H. N. SINHA

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN POLITY

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H. N. SINHA
M.A. (ALLD.), PH.D. (LOND.)

University Professor of History and Dean, Faculty of Arts
Jabalpur University

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TO

MY REVERED TEACHER

PROF. ISHWARI PRASAD
M.A., D. LITT. (ALLD.)

PREFACE

I HAVE been long thinking of writing a book that would trace the evolution of Indian polity from the earliest times to the present day. I got the idea from the famous work of Sidgwick—*The Development of European Polity*. I found that while separate and isolated studies of Indian polity in the ancient, medieval and modern periods have been undertaken, there is no work that surveys the continuity and development of political institutions, theories and traditions through all those periods. This has been attempted in this work.

I feel that our great endeavours today to build up a new India, particularly in the sphere of polity, must be related to the experiences of our past. That may give us some guidance and some pitfalls may be avoided. We cannot see clearly through the complexities of today nor can we look intelligently forward to tomorrow unless we can view them both in some perspective of continuity with what has gone before. At all turning points of history as our present is, it is fitting to pause, if only for a moment, to look back at the path we have traversed so far, before setting foot on the new way. We are already on the new way—Parliamentary Democracy borrowed from the West. How far this can be adjusted to our life and character, and how far this can be grafted on our political traditions and institutions which are the legacies of our past, are matters for study and understanding. That may help us on our new way. With this purpose in view the work has been undertaken.

It has got two parts. The first part entitled Indo-Aryan Polity surveys the evolution of the State in ancient India. It is practically the same as my earlier work *Sovereignty in Ancient Indian Polity* which is not available now. The second part entitled Indo-Islamic Polity surveys the evolution of the State in medieval India. The study follows the same lines in both the parts and seeks to trace the political growth and discover the affinities and continuity of political traditions and institutions during these two periods of Indian History, covering more than 3000 years. I do not know how far that has been done successfully. That will be assessed by competent scholars. At any rate I thought that an attempt should be made to visualise the evolution of Indian polity as a single continuous

process. So far as this work goes, the task is half done. Unless the modern period is covered the process of evolution cannot be studied fully. I am, therefore, planning to write a third part that would survey the evolution of the State in modern India. I do not know when that will be possible ; for in writing these two parts there has been a considerable interval. While the first part was written in London for the Ph.D. degree of London University in 1935, the second part took shape out of my lectures delivered to the post-graduate classes of the Chicago University, U.S.A. in 1954.

In the book occur many Vedic, Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian words, and also quotations. I have taken care about their correct transliteration but it has not been possible to be uniform in spelling and use diacritical marks everywhere.

In the preparation of the work I have had the assistance of a number of friendly scholars. They have helped me particularly by explaining references to the original texts in Persian and Arabic for which I am beholden to them. The Librarian of the Chicago University Library and Professor Walter Johnson, Head of the Department of History, Chicago University, were extremely generous in giving me access to their Libraries. I hereby offer my grateful thanks to them. Lastly, I shall be failing in my duty if I did not refer to the help my wife has rendered to me in various ways during the preparation of the book.

H. N. SINHA

Jabalpur
November 30, 1962

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PART I

INDO-ARYAN POLITY

A STUDY IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE STATE IN INDIA FROM 1400 B. C. TO A. D. 700

CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF INDO-ARYAN POLITY

RIG VEDIC SOCIETY, STATE AND KINGSHIP

OUR study of Indo-Aryan polity has to start with the coming of the Indo-Aryans. They entered India about 1600–1400 B.C. They brought with them a tribal organization, a cult of fire sacrifice and a concept of cosmic order. Their tribal organization based on Viś and Jana was, in their new habitat, slowly transformed into a territorial organization comprising Grāma and Rāṣṭra. Their cult of fire sacrifice or Yajña in honour of their gods required for its performance the services of experts called the priests. Their concept of cosmic order or the Ṛg Vedic Ṛta consisted in the idea that an order or system was inherent in physical phenomena. It was their gods who were instrumental in preserving this cosmic order, and therefore they merited offerings in the shape of fire sacrifice. This cult of fire sacrifice was, in the Sapta Sindhu habitat much elaborated. New gods representing the deified forces of nature sprang up for whose worship a ritual was slowly evolved and the services of increasing number of priests were needed. Thus in course of time a religion of sacrifice came into being and along with it a class of priests.

The Indo-Aryan society as depicted in the Ṛg Veda was patriarchal, and therefore the government of the Rāṣṭra was monarchical. But kingship was generally elective, though it tended to become hereditary with the passage of time. There were two popular bodies called the Samiti or tribal assembly and the Sabhā, the council of elders and powerful men who perhaps chose the king and helped him in times of need. The king could claim no regular tribute from the people except what the latter were pleased to offer. And since the king was chosen, he could be deposed also. But nevertheless, the power of the king was visibly increasing owing to the frequency of war between the Indo-Aryans and the original inhabitants as also between the various tribes of Indo-Aryans themselves. Indeed the kings were often successful leaders in war. That enhanced the

importance of kings and their soldiers. They must have, in course of time, become an organized body — the faint beginnings of a class of warriors and rulers — the Rājanyas.

But frequent warfare enhanced the importance of sacrifice also. Since the assistance of gods helped them in winning wars, they had to be invoked by sacrifices as frequently also ; and for that purpose the services of priests had to be requisitioned. Therefore, the importance of a class of persons who were adept in the performance of sacrifices was increasingly realized. Indo-Aryan society was slowly developing organized classes who took to certain vocations. After centuries of stay in the Punjab the Indo-Aryans began, perhaps owing to the pressure of growing population, to spread out into the rolling plains of the Ganges and the Jumna.

With the spread of the Indo-Aryans into the Gangetic plain the size of states grew immensely. Warfare was not only more strenuous but far more frequent than in the Punjab. These two factors — (*a*) extensive states and (*b*) frequency of warfare, gave rise to new social and political developments. Society began to differentiate on the lines of functions. As warfare became frequent and strenuous, greater specialization in the art of fighting was a necessity. The nebulous class of warriors gradually rigidified into a caste of Kṣatriyas. Similarly did the caste of Brāhmaṇs arise. And as their services were increasingly appreciated for victory in war a complicated ritual also arose. They were regarded as even superior to gods for they could by their power, that is, by their rites and prayers win favours from gods. The performance of sacrifices often took months and years, and the services of numerous priests were required. Greater specialization was therefore necessary and that helped the class of priests of the previous age to become organized more solidly into a caste of priests. Again with the conquests of vast areas in the fertile valleys of the Ganges and the Jumna, and with the growing needs of society, agriculture and other arts and industries came to be widely and efficiently practised. Specialization in these arts and crafts led to the rise of the new caste of the Vaiśyas out of the nebulous classes that existed before and followed similar professions. Lastly from amongst the non-Aryans who were conquered and enslaved, or chose to accept the cult of the Aryans by peaceful submission, a fourth caste, viz. the Śūdras arose. Thus arose the four orders of the society.

EXTENSIVE KINGDOMS AND KINGSHIP UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF RELIGION

Side by side proceeded the development of the state also. With the rise of extensive states the material resources and military power of the king grew immensely. His office from being elective gradually became hereditary; and with hereditary kingship the early Vedic popular bodies became anomalous. Rājasabhā and Mantri Pariṣad took the place of the Samiti and Sabhā. Indeed the Mantri Pariṣad — a council of ministers, became the most important body since it was composed of the chief officers of the king. The existence of these officers is a sure indication of the differentiation of the functions of the state, and of the growing prestige of the king. He is now called the "guardian of law" and the symbol of "lordly power," i.e. sovereignty. Further his authority now receives religious sanction. Kingship which was a secular institution in the past, i.e. early Vedic period, is transformed into a religious institution. For, it was not an office that arose out of temporal needs or exercised an authority that was secular in character. It arose, according to the Śatapatha and Aitaréya Brāhmaṇas to fight the demons who were the enemies of sacrifice. The royal authority therefore existed not for its own sake, that is, to rule the people only, but to uphold the sacred law; and the sacred law consisted in the observance of rites and obligations prescribed for each of the four orders of society. These rites and obligations, were, to begin with, not all of them sacred, that is, connected with Vedic worship. Many of them were of popular origin.

With the passage of time, and as the Indo-Aryans were spreading out, they were possibly forgetting their ancient customs and usage, rites and ceremonies. That was because they came into contact with new peoples, their cults, and customs and manners. The Indo-Aryans dreaded nothing more than losing their Ārya (Aryan) colour, the cult of sacrifice and customs. That was why great efforts were made to compile, explain, and elaborate their rites and ceremonies, customs and usage into convenient codes, so that they might not be forgotten and lost. In this matter the usage and customs prevailing in the eternal Middle country — Dhruvāyāṃ Madhyamāyāṃ diśi — the Brahmāvarta, were taken as the norm. Everything that once belonged to the Indo-Aryans was considered as sacred. Popular

pastimes, religious rites, social institutions, customary laws, traditions, royal coronation, etc. all had their values transformed. Partly because of the dread of losing their Ārya colour and cult, and partly because of the human instinct of clinging to past customs and traditions they developed a ritualism which became the religion and its observance, the sacred law of the people. That was Brāhmaṇism. And kingship itself was affiliated to and had its functions determined by it. In practical reference the religious affiliation of kingship meant the imposition of religious tutelage on kingship. The king had to do what the religion or the priesthood tutored him to do.

KINGSHIP RELEASED FROM TUTELAGE OF RELIGION

From this condition of tutelage Brāhmaṇic kingship slowly emerged to assert itself, when instead of being influenced by religion, it began to exercise its authority over religion. That was with the rise of Buddhism and Jainism. These heretical creeds had little respect for the scheme of Brāhmaṇic society based on birth, for ritualism and priesthood. Indeed they arose as a protest against these. The founders and followers of Buddhism and Jainism appealed to the king for support. In this appeal there was no religious direction. The support of the king was courted in order that the new religion might spread among the people, and as these religions began to spread, the hold of Brāhmaṇism and the domination of the priests were gradually weakened. The hold of Brāhmaṇism was also undermined by the spread of the doctrines of the Cārvākas and the philosophical systems called the Upaniṣads. On the whole there was a ferment of thought throughout the country and its tendency was to probe into, and question the rationale of, the ritualism that was the faith of the people. Thus when Brāhmaṇic ritualism failed to satisfy the thoughtful people and its adequacy was questioned, the ground had been prepared for a new order of things. In this new order the king could assert himself and through him the state.

There was another factor that helped the self-assertion of the king. The Brāhmans realized the value of royal support. They found that the spread of heretic faith undermined the prestige of Brāhmaṇic ritualism. And their panic was great when within the four castes there arose, as a result of forbidden marriages, new classes of people, who could not be accommodated without relaxing the laws

of society. Brāhmaṇism strove to induce the king to maintain the four orders of society and the prescribed duties of each intact by his power. To counteract the influence of heresies Brāhmaṇic ritual codes were now divided into three distinct categories comprising short formulas for the performance of various social obligations. They were called the Śrauta, Gṛhya, and Dharma sūtras, i.e. in one word Kalpa Sūtras. They sought again to preserve the Vedic religion which was threatened with destruction by the heretical faiths. The Dharma Sūtras, which were the first law codes and were an undifferentiated mass of religious, ethical and secular elements in public conduct, contained rulings for the guidance of the king and his government. Indeed these constituted the public or customary law which was grounded on religion.

But on the whole kingship was gaining power and prestige. When Brāhmaṇism looked upon the king as the sole saviour of social order and sacred law, and when Jainism and Buddhism courted his support, the importance of the king in the scheme of society was undoubted. To this had been added the growth of the material resources, military power, and governmental organization of the king. Meanwhile there had arisen many important states in Northern India like Aṅga, Magadha, Avantī, Kāśī, Kosala, etc. and they fought for supremacy. It was Magadha that emerged triumphant out of the struggle for supremacy in the fifth century B.C. Magadha was also among the foremost to help Buddhism in its struggle for existence.

MAURYA EMPIRE ESTABLISHES ASCENDANCY OF MONARCHY

The foundation of the Maurya dynasty in the fourth century B.C. resulted in the foundation of the first historical empire in India. The empire was only a logical outcome of the struggle for supremacy between the kingdoms of Northern India. And Candra Gupta, who is said to have organized it, had leanings towards Jainism, while Aśoka, under whom the empire reached its highest extent and power, was a thorough-going Buddhist. Aśoka sought to live the life of an ideal king. With the Brāhmaṇic tradition of maintaining the social orders and sacred laws, he found that in a country where law, i.e. Dharma Sūtra based on the recognition of caste principles and supremacy of the Brahmins regulated life, the existence of

Buddhists and Jains created administrative difficulties. In order that their social and religious needs be recognized, religious tolerance was the first requisite. By religious tolerance the Buddhists and Jains could freely follow their own religion and ways of life, and could be governed by their own customary and secular laws. But Aśoka soon realized that in these two aspects of religious tolerance his active interference was necessary. As regards the first, he observed that people found fault with and spoke ill of each others' religion, that Śramaṇas and Brāhmaṇas were not properly treated, that the elders were not respected. That was not desirable conduct which would be conducive to the common good. He therefore thought that he could regulate by his power the conduct of all his people. He drew up his commandments and sought them to be enforced by elaborate administrative arrangements. As for the second part, that is, in regard to allowing the customary laws of various sections of people, the Brahmins, the Buddhists and the Jains to obtain, Aśoka had not to worry much. From time immemorial, the customary and local laws had a binding force. The Brāhmaṇic law codes ruled to this effect also. Āpastamba said that customary laws of the countries and families[1] have to be respected and that the laws of countries must prevail.[2] Aśoka in conformity with this tradition, had only to rule that customary laws of the heretics or sects other than the followers of Brāhmaṇism must prevail. That is why he commanded his Rājukas in charge of the rural areas that "there should be both impartiality in judicial proceedings and impartiality in punishment."[3] He wanted "that all should listen and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others."[4] He had his Dharma Mahāmātras — Ecclesiastical officers, to enforce that. He thus maintained "concord" among all the sections of his people. His meaning was clear when he said "My highest duty is indeed the promotion of the good of all . . . . There is no higher work than the promotion of the common weal."[5]

If the promotion of the "common weal" and "concord among sections" was his ideal, he had to guarantee conditions so that the various sections of his people could practise freely their own religion, and follow their own laws. And since this could be accomplished only

[1] Etena deśa-kula-dharma vyākhyātaḥ — ii, 15, 1.
[2] Tatra tatra deśa prāmāṇyameva syāt. I, 1, 2, 6.
[3] Delhi Topra P.E. iv. [4] Girnar R.E. xii. [5] *Ibid.*, vi.

by a fiat of his power, by overruling the claims of Brāhmaṇism or of any one creed, Aśoka controlled to some extent the religious life of the people. To that end he sought to regulate their moral conduct, and pronounced the performance of certain ceremonies to be good or otherwise. Thus in and through the personality of Aśoka, the institution of kingship asserted itself, and became the custodian of the common good of the people and not merely the protector of sacred law. The competence of kingship thus increased immensely.

A NEW IDEAL OF KINGSHIP

This ideal of kingship was soon accepted by Brāhmaṇism also. It is reflected in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭalya who maintained that it was the duty of the king to chasten the conduct of the people (Vidyā-vinīto-rājāhi prajānāṃ vinaye rataḥ), to be the promulgator of right law and duty (Dharmapravartaka), and to co-ordinate the laws of various orders and sections of society. It is in the Arthaśāstra, that we find for the first time a comparatively liberal, that is, secular view of law, expressed. Law is derived, he says, from Dharma, i.e. religion, Vyavahāra, i.e. long established usage, Cāritraṃ or conduct of the good and righteous, and Rājaśāsana or command of the king. The application of laws follows the principle that wherever the first three were in conflict, there Dharma was to prevail ; but if Dharma conflicted with Nyāya, that is, canons of justice, then the latter was to prevail, since the original text of sacred law was not available.[6] Examination of witnesses was an important item in the application of law. To conclude, if Nyāya as manifest in royal command prevailed, it could, because the king had to co-ordinate the customary law and usage of various sections and creeds in order to formulate commands that satisfied the canons of justice, that is, Nyāya. And he had also to determine what is right law and duty, and what is not ; and thus became Dharmapravartaka. He is also to regulate the moral conduct of the people. These opinions of Kauṭalya point to a very comprehensive competence of the king in society. But they were not opinions only. They were founded on facts and traditions. Thus the king was gradually rising to become sovereign in a very real sense.

[6] Kauṭalya *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. III, Ch. I.

DEIFICATION OF THE KING

At a time when Aśoka's example had thus contributed to the content of kingship there arose political disturbances in the country. With the downfall of the Maurya empire, there arose many kingdoms to prominence and the Śakas, the Kuṣāṇs and the Bactrian Greeks invaded the country. The latter established new kingdoms and there ensured a rivalry between these new-comers and the country-powers. Their political rivalry was aggravated by their religious affiliations. The new-comers had entered the country at the time of the Brāhmaṇic revival. And the genesis of this revival lay in a reaction against Buddhism, resulting from the royal support of Aśoka for its propagation. Thus it had an anti-Buddhistic sting, which added to its orthodoxy. When, therefore, the foreigners entered the country they were detested as Mlecchas, or barbarians. And if the barbarians were thus socially ostracized and degraded by Brāhmaṇism they eagerly embraced Buddhism which accorded them a better treatment. They had naturally little sympathy with the Brāhmaṇic order of society and sought to destroy it. Among the country powers there were those who favoured the Brāhmaṇic revival and persecuted Buddhism, as there were others who favoured both Jainism and Buddhism against Brāhmaṇism. Naturally when kings appeared as partisans of opposing creeds, their enmity was aggravated. Political rivalry received a sting from religious differences. This condition of things brought out the state in the rôle of religious partisan no doubt, but it made for unity of control in the state. Since Brāhmaṇic revival depended upon royal power, the forces of religious orthodoxy were directed to strengthen that royal power. The king, therefore, came to be regarded as a god in human form, and his commands could not be disobeyed. Here the examples of the foreigners helped to strengthen the status of the king. Many of the Śaka and Kuṣāṇ rulers called themselves Devaputra — "son of god" "Dhārmika", etc. That supplied the precedent to Brāhmaṇism, and their royal customs were adopted. Thus the king came to be regarded as ruler by right divine, for the protection of the sacred religion on the earth. This ideal was preached through popular epics — the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. It was adopted by the law code like the Manusmṛti and helped centralization of authority. And from the Arthaśāstra, the

technique of administration was borrowed to effect the purpose. Thus increasingly the royal authority became effective, because of the centralization of power in the hands of the king and the reliance of the reviving Brāhmaṇism on his power.

SUPREMACY OF STATE OVER RELIGION

With this background the empires of the Guptas and Harṣa were bound to reflect the glory of royal power in a manner never known before. They were mighty conquerors and tactful rulers. They saw the evil consequences of the kings playing the rôle of religious partisans. And they realized that religious intolerance was not compatible with general welfare. That is why they adopted a policy of religious tolerance. It embodied their attitude towards religion, that is, they were not prepared to be swayed by their religious affiliations in matters of public interest and administration. That was also the clearest manifestation of the supremacy of the state over religion. And in realizing this supremacy in actual administration, the king was assisted by the change in the tone of law. For the law that was so far religious and ethical in content and character, gradually tended to drop those elements and became more and more secular. Positive law was in the process of evolution. A code like the Nārada displayed the new tendency in law. It must have been due to two causes. In the first place there had been growing in volume that part of law which owed its origin to royal commands or administrative acts and principles promulgated by the king. We saw that Kauṭalya recognized these as an important source of law. In the second place it would have been realized that so long as law and justice followed the lines of caste and the Brāhmaṇical scheme of life, there could not be equity in the administration of law and justice, for the simple reason that millions of people in India professed creeds other than Brāhmaṇism. This difficulty was obviated a great deal by allowing local customs and traditions to obtain. The heretics, the citizens, the trade and craft guilds, the autonomous tribes and others were permitted to follow their own laws. Nevertheless, the king was called upon to arbitrate in cases of conflict in local laws. Long before, Manu had ruled that the king had to give his ruling after a due scrutiny of all the local laws and usage. So to facilitate his task the law was tending to be secular as

far as possible ; that is, it was dropping its religious and ethical elements. And as the law became secular it helped the king to make his policy of religious tolerance effective. It also helped to centralize power in his hands ; and for the purpose of centralization, the administrative scheme outlined by Kauṭalya supplied the model.

CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY IN ANCIENT INDIAN POLITY

With this survey of the development of Indian polity we may pass on to a consideration of sovereignty in ancient Indian polity. Sovereignty in ancient India was embodied in the king. Royal sovereignty was the symbol of the authority of the state. That is brought out by the references to the word sovereignty in ancient Indian literature. The Indian equivalent of sovereignty was Kṣatra or Kṣātraśrī in Vedic literature, and Svāmitva in the *Arthaśāstra*, the law codes, and inscriptions. It was Kauṭalya who maintained that svāmin was one, though the first, of the seven elements of the state. He was actually the sovereign and symbol of the state. The word indeed reveals the content of sovereignty — what the ancient Indians actually understood by sovereignty. Svāmī was the lord or head of the state, and with ministers, allies, treasury, army, law and fortifications constituted the total content of the state. That is why the Indian concept of sovereignty must be based upon the concept of ancient Indian state.

CONTENT OF SOVEREIGNTY DEPENDED UPON THE CHARACTER OF THE STATE IN ANCIENT INDIA

The king who was the lord or head of the state gradually acquired a new right — the right divine to rule the state. That added considerably to the content of Kṣātraśrī or sovereignty, and during the Gupta period he regulated the attitude of religions towards each other. He directed that there should be no antagonism among them, that all religions be tolerated. In this matter he was aided by the changed character of law, which was increasingly becoming secular. Thus did his sovereignty gain in content even more than before, and become more effective than before. And lastly we have indicated that the content of sovereignty has only to be understood in relation to the character of the state. The ancient Indian state that was

founded on the recognition of many territorial entities, i.e. independent administrative areas, differed very much from the modern state which within it does not recognize any such entity at all. This leads to the examination of some of the current notions about ancient Indian state.

ANCIENT INDIAN EMPIRES NEITHER UNITARY NOR FEUDAL — FEDERAL BUT TRIBUTARY SYSTEMS

It has been assumed on the evidence of the *Arthaśāstra*, the Gupta inscriptions, like the Damodarpur Copper plates, Vasārh seals, etc. and Harṣa's inscriptions like the Madhuban plates that there had evolved an organization of unified control in the empires that came into existence in the various epochs of ancient India. Scholars have sought to prove that imperial administration was co-extensive with its territorial jurisdiction and that there was a hierarchy of administrative areas under appropriate officers controlled from the centre. Such a notion runs counter to the actual facts of the situation. In ancient India empires arose as a result of the struggle for supremacy among a congeries of states. The means adopted for the building up of the empire was the Digvijaya or conquest of quarters which was pursued within the bounds of safety. In this conquest the traditional six-fold policy was employed. And once the conquest was complete, the vanquished kings were reinstated in their kingdom as a matter of principle. They were recognized as the de-facto as well as de-jure rulers of their kingdom and were independent for all practical purposes. The only limitation of their independence was that they had to owe allegiance to the paramount king, either in the form of tribute or personal service. Such empires could not possess unified control, could not have an administrative machinery co-extensive with the sphere of influence, i.e. cakra, and guided from the centre. They arose invariably after a foreign invasion, and necessarily retained a military character. And that military character was brought out by the Digvijaya which was the genesis of the empires. Thus empires depending upon military power and restoration of their kingdoms to the vanquished kings, could hardly square with the administrative organization peculiar to a unitary state.

Neither could they be called feudal-federal states, for the principle of feudalism was also totally absent. Feudal organization has a

double character — political and social. Based on land tenure it regulates political and social status of the people. In ancient India with the social organization based upon the caste, that was unimaginable. Necessarily, therefore, a feudal-federalism could not be an appropriate characterization of the empires of ancient India.

The ancient Indian empires were tributary systems and in the terminology of the period, Cakras, or in the language of the *Arthaśāstra*, Maṇḍalas, that is, circles or spheres of influence at the head of which a Cakravartin, a paramount king, ruled. The relation between the paramount and the vassal kings was one of voluntary or forced allegiance as the case may be. But the government of the paramount and the vassal kings was each an independent though uniform unit. That is to say the technique of government was the same, though the kingdoms were independent of each other for the purposes of government. Often the paramount king employed some of his feudatories to the task of keeping others under control, that is, as provincial viceroys. Often they were associated for the sake of honour in the administration of his original dominion by the king paramount. That of course was not derogatory to the honour of the tributary kings, who were categorically known by the name of Sāmantas. Such was the character of ancient Indian empires.

ROYAL SOVEREIGNTY OF THE TRIBUTARY SYSTEMS

In such empires the sovereignty of the king meant his paramountcy, of which the hold was often precarious. And that paramountcy consisted in the king becoming the lord supreme of the land and water of his realm, the upholder of the sacred law, the promulgator of religion, the maker of the age, the god in human form, and the head of justice. But his paramountcy was more real within his own kingdom, under his direct control than over his empire. Such was the nature of sovereignty in ancient India. It was identical with paramountcy of the king, who was Cakravartin. He was Cakravartin, because he was the Lord of a Cakra — circle of kings, and that circle was what we may call a "sphere of influence," and Kauṭalya called a Maṇḍala.

CHAPTER II

KINGSHIP A SECULAR INSTITUTION
(1400 B.C. — 1000 B.C.)

COMING OF THE INDO-ARYANS

In that far-off age of hoary antiquity when the dark-skinned "Dasyus" peopled the country of India, and the fruitful plains of the Indus and the Ganges bore in their bosom dreams of a glorious civilization, there came to the mountain gate-ways of India a race of virile white-skinned people, the Indo-Aryans, and entered the Punjab in a series of invasions. From where they came, and at what time, are problems, that still perplex the minds of scholars. Whether their early home was the Arctic Region or the Central Asian steppes, the Caucasian countries or the "low-lying levels of Hungary,"[1] are matters of small concern to us. What is important, is, that their advent into India, opened a new era in the history of mankind. On the banks of the Indus, the Ganges and the Jumna ebbed and flowed a new life and a new civilization whose relics survive till today. It is a long, long story, this coming of the Indo-Aryans, their conquest of the country and their achievements, and its uncertain length is a painful episode in human history. The times that were bustling with buoyant life now send down to us through dying centuries faint echoes caught in the crumbling moulds of excavated sites. Perhaps the Sind valley finds are but the first fruits of a rich harvest ; yet we have to pass it by and fix our eyes on that period of Indo-Aryan migration into the Sapta Sindhu country, that is the country of seven rivers, viz. the Kabul, the Indus, the Jhelum, the Chenab, the Ravi, the Bias and the Sutlej, of which some of the most delightful details are embedded in the hymn-collection called the Ṛg-Veda.

The picture of the Indo-Aryans presented to us by the Ṛg-Veda is only in the form of a silhouette. The outlines are visible, the details are buried in the haze and silence of the past. Owing to the

[1] *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, pp. 68–70.

lapse of vast periods of time the meanings of the Ṛg-Vedic words have been forgotten. Their interpretation is a problem by itself. In spite of that, human effort has tried to unravel the mysteries of that great book of the Aryan race, and sufficient details have been gleaned to give us an idea of the Indo-Aryan state and society. Hence no study of the ancient Indian state or society could properly begin without a reference to the Ṛg-Veda.

ṚTA AND YAJÑA

When that great compilation was taking shape, the Indo-Aryans had already passed through centuries of social changes. Their social structure had become more or less fixed, and the fluid state of their nomadic life had been left behind. They had come and settled in a new country, amidst new peoples, whom they had to dislodge before they could occupy the country. That many a social change must have come about by their contact with the non-Aryans, there is no doubt. But these changes were not of such a nature as to transform or modify their entire social and religious heritage. In the dim background of the Indo-Aryan society in the Punjab there was a great heritage of thought-treasure that vitally influenced their later social developments. The Indo-Aryans brought from their ancient home where they lived with the Iranians two remarkable concepts, viz., the concept of a world order pervading the cosmic phenomena, i.e. the Ṛg-Vedic Ṛta, and the concept of Yajña or fire-sacrifice in honour of the ancestors and the heavenly ones,[2] for which the services of a priesthood were necessary.

GENESIS OF THE "ṚTA"

Both these concepts are as old as the Indo-European times. The Ṛta or the Cosmic Order was represented by the rule of the Heaven (Dyoḥ) over the "heavenly ones" in the world of nature. In the human world, it was embodied or had its reflex in that social and moral order, we call society, in which the rule of the clan-father corresponded to that of the Heaven (Dyoḥ).[3] This

[2] Farquhar, *Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, p. 1.

[3] Griswold, *Religion of the Ṛg-Veda*, p. 24 ; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 7.

idea of the cosmic order must have first suggested itself to the thinking man (Manuṣ) when he observed the sun pursuing its daily course without remission, the seasons coming and going in an unbroken chain, and the moon waxing and waning as if bidden by a magic wand. These phenomena of nature never deviated from their fixed purpose, their will could never be bent and "power never broken." They had a will against which no one on earth could prevail.[4] But man was not so strong, so undeviating as they were. Hence they were deified, conceived as "shining ones" or "heavenly ones," who ruled everything, and watched everything. And since they never deviated from a fixed purpose, that purpose was conceived as an order — Ṛta or Cosmic Order, and the fulfilment of that order was due to the unfailing activities of the shining ones, or gods. And Varuṇa, as Professor Bloomfield rightly said, was "the real trustee of the Ṛta."[5]

This conception of Ṛta seems to have been expressed by the Avestan Aśa, and it is found in the Persian proper names about 1600 B.C. in the form of Arta. There is indeed such a great deal of similarity between Varuṇa and Ahura Mazdah that the two seem to be identical in origin.[6] So much with regard to the Ṛta.

CONCEPT AND UTILITY OF "YAJNA"

With regard to the Yajña, we have seen that it was required for the worship of the ancestors and the gods. Now these gods were the deified phenomena of nature, which the Aryans designated as the shining ones — the Devas, and conceived to have possessed the most irresistible might, inexhaustible energy, unbending will, the highest goodness, boundless munificence and moral greatness.[7] What is more, they were ready to share in the struggles and strifes, in the joys and sorrows of the Indo-Aryans. Hence the greatness and munificence of these gods, whose help they courted, for victory in battles against the non-Aryans, i.e. the aborigines, and for general prosperity in the world, drew forth from them, fulsome praises in the form of hymns or prayers, and free-will offerings in the form of the Soma (Avestan Haoma), oblations of grain and milk or the

[4] Kaegi, *Ṛg-Veda*, p. 29. [5] Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, p. 128.
[6] Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 61 ; Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 132 ff.
[7] *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 15, 17 ; *R.V.*, ii, 28, 8 ; *Ibid.*, 54, 18.

flesh of animals sacrificed. Both these, the prayers and the free-will offerings constituted the Yajña, and its chief object was to draw the heavenly ones near, "milk" their favour or seek their pardon. The Indo-Aryans hated the dark-skinned niggards — the aborigines, because they never sacrificed to gods, they never gave good things to them, nor did they share their joys and sorrows with them. This spirit of jovial friendship with and reverence to gods, maintained unimpaired a sturdy sense of manliness in them. Hence in spite of the bargaining spirit in which they sacrificed to gods, the sacrifice or the Yajña, they believed, contributed to stimulate the activities of gods[8] and helped them to maintain the Cosmic Order — "the broad path of the Ṛta." But why should the gods take all the pains to maintain it ? "Of course, this ever-lasting keeping of the world-machinery going has an object: to benefit the race of men that dwells on earth, of course the righteous, well-thinking men, i.e. the Āryas and such of others as they approve of. It is but meet, therefore, that men should try to please the gods, keep on good terms with them — not merely out of gratitude, but also because, should they be displeased, they might sulk and 'strike', and then where would the denizens be ?"[9] Such was the utility and the conception of Yajña.

PRIESTHOOD AND ARISTOCRACY IN THE ṚG-VEDA

So far with regard to the Ṛta and Yajña. But these were not the only things they brought with them into the Punjab from their ancient home. They brought with them a priesthood, i.e. a class and not a caste of priests, which must have arisen from the necessity of preparing the Yajña for the gods. The coincidence of the Avestan Zoatar with Vedic Hotṛ and of the Avestan Atharvan with Vedic Atharvan, and Soma with Haoma is not a mere chance.[10] They certainly "indicate a differentiation of priestly functions in the Indo-Iranian period."[11] In the Ṛg-Veda we have several examples of priests or Purohitas such as Viśvāmitra and Vaśiṣṭha of King Sudās, and Devāpi of Śāntanu.[12] But at the same time we find references to another class of men as distinct from the priests. For

[8] *ṚV.*, iii, 34, 1 ; *R.V.*, vii, 19, 11.
[9] Ragozin, *Vedic India*, p. 390.
[10] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 7.
[11] Griswold, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[12] *R.V.*, ii, 33, 53 ; *R.V.*, vii, 18, 83 ; *R.V*, x, 98.

example in the Ṛg-Veda, Bk. v, 54, 7, a distinction is drawn between a Ṛṣi and a Rājan ; in Book i, 108, 7, a distinction is drawn between a Brāhman and a Rājan. The term Rājanya is found in the Puruṣa Sukta while Kṣatriya, meaning a noble, a member of the royal family, in Book x, 109 3. Thus it appears that in the Ṛg-Vedic period there possibly existed two distinct classes of priesthood and aristocracy, each depending on the other for growth. In every primitive community there are generally found a military aristocracy and a priestly class based chiefly upon functions. This was so among the Aryans in their first habitat of the Punjab. With the military needs of the community becoming insistent and indispensable, because of their continuous conflict with the Dasyus, the power of the warriors was likely to grow, and with it must have grown the importance of the priests, whose services must have been constantly requisitioned for seeking the aid of gods by sacrifices. Thus the aristocracy of military power must have developed hand in hand with the priestly class. With the conquest of countries, these military nobles must have become the territorial lords also. In fact the picture of the society comprising the classes of fighters and worshippers is reflected in their conception of gods, among whom are found two general types, the heroic like Indra, and the priestly like Agni.

CLASSES, NOT CASTES IN THE ṚG-VEDA

But besides these two occupations we seem to have in the Ṛg-Veda traces of others also, such as, of carpenters, of doctors,[13] of grinders of corn, of poets, etc. One of the verses[14] makes it perfectly clear, that professions were not generally hereditary and this is further strengthened by the instance of Viśvāmitra who was not born into the priestly class and yet became a priest. That was again true of Devāpi. Further it is not the priests alone who were the composers of Ṛg-Vedic hymns ; there were princes also. Vītahavya or Bharadvāja is said to have composed Bk. vi, 15 ; Sindhudvīpa Bk. x, 133 ; Māndhātṛī Bk. x, 133 ; Śibi Bk. x, 179 ; and Pṛthu Vainya Bk. x, 148. In Book viii, 9, 10, Pṛthu Vainya is mentioned with three Ṛṣis. The evidence of these verses points to the conclusions that there

[13] *R.V.*, ix, 112, 1. [14] *R.V.*, ix, 112, 3.

were classes not castes, that there were groupings according to occupation and that these groupings were in a fluid state.[15] It is just possible that kingship was hereditary amongst certain tribes,[16] but it does not prove that there was a caste of rulers and warriors. There were functions, that is, of rulers, warriors, farmers, sacrificers, poets, carpenters, etc. but these did not intersect the society into rigid sections or castes. It was the occupation that counted, not birth. This state of society points to a good deal of laxity in social grouping. It was a period of social growth, of adaptation to new environments, of expansion and adjustment that we find pictured in Ṛg-Veda. But if the integral elements of social structure were in a state of flux, the ethical elements had become fixed and pronounced. The conception of Varuṇa as essentially an ethical god[17] whose ordinances are fixed and unassailable (iii, 54, 18) is a great step taken in the direction of moral development. Further the fact that sin and crime had come to be recognised[18] strengthens our inference.

INFLUENCE OF ṚTA AND YAJÑA ON SOCIETY

But in and through this social and moral woof, ran the double warp of Ṛta and Yajña. Society had come to be recognized as consisting of several classes, each characterized by a function and their harmonious functioning constituted the social order, the replica of Cosmic Order — the Ṛta — in the human world. Meanwhile the utility and potency of Yajña had also been slowly but steadily growing. At first it was thought that the Yajña induced the gods to grant the desires of men as well as helped them to keep the world-machinery going. The next step was taken when people considered it desirable to constrain the gods to do what they wanted. "Here comes in that old, old notion of producing a thing by an imitation of it. On the "finding" of the heavenly Agni and the heavenly Soma, in obedience to the "fixed ordinances" of Ṛta, the preservation and the continuation of the world hangs as on a hinge. Let Agni and Soma, then, be "found" (produced) here on earth, strictly according to the "fixed ordinances" of sacrificial law and order —

[15] Senart, *Caste in India*, p. 117. [16] *C.H.I.*, p. 94.
[17] *R.V.*, ii, 28 ; *R.V.*, v, 85 ; *R.V.*, vii, 86, 89, 41, 42 ; *R.V.*, i, 24, 25.
[18] *R.V.*, iv, 5, 5 ; *R.V.*, vii, 49, 3 ; *Ibid.*, 84, 2.

the rite, the ritual.[19] The sacrifice becomes invested with a compelling power when it is made "ritualistically perfect."[20] We are told in Bk. x, 98, that the Ṛṣi Devāpi did procure rain for his patron Śāntanu by an efficient rain prayer. Bk. x, 101 is another rain-compelling hymn and these are only two of a very large number indeed! The conception of the compelling power of the Yajña and the gradual elaboration of the sacrificial rites foreshadowed new changes in Vedic society. These were the sure signs of the consolidation of priesthood into a caste.

THE INDO-ARYAN TRIBES

Side by side with the changes in society there were coming about changes in their political organization also. The nature of these changes must have been largely determined by the way they entered, conquered and colonized the Sapta Sindhu country. But the Ṛg-Veda is silent about these activities of the Indo-Aryans. From the nature of their settlement and tribal organization it can however be surmised that their advent was only a pulsatory process. In tribal groups they entered and colonized the country, the western-most limit of which was marked by the river Kubhā, the eastern-most by the Sarasvatī, and the northern-most by the Himalayas. This was their Sapta Sindhu habitat because through it flowed the Kabul river and the Indus with its five tributaries. Some of the tribes referred to in the Ṛg-Veda, as inhabiting this country were the Alinas to the north-east of Kafiristan,[21] the Pakthas possibly corresponding to the modern Pakhthun in Eastern Afghanistan,[22] the Bhalanas probably inhabiting the country around the Bolan pass,[23] the Śivas corresponding to the Śivis of later times[24] dwelling between the Indus and the Asiknī, the Viṣāṇins of the north-west,[25] the Pūrus who lived on the banks of the Sarasvatī adjoining the Kurukṣetra,[26] the Aṇus on the Paruṣnī, the Druhyus who were again a north-western people,[27] the Yadus and the Turvaśas who lived in the regions to the north-west of the Sarayu, i.e. the united course of the Vipāś and Śatadri, the Bharatas or the Tritsus[28] established on the

[19] Ragozin, *Vedic India*, p. 392.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 394.
[21] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 39.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 464.
[23] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 99.
[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 381–82.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 22.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 385.
[28] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 95.

Sarasvatī, Āpayā and Dṛṣadvatī rivers,[29] and the Uśīnaras to the north-west of the Āpayā. As the tribes entered in successive waves they came into conflict with those, that had perhaps entered the Punjab earlier as well as with the aborigines, in other words, the "Ārya enemies" and the "Dāsa enemies."[30] But there is no means of ascertaining the beginning and the end of this period of migrations. It is however certain that the period was one of struggle, settlement, and expansion. It must have taken a long time for the Indo-Aryans to dislodge and destroy their enemies — the dark-skinned Dasyus, for the latter, however contemptuously the Indo-Aryans might have spoken of them, were not arrant barbarians, living in huts and forests. In fact they were a civilized people. They lived in cities, and had even forts.[31] In order to conquer them the Indo-Aryans might have had to organize themselves in a way different to their tribal organization.

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION GIVES WAY

Their tribal organization might have even disintegrated under the pressure of conquest. A large tribe, for instance, while migrating into India, might have found it convenient to break up into small groups, and attack the Dasyus, scattered over a vast area. A small tribe, on the other hand, realizing its weakness might combine with other small or big tribes for the same purpose. And as they would conquer and dislodge the non-Aryans, either singly or jointly, they would settle down in colonies of single tribes or of many tribes joined into one. That was why the Aṇus and Druhyus were "closely associated", why the Turvaśas and Yadus were the "two allied tribes," why "in the later Ṛg-Vedic period the Pūrus become closely united with their former rivals the Bharatas, both tribes being merged in the Kurus," or why the Bharatas were "closely connected" with the Śriñjayas.[32] These are perhaps a few known cases of many similar ones. But this process of disintegration and combination might have been helped by the physical features of the Sapta Sindhu country, comprising river lines, patches of forests, high mountain ridges and low-lying valleys. Marked off and protected by these natural barriers the single or combined tribes would

[29] *R.V.*, iii, 23, 4. [30] *R.V.*, vi, 33, 3, and 60, 6; *R.V.*, vii, 83, 1.
[31] *R.V.*, i, 103, 3; *R.V.*, ii, 20, 8. [32] *C.H.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 82, 83.

settle down. And as they would settle down in such sheltered spots, agriculture and industry would naturally spring up. With this, there would emerge interests other than purely tribal ones. Acquisition of land by war would be highly prized. Indeed how eagerly did the Vedic Indian covet the acquisition of land and how it whetted his zeal for the conquest of more territory are adequately reflected in the Ṛg-Veda and the Atharva Veda. Since he already knew the art of agriculture,[33] and fortune had placed him in a fertile country like the Punjab, he loved to cultivate as vast areas as could be conquered from the enemies. That an intensive cultivation was practised is proved by numerous references to ploughing,[34] the measurement of land,[35] the formation of separate fields,[36] and irrigation.[37] His attachment to the land is further proved by the formation of villages.[38] His love of the new country is expressed in numerous hymns containing a glorious picture of the grand and sublime aspects of nature. His admiration for the golden dawn, the sweetly flowing rivers, the mountains and forests is only too well known to be dealt with at length. On the whole the Ṛg-Veda conveys the impression that the Indo-Aryan had become very much attached to his new home.

RISE OF THE RĀṢṬRA

With this attachment must have combined the hatred of the Aryan towards the aborigines, and a deep concern for the preservation of his colour and conquest. Thus must have arisen a strong sentiment in relation to the territory he inhabited, and from which he never liked to be ousted. This sentiment, further reinforced by the needs of defence and offence, must have assumed an embryonic form of political consciousness, and thus the first state which the Vedic Aryan called Rāṣṭra[39] must have arisen. Rāṣṭra might have,

[33] *V.I.*, i, p. 181.

[34] *R.V.*, i, 23, 15 and 176, 2 ; *R.V.*, x, 34, 13 ; 117, 7 ; 146, 6 ; *R.V.*, viii, 20, 19 ; 22, 6 ; *R.V.*, iv, 57, 4 and 8.

[35] *R.V.*, i, 110, 5 ; 100, 18 ; *R.V.*, ix, 85, 4 ; 91, 6.

[36] *R.V.*, x, 33, 6 ; *R.V.*, iii, 3, 15 ; *R.V.*, v, 62, 7.

[37] *R.V.*, vii, 49, 2 ; *A.V.*, i, 6, 4 ; *A.V.*, xix, 2, 2.

[38] *R.V.*, i, 44, 10 ; 114, 1 ; *R.V.*, ii, 12, 7 ; *R.V.*, x, 146, 1 ; *A.V.*, iv, 37, 7 and 8 ; etc.

[39] *R.V.*, iv, 42, 1 ; *R.V.*, vii, 84, 2 ; 34, 11 ; *R.V.*, x, 109, 3, etc.

to start with, followed the lines of tribal grouping, but later, might have freely intersected them. In whatever manner they might have been formed they must necessarily have been small in size ; for here the nature of the country comprising numerous physical barriers must have asserted itself more strongly than the nature of the grouping. Hence it is that the Sapta Sindhu country contained a large number of small states or Rāṣṭras.[40] Though a Rāṣṭra was called after a particular tribe yet it could not have contained the people of that particular tribe only. That is, the Rāṣṭra was not a homogeneous body.

GRĀMA THE NUCLEUS OF RĀṢṬRA

But the rise of the Rāṣṭra, as a political and territorial organization, on the ruins of disintegrating tribal organization was due to the emergence of the Grāma or village, as its integral unit. Just as it is difficult to ascertain whether a Rāṣṭra did or did not contain a homogeneous Jana or tribe, so it is difficult to assert whether a Grāma "contained the whole of a Viś, or a part of a Viś, or parts of several Viśas."[41] But if it could be ascertained that the Grāma was a new institution, super-imposed on the Viś and had a political character about it, then the political character of the Rāṣṭra could be easily proved, for the Rāṣṭra must have been only the development of the Grāma, as also a unity of Grāmas.

In the Ṛg-Veda the Grāma or village has been constantly referred to as the dwelling-place of the people in general without specific reference to the people of clans or Viśas.[42] It might have originally contained members of a single clan, constantly fighting, winning new lands and expanding. But gradually the exclusive nature of the village vanished and it comprised families of different clans, all contributing to the life of the village.[43] The more thoughtful and contemplative amongst them took to the worship of gods, the more warlike and enterprising of them assumed authority over the rest, the great mass of people took to trade, agriculture and industry, while the conquered aborigines were incorporated in the society

[40] Muir, *Sanskrit Text Series*, Vol. V, p. 454.
[41] *C.H.I.*, Vol. I, p. 91.
[42] *R.V.*, 44, 10 & 11 ; *R.V.*, i, 94, 1 ; *R.V.*, ii, 12, 7 ; *R.V.*, x, 149, 4.
[43] *R.V.*, i, 114, 1 ; *R.V.*, viii, 7, 11 ; *R.V.*, x, 127, 5.

and forced to work as slaves.[44] Besides agriculture, construction of chariots,[45] manufacture of the implements of war,[46] weaving,[47] and ship-building[48] were some of the industries which were practised. The same man could take to different crafts and occupations.[49] The sharp division of the village Community into the rich and the poor seems to have been existing, and there were starving men begging for food.[50] In the village the man who lavished largess to the destitute and to the priests at sacrifices was the Grāmaṇī.[51] Because he was "the giver of gifts . . . he walks in the front as leader." But the Grāmaṇī or the village headman was a very important person. Besides his importance as an elector of the king in the time of the Atharva Veda,[52] "he is certainly often connected with the Senānī or leader of army"[53] functioning as a troop-leader. That is perhaps because the Grāma bears a derivative sense of a body of men, or a company of troops,[54] and therefore Grāmaṇī might have been the leader of it. It is likely that in those days when there was no standing army, the national army or militia was composed of the units called Grāmas, i. e. bodies of men supplied by the villages or Grāmas. And the villages bore the designation of Grāmas, because they supplied Grāmas or companies of troops. Or it may be that because the national army comprised units supplied by the villages or Grāmas, the units were called "Grāmas" and their leader, the Grāmaṇī. Further we are told that kings conquered Grāmas, and loved the epithet of Grāmajitaḥ, i.e. conqueror of Grāmas.[55] Here the meaning may be conqueror of villages or of troops. Whatever it be, it seems pretty certain that the village had a share in the national defence, and therefore must have formed a nucleus in the military system of the kingdom. But it was not from the military standpoint that the village had its importance; it was important

[44] Muir, *Sanskrit Text Series*, Vol. V, p. 452.

[45] *R.V.*, 1, 62, 13; 130, 6; 171, 2; *R.V.*, ii, 19, 8; 35, 2; *R.V.*, iv, 16, 20; *R.V.*, v, 2, 11; etc.

[46] *R.V.*, i, 162, 20; 127, 3; *R.V.*, vii, 104, 21; *R.V.* viii, 91, 19; etc.

[47] *R.V.*, i, 61, 8; *R.V.*, vii, 3, 9; *R.V.*, x, 130, 1; etc.

[48] *R.V.*, i, 116, 3; *R.V.*, ii, 39, 4; *R.V.*, viii, 42, 3; *R.V.*, ix, 70, 10; *R.V.*, i, 25, 7.

[49] *R.V.*, x, 97, 6 — "Vipraḥ sa ucyaté bhiṣag rakṣohā", etc.

[50] *R.V.*, x, 117, 1–6.

[51] *R.V.*, x, 62, 11; 107, 5.

[52] *A.V.*, iii, 5, 7.

[53] *V.I.*, i, p. 247.

[54] *R.V.*, i, 100, 10; *R.V.*, iii, 33, 11; *R.V.*, x, 27, 19, *A.V.*, iv, 7, 5; *A.V.*, v, 20, 3.

[55] *R.V.*, v, 54, 8; *A.V.*, vi, 97, 3.

as a unit in the financial system of the realm. We are told in the Atharva Veda that royal dues comprised a share of the village, horses, and cattle.[56]

But even that does not complete the rôle of the village. The corporate life of the people was focussed in the village Sabhā.[57] This was the embodiment of the Aryan love of autonomy. For, here did the people meet to discuss the most serious as well as the most homely[58] affairs of the village. It was perhaps used as the law court of the village[59] and was composed of the most distinguished[60] among the village folk. Perhaps on such occasions the Grāmyavādin or the village judge presided over the Sabhā or the rural council[61] The council hall, for that bore the designation of the Sabhā also, was a favourite resort of the village folk when no deliberations were going on there. That is suggested by its name Nariṣṭā.[62] Here the people often beguiled their time in play.[63] or joke, and therefore it served the purposes of a modern club on a humbler scale. Perhaps above all Sabhā expressed the corporate will of the village by controlling its arable and fallow land.[64] For, otherwise how could the fields be measured, and intensive cultivation carried on by means of irrigation ?[65] Perhaps as has been already mentioned, it was responsible for the payment of the village dues to the treasury of the Rāṣṭra. Thus the importance of the Grāma or village for military (defensive and offensive), judicial and fiscal purposes lends support to the inference that it had a political character. And since villages combined to form a Rāṣṭra or state, the Rāṣṭra became the highest political organization in the country.

FORMS OF THE RĀṢṬRA

Vedic Rāṣṭra seems to have been monarchical as the earliest form of state always was. That was perhaps due to the insistent needs of military offence and defence, and the patriarchal organization of society.[66] The Rāṣṭra, it is often asserted, belonged to the

[56] *A.V.*, iv, 22, 2. [57] *R.V.*, vi, 28, 6.
[58] *R.V.*, x, 71, 10 ; *A.V.*, xii, 1, 56 ; *A.V.*, vii, 38, 4 ; *A.V.*, vi, 28, 6.
[59] *A.V.*, vii, 38, 4. [60] *R.V.*, viii, 4, 9. [61] *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, ii, 3, 1.
[62] *A.V.*, vii, 12, 2. [63] *R.V.*, x, 34, 6. [64] *R.V.*, *i*, 127, 6.
[65] *R.V.*, vii, 49, 2. *A.V.*, i, 6, 4 ; *A.*, *V.*, xix 2, 2.
[66] *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 210.

Rājā, and the Kṣatriya lorded it over, as well as protected it.[67] But it may be made clear that this Rāṣṭra or Vedic state was qualitatively very different from the modern state. It was identical with government. It gave protection to the people against foreign enemies, waged war, collected revenues and administered justice. And all these functions belonged to the king. Though the normal form of government was monarchy it is difficult to say whether that was the only form. We find the word "Gaṇa" mentioned in the Ṛg and Atharva Vedas, often in the sense of hosts in reference to Maruts and gods in general. It occurs at least twenty-two times in the Ṛg and four times in the Atharva Veda. In Ṛg-Veda Bk. ii, 23, 1 we have a prayer in which Brahmaṇaspati has been invoked as "Gaṇānām tvā Gaṇapatiṃ" and "Jyeṣṭha rājam" meaning "Lord and Leader of Heavenly Hosts" and "King Supreme (of prayers)" respectively. Taking this interpretation as correct, we may say that Jyeṣṭha rājaṃ in the context of Gaṇapatiṃ may have been an earthly imagery applied to gods. That is to say the Vedic Aryans might have been familiar with organized bodies of people, "Gaṇas", living under several leaders or kings — Rājānaḥ, of whom one was the Jyeṣṭha rāja, that is, King Supreme. In Ṛg-Veda Bk. x, 97, 6, we have "Rājānaḥ Samitāviva" explained by Sāyaṇa as "kings in Samiti." If the latter explanation be correct, then we have got a reference to the existence of a type of political organization which had a Samiti, i.e. popular assembly and many Rājās as leaders. In the Atharva Veda Bk. xix, 22, 16 and 17 we have "Gaṇa" and "Mahāgaṇa" used in the sense of "hosts." In the light of later facts we may say that there were possibly groups, — tribal groups, who lived an organized political life not under any one king or leader but under many kings. The significance of Gaṇa in Buddhistic religious order and the existence of tribal oligarchies called Gaṇas, like the Vajjis, Mallas, Mālavas, etc. in later times may point to the inference that Gaṇa as a corporate body might have originated at this time. It is not hard to imagine that, specially in a situation where villages enjoyed a corporate life with all the functions of an autonomous body. Gaṇas therefore may have been just organized groups, with popular assemblies, i.e.

[67] "Rājā rāṣṭrāṇāṃ", *R.V.*, vii, 34 ; "Eṣa rāṣtraṃ kṣatriyasya gupitaṃ." *R.V.*, x, 173, 1.

Samitis and Rājās, as leaders. That is about all, we can say in regard to a form of government other than monarchy.

THE MONARCHICAL RĀṢṬRA

In Vedic times monarchy seems to have attained some development and variety. There is no means of getting at the details, and all that we can guess is from the words Ekarāj,[68] Adhirāj,[69] Samrāṭ,[70] and Svarāj,[71] occurring in the Ṛg and Atharva Vedas. Whatever they connote, it is agreed that Samrāj expresses a greater degree of power than Rājan,[72] for as the Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra maintains "the office of the Rājan is lower and that of Samrāj higher."[73] That is a very general statement. What exactly was the difference between the status of a Rājā and a Samrāṭ is the moot point. It is too much to say that in the days when the Indo-Aryans lived in the Punjab, they had formed empires and had "Samrāṭs" or emperors ruling over them. Only this much may be mentioned in explanation of these terms that, perhaps there was a struggle for supremacy going on between the various monarchical Rāṣṭras and those that attained to preeminence or supremacy amongst them took the distinctive title of Samrāṭ, etc.

At the head of the Rāṣṭra was the king.[74] His office appears to have been elective,[75] but it is difficult to say how he was actually elected. In Ṛg-Veda Bk. x, 124,8 and Bk. x, 173,1, we are told that the Viś chose the king; while Atharva-Veda Bk. iii, 5,7 mentions that a group of men, called the king-makers — Rājakṛt, the Grāmaṇī, etc. chose the king. What seems to be true is that originally perhaps the Vedic tradition was to choose the leader of a Viś by the people themselves and this leader was known as king. Later on with the growth of military needs, acquisition of territories, and formation of kingdoms there arose a group of powerful men, who owed their power to the help they rendered to the king in his war, conquest and government. They were hailed by the king at the time of his

[68] *R.V.*, viii, 37, 3; *A.V.*, iii, 4, 1.
[69] *R.V.*, x, 128, 9; *A.V.*, vi, 98, 1; *A.V.*, ix, 10, 24.
[70] *R.V.*, i, 25, 10; *R.V.*, ii, 28, 6; *R.V.*, v, 85, 1; *R.V.*, vi, 68, 9; *R.V.*, viii, 42, 1.
[71] *Ibid.*, ii, 28, 1.
[72] *V.I.*, Vol. II, p. 433.
[73] *A.V.*, xv, 1, 1, 2.
[74] *R.V.*, ii, 43, 6; *R.V.*, iv, 42; *R.V.*, v, 53, 7; *A.V.*, iv, 8 and 22; *A.V.*, iii, 3 & 5.
[75] *R.V.*, x, 173, 1; 124, 8; *A.V.*, iii, 3, 5; 4, 2.

coronation as "Abhito janān"[76] or men about him, that is, his associates. Most of these associates were, perhaps like the Grāmaṇī, employed in the royal administration, and as we shall see later on, came to be regarded as Ratnins, in the period of the Brāhmaṇas. No wonder that they came to wield great power in the realm and influenced the choosing of the king. That is why the king openly declared that he counted upon their aid.[77] Hence we can say that in the early vedic age the king was chosen by the people, but as the age advanced and states were formed and governments organized, the king was first chosen by the Rājakṛtas and then accepted by the people.[78]

THE SAMITI AND THE SABHĀ

After the king was accepted by all, if he was genuinely interested in the welfare of his subjects, he consulted the Samiti and Sabhā[79] and we may guess that he possibly sought to be in perfect agreement with both.[80] Of these two, the Sabhā seems to be a council of the influential men and the elders, while the Samiti was an assembly of the people, meeting on special occasions. Probably these were the popular organs to ventilate opinion. In the Samiti were discussed all matters of political and non-political import.[81] Legislation was perhaps one of its functions,[82] but such occasions must have been few and far between. The Sabhā, possibly functioned as a law court[83] and as a place for "transacting public business." The matters that came before the Sabhā might have pertained to policies of government. But how far the Sabhā could influence the policy of government it is hard to say. From the fact, however that the king was chosen, and aided in his administration, by the Rājakṛtas, Grāmaṇī, etc. it would not be far wrong to hold, that these men like the king were concerned with the policy of government, and influenced the matters of public interest. And some of them were most probably

[76] *A.V.*, iii, 5, 6 & 7. [77] Etān kriṇvobhito janān — *A.V.*, iii, 5, 6 & 7.
[78] *V.I.*, Vol. II, p. 211.
[79] *R.V.*, ix, 92, 6 ; *R.V.*, x, 97, 6 ; *R.V.*, viii, 4, 9 ; *A.V.*, vii, 12, 1.
[80] *R.V.*, x, 166, 4 ; 191, 3 ; *A.V.*, vii, 12, 1.
[81] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 431 ; K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Vol. I, p. 13. [82] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 431.
[83] *R.V.*, x, 71, 10 ; K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Vol. I, p. 18 ; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 428.

members of the Sabhā. But we cannot agree with Dr. Beniprasad[84] when he maintains that certain passages in the Atharva Veda point to the discussion of war and peace, finance and general well-being in the Sabhā. Of those passages, Bk. vi, 75 and 103, to which he refers as containing a discussion of war in the Sabhā, are actually charms for the removal of the enemy; similarly Bk. vii, 52, does not contain a discussion of peace but is a charm for general peace and concord; Bk. iii, 29, speaks of immunity from taxation in the other world by a sacrifice and not of finance in the Sabhā; and Bk. vi, 107, is a charm to protect men and cattle and does not refer to a discussion of general well-being in the Sabhā. Indeed, to determine the functions of the Sabhā and the Samiti is an impossible adventure owing to the nature of the texts at our disposal.

FUNCTIONS OF THE KING

As for the functions of the king, however, we are on surer grounds. He certainly was the leader in war[85] and protector of the people in critical times. In times of peace,[86] he claimed their obedience and free-will contributions[87] for the maintenance of his dignity. It is, however, not always that people willingly paid him homage and gifts;[88] he often forced them to do so. He was specially charged with the protection of the Brāhmans.[89] He discharged the duties of a judge, and employed spies for the preservation of peace and order in the kingdom.[90] The employment of spies might have been due either to the frequent occurrences of crimes or to the insecurity of the royal power. But they must have been a necessary adjunct for securing the welfare of the people. It is just possible that the king administered the criminal law and had wide powers of initiative. He might have been even the maker of criminal law. As regards civil justice, several ancillary facts, point to its administration by the king also. The individual ownership of property in land,[91] the practice of irrigation[92] and measurements of fields[93] clearly point to

[84] Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, pp. 42–43.
[85] *R.V.*, iii, 43, 5. [86] *R.V.*, i, 67, 1. [87] *R.V.*, iv, 5, 8.
[88] *R.V.*, i, 65; 4; iv, 50, 9. [89] *R.V.*, iv, 50, 9.
[90] *R.V.*, i, 25, 13; *R.V.*, iv, 4, 3; *R.V.*, vi, 67, 5.
[91] *Kriṣṇa Yajurveda* (Keith's trans.), ii, 3, 3.
[92] *R.V.*, vii, 49, 2. *A.V.*, 1, 6, 4; *A.V.*, xix, 2, 2. [93] *A.V.*, i, 110, 5.

the existence of some system of social justice. For, these facts denote a complicated system of social economy, which, but for the cognizance of government, could not exist. Further the Sabhā, as we have seen, was the rural court of justice. Hence it could be safely inferred that the king acted as a judge at times.[94] The making of laws might have been outside his province,[95] but he certainly upheld the law — Dharma or customs and usage of society, as will be evident from the sequel. One of his foremost duties was to endow an impoverished Brāhmaṇ (*R.V.*, iv, 50,09).

ROYAL SOVEREIGNTY

These powers of the king and the functions of his government seem to suggest that there had faintly developed by this time the concept of sovereignty, i.e. vedic Kṣatra[96] or Kṣatraśrī.[97] It was associated with the Kṣatriya or the ruler.[98] Kṣatraśrī belonged to the Kṣatriya, because he was the upholder of the Law — Ṛtasya Gopāh, as also of the Rāṣṭra — Rāṣṭramu dhāraya,[99] and the protector of the people — Pāyurviśa. (*R.V.*, iv, 4, 3). That was the justification of royal sovereignty, or, of royal power. That is to say, the content of sovereignty was power; it was by his power, that the king could uphold the Law — Ṛta or the spirit of sacrifice, which was the essence of the Aryan cult. Ṛta distinguished the Aryan from the non-Aryan, who adhered to Anṛta. When Mitrā-Varuṇa are invoked (as kings) to exterminate Anṛta in order that Ṛta might prevail (R.V. vii, 65, 2 and 66, 13) we have to understand that their prototype on earth, the king, was expected to follow their example. This suggests that the earthly king by conquering the non-Aryans caused the Aryan cult — the cult of fire-sacrifice, to prevail. That was the justification of royal power. The king possessed Kṣatraśrī, because he was the defender of Ṛta — the Aryan cult.

[94] A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 213. [95] *Ibid.*

[96] *R.V.*, 1, 24, 6; 136, 1; *R.V.*, iv, 17, 1; *R.V.*, v, 62, 6, etc. A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 24.

[97] *R.V.*, 1, 25, 5; *R.V.*, vi, 26, 8.

[98] *R.V.*, iv, 12, 3; 42, 1; *R.V.*, v, 69, 1; *R.V.*, vii, 64, 1; *R.V.*, viii, 25, 8; *R.V.*, x, 109, 3; A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 24.

[99] *R.V.*, vii, 66, 13; *R.V.*, vii, 64, 2; *R.V.*, x, 173, 2.

The king was also the defender of the realm — Rāṣṭra, in the sense that he afforded his people protection against enemies, and maintained peace among them — *Gopā Janasya* (R.V., iii, 43, 5). He was therefore loved by them — Viśastvā sarvā Vāñchantu (R.V., x, 173, 1). It is well-known that the vedic king had to fight frequently against Aryan and non-Aryan enemies. Power, therefore, was a very real asset of the king; and he was respected to the extent that his power was effective. Hence he aspired to be Asapatna Sapatnahā — rival-less, slayer of rivals — in the realm.

Further, the king ensured internal peace to the people. How he could do it, has been brought out in R.V. vii, 89, 5 where Varuṇa has been implored not to punish men for offences — Droha, committed through ignorance in violation of his law, Dharma. This is only a reflection of what happened on earth. The king maintained Dharma among men, as did Varuṇa among gods, and punished those who violated it (Abhidroham).

DHARMA AND DROHA UNDER ROYAL AUTHORITY

Now, Dharma may bear the interpretation of customs and usages, both sacred and secular in society. For, in R.V., iii, 17, 1 Dharma has been used in the sense of custom, in R.V., vii, 89, 5 in the sense of moral laws, in R. V., x, 56, 3 in the sense of laws or duties in general, and in R.V., viii, 98, 1 in the sense of duties or what is right. The general sense of these passages points to the inference that the vedic customs and usages, both sacred and secular were categorically called Dharma. And like Varuṇa the King maintained that Dharma among men with the help of his spies. Therefore the king was Pāyur-Viśa — Protector of the people (R.V., iv, 4, 3). And this Dharma is the earliest form of law in society; in content, customs and usage.

This may lead to the further enquiry as to what constituted Droha, i.e. violation of Dharma, in order to ascertain that the king was the upholder of this earliest form of law in society. It may be imagined that non-performance of fire sacrifice was one of the Drohas, though it might have seldom occurred in vedic society. But that apart, there might have been frequent outbursts of what is called the "anti-social tendencies", that is, offences against society or Drohas. In rural areas, for example, there might have

been cases of land and cattle usurpation. Since irrigation was practised, misuse of water and deliberately spoiling crops of a neighbouring field might have often come to the ears of the king. We know of thieves infesting highways and stealing clothes (R.V. i, 65, 1 ; 191, 5 ; iv, 38, 5 ; v, 15, 5). Indebtedness, specially due to gambling, was not unknown. (R.V. vii, 118, 1). Poverty and starvation, had already appeared, so that charity has been highly extolled and niggardliness condemned (R.V., x, 117, 2 and 4 ; 107, 5, 9, etc.). The state of social morality required some restrictions to be imposed. For, if the wife of the gambler became the object of other men's intrigues (R.V., x, 34, 4), and women bore children secretly and put them away (R.V., ii, 29, 1), they certainly could not have been encouraged. Quarrels between brothers, disobedience to the father, and conjugal infidelity have been stressed as undesirable (A.V., iii, 30, 2 & 3 ; R.V., x, 34, 5 ; R.V., x, 40, 6). Murders were not unknown. These are Drohas, that have been mentioned, and perhaps there were others which have not been mentioned. But all these necessitated some sort of social control, and that social control must have taken the form of the methods by which justice was done. In vedic society these methods were rather crude, like wergild, ransom or religious expiation. Though these were customary according to Dharma yet the king must have often been required to lend his authority in order that these customary methods of justice — Dharma, might prevail ; for example, in a case of murder the offender might not pay his Vairadeya ; or in a case of adultery the offender might fail to pay adequate compensation ; or there might occur cases where parties belonged to different clans or tribes, with differing methods of justice. On such occasions the royal authority must be invariably invoked. The king helped by his spies and power would effectually punish Droha and uphold the Dharma, i.e. customs and usage. It is in this way that the king punished Droha and upheld Dharma. Of course Dharma did not comprise merely customary methods of justice. It comprised all that was good and right. The king by virtue of his power upheld it. Therefore he was sovereign among men — Virājāni Janasya (R.V., x, 174, 5). The relation between the sovereign and subjects was one of good-will and devotion — Viśastvā Sarva Vāñchantu, and therefore kingship was to obtain eternally among men — Dhruvā rājā Viśāmayaṃ (R.V., x, 173, 4).

KINGSHIP, PURELY SECULAR

The most important development of this period therefore is that kingship like the Rāṣṭra became an established institution; and kingship was the very essence of the Rāṣṭra. It arose out of human needs, and like human needs was to be eternal. How it arose has been thus explained. "The Devas and Asuras were fighting .... The Asuras defeated the Devas. The Devas said, 'It is on account of our having no chief — Arājataya — that the Asuras defeat us. Let us create a Rājan (king).' All agreed."[100] This is a much later, and mystified record of the fight between the Aryans and the non-Aryans which gave rise to kingship in the early vedic period. Nevertheless, it indicates the character of kingship, which arose owing to a very vital need, that is, the need of a leader in war. Hence the content of vedic kingship was chiefly power,[101] that could crush the enemies of Ṛta, uphold Dharma and afford protection to the people.[102] In vedic society, therefore, kingship was associated with the highest glory, distinction and prestige so that on one occasion a king-Trāsadasyu of the Purus claimed divinity for himself.[103] Still, kingship was a secular and popular institution. There was nothing of that sacred or religious colouring about it, which it acquired in the age of the Brāhmaṇas. But the concept that the king was the upholder of the Aryan cult, of the Dharma by punishing Droha, and ultimately of the Rāṣṭra, i.e. the state, set the norm for all subsequent ages of ancient Indian history.

[100] *Ai. Br.*, Bk. i, 14.

[101] Agni referred to as possessing quality of strength — *R.V.*, iv, 12, 3. The king is described as Sacker of forts, A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 212.

[102] *R.V.*, iii, 43; *R.V.*, iv, 4, 3; *R.V.*, vii, 13; *R.V.*, x, 173, 2.

[103] *R.V.*, iv, 42.

CHAPTER III

KINGSHIP UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF RELIGION

(1000 B.C.—700 B.C.)

FEATURES OF THE BRĀHMAṆIC AGE

By the close of the early Vedic age the Indo-Aryans had crossed the Sarasvatī, that had so far marked their eastern boundary. They were ready to expand further eastward into the Gangetic plain. That is a remarkable phase of their history. For, with their eastward advance far-reaching changes came about in their social and political institutions. The differentiation of society into a system of castes, the gradual predominance of religion over all social institutions and lastly its domination over the state created a socio-political complex, that left its impress on the Hindu body-politic for a long time to come. These are reflected in the vast ritual codes, the Brāhmaṇas, the literary monument of this period. The age can be best named after these as the Brāhmaṇic age. It was substantially an age of progress. The state developed in structure and function, though under the tutelage of religion. The early conception of kingship gained in magnitude and substance. The society attained not only a functional growth, but also opened out new avenues of integration and expansion. New systems of thought and new fields of activity foreshadowed the precious possibilities of the Indo-Aryan life. Such were the main features of the Brāhmaṇic period, "one of the most important periods in the social and mental development of India."[1]

EXPANSION OF THE ARYANS

The expansion of the Aryans is one of the most interesting episodes of this period. By 1000 B.C. they "had arrived on the banks of the Sarasvatī and had even extended as far as the Jumna and the

[1] *Sat. Br.*, Introduction, p. ix. (*S.B.E.*, Vol. XII).

