

The companions of the king, who are ornaments of the court by the light of their wisdom, the ray of their sharp-sightedness their knowledge of the times, their intimate acquaintance with human nature, their frankness and polite address. Through the excellence of their religious faith and good-will thousands open in the market place of the world the stores of virtue. Wisely fettering ambition of the battle field of the world, they extinguish the spark of wrath by the rain of their wisdom ; whence they resemble water, in the affairs of political body. When they are of mild temperament, they remove the dust of affliction from the hearts of men : but if they depart from moderation, they inundate the world with a deluge of calamity.

The servants, who at court perform the duties about the king. They occupy, in the system of state, the position of earth. As such they lie on the high road of submission and in dust before the majesty of the king. If free from chaff and dross, they are like an elixir for the body, otherwise they are dust and dirt upon the face of success.¹⁹

The Four-fold Constituent of the Political Body :

Abul Fazl divided the people of the state into four categories on the basis of their professions. The first he called warriors, who in the political body have the nature of *fire*. Their flame directed by understanding, consume the straw and rubbish of rebellion and strife and kindle the lamp of rest in this world of disturbance. The second category consisted of artificers and merchants who hold the place of *air*. Through their labours and travels God's gifts become universal, and the breeze of contentment nourishes the rose tree of life. The third group consisted of the learned such as the philosopher, the physician, the arithmetician, the geometer, the astronomer, who hold the place of *water*. From their pen and their wisdom a river flows in the draught of the world, and the garden of the universe receives from their

19. *ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

irrigating powers a peculiar freshness. The fourth class was of husbandmen and labourers who may be compared to *earth*. By their efforts the staple of life is brought to perfection, and strength and happiness flow from their work.²⁰

The above observation of Abul Fazl indicates that to him the state was like an organic body and like the organic body it is also composed of four elements all of which were equally important for the maintenance of the body. By this comparison he successfully brings out the equality of all the professions because all the four elements were necessary and none of the three could exist in the absence of the fourth. It was in the harmonious blending of these elements that the health of the state could be maintained. This four-fold division of the body political, according to him could be maintained in proper balance by the monarch alone for he says "It is obligatory for a king to put each of these in its proper place, and by uniting personal ability with due respect for others, to cause the world to flourish"²¹

Abul Fazl considered Akbar as his ideal monarch in whom he discovered all the requisites of a just and true king which according to him, was sufficient proof of the divine origin of his monarch. "Praise be to God," writes Abul Fazl, "The exalted monarch of our time is so endowed with these laudable dispositions, that it is no exaggeration to call him their exordium. From the light of his wisdom, he discerns the worth of men, and kindles the lamp of their energy; whilst ever clear to himself, and without an effort, he adorns his wisdom with the beauty of practice."²²

By granting him complete authority over every section and type of people and by tracing divine attributes, Abul Fazl certainly made his monarch a despot. But such a thing as undiluted autocracy could not have existed. Being conscious

20. *ibid.*, p. 4.

21. *ibid.*, p. 4.

22. *ibid.*, p. 9.

of this fact, he laid great stress on the recognition of the spirit of the age by the king. At one place he said, "In his wisdom the king will understand the spirit of the age and shape his plans accordingly." Besides, Abul Fazl never intended his ideal monarch to be sectarian in his views and in general conduct of the state business. He said that in spite of all the requisite qualities the king could not be fit for the lofty office if he did not inaugurate universal peace, and did not treat all conditions of humanity and all sects of religion with single eye of favour, and "not be mother to one and be step-mother to others."²³

Limited kingship was something beyond the conception of Abul Fazl, for he argued that all were not competent to give advice or even to participate in deliberations. Being a shadow of God the king received light directly from him. He feared Him alone and trusted Him alone. On earth the king was supreme in his sphere, His power as a ruler was absolute and indivisible, because according to Abul Fazl, "ascetic and sages and politicians who have regard to the repose of mortals regarded that repose bound up with one ruler, one rule one guide, one aim and one thought."²⁴

Was Abul Fazl's Conception Anti-Islamic

It is a well known fact that Hindu writers, chief among among them being Manu, attributed divinity to the king. The early Muslims could never have thought of acknowledging divine element in any man. In theory even the Khalifa existed by virtue of the will of the Muslims people. But according to Abul Fazl, the monarch enjoyed his position because of divine will. Hence the greatness and the right to rule was inherent in a monarch. Thus Abul Fazl's theory was autocratic whereas Islamic theory conceived of democracy. The object of the Khalifa was to propagate the gospel of the Prophet Muhammad, but Abul Fazl's monarch was to main-

23. *Akbar Nama*, II (Tr.) p. 421.

24. *ibid.*, III, (Tr.), p. 6.

tain goodwill, concord and peace among the different religions and creeds that existed in his dominions. The Khalifa was to maintain the eternal difference between the Muslims and the non-Muslims but Abul Fazl's Monarch was to place them on the same footing not be mother to one and be step-mother to the other. Abul Fazl's monarch was the head of a political body and not merely a leader of an active and conscious missionary political society. Apparently these differences may look like anti-Islamic, but truly speaking they were not. Islam as preached by the Prophet was not as conservative, sectarian and narrow in its out look as it was later interpreted by the Ulama and the jurists who had their own axe to grind through these interpretations. Abul Fazl spoke of "hatred of sequacity (*taqlid*) as one of the essentials of monarchy. "Let the love of inquiry always precede his actions, and the cult of proof be his method so that he may not be moved from his course by perceiving the view of a multitude, and may not by altercation be made impatient of research." Such a statement of Abul Fazl led Ibn Hasan and Tripathi to conclude that Abul Fazl's monarch was above the religious law. "Thus Abul Fazl's monarch," says Ibn Hasan, "should take no notice of religious. He should act as time demands. He must follow inquiry and not be led by authority. Thus both Islamic law and Hadis cease to be the code of his government,"²⁵

Similarly, Dr Tripathi says, "In place of the religious law of the Muslims, Abul Fazl puts the divine will which manifests itself in the institutions of the King. The one believes in the law as laid down by the Quran and the Hadis and other sources, the other puts its faith in the law of God as a true sovereign understands it."²⁶

However, with due deference to these two learned scholars one may point out that Akbar never acted in direct contradiction of any injunction laid down in Quranic Law. The

25. Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, p. 61.

26. R. P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 138.

declaration of the Metzhar did not give an authority which was superior to the Quran and Hadis. What Abul Fazl actually aimed at was that the monarch should not allow himself to be dominated by the Ulama who professed to exercise authority. Truly speaking, Abul Fazl had understood the true spirit of the Islamic law and religion and was opposed to those things which were being practised in the name of religion. So far the divine element is concerned, it had entered into Islam long before Abul Fazl came with his theory. During the later Abbasids, when the temporal power of the Khalifa had declined, they tried to compensate for the loss in the temporal power by assuming high sounding religious titles. In those days of decadence the Khalifa was called the 'Viceroy of God' and the 'Shadow of God on Earth', etc. Since then it became a fashion to apply the above epithets to powerful kings and emperors. Thus, in Abul Fazl's theory, there was hardly anything offensive to the Muslims in general except of course to a few orthodox Sunni Ulama. Strictly speaking in Abul Fazl's concept of sovereignty, the three streams, the Mughal, the Muslim and the Hindu, had mingled into single channel.