

**INTERPRETATION OF THE IMAGE OF THE INDIAN RULER
AKBARSHAH IN HISTORICAL-BIOGRAPHICAL NOVELS**

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the literary works written about the life of the Indian ruler Akbarshah, who left an indelible mark on the history of India, contributed to the development of cultural and educational life in the country, and made a name for himself as a people-loving ruler. In this article, the historical-biographical novels of the English writer Alex Rutherford “Ruler of the World” and Pirmkul Kadirov “Humayun and Akbar” are compared and analyzed from the point of view of the laws of literary criticism. Issues such as the depiction of the portrait of Akbarshah in the works, the presentation of the character traits of the Indian king according to the interpretation of the writers and the complete coverage of historical facts related to Akbarshah’s life and military campaigns are compared, similarities and differences are identified.

KEYWORDS: Babur Mirza, Humayun Mirza, Akbarshah, Pirmkulkadirov, Alex Rutherford, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Muhammad Jaffar, Historical-Biographical Novel.

INTRODUCTION

Akbarshah, the son of Humayun Mirza, who became a worthy successor to Babur, left an indelible mark on the history of India, and aroused the interest of many historians and literary critics. Many artistic, scientific and historical works have been written in English and Uzbek literature, such as Alex Rutherford’s “Ruler of the World” and Pirmkul Kadirov’s “Humayun and Akbar”, and have been recognized by readers. However, we should separately mention the works in English-language Indian literature. In particular, the historical novels “Akbar of Hindustan” by Parvati Sharma and “Akbar- the Great Mughal” by Ira Mukhoty served to fully illuminate the realities of the reign of Akbarshah. It is noteworthy that the famous Indian political scientist, historian and writer J. Nehru expressed his views on Akbar Shah in his historical and scientific work “Discovery of India”. He wrote that Akbarshah was known as a very curious ruler, eager to acquire any religious or secular knowledge in the blink of an eye. He encouraged more war elephants in the military field and contributed to the development of shipbuilding and maritime trade mechanics.

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Prince Akbar, who had just turned thirteen, was fighting bravely in battles with his father and showing courage in his campaign in India, is depicted in Alex Rutherford’s novel “Brothers at War” as follows: “Akbar – a strong, muscular boy for his age – was clearly perfecting a

technique for parrying Bairam Khan's thrusts. Dodging beneath his tutor's shield, he stabbed the protective quilted padding worn for such training sessions with his blunted sword. He was mature for his age, not only in his muscular physique and stature but also in his power of analysis and in a growing astuteness in his judgement of others. [2, 316]The English writer describes Akbar as a strong, muscular young man, emphasizing his growing physical strength as a result of his constant training in swordsmanship and archery.

Pirimkul Kadirov's interpretation of the young prince Akbar is as follows: *"Akbar's full body, sharp intellect, and especially the words he spoke now, with his mustache growing and his voice deepening, resembled those of a 17-18-year-old boy. Humayun remembered that at the age of thirteen he had been a young teenager who had not yet experienced difficulties. And his father seemed to notice more clearly today how quickly the dangers he had experienced and the tragedies he had witnessed up close had made Akbar grow up"*. [1, 312]The two writers' descriptions reveal several similarities and differences. In both works, the thirteen-year-old boy is described as having grown up both mentally and physically and as having the appearance of a 17-18-year-old teenager. Pirimkul Kadirov describes Akbar as a young man with a "mustache and a voice that has become thick", while Alex Rutherford specifically notes that the young prince was not only physically strong, but also had a mature ability to analyze events around him and evaluate people's actions. Among the Baburid rulers, Akbarshah was one of the first to marry a Brahman girl of Indian origin. His decision was severely criticized by many religious scholars. However, Akbar Shah had his own political goals in arranging this marriage. The scholars, who could not understand his plans, secretly gossiped about Akbar, accusing him of being an "atheist" and "apostate". They even accused Akbar, who was approaching thirty years old, of marrying a non-Muslim girl while still seeking an heir to the throne. The English writer Alex Rutherford explains this situation in Akbar's own words. *"The ulama know perfectly well why I married a Hindu – not only to strengthen a military alliance but to show that all can prosper under the Moghuls regardless of religion . . ."* [2, 115]According to Akbar Shah's explanation, by marrying an Indian girl, he was trying not only to strengthen military ties, but also to prove that in this country one could live in all prosperity, regardless of religion.

The Uzbek writer Pirimkul Kadirov also describes similar events: *"The fanatical sheikhs condemned Akbar's respect for the Indian nurse and in the margins they made prophecies saying: "Our king has entered the path of blasphemy, may his fate be bad!"* [1, 418] We know about the nurse Maham Anga, who took care of Akbarshah from the first days of his birth, raised him and even tried to save Akbarshah's life, even at the cost of her own life. However, among the nurses who gave Akbarshah white milk, there was also a woman of Indian nationality. Akbar respected her along with all his nurses. Misinterpreting Akbarshah's good intentions, some hateful people do not go beyond criticizing the young ruler and calling him an "infidel".