Ganges."[2] Even now as before they had to encounter Dasyu opposition. In spite of the subjugation of some of the Dāsa chiefs like Śuṣṇa and Kuyava,[3] Śambara and Arbuda,[4] Karañja, Parṇaya and Vangrida[5] their tribe had not become extinct. There were others like Śaṇḍa and Mārka,[6] Kilāta and Akuli.[7] The Aryan dread of the aborigines finds expression in several passages of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.[8] There is no doubt that the Aryans were constantly troubled by the Dasyus, who did not like to give up their all without a fierce struggle;[9] and their black complexion, ferocious aspect, barbarous habits, rude speech and savage yells and sudden attacks[10] constantly haunted their imagination. At the time of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa the bank of the Sarasvatī[11] was a sacred place for sacrifice, but when the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa was being composed, the Aryans had advanced far to the east. They had reached the Sadānīrā[12] variously identified as the Karatoyā in the north of Bengal or the Gandak between the countries of Oudh and north Bihar[13] that perhaps marked the farthest advance eastward, of the Aryans for a considerable time. But gradually the Sadānīrā was also crossed, so that the Śatapatha says "Nowadays, however, there are many Brāhmaṇas to the east of it — and it is very cultivated."[14] On the south their advance must have been chequered, owing to the physical features of the country. In the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa[15] we hear of the Āndhras, the Puṇḍras, the Śabaras, the Pulindas and the Muṭibas, as occupying the extremities of the Aryan land and

[2] Muir, *Sanskrit Text Series*, Vol. II, p. 397.

[3] *R.V.*, vii, 19, 2, *Sanskrit Text Series*.

[4] *R.V.*, i, 51, 6. [5] *Ibid.*, i, 53, 8.

[6] *Taitt.-Sam.*, vi, 4, 10, 1. *Sat. Br.*, iv, 2, i, 4 & 6, Saṇḍa and Mārka of the *Sat. Br.* may have been the chiefs or priests of the tribe called the Sandikas in the *R.V.*, ii, 30, 8.

[7] *Sat. Br.*, i, 1, 4, 14. Kilāta is the same as Kirāta and is described as an Asura along with Akuli in the *Panch. Br.*, 13, 11 also.

[8] i, 2, 2, 16; i, 2, 5, 18; i, 3, 4, 13, etc.

[9] See Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, i, 186 & ii, 243.

[10] Muir, *Sanskrit Text Series*, Vol. II, 6. 393.

[11] Risayoḥ vai sarasvatyām satramāsata. *Ai. Br.*, ii, 19.

[12] *Sat. Br.*, i, 4, 1, 10. See Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, I, p. 170 et seq. According to him there are three stages in the expansion of the Aryans to the east (*a*) from the Punjab to the Sarasvatī, (*b*) thence to Sadānīrā, (*c*) further east.

[13] Muir, *Sanskrit Text Series*, Vol. II, p. 404.

[14] I, iv, 1, 15 & 16. [15] vii, 18.

regarded as frontier tribes. The same Brāhmaṇa also speaks of Bhīma of Vidarbha[16] as one of the "great kings . . . obtaining tribute from all quarters." Now from the Aśoka inscriptions[17] we know that the Āndhras and Pulindas were the peoples of South India in the third century B.C. It is said that the Āpastamba school which produced the Āpastambīya Dharma Sūtra between 600 and 300 B.C.[18] must have been founded in the Āndhra country.[19] If we accept this date as correct, then certainly another hundred years may be allowed to reach the time when the first work of conversion of the Āndhras into the fold of Aryan culture began. No wonder therefore that at the time of the composition of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa they were still regarded as the Dasyus.[20] But if the southward advance of the Aryans was not rapid, the eastward advance seems to have been otherwise. By the time of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa we find that the villages of the east were densely populated.[21] Later still the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa mentions Janaka as the Samrāṭ, i.e. the emperor of Videha. From these facts we can conclude that the Aryan pale now extended from the Punjab and the Himalayas to the confines of Bengal in the east and to those of the Andhra country in the south.

EFFECT OF ARYAN EXPANSION

But the expansion of the Aryans had not been effected without encountering the most dogged resistance of the non-Aryans, nor without introducing the most significant changes in their social life and thought. As they spread beyond the Sarasvatī they came to the land known as either Brahmāvarta or Āryāvarta, i.e. the country between the Ganges and the Jumna up to their confluence. This country is, for all subsequent periods of Hindu history, invested with a glory and sanctity that is not equalled by any other part of India. The reason seems to be indicated by the very name Āryāvarta, i.e. whirlpool of the Aryans. Here perhaps the Aryans must have encountered the most determined and stubborn opposition from the non-Aryans, and the probability increases to certainty when it is

[16] vii, 34. [17] R. Ed. V.
[18] Kaṇé, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, pp. 45 & 46.
[19] *S.B.E.*, Vol. II, Introduction, xxxii-xliii. [20] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 18.
[21] *Ai. Br.*, translated by Keith, p. 193.

realized that this country is of great strategic importance besides being the most fertile and covetable part of India.[22] This country taken, the invader of Northern India is free to proceed either to the east or to the south ; and then the road is open into Bihar and Bengal on the one hand, and into Malwa and Gujerat and further south on the other. The subsequent facts of Indian history bear testimony to this. The non-Aryans therefore must have fought in the most determined manner before they were dislodged from this country and ultimately expelled. But the tremendous effort that the Aryans must have put forth, for the occupation of this land increased its worth in their eyes ; and as they actually settled down there after conquest they also must have realized the worth and advantages of the land. And after this land had been occupied the path to the east and south became easy. As the Aryans spread eastward and southward this country became really the middle country, the centre of the Aryan pale. Here perhaps the Aryans could retain their purity of blood and culture. Here everything was so favourable for human life. There was little chance of fighting any adversaries which was the lot of the people on the extreme north-west, as also of the people on the extreme east and south. Further the people could, with a little labour produce sufficient to live and spare. Naturally here the people had more leisure for different pursuits. They had polished manners, and retained the purity of blood and culture to a greater degree than those who spread further. Hence it is that this country came to be looked upon as the fountain-head of Aryan culture, in this and in subsequent periods. It set the norm for the rest of the country.

RISE OF CASTE

Now this expansion of the Aryans must have called for their highest powers of organization. The further they spread from their Sapta Sindhu habitat, the smaller and smaller must have grown their number, even though we grant that their expansion was a slow process. This reacted in two ways. In the first place it put a premium on efficient organization ; and efficient organization, as always, entailed specialization in functions. The frequency of warfare and its bloody nature, due to the stubborn opposition of the

[22] *C.H.I.*, pp. 21–22.

non-Aryans demanded specialization in the arts of fighting and sacrifice. For, as the fighters, the Kṣatriyas fought, the priests prayed and sacrificed to gods to invoke their favour. Further as the conquest of territories brought fresh lands into the possession of the Aryans, the old combatants settled down to peaceful pursuits; for, these lands had to be cultivated and their vast material resources tapped and utilized. This required also specialization in the art of agriculture, trade and industry.

Thus gradually the fluid vedic classes began to crystallise into castes. Towards the end of the vedic period there seems to have emerged in more or less pronounced form three organized classes, which now become consolidated into castes. To these three castes was added one more recruited from among the conquered aborigines. As the conquerors settled down, the problem arose as to what they should do with the conquered non-Aryans. They could not possibly avoid their contact, however much they detested them, and as centuries rolled by and their racial angularities wore away they became more considerate.

"The fourth caste, the Śūdras, consisted according to Prof. Roth, of a race subdued by the Brāhmaṇical conquerors, whether that race may have been a branch of the Aryan stock which immigrated at an earlier period into India, or autochthonous Indian tribe."[23] Whatever it may be, there is the clearest proof that the Aryan conquerors did not only give the aborigines a place in their social system, they actually conceded some of the most important privileges to them. "One of the best known cases is that of the Rathakāra" remarks Prof. Max Müller. "Then the Niśādasthapati, though a Niśāda chief and not belonging to the three highest classes, was admitted to great sacrifices, e.g. Gavedhukacaru."[24] Further the fact that a Śūdra could enjoy the great privilege of performing Yajñas is evident from the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.[25] Thus the Aryan conquest and expansion was one of the chief causes of the formation of four castes.

RISE OF THE BRĀHMAṆAS AND RITUALISM

Further their expansion reacted in another way. The small Aryan population, far-flung from their homeland amidst peoples, with

[23] Muir, *Sanskrit Text Series*, Vol. I, p. 292.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 366. [25] I, 1, 4, 12.

very different habits and customs must have run a grave risk of losing their own culture. In fact they began to forget their own tradition, manners, and customs, and to imperceptibly adopt those of peoples with whom they came into contact. That was specially the case with those who lived in the outlying districts or border-regions of the Aryan pale. We know for example that the people of the Punjab betrayed unorthodox tendencies,[26] and those of Bihar had absorbed so much of the non-Aryan culture and had such a "predominance of the aboriginal blood" that the Aryans of the middle country, looked upon them with contempt. The Aryans there must have felt the pressure of the native races and would have come very near being absorbed by the latter. That is why Dr. Keith says that these eastern regions had been imperfectly Brāhmaṇized. In a situation like this the apprehension that they might lose their culture and creed obsessed the minds of the Aryans. Those that were in the Middle country or those that were in regions far away from it, realized the imperative need of collecting and compiling the elements of their social heritage. This social heritage comprised primarily rites and ceremonies of vedic worship, for, it was this that distinguished the Aryan from the non-Aryan who had no rites. The need was also felt as Prof. Eggeling says, of a "more uniform system of worship,"[27] and this led to "the first attempts at a systematic arrangement of the entire ceremonial of worship and the definite distribution of sacrificial duties among four classes of priests, viz. the Adhvaryu or performer of the material part of the sacrifice ; the Udgātri or chanter of hymns ; the Hotri or reciter of solemn sacrificial prayers and the Brāhmaṇa or the superintendent of the entire performance."[28] This systematization as well as definite division of sacrificial duties were calculated to benefit those who ran the risk of forgetting or losing them in the welter of non-Aryan customs and cults as those who specialized in the art of sacrifice. And that led to the explanation, rearrangement and elaboration of vedic rites — a task that demanded the best intellect, and imagination of those who were supposed to have retained the original culture intact, and at the same time could command plenty of leisure and erudition. Such exactly were the people of the Middle country,[29] where "the sacrifices were perfectly

[26] *C.H.I.*, p. 117. [27] *Sat. Br.*, *S.B.E.*, Vol. XII, p.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. xx. [29] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 14.

performed" and the "speech best spoken."[30] They undertook the task — not all of them, but the Brāhmaṇas who were tending to form a caste, a sacrificial corporation; and the result was the production of the Brāhmaṇas[31] — extensive codes containing elaborate, hair-splitting explanations of the vedic ritual, and speculations on the meaning of the Mantras.[32]

With the growth of this literature a new era opened in the history of Aryan religion and society. The broad outlines as well as the minute details of religious and social requirements were settled once for all. For it is remarkable that "when the Brāhmaṇas were brought into that form in which we possess them now, not only the whole Kalpa (i.e. the way of performing the sacrificial ceremonies) was settled, save some minor points, but even the symbolical and mystical meaning of the majority of rites."[33] It is true that their spirit was vitiated by too great a love for "symbolical interpretation and speculative reason" but yet there seems to be some justification for it.[34] The Aryans in their anxiety to preserve the purity of their early traditions, rites and ceremonies and pass them on in the same manner to posterity did not choose to, and perhaps could not, discriminate between, what was purely popular or secular and religious. Every bit of their ancient customs, rites and ceremonies now appeared to them to be full of significance. That instinct which leads to ancestor-worship and invests the past with colour and sanctity, transformed the character of the heritage of the Aryans. But many of their ancient traditions, rites and ceremonies had been by now forgotten and little understood. Nor was it that the people of Āryāvarta preserved their vedic traditions and rites in perfect purity; it is quite likely that even they had forgotten or half-remembered some of the rites and ceremonies, customs and traditions. That accounts for the frantic attempt made to explain every little rite and ceremony. No matter whether a ceremony was really connected with vedic worship or popular pastime, whether a particular custom was actually of a religious character or of magical import, all were treated equally and explained and imparted to the people with a halo of sanctity about them. Popular rites like the Rājasūya and the Vājapeya, or the magical rites like the

[30] *C.H.I.*, Vol. I, p. 118. [31] Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 395.
[32] Dr. Haug's *Introduction to the Ai Br.*, pp. 3–4.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 7. [34] Winternitz, *History of Indian literature*, p. 188.

Aśvamedha were all given a religious colouring,[35] assumed the magnitude of big sacrifices and thus acquired a sanctity that had far-reaching effect. Lest foreign or profane elements should enter into them great stress was laid upon the correct performance of the rites only by those who specialized in it. Hence the ritual text-books or the Brāhmaṇas contained "practical sacrificial directions (Vidhi) explanations (Arthavāda) exegetical, mythological or polemical, and theological or philosophical speculations on the nature of things (Upaniṣads)."[36]

However great might have been the utility of the Brāhmaṇas in preserving vedic culture, they are responsible for circumscribing the scope of social and religious growth. The complexity of their ceremonial consumed all the energies of a class, which could better have been directed to creative ends. Take for example the Aśvamedha. In the time of the Ṛg-Veda[37] it required only six priests (Hota, Adhvaryu, Avayāja, Agnimiṇḍha, Grabagrabha and Saṃstar) to perform, while in the period of the Brāhmaṇas it was developing to be one of the most costly and lengthy ceremonials. "The Agnistoma, which was the most simple soma sacrifice required for its performance already at the time of the Brāhmaṇas . . . sixteen officiating priests."[38] Indeed the social life of the Aryans came to be identified with a round of rites and ceremonies, and it was these that tended to kill all creative faculties of the Aryan mind.

The rushing and vivacious life of the vedic Aryans was arrested and it began to meander sluggishly within its own channels, and these channels were the creations of the Brāhmaṇas. Every Aryan was called upon to conform to the Brāhmaṇical ritual and regulate his life by the Brāhmaṇical precepts. Non-conformity spelt disaster for that might mean absorption into the non-Aryan fold. The full significance, and the implicit faith in the utility of this conformity would be fully comprehended, if it is borne in mind, that the Indo-Aryan had the greatest contempt for the colour and cult of the non-Aryan "of the black descent,"[39] and dreaded nothing more than his absorption into them. This contempt and this dread

[35] *C.H.I.*, pp. 141–2.

[36] Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 202.

[37] *R.V.* I–162–5. [38] *Introduction to Ai. Br.* p. 3. (Dr. Haug's trans.)

[39] *R.V.*, i, 101, 5 ; *R.V.*, ii, 11, 18 ; *R.V.*, iv, 28, 4 ; *R.V.*, ii 20, 7 ; *R.V.*, iv 16, 9, etc.

explains as to why such scrupulous care and attention was bestowed not only upon the correct preservation and performance of the rites, but even on the correct pronunciation of the words used there.[40] Further the Yajña or sacrifice had long come to be regarded as wielding the highest creative powers,[41] and Yajña consisted of a number of rites and ceremonies. Thus when the ancient rites and ceremonies, compiled, explained and elaborated in the Brāhmaṇas acquired the most sacred character and the highest creative powers, and when it was regarded that the performance of these rites and ceremonies only preserved the Aryan cult and colour from being swallowed up by the non-Aryan, a religion of ritual or ritualism came into existence. And since the Brāhmaṇas specialized in the knowledge and art of ritual, they were conceded the highest honour and the highest spiritual power also. The Indo-Aryans placed them at the head of their society. We are told in the Ṛg-Veda[42] that the king who honoured a Brāhmaṇa and employed him attained to great prosperity, and that they alone can most effectively intercede with gods.[43] But the Atharva Veda shows them in their glory. Perfect undecaying power is attained by the prayer of the priests ;[44] by that means kingdoms are secured and enemies defeated,[45] while any molestation of the Brāhmaṇa, any injury or insult, spells disaster to the oppressor even if he be a king.[46] The climax is reached when it is asserted that "there are two kinds of gods ; indeed, the gods are the gods ; and the Brāhmaṇas who have studied and teach sacred lore are the human gods."[47] That is in the Śatapatha. Earlier still in the Taittirīya Saṃhitā we read that there are two types of gods — those that are worshipped in their absence and those that are worshipped in their presence. The Brāhmaṇa belongs to the latter class.[48]

It is thus that the expansion of the Aryans out of their Saptasindhu habitat resulted first in the crystallization of the fluid vedic classes into castes, and secondly in the elaboration of vedic rites

[40] Muir, I, pp. 293–94, Ragozin, *V.I.*, p. 386.
[41] *R.V.*, i, 93, 5 ; *R.V.*, x, 90, 7–16 ; *R.V.*, x, 92, 10.
[42] *R.V.*, iv, 50, 8 & 9.
[43] *R.V.*, iii, 53, 9 & 12 ; *R.V.*, vii, 33, 2 & 3 & 5 ; *R.V.*, vii, 83, 4.
[44] *A.V.*, iii, 19, 1. [45] *A.V.*, iv, 40, 2.
[46] *A.V.*, v, 18, 1–7 ; *A.V.*, v, 9, 3–5 ; *A.V.*, v, 19, 12–15 ; etc.
[47] *Sat. Br.*, II, 2, 2, 6. [48] *Taitt. Sam.* i, 7, 3–1.

and ceremonies, customs and traditions into a system of ritual. Together they envisaged a life that had its details defined and coloured in the texture of a sacrificial ritualism which was the religion of the age. Indeed life in its manifold expressions found its significance in the context of this religion. And in this context alone Indo-Aryan polity could be studied, for it was the sacrificial ritualism that substantially influenced its nature and lines of development.

BRĀHMAṆIC RITUALISM AND THE STATE

It has been already noted that of many kinds of vedic rites some were connected with vedic worship and hence were of religious origin. There were others not connected with vedic worship, and hence were of popular origin. In the latter category could be included the rites and ceremonies associated with the institution of kingship. The most important among them were the Rājasūya, the Vājapeya, and the Aśvamedha, and the king had to perform one or more, according to his rank and power. He could not dispense with them lest he should lose his kingdom.[49] For kings like Janamejaya Parīkṣit, Śāryāta Mānava, Ambaṣṭhya, Sudās Paijavana, Anga, Bharata Dauṣyanti, etc. performed this anointing ceremony, i.e. Rājasūya and thereby "went round the earth completely conquering on every side."[50] Even by the knowledge of it kings like Durmukha Pāñcāla and Atyarāti Jānaṃtapi did similar feats of strength.[51] Hence his accession to the throne must be celebrated by the Abhiṣeka or anointing ceremony and at each elevation of his power and status he must perform a sacrifice prescribed for the purpose. For example after being anointed or crowned as king, Bharata Dauṣyanti and Anga conquered the earth, and to celebrate their conquests "offered the horse in sacrifice."[52] Again the verdict of the Śatapatha is that by offering Rājasūya he (the aspirant) becomes king, and by the Vājapeya, he becomes emperor, and the office of the king is the lower and that of the emperor higher.[53] The Rājasūya was "fundamentally a popular rite for anointing the king," and the popular element of the Vājapeya lay "in the prominence in it of a chariot race, once probably the main element" and Aśvamedha was

[49] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 23. [50] *Ibid.*, 21, 22 & 23. [51] *Ibid.*, 23.
[52] *Ibid.*, 22 & 23. [53] *Sat. Br.*, V, I, I, 13.

"at bottom the elaboration of a simple rite of sympathetic magic."[54] Now they had become part of Brāhmaṇic ritualism, and their performance was obligatory. They had become associated with royalty, and royalty received its religious sanction through their performance. By now they had become so elaborate as to require years and the services of numerous priests for their performance. The whole process was a long drawn series of rites and ceremonies, as expensive as they were solemn. The religious implication of these political rites or royal sacrifices transformed the character of kingship, which as we have noted in the last chapter, was a secular institution. It now ceased to be purely that and acquired a somewhat religious character owing to the fact that the institution of kingship became associated with, and received its recognition from religion.

This was the age when religion ruled the life of the Aryan, and religion consisted in the punctilious performance of vedic rites and ceremonies prescribed for various castes and orders. Naturally the ceremonies that instituted or inaugurated kingship gave a sacred character to kingship itself. But while clothing kingship with its own hues or sanctifying royalty, religion came to dominate it; and the domination over royalty meant the domination over the Rāṣṭra or kingdom. Thus was the state drawn perhaps unwittingly into the orbit of religion, and remained under its tutelage for a considerable time.

Now royal office and power or kingship as an institution derived its effectiveness from an organization, that is, government, which like kingship acquired a new significance. Leaving the institutional basis of royalty to be studied later let us now examine some of the details of the ceremonies that accompanied, for example, the coronation of the king or the attainment of paramountcy by him in order to elucidate the significance of the religious sanction, which was essential for royalty to function in society.

Of the Rājasūya it has been said that it is rather a complex ceremony which includes among other rites the performance of a number of Soma sacrifices of different kinds. The Vājapeya or "drink of strength", on the other hand, is recognized as one of the different forms (Saṃsthā) which a single Soma sacrifice may take .... Unlike the other forms of Soma sacrifice it has some striking

[54] *C.H.I.*, pp. 141–2.

features of its own which stamp it, like the Rājasūya as a political ceremony.[55] The Rājasūya is of three kinds, viz. Abhiṣeka, Punarabhiṣeka and Mahābhiṣeka and the "principal part of all these ceremonies consists in the sprinkling of holy water over the head of the kings which is called Abhiṣeka."[56] The Abhiṣeka or anointing of the king brings out in the clearest manner the relation between royalty and religion. Before being anointed, the king has to be raised to the status of Brāhmaṇa ;[57] he must be "of the true sacrifice", "of true religion", "like the Varuṇa in truth and falsehood" and "true king."[58] Then he mounts the throne with the formula : "I mount for kingship, for overlordship, for paramount rule — for suzerainty, for supremacy, for pre-eminence."[59] Next comes the anointing ceremony and thus he drinks Surā.[60] The coronation oath following thereafter is perhaps one of the most significant parts of the ceremony. The king solemnly addresses the priest to the effect that he will not play him false. That is to say, his conduct as also that of his government will be in conformity with the Brāhmaṇical religion.[61] After all these the king is proclaimed, for "the Kṣatriya, if not proclaimed, cannot show his strength."[62] These ceremonies serve to announce and confirm the religious affiliation of kingship. Indeed that is suggested at the very beginning of the Rājasūya. "Prajāpati" it is said "created sacrifice ; after the creation of the sacrifice the holy power and the lordly power were created."[63] "Kingship is the lordly power" and it has to seek the sanction of holy power by sacrifice.[64] Such in brief is the significance of the Rājasūya in regard to kingship.

The chief features of the Vājapeya are the drinking of Surā and a chariot race ; after which the king ascends the throne. The Adhvaryu while spreading the goat skin on a throne of Udumbara wood says to the king "This is thy kingship !" and with this he — the Adhvaryu endows him with royal power. Such are the main features of the Rājasūya and Vājapeya. There were also the Aśvamedha

[55] *Introduction to Sat. Br., S.B.E.*, xli, p. xi.

[56] Haug's *Introduction to Ai. Br.*, p. 66. [57] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 23.

[58] Satyasava, Satyadharmā, Satyānṛte-Varuṇaḥ and Satyarājā. *Tai, Br.*, I, vii, 10, 1–6.

[59] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 6. [60] *Ibid.*, 7 & 8. [61] *Ibid.*, 15. [62] *Ibid.*, 17.

[63] Prajāpatir Yajnam Asrijata, Yajnam Sriṣtam anu brahmakṣetre asrijyetām. *Ai. Br.*, vii, 19. [64] *Ibid.*, 21 & 22.

and the Śrautrāmaṇi[65] — the latter being performed when a king was deposed. The Aitareya gives prominence to the Rājasūya and also enumerates the names of kings who performed this enviable ceremony.[66] The Śatapatha mentions the names of thirteen kings who had performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice.[67]

It is thus that "lordly power", i.e. the Kṣatra or royalty receives the recognition of the "holy power," i.e. Brahma or divine authority. The latter is, in all tangible reference the religious authority, wielded by Brāhmaṇas. Political power therefore, was, in principle, to function in subordination to religious authority, which it should not play false. The state thus became a subsidiary institution, religion being not merely the primary but the absolute and ubiquitous institution of society. Such was the effect of Brāhmaṇic ritualism on the Indo-Aryan polity of the age.

RELATIVE POSITION OF CASTES

We have so far indicated the effect of Brāhmaṇic ritualism on the state. Before we proceed to study the state in regard to its form and function in this epoch we may ascertain the influence of Brāhmaṇic ritualism on the orders of society. Its rise helped to define the relative position of castes. It was regarded for example that "the Brāhmaṇa alone of the four castes has the right of consuming things offered in sacrifice."[68] The exaltation of the Brāhmaṇa over the Rājanya, is further indicated when it is said that "the gods do not eat the food offered by a king who has no Purohita. Wherefore . . . the king should put forward a Brāhmaṇa."[69] In relation to the Kṣatriya the Brāhmaṇa is always regarded superior,[70] and both the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya, superior to the Vaiśya.[71] The Vaiśya is a tributary to another, "to be eaten by another," "to be oppressed at will"; while the Śūdra is the "servant of another, to be removed at will, to be slain at will."[72] But despite this definition of the relative position of castes there was a good deal of laxity. Apart from the

[65] A. Hillebrandt, *Ritual Litteratur*, pp. 159–161.
[66] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 21, 22, 23.
[67] *Sat. Br.*, xiii, 5, 4.
[68] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 19, 1.
[69] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 24.
[70] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 15; *Ai. Br.*, viii, 9, 6; *Sat. Br.*, v, 1, 1, 12; v, 4, 4, 15, etc.
[71] *Ai. Br.*, ii, 33; *Sat. Br.*, vi, 4, 4, 13; *Panch. Br.*, ii, 8, 2.
[72] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 29. (Dr. Keith's translation).

fact that a Rājanya "when consecrated enters into the condition of a Brāhmaṇa,"[73] that he becomes as it were a Brāhmaṇa if he starts his sacrifice in the spring,[74] and that when sacrificing a Rājanya or a Vaiśya has to be addressed as a Brāhmaṇa[75] there seems to have been some sort of a tacit recognition by society of the competence of every man to change his caste. Otherwise, how could the children of a Kṣatriya become Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya or Śūdra in the second or third generation ?[76] Or how could the Śūdra be admitted to the proud privilege of Aryan sacrifices ?[77] That was possible because the function and not birth was yet the hall-mark of caste. "The Brāhmaṇa who knows the three Purohitas, and their three appointers, is a (proper) Purohita, and should be nominated to office . . . and he who does not know this is to be rejected."[78] Further "he who has learning, is the Brāhmaṇa Ṛṣi."[79] Kavaṣa Ailūṣa was honoured by the Brāhmaṇas for his knowledge even though he had been cast out as the son of a slave-girl,[80] and Janaka, a Kṣatriya was raised to the status of a Brāhmaṇa.[81] It is evident that even in this age, function rather than mere birth was, regarded as a determining factor of caste.

RIVALRY BETWEEN THE BRĀHMAṆAS AND KṢATRIYAS

A logical concomitant to this theory of function was the emergence of a corporate spirit among certain castes. That spirit was stronger in the first two social orders, that is, Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, than in the third, i.e. Vaiśyas, whose number was too large and profession too varied to allow them to develop a strong corporate spirit. The "hereditary occupations" of the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas which admitted comparatively of lesser variety soon helped them to form a "closed body" each.[82] The consciousness of their corporate existence and therefore of their power, led to an

[73] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 23.
[74] *Sat. Br.*, xiii, 4, 1, 3.
[75] *Kātyāyan Sūtra*, vii, 4, 12.
[76] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 29.
[77] *Sat. Br.*, i, 1, 4, 12. Explaining the modification in the use of the sacrificial formula "Haviṣkṛd-ehi", i.e. Come Oh you, who has to offer oblations — the *Sat. Br.* has it that in case of Śūdra sacrificing, the formula should be "Haviṣkṛd-ādhāva," i.e. to come running, etc.
[78] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 27.
[79] *Taitt. Sam.*, vi, 6, 1, 4.
[80] *Ai. Br.*, ii, 19.
[81] *Sat. Br.*, xi, 6, 2, 10.
[82] *V.I.*, Vol. ii, p. 264.

unhealthy rivalry between them. There arose discord between the two orders that had been originally designed to supplement each other.[83] The Kṣatriya smarted under the superiority of the Brāhmaṇa, and a faint note of protest was heard here and there which grew in volume and strength with the passage of time.[84] On one occasion a king Viśvantarā turned out the priests from his sacrifice.[85] On another occasion the Brāhmaṇas are found to be instructed by Rājanyas like Ajātaśatru and Janaka.[86] Gradually the Brāhmaṇa is considered to follow as a matter of course in the train of the king[87] and "became an object of respect after the king."[88] This growing spirit of rivalry between the two highest orders marked the introduction of a centrifugal tendency in society, which reached its culmination in a schism later on. This was brought about by the Kṣatriyas mostly, and manifested itself in the social thought taking a distinct turn. It was characterized by a simplicity and synthesis, that was only equalled by its depth and liberalism. This spirit of synthesis and liberalism called for new ideals of social adjustment and religious reformation, which were embodied in the two new religions of India — Jainism and Buddhism.

REGROUPING OF TRIBES AND FORMATION OF NEW STATES

Now let us turn to examine the effect of Indo-Aryan expansion on the form and function of their state. The outstanding political phenomenon at the opening of this period is a regrouping of tribes and formation of new states. A number of hitherto unheard of peoples like the Uśīnaras, the Vaśas and the Kurupañcālas are noticed for the first time and are found to have occupied the "Middle country", while the Uttara Kurus and the Uttara Madras occupy the regions to the north of it.[89] In relation to those in the Middle country there were "the Nīcyas and the Apācyas in the western countries"[90] whose identity is rather uncertain. It seems, however, that they were the inhabitants of the Indus valley and the Punjab.[91]

[83] *Sat. Br.*, iv, 1, 4, 4 & 5.

[84] Refer for a full discussion of this topic to Dr. Muir's *Original Sanskrit Text Series*, Vol. I, Ch. IV.

[85] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 27.

[86] *Sat. Br.*, xiv, 5, 1, 1 ; *Ibid.*, 9, 1, 1 ; *Sat. Br.*, xi, 6, 2 ; 1.

[87] *Sat. Br.*, i, 2, 3, 2.

[88] *Sat. Br.*, v, 4, 2, 7.

[89] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 14.

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] *V.I.*, Vol. I, p. 456.

As opposed to the peoples of the western countries, there were others of the east, known by the designation of the Prācyas,[92] probably denoting the Kāśīs, Kośalas, Vidéhas, and the Magadhas.[93] Lastly in the south there were the Śatvants,[94] who perhaps were known as the Bhojas also.[95] They were once upon a time the enemies of the Bharatas.[96] Perhaps further south lived the Vidarbhas whose ruler Bhīma was a paramount king[97] and beyond them were the Āndhras. These were some of the most famous peoples of the Brāhmaṇic age.

It is difficult to trace the history of their growth, but it seems pretty certain that the double process of expansion and integration must have produced this result. For example the Kuru-Pañcālas were an amalgam of several tribes. The Bharatas of the Ṛg-Veda[98] appear by this time to have merged in the Kuru-Pañcālas[99] and so have the peoples called the Krivis in the Ṛg-Veda[100] and the Śriñjayas.[101] The Uttara Kurus who lived beyond the Himalayas according to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa[102] and possibly in Kāśmir[103] might have been a branch of the Kuru Pañcālas. The constituents of the Vidéhas and the Añgas are highly uncertain. These new tribes formed new states, and named them after themselves. For example there were the kingdoms of the Kurus, the Pañcālas, the Kāśīs, the Uśīnaras, the Vaśas, the Bhojas, etc. and the formation of new kingdoms brought into prominence entirely new localities. "There are fairly clear references to Āsandīvant the Kuru capital, Kāmpīla the capital of Pañcāla in Madhyadeśa, to Kauśāmbī, and to Kāśi, the capital of the Kāśis on the river Vāraṇāvatī, from which in later times Vārānasi is derived. So we hear in this period for the first time of the Vināśana, the place of disappearance of the Sarasvatī in the desert, and Plakṣa Prasravaṇa the place forty-four days' journey distant where the river reappears. . . ."[104]

[92] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 14 ; *Sat. Br.*, i, 7, 3, 8 ; *Sat. Br.*, xiii, 8, 1, 5 ; 2, 1
[93] Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 939 — note.
[94] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 14.
[95] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Vol. I, p. 39.
[96] *Ai. Br.*, ii, 25.
[97] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 34.
[98] *R.V.*, iii, 33, 11 & 12 ; *R.V.*, vii, 33, 6 ; etc.
[99] Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 409.
[100] *Sat. Br.*, xiii, 5, 4, 7
[101] *C.H.I.*, p. 118.
[102] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 14.
[103] *V.I.*, Vol. I, p. 84.
[104] *C.H.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 117–118.

RISE OF EXTENSIVE KINGDOMS

And the chief feature of these new kingdoms was their large size. They were far bigger than the kingdoms of the Vedic times — kingdoms that rose and fell in the Sapta Sindhu country. The kingdoms of this period were the product partly of the process of integration and expansion of the Aryan tribes and partly of the physical features of the country, watered by the Ganges and its tributaries. In the vast rolling plains of the Ganges and the Jumna nature has not raised any formidable barrier to obstruct the free movement of man. Consequently tribes loved to expand, and to control vast areas of fertile land. The result was the formation of extensive kingdoms. And once these extensive kingdoms had risen there opened a period of conflict which marked their struggle for supremacy. Ultimately as a result of the conflict there emerged the first empire, as in the time of the Mauryas. In the rest of the country — in the Punjab, north of Āryāvarta, north of Bihar, and in the Deccan where the physical barriers were too many and varied, much smaller states arose and showed a great exuberance of political life. Some of them were even tribal oligarchies. But most of the states in the Gangetic plains, which were ruled by kings bore the names of the tribes, so that in the consecration ceremony the king-elect was addressed as the king "of such and such a people."[105]

FORMS OF THE STATE

There seem to have arisen various forms of grouping for political purposes. We get many political terms — names perhaps of new forms of state — like Sāmrājya, Bhaujya, Svārājya, Vairājya and Rājya.[106] There is however a good deal of difference of opinion about their exact meaning. While Dr. Keith understands "overlordship" by Sāmrājya; "paramount rule" by Bhaujya; "self-rule" by Svārājya; "sovereignty" by Vairājya; and "kingship" by Rājya,[107] Mr. Jaiswal interprets them as so many mutually exclusive constitutions. According to him the "Sāmrājya" literally means "a combination of monarchies" or a federal imperialism around one

[105] *Sat. Br.*, V, 4, 2, 3. [106] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 14 & 12.
[107] *Rig. Brāhmaṇas*, translated by Keith, p. 329.

dominant member."[108] It can be fairly accepted that these terms suggest varying forms of political organization. Sāmrājya as Dr. Keith suggests was a loose type of empire in which the overlordship or paramountcy of one state was recognised. Similarly Svārājya, might have been a form of self-rule, obtaining in autonomous tribal states or oligarchies. The meaning of the Rājya is obvious — the state over which there was a king.

The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa indicates the localities where these forms of state were in existence. We are told that the political organization in the eastern countries was called Sāmrājya ; in the south amongst the Satvants the Bhaujya ; in the west among the Nīcyas, the Svārājya ; in the north beyond the Himalayas among the Uttara Kurus and the Uttara Madras the Vairājya ; and in the middle country among the Kuru Pañcālas the Rājya.[109] Hence Jaiswal concludes that "except the Doab and Magadha the whole country was republican."[110] It is too sweeping a statement to be accepted before the exact situation and nature of these states are determined. To determine that, however, appears extremely difficult owing to the uncertain and meagre evidence, we possess. But whether the whole country except the Doab and Magadha was republican or not it is pretty certain that monarchy had gained a firm footing in the country when the Brāhmaṇas were composed and was growing in favour. That was the most recognized political institution in the age of the Brāhmaṇas. It had received the utmost attention of society and religion. That was why, as we have already observed, the ceremonies of royal consecration had acquired a religious significance ; and the Rājasūya and the Vājapéya were political sacrifices par excellence.

THE NON-MONARCHICAL STATE

But nevertheless, it appears that there were many non-monarchical states in the country and they did not find favour with the people of the middle country or that part of the Aryan pale, which produced the Brāhmaṇas and set the norm for the rest.[111] That

[108] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Part I, pp. 39–40 ; 92, 94 ; 137, 138.
[109] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 14.
[110] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. I, pp. 137–38.
[111] *V.I.*, Vol. I, p. 165.

was the orthodox part which was regarded to have retained the purity of Aryan cult and colour. To them monarchy commended itself. In other parts of India, Jaiswal maintains, there were non-monarchical states flourishing. Far away in the south, beyond the Narmadā and severed by numerous mountains and forests were the Satvants, i.e. the Yādavas who had the Bhaujya form of government. Its speciality consisted in this, that there were many leaders like the Athenian Archons, and leadership was not hereditary. "Sovereignty rested in the Bhoja leaders."[112] Far away in the west where the stream of immigrants kept flowing in, the government was called Svārājya or self-rule. Self-rule or self-government is typical of a free and living people, and it will be seen in the subsequent chapters that the Indus valley, was the seat of many such peoples. By this time the Persian invasion had not taken place, but the free intercourse of the people there with the immigrants had created divergent tendencies in political practice. It is possible they were self-governing tribes. Among them all were equal and the president or Svārāt was the elect of the equals.[113] As in the west, there was the Vairājya form in vogue in the extreme north of the Aryan pale, chiefly among the Uttara Kurus and Uttara Madras. Here perhaps there was no king, the whole people being considered as the receptacle of royalty. Thus there may have been as the Aitareya mentions, three different forms of non-monarchical government all flourishing outside of what was known as the "eternal middle established quarter,"[114] i.e. the Aryan land par excellence, the Āryāvarta, the land of the Kuru-Pañcālas, the Vaśas and the Uśīnaras. They were deviations from the political norm, monarchy, which obtained in this eternal Aryan mid-land. Since here were composed the Brāhmaṇas and nearly all the sacred books of the Hindus of this period we could hardly expect to get any detailed information of the non-monarchical types from these works. The different grades of kingship[115] the functions of the king,[116] the royal consecration ceremonies, and many other things have been detailed. We are also told that "the kings of the Kuru-Pañcālas performed the Rājasūya"[117]

[112] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. I, p. 90.
[113] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. I.
[114] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 14.
[115] *Sat. Br.*, v, 1, 1, 13.
[116] *Sat. Br.*, ix, 3, 3, 10; *Sat. Br.*, v, 4, 4, 5; *Ibid.*, 2, 1, 25.
[117] *Ibid.*, 5, 2, 5.

which is a suggestion of the ideal that others in other parts should follow. But of the other parts of India nothing definite can be said.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MONARCHICAL STATE

As regards the organization of the monarchical states it is painful to remark that here the paucity of reliable information is on a level with its confused character. Though the information is scanty and confused, yet it points to a more developed condition of things than what we noted in the previous chapter. The nucleus of a monarchical state was now the king and his council of ministers. The popular assemblies of the early vedic age, which could work in small tribal states gradually disappeared and they were replaced by the more convenient body of the Ratnins, and the council of the royal ministers. The Ratnins were summoned perhaps for important state functions, and the Rāja-sabhā, was the royal court[118] into which came the king's chieftains, men of distinction and certainly the royal ministers in charge of actual administration. This Rāja-sabhā now grows conspicuous and the king is in constant touch with it. The body called the Rājakṛtas in the Atharva Veda is known now by the significant name of Rājakartāras[119] some of whom were the Ratnins as also the royal ministers.

The Ratnins or the jewel-bearers of the state seem to have been a heterogeneous body containing persons of different denominations. They are (*i*) Sénānī — the commander of the army ; (*ii*) Purohita — the priest ; (*iii*) Mahiṣī — the queen ; (*iv*) Sūta — the chronicler ; (*v*) Grāmaṇī — the head of the village ; (*vi*) Kṣattri — the chamberlain ; (*vii*) Saṃgrahitṛ — the master of the treasury ; (*viii*) Bhāgadugha — the collector of revenue ; (*ix*) Akṣāvāpa — "the officer in charge of state accounts";[120] (*x*) Govikartṛ — the grand carver and (*xi*) Palagala — the courier. Some of these were important functionaries of the state, and as Jaiswal suggests, they might have represented the different orders of society.[121] For, it is said that the Purohita was always a Brāhmaṇ, the Grāmaṇī or Vaiṣya Grāmaṇī is said to have represented the Vaiśyas, the Palagala represented

[118] *Sat. Br.*, iii, 3, 4, 14. [119] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 17.
[120] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. II, p. 19.
[121] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. II, p. 20.

the Śūdra and the king-elect himself represented the Kṣatriya class. The Ratnins took an important part in the consecration ceremony of the king. It was before them that the king took his coronation oath administered to him by the priest and they were therefore called "Rājakartāras." In the Śatapatha we are told that the Grāmaṇī and the heralds were non-royal king-makers.[122] This shows that there were two classes of king-makers, viz. the royal and the non-royal. The Mahiṣī was certainly among the former. The importance of the Ratnins in the coronation of the king is brought out by the fact that the king-elect, after "having taken up both (the Gārhapatya and Āhavanīya) fires on the two kindling sticks" visited the houses of the Ratnins, one on each day.[123] This took him eleven days for there were eleven Ratnins. After this he became their king and made them his faithful followers.[124] Naturally we could suppose that they proclaimed the king to the people.[125] The Ratnins were friends or followers of the king, who helped him in carrying on his government.

HEREDITARY KINGSHIP

These developments appear to foreshadow a change in the character of kingship itself. The existence of the Ratnins signifies the development of an executive in the realm. And with the growing size of the kingdoms the power of the executive was imperceptibly growing. It is safe to infer that there must have been a large number of officials to aid the king and his council of ministers in their administrative work. We come across also the Rājamātrā, i.e. the vicegerent of the king, possibly officers of the type of the modern governor or head of the district. It appears therefore that the kingdoms containing districts and provinces had come into being. All these suggest that an administrative machinery had been framed, which must have aided the king to centralize power, and as this centralization became more and more complete his office tended to be hereditary. A hereditary kingship now came to take the place of the almost generally elective kingship of the early vedic age. For, in the Śatapatha we are told that the son of a king is to

[122] *Sat. Br.* iii, 4, 1, 7.
[123] *Sat. Br.*, v, 3, 1, 1–11.
[124] *Ibid.*, 3, 1, 12.
[125] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 17.

perpetuate his line,[126] and "a kingdom of ten generations"[127] is mentioned. Thus with the rise of extensive kingdoms kingship tended to be hereditary. It actually meant the growth of royal power.

VILLAGE AUTONOMY IN EXTENSIVE KINGDOMS

The growth of royal power reacted adversely on village autonomy to a certain degree. Not that the autonomous institutions of the village became defunct; the village council continued to operate but the leader of the village, the Grāmaṇī had become definitely an attendant of the king,[128] though he was in theory the king-maker. Perhaps he was the intermediary between the government and the people. He may have been responsible for the payment of village tribute to the royal officials, and must have been accountable to them for peace and order in the village. In fact he represented the royal authority in the village, as well as the village in the royal government. This should not lead us to infer that he was the little tyrant he became under the British. The village council was really a powerful body, and social backing and public opinion were always behind it. The centralization of power seems to have affected the village autonomy to this extent that the Grāmaṇī had become "a nominee of the king rather than a popularly elected officer. But the post may have been sometimes hereditary, and sometimes nominated and elective."[129] The post was very much coveted by the Vaiśya who did not always get it. Apart from this the village showed an improvement in other ways. Roads had been constructed and connected villages. The boundaries of villages were well marked now.[130] All these only go to prove that there had arisen a strong need for contact between the central power and the countryside, and between the villages themselves. That is a necessity in extensive states for ensuring good government. Equally necessary is also a clear demarcation of rural groupings.

KING THE SUSTAINER OF THE STATE-RĀṢṬRABHṚT

It has been said, the king received the formal recognition at the hands of the Ratnins who besides being ministers represented the

[126] *Sat. Br.*, v, 4, 2, 8. [127] *Sat. Br.*, xii, 9, 3, 3. [128] *Sat. Br.*, iii, 4, 1, 7.
[129] *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 247. [130] *Sat. Br.*, xiii, 2, 4, 2 & 4.

different orders of the society. But all of them could not be ministers of state. The ministers were only the Sénānī, Purohita, Kṣattri, Saṃgrahitṛ, Bhāgadugha, and Akṣāvāpa, who except the Purohita looked to the administration of the different departments of the state. There is no minister in charge of law and justice in the list of the Ratnins. Therefore it seems that the king, who was the "Guardian of Law" was actually in charge of law and justice. Improving on the vedic tradition it is now asserted that "Varuṇa, the Lord of the Law, makes him (the king) the Lord of the Law; and that truly is the supreme state when one is Lord of the Law (Dharmapati)."[131]

In the vedic age the king was the "Protector of the people" as also the upholder of the Rāṣṭra.[132] Similarly now he was the "sustainer of the state."[133] He now ruled over big states as the king "of such and such a people."[134] That did not mean that these vast states contained only single peoples — like the Kurus or Uśīnaras. These states like the vedic states were not of a homogenous nature. There must have been one dominant tribe whose king was the king of the state as well as of all the tribes living there.

But whatever the king conquered he did, as the chief of his people. For, otherwise the people would not be considered as the lord of the entire kingdom at least in theory. But this designation of people was rather a colourless term, for by now the chief basis of organization was neither racial nor tribal, but social and political. The caste as the basis of Indo-Aryan society was gradually absorbing all other interests; and political needs brought about the state. These two were wiping out the lines of tribal organization. At any rate this theoretical importance of the people had a great restraining influence on the autocracy of the king. It is alleged for example, the king could assign a settlement only with the approval of his people.[135] But he is now the "eater of the Viś"; that is to say, he had a right to realize tribute from the people, whom he protected from enemies. He also safeguarded, like the vedic king the privileges of the Brāhmaṇs, and was like him the guardian of law.[136] Because of these

[131] *Sat. Br.*, v, 3, 3, 9.
[132] *R. V.*, iii, 43, 5,— Gopāṃ Janasya; *R. V.*, x, 173, 2 — Rāṣṭramudhāraya.
[133] *Sat. Br.*, ix. 4, 1, 1. Rāṣṭra-bhṛt.
[134] *Sat. Br.*, v. 4, 2, 3. Cf. Pāyurviśa, *R. V.*, iv., 4, 3.
[135] *Sat. Br.*, vii, 1, 1, 4. [136] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 17.

responsibilities he was called sustainer of the state — Rāṣṭrabhṛt,[137] and was highly respected and suffered to have wide measures of freedom and initiative. He is no more like the vedic king, depending upon the free-will offering of the people though with regard to the Brāhmaṇs his claim to tribute is sometimes disputed.[138] He still retains the supreme command of the army.[139] Thus his powers of maintaining the law with which went justice and administration, of realizing revenue and of controlling the military, made the king extremely strong in spite of his limitations.

SOVEREIGNTY OF THE KING

In spite of his limitations it is asserted that the king is the sovereign, that the sovereign is the guardian of law, and that as such he cannot do wrong and is exempt from the liabilities of law. His exemption from the liabilities of law is beautifully symbolised by a ceremony during his consecration. The Adhvaryu and his assistants "slightly strike him with sticks on the back! — by beating him with sticks (daṇḍa) they guide him safely over judicial punishment (daṇḍabadha): whence the king is exempt from punishment (adaṇḍya)."[140] This great distinction of royalty, this exalted privilege of the king was no mere juggling with words, or a mere matter of ceremonies. It was founded on solid reasons, that would stand comparison with modern political concepts. He is Adaṇḍya, that is, above judicial punishment "for he is not capable of all and every speech, nor of all and every deed, but that he should speak what is right and do what is right";[141] for he is "the upholder of the sacred law"[142] "the guardian of law"[143] and the symbol of "the lordly power"[144] or sovereignty. This theory appears to be similar to the English constitutional theory that the king can do no wrong. The Hindu king could do no wrong because he was the guardian of law and the upholder of the sacred law. It was a rational expectation, not a constitutional safeguard. The king could do no wrong, because

[137] *Sat. Br.*, ix, 4, 1, 1.
[138] *Ai. Br.*, vii, 29. *Sat. Br.*, xi, 2, 6, 14; *Sat. Br.*, v, 4, 2, 3.
[139] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 16 — Senānyam.
[140] *Sat. Br.*, v, 4, 4, 7 (Eggeling's translation).
[141] *Ibid.*, 4, 4, 5.
[142] *Sat. Br.*, v, 4, 4, 5. [143] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 17 [144] *Ibid.*

his competence was limited. His competence was effective in purely administrative affairs, in the enforcement of the law. Strictly speaking he was the upholder of the law, and law had devised its own means of making itself effective. It was grounded on religious susceptibilities of the people, on moral obligations. Behind it was the enormous authority of society. Indeed society was the source of law, i.e. social customs and usage ultimately assumed the form of law. Thus originated and supported, law depended upon the royal power as an additional support. It was again the law that in a way prescribed lines of conduct of royal authority. The king could not do wrong, so long as he was within the limits of law, and so long as he was within the limits, he was supported by religion. The king was the upholder of law, because law was the upholder of the royal or lordly power or sovereignty. Royal sovereignty in this context becomes an object of religious concession. This point could be further elucidated by a reference to the concept of law.

Law, the Śatapatha said was "truth."[145] That was truth, which religion pronounced as such, and which was to be upheld by men, that is, Dharma. The logical deduction is that since the king was the lord of men, he was the guardian of Dharma or Law. Today the visible symbol of sovereignty is law, which emanates from it. In the Brāhmaṇic age the visible symbol of royal sovereignty was also law, but it emanated from a source other than royal sovereignty. That is why when the king was "the guardian of law,"[146] "the sustainer of the realm,"[147] he could not be the maker of law ; for, the justification of a king lies in his being able to carry out best any work to be done.[148] He is only the head of the executive. Naturally law emanates from society, and since society is ruled by religion, law assumes essentially a religious garb. Just as the state is fettered to the foot of the religion, so is law ; and just as the political institution has not a distinct entity of its own and is really absorbed by society so is the public law, i.e. the law of the state, inextricably interwoven into social customs, religious traditions, etc. Lordly power or power of the Sovereign, that is, of the Kṣatriya was executive power, and in the words of the Ai. Br. (viii, 17 and 18) was the "guardian" of "the Brāhmaṇs," "the law," and "order".

[145] *Sat. Br.*, vi, 7, 3, 11.
[146] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 17.
[147] *Sat. Br.*, ix, 4, 1, 1.
[148] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 12.

Thus royal sovereignty in this age was executive supremacy conceded by religion. It made autocracy of the king impossible but it also made the free development of the state impossible. There was only one autocracy in this age, that is, of religion, which pervaded the whole society. The king was the sustainer of the state, not of the society. That was the attribute of religion. Such a concept of sovereignty postulated a new theory of kingship.

BRĀHMAṆICAL THEORY OF KINGSHIP

In this context, a theory of kingship whose administrative authority and moral competence were conditioned by religious sanction would start by envisaging an ideal that would reveal the *raison de etre* of royal power. The ideal king, in other words, would be the justification of kingship. The idea was to create a political tradition by explaining the origin and justification of kingship. It was preached that kingship owed its origin to a social need leading to a popular arrangement, and the recipient of that office was a person who could best carry out the work of the people.[149]

Kingship arose first amongst gods, and the circumstances of its genesis in heaven, were naturally an echo of what happened on earth. The theory therefore starts by describing the condition of gods, in their conflict with the demons — Asuras. The former were disunited by discord ; and they thought "through our disagreement the Asuras will wax great here. Having gone apart they took council . . . they said 'Come, our dearest bodies let us deposit in the house of the king Varuṇa ; with them he may not be united, who shall transgress this, who shall seek to cause trouble.' Be it so (they replied). They deposited their bodies in the house of king Varuṇa ; that became their bodily covenant . . . . "[150] Again we are told that "when the gods had performed the guest-offering, discord befell them. They separated into four different parties, unwilling to yield to each other's excellence . . . when they were separated the Asura Rākṣas came after them and entered between them. They became aware of it — 'Forsooth, we are in an evil plight, the Asura-Rākṣas have come in between us ; we shall fall a prey to our enemies. Let us come to an agreement, and yield to the excellence of one of

[149] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 12.
[150] *Ai. Br.*, i, 24 (Dr. Keith's translation).

us!' They yielded to the excellence of Indra. They said 'well then, let us contrive so that this (concord) of ours shall be for ever imperishable!' The gods laid down together (literally "cut off together part by part") their favourite forms, and desirable powers, one after another, and said 'Thereby he shall be away from us, he shall be scattered to the winds, whosoever shall transgress this (covenant) of ours'!"[151]

How very similar is this Hindu account of the origin of kingship to the famous Social Contract theory is obvious. We have here the same idea of a covenant into which people entered to create a sovereign, in order that they might escape the evils of their pre-political state of existence. The Hindu conception of the pre-political state of existence was, like that of Hobbes, one of endless strife. By a covenant, the gods put, as did the pre-political men in the state of nature, in a common receptacle their own "favourite forms and desirable powers." And then, as Hobbes thought the covenant became "for ever imperishable," and whoever transgressed this covenant, was to be scattered to the winds. Thus as in the Social Contract theory, we have the origin of kingship or sovereignty — to the ancient Indians both the terms appeared identical in meaning — in a covenant that is indissoluble, and the nature of kingship comprising the collective powers of the community voluntarily resigned. It appears that the Indo-Aryans of the Brāhmaṇic age did not confine their interest to the matters of religion. They were interested in matters of the state, and speculated to arrive at the *raison d'être* of kingship, which as they have themselves explained arose out of human needs, viz. of putting an end to the social discord, and of securing peace in society. Kingship and therefore the state was entirely a human institution, though an air of sanctity and solemnity had been lent to it by associating it with religion. But this is only one aspect of kingship, viz. its origin.

The other aspect consists in the justification of royal power. What is the rationalé of royal authority — the justification of kingship? That is best brought out by the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. Why does the king being one, it says, rule over many?[152] That is, in the words of Laski, what are "the causes that explain the surely striking fact of a voluntary servitude of a large mass of men to a small

[151] *Sat. Br.*, iii, 4, 2.
[152] *Sat. Br.*, v, 1, 5, 14.

portion of their number." This is the crux of the political thought of all ages and of all climes. And the Indo-Aryans thus explained it. The Rājanya or king rules because he "is most manifestly of Prajāpati (the Lord of Creatures)."[153] Here lies the value of the support of religion accorded to kingship and therefore to the state. He is of the same nature as the Prajāpati, i.e. partakes of the nature of divine Lord of Creatures. He is the "most vigorous, most strong, most valiant, most perfect, who carries out any work best."[154] The king possesses the highest excellence among men ; hence he rules. He is among men what Prajāpati is among gods. This is the beginning of that political tradition which ended by preaching that the king was a great god, in human form, on earth. That was to happen long long after, but for the present this Brāhmaṇic theory of kingship certainly marked a considerable advance in political thought and practice.

MONARCHY OF THE BRĀHMAṆIC AGE

On the whole it can be safely said that the Brāhmaṇic age is marked by a pronounced growth of monarchy. The king became the "sustainer of the state", and kingship became hereditary. The king owned "fortified castles"[155] and his was "the social distinction" and "ruling power" amongst the people of the clan.[156] Elaborate ceremonies lent an air of solemnity to the royal office and dignity to the royal person. These were the preparations for the growth of absolute monarchy later on. The elements of monarchy in this age developed out of (*a*) the expansion of the Aryans into the plains of the Ganges and Jumna and (*b*) the association of kingship with religion. The conquest of new territories increased the power and importance of the king. But the king acquired distinction and dignity by the support of religion, of which the symbol was the royal consecration ceremony. This religious support was a danger in disguise, for it actually meant subordination of monarchy to religion. It was a veritable limitation to the powers of the king, which otherwise would have soon become autocratic. Hence from the standpoint of our study, i.e. the evolution of the state, we have to note that it was the conjunction of material power and religious

[153] *Sat. Br.*, v, 1, 5, 14. [154] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 12. [155] *Ai. Br.*, 1, 23.
[156] *Sat. Br.*, ix, 3, 1, 13.

support that contributed to the exaltation of kingship, of royal government and thereby of the Rāṣṭra or the monarchical state. The latter, i.e. religious support explains why the Brāhmaṇas are full of praise for monarchy ; for, that was in vogue in the "Eternal Middle Country" and was the political institution *par excellence*. Naturally the non-monarchical forms of government like the Svārājya, Vairājya, Bhaujya, etc. went by default. Of these there is little in the Brāhmaṇas ; they were the institutions of the north, south and west and embodied political traditions radically different from those of the Kuru-Pañcālas, Uśīnaras and Vaśas, i.e. peoples of the Middle Country. That is why Prof. Rhys Davids has remarked that "the earliest Buddhist records reveal the survival, side by side, with more or less powerful monarchies, of republics, with either complete or modified independence."[157]

[157] *Buddhist India*, p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

KING AS PATRON OF RELIGION

(700 B. C.-400 B. C.)

A PERIOD OF "UNFETTERED THOUGHT"

THE period following the rise of Brāhmaṇism and preceding the spread of Buddhism is one of the most uncertain in Indian thought and politics. At the beginning of it light fails us entirely and we have practically to grope in the dark. After the rise of Buddhism the darkness gradually diminishes, till by the time of Alexander's invasion and the Maurya empire it seems to have vanished. The period thus covered comprises three centuries from the seventh to the fourth Century B.C.

One of the most outstanding features of this period was that there prevailed "the most unfettered thought, the widest dissension from the orthodox Vedāntist view, the most original and daring speculation,"[1] centred in the two extreme regions of India — the easternmost and the westernmost corners of the Aryan pale. If the previous, that is, the Brāhmaṇic age was an age of intensive ritualism, this age was one of intensive thought, or as Sir R. G. Bhandarkar said, one of the ferment of thought. There was a reaction against ritualism, and people questioned the adequacy of a religion whose content consisted in rituals. Out of this ferment of thought arose a number of heretical systems, of which sixty-two have been recounted by Prof. Rhys Davids.[2] In the Gangetic valley, i.e. in the "eternally-established Middle Country"[3] there surged "a maze of interesting ideas" which could be best classified under (*a*) Animism, (*b*) Polytheism, (*c*) Pantheism and (*d*) Dualism — the last three embodied in the Brāhmaṇas, the Upaniṣads and the Sāṃkhya respectively. That was "at the time when the Buddhist theory of life was first propounded."[4] In the history of Indian

[1] Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 34. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 31–33.
[3] "Dhruvāyāṃ madhyamāyāṃ diśi," as the *Ai. Br.* put it.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 35–37.

thought, this was a period of transition, and like all periods of transition it was full of doubts, speculations and conflict of ideas. The Aryans had spread far out of their first home in India; they had forgotten many of their old traditions as they had created many new ones; their clash with new peoples and new cults had turned the trend of their social thought and a new religion had come into being. That was Brāhmaṇism. And while life needed expansion and variety this religion sought to circumscribe it. Naturally there was a deep pause, quiet questioning, and the formulation of new values of life. The ultimate problems of life had to be explained, and that, more than anything else "engaged the ardent attention and passionate patience of a surprisingly large number of men . . ."[5]

REVOLT AGAINST RITUALISM

It was really a period of vigorous mental activity directed to creative ends. Out of this arose various dogmas and systems of philosophy. The Upaniṣadic doctrines propounded by the seers from their sylvan retreats opened a new phase in the development of Aryan thought. They were essentially the product of open and alert minds, that were not satisfied with age-worn dicta about the problems of life and death. And ultimately from these doctrines the Sāṃkhya, and from the Sāṃkhya, Buddhism and Jainism were born. There were the out-and-out materialists and atheists besides. Altogether they represented a spirit of revolt, of protest against the existing order of things or the accepted values of life. But it was not merely a spirit of protest that characterized the new attitude towards vedic polytheism or Brāhmaṇical ritualism. There was also a deep under-current of liberal thought, that strove not only to demolish all those barriers which narrowed down life to a round of rites and ceremonies, but also to reconstruct a new order of things. It was here that its creative aspect becomes prominent. This liberal thought throbbed with a spirit of daring that loved to explore new possibilities of life, as also new modes of their expression. It infused boundless energy into the age; and that was the outstanding achievement of this revolt, this reactionary spirit of the age.

[5] Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 37.

CONFLICT BETWEEN LIBERALISM AND CONSERVATISM

But this reactionary spirit met its match soon enough. As the force of its impact began to shake the foundations of the Brāhmaṇic structure of social life, Brāhmaṇism released forces of conservatism which secured that structure. These moorings took the form of Kalpa Sūtras. They comprised the Śrauta, Grihya, and Dharma Sūtras, and sought to define and regulate to minutiae the conduct of man in the scheme of life envisaged by Brāhmaṇism. They tried to forestall deviations from the Brāhmaṇic scheme of life, on account of the impact of the new forces. They represented efforts to conserve the old Aryan heritage. But that contributed to restrict life, to narrow down its limits, to hinder its growth. This spirit of conservatism was led inevitably to join battle with the spirit of liberalism. Viewed in this light, the value of the Kalpa Sūtras appears to have consisted in diminishing the pressure of the new forces.

THE KALPA SŪTRAS

The Kalpa Sūtras arose under the auspices of various Vedic Schools called the Caraṇas. They dealt with the sacrificial ritual, the domestic ritual and the customs of everyday life (Samayācārika) under the three heads of the Śrauta, Grihya, and Dharma Sūtras respectively. In the form of aphorisms, which were easy to remember, they facilitated the conformity of the priest in relation to the householder, and of the king in relation to the subject, with the duties assigned to them by the scheme of Brāhmaṇical society. The Śrauta Sūtras formed a continuation of the ritual side of the Brāhmaṇas. The domestic ritual on the other hand had been entirely excluded from the Brāhmaṇas, and hence "the authors of the Grihya Sūtras had only the authority of popular tradition to rely on, when they systematized the observances of daily life."[6] The Dharma Sūtras also were based on tradition or Smriti, and were "the earliest Indian works on law treating fully of its religious, but only partially and briefly of its secular aspect."[7] They altogether envisaged the whole life of man in Brāhmaṇical society. By now the sacrificial ritual had become even more elaborate than it was in

[6] Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 249.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

the age of Brāhmaṇas. The domestic ritual had become equally elaborate, and comprised the whole span of human life. Starting from the conception of life in the mother's womb they extended even beyond the grave. The customs of everyday life had become numerous as a result of the growing importance of religious obligations and differentiation of society. The accumulated mass of all these sacrificial and domestic rites, traditions and daily observances had grown unwieldy; and at a time when their validity was questioned and Brāhmaṇical society was threatened to be undermined, unsparing efforts must have been made to compile them in systematic treatises. To bring them within a convenient compass, they were composed in the literary form, called the Sūtras or aphorisms. These various Sūtras, whether they were founded on the texts of the Brāhmaṇas or on popular traditions, usages and observances, were all brought together to form appendices to various Brāhmaṇas and ultimately to various Vedas. Thus attached, they acquired the sanctity of the Vedas. In an age, when the forces of liberalism worked to disrupt vedic culture and Aryan heritage, the forces of conservatism tried to save it by grouping together under vedic denominations all the elements of that culture and that heritage into convenient forms, that is, in systematic treatises of Śrauta, Grihya, and Dharma Sūtras dealing with the sacrificial ritual, domestic obligations and popular tradition having the force of law respectively.

THE UPANIṢADS

As against these there were the Upaniṣads, which drawing their inspiration from the Brāhmaṇas deprecated Brāhmaṇical ritualism.[8] Therefore they antagonized orthodox opinion and had to be taught in absolute secrecy, so that they came to be regarded as secret doctrines.[9] The Upaniṣads comprised nine systems of philosophy, of which six were regarded as orthodox. But of these six, four "were originally atheistic and one remained so throughout." "Of the orthodox systems, by far the most important are the pantheistic Vedānta, which as containing the doctrines of the Upaniṣads, has been the dominant philosophy of Brāhmaṇism since the end of the vedic period, and the atheistic Sāṃkhya, which for the first time

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 218. [9] *V.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 91–92.

in the history of the world, asserted the complete independence of the human mind and attempted to solve its problems solely by the aid of reason. On the Sāṃkhya were based the two heterodox religious systems of Buddhism and Jainism which denied the authority of the Vedas, and opposed the Brāhmaṇic caste system and ceremonial."[10] These were not all. "By the side of the orthodox systems and the two non-Brāhmaṇical religions flourished Lokāyata (directed to the world of sense) a materialistic school, usually called the Cārvākas from the name of the founder of the doctrine."[11] It was most radically and even offensively heretical; for, it denounced the Vedas and Brāhmaṇic ceremonial. "The Vedas, say the Cārvākas, are only the incoherent rhapsodies of the knaves and tainted with the three blemishes of falsehood, contradiction and tautology; vedic teachers are imposters, whose doctrines are mutually destructive, and the ritual of the Brāhmaṇas is useful only as a means of livelihood."[12] The rise and spread of these doctrines must have considerably alarmed the orthodox section in the Aryan fold, and they must have felt extremely concerned to save their vedic cult from its impending doom. It was this concern which "gave the first impetus to the composition of systematic manuals of Brāhmaṇic worship"[13] and provoked Brāhmaṇism to a fierce fight with the new heresies swirling all around.

That was the background of Indian life of this period, i.e. from the seventh to the fourth century B.C. and Indo-Aryan polity has to be studied in the context of these social forces, insofar as their operations reacted on the form and function of ancient Indian polity.

EFFECT ON THE STATE

We have already observed that in the preceding period, Brāhmaṇism, which was the outcome of the conservative tendency of the Indo-Aryans, had imposed its authority on the king. That was for the state also, since the state was incarnate in the king. By anointing the prince Brāhmaṇism had sought to invest him with sovereign authority. This fact meant, as the coronation of Charlemagne and of other emperors of Europe did in the political thought

[10] Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 385–386.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 405. [12] *Ibid.*, pp. 406–407. [13] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

of the Middle Ages, that temporal power was a gift of the spiritual power, that is, of religion. Now with the rise of new doctrines, of Jainism and Buddhism, as also of other heretical systems of thought, the fundamentals of Brāhmaṇism were challenged and naturally the claim of Brāhmaṇism on the state might have been challenged also. But Brāhmaṇism had forestalled that contingency and the Kalpa Sūtras had been framed to combat the anti-social tendencies of the age ; anti-social in the sense that they ran counter to the Brāhmaṇic scheme of society. In this scheme rites and ceremonies played an important part, and therefore, methods had been devised to make the knowledge of their performance easy of attainment. The complex round of rites could be remembered and mastered easily because the directions were in the form of short aphorisms. In the body of Śrauta rites, as compiled in the Śrauta Sūtras, were included the royal or political sacrifices ; so that now the fact or rather the fiction that the king derived his power from religion came to be with greater insistence emphasised. Besides that, the Dharma Sūtras made an attempt for the first time to codify the customs, and usages, which had the binding force of law. And it was the duty of the king to conform to them as also to coerce all to do so. That was the law code which regulated the conduct of the king and the conduct of those who were under his authority. Thus if in the previous age, the king received the symbol of sovereignty, i.e. the crown from Brāhmaṇism, in this he received from it law, the instrument to make his sovereign power effective.

It was thus that in its eagerness to preserve the elements of social heritage of the Indo-Aryans, Brāhmaṇism had not merely tightened its grips on society, but also on the royal power, and therefore on the state or Rāṣṭra. That was accomplished when the Dharma Sūtras outlined the duty of the king. Since his duty comprised in the main, the maintenance of the four orders of society with their prescribed functions ;[14] and the prescribed functions of the orders of society as also of the king were the dictates of religion regarded as canons of public law,[15] the subservience of the king, that is, of the state to religion was complete. At least it was so in theory, and Brāhmaṇism had exerted its utmost to bring this theoretical solution of the difficult problems facing it, within easy grasp of the custodians

[14] *Gautama Dharma Sūtra*, xi, 9 ; Āpastamba, II, 27, 18.
[15] *C.H.I.*, p. 228.

of the social order, that is, primarily the Brāhmaṇas, and secondarily the Kṣatriyas. But the complicated problems of the age, the vigorous challenge of the new systems of thought did not admit of the adequacy of so simple a solution. This fact betrayed the liquidation of the creative powers of Brāhmaṇism, and that was the opportunity of the heretical creeds. They formulated new values that did not square with Brāhmaṇic ritualism and the institution of caste. Hence their triumph adversely affected in course of time the stability of those social institutions which the forces of conservatism had so laboriously built up. And if the foundations of Brāhmaṇism were undermined, then the king was free from religious domination. But that could be accomplished only when the new religions actively co-operated with the king. What therefore actually happened was that when the former wanted to establish a new social order, they turned to the king for help. Buddha and Mahavira eagerly sought the adherence of kings to their cause and the kings recognized in that their means of release.

But it was not only the heretical creeds that appealed to the king for assistance ; Brāhmaṇism, in spite of its dominating attitude towards the royal power, gradually realized that in order to combat the spread of heretical systems, of the "anti-social" tendencies the co-operation of the king was extremely necessary. The inevitable result of this two-fold appeal for royal support — appeal of the heretical creeds against Brāhmaṇism, and of Brāhmaṇism against heretical creeds to retain their respective grounds was that the prestige of the king and therefore of the state began to grow, and instead of dominating royal power or the state, religion gradually was reduced to a position of dependence. To this growing sense of superiority of the royal power, the triumph of monarchical ideal over the non-monarchical visibly contributed.

