**The World in 1750 1 - The Mughal and Ottoman Empires 1**

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| **Aim:**  | **Date:** |
| **Key Words:****1.****2.** |  |

**A. The Mughal Empire**

The Mughal Empire was an empire that at its greatest territorial extent ruled parts of modern day Pakistan and most of the Indian Subcontinent between 1526 and 1857. The empire was founded by the Mongol leader [Babur](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Babur) in 1526. The Mughal ruling class was [Muslim](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Islam), although many of the subjects of the empire were Hindu and also [Sikh](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Sikhism). When [Babur](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Babur) first founded the empire, he did not emphasize his religion, but rather his [Mongol](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Mongol) heritage.  The empire he founded was a sophisticated civilization based on religious toleration.  Under Babur, Hinduism was tolerated and new Hindu temples were built with his permission.

The third Emperor, Abu Akbar also referred to as "Akbar the Great” is regarded as one of the great rulers of all time. He was an absolute ruler who was interested in all beliefs and believed in religious tolerance at a time when religious persecution was common throughout Europe and Asia. Therefore, he abolished the jizya, a tax paid by non-Muslims in return for religious liberty.  Akbar's government included many Hindus who were allowed to reach senior government or military positions of responsibility. Akbar established the mansabdar system to generate land revenue and control the empire. The emperor would give the mansabdar (a military officer) the right to tax the people in the area they managed in exchange for promises of soldiers in wartime. Because the power of the mansabdar was not permanent and the Emperor still maintained significant control over the large empire.

By 1707, when the last great Mughal Emperor died, the empire had begun to decline. Aurangzeb was a very observant and religious Muslim and he imposed Islamic law over the whole empire.  As a result, all non-Muslims were no longer allowed to live under their own laws and customs. Thousands of Hindu temples and shrines were torn down and *jizya,* the tax which had been previously abolished by Abu Akbar, was re-imposed.  The intolerance towards non-Muslims led to rebellion throughout the empire and the Mansabdar system was no longer effective in maintaining control.

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| *Ruler* | *Religious Policy (Give 2)* | *What was the purpose in treating religious groups this way?* |
| Babur |  |  |
| Akbar the Great |  |  |
| Aurangzeb |  |  |

**B. The Ottoman Empire**

The Ottoman Empire was the one of the largest and longest lasting empires in history (1299–1920). At its peak, it included: modern-day Turkey, Egypt, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Hungary, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, parts of Arabia, and much of the coastal strip of North Africa.

Because the Ottoman Empire spanned three continents, the population of the empire included non-Muslims such as Jews and Christians.  These non-Muslim communities were organized according to the millet system*.*  The millet system gave non-Muslim groups a limited amount of power to regulate their own affairs.  Some millet groups were required to pay a  jizya tax in return for protection and the right to practice their religion.  Each millet was under the supervision of a leader, most often a religious patriarch, who reported directly to the Ottoman Sultan. The millets had a great deal of power—they set their own laws and collected and distributed their own taxes. In return, the empire insisted that the millets remain loyal.

Ottoman state organization was based on a hierarchy with the sultan (ruler) who was a Caliph (Islamic leader) at the top.  The primary responsibility of the sultan was to ensure that justice was served. A body called the *Diwan* advised the sultan. Public opinion was regarded as important and the Ottomans made some use of polls to ascertain the popular will. All laws and taxes were posted in public so that the people knew their content. Provinces were originally governed by designated local military leaders, who often acquired large landholdings and passed the position on to their offspring. Provinces were subdivided into smaller units*.* The leaders of the millets collected taxes and oversaw their community’s legal systems. At times, the millet leaders and the sultan's representatives worked closely together, but sometimes clashed.

*How were non-Muslim communities organized?*

*What effect could this system have on maintaining control?*

*Why were laws publicly posted? What impact might this have on maintaining control and stability?*