled. The Mughal Empire experienced dramatic reverses as regional governors broke away many and founded independent kingdoms. The Mughals had to make peace with Maratha rebels; and the Persian and Afghan armies invaded Delhi, carrying away treasures, including the Peacock Throne in 1739. SIKH REVOLT In the fifteenth century, the Sikhs grew into a strong community. Aurangzeb captured Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of Sikhs in 1675 and executed him when he refused to embrace Islam. The Sikhs resented the Mughals or their religious intolerance. Guru Gobind Singh, son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, organized his followers into a militant force called Khalsa to avenge the murder of his father. Guru Gobind Singh was, however, murdered in 1708 by an Afghan in the Deccan. Banda Bahadur, the militant successor of Guru Gobind Singh, continued the war against Mughals but he too was put to death.

### **WAR WITH SHIVAJI**

Shivaji was the most powerful Maratha king and an arch enemy of Aurangzeb. When Aurangzeb could not eliminate him, he conspired with Jai Singh of Ambar, a Rajput, to eliminate Shivaji. In 1665, on an assurance given by Jai Singh, Shivaji visited Aurangzeb's court. Shivaji was imprisoned by Aurangzeb but he managed to escape and in 1674 proclaimed himself an independent monarch. He died in 1680 and was succeeded by his son Sambhaji, who was executed by Aurangzeb. Sambhaji was succeeded by his brother Rajaram and after his death in 1700, his widow Tarabai carried on the movement.

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