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE MONARCHICAL AND NON-MONARCHICAL IDEALS, AND THE LATTER DISCREDITED

Already the monarchical and non-monarchical states were in existence and presented an antithesis ; but now that antithesis was becoming more pronounced, inasmuch as the monarchical states that had meanwhile developed in organization and efficiency, were trying to overpower and eclipse the weaker and less organized

non-monarchical states. The consequence was that monarchy gained power owing to several causes, and as the period advanced the foundations of the first empire in India were laid. The non-monarchical states losing power were relegated to the background of Indian political life. They "occupied in the sixth century B.C. the whole country east of Kosala between the mountains and the Ganges,"[16] as also the Vāhika country, i.e. the Punjab.[17] And it is remarkable that it was roughly in these regions that, that free ferment of thought to which some reference has been made already, had its birth and growth. Whatever be the cause of this coincidence, the non-monarchical states pursued their career of self-centred activities in those regions perhaps by the sufferance of the more powerful monarchical states. Very often the monarchs looked askance at these states, and even tried to subjugate and annex them. Thus it is that the period is marked by a conflict in the ideals of political practice, and in this respect it is in tune with the conflict of the liberal and conservative currents of social thought. The climax of this conflict in political ideals was reached with the invasion of Alexander. Already their inability to withstand external aggression had discredited the non-monarchical states. It had been proved by the invasion of Darius, who had conquered the whole of the Punjab; and that of Alexander completed their humiliation. The course of later events did not leave a shadow of doubt about the inevitable decline of the non-monarchical states. With the rise of the Maurya empire, the bankruptcy of the non-monarchical ideal became all the more apparent, and the triumph of the monarchy was complete.

MONARCHICAL AND NON-MONARCHICAL STATES IN NORTHERN INDIA

Now when the curtain rises on the seventh century B.C. we have sixteen states existing in Northern India.[18] We have data available in this century for Northern India only, and nothing definite is known about the Deccan. These sixteen states covered the region, which is bounded on the North by the Himalayas, on the South by the Vindhya, on the West by the "mountains beyond the Indus, and on the East by the Ganges as it turns to the South."[19] Some of them

[16] *C.H.I.*, p. 175. [17] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. I, p. 34.
[18] *Anguttara*, i, 213; iv, 252, 256, 260. *Vinaya Texts*, Pt. II, p. 146.
[19] *Buddhist India*, p. 29.

were monarchies and others were not ; but all of them are known by the name of the peoples, that inhabited the country.

Now of these states the Vajjis and the Mallas had oligarchical, while the Aṅgas, the Magadhas, the Kāśis, the Kosalas, the Cetis, the Vaṃsas, the Kurus, the Pañcālas, the Macchas, the Saurasenas, the Avantis, the Gāṅdhāras and the Kāmbhojas had the monarchical form of government. It appears that there were a good many oligarchies besides the two mentioned. There were the Bhaggas of Suṃsumar Hill, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Kalamas of Kesaputta, the Koliyas of Rāmagāma, the Moriyas of Pippalivana and the Sākiyas of Kapilavāstu.[20] Some of these were known to Pāṇini, who flourished in the fifth century B.C.[21] We get, for example, just a reference to the Vrijis,[22] and the Bhargas[23] who are to be identified with the Vajjis and the Bhaggas mentioned above. But apart from these corroborations Pāṇini mentions several other oligarchies, viz. the Vṛkas,[24] the Dāmanis and the Six Trigarttas,[25] the Yaudheyas,[26] the Parśvas,[27] the Madras,[28] the Rājanyas,[29] the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis[30] and the Mahārājas,[31] not mentioned in Buddhist literature. It is just possible that these were of later growth, or were comparatively unimportant in about the seventh century, if they existed at that time. Whatever be the fact, and there is no means of ascertaining it, the existence of so many oligarchies, dotted all over the country perhaps points to the inference that the autonomus traditions of the vedic Aryans had acquired a wide vogue in the period subsequent to that of the Brāhmaṇas about which only a hint has been dropped by the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. For, otherwise, it is difficult to explain the existence of so many oligarchies between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C. The Brāhmaṇas, however, do not give us an inkling as to whether there were free self-governing peoples alongside the monarchies. They extol monarchy and make it appear as if that was the only form of government, and therefore, the non-monarchical governments go by default. The reason appears to be that the non-

[20] Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, *S.B.E.*, Vol. XI, pp. 131–135 ; *Buddhist India*, p. 22 ; *C.H.I.*, p. 175. [21] Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 42.
[22] Pāṇini, iv, 2, 130. [23] *Ibid.*, 1, 175. [24] Pāṇini, v, 3, 115.
[25] *Ibid.*, 3, 116. The Trigarttas were a league of Six tribes viz. the Kauṇḍoparatha, the Dāṇḍaki, the Kauṣṭaki, the Jālamāni, the Brahmagupta and the Jānaki. [26] *Ibid.*, 3, 117. [27] *Ibid.* [28] Pāṇini, iv, 2, 130.
[29] *Ibid.*, iv, 2, 52. [30] Pāṇini, vi, 2, 34. [31] Pāṇini, iv, 3, 97.

monarchical states were the creation of the self-governing warrior caste, in which not one but many,—all of them the heads of families, i.e. the elders, held sway. And it is really this antithesis of the Brāhmaṇical as against the Kṣatriya institutions that was at the bottom of the Brāhmaṇical neglect of it. This antagonism in political ideals, coloured by a social prejudice took a more pronounced form when the two religions—Buddhism and Jainism were founded by the two princes of the warrior caste. It was because of their Kṣatriya origin that their creeds were patronized all the more readily by many kings and self-governing peoples.

NON-MONARCHICAL STATES THE CREATION OF THE KṢATRIYAS

That the so-called self-governing peoples who formed corporations and founded non-monarchical states, belonged to the warrior caste or were Rājanyas become clear from a reference to Buddhist literature, Pāṇini, and the Greek records. The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta mentions that after the cremation of the dead body of Buddha, the Licchavis of Vaisāli, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Sākiyas of Kapilavatthu, the Koliyas of Rāmagāma, the Mallas of Pāvā and Kusinārā, and Moriyas of Pippalivana claimed a portion of the relics on the ground that "the Blessed one belonged to the soldier caste and we too are of the soldier caste."[32] Further Pāṇini mentions the Saṃghas of the Vṛkas,[33] the Dāmanis,[34] the league or confederacy of the six Trigarttas,[35] the Yaudheyas,[36] and the Parśvas,[37] which belonged to the category of Āyudhajīvins, i.e. those who observed the practice of arms or military art.[38] Lastly it is wellknown that Alexander had to encounter the most stubborn opposition from some of the free "nations" of the Punjab. These were notably the Oxydrakai and Malloi—the Kṣudrakas and Mālavas who were said to have been "the most warlike nations in all India."[39] It is also asserted that "the Catheans (Kṣatriyas) enjoyed the highest

[32] *S.B.E.*, Vol. XI, pp. 131–135. [33] *Vṛkāṭṭeṇyaṇ*, V, iii, 115.

[34] *Dāmanyādi-trigartta-ṣaṣthācchah*, V. iii, 116. [35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Parśvādiyaudheyadivyāmaṇañyau*, V, iii, 117. These to be taken along with the Sūtra, V, iii, 114, i.e., Āyudhajīvisaṃghāññyaḍvāhikeṣva-brāhmaṇarājanyāt. [37] *Ibid.*

[38] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Part I, p. 36.

[39] Curtius, ix, Ch. IV ; McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander*, p. 234.

reputation for courage and the same warlike spirit characterized the Oxydrakai etc."[40] All these were certainly self-governing peoples, and thus the cumulative evidence points to the conclusion that the non-monarchical form of government was the institution par excellence of the warrior caste, and that fact alone was sufficient to antagonize the orthodox opinion.

NON-MONARCHICAL STATES REALLY OLIGARCHIES

It is, however, not suggested that in these states the Kṣatriyas only lived and none else. We know for example the Licchavis had a subject territory, inhabited by a subject people,[41] and so had the Sākiyas and the Koliyas.[42] In the famous Vāhika republics of Pāṇini (in the Punjab) there were many other castes besides the Kṣatriyas.[43] It was not the population of a Gaṇa or republic that gave it its peculiar character; it was really the ruling class there. For these Gaṇas seem to have been ruled invariably by an aristocracy of ruling families, who were Kṣatriyas. We are told for instance that when there was a quarrel between the labourers of the two republican tribes — Sākiyas and the Koliyas they (the labourers) began to cast aspersion "on the origin of their princely families" and afterwards "went and told the councillors and they (councillors) reported it to the princes of their tribes."[44] After the death of Buddha when his body was to be carried in a bier "eight chieftains among the Mallas bathed their heads and clad themselves in new garments."[45] Further "tradition says that Licchavis of the ruling

[40] Arrian, V, 22, 2.

[41] Mahāvagga, vi, 30, 3. "My Lords, were you to offer all Vesāli with its *subject territory* I would not give up this meal."

[42] *Jātaka, No.* 536; *Kuṇāla Jātaka*, Vol. V, p. 219. "When the female slaves of the Sākiyas and Koliyas came to the river to fetch water . . . and when owing to this a quarrel arose . . . gradually the people of the two cities *the Serfs and the labourers*, the attendants, the headmen, councillors and viceroys, all of them sallied forth ready for battle."

[43] Pāṇini, V, 3, 114–117 gives Taddhita rules with regard to the Saṃghas of the Vāhika country. By those rules the members of a particular Saṃgha, when mentioned could be distinguished whether they were Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas or of castes other than these.

[44] Cowell, *Jātakas*, Vol. V, p. 219.

[45] Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, *S.B.E.*, Vol. XI, p. 123.

family to the number of 7707 had their abode at Vesāli, and all of them were given to argument and disputation."[46] As for the Greek accounts, Arrian tells us to the east of the Bias there was a powerful kingdom in which "the multitude was governed by the aristocracy, who exercised their authority with justice and moderation."[47] The two "nations" of Kṣudrakas (Oxydrakai) and Mālavas (Malloi) after their overthrow sent "hundred ambassadors" for negotiating with Alexander for peace.[48] The Ambaṣṭhas who were a self-governing people, it is said, "adopted the advice of their elders not to fight."[49] The state of Pāṭala on the other hand had a "constitution drawn on the same line as the Spartan, for in this community the command in war vested in two hereditary kings of two different houses while a council of elders ruled the whole state with paramount authority."[50] Thus it appears that the so-called Gaṇas were really oligarchies in each of which there was a ruling aristocracy.

CORPORATIONS — POLITICAL AND NON-POLITICAL

This conclusion may admit of a little divergence to discuss the different types of corporations in ancient India. There is a tendency to confuse between corporations that are distinguished by their commercial and military pursuits, and thus bear essentially the character of guilds, and what are purely political institutions characterized by their sovereign powers.[51] When Arrian (Bk. V, 25)[52] speaks of the people of a great republic on the Bias that they were "agriculturists, brave in war," Mr. Jaiswal seems to identify them[53] with one of those corporate peoples, who according to Kauṭalya "observed the practice of agriculture and military art," (Vārtāśastropajīvinaḥ) as opposed to those who "observed the practice of assuming the title Rājan" (Rājaśabdopajīvinaḥ).[54] Kauṭalya in his book speaks of them in the following manner:

[46] Cowell, *op. oit.*, Jātaka, No. 301, Vol. III, p. 1.
[47] Arrian, V, 25; McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander*, p. 121.
[48] Curtius, Bk. ix, Chaps. 7, 8; McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander*, pp. 248–251. [49] *Ibid.*, p. 252. [50] *Ibid.*, p. 356.
[51] Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. I, pp. 36, 67.
[52] McCrindle, *I.I.A.*, p. 121.
[53] Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. I, pp. 36, 67.
[54] Kauṭalya, *Arthaśāstra*, Text, Bk. xi, p. 378.

(*a*) Kāmbhoja-Surāṣṭra — Kṣatriya — Śreṇyādayo — Vārtāśastropajīvinaḥ.

(*b*) Licchivika — Vṛjika — Mallaka — Madraka — Kukura — Kurupañcālādayo rāja-śabdopajīvinaḥ.

Now this is in the section entitled Saṃghavṛttaṃ, i.e. account of the Saṃghas, in the context of how an invader, a conqueror should conquer a corporation. Read in this context the meaning of the above passages seems to be that (*a*) the Śreṇi (corporation, guild, etc.) of the Kṣatriyas of Kāmbhoja and Surāṣṭra take up (the pursuits of) trade, agriculture and arms while, (*b*) the Licchavis, the Vṛjis, the Mallakas, the Madrakas, the Kukuras, the Kuru-Pañcālās, etc. take up the title of kings. Here Kauṭalya does not intend contrasting two types of autonomous organizations distinguished by their political character, but two distinct types of corporations — one instituted for non-political and the other for political purposes. The non-political type is distinguished by men taking up pursuits of trade, agriculture and arms with a mercenary motive. This is clear from the use of the word Śreṇi, meaning a guild or corporation of a non-political character. For Nārada uses this word along with two other words of similar import in the following line : Pāṣaṇḍi-Naigama-Sreṇi Pūga-Vrātagaṇādiṣu (Bk. x. 2)

According to the Vyavahāra Mayukha, Pāṣaṇḍi means persons following commerce and other pursuits but opposed to the vedic ways of life ; the Naigama are those who are not opposed to the vedic ways ; the Śreṇi is a corporation of persons belonging to different castes but of the same calling ; the Pūga is the corporation of men of different castes and calling ; the Vrāta is the association of the kith and kin, while a Gaṇa is a federation of all of these. Here therefore the Kṣatriya Śreṇi could mean only guild or corporation of Kṣatriyas. Pāṇini also makes distinct references to the existence of the Pūga,[55] Vrāta[56] and Āyudhajīvin Saṃgha.[57] Of these Pūga and Vrāta definitely bear the import of a trade guild, while Āyudhajīvi Saṃgha is also a guild where men took up the calling of arms. The evidence of Jātakas points to the existence of warrior guilds.[58] Perhaps the Kṣatriyas of such guilds used to hire themselves out.

[55] V, 3, 112.
[56] *Ibid.*, 3, 113.
[57] *Ibid.*, 3, 114.
[58] Cowell, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 145.

Whatever be the truth it is certain that the Kṣatriya Śreṇi means a corporation of men following the military profession. Thus it appears that the corporate life in ancient India ran in two channels — one, that was non-political including corporations organized on a commercial basis, in which everything had its price ; and two, that was political comprising organizations or corporations distinguished by their sovereign character. The sovereign political corporations bore the designation of either Gaṇa or Saṃgha, while the non-political ones, Śreṇi, Pūga, etc. The transformation of the one into the other most probably depended upon the prevailing political conditions and their own character. It is perhaps the warrior guilds that acquired sovereign authority most easily. That is to say the Kṣatriya Śreṇis became Rājaśabdopajīvinaḥ. To sum up, whether they developed out of the Kṣatriya Śreṇis or tribal organizations, almost all the non-monarchical states had been founded and maintained by the Kṣatriyas. That might explain why the Brāhmaṇical literature overlooked them.

WORKING OF SOME OLIGARCHIES

But with the rise of heretical creeds (Buddhism and Jainism) and heretical literature, these "unsung" and "unhonoured" Saṃghas or non-monarchical states of the warrior caste appeared in the limelight. Buddhist literature is full of the glory of the Sākyas among whom the great Buddha was born. These Sākiyas or Sākyas were a ruling (Kṣatriya) aristocracy holding sway over a territory about 50 miles long and 40 miles broad.[59] The people that lived here comprised the Sākyas, their "serfs and labourers" and many others who were neither Sākyas nor their "serfs and labourers." But the government was carried on by these Sākyas, who perhaps formed more or less an oligarchy the power being in the hands of their "chieftains" or "princely families."[60] For we are told that when the king of Kosala wanted to marry a daughter of the Sākya families and sent a message to Kapilavāstu to that purport "the Sākyas gathered together and deliberated." Ultimately a prince by name Mahānāman, deceived the king by sending his daughter Vāsabhakhattiyā, born of a slave woman. Later on Queen Vāsabhakhattiyā

[59] *Buddhist India*, p. 20.

[60] Kuṇāla Jātaka, No. 536 ; Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 219.

became the mother of Prince Viḍūḍabha and when asked by the latter about her own father's family she said "My boy, your grandsires are Sākyan kings."[61] It appears therefore that it is the Sākya princes who were the head of the state. Further the Kuṇāla Jātaka tells us that there were headmen, councillors, and viceroys, besides serfs and labourers and attendants in the city of Kapilavāstu. The councillors seem to be in charge of actual administration, for there it is mentioned that some of them were supervising the execution of a work of public utility.[62] The councillors had to report to the chieftains who were perhaps superior in rank and office. And it is these people, the headmen, councillors, viceroys[63] and kings that formed the ruling class. There was besides a subject population also.

They had a national council called the Saṃsthā where according to Prof. Rhys Davids, the young and old met to dispose of public business. It is possible that the headmen, councillors, viceroys and kings had all their seats in this Saṃsthā. Over its sessions a chief called Rājā, elected from time to time presided, and when there was no session, he was the president of the state. The viceroys above referred to might have been his representatives, to carry on the administration.

"We hear at one time that Bhaddiya, a young cousin of the Buddha was 'Rājā'; at another that the Buddha's father Suddhodana held that rank."[64] The procedure in the assembly may have been like that in the Buddhist Saṃghas, specially as given in the accounts of the council of Vaisāli.[65] After all took their seats in a specified order, the president informed (gave notice, i.e. jñapti) the assembly of the business in hand. Formal deliberations then began with a resolution (Pratijñā) moved by a member. After that members were allowed to express their opinion. If there was perfect

[61] Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 92–93.

[62] Kuṇāla Jātaka, No. 536; Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, 219.

[63] The Viceroys might have been same as, or below the "chieftains or kings", but all of them were of the Sākya clan.

[64] *C.H.I.*, p. 177; *Dialogues of Buddha*, Vol. I, p. 113.
"Sarvaṃ-Sākyagaṇam Sannipatyaiva mīmāṃsate Rājā Suddhodanaḥ . . . Sākya Gaṇena Sārdhaṃ Saṃkhyā-gāre nisaṇṇobhūt." Quoted from Lalita Vistara by Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Vol. I, p. 50.

[65] Cullavagga, XII, 2, 7, 3; *S.B.E.*, Vol. XX, pp. 405–409.

agreement then the resolution was passed and the recorders took note of it. If not it was referred to a select body of men, who perhaps possessed expert knowledge. It is unlikely that any one else than a Sākya could be a member of this Saṃsthā which was their tribal assembly. But besides this Saṃsthāgāra or "town hall" at "the principal town, we hear of others at some other towns above referred to (Catuma, Samagama, Khomadussa, Sitavati, Metalupa, Ulumpa, Sakkar and Devdaha). . . . And the local affairs of each village were carried on in open assembly of the house-holders, held in the groves which then, as now, formed so distinct a feature of each village in the long and level alluvial plain."[66] The village council, it appears had control over all the affairs of the village. Even the sale and mortgage of the village land could not be effected without the consent of the village council. The link between the rural self-government and the central government seems to be the village headman Grāmaṇī who came in contact with government officials and represented the grievances of the villagers to them. His office "was either hereditary or conferred by the village council itself."[67] Perhaps he was in charge of maintaining peace and order in the village ; for, when a theft occurred he was made to pay for it.[68] There used to be periodical survey of village lands in the presence of government officials.[69] On the whole it appears that the villages in the country over which the Sākyas ruled, were each one of them very much like "a tiny self-governing republic."[70]

This form of government seems to have been typical of all self-governing peoples. They were, each one of them as has been observed above, a ruling aristocracy. The Koliyas for example were very much like the Sākyas and so were the Mallas. There might have been slight differences in the details of their administration. "The Koliyan central authorities were served by a special body of peons or police" who had a bad reputation for extortion and violence. "The Mallas had similar officials and it is not improbable that each of the clans had a somewhat similar set of subordinate servants."[71] The Licchavis were also a ruling aristocracy that held sway also over

[66] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 20. [67] *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48.
[68] Jātaka, No. 257, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II.
[69] Jātaka, No. 467, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 105.
[70] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 21.
[71] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 21.

a "subject territory."[72] They had a national assembly which they called the house of law[73] and matters of public interest, were discussed there. It appears that there were 7,707 Licchavi princes, each one of whom called himself a Rājā, in theory at least, because the Licchavis were a ruling aristocracy. From among them some were chosen to be kings, others viceroys, etc. This seems to be warranted by facts. For in one of the Jātakas Buddha refers to "Six elders among the Licchavis."[74] Further we are told that "many distinguished Licchavis. . . assembled in the town hall."[75] Perhaps the town hall is the same as the "house of law." It is also said that they employed a military guard not composed of the Licchavis to protect their sacred tank[76] and that they had one "Siha" as their general-in-chief.[77] This shows that they maintained an army, and that there was a general, though in theory every Licchavi elder had a right to that office.

The Licchavis had formed a federation with the Vajjis for some time, and then in the last quarter of the 6th century B.C. with the Mallas. In league with another power they often proved formidable. Between the Mallas and Licchavis there was a common federal council which contained 18 members nine being elected by each. But this was not the only type of federation. The Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis are said to have formed a league also.

GENERAL TENDENCY TOWARDS MONARCHY

This brief review has shown us that autocratic traditions were developing even in the non-monarchical states, for the so-called republican peoples were, in reality, ruling aristocracies or oligarchies. There was, it seems, a countrywide trend to install autocratic ideal, and the margin between the monarchical and non-monarchical rule was very narrow indeed. That will be realized after a review of the monarchies in the country.

We have seen in the last chapter how extensive kingdoms were gradually coming to prominence in the Brāhmaṇic age, and how,

[72] Mahāvagga, vi, 30, 3. [73] *J.A.S.B.* (1838), vii, p. 996.
[74] Sigāla Jātaka, No. 152, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 7.
[75] Mahāvagga, vi, 31, 1 & 2 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 108–109.
[76] Jātaka, No. 465, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 94.
[77] Mahāvagga, vi, 31, 1 & 2 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 108–109.

they very often bore the names of peoples. There were the kingdoms, for example, of the Kāśis, of the Kuru-Pañcālās, of the Vaśas, of the Uśīnaras, etc. In the meanwhile new ones had also arisen, like the kingdom of Aṅga of which the capital was Rājagṛha.[78] After the rise of these kingdoms in the Gangetic valley, there ensued, a struggle for supremacy between them, between Kāśi, Kosala Aṅga, Magadha, Sourasena, Avanti etc. But the real contest for supremacy seems to have been between Kāśi and Kosala[79] and this contest fills the annals of the seventh century.

It appears that at first Kāśi and then Kosala and ultimately Magadha rose to supremacy in Northern India. The Campeyya Jātaka (Cowell, *Jātakas*, Vol. IV) mentions that there was a struggle for supremacy between Magadha and Aṅga just as there was between Kāśi, and Kosala. As regards Kāśi, one of its kings was so powerful as to subjugate all the kingdoms of Northern India and ultimately "the kingdom of Takkaśila."[80] Another king "went against the king of Kosala with a large army and coming to Savatthi, after a battle entered the city and took the king prisoner."[81] But gradually the kings of Kosala took full revenge for that. King Dabhasena of Kosala "had the king of Benares seized,"[82] and the subjugation of the Kāśi country was completely accomplished by another powerful king named Kaṃsa.[83] By this time Magadha was rising to prominence as a result of the shrewd diplomacy of Bimbisāra (537-485 B.C.).[84] He made a series of lucky marriages and was on friendly terms with nearly all his neighbours. He had married a daughter of Mahākosala,[85] a daughter of Ceṭaka, one of the Licchavi

[78] Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, *S.B.E.*, Vol. XI, p. 99. "For, Lord, there are other great cities such as Campā, Rājagaha, Sāvathi, Sāketa, Kosāmbi and Benares." Ch. V, 41.

[79] Mahāvagga, x, 2, 3 ; viii, 2 fn. "And King Brahmadatta, of Kāśī having set the four hosts of his army in array went out to war with King Dighiti of Kosala. . . . Then the King Brahmadatta of Kāśī conquered the troops and vehicles, the realm, the treasuries and store-houses of King Dighiti of Kosala and took possession of them." *S.B.E.*, Vol. XVII, p. 294. The rule of Pasenadi, King of Kosala "extended both over Kāśī and Kosala." vii, 2, fn. 2 ; *Ibid.*

[80] Jātaka, No. 353, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 106.

[81] Jātaka, No. 336, *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[82] Jātaka, No. 303, *Ibid.*

[83] *C.H.I.*, p. 180.

[84] Dhammapada, *S.B.E.*, Vol. X, Introduction, p. xlvii.

[85] Jātakas, Nos. 283 and 492 ; Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vols. II and IV respectively.

chiefs,[86] and also a princess of Videha.[87] He helped king Pajjota (Pradyota) of Ujjain at the time of his illness by sending his own physician Jivaka.[88] Perhaps it was he who annexed the neighbouring kingdom of Aṅga.[89] But certain it is that King Bimbisāra left a very prosperous kingdom to his son the parricide, Ajātaśatru who therefore waged wars against his neighbours and made annexations right and left.[90] The succession of Ajātaśatru to the throne of Magadha and of Pasenadi to the throne of Kosala, opened a period of prolonged conflict between these two kingdoms for supremacy in Northern India. In the meanwhile the kingdom of Kosala had swallowed up the state of the Sākyas.[91] Simultaneously we hear of the king of Avanti by name Pajjota making war on the king of Kośāmbi, by name Udena,[92] and the son of Pajjota by name Palaka annexing the kingdom of Kośāmbi.[93] Now there were three powerful kingdoms in the Gangetic valley, and each one of them was bent on aggrandizing at the cost of others. We are told that after the discomfiture of Kosala at the hands of Magadha, Avanti came face to face with Magadha.[94] But as a result of this ferment of political ambitions, there arose a new monarchical ideal, viz. the sovereignty over the whole of India. This ideal of empire or imperial rule is seen reflected in the Jātaka stories.[95] This ideal received a further impetus from the invasion of the Persians who under Darius (522-486 B.C.) and Xerxes (486-465 B.C.) had extended their sway over the whole of Peshawar, Kabul, Kandahar, and the lower Indus Valley.[96] They had in the course of their conquest supplanted the Vāhika Gaṇas referred to by Pāṇini. The subjugation of the

[86] Jacobi, *Jaina Sūtras*, Pt. I, xii-xv.

[87] Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta, *S.B.E.*, XI, p. 1.

[88] Mahāvagga, *S.B.E.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 186–187.

[89] Campeyya-Jātaka, No. 506 ; Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 281 ; Mahāvagga, V, i, 1-2; *S.B.E.*, Vol. p. 1.

[90] For his conquest of Vaisāli — the Mahāparinibbāna-Sutta, *S.B.E.*, xi, p. 1, and Mahāvagga, VI, 28, 7, 8 ; and of Kāsi, Jātakas, Nos. 283 and 492.

[91] Bhaddasala Jātaka, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 92–96.

[92] *C.H.I.*, p. 185.

[93] Raichaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 131 ; Tawney, (tr.), *Kathāsarit-Sāgara*, Vol. II, p. 484.

[94] *C.H.I.*, p. 185 ; Raichaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[95] Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 21 ; Dhonasakha Jātaka, *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[96] *C.H.I.*, pp. 337–340.

Vāhika Gaṇas by the Persians, of the Vajjis by Magadha and of the Sākiyas by Kosala, as also the emergence of single monarchical states to power and paramountcy, in Northern India tended to discredit the non-monarchical ideal. And to the degree that this was dis-credited the new imperial ideal, only a magnified form of the monarchical ideal was exalted. It marked really the triumph of monarchy over any other forms of government.

UNIVERSAL EMPIRE

The monarchical states referred to in the Jātakas and the Dharma Sūtras do not seem to have been very small. In the Jātakas we have observed, how extensive kingdoms were coming into existence, as a result of the struggle for supremacy among the monarchical states, which after having overpowered the oligarchies had gained in power and extent. We are told for example the kingdoms of Kāśi and Kosala were under the same king[97] and again the king of Kāśi aspired for the sovereignty over all-India.[98] The highest political ambition consisted in obtaining "all Kāśi and Kosala and the realm of India and the glory of a universal empire."[99] The Dharma Sūtras also appear to have known extensive states or kingdoms that comprised many countries. Gautama for example while pointing out the right method of the administration of justice, says that "the laws of countries"[100] have to be respected. Baudhāyana also emphasises the "rule of the countries."[101] Āpastamba while discussing the law of inheritance makes a reference to "the law of custom" which is observed in particular countries."[102] Lastly Vaśiṣṭha in outlining the duties of a king wants him to pay "attention to all the laws of countries."[103] Thus incidentally while emphasising the importance of local laws, these four law-codes refer to the inclusion of "countries" in the dominions of kings. The instances of "countries" given by commentators like Medhātithi

[97] Jātaka, No. 336 ; Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 77 ; Ekaraja Jātaka, No. 303.
[98] Jātaka, No. 353 ; *Ibid.*, p. 106.
[99] Sahya Jātaka, No. 310 ; *Ibid.*, p. 21, pp. 9–10. Mahāvagga, viii, 2, fn. 2
[100] xi, 20 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. II, p. 237.
[101] I, 1, 2, 6 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. XIV, p. 147.
[102] II, vi, 15, 1 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. II, p. 137.
[103] XIX, 7 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. XIV, p. 96.

comprise those of Kuru, Kāpisa, Kāśmīra and others. Now if the dominions of kings were small and inhabited by homogeneous peoples then such a prescription or statement would have been out of place. It is pretty certain that the dominions of kings more often than not, were extensive and comprised many countries, and hence the kings were enjoined to respect not only the peculiar laws of castes and families but of the countries also. Now let us see how these wide country-states were governed by kings.

GROWTH OF ROYAL POWER

With the growing size of the kingdoms, the power of the king was also growing. The royal governments were visibly gaining in efficiency and organization, and new departments of activity were springing up. The most outstanding feature of the monarchy of this period is that it recognizes only one great limitation, and that is of the religion. There is nothing else to circumscribe the power of the king, which otherwise would have become unlimited. For, in the meantime with the rise of extensive country-states hereditary kingship had become an established fact,[104] and that was the first step towards absolutism. His power was not limited as in the Vedic time by the will of the popular assemblies, nor as in the Brāhmaṇic period by the prestige of the Ratnins. Though in this period the courtiers or ministers could choose a king, it was only by the consent of the dying king, and yet the choice was confined to the ruling family. The theory seems to have been that "all the sons" of the king had a "right to the white umbrella."[105] How the power of the king was growing and tending to be absolute could be comprehended by a close examination of the broad principles of his government.

[104] Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 62, 67, 105; Vol. V, p. 128, etc. "Brahmadatta, King of Kāśī being suspicious of his son said to him: Do you depart hence and dwell for the present where you please and at my death take the hereditary kingdom ?" Bhuridatta Jātaka, No. 543; Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 80.

[105] Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 84. "When in due time the king lay on his death-bed the courtiers asked him: When you are dead, my lord, to whom shall we give the White Umbrella ? 'Friends !' said he 'all my sons have a right to the White Umbrella. But you may give it to him that pleases your mind.'"

KING, "THE MASTER OF ALL," TO "PROTECT THE CASTES AND ORDERS"

To indicate the relation of the king to his kingdom the writers of Dharma Sūtras lay down that "The king is the master of all, with the exception of Brāhmaṇas"[106] and that he was to afford a paternal protection to the subjects.[107] "All excepting the Brāhmaṇas, shall worship him while Brāhmaṇas shall honour him."[108] That the Brāhmaṇas had to honour him and others had to worship him marks the beginning of that process which ended in attributing divine qualities to him.[109] He had now acquired the right of taxation.[110] He could demand one-sixth of the income of the people as his revenue[111] though he could tax the people in many other ways,[112] and even could enhance the rate of taxation.[113] The king was the head of the army and had to lead it personally in the battle.[114] He appears to have maintained standing armies.[115] As the head of the government, both the executive and the judiciary, he made all the major appointments, while the higher officials appointed their subordinates.[116] He wielded the highest legal powers, though in regard to the making of laws his competence was severely limited. For, his ordinances constituted only one category of laws. The other categories comprised the ruling of the religion, which comprehended all aspects of human life. Nevertheless, some of the important elements of sovereignty the king had acquired by now. The effect of it would have been the consummation of absolutism, had not the royal authority been limited by religious injunctions which formed the bulk of the public law. According to these the king, in spite of his extensive powers, was only to "protect the castes and orders in accordance with justice" and "restrain those who do not restrain

[106] Gautama, XI, 1.
[107] Baudhāyana, I, 10, 18, 1 ; Vaśiṣṭha, XIX, 1 ; Gautama, XI, 9, etc.
[108] Gautama, XI, 7, 8.
[109] *Mahābhārata*, Śānti Parva, Secs. 40, 41 and 68.
[110] Āpastamba, II, x, 26, 9.
[111] Baudhāyana, I, x, 18, 1 ; Vaśiṣṭha, Ch. I, 42.
[112] Vaśiṣṭha, XIX, 28 ; "He shall take a monthly tax from artisans."
[113] Mahā-Assaroha-Jātaka, No. 302 ; Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. III.
[114] Gautama, x, 13–17.
[115] Vaśiṣṭha, XIX, 17–20 ; Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 14.
[116] Āpastamba, II, 10, 26, 4 and 5.

themselves."[117] His authority was to be exercised only to protect the social orders, to punish all deviations from the duties of four castes.[118] In short he has to "uphold the moral order in the world" and that, with the help of "a Brāhmaṇa deeply versed in the Vedas."[119] Here we find the connection between the state and religion. Purohita or the royal priest has become an institution by himself as important as, if not more important than, the king. For without the priest to guide, the king and his kingdom come to distress.[120] The priest has therefore to be "learned, of noble family, eloquent, handsome, of virtuous disposition"[121] and "foremost in all transactions."[122] King should "act according to his instruction"[123] and send all those, who have transgressed their priests' orders, to be adjudged by him alone.[124] Thus he had to accept the spiritual lead of the priest, and through him the injunction of the religion. Religion actually ruled the state inasmuch as the law that the king administered bore the stamp of and was dictated by religion. For now law was regarded to have had its source either in the Veda,[125] the traditions,[126] or the practice of the Śiṣṭas, i.e. good and righteous men[127] or all of these. In cases of controversy what an assembly of ten, five or three, or "one blameless man" decided[128] was to be accepted. "What Brāhmaṇas riding in the chariot of the law (and) wielding the sword of the Veda propounded even in jest, that is declared to be the highest law."[129] The fact that the king received law from an extraneous authority, from a source over which he had no control served as a great check to his power. And apart from that religion entered into the working of his government. Since Brāhmaṇas were the custodians of religion, the administration

[117] Gautama, XI, 9, 28 ; Cf. Vaśiṣṭha, XIX, 8 ; Āpastamba, II, x, 27, 18.

[118] Āpastamba II, x, 27, 18 ; Vaśiṣṭha, xix, 8.

[119] Gautama, VIII, 1.

[120] "Kṣatriyas, who are assisted by Brāhmaṇas prosper and do not fall into distress." — Gautama, XI, 14. "Brāhmaṇas, united with Kṣatriyas uphold gods, manes and men", Gautama, XI, 27. "A realm where Brāhmaṇa is appointed domestic priest, prospers", Vaśiṣṭha, XIX, 4.

[121] Gautama, XI, 12.

[122] Baudhayana, I, x, 18, 7.

[123] *Ibid.*, x, 18, 8.

[124] Āpastamba, II, v, 10, 12–14.

[125] Baudhayana, I, I, I, I ; *Vaśiṣṭha*, I, 4 ; *Gautama*, Ch. I, 1.

[126] Gautama, I, i, 1, 3 ; Vaśiṣṭha, I, 4.

[127] Baudhayana, I, i, 1, 4–6 ; Vaśiṣṭha, 1, 5, 6.

[128] Baudhayana, I, i, 1, 7–9.

[129] *Ibid.*, i, 1, 13.

of justice had to grant many a concession in their case. For example, "anybody but a Brāhmaṇa shall suffer corporal punishment for adultery."[130] "A Brāhmaṇa, forsooth, shall not suffer corporal punishment for any offences," and in cases of very great offences in which a non-Brāhmaṇa was punished with death, a Brāhmaṇa escaped only with corporal punishment.[131] He is free from royal taxes.[132] Further the king has to support him[133] and could never escheat the property of a Brāhmaṇa.[134] Thus from the liability of law as well as from taxation the Brāhmaṇa was exempt. Next to the Brāhmaṇa in preferential treatment came the Kṣatriya. In his case too the laws of the land were relaxed and next to him came the Vaiśya.[135] The hardest treatment was accorded to the Śūdra by law. The chief point for consideration in the application of law was the social status of the person[136] and the social status was determined by religion. It was religion to conform to caste duties, and if a person deviated from his duties, he forfeited his social status and became an outcaste.[137] It was thus that religion not only dictated law; it actually controlled its application also. Bearing this interrelation of the state and religion in mind let us examine the machinery of government in a monarchical state.

ROYAL AUTOCRACY

The driving force in the administrative machinery of a monarchical state was the king. He imparted both vigour and efficiency to the whole system of administration. His life was in theory a life of dedication to the cause of society. His duty was to "correct the evil-minded,"[138] or in the words of Laski, eradicate all "anti-social tendencies," by punishing adequately all moral and social wrongs.[139]

[130] Baudhayana, II, ii, 4, 1. [131] Baudhayana, I, x, 14, 17 & 18.

[132] Vaśiṣṭha, Ch. I, 49; Āpastamba; Ch. II, x, 26, 10.

[133] Gautama, X, 9. [134] Baudhayana, I, V, 11, 15 & 16.

[135] For full, information on the subject refer to Gautama, Ch. xii; Āpastamba, II, x, 27; Baudhayana, I, x, 18, 19. [136] Gautama, XII, 51.

[137] Gautama, Ch. XXI, 4.— "To be an outcaste means to be deprived of the right to follow the lawful occupations of twice-born men."
How a person becomes an outcaste, refer to Gautama, XXI, 1–14.

[138] Vaśiṣṭha, Ch. XX, 3.

[139] *Ibid.*, Ch. XXI; Ch. III, 4; Rajavada-Jātaka, No. 151, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II. "It is said that one day the king of Kosala had just passed sentence in a very difficult case involving moral wrong."

The king accomplishes it only when he "takes care of the welfare" of his subjects, in whose dominions be it in villages or forests, there is no danger from thieves.[140] But there seems to have been a great divergence between theory and practice. The kings of ancient India were not the self-dedicating, impartial and wise rulers that the legal theory required them to be.[141] Indeed they sometimes played the tyrant, though owing to the general prosperity of the people, and the rigid social or religious obligations, that sat tight on the people and their princes alike, their tyranny was shorn of its sting. Often, it may be "the king increased the tax for the second and third time."[142] Perhaps that was done after the accession of new kings when the king's officers took "a survey of the fields."[143] As regards the administration of justice we are told how in a certain case a particular "king made no enquiry, but only said 'Off with him, impale him upon a stake'"[144] though in theory if an innocent man was punished, the king had to make a penance.[145] The growth of royal power is clearly brought out by the great emphasis laid on the duty, the training and the personality of the king. Indeed prescriptions on these heads comprise the bulk of treatises on government now. The ministers in comparison sink into insignificance. They are seldom referred to,[146] while three full chapters and more than a hundred and thirty sections are devoted to the "King and his duties" in the three Dharmasūtras. Hence the king now comes to be identified with the state in fact as in theory.

FEATURES OF THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT

According to the Āpastamba the king appointed the highest officials,[147] leaving the latter to choose and appoint their subordinates. The importance of higher officials to the king is

[140] Āpastamba, II, 25, 15.

[141] Gautama, Ch. XI, 2–6.

[142] Mahā-Assaroha-Jātaka, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, No. 302.

[143] Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, No. 467.

[144] Kanhadipayana Jātaka, No. 444, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II.

[145] Vaśiṣṭha, xix, 42–43.

[146] Only twice Vaśiṣṭha refers to them. (*a*) Vaśiṣṭha, xvi, 2—"Let the king or his ministers transact the business on the bench" and (*b*) Vaśiṣṭha, xvi, 20 — "If it be otherwise, the king with his ministers and the citizens shall administer it."

[147] Āpastamba, II, 26, 4–7.

suggested by the statement that "a king will be superior even to Brāhmaṇa if he lives surrounded by servants . . ." who have been most carefully selected.[148] Āpastamba lays down that the king should not give land and money even to a Brāhmaṇa without detriment to his servants.[149] It appears therefore that the king chose his own servants and took care to keep them well pleased. These higher officers must have included the ministers. That the king had always a number of ministers to assist him is clear from many references in the Jātakas. One of them tells us that the king of Benares had five ministers,[150] and this might have been the normal strength of a royal ministry. The king held his court every day, and there were councillors present there.[151] These councillors might or might not have been royal ministers for the Mahāvagga speaks of "ministers" and "councillors" separately.[152] The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta mentions that there were two "chief ministers" by name Sunidha and Vassakara in Magadha at one time.[153] It is however difficult to ascertain the duties of these ministers, who might have been in charge of different departments of the state. There was certainly a minister in charge of the treasury, called the Seṭṭhi, who was assisted by a number of sub-treasurers[154] (Anuseṭṭhi). There was a commander-in-chief of the army, though the king was in theory the lord of the army. The administration of justice was carried on by a number of judges[155] with the chief judges[156] above them. There was a Gahapati and a Pariṇāyaka,[157] possibly corresponding to superintendent of the palace or the lord high steward and master of ceremonies respectively. We are told of one "master of ceremonies in the king's elephant festivals"[158] and it is likely that there must have been one for general purposes. Thus we actually get five officers of state, viz. the head of the treasury, the commander-in-chief, the chief justice, the lord high steward

[148] Vaśiṣṭha, xvi, 21, 26. [149] Āpastamba, II, 26, 1.
[150] Jataka, No. 528, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I.
[151] Jataka, No. 533, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, page 184.
[152] *S.B.E.*, Vol. XVII, p. 304. [153] *S.B.E.*, Vol. XI, p. 18.
[154] Jataka, No. 545, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 203–204.
[155] Jataka, No. 218, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 11.
[156] Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 25.
[157] Mahāsudassana Sutta, Ch. I, 41, 46, *S.B.E.*, xi, pp. 257 and 259.
[158] Jataka, No. 163, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II.

and the master of ceremonies, who constituted the normal feature of the royal government in this age. There seems to be one important omission and that is of the chief collector of revenues. But it is just possible that the village and town officers in charge of the collection of taxes were under a special minister. For, we are told that the king appointed the chief officers, "over villages and towns for the protection of the people" and who again appointed their servants, to "protect the country to the distance of one Krośa from each village" as well as "collect the lawful taxes."[159] It is further laid down that particular attention should be paid to the collection of taxes.[160] Thus it appears that there must have been an additional sixth minister in charge of the royal revenues. These ministers seem to have been like secretaries to the king in charge of different departments incapable of acting on their own initiative. The king was the mainspring of all administrative activity, as he was the fountain-head of all authority. The ministers could at best count upon his approbation when they actually meant to or did take the initiative. That does not mean that the king always acted all alone. He needed the advice of the ministers, though a good deal of emphasis was laid on the personality of the king. He was to be "pure, of subdued senses, surrounded by companions possessing excellent qualities and the means for upholding his rule."[161] He was not to live better than his ministers.[162] These injunctions of the law-codes about the power and personality of the king were the first steps towards an apotheosis of the king in theory.

His priest stood on a different footing altogether above the ministers. "With his assistance he (king) shall fulfil his religious duties,"[163] and all alone he cannot do both his religious and temporal duties.[164] Then only would his kingdom prosper. This conviction gave him a position of privilege which no minister could hope to attain, for unlike others he was "learned in the law and the science of governing."[165]

[159] Āpastamba, II, 26, 4–9.
[160] Gautama, x, 29.
[161] Gautama, Ch. XI, 4 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. II, p. 232.
[162] Āpastamba, II, 25, 10, *S.B.E.*, Vol. II, p. 160.
[163] Gautama, Ch. XI, 13 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. II, p. 233.
[164] Vaśiṣṭha, Ch. XIX, 6 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. XIV, p. 96.
[165] Āpastamba, II, 10, 14.

SOCIETY RELIES ON ROYAL PROTECTION AGAINST FORCES OF DISRUPTION

The growth of royal power, is, in spite of that, a palpable fact now, for the people have learnt to rely more and more on the strength and ability of the king for the maintenance of peace and order. He has to protect not merely the tax payers[166] but all the created beings.[167] He has to punish all deviations from social duty and discipline even with death.[168] He could punish even the Brāhmaṇas who "unobservant of their sacred duties and ignorant of the Veda subsist by begging."[169] This is significant. Further he was the head of the civil and criminal justice and as such had to "transact the business on the bench" either all alone or with his minister.[170] The governmental functions had immensely increased and local government was a powerful factor. There were village and town officers who were in charge of law and order in their areas. They had "to repay what is stolen within those boundaries", i.e. one yojana or 8 miles round a town and one Krośa or 2 miles round a village.[171] He could make grants of villages to his officers and now the headman of the village had become a royal nominee.[172] Administration of justice had become very much elaborated. The king or the judge must never be partial to any one of the parties.[173] "The award of punishment must be regarded by a consideration of the status of the criminal, of his bodily strength, of the nature of the crime and whether the offence has been repeated."[174] There was also an elaborate process of ascertaining the truth in disputed cases by means of witnesses and ordeals. The administration of justice was regulated by the "Veda, the . . . institutes of the sacred law, the Añgas, and the Purāṇa,"[175] but at the same time local customs and laws have to be considered.[176] In cases where the evidence is conflicting, the opinion of the learned Brāhmaṇas should be taken as correct.[177]

[166] Gautama, Ch. X 28. "It is the duty of the king to protect the tax payers." *S.B.E.*, Vol. II, p. 227.

[167] Gautama, X, 7 ; *S.B.E.*, Vol. II, p. 225.

[168] Āpastamba, Praśna, II, Ch. XI, 1–4.

[169] Vaśiṣṭha, iii, 4, *S.B.E.*, Vol. XIV, p. 17.

[170] Vaśiṣṭha, xvi, 2. [171] Āpastamba, II, 26, 5–8.

[172] Jātaka, Nos. 534, 537, Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. V.

[173] Vaśiṣṭha, Ch. XVI, 3. [174] Gautama, Ch. XII, 51.

[175] Gautama, Ch. XI, 1–9. [176] *Ibid.*, 20. [177] Gautama, 25.

It is evident from the above review that society was coming to rely more and more upon the political organization of which the mainspring was the king himself. That was only a natural concomitant of the growing differentiation of the society. The four castes had by now become many more by a process of inter-marriage, social and religious fissures, and economic needs; and the homogeneity of the social orders was threatened with destruction. The rise of new castes or sub-castes like the Rathakāra, the Kṣattri, the Sūta, the Niṣāda, etc.[178] created new problems of social adjustment and introduced elements of disorder into the fourfold system of the society based on occupation. These new classes naturally took to new occupations. At this time therefore the royal authority was given a free hand to deal with the anti-social tendencies. That is why Vaśiṣṭha wants that the king should, after "paying attention to all the laws of countries, subdivisions of castes and families make the four castes fulfil their particular duties, and that he should punish those who stray from the path of duty."[179] The king was, as had been indicated already competent to take cognizance of and punish social and moral wrongs. In short the social forces were slowly working to build up royal supremacy or sovereignty, with the single limitation of religion on it. The oligarchies were being overpowered by monarchy and the republican traditions were falling into discredit in the country. At this juncture the rise of Jainism and Buddhism helped to facilitate the work of monarchy to rise as the dominant institution of society. We have just seen how with the creation of new castes due to forbidden inter-marriages, the already existing social order was becoming rather shaky and naturally the society looked up to the king to maintain the social equilibrium intact. This process was further accelerated by the disturbing influence of the new creeds, and since they abolished rituals and turned to court royal patronage for their triumph, the king naturally gained in prestige to which the rise of extensive states contributed.

NATURE OF SOVEREIGNTY

Thus from our preceding review, we conclude that royal power was acquiring a measure of competence it had never enjoyed before.

[178] Baudhāyana, I, 17. [179] Vaśiṣṭha, xix, 7 & 8.

Though "the Veda, the institutes of the sacred law, the Añgas and the Purāṇa"[180] as also the practice of the Śiṣṭas, i.e. good and righteous men[181] were declared as sources of public law, and therefore, according to legal theory the king could not be sovereign, yet in actual reference his judgment as to the validity of these sources always prevailed. For, he had to scrutinise "all the laws of the countries, subdivisions of castes and families"[182] in order to adjust the interests of all, and thus made the castes conform to their social duties. Thus his ordinances, which bore the stamp of his power as of his judgment, formed a category of law also. In an age when foundations of social order and sacred law were likely to be undermined by the impact of external forces, viz. of the new creeds that sought to reconstruct society and evolve new values, and by the emergence of new castes and sub-castes which introduced social fissures, because they could not be absorbed by the social structure, royal power was accorded a free hand, and an initiative in a way that certainly bade fare to exalt its importance. In an age again when Brāhmaṇs "unobservant of their sacred duties and ignorant of the Veda"[183] subsisted by begging, they had to be corrected by the king alone. If such was the reliance of the society on his power, naturally royal authority commanded a vast volume of obedience from all grades of society. But it was not merely the Brāhmaṇic society that relied on royal power. The heretics, even more than the Brāhmaṇs, relied on the royal power. They appealed to the king, that he might adhere to their cause ; for the royal adherence helped to establish their faith. Internally the state or royal power was growing to be supreme in society in a very tangible manner in spite of the restrictions of religion and law codes. The only point to be noted in this context is that the supremacy of royal authority prevailed in a sphere, whose limits now began to extend over areas hitherto reserved for religion. That is to say, religious sanction was not enough for a law to obtain in society now, for, the society was not the homogeneous body it was before. The new castes or sub-castes and the new creeds that arose during this period required the backing of royal authority. Thus royal authority had ceased to be identical with merely executive authority, that is,

[180] Gautama, Ch. XI, 19.
[181] Baudhāyana, I, i, 1, 4–6 ; Vaśiṣṭha, i, 5 & 6.
[182] Vaśiṣṭha, xix, 7 & 8. [183] Vaśiṣṭha, iii, 4.

authority charged with the execution of laws dictated by religion and not made by the king. But in view of the rise of new castes and sub-castes, and of new creeds the royal authority exercised discretionary power in matters of social and religious obligations of the people. It is in this gradual slipping away of authority and prestige of religion to the hands of the king, that the growing supremacy of royal authority consists. Royal authority was growing to be supreme or sovereign authority inasmuch as it was slowly acquiring power over social institutions in addition to administrative powers.

CHAPTER V

KING AS PROMULGATOR OF RELIGION AND SOCIAL MORALS (400 B. C.—100 B. C.)

FEATURES OF THIS PERIOD

If the consolidation of monarchy, and the gradual centralization of authority marked the evolution of ancient Indian polity in the last period, even greater results were achieved in the period which extended from the fourth century B.C. to the end of the Maurya dynasty. This is a period of a little more than two hundred years and one of the most illuminated as well as glorious periods in Indian history. It recorded the invasion of Alexander the Great, and the rise of the first historical empire. In regard to the development of Indian polity the only limitation on the authority of the state tended to disappear, and the state made an effort to rise to sovereign status. That was on the practical side of Indian polity ; on the theoretical side, the concept of state grew more clear and comprehensive. The external aspect of the state hitherto ignored by the theorists, received equal recognition with the internal aspect of it. In other words, the state came to be viewed as having relations with other states. Interstate relations were for the first time discussed by the political theorists. And for all these we have not to rely on mere guess work or half-authenticated facts, but on undoubted evidences of contemporary records.

RISE OF MAGADHA

The glory of this period centres round the kingdom of Magadha. We have noticed in the last chapter how as a result of the struggle for supremacy in Northern India among the monarchical states Magadha had emerged triumphant. But before she could lord it over the whole country, the kingdom of Avanti had to be humbled in the manner that Kāśi and Kosala had been. The subjugation of Anga, Videha, Kāśi and Kosala had been achieved by the first two kings of Magadha, Bimbisāra and Ajātaśatru, who have left

an abiding name behind, by their personal contact with the Buddha. The dynasty of Bimbisāra came to an end according to the Ceylonese chronicles, with Nāgadasaka[1] who was deposed in favour of one Śiśunāga about 400 B.C. "The most important achievement of Śiśunāga seems to have been the annihilation of the power and prestige of the Pradyota dynasty of Avanti."[2] The Śiśunāga kings were succeeded by the Nandas, one of whom was the contemporary of Alexander and deposed by Candragupta Maurya in about 322 B.C. Though the chronologies of these three dynasties as proposed by the Purāṇas and the Ceylonese chronicles are conflicting, yet we are on pretty sure grounds with regard to the establishment of the paramountcy of Magadha in India. The achievement of these three dynasties could be best given in the following words of Prof. Rapson. "Certain stages in the growth of the power of Magadha from its ancient stronghold in the fortress of Girivraja, may thus be traced. The expansion began with the conquest of Anga (Monghyr and Bhagalpur in Bengal) by Bimbisāra, 500 B.C. The establishment of a supremacy over Kāśī (Benares), Kosala (Oudh) and Videha (N. Bihar) was probably the work of his son and successor, Ajātaśatru, in the first half of the fifth century. Kalinga (Orissa) was, perhaps, temporarily included in the empire as a result of its conquest by a Nanda king. It remained for Candragupta to extend the imperial dominions by the annexation of the north-western region which for a few years had owned the sway of Alexander the Great and his satraps, and for Aśoka to conquer or reconquer Kalinga."[3]

THE NANDAS

This steady rise of Magadha to the headship of an empire, is a remarkable achievement indeed. But this achievement cannot, as has been shown above, be assigned solely to the credit of the Mauryas. Their contribution was that they further extended the already existing "imperial dominions" ruled by the Nandas. That the Nandas had an extensive dominion is attested by the Greek writers. Curtius for example tells us that along the banks of the Ganges extended the empire of Agrammes or Xandrames, perhaps no other than Dhana Nanda Augrasainya, the last of the Nanda

[1] Raichaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 133 ; *C.H.I.*, p. 134.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 134. [3] *C.H.I.*, p. 315.

dynasty, who is said to have been the king of Prasii or the Prācyas.[4] His power could be gauged from the fact that he could bring to the field 20,000 cavalry, 200,000 infantry, 200 chariots and 3,000 elephants, the news of which may have damped the courage of Alexander's soldiers, who therefore "positively asserted that they would follow no farther."[5]

THE THREE MAURYAS

But the rulers of this rich and powerful kingdom soon degenerated; it is said all the nine Nandas ruled only for 22 years — and therefore, the dynasty was overthrown by the Maurya, Candragupta, who might have been the commander-in-chief of Dhana Nanda, the last of the Nandas. Whether he was the low-born son of Murā or belonged to the tribe of the Moriyas of Pippalivana,[6] he was very ambitious and "is said to have made an attempt against his master instigated by the Brāhmaṇ Viṣṇugupta, Cāṇakya or Kauṭilya . . . . " Unsuccessful, he fled away and met Alexander in the Punjab.[7] It is after Alexander's departure that he made a second attempt at the overthrow of the Nanda. Whether in this exploit he was helped by a Himalayan chief Parvataka, which the drama Mudrā Rākṣasa would have us believe or by Porus of Taxila as Dr. Thomas suggests,[8] is of little moment to us. That Candragupta succeeded in deposing and killing the Nanda and ascended the throne is a matter of greater consequence, because the foundation of the Maurya empire is extremely important for our study of the evolution of the state in ancient India. This dynastic revolution appears to have been effected about 323 B.C. The extraordinary ability of the new king is clearly seen from the rapid and extensive conquests that he made, and the efficient system of government that he devised for his dominions within the short span of twenty-five years. His conquests comprised not merely the whole of the Punjab and modern Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Khorasan, which were ceded to him by Seleucos

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 468.

[5] Arrian, V, 25 ; McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander*, p. 121.

[6] *Digha Nikaya*, II, p. 167. Pali Mahavamsa-Turnor-Intro., pp. xxxviii-xlii. In Geiger's translation Mahavamsa is said to have belonged to the Moriya clan.

[7] Plutarch, *Alexander*, p. lxii, Justin-Watson's edition, p. 142.

[8] *C.H.I.*, p. 471.

Nikator, but nearly the whole of India which as Plutarch tells us, he overran with an army of 600,000 men.[9] According to Justin he was "in possession of India." These statements leave us in uncertainty as to the extent of the empire. It is certain, however, that he left an extensive and flourishing kingdom to his son Bindusāra who ascended the throne in 298 B.C. and took the style of Amitraghāta[10] or Amitrakhāda. His reign saw some recrudescence of local revolts in the extensive empire perhaps because of the iron grip of the government established by Candragupta. Divyāvadāna speaks of the Taxilan revolt whither Aśoka was sent to pacify the people. Here the cause seems to have been the "insult of wicked ministers."[11] At any rate Bindusāra had a fairly long and prosperous reign, extending over 25 years. After his death there might have occurred a war of succession between his sons, and Aśoka might have come out successful. But certainly he did not drive all his brothers to destruction in the cruel way that Aurangzeb did. We know for instance from the Fifth Rock Edict that he had many brothers and sisters alive till late in his reign. Aśoka ruled over an empire, that became at once the glory and pride of India. His long reign of forty years recorded only one war — the Kalinga war, a single ebullition of warlike propensity, after which there came about a singular transformation of his life and administrative policy. How important this change was, could be realized when we know that Buddhism won a world-wide recognition and ceased to be of parochial importance because of this change in Aśoka. The change in Aśoka, opened a new chapter in India's history. A genuine endeavour for the good of his people characterized his government, at once vigorous and forgiving, imperious and full of piety, despotic and yet benevolent. That was Aśoka in his strength and weakness. His death proved disastrous to the empire in which diverse peoples and creeds had found the only symbol of unity in the extraordinary piety and ability of that great king. None else could fill his place; and taking advantage of the weakness at the centre, the Andhras and Kalingas became independent, the foreign invasions from Syria[12] (208 B.C.) and Bactria[13] (175 B.C.) tore away the north-

[9] Plutarch, *op. cit.*, p. lxii. [10] Raichaudhuri, *op. cit.* p. 184 and footnote 1.
[11] *Divyavadana* edited by Cowell and Neil, p. 371.
[12] & [13] Antiochos the Great of Syria invaded Kabul. Demetrios of Bactria conquered Kabul and founded a line of frontier kings.

western portions, and what remained of the vast empire wasparcelled out between his sons, grandsons or ambitious nobles. Thus came to an end the great empire built up by generations of kings from 500 B.C. onwards.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For an account of the Mauryan government the chief sources of our information will be the Greek accounts, the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭalya and the imperial edicts of Aśoka. Though Kauṭalya's *Arthaśāstra* seems to have been composed later than Mauryan times, yet its observations must have been based on conditions, which obtained not far back in the past and certainly in the Mauryan times. The imperial edicts of Aśoka furnish the most reliable evidence on the period. No less reliable are the Greek writers, though it is hardly realized what a mine of information their laconic observations contain, and what a flood of light they throw on the government of the country. What they all say has to be examined in the light of the previous development of Indian polity, outlined in the last chapter.

We concluded in the last chapter that as a result of the disturbing elements in the social system due to the emergence of new castes or Varṇasankaras, and the rise of new creeds that preached a crusade against the accepted dogma and ritual, society in order to maintain its equilibrium came more and more to rely on the support of royal power. The king became the custodian of the moral, and material welfare of the society. The natural consequence of such a reliance upon royal power, at a time when the rise of extensive country states had become an established fact bringing with it an extension of the power and resources of the king, was that the royal government attained a degree of competence never known before. The king could therefore, as the writers of Dharma Sūtras prescribed, take cognizance of the moral, and social wrongs, and prescribe remedies.

Such a development of royal authority could alone precipitate that attitude of the king, which we find in Aśoka. He made himself the irresistible autocrat of a vast empire, the head of the religion, the dictator of moral and social conduct, and the sole and self-appointed custodian of the welfare of the people. If this unprecedented

growth of royal power arouses any doubt, we have only to look back and scrutinise the problems that had arisen in society for some time past. Who for example had to keep the balance even between the rival creeds in the country ? How were the claims of those who clung to a liberal mysticism as their creed like the teachers and followers of the Upaniṣads to be reconciled with those of others who clung to conservatism like the ritualistic unthinking masses ? What for example should be the treatment to be given to the Śramaṇs and the Brāhmaṇs ? And lastly how were the newly sprung sections or castes like the Sutas, the Ugras, the Ambaṣṭhas, the Parsvas, etc. to be accommodated in the fourfold social structure ? These were very knotty problems that made the social foundations very shaky. How this state of affairs must have been brought about can be partly explained by the observations of Megasthenes about family life and morals. "They marry many wives," he says "whom they buy from their parents, giving in exchange a yoke of oxen. Some they marry hoping to find in them willing helpmates ; and others for pleasure and to fill their houses with children. The wives prostitute themselves unless they are compelled to be chaste."[14] This laxity in family morals may have given rise to a number of new castes.

But this is only a part of the picture. The rest of it we shall find in the edicts of Aśoka, where he remarks that people spoke of others' creeds without charity and treated the Brāhmaṇs, the Śramaṇs, their elders, teachers and relations without courtesy. At any rate the disruptive forces in the social structure and the increasing laxity in social morals seem to have baffled the genius of the cloistered scholars, saints and thinkers. Perhaps they thought that all the discordant elements could best be brought under control and harmonized by the pressure of royal power; the anti-social tendencies could be best eradicated by the governmental rod. In the religious sphere, Buddhism and Jainism had shown the way by courting royal patronage, as the only means of gaining ground against rival creeds. Indeed all the social and religious forces now combined to raise the king above all, and to make the king-governed state — Rāṣṭra practically the sovereign institution. Bearing these ideas in mind let us pass on to examine the Greek accounts of the Maurya empire.

[14] McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian* (1926), p. 69.

MEGASTHENES ON KINGSHIP, CAMP-LIFE AND SOCIAL HABITS

Reporting the observations of Megasthenes, Strabo says "The Indians all live frugally especially when in camp. They dislike a great undisciplined attitude and consequently they observe good order. Theft is of very rare occurrence. Megasthenes says that those who were in the camp of Sandrakottos, wherein lay 400,000 men, found that the thefts reported on any one day did not exceed the value of two hundred drachmae, and this among a people who have no written laws, but are ignorant of writing, and must therefore in all the business of life trust to memory.... The simplicity of their laws and their contracts is proved by the fact that they seldom go to law."[15] Speaking of the royal succession he says: "The sons succeed the father. The king may not sleep during the day time, and by night he is obliged to change his couch from time to time with a view to defeat plots against his life. The king leaves his palace not only in time of war, but also for the purpose of judging causes. He then remains in court for the whole day without allowing the business to be interrupted, even though the hour arrives when he must needs attend to his person.... Another purpose for which he leaves his palace is to offer sacrifice; a third is to go to the chase...."[16]

These extracts give us a glimpse into the nature of kingship, discipline in the camp and the general honesty of the people. The law of the people obviously comprised the Smritis, and it was a class of people possibly the Brāhmaṇs who specialized in legal studies, and acted as judges. Perhaps this class is the same as the seventh caste of Megasthenes, consisting of councillors and assessors. "It is the smallest class" he says "but the most respected on account of the high character and wisdom of its members; for, from their ranks the advisers of the king are taken, and the treasurers of the state and the arbiters who settle disputes. The generals of the army also, and the chief magistrates usually belong to this class."[17] It was with their assistance that the king discharged one of his most important duties namely that of "judging causes," which was never allowed specially in the case of Candragupta, to be interrupted by physical needs. Candragupta, at least for some time,

[15] McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian*, (1928), p. 68. [16] *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

was a Brāhmaṇical Hindu, otherwise he could not have been so particular about "sacrifices." One of his chief pastimes was the chase. That he lived in constant dread of assassination and to "defeat plots against his life" changed his couch and compartment at night, is as much true of Candragupta as of any other king. Kingship was hereditary, but there was no law of primogeniture. Usurpation of royal power by murder seems to have been a normal thing, and nothing like a social or moral stigma attached to it. For otherwise "a woman who kills the king when drunk" would not become "the wife of his successor."[18] The logical result of such a state of things would be that the king must be always alert and watchful as to the activities of his ministers and officers around him and away from him in the provinces, of the princes of the royal family and indeed of every one in the kingdom. He had to be, in short, something of a superman seeing to everything; taking note of everybody, and setting example by his conduct to the people. For this he had to institute a vigorous system of secret service, the efficiency or otherwise of which vitally affected his career and kingdom. It was to his interest to take the initiative in and direct the activities of his government as much as it was for his government to come in contact with people directly in every part of the kingdom. Indeed the more alert and ubiquitous his government became, the greater was his security, and upon his security depended the security of the social order. It was thus a vicious circle and the frank recognition of it helped the king to raise his government to a high pitch of efficiency. These conclusions would be borne out again by the evidence of the Greek writers.

ROYAL GOVERNMENT

Coming to the form and function of the government Megasthenes divides it into three parts, each composed of a set of officials discharging allotted duties. "Of the great officers of state" he says, "some have charge of the market, others of the city, others of the soldiers. Some superintend the rivers, *measure the land*, as is done in Egypt and inspect the sluices by which water is let out from the main canals into their branches, so that everyone may have an equal supply of it. The same persons have charge also of the hunts-

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

men, and are entrusted with the power of rewarding or punishing them according to their deserts. They *collect the taxes*, and superintend occupations connected with land, as those of wood-cutters, the carpenters, the blacksmiths and the miners. They *construct the roads* and at every ten stadia set up a pillar to show the byroads and distances."[19]

(*a*) *The country*

The officers of state in charge of the country looked to the irrigation ; controlled the ferries across the rivers ; preserved the forests as well as encouraged the huntsmen to kill those animals that pestered the people ; surveyed and assessed land, as well as collected taxes ; encouraged various arts and crafts ; and lastly had the charge of constructing and maintaining works of public utility like the roads, etc. These officers in charge of the country formed a category of government officials, as different from those in charge of the city ; and it appears there was a broad division in the government as well as in the population as belonging to the country, and to the town or city. For we are told, that "the husbandmen themselves, with their wives and children live in the country, and entirely avoid going into town."[20] Of these the second class of the Indian people, "who form the bulk of the population"[21] it is again said that "they never go to town, either to take part in its tumults or for any other purpose."[22] To protect these people from all troubles and ravages due to war, was the most sacred duty of the state as well as the most accepted principle in all interstate relations in ancient India ; for, men of this class were regarded as public benefactors. It is obviously by some mistake that the Greeks wrote market where they actually meant the country.

Apart from this some distinction was made between the city and the country-side in matters of revenue collection and private ownership. The husbandmen we are told paid a land tribute to the king, because all India was the property of the crown and no private person was permitted to own land. Besides the land-tribute, they paid into the royal treasury a fourth part of the produce of the soil.[23]

[19] McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 86.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 39. [21] *Ibid.*, p. 83. [22] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

The treatment of the city was far different, for there lived the artisans and craftsmen and that was the centre of trade and industry, often frequented by foreigners. The city problems were therefore different. There were trade corporations and industrial guilds in cities. No wonder, there might have been different classes of officers to take charge of the country and the town.

But these diverse governmental activities must have been performed by an army of officials though it is difficult to ascertain their designations. What is more they unmistakably point to a developed system of administration. But even that forms only one of the three categories of the governmental functions. Next come the officers of state in charge of the cities in the empire, not particularly of Pāṭaliputra only, as has been supposed so far. The distinguishing feature of the cities was the prevalence of municipal government. It has been repeatedly remarked that "after many generations had come and gone, the sovereignty was dissolved, and democratic governments were set up in cities,"[24] and that "after many years had gone most of the cities adopted the democratic form of government...."[25] These do not refer to the city states as Jaiswal thinks.[26]

Indeed there could not have been any independent city states; for Candragupta, as we have observed, and as Plutarch asserts had already with "six hundred thousand men attacked and subdued all India."[27] What is more probable is that like many chiefs, the cities perhaps because of their corporate existence retained a wide measure of freedom, and as was customary in ancient India their autonomy was never disturbed nor curtailed by the central authority. We have in the last chapter adverted to the autonomy of corporations, in-so-far as their laws were respected by the king. Thus it appears that in the Maurya empire a special section of the administration concerned itself with the cities, and the cities were distinguished by their corporate existence and municipal governments.

(b) *The city*

"Those" we are told "who have the charge of the city are divided into six bodies of five each. The members of the first look after

[24] *Ibid.*, Strabo, p. 36. [25] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[26] Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. I, p. 84. [27] Plutarch, *Alexander*, p. 62.

everything relating to the industrial arts. Those of the second attend to the entertainment of foreigners. To these they assign lodgings, and they keep watch over their modes of life through those persons whom they give to them as assistants. They escort them on the way when they leave the country, or, in the event of their dying, forward their property to their relatives. They take care of them when they are sick, and if they die, they bury them. The third body consists of those who enquire when and how births and deaths occur, with the view not only of levying a tax, but that births and deaths among both high and low may not escape the cognizance of government.[28] The fourth class superintends trade and commerce. Its members have charge of weights and measures, and see that the products in their season are sold by public notice. No one is allowed to deal in more than one kind of commodity unless he pays a double tax. The fifth class supervises manufactured articles, which they sell by public notice. What is new is sold separately from what is old, and there is a fine for mixing the two together. The sixth and last class consists of those who collect the tenths of the prices of the articles sold. Frauds in the payment of this tax is punished with death. In their collective capacity they have charge both of their special departments, and also of matters affecting the general interests, as the keeping of public buildings in proper repair, the regulation of prices, the care of markets, harbours and temples."[29] This account of the city administration, and the duties of the administrative boards confirms ours previous conclusion. It is noteworthy that the municipal government of the city should have been concerned primarily with the regulation of indigenous industry, foreign trade and commerce, and the production and consumption, and in short the economic activities of the people. Besides these the only other activities pertained to the care of the foreigners who obviously came for purposes of trade, and care of the public buildings. That the sources of the royal revenue in the city were different from those of the country are apparent. Here they consisted in the "tenths of the prices of the articles sold" as well as fees on "births and deaths," that is, perhaps succession.[30]

[28] Dr. Barnett suggests that they had a regular census of the people. Its institution was a broad-minded and daring effort on the part of the king against the superstition of the people.

