

KINGS AND CHRONICLES

Multiple Choice Type Questions

1. Mughals were the descendants (Fatheeside) of
 - (a) Genghis Khan
 - (b) Timur
 - (c) Ibn Battuta
 - (d) Safavids
2. The successor of Babur was _____
 - (a) Humayun
 - (b) Akbar
 - (c) Shahjehan
 - (d) Jahangir
3. _____ is considered the greatest Mughal Emperor.
 - (a) Shahjehan
 - (b) Akbar
 - (c) Jahangir
 - (d) Aurangzeb
4. Mother tongue of the Mughals was _____
 - (a) Persian
 - (b) Arabian
 - (c) Turkish
 - (d) Urdu
5. Who made Persian as the Court language of the Mughal Court?
 - (a) Akbar
 - (b) Aurangzeb
 - (c) Babur
 - (d) Shahjehan

Answer

1. (a) 2. (b) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (a)

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Mughal rulers get their dynastic histories written?

Answer: The Mughal rulers believed that they are appointed by the 'God' himself to rule over a large and heterogeneous populace. Although actual political circumstances circumscribed this grand vision but this vision remained important. One of the methods of transmitting this vision was writing of the dynastic histories. The Mughal rulers gave this work, of writing accounts of their achievements; to their court history. These accounts recorded all the events of the emperor's reign. Except this, these authors also collected a lot of information about other aspects of the sub-continent which helped the rulers to govern their domain.

2. What is Mughal chronicle? What is their importance for writing of Mughal history?

Or

describe the characteristic features of the Mughal Chronicles. (C.B.S.E. 2011 (D))

Or

how do you think that the chronicles commissioned by the Mughal Emperors are an important source for studying Mughal history? (C.B.S.E. 2017 (O.D.))

Answer: The genre of texts written by modern historians in English is called a chronicle. These chronicles present a continuous chronological record of events and are an indispensable source for any scholar who wanted to write about Mughal history. On one side, these chronicles give us information about institutions of Mughal empire and on the other side, they convey the meaning of those objectives which Mughal rulers wanted to impose on their domain. In this way these chronicles give us a glimpse that how imperial ideologies were created and disseminated.

3. How images or pictures were incorporated in the Mughal manuscripts? Discuss any two points of its importance.

Or

assess the importance of the painted images in Mughal manuscripts. (C.B.S.E. 2008 (D))

Answer: The painters played a significant role in the production of Mughal manuscripts. They included in the manuscripts many images that described an event in the visual form. The pictures accompanied what was described in words in the manuscript. They served as miniatures. Their importance can be understood from the following points:

- These pictures enhanced the beauty of a book or manuscript.
- They conveyed ideas which were difficult to be expressed in the written medium.
- They had the magical power to make inanimate objects look as if they possessed life.

4. Write a brief comment on Badshahnama.

Or

Name the author of Badshahnama. Describe its content. (C.B.S.E. 2011 (O.D.))

Or

“illegal transmitted their grand vision through the writing of dynastic histories.” Explain the statement with reference to Badshahnama. (C.B.S.E. 2019 (O.D.))

Answer: Once Emperor Shah Jahan called Abdul Hamid Lahori and requested him to write a history of his reign as was done in Akbarnama. As a result, Badshahnama was written by Abdul Hamid Lahori, a pupil of Abul Fazl. It is the official history of the events which occurred during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan. It was written in three volumes (daftars). Each volume covered a period of ten years. Later on Sadullah Khan, the Wazir of Shah Jahan revised the first two. Volumes of the Badshahnama. The Asiatic- Society was the first to publish edited versions of Badshahnama in the nineteenth century. A few excerpts of this book have so far been translated into English.

LONG ANSWER QUESTION

1. Who were the Mughals? Give a brief description of political history of Mughals.

Answer: The name Mughal was derived from Mongol. Though today this name is the symbol of grandeur of Mughal Empire but Mughals themselves did not selected this name. They called themselves as Timurids because from paternal side they were the descendants of Turkish ruler Timur. First Mughal emperor Babur was related to Mongol ruler Ghenghiz Khan from his mother side. He used to speak Turkish and referred Mongols as barbaric hordes.

