

Dara Shukoh'S Writings (Download PDF)

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Dara Shukoh, also known as Dara Shikoh (20 March 1615 – 30 August 1659), was the eldest son and heir-apparent of the fifth Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. The Vice President of India, said that Prince Dara Shukoh's writings can come as a refreshing source for infusing peace and harmony.



Image of Dara Shikoh

Who is Dara Shukoh?

- Dara Shukoh was favoured as a successor by his father, Shah Jahan, and his older sister, Princess Jahanara Begum, but was defeated and later killed by his younger brother, Prince Muhiuddin (later, the Emperor Aurangzeb), in a bitter struggle for the imperial throne.
- When he was 12, his grandfather, Emperor Jahangir, died, and his father succeeded as emperor
- Aurangzeb, sibling of Dara Shukoh became the sixth Mughal Emperor.

Dara Shukoh Introduced to the Military Service

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- As was common for all Mughal sons, Dara Shukoh was appointed as a military commander at an early age.
- As his father's health began to decline, Dara Shukoh received a series of increasingly prominent commands.

He was appointed Governor of Multan and Kabul on 16 August 1652, and was raised to the title of Shah-e-Buland Iqbal ("King of High Fortune") on 15 February 1655.

Struggle for Succession

- On 6 September 1657, the illness of emperor Shah Jahan triggered a desperate struggle for power among the four Mughal princes, though realistically only Dara Shukoh and Aurangzeb had a chance of emerging victorious.
- At the end of 1657, Dara Shukoh was appointed Governor of the province of Bihar and promoted to command of 60, 000 infantry and 40, 000 cavalry.
- Despite strong support from Shah Jahan, Dara Shukoh was defeated by Aurangzeb and Murad during the Battle of Samugarh, 13 km from Agra on 30 May 1658. Subsequently Aurangzeb took over Agra fort and deposed emperor Shah Jahan on 8 June 1658

Death and Aftermath

- After the defeat, Dara Shukoh retreated from Agra to Delhi and thence to Lahore.
- He moved towards north and then with the help of few rulers occupied Surat and advanced towards Ajmer and with the help of Rajput tried to conquer again, but was again defeated by Aurangzeb.
- After this defeat, he fled to Sindh and sought refuge under Malik Jiwan (Junaid Khan Barozai), an Afghan chieftain, whose life had on more than one occasion been saved by the Mughal prince from the wrath of Shah Jahan.
- The treacherous Junaid betrayed Dara Shukoh and turned him (and his second son Sipihr Shukoh) over to Aurangzeb's army on 10 June 1659.
- Dara Shukoh's was a prince popular with the common people.
- He was assassinated by four of Aurangzeb's henchmen on the night of 30 August 1659. After death the remains of Dara Shukoh were buried in an unidentified grave in Humayan's tomb in Delhi.

Dara Shukoh's Contribution to Religion and Peace

- Dara Shukoh is widely renowned as an enlightened paragon of the harmonious coexistence of heterodox traditions on the Indian subcontinent.

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- He was an erudite champion of mystical religious speculation and a poetic diviner of syncretic cultural interaction among people of all faiths.
- Dara Shukoh was a follower of the Persian “perennialist” mystic Sarmad Kashani, as well as Lahore’s famous Qadiri Sufi saint Hazrat Mian Mir.
- Dara Shukoh devoted much effort towards finding a common mystical language between Islam and Hinduism.
- He completed the translation of fifty Upanishads from their original Sanskrit into Persian in 1657 (Sirr-e-Akbar) so that they could be studied by Muslim scholars.
- His most famous work, Majma-ul-Bahrain (“The Confluence of the Two Seas”), was also devoted to a revelation of the mystical and pluralistic affinities between Sufic and Vedantic speculation.
- The library established by Dara Shukoh still exists on the grounds of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi, and is now run as a museum by Archaeological Survey of India after being renovated.
- He was also a patron of fine arts, music, and dancing. The ‘Dara Shikoh’ is a collection of paintings and calligraphy assembled from the 1630s until his death.
- Among the existing paintings contains pictures about Hindus as well as Muslims. The albums reflect Dara Shikoh’s interest in religion and philosophy.

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