[29] McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian* (1926), pp. 87–88. [30] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

(c) *The army*

Last comes the army, which was in charge of a governing body. " This also consists of six divisions with five members to each. One division is appointed to co-operate with the admiral of the fleet, another with the superintendent of the bullock trains which are used for transporting engines of war, food for the soldiers, provender for the cattle, and other military requisites. They supply servants who beat the drum, and others who carry gongs ; grooms also for the horses.... The third division has the charge of the foot-soldiers, the fourth of the horses, the fifth of the war-chariots and the sixth of the elephants. There are royal stables for the horses and elephants, and also a royal magazine for the arms, because the soldier has to return his arms to this magazine and his horse and his elephant to the stables."[31] This account of the army management is rather extraordinary. The board corresponds to a modern council of war. But the principle involved here seems to be of entrusting to a Panch, i.e. Panchāyat, the management of each section of the army. It is a piece with the management of the city, and embodied a democratic element in it. The Greeks definitely mention that it was a standing army "maintained at the king's expense."[32] It numbered about 600,000 men with which Candragupta "traversed India and conquered the whole."[33] Besides these there were amazonian guards, in the palace, who were charged with the safety of the king's person. They attended on him in the palace and accompanied him to the chase "equipped with weapons of every kind."[34]

GREEKS SPEAK OF AN ELABORATE ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY

This picture testifies to the existence of a highly elaborate administrative machinery. The government consisted of three main heads — the country, the city and the army, and the principle followed was that the arm of government should reach the individual in his daily life. That necessitated the service of numerous officials, about whom Megasthenes wrote : "In point of numbers" and in comparison to other classes, "this is a small class, but it is distinguished by superior wisdom and justice, and hence enjoys

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 88. [32] *Ibid.*, p. 41 and p. 161.
[33] Plutarch, *Grecian Lives*, Pt. II, p. 152. [34] *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71.

the prerogative of choosing governors, chiefs of provinces, deputy-governors, superintendents of the treasury, generals of the army, admirals of the navy, controllers and commissioners who superintend agriculture."[35] In spite of that however, the king could not depend on the honesty of his officers. In an age when facilities for communication were very crude, when distance and physical configuration presented innumerable barriers, a king who has to control a continent like India, had to rely upon a secret service of espionage, which indeed was the chief instrument of royal control. This department also was staffed by an enormous number of persons, so much so that they gave Megasthenes the impression of being a class by themselves. They formed the sixth class we are told, and were actually the eyes and ears of the king. They had been "assigned the duty of watching all that goes on and making reports secretly to the king. Some are entrusted with the inspection of the city and others with that of the army. The former employ as their co-adjutors the courtesans of the city, and the latter the courtesans of the camp."[36] Regarding them Arrian also says that "they spy out what goes on in the country and town, and report everything to the king where the people have a king and to the Magistrates where the people are self-governed and it is against uses and wont for them to give in a false report — indeed no Indian is accused of lying."[37] This means that even in cities, that were governed by popular boards and were distinguished by their corporate activities spies were extensively employed. It is really by means of these that the king could both reign and rule in great confidence. They with the army formed the mainstay of his power.

These observations of the Greeks, give us quite a good picture of the working and structure of the government. The state had developed an elaborate administrative machinery, that concerned itself with and took note of all the varied activities of society. The king, placed at the head of the state was in theory as in practice the lord of the land and water, the fountainhead of honour and justice and the repository of the coercive power of society. The growth of the state under Candragupta is brought out by the fact that there had developed in the meanwhile what Dr. Wilson would call the constituent and ministrant functions of the government.

[35] McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian* (1926), p. 218.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 85. [37] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

While organizing finance, the army and justice, and maintaining peace and order, it did not neglect beneficent works for the people. It promoted and regulated trade, controlled ferries, constructed roads, fostered agriculture, maintained irrigation, started charitable institutions, and even subsidized many kinds of industries. How concerned the state was to avoid famine, is evident from the fact that it not only strove to protect the peasantry from ravages of war, it also took note of the weather forecast at the beginning of the year, and "learning beforehand what is to happen, always make (made) provision against a coming deficiency."[38]

ARTHAŚĀSTRA AND MAURYAN GOVERNMENT

This picture is sufficiently impressive and if that is supplemented by what the *Arthaśāstra* depicts it would surpass our expectations. But while we have to refer to the *Arthaśāstra* to form an adequate notion of the Mauryan government we have to do so with some caution. In the first place we have to remember that it seeks to depict the ideal working of a state. Its value, therefore, consists in its theory. For, in an age when the barriers of nature and customs were insuperable difficulties, to speak of the government regulating every human affair from the washerman's prices to the conduct of princes and ministers, as Cāṇakya does in the *Arthaśāstra* is to only project an ideal of governmental action. To accomplish it in an atmosphere of distrust, in which according to Cāṇakya and Megasthenes, the rulers and their ministers lived, is an impossible adventure. But there is an appreciable amount of truth in what Cāṇakya depicted. He perhaps sought to visualize an ideal government formed out of the elements supplied to him by the Mauryan government. Perhaps his polity, which has a mania for regulation must have been conceived on the pattern of Aśoka's government. Aśoka's government sought to attain a universal competence; but certainly without that efficient machinery of control, which could ensure a universal competence. The political outlook he borrowed from Aśoka; and the technique he himself supplied. Comprehensive competence based on centralized control — that is the hallmark of Cāṇakya's state. Hence to have a full comprehension of Aśoka's government in particular, and Mauryan government in general we have to study

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

side by side both the *Arthaśāstra* and Aśoka's edicts. For, the *Arthaśāstra* will help us to visualize in an ideal setting the actual government of Aśoka.

But even that would not liquidate the worth of the *Arthaśāstra*. As a scientific treatise depicting the norm of statecraft it drew upon the details of government of the Mauryas, and also envisaged an ideal for governments of the subsequent periods. Hence without being dogmatic about its date, the Arthaśāstra has been accepted in these pages as drawing upon conditions that obtained in the Mauryan and specially Aśoka's empire, and also as influencing the conduct of government subsequently. The treatment of the subject matter might have followed the lines of similar scientific treatises that existed before. Bearing this in mind we proceed to study the Arthaśāstra, primarily as a treatise on governmental theory in spite of the assertion of its author to the contrary.[39] And as a scientific treatise it seems to have been based on the administrative details of Aśoka's empire, because it depicts a government with similar details and therefore may have been written after the age of Aśoka.[40]

KAUṬALYA MAKES SOCIETY DEPENDENT ON THE STATE

But before proceeding to give a picture of the *Arthaśāstra* polity, we have to bear in mind that as the result of that process of political development which had started with the vedic polity, and closed with the foundation of the Mauryan empire, people had come to realize the importance of the political organization to secure social equilibrium and happiness. That indeed was the content of political consciousness in ancient India ; and it is reflected in the *Arthaśāstra*. It is this spirit that exalted the government and therefore the state, above all other institutions, and theorized that the social structure itself depended upon the governmental machinery. Hence said Kauṭalya that "it is on this science of government that the course

[39] *Arthaśāstra* II, Ch. X. Sarva-śāstrāṇyanukramya prayogānupalabhya-ca ; Kautilyena narendrārthe śāsanasya vidhiḥ krita.

[40] For a discussion of the date see Bernhard Von Breloer, Jolly and Schmidt's edition of the *Arthaśāstra*. Kauṭaliya-Studien, 2 vols., pp. 1–47 ; A. B. Keith in the *J.R.A.S.*, 1916, pp. 130–38 ; Jacobi in *Ind. Ant.*, June–July, 1918 ; Jayaswal in *Hindu Polity*, Part I, appendix c ; R. K. Mukherji's Introduction to N. N. Law's *Studies in Ancient Hindu Polity*, D. R. Bhandarkar, *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, VII, pp. 65 ff., etc.

of the progress of the world depends,"[41] and again that "this people (society) consisting of four castes and four orders of religious life, when governed by the king with his sceptre, will keep to their respective paths, ever devotedly adhering to their respective duties and occupations."[42] Not merely that; the king is the promulgator — Pravartaka, of the Dharma, i.e. law and duty, when all Dharmas perish.[43] In this verse the importance of royal authority for social progress has been very forcefully stated. This idea of the king being *Dharmapravartaka* reminds one of Aśoka assuming the very same role. But in order that the king may play this exalted role, he must undergo a rigorous course of training.[44] He must be learned, self-controlled, active, brave and well-served by loyal ministers. The type of the king who would rule over the whole world, is the one who has been chastened by learning and who seeks to make his people chaste.[45] Here again we have the example of Aśoka, who fulfilled this ideal, in its double aspect. He led a life of self-restraint, and he made his people do so.

KAUṬALYA'S CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY

As the duty of the king became more and more clear and precise, so did the conception of the content of his sovereignty. Of course the content of sovereignty is always power; but before Kauṭalya there was hardly any clear conception of what constituted that power. For the first time in political thought in Ancient India we have the seven elements of sovereignty clearly defined. These are Svāmi, Amātya, Janapada, Dūrga, Kośa, Daṇḍa, Mitrāṇi or the sovereign, ministers, territory, fortifications, the treasury, the army, and the ally respectively. These being the essentials of statehood, royal government, that is Rājatva, cannot be conducted without the co-operation of the ministers who must be consulted by the

[41] Tasyāmāyattā lokayātrā, *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. IV.

[42] Caturvarṇāśramo-loko-rājñā-dandena-pālitaḥ.
Svadharma-karmābhirato vartatṇë sveṣu vartmaṣu, *Ibid.*

[43] Caturvarṇāśramasyāyaṃ lokasyā-cāra rakṣaṇāt;
Naśyatāṃ sarvadharmāṇāṃ rājādharmapravartakaḥ, *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iii, Ch. I.

[44] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Chs. V–VIII.

[45] Vidyāvinīto rājāhi prajānāṃ vinayerataḥ; Ananyāṃ pṛthiviṃ bhuñkte sarvabhūtahiterataḥ, *Ibid.*, Ch. V.

king.[46] But the prosperity or otherwise of the state depended chiefly on the king. Self-restraint of the sovereign is of the utmost importance. Without that, even the lord of the whole earth would be destroyed ; while practised in continence, even an insignificant monarch may sway the sceptre of the whole world.[47] Hence all depended on the king's personality, which supplied the motive power to the whole system. That is why great deal of care has to be bestowed on the proper training of the monarch. And since equally important were the ministers, in charge of the actual administration, no less care has to be taken in their selection and appointment ; for, is it not that government is carried on by their assistance and co-operation? Merit should be the chief consideration in their appointment,[48] but they have to be tested as to their honesty and loyalty beforehand. There seem to have been two types of ministers —Amātyas, viz. (*a*) those who were in charge of actual administration ; (*b*) those who were only councillors to the king. The former were what we call now the executive officers.[49] The latter formed a sort of cabinet—Mantriparisad[50] whose numerical strength depended upon the requirements of the kingdom. There was a prime minister, who ranked equal with the teacher and family priest of the king.[51]

ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

The executive comprises a bureaucracy of eighteen departments[52] worked by several superintendents. Some of them are (*i*) the collector general (Samāharttā) in charge of the revenue collection ; (*ii*) the receiver general (Sannidhātā — in charge of receipts into the treasury ; (*iii*) the auditor general (Akṣapaṭala) ; (*iv*) the superintendent of the royal writ ; (*v*) the chancellor of the exchequer — Kośādhyakṣa ; (*vi*) the superintendent in charge of mines ; (*vii*) the superintendent of gold and jewellery manufacture — Sauvarṇika ; (*viii*) the superintendent of grain-reserves, of the forest produce etc. — Kośthāgārādhyakṣa ; (*ix*) the superintendent of the arsenal

[46] Sahāyasādhyaṃrājatvaṃ, etc. *Ibid.*, Ch. VII.

[47] Arivarjāḥ prakṛtayaḥ saptaitās svaguṇodayāh . . . Nayajñaḥ prithivīṃ kritsnāṃ jayatyeva na hīyate, *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. vi, i.

[48] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. VIII. [49] *Ibid.*, Ch. VIII. [50] *Ibid.*, Ch. XIX.

[51] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. x, Ch. III.

[52] . . . Tirtheṣvaṣṭādaśasvāpi, *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. XII.

Āyudhagārādhyakṣa; (*x*) the controller of the weights and measures — Pauṭavādhyakṣa; (*xi*) Mānādhyakṣa; (*xii*) the collector of tolls — Śulkādhyakṣa; (*xiii*) the director of agriculture and royal farms — Sītādhyakṣa; (*xiv*) the director of the weaving; (*xv*) the controller of the wine shops and liquor manufacture — Surādhyakṣa; (*xvi*) the controller of the courtesans — Gaṇikādhyakṣa; (*xvii*) the superintendent of the slaughter house Sūnādhyakṣa; (*xviii*) officer in charge of the ferries, and navy — Nāvadhyakṣa; (*xix*) officer in charge of cattle — Godhyakṣa; (*xx*) officer in charge of the royal stables — Aśvadhyakṣa; (*xxi*) officer in charge of the elephants; (*xxii*) officer in charge of the chariots — Rathādhyakṣa; (*xxiii*) officer in charge of the infantry — Pattyādhyakṣa; (*xxiv*) controller of seals, of documents, of passports — Mudrādhyakṣa; (*xxv*) officer in charge of pastures — Vivītādhyakṣa; (*xxvi*) officer in charge of waste lands — Śūnyādhyakṣa; (*xxvii*) Kaṇṭaka-śodhana commissioners; (*xxviii*) Saṃsthādhyakṣa; (*xxix*) controller of raw vegetables; (*xxx*) controller of commodities for sale — Paṇyādhyakṣa; and others.

It is difficult to ascertain how these superintendents were brought under eighteen categories, i.e. departments; or what was their relation to the ministers of state. It is equally difficult to say if this bureaucracy existed in the Mauryan empire as depicted here. This bureaucracy was expected to perform nearly all the functions of a modern state. For example we have under the department of revenue, the collection of land tax, tolls at the ferries, taxes from artisans, loans, interests, road-cess, duties on goods sold, octroi duties, customs duties etc. Besides these sources of royal revenue there were mines, forests, royal farms etc. There was side by side what we may call in modern phraseology the department of audits and accounts, which according to the *Arthaśāstra* worked most rigorously, for they are the only means of ascertaining income and expenditure. Then there were the police, and spy department on whose efficiency depended the smooth working and prosperity of the royal government. The city superintendent — Nāgaraka — with his subordinates — Gopa and Sthānika, was a very important official. But perhaps more important than the city superintendent and his subordinates were the spies whose ubiquitous presence was both a terror, and an assurance of safety for all the people of the empire.[53] In fact like the king they too had a universal competence.

[53] *Ibid.*, Bk. i, Ch. XII.

The army was composed of the infantry, the cavalry, the war-chariots and the elephants, all controlled by a special officer. There was a navy, under a superintendent also.† The modern department of commerce and industry was represented by one that controlled the sale and supply of commodities, labour and guilds, imports and exports, rates of interest on loans, mortgages, etc. Public health and sanitation considered as one of the foremost nation-building departments of the modern state did not go by default.[54] Great care was bestowed on the prevention of adulteration of food, the eradication of social evils — Kaṇṭakaśodhana, regulation of drinking, gambling and slaughter houses, the supervision of courtesans, etc. Apart from all these there was an elaborate system of judiciary in the empire, staffed by competent judges, at the head of whom stood the king himself. Lastly the local administration — the rural and provincial governments were equally well organized. This administrative machinery in order to work in an empire extending from Kabul to the Kṛṣṇā presupposes a unitary political outlook, an elaborate scheme of transportation facilities and the employment of an immense army of officials. It is impossible to think of a unitary outlook and transportation facilities at this stage of the development of Indian polity. What therefore Kauṭalya sought to do was to envisage an administrative norm, based upon what was actually in practice. Yet this extensive scope of the political machinery perhaps is, granting that it combined what was actual and ideal, an unmistakable sign of the growing importance of the state.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The ideal element in the governmental machinery is clearly brought out when Kauṭalya speaks of the rural and urban areas, i.e. the local government. Its effective functioning depended upon two things, viz. : (*a*) an elaborate and widespread organization, and (*b*) a civic sense of the people, who ungrudgingly co-operated with the government. This condition of things seems to be far too ideal to be true of the times. It is to be doubted if such an elaborate and widespread organization of local government as Kauṭalya contemplates

† Note the difference between the Greek and Arthaśāstra accounts.

[54] *Arthaśāstra* Bk. ii, Ch. XXXVI — Pāṃsunyāse rathyāyāṃaṣṭabhāgo daṇḍa . . . Manuṣyapretānāṃ pañcaśatpaṇa, etc.

had evolved in India. Next, granted that it had, it is yet to be doubted whether a people whose love of autonomy was real could willingly co-operate with a government, whose eagerness to regulate, control, and centralize was unquestionable. The spirit of Kauṭalya's regulations and espionage seeks to atrophy all civic sense in the people. That will be realized when we study the details.

Local governments were formed by the Janapada, i.e. the country or kingdom being divided for fiscal purpose into four parts,[55] each under a Sthānika.[56] The Sthānika was usually assisted by the departmental heads — the Adhyakṣas — and these again by the accountants (Saṃkhyāyaka), the writer (Lekhaka), the coin examiners (Rūpadarśaka), the treasurer (Nivīgrāhaka), and the military officer (Uttarādhyakṣa).[57]

In towns and villages householders were required to report to the officers in charge, either the Gopa, the Sthānika or the Nagaraka; of strangers arriving at or departing from their houses. Vintners, sellers of cooked meat and rice, and even prostitutes were similarly asked to report about spendthrifts and foolhardy persons, who engage in risky undertakings. The householders were required to remain always prepared for accidents like fire, and to maintain sanitary conditions in their localities.[58] As regards villages there were, we are told, village councils — Grāmakūṭam — which perhaps attended to improvement work or the judicial business of the village.[59] The elders of the village looked after the property of the minors, as also of the gods. The villagers also constructed many kinds of public works in co-operation.[60] Such are some of the civic functions of the people. As regards the activities of the government, the first thing to be noted is, that it employed spies everywhere.[61] Assisted by their reports the government took care of the lives and pursuits of the villagers. "No ascetic other than a Vānaprastha, no company other than one of local birth, and no guilds of any kind other than local co-operative guilds shall" we are told "find entrance

[55] *Ibid.*, Bk. ii, Ch. XXXV.

[56] *Ibid.*, Evam janapadacaturbhāgam Sthānika Ścintayet.

[57] *Ibid.*, Ch. IX. [58] *Ibid.*, Ch. XXXVI.

Arthaśāstra, Bk. v, Ch. III. The village judges must have been honorary for in the list of remunerations allowed to the village officers the village judge does not find a place. [60] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. ii, Ch. I.

[61] *Ibid.*, Ch. XXXV; *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iv, Ch. IV; *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. XII.

into the villages of the kingdom. Nor shall there be in villages, buildings intended for sports and plays. Nor, in view of procuring money, free labour, commodities, grains and liquids in plenty shall actors, dancers, singers, drummers, buffoons and bards make any disturbance to the work of the villagers."[62]

The chief officers of the village were the superintendent, the accountant, the Gopa, i.e. the revenue officer, the veterinary surgeons, the physician, horse-trainers and messengers[63] and the village headman.[64] Villages were grouped together for administrative purposes. There were different types of villages — those that were exempt from taxation, those that supplied soldiers, those that paid taxes in the form of grains, cattle and gold, those that supplied free labour, and those that supplied dairy produce. Such villages after being classified were formed into groups of five or ten for fiscal purposes. The Gopa attended to the accounts of a group of that type. He set up boundaries of the villages, numbered plots of land as arable, fallow, marshes, forests, temple property, irrigation tanks, cremation grounds, pasture land, roads, places of pilgrimage, etc. and accordingly registered them as gifts, charities, taxable property or otherwise. The houses were numbered as tax-paying and tax-free to facilitate the collection of royal revenue. Further the history, the occupation, the income and the expenditure of each household were ascertained. Over the Gopa there was the Sthānika who similarly worked in the district — that comprised several village-groups. There were supervisors, called the Pradeṣṭās, who were deputed by the collector general to inspect the work of the district and the subdivisional revenue officers (those in charge of groups of villages).[65]

As for fiscal purposes so for defence the villages were grouped. Forts were constructed to guard groups of ten, two hundred, four hundred and eight hundred villages. The last went by the name of the Sthānīya, and seems to bear some affinity with the Sthānika. Perhaps as the Sthānika was the district officer or as we call him by the modern designation — the collector, so the district fort was called the Sthānīya.[66] It was perhaps thought that a district should comprise 800 villages. The forts that guarded each group of ten,

[62] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. ii, Ch. I.
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iii, Ch. X.
[65] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. ii, Ch. XXXV.
[66] *Ibid.*, Ch. I.

two hundred and four hundred villages were called Saṃgrahaṇa, Khārvātika and Droṇamukha respectively.[67]

The judicial administration again followed the lines of interior defence. At the places where there was a Sthānīya, or Droṇamukha, or Saṃgrahaṇa, or where provincial frontiers met, there was to be a panel of judges composed of three men conversant with sacred laws, and three ministers of the king to dispense king's justice.[68] These were perhaps courts of appeal, for as we have observed above there was a village council — Grāmakūṭam[69] that discharged judicial functions in the village. There were perhaps civil and criminal courts — Dharmasthānīya and Kaṇṭakśodhana[70] at these places. The *Arthaśāstra* maintained that there were four elements of which law was composed. They were the sacred law (Dharma), usage (Vyavahāra), conduct of the good (Caritraṃ), and orders of the king (Rājaśāna).[71] But in cases where these were in conflict with one another sacred law or Dharma was given preference, and where the sacred law or Dharma ran counter to Nyāya, i.e. canons of justice manifest in Rājaśāsana, the latter had the preference,[72] because the original text of the sacred law was not available. Torture was often employed to elicit confession in criminal cases, and there were generally four kinds of torture in vogue.[73] Examination of witnesses was a very important item in civil suits, and it was the work of the clerks (Lekhaka) to take down the deposition correctly.[74] The punishment ranged from fines or compensations to convictions and capital punishment.

Next came the police administration which again was of a piece with the judicial and the defence organizations. The commissioner (Pradeṣṭā) who, as we have seen, inspected the work of the village and district officers, along with the Sthānikas, or the district officers and the Gopas, the officers in charge of groups of villages, took steps to detect theft and other crimes.[75] In this work they were perhpas substantially helped by the superintendent of the village,[76] and

[67] *Ibid.* [68] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iii, Ch. I, Dharmasthā . . . Kuryu.
[69] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iv, Ch. IV.
[70] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iii, Chs. X–XX ; *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iv, Ch. I *et seq.*
[71] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iii, Ch. I. Dharmaśca-vyavahārasca caritraṃ rājaśāsanaṃ . . . etc. [72] *Ibid.*, Saṃsthāyā-dharmaśāstreṇa . . . Pāṭohinaśyati.
[73] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iv, Ch. VIII. [74] *Ibid.*, Ch. IX.
[75] *Ibid.*, Ch. VI, p. 264. [76] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, p. 256.

the headman of the village who had considerable influence in the village.[77] The headman could command the services of the villagers and could expel the suspects and criminals.[78] Apart from these the spies did the most valuable work in this matter of the prevention of crimes.

To sum up, the local or provincial administration worked as follows. There was the collector general (Samāharttā) at the head. Under him were the district collectors or the Sthānikas, and under the district collectors, the deputy collectors or Gopas in charge of subdivisions of districts. They were in charge of revenue collection, and of maintaining peace and order. They were assisted in their work by the superintendents of the villages and village headmen. Internal defence was secured by fortifications in the country, that were to guard against possible insurrections. This presupposes the existence of a standing army. And since there were to be numerous forts, the army must be large also. The work of the district and subdivisional officers was inspected by the commissioners—the Pradeṣṭās, who worked on the orders of the collector general. There were judges, who took cognizance of appellate cases. The village had a council, perhaps of the elders, and enjoyed a good measure of autonomy in local matters, like justice, works of public utility, management of village lands, temple property, property of the minors, etc.

URBAN ADMINISTRATION

It is significant to note the distinction made by the *Arthaśāstra* between the rural and the urban administration which formed two independent but uniform units of the government. In this the *Arthaśāstra* corroborates the account of government left to us by the Greeks, which we have already observed. This fact strengthens the view that Kauṭalya reflected the conditions of the Mauryan age. A great deal of confusion is likely to arise from Dr. Śāma Śātry's translation of the word Nagaraṃ as the capital. Nagara or city is used to distinguish it from Janapada or country. Indeed nowhere in the chapter dealing with the duties of Nāgaraka or city superintendent is there even a reference to the capital. We are abruptly told that like the collector general, the officer in charge of

[77] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iii, Ch. X. [78] *Ibid.*

the city (Nāgaraka) shall look to the affairs of the city.[79] This means that the Nāgaraka had the same authority over the city, as the collector general — Samāhartṛ had over the country. Nāgaraka was not a subordinate but a co-ordinate officer to the collector general. Like the latter he had the supreme control over the city and its officials ; and like the country administration, the city administration was carried on by a number of Gopas and Sthānikas. It is here that we find the uniformity. There was a Gopa for every ten, twenty or forty households, as the case may be, in the city. He was required to know everything about everybody within his jurisdiction— the caste, the gotra, the name, the income and expenditure of each man and woman. Like the country Sthānika, the city Sthānika controlled the Gopas, and looked after the four quarters of the citadel.[80] This again points to the conclusion that by Nagara, was meant city in general and not the capital city in particular. The word 'citadel' makes that clear. For it is almost certain that wherever there was a Sthānīya, Droṇamukha, or Saṃgrahaṇa fort, there grew up a city, and that owing to two important reasons. In the first place they were the central and strategic places. Next there were courts of justice. Hence it is that the Sthānika there had to look after the citadel. Further there was the jail, as at present at every seat of judicial courts, and the Nāgaraka was in charge of the jail administration. We are told that he was empowered to release the prisoners once in a day or once in five nights in consideration of the work the prisoners did or of an adequate ransom paid in gold. Nāgaraka had also to take care of "reservoirs of water, of roads, of the hidden passage for going out of the city, of forts, fort walls and other defensive works." There were charitable institutions of Dharmaśālā type, and heretics and suspects arriving to stay there, had to be reported to the Gopa or Sthānika by the managers of these institutions. Medical profession could be practised with the permission of the Gopa or Sthānika. Strict rules about sanitation and public health were enforced on the city dwellers. They were required on pain of fines to keep ready against accidents like fire, as also to report about the strangers arriving at or departing from their

[79] For this topic see *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. ii, Ch. XXXVI.

[80] *Ibid.*, Ch. XXXVI — Evaṃ dūrga-caturbhāgaṃ sthānika ścintayet. Here Dr. Śāmśastry's translation of the word 'Dūrga' as city is not correct. It should be fortified portion of the city or citadel.

houses. Thus in the discharge of their duties, the government officers were helped a great deal by the people. Equally great was the help rendered by the watchmen at nights.

FEATURES OF ARTHAŚĀSTRA GOVERNMENT

(a) *Financial system*

Now let us pass on to consider the general features of the government envisaged by Kauṭalya. The sources of its finance were as many as could be devised by human ingenuity. The most important of them was that paid by the Rāṣṭra or the royal territory, and it comprised the general and traditional tax amounting to one-sixth of the produce (Saḍbhāga), religious taxes (Bali), tributes of the vassal chiefs (Kara), taxes specially levied on the occasion of the birth of a prince (Utsaṅga), presents made to the king (Aupāyanika), etc. Next perhaps came the commerce and crown lands.[81] Great precaution was taken against smuggling,[82] and the superintendent of tolls knew what commodities could be taxed. From cooked rice to dried fish, all things taken into a city were taxed, and stamped at the city gates.[83] Royal forests also brought in considerable income. Besides these there were mines, ferries and proceeds from law courts. In short the sources of revenue were the most extensive, ever known. The government was to tax the people even to maintain their religion. This appears to be an innovation.

(b) *Control of trade*

Another feature of the state was that it regulated trade, commerce, manufacture, labour, etc. We are told "that merchandise of the kingdom which is of local manufacture shall be centralized; imported merchandise shall be distributed in several markets for sale."[84] The superintendent of commerce was required to gather information to secure markets in foreign countries for the goods of indigenous manufacture. He was to "show favour to those who import foreign merchandise."[85] The state conducted mining operations and manufactures. Wherever it did not work the mines itself,

[81] *Ibid.*, Ch. XV.
[82] *Ibid.*, Ch. XVI, p. 133.
[83] *Ibid.*, Chs. XXI and XXII.
[84] *Ibid.*, Ch. XVI, p. 115.
[85] *Ibid.*

it encouraged private enterprise by granting licenses.[86] The superintendent of metals conducted the manufacture of copper, lead, tin, mercury, brass, bell-metal, gold, silver, salt, etc.[87] The state also undertook to regulate labour. Guilds of workmen (Saṃghabhṛtāḥ) and those who executed any co-operative work in the country came equally under the state regulations.[88] The superintendent of weaving conducted the manufacture of threads, coats, clothes, ropes, etc. and fixed wages and ways of work.[89] Liquor was manufactured and sold under the government license. The superintendent of liquor centralized or decentralized the sale of liquor according to the demand. Those who carried on the manufacture or sale of liquor, without a license were fined heavily. Liquor shops were made attractive to the people by all sorts of comforts and decorations. Its price was also regulated.[90] The state even controlled the slaughter of animals and set up shambles for that purpose. Specified creatures only could be killed. Those who violated the law were punished by fines.[91] Neither did prostitution go by default. It was subject to state supervision and regulation.[92]

(c) *Conduct and salary of officials*

One other feature of *Arthaśāstra* polity was that official conduct was governed by certain rules and regulations, as it is now, and that almost all the officers were paid cash salaries. Even the least oppression by the officers was not tolerated. Whether it be the judge, the clerk, the commissioner, the superintendent of jail or any other officer, every one had to discharge his official duties properly in order that the prestige and reputation of the government may never suffer. In case of dereliction of duty adequate punishments were inflicted.[93] For example ministers (Mahāmātra) and confederacy of chiefs, who are dangerous to the safety of the kingdom and therefore could not be crushed in the open were punished secretly.[94] As regards the salary of officials there was a graded list, and the

[86] *Ibid.*, Ch. XII, p. 94.
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iii, Ch. XIV, pp. 226–27.
[89] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. ii, Ch. XXIII, pp. 136–7.
[90] *Ibid.*, Ch. XXV, pp. 143–5.
[91] *Ibid.*, Ch. XXVI, pp. 147–48.
[92] *Ibid.*, Ch. XXVII, pp. 149–50.
[93] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iv, Ch. IX.
[94] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. v, Ch. I.

principle followed, was the payment of a remuneration that would keep the state officials above temptation.[95] The sacrificial priest, the teacher, the minister, the family priest, the commander of the army, the heir-apparent to the throne, the mother and the queen, got 48000 Paṇas each per annum. The door-keeper, the superintendent of the harem, the commander, the collector general and the chamberlain received 24000 Paṇas each. Next came in order of dignity the princes, the chief constable, the superintendent of the town, the superintendent of law or commerce, the superintendent of manufactories, members of the council of ministers, the superintendents of country-parts and of boundaries, each of whom got 12000 Paṇas a year. Below them in the list were the chiefs of military boards, the chiefs of horses, of chariots and of infantry and the commissioners, who received 8000 Paṇas each per annum. Thus the list goes on, comprising the soldiers, the accountants, the writers, the messengers, the spies, village servants, and even prisoners and many others. And this system of paying cash salaries presupposes a coinage. There was a special department for minting coins, staffed by a superintendent of the mint, the examiner of coins and other officers.[96] The pension rules were extremely humane and reasonable. "The sons and wives of those who died while on duty shall get subsistence and wages."[97] The king often went on military tours in the kingdom, perhaps to establish personal contact with the actual administration and condition of the people.[98]

(*d*) *Foreign policy*

Still another feature was that for the first time in the evolution of ancient Indian polity, the external relations of the state, i.e. of the state with other states were visualized and systematized. All the external powers are divided into three categories — those that are allies, those that are enemies, and those that are neutrals. These are supposed to surround the state that aspired for overlordship. Now the state that aspired for suzerainty and all others surrounding it could never be more than twelve in number, viz.

[95] *Ibid.*, Ch. III, p. 297. [96] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. ii, Ch. XII, p. 95.
[97] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. v, Ch. III, p. 299.
[98] *Ibid.*, Ch. III, p. 299. cf. Aśoka on pleasure tours of the kings in the past which he changed into religious tours; Girnar R E., viii.

(*i*) Vijīgiṣu — the would-be conqueror in the centre; (*ii*) Ari — enemy; (*iii*) Mitraprakṛti, the friend of the Vijīgiṣu; (*iv*) Arimitra — the friend of the Ari; (*v*) Mitramitra the friend of the Mitraprakṛti; (*vi*) Arimitramitra, the friend of the Arimitra; (*vii*) Pārṣṇigrāha, the rearward enemy; (*viii*) Ākranda, the rearward friend; (*ix*) Pārṣṇigrāhāsāra, the friend of the Pārṣṇigrāha; (*x*) Ākrandasāra, the friend of the Ākranda; (*xi*) Madhyama, the intermediary; (*xii*) Udāsīna, the neutral.[99] Between them the currents and cross-currents of war and diplomacy had free play. And these currents and cross-currents have been analyzed to fall within six categories of policies, viz. peace (Sandhi), war (Vigraha), observance of neutrality (Āsana), marching (Yāna), alliance (Samāśraya), and making peace with one and war with another.[100] The means of accomplishment consisted in the sevenfold elements of sovereignty, viz. the king, the ministry, the territory, the defensive fortification, the finance, the army and the ally. All these were employed for the attainment of paramountcy in an empire which can be best called a "Maṇḍala."† This ideal naturally had, as we noticed in the previous chapters, been the most powerful factor in the interstate politics of Northern India ever since the seventh century B.C. and it is this ideal which gave birth to the Mauryan empire by the end of the fourth century B.C. No wonder that it finds adequate expression in the *Arthaśāstra*, which is the first treatise to enunciate a theory of the origin of Maṇḍala — Maṇḍala-Yoni, to use the words of Kauṭalya (Bk. vi, Ch. i).

It is within the sphere of the external relations of the state, and as an object of sixfold policy, that the states' attitude towards self-governing communities or corporations should be properly considered. There were generally two types of these, viz. (*i*) those corporations which followed the profession of arms and agriculture with a mercenary motive (Vārttāśastropajīvinaḥ); (*ii*) those corporations which were political in character and where the people bore the title of Rājā (Rājaśabdopajīvinaḥ). The former comprised the Kṣatriya corporations of Kambhoja, Surāṣṭra, etc. and the latter, the Mallas, Vrijis, etc. The general principle that influenced the attitude of Kauṭalya's state towards these has been thus

[99] Bk. vi, Ch. II. [100] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. vii, Ch. I.

† Kauṭalya calls it a Maṇḍala, which simply means a circle, that is, of kings, or Cakra. At the head was Cakravartin, i.e., Ancient Indian Emperor.

outlined : "Acquisition of a Saṃgha or corporation is more desirable than an alliance of good-will or military aid. Those which are united (in a league) should be treated with the policy of benevolent control, for they are invincible. Those which are not united should be conquered by army and dissension."[101] "In other words," says Jaiswal, "the Mauryan policy was to allow honourable existence to those republics which were strong and united in leagues (for it was difficult to conquer them). Those which were isolated were to be weakened by a policy of internal division and then reduced by force. The states of the confederate oligarchies varied according to their strength. Some of them were treated on terms of equality, while others were subsidized and probably expected to render military assistance, for 'acquisition of army' from them is a condition, contemplated as against pure alliance (Mitralābha). The result of this policy was that the stronger oligarchies survived Mauryan imperialism, while the weaker ones succumbed."[102] Bearing in mind that the *Arthaśāstra* based its deductions on conditions obtaining in the Mauryan empire and also the theoretical character of the treatise itself we can safely say that the ideal of paramountcy or sovereignty had come to colour the interstate relations. One vast empire or Maṇḍala comprising numerous states that enjoyed various degrees of autonomy, under the categories of autonomous peoples and monarchical kingdoms, was sought to be the end of inter-state relations.

COMPREHENSIVE CHARACTER OF ARTHAŚĀSTRA POLITY

Such are the broad outlines of the state envisaged by the *Arthaśāstra*. It was in the first place characterized by a comprehensiveness that had a double aspect. Internally it sought to comprehend and control the whole social life ; externally, it aimed at the sovereignty of the whole of India. It sought to "promote true religion . . . to regulate the age and conditions under which one might renounce the world. The state should see that husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister, uncle and nephew, teacher and pupil are faithful to one another, and do not play each other false. The state itself should provide support to the poor, the pregnant women, to

[101] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. xi, Ch. I.
[102] Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. I, p. 142.

their new born offspring, to orphans, to the aged, the infirm, the afflicted and the helpless."[103] The different ways of marriage are laid down as well as the ways of separation, subsequent marriages and even of teaching manners to refractory women. On the one hand, prostitution, gambling, social entertainments and use of liquor are regulated, on the other religious taxes are levied, and the officers are appointed to superintend religious institutions.[104] One could not imagine a more comprehensive state than this. Indeed the mania of regulation has not left even the minutest matters like fixing the rates of the washerman.

As for the second aspect — sovereignty over the whole world, which actually meant all India, we have seen how the external relation of the state was made the object of a careful scrutiny and how the surrounding states were divided into three groups, and lastly how the sixfold policy was prescribed to be followed. Almost half of the *Arthaśāstra* has been devoted to the treatment of this topic, i.e. of the external relations of the state. It seems that at the back of the author's mind was present that idea which gave tone and colour to his political philosophy. To him the human affairs appeared to be in a state of constant flux, and the states must either expand or decline. Hence they must strive for constant expansion. Further the example of the Mauryan empire was before him.

One other aspect of Kauṭalya's state was its attitude towards morals and religion. For, the state as envisaged in the *Arthaśāstra* subordinates moral principles to the necessities of its own existence and welfare, and the same attitude is assumed towards religion. It is made even a means of accomplishing political ends. And to the practical application of these ideas, everyone, whether he be the king, the Brāhmaṇ or the god, is subject. If, for example, the only son or successor of the king happens to be a worthless man "attempts shall be made to procreating a son to him ; or sons may be begotten on his daughters . . . but never shall a wicked and an only son be installed on the royal throne."[105] It is not merely that the family morality of the king has thus to yield to the exigencies

[103] Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, p. 260

[104] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. v, Ch. II, p. 244. The Superintendent of gods was called Devatādhyakśa.

[105] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. XVII, p. 37.

of the state ; even the temples of gods and the property of guilds could be looted to replenish the treasury.[106] Here the question may arise, how far the caste influenced the government. Indeed it had some influence on the administration, and to a certain extent administrative methods respected the spirit of the caste system. We know for example the Brāhmaṇas had some preferential treatment in matters of criminal justice. But the sternness of justice even in their case left no room for a suspicion of escaping punishment. It is prescribed, for example, that in the case of a rape the Brāhmaṇ convict would be so branded as to leave a mark indicating his crime, and "after having thus branded to a wound and proclaimed his crime in public, the king shall either banish a Brāhmaṇ offender or send him to the mines for life."[107] This rather convinces one of the fact that equity was the spirit of the law though the law was very stern.[108] But that had to be done, only to fulfil one great aim — good government, political welfare. To this end everybody, everything was a means and hence every means was justifiable. The king was not to be a benevolent despot assuming a paternal attitude towards the people. His attitude should be so adjusted as to secure the good of the state — the political welfare of the people, and "whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects, he shall consider as good."[109] In other words it is the self-dedication, not dictation of the king that was desired. The idiosyncrasies of a paternal monarch did not constitute the good of the state, it was his energy in the discharge of his duties that mattered. To conclude therefore, Kauṭalya contemplates a state, that is very comprehensive in scope and comparatively catholic in spirit.

LIMITATIONS OF THE ARTHAŚĀSTRA

When asserting that, we have to bear in mind the limitations of the *Arthaśāstra*, we have to remember that it is not a book like Aristotle's Politics, nor one like Wilson's *The State*. In and through the *Arthaśāstra* runs a severe sense of logical accuracy ; and to

[106] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. v, Ch. II.
[107] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iv, Ch. VIII, p. 270.
[108] Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, p. 274.
[109] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. XIX.

give a flawless picture of government, details have been worked out with the utmost care and ingenuity. It leaves the impression of an excellent scientific treatise on government. While professing to outline the practical methods of government, and aiming at an essentially pragmatic treatment, Kauṭalya has indulged in a most mechanical treatment, which leads people to think that he has lost touch with reality. Nevertheless it seeks to present a hypothetical picture of the state, all the administrative details of which could not be found in any single state, in actual existence during and after the time of *Arthaśāstra*, whatever be that time, but certainly most of which might have been the common features of the Indian states in general and the Mauryan state in particular. That is to say (as Dr. Barnett suggests), the *Arthaśāstra* freely draws upon the governmental traditions and practices, which characterized Mauryan government, and Mauryan government epitomised, owing to its extensive control, the governmental traditions and features obtaining in India.

AŚOKA'S REIGN

Now let us examine the details of Aśoka's government. Aśoka succeeded to the throne after a struggle with his rivals which perhaps lasted for four years (274–270 B.C.). In 270 B.C. he celebrated his coronation, and subsequently ruled for full 38 years, till his death in 232 B.C.[110] It is a glorious period, crowded not with stirring events, but with activities, all of which except the Kaliṅga war of 262 B.C. were directed to the good of the country, and the good of the humanity at large. Converted to Buddhism in 265 B.C. he became "keen in the pursuit of Dharma, love of Dharma and inculcation of Dharma" after the conquest of Kaliṅga.[111] He entered the Order about 260 B.C. and then began his active propaganda for the spread of Buddhistic ideals. It was about this time that he issued his first rock edicts and began the first of his 'pious tours.'[112] "During the following two years, the thirteenth and fourteenth, Aśoka's activity must have been at its height. He issued no fewer than sixteen missions, of which fourteen are found engraved in one corpus, in places as far distant, as the extremities of his empire, at

[110] R. K. Mukherji, *Aśoka*, pp. 23, 44–46.
[111] R.E. xiii. [112] R. K. Mukherji, *Aśoka*, p. 18.

Girnār in Kathiawar, at Manśera and Shahbazgarhi in the Punjab, and twelve of the same with two others at Dhauli and Jaugaḍā in Orissa."[113] In these have also been mentioned administrative and other measures that he had introduced. He had caused wells to be dug, shady trees to be planted and rest houses constructed by the roadside; he had taken steps to provide men and animals with medical aid not only in his own dominions, but in those of the neighbouring independent and quasi-independent states of South India and North West frontier, as well as in the Greek kingdoms of Antiochos and beyond; he had issued appeals to the people to make their life more honourable, happy and worthy; had abolished the "gay progresses of his predecessors on their hunting and holiday excursions" and had substituted "edifying spectacles and pious conferences;" and lastly he had instituted the quinquennial tours of the officials for the propagation of the moral law and had opened an ecclesiastical department staffed by Dharma-Mahāmātrās. He also evinced some concern to retain the allegiance of the unsubdued border peoples and for the purpose issued special exhortations to his governors and viceroys. About the year 253 B.C. happened one of the most memorable events in the Buddhist world — the third Buddhist Council at Pāṭaliputra. In 250 B.C. he visited the Lumbini garden the birth place of Buddha and commemorated his visit by raising a pillar there. Between 243 and 242 B.C. the pillar edicts were issued and in 232 B.C. that great emperor, and great man, whose records of benevolence and righteousness have hardly been equalled by any monarch in the world, expired.

AŚOKA'S DUTY AND GOVERNMENT

Succeeding to an already well-organized and prosperous empire Aśoka was not called upon to start afresh the work of administrative arrangement. He took up the system as he found it, and introduced changes by and by, as they were felt necessary. Upon his character and personality therefore depended the welfare of the state, of an empire that extended from Hirat in the North West to Orissa and Assam in the East, and from the Himalayas to the heart of the South. What an empire it was, what were its traditions, its peoples and problems, he did not take long to comprehend and

[113] *C.H.I.*, p. 496.

he knew where he stood. He thought and the *Arthaśāstra* endorsed it later, that his "highest duty is, indeed, the promotion of the good of all.[114] Of that, again, the root is this : exertion and despatch of business.[115] There is no higher work than the promotion of the common weal."[116]

In this mission of his, he was assisted by his council of ministers,[117] the strength of which there is no means to ascertain, as well as by an army of officials and spies (Prativedaka).[118] "The empire was divided for administrative purpose into a number of provinces, of which the more remote ones were placed under viceroys. The vice-royalties were generally reserved for the princes called the Kumāras or Āryaputras in the edicts. The edicts refer to four princely viceroys, viz. those governing the provinces with headquarters at Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali and Suvarnagiri (Kaliṅga Edict I; KaliṅgaEdict II, Dhauli version; Minor Rock Edict I, Brahmagiri version)."[119] The viceroys had under them a class of higher officials generally designated as the Mahāmātrās.[120] They are found in charge of various administrative functions of importance. They were in independent charge of the cities like Samapa and Tosali.[121] They were sometimes associated with the viceroys, as was the case in Suvarṇagiri.[122] They were in the Mantri Prariṣat — or the council of ministers also and deliberated on matters of emergency.[123] Besides they were made later the censors of public morals — Dharmamahāmātrās, the guardian of the harem, — Strī Adhyakṣa

[114] cf. Vidyāvinītorājāhi, etc.. . *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. V. Prajāsukhesukhaṃ-rājñaḥ-prajānām ca hite hitaṃ *Ibid.*, Ch. XIX.

[115] cf. Tasmānnityotthito-rājā-kuryād-dharmānuśāsanaṃ. *Ibid.*, Ch. XIX.

[116] Girnār, R. E., vi ; Mukherji, *Aśoka*, p. 149.

[117] Girnār, R. E., vi, (Pariṣat) cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, XIX.

[118] *Ibid.*, Mukherji, *Aśoka*, p. 149. cf.

[119] Mukherji, *Aśoka*, p. 51. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. ii, Ch. XXXV.

[120] cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Chs. X, XII, & XIII ; Bk. v, Ch. III — Where the meaning of Mahāmātrā is a minister. Thomas in *J.R.A.S.*, 1914, p. 387 translates it as 'official'.

[121] First Separate R.E. of Dhauli I ; Second Separate R.E. of Jaugaḍā ; cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iv, Ch. V-Nāgarikamahāmātra, i.e., Mahāmātra in charge of the city.

[122] Girnār R. E., vi ; Shabazgarhi R. E., vi.

[123] Brahmagiri Rock Inscription cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. XV, Ātyayika kārye mantriṇo mantri pariṣadam cāhūya brūyāt.

Mahāmātrā and the superintendent of some religious sects.[124] Perhaps of the same rank as or below the Mahāmātrās, were the Yuktas, the Rajukas and the Prādeṣikas.[125] The Lājavacanikas, as Dr. Mukherji thinks, do not appear to be "provincial governors entitled to receive king's messages directly and not through the royal viceroys."[126] The interpretation of Dr. Hultzsch seems more natural,[127] i.e. it simply means "at the word of the king." It has also been supposed, there was one other type of officers called the Puruśas "higher than even the Rajukas."[128] Here again the interpretation of Hultzsch appears to be more natural,[129] i.e. signifying "agents" or spies. And as Dr. Barnett suggests the Puruṣas may have been policemen, for there is another category of these in the *Arthaśāstra* called the Gūḍhapuruṣas.[130] Of the Puruṣas and the Prativedakas the latter sent reports to the king regularly and were posted everywhere in the kingdom.[131] For aught we know of the traditions in India, the needs of centralization and prescriptions of treatises like the *Arthaśāstra* espionage was an established institution. No wonder that Aśoka made extensive use of it. Of the officers of these four designations, viz. the Mahāmātrās, the Rajukas, the Prādeśikas and the Yuktas, the Mahāmātrās appear to be provincial governors[132] appointed to assist the four viceroys. They were also in charge of the frontier provinces, and bore the name of Anta Mahāmātrās,[133] very similar to the warden of the marches. As has been already mentioned some of them were at the heads of the ecclesiastical department and were called the Dharma Mahāmātrās. When in charge of ladies of the harem they were known as the Strī-Adhyakṣa Mahāmātrās.[134]

[124] Shabazgarhi R.E. v; Delhi-Topra P.E. vii. "Some Mahāmātrās were ordered by me to busy themselves with the affairs of the Saṃgha; others . . . with the Brāhmaṇa, Ājivikas; others . . . with Nirgranthas; others — with other sects; different Mahāmātrās specially with different sects."

[125] Girnār R.E. iii.

[126] Mukherji, *Aśoka*, pp. 52, 126.

[127] The Inscriptions of Aśoka, p. 117.

[128] Mukherji, *Aśoka*, p. 177.

[129] Inscriptions of Aśoka, Delhi-Topra P.E. iv. His introduction also p. xli.

[130] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Chs. XIX & XII.

[131] Girnār R.E. vi.

[132] Dhauli Second Separate R.E.; Brahmagiri Rock Inscription; Siddapura Rock Inscription.

[133] Delhi-Topra P.E.I. cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. XII-Antapāla.

[134] *Ibid.*, vii; Shabazgarhi R.E. v.

Below the Mahāmātrās were the Rajukas "with many hundred thousand men" under them and their chief duty was to work for "the welfare and happiness of the country people" as opposed to the city people.[135] They had vast discretionary powers, conferred upon them by the king. Like the modern district magistrate of British India, they were by far the most important officials in the country, inasmuch as they maintained the link between the central authority and the people at large. In the eyes of Aśoka, they were like "the intelligent nurse" entrusted with the care of his children – the people of the country. The people of the city were more clever and perhaps did not need so much attention for their well-being. But when Aśoka gave them local responsibility and discretionary powers so that they might discharge their duties with confidence, he at the same time communicated with them directly by his Puruśas or agents, who "knew (his) wishes."[136] Perhaps associated with the Rajukas were the Prādeśikas,[137] identified by Dr. F. W. Thomas as the Pradeṣṭṛs[138] of *Arthaśāstra*.[139] These as we have said in the case of the Pradeṣṭṛs, already might have been like the divisional commissioners of today. Lastly came the Yuktas corresponding to their namesake in the *Arthaśāstra*.[140] They might have formed a general class of subordinate officials, employed for performing miscellaneous works — from registering the orders of the council of ministers to filling administrative positions in the country.[141] Of these the higher officials were ordered to go out on tour every five years[142] or every three years[143] so that they might come in touch with the people, listen to their grievances, and try to persuade them to a better life and higher morality.

CITY ADMINISTRATION

The general administration apart, there was a section of Mahāmātrās who were in special charge of the administration of the city, as opposed to those who were in charge of the country. These were

[135] Delhi-Topra P.E. iv.
[136] Delhi-Topra P.E. iv.
[137] Girnār R.E. iii.
[138] *J.R.A.S.*, 1914, pp. 383–6.
[139] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, ch. XII.
[140] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. ii, Chs. VIII & IX. Yuktāstathākārya-vidhau Niyuktāḥ, etc.
[141] Girnār R.E. iii.
[142] *Ibid.*
[143] K.R.E., i.

known by the name of Mahāmātrā — Nagara-Vyavahāraka,[144] corresponding to the Pauravyavahārika of the *Arthaśāstra*.[145] Perhaps the Mahāmātrā was in the general charge of city administration, not merely of justice as has been supposed.[146] He ruled the city in the same way as the Rajuka ruled the country, or Janapada.[147] Perhaps like the Rajukas the Nagara Mahāmātrās wielded vast discretionary power. Hence just as the Purusas brought the Rajukas into touch with the king,[148] the Nagara Mahāmātrās were brought into contact with the central government through the Mahāmātrās, deputed by the king and his viceroys to supervise and report once in five years.[149] To these two kinds of officers, the king sent his orders regarding administration of justice, and other matters. It appears that the city administration and country administration constituted two co-ordinate units of government, and were therefore a continuation of the practice obtaining in the time of Chandragupta and Bindusāra referred to by the Greeks.

ASOKA'S JUSTICE AND HUMANITY

The foundation of Aśoka's administration was a sturdy sense of justice and humanity. He meant to secure the welfare of the people by dispensing even-handed justice and by ministering to their material needs in various ways. Therefore he exhorted his city-magistrates to take care against partiality and unjust imprisonment, and they were desired to give up "anger, cruelty, hurry, want of practice, laziness and fatigue" for that purpose. If they failed they ran the risk of losing royal favour in this world and the heaven in the next.[150] Whatever the magnitude of the latter loss, Aśoka knew, that every one of his officers would be extremely concerned about the former. Similarly did he command his officers in charge of the country, viz. Rajukas that "there should be both impartiality in judicial proceedings and impartiality in punishment." While

[144] First Separate Rock E. of Dhauli; First Separate R.E. of Jaugaḍā. (Mahāmāta Nagala biyohālakā). [145] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. XII.

[146] The words are "Nitiyam" and "Niti", "Niti" here means Daṇḍanīti = government. (First Separate R.E. Dhauli).

[147] Delhi-Topra P.E. iv. [148] *Ibid.*

[149] First Separate R.E. of Dhauli; First Separate R.E. of Jaugaḍā.

[150] First Separate R.E. of Dhauli; First Separate R.E. of Jaugaḍā.

proclaiming that three days of grace had been granted by him to those on whom the sentence of capital punishment had been passed, he further desired his Rajukas to set free the man if during these three days a ransom was paid.[151] Aśoka also proclaimed that certain animals should not be killed, and that had to be enforced by the Rajukas. But like his great concern for justice, his benevolence was unbounded. He caused banyan-trees to be planted on the road-sides so that they might afford shade to the cattle and men. Mango groves were also planted. Wells at intervals of half a kos were dug with flights of steps descending to the water. Drinking places were also founded. These works were meant to alleviate the tedium of the journey, and to facilitate communication between different parts of his empire.

ASOKA'S DHAMMA

The most remarkable achievement of Aśoka, however, was the triumph of his Dhamma or piety. It was this Dhamma which completely changed the tone of his government and gave a new turn to his administrative policy. His Dhamma consisted in "the freedom from self-indulgence, abundance of good deeds, kindness, liberality, truthfulness and purity."[152] and "the growth of the essential elements of all religious sects."[153] These principles were further elaborated and formed into definite commandments, e.g. "proper treatment of slaves and servants, obedience to mother and father, charity to friends, companions, relations, Brāhmaṇa and Sramaṇa ascetics and abstention from the slaughter of living creatures for sacrifice."[154] Again "there should not be honour of one's own sect and condemnation of other's sects without any ground. Such slighting should be for specified grounds only . . . . Hence concord alone is commendable, in this sense that all should listen and be willing to listen to the doctrines proposed by others."[155] There was one other element to complete his ideal of Dhamma and that is expressed in the following edict :

"People perform various ceremonies. In troubles, marriages of sons and daughters, birth of children, departures from home — on

[151] Delhi-Topra P.E. iv. For ransom cf. *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iv, Ch. X.
[152] Delhi-Topra P.E. ii. [153] Girnār R.E. xii.
[154] Shabazgarhi R.E. xi ; Kalsi R.E. ix. [155] Girnār R.E. xii.

these and other occasions people perform many different ceremonies. But in such (cases) mothers and wives perform numerous and diverse petty and worthless ceremonies. Now ceremonies should certainly be performed. But these bear little fruit. That, however, is production of great fruit which is connected with Dhamma" — and the "ceremonies that are other than these, are of doubtful effect."[156]

These ideas he wanted to spread amongst his subjects, and saw that they were even enforced by his government. "For this purpose" he says "are indeed employed the Dharma Mahāmātrās, Stri-Adhyakṣa Mahāmātrās, the Vachabhumikas and other bodies."[157] In trying to do all these, what he wanted was "that the promotion of one's own sect should take place, and the glorification of morality."[158] It is not that he depended solely on the exertions of his officials for the attainment of his desired end. He worked hardest of all and allowed himself hardly any respite.[159] In his anxiety that all people—ascetics, householders, soldiers, their chiefs, the poor and the old be protected from unjust imprisonment and molestation, and conform to the practice of morality he appointed Mahātmātrās to supervise the affairs of the Saṃgha, of the Brāhmaṇs, the Ājīvikas, the Nirgranthas (Jain Monks) and various other sects.[160] And having ordered quinquennial tours for his officers he himself toured extensively.[161]

ASOKA'S GOVERNMENT REGULATES RELIGIOUS CONDUCT AND SOCIAL MORALS

When Aśoka attempted all these things he had, no doubt, that the ideal of kingship before him, which later found expression in the *Arthaśāstra*, was that the king should constantly endeavour to prescribe discipline for his subjects.[162] Indeed the causes of these activities of his, have been specified by him. Drawing the attention of his people as to why he insisted upon charitable conduct and

[156] Kalsi R.E. ix.
[157] Girnār R.E. xii.
[158] *Ibid.*, (Hulzsch).
[159] Girnār R.E. vi.
[160] Delhi-Topra P.E. vii. Manśera R.E. v.
[161] Rupnath Rock Inscription i; Sasram Rock Inscription ii; & Girnār R.E. iii.
[162] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. i, Ch. V-Prajānāṃ Vinaye rataḥ.

Ahiṃsā, i.e. non-hurting of creatures, he says "in times past, for many hundreds of years, there had ever been promoted the killing of animals, and the hurting of living beings, discourtesy to relatives and discourtesy to Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas."[163] People often talked ill of others' religions; one sect impugned and segregated another;[164] and thus each was, Aśoka thought, "hurting his own sect and wronging other sects as well."[165] Besides sacrificing animals, indulging in religious recriminations, and insulting Brāhmaṇas, Śramaṇas, Elders and those that deserved better treatment, — a state of affairs that points unmistakably to a laxity in social morals, Aśoka saw that men and women were on numerous occasions "practising many and various vulgar and useless ceremonies"[166] which bore little fruit for them. Hence he banned the slaughter of animals in the name of religion, enjoined religious toleration and sought to suppress worthless ceremonies. It is therefore not enough to say, that like many Indian kings Aśoka practised tolerance.[167] Indeed the condition was such that Aśoka had to enforce it, and perhaps for the first time in Indian history he realized the need for tolerance. Hence he ordered that people must practise "restraint of speech" in religious affairs, that "there should not be honour of one's own sect and condemnation of others' sects without any ground,"[168] and that "all sects may reside everywhere."[169] Thus he showed what he meant by tolerance. He sought thereby to regulate the religious conduct of the people.

Regarding the "practice of morality" he ordered his officers to undertake "tours of morality" which should be occupied with "visiting Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas and making gifts (to them), visiting the aged and supporting (them) with gold, visiting the people of the country, instructing them in morality, and questioning (them) about morality."[170] As regards slaughtering of animals the imperial ban was that "living animals must not be fed with (other) living animals."[171] Truth as he commanded to be spoken by all,[172]

163 Girnār R.E. iv. (Hultzsch).
164 *Ibid.*, xii. 165 *Ibid.* 166 Girnār R.E. ix.
167 Hultzsch, (*Ed.*) *Corpus Inscriptium Indicarum*, Vol. I Introduction, p. xlviii.
168 Girnār R.E. xii (Hultzsch). 169 *Ibid.*, vii.
170 Girnār R.E. viii. 171 Delhi-Topra P.E. v.
172 Brahmagiri Rock Inscription, vi.

he himself spoke the bitter truth when in reviewing the results of his twenty-seven year's of activities he frankly recorded that "men *have been made* to progress and will (*be made to*) *progress*" in the practice of morality. "Now this progress of morality among men" he continues "has been promoted only by two ways — by moral restrictions and by introspection." To make his meaning clear he says "now moral restrictions indeed are these, that I have ordered this (that) certain animals are inviolable. But there are also other moral restrictions which have been imposed by me."[173] That is to say, he forced people to follow his moral restrictions pertaining to social and religious conduct. He imposed an ethical code on his people, not with a view to emblazoning his autocracy, his irresistible power which was a very real fact behind his moral restrictions and piety, but to promote sincerely the good and happiness of his people.

From our standpoint, however, from the standpoint of the evolution of the state in ancient India it raises an important issue. Aśoka's action implies a plenitude of political power, the potency and competence of which acknowledged hardly any limitation. Be it that he was actuated by undeniably altruistic motives, or that he wanted to discharge his debt to all living beings, there is no denying the fact that he had such a mania for restrictions and regulations, that he forgot, there were spheres of human life which were sacred to governmental interference. He, as the head of the government, as the sole guide of the destiny of his subjects and as the judge of what was their good forced them to conform to a system of moral conduct. For, there was no other purpose in the appointment of Dharma-Mahāmātrās, whose universal competence must have evoked awe in the minds of the people. Helped by circumstances he enforced tolerance of all religions, though in the act of doing so he broke his own principle. When he branded certain ceremonies as "useless" and "vulgar," and prohibited the slaughter of animals even for sacrifices, he certainly encroached upon the religious freedom and the liberty of conscience of a large part of the people. He did not rest content there. He brought under state control the affairs of the Buddhist Saṃgha, the Jain Monks, the Brāhmaṇs, the Ājivikas and possibly many others by appointing the Dharma Mahāmātrās. Such steps as these point to but one conclusion which is that the state under Aśoka sought to control

[173] Delhi-Topra P.E. vii.

the religious and social conduct of the people. It was ubiquitous, and actually dominated and regulated everything. To take a single instance, he once commanded the Mahāmātrā of Kauśāmbi as to what the latter should do when "a monk or nun shall break up the Saṃgha" there.[174] Again he dictated "Law" to the Saṃgha in general from his imperial throne,[175] and thus sought practically to be the head of the Buddhist church if not of all the rest of Indian religions.

But if he did not try to dominate other religions, he did not let them alone. With them too he interfered and sincerely tried to promote the essentials of religion. And for the purpose, people were treated to the "sights of the cars of the gods, of elephants, masses of fire and other heavenly shows."[176] So that as he says "those who had remained unassociated with the gods became associated with the gods,"[177] that is to say — "the strife of gods and their worshippers had largely ceased in the country."[178] Thus did he endeavour to make people truly religious and moral ; and inasmuch as he by the resources of his empire, undertook to promulgate true morality or piety, he was arrogating to himself powers and privileges, which perhaps did not properly belong to the state. By his assumption of such powers he naturally, raised the state above all other institutions. For, it was the double role of emperor and moral dictator that marked Aśoka's sovereignty, that is sovereignty of the state. Indeed the whole span of Indian history does not present to us a more dominating, more exalted specimen of political power, or royal sovereignty than this. To think of spies and government officers watching your conduct, taking note of your words, and relations with all around you, and correcting you, appears to be highly vexatious and even atrocious. Even Akbar could not do it in the plenitude of his power. But Aśoka's empire was far more efficiently organized than that of the Mughal autocrat. Hence it may be asked whether all that Aśoka did, — his assumption of the role of political ruler and moral guide — was not due to his personal power and initiative. Was it not that his authority, his prestige, his sovereignty, in short his exalted

[174] Kauśāmbi P.E. — Allahabad-Kośam.
[175] Calcutta-Bairat Rock Inscription.
[176] Girnār R.E. iv.
[177] Brahmagiri M.R.E.
[178] Mukherji, *Aśoka*, p. 110, note 1.

position, purely personal? Was it not that his transparent good-will, transcendental ability and irresistible power backed all his undertakings? And were not all these personal? If so, is it far wrong to say that the state as an impersonal institution was in tune with and gained significance from the personal achievements of Aśoka? What he did was not a part of the programme of the state but of his own, of that man who happened to be the king at a particular time.

AŚOKA'S ACTIVITIES A PART OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE STATE

To begin from the end. Aśoka did all that as the king of a state at a particular time no doubt, and no doubt he did foist upon the state his idiosyncrasies ; but kingship was not personal. It was an institution, and a fully developed one by now. It had evolved its own form and function and there were great traditions associated with it. The conduct of the king was limited by these and he could not give a free rein to his personal idiosyncrasies. We have in the last chapter noted how the king had to undergo a rigorous course of training in different arts and sciences in order to equip himself for his life's task. Then as the head of government he had to be active, disciplined, just, calculating and deeply concerned about the welfare of his people. He had to maintain the social order and lead a life of self-dedication. Such were the traditions of kingship — an institution, that could count upon more than a thousand years of growth by now. To add to it Aśoka himself was aware of the responsibilities of his position, his obligation, or as he says "debt" to his people. And it was the obsession of his conception of this "debt," which prompted him to those undertakings, which resulted in his assuming the role of moral dictator. As Dr. Barnett suggested, this constitutes the emotional element of royal sovereignty. This is brought out much later in a fascinating way in the Mahābhāratā, Book viii, when Dhṛtarāṣṭtra taking farewell of his subjects exhorts them to pardon his errors and reminds them that he ruled the kingdom as a trust and rendered śuśruṣā unto them. So it was certain traditions, certain ideals, inseparably associated with the institution of kingship, which actuated Aśoka. It should not also be forgotten that these traditions and ideals again had their fittest mouth-piece in Aśoka. He completely identified himself with those

traditions and ideals. It was this living example of Aśoka, that might have supplied Kauṭalya his ideal of kingship.

The king of Kauṭalya is Aśoka devoid of his great love for Buddhistic ways of life. Thus Aśoka is the best representative of Indian kingship or royal sovereignty. But that does not answer all our questions. How can we say that all that he did, formed part of the programme of the state? All that he did, certainly had not been, before his time a part of the programme of the state. But the underlying purpose of what he did, i.e. the promotion of social morals, and religious duties of the people — had already been recognized as the declared purpose of the state. Society had come to rely on royal authority for its smooth working. When we examine the actual administration of Aśoka the only innovation, we notice he introduced, was that he dictated a code of ethical rules to the people, which he enforced by instituting an ecclesiastical department of Dhamma-Mahāmātrās, Strī-Adhyakṣa-Mahāmātrās, etc. Though this innovation might have been resented by the people in contemporary times, it was not resented then. For example Kauṭalya prescribed that the king's duty was also to make the people moral, (Prajānāṃ Vinaye rataḥ). The enlightened opinion reflected in the Mahābhārata maintained that the king was the maker of the age — Rājā kālasya kāraṇaṃ. And Aśoka could therefore be rightly considered as a king, who while meeting the conditions of the age, and remedying the evils of the social and religious orders, did not make a radical departure from the accepted purpose of the state, and at the same time by working out administrative details to give effect to that purpose, set an ideal for his successors to follow.

We have already observed that the social and religious conditions of the time presented a sad picture of "vulgar ceremonies" blindly performed, slaughter of animals in the name of religion, prevalence of drinking and pleasure-seeking parties — samājas — lack of courtesy and charity in the general conduct of men and religious recrimination; and these, after his inward change, pricked him very much. The crying need of the times was also to find a remedy for all these. Therefore prompted by personal humanitarian motives as also by the obligation of his office — what he called his "debt" to his people, which was his duty, — he instituted the ecclesiastical department. How enlightened opinion approved of his conduct, is suggested by Kauṭalya. If Aśoka instituted the office of Dharma

Mahātmātrās, Kauṭalya prescribed the institution of Devatādhyakṣas, under the control of the Purohita of the king. These according to Kauṭalya, were employed to control the property of gods and religious institutions. And if Aśoka's Dharma Mahāmātrā was a censor of morals, Kauṭalya's Devatādhyakṣa could be employed to transfer the property of gods and of religious institutions fraudulently to the royal treasury when it became empty. This is only a difference in the function; the idea is there. Indeed there is throughout a difference between the technique of Aśoka and what was laid down by Kauṭalya for the fulfilment of the same purpose, viz. royal control of popular conduct and attainment of paramountcy by the king. Thus it is that the innovation of Aśoka, i.e. the administrative programme regarding the promotion of social morals and religious obligations was not opposed to the purpose of the state, and indeed was accepted as a part of the programme of the state later on.

