

Nooruddin Jahangir

Jahangir was the son of many prayers. Akbar wanted a heir to succeed him, he not only prayed to God but also begged of the blessings of saints to have a son. All previous children of the emperor having died in their infancy, ultimately, a son was born in August, 1569, and he was named Muhammad Saleem. It was as a result of the blessings of the famous Sheikh Saleem Chishti that he was blessed with a son and named him after the saint Muhammad Sultan Saleem, but Akbar used to call Saleem by nick name of Sheikho Baba.

The child was brought up with utmost care and affection. Akbar paid full attention to the education of Saleem and placed him under the guardianship of the best scholars and tutors of the age. Saleem learnt Turki, Hindi, Geography, arithmetic's and other important sciences from his teachers.

Saleem was married to Man Bai at the age of 15, apart from that Saleem kept some eight hundred women in his harem. Saleem developed great love for wine and other sensual pleasures at an early age. This was not liked by Akbar and he tried to mend the young prince but without much success.

The loose character of Saleem was a cause of great concern to Akbar but the young prince was not willing to pay any heed to Akbar's advice. In 1599, when Akbar left for the Deccan expedition, he directed Saleem to attack Rana Amar Singh of Mewar. Instead of complying with the directions of Akbar, Saleem utilized the occasion to raise a banner of revolt. Saleem had declared his independence and set up court at Allahabad. Akbar rushed back to Agra and crushed the revolt.

Jahangir succeeded to the throne on November, 1605, on the eight day of Akbar's death. Soon after accession to the throne Jahangir proceeded to issue a proclamation of his policy in the shape of rules of conduct (Dastur-ul- Amal). These rules or instructions were as follow.

1. Regulations about Highway Robbery and Theft

2. Free Inheritance of Property of Deceased persons
3. Prohibition of Wine and all kinds of Intoxicating Liquors
4. Prohibition of the Taking Possession of the Houses and cutting the Noses and Ears of the criminals.
5. Prohibition of Ghasbi
6. Building of Hospitals and Appointment of Physicians to attend the Sick
7. Prohibiting Slaughter of Animals
8. General Confirmation of Mnsabs and Jagirs
9. Confirmation of aima Lands
10. Amnesty for all Prisoners

An important event of Jahangir's reign was his marriage with Nur Jahan, which left a deep impact on the course of history of his reign. He bestowed on her the title of Nur Mahal (light of the harem) which was subsequently changed into Nur Jahan Begum (Light of the World). Once installed as empress the influence continued on the administration. She was a brave and shrewd lady and came to exercise tremendous influence on Jahangir during the period from 1611 to 1627.

Two Sides of his character.

(A) Bright side of his character.

Jahangir possessed a very amiable personality. He always showed great respect to his mother and other elders of his family. Though he rebelled against his father, yet he showed very much repentant over his folly. He always cherished the memory of Akbar and used to pay his homage to the departed soul.

Jahangir was highly educated man. He had acquired sufficient knowledge of Arabic, Hindi and Persian languages. His own memoirs called Tuzak_i_Jahangiri is a proof of his excellent composition. He was very much interested in the fine arts like music, architecture, painting and others.

Jahangir had a great passion for justice, allowing all men to approach him with complaints which he himself heard. With a view to make him accessible to all the seekers of justice, he caused gold chain with bells to be hung between the Shah Burj

at the Agra fort and a post on the road near the bank of the river Jumna so as to enable the suitors to ring the bell of justice.

(B) Dark Side of His Character.

Jahangir had many good qualities in his character, but he had certain shortcomings too which eclipsed the good qualities in him. He was a notorious drunkard but punished other drunkards very severely. He had formed such a strong habit of wine that wine failed to intoxicate him. Thus, he became more and more engrossed in pleasure and ease, till he became a figure head in the State, and real powers being thus enjoyed by Nur Jahan, he never interfered with the work of Nur Jahan.

The health of Jahangir was completely shattered on account of excessive drinking. He was trying to restore it by visiting Kashmir and Kabul. On his way from Kabul to Kashmir he returned to Lahore on account of severe cold and died on the way in October 1627, probably in the vicinity of Murree and Abbottabad, according to one account, his body was brought to Lahore and was ultimately interred in the tomb near Shahdara, Lahore.