

THE QUALITIES OF BABUR

Abdullayeva Barnokhon Umidullo qizi

PhD Candidate at Namangan State University,

Lecturer at Impuls Medical Institute

abdullayevabarno789@gmail.com

Abstract: This article provides an in-depth analysis of the personal qualities, moral character, scholarly interests, political vision, and military leadership of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, based on historical sources. Drawing on Mirzo Haydar Dughlat's *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, Gulbadanbegim's *Humayun-nama*, and the works of English historians such as S. Lane-Poole, H. Elliot, and W. Erskine, the study examines Babur's physical endurance, moral integrity, justice, political insight, and intellectual-literary legacy. The findings demonstrate that Babur's significance lies not only in his military achievements but also in his role as an enlightened ruler whose administrative skills, diplomatic strategy, and military expertise require a renewed evaluation in the historical context.

Keywords: Babur, virtue, historiography, Mughal dynasty, Mirzo Haydar, Gulbadanbegim, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, *Humayun-nama*, history, personality, commander, diplomat, ruler, enlightenment, justice, military art, historical source.

Introduction. Babur's character has been highly praised both by his contemporaries and by modern historians. Among the valuable works dedicated to the history of the Mughal dynasty, in addition to the precious manuscripts created during his era, numerous modern historical studies based on those manuscripts have been published in Britain, India, and Pakistan. One such work is Indian historian L.P. Sharma's *The Mughal Empire*, published in Delhi in 1988. According to Mirzo Haydar Dughlat, author of *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, Babur "possessed countless noble traits, and among those qualities, his bravery and generosity stood above all."

Methods. Babur's virtues are described in great detail in *Humayun-nama*, written by his daughter Gulbadanbegim. The English historian S. Lane-Poole referred to Babur as "the most fascinating figure in Eastern history."

Babur's qualities as a human being are truly admirable. Physically, he was exceptionally strong; he could carry two men under his arms while walking along the top of a fortress wall. In India, he would cross any river without difficulty and could ride eighty miles in a single day without rest. He enjoyed wine and smoking, yet his body remained resilient throughout his life. Even the poison given by Ibrahim Lodi's mother did not cause serious harm to his robust constitution.

Results. Babur was a devoted son, a loving father, a loyal friend, a faithful husband, and a caring relative. He respected his elderly kin and paid great attention to his children's education, upbringing, and moral development. He advised his eldest son Humayun to master the art of eloquent speech, to strive for intellectual growth, and to remain composed in difficult situations. "Fortune favors the striving," he would say, and he never allowed panic in emergencies. "Carelessness and indifference are not the qualities of a ruler," he emphasized.

He never withheld generosity from his relatives, empathized with his friends' troubles, and shared in their joys. Although he had several wives, he treated them all with equal respect, and he showed the same affection to all his sons. Even on his deathbed, he advised Humayun:



“Even if your brothers commit acts deserving punishment, do not wish them harm.” Despite enjoying wine and social gatherings, he felt deep responsibility for promises made under intoxication. He was generous, noble, courageous, charming, beloved, and highly cultured. The English historian H. Elliot wrote of Babur: “He was naturally cheerful, brave, dignified, sharp-witted, and open-hearted. Had his life been spent in Europe, he would have been the very image of Henry VII. He immediately grasped both the human heart and the circumstances. He had a strong passion for music and garden design, and built numerous structures in India.”

Babur was an enlightened ruler. Though known for his military victories in North India, even if he had not conquered India, he would still have been remembered as a scholar. Because he spent his early life engaged in wars from the age of eleven, he was unable to receive a complete formal education, yet his knowledge gained from life experience and his mastery of the Turkic language secured him a special place among scholars. In addition to his perfect command of Turkic, he knew Arabic and Persian well. No contemporary could rival him in the art of composing prose in Turkic. His memoir, known as *Tuzuki Baburi* or *Baburnama*, is considered one of the greatest autobiographical works ever written. According to A.S. Beveridge, it is “the most priceless written monument in the entire course of history.” In this work, Babur masterfully described the natural landscapes, climate, animals, birds, flora, craftsmanship, and lifestyle of the peoples of the lands he visited. While recounting the events of his life, he vividly portrayed his own habits, virtues and weaknesses, the political and economic conditions of his rivals, and the temperaments of his children and relatives. The reader of the *Baburnama* becomes convinced of Babur’s mastery of Turkic and his keen observation of the geographical, social, and political realities of the lands he traversed.

His poetic collection, *Devon*, is undoubtedly among the finest works of poetry of his time. He also composed ghazals in Persian, creating his own distinct style. He translated Khoja Ubaydullah’s *Risala-i Walidiya* into Turkic. Moreover, Babur authored *Mubayyin*, a masnavi that embodies Islamic teachings, and he created the script known as *Khatti Baburi*, contributing to new calligraphic traditions. These works testify to the breadth of his knowledge, his refined literary style, and his skillful use of linguistic sources.

Among the poets of his era, Babur ranked immediately after Mir Alisher Nava’i, which is why he is rightly regarded as a “scholar-king.” As S. Lane-Poole noted, Babur was “not only a fortunate soldier, but also a refined literary critic and connoisseur; the breath of poetry permeated both his battles and his daily life.”

Discussion. Babur was a courageous warrior and an experienced commander. Having participated in battles from childhood, he never feared death. According to S.R. Sharma, “He was an excellent horseman, a skillful archer, a swift swordsman, and an tireless hunter.”