HIS FOREIGN POLICY

We have next to examine whether on matters of foreign policy or interstate relations Aśoka's Dhamma had any bearing. Now, Aśoka maintained relations with powers that could be classified under two categories, viz. (*i*) those with whom he maintained friendly relations by sending ambassadors to their courts and (*ii*) those who enjoyed autonomy within his empire.[179] The states of the first category were those, ruled by the Yona king Antiyoka (Antiochos Theos, grandson of Seleukos Nikator), Antikini (Antigonos of Macedonia), Turamaya (Ptolemey Philadelphos of Egypt) Maka (Magas, the ruler of Cyreme to the west of Egypt), and Alikasudara (Alexander of Epirus), and the southern states of Choda (Cholas) and Pāṇḍya.[180] Those of the second category were the Yonas, the Kambojas, the Nabhakas, the Nabhapamtis, the Bhojas, the Pitinikas, the Andhras and the Pulindas. These were on the frontier — the borderers. It was in these states rather than in the states of the first category that "the conquest by morality (Dhamma)... has been won repeatedly by Devānāmpiya."[181] Thus the object of his foreign policy is conquest, though it is a conquest that "causes the

[179] Shahbazgarhi R.E. xiii. [180] *Ibid.* [181] *Ibid.*

feeling of satisfaction" and bears "fruit in the other world."[182] He even recommended this conquest to his successors. "If a conquest does please them" he says "they should take pleasure in mercy and mild punishment and they should regard the conquest by morality as the only true conquest."[183] This need not delude us as to the real nature of his foreign policy. We must not think that he was mildness and mercy incarnate. We are at once disillusioned when he says that "the borderers . . . may not be afraid of me, but may have confidence in me; that they may obtain only happiness from me, not misery; but that they may learn this that Devānāmpiya will forgive them what can be forgiven; that they may be induced by me to practise morality." In other words Aśoka means to shun all those methods of conquest which inspire awe and cause misery; he wishes them well and induces them to practise morality but in return he wants them to do well by him also; and any contumacious conduct of theirs, not consistent with his dignity he is not prepared to forgive. Here is the mailed fist in the velvet glove. But it is not that he believed in a threat to back his precepts. He believed that example is better than precept. Hence he himself showed the way of doing good to the neighbouring states, to "the borderers" as he calls them. All those countries he provided with two kinds of medical treatment — for men and beasts, free of any cost. He laid out gardens for the culture of medicinal plants or sent them from where they grew, and caused wells to be dug for their use.[184] If all these are true then to Aśoka belongs the highest credit for substituting a relationship of goodwill founded on the rendering of humanitarian services, for diplomacy founded upon political interest, cunning and force, in the sphere of interstate relations. Here we find the best of motives at work to avoid internal and external aggression. This is an innovation in interstate political morality very unlike that of Alexander or Darius.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AŚOKA AS THE PROMULGATOR OF DHARMA

Thus to conclude, Aśoka enunciated a new principle as also envisaged a new ideal in the spheres of foreign relations and internal administration. In the interstate relations Kauṭalya recommended

[182] *Ibid.* [183] *Ibid.* [184] Shahbazgarhi R.E. ii.

the use of a sixfold policy, and Aśoka's principle could not be followed by any of his successors on the throne of India. His administrative programme is reflected in the *Arthaśāstra*. But there is some difference between the administrative ideals of Aśoka and Kauṭalya. Aśoka's state claimed wider competence than even what the *Arthaśāstra* contemplates. For example the *Arthaśāstra* polity could not transcend the considerations of caste in the administration of justice. It could not think of subjecting the moral conduct of the people to state regulations, nor could it assign religious headship to the king — all that distinguished Aśoka's statecraft. But in spite of that Kauṭalya was perhaps wiser than Aśoka. Aśoka was an administrator, and Kauṭalya an author; what the latter in his calm moments of thought and study, could easily see, the administrator in the rush and heat of events could not. That is to say, while Aśoka sought to dominate religion, prescribe moral conduct, and forbid certain popular practices, he was obsessed by his ideas of Dhamma and the "debt" or obligation to his people. Aśoka was making a mistake when he thought he could standardize human conduct, and impose a set of ethical rules uniformly on all people alike, however great or good might have been the motive behind it.

Nevertheless this attempt of Aśoka contributed to raise the prestige of the state incarnate in him. That is why he could assume the double role of the temporal head and moral guide. He sought thereby to attain complete supremacy within his empire. For he said in his Rock Edict xiii, that "Dharmavijaya — moral conquest is considered by His Sacred Majesty the principal conquest. And this has been repeatedly won by His Sacred Majesty both here (in his dominions) and among all the frontier peoples to the extent of six-hundred Yojanas, etc. etc." He hated unscrupulous conquest — conquest by undiluted force. For, he thought, and rightly, it never ensured real supremacy. Real supremacy consisted in winning the entire allegiance of the people to his authority. This, he knew, could not be attained so long as he was a mere conqueror, as he appeared at the Kaliṅga war. The humanitarian, the altruist, in him demanded a better instrument for conquest than the sword, a better object of conquest than territories. The first was Dhamma, the second was the heart of the people. It is the winning of the heart, that could make his kingship real. He wanted *indivisible allegiance* of the people and their allegiance had been hitherto divided

between the state and religion. Aśoka sought allegiance from the people both as king and as moral guide. He could claim moral headship and he felt, with his ideas and ways of life, competent for it. Aśoka practised Dhamma — piety in his dealings with the people and he expected the people to practise Dhamma in their dealings among themselves. And the rules of this Dhamma he enunciated and imposed by force of his royal sceptre. Inspired by the highest motives of doing good to the people, of raising the social morals, and of making for the real happiness of all, he promulgated these rules. Naturally they had to be, as far as possible, only ethical principles, common to all religions, in order that they may be enforced on all alike. At a time when fissures and schisms appeared in religion and society, when social morals were deteriorating, when religious rivalry was acute, when, in short, society and religion helplessly looked for support to the royal authority, Aśoka thought he could maintain social equilibrium and raise social morals by his Dhamma.

Besides he was imbued with the spirit of the ideal of kingship. He, as the king of his people, wanted to discharge his debt to them. We have observed that he proclaimed, he wanted to promote human happiness and social peace by these principles. It was indeed the shaky foundations of society and religion that imparted purpose and adequacy to his undertakings. It was not merely that the political motive of attaining supremacy, and commanding indivisible allegiance of the people prompted him to formulate a series of rules called the Dhamma. He was led to do so by the genuine desire to do good to the people also ; to serve them in the best way he could. Political supremacy, he realized, would be an inevitable outcome of his attempts. It was in and through this supremacy of Aśoka based on the indivisible allegiance of the people and claiming a comprehensive competence that the state, incarnate in him approximated to sovereign state. For, the king, determined what was the good of the people ; decided upon the means of realizing that good ; attempted to tutor the conscience of the people ; enforced measures that were conducive to religious tolerance ; commanded them to speak the truth and restrain their speech ; on the whole sought to make his authority ubiquitous in the state. And these endeavours and aspirations with modifications suggested by Brāhmaṇism, were adequately reflected in the *Arthaśāstra.*

What therefore, Aśoka claimed in order to make his sovereignty real was considered as the just claims of the king in subsequent periods. The claims (*a*) to be the Dharma-pravartaka, i.e. promulgator of law and duty, and (*b*) to be the Svāmin, i.e. lord of the realm, the first element of statehood by virtue of which to administer justice and punishment, Daṇḍanīti — created a new tradition of kingship or sovereignty. The *Arthaśāstra* maintained these claims when it said (*a*) that by virtue of his competence to uphold the observance of the traditions or usage of the four castes and to guard against the violation of the Dharmas, i.e. laws and obligations of the people, the king is the promulgator of law and duty;[185] and (*b*) that as Svāmin, the king wielded Daṇḍanīti or power to punish and reward, that is, administer justice.[186]

SIGNIFICANCE OF AŚOKA AS THE PROMULGATOR OF LAW

We have observed the nature of Aśoka's endeavours to be Dharma-pravartaka. We have now to observe his endeavours to wield Daṇḍanīti. That is to say, we have to ascertain what law he promulgated in order to administer justice. In regard to the legal theory that law is the command of the sovereign, we have to examine the source and content of the law that obtained in his or the Mauryan empire. That would help us to determine the nature of his sovereignty. Previous to the spread of Buddhism and indeed previous to the Mauryan empire the law was purely Brāhmaṇical in content and character. The law codes like the Baudhāyana, Gautama and Āpastamba obtained unchallenged. But with the wide acceptance of Buddhism and Buddhistic ways of life, the rulings of Brāhmaṇical law codes would have certainly been found inadequate. If, for example, law followed the principle of caste, as Brāhmaṇical law did, then a Buddhist, or for that matter a Jain could not hope to receive justice at the law courts. In the empire of Aśoka in particular, and of Mauryas in general, an awkward situation must have been created for the Buddhists and Jains. What law the Mauryas made for them cannot be ascertained. But if Brāhmaṇical law or the sacred law could not be with propriety enforced upon them, then certainly some *modus operandi* might have been devised to meet their case. Their own religious and

[185] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. iii, Ch. I. [186] *Ibid.*

secular customs and traditions might have been sought for in order to give them justice. If Brāhmaṇical law codes ruled that traditions and customs of the sects, families, castes, or countries had a binding force with certain reservations, then those of Buddhists and Jains might have been similarly treated.

It was Gautama who said that "Laws of countries, castes and families which are not opposed to (sacred) texts have also authority;" that "cultivators, traders, herdsmen, money-lenders and artisans (have authority to lay down laws) for their respective classes;" and that "having learned the (state of) affairs from those who (in each class) have authority (to speak) he shall give the legal decision."[187] The Āpastamba[188] and Baudhāyana[189] expressed themselves to the same purport. These were clearest indications of the validity of usage or Vyavahāra in matters of law. And in dealing with the Buddhists and Jains the king might have relied on their usage or customs and traditions. A ruling to this effect was actually given by an orthodox Brāhmaṇical law code — the Nārada much later on. He said: "Among heretics, naigamas, guilds, corporations, Vrātas, Gaṇas, the king must maintain the usages prevalent among them both in fortified town and in the country."[190] It therefore stands to reason that Aśoka and the Mauryas might have taken the sense of traditions and customs of the Buddhists, Brāhmaṇs, and Jains in the act of giving justice to them and might have even sought a harmonious adjustment of their customs and traditions in matters of administration. And these traditions were perhaps not written down at this age. That is why Megasthenes said that the laws of India were not written to which we have already referred in the chapter. That is why the *Arthaśāstra* maintained that Vyavahāra or usage and customs, caritra or conduct of the good, and the command of the king, i.e. Rājaśāsana had a legal force like that of the sacred law or Dharma.[191]

It further laid down that king should administer justice according to the sacred law or Dharma, usage or Vyavahāra, Saṃsthā or established custom, and Nyāya, that is, ruling of the king or of the learned men which satisfies the canons of justice or equity.[192] But, if there was disagreement between Caritra, Vyavahāra and Dharma, the last, i.e. Dharma was to prevail, while between Dharma

[187] xi, 20–22. [188] II, 15, 1. [189] I, i, 2, 6. [190] x, 2.
[191] Bk. iii, Ch. I. [192] *Ibid.*

and Nyāya, the latter, i.e. Nyāya was to prevail.[193] These statements of *Arthaśāstra* point to the inference that the king possibly sought to follow the Vyavahāra and Caritra, to give his final verdict or ruling — Śāsana — in cases where the Buddhists, Jains or Brāhmaṇs were involved. Thus the law, that was administered by the king comprised primarily his own ruling in accordance with the sacred law, the established usage and conduct of the righteous people. In an empire in which many creeds and sects lived side by side, the task of interpreting and co-ordinating their customs and traditions entirely devolved upon the king. Consequently his ruling was likely to be the chief element of the law of the land.

AŚOKA'S SOVEREIGNTY

That is to say Rājaśāsana in the interpretation of varying usages and conduct of the people, was the most powerful element of law. This lends support to the view that the king was sovereign in a very real sense, because his ruling was law to a very great extent. That Aśoka might have exercised his authority in this respect to the fullest advantage, there is hardly any doubt. He was bold enough to attempt a synthesis of the best ethical elements of all religions, which he called Dhamma and enforced them upon all. He might as well have sought to enforce his commands, in accordance with the prevalent usage and conduct of the people for the purpose of the administration of justice. Hence we can say that by virtue of his being the moral guide, the administrative head, and the promulgator of laws, Aśoka was sovereign in a very real sense of the word; and through him the state, Rāṣṭra also became sovereign to that extent.

[193] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER VI

DIVINE RIGHT AND PERSONALITY OF THE KING
(100 B.C. — A.D. 300)

PERIOD OPENS WITH POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

AŚOKA'S death marked the decline of the Mauryas. It spelt disaster for the empire, which had been so laboriously built up by a succession of capable kings. The empire sank under the double pressure of internal strifes and external invasions. New peoples rose to power and founded new kingdoms in different parts of India. Political cohesion seemed to be at its lowest ebb. That was because of the interminable conflict that marked the relations of these newly established kingdoms. Often they assumed dimensions of empire, but never could they attain that paramountcy which was the glory of the Mauryas. They could not even unite the whole of Northern India under one rule. The Śungas, the Kaṇvas, the Āndhras, the Ceṭas, the Kuṣāṇs, the Bhāraśivas, the Vākāṭakas — all these attempted that task, but with indifferent success. They appeared on the stage often encountering each other in deadly conflict, and after a brief spell of brilliancy disappeared into darkness and confusion. At long last the task of uniting Northern India and of dispelling the darkness and confusion into which Northern India had plunged, was successfully accomplished by the Guptas. The period therefore that opened with the downfall of the Mauryan empire and closed with the foundation of the Gupta empire is a vast period of five centuries, its broad expanse punctuated by periods of brilliancy and gloom, of great endeavours, and relentless conflicts.

The elements of conflict were partly embedded in the political traditions of the country, and partly precipitated by the advent of new peoples into India. That is to say, the disintegration of the Mauryan empire released on all sides, centrifugal forces which sought to assert themselves, and there arose numerous kingdoms out of its ruins. The existence of these kingdoms was conspicuous by their mutual enmity often demonstrated by longdrawn warfare. This mutual enmity and warfare found their justification in the

political traditions of the country. They were inspired by the ideal of Digvijaya which brought the laurels of Cakravartin. And many a king aspired for that though few could attain it. This flung the state into a vortex of conflicts, and before political life could flow in peaceful channels there poured into the country through the mountain gateways of India hordes of invaders — the Indo-Greeks, the Scythians, the Parthians and the Yuehcis. That was because the frontier defence had completely collapsed owing to the internal confusion after the breakup of the Mauryan empire. Their advent introduced new elements of conflict, and the impact of their invasion proved disastrous to the feeble sense of unity that was slowly emerging in the country.

But that is only one side of the picture — this conflict between peoples and principalities. On the other side we find the conflict assuming a religious character. Indeed the differences in religious affiliations of peoples and principalities aggravated their political conflict. There was a partisan spirit shown by the states towards religions which was only a prototype of what had been evidenced under Aśoka. A reaction had set in against Buddhism because it had been supported by Aśoka's political power. This was the age of Brāhmaṇic revival. Most of the states that arose out of the ruins of Aśoka's empire lent a helping hand to struggling Brāhmaṇism, and often sought to repress Buddhism both out of vindictiveness, as also to vindicate the prestige of Brāhmaṇism.

It was at this time of Brāhmaṇic revival, that the new hordes of invaders entered India. Their advent created a problem for Brāhmaṇic society, and intensified the conflict going on between reviving Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism. They could not be accommodated within the scheme of Brāhmaṇic society, and were detested as Mlecchas — the name given to them in contemporary literature, like the Purāṇas, the Epics, Manusmriti, etc. Buddhism was the only creed which welcomed them into its fold, and since the Mleccha rulers felt the insulting treatment accorded to them by Brāhmaṇic society, they were all the more determined to destroy that social system which not merely excluded them but poured ignominy upon them. It was this social or religious hatred which prompted the Kuṣāṇ rulers, as we shall observe later on, to a bitter persecution of Brāhmaṇism, wherever their power prevailed. Thus it was this bilateral conflict that characterized this period of Indian history.

THE CONFLICT ENDS WITH RECONSTRUCTION

It was apprehended in the earlier parts of the epoch that the forces of this bilateral conflict would succeed in undermining the prestige of the state and the solidarity of the ancient social structure. For, the religious partisanship of the state sought to perpetuate religious conflict and vitiate its slowly evolving universal character, that is, its sovereign character. But as the epoch drew to its close the elements of conflict — religious partisanship of the state and the impact of the foreigners on Brāhmaṇic society — slowly changed their character, and made for political and religious reconstruction. The partisan spirit of the state in regard to religion helped to evolve a new theory of state, that is, of kingship. Since the state, embodied in the person of the king, offered its support to religion, religion in its turn invested the person and authority of the king with a halo of sanctity and divine glory. The king came to be treated as a god in human form. And if this exaltation of royal person and power lacked force and effectiveness, that was supplied by the practice of the foreign invaders, who entered India in this epoch. Thus arose the theory of divine right of kings, in Indian polity. And this apotheosis of kingship restored the prestige of the state, since the state found its reality and effectiveness through the personality of the king. Alongside this political development there developed an unforeseen spirit in the sphere of religion. The age that was marked by religious conflict gradually substituted a religious synthesis, which wrought a complete change in the outlook on life. It embodied a spirit of compromise between conflicting religions. Thus in spite of its shortcomings, in spite of its conflict and confusion the age is full of great endeavours, of the elements of progress. Above all it sought to evolve new values in art and literature which were deeply influenced by the spirit of religious synthesis that breathed love and liberalism. It even influenced the technique of statecraft in the subsequent age, when religious tolerance, rather than religious partisanship became the accepted policy of governments. Such were the possibilities of the age.

OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE PERIOD

The political history of the age is a tangled skein of half-authenticated facts, controversial details, and conflicting accounts ;

and the Purāṇas, the coins, the inscriptions and literature yield very meagre historical data, which serve rather to confuse than to clarify our idea of the period. The Mauryan empire practically came to an end about 184 B.C. when Puṣyamitra Śunga slew Brihadratha Maurya and usurped the throne. The origin of the Śungas is obscure, and the dynastic list of the Śunga kings suggests duration of their rule for 112 years.[1] The rule of the Śungas is marked by a Brāhmaṇical revival. Puṣyamitra is regarded as a champion of this revival and is credited by the Mālavikāgnimitra to have performed the horse-sacrifice, as a mark of his Cakravartin rulership, i.e. paramountcy. In Buddhistic literature he is depicted as a persecutor of Buddhism and as having destroyed many monasteries.[2] Of his son Agnimitra little is known beyond what can be gleaned from the Mālavikāgnimitra and the Purāṇas. He may or may not have been the Agnimitra of the coins which have been found in Northern Pāñcāla.[3] There is little doubt however that Bhāgabhadra or Bhāgavata of the Purāṇas was the last king but one of his dynasty, in whose "reign the Besnagar column was erected by Heliodorus, son of Dion, the Yavana ambassador who had come to the court of Vidiśā from Antialcidas, king of Takṣaśila."[4] The last king Devabhuti is said to have been slain by a daughter of his slave woman at the instance of his minister Vāsudeva, who founded a Brāhmaṇ dynasty called the Kaṇva dynasty.[5] It is difficult to determine the extent of Śunga empire. It doubtless included Malwa, Pāñcāla (Ahichatra), and Vatsa (Kausambi), Eastern Punjab and Mathura. But whether Kosala, Videha, Kāśī, Magadha, Aṅga, Punjab and Vidarbha were also included, it is difficult to say.

During the life time of Puṣyamitra, Sakala, in the Punjab was wrested by Menander, and Ujjayinī in Malwa by Śātakarṇi. Again about the second half of the first century B.C. the region round about Mathurā came under the rule of the Śakas.[6] As regards Vidarbha it is probable that Yajñasena of the Mālavikāgnimitra was either an Andhra king or a tributary of the Andhra king, but not a tributary of the Śungas. Thus there were at this period three powers worth

[1] F. E. Pargiter, *Kali Age*, pp. 30–33, 70.
[2] E. B. Cowell & R. A. Neil, *Divyāvadāna*, pp. 433–4.
[3] *C.H.I.*, p. 520. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 521.
[5] Cowell and Thomas, *Harṣa Carita*, p. 193.
[6] *C.H.I.*, pp. 576–77.

reckoning in Northern India, viz. the Śungas in the east, the Yavanas in the north and the Andhras of Pratisthana in the South.

With the assassination of Devabhuti, the power passed from the Śungas to the Kaṇvas. The Kaṇvas have been described as "ministers of the Śungas," and also as kings "among the Śungas."[7] By 72 B.C. according to the chronology of the Puraṇas the Śunga power had ended, and the Kaṇvas who succeeded them ruled for forty-five years. In the meanwhile Simuka in the South had founded the Śātavāhana or Śātakarṇi dynasty in the last quarter of the third century B.C. "In his reign or in the reign of his immediate successor, his younger brother Kṛṣṇa, the Andhra empire spread westward to at least 74 longitude and possibly even to the Arabian sea. Under these early Śātavāhana kings the boundaries of the Andhra dominions were enlarged so as to include a great part, if not the whole of Vidarbha (Berar), the Central Provinces, and Hyderabad."[8] Naturally they came into conflict with the Śungas and actually wrested, as has been observed, Ujjayinī from Puṣyamitra. "Their sway in Central and Southern India lasted until the middle of the third century A.D." when their supremacy came to an end. The later Śātavāhanas engaged in a war of extermination against the two dynasties of Western Satraps, one founded by Nahapāna and the other by Caṣṭana.[9] The first had his capital at or near Nasik and the second at Ujjayinī. "About A.D. 117 during the assumed interval between the death of Kadphises II and the accession of Kaniṣka, an Andhra king called Gautamīputra extirpated the line of Nahapāna and annexed the dominions of the dynasty."[10] The most powerful of the later Sātavāhanas was Gautamīputra Yajñaśrī who ruled for about thirty years in the latter half of the second century A.D. "The Andhra kings assumed the position of protectors of Hinduism and the caste institutions."[11] One of their greatest kings Śātakarṇi — probably third in the list — performed the horse-sacrifice twice; and lavished largess on the Brāhmaṇs.

The contemporaries of the Āndhras were the so-called Yavanas, the Śakas and the Pahlavas in the North and North West of India, and the Ceṭas in Kalinga and Eastern India. The Yavanas were the Greeks, who came from Bactria. The conquest of the Kabul

[7] *Kali Age*, pp. 34, 71.
[8] Dr. Barnett in *C.H.I.*, pp. 599–600.
[9] Lüder's List No. 1123.
[10] *Oxford History of India*, p. 152.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

valley and a part of North-Western India was attempted in about 200 B.C. by the Bactrian king Euthydemus and continued by his successor. In about 162 B.C. Eukratides, had supplanted the family of Euthydemus in Bactria, deprived it of its possessions in Kabul valley and of a portion of its territory in North West India. The story of Indian conquests of these Greco-Indian kings has thus been narrated by Strabo (xi, 516). "The Greeks who occasioned its (Bactria's) revolt became so powerful by means of its fertility and advantages of the country that they became masters of Ariana and India, according to Apollodorus of Artemita. Their chiefs, particularly Menander (if he really crossed the Hyphanis to the east and reached Isamus) conquered more nations than Alexander. These conquests were achieved partly by Menander and partly by Demetrius, son of Euthydemus, king of the Bactrians. They got possession not only of Patalene but of the kingdom of Saraostos and Sigerdis, which constitute the remainder of the coast.... They extended their empire even as far as the Seres and Phryni."[12] If Hyphanis is the same as Hyphasis, the Isamus the same as the Jumna, Patalene Pātala, and Soraostos Surāṣtra, then their conquests comprised the modern North Western Frontier Province, the Punjab, Sind and Kathiawar in India. When Eukratides in about 162 B.C. ruled in the Kabul valley, Kandahar and Gandhara, there arose "two royal houses of Yavanas in India and several branches of these houses were established in different kingdoms and ruled at the same time."[13] Of the house of Euthydemus, Demetrius, Pantaleon, Agathocles and probably Antimachus ruled both in Bactria and in the regions south of the Hindukush. To the same house also belonged Apollodorus and Menander, who are noted for their Indian conquests. And Menander alone of all the Yavana kings of India has been celebrated in the literature of Ancient India in which he is known as Milinda. He is noted as a great king, a deep philosopher, a clever disputant and a mighty warrior. He had conquered wide dominions in India which comprised regions from the Punjab to Pāṭaliputra, and from Sāketa in Oudh to Madhyamika, near Chitor, in Rajputana. And Menander and Eukratides were probably contemporaries. "Coins show that Heliocles, the successor of Eukratides also ruled both in Bactria and in India, and that after his reign

[12] McCrindle, *Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 150. [13] *C.H.I.*, p. 545.

Greek power in Bactria ceased. Henceforth Yavana princes are found only in kingdoms south of the Hindukush and they are divided into two royal dynasties — the successors of Eukratides in the Kabul valley and in North West India, and the successors of Euthydemus in the eastern region of the Punjab."[14] The successors of Eukratides were Heliocles and Antialcidas, and those of Menander Agathocleia and her son Strato. It was Antialcidas who was contemporary of the Śunga king Bhāgabhadra of Vidiśā. And in the life time of Strato the downfall of Yavana rule in Northern India was complete. That was due to the great foreign invasion, which led to the supremacy of the Śakas and Pahlavas (75 B.C.).

The Śakas were the Scythians some of whom had long been established in the country called Seistan, while others in the country along the river Jaxartes. When they were dislodged by the Yuehcis, from the Jaxartes country they migrated into Bactria and wiped out the Greek rule from there (135 B.C.). In the meantime, however, the Yuehcis, defeated by the Huns, about 165 B.C. had begun their movements westwards and their impact again forced the Scythians to shift. The Scythians as they dispersed took possession of what the Chinese called Kipin, perhaps Kafiristan, and reinforced the settlements of their kinsmen in Seistan. That made the Scythians of Seistan, defiant of their Parthian rulers. A long contest that ensued between them in the reign of Phraates II (138–128 B.C.), was decided in favour of the Parthians in the reign of Mithridates II, the Great (123–88 B.C.). This forced the Scythians to migrate into the country of lower Indus through the Bolan Pass in the early years of the first century B.C. But in Seistan and Kandahar they "were so closely associated with the Parthians that it is not always possible to distinguish them ; the same family includes both Parthian and Scythian names."[15] For the sake of convenience however it may be said that Maues, Azes I and Azilises who succeeded to the dominions of the Yavanas in the North West Frontier Province and the Punjab were Śakas, and Vonones and his successors — Spalirises and Azes II (end of reign A.D. 19) who ruled over Seistan and Kandahar were Pahlavas. About the year A.D. 19 Gondopharnes succeeded to the dominions of Pahlavas and Śakas in eastern Iraṇ and North West India as also ruled over the Kabul

[14] *C.H.I.*, p. 554. [15] *C.H.I.*, p. 568.

valley. He himself was probably a Pahlava and so was his successor Pacores. Their rule was terminated by the influx of the Kuṣāṇas, somewhere in the latter half of the first century A.D.

The Kuṣāṇas were one of the five tribes of the Yuehci horde, who we have already observed, drove the Śakas out of Bactria. More than a hundred years after their settlement in Bactria, the chief, i.e. Yavuga of the Kuṣāṇ tribe made himself supreme among the Yuehci and founded a kingdom some time between A.D. 25 and A.D. 81. From their base in Bactria they gradually conquered Afghanistan, Kandahar and North-Western India, and stamped out the rule of the Pahlavas from these regions. There were five great Kuṣāṇa kings, who ruled in succession and they were Kadphises I, Kadphises II, Kaniṣka, Huviṣka and Vāsudeva. Their chronology is still uncertain; for, while Prof. Rapson holds the view that Kaniṣka came to the throne in about A.D. 78, Dr. Smith supports the other view that Kaniṣka came to the throne forty years later. There is a reasonable probability, however, that Kaniṣka rose to power after the two Kadphises. Altogether the five Kuṣāṇas ruled for very nearly a century, and their empire in its heyday comprised regions in Northern India as far as Benares and the Narbada — the Śaka Satraps of Malwa and western India owing allegiance to the Kuṣāṇ overlord — besides regions in the further north and west including the Indus basin, Kāśmer, Khotan, Yarkand, Kāsgār and Kabul. Their rule was marked by much progressive thought and activity in Indian life. How their empire fell, it is difficult to say. It might have been, in the north-west, visibly affected by the rise of the Sassanian power in about A.D. 225 and the conquests of Ardeshir or Artaxerxes I and his successors. Nevertheless, strong Kuṣāṇa dynasties continued to rule in Kabul and in the North-Western regions. Perhaps it was some princes of the dynasty, who have been referred to as the Śāhis and Śāhānusāhis of Samudragupta's inscription. Some of them remained till the Hun invasion of India and some of them till perhaps the Arab conquest.

So far with regard to the foreigners who entered India during this period, and gradually were absorbed into the social and political systems of the country. Before their advent and contemporaneous with the early Andhras was the Ceṭa dynasty of Kalinga. It rose to power under the great king Khāravela who, about a hundred years

after the death of Aśoka,* established his supremacy over a wide tract of territory in Eastern and Southern India. Unfortunately we do not possess sufficient records of the Ceṭas, that would help us to reconstruct their history. We know only three names from the inscriptions — Aira Mahāmeghavāhana Śri Khāravela, Mahāmeghavāhana Śri Vakradeva and Kumāra Vaḍukha.[16] We are told by Khāravela in his own inscription that "when he completed his twenty-fourth year, he was anointed Mahārājā in the third generation of the royal family of Kalinga. . . . In the second year without taking heed of Satakani (Śātakarṇī) he sent a large army to the west and took (?) some town with the help of Kusambas (?). . . . In the eighth year, after having killed . . . he was harassing the king of Rajagaha so that he fled to Madhura (Mathura). In the eleventh year he revived the meditation on the feet of Jina that had not been practised for 113 years. In the twelfth year harassing the kings of Uttarapatha and striking terror into the Magadha he watered his elephants in the Gaṅgā and made the Magadha king bow at his feet."[17] That is a brilliant record for any king, aspiring for sovereignty. But that is about all that we know of this dynasty. What became of Khāravela's empire, how long it continued or when it fell are problems shrouded in darkness. And equally dark is "the period between the extinction of the Kuṣān and Andhra dynasties, about A.D. 220 or 230, and the rise of the imperial Gupta dynasty, nearly a century later."[18] There was no paramount power either in the North or the South, and naturally numerous petty kings shared the dominion of India, till the Guptas arose to paramountcy.

Against this Jaiswal writes that "the statement that there was no paramount power before the Imperial Guptas is thoroughly incorrect and cannot be maintained for a moment. The history of the imperial Hindu revival is not to be dated in the fourth century with Samudra Gupta, not even with the Vākāṭakas nearly a century earlier, but with the Bhāraśivas half a century earlier still."[19] Hence after the

* See R. P. Chanda's article in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. V, nos. 3 & 4.

[16] Lüder's List Nos. 1345–1348.

[17] Lüder's List of Brāhmi Inscriptions, No. 1345.

[18] V. A. Smith, *Early History of India* (1924), p. 292.

[19] *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. XIX, Pts. I and II, p. 4.

sinking of the Kuṣāṇa and Andhra power that of the Bhāraśivas and of Vākāṭakas arose in India. Jaiswal maintains that the Bhāraśivas performed ten Aśvamedhas on the Ganges — which has been commemorated by the Daśāśvamedha Ghāṭa of Benares — in assertion of their imperial position in Āryāvarta, "at the cost of the Kuṣāṇa empire" which signified "the breaking up of the Kuṣāṇa empire, and the driving of the Kuṣāṇas further and further North-West towards the confines of the Salt Range."[20] The Bhāraśivas of the inscriptions, he says, were the same as the Nāgas of the Purāṇas. The dynasty arose at Vidiśā, about 31 B.C. and shifted to Padmāvati (Pavaya) under one Bhuta Nandi. Here they ruled till under Śiva Nandi they acknowledged the suzerainty of Kaniṣka represented by his viceroy Mahākṣatrapa Vanaspara.[21] "We have definite statement in the Purāṇas that Vinvasphāṇi ruled at Padmāvati and ruled up to Magadha. Therefore, we may take it that about A.D. 80–100 the Nāga dynasty takes shelter, away from the trunk road between Mathurā and Vidiśā into the inaccessible jungles of the Central Provinces."[22] Hence the Nandi-Nāgas when they left Padmāvati and Vidiśā owing to the impact of the Kuṣāṇas came to the Nagpur district of Central Provinces, and settled down in a place possibly known after them as Nāgpura-Nandivardhana or modern Nagardhana which is within 20 miles of Nagpur — the capital of the modern province of C.P.[23] Here they lived for over half a century and about A.D. 150 reached Kāntipuri or Kantit of the Muslim period, between the modern towns of Vindhyācal and Mirzapur.[24] They worked their way up from here through the northern parts of the modern C.P. — Hoshangabad and Jabalpur districts, and Baghelkhand. While here, "they performed their Aśvamedhas and coronations at or near Benares, where the place Nāgwa, the present site of the Hindu University, seems to be associated with their name. From Kāntipuri they move westwards and under Virasena, who strikes coins extensively and whose coins are found from the east of Ahichatra to Mathurā region, Padmāvati and Mathurā."[25] It was perhaps Nava Naga, who had first established

[20] *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. XIX, Pts. I and II, p. 5.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 11. [22] *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 42.
[23] *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. xix, Pts. I & II, pp. 39–40.
[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 31. [25] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

the Naga or Bhāraśiva dynasty at Kāntipuri.[26] This family is said to have several branches ruling in subordination to the sovereign branch from Mathura and Padmāvati.[27] The Mathurā branch bore the official designation of Yadu family and the Padmāvati branch the Ṭaka family. "We may take it that, speaking roughly, the empire of the Bhāraśivas included Bihar, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Bundelkhand, the Central Provinces, Malwa, Rajputana and the Madra republics in the Eastern Punjab. The Kuṣāṇas accepted the suzerainty of Ardeshir just in the middle of the Bhāraśiva period, A.D. 226–241 and they adopted Shapur's effigy on their coins between A.D. 238 and 269. This was the result of the Bhāraśiva pressure."[28] As regards the extent of the empire it is difficult to accept Jaiswal's statement, but when he asserts that the Kuṣāṇas acknowledged Sassanian supremacy owing to the Bhāraśiva pressure he is imagining things, for he has no evidence to adduce.

How this power of the Bhāraśivas became weak, and yielded to the Vākāṭakas and then to the Guptas we do not know. Neither has Jaiswal in his extremely laborious and ingenious account of India between A.D. 150 and 350 anything adequate to say. According to him about the middle of the third century A.D. rose the dynasty of the Vākāṭakas, founded by one Vindhyaśakti on the bank of the Kilakilā near Panna in Central India. Vindhyaśakti was a Brāhman, who started his career as a tributary to the Bhāraśivas but made extensive conquests comprising Āndhra and Naisadha-Vidura countries. He was succeeded by his son Pravara Sena who "not only performed four Aśvamedha sacrifices but also assumed the title of Samrāṭ, i.e. the emperor of India." Because of his very

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 28. The chronology of this dynasty called by Jaiswal as the main line of Nava Nāgas or Bhāraśivas has been thus arranged by him on the evidence of the Purāṇas, the coins and inscriptions:

(1)	Nava (Nāga)	(Coins) A.D. 140–170.
(2)	Vīra Sena (Nāga)	(Coins & inscriptions) A.D. 170–210.
(3)	Haya Nāga	(Coins) A.D. 210–245.
(4)	Traya Nāga	(,,) A.D. 245–250.
(5)	Barhina Nāga	(,,) A.D. 250–260.
(6)	Charaja Nāga	(,,) A.D. 260–290.
(7)	Bhava Nāga	(inscription) A.D. 290–315.

[27] *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. XIX, Pts. I & II, pp. 35–36.

[28] *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. XIX, Pts. I & II, p. 55.

long reign his son predeceased him and he was succeeded by his grandson, Rudrasena, whose mother was the daughter of Bhava Nāga. He was a contemporary of Samudra Gupta. His successors came under Gupta suzerainty and henceforth they ceased to be regarded as sovereign kings. Their sovereignty therefore lasted for about sixty years, from the time of Pravara Sena (A.D. 284–344) to that of Rudra Sena (A.D. 344–348).[29] After this they are chronologically connected with the Guptas. Perhaps the weakest point in the construction of this dynastic list is Jaiswal's reliance on the Purāṇas; for he says "we gain the whole history of the Vākāṭakas from the Purāṇas which the inscriptions by themselves fail to impart."[30] From the inscription we only know that Candra Gupta II was the contemporary of Prithvisena I and Rudrasena II. Again in arranging these dynastic lists Jaiswal has accepted A.D. 78 as the beginning of the reign of Kaniṣka which is controversial. His reliance on the Purāṇas is not a safe method. Nevertheless, until something more reliable is forthcoming his dynastic lists and chronology may serve as a working hypothesis for this period.

PREDOMINANCE OF PETTY INTERESTS

On the whole the period presents a picture of rapidly shifting scenes and tendencies that seek to destroy unity of political and social control. It appears from this distance of time an incoherent heap of events the outlines of which seem to be buried in confusion. The rise and wreck of empires, the influx of foreigners, the alternating phenomena of conflict and conquest, the revival and rivalry of creeds,— such are the outlines. This impression, is broadly confirmed by the literature of the age—the Epics, the Purāṇas, the law codes, etc. They depict petty interests and petty principalities, trying to assert themselves; they abound in references to kings, and their kingdoms, their wars of defence and "Digvijaya", and to the barbarians that poured into India, their manners and customs and their patronage of the heretical faiths. There are references to kingdoms like the Pancāla, Cedi, Matsya, Surasena, Daśārṇa, Mithilā, Kampilya, and Magadha which are among the more famous

[29] *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. XIX, Pts. I & II, pp. 62–63.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

ones of Northern India.[31] Besides these, the foreigners, viz. the Yavanas, the Śakas, the Pahlavas and the Kṣatrapas[32] are said to have established new kingdoms also. The political flux into which the period plunged is brought out by the ways that Jarāsandha of Magadha is said to have adopted, to attain to paramountcy,[33] and by the instance of the divine Kṛṣṇa slaying the Yavana king Kaseruman.[34] The interstate relations found expression in the leagues of kings[35] and the highest political ambition in the attainment of the rank of Samrāṭ. We are told that there were Rājans in every house, but few could be called Samrāṭ.[36] The rigidity of caste as consisting in birth with strictly apportioned duties is clearly indicated by the contemptuous treatment of Karṇa[37] by Bhīma, and by Rama slaying a Śūdra who dared practise penances.[38]

FOREIGNERS IN THE COUNTRY

This social rigidity and pettiness are due to (*a*) the influx of foreigners like the Greeks, the Scythians, the Parthians, etc. and their impact on the Indian body politic, and (*b*) to the rivalry of religious systems, between the indigenous and exotic peoples. We have observed already that intermixture of castes as a result of forbidden marriages, had created thorny problems for the Brāhmaṇic society which had not yet devised any means of accommodating these new offsprings of irregular marriages. And now the ingress of the foreigners made that problem more acute. Further their advent synchronized with the revival of Brāhmaṇism. These facts explain the uncompromising attitude of Brāhmaṇical society, which is reflected in the Epics and the Purāṇas. The Mahābhārata mentions the newcomers, viz. the Śakas, Yavanas, the Vālhikas as well as the Āndhras and the Pulindas under one category of the Mlecchas or the barbarians. These Mlecchas would seek to destroy the sacred law and religion as also the order of society. Under their

[31] *Mahābharata*, Virāṭa Parva, Ch. I, 11–12 Verses ; Ādi Parva, Chs. CXIII & CXC ; & *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bk. i, Ch. XII.

[32] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Chs. LI & LII ; *Ramāyaṇa*, Bk. i, Chs. LIV–LV.

[33] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. XIV.

[34] *Mbh.*, Vana Parva, Ch. XII, Verse 31.

[35] *Mbh.*, Āśhramvāśi, Chs. VI & VII.

[36] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, xv, 2. [37] *Mbh.*, Ādi Parva, cxxxix.

[38] *Ram. Uttara.* Chs. LXXXVII–XCI.

ægis, it says, materialism and atheism would prevail, and the land would be full of Eḍukas, i.e. Buddhist stupas.[39] The Viṣṇu, the Bhāgavata, and the Vāyu Purāṇas contain references to the mischievous activities and barbarous ways of the Śaka-Pulindas.[40] Gunāḍhya in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* mentions that the "Mlecchas slay Brāhmans, interfere with sacrifices and other sacred ceremonies."[41] These references indicate the repellent attitude of Brāhmaṇic society towards the newcomers. And that was heightened to a distinct hatred when Brāhmaṇism realized that it could not shake them off; for they had entered the country as conquerors. When we know that Vanaspara ruled as a governor of Kaniṣka the province in which Benares was situated the most uncomfortable position in which Brāhmaṇism was placed could be imagined.[42] To escape the Brāhmaṇic ostracism and hatred, the newcomers would obviously embrace Buddhism, whereby they could claim equality with members of the old and orthodox order of society. The most degrading status, to which the Brāhmaṇic social system assigned them would naturally provoke them after their conversion to Buddhism to destroy the Brāhmaṇic social order. And these conclusions are borne out both by contemporary literature and epigraphic records.

HERETICAL FOREIGNERS PERSECUTE BRĀHMAṆISM

In this context we could understand why Nāgasena "succeeded in converting his royal antagonist" Menander of the Milinda Panha,[43] Theodoros the Meridark established "the relics of the Lord Sākyamuni," the Kṣatrapa Patika did similarly make a deposit of Buddhist relics at Taxila,[44] and Kaniṣka and Huviṣka were Buddhists and did a great deal to promote the cause of Buddhism besides less notable persons whose number was legion.[45] Spurred on to embrace Buddhism by the repelling orthodoxy of Brāhmaṇism they must have displayed the zeal of new converts to spread Buddhism at the cost of Brāhmaṇism. That is why we

[39] *Mbh.*, Vana Parva, Chs., 188 & 190.
[40] *Pargiter*, Pt. I, p. 52, n. 48. [41] *Kathāsaritsāgara*, Bk., xviii.
[42] Two Sarnath Inscriptions, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. VIII, p. 173.
[43] *C.H.I.*, p. 549. [44] S. Konow, Cor. Ins. Ind., Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 4.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

are told by the Mahābhārata that under the Mleccha rule the Vedas were disregarded; the Śūdras were on the footing of Brāhmaṇs, and the worship of gods was forbidden.[46] The Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa mentions that they were actuated by greed and religious zeal.[47] Their massacres have been noted by the Garga Saṃhitā.[48] Alberuni also observed of the Śakas that they "interdicted the Hindus from considering and representing themselves as anything but Śakas. The Hindus had much to suffer . . ."[49] Even the Rājataraṅgiṇī recorded the tradition that in Kaśmer they stopped the prevalent Nāga-worship and imposed Buddhism.[50] Activities such as these created much bad blood in the country and produced reactions that died hard.

HERETICAL KALINGAS

Nor did Brāhmaṇism encounter opposition from Buddhism alone. Just as Buddhism was strengthened by the political patronage of the foreigners, so was Jainism strengthened by that of the kings of Kalinga. And though religious partisanship was not the only cause, yet it might have certainly influenced the attitude of Khāravela, when he invaded Northern and Southern India, since his invasion had been undertaken after the death of Aśoka when there had set in a wave of reaction against Buddhism. We have already noted that according to his Hāthigumphā inscriptions he revived Jainism in Kalinga. Including Khāravela's we have five inscriptions in the caves of Udaygiri near Cuttack. They preserve the memory of two kings, a queen, a prince and other persons, all of whom provided for the Jain ascetics of Udaygiri. A fair portion of the people of Kalinga may have been Jain also. It is perhaps because of this predisposition for Jainism, that the Ceṭa dynasty has not been mentioned by the Purāṇas. And since "evidently the faith of the

[46] Refer for their benefactions to the Sahdaur Inscriptions of Śivarakṣita, the Mathurā Lion capital and Elephant Inscriptions; Taxila gold plate Inscriptions; Taxila Vase Inscriptions; Suibihar Inscriptions, etc., in *Cor. In Ins. Ind.* Vol. II, Pt. I.

[47] *Mbh.*, Vana Parva, Chs. 188 & 190; *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, pp. 55–56. *Br. Purāṇa*, Bk. iii, 200–203.

[48] *J.B.O.R.S.*, XIV, pp. 404, 408.

[49] Alberuni, *India*, Vol. II, p. 6.

[50] Bk. I, Ch. I, 174–185.

people of Kalinga remained solid in Jainism,"[51] in the Mahābhārata they have not been given a very praise-worthy descent. It is asserted that the people descended from Kalinga, the son of the saint Dirghatamas by Sudeṣnā, the wife of king Bali.[52]

RELIGIOUS RIVALRY ACCENTUATED BY ROYAL PARTISANSHIP

These considerations bring out into prominence two distinct features of the period. The one was that religious rivalry was becoming more and more pronounced; and the other was that kings were playing the role of religious partisans. Indeed the one depended upon the other. Religious rivalry received a sting when royal patronage backed it. The tradition of state, that is, royal patronage or partisanship had its origin with Aśoka, and it was only the extension of that tradition which coloured the attitude of kings in this age. This partisanship of religion by the state ultimately raised the prestige of the state or of the symbol of the state, the king. In this matter the tradition of the foreigners — the so-called barbarians, exercised a powerful influence. And ultimately the result was the rise of the divine right of kings. From the standpoint of our study, this feature of the period is of utmost importance. For, since the state was incarnate in the king, the divine right of the king actually meant that the state came to acquire a sacred and sovereign character. This became an accomplished fact in the subsequent age; this age saw only the laying of foundations.

UTILITY OF VAISṆAVISM

We have observed that religious rivalry received a sting, when royal patronage backed it. Though this had its origin under Aśoka yet under the foreigners, who persecuted that system of society and religion which assigned them a position "lower than the lowest Śūdra," the poison of the sting was painfully felt. And since they held sway over a region that extended from the Hindukush to the Narbada the effects of that sting was even more acute. For all that, Brāhmaṇism had to thank its own orthodoxy. There were kings like the Śuṅgas, the Śātavāhanas, and the Bhāraśivas, who

[51] R. D. Banerji, *History of Orissa*, Vol. I, p. 70.
[52] *Mbh.*, Adi. Parva, Ch. CIV, 44–49.

supported Brāhmaṇic revival, and as Divyāvadāna tells us Puṣyamitra Śuṅga actually persecuted the Buddhists; and as Gautamiputra Śri Śātakarṇi records in the Nāsik Cave Inscription that he destroyed the pride and prestige of the Kṣatriyas as also the Kṣatrapas.[53] But this sort of religious antagonism was realized to be detrimental to progress. An effort was made to get the newcomers — the so-called barbarians into the fold of Brāhmaṇic society. The effort was successful because it utilized Vaiṣṇavism or Bhāgavata religion for the purpose. Emanating originally from Brāhmaṇism, as a result of that ferment of thought which took the shape of Buddhism, Jainism, and Vedanta philosophy, it had sought to piece together all that was best in Brāhmaṇism, as also in the heretical systems.

This spirit of synthesis, that pervaded Vaiṣṇavism, naturally could have no room for the orthodoxy and rigidity, that characterized Brāhmaṇism. Besides that the concept of personal God — God, who could be attained by love and devotion captured the hearts of all; and was sure to appeal to the barbarian most. Further since in the beginning it paid scant attention to caste duties or obligations, and ceremonials peculiar to Brāhmaṇism there was indeed no difficulty for the newcomers, the Buddhists or anybody to embrace Vaiṣṇavism, and claim the distinction of belonging to the oldest order of society. Naturally this Bhāgavat religion could make a rapid headway in this period,[54] and in the North-Western regions where the foreigners dominated, it shared their allegiance with Buddhism. That is why Heliodorus of the Besnagar pillar inscription was a devotee of Kṛṣṇa,[55] or why the Peshawar Museum inscription mentions the establishment of "a relic of Bhagavata."[56] And more than the inscriptions, the orthodox literature of the period contains unmistakable references to their gradual absorption into Hindu society. When the epics do not betray the slightest repugnance to mention that the chief of the Yavanas was invited to the Svayambara of Draupadi,[57] that the Romakas, Yavanas, Cinas,

[53] "Khatiya-dapa-māna-mardana." Dr. Barnett suggests that this means not merely that he destroyed the pride and prestige of Kṣatriyas but also Kṣatrapas. [54] R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism*, etc., p. 4.

[55] For the Inscription, see *J.R.A.S.*, 1909–10.

[56] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 128.

[57] *Mbh.*, Ādi Parva, Ch. CLXXXXIX, 15.

Śakas, Pahlavas, etc. brought presents to Yudhiṣṭhira on the occasion of his Rājasuya sacrifice,[58] that the Pahlavas, Yavanas, Śakas, etc. were created by Vaśiṣṭha's cow,[59] and that the Yavanas, the Gandharas, the Barbaras, the Śakas, the Pahlavas, etc. should follow the duties and rites laid down by the Vedas and should perform sacrifices also,[60] the inevitable inference is that the religious and social barrier between the newcomers and the people of the country was already fast disappearing. Indeed these are the clearest indications that a rapid fusion of races was coming about. And if there was no religious repugnance felt for them there could certainly be no repugnance for their customs and traditions. Indeed along with the fusion of blood, after they were Aryanised there was a fusion of customs also. And of all their customs and traditions with which we are not concerned here, there was one which had tremendous influence on the political traditions of the country. That helped the rise of the divine right of kings in ancient India.

APOTHEOSIS OF KINGSHIP

We have already observed that the kings of this period were considerably influenced in their activities by their religious affiliations. There was the pressure of Buddhism on Brāhmaṇism and that had to be relieved. There was the barbarian invasion also, and specially of those barbarians who had embraced Buddhism. This double pressure taxed the resources of the king, i.e. of the state. Upon the strength of the Aryan king depended the revival of Brāhmaṇism and expulsion or subjugation of the barbarians. This naturally involved establishment of internal cohesion and organization of all the resources in the state. It was realized that in this adventure the state must be loyally served by religion. That is to say both must pool their resources in order that Buddhism might be suppressed and Brāhmaṇism might revive, as also the foreign barbarians might be repulsed. In this crisis religion began to work on the susceptibilities of the people in order that they might tender their wholehearted allegiance to the king. And that would exalt his power and make for centralization of resources and authority.

[58] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. LI.
[59] *Rām.* Bk. i, Chs. LIV, LV ; *Mbh.*, Ādi Parva, Ch. CLXXVII.
[60] *Mbh.*, Śanti Parva, Ch. LXV, 13–19.

Hence an attempt was made by Brāhmaṇism to invest the king's person with the halo of divinity and his authority with divine sanction. That was accomplished through the medium of popular orthodox literature like the Epics and the law codes. Ideas like that the king is a god in human form, were preached in a very insidious manner. That is why God now incarnated as the Kṣatriya king as in the Rāmāyaṇa; that is why the king as in the Mahābhārata, undertook in his coronation oath to "protect the holy faith on earth" and "the religion inculcated on earth by the Vedas."[61] That is why Manu ordained that the king is created by God out of the eternal elements of Indra, Vāyu, Yama, the Sun, Fire, Varuṇa, Chandra and Kubera,[62] and existed for the exaltation of the Brāhmaṇa and the Veda, and "the protection of castes and orders."[63] The seal of divinity was set when the Mahābhārata pronounced that God and kings were alike and that every king was a part of Viṣṇu.[64] This was the apotheosis of kingship, deification of kings.

RAISON D'ETRE OF KINGSHIP

That is not all. The *raison d'etre* of this exaltation or apotheosis of kingship has also been set forth with some colour and cogency. The king is indispensable, for without the king, the people perish and gods frown. Law disappears and so do trade and agriculture. The rain fails; men prey upon one another like fishes; family purity and social morals degenerate; the orders of society forshake their duties and religion decays.[65] Indeed the power of king seems to be like that of God in reference to human happiness. That is further brought out by Manu. "The Lord created the king for the protection of this whole (creation) taking (for that purpose) eternal particles of Indra, of the Wind, of Yama, of the Sun, of Fire, of Varuṇa, of the Moon, and of the Lord of Wealth. Because a king has been formed of particles of these lords — he therefore surpasses all created beings in lustre; and like the Sun he burns eyes and hearts, nor can anybody on earth even gaze on him. Through his

[61] Pratijñām cā dhi rohasva manasā karmaṇā girā; Palayiṣyamy aham bhaumaṃ brahma ity eva cā sakrit. *Mbh.*, Śānti, Ch. LIX, 107.

[62] vii, 3 & 4.

[63] vii, 35, 82, 133, 134.

[64] *Mbh.*, xii, 59; 128–144.

[65] *Rām.*, Ayodhyā, Ch. LXVII.

(supernatural) power he is Fire and Wind, he is the Sun and Moon, the Lord of Justice (Yama), Kubera, Varuṇa, the great Indra. Even an infant king must not be despised, (from an idea) that he is a (mere) mortal; for he is a great deity in human form."[66] God Viṣṇu imparted his own lustre to the king and hence he came to be worshipped as a god by the whole universe.[67]

KING THE "DEFENDER OF THE FAITH"

Thus we find that there was an attempt on the part of Brāhmaṇism to invest the person and office of the king with divine glory and sanctity; and that was due to the desire that such a king would be better able to protect it against atheism, and promote its interests. Because his temporal power was needed for the furtherance of "the religion inculcated on earth by the Vedas" — Bhaumaṃ brahma — therefore his power had a divine sanction and could not be challenged. His power could not be challenged because he was to be the defender of the divine faith. This had another result. The exaltation or apotheosis of kingship made for the unity of control, that is centralization in the state. When centralized the royal power was more effective, and specially for the desired end. This apotheosis of kingship, was the divine right of the king to rule. It was a product of peculiar circumstances, as we have observed; and the doctrine was cogently shaped and carefully spread by the popular epics and law codes.

And what the popular literature sought to preach among the people, the newly Aryanized barbarians i.e. the foreigners actually practised. And their practice, that is, political tradition went far to validate the convention of the divine right of kings preached by orthodox literature. What was merely theory thus received confirmation from prevalent practice and acquired force and legitimacy about the end of the period. Now let us pass on to discuss the political convention of the barbarians.

POLITICAL CONVENTION OF THE FOREIGNERS

Their political convention was that their kings assumed high-sounding, divine honorifics. It has been said that the Śaka and

[66] Manu, *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXV, Ch. VII, 3–8.
[67] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LIX.

Pahlava kings normally assumed the title of "Great King of Kings" which was borrowed from the Persian honorifics like "Ksayathiya-nam Ksayathia" of the inscriptions of Darius.[68] This title first occurs on the Parthian coins, which have been attributed to Mithridates II.[69] Then Azes I and Azilises are said to have issued conjointly coins, on which appear the title of "Great king of kings."[70] On the Pahlava coins of Sapedana and Satavastra, appear the same title of "Great king of kings" and that is one degree inferior to the most lofty title that Gondopharnes, the powerful lord of the Pahlavas assumed, viz. "Great king, Supreme king of kings."[71] Another type of contemporary coins contain the title "Great king" or "Great saviour" obviously issued by a less powerful ruler than Sapedana and Satavastra. Still another type of coins have been attributed to Vima Kadphises, which like those of Kaniṣka bear the most exalted honorifics. Vima Kadphises took the style of the "Great king, Supreme king of kings, the Kuṣāṇa chief,"[72] while Kaniṣka — "the Great king, the king of kings, the son of Heaven," — the Mahārāja, Rājātirāja, Devaputra.[73] Similarly Vāsudeva the last of the powerful Kuṣāṇs assumed the title of Mahārāja, Rājātirāja and Devaputra.[74] The climax is reached here since Kaniṣka and Vāsudeva assume the style of Devaputra, i.e. son of Heaven. Besides these, we have the instance of kings who assumed the titles of "Great king, Supreme king of kings" and "Devoted to Gods," — Devavrata. That was Gondopharnes.[75] There are others who assumed the title of the devout — dharmika. This epigraphic and numismatic evidence indicates how the kings of the Yavanas, the Pahalavas and the Sakas brought with them a tradition of absolute power, which their grand titles signify. Further they sought to promote the cause of religion, which is also indicated by their titles like Devavrata or Dharmika. Thus the two political ideals that Brāhmaṇism strove to inculcate, one, the king to become "the defender of the faith," and two, the king to be regarded as a god incarnate, had been actually the political convention of the barbarians; and after they were Aryanized, this convention

[68] *C.H.I.*, p. 567. [69] *Ibid.*, p. 567. [70] *Ibid.*, p. 572.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 580. [72] *C.H.I.*, p. 581.
[73] Taxila Silver Scroll Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 77.
[74] Lüders' List, No. 69 a. [75] *C.H.I.*, p. 590.

strengthened the cause of Brāhmaṇism as also the theory of the divine right of kings.

"DIVINE RIGHT" THEORY BECOMES EFFECTIVE THROUGH TWO FACTORS

This political principle became effective because of two factors. The first was that the states over which kings ruled were comparatively smaller in size and more homogenous in nature than those of the preceding periods. Consequently the possibilities of centralized control in these states were greater. The second factor, which substantiated the first was the scheme of state organization projected by a treatise like the *Arthaśāstra*, which gave a vigorous drive to the ideal of centralization of power in the hands of the king. The *Arthaśāstra* in foreshadowing a scheme of state control and state action indeed supplied the technique of centralization of power, which must have been eagerly utilized by kings and the advocates of Brāhmaṇical revival to serve their end. For example, the seven elements of royal sovereignty, the moral obligation of the king to be the Dharmapravartaka — promulgator of the law and religion — the comprehensive legal competence of his commands, the elaborate organization and bureaucratic control of the state, and the operation of the sixfold policy in the circle of rulers, — all these must have made a powerful appeal to the minds endeavouring to centralize authority in the hands of the king. Thus these two factors — (*a*) the smaller size and greater homogeneity of the state and (*b*) the technique of centralized control envisaged by the *Arthaśāstra* helped the theory of divine right of kings to be effective through state action.

ORIGIN OF KINGSHIP IS THE ORIGIN OF CIVIL SOCIETY

And that is reflected in the literature of the period. A coherent theory of kingship and government emerges into the field. Since the king is the soul of the state and support of society a theory embodying the rationale of his origin is of first necessity. He is the gift of god Brahmā to the people, because the latter led a miserable life, without a king to protect them. Insecurity, brutal struggle for existence, negligence of sacrifice, loss of social virtues and

predominance of criminal or anti-social tendencies, — these were the evils in a kingless state. Hence people approached Brahmā, and he gave Manu to govern them. The people pledged to pay one-fifth of their cattle and gold and one-tenth of their grain to him in lieu of his protection. Thus civil society sprang up with the institution of kingship.[76] Similarly the origin of kingship has been attributed to God's will for "the protection of the whole creation" ;[77] for keeping the whole world in order ;[78] for maintaining the social order and the system of caste.[79] The end in enunciating these theories seems to be to establish a causal connection between kingship and the social order. That is to say, the social order originates with the institution of kingship, and the origin of kingship is the origin of government. Royal government can work only with the aid of the weapon of punishment — Daṇḍanīti, which is the son of the Lord.[80] Thus the institution of royal government is the *sine qua non* of the social order. And here we have a theory of government that seeks to establish royal absolutism. For if the king wielding his royal sceptre — the symbol of punishment or Daṇḍanīti, becomes the protector of the creation and of the social order, no one could be permitted to disobey his orders, and therefore the competence of his authority must be universal. This is the theoretical justification of royal autocracy, and is an indirect instrument of centralizing power in the hands of the king.

THE KING AND HIS DUTY

In the context of these speculations the importance of the king can be easily estimated. He already figures as the first of the seven elements of sovereignty — svāmin. Indeed svāmin now connotes sovereign according to the evidence of contemporary inscriptions.[81] Here we find how political theory was influencing political practice. If the king is sovereign his duty or Rājadharma consists in the exercise of law of punishment or Daṇḍanīti. By virtue of Daṇḍanīti he is the lord of the kingdom.[82] Since he is a great god in human

[76] *Mbh.*, Śānti, Ch. LXVII. [77] *Manu.*, vii, 3.
[78] *Ibid.*, 22. [79] *Ibid.*, 35. [80] *Manu.*, vii, 14.
[81] Lüders' List, No. 1100, for Pulumāvi; No. 1174 for Nahapāna ; No. 1124 for Gotamiputra Śrī Śātakarni.
[82] *Ram.* Bk. i, Ch. XLI.

form,[83] the supporter and preserver of everything,[84] the maker of the age,[85] the heart of his people, their great refuge, their glory, and their greatest happiness, those who are loyal to him conquer both this and the other world,[86] while those who even think of injuring the king meet with grief here and go to hell hereafter.[87] It is in these precepts, that we find the subtle influence of the example of Aśoka as also the hand of religion working on the minds of the people. The mind of the people was thus prepared to tolerate royal absolutism. The first duty of the people was to choose a king,[88] and then to obey him implicitly. Of course this choice meant nothing more than acceptance of the king, who ascended the throne by hereditary right, unless disqualified by some physical defects.[89] It was the king who often nominated his son to be his heir-apparent, and even to rule during his own lifetime.[90] As regards the duties of the king, his first duty was to conquer himself and the next duty was to conquer his enemies ; and the latter depended upon the former.[91] He could not act in entire opposition to the wishes of his people, who often expressed themselves strongly in favour of or against his conduct.[92] These were customary checks on royal absolutism. Towards his subjects the highest duty of the king was to afford protection.[93] Now this duty of affording protection could be best performed by "the employment of spies and servants ; paying them their just dues without pride ; the realization of taxes with mercy ; never taking anything whimsically and unjustifiably ; the selection of honest men ; heroism, skill and cleverness ; truth ; seeking the good of the people ; creating disorder and disunion among the enemy by fair or unfair means ; the repair of the old and dilapidated buildings ; the infliction of corporal punishments and just fines ; never abandoning the honest, and giving employment and protection to respectable persons ; the keeping in reserve of what should be kept ; living in the company of intelligent persons ; always

[83] *Mbh.*, Bk. XII, Ch. LXVIII, 40.
[84] *Mbh.*, Ch. LXXII, 25 ; *Manu.*, Ch. VII, 14.
[85] *Mbh.*, Ch. LXIX, 79. [86] *Ibid.*, Ch. LXVIII, 59.
[87] *Ibid.*, Ch. LXVIII, 39 ; *Manu.*, Ch. VII, 14. [88] *Ibid.*, Ch. LXVII, 2.
[89] *Mbh.*, Udyoga Parva, Ch. CXLIX, 25, 30.
[90] *Ibid.*, Ch. CXLIX, 10–16 ; *Ram.*, Bk. II, Ch. II.
[91] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXIX, 4.
[92] *Mbh.*, Ādi Parva, Ch. CXLVII ; *Ram.*, Bk. II, Ch. II.
[93] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LVIII, 1–4 ; *Ram.*, Bk. I, Ch. XXXIV.

gratifying the soldiers ; supervision over the subjects ; steadiness in the transaction of business ; filling the treasury ; absence of blind confidence in the guards of the city ; constant readiness for action in consonance with Daṇḍanīti ; never disregarding an enemy ; and driving away the wicked."[94] These are all comprised within the Daṇḍanīti, that is the eternal vyavahara or usage, embodied in the Veda.[95] Hence atheism that is opposed to the Veda has to be exterminated[96] by Daṇḍanīti which is the only means of securing righteousness in society. That is why the king has to be the Dharmapravartaka as the *Arthaśāstra* maintained. The kings of foreigners loved to call themselves Devavrata and Dhārmika, as we have already observed. That is why the Pahlava king Śivaṣkanda Varman took the title of Dharma-Mahārājādhirāja.[97]

ROYAL GOVERNMENT

(*a*) *Ministry*

Now this Daṇḍanīti could be exercised to the best advantage if the king was assisted by ministers. Their number varied from eight[98] to more than thirty.[99] But this number had only a theoretical importance allowing wide divergence in practice. King Daśaratha had ten ministers.[100] King Yudhiṣṭhira had on the other hand seven ministers,[101] of whom five looked after the city, fortifications, merchants, agriculturists and civil and criminal justice.[102] The number of ministers must have depended upon the needs of the kingdom ; but certain it is that all kings had ministers and they played an important part in the government of the state.[103] That is why attempts were often made by enemies to corrupt the ministers.[104] But above perhaps these ministers and equal in dignity to the king himself was the priest, whose appointment brought prosperity to the king and his kingdom.[105] These ministers and officers

[94] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LVIII, 5–12.
[95] *Ibid.*, Ch. CXXI.
[96] *Mbh.*, Ādi Parva, Ch. CXLII, 59.
[97] Lüder's List, No. 1200.
[98] *Manu.*, vii, 54.
[99] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXXXV.
[100] *Ram.*, Bk. i, Canto vii.
[101] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. V, 22.
[102] *Ibid.*, Ch. V, 80.
[103] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, II, i, p. 77 ; *Ep. Ind.*, viii, No. 8.
[104] *Mbh.*, Ādi Parva, Ch. CCIII, 5–7.
[105] *Ibid.*, Ch. CLXXVI, 13.

possibly received cash salaries.[106] Manu sanctions the appointment of officers in charge of revenue, mining, manufacture and storehouses.[107] The foreign relations are to be entrusted to the ambassador,[108] and he along with the king and the commander-in-chief are thought to be the real props of the kingdom; for, the control of the subjects depended upon the army, and the treasury; the general administration on the king, and peace and war on the ambassador.[109] The king was the head of justice and had the highest appellate jurisdiction in the realm. But he often delegated his powers as the chief justice to an officer who happened to be a learned Brāhmaṇ.[110] It is not that these offices found mention in governmental theory. We have epigraphic evidence to testify to their actual existence. In the list of Lüders' inscriptions we have the mention of Mahāsenāpati,[111] Mahādaṇḍanāyaka[112] and treasurer,[113] who perhaps correspond to the similar officers of Manu mentioned above. All these bore the general designation of Amātyas, as is evident from the Nāsik cave inscription, Rudradāman's Junāgaḍh inscription and the Taxila Silver Scroll.

(*b*) *Army*

The administration of the army devolved upon a number of higher officials, whose head was the Mahāsenāpati or commander-in-chief noted above. These were generals and other superior officers,[114] possibly corresponding to the Senāpati, Gaulmikas, Ārakṣādhikritas of the inscription.[115] The army was most probably a standing army.[116] Payment of cash salaries to the chief officers of the army and of other departments was not unknown[117] though most of them seem to have actually received free holdings from the king.[118]

[106] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. V, 114. [107] *Manu.*, vii, 62.
[108] *Manu.*, vii, 63. [109] *Ibid.*, 65. [110] *Ibid.*, viii, 9.
[111] Lüders' List, Nos. 1124 & 1146. [112] *Ibid.*, No. 1328.
[113] *Ibid.*, Nos. 1141 & 1182 — Bhāṇḍāgārika & Gañjāvāra respectively.
[114] *Manu.*, Ch. VII, 189.
[115] Lüders' List, No. 1200; *Ep. Ind.*, xiv, p. 155.
[116] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. V, 47, 48; *Manu.*, vii, 114; & Lüders' List No. 1200.
[117] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, *Ibid.*, Ch. V, 114 & 115.
[118] Lüders' List, Nos. 1126 & 1200.

(c) *Other Executive Officers*

Manu[119] and the Mahābhārata,[120] appear to have two distinct types of royal officers — those who were employed as ministers of state — called Mantrins constantly moving round the king, and working as his private counsellors, and those who were in charge of actual administration called the Amātyas. These perhaps correspond to the Rahasyādhikṛta-Rājāmātya or Amātyas of the inscription.[121] With the former the king appeared in the public, attended all ceremonial functions and took counsel in secrecy about policies of government.[122] The latter were executive officers like governors, inspectors and supervisors, who inspected the affairs of the realm and the details of administration.[123] This distinction seems to correspond to that between the Mati Sacivas and the Karma Sacivas of the inscriptions,[124] the Mati Sacivas being the privy councillors or Mantrins, and the Karma Sacivas being the executive officers or Amātyas.[125]

(d) *Urban and Rural Administration*

Without breaking the continuity of the Mauryan and *Arthaśāstra* traditions, the administration seems to have been divided into two branches — (*i*) that of the city, (*ii*) that of the country. The canonical works speak separately of the rural[126] and urban[127] administration. According to Manu the king should "place a company of soldiers, commanded (by trustworthy officers) in the midst of two, three, five or hundreds of villages (to be) a protection of the kingdom." In addition he must appoint a lord over each village, as well as lords of ten, of twenty, of a hundred and of a thousand villages. "The lord of one village shall inform the lord of ten villages of the crimes committed in his village, and the ruler of ten to the ruler of twenty"

119 *Manu.*, Ch. VII, 55 & 81. 120 *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXXXIII.

121 Lüders' List, Nos. 1053, 1141, 1200.

122 *Manu.*, vii, 146 & 147 ; *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXXXIII, 47 et seq. Sabhā Parva, Ch. V, 85 & 86.

123 *Manu.*, vii, 80 & 81 ; *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. V, 80 ; Lüders' List, Nos. 1126, 1186.

124 Bomb. Gaz., I, i, 39. 125 Lüder's List, Nos. 1126 & 1186.

126 *Manu.*, vii, 114 et seq., *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. V, 80, 81 & 82.

127 *Manu.*, vii, 121 et seq., *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXXXVII, 3.

and so on. As regards the emoluments of these officers it has been prescribed that "the ruler of ten (villages) shall enjoy one Kula (as much land as suffices for one family), the ruler of twenty, five Kulas, the superintendent of a hundred villages (the revenues of) one village and the lord of a thousand (the revenues of) a town. The affairs of these (officials) which are connected with (their) villages and their separate business another minister of the king shall inspect."[128] The Mahābhārata prescribes a headman or Grāmika for each village, a superintendent for ten villages, and similar superior officers for twenty, hundred and thousand villages.[129] As regards the city Manu says that there should be a superintendent, who must "personally visit all these (other officials)" and "explore their behaviour through spies."[130] The Mahābhārata considers that of the five wise and brave men employed in the five chief offices, one must be for the city.[131] These theoretical details receive confirmation from epigraphic evidence again. That the village was the administrative unit, there is no doubt. The head of the village was called the Grāmika,[132] exactly the name which we have already found in the Mahābhārata. Other names like the Grāmaṇī[133] and Grāmabhojaka[134] were perhaps local variants of the same name. Similarly the officer in charge of the city was perhaps known as Nagarākṣadarśa.[135]

(*e*) *Revenue*

The legitimate sources of revenue are said to comprise a sixth part of the produce of the soil, fines and forfeitures collected from the offenders, and taxes levied on merchandise.[136] But the king could, when he needed money, raise it by any other methods, he pleased. He could replenish his treasury by taking wealth from all except the Brāhmaṇs.[137] The Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāman corroborates the canonical works when it mentions three sources of

[128] *Manu.*, Ch. VII, 114–120.
[129] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXXXVII, 3 et seq.
[130] *Manu.*, vii, 121 & 122.
[131] Sabhā ; v, 80.
[132] Mathurā Ins., Lüders' List, Nos. 48, 69 a.
[133] Lüder's List, No. 1333.
[134] *Ibid.*, No. 1200.
[135] Udaygiri Cave Inscription, Lüder's List, No. 1351.
[136] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXXI, 10 ; *Manu.*, vii, 130–137.
[137] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXXI, 10 ; *Manu.*, vii, 21.

revenue — the Bali, Śulka and Bhāga. There seem to have been large numbers of officials who were employed as accountants and clerks in the revenue department.[138] These latter perhaps corresponded to the Rāja-Lipikāras or Lekhakas of the inscription.[139] But by far the most important function was that of the spies. They were employed extensively, everywhere in the kingdom. They reported to the king the conduct of the officers in the interior, and of the women in the harem, the disposition of his friends and enemies and the activities of thieves and other miscreants.[140] This again seems to be an echo of the activities of Aśoka's officers. They are called in a Pallava inscription as Saṃcārāntakas[141] literally "moving Antakas or gods of death," which conveys the sense of dread they inspired in the minds of people.