To strengthen his power, Akbar Shah aims to launch new military campaigns, thereby expanding the borders of the state and replenishing the treasury for the well-being of his citizens. But first, like his father Humayun Mirza, he looks at the "Baburnama" to learn from the experiences of his grandfather Babur Mirza. At that moment, he sees Babur Mirza's profound thoughts: "Be generous to your supporters. After all, they will be loyal only if they know that they will have more if they are on your side". Following his grandfather's advice, he invites all the nobles and officials to his presence. In Alex Rutherford's novel "Ruler of the World", Akbarshah's speech to the nobles is given as follows: *"Like my father before me I have decided to revive the ancient custom of the rulers of Hindustan of being publicly weighed against precious stuffs. After the*

weighing, the treasure will be distributed amongst those invited – as you have been today – to witness it. To show my special regard for you, I wish on this first occasion to give you more than the mere equivalent of my bodyweight". The young ruler Akbar Shah, continuing the old traditions of the kings of India, ordered the distribution of wealth equal to his own body weight to his supporters and needy citizens. Persons responsible for the distribution of gold and silver coins and precious jewels were appointed. Gifts and greetings were also sent to officials in remote areas of the country. Wanting the common people to also benefit from the generosity of the ruler, Akbarshah ordered them to distribute daily necessities such as rice, oil, and grains.[2, 79] PirimkulKadirov's novel "*Humayun and Akbar*" also contains a similar description of reality: "*With these thoughts, Akbar wanted to distribute a large part of the coins collected from the jizya to the needy. By his decree, the marble pool in front of the office was cleaned of water. The coins taken from the treasury in leather bags were poured into the marble pool, which was wiped dry, like wheat poured into a barn*". [1, 527] Through the above passage, we can once again be convinced that Akbar was a generous ruler. Unlike the description of the English writer, P. Kadirov emphasizes that Akbar ordered to fill an entire pool with gold coins. This, of course, can be another proof that Akbar prioritized the well-being of the people over his own interests.

Akbar Shah, having correctly concluded from the fate of his father Humayun Mirza, organized military campaigns to expand the borders of the state based on a well-thought-out plan in advance. Pirimkul Kadirov expresses the following opinion about Akbarshah's unique state policy: "*Akbar was expanding the borders of his state step by step, without haste. For fifteen years, he ended internal discord in the regions between Gujarat and Agra, such as Bikaner, Chitar, Bundi, Malwa, became blood relatives with the most influential rajas, and recruited half of his cavalry from loyal Rajputs*". [1, 486] Akbarshah, starting his military campaigns, tried to conclude peace and friendship agreements with many rajas. He appointed rajas who were members of intelligent families to high positions. As a guarantee of reliable cooperation with them, he established blood relations, married many Indian girls and accepted them into his harem. Alex Rutherford also pays special attention to the issue of Akbar Shah's marriages with Indian girls: "*To ensure the stability of his empire, he had taken Hindu wives and allowed them freedom of worship*".[2, 168] Although Akbarshah married Indian girls with political goals, he respected their religious beliefs, gave them freedom of conscience and never encouraged them to convert to Islam.

One of the events that left an indelible mark on the history of India during the reign of Akbarshah and led to the title of "The Great Ruler" was his abolition of taxes levied on non-Muslim Hindus. "*Humayun and Akbar*" describes this historical process as follows: "*Meanwhile, the jizya tax was also abolished. By another edict of Akbar, the pilgrimage tax was also abolished. The majority of the population of the country was pleased with Akbar for being freed from these religious taxes, but the muhtasibs, qadis, imams and scholars, who had lost their large source of income, were equally dissatisfied with him*". [1, 527] The religious scholars, who had lost their large source of income from taxes, condemned this decision of Akbarshah and spread rumors among the people that the ruler had apostatized. A. Rutherford's novel "*Ruler of the World*" also reflects this historical reality: "*The Moghul empire will flourish only if all its subjects can prosper too. To show I mean what I say, I hereby declare an end to the jizya – the poll tax on non believers. Because a man does not follow the path of Islam is no reason to impoverish him. I also abolish the ancient tax levied since before Moghul times on Hindu pilgrims visiting their holy shrines*".[2, 168]Akbarshah announced that he would stop collecting

the jizya tax on non-Muslims solely for the welfare of the people. According to his decree, the pilgrimage tax levied on visits to Hindu holy sites was also abolished in order to establish equality among citizens and peace in the country.

The reign of Akbarshah, who is revered in Indian history as the “Great Ruler”, is notable for the establishment of extensive cooperation with neighboring countries, in particular, Iran and Turkey. The reign of the just king, the Ottoman ruler Sultan Suleiman, who carried out the most military campaigns in Turkish history, also coincides with the reign of Akbarshah, that is, the second half of the XVI century. Of course, political interests were sought in establishing trade and economic cooperation with such great empires. Although Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur briefly retained control of India, we know that he established cooperation with neighboring countries. Babur Shah, who started construction work in India, even invited famous architects from Constantinople, as mentioned in his autobiographical work “*Baburnama*”. During the reign of Akbarshah, Europeans also began to show interest in India. A. Rutherford writes about this in his work “*Ruler of the World*”: “*Akbar’s reign was also the time when growing numbers of Europeans – merchants, priests and soldiers of fortune – began making their way to the Moghul court. In 1584, Ralph Fitch was among the first English merchants to reach Hindustan and he describes the wonders of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri in his Memoirs*”. [2, 362] From the above records, it is clear that many European traders, religious leaders and military men visited India for various purposes. Akbarshah’s policy of treating all religions equally was instrumental in ensuring that Christians could freely move around India without any obstacles. From the same period, the British colonialists began to show interest in this country and exactly two centuries later they made India their colony.

CONCLUSION

During our research, we were convinced that Akbarshah was the most studied and most widely written historical, artistic and scientific king among all the other Mughal rulers. This is certainly not in vain. The ruler Akbar spent his entire life expanding the lands inherited from his ancestors and strengthening the borders. But most importantly, he always lived with the pain of the people, trying to contribute to the well-being of his citizens. He promoted the doctrine of the equality of all religions in the country in order to put an end to religious disagreements and internal conflicts. Akbarshah, who was a supporter of unity and peace, was awarded the title of “Great Ruler”.

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