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BOBUR MIRZO'S CHERISHED PLACES

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ABSTRACT

This article reflects on the three places mentioned by Babur Mirzo in "Boburnoma" with special affection, which left a bright mark on his life. It should also be noted that Babur Mirza had great satisfaction and great gratitude in the king's heart. It is precisely because of this feeling of gratitude that Babur Mirza quickly notices the favour in the world, discovers the good in every situation and acknowledges it wholeheartedly.

The article searches the role of Dizak (Jizzakh), which kept bread and salt after the siege of Samarkand, the village of Yakka Olang, which he embraced warmly after the snowfall, and Kabul, which was the cradle of his great dreams, in the life of Babur Mirza.

KEYWORDS

Ethical because of this feeling of gratitude that Babur Mirza quickly notices -spiritual credo, favor, Dizak, "Ilon utti" gorge, International expedition of "In the footsteps of Babur", Snowfall incident, the village of Yakka Olang, Kabul, Kabul-Ghazna dams, Kabul Mosque, Babur Mirza's will, "Bogi Navruzi".

INTRODUCTION

At the conclusion of Baburnama, the manuscript copyist (a scribe whose identity remains unknown) lists eight attributes of Bobur Mirzo. One of them is the ability to show kindness and generosity to the

Creator's servants. Bobur Mirzo made the pursuit of good deeds and righteous actions the foundation of his personal, social, and moral values. In Baburnama, he evaluates historical figures based on this philosophy,



acknowledging only those who have contributed something valuable to society, science, culture, and the people.

Bobur's recognition of kindness is not limited to individuals but extends to cities, regions, and towns that left a positive mark on his turbulent life, reminding him that goodness and human compassion endure in the world. In Baburnama, he fondly mentions three places that brought him great comfort and satisfaction—one of them being Dizak, which corresponds to modern-day Jizzakh.

After a six-month siege of Samarkand, Bobur Mirzo, leaving the city to Shaybani Khan, passed through Dizak on his way to Andijan. In this context, a noteworthy passage from Baburnama provides a glimpse into Bobur's lively character:

“... Crossing Khwaja Didar, we reached the Kharbugh ridge during the circumcision ceremony. From the north of Kharbugh, following the foot of Hudak village and Ilon Valley (a gorge located between Samarkand and Jizzakh – Y.K.), we swayed along.”

While riding on horseback, Bobur playfully raced with his companions Qambar Ali and Qosimbek. Although he unexpectedly fell from his horse and was unconscious until evening, he still won the race. One wonders how Bobur, deprived of his country, throne, and most loyal men, still found room for such light-heartedness amid his many burdens.

The loss at the Battle of Sar-e-Pul, the death of his most trusted commanders, and the desertion of many followers had deeply affected him. The six-month siege had left the people in despair, facing hunger and scarcity. To add to this, he surrendered not only the throne of Samarkand but also his sister, Khanzoda Begim, to the enemy.

Did the weight of these overwhelming losses not crush the spirit of the 19-year-old Bobur? Perhaps Bobur spurred his horse onward during the race to liberate his mind from these tormenting thoughts. Maybe the race was his way of escaping the sorrow and anguish—an attempt to reconnect with his inner self and find solace.

Throughout Baburnama, moments appear when Bobur Mirzo longs for solitude, even though he values gathering with friends and considers society a form of wealth. In 1527-1528, Bobur describes one such moment:

“On Sunday, we stayed at the home of Rawiy Servani in Sepandara. After the meal, we set out before dawn. Along the way, I separated from the group under a pretext and rode alone until I reached a village near Agra, where the others joined me later.” (p. 232)

These moments of solitude offered Bobur a reprieve from the constant turmoil of ruling, allowing his thoughts to clear and his spirit to rejuvenate. Literary



scholar Ibrahim Gafurov aptly describes this aspect of Bobur:

“There is a precious and sacred gem within Bobur’s heart that never fades. No matter the circumstances, he always urges himself toward goodness. His goodness manifests in courage, justice, and sincerity. Because he constantly strives for goodness, no hardship frightens him or makes him retreat. He never succumbs to hopelessness.”

Bobur's profound sense of gratitude and contentment shaped his worldview. This attitude enabled him to recognize goodness in every situation and acknowledge it sincerely. For example, during his retreat through Dizak (Jizzakh), despite the hunger and hardships, Bobur expressed deep gratitude for the hospitality shown to him and his companions:

“There was an abundance of good lamb meat, delicious bread, sweet melons, and fine grapes. After such prolonged hardship and hunger, we found peace and safety here. The specter of death disappeared, and hunger no longer tormented the people. We had not experienced such comfort in our lives.” (p. 86)

This passage not only reflects Bobur’s ability to appreciate kindness and generosity but also provides insight into the agricultural and economic prosperity of Jizzakh during the 15th century. Known for its advanced horticulture, livestock breeding, and trade,

Jizzakh was already a flourishing hub during Bobur's time.