(*f*) *Civil and Criminal Justice*

There are clear signs of the development and elaboration of the system of justice. Civil and criminal laws are now distinguished; the nature of deposition is defined; and the conduct and attainments of judges receive a great deal of care. Nevertheless, justice followed the lines of caste,[142] and thus vitiated the highest ideal of law, which consisted in its being absolutely impartial. The speciality of Indian law was not its impartiality, but sacredness. Hence none was above law; but at the same time all were not equal in the eyes of law. Punishment was determined by a number of factors, among which caste and rank were not negligible. Hence it was asserted that "neither a father, nor a teacher, nor a friend, nor a mother, nor a wife nor a son, nor a domestic priest must be left unpunished by a king, if they do not keep within their duty."[143] And the king far from being above law, had to be more severely punished if he deviated from his duty, for it is laid down that "where another common man would be fined one Kārṣāpaṇa the king shall be fined one thousand."[144] Intimately connected with the system of justice was the Daṇḍanīti which was equated with the

[138] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. V, 72.
[139] Lüders' List, Nos. 271, 1045, 1138, 1148, etc.
[140] *Manu.*, vii, 122, 153–154, 223; ix, 256, 261, 298.
[141] Lüder's List, No. 1200.
[142] *Manu.*, viii, 337 et seq.
[143] *Manu.*, viii, 335.
[144] *Ibid.*, 336.

common law. Now the common law comprised principles "drawn from local usages and from the Institutes of the sacred law." It fell into eighteen different heads, viz. (*i*) the non-payment of debts, (*ii*) deposit and pledge, (*iii*) sale without ownership, (*iv*) concerns among partners, (*v*) resumption of gifts, (*vi*) non-payment of wages, (*vii*) non-performance of agreements, (*viii*) rescission of sale and purchase, (*ix*) dispute between the owner and his servants, (*x*) disputes regarding boundaries, (*xi*) assault, (*xii*) defamation, (*xiii*) theft, (*xiv*) robbery and violence, (*xv*) adultery, (*xvi*) duties of man and wife, (*xvii*) partition of inheritance, (*xviii*) and gambling and betting.[145] The king personally adjudged all cases, and failing that, a judge appointed by the king and three assessors decided the cases, in consonance with the sacred law, and the laws of castes, of districts, of guilds, and of families.[146] Points of controversy were referred to an "assembly consisting either of at least ten or of at least three persons who follow their prescribed occupations," and whatever they decided was accepted as law.[147] Perhaps here again we have the echo of the *Arthaśāstra* which ruled that where the sacred law or Dharma and Nyāya were in conflict, the latter prevailed. And with perfect propriety, the Nyāya could mean the decision of a legal assembly such as the one projected by Manu. For the decision of the legal assembly must have followed the canons of justice. Elaborate rules regarding the qualifications of witnesses and their deposition have been also framed by Manu. All this points to the inference that law was tending to be more positive and less clerical in character.

LAW AND SOVEREIGNTY

In this connection we may discuss the source of law, and in the light of our discussion determine the nature of sovereignty. We have just referred to the character of law. It was tending to be less clerical — what primarily aimed at teaching the principles of the religious life, and only secondarily at taking account of the administration of civil and criminal justice, organization of defence, finances, trade and commerce, agriculture, law and order, etc. That is to say the secondary or the secular aspect of law was attracting more

[145] *Manu.*, viii, 4–7. [146] *Ibid.*, 41. [147] *Ibid.*, Ch. XII, 110.

attention. That is for the first time reflected in the *Arthaśāstra* and Manusmriti. But the *Arthaśāstra* is a treatise on the theory of organization of the state, while Manusmriti is a Dharmaśāstra, whose subject matter is law and duty, i.e. Dharma. In spite of that, one half of the Manusmriti has been devoted to the treatment of what we have called the secular law. This again is an indication of the increasing competence of the king; firstly because if the law was secular, it could be directly administered by the king; and secondly because the king could exercise his fullest initiative in making secular laws. Indeed the king could with greater propriety seek to make his authority supreme in this sphere of law. We have already discussed in the last chapter how the king's commands, that is, his decisions in endeavouring to co-ordinate Dharma, Caritra and Vyavahāra were a source of law. Manu maintained that the king must decide all civil and criminal cases "according to principles drawn from local usages and from the institutes of the sacred law."[148] But that apart, since he had to maintain the social order and make people conform to their moral and religious duties by means of Daṇḍanīti or law of punishment, a vast deal of initiative must have been also conceded to him. Though Manu, influenced by reviving Brāhmaṇism, prescribes a series of penances for minor and major offences, crimes or sins, which tended to diminish royal competence and broadened the scope of decentralization of justice, yet on account of his competence to decide all civil and criminal cases, his initiative in matters of law must have been real and effective. Thus in spite of the fact that Manu recognizes four sources of law, viz. the Veda, the institutes of law, the conduct of the good and self-satisfaction, the determination of what was Sadācāra or conduct of the good and self-satisfaction devolved upon the king, which made him the source of justice, and therefore, from a legal point of view, sovereign to an appreciable degree.

TRIBAL OLIGARCHIES

So far we have taken note of monarchical states. Now we pass on to study the government of the autonomous tribes, who may be best called tribal oligarchies. Such were the Yaudheya confederation in the southern portion of the Punjab, and the Ārjunāyanas in the

[148] *Ibid.*, Ch. VIII, 3.

regions where Bharatpur and Alwar states of Rajputana are now situated, the Udumbaras in the Gurdaspur district of the Punjab, the Kulutas in the Kulu valley of the Kangra district and the Kuṇindas in the Sutlej country.[149] Of their existence the coins issued by them are the only evidence, and they range over a period from the first century B.C. to the second century A.D. The Ārjunāyanas issued coins about the first century B.C. There were other states in Rajputana that struck coins with the bare legend "of the Rājanya country." And the coins of the Kulutas, Kuṇindas and Udumbaras could be dated at first or second century A.D. Perhaps all these peoples came under the general category of Gaṇas of whom a few more have been mentioned in the Mahābhārata. They are the Yādavas, the Kukuras, the Andhakas, the Vṛṣṇis and the Bhojas,[150] the Śibis, the Ambaṣṭhas, the Kṣudrakas and the Mālavas ;[151] and the Trigarttas.[152] Besides these many other tribes are also referred to, but of all these we have the coins of the Mālavas,[153] and the Śibis,[154] only — the latter living in Mādhyamikā or Chitor. There seems to have been a confederacy of these tribes like that of the Andhakas — the Vṛṣṇis and the Bhojas.[155] These facts point to the conclusion that there were self-governing tribes in spite of the rise and wreck of empires, and waves of invasions. "The most powerful among them were found very often ranged against their aggressive royal neighbours who were now mostly Scythian."[156] But though the Scythian invaders could not annihilate the independence of these tribes, yet it is just possible that their pressure forced the tribes to retire towards the western and southern fringes of Northern India. This fact perhaps finds its echo in the story of the exodus of the Vṛṣṇis from the region of Mathurā to the Dvārakā, as narrated by Kṛṣṇa.[157] Many of the republics of this period retained their power till the Gupta period.

[149] *C.H.I.*, p. 528–29. [150] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXXXI, 29.

[151] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. LII. [152] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. XXXII.

[153] Catalogue of coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta by Smith pp. 170–4 — The legends are — (*a*) Mālavānām jaya, (*b*) Mālava jaya, (*c*) Mālava Gaṇasya, etc.

[154] *Arch. Ins. Re.*, Vol. XIV, p. 146. The legend is Majhimikāya sivi janapadasa.

[155] *Mbh.*, Ādi., Ch. CCXX. [156] *Raichaudhuri, op. cit.*, p. 322.

[157] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, Ch. XIV, 48–56.

GOVERNMENT OF THE TRIBAL OLIGARCHIES

Regarding the government of the republican tribes, no adequate information is available. The Mahābhārata supplies some information as to how the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis conducted their affairs. We are told that they had a council hall which they called the Sudharmā where they assembled on important occasions and deliberated on the course of action.[158] There was a controller or secretary of the council, Sabhāpāla, who convened the meetings on suitable occasions. Every one was at liberty to express his opinion, and it was the wisdom and persuasiveness of the speaker that prevailed. Perhaps the opinion of the president — as Kṛṣṇa was at one time — was listened to with respect.[159] There were many chiefs or elders amongst them, (Gaṇa-Mukhyas) who had their followers,[160] and one of them (Akrura) was the commander-in-chief.[161] There were often parties and party-leaders, who contended for power, as was the case between Babhru Ugrasena and Kṛṣṇa on one occasion.[162] As regards the method of administration it is asserted that "valid legal procedures according to the Śāstras"[163] regular espionage, the pursuit of proper domestic and foreign policies, and a full treasury[164] should always be maintained. The administrative discipline should always be secured by appointment of brave, active and dutiful officers, i.e. Yuktas, who must always be obeyed.[165] The head or president of the Gaṇa was ordinarily charged with (the execution of) the policy of government decided upon by all the elders perhaps meeting in a council.[166] These elders were to be obeyed in the same way as the officers of government. On the whole the picture though it leaves much to be desired is one of a tribal oligarchy, and there does not appear any great improvement made upon what we saw of the tribal oligarchies in the Maurya period. They were by circumstances and aptitude incapable of making bold experiments in their constitution like the Greeks. They simply dragged on till

[158] *Mbh.*, Ādi Parva, Ch. CCXLIV. [159] *Ibid.*, Chs. CCXLIV & CCXLV.
[160] *Ibid.*, Chs. CCXXXIX & CCXLIII. [161] *Ibid.*, Ch. CCXLIV.
[162] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, Ch. LXXXI.
[163] Dharmiṣṭhān vyavahārāṃśca Sthāpayantaśca śāstrataḥ. Yathāvat pratipasyanto vivardhante gaṇottamāh. *Ibid.*, Śānti, Ch. CVII, 17.
[164] *Ibid.*, Śloka 19 — Cāramantra vidhāneṣu kośasannicayeṣu ca.
[165] *Ibid.*, Śloka 20. [166] *Ibid.*, Śl. 24 & 25.

one after another their political entity was completely wiped out centuries later.

NATURE OF STATE ORGANIZATION

In view of the existence of these tribal oligarchies and many small princedoms as integral parts of the empires of this period we have to say a few words regarding their mutual relation. In the Śuṅga empire there were kingdoms ruled by subordinate royal dynasties, like those of Ahichatra, Bhārhut, Mathurā, etc.[167] and perhaps tribal oligarchies like those of Malwa and Rajputana.[168] In the Vākāṭaka empire there were kingdoms under ruling dynasties like the Meghas of Kośala, the Nalas of Berar, etc. and tribal oligarchies like the Ābhiras and Puṣyamitras. The same thing could be said of the empire of Khāravela who had a number of Raṭhikas and Bhojakas, i.e. provincial and local chiefs.[169] This phenomenon, i.e. the co-existence of a paramount king and a number of vassal kings owing allegiance to him, has led scholars to think that the age was marked by a feudal tendency.[170] There seems to be an air of unreality about this analogy borrowed from medieval European history. The analogy seeks to travesty the truth about the political organization of this period. And the strongest objection to its acceptance arises from the nature of feudalism. Feudalism in medieval Europe was not merely a system of government; it was a system of social organization also. Land tenure which was the foundation of feudalism regulated not merely the political relations but also the social status of the people. Now to read these ideas in Indian conditions, where social status regulated by caste system took little account of land tenure, is to mis-interpret the facts.

Therefore what seems to have existed in India of this age was not a system that was very near feudalism, but one which we may better call an imperial system founded upon Digvijaya and diplomacy. Kauṭalya called such a system a Maṇḍala (Bk. vi. Ch. I), since it comprised a circle of tributary chiefs. That seems to be the most appropriate term to characterize ancient Indian empires. At the head of the Maṇḍala, which was also called Cakra,

[167] *C.H.I.*, pp. 523–25. [168] *Ibid.*, p. 528. [169] Lüder's List, No. 1345.
[170] Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, p. 223.

and which we may translate as tributary system, was the King-Paramount — Cakravartin, between whom and his tributary chiefs there was nothing like that moral obligation which subsisted between the Lord and the vassal in Europe, and which was founded upon the principle of "Commendation." Of this state of affairs, the Epics as well as the Inscriptions and coins have preserved a faithful picture. In the *Mahābhārata* we have frequent references to Digvijaya, and as a result of it, independent kings are conquered and converted into tributaries. The conqueror attains thus to paramountcy. On ceremonial occasions they were required to attend on the suzerain, and at the time of war they had possibly to render military services. Except for these limitations they were independent in their own kingdoms and ruled as sovereigns. There was no other check on the tributary chiefs to keep them submissive to their paramount lord. Hardly any attempt was made to reduce their strength. There was no control of their foreign policy. Indeed the difference between paramountcy and vassalage was very little, dependent upon the single accident of victory of the one over the other. Hence the erstwhile Sāmanta or tributary might become the lord paramount, if by a clever combination of power and diplomacy he makes a Digvijaya, i.e. conquest of the quarters or of countries. In fact this Digvijaya was the highest political distinction that a king could achieve and it was this which made a king tributary or paramount. Hence it was not that "a sort of feudalism seems to have become the order of the day,"[171] but it was a tendency to attain to paramountcy which was the order of the day; and that was a natural concomitant of a state of political unrest. The Mahābhārata has preserved the picture of several Digvijayas, viz. of Pāndu,[172] of Jarāsandha,[173] of Arjuna[174], etc.

As regards the treatment that was accorded to the Sāmanta or tributary by the conqueror, the theory propounded by Jarāsandha is that "the duty of a Kṣatriya is to bring others under his sway by displaying his own prowess, and then to treat them in the way he likes."[175] Hence it is that he had collected all the conquered kings to sacrifice them to Rudra. When Yudhiṣṭhira celebrated the Rājasūya

[171] Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India.*
[172] *Mbh.*, Ādi Parva, cxii.
[173] *Mbh.*, Sabhā Parva, xiv.
[174] *Ibid.*, xxvi-xxx.
[175] *Ibid.*, xxii-28.

sacrifice as the symbol of his paramountcy, kings conquered from all quarters came to pay their respect by offering presents.[176] A similar Digvijaya is recorded to have been undertaken by Khāravela, who in his inscription recounts the victories that he had won over the kings of the South and the North.[177] How little was the difference between paramountcy and vassalage is illustrated by the rise of the Āndhras who certainly were tributary to Aśoka, and after his death rose to paramountcy within a very short time. Puṣyamitra Śuṅga also indulged in this ambition of Digvijaya, and performed as a symbol of paramountcy the Aśvamedha sacrifice. The Āndhra Śātavāhanas also claimed to have attained to similar distinction, by performing Aśvamedha sacrifices at least twice besides other sacrifices.[178] But the truth about these Digvijayas, which are really a challenge to the prevalent political power, seems to be that "they appear not to have been pursued beyond the limit of safety."[179]

Now the inscriptions and the coins give us an idea of the Sāmantas, for example of the Śuṅga kings. Dhanabhuti Vachiputra, i.e. the son of a Vatsa princess,[180] who was a ruler of the local dynasty of Bhārhut, the kings of Kauśāmbi (the capital of Vatsa) and of Ahichatra (Northern capital of the Pāñcālas) acknowledged the suzerainty of the Śuṅgas.[181] The rulers of Mathurā were also the tributaries of the Śuṅgas, and it is difficult to assert whether Kosala, Videha, Kāśī, and Magadha owed allegiance to the Śuṅgas or not, for the paucity of epigraphic and numismatic evidence. The Śātavāhanas of the South and Khāravela of Kalinga proudly mention that they had their tributaries. Of the foreigners, the Yavana or Greek kings of India, viz. the successors of Demetrius, Apollodotus and Menander did not rule for a long period nor over an extensive dominion so that they do not seem to have many tributaries. The Scythians, the Parthians and the Kuṣāṇas on the other hand have left undoubted evidence of their vast dominions and tributary system of state-organization. The Scythian Azes I and Azilises

[176] *Ibid.*, Ch. LI & LII. [177] Lüder's list, No. 1345.

[178] Nānāghāṭ Inscription No. 1112 ; *Indian Antiquary*, XLVI II, p. 77 ; R. G. Bhaṅdarkar in the *J.B.B.R.A.S.*, XIII, p. 311.

[179] *C.H.I.*, p. 536.

[180] His name occurs in an inscription (No. 687) on one of the two gateways of Bhārhut, dated "in the sovereignty of the Śuṅgas."

[181] *C.H.I.*, pp. 524–525.

bore the imperial title of "great king of kings." The Parthian Vonones also bore the same imperial title of "great king of kings."[182] Under Maues we have two types of Governors, viz. Satraps or Kṣatrapas and great Satraps or Mahākṣatrapas.[183] The Sui Bihar copper plate contains "great king, supreme king of kings,"[184] as attributed to Kaniṣka. All these certainly signify that there was a tributary system prevalent throughout India, and that the allegiance of these Sāmantas to the Suzerain was an unknown quantity.[185] But apart from this fact, a new element seems to have been introduced by the foreigners into this system. That was the gradation of the members who formed this system into different categories like the Kṣatrapa and Mahākṣatrapas, or like the king, the great king, and the great king supreme king of kings. This points to the inference that there was possibly a hierarchy of tributaries. This element of hierarchy seems to have been a contribution of these foreigners to the Indian political system. Before them we do not find such a gradation. Neither Kauṭalya nor Manu, nor the Epics did so far as make a passing reference to it. The only reference of Indian literature is to the gradation of kings into the vassal and the paramount lord or in the term of the *Arthaśāstra* cycle — the conqueror and to be conquered. It is only during and after this epoch that a gradation of conquered or Sāmanta chiefs is referred to.

To sum up therefore the epoch witnessed a revival of Brāhmaṇism and this revival was of a conservative character. Since it met with a rebuff from religions like Buddhism and Jainism, religious differences were accentuated. Religious antagonism affected the activities of the states, which had arisen in the period after the break-up of the Mauryan empire, and as a result of the invasion of foreigners. The predominance of local interests which was evidenced in the rise of numerous principalities inaugurated an era of conflict in inter-state relations. The conflict between the country powers and these foreigners, became acute, since the latter were opposed, and the former were allied to Brāhmaṇism and its social system. That is to say there was a conjunction of the interests of religion and the state. The power of the state had to be centralized in the king in

[182] *C.H.I.*, pp. 572–575.

[183] Taxila Copper plate and Lion capital of Mathurā ; *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 29 et seq.

[184] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[185] *C.H.I.*, p. 580.

order that it might be wielded in a more effective manner for the protection of religion and social order. This tendency resulted in the apotheosis of kingship. The king became a god in human form. This tendency derived support from the political practice of the foreigners ; and ultimately appeared as the divine right of kings. And this divine right of kings, the rise of petty kingdoms and the mutual conflict between them which assumed the form of Digvijaya — conquest of quarters favoured the growth of a tributary or Maṇḍala system, which consisted in the existence of a paramount Lord who imposed his suzerainty by force of arms and a number of less powerful and conquered chiefs. Such systems rose and fell under different dynasties in different parts of India. The evolution of divine right of the king, and of the Maṇḍala, that is, tributary system dependent upon a nominal vassalage of the chiefs to the lord paramount were the two features of the epoch. To this there was a third one added ; that was the existence of the tribal oligarchies. The prestige that the state as an organization now acquired, was manifest through the person of the king. For, the king came to be regarded as the supporter of the social orders and morals, and as the wielder of the law of punishment. He became, in other words, the lord of the kingdom and the defender of the faith. He was the fountain of justice. The ruling of the Dharmaśāstra was the only limitation to his legal sovereignty. But nevertheless his sovereignty was real and effective inasmuch as he was the wielder of the law of punishment, the Dharmapravartaka, the maker of the age and a god in human form whose commands were not to be transgressed.

CHAPTER VII

SOVEREIGNTY OF THE KING

(A.D. 300 — A.D. 700)

A PERIOD OF SOCIAL REJUVENATION AND PROGRESS

IT is with a sense of great relief that one passes from "the unsettled and hotly disputed" history of the foreign dynasties to the comparatively serene atmosphere of the Gupta period." And the Gupta period could be taken "in a wide sense as extending from A.D. 320 or in round numbers from A.D. 300 to A.D. 647 or the middle of the seventh century." This period of about three hundred and fifty years forms a land-mark in Indian history in many ways. The first half of it (A.D. 320-480) is known as the "golden age of the Guptas."[1] The establishment of an empire in consequence of the extensive conquests of the powerful Guptas, the "gradual changes in religion, effected without persecution," the growth of literature, art and science to a very high pitch, the mild and yet efficient administration, and the generally prosperous condition of the people justify the claim that it was an exceptionally glorious epoch of ancient India. The second half of this period, however, is not equally glorious, though towards the end of it, the radiance of Harṣa's empire becomes reminiscent of the Gupta glory. But that is off-set by the troubles and turmoils of foreign invasion and wreck of the Gupta empire that preceded it. The inrush of the Huns created disturbances that shook the whole structure of the empire and it gradually fell to pieces. Out of its ruins rose smaller kingdoms and these again lapsed into a state of warfare in which even the strongest could not feel secure. It was out of such elements that Harṣa built up his empire, which had too brief a career to leave any lasting impress as a political force on the country. But it was Harṣa who completely subjugated the Huns, and their political subjugation was only a prelude to their total absorption in Brāhmaṇic society. Of course it is well known that the Huns did not bring with them an

[1] Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 147.

organized religion and social system, and that hastened the process of their absorption. But nevertheless, the fact that the caste-ridden Brāhmaṇic society could absorb the foreign barbarians is proof positive that it was still a living organism. Indeed their absorption rejuvenated the society by infusion of fresh blood. It can be safely said that many of them were included in the ancient warrior caste the Kṣatriyas, and many others in the lower classes. But there is no proof for the assertion that "the upper ranks of the invading hordes of Huns, Gurjaras, Maitrakas and the rest became Rajput clans, while the lower developed into Hindu castes of less honourable social status such as Gujars, Ahirs, Jats and others."[2] The statement assumes that the Rajputs owe their origin to these invaders — a statement which has been ably refuted by Rai Bahadur G. S. Ojah in his *History of Rajputana*. Nevertheless the fact that they infused new vigour into society is realized when we remember that the history of Northern India in the subsequent periods is full of the glory and valour of the Rajputs. On the whole the period was one of many sided progress. There was progress in art, literature and science ; there was extensive trade and commerce, and intercourse with foreign countries ; and there was development in the nature and form of the state.

TRACE OF PAST DECAY AND RELATIVE POSITION OF RELIGIONS

This progress of society appears dazzling against the traces of decay which political anarchy and religious antagonism of the last epoch had left in the country. Many a flourishing locality had gone to wreck and ruin. Religion had tended to be regional. Social intercourse was not very happy. Fahien and Hiuentsang give us a general impression of this kind ; that is to say, what they note in the fifth and sixth centuries, speaks volumes of the conditions that might have had their roots far back in the past. We are told by Fahien that all the country to the north and west of the middle kingdom, i.e. Gangetic valley beginning with Delhi and Mathura had Buddhism as the dominant religion. But for the first time at Mathura Fahien noted that there were only 3,000 Buddhist priests, as against "10,000 and more" non-Buddhist priests. But the relieving feature for the pious pilgrim was that even here "the law of Buddha is in

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

a reviving condition. All the kingdoms beyond the sandy deserts are spoken of as belonging to Western India. The kings of all these countries firmly believe in the law of Buddha."[3] Even in the middle country where Brāhmaṇism predominated Fahien thought that the people followed the tenets of Buddhism, for they "kill no living creature, nor do they drink intoxicating liquors. And, with the exception of the Caṇḍālas, they eat neither garlic nor onions."[4] This habit of the people was due, obviously to the rise of Vaiṣṇavism which as we have observed before embodied a religious synthesis inasmuch as it took over the outstanding traits of Buddhism and Brāhmaṇism, and wove them into a new cult of liberal and progressive type. Nevertheless we are told that "untouchability" was gaining ground. There were Caṇḍālas who ate onion and garlic, and lived "apart from others. If such a man enters a town or market place he strikes a piece of wood, in order to keep himself separate; people, hearing this sound, know what it means and avoid touching him or brushing against him."[5] In Kāśī Fahien noted that many Buddhist towers were in ruins.[6] Srāvasti once the flourishing capital of Kosala had "very few inhabitants — altogether perhaps about two hundred families."[7] Many of its Buddhistic towers "the unbelieving Brāhmaṇas, entertaining a jealous feeling desired to destroy"[8] but Fahien says, they could not owing to divine intervention. Going further up he found that in the city of Kapilavāstu "there is no government or people, it is just desert. There is simply a congregation of priests and about ten families of lay people."[9] About Rajagriha he remarks that the ruins of the former Buddhistic buildings only exist. "Within the city all is desolate, and without inhabitants."[10] Gaya near which the Sakya Muni became the Buddha, was also in ruins." All within city likewise is desolate and desert."[11] It is only when he came to Tāmralipti that he was delighted to note that in the country "the law of Buddha is generally respected."[12] The picture of the country that Fahien gives us though not without discrepancies, is sufficient to suggest that Buddhism was decaying in the middle country, i.e. from the Sutlej to Tāmralipti, while it flourished further north and west. In the last chapter

[3] Beal, *Travels of Fahien and Sung Yun*, pp. 53–54.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 55. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 55. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 72. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 75. [9] Beal, *op. cit.*, p. 85. [10] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 120. [12] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

we have made the same observation, on the assumption that the rise of Vaiṣṇavism was perhaps its chief cause. The evidence of the inscriptions and the observations of Hiuentsang point to the same conclusion. The inscriptions of this age record that the Guptas were Paramabhāgavatāḥ that is devout Vaiṣṇavites, and most of them record devotion either in honour of Viṣṇu or Śiva. Hiuentsang noted that in the Gandhara country "the majority adhered to other systems of religion, a few being Buddhists."[13] The Buddhist monasteries, above 1000 in number were in ruins.[14] Though Buddhism "was in high esteem" in the country of Udyāna it had decayed in Taxila.[15] Even in Kāśmer it is said a political or dynastic revolution had resulted in the change of religion. "The country had no faith in Buddhism and gave itself up to other sects."[16] In Mathura while there were only "ten Buddhist monasteries" there were "some hundreds of Deva temples."[17] At Jalandhara he mentions there were "more than 500 professed non-Buddhists of Pāśupata sect."[18] In Prayāga and Kośāmbī again the non-Buddhists were very numerous.[19] Almost everywhere in the east Buddhism was decaying. In these regions people of various sects lived. Regarding Kalinga the traveller remarks here "the various sects were numerous, the majority being Nirgranthas."[20] The Nirgranthas were the Jains. The general impression is that Buddhism was receding further and further north, Hinduism or Vaiṣṇavism gaining ground and Jainism perhaps was a nonentity. Such was the relative position of the several creeds in India.

PROGRESSIVE OUTLOOK AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

But the orthodoxy and pettiness that characterized the life of the previous age and engendered an alliance between religion and the state, tended to disappear and there developed instead an outlook that was progressive and secular. That was heralded by the rise of the Gupta empire. Fully conscious of its own strength it manifested its progressive and secular nature by proclaiming a policy of religious tolerance to all. It was the clearest indication of the state refusing to treat any one of the several creeds of the country with special

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 199. [14] *Ibid.*, p. 202. [15] *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 240.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 279. [17] *Ibid.*, p. 286. [18] *Ibid.*, p. 296.
[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 361–66. [20] Beal, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 198.

favour. We have seen how there had arisen a state of affairs in the time of the Mauryas that approximated to religious intolerance. This had precipitated a bitter reaction subsequently which took the form of mutual antagonism between Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism. Into this antagonism of creeds the rulers and their governments had thrown their energy and resources. The king appeared in the role of a religious partisan. But the Guptas and later on Harṣa besides many other less notable kings refused to do so, that is, refused to be swayed by their religious leanings. They attempted to treat all the creeds on a footing of equality and succeeded in doing so. In a way this attitude of the rulers stressed the dignity of the state. Instead of being influenced by religion, as in the previous age it dictated its own terms to religion and therein lay the glory and greatness of this epoch.

NATURE OF GUPTA IMPERIALISM

Of course the preceding age had not failed to contribute to this end. For one thing the community of political and religious interests had imparted a unity of control to the king without exalting religion too much. That had helped the growth of royal dignity and power, so that the king, as we have already seen came to be regarded as an incarnation of God on earth. However great or small be his kingdom, it made no difference in the matter of personal dignity of the king, who ruled, by right divine. With this background, with the political scene thus set in favour of the royal power, the Guptas started their Digvijaya, i.e. the conquest of the quarters. And when the Digvijaya had been accomplished and an efficient government established, power that was invincible was wedded to the right that was divine. Such is the nature of Gupta imperialism.

But with all these the Guptas were shrewd kings. It was their practical commonsense which introduced that salutary change in the administrative policy, which gave a new turn to the political development. Even Aśoka from his high pedestal of imperial throne could not look upon the affairs of the state without a display of personal prejudice. His policy of government, his attitude towards religion were coloured by his deep Buddhistic beliefs. But the Guptas were above religious bias. With the eye of statesman they saw that in order to rule over an empire in which people of various religions

lived they have to be above religious bias. For if they were biased in favour of Brāhmaṇism against Jainism, Buddhism, Vaiṣṇavism or Śaivism, or any one of these against the rest there would be a repetition of what had happened during and after the time of Aśoka. They knew that the revival of militant Brāhmaṇism was only an inevitable outcome of Aśoka's religious bias for Buddhism. Hence it is a conspicuous fact of this period that the rulers assumed an attitude of absolute religious detachment, that was at once generous and secular.

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND THE SPIRIT OF LAW

This policy helped the kings to centralize power by eliminating the causes of religious discontent. But to carry out this policy was not as easy as it has been supposed to be. It has been argued that religious tolerance in ancient India was not such a great necessity as in other countries we know of, because of the affinity that existed between Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. But its importance could be proved by a reference to the result that Aśoka's sweeping condemnation of the useless rituals and his enforcement of the creed of Ahiṃsā produced upon a people many of whom adhered to a ritualistic religion and animal sacrifices. But the case of Aśoka apart, there were bound to arise difficulties in actual administration in any state of ancient India when religious intolerance was the rule. For example in an age when kings were called upon to administer law and justice according to the prescriptions of the Dharma Sūtras and Dharma Śāstras, that were both by content and character saturated with orthodox Brāhmaṇical ideas, what would be the position of a Buddhist or Jain in a court of law? To take a concrete case, Viṣṇu says that "he, who denies the sacred knowledge, the country or the caste (of such) or, who says that his religious duties have not been fulfilled by him shall be fined 200 Paṇas."[21] Now if the kings adhered to this law then the Buddhists and Jains would be in an embarrassing situation. They deny the sacred knowledge, the Veda, and also the caste, which upholds the principle of birth and not merit. The very principle of the Hindu legal system has made no provision for adherents of religions, other than Hinduism. It is well-known that "according to Hindu law-givers if there is

[21] Viṣṇu Smṛiti, tr. Jolly in *S.B.E.*, Vol. II, v. 26.

any conflict between the Śruti and the Smṛiti, the former is to prevail."[22] Further Gautama held that "laws of countries, castes, and families not opposed to the sacred texts have authority."[23] Manu said "that the kingdom where Śūdras are very numerous which is infested by atheists and destitute of twice-born, soon entirely perishes." Regarding law he maintained that "what may have been practised by the virtuous, by such twice-born men as are devoted to the law, that he (king) shall establish as law if it be not opposed to the (customs of) countries, families and castes (jāti)."[24] How far such ideas of law could commend themselves to the Buddhists and Jains, is not very difficult to see. Buddhism and Jainism started with the ideal of rejecting the authority of the Veda and the leadership of the Brāhmaṇs. And nothing could have been more unpleasant to Buddhists and Jains, than to be ruled by laws that embodied the Hindu ideals of the authority of the Veda, the superiority of the Brāhmaṇ, and the sanctity of sacrifical ritual. Of course instances culled from the law codes could be easily multiplied but it is sufficient to say that the very principle of Hindu law was opposed to the religious susceptibilities of the Jains and Buddhists. Hence it is that the need for religious toleration was very great; for it is only a spirit of toleration of the king and government that would relax prescription of the law in extenuating circumstances, without impairing the authority of the law. Now it was here that religious tolerance affected the administration. But how far even the Guptas could take law that spoke with the authority of religion, and the Veda, into their own hands, is the crux of the question. It can be safely asserted that even with all their power they would have failed to stretch the spirit and prescriptions of the orthodox Hindu law, had not the law itself been changing in content and character.

CONTENT AND CHARACTER OF LAW

As it was realized that social welfare was unthinkable if the king adopted a policy of religious partisanship and religious intolerance, there arose the tendency that the law, the king administered, must be divested of its religious elements. That is seen when we compare

[22] Rai Bahadur S. Basu in his Introduction to *Yājñavalkya.*
[23] xi, 20. [24] *Manu.*, viii, 22 & 46.

the content and character of the law codes composed in this age with those composed before this age. Of course it is well known the former along with Manu go by the name of Dharmaśāstras while the latter by the name of Dharmaśūtras and there seems to be a marked difference between them. It is true that in Manu for the first time we have what may be called the instances of positive law or Vyavahāra, and Nārada and Yājñavalkya gave a more elaborate treatment of the subject. But that apart, the difference between the Dharmasūtra and Dharmaśāstra has been stated thus : "whereas in the Sūtra the term Dharma embraces all domestic duties, religious, ethical with slight attention paid to formal law, in the completed Śāstra, law itself is the sole object discussed."[25] This distinction, which became more and more pronounced with the passage of time, signified a "formal distinction between a prose sūtra and a metrical law-book," and "the gradual exclusion of the irrelevant matter in the law-book."[26] That is to say it consisted in a distinctive literary form and treatment. But what does this distinctive treatment that is, "exclusion of irrelevant matter in the law-book" signify? Why in the Dharmaśāstra period was there the "exclusion of irrelevant matter"? or this discrimination between relevant and irrelevant matter? It becomes clear when we know what this irrelevant matter was in the Dharma Sūtras and what the relevant matter in the Dharma Śāstras. The irrelevant matter comprised "all domestic duties, religious and ethical," which were separated from the relevant matter, viz. "formal law." That is to say while the Dharma Sūtras were religious and ethical in character, the Śāstras were increasingly secular. For, the formal law, the subject-matter of the Dharma Śāstras, consisted in "that part of the Dharma or right which is included under the head Royalty and Vyavahāra. The latter term means law in the modern sense, business intercourse legally interpreted, legal procedure."[27] Now that makes the distinction clear. The distinction was a fundamental one. And from what does this distinction arise — the distinction that the Sūtras were religious and ethical, while the Śāstras were legal in the modern sense or secular? Does it arise from a consideration of mere convenience in treatment, or from change in the social angle of vision? If the legal systems or Dharma Sūtras and Śāstras of India were merely of

[25] *C.H.I.*, p. 277. [26] *Ibid.* [27] *C.H.I.*, p. 281.

academic interest and were not related to life, then the first alternative would hold good. But the Dharma Śāstras were the embodiment as well as the product of the actual needs, of actual tendencies of a living society. So only a change in the angle of vision of that society must be the cause of this distinction between the nature and content of the Dharma Sūtras and of Dharma Śāstras. The point could be further elucidated by a reference to the content of law.

Prof. Hopkins writes that "there is no formal distinction between civil and criminal law till the term Vyavahāra is divided by later writers between cases of property and cases of hurt. The first enumeration of legal titles is found in Manu" and we have eighteen such titles. These comprise criminal and civil law. They "are remarkable as the first attempt to separate different cases; to demand that Manu should have given us a perfect or even a perfectly clear list is unreasonable. The titles and the arrangement of Manu are followed by later writers though with subdivisions." Bṛhaspati for example gives eighteen titles and adds that each one of them could be further divided according to the diversity of lawsuits. "Other writers give the chief crimes (killing a woman, mixture of caste, adultery, robbery, causing illegitimate birth, abuse, insult, assault, procuring abortion) headed by disobedience to king's commands. It is only later writers who assert that a lawsuit cannot be instituted mutually between father and son, or man and wife, or master and servant."[28] Discussing the criminal law in the Sūtras and in the Śāstras he says "in the Sūtras the thief is brought before the king and punished by him, and theft is the chief crime mentioned in the Vedas (more particularly theft of cattle or robbery)." According to Bṛhaspati theft is "one of the kinds of violence of which there are four — homicide, theft, assault on another man's wife, and injury (either abuse or assault)." As for the ordeal the Sūtras do not notice them except as divine proofs as Āpastamba called it. Manu recognizes only two kinds, viz. fire and water while the later authors add several more. Nārada and Yājñavalkya describe five ordeals, viz. plough-share, scales and poison, besides the two of Manu. It may be interesting to note in this connection that while Yuan Chwang was travelling in India he noted four kinds of ordeals in vogue. "These are by water, by fire, by weighing and

[28] *Narada Smṛiti*, S.B.E., Vol. XXXIII, 1, 6.

by poison."[29] His description of each agrees with that of Nārada and Yājñavalkya; and this proves the influence that these codes had in the country and the intimate touch they had with life. Bṛhaṣpati prescribes nine, these five and four others namely sacred libation, grains of rice, hot gold piece, and the ordeal by Dharma and Adharma. Proceeding further Prof. Hopkins says that "in the province of civil law the later law-books show the greatest advance over the earlier," and he gives a number of instances from the Sūtras, Manu, Nārada, Bṛhaṣpati and Yājñavalkya. For example the Sūtra knew nothing of equal partnership in matters of trade, except as it concerned a joint family and its obligations as a whole to pay debts. Manu's conception of partnership revolves round the partnership in priestly functions. Yājñavalkya on the other hand includes agriculture and trade in his treatment of partnership. And Nārada while treating of priestly partnerships, is not blind to partnerships in other matters of business like storage, food, tolls, loss, etc. Similarly Bṛhaṣpati speaks of partnership in building a house, or a temple, digging a pool or making leather articles. The force of our argument is best brought out when Prof. Hopkins asserts that Nārada who flourished in the fifth century A.D. "is the first to give us a legal code unhampered by the mass of religious and moral teaching with which or out of which the earlier works of Dharma arose, a code which in its fine subdivisions of the titles of law, as well as in its elaborate treatment of slaves, inheritance, witnesses, ordeals, etc. is the first in which law itself is the subject matter."[30] In short the law was becoming secular. And it was this secular law which could meet the demands of all sects and creeds for justice. So long as law remained clerical in content and character it could not be impartial towards all religions. When this was realized by society it naturally favoured the exclusion of religious and ethical elements from what was secular in law. But even this was not adequate to ensure justice to all sections of people. For often this secular law was not free from caste discrimination. For example Nārada brings in caste discrimination in matters of evidence and punishment; while Bṛhaṣpati in matters of defamation and adultery. But that was neutralised by the definite ruling of Nārada that the

[29] Watters' *Yuan Chwang*, edited by Rhys Davids and Bushell, 1904, Vol. I, p. 172.

[30] *C.H.I.*, p. 280.

laws of the heretics, the outcastes as also of commercial corporations had to be respected by the king. Similarly Bṛhaspati ruled that families, religious orders, merchants, money-lenders, etc. should settle their own disputes by their own laws. This regard for the laws and customs of social groups, and of administrative areas sought to promise justice and accommodation to all. It was this social attitude to accommodate all sections and orders of society which made possible and effective that attitude of the state, or of the king, which was expressed by the policy of religious tolerance.

IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

It has been assumed in this discussion that law mirrors the attitudes of government and society. To accept that, is to accept that without a system of law which seeks to rise above religious discriminations and takes its stand on equity, a policy of religious tolerance would be an empty show. Hence the implications of the policy of religious tolerance were far-reaching. It did not merely give a secular tone to the state, it was the technique that the state adopted to secure that social good which, it had realized, was incompatible with religious partisanship and persecution. The adoption of this technique obviously involved the exercise of state that is, royal control, in a negative manner over religion. The negative aspect of the control consisted in the state refusing to be swayed by any sectarian or religious considerations and thereby treating all religions on equal footing.

HISTORICAL SURVEY

Now let us pass on to a brief historical survey of the period. The period opened with the foundation of the Gupta empire or as it has been said "the second Magadhan empire." The second Magadhan empire was founded by Mahārājādhirāja Candra Gupta I, the son of Mahārāja Ghatotkaca, who was the son of Mahārāja Gupta. Perhaps the chief event leading to the foundation of this empire was the marriage of Candra Gupta with the Licchavi princess Kumāra Devi. This marriage contributed to increase the power of Candra Gupta. Starting with the nucleus of a kingdom that comprised a portion of Magadha he extended it to include Oudh

as well as Magadha. There is some controversy about the extent of his heritage. It has been suggested that "traces of Gupta rule in Magadha are found as early as the second century A.D." and that there are numerous epigraphic references to these elsewhere.[31] Dr. Smith suggested that Pāṭaliputra was in the possession of the Licchavis[32] while Allan thinks that it was in the hands of Śri Gupta the grand-father of Candra Gupta, and the latter inherited it from him.[33] The Vāyu Purāṇa is silent on this point and so are Samudra Gupta's inscriptions. Candra Gupta ruled over a territory which perhaps extended from Prayāga to Pāṭaliputra[34] for about ten years, and was succeeded by his son Samudra Gupta, who reigned for about forty to fifty years, and was one of the most remarkable and accomplished kings recorded in history. Jaiswal thinks that Candra Gupta was ousted from Magadha and died in exile. From A.D. 340 to 344 is the period of expulsion.

It was Samudra Gupta who retrieved the fortunes of his dynasty.[35] At any rate his conquests were extensive. He overran both Northern India and the Deccan, and partly by annexations and partly by the imposition of his supremacy he controlled an empire that stretched as far north as the base of the Himālayas but did not include Kaśmere, and as far east as the Brahmaputra. "The Jumna and the Chambal rivers marked the western limit of the territories directly under the imperial government but various tribal states in the Punjab and Malwa, occupied by the Yaudheyas, Mālavas and other nations enjoyed autonomy under the protection of the paramount power. Tribute was paid and homage rendered by the rulers of five frontier kingdoms namely Samatata or the delta of the Brahmaputra; Davāka, perhaps eastern Bengal; Kāmarupa roughly equivalent to Assam; Kartripura, probably represented by Kumaon and Garhwal; and Nepal; he received respectful service from the foreign princes of the North-West, whom he grouped together as

[31] Raichaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 359–60.

[32] *Oxford History of India*, p. 148.

[33] Catalogue of Coins, *Gupta Dynasties*, by John Allan, pp. xv, xvi.

[34] Anugangāprayāgaṃ māgadha-Guptāśca bhokṣyanti (Viṣṇu Pur., trans. by Wilson (1840), p. 479, note 70) Anugangāprayāgaṃ ca sāketaṃ magadhānstathā; Etān janapadān sarvan bhokṣyante Guptavaṃśajā (Vāyu, *Ibid.*).

[35] *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. XIX, pp. i–ii; pp. 117–19. Jaiswal relies on a drama called Kaumudi Mohatsava for this information.

Śaka chiefs and even from the Simhales."[36] No wonder that he loved to speak of himself as Sarvarājocchettā, the uprooter of all kings as he has been called in the Allahabad inscription. Starting, it is said, with the extermination of the kings of Aryavarta like Rudra Deva, Matila, Nāgadatta, Candra Varman, Gaṇapati Nāga, Nāgasena, Acyuta, Nandi, Balavarman and many others, he captured and then liberated kings like Mahendra of Kosala, Vyāghrarāja of Mahākāntāra, Mantarāja of Kerala, Mahendra of Piṣṭapura, Svāmidatta of Koṭṭura on the hill, Damana of Erandapalla, Viṣṇu Gopa of Kāñci, Nilarāja of Avimukta, Hasti Varman of Vengi, Ugrasena of Palakka, Kubera of Devarāṣṭra, Dhanañjaya of Kuṣṭhalapura and others, of the Deccan.[37] These wide conquests have won for him the deserving appellation of "Indian Napoleon."

This vast empire was bequeathed to his son Candra Gupta II after his death. The son proved worthy of his father and crowned his career of conquest by completely subjugating and annexing the dominion of the great Satrap of Ujjain Rudra Simha. But after the conquest and annexation, Candra Gupta's shrewd diplomacy ensured the possession of these newly conquered provinces for his posterity. He cemented a diplomatic alliance with the great Vākāṭaka king Rudrasena II, by giving his daughter in marriage to him. That was because the "Vākāṭaka Mahārāja occupied a geographical position in which he could be of much service or disservice to the Northern invader of the dominions of the Śaka Satraps of Gujerat and Surāṣṭra."[38] He added to the empire Malwa, Gujerat, Surāṣṭra or Kathiawar, and pushed his frontier up to the Western sea. That was momentous in many ways. There were many important ports like Bharoch, Sopara, Cambay and others which carried on a rich trade and thereby added to the resources of the kingdom. Ujjain became the centre of the empire, and to it naturally converged all the trade-routes, emanating from the great Western sea ports. These increased in political importance, and it perhaps became the second capital about this time.

Candra Gupta II ruled with great prosperity, and his reign is supposed to have recorded the inimitable compositions of Kālidasa who lived well into the reign of Kumāra Gupta his son and successor. Kumāra Gupta ascended the throne in A.D. 415. It was during his

[36] *Oxford History of India*, p. 149.
[37] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. i.
[38] *J.R.A.S.*, 1914, p. 324.

reign that the glory of the Guptas suffered a temporary eclipse at the hands of a people called the Puṣyamitras. There has raged a controversy round the identity of these Puṣyamitras,[39] but whoever they be, it is certain that the fallen fortunes of the Gupta dynasty were revived by prince Skanda Gupta. This must have happened towards the close of Kumāra's reign and continued after his death. The credit of having revived the decaying glory of the Guptas, goes entirely to Skanda Gupta.[40] Nevertheless this was but the beginning of that disaster which almost destroyed their empire. The Bhitari inscription clearly mentions the Puṣyamitras and Huṇas as the enemies, who came from outside. Junāgadh inscription speaks of the Mlecchas in the category of foreign enemies. But Skanda Gupta successfully drove out all the invaders, and had a peaceful reign towards the end of his days. He died in A.D. 467, and with his death departed the glory of his dynasty. For after his death fresh waves of invaders arrived and shattered the fabric of the Gupta empire. The dynasty continued to rule diminished dominions with reduced power for several generations. Then another period of confusion and gloom followed. The Huns burst into India with a terrific force. By the close of the fifth century A.D. 496 the Gupta empire extended from Bengal to Eastern Malwa.[41] The first quarter of the sixth century records the inclusion of a fair portion of modern Central Provinces in the Gupta empire.[42]

But the century that intervenes the decline of the Gupta empire effected by the inroads of the Huns, and the establishment of Harṣa's empire, was a period of unsettlement. The foreign hordes—the Huns and Gurjars, in their irresistible might burst through the gateways of India. Before that they had occupied Persia and Kabul. The dawn of the sixth century in India witnessed the foundation of their dominions in Malwa under their leader Toramana (A.D. 500).

[39] Fleet, *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, p. 55 n ; *Annals of the Bhandarkar Research Institute* (Bibliography), 1919–1920, p. 99f. Divekar on Puṣyamitras in Gupta period.

[40] Bhitari Inscription — *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 13. Pitari divaṃ upete viplutāṃ vaṃśalakṣmīṃ, Bhujabalavijitāriryyaḥ pratiṣṭhāpya bhuyah, Jitamiti paritoṣān mātaraṃ sāśranettrām, Hataripuriva kriṣṇo devakīmabhyupetaḥ.

[41] *Arch. S.I. Rep.*, 1914–15 ; Sarnath Inscription.

[42] Baitul plates of the Paribrājaka Mahārāja Saṃkṣobha *Ep. Ind.*, vol. viii, pp. 284 et seq ; his inscription found at Khoh in Baghelkhand Fleet, *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 113–16.

Toramana's son Mihiragula succeeded to his father's possession in A.D. 502 and had his capital at Sākala or Sialkot in the Punjab. This indicates that their sway extended from the Punjab down to Malwa. The power of Mihiragula was broken by Yaśodharman King of Malwa in combination with a Gupta king of Magadha about A.D. 528. He withdrew to Kaśmere and ceased to play a part in the fortunes of Northern India. About this time in the West the Maitrakas, perhaps of Iranian origin, founded an independent kingdom in the Saurāṣṭra peninsula with their capital at Valabhi. The kingdom and its capital rose to considerable fame and prosperity and had a glorious career till it was overthrown about A.D. 770 by the Arabs. The Gurjars, one of the powerful clans associated with the Huns established kingdoms at Bharoch and at Bhinmal in southern Rajputana. The Cālukyas[43] founded a kingdom with its capital at Vātāpi, the modern Bādāmi in the Bijapur district of Bombay Presidency. Besides these states founded by the foreign invaders of India, there were others of indigenous origin like the Vākāṭakas and the Maukhāris. The two were very powerful and controlled considerable portions of Northern and Southern India. The Vākāṭakas were in the central Deccan, and the Maukhāris in the mid-Doab. The extent of their influence could be best judged by the ways the Guptas and the Vardhanas treated them. We have seen already that king Candra Gupta Vikramāditya gave his daughter Prabhāvatī Guptā to Rudra Sena II of the Vākāṭakas in order to ensure his alliance, and with a similar motive Harṣa's sister Rājyaśrī had been married to a Maukhāri king of Kanauj. The existence of many independent kingdoms at this time is referred to by Bāṇa.[44] At any rate, it is out of these elements that Harṣa built up an empire comprising a fair portion of Northern India.

The story of the rise and fall of Harṣa's empire is as fascinating as it is illustrative of that round of conquests, personal rule, meteoric glory and rapid disintegration, which mark every empire of the medieval and ancient world. Harṣa was the last of a series of able kings that graced the throne of Thāneśvar in the land of Śrīkaṇṭha. His father and his brother were capable kings. The earliest known ancestors of Harṣa, viz. Nara-Vardhana, Rājya Vardhana and Āditya Vardhana, all took the style of Mahārāja. Whether they were

[43] Cf. Dravidian origin from the word "Culuku" meaning a noble.

[44] Cowell and Thomas, *Harṣacarita*, pp. 154–55.

tributaries or not, cannot be ascertained, but certainly they claimed no paramountcy. The first to assume the style of Mahārājādhirāja, and therefore to claim greater power than his predecessors was Prabhākara Vardhana. His kingdom lay in a part of Northern India, that has been of the utmost strategical importance at all times. It has always commanded the highways from the Punjab into the Gangetic plain. A king established there has the advantage of extending his kingdom either northwest into the Indus plains or south-east into the Gangetic plains. But the advantages of the situation were not always an unmixed good. At the times of foreign invasion this part of Northern India was the most exposed part, and therefore any kingdom established there must always bear the brunt of a foreign invasion. It was because the kingdom could successfully combat the foreign invasion — at this time of the Huns, — it rose to power and greatness. That is the secret of the rise of Thaneśvara to paramountcy in Northern India. We see later that exactly similar was the situation of Pṛthivirāj and Ānaṇda Pāla on the eve of another foreign invasion and their failure spelt disaster to the whole country. It was perhaps Prabhākara Vardhana, who raised the fortunes of his family by a clever combination of diplomacy and force. He had himself married Yaśomatī, the daughter of the powerful king of Malwa, Yaśodharman.[45] This must have raised his prestige. Further flanked on the one side by the Huns and on the other by the powerful Maukhāri kingdom of Kanauj, he formed an alliance with the latter in order that he might successfully fight the former. His political alliance was assured as it was concealed by a matrimonial alliance, when he gave his daughter Rājyaśrī to Prince Graha Varman the son of Avanti Varman the Maukhāri king of Kanauj. Thus secure on one side he subdued his enemy the Huns on the other. It is said that he "won considerable military successes over his neighbours — the Gurjars, Mālavas and others in the latter part of the sixth century."[46] At the time of his death, the Harṣa-Carita says, his two sons — Rājya Vardhana and Harṣa were far away on the frontiers repelling the attack of the barbarian Huns. This shows that the Huns were still a standing menace, and perhaps the credit of fully subduing them, goes entirely to Harṣa. At any rate Prabhākara Vardhana was succeeded by his son Rājya

[45] Madhu Bana Plate.

[46] *Oxford History of India*, p. 165.

Vardhana. But the death of Prabhākara Vardhana must have precipitated a crisis for the Maukhāri king of Kanauj. When the death of his father-in-law deprived him of a powerful ally, he was attacked and slain by the king of Malwa. At the beginning of his reign, therefore, Rājya Vardhana found that the balance of power carefully built up by his father, was about to collapse. He led an invasion against Malwa, succeeded in punishing the king of Malwa and in bringing him back to his allegiance. But at the moment of his victory, he was treacherously slain by the Gauḍa king. Harṣa, was raised to the throne by Bhaṇḍi, the commander-in-chief, representing the council of ministers, and young as he was — only sixteen at that time, proved capable and careful, far beyond his age. Starting his reign in October 606 he spent very nearly six years in an extensive campaign, when he "went from east to west subduing all who were not obedient ; the elephants were not unharnessed, nor the soldiers unhelmeted. He had a force of 5,000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry," and his conquests comprised the whole of Upper India excluding the Punjab but including Bihar and the greater part of Bengal. He ruled Kanauj, jointly with his childless and widowed sister, and made Kanauj the capital of his empire. After this he assumed the deserving style of Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Parameśvara, signifying paramountcy and suzerainty over Northern India. His last recorded campaign in A.D. 643 was on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. A few years earlier he had waged a successful war with Valabhi and in the East he was feared by the king of distant Assam. But like his father, Harṣa was clever in diplomacy. That is brought out by his treatment of his sister, with whom he ruled jointly and after whose death he annexed the kingdom. It was by such clever combination of force and diplomacy that he built up an empire, that comprised the whole country north of the Narmadā, with the exclusion of Rajputana and the Punjab. During his successful career of forty years he was only once defeated, and that was in A.D. 620 when he waged a war with the Cālukya king Pulakesin II. This defeat forced him to accept the Narmadā as the Southern boundary.

FEATURES OF THE PERIOD

Such in brief is the political history. To visualize it in outlines we have to picture a congeries of independent states out of which

there gradually emerges a powerful empire by force of conquest. It is a slow growth and its chief function is to control the allegiance of a number of less powerful kingdoms. Such an empire is at best a loosely-knit system of tributary chiefs, whose allegiance or independence depended upon the strength or weakness of the Cakravartin or the paramount king. Such an empire always depends upon a personal factor — the ability of the sovereign, and whenever that ability is wanting the empire crashes to its fall. That was the character of the Gupta empire. With a nominal central control it could not withstand the shock of foreign invasion led by a vigorous people. It broke down and there sprang up independent principalities all around. A century later, one other powerful state Thāneśvar, successfully conquered and tactfully built up another imperial fabric, only to go the way of its predecessor much more rapidly owing to the lack of efficient central control and an adequate machinery to embody that control. Local interests reasserted themselves with redoubled vigour, and a congeries of states, founded chiefly by the clannish foreigners grew up. That is the outline picture of the political condition of this period.

CHARACTER OF KINGSHIP

The character of kingship of this period is determined partly by the time-honoured traditions and partly by the circumstances peculiar to it. Traditions of the past hallowed kingship or monarchy, and invested the king with a divine prestige and right to rule over the people. We have already seen that in the preceding period high sounding honorifics were assumed by the kings. These reappear in this period, and the kings are, without exception, found to assume them. Right from the Guptas up to Harṣa the independent kings, who happened to rise to paramountcy in the sense that they commanded the allegiance of a few kings, never failed to take the title of Parameśvara, i.e. supreme lord, Mahārājādhirāja, i.e. supreme king of kings, and Paramabhaṭṭāraka, the most worshipful master.[47] Samudra Gupta in the Allahabad Praśasti has been called a "mortal only in celebrating the rites of the observances of mankind (but otherwise) a god dwelling on the earth,"[48] and in the Gaya

[47] Fleet, *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, Nos. 1, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13 ; 32 ; 40, etc.
[48] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 1.

Copperplate Inscription, a like of the gods of Kubera, Varuṇa, Indra and Antaka in one.[49] Prabhākara Vardhana as well as his son Harṣa assumed the style of Paramabhaṭṭāraka and Mahārājādhirāja.[50] Even Yaśodharman assumed the style of Janendra, i.e. lord of the people, Rājādhirāja and Parameśvara. And all these kings claimed to possess divine sanction to rule.

NO LAW OF PRIMOGENITURE

One important feature of kingship was that there was no law of primogeniture to regulate succession. We have for example a dying king, who nominated the most deserving of his sons to rule after him. We know for instance the cases of Samudra Gupta and Skanda Gupta, who were chosen in exclusion of the other sons of the king.[51] This right of choice was also exercised by the ministers of the state sometimes. We know that after the death of Rājya Vardhana, Harṣa was acclaimed as his successor by the ministers, and according to Bāṇa, the commander-in-chief Siṃhanāda was chiefly instrumental in this choice. Later on as the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang remarks, when the throne of Kanauj fell vacant after the death of Graha Varman "the statesmen of Kanauj, on the advice of their leading man Bāṇi (or Vāṇi) invited Harṣa Vardhana, the younger brother of Rājya Vardhana the murdered king, to become their sovereign."[52] On another occasion, the brother becomes king, we do not know how, in exclusion of the son. It was in the case of Pura Gupta, who succeeded Skanda Gupta. That might have been due to the support of the ministry, or a powerful party at the court. These facts besides proving that there was no law of primogeniture, prove that the support of a powerful party at the court, or of the ministers always counted much in the matter of the succession. This points to the fact that the power of the ministers or royal officials was enormously increasing.

HEREDITARY ROYAL OFFICERS

The surest proof of it is that their offices, had by now, become hereditary, and they assumed grandiloquent titles like their masters.

[49] *Ibid.*, No. 60. [50] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 52.

[51] Alld. Praśasti of Samudra Gupta and Junāgaḍh Inscription of Skanda Gupta. [52] Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, Vol. I, p. 343.

The high sounding and rolling epithets like Mahāsaṃdhivigrahika, Mahāvalādhikrita, Mahāsenāpati, Mahāsarvadaṇḍanāyaka, etc. are found in abundance everywhere. As regards hereditary offices we are told that one Suryadatta, the Mahāsaṃdhivigrahika was the great-grandson of Amātya Vakra, the grandson of Bhogika Naradatta and the son of Bhogika Ravidatta.[53] One Dakṣa, who was himself a minister of Viṣṇu Vardhana, came of a family of ministers and one of his ancestors by name Abhayadatta was the Rājasthānīya (perhaps governor) of the country between the Revā and the Pāriyātra (Western ghat).[54] The phrase Anvayaprāpta-sācivya, i.e. attainment of the office of minister by hereditary right, in the Udayagiri Inscription points to the same conclusion. A governor of Saurāṣtra by name Parṇadatta could appoint his son Cakrapālita to the government of a part of the country.[55] It is significant that these dignitaries of the state owed their high influence and power partly to their hereditary tenure of the offices, and partly to their eminent position. Most of them happened to be subordinate chiefs. We know for example that Bhaṇḍi, the chief minister of Rājya Vardhana, was his cousin and the son of the king of Malwa, ostensibly a Sāmanta. Avanti, "the supreme minister of war and peace" of Harṣa seems to have been a tributary chief also, and so perhaps was Kuntala "as chief officer of cavalry and a favourite of his (Harṣa's) brother." This points to some laxity in the centre.

ADMINISTRATIVE SLACKNESS

Since monarchy was the government par excellence now as before, the traditions of kingship and Digvijaya obtained unimpaired; indeed kingship and Digvijaya had risen immensely in the estimation of the people. The king, as we have noted had become Acintya-puruṣa, Dhanadavaruṇendrāntakasama, Lokadhāmadeva, etc. and Digvijaya or the conquest of the quarters had become the foremost distinction of such a king. But there was more show than substance in that. The deficiency in the centralization of government is brought out clearly by the evidence both of Fahien and Yuan Chwang. The former remarks that "there are no boards of

[53] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 22. [54] *Ibid.*, No. 35.
[55] Junāgaḍh Inscription of Skanda Gupta.

population and revenue. Those only who farm the royal demesnes, pay a portion of the produce as rent. Nor are they bound to remain in possession longer than they like. The king in the administration of justice inflicts no corporal punishment, but each culprit is fined in money according to the gravity of his offence ; and even in cases where the culprit has been guilty of repeated attempts to excite rebellion they restrict themselves to cutting off his right hand. The chief officers of the king have all allotted revenues."[56] This account appears to suggest that the system of revenue administration was weak. The king therefore depended upon the tributes or presents paid by the chiefs, who acknowledged his suzerainty according to the ancient Hindu traditions. A portion of the produce was paid as rent. The royal officials had, what may be called fiefs or Jāgirs assigned to them. Since the king allotted fiefs to his officials these must have grown powerful and often defiant of his authority. This impression is confirmed by the remarks of Yuan Chwang. He remarks that "as the government is generous official requirements are few. Families are not registered, and individuals are not subject to forced labour contributions. Of the royal land there is a fourfold division : one part is for the expenses of government and state worship, one for the endowment of great public servants, one to reward high intellectual eminence, and one for acquiring religious merit by gifts to the various sects. Taxation being light, and forced service being sparingly used, everyone keeps to his hereditary occupation, and, attends to his patrimony. The king's tenants pay one-sixth of the produce as rent. Tradesmen go to and fro bartering their merchandise, after paying light duties at ferries and barrier stations. Those who are employed in government service are paid according to their work. They go abroad on military service or guard the palace ; the summonses are issued according to the circumstances and after proclamation of the reward the enrolment is awaited. Ministers of state and common officials all have their portion of land, and are maintained by the cities assigned to them."[57] Here too we find light taxation, little control of the population and allotment of fiefs to the officers of the state. These certainly suggest administrative slackness. And perhaps the pilgrims confined their observation to the imperial administration of the Guptas and Harṣa.

[56] Giles, *Fahien*, p. 55.

[57] Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, Vol. I, 176–177.

NATURE OF THE EMPIRE

The loosely knit imperial fabric of the Guptas and of Harṣa was the embodiment of their sovereignty. The principle of Digvijaya which was the foundation of the Empire, Maṇḍala, or Cakra, that is, circle of kingdoms acknowledging the supremacy of the one, has been very clearly expressed by Kālidāsa. When Raghu was conquering the quarters he captured and liberated the king of Mahendra, only that the latter might be deprived of his dignity as an independent ruler but not his kingdom.[57a] Perhaps the poet had the example of Samudra Gupta when he wrote these lines. This has also been brought out by the Allahabad Inscription of Samudra Gupta. His conquests have been detailed to show how some kings were killed in battle and their kingdoms were annexed by Samudra Gupta, some defeated and captured but reinstated in their kingdoms as tributary princes, and lastly how frontier kings submitted of their own accord. That is clear in the proclamations of Harṣa on the eve of his Digvijaya.[58] The symbol of paramountcy consisted in the obedience on the part of the vassal chiefs to the commands of sovereign. Sometimes they paid tributes, came to "perform obeisance" or "acts of respectful service" by "bringing presents of maidens, the enjoyment of their own territories, soliciting commands, etc."[59] Harṣa, on the occassion of the quinquennial assembly at Prayaga was attended by twenty vassal chiefs.[60] The tributary system obtained throughout the country. We know from the Siwani Copper-plate Inscription that Pravara Sena I, the founder of the fortune of the Vākāṭakas, had before the Guptas been the head of a tributary system and as a symbol of it had performed the horse sacrifice.[61] Perhaps for some time after this none succeeded in attaining to paramountcy in India and consequently as the Allahabad Inscription of Samudra Gupta says the horse sacrifice was "long in abeyance." It was Samudra Gupta who became "the restorer of the Aśvamedha."[62] His grandson Kumāra Gupta also

[57a] Gṛhīta pratimuktasya sa Dharmavijayīnṛpaḥ, etc., Raghu, Canto 4.

[58] Mukherji, *Harṣa*, p. 23. [59] Alld. Inscription of Samudra Gupta.

[60] Si-yu-ki's *Budhist Records of the Western World*, tr. S. Beal, 2 Vols.; R. K. Mukherji, *Harsa*, p. 81.

[61] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, Nos. 56.

[62] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, Nos. 4, 10, 12, 13 & 60.

had the distinction of celebrating it.[63] After the fall of the Gupta empire, there were many attempts made to form such tributary systems, e.g. by the kings of Malwa, of Bengal and of the South but with indifferent success. It was Harṣa who was most successful in the clever use of diplomacy and force in building up such a system. He was the first after the Guptas to have performed the same sacrifice which established his paramountcy in an unassailable manner. The empires thus founded may be called spheres of influence, or Cakras, ruled by a Cakravartin.

NATURE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE EMPIRE

But after a circle of kings or sphere of influence was secured by Digvijaya, i.e. conquest of quarters and Aśvamedha, as also by diplomacy, the primary concern of the king-paramount or Cakravartin was to frame an administrative machinery to keep the empire intact. In regard to this it has been assumed that there was a centralized system of government with imperial officers like Mahādaṇḍanāyaka, Mahāsaṃdhivigrahika, Mahāvalādhikrita, Mahāpratihāra, and others administering various departments, and with administrative areas like the Bhukti, Viṣaya, and Grāma, to each of which imperial officers were appointed. According to Dr. Mukherji the government was mild and "the people were comparatively left free from the interference and control of the Central authorities characteristic of unitary states and their system of over-government at the expense of local liberty and self-rule. As the central government left the people to govern themselves as far as possible it rested on very light taxation and was satisfied with a small amount of revenue."[64] Dr. Beni Prasad thinks that the king paramount, i.e. Cakravartin, as the Central authority ruled as well as reigned with the help of his ministers.[65]

These are assumptions not justified by facts. In the first place we must remember that the empires of the Guptas and Harṣa were really spheres of influence in which were autonomous chiefships and tribes varying in size and power. These could not be wiped out of existence, nor could their autonomy be impaired in any way.

[63] Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 299. [64] Mukherji, *Harṣa*, p. 101.

[65] Beni Prasad, — *The State in Ancient India*, pp. 292 et seq. ; Rai Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 380 et seq.

Local variations had to be retained. It has been already observed how Samudra Gupta conquered certain kings and incorporated their kingdom in his dominions ; conquered others and allowed them to rule their own kingdom ; and lastly the frontier kings submitted voluntarily and proffered services, presents and tributes. Besides these there were certain autonomous tribes. There were thus several categories of dominions included within the empire of the Guptas yielding varying degrees of obedience. That was also the nature of the empire of Harṣa. These various categories of dominions could not be transformed into one uniform type, so that one uniform central government could be imposed upon all. Neither could the central government for the sake of convenience, be broken into a number of provinces, districts and villages or in one word, local governments. That would be the frame-work of a unitary state. To seek to do that in the empires of the Guptas and Harṣa was an impossible adventure. A system of government therefore had to be devised which would respect the local variations, retain the various categories of political organization, and at the same time would be competent to impose the paramountcy of one upon all. Under such conditions the central government, that is, government of the Cakravartin, would not, in all practical references to the local autonomous areas be very effective. It would seek first to retain the allegiance of all the component parts of the empire, and next to administer the home dominion and crown lands with all efficiency possible. Of course that was the home dominion of the paramount king which originally belonged to him, e.g. the kingdom of Thāneśvar of Harṣa. For the performance of these two functions hereditary officers of great ability and loyalty and also tributary Rājās and Mahārājas, Sāmantas and Mahāsāmantas were freely associated with the administration of the paramount king. Some of them used to be in charge of the home dominions while others of the component parts of the empire. That is why we have in the time of Samudra Gupta the Mahādaṇḍanāyaka Harisena who was the son of the Mahādaṇḍanāyaka Dhruva Bhuti ; the mantrin Prithvi Sena who was the son of the mantrin Sekhara Svāmin ; and hereditary governors who are also local chiefs, like Viśvavarmā and Bandhuvarmā in Mandsor. That is why we hear of the tributaries of Samudra Gupta offering to render "respectful service" by which they meant perhaps nothing else than service as his high officials. That is why in the Banskherā

Inscription of Harṣa we have Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja Bhāṇa and in the Madhubana Inscription Mahāsāmanta Skanda Gupta and Sāmanta Mahārāja Iśvara Gupta as the emperor's officials. Again Bāna mentions that Avanti, obviously the chief of Avanti, was Harṣa's supreme minister of war and peace ; and lastly as Yuan Chwang says Kumāra Rāja Dhruvabhaṭṭa was mostly in the train of Harṣa on important occasions and was ordered to receive him when the latter made a state entry into Kanauj.[66] It was due to this necessity of maintaining the sphere of influence intact that Harṣa "made visits of inspection throughout his dominion....."[67] He realized the value of personal touch in the matter of retaining his paramountcy over the empire. Thus the central government had very great limitations to its power of directly ruling the people of the empire, and was centent to keep a sort of over-all control of the constituents of the empire.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

In this connection we have to examine the statements made on the evidence of the Damodarpur copper plate inscriptions. "It was the central government under the Guptas which used to appoint provincial governors, who are described as being tatpādaparigṛhīta (literally accepted by the imperial majesty's feet) and having right of use of such titles as uparika mahāraja. Their position may be compared to some extent to that enjoyed by the divisional commissioners of the present day, *if these were directly responsible to the imperial government.* These provincial governors of the Gupta period had power to appoint Viṣayapatis (district officers) who are described as tanniyuktakas (literally appointed by them) with the right of use of such titles as Kumārāmātya or āyuktaka. It is also a most interesting point that the Viṣayapatis had their head-quarters in Adhiṣṭhānas (towns) where they had their adhikaraṇas (offices or courts). Another most interesting fact of history obtained from these newly discovered copper plate inscriptions, especially nos. 1, 2, 4 & 5, is that the Viṣayapatis appear to have been aided in their administrative work — Saṃvyavahāra — by a board of advisers, which is found to have been constituted of four members, representing the various important interests of those days, viz. (1) the Nagara

[66] Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, Vol. I, p. 344. [67] Mukherji, *Harṣa*, p. 84.