The word Mughal was used by the Europeans during 16th century for the Mughal dynasty.

Political History of the Mughals

1. **Babur:** The Mughal Empire was made up of many regional kingdoms. It was the result of conquests and friendly treaties. Babur was the founder of this empire who was driven away by the warring Uzbeks from his Central Asian homeland, Farghana. First of all, he established himself at Kabul and then moved towards the Indian sub-continent in search of territories and resources to meet the needs of the members of his clan.
2. **Humayun:** Humayun (1530-40, 1555-56) was the son and successor of Babur who expanded the frontiers of his empire. But he was defeated by Afghan leader Sher Shah Suri and was forced to run away from India. He took refuge in the court of Safavid ruler of Iran. With his help, Humayun defeated Suris in 1555 C.E. But a year later, he died by accidentally falling off the stairs of the library.
3. **Jalal-ud-din Akbar:** Jalal-ud-din Akbar (1556-1605) is considered as the greatest Mughal emperor. He not only expanded his empire but also consolidated it and made it as the strongest and richest empire of his time. He extended frontiers of his empire to the Hindukush Mountains. He also checked the expansionist plans of Uzbeks of Turans (Central Asia) and the Safavids of Iran.
4. **Successors of Akbar:** After Akbar, Jahangir (1605-27), Shah Jahan (1628-58) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707) became rulers of the Mughal Empire. All three were able successors who further expanded this empire although with a slow speed. They maintained and consolidated the different instruments of governance.

End of the Mughal Empire: Aurangzeb died in 1707 C.E. after which the central power of Mughal dynasty reduced. That is why instead of controlling such a large empire from capital cities like Delhi, Agra or Lahore, many regional forces emerged. But symbolically, the prestige of Mughal rulers remained intact. The last scion of this dynasty, Bahadur Shah Zafar-II was overthrown by the British in 1857 C.E.

2. Throw light on the role of painters and images in the Mughal manuscripts. Why and on what grounds, there was a tension?

Or

describe briefly how the interpretations of the Sharia changed 'with time. (C.B.S.E. 2011 (D))

Answer: The painters had a significant role in the production of the Mughal manuscripts. They described an event in the visual form. They gave a visual expression to many important events that happened during the reign of various Mughal rulers. In fact, their paintings accompanied what was described in words. They were miniatures on the pages of manuscripts. Significance of the Paintings: The paintings served the following purposes:

- They enhanced the beauty of a book.
- They communicated those ideas which were hard to be conveyed in the written medium.
- They were like a magical art having the power to make inanimate things look life-like.

Tension Regarding Paintings: The paintings portrayed not only the emperors but also their courts and other people. So they were always a source of constant tension between the rulers and the representatives of the orthodox Muslims, i.e., the Ulema. These orthodox Muslims invoked the Islamic prohibition of the portrayal of human beings enshrined in the Quran and the Hadis which described an incident from the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

In Hadis, the Prophet Muhammad had forbidden the depiction of living beings as it would have interfered in the laws of nature and the divine power of creation. It was believed that the power of

creation belonged exclusively to God. Akbar ignored and did not recognize the tension on the question of visual representations of living beings in the Mughal Court. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar had stated: "There are many that hate paintings, but such men I dislike. It appears to me that an artist has a unique way of recognising God."

Changing Environment: With the passage of time, the interpretations of the Sharia also changed. Various social groups interpreted the Islamic tradition in the way it suited them politically. So all the Muslim rulers of Asia asked artists to paint their portraits and scenes of life in their kingdoms. For example, the Safavid kings of Iran patronised the finest artists. So many painters like Bizhad played a great role in spreading the cultural fame of the Safavid Court. Many artists came to India from Iran during the Mughal rule. Similarly the famous artists like Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad came to India along with Emperor Humayun. Many other artists came to India in search of opportunities to win patronage and prestige.

5. Write an essay on Akbarnama and its author Ahul Fazl.

Or

Discuss Akbarnama as an important .source of the Mughal history. Who wrote the Akbarnama?

Describe its content in brief. (C.B.S.E. 2011 (O.D.))