Five centuries later, the international expedition “In the Footsteps of Bobur” passed through Jizzakh, following the path of the great ruler. Expedition member and writer Qamchibek Kenja recorded his impressions:

“The serene beauty of nature, the crisp air... The hills were lush and green, as if spring had arrived, though it was December. Yet, as if to remind us that winter was still here, snow-covered peaks suddenly came into view. After descending from Bakmalsay, on both sides of the road, apples of various colors—yellow, blue, and brilliant red—were carefully displayed for sale in wooden crates. Even those with no intention to buy couldn’t resist admiring them. ‘Heavenly apples,’ remarked Muhammad Sodiq (a member of the expedition), expressing his admiration.”

The fertile soil and fresh produce that delighted the expedition members are the same gifts that astonished Bobur five centuries earlier. In Baburnama, alongside the “pears of Andijan,” the “pomegranates and apricots of Margilan,” and the “plums of Bukhara,” the “sweet melons and fine grapes of Jizzakh” receive special mention, showcasing Bobur’s habit of recognizing and valuing goodness wherever he found it.



One particularly intense narrative in Baburnama describes Bobur's journey through the snow-covered peaks of the Hindu Kush mountains. Much like the harrowing events of Karnal, the passage evokes great tension and anxiety. Here, we see Bobur not as an exalted ruler but as a tireless traveler, enduring the same hardships as his men. During a severe winter storm, with snow so deep that even the horses struggled to move, Bobur and his loyal entourage pressed on. Many suffered frostbite, and Bobur himself was afflicted with an ear infection that troubled him for the rest of his life.

Despite these difficulties, Bobur's unwavering gratitude shines through. Guided by the principle "Nothing happens except by the will of the Almighty," he sought meaning and wisdom in every hardship:

"Although the heavy snow caused us great distress for several days, it ultimately enabled us to reach our destination. Without it, we would not have made it across the treacherous cliffs, and our horses and provisions would have been lost."

"Every hardship, when examined closely, holds a hidden blessing," Bobur writes, displaying his resilience and ability to find goodness in every challenge.

Even during the most perilous moments, Bobur maintained his commitment to goodness and sought to bring kindness to all he encountered. His courage,

tenacity, and devotion to noble ideals earned him the rewards of life itself. As the Indian historian Muni Lal aptly put it:

"He (Bobur) achieved everything with courage and integrity. On the foundation of his greatest defeats, he built his greatest victories."

Bobur's enduring legacy as a ruler, poet, and human being continues to inspire, reminding us of the transformative power of kindness and perseverance.

The foundation of the victory Bobur Mirzo built was rooted in goodness, while the mortar binding the bricks of his triumph was the acknowledgment, encouragement, and example of that goodness. Like a great warrior returning from battle, Bobur Mirzo and his companions, weary from hunger, cold, and exhaustion, found solace and hospitality in the village of Yakka Olang. This small, generous village, nestled in the foothills of the majestic Hindu Kush mountains, is one of the two places after Dizak (modern Jizzakh) that Baburnama commemorates with deep gratitude.

Bobur Mirzo expresses his heartfelt appreciation for the hospitality extended to him:

"When we arrived in Yakka Olang, word spread quickly. Warm houses, fat sheep, abundant grass for the horses, and limitless firewood and dung for fuel awaited us. Finding such comfort and nourishment



after cold, hardship, and hunger is a relief known only to those who have experienced such trials.” (p. 148)

Through Baburnama, this remote village has gained recognition worldwide.

Bobur's Affection for Kabul

One of the regions Bobur cherished most was Kabul. It was here that he realized many of the dreams that had remained unfulfilled in his homeland. Kabul became the cradle of his creativity, governance, and architectural endeavors. Bobur did not enter Kabul as a conqueror but as a responsible and just ruler committed to improving the socio-economic and cultural well-being of the region.

He united fragmented territories into an independent state, established a standing army, and built remarkable gardens such as the “Garden of Shahr Ara,” “Garden of Jahān Ara,” “Central Garden,” and “Garden of Nawrozi.” These achievements earned Bobur great respect not only in Afghanistan but throughout Khorasan and Transoxiana.