Śreṣṭhin, the most wealthy man of the town, representing perhaps, the rich urban population, (2) the Sārthavāha (the chief merchant), representing perhaps the various trade guilds, (3) Prathamakulika (the chief artisan) representing perhaps the various artisan classes and (4) the Prathama Kāyastha (the chief scribe) who may either have represented the Kāyasthas as a class or have been a government official in the capacity of a chief secretary of the present day."[68]

Valuable as the observations are it has been here assumed that the imperial administration of the Guptas consisted of central government and provincial governments, and that the whole had been centralized. The provincial government was composed of the provincial governor and the district officers with their establishments. The relation between the king and the provincial governor was that the latter was appointed by the king. This is supported also by other inscriptions.[69] We are told that the king appointed Goptas or governors to all the provinces — Sarveṣu deśeṣu vidhāya goptṛn. But that does not warrant the conclusion that the whole empire had been divided into provinces and provinces into districts; and that these districts and provinces were administered by an army of officials, controlled from the Centre. In the first place the governors were not responsible to the king though they were appointed by the king, and so perhaps were the district officers in their relations with the provincial governors and the king. What has been inferred here rather pertain to what we have called the home dominion of the king. For in the period of the Damodarpur inscriptions, i.e. A.D. 443 — 533 when the empire was shrinking in extent no province, which was not a province of the home dominion of the king could be directly controlled. Puṇḍra Vardhan province — Bhukti — to which these copper plates refer was within the home dominion firstly because it was still held by Budha Gupta and Bhānu Gupta,[70] and secondly because kings of Bihar generally incorporated North Bengal in their kingdom. Hence what was true of a home province in the decadent days of the empire could not be true of the central government of an empire, which had been built up by Digvijaya and diplomacy, and which comprised chiefships, whose independence knew only the single limitation of allegiance to the paramount king.

[68] *Ep. Ind.*, xv, pp. 128–29.

[69] Nos. 14 and 18 of *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III; Madhuvan plate of Harṣa.

[70] Jaiswal, *Modern Review*, Aug. 1933.

Indeed a tributary system would hardly square with territorial divisions admitting of an administrative control on bureaucratic lines. If provincial governors like Parṇadatta and Viśva Varmā could appoint their sons to offices of their choice, then certainly the so-called central government of the empire was more nominal than real. If again on the evidence of Vasārh seals it is maintained that there were district offices like that of Vaiśali (Vaiśālyādhisthānādhikaraṇa[71]) then we can advance the same argument as above, that is Vaiśāli was a part of the home dominion and therefore it was a part of home administration. Thus the evidence of the Damodarpur copper plates and of Vasārh seals is not the conclusive proof of the existence of a centralized form of government in the Gupta empire.

ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS

At any rate there was a rough and nebulous system of administrative areas in the empire known as Deśa or Bhukti, i.e. province, and Viṣaya, i.e. district. These areas followed the sphere of influence of the paramount king and therefore were changing in extent. An idea of the relative areas of a Bhukti and a Viśaya could be formed from the fact that while the country between the Ganges and the Jumna was a Viṣaya,[72] that between the Jumna and the Narmadā was a Bhukti.[73] Again there were provinces like the Sukulideśa,[74] Nagar Bhukti,[75] Surāṣṭra[76], etc. and Viṣayas like the Lāta,[77] the Antarvedi,[78] Arikīṇa[79], etc. As the formation of the provinces followed the sphere of influence of the sovereign we have new provinces every time. For example we do not hear in the time of Harṣa of a province so big as to comprise the whole country between the Jumna and the Narmadā, which Budha Gupta, placed in charge of Mahārājā Suraśmicandra ;[80] again the Srāvasti Bhukti[81] and the Ahicchatra Bhukti[82] of Harṣa do not appear to have existed during the time of the Guptas.

[71] *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India*, 1903–4, pp. 101 et seq.

[72] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 16.

[73] *Ibid.*, No. 19.

[74] *Ibid.*, No. 5.

[75] *Ibid.*, No. 46.

[76] *Ibid.*, No. 14.

[77] *Ibid.*, No. 18.

[78] *Ibid.*, No. 16.

[79] *Ibid.*, Nos. 2 & 36.

[80] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 19.

[81] Madhuban Inscription of Harṣa.

[82] Banskhera Plate of Harṣa.

OFFICERS OF GOVERNMENT

Of the function of the administrative heads of these areas and their relation to the Central authority, i.e. the king paramount, nothing definite could be said. Nothing could be inferred from the high sounding and grandiloquent titles of officers as to whether some of them were imperial officers, and others officers of the tributary chiefs, or whether there were different categories of officials like the officials at the Centre, the provinces, districts and villages of the empire, and again similar or different categories of officials of the tributary kingdoms. That is to say the titles with the prefix Mahā, as in Mahāvalādhikṛta, Mahākṣapatalādhikṛta, etc. are not, a sure indication that the officers were of the paramount king or imperial officers, while those without the prefix as Valādhikṛta, Akṣapatalādhikṛta, etc. were of the tributary king. The titles of the imperial officers of the Guptas and of Harṣa, appear to be as high sounding and impressive for example as those of less powerful monarchs like the Paribrājaka Mahārāja Hastin and Sarvanātha. We are told that the former had his Mahāsaṃdhivigrahika, Mahābalādhikṛta,[83] as well as Amātya and Bhogika[84] and he was only a tributary chief of the Guptas. Maharāja Sarvanāth's officials had similar titles, e.g. Mahāsaṃdhivigrahika, Mahābalādhikṛta, Bhogika and Amātya.[85] If the foreign secretary of Samudra Gupta could have the simple title of Saṃdhivigrahika[86] while the foreign secretary of Sarvanātha, a vassal of the Guptas, the title of Mahāsaṃdhivigrahika ; or while the commander-in-chief of Harṣa as well as of Sarvanātha, and the officers of the Guptas, Harṣa and some of their chiefs bore the same title it is difficult to say, whether there were or not actually two systems of administration, carried on by two types of imperial officials, each in its own sphere. If the Sāmantas or tributaries could maintain as full an establishment of government as their lord paramount or Cakravartin then the obvious inference is that the former ruled their states in the same way as did the latter.

That was entirely in accord with the tradition of the country and precepts of law codes. We have the echo of this tradition in Kālidāsa, in the Allahabad inscription of Samudra Gupta, and in the proclamation of Harṣa on the eve of his Digvijaya, which Bāṇa has

[83] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, No. 23.
[84] *Ibid.*, No. 22.
[85] *Ibid.*, Nos. 28 & 30.
[86] *Ibid.*, No. 1.

described. We have the ruling of the law codes like the Manu to this effect.[87] Indeed the whole country was dotted over with local autonomous areas. Therefore it is a misreading of the conditions if we say that there were territorial divisions of the empire which as administrative areas were staffed and controlled from the centre by the king paramount. The Madhuban plate mentions Mahāsāmantas, Mahārājas, Dausādhasādhanikas, Pramātāras, Rajasthanīyas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas and Viṣayapatis. Here there are Mahāsāmantas and Mahārājas as also Viṣayapatis ; and these perhaps constituted a rough hierarchy of officials. Some of them — the Sāmantas and Rājās specially, might have been governors of various parts of the empire. We have frequent references in the inscription to the tributary chiefs employed by the paramount king to control or govern provinces and districts. Their chief duty was to keep other chiefs loyal to the paramount king. They were best fitted for the task because of their local knowledge and importance. Often the tributary chiefs were appointed as governors of their own realm, on their own request. The Allahabad inscription of Samudra Gupta mentions the prayers of chiefs to rule their own Bhuktis and Viṣayas as if on behalf of the emperor — Sva Viṣaya Bhuktiśāsana-yācanādy-upāya sevā. Hence we can safely say that the tributary chiefs were employed to control the parts of the empire on behalf of the emperor, and their control was not like that of a modern district or divisional officer, but as a political agent of today. Some of the tributary chiefs were associated with the administration of the home dominion of the Cakravartin. The Banskhera copper plate of Harṣa mentions that.

FISCAL SYSTEM

Obviously there was nothing like a Central or imperial fiscal system. All that the governors or Viṣayapatis were called upon to do was to realize the tributes from the chiefs and tribes like those mentioned in the Allahabad inscription. Even a regular payment of such tributes through governors does not appear to have been in vogue ; for the chiefs or Sāmantas used to pay court to the sovereign personally and on such occasions used to give presents, which were treated as tributes.[88] When Dr. Beni Prasad says that "Bhukti or

[87] *Ibid.* vii, 202–3. [88] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 1.

Bhogika has fiscal implications and shows that provinces were also meant to be fiscal divisions"[89] we can only understand by it that from the tributaries or chiefs of each part of the empire, that is, Bhukti or Deśa some tribute as a general rule was due to the sovereign. That way a province was a fiscal unit. If Dr. Beni Prasad means that there was a regular revenue system in the districts and provinces based upon the assessment of actual produce, which the central government imposed, then we cannot agree with him, for there is no evidence to prove that. We cannot agree with him in his conclusions about the district officer having "had a large secretariat, consisting of Kāyasthas or scribes headed by the Prathama Kāyastha"[90] for reasons already mentioned. When therefore we are told that one Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja Bhāṇa was the Mahākṣapatalādhikṛta, i.e. inspector general of records we have to understand that he was not the chief officer of the records of the empire, in the sense that he controlled the compilation and maintenance of all the records of the empire, but that he only was a record keeper of the paramount king, that is of Harṣa. The Mahāsenāpati was a functionary who did not control armies distributed over the empire but served the paramount king as a commander-in-chief of his own army. The Mahāsaṃdhivigrahika was, with similar modifications only a foreign secretary of the paramount king. So were the Mahādaṇḍanāyaka, the Mahāpratīhāra, the Bhāndāgārādhikṛta, etc. These were merely glorified local officials belonging to the home administration of the paramount king. The government of the paramount king, that he imposed on the empire was most elastic and shadowy. The suzerain's tact and military skill were the twin supporters of such a government. The so-called imperial officers like governors of provinces and districts were mostly local chiefs, like the Mahārāja Hstin and Viśva Varmā, who besides being the rulers of their own territories, also looked to the imperial interests in the province or Bhukti and district or Viṣaya, by payment of tributes that they collected from tributary chiefs and by seeking to keep them loyal to the king paramount. There could not have been civil and military officials with their elaborate establishment, appointed by the central government to the different parts of the empire in the manner it is done today. Such a system presupposes

[89] Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, p. 296.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 297.

two important factors — (*i*) an elaborate system of communication and (*ii*) a conscious attempt to unify local areas and level down local variations, both of which were conspicuous by their absence till very recent date. That is why it is too much to say on the flimsy data available that there was a centralized imperial organization, comprising the territorial extent of the empire. In a shadowy and invertebrate empire, that is sphere of influence what was solid and effective was the local government.

ORGANIZATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

When we think of the local government we have to think of the governments of the home dominion of the paramount king, of the tributary kingdoms and of the corporations. The local governments of these denominations were independent and uniform units. Their foundations lay broad and deep in the country. They enjoyed full autonomy inasmuch as they coined their own money, and had their own laws, law courts, administrative areas like the Bhukti and Viṣaya, their own fiscal system, etc. These had attained to a high degree of centralization as a result of Kauṭalya's envisaging the technique of centralization and of the developments of the last period. The local government comprised an organization in which the whole control had been centralized in the hands of the king. The government of the individual states, which we have called local governments to distinguish it from the government of the empire or central government was thus a really effective machinery.

At the head was the king whether Cakravartin or Sāmanta. The Sāmantas according to their importance were styled Rājās, Mahārājas, Mahāsāmantas, etc. They were assisted by a number of ministers, whose offices were often hereditary. There were the Maṇtrin, Mahāsaṃdhivigrahika,[91] Mahāvalādhikṛta,[92] Mahāpratīhāra,[93] Mahākṣapatalika,[94] and Mahādaṇḍanāyaka,[95] who corresponded to the prime minister, foreign secretary, commander-in-chief, chamberlain, chief of the records and chief of the police or justice respectively. In addition to these there might have been a minister in charge of public morals — Vinayasthitisthāpaka.[96]

[91] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 22.
[92] *Ibid.*, No. 23.
[93] *Ibid.*, No. 39.
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] *Ibid.*, No. 1.
[96] Basarh seals.

These officers perhaps exercised different degrees of control directly over the various administrative areas like the village, the Viṣaya and the Bhukti or over the local corporations like the Sreṇī, Nigama, Puga, etc. The inscription of the two Mahārājas, Hastin and Sarvanātha clearly indicates that there were Bhogas or Bhuktis in their kingdoms though they happened to be tributary chiefs.[97] That Samudra Gupta's tributary chiefs had Bhuktis and Viṣayas in their kingdom is also evident from his Allahabad inscription — sva viṣaya-bhukti-śāsana yācanādy-upāya sevā. A tributary Mahārajā Dhruva Sena II, had his "Āyuktakas, Viniyuktakas, Drangikas, Mahattaras, irregular and regular troops Dhruvādhikaraṇikas, Daṇḍapāśikas, Rājasthānīyas, Kumārāmātyas and others,"[98] and yet another, Mahārājā Hastin had his Amātyas, Saṃdhivigrahikas, Bhogikas, Viṣayapatis, Upārikas, etc.[99] Indeed an adequate picture of the local governments can be formed out of the details supplied by the inscriptions.

The provinces — Bhukti or Deśa — were generally governed by Uparika Mahārājas or Rājasthāniyas[100] or Bhogikas, all signifying provincial governor. The provincial governor was also known as Rāṣtriya as in the Junāgadh inscription of Rudradāman.[101] In the Damodarpur copper plate inscription we have Rājaputra-deva-Bhaṭṭāraka governor of Puṇḍravardhana and in the Basārh seals — Govinda Gupta, governor of Tirabhukti. The provincial governors had a number of subordinate officers called tanniyjuktakas. The officers in charge of districts or Viṣayas were known as Viṣyapatis.[102] The Āyuktakas were sometimes raised to the status of district officers. At the provincial headquarters there were official establishments of the Uparikas — called Adhikaraṇas which according to the Basārh seals comprised Raṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa or war office, Daṇḍapāśādhikaraṇa or office of the chief of police, Vinayasthitisthāpakādhikaraṇa or office of the public censor of morals and Uparikādhikaraṇa or office of the governor. Damodarpur copper plate inscriptions suggest that like the provinces the districts had their separate establishments. We hear of the Daṇḍika, or Daṇḍapāśika, perhaps police officials, Puṣṭapālas or record keepers,

[97] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 24. [98] *Ibid.*, No. 38.
[99] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, Nos. 21–23 & 27–31.
[100] *Ibid.*, No. 38. [101] *Luder's List*, No. 965.
[102] *Ep. Ind.*, XV, p. 138 ; Luder's List, No. 629.

regular and irregular troops,[103] Dhruvādhikaranikas, perhaps permanent officials[104] in general, Āyuktakas and Viniyuktas,[105] officers of various categories ; drangikas, or collector of Udranga tax associated with the district administration. Viṣayapatis were "aided in their administrative work —Saṃvyavahāra — by a board of advisers... constituted of four members representing various important interests, of those days, viz. (*i*) Nagaraśreṣṭhin, the most wealthy man of the town representing perhaps the rich urban population, (*ii*) the Sārthavāha ... representing perhaps the various trade guilds, (*iii*) Prathama Kulika ... representing the various artisan classes and (*iv*) the Prathama Kāyastha ... "[106]

GOVERNMENT OF THE VILLAGE

The lowest unit of the local government was the immemorial grāma or village, and the head of it was the Grāmika,[107] the headman. Besides him there were the village elders or Mahattaras,[108] who along with the headman perhaps formed the nucleus of the village government. This is corroborated by the theory of Bṛhaspati, who says that "honest persons, acquainted with the Vedas and with Dharma, i.e. social obligations, capable, self-controlled, sprung from noble families, and skilled in every business shall be appointed as Mahattamas. Two, three or five persons shall be appointed as advisers and their advice shall be taken by the villagers, companies (of artisans), corporations."[109] Apart from the Mahattaras or Mahattamas — both being perhaps convertible terms who, carried on the government of the village, it is significant to note that the village had its own court of justice. It bore the name of Pratiṣṭhitā according to Bṛhaspati.[110] And Bṛhaspati himself brings out the relation of the village in this matter with the king. "Whatever is decreed by them (the village elders) in accordance with the laws and customs, be it favourable or otherwise, to the people, must be approved by the king as well."[111] The king interfered and imposed his judgment only

[103, 104, 105] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 38.
[106] *Ep. Ind.*, XV, pp. 128–29.
[107] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 24. [108] *Ibid.*, Nos. 38 & 46.
[109] *Bṛhaspati*, S.B.E., Vol. XXXIII, xvii, 9 & 10.
[110] *Ibid.*, 1, 2–3—Pratiṣṭhitā-Pratiṣṭhitā-mudritā śāsita tathā, etc.
[111] *Ibid.*, xvii, 18.

where the Mahattaras themselves were at variance with one another.[112] That is to say there could also be an appeal to the king. These elders could even mete out punishment to the offenders against the laws and customs of the country.[113] The village government further consisted of the Talvāṭaka, perhaps accountant, Dūta, i.e. messenger, Sīmākarmakāra, i.e. the maker of the village boundary[114] and Karaṇis or clerks.[115] The self-sufficiency of the village administration is complete when it is treated as a fiscal unit in the national economy. We are told that the different items of royal revenue were raised by the village. The village had to pay the Udranga (probably the land-tax), the Uparikara (a tax levied on cultivators who had no proprietary rights on soil), dhānya (paddy), hiraṇya (payment in gold), ādeya (that to be surrendered), vistika (forced labour), daśāparādha (fines form ten offences, viz. three offences of the body, theft, murder and adultery ; four offences of speech, harsh words, untruthful words, libellous words and pointless words; and three offences of mind, coveting others' property, thinking of wrong and devotion to what is not true, bhoga (enjoyment), bhāga (share), etc.[116] Thus as a fiscal unit the importance of the village is undoubted. Further, the fact that the village was taxed on the head of Daśāparādha, i.e. the ten offences indicates that the village wielded the power of punishing offences or judging crimes. This system of justice was highly effective not merely because "in the almost inconceivable case of disobedience to the award of the village council the sole punishment or the sole certain punishment would appear to be universal disapprobation,"[117] but also because the king, owing to this share in the proceeds of the ten offences had, in the ultimate reference, to maintain the decisions of the village council by an exercise of his authority.

Important details regarding the land transfer are obtained from the Damodarpur copper plate inscriptions. A "class of local officers which finds mention in these plates from North Bengal, as also in Faridpur plates, are the Puṣṭapālas (the keeper of records), who were, it seems, made aware of the title to all lands . . . the government would sanction land sales only after these record keepers had, on

[112] *Ibid.*, xvii, 20. [113] *Ibid.*, 17. [114] Fleet, No. 39.
[115] Cowell & Thomas, *Harṣacarita*, p. 198.
[116] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 38.
[117] *Village Communities in the East and West*, p. 68.

receipt of application from the purchasers, determined the title to the land under proposal of transfer and sent in their report to government. In one of these epigraphic records (plate No. 3) other important bodies presumably rural such as Mahattaras, the Aṣṭa-kulādhikaraṇas and the Grāmikas — were consulted by government in arranging land transfer and also in inspecting (Pratyavekṣya) the execution of the transaction."[118] As a corollary to this elaborate administration of land, which obviously devolved upon the village, there seems to have been a system of land-measurement and classification of land also. There were mainly two classes of land — cultivable and common land and the unit of measurement was perhaps a Pādāvarta.[119] That completes the picture of the internal economy of the village. We may now pass on to review the conditions of corporations, the autonomous bodies, that had attained by this time considerable development.

GOVERNMENT OF CORPORATIONS

They comprise the Kula, the Pūga, the Vrāta, the Śreṇi, etc. and from Manu onwards all the law codes stress the importance of these bodies. We have already noticed the reference to Saṃgha and Gaṇa in Pāṇini. We also have a reference to Pūga, Vrāta and Śreṇi in Pāṇini.[120] The Kāśika explains the Pūga as a kind of Saṃgha, i.e. corporation of men belonging to various castes following various professions with a view chiefly to acquire wealth[121] and the Vrāta as a kind of corporation of men belonging to various castes and following various professions, mostly (unlawful?) in their nature,[122] while Kayyata and Tattvabodhini explain Śreṇi as a corporation of men following one craft or one trade. But in spite of their early existence, their laws, are for the first time recognized by Manu. Manu introduced the laws of the Janapada (countryside), and the

[118] *Ep. Ind.* XV, p. 129.

[119] *Cor. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, No. 38.

[120] Bahu Pūga gaṇa saṃghasya tithuk (v. 2, 52). Vrātac-fañyorastriyāṃ (v, 3, 113).
Śreṇyā-dayaḥ kṛtadisiḥ (II, 1, 59).

[121] Nānā jātiyāḥ aniyata vṛttayaḥ
Arthakāma-pradhānaḥ samghāḥ pūgaḥ. v, 3, 112.

[122] Nānājātiyāḥ aniyata-vṛttayaḥ
Utsedha jīvinaḥ saṃghāh Vrātaḥ. v, 3, 113.

Śreṇi (trade and craft guilds),[123] into the general category of laws, and Nārada added further to it the laws of heretic associations of Nigamas, Pugas and Gaṇas.[124] The king was charged with the duty of maintaining the laws and conventions of these bodies intact. Yājñavalkya when he said that one ought to adhere to one's own customs and conventions and also to the laws of the kings, when they do not conflict with his own lays greater stress on the nature of local laws and conventions.[125] This indicates the nature of the local bodies.

As to their functions, they were as varied as they suggest a vast degree of responsibility and initiative. For this we have to rely for information mostly on the later Smṛtis like the Nārada, Bṛhaspati and Yājñavalkya. Administration of justice and various municipal enterprises were the functions of the local bodies. Nārada clearly states that "Kulas, Śreṇis, Gaṇas and the one appointed (by the king) and the king — all these are invested with the power to decide law suits ; and of these each succeeding ones are superior to each preceding ones in order."[126] Equally clear is Yājñavalkya when he says that the royal courts, the courts of the Pugas, of the Śreṇis and of the Kulas, range in the ascending order of their importance.[127] How widely and deeply these had struck root in the country, could be realized by a reference to the South Indian inscriptions of the tenth and eleventh centuries, as has been shown by Prof. Mukherji.[128] The corporate enterprise of the village, Pūga, Śreṇi or Gaṇa has been

[123] Jāti-jānapadān Dharmān Śreṇi dharmānśca Dharmavit,
Samikṣya kula Dharmānśca sva-dharmaṃ pratipadāyet. (viii, 41).

[124] Pāṣanḍi-naigama-śreṇī-pūga-vrāta-gaṇādiṣu,
Samrakṣet samayaṃ rāja dūrge janapadetāthā. (x, 2).

[125] Nija-dharmā-virodhena yastu sāmayiko bhavet,
Sopi yatnena saṃrakṣya dharmorāja kṛtaścayaḥ
(Saṃvidvyatikarma Prakaraṇa).

[126] Kulāni śreṇaya ścaiva gaṇascādhikṛtonṛpaḥ.
Pratiṣṭhā vyavahārāṇām gurvebhya stuttarottaraṃ. I, 7.

[127] Nṛpeṇādhikṛtāh pūgāh sreṇayotha kulānica
Pūrvam Pūrvam guru jñyeyam vyavahāra vidhaunṛṇāṃ — II 30
(Sādhāraṇa-vyavahāra-mātṛikā Prakaraṇa)
Pūgāh samūhāḥ bhinna jātināṃ bhinna vṛttināṃ
Ekasthāna nivāsināṃ yathā grāma nagarādayaḥ ;
Śreṇayo nānā jātināṃ eka jātināmapyeka
Jatiya karmopajivināṃ samghātaḥ (Mitākṣarā).

[128] Local Administration in Ancient India, pp. 129-130.

clearly indicated by Bṛhaspati when he says that before undertaking any public work the people have to enter into a written agreement through their representatives to the effect that "the construction of a sabhā (a house of assembly), of a shed for water for travellers, of a temple, of a tank or of a garden, relief to the helpless or poor, the performance of sacrificial rites, a common path or defence shall be undertaken by us in proportionate shares."[129] This gives us an idea of the varied character of the municipal functions of the local bodies compatible with their needs and social economy. One thing that is very remarkable in this list is that defence was a concern of the local bodies. This responsibility of organizing their own defence raises their importance as a factor in the government of the country. Prof. Mukherji further has shown how the South Indian inscriptions of the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. prove that the local assemblies employed compulsory labour for the maintenance of irrigation tanks and channels.

AUTONOMOUS TRIBES IN THE GUPTA EMPIRE

Such are some of the details of the self-governing corporations. These embody the time-honoured autonomous traditions of Aryan society. But apart from these, there were the Gaṇas, the autonomous tribes, who while acknowledging the suzerainty of the paramount king, that is of the Guptas, in principle they were actually oligarchical. Such were the Mālavas, Ārjunāyanas, Yaudheyas, Madrakas, Ābhiras, Prārjunas, Sanakānikas, Kākas, and Kharparikas, mentioned in the Allahabad inscription of Samudra Gupta. They had obviously ceased to be sovereign peoples, and had become merged in the empire of the Guptas. Their gradual subjection begun during the time of the Mauryas, became a *fait accompli* in the time of the Guptas. But in spite of that the coins of the Ārjunāyanas[130] and the Yaudheya votive tablets, discovered at Ludhiana[131] testify to their independent rule. It is not merely that they could issue their own coins. Their laws and customs had to be regarded as sacred. Hence the law books prescribe that the king should respect and defend the laws of the Gaṇas as also of other corporate bodies. Nārada

[129] *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 347–48.
[130] Smith, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, p. 160.
[131] *J.R.A.S.*, 1897, p. 887.

had the case of Gaṇas particularly in mind when it ruled that "among the Naigamas, Śreṇis, Pūgas, Vrātas and Gaṇas, be they in fortified towns or villages, the king must maintain their laws."[132] Gaṇas were now included in the categories of common corporate bodies like the Puga, Vrāta, etc. This shows that the period that marked the glory of the Guptas and the consummation of the tributary system, witnessed the complete decay of the political Gaṇas.

KING AND LOCAL BODIES

Thus an examination of the nature and function of the local bodies leads to the conclusion that local government was as extensively practised as it was effective in the social economy. It wielded vast powers, and was essentially democratic in organization. That was indeed the foundation of ancient Indian polity. It supplied effective brake to the autocracy of the king. We have already observed how the king was allowed to impose his own authority upon them only in cases, where the local bodies were at variance with one another. According to Nārada royal interference could be justified only when the local bodies worked against the interests of the king or community, or armed themselves without sufficient cause, or quarrelled with one another or assumed an attitude of hostility towards the king or caused waste of public money, or acted in a way that was morally reprehensible or contrary to the dictates of religion as laid down in the Vedas or when owing to their mutual hatred members combined and boycotted one another.[133] Other Smṛtis, like the Viṣṇu[134] and Yājñavalkya[135] speak in the same strain. To sum up, therefore, the powers of the local bodies though self-sufficient in many things, yet had to acknowledge some limitation in the form of royal interference ; at the same time, though the king ruled over the country he had to recognize the limitations on his power in the form of the inviolable rights to self-government of the local bodies. This relation between the Central and local authorities raises the question as to the nature of state and its sovereignty.

[132] *Ibid.*, x, 2.
[133] *Narada*, x, 4–7.
[134] *Narada*, v, 167.
[135] *Ibid.*, II, 187.

SCOPE OF STATE SOVEREIGNTY

What then was the position of the state in the contemporary society ? We have argued that the state as represented by the king had attained to a position, where it could dictate terms to religion. That is to say the policy that the king's government, adopted to secure the good of society, consisted not in identifying its interests with those of any one religion or sect, but with those of all religions and sects alike. Public law or Dharma came in also to its aid, when it tried to drop its moral and religious elements, and showed a regard for the customs and usages of local areas and social groups. It became at the same time increasingly secular and positive, and therefore affected the life and conduct of the people far more than it did even before. That was because the titles of law became clear in their scope and application. With its control, however slight it might be, over religion secured by the policy of religious tolerance, and with the weapon as potent as the systems of positive law, the state to some extent approximated to what we call today the sovereign state. Today sovereignty of the state is founded primarily upon its power to make and enforce laws, order groups, control religion and direct the main currents of social life besides other subsidiary activities. If there was ever an age in ancient India when the state could dominate the life of society, it was this ; for, almost all the factors to implement the supremacy of the state were present.

But when we think of ancient Indian state, we think of the king, who was the symbol and embodiment of the state. Therefore we have to see whether the king wielded all those powers which today constitute sovereignty. It was Nārada, who ruled that the king has to maintain the established usage of the various social groups and corporations like those of the atheists, outcastes, merchants, traders, tribal oligarchies, etc.[136] Yājñavalkya maintained that the king must "discipline and establish on the path of their duty all such as have strayed from their own laws be they families, castes, guilds, associations or people of certain districts."[137] These legal rulings appear to impair the sovereignty

[136] Pāṣanḍi Naigama Śreṇi Pūga Vrāta Gaṇādiṣu ;
Saṃrakṣet Samayaṃ rājā Dūrge janapade tathā. (x, ii).
Pāṣandi Naigamā-dīnām sthiti samayamucyate. (x, i).

[137] I, 361.

of the king by circumscribing his power to make laws. For, he found that he had to maintain the respective laws of social groups, corporations or local areas. But in point of fact it meant that the king was in a position to co-ordinate the laws of social groups and corporations and enforce them in a manner that was conducive to the good of all. That is why Yājñavalkya as we have noted already maintained that the laws of the king or what was Rājakṛta had a binding force equal to that of established usage.[138] And Nārada and Yājñavalkya have unequivocally maintained that the king has to keep people to their particular affiliations. Thus the retention of local usage and laws of corporations, atheists, etc. did not impair the competence of the king to make laws. More than that, their retention and co-ordination was necessary to the end of maintaining a policy of tolerance. We have already observed, the policy was effective to the degree, that local usage and customs were maintained intact and wisely co-ordinated. It was, therefore, by proclaiming a policy of religious tolerance that the king ordered groups and controlled religious life.

In a situation where the king held the balance even between religions, became the fountain of justice, directed the government and both framed and executed laws, we could with some propriety say that he was, in that situation sovereign; and because his sovereignty was effective through a Rāṣṭra, i.e. a governmental organization, the Rāṣṭra or the state became the supreme organization in society. Of course its supremacy was co-extensive with that of the royal power. To conclude, sovereignty in ancient Indian polity was sovereignty of the King, who was the Cakravartin, the Dharmapravartaka, the maker of the age, a god in human form, the Lord of the land and water, and the source of law and justice. Even as such he could not dictate to society. His sovereignty or supremacy consisted in being the supreme arbiter of society, that is, of social groups, of social institutions, as of individuals regarding their claim and interests. And his empire was Maṇḍala.

[138] Nijadharmā-virodhena ya stu sāmayiko bhavet;
So pi yatnena samrakṣya dharma rājakṛta śca yaḥ.

PART 2

INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY

CHAPTER VIII

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY

ARAB CONQUEST OF SIND

THE Muslims entered India for the first time when the Caliph of Baghdad commissioned Muhammed-ibn-Qasim to invade Sind in A.D. 712. Some Arab merchants trading by sea with the west coast of India had been robbed by Indian pirates, and the Caliph held the King of Sind responsible for it. But since the King did not punish the pirates and compensate the Arab merchants, an expeditionary force under Muhammed-ibn-Qasim was sent against him. It was eminently successful, and the small Kingdom of Sind was conquered and annexed to the vast dominions of the Caliph, that now extended from the Indus to the Pyrennees. The Arab rule in Sind continued for almost a century and a half. With the weakness of the central authority at Baghdad, and the disruptive forces let loose in the Caliphate their control over Sind gradually slackened and ultimately disappeared.

THE TURKS CONQUER AFGHANISTAN

Meanwhile the Central Asian Turks who had embraced Islam, and acquired some political influence and authority in the Caliphate founded some independent kingdoms in Central Asia, bordering India and Afghanistan. They conquered Afghanistan from its Hindu rulers, who were forced to shift to the western Punjab. The Turks thus established themselves in Afghanistan, which supplied them with a splendid base for invading India through the Khyber Pass. That was accomplished in the tenth century, and synchronized with a period of political disintegration in Northern India. It was Harṣa who had unified Northern India into an empire. After his death in A.D. 647 his empire fell to pieces, and small kingdoms arose all over the Indo-Gangetic plains from the Punjab to Assam, and from the Himalayas to the Vindhya mountains. Their struggle for

supremacy and internecine wars made them weak and disunited, and the Muslim Turks who had gradually built up their power in the trans-frontier regions of India took advantage of it. They made frequent raids into the Punjab, and it was Mahmud of Ghazni, who in the first quarter of the eleventh century extended his raids beyond the borders of the Punjab as far east as Benares and as far south as Somnath in Gujerat. His successes thoroughly demoralized the petty kings of Northern India, and at the time of his death Muslim rule was established over the Punjab. For a century and a half after his death Muslim rule in India remained confined to the Punjab only. Towards the closing years of the twelfth century a new invader Muiz-ud-din Muhammed Ghori appeared on the scene. He came into conflict with the Hindu rulers of Delhi and Ajmer, and conquered the country between the Ganges and the Jumna. His general, Qutab-ud-din Aibak further added to his conquests, and laid the foundations of the first Muslim empire in India, which is known as the Delhi Sultanate.

THE DELHI SULTANATE

In 1206 the Delhi Sultanate was established under the first Muslim Sultan, Qutab-ud-din Aibak. It took nearly a century — the whole of the thirteenth century, for the Delhi Sultans to conquer and consolidate their rule in Northern India. The Deccan, or the country south of the Vindhya mountains was conquered in the first half of the fourteenth century, but could not be held and ruled from Delhi for long. It broke away in the second half of the fourteenth century, and became independent. Two big and powerful kingdoms, one Hindu, and the other Muslim arose there, and the history of the following two centuries of the Deccan is filled with conflicts due to their rivalry and struggle for supremacy. About the close of the fourteenth century the Delhi Sultanate disintegrated, partly as a result of the terrific pressure that the needs of a huge empire exerted on its system of administration, which had lost its driving force and energy, and became stagnant ; and partly because of the invasion of a more virile race of people who are known as the Mughals. Though Muslims themselves they differed in language, culture and race from the degenerate Muslims of India who had entered the country as conquerors five centuries before.

THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

During this period, as a result of the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate independent kingdoms had sprung up in Northern India, and the political unity had been lost. Northern India had relapsed once again into the condition in which Mahmud of Ghazni found it during his invasion five centuries before. That made the task of the Mughal invaders easy. In 1526 Ibrahim Lodi, the Afghan ruler of Delhi, and in 1527 Rana Sangram Singh, the valiant leader of the Rajputs and King of Rajputana, were defeated by Babar, the King of Afghanistan. Babar had been ruling over Afghanistan for some time, and was descended from the two great conquerors of Asia, Chingiz Khan on his mother's side, and Ameer Taimur on his father's side. With his victory over the Afghans and the Rajputs the Mughal empire in India was founded. A dynasty of illustrious Mughal Emperors ruled over the country for about two centuries, and unified the whole of India politically as it had never been since the days of the Mauryas in the third century B.C., and the Guptas in the fourth century A.D. It was Akbar the Great who built up an empire which included Afghanistan, Kashmere and the whole of the Indo-Gangetic plains, bounded by the Himalayas on the north, the Vindhya mountains on the south, the Bay of Bengal on the east and the Arabian sea on the west. He gave it a system of administration and political solidarity, which endured long after him. Even when the Mughal Empire fell to pieces about the middle of the eighteenth century the system of government did not topple down. The Marathas adopted it, and after them, the British utilized it for their administrative set-up. That was the importance of the work of the Mughals. But the Mughal government was the fully developed form of what the earlier Muslim rulers had tried to build up in India ever since the time of Mahmud of Ghazni and Qutab-ud-din Aibak. That form of government, that polity which the Muslims founded and developed in India, is described in this study as Indo-Islamic polity.

INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY AND ITS FEATURES

The state with its system of government that the Muslims built up in India can be best called Indo-Islamic, because of the sources

of its origin and constituent elements. It embodied a synthesis of the political ideals, traditions and institutions that had come down from the ancient past, the hoary antiquity of India's history, and those that the Muslims brought with them, and introduced in India, after they established their rule there. This synthesis, slow and halting, took six centuries to evolve. It started with Mahmud of Ghazni about A.D. 1000 and assumed its final shape at the end of Akbar's reign about A.D. 1600 in round figures.

The Muslims brought with them certain political concepts and institutions. These had their birth and growth in Arabia and Persia, and were embodied in the political institutions of the Caliphate. The structure of the early Islamic state founded by Prophet Muhammed, and subsequently continued and modified in the regime of the first four Caliphs, the Umayyeds and the Abbasids, supplied the pattern for the Muslim rulers of India. Their administrative organization followed the lines of what was in vogue under the Caliphate. Their systems of public and private law were those that had developed in Arabia on the basis of the rulings and teachings of Prophet Muhammad, and subsequently elaborated by the interpretations and commentaries of the juristic schools led by Abu Hanifa and others. Their fiscal system drew upon what obtained in the Caliphate and developed under the exigencies of conquest and expansion, that had to be maintained out of state revenues for purposes of the defence and spread of the Faith. These institutions could not be introduced into the Indian Governmental system without modification.

The Indian environment of the Muslim rulers was very different from the environment of the Caliphate. The presence of a vast population of non-Muslims, who had a distinct religion, philosophy, culture and political institutions, and who could not be cowed down to easy submission and conversion created extremely difficult problems for the Muslim rulers. For one thing, the whole of Northern India could not be conquered and ruled by the Muslim Kings of Delhi at any time. There were always pockets of independent territories, which defied their power. On the other hand the Deccan, which was far away from Delhi, could neither be conquered nor ruled for any length of time. Besides, the Muslims had settled down in the country and lived side by side with the non-Muslims as the children of the soil. Common environment and the natural human

urge for contact gradually wore out the barriers of religion and political subjection. There were efforts from both the sides for adjustment of interest, and for mutual understanding. The Muslim rulers became consequently less intolerant and more accommodating in their attitude towards their Hindu subjects. For about two centuries that intervened the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate and the rise of the Mughal Empire under Akbar, the whole country, Northern India and the Deccan, was honeycombed with small regional states in many of which Hindu kings ruled with Muslims as their subjects, and vice versa. In a political situation like this the Hindu and Muslim kings could not possibly rule with a partisan spirit and communal outlook, if they wanted their rule to last and be popular. That called for a compromise, and this spirit gradually expressed itself through a synthesis in all spheres of life — in state, in language and literature, in art and architecture, in religion, and in dress and modes of life. Here we are only concerned with one aspect — how this synthesis manifested itself through the political traditions and institutions during the period of Muslim rule in India. We have to study how the political traditions and institutions that were Indian in origin, were adjusted and woven into a system of government that was alien and Islamic in origin. It is therefore necessary to understand in broad outlines the political development of India, before the advent of Islam, and the political tradition and institutions of India as the Muslims found them when they established their rule in India.

FEATURES OF THE STATE IN ANCIENT INDIA

(a) *Vedic polity*

The state in ancient India had a long period of development, which can be traced to the Vedic age, about 1500 B.C. Vedic polity took the form of tribal monarchy, and was known by the generic name of Rāstra, i.e. the territory ruled by the Rājā or King. The King was often elected, and also could be deposed, with the common consent of the tribal leaders, congregated in assemblies, one of which was known as the Sabhā, that is, the council of the illustrious or important men, and the other as the Samiti, i.e. the assembly of the people. Kingdoms were small and compact, composed of Visas or districts, and Grāmas or villages, all being Aryan settlements

of various sizes. The king received free-will offerings from the people, which formed his revenue and with which he maintained his dignity. He was the leader in war, and defender of the Aryan "cult" and "colour" against the Dravidians, the original inhabitants of the country, who were detested as "black-skinned niggards" and "Phallus-worshippers." The Aryans had to fight to conquer the country from them. The importance of the king as leader in war, and protector in peace, gave him a social prestige and authority over the tribe, that was unknown, when the Indo-Aryans entered India. Kingship thus very soon became an institution of the highest social significance. But even then, it was secular in character.

The Indo-Aryan village or Grāma which was the unit of the state or Rāstra, had its own Sabhā, a council which was the centre of the corporate life of the village. Here people met to discuss common affairs and problems, to organize their activities, and to decide the disputes arising out of ill will, regarding property, etc. The Sabhā was the embodiment of the village autonomy, which was the outstanding feature of Indo-Aryan polity. The headman of the village was known as Grāmaṇi. He did not exercise any authority, nor was he the petty tyrant that he became in the British days. He was the leader of the village militia in times of war, when the king called for military service, and was one of those who elected the king.

(*b*) *Rise of extensive states*

This simple form of Indo-Aryan or vedic polity changed as the Aryans expanded and occupied the whole of the Indo-Gangetic plains. That had been accomplished before 1000 B.C., and this age which is known as the Brāhmaṇic age recorded remarkable developments in the form and functions of the state in ancient India. For one thing the small and compact Vedic Rāstras grew immensely big; their governments assumed more and more authority; and kingship which had been so far elective became hereditary. The popular assemblies of the vedic times, the Sabhā and Samiti continued to exist but they became more ornamental and functioned as advisory bodies. Their importance diminished and they were eclipsed by a new set of people — the king's officers called Ratnins or, literally, "jewel-bearers." They assisted the king in the performance

of his duties and exercise of his authority. They appear to have been in charge of the different departments of the royal government as is evident from their designations. The commander-in-chief of the army was known as Senāni, the collector of royal revenues as Bhāgadugha, the controller of accounts as Akshāvāpa, the court chronicler as Suta, the chamberlain as Ksattri, and the king's priest as Purohita. These Ratniṇs, in the later periods came to be known as Mantriṇs or ministers of the king. The Grāmas enjoyed their autonomy, with their corporate life focussed in the Sabhā. The rise of extensive states, the growth of monarchical power, hereditary kingship, and the emergence of an executive comprising the highest functionaries of the state indicated the degree of development that vedic polity had reached in the Brahmanic age. But that was not all. A theory of kingship had been also formulated and it resembled the Social Contract Theory propounded by Hobbes twenty-five centuries later. The origin of kingship was traced to a covenant formed in a sort of pre-political "state of nature." The covenant which was indissoluble conferred on the king the collective power of the community, voluntarily resigned. A code of religious ritual arose for the performance of the anointing ceremony of the king, which marked his investiture of office that was now regarded as sacred and held for the peace, security and well-being of the people. If a king misused his powers, he was likely to be deposed as well. Kingship as an institution thus acquired a philosophical foundation, a religious sanction and a popular appeal in this age.

Side by side with the monarchical states non-monarchical republican states had also come into existence in the different parts of the country. They were tribal republics or Gaṇa Rāstras that had arisen in the regions north of the Himalayas, beyond Kashmere, in the northern parts of the Gangetic plain and in the plains of the Indus and its tributaries. In one such republic, Gautama the Buddha was born. They were known by their tribal names such as the Sakiyas, Mallas, Vajjis, Uttarakurus, Uttara Madras, etc. They were small republics, sometimes smaller than the Cantons of Switzerland. They frequently met in their assembly halls, where practically all the able-bodied men of the tribe congregated and disposed of, in a general way, the most important matters affecting the life and well-being of the tribe. They also elected a number of executives, whom they called their chiefs or leaders, and who formed a sort of

board for carrying on the government of the tribe. These republican tribes were highly conscious political groups, and the most solidly united warlike communities ever known in ancient India. Such were the developments of Indian polity in the Brahmanic age.

(c) *First historical empire*

In the subsequent age from 700 to 200 B.C. a new ideal of polity, the ideal of empire, that is, the whole of India united under the rule of one king, came into prominence. The king was to achieve that by means of "Digvijaya"— literally conquest of the quarters or world conquest, and assume the title of "Chakravartin," or "Samrat", or emperor. That was the result of the struggle for supremacy among the extensive and powerful monarchical states, which had by now a fairly long period of existence. Further, India's contact with the Persian empire and Alexander, paved the way for it. Alexander could not proceed beyond the Punjab owing to the stubborn resistance that he encountered from some of the republican tribes there. His example had a strong appeal for the Indian kings, and after his return Candra Gupta Maurya embarked on a career of conquest — conquest of the quarters or Digvijaya in the Indian political terminology — which made him master of a vast empire. He reconquered all the territories beyond the Indian frontier as far as the Bamian Pass and the Pamir Plateau from the Greek general of Alexander, Seleukos Nikator, and entire Northern India and the Deccan peninsula. This vast empire was ruled from Pataliputra — modern Patna in Bihar — which he made his capital. His son Bindusara and grandson Asoka continued and consolidated it, and added to its power and prosperity. It maintained contacts with the contemporary rulers of Asia Minor, Egypt and Greece, who are mentioned in the edicts of Asoka.

The Mauryan empire comprised numerous autonomous tributary states whose rulers owed allegiance to the Maurya overlord. The emperor now was the king of the Brahmanic age, elevated to the highest pedestal of sovereignty and political glory. His person came to be invested with a halo of sanctity, and his office with a divine sanction. He figured as the saviour of the social and moral order, the protector of mankind, and "the maker of the age." With such prestige attributed to him, and with his sovereign power derived

from the divine will, the king was likely to become a thorough-going despot. To prevent such a result a code of duties and ideals of the king and the ends of governmental power was formulated, with a strong stamp of religious and social sanction. The king was to be carefully trained from his boyhood. It was emphasized that the ideals and duties of the king were to serve the people in a spirit of self-dedication. His office and power were a sacred trust to be used for the well-being of the people and not of his own. He had to take a solemn oath to that effect at the time of his coronation, which in a public and ceremonious way gave religious sanction to his power and office. Further he was to rule according to the laws, which had a religious origin, and according to the traditions and customs of the groups and communities which were inviolable. Thus the absolute power and autocracy of the king were restricted and polarized by the prescriptions of religion, force of established laws and customs, and a social expectation that he should not act in a manner contrary to these. He was assisted in his duties and functions by a council of ministers, Mantri Parishad, which controlled the different departments of government, and exerted a stabilizing influence over the king, if he was inclined towards self-indulgence and autocracy.

(*d*) *Kingship of Asoka and Mauryan government*

With the rise of the empire ideal, republican traditions were discredited, and practically all the tribal republics were integrated into the Mauryan imperial system and allowed to exist as autonomous units acknowledging suzerainty of the emperor. Thus the political ideal of royal sovereignty or universal sovereignty of the king emerged triumphant. The king was the symbol of the state, and the state connoted universal empire. Royal sovereignty, therefore, attained a character and competence it had never had before. A king like Aśoka could undertake the regulation of the moral conduct and social behaviour of his people, proclaim and enforce through his state department, what was righteous and unrighteous and therefore forbidden, regard his subjects as his children, and impress upon all that he was "the beloved of gods" and most benevolent of kings. He saw the importance of religious "concord" in an empire where people professed different religions,

like Buddhism, Jainism, and Brāhmaṇical Hinduism, and he enforced it with a firm hand. The pattern of governmental action and the ideal of kingship that he set endured long after him, and became the hallmark of ancient Indian polity.

The government under the Mauryas became a centralized and well-balanced machinery consisting of the central and local administrations. The central administration consisted of a number of departments, hierarchical in set-up, with bases in the provinces and apex in the capital. The local administration fell into two categories, one for the urban and the other for the rural areas. The detailed accounts of the municipal administration of Pataliputra, the capital city of Chandragupta Maurya, described by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador of Seleukos Nikator, at the court of Chandragupta, leave no doubts about the elaborate democratic set-up of the city administration on modern lines. It may also be presumed that the capital city supplied the pattern for other cities of the empire. The rural areas were looked after with equal care. Works of public utility, hospitals for men and animals, wells, tanks, roads with trees planted for shade on both sides, places of rest for travellers, and mileposts to mark the distance, schools, and public parks were built extensively. The state, though monarchical in character and universally sovereign in competence, became essentially what we now call a welfare state. And these traditions were handed down to posterity, for kings to follow.

(e) *Saka empire*

After the Mauryas came the Sungas, the Kanvas, the Satavahanas and the Kushans, who built up empires between the second century B.C. and the fourth century A.D., but none of these empires lasted as long as, or covered as much of India as, the Maurya empire. Generally speaking their rulers showed a partisan spirit as followers of Brahmanism or Buddhism in the formulation and execution of their state policies, and strove to promote the ideals of their own religion. Some of the kings of this period assumed the titles of "Deva-putra" or Son of God, "Deva-Vrata" or follower of God, "Mahā-brahmana" or great Brahmin. In political theory, the kings, now, were described as "great gods in human form." These developments pointed to the partisan character of the state during this

period. The state, now, according to political theory, comprised seven constituents, viz. the king, the ministry, the allies or allied states, the finances, the system of law and justice, the fortifications or defensive works and the military forces. By now definite concepts about inter-state relations had also developed, and what we call diplomacy today, had assumed certain objectives and followed certain patterns. Considerations of popular well-being and moral justification restrained what is described as "the law of the jungle" or "the logic of the fish" or the natural law that the strong must prey upon the weak, in inter-state relations. By the end of the third century A.D. therefore Indian polity had attained a wonderful richness and maturity both in theory and practice.

(*f*) *Gupta imperialism — Divine Right of Kings and religious tolerance*

At the beginning of the fourth century A.D. the Guptas founded their empire, which in many ways not merely equalled but even surpassed the achievements of the Mauryan empire. Their rule lasted for about two hundred years. During this period the whole of India was again united into one political unit. The empire, as before, was a feudatory system in form, and it had a government that became a model of efficiency and a welfare state. Its enlightened policy extended tolerance to all religions, patronage to arts and sciences, and support and security to the needy and the poor. It ushered in an age, which is known as the Golden Age of ancient India. The king therefore was veritably regarded by the people, as he had been described in theory, as a god in human form, because he was the most potent instrument for securing the social well-being and the happiness of all. And through the king, the state became once again, as in the time of the Mauryas, a welfare state and a symbol of the divine will. All through these ages, when the empires rose and fell, the villages retained their autonomous character, and functioned as little republics undisturbed in their life and economy. Indeed they had gained in maturity and importance from age to age, and remained as little havens of peace and security, because the laws of war and diplomacy strictly forbade oppression and spoliation of villages in any form. Thus by the end of the Gupta empire five important features marked the evolution of Indian

polity, viz. the ideal of empire, kingship as a symbol of divine will, the policy of religious tolerance, the institution of village autonomy, and the traditions of a welfare state. These political traditions, institutions and ideals supplied the patterns for the later ages.

GENESIS OF INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY

The empire of the Guptas disintegrated by the end of the sixth century. After them Harṣha in Northern India and Pulakesin in Southern India built up empires about the middle of the seventh century. Northern India and Southern India were never again united under one king till the time of the Mughals, nearly a thousand years later. In the eighth century the Arabs established their rule in Sind, but did not leave any enduring impression after their fall a century and a half later. Long afterwards when the Muslims had built up permanent dominions in India and adopted the country as their home they were influenced by the ancient political traditions and institutions of India which they utilized for purposes of good government. Therein lay the genesis of Indo-Islamic polity. Conquerors and rulers like Mahmud of Ghazni, Ala-ud-din Khilji, and Sher Shah laid the foundations, and Akbar completed the structure. The genius of the Muslims and the co-operation of the Hindus achieved in the sphere of polity, as in the spheres of art and architecture, language and literature, a synthesis which more than any thing else reveals the nature of relationships between the Hindus and Muslims in India for ages past. That synthesis which assumed the form of Urdu in the sphere of language, the Mughal and Rajput painting in the sphere of art, the Taj in the sphere of architecture and the Bhakti movement and Sikhism in the sphere of religion, assumed the form of Indo-Islamic polity in the sphere of government. It is a standing testimony to the genius of those Muslim rulers, who saw far beyond their narrow horizons of creed and kingship, and built up a common polity, which was neither Hindu nor Islamic, but which embodied the elements of both.

CHAPTER IX

ENVIRONMENT AND FEATURES OF PRE-ISLAMIC INDIAN POLITY

A STUDY of Indo-Islamic polity should start with a brief review of the form and features of ancient Indian polity, as the Muslims found it, when they entered India. The environment in which this polity had developed and functioned may also be outlined for a perspective. We need not go far back into the past history of India. But at least the political condition of India in the seventh and eighth centuries, and how the state was constituted and functioned, will be of some significance for a proper understanding of the subsequent developments that took place after the advent of Islam. Islam introduced into India certain political concepts and institutions. Their effectiveness, and the reactions that they produced, can be assessed only in the context of what obtained in India at that time. How far the political ideals and institutions of India in the seventh and eighth centuries were calculated to serve the best interests of the country, and maintain the freedom of its people, and what factors contributed to the success of Islam in conquering and establishing its rule in Northern India, will be a proper orientation for the purposes of our study. We have, that is to say, first to understand the factors that faciliated the advent of Islam into India, and whether those factors were operative in the political environment of Northern India.

INDIA AFTER THE DEATH OF HARṢA VARDHANA

With the death of Harṣa Vardhana in A.D. 647 Northern India lost the political unity that it had attained under him. Harṣa called himself "Sakala-Uttara-Pathes-vara" or the Suzerain Lord of All Northern India. That only meant that he was the Lord of the tributary or feudatory system comprising the whole of Northern India. But neither Harṣa nor the Guptas had built up an enduring system of centralized government. The system of government that they had established could not survive the

death of a strong king or dispense with the need for a powerful personality. In fact all the political systems of ancient India whether set up by the Mauryas, Guptas or Harṣa suffered from a peculiar weakness, which resolved them into tributary systems, or spheres of influence or in the phraseology of Kauṭalya, Mandalas. The basic fact of a Mandala or tributary system was the suzerainty of a powerful king, to whom a number of less powerful kings and rulers owed allegiance. These vassal chiefs preserved their kingdom, retained their entity and continued to rule not as an integral part of the suzerain's dominion but as an appendix to it. This fact deterred all efforts towards centralization which was further hampered by difficult physical barriers and vast distances that separated the units in the dominion of the suzerain. In spite of that however Northern India did not lapse into a condition of anarchy or confusion. After the death of Harṣa the vassal kings only became independent and ruled over their kingdoms as they did before.

The Deccan on the other hand had an independent and orderly political life right from the middle of the sixth to the end of the thirteenth century.[1] We have in a previous chapter indicated how contemporaneous with Harṣa's tributary system or Mandala there was the Mandala of the Cālukyas under Pulakesin, and how the Guptas had gradually built up their own empire by annihilating one after another different Mandalas like those of the Vakatakas and the Kṣatrapas. Thus while it is clear that the collapse of the Northern Mandala after the death of Harṣa did not lead to the disruption of political life in the whole of India, it is nevertheless true that the political disintegration of Northern India after the death of Harṣa was a prelude to an era of violent changes. For a little more than half a century later in A.D. 712 the Arabs took possession of Sind and Multan, and Islam had made its first entry into India.

Not long afterwards the remote outworks of India in the North-West, viz. Balkh and Afghanistan completely collapsed. A mighty storm was brewing between the Hilmand and the Oxus about this time, and the destruction that it wrought could be best understood in the context of the conditions prevailing in Northern India. Northern India during these centuries convulsed with spasms of

[1] H. C. A. Roy, *A Dynastic History of Northern India* pp. XXXIV—XXXV.

civil war and anarchy due to the rivalry of small states. The disintegration of Harṣa's empire had led to a general scramble for power, and from Kashmere to Maharashtra and from Sind to the Himalayas, there was in evidence that struggle for supremacy which was a phenomenon inseparable from the tradition of Digvijayas and Mandalas. From the consequent confusion slowly emerged four powerful Mandalas, viz. those of Kashmere, Kanauj, Bengal and Maharashtra.

THE RISE OF THE RAJPUTS

Indeed they were the new political groupings, precipitated by the operation of a host of factors some of them emerging into view for the first time. One such factor was the ascendancy of the Rajputs, who were till now not much heard of, though they were living in the country. A word about their origin may not be out of place here. Tod and many others would have us believe that they were foreigners, who had entered India in the sixth century A.D. Such a theory seems to be hardly tenable after the researches of Rai Bahadur G. H. Ojha who presents the story of the origin of the Rajputs in a new light.

The tribes known as the Rajputs, whose tales of heroism and self-sacrifice fill the annals of Medieval India, were not entirely exotic in origin. There were ancient tribes like the Yaudheyas and Arjunayanas in the time of the Imperial Guptas ; and the Sakkias, Mallas, Lichhavis, etc. in the time of the Imperial Mauryas, who resembled in their tribal organization and spirit the Medieval Rajput tribes. They could not have been extinct in the time of Harṣa. Further the ancient ruling dynasties of India always claiming to be Kṣatriyas with their vast families of dependents and kinsmen might have expanded in course of time to form sufficiently big groups with a distinct social status and characterized by a community of political interests.

This fact must have helped the formation and growth of Rajput tribes. Besides, for centuries preceding the time of Harṣa the Sakas, the Huns, etc. had entered India as conquerors and established their rule in various parts of the country. But though originally they came as conquerors and aliens, eventually they were absorbed into the Brahmanical social order. Consequently there must have

ensued inter-marriage between the Kṣatriyas of India and these foreigners, who in their warlike habits resembled the Kṣatriyas. The commingling of the Kṣatriyas and these foreigners might have resulted in the evolution of a distinct class, which in consequence of their political and military ascendancy must have won unique social recognition and prestige under the new appellation of Rajputs or sons of rulers.

Bearing these facts in mind we can also understand why the Rajputs play an important part in the political history of Medieval India. In the years following the disintegration of Harṣa's empire there arose a scramble for power. These princes inspired by the ideals of their caste and political traditions of their country that glorified Digvijaya or conquest of new areas, and aided by their loyal and warlike followers and kinsmen in clan formations found it easy to conquer and establish independent kingdoms for themselves. Thus petty principalities founded by different Rajput clans arose in all parts of Northern India and their mutual rivalry and fight for ascendancy gave little respite, prosperity and unity when the storm of the Muslim invasion broke upon them. With sufficient time and proper leadership an empire like that of Harṣa might have been built up, and the political forces that lacked coherence might have been adjusted and cemented into a system of comprehensive and unified control. Indeed the ascendancy of the Gurjar-Pratiharas of Kanauj, succeeded in building up such a system and their dominions comprised nearly the whole of Northern India. But it was very short-lived. The country ultimately lapsed into a condition of political instability, and the clannish spirit of the Rajputs substantially contributed to it. Hence when the Muslims invaded, they encountered isolated opposition from several Rajputs Kings. The Rajputs fought bravely, with a heroism that knows no parallel in this country and is rare in others. But they failed to develop a united front, and hence despite their dauntless courage and unstinted sacrifice they went down. It was again a fight for political supremacy between the foreigners who were the Muslims and the indigenous Hindus — the Rajputs, the one fighting with a religious fanaticism, well-organized and united, and the other with a parochial purpose. disorganized and disunited. That is the story of the Rajput-Muslim struggle for supremacy.

RIVALRY BETWEEN THE GURJARA–PRATIHARAS, PALAS AND RASTRAKUTAS

When the curtain rises after the death of Harṣa we find the confusion and scramble for power gradually yielding place to the seemingly stable political ascendancy of the Gurjara-Pratiharas who are established in Kanauj. They strove to establish a Mandala of their own, perhaps comprising Northern India. In doing so they inevitably came into conflict with the Palas in Bengal. A struggle for supremacy arose between the two and that was aggravated when the Rastrakutas of the South and Lalitaditya of Kashmere stepped in to take part in the politics of Northern India. Lalitaditya's activities were short-lived, and they were not resumed by his successors. Thus while Kashmirian interference in Kanauj was only a passing episode, the interference of the Palas and Rastrakutas had a more enduring influence. A detailed narrative of how Dharmapala of Bengal (A.D. 769–801) and the three Rastrakuta kings, Dhruva, Govinda III (A.D. 793–814) and Indra III, attempted aggrandizement at the expense of Kanauj will be out of place here. It may however be noted that this struggle between the three powers ultimately weakened the Pratiharas of Kanauj, and inclined them to pay little heed to the encroaching arms of Islam from the North–West. While they were engrossed in their own affairs the only barrier between them and the Muslims, viz. the Shahi kingdom of Afghanistan and the Punjab was gradually undermined. About the middle of the tenth century, the Gurjara-Pratiharas rose to supremacy in Northern India and the glamour of their power lasted for about fifty years. The beginnings of the eleventh century marked the invasion of India by Mahamud of Ghazni, and the Pratiharas fell before the mighty blows of this invader. Thus by the time Kanauj was free to look ahead for increase of power, Islam had crossed the inner frontier of India, and was already hammering at the gates of the sacred Sapta Sindhu country. It was only a question of time for the hardy North-Western Muslim converts to sweep everything before them and shatter the paramount power of Northern India with its seat at Kanauj. That was accomplished by the middle of the eleventh century. Thus the four hundred years following the death of Harṣa, form a momentous epoch in the history of Northern India, and because the politics of Northern

India left a lasting impress on the whole country, it has a significance for the whole of India far greater than most would imagine.

The period between the collapse of the Mandalas of Harṣa and the Pratiharas of Northern India recorded events like the rise and fall of the Pala and Rastrakuta feudatory systems, the breakdown of the frontier barriers, the impact of Islam, and the establishment of Islamic rule over a portion of Northern India. It is an era of great political convulsions and uncertainties, because Northern India was gradually losing touch with her past and was facing with consternation a future in whose womb lay the forces of Islamic expansion. If for nothing else an era that marked the first impact of Islam on India, and its preparation for dominating it would form an outstanding chapter in Indian history. It is for this reason that the period of the four hundred years following the death of Harṣa is so important.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANS-FRONTIER REGIONS FOR THE DEFENCE OF INDIA

The story of how Islam slowly bore down all opposition unnoticed by the powers of Aryāvarta and was safely established along the North-Western frontier, thus controlling, before the Pratiharas were aware of it, all the pivotal points of India is a story which is as grim in its details as it is distressing in its conclusion. It is the end of a long process, that reveals an attitude of increasing indifference on the part of the people in Northern India towards their own kinsmen, who were on the frontier regions and beyond. Islamic control of the frontier regions during these centuries as a preparation for further penetration forms only an episode in a long drama, of the influx of the Aryans, the Persians, the Greeks, the Scythians, the Yuehcis and the Huns. Islam was the last and next to the Aryan the most powerful of the human tidal waves that penetrated into India and moulded her destiny.

But while the narration of this story is of undoubted importance for a complete perspective, it is also important to bear in mind that it is the story of the influx and fusion of peoples and cultures as well as of unmitigated military conquest. In ancient times movement of peoples entailed conquest which always resulted in the fusion of races and cultures. The only exception, so far as this story

is concerned, was the case of Alexander, who started at the head of an army with the avowed purpose of conquest only. But even so as he proceeded from one country to another he founded towns after his own name and settled them with Greeks, whom he induced to marry wives of Asiatic origin. At any rate even Alexander's methods of building up of an empire extending from Greece to India were conceived on the lines of racial intermixture which alone is the right method of harmonizing interests of humanity with conquests and of creating a culture, in which there would be neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free. That was the nature of all pre-Muslim conquests of India. All the peoples that entered India yielded to biological necessity and adapted themselves to the general social economy of India, to enrich its heritage. The Greeks and the Persians, the Parthians and the Huns, whether across or within the frontier, were all absorbed into one Indian social system and professed Indian religions.

The countries which we know as Khotan, Afghanistan, Balkh, Kandahar, and Baluchistan, were all annexes of Indian civilization. The Greeks there had forgotten their proud ancestry long before Islam shattered the frontiers of Balkh and Afghanistan. The Persian and the Greek, the Saka and the Hun had all been absorbed by a catholic Indian culture to the making of which the Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian elements contributed substantially. This catholicity was its weakness. When Islam came, it offered, at the point of the sword, a substitute that was far more adhesive and forceful in character. Islam, therefore, could build up a position far more stable than any of its predecessors. From this point of view Islamic conquest of these regions was a greater danger to India than any other conquest that came before. Bearing this in mind we may pass on to narrate the story of this drama of which the advent of Islam was the last act.

ADVENT OF ISLAM FACILITATED BY THE LOSS OF POLITICAL CONTROL OVER AND BREACH OF CULTURAL AFFINITIES WITH THE TRANSFRONTIER REGIONS

The advent of Islam was possible in the same way as that of the earlier human tidal waves. Age-long traditions and the disturbed political condition obtaining in India, prepared the path for Islam.

The political system long in vogue — the Mandala system — stressed separatist tendencies. For, a feudatory system marked the sphere of influence of a paramount king, who had to retain independent administrative areas, under his vassals. Thus there could not develop that political integration, which characterizes a unitary state. They fell asunder as soon as the sphere of influence ceased to be.

If that was the political morale of feudatories, those who did not come within that category maintained an existence and pursued a purpose, very much like the men in a "state of nature." This absence of unitary outlook in Northern India always helped the influx of the foreigners. That was a sufficiently deplorable defect. To aggravate it the Brahmanical religion had built up a tradition of isolationism for ages past. It must not be forgotten that kinsmen of the Indians inhabiting the outlying countries of the Aryan pale — the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Khotan, etc. had long ceased to be regarded as a part of the Aryan people. The people there had come to be known as Mlechhas, and none cared for what happened to them. Aryavarta comprised, in the first century A.D. according to Manu, the land between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas, and between the two seas,[3] and did not extend beyond. The Hindukush limit of the Aryan country had long been forgotten. The Hindukush formed the limit during the Vedic and Brahmanic times. The Indo-Aryans had not spread far into the eastern and southern parts of India, and perhaps retained their relations with the kinsmen in the North-West. The memory of this relationship finds expression in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. Though severed from their kith and kin, by vast distances, and cold and bleak mountains, they manifested a consciousness of political, religious and racial affinity even as late as the time of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa in which Uttara Kurus and Uttara Madras have been mentioned as kith and kin of the Aryans of India living beyond the Himalayas.[4] Perhaps of these the Kurus and Madras of subsequent periods — inhabiting the Sutlej-Jumna basin were reputed offshoots.[5]

That they were considered as part of the Aryan community, and followed the same rites and ceremonies as their kinsmen south of the Himalayas is clearly mentioned in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. Living in small autonomous tribal groups of their own, perhaps like

[3] Manu, II, 22.

[4] *Ai. Br.*, viii, 14.

[5] A. A. Macdonell's *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 84; Vol. II, p. 123.

those which Sir A. Stein noted at the foot of the Hindukush (round about Dard, Darel, or Yasin)[6] they observed at the time of succession to the throne the same consecration ceremonies as were prescribed for all the Aryan peoples within or without the Indian frontier. Even then the country between the Saraswati and Drisadvati was considered as the Madhyadesa the sacred land of all Aryans and the home of Kuru-Panchalas, Vassas and Usinaras. The propriety of considering this country as the "Eternal Middle Country" rests on the assumption that its outlying flanks in the north and north-west comprised the countries as far as the Hindukush and Afghanistan, while, those in the east and south comprised the country as far as the Vindhya and the eastern ocean. It can, therefore, be safely asserted that till the time of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa the territories inhabited by the Aryans comprised the countries from the Hindukush to the seas, and from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas, and the people were aware of their common social and cultural affinity. The first break in this cultural affinity, must have occurred with the Persian conquest of the Hilmand - Indus regions. The eight provinces, viz. Bakhtri (Bactria), Haraiva (Herat), and Zerauka (Drangiana), Gandhara (Peshawar), Thatagu (Ghilzi and Hazara territory), Harahvaiti (district round Quandahar), Saka and Maka, mentioned in the Bahistan Rock, the Platform and the Tomb Inscriptions of Darius as forming a part of the Persian empire, perhaps comprised the whole land between the Hilmand and the Indus. This empire of Darius passed on to Xerxes (480 B.C.) for in his army against the Greeks fought the Bactrians, Sakai, Arcioi, Gandarioi, Dadikai, Kasipoi, Sarangai, Paktyes and Mykois, peoples just outside the Indian borderland. Indeed Achaemenian sway over this region lasted till 330 B.C. when Darius III summoned troops from this region to fight Alexander at the battle of Arbela.[7] And after the defeat of Darius III, Alexander conquered all these regions up to the banks of the Sutlej. It was Candragupta Maurya who recovered a portion of it, and it was held till the death of Aśoka whose efforts were responsible for the spread of Buddhism in these regions.