Or

"Mughals transmitted their grand vision through the writing of dynastic histories." Explain the statement with reference to the Akbarnama. (C.B.S.E. 2019 (O.D.))

Answer: Akbarnama is an important illustrated Mughal official history written by Abul Fazl. It has a lot of paintings depicting battles, sieges, hunts, construction of buildings and scenes of courts. It has shaped and articulated the ideas associated with the reign of Akbar.

Abul Fazl began to write Akbarnama in 1589 C.E. He repeatedly revised his draft and made use of all the available sources such as:

1. Actual records of events (waqai).
2. Official documents.
3. Oral testimonies of knowledgeable persons.

Akbarnama was divided into three volumes. The first two volumes were in the form of chronicles. The third volume is the Ain-i-Akbari. The first volume describes the first thirty years of Akbar's life. The second volume describes the period from 31st year to 46th year of Akbar's life. Thus, Akbarnama provides detailed information about the reign of Akbar. It depicts various aspects of Akbar's empire such as geographic, social, cultural and administrative. Ain- i-Akbari delineates the picture of Mughal society which comprised of the Hindus, the Jainas, the Buddhists and the Muslims. In other words, the Mughals had a composite culture.

4. Give main features of different capital cities of the Mughals.

Or

"The heart of the Mughal Empire was its capital city." Explain with 'examples.

Answer: Capital city was the heart of the Mughal Empire. Mughal courts were assembled here. The Mughals changed their capitals frequently during 16th and 17th centuries. Although Babur captured Agra, capital city of Lodhis but still, within four years of his reign, royal court assembled at different places.

1. **Agra and Fatehpur Sikri**: Akbar constructed Agra fort in the decade of 1560's. Red marble was used in its construction. In the decade of 1570's, he decided to shift his capital to Fatehpur Sikri. Its reason was probably that Sikri was situated on the direct road to Ajmer where there was a tomb of Shaikh Muin-ud-din Chishti. This tomb had become an important pilgrimage centre. The Mughal rulers had very close relations with Sufis of Chishti silsila. Akbar constructed a white marble tomb for Shaikh Salim Chishti near Jumma mosque at Sikri. He also constructed Buland Darwaza. Its objective was to remind visitors about the Mughal victory over Gujarat.

2. **Lahore**: In 1585, the capital was shifted to Lahore to increase control over north western frontiers. In this way, Akbar maintained a great check for 13 years on this frontier. Shah Jahan adopted sound fiscal policies and accumulated enough wealth for his passion of buildings. The work of construction of building in monarchical cultures was a tangible sign of dynastic power, wealth and prestige.

It was also seen as an act of piety in the context of Muslim rulers.

3. **Shahjahanabad**: In 1648 C.E., Court, military and royal families were migrated to new capital Shahjahanabad from Agra. Shahjahanabad was a new addition to the old residential city of Delhi. The city of Delhi had Red Fort, Jama Masjid, a tree lined esplanade with bazaars, i.e., Chandni Chowk and large mansions of nobles. This new city of Shah Jahan was appropriate to a more formal vision of a grand monarchy.

5. "The keeping of exact and detailed records was one of the major' features of Mughal administration." Explain the statement with example. (C.B.S.E. 2009, 2016 (O.D.))

Or

"The keeping of exact and detailed records was a major concern of the Mughal administration."

Support the statement with facts. (C.B.S.E. 2012, 2015 (O.D.))

Answer: Yes, it is true that the keeping of exact and detailed records was one of the major features of the Mughal administration.

1. Mir Bakshi used to check the group of Court writers (waqia nawis). These writers used to record all applications and documents presented in the court and all imperial orders.
2. Agents (wakil) of nobles and regional rulers used to record whole of the working of the court under the heading of 'News from the Date Court'. These records also included the time and dates of meetings of court.
3. The akhbarat had all kinds of information like attendance at the court, distribution of offices and titles, diplomatic missions, received presents and enquiries made by the emperor about the health of any officer.
4. News reports and important documents travelled across the regions under Mughal Empire by imperial post.
5. The emperor received reports from even distant provincial capitals within a few days. Whole of the empire was connected by surprisingly rapid information loop for public news.