His commandship matured through battles against various Central Asian tribes and factions. He was not a born commander like Timur or Genghis Khan; rather, repeated early defeats taught him valuable lessons, gradually shaping him into a wise and resourceful military leader. He never lost his resolve and always drew upon his willpower to recover from failures. He learned the *tulghama* tactic from the Turks, ambush strategies from the Afghans, the use of firearms and cannons from the Iranians, and mobile cavalry techniques from the Turks. He also developed a system for applying these methods appropriately. This ingenuity enabled him to win every battle he fought in India. Moreover, he inspired confidence in his companions, encouraged their bravery, and could command obedience when necessary. He never hesitated to confront armies larger than his own and always sought to discern his opponent’s strengths and weaknesses during battle.

Babur lived among his soldiers during difficult times, which earned their respect. Yet he demanded strict discipline and severely punished disobedience. According to historian Farishta:



“It is certain that the honor of Sultan Daulat Khan’s household was preserved only because of Babur’s presence.” After the Battle of Bhera, he harshly punished all who engaged in looting. In his memoirs, he wrote: “It was reported that the troops were committing excesses against the people of Bhera. I sent men to punish the offenders; some were executed, others had their noses pierced and were expelled from the camp.” Thus, his troops not only loved him but also feared him, and under his leadership the army became highly organized and disciplined.

As a diplomat, Babur was remarkably astute. When he was first expelled from the throne of Fergana, hostile uncles threatened his rule from all sides. Through resourcefulness and prudence, he managed to preserve the state of Fergana from their aggression.

His alliance with the Shia Shah of Iran and his later diplomatic conduct demonstrated his political skill. His rule in India likewise reflected this talent. By arranging marriages between his sons Humayun and Kamran and the daughters of the defeated Hindu ruler Medini Rao, he strengthened relations with the local population and established kinship ties between the Mughals and Hindu nobility. Numerous Afghan nobles sought refuge at his court, and the Sultan of Bengal, Nusrat Shah, also established diplomatic relations with him.

Babur facilitated Sher Shah Suri’s rise but was later temporarily displaced by Suri’s betrayal. At that time, Jalal Khan of Bihar posed a threat to Babur’s empire, so Babur accepted Sher Shah’s apology and appointed him to Bihar to monitor Jalal Khan. He instructed his amirs to closely follow Sher Shah’s actions, saying: “Do not take your eyes off Sher Khan; he is a wise man, and his forehead bears the mark of future kingship.” This shows Babur’s sharp intuition and mastery of reading human intentions. Thanks to his ability to win hearts, Babur brought six Hindu rulers under his authority willingly.

As a sovereign, Babur fulfilled his duties faithfully. He sought to elevate the prestige of kingship and firmly believed in the power of centralized rule. For this reason, he adopted the title “Padishah.” This governing style resonated with Indian traditions, where reverence for royal authority was strong. Babur restored the dwindled prestige of kingship that had suffered since the era of Firuz Tughluq. During the Delhi Sultanate, rulers such as Balban, Alauddin Khalji, and Muhammad Tughluq were feared rather than respected. Firuz Tughluq himself commanded neither fear nor respect. Sultan Sikandar Lodi temporarily restored some dignity to the throne, but his son failed to maintain it.

Babur elevated the status of the monarchy to its highest level. Both nobles and common people honored him and held him in awe. As a result, he was able to maintain order and security across the vast region from Badakhshan to Bihar. He considered the protection of people’s property and dignity to be his primary duty. He ensured safety from banditry, demanded compassion from officials toward the populace, supervised administrative affairs, and sought to establish justice in the land. Upon first arriving in India, he ordered the nobles of Bhera not to plunder the property of the local population. According to English historians H. Elliot and J. Dowson, Babur declared: “Since I have proclaimed these lands, long belonging to the Turks, as my own, I shall permit no plunder here.”

He introduced the measurement unit “Ghaz-i Baburi” for calculating distances, and it remained in use until the reign of Jahangir. As a ruler, he strictly monitored the officials’ implementation of orders and ensured the population’s economic well-being.

Babur was also greatly fond of art. He built numerous structures in Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Bayana, and Dholpur, and created beautiful gardens filled with flowers and fruit trees. As a sovereign, he achieved great success in maintaining peace, ensuring security, caring for the people, and upholding justice, earning the deep respect and affection of his subjects.

Conclusion. Modern historians unanimously acknowledge Babur’s exceptionally high status in history. According to the English historian V.A. Smith, “Babur was the greatest among



the Asiatic princes of his time, and his place in history is distinguished by extraordinary merit.” The European historian Gavel described Babur as “one of the most attractive figures in the history of the Islamic world.”

The English Orientalist W.Erskine stated that “among Asiatic princes, none could match Babur in rank and character.”

Babur’s personality and his noble character fully deserve such high praise.

References

1. Mirzo Haydar Dughlat. Tarikh-i Rashidi.
2. Gulbadanbegim. Humayun-nama.
3. Lane-Poole, S. Babur. Oxford Press.
4. Elliot, H. The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians.
5. Erskine, W. A History of India under the Two First Sovereigns of the House of Taimur.
6. Smith, V.A. Akbar the Great Mogul, 1542–1605.
7. Sharma, L.P. The Mughal Empire. Delhi, 1988.
8. Gavel, R. Studies on Islamic History.
9. Farishta. Tarikh-i-Farishta.
10. Beveridge, A.S. Notes on Babur and the Baburnama.