Thus before the influx of the Scythians and Yuehcis, this region contained a polyglot population comprising the Indo-Aryans, the

[6] Sir A. Stein, *Innermost Asia*, Vol. I, p. 20.
[7] *C. H. I.*, Vol. I., pp. 340–41.

Iranians and the Greeks — the Greeks because of the policy of Alexander who founded towns in all parts of his empire and settled them with Greeks and induced the Greeks to marry from among the people. The welter of peoples and cultures of this region made the orthodox followers of Brahmanism — the new form that vedic religion had assumed shrink from maintaining bonds of kinship with them. The people in these regions owing to their contacts with foreigners and foreign cults could have no single cult prevailing amongst them. Even that was so in the city of Taxila, at the time of Alexander's invasion. It is owing to the heterodox elements in their culture that there resulted a break in the affinities of these regions with the "Eternal Middle Country." The fact of political alienation of these regions, also reacted adversely upon cultural and religious affinities of the people there with people in the Middle Country. How it reacted upon the religious susceptibilities of the people is evident from the law codes. We have seen that Manu considered as the Aryan land that which lies between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas, the eastern and the western seas.

But even before Manu a tendency had been growing which regarded the regions lying between the Sutlej and Bihar, the Himalayas and the Vindhyas as the home of the Aryans who retained their culture intact. According to some it was limited to a narrower region, that between the Ganges and the Jumna.[8] There is nothing surprising in this idea of defining the extent of the Aryan country proper, if we remember the spirit of the contemporary Brahmanical faith with its orthodoxy, ritualism and contempt for the heretical creeds. But the emperors of the Maurya dynasty realized full well the strategic importance of the Hilmand–Indus regions for the political safety of Northern India. One of the earliest endeavours of Candragupta Maurya to build up a solid empire had been to wrest the Indus country — the Punjab — and Sindh from the Greeks, in which he succeeded with surprising ease. His endeavour to secure a scientific frontier, i.e. the Hilmand - Hindukush line had its fruition when Seleukos Nikator ceded after his defeat, Paropanisadai, Aria, and Arachosia with their capitals Kabul, Hirat, and Kandahar respectively. At any rate the value of these possessions and their significance to the Indian empire has been fully brought out by V. A. Smith. "The first Indian Emperor"

[8] Baudhayana, I, i, 2, 940 ; Vasistha I, 8–12.

he says "more than two thousand years ago, thus entered into possession of that scientific frontier sighed for in vain by the English successors and never held in its entirety even by the Moghal monarchs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."[9] These possessions of Candragupta passed on to his grandson, the Great Aśoka, who has left everlasting memories of his sway in his edicts along the North-Western frontier of India. The Buddhist missions that he organized came to these regions, as well as to many others beyond these and did useful missionary work. No authentic account of their activities could be found, but it can be safely assumed that a large part of the population here as elsewhere must have embraced Buddhism. Buddhism even penetrated into Khotan at this time; and tradition has it that the blinded son of Aśoka exiled from Taxila became the king of this country. Khotan not only professed an Indian religion,[10] it adopted Indian language, script,[11] and culture. Indeed Indians had in large numbers migrated into the country like the Chinese, and it was this country which became the base for the gradual penetration of Buddhism into China.

Thus in the reign of Aśoka political India extended as far as the Hindukush - Hilmand line — all bound together not merely by a recognition of Aśoka's sovereignty, but greater than that, by his Dhamma or law of piety and moral persuasion. The cultural link that had been broken by the orthodoxy of Brahmanical religion was thus restored by Buddhism under the leadership of Aśoka. The measure of unity thus attained by India proper and this annexe of India is clear when "Strabo speaking of the Oxus, states (XI, 509) that it formed a link in an important chain along which Indian goods were carried to Europe by way of the Caspian and the Black sea."[12] After the fall of the Maurya Empire the North-Western regions, that is to say between the Indus and the Hilmand-Hindukush line, perhaps with the exception of Kashmere, were ruled by one "Sophagasenus," i.e. Subhaga Sena. The affinity of this region to India proper was so strong and ancient that south of the Hindukush the country was regarded as India. Polybius writing about Antiochus III says that after having crossed the Hindukush,

[9] V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 126.
[10] Sir A. Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, Ch. VII.
[11] *Ibid.*, Kharosthi Inscriptions discovered by A. Stein.
[12] *C. H. I.*, p. 433.

Antiochus "descended into India."[13] But after Aśoka the history of the regions, lying between the Indus and the Oxus-Hilmand line, becomes confused owing to the civil wars and struggles for supremacy between the petty Indo-Bactrian kingdoms scattered over these regions, which was a legacy of Alexander's invasion. About 200 B.C. there arose two independent monarchies in these regions — Bactria and Parthia, both of which were wiped out of existence about 135 B.C. by the Sakas.[14] A little later they themselves were expelled by the Yuehcis so that they moved further eastward and fixed up their settlement on the Indus towards the beginning of the 1st century B.C. Maues their king wrested both Pushkalavati and Takshcila about 75 B.C. He was succeeded by Azes I, Azes II, and Gondophernes, who extended his rule in all directions. Perhaps the foundation of the Saka suzerainty in India by Azes I might have been commemorated by the establishment of the Saka era in 58 B.C.[15] And Gondophernes (or Godophara) ruled over a kingdom comprising the eastern part of Iran, the Kabul valley and North-West India. With all these conflicts and movements of people the territorial and cultural affinity of these regions with India must have been lost. But that was partially restored by the Kushans who came after the Sakas.

The Saka rule was eventually stamped out by the Kushans, who were spreading from Bactria. The founder of Kushan dominions in the Upper Kabul valley and Qandahar was Kujala Kadphises. He was followed by powerful conquerors like Wima Kadphises and Kanishka. With Kanishka the Kushan power reached its zenith and according to the testimony of the Sue Vihara inscription (of the eleventh year of Kanishka) his suzerainty was imposed on the lower Indus country. His dynasty continued to rule over these territories, that comprises the whole country between Bactria and the Indus, till the dynasty came to an end about the first quarter of the third century A.D. The next time we hear of the trans-frontier regions and their king, is when the Allahabad Prasasti of Samudra Gupta makes pointed reference to the "acts of respectful services that the Daivaputra-Sahi-Sahanusahis rendered to him." Who these Sahis were, it is difficult to ascertain. They might have been

[13] MacCrindle, *Ancient India*, Polybius, xi, 34.
[14] Le Coq, *Buried Treasures of Turkistan*, p. 21.
[15] C. H. I. Vol. I, p. 571.

the weak representatives of the Kushan dynasty. What is important is that the great Gupta emperor realized the importance of the frontier regions. But perhaps the Gupta sovereignty did not extend over the regions beyond the Indus valley or Kabul, and that too was short-lived. Their domination had certainly disappeared by the time of Candra Gupta Vikramaditya, and the Indian frontier was fast becoming an abandoned region in relation to Northern India.

About the time that the power of the Kushans declined one other branch of the Yuehcis — the Little Yuehcis were separated from their main branch, north of Hindukush and founded a kingdom to the south of the Hindukush with Peshawar as their capital. That is supposed to have taken place about A.D. 430.[16] But they too did not long retain power. Meanwhile a new nomadic people had been pressing the Yuehcis from beyond the Oxus. These were the Huns. After dislodging the Yuehcis they came in conflict with the Sassanid power established in Balkh and the Oxus valley, killed the Sassanid king Firoz I, and sent up one of their sections through the Hindukush into Afghanistan and India. They grew so powerful that from their headquarters at Bamiyan and Hirat they controlled a wide dominion "which extended from the borders of Persia and Khotan to Central India."[17] During these years of Yuehci and Hunnic ascendancy, the Sahis of Kabul sank to the status of vassal chiefs. But even the ascendancy of the Huns was as short-lived as that of the Little Yuehcis, and they gradually lost it in consequence of their constant conflicts with the Western Turks, the Sassaanid king Khushrau I (Anoshirvan A.D. 531–79), and Indian kings Yasodharman and Baladitya in which they suffered reverses. Soon after came the Turks who expelled the Epthalites from Transoxiana. When Hiuentsang came into this region he found that the whole country from Turfan to Merv and Lake Issykkul to the Hindukush was under their sway. To the south of the Hindukush was a powerful kingdom whose king according to Hiuentsang was a Kṣatriya. The kingdom touched Kashmere on the one side and Taxila on the other, and the Kṣatriya king was perhaps a Hun converted to Hinduism. Indeed the Huns had all been converted to Indian culture. It is these people whom the Vardhans had to fight to safeguard their kingdom. But Harṣa could not gain a foothold on the frontier so that the safety of Northern India remained

[16] H. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 58. [17] *Ibid.*

precarious, depending upon the power and disposition of the rulers established there.

By the middle of the seventh century the picture changed. The Turks were dislodged by the Chinese who extended their dominion even to the south of the Hindukush. Simultaneously the Arabs advanced northward through Persia and in the fifties of the seventh century they planted their power on the banks of Hilmand. And where were the Sahis ? They had not been completely wiped out of existence. They had retained their hold on Kabul during the past centuries of trouble and confusion. But when the advancing tide of Islam, dashed against them they bravely resisted it. For two hundred years (A.D. 650–860) these Sahi rulers of the Hilmand and Kabul valleys stubbornly opposed the expanding power of the Arabs. No one from India came to their help. None took any notice of it either ; because the political affinities with India had been broken long ago. In A.D. 870 Kabul fell ; and the irresistible advance of the Turks forced the Sahis to shift their capital to Udbhandapura or Ohind in the Punjab. Later on, they became known as Rais of Hindustan, and their rule came to an end with the defeat and death of Trilochanpala in the battle with Mahmud Ghazni in A.D. 1021. With their destruction the inner defence line of India had been completely destroyed.

That, in brief, is the history of the trans-frontier regions of India. Owing to the frequent influx of the invaders from Transoxiana and the lack of political unity of these regions with India proper, the frontier defence collapsed completely. For centuries past the cultural and political affinities between the trans-frontier regions and Northern India, had become weak and almost non-existent. People in Northern India did not feel concerned about the political destiny and cultural affiliations of the people who lived in the trans-frontier regions and professed the same faith. Their contacts with the foreigners and barbarous hordes of Central Asia, which had contributed to relax their adherence to the ways of life regarded as orthodox by the people in Northern India, had practically snapped the links of culture and religion that once bound them together. Besides, the central authority in Northern India after Samudragupta ceased to control the frontier regions. That was due partly to the lack of vision on the part of the later Guptas and partly to the insistent demands of Mandala politics on the energies and resources

of the Gupta emperors. After the Guptas, the Huns ruled the country; and the Vardhana ascendancy was, perhaps, too short-lived to reach the frontier regions. The absence of a definite frontier policy, devised and directed from Northern India, was responsible for the ascendancy of the Muslims in these regions and ultimately for clearing the way for their domination of Northern India.

But this was the North-Western episode; only one phase of the advent of Islam into India. The other phase had been accomplished more than a hundred and fifty years before the fall of Kabul. Sind had been conquered by the Arabs in A.D. 712; and a new factor had appeared in Indian politics. But the establishment of Islam in Indian territory, that is Sind "was the final act of a drama which began as early as the Caliphate of Umar in the year 15 A.H. (A.D. 636) with the Arab naval attack on Tanah modern Thana near Bombay and Baowas (Broach)".[18] Thus the entire North-Western outworks of India, the entire frontier regions passed under the control of the Muslims during the period under review, i.e. between A.D. 700 and 1050; and its consequences were far-reaching. After this survey of the situation in India in general and of the frontier regions in particular, let us pass on to a survey of the system of government of the country.

FEATURES OF INDIAN POLITY DURING THIS PERIOD (A.D. 700–1050)

Regarding the development of Indian polity of this period Dr. Beni Prasad remarks that "everywhere one meets with similar feudal conditions of suzerainty and vassalage, nearly the same high officers with similar designations, the same fiscal and judicial system and though not to the same extent, a similar attitude on the part of the state towards the people. Everywhere one meets with the same despotism — often benevolent but sometimes terrible and tyrannical. Everywhere is the same system of village administration — partly informal self-government and partly government, and supervision from the district, provincial and central headquarter." This picture may be true in broad outlines. But it is not possible to agree with Dr. Beni Prasad when he concludes that "monotony and stagnation seem to characterize the politics of these four

[18] H. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

centuries." For, at a time when the North was stagnating and her political vigour as well as inventiveness was departing, the South was developing new patterns of political organization, whose variety and richness were striking indeed. The degeneracy that had set, for example, in Kashmere forms a distressing contrast to the condition of affairs in the Rashtrakuta empire, in the same way as the decay of the Shahi government of the Punjab and Kabul is a contrast to the kingdom of Bengal. The most prominent feature of the political system of the South was the vigorous and extensive functioning of the self-governing institutions. The numerous inscriptions of Southern India give quite a full picture of the rural and urban areas, whose chief feature was a wide measure of self-government. There was co-operative effort in evidence almost everywhere. "It sought to better the condition of the people by founding institutions of social and material utility. The village council was more democratic and elective in the South than was usually the case in the North,"[19] and the epigraphic evidence adduced by Dr. Mukherji in his *Local Government in Ancient India* sufficiently substantiates it.[20]

POLITICAL CONFIGURATION OF INDIA

A consideration of the form and function of Indian polity, therefore, would postulate a consideration of the features that are common to the governments of states of Northern and Southern India and also those that were peculiar to any of them. These states were mainly the kingdoms of Kashmere, Kanauj, Bengal and Maharashtra.

The Rashtrakuta empire usually "extended over southern Gujarat, Marathi districts of the Central Provinces, Konkan, the whole of Maharashtra, practically the whole of the states of Hyderabad, Karnatak and portions of Mysore. Its northern boundary extended from Cambay to Hoshangabad; the eastern boundary, which is rather difficult to determine precisely ran through Hoshangabad, Nagpur, Chanda, Warangal and Cudappah. The southern boundary was formed partly by the Northern Pennar, beyond which extended the Bana and the Nolamba principalities, and partly by an imaginary

[19] Altekar, *Rastrakutas and Their Times*, p. 150.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 200 et seq.

line starting from the sources of the Northern Pennar and passing through Chitaldurg to the Arabian sea. The western boundary was, of course, the Arabian sea."[21] If that was the extent of the Rastrakuta empire, the extent of the Pala empire comprised the whole of Bengal and Bihar. Gopala (A.D. 765) the founder of the empire ruled over Bengal and Magadha,[22] and in the Khalimpur grant his successor Dharmapala tells us that "with a sign of his gracefully moved eyebrows he installed the illustrious king of Kanyakubja, who readily was accepted by the Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yadu, Yavana, Avanti, Gandhara and Kira kings bowing down respectfully with their diadems trembling, and for whom his own golden coronation jar was lifted by the delighted elders of Pancala.[23] Perhaps far beyond the vast territories of Bengal and Bihar his influence had been extended into the Doab and contiguous countries. As regards the Gurjara-Pratiharas, it was not before A.D. 836 that they captured Kanauj, and under their two great representatives, Bhoja and Mahendra Pala, they succeeded in establishing an empire in Hindustan that extended from the Karnal district in the Punjab to Bihar and from the Kathiawar peninsula to North Bengal.[24] "In the first half of the eighth century Kashmere became one of the strongest powers in Asia,"[25] and made wide conquests. Kanauj in the Doab, Turkharistan in the Oxus valley and Darddesa in the upper Kishen-Ganga valley appear to have been conquered. She maintained diplomatic relations with China and Bhutan. But gradually her territory and influence diminished, more on account of her internal troubles than any external causes. As regards the Shahis, they were once ruling over the Punjab and Kabul but they were gradually dislodged from Kabul by the Muslims, who established their power there and the Shahis had to remain content with the Punjab only. They lost their extensive dominions on the Kabul and Hilmand rivers and what remained to them and specially under Jaipala, "extended in length from Sirhind to Lamghan and in breadth from the kingdom of Kashmere to Multan."[26] South of Multan the country of Sind belonged to the Muslim Arabs. Such was the political configuration of India during these centuries.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[22] H. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, pp. 279–84.
[23] Khalimpur Plate of Dharmpala, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 243–54.
[24] H. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 570.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[26] Briggs, *Frishta*, Vol. I, p. 15.

FORM OF INDIAN POLITY : NO LAW OF SUCCESSION

Monarchy

The prevalent form of Indian polity during these centuries was monarchy, and monarchy of a benevolent type. Though the tradition that the dying king always nominated his successor obtained almost everywhere, yet the element of popular or ministerial choice was not totally extinct. In the Khalimpur grant it is pointedly mentioned that the *Matsya Nyaya* came to be so much detested that the people, to get out of this "state of nature" elected the first king of Bengal called Gopala. The same circumstances brought about the election of Yasaskara in A.D. 939 to the throne of Kashmere.[27] Regarding the question of succession, Lalitaditya Muktapida ruled that "the elder should be placed on the throne . . . . Do not make the younger, king. If, however, through a fault of judgment this should happen, then his commands should be obeyed, and he (himself) protected, though he may be of bad character."[28] The feudatories and ministers also sometimes elected the ruler. When the Rastrakuta king Amoghavarsha III was installed in A.D. 936 the feudatories and ministers took a prominent part.[29] It is not always again that the first son succeeded to the throne. In the Rastrakuta empire Govinda II selected a younger son of his to succeed him. On the whole, while kingship was hereditary, for the Muslim writers observe that "the princes named their own successors,"[30] and there was hardly any law of succession. Public opinion countenanced the succession of the eldest as also of the ablest and most deserving ; and since public opinion was always articulate or strong, its sanction depended upon the tact of the man who ascended the throne by any irregular or questionable methods. It is well known, for example, that ministers often usurped the power of the kings. The end of the Maurya, Sunga, Kanva, and Vardhana kingship resulted in ministerial usurpations. And in these centuries the history of Sind and Kashmere contained instances of ministerial usurpation also. The Brahman

[27] Stein, *Raja-tarangini*, Ch. V, pp. 461–66 ; Ch. VI, 2–4.

[28] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, pp. 356–58.

[29] Deoli Plate, *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IV, p. 90—" सामन्तैरथ रट्टराज्य महिमालम्वाथ मभ्यर्थित: । "

[30] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I, p. 6.

minister of Rai Sahasi of Sind usurped his master's throne and so did Sambhuvardhana the minister of the Kashmerian king Cakravarman (A.D. 935). This testifies to the enormous power wielded by ministers.

Ministry

Next to the king were his ministers and feudatories, and their number depended upon the strength and extent of the kingdom. The Rastrakutas had several ministers and their number perhaps depended upon the needs of the kingdom. There was the prime minister, who enjoyed "the status of a Mahāsāmanta entitled to Pancamahāsabdas....also saluted by the feudatory chiefs of the imperial power."[31] He often represented the king in his absence or illness; and became the regent when the heir to the throne was young. Next to him perhaps came the Mahāsandhivigrahika or the chief foreign minister, who controlled several Sandhivigrahikas. Their chief function was to transact diplomatic business. There was also a chief justice who is mentioned in the Sanjān plates of Amoghavarsha I. Not less important than any of these and from certain considerations perhaps more important was the commander-in-chief designated Sachiv by Sukra, and Kampana by Kalhana.[32] The Purohita was, since early times, an important person, and hence he must have formed a member of the ministry. According to the Multai plates the office seems to have been maintained by the Rastrakuta king Nannaraja in A.D. 708.[33] The Amatya though not mentioned by any Rastrakuta record, could not have been omitted from the Rastrakuta ministry. He happens to be in charge of the royal revenues in one of the eleventh century records,[34] and bears the name of Mahāksapatalika or Sāsanādhikārin in some of the contemporary dynastic documents.[35] Last but not the least was the Bhāndāgārika[36] who was in charge of the royal treasury. These make a list of seven ministers and that was in the most powerful kingdom of the South. In the North, Kalhana mentions that an equal number of ministers served the state of Kashmere. These

[31] Altekar, *Rastrakutas and Their Times*, p. 165.
[32] Stein, *Rajatarangini*, vii, 365.
[33] *Ind. Ant.*, XVIII, p. 230.
[34] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, 225.
[35] *Ind. Ant.*, VIII, p. 11.
[36] Figures in Silhara Records as also in Gahadwal Copper Plates.

were the Dharmādhyaksa, Dhanādhyaksa, Kosādhyaksa, Chamupati, Duta, Purodhā and Daivajña. It was Jalauka, the son of Aśoka, who instituted eighteen offices.[37] King Lalitaditya, however, had Mahāpratipîda or high chamberlain, Mahāsandhivigrahika or minister for peace and war, Mahasvasāla or chief master of the stables, Mahābhāndāgāra, the lord high treasurer, and Mahāsādhanabhāga, whose function is difficult to ascertain, besides perhaps a prime minister, called Sarvadhikāra.[38] The Mantri[39] and the Amatya[40] appear to have been two different ministers of the state, though the names could be taken for general designation of ministers. In the reign of Avantivarman (A.D. 856–883) the Mantri Suravarman, a stepbrother of the former, enjoyed wide powers of Yuvaraja,[41] which was also a rank of distinction in the state. The commander-in-chief was designated Kampanādhipati.[42] The Pratihāra was the chamberlain and was an important official. In Sind the chamberlain Chach usurped the throne, and in Kashmere the chamberlain after the death of Avantivarman in A.D. 883 secured the kingdom for Avantivarman's son Sankara Varman. Sankara Varman instituted two new offices, viz. the Attapatibhāga or the share of the lord of the market and Grihakritya[43] or domestic affairs, headed by two ministers. The latter was called Grihakrutyādhikara[44] and the treasurer was called Ganjāvāra[45] or Kosādhyaksa.[46] The Rājasthāna was perhaps the head of justice.[47] These ministers make in all a total of eight, and thus the evidences of the North and South are in agreement. The inscription of Samalavarmadeva, king of Bengal, however, mentions that he had many more ministers, viz. the prime minister (Rājamātya), the priest (Purohita), the chief justice (Mahādharmādhyaksa), the minister for peace and war (Mahāsandhivigrahika), the commander-in-chief (Mahāsenapati), the keeper of the royal seal (Mahāmudrādhikrita), the keeper of records (Mahāksapatalika), chief warden of the palace (Mahapratihāra), chief privy councillor (Antarangabrihaduparika), chief master of the elephants (Mahāpilupati), commander of gaṇa squadrons

[37] Stein, *Rajatarangini*, I, 118–20.
[38] *Ibid.*, VII, 364.
[39] *Ibid.*, IV, 290 & 304.
[40] *Ibid.*, V, 128–29.
[41] *Ibid.*, V, 22.
[42] *Ibid.*, V, 447.
[43] *Ibid.*, V, 167 —"तेनाट्टपति भागाख्य गृहकृत्या भिधेकृते ।"
[44] *Ibid.*, VII, 42.
[45] *Ibid.*, V, 177.
[46] *Ibid.*, V, 232.
[47] *Ibid.*, VIII, 573.

(Mahaganasatha), etc.[48] Khairha plates of Yaskarnadeva of the Kalachuri dynasty mentions the prime minister, the chief councillor, the generalissimo, the chief priest, the great warden, the chief keeper of records, the interpretor (Mahāpramātra), the grand equerry, the chancellor of the exchequer, and the chief superintendent (Mahadhyaksa), as the heads of governmental departments.[49] There seems to be agreement between this and the *Sukraniti* regarding the number and function of the ministers. The *Sukraniti* prescribes the Purodhas (priest), Pratinidhi (regent), Pradhāna (premier), Sachiva (minister for finance), Mantri (councillor), Pradvivāka (chief judge), Pandita (legal minister), Sumantaka (minister for peace and war), Amātya (secretary of state) and Duta (ambassador).[50] Lastly there is the theory of ministerial responsibility, honoured more in breach than in observance. The Dharma—Mudra Raksasa mentions that "when anything wrong is done by the king, the fault is of the minister."[51] This maxim cannot be compared with the modern concept of ministerial responsibility. But all the same there seems to be a sort of convention that it was the duty of the ministers to offer right advice to the king, and if things went wrong, the ministers were to blame.

Feudatories

Ministers were often appointed from among powerful feudatories and relations of the king. As regards the latter category, we know that Suravarman, the Mantri of Avantivarman, king of Kashmere, was the latter's step-brother. They therefore played a very important part in the politics of the kingdom.[52] The number of feudatories was legion and specially because the ideal was Digvijaya and political morality demanded the retention of the conquered kings, though in a state of vassalage. We have a list of vassals of the Gauda king Rama Pala in the eleventh century, which is as follows[53] : (*i*) Bhimayasas, the ruler of Magadha ; (*ii*) Viraguna the ruler of Kot-alavi — a sovereign of the southern region ; (*iii*) Jayasimha, the ruler of Danda-Bhukti, who defeated Utkalesa Karnakesari ;

[48] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XII, Inscription no. 8.
[49] *Ibid.*, Inscription no. 24.
[50] *Sukraniti*, Chap. I.
[51] Act III.
[52] Stein, *Rajatarangini*, V, 128–29.
[53] H. C. Roy, *op. cit.*, pp. 340–41.

(*iv*) Vikrama Raja, the ruler of Bala-Valabhi ; (*v*) Laksmisura, who was the Samanta-cakra-chudāmaṇi, the first of the vassal chiefs ; (*vi*) Surapala of Kunjavati ; (*vii*) Rudrasikhara, the Kalapataru of Tailakampa ; (*viii*) Mayagalasimha, the ruler of Ucchala ; (*ix*) Narasimharjuna, the Mandalādhipati of Kayangala ; (*x*) Pratapasimha, the ruler of Dhekkariya ; (*xi*) Candarjuna of Sankatagrama ; (*xii*) Vijayaraja of Nidrabala ; (*xiii*) Dvorapavardhana, the ruler of Kausambi ; (*xiv*) Soma of Paduvanva.

Besides the conquered kings, who became feudatories there were others who were created by the paramount king. "Most of these used to be originally appointed only as governor with the feudatory privilege of Panchamahāsabdas, but the principle of hereditary transmission of office used to convert them soon into full-fledged feudatories."[54] They wielded vast powers, supplied the paramount king with armies in times of war, entertained permanently an ambassador from the paramount king in their court, and could create sub-feudatories. Their attendance at the imperial court was required on ceremonial occasions. Such feudatories were the Calukyas of Vengi, the Silāhāras of Konkan, and others in the Rastrakuta empire, and the Sāmanta-cakra-cudāmani Laksmisura in Bengal.

Below them was the second class of feudatories who enjoyed a lesser degree of autonomy and power, and could not grant even a village without the sanction of the sovereign. That seems to have been a general practice throughout India. For, Sankaragana a feudatory of the Rastrakuta king had to get his sanction at the time of granting a village.[55] Virachola and Prithivipati II, feudatories of the Cholas had to secure similar sanctions.[56] In the Gurjara-Pratihara empire the representatives of the sovereign signified his approval of land grants or other charities by signing them.[57] In Nepal also prevailed the same practice.[58]

Lastly came the feudatories of the lowest order. They often served as officials of the king as also did the feudatories of the second class. But while those of the first class could be called Sāmanta-cakra-cudāmani, Mahāmandalesvara, or Mahāsamantādhipati, those of the second and third classes were called only Maha Samantas or Samantas.

[54] Altekar, *Rastrakutas and Their Times*, p. 263.
[55] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IX, p. 195.
[56] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV., p. 82.
[57] *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 9.
[58] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XIII, p. 98.

In conclusion it may be said that though there was a growing tendency towards centralization the paramount king could not ignore the increasing importance of the feudatories at the time of need.[59] Dhruva, Amoghavarsha I, and Amoghavarsha III of the Rastrakuta empire, Avanti Varman, Sankara Varman, and Yashaskara of Kashmir, and Ram Pala of Bengal owed their thrones to the help of feudatories. But on the whole it may be said that the work of centralization was proceeding throughout India, in a more thorough way than before because, now there were many mandalas or feudatory systems in India, and the spirit of defiance of the local lords ran the greater risk of being curbed. This state of affairs was a prelude to the task of empire building by the Muslims.

In empires or Mandalas thus characterized by the rule of feudatories enjoying different degrees of autonomy and paying different degrees of obedience to the central authority, the organization of government would fall into three categories, viz. the government of the empire, that of the feudatory kingdom, and that of the village. This naturally leads to a consideration of the territorial divisions and subdivisions.

Territorial Divisions

We have already indicated the extent of the empires of this period. From Bhagalpur inscription of Narayan Pala[60] the gradation of the territorial divisions appears to be the Bhukti, Visaya, and Mandala in the descending order. In an Orissan inscription Mandala is used for Visaya.[61] The Rastrakuta records mention a slightly different division, viz. Rāstra, Visaya and Bhukti. In Orissan records Mandala has been often mentioned instead of Rāstra, while at times Rāstra is made the smaller and Visaya the larger territorial division. In the Gurjara-Pratihara,[62] and Gauda[63] imperial organization Bhukti appears to have been a larger territorial unit than Mandala. For example, the Amgachi grant records that some land in the village of Visampura in the Brahmani grama-mandala of Keti Varsa

[59] Stein, *Rajatarangini*, V, 250 & 451–52 ; VII, 48.
[60] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XV, pp. 304 et seq.
[61] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XII, Ins. no. 20.
[62] Dhighwa-Duboli grant of Mahendra Pala, *Ind. Ant.*, XV, p. 105.
[63] *Amgachi grant. Epi. Indica*, Vol. XV, pp. 295–301.

Visaya included in the Pundravardhana Bhukti was bestowed upon a Brahman. Similarly we read in the Archaeological Survey's plate of Vinayaka Pala that Varanasi Visaya was a part of Pratisthāna Bhukti. In the Chola empire Mandala meant a province, and there were at one time nine Mandalas in this empire.[64] At the bottom of these territorial divisions came the village or grāma. The Governor of the Rāstra was the Rāstrapati, of the Visaya the Visayapati, and of the Bhukti the Bhogapati or Bhogika. It is difficult to determine who was the governor of the groups of villages.

Perhaps the name "Brihadbhogika" suggests that the officer may have been the governor of a bigger province or a big division of a province.[65] One of the Orissan inscriptions suggests that, Visaya and Grāma formed territorial divisions in the descending order ;[66] while another mentions Mandala, Visaya and Grāma in the same order.[67] Still another contains in the descending order Visaya, Mandala, Khanda and Grāma, as territorial divisions of Kosala Rajya Khanda, which was a part of the dominion of the Kesari kings of Orissa.[68] But apart from these, important towns and cities formed administrative units by themselves and were governed by special officers, while the villages enjoyed wide measures of self-government. Whatever be the gradation of territorial divisions and the epigraphic evidence of the period suggests no uniformity in the country, there is no doubt about the fact that offices and more often the higher offices of state were tending to become hereditary.[69]

Officers of the Empire

Each territorial unit was under an officer appointed by the sovereign or by the feudatory. In the territorial divisions of the empire were incorporated the feudatory states for purposes of general administration. The gradation of officers in the imperial administration is thus indicated in a Silahara record of A.D. 1026, viz. Rāstrapati, Visayapati, Nagarapati, Grāmapati, Niyuktā-Niyukta and Rajapurusha.[70] The provincial governors, who were

[64] Venkayya, *Introduction to South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. II, Part V.
[65] Beni Prasad, *State in Ancient India*, p. 409.
[66] *Ep. Indi.*, Vol. XII, pp. 237–42. [67] *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 140–42.
[68] *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. II, p. 45–49.
[69] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. I, p. 20. [70] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. V, p. 278.

at the head of the Rāstra, or its equivalent the Mandala in the Deccan, or Rajyakhanda in Orissa, perhaps controlled the feudatory chiefs. Often, as has been observed, these governors were chosen from among the feudatories. In the Khalimpur inscription, for example, we have the provincial governor Narayana Varman who also bore the title of Mahāsāmantādhipati. In the Rampala Charita we have a feudatory who was a "Mandalādhipati." In the Rastrakuta administration the provincial governors often enjoyed the title of Mahāmandalesvara or Mahāsāmantādhipati.[71] In Orissa, for example, we hear of Māndalikas[72] and Mahasamantas[73] who perhaps were provincial governors and feudatories at the same time. There, these feudatories most probably bore also the general title of Rāṇaka, which perhaps corresponds to Rājanakas of Kashmere and Bengal. The Rājatarangini[74] and the Khalimpur plate of Dharma Pala Deva mention Rājanakas and Rājans from which perhaps have been derived Rāṇaka and Rāṇā respectively. There appears to be a great similarity between Rāṇaka and Rāṇā, the title of many of the Rajput princes of India today. And it is not merely that these Rāṇakas were Māndalikas[75] or Mahāsāmantas ;[76] they were employed as imperial officers in charge of various departments. For example we hear of a Rāṇaka Bhusaṇa Nāga, who was a Mahāksapatalādhikrta.[77] In the Gurjara-Pratihara empire the governors also bore the title of Mahāsāmanta[78] or Mahāsāmantādhipati.[79] Apart from the feudatories, the king's relations or Yuvarajas were often employed as provincial governors. The power and status of these chiefs could be estimated from the following instances of provincial governors. In the Rastrakuta empire in A.D. 912 Mahāsāmanta Kala Vattarasa (the ending Canarese "rasa" is the equivalent of Sanskrit "rājā") was the governor of Banavasi, and when a subordinate of his revolted and tried to escape to a neighbouring kingdom he was arrested by him.[80] Further, against another disaffected subordinate he led an armed attack and fully reduced him to submission.[81] An officer of the king of Bengal, the ruler

[71] Altekar, *Rastrakutas and Their Times*, p. 175.
[72] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 254–59.
[73] *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, pp. 98–101.
[74] *Ibid.*, vi, 117.
[75] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 259.
[76] *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, pp. 98–101.
[77] *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. V, pp. 564–78.
[78] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 176–88.
[79] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 90.
[80] *Ep. Carnatica*, Vol. VIII, no. 88.
[81] *Ibid.*, nos. 10 & 22.

of Danda-Bhukti, defeated Utkalesa (King of Utkala) Karnakesari. On the whole the provincial governors enjoyed a large measure of power and initiative. Their prestige could be judged from the fact that they "had their own courts at their capitals, which were replicas of the imperial court on a smaller scale.[82]

Often the offices were made hereditary in the families of these feudatory chiefs. But in spite of that, it has been remarked that the Rastrakuta king exercised greater control over his provincial governors than his contemporaries in the North.[83] In the Rastrakuta empire "provincial governors were also at the head of the revenue administration....Revenue settlement of the villages and fields in their jurisdiction was carried out by these officers in conjunction with local bodies."[84] The system of provincial government in the North seems to have slightly differed from government in vogue in the South. Instead of Rastrapatis, there were Rājasthāthaniya, i.e. viceroys in the North and they were not the head of revenue administration. The fiscal officer Uparika was independent of Rājasthāthaniya. Another distinctive feature of the South is that local bodies co-operated with government in the performance of its function. For example, provincial governors were helped by a body of men called the Rāstramahattaras.[85] But this practice was not peculiar to the Rastrakuta government. It was prevalent in the Kalachuri kingdom also.[86] In the North the government followed traditional lines, and perhaps the provincial government was just what it was in the time of Harṣa or the Guptas.

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The provincial administration perhaps, as before, consisted of some departments called Adhikaranas, each staffed by the Lekhakas and Kāyasthas or clerks. But we hear of a Mahākāyastha Sandhivigrahin,[87] as also of a Kāyastha Mahāsandhivigrahika.[88] The Bhagalpur plates of Naranyanpala mentions certain other officers

[82] Altekar, *Rastrakutas and Their Times*, p. 173.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 173. [84] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[85] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, p. 186 ; Dhulia Plates of Karka.
[86] Vadner Plates of Budha-raja, *Ibid.*, Vol. XII,, p. 130.
[87] *Quarterly Journal of Andhra Historical Society*, July 1926.
[88] *J.A.S.B.*, 1898, Vol. 64, pp. 125–27.

like Ksetrapas or protector of fields, Prāntapala or protector of the frontiers, Kottapala and Khandaraksa police or military officers,[89] who perhaps belonged to the provincial administration. Since Rāstra or Bhukti comprised Visayas or districts the heads of districts were called Visayapatis. These districts were sometimes very big as in the Rastrakuta kingdom and very small as in Orissa. As for the latter it is said that Vepura Visaya comprised only twelve villages.[90] There is also mention of a number of officials, whose duties seem to be of vital importance to the countryside, be it of a Mandala or a group of villages, of a Visaya or district, of a Bhukti or province, or of a Rāstra or kingdom. They are the Dausādhasādhanikas and Chauroddharanikas, most probably police officers ; Dandasaktis and Dandapasikas, most probably judicial officers ; and the Saulkikas and Gaulmikas, most probably collectors of tolls and supervisors of forests respectively. Among the fiscal officers is also mentioned the controller of Sasthāmsa, i.e. the traditional sixth part of the produce which was the revenue paid to the king. In the Khalimpur grant, the Jyesthakāyastha, perhaps means the chief of the writers or clerks attached to the provincial government. The corresponding modern officer would be the registrar or superintendent of an office.

Some of the Visayapatis in the Rastrakuta empire actually were, and enjoyed the status of, feudatory chiefs ; for example, the governor of Kuntala Visaya in A.D. 1019 was a Mandaleshvara with Panchamahāsabdas.[91] They also enjoyed "considerable revenue powers since they are invariably mentioned in the copper plates among the officers requested not to disturb the possession of the donees of the lands or villages granted."[92] They were assisted, by the Visayamahattaras in their administrative work.[93] Next to the Visaya and Mandala in the administrative division of the Rastrakuta empire came the Bhukti, at the head of which was the Bhogika or Bhogapati. A Bhukti consisted of 100 to 500 villages ; and these were subdivided into groups of villages or Mandalas, comprising about ten to thirty villages each. Army officers of ordinary ranks were often appointed to the offices. The Ganga ruler Biratunga II appointed one Manalera as supervisor over Atkur 12, owing to his

[89] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XV, pp. 304 et Seq.
[90] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 183–93.
[91] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. V, p. 17.
[92] Altekar, *Rastrakutas and Their Times*, p. 177.
[93] Kapadwanj Grant of Krishna II, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 55.

bravery in battle.[94] The Visayapatis and Bhogikas administered the country with the help of hereditary revenue officers or headmen called Nadgaudas in Karnatak, and Desagramakutas in Maharastra.[95]

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

The most important item of public administration was the administration of the village ; and the democratic basis of the village administration was a special feature of the South. Normally every village had a headman ; whose office was more or less hereditary. But yet "he was more a representative of the people than a servant of the Central government."[96] That was because from very early times the village enjoyed a measure of autonomy that had become traditional and formed the foundation of all political organization and stability. Perhaps the village contributed a military quota to the service of the state also. It was certainly a fiscal unit of the kingdom. Of the village headman, it has been said that owing to frequent references to him in connection with royal revenues, it may be inferred that he was perhaps in charge of the collection and payment of the royal revenues.[97] He played a prominent part in the meetings of the village council and acted as the village magistrate for trying petty criminal cases.[98] But there were villages where not one but many were considered as headmen. The Ratta records mention that villages of Sugandhavati, Elerave and Hasudi had twelve headmen each while Hirayakummi had only six.[99] These might have been prominent men of the village who formed the village council or Panchayat, and the Panchayat was responsible for common security, administration of justice and collection and payment of royal revenue.

The most important institution of the village was the village council, and in the Deccan there were three types, viz. the Tamil type, the Karnatak type, and the Maharastra and Gujerat type. "Village assemblies or councils in Tamil country consisted neither

[94] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VI, p. 56.

[95] *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, p. 366. Under the Peshwas in the 18th century Nadgauda was a portion of the revenue, allocated for a specific purpose.

[96] Altekar, *Rastrakutas and Their Times*, p. 189.

[97] Altekar, *Village Communities in Western India*, Ch. I.

[98] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XI, pp. 224 et Seq.

[99] *J.B.B.R.A.S.*, Vol. X, p. 283 et Seq.

of the whole adult population, as was the case in Maharastra and Gujerat, but of about 20 to 30 individuals elected by a kind of selection by ballot. There were detailed rules about the qualifications of the voters and the candidates ; certain property and educational qualifications were insisted upon in the candidates, along with a blameless character. Persons once elected were disqualified to stand again for election for three years, a rule apparently framed to afford opportunities to all qualified persons to serve on village councils. The election took place annually and the members elected were known as the great men of the year (Perumankal). They divided themselves into a number of sub-committees, as was the case with the corporation of Pataliputra in the time of Candra-gupta Maurya. Each sub-committee was in charge of a specific department, like the village tank, the village temple, roads, adjudication, wet lands, dry lands, etc."[100] In the Karnatak the members of the village council were neither elected nor selected. These members were the heads of all families in the village called Mahajanas. The members of the council in Gujerat and Maharastra were called Mahattaras, denoting perhaps heads of families. "The powers and functions of the village assembly and their executives were substantially the same in Gujerat, Maharastra and Karnatak, but they differed considerably from those of the corresponding bodies in Tamil country. In the latter province the village executive was responsible to the Central government for its revenues ; but how and when these were collected, and whether and to what extent remission in taxation was to be given, were matters about which the village had full powers. Nay, the government had even delegated to the village assemblies its power of selling the land of defaulters of land revenue. The village committees there were also the owners of the village lands, and could sell or assign them for village purposes. Under the Rastrakuta administration all these powers were reserved to itself by Central government and were exercised through its representatives."[101] In spite of that however the village councils managed public works, school and charity foundations.[102] The village revenues

[100] Altekar, *Rastrakutas and Their Times*, p. 198 ; *Archaeological Survey Report*, 1904–5, p. 140 et Seq ; South Ind. Ins. Vol. III, p. 12.

[101] Altekar, *Rastrakutas and Their Times*, p. 207 ; R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 193.

[102] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 93–94 ; *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, p. 327.

were divided into two parts, viz. (*a*) Melavaram, (*b*) Chudivaram, the former being government share and the latter at the disposal of the village council for village improvement.

In the North, village administration had not differentiated as much as in the South. There was a village headman who together with the Mahattaras and Mahattams[103] that is, village elders, was responsible for the good government in the village. In Kashmere the representative of the state in the village was known as the Grama Kayastha.[104] From the Alina Copper Plate Inscription of Siladitya, we gather that Falapatika and Pattika were two kinds of revenues realized by the state from the village. There were king's officers in charge of a number of villages as in the South. The officer in charge of a group of ten villages was called Dasagramika. Karanas[105] are mentioned who correspond to the Kayasthas of the village mentioned in the Rajatarangini, and who form a caste today in Orissa.

SUKRANITI ON FEUDATORIES, BUDGET, LAW AND JUSTICE

So much with regard to the details of governmental organization as gleaned from epigraphic records. They hardly give any guidance in regard to the law and justice in the kingdoms that existed at the time. Here we have to turn to the treatises on government or Dharmasāstras and the most important one seems to be the Sukraniti. There is some difference of opinion about the date of the work. Gustav Oppert ascribes it to the fourth century A.D., Dr. K. P. Jaiswal to the eighth century, and R. L. Mitra to the sixteenth century A.D. at the earliest. The objection to its being an early work, i.e. before the advent of the Muslims, seems to be the mention of gunpowder and artillery in it. It may however be contended that these portions may be interpolations, and the fact that Alberuni mentions the name of Sukra as an author of Dharmasastra and a disciple of Vyasa[106] may lead to the conclusion that Sukraniti may

[103] Alina Copper Plate Inscription of Siladitya (A.D. 766–67), *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, no. 34.

[104] *Rajatarangini*, tr. Stein, V, 175.

[105] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, no. 34.

[106] Alberuni's *India* (trans. by Sachau, Popular Ed. 1914), p. 132.

be at least a century prior to his time. We would assign it to the period between the eighth and ninth centuries A.D.

As is usual with Hindu political treatises it seeks to picture a small kingdom directly under the control of the sovereign though he may have vast dominions under him ruled directly by his feudatories. Two very interesting items dealt with are (*a*) the gradation of rulers from a Sāmanta, i.e. small feudatory to a Sārvabhauma, i.e. universal sovereign and (*b*) the sample budget of a kingdom with a lakh of annual income. "That ruler is called a Sāmanta" it says "in whose kingdom without oppressing the subjects, an annual revenue from one lakh up to three lakh karsas is generally realized. That ruler is called Māndalika whose annual revenue exceeds three lakh karsas up to 10 lakhs. The Raja is he, whose income exceeds 10 lakh karsas up to the 20th lakh. The Maharaja is he, whose income exceeds the last up to a crore. The Samrat is he, whose income exceeds a crore up to 10 crores ; the Virat, whose income goes beyond that to the 50th crore ; the Sarvabhauma, who is above that and to whom the earth with its seven islands is ever bound."[107] Alongside this hierarchy of rulers there is another of the royal officers. The governor of ten gramas is called a Nāyaka ; of a hundred gramas, a Sāmanta ; and of an Ayuta (10,000) gramas, Swarāt.[108] It appears that royal officers who were appointed over various territorial divisions, were assigned same share of the royal revenues, and bore the designations like those of the feudatories. For "those servants who have been appointed equal with the Sāmantas and others are also to be known as Sāmantas, etc. in succession and to be sharer of the royal revenue."[109] That conclusion is obvious from the context also. And this seems to throw some light on the problem of the interpretation of "Samadhigata Pancha-mahāsabdas" (समधिगत पंचमहाशद्ब) which has been frequently used in the inscriptions of the period as an epithet of the great officers and feudatories. Fleet pointed out that "Panchamahāsabda" refers to the use of the five instruments of sound, viz. Sṛnga or horn, Tammata or tamborine, Samkha or conchshell, Bheri and Jayaghanta.[110] This can hardly be accepted as correct. For, there is at least one inscription in which the insignia of sovereignty have been described as the "unique conchshell, the drum, the five

[107] *Sukraniti*, Ch. I, pp. 365–74.
[108] *Ibid.*, p. 381–84.
[109] *Ibid.*, Ch. I, pp. 377–78.
[110] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XII, p. 95.

mahasabdas, the white parasol, the golden chowie."[111] That is to say, the five mahasabdas do not here include the conchshell and kettle-drum which they ought to, if Fleet and his source of information Lingayat Vivekachintamani were correct. The passage cannot be construed to mean the five mahasabdas beginning with Samkha and Bheri which have been mentioned in addition to the Panchamahasabdas. We therefore reject the hitherto accepted interpretation that the term means the use of five sounds. What seems to be acceptable is that the five mahasabdas were the five titles with Mahā as the prefix of each and those who bore five such titles were the most exalted of the royal officers.

They cannot be feudatories only. They may be feudatories in addition to their being royal officers. This conclusion is possible from the invariable use of "Samadhigata" before "Panchamahasabdas" which suggests that the titles have been received from a sovereign. The lowest officer in the hierarchy was thus the Mahanayaka, and a Nayaka was a royal officer appointed over ten villages.[112] Similarly above him came the Mahasamanta ; still above him the Mahāmāndalika ; above the Mahāmāndalika, the Mahārāja ; and above the Mahārāja the Mahārājādhirāja. This hierarchy of the royal officers has been indicated by the Sukraniti.[113] It is pretty certain that the five Mahāsabdas do not form the titles of the independent kings and emperors. But their assumption suggests royal officers of the most exalted rank. Turning to the epigraphic evidence, we find in the Tarachandi rock inscription the mention of one Mahānāyaka Pratapadhavala who is the lord of Japila, but who owed allegiance to the king of Gadhinagara.[114] Mahāsāmantas[115] and Mahāsāmantādhipatis[116] are frequently mentioned in the inscriptions. Though the titles of "Mahāmāndalika"[117] and Mandalādhipati[118] are rare, those of Mahārāja and Mahārājādhirāja[119]

[111] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XI, pp. 147–57.

[112] *Sukraniti*, Ch. I, pp. 383–84. [113] *Ibid.*, Ch. I, pp. 377–78.

[114] *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. VI, pp. 547–49 ; *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. V, Appendix p. 22.

[115] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 176–88.

[116] *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. II, pp. 396–400 ; *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 243 et Seq.

[117] *Ind. Hist. Quarterly*, March 1929, pp. 44–45.

[118] Bhavabhuti's Uttara Rama Charita, *Commentary on Rama Charita*, II, 5–6.

[119] *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 263–67 & Vol. XII, pp. 156–59.

are not rare at all. These being the titles of the vassals or royal officers the sovereigns were invariably called Paramesvara ; while there is, in the north, solitary instance of a vassal who had, instead of only the five great titles, acquired all the great titles, Samadhigatāsesa Mahāsābdas.[120] These data point to the conclusion that the Mahāsābdas were the exalted titles, i.e. titles beginning with Mahā Nāyaka and ending with Mahārājādhirāja all with a prefix Mahā.

As regards the sample budget, for a state with a revenue of one lakh of karsas a year the Sukraniti prescribes as follows :

		Per month Ks.	*Per year* Ks.
(*i*)	Contingencies, enjoyments and charities	1,500	18,000
(*ii*)	Six clerks	100	1,200
(*iii*)	Three councillors	300	3,600
(*iv*)	Wife and children	300	3,600
(*v*)	Men of letters (education)	200	2,400
(*vi*)	Horsemen, horses and infantry	4,000	48,000
(*vii*)	Elephants, camels, bulls, and fire-arms	400	4,800
(*viii*)	Savings	1,500	18,000
		8,300	99,600

This shows that about half, or 48 per cent of the annual revenue was to be spent on the army, 18 per cent on the contingencies, and 4·8 per cent on the administrative staff on the civil side. The army that was to be maintained numbered 100 reserve forces, 300 infantry, 80 cavalry, two large guns, 10 camels, 2 elephants, 2 chariots and 6 bulls. The staff on the civil side comprising 3 councillors and 6 clerks, seems to be inadequate, and it indicates the functions that the government was called upon to perform. These functions must be very few, and they certainly included realization of revenues and dispensation of justice. But this cannot be a true picture of the administration of a sovereign. In theory at least the scheme of government of a king or emperor was far more elaborate, and under capable princes like Harṣa must have been efficient.

[120] *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XII, pp. 190–95.

Much attention has been devoted to matters regarding the training and duties of the king, the conduct of departmental affairs, and law and justice as a function of the king. The last appears and rightly, to have been considered with the realization of revenue, as one of the most important functions of the king. The chief officers of the king were the Purodhā (priest), Pratinidhi (viceroy), Pradhāna (superintendent, chief secretary), Sachiva (war secretary), Mantri (foreign secretary), Pandita (ecclesiastical officer), Prādvivāka (chief justice), Amātya (land revenue officer), Sumanta (finance minister) and Duta (ambassador).[121] Besides these, there were superintendents of parks, buildings, palaces, etc. The sources of revenue comprised the rent from land, duties, fines, income from forests, mines, unclaimed property, etc.

As regards the local administration six officers were to be appointed in each village, viz. the lord of Sahasa, somewhat like a police officer, the headman of the village, the collector of taxes, the collector of land revenues, the clerk, and the news bearer.[122] Law and justice are under the chief justice, who has to "advise the king after examining with the help of his peers in council, the men who have brought forward suits for judgment, by witnesses, written documents, artifices, and by occult processes; and to find out which method or procedure is likely to be most efficacious in which case, and after determining what is the inevitable decision by the application of reasoning, direct observation, inference, analogy as well as the local custom."[123] This indicates that cases were decided not by one judge but by a panel of judges — the peers of chief justice in council, i.e. Sabhyas; that an examination of witnesses and written documents was a necessary adjunct for a decision; and that local customs received due weight in the matter. The importance of local customs in the matters of adjudication and administration could be realized from the dictum of the Sukraniti that "the local customs, the social customs, and domestic customs, those duties that have been prescribed as eternal and universal by the sages, the old and the new regulations, all these are to be carefully observed by the king for the protection of the realm."[124] "The cultivators, the artisans, the artists, the usurers, corporations, the dancers, the ascetics, and thieves should decide their disputes

[121] *Sukraniti*, Ch. II, 168–73.
[122] *Ibid.*, 242–45.
[123] *Ibid.*, 194–99.
[124] *Ibid.*, Ch. V, Sec. iii, 17–19.

according to the usage of their guild, etc."[125] Again "the foresters are to be tried with the help of foresters, merchants by merchants, soldiers by soldiers, and in the village (affairs are to be administered) by persons who live with both parties (i.e. neighbours)."[126] This suggests that possibly a sort of jury system was in vogue in the country.

PROCESS OF LAW AND JUSTICE

The legal process seems to have become highly elaborate by now. The crimes are divided under three heads, viz. (1) chhalas or misdemeanour, (2) Aparādhas or felonies and (3) Rājajñeya or offences against the state. Yet no absolute standards of justice are followed, for local customs have to be respected, e.g. "in the Southern countries maternal uncle's daughters are married by Brahmanas."[127] The local customs go to supplement what is mentioned in the Sastras. In the act of adjudication witnesses have to be carefully examined and their deposition correctly recorded. There are Pradvivākas, whose business it is to "ask questions and analyze cases"[128] and who are equivalent to government advocates of the present day. There was the practice of appointing lawyers to represent the parties,[129] except "in the cases of murder, thieving, adultery, taking forbidden food, abduction, harshness, forgery, sedition and robbery." In these cases "the perpetrators have to answer personally."[130] There was provision for securities from parties.[131] Finally, when a case has been fully heard, the verdict was given; but in cases of division in the council the verdict of the majority was accepted. One of the methods of eliciting truth from evidence was ordeal. But that was the last of the three methods, viz. (*i*) Persuasion to be fair, (*ii*) Yukti, i.e. probability and expediency and (*iii*) Ordeal.

So much with regard to the criminal cases. "In the disputes relating to immovable properties; in cases of disputes among unions of men, guilds and companies; in cases relating to nondelivery of gifts; when a case has to be decided between servants and their masters; in a case relating to rescension of sales; and where having

[125] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, Sec. V, 35–36.
[126] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, Sec. V, 44–45.
[127] *Ibid.*, 92–96.
[128] *Ibid.*, 125–26.
[129] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, Sec. V, 216–18.
[130] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, Sec. V, 238–41.
[131] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, Sec. V, 249–51.

purchased a thing one does not pay the amount of its price — these [disputes] one shall prove by witness, by document and by possession too."[132] These comprise civil cases. In these cases decisions are "through pramāṇas [evidence of witness, documents, etc.], reasons, usages, oaths, special orders of the king, and the admission by the plaintiff." But "where there is no document, no possession, no witness, and no resorting to ordeals, the king is at liberty (to proceed as it is best)."[133] There are four kinds of punishment, viz. the Dhig-danda (moral disapprobation), the Vāg-danda (oral chastisement), and Artha-danda or fines, and corporeal punishment. But of these the first three could be inflicted by the councillors while the last by the king only.[134]

This account of the legal process or procedure leads to one or two significant conclusions. In the first place the differentiation of law into civil and criminal, and the gradation of punishment, have now a more social context than ever before. That is to say, both the law and the punishment are free from any divine or super-human references and follow the lines of human knowledge and feasibility. The second significant point is that the king is regarded as the final authority in matters of law and justice, because it is his duty to co-ordinate Vyavahāras and the dictates of Dharma-sāstras. He is not the source of law in the sense that whatever emanated from him was law. He was the source of law in the sense that his interpretation of the Vyavahāra and Dharmasāstras and their co-ordination, took the form of law, which he enforced. He also had to reconcile local customs and the customs of the guilds, corporations, and even of families, with Vyavahāras and Dharma-sāstras. Thus the king played the role of the most authoritative interpreter of the experiences of the people, and in that sense he approximated to the modern conception of the legislator. For, it is maintained that in the modern state the function of the legislator is "one of interpretation rather than of origination." In the punish-ment of crimes and violence he could make laws independently of the local customs, Vyavahāras and the Dharmasāstras. They were meant, for example, to supress what are known now as public enemies. These laws, he proclaimed by the state-drum, and by placing them in esplanades as written notices.[135] It is therefore that

[132] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, Sec. V, 517–20.
[133] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, Sec. V, 529–32.
[134] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, Sec. V, 547–48.
[135] *Sukraniti*, Ch. I, 625–26.

the Sukraniti regards the king as the highest guide[136] and maker of the age.[137]

SOURCE OF LAW

This incidentally leads to a consideration of the sources of law. In the foregoing section, we have observed that the king had to reconcile the local customs with the injunction of Dharmasāstras, and also issued fresh regulations where there was need for it. The Sukraniti pointedly mentions that "the local customs, the social customs, and the domestic customs, those duties that have been prescribed as eternal and universal by the sages, the old and new regulations — all these are to be carefully observed by the king for the protection of the realm."[138] These actually correspond to the three sources of law, viz. local customs or Vyavahāras, Dharmasāstras, and Rajasasana, as Kautalya expressed it. Only one item of his, viz. chāritryam, conduct of the Sistas or learned and disciplined Brahmans is not included in it. In this connection one important observation of the Sukraniti cannot be overlooked. It maintains that whereas in ancient times caste was created according to activities of the people, now caste is determined by learning or proficiency in art and craft, i.e. according to Vidyā or Kalā.[139] There may therefore be a caste (jati) of the philosophers, who may be Brahmans, Kṣatriyas or Vaisyas. Therefore, the propriety of regarding the conduct of the learned Brahmans or Sistas as a source of law does not hold good. This rule introduces significant modification in the administration of law and justice, and at once releases law from its bondage to religion. Up till now Brāhmaṇism with its fourfold social order emphasized birth rather than merit, and imposed certain limitations on the impartial application of law. For example, for the same offence a Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, and Vaisya deserved different punishments according to the Dharmasāstras. The Sukraniti reverses the position when it says that "not by birth are the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaisya, Sudra and Mlechha separated but by virtues and works."[140] This principle introduces significant

[136] *Ibid.*, Ch. I, 129–30.
[137] *Ibid.*, Ch. I, 43–44 ; 119–20.
[138] *Sukraniti*, Ch. IV, Sec. iii, 17–19.
[139] *Ibid.*, Ch. IV, Sec. iii. 21 & 30.
[140] *Ibid.*, Ch. I, 75–76.

modification, and consequently, law in theory at least, is freed from the religious bias that it had so far.

CONSTITUENTS AND THEORY OF THE STATE

The state again is regarded in theory as the aggregate of the sovereign, the ministry, the allies, the treasury, the territory, fortifications, and the army.[141] It has been compared and very correctly, to an organism with these seven units. The king must not do anything without consulting his ministers. The analogy of the state to an organism compares favourably with the modern conception of the state, and emphasizes the importance of each member of the organism. The importance of the sovereign in the scheme of governmental organization is equal therefore to that of any other member, though he has been conceded the highest dignity among men, even divine origin,[142] and also regarded as the protector of religion and destroyer of irreligion.[143] The existence of the sovereignty (swamitva) of the king consists in his authority as the propagator of law, the protector of religion, lord of justice, supreme guide and maker of the age. In spite of all these "the ruler has been made by Brahma or Creator a servant of the people getting his revenue as remuneration. His sovereignty, however, is only for protection."[144]

This theory of the state and sovereignty seeks to steer a middle course between the royal autocracy and popular democracy. It reduces the monarch to the position of a servant of the people while it does not project the ideal of self-assertion for the people. The divine origin of the king seeks to attribute sovereign power to the divine will, and therefore, the people cannot possibly take the view that all power emanates from them. The social implication of royal authority — that power of the king arises from society and has to be wielded for securing the social good remained alien to Hindu political theory, and therefore, kingship and royal government was not actuated by any purpose more significant and impelling than securing peace and prosperity to the people.

[141] *Ibid.*, Ch. I, 121–22.
[142] *Ibid.*, Ch. I, 141–43.
[143] *Ibid.*, Ch. I, 146.
[144] *Ibid.*, Ch. I, 375.

Royal authority as the means for securing peace and prosperity of the people was a very ancient ideal, which had lost much of its force, because of centuries of well-ordered society. The only impetus for increasing the efficiency of governmental organization and royal power was the ideal of Digvijaya. But that too produced a loose feudatory system with a weak centre. Thus, when Hindu political theory and practice, contrived to weaken their governmental organization, and the royal authority was not inspired by any greater or more powerful purpose than that of securing peace and prosperity to the people, came the Muslims, the purpose of whose state was to propagate their faith.

CHAPTER X

FEATURES OF EARLY ISLAMIC POLITY

WITH this brief review of the political condition of India and the form and function of the state during the period A.D. 700 to 1100, as a background we may pass on to study the advent of Islam into Northern India and its effect on the country. As we have already observed, it deeply influenced the entire life of the people. It introduced a new religion, a new culture, a new system of government, and indeed a new scheme of life. The first impacts of Islam were disastrous, and destructive of much that had been built up by centuries of human endeavour. As a religion it was violently intolerant, and it ushered in a state that was partisan, autocratic, and aggressive. It insisted on a scheme of life in which religion and state were rolled into one. That ran counter to the hoary traditions of India, and created a cleavage that kept the Hindu and the Muslim separate in two warring camps. But as centuries rolled by the cleavage diminished, and mutual understanding and goodwill replaced the separatist tendencies.

The first Islamic government that was established in India was in Sind by the Arabs in the first quarter of the eighth century. Muhammad ibn Kasim was successful in conquering Sind from king Dahir who ruled at Brahmanabad. The work of conquest and consolidation proceeded hand in hand, and within a decade or so Sind became an annexe of the dominions of the Caliphate under the Ommeyades.[1] Since the government that Muhammad ibn Kasim established in Sind and Multan was an extension of the Arab system into India, it would be worthwhile to review the Islamic state in brief outlines.

ISLAMIC STATE UNDER MUHAMMED AND HIS SUCCESSORS

The Islamic state was founded by Muhammed, who along with his role as prophet sought to organize society and government on

[1] Conquest of As-Sind, Part XX, Kitab Futah Al-Buldan of al-Imam abu-Abbas Ahmad ibn-Jabir al-Baladhuri, trans. by Philip Khuri Hitti

lines which were in accord with his religious teaching and at the same time did not conflict with the deeprooted conventions of Arab society. Hence he had to effect a series of compromises, by means of which he welded the warring tribes of Arab people into one brotherhood. Thus Islam became a brotherhood and a state besides a religion. The Muslims have to obey the Prophet as their leader in prayers, as in battles, and their life was that of warriors dedicated to fight the battle of God. All that was conquered belonged to the community, which was purely Arab at first, but contained heterogeneous elements later. The Prophet was the sovereign who ruled by right divine, and his authority was indisputable, because through him spoke God. During the ten years of his ministry (A.D. 622–632) he did much to consolidate the tribal Arabs into some sort of a crude commonwealth of Islamic faith.

But even he had not been able to tame the turbulent spirit of the Arabs. For, after his death secessions and rebellions started,[2] and it was with some tact that Abu Bakr got himself elected as Khalifa, or Deputy, i.e. of the Prophet. Up to the time of Muawiyah the principle of electing the Khalifa was followed, and that was in accord with the ancient tribal custom that the chief must be elected. But from Muawiyah's time "the reigning sovereign nominated his successor, and the grandees and military chiefs took the covenant in the royal presence ; whilst in the provinces the oath was taken by the governor on behalf of the presumptive Caliph."[3] Indeed many changes took place with the succession of the Ommeyades to the caliphate. Damascus became their capital and as they controlled a vast empire — perhaps the biggest continuous empire that ever existed — wealth and luxury began to grow. The crude commonwealth that Muhammed had established and the first three Khalifas continued, came to an end. Imperial power and grandeur gradually transformed the personal habits and ideals of the Khalifa. Though he was expected to preside at the daily prayers and his presence was indispensable at the Friday service, yet after Omar II, the Khalifas began to shirk both, and after some time gave up attending. Instead they found their time more agreeably occupied in the company of beautiful women of the Harem, in drinking wine,

(*Studies in History, Economics & Public Law*, Vol. XLVIII, of Columbia University), pp. 209–230.

[2] Ameer Ali, *History of the Saracens*, pp. 22 et Seq.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

in listening to the musicians, or in witnessing cock fights and horse races. Similarly did the administrative machinery undergo significant changes. Under the commonwealth "the caliph who was the supreme head of the government was assisted by a council of elders, composed of the principal companions of the Prophet, who held their sittings in the principal mosque, often assisted by the city notables and Bedouin chiefs present in Medina. Several companions were entrusted with special duties. For instance during Abu Bakr's caliphate Omar had charge of the administration of justice and distribution of poor tax. Ali as a scholar was entrusted with the work of correspondence, the supervision of the captives of war and their treatment and ransom. Another companion of Muhammed presided over the equipment of the troops."[4] Omar established a state archieve for the safe custody and preservation of the records of the caliphate and created the office of Hajib or chamberlain. Ali is said to have formed the municipal guard called the Shurta, and created the office of Sahib-ush-Shurta or captain of the guard. It served the purpose of a police force.

The Prophet had divided Arabia into a number of provinces and had appointed governors, called Ameers over all the chief cities and provinces. Omar continued the title and appointed Ameers to the provinces of the empire. Ahwaz and Baharain formed one governorship; Sijistan, Mekran and Kerman another; Tabaristan and Khorasan a third; Southern Persia was placed under three governors, whilst Irak under two; Syria was divided into two governorships, Africa into three, and Arabia into five. In the smaller provinces the governors were called Walis or Naibs (deputies). But in most places the governor by virtue of his office led in public prayers and delivered the Friday Sermon, i.e. Khutba. "For Palestine, Damascus, Hems, and Kinnisrin Omar appointed special judges to lead the prayers and to administer justice."[5] There was a department for the receipt and disbursement of revenue, which was called Diwan. The governor was the military and civil head of the province. Fiscal duties were discharged by his subordinate officers. Fiscal and civil administration constituted the first charge on the provincial revenues; next came the military requirements, and the surplus was applied to the support of the brotherhood of Muslims.

[4] Ameer Ali, *History of the Saracens*, p. 57.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

The subdivision of landed property was never allowed by the Prophet or the great Khalifa Omar. That was why the land of the conquered countries "instead of being parcelled among the soldiers, were held by the state, and the income only after defraying the charges was distributed among the people entitled to it."[6] The Arab soldier was prevented from settling down to agriculture, or trade and industry either in his own country or in the conquered countries.[7] The Muslims thus appeared to the non-Muslims as a military community ready to fight the battle of Islam, and to share in the plunder that was their legitimate prize. There arose also new sources of revenue in forms of land-tax levied from the zimmis (non-Muslim subjects) under the name of Kharāj and capitation tax, Jazia.[8] The income of the Islamic state was thus "divided amongst the faithful as their heritage but upon rules of precedence befitting the military and theocratic groundwork of Islam. For this end three points were considered, viz. priority of conversion, relationship to Prophet, and military service."[9] To regulate as well as facilitate this division a register of all Arabs entitled to a stipend

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[7] W. Muir, *Rise, Decline and Fall of the Caliphate*, p. 147.

[8] See Appendix I to Part II of *Kitab Futah Al-Buldan* of al-Imam abu-l Abbas Ahmad ibn-Jabir al-Baladhuri, translated by F. C. Murgotten, *Origins of the Islamic State — Studies in History Economics & Public Law*, Vol. LXVIII of the Columbia University (Longmans Green & Co., New York). The appendix gives opinions of ten different Muslim legists. According to ibn-Yusuf "Only land which was taken by assault such as as-Sawad, as-Sham & others, is subject to Kharaj. If the leader divided it among those who conquered it, it is the tithe — land, and its inhabitants slaves ; if the leader did not divide it but turned it over to the Moslems as a whole, as Umar did with as-Sawad, then its people sustain the burden of the Jizyah and the land is subject to Kharaj, but the people are not slaves. This is the dictum of Abu-Hanifah (also)."

Malik ibn-Anas says, "when an unbeliever from the people of "assault" accepted Islam his land was confirmed in his possession for him to cultivate, paying the Kharaj for it, just as other Moslems."

Malik, Sufyan, etc. say in regard to the people "of assault" (Jihad ?) who accept Islam : "The Kharaj is upon the land in addition to the Kharaj, the Zakat (alms-tax) of the crop. This is (also) the dictum of al-Auzai."

But Abu-Hanifah and his school say : "A man is not liable for both Kharaj and Zakat."

[9] W. Muir, *Rise, Decline and Fall of the Caliphate*, pp. 147–48.

was kept at the Diwan.[10] "Women had the tenth of a man's share. Wives, widows, and children had each their proper stipend and in the register every new-born infant had a title to be entered with an allowance. Even Arab slaves . . . had their portion."[11] Non-Arab Muslims were not treated on the same footing with the Arabs and were known as Mawalis (clients). "Thus the Arabians set themselves apart as a nation militant for the sacred task of propagating Islam. Even after the new-born zeal of the faith had evaporated the chivalry of the Arabs as a race wholly devoted to arms, was, owing to Omar's foresight, maintained in full activity for two centuries and a half. The nation was, and continued to be, an army mobilized ; the camp and not the city, their home ; their

[10] Regarding pensions or "Ata" see Appendix II to part II of the *Origins of the Islamic State*, pp. 240 *et. Seq.* Of the order of precedence it has been said that Umar "assigned to Aishah, the mother of Believers 12,000 dirhams and to the rest of the wives of the Prophet 10,000 each. To Ali ibn-abu Talib he assigned 5,000 and the same amount to those of the bana — Hisham who had taken part in the battle of Badr." (p. 240). Regarding the size of the allotments it says as follows : "Umar assigned pensions to those enrolled favouring in size of allotments, those who were enrolled first and those who had taken part in battles, although Abu Bakr had divided equally among the people. So he began with those of the emigrants and of the companions who had taken part at Badr, assigning to each one of them 5,000 dirhams for a year, and putting their clients (halif) and freedmen (mawali) on an equality with them. He assigned to those who were converted to Islam as early as the veterans of Badr, to those who emigrated to Abyssinia and to those who fought at Uhud, 4,000 dirhams each. To the sons of veterans of Badr he assigned 2,000 each, with the exception of Hasan and Husain, for their pension he made equal to that of their father, because of their close relationship to the Apostle of