

Humayun and the Mughal Empire

Introduction to Humayun's Rule

When Babur died in 1530, his son Humayun became the second Mughal emperor. He inherited an empire that was not fully stable because Babur had only ruled for four years. The foundations were laid, but the administration, loyalty of nobles, and security of the empire were still weak. Humayun was young and did not have much political experience. He faced strong enemies in India, such as the Afghan nobles and Rajput rulers, who did not accept Mughal control. His reign became a struggle for survival, and though he lost power for many years, he eventually managed to restore the Mughal dynasty before his death.

Early Challenges and Rivalries

One of Humayun's first mistakes was dividing the empire among his brothers. This decision weakened the Mughal center because his brothers became rivals instead of allies. At the same time, Sher Shah Suri, an Afghan leader from Bihar, was rising in power and posed a serious threat to the Mughals. The Rajputs, who had been defeated by Babur, also tried to regain their strength and independence. Humayun had no strong system of administration, and many nobles were not loyal to him. Instead of focusing on governance and stability, Humayun sometimes wasted time in luxuries, which made his position weaker.

Defeat and Exile

The most important event of Humayun's reign was his defeat by Sher Shah Suri. In the Battle of Kannauj in 1540, Humayun's forces were crushed. This battle forced him to leave India, and Sher Shah Suri became the ruler, establishing the Sur Empire. For almost fifteen years, Humayun lived in exile, moving from one place to another in search of support. His long years in exile showed his weakness, but they also revealed his determination. Finally, he gained the support of Shah Tahmasp, the ruler of Persia, who gave him soldiers and resources.

Return to India

After the death of Sher Shah Suri in 1545, the Sur Empire became unstable. There were disputes among his successors, and the empire started breaking apart. Humayun saw this as his chance to return. With the help of Persian forces, he re-entered India and recaptured Delhi in 1555. This victory restored the Mughal dynasty after fifteen years of absence. Unfortunately, Humayun could not enjoy this success for long. In 1556, only a year after regaining Delhi, he died suddenly after falling down the steps of his library.

Importance of Humayun's Rule

Although Humayun is often remembered as a weak ruler, his reign was important in Mughal history. He failed to consolidate the empire in the beginning and even lost it for a long time, but

his determination and eventual comeback kept the Mughal dynasty alive. His time in Persia also brought new cultural and administrative influences into the Mughal court, such as Persian art, literature, and architecture. Most importantly, by regaining Delhi, Humayun ensured that the empire passed on to his son, Akbar. Without Humayun's return, there would have been no strong Mughal empire under Akbar. His perseverance made him a bridge between Babur, the founder, and Akbar, the real consolidator of the empire.