

“BABUR AS AN OBSERVER IN HIS MEMOIR”

shabistan bano

“In the month of Ramzan of the year 899 Hijra, in the twelfth year of my age, I became ruler in the country of Farghana.” These are the opening words of Babur’s Memoirs, with these words, abruptly Babur begins the story of his adventurous life.

Babur has handed over to the posterity his autobiography a turki literature, known as Tuzuk-i-Baburi, which is a source of history. Later, it translated into Persian and then in the early nineteenth century William Erskine translated it into English under the title, “Memoirs of Zahiruddin Mohammad Babur Emperor of Hindustan.” (London 1826)

Hazrat Nasiruddin Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar, one of the renowned saints of that period named the child Zahiruddin Muhammad. Since the chaghtais found it difficult to pronounce his name Zahiruddin Muhammad correctly they called him Babur and he known to history as such.

Babur presents a portrait of himself as extremely confident Timurid prince. Babur was neither a religious scholar, nor a professional historian nor a court poet. He was the genius of a great warrior, a poet, a lover and critic of arts, and a clear sighted psychologist—all these qualities are contained in the most famous literary work of the great Padishah; for both from his father’s side and mother’s side he had inherited the gift of poetry and the love of art.

Babur was not only a warrior but was a man who left behind him a mark in the pages of history and culture. His inspiring works, heroic feats of arms, his dynamic personality, and his literary contributions in the form of *Waqiat-i-Baburi*, his diwan and other poetic compositions, shall always be remembered by descendents.

Abul Fazl also praises Babur and writes in Akbarnama that, “He used to compose verses in Persian also.”

ہم چینی بہ زبان فارسی نیز اشعار دل پذیر دارند

Abul Fazl highlighting the scholarship of Babur holds opinion that “He was an excellent writer and poet both.”

در نظم و نثر پایہ عالی بود

Babur owned a good library and in that he must be having the works of Ibn al-Arabi and Shaikh Ali Hujaveri and the diwans of Sufi poets.

A great general, scholar and poet, historian Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur invented his alphabets with the purpose of reflecting, all the phonetic peculiarities of the Turki language.

Babur invented a new hand-writing, which he calls Baburi khat or Khat-i-Baburi (Babur's hand writing), and wrote a copy of the Quran in it, which he afterwards sent to Mecca.

Babur was a versatile personality. His stamina, acute mind, refined taste, gentle heart and diversified activities are indeed amazing. He was a great statesman, soldier, talented scholar, remarkable poet and patron of the arts.

Babur was a lover of nature and an auto biographer. Babur's poetry, like his prose, was usually marked by good taste. His battles as well as his orgies were humanised by a breath of poetry.'

Naimuddin has quoted some of Babur's Persian verses, which are as follows:

ای ماه شام وصل تو صبح سعادتست
روز جدائی تو ولی شام محنت

O! Moon of evening: your union with thee is the morning of happiness, but the day of separation from thee is the evening of sorrow.

از کام جام باده بگیرد کام دل
اکنون کہ وقت باده و ہنگام عشر تست

Now it is time for drinking and pleasure seeking, seek your heart's desire from the wine-up and it is the time to enjoy life.

عمر من رفت و رافرت اوساخت ہلاک
چکنم عمر من دلشدہ مستعجل بود

My life is over and separation from my beloved has killed me. What should I do, my life, love-lorn as I am, was fleet-footed.

As regards his personal religion, he cherished a firm belief in the guidance and intervention of Allah. He ascribed all his successes to God's favour all his disasters to God's mysterious will.

According to Mirza Haider Doghlat, the author of Tarikh-i-Rashidi that, "Babur was adorned with various virtues and clad with numberless good qualities. While, appreciating Babur's academic achievements, concludes that, infact no one in his family before him over possessed such talents as he." Babur was a lover of books and was having rich collection of books. He constructed a separate building of his library in his home town which is still intact in the town of Andijan presently in Uzbekistan.

Babur was a great lover of books and was having a good collection of manuscript in his personal library. After winning the battle of Panipat. Babur had taken over all manuscripts preserved in the library of Ghazi Khan, in his library.

Shimmel hold the opinion,"Babur's poetry covers every field of life-love and war, drinking and asceticism . After the battle of Panipat, when Nizam Khan of Biana seemed indisposed to surrender, Babur sent him" royal letters of promise and threat," and drove his meaning home with an extempore Persian quatrain:-

"Strive not with the Turk, O! Mir of Biana: His courage and skill are obvious. Pay attention to this advice, whatever is obvious, so there is no need to say?"

و مردانگی ترک عیان است

با ترک ستیزه مکن اے میر بیانه

لہ عیان است چه حاجت بہ بیان است

گر رد دنیائی و نصیحت نہ کنی گوش

Great natural intelligence, an enquiring mind, a sense of humour, and good taste combined to render Babur's work unique. Not the least attractive feature of his character was his intense love of Nature and his delight in all the wonder and glory of the world. Babur was always observant of even the smallest masterpieces of Nature's art.

He was polite and cultured and sensitive to the feelings of others. He was of simple habits and did not care for pretentious display. He did not have a quick temper, nor suffer from outbreaks of wrath.

A sterling feature of Babur's personality was his loyalty to kinsmen and friends and to his plighted word. Babur was in principle opposed to wanton destruction of life and property, and severely punished his soldiers for harassing and plundering innocent men. Even towards his enemies his attitude was characterised by forgiveness and humanity. After Panipat, he gave an assignment of seven lakhs, to Ibrahim's mother, treated her with respect, and addressed her as mother. Yet, when she tried to poison her, he did not put her to death, which she deserved owing to the nature of her crime. She was kept under custody.

"The description of Hindustan reveals Babur's intellectual curiosity, his great powers of observation and his keen interest not only in the geography and history, flora and fauna, forts and palaces, temples and khanqahs of the country, but also in the houses, dress and diet, manners and customs of the people. He has been criticised for pointing out the defects of Hindustan-Hindustan is a place of little charm. There is no beauty in its people, no graceful, social intercourse, no poetic talents or understanding, no etiquette, nobility, or manliness. The arts and crafts have no harmony. There are no good horses, meat, grapes, melons, or other fruit. There is no ice, cold water, good food or bread in the markets. There are no baths and no madarsas[Islamic School]. He did not like the heat of India.

There are, however, he admits, some compensating advantages. "The great advantage of Hindustan, besides the vast extent of its territory, is the amount of gold, coined, which may be found there." Also, during the rains, the climate is very pleasant.

Babur uses the term Hind, Hindustan to denote the whole of India. "The country of Hindustan," he observes, is extensive, full of men, and full of produce.

Babur's view of Hindustan is often brief and superficial. Not being a socialist he does not give sufficient details of the manners and customs of the people, omitting such practices as female infanticide and sati, which were prevalent at the time. Nor does he describe their religion and religious ceremonies, beyond saying that the Hindus are pagans and believe in the transmigration of souls. Babur noted down what he saw and what interested him, he did not try to go beneath the surface of things. But we must remember that he was mainly a conqueror.

Babur's history of medieval India is extremely brief and sketchy. Babur was frequently sick in India and perhaps dead prematurely because of the south Asian climate.

I am going to conclude my paper with these words- Babur was a great observer, warrior, poet, writer, kind-hearted and also a lover of nature. With these qualities he had also the vision of great builder. Yet Babur was not able to build as much and as well as he wanted. This was because he lived for only four year after coming to Hindustan-a period too short for his ambitious building projects.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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