Bobur restored and expanded the Bala Hissar fortress, making it his royal residence. Reflecting on the importance of this moment, he wrote:

“Until now, they referred to the descendants of Timur as ‘Mirza,’ despite their royal lineage. But I gave the order that they should call me ‘Padishah.’”

During his time in Kabul, Bobur also experienced a profound personal joy—the birth of his son Humayun in 1508. After the loss of his first daughter, born to Aisha Sultan Begum, Bobur had longed for a child, and this wish was fulfilled in Kabul. As Gulbadan Begum notes in Humayun-nama:

“All the children of Babur were born in Kabul, except for those born in Khust: Mehrjang Begum from Mohimbegim and Gulrang Begum from Dildor Begim.”

Thus, Kabul was not only the center of Bobur’s political success but also the place where his personal dreams came to life.

The Strategic Importance of Kabul

Bobur strengthened his influence in Kabul to lay the groundwork for his conquest of India. As noted in Muzakkir-i Ahbab:

“According to Indian belief, no one can become the true ruler of India without first capturing Kabul.”

With this in mind, Bobur made Kabul the starting point of his Indian campaign. His mastery over the region was instrumental in establishing a powerful empire in India.

Bobur’s Legacy and Governance in India

After conquering India, Bobur implemented a governance model based on Timurid principles. Indian historian Sharma writes:

“In the medieval period, only a powerful ruler was considered a good governor. India could only flourish under strong and effective administration. For centuries, the Rajputs, Turks, and Afghans attempted to establish empires and monarchies, but none succeeded. Only Babur managed to establish a dynasty of capable rulers and build a vast empire. He fought three decisive battles—at Panipat, Khanwa, and Ghogra—and won them all, laying the foundation for Timurid rule in India.”

While focusing on the prosperity of India, Bobur never forgot Kabul. From afar, he monitored the construction of mosques, caravanserais, and dams, issued instructions for repairs, and ensured water supply to barren lands.

In a letter to his son Humayun, Bobur highlighted the importance of Kabul:

“Kabul has been the site of many victories. I kept it under my control and made it my own. None of you should have any desire for it.” (p. 244)

Bobur’s deep affection for Kabul is also evident in his correspondence with Khwaja Kalon:

“I have kept Kabul for myself. None of the princes should covet it... My attachment to Kabul is boundless. If the affairs of India stabilize, with the grace of the Almighty, I will immediately set my sights on Kabul. How can one forget the charm of those lands?” (p. 249)

Bobur’s attachment to Kabul was so profound that his family, including his young wife Bibi Muborika, arranged for his remains to be moved there after his death. Although some historians argue that Bobur did not leave a written will, his longing for Kabul, frequently expressed in Baburnama, likely inspired his family’s decision.

The Final Years of Bobur’s Life

During his last days, Bobur focused on securing the future of his dynasty. On his deathbed, he arranged marriages for his daughters Gulrang and Gulchehra Begum and entrusted the throne to his son Humayun. Yet, despite his deep connection to Kabul, Bobur made no explicit mention of being buried there. As historian Vahob Rahmon points out:

“There is no historical evidence of Babur writing a will requesting to be buried in Kabul. Even Gulbadan Begum, his daughter, does not mention this in Humayun-nama.”

It is likely that Bobur refrained from making such a request to avoid unsettling his followers, who had reluctantly settled in India’s unfamiliar climate. Instead, he focused on unifying the people and stabilizing his new empire.

In keeping with his philosophy, Bobur believed:

“Even when things seem unfavorable, they often contain hidden benefits.”



This unwavering optimism and commitment to goodness defined Bobur's life and legacy. No hardship could deter him, and his actions were always guided by his inner conviction to do good for others. Muni Lal, an Indian historian, summarized Bobur's life beautifully:

“He (Babur) achieved everything with courage and honesty. Upon the foundation of his greatest defeats, he built his greatest victories.”

Bobur's ability to recognize, encourage, and practice goodness was the cornerstone of his empire. His triumphs, from Kabul to India, were not just military or political achievements but victories of the spirit, built on the values of kindness, perseverance, and gratitude.

After Humayun's defeat by Sher Shah Suri and his forced departure from India, there was a concern that the tomb of the late emperor could be desecrated. Thanks to the courage and resourcefulness of Bibi Muborika, Bobur Mirzo's remains were relocated in 1540 to Kabul, to the Garden of Nawrozi, where his mother, Qutluq Nigar Khanum, had been buried. For eternity, Bobur Mirzo rests in Kabul—his second homeland, the cradle of his dreams, and the guardian of his children—facing the winds blowing from Transoxiana, his birthplace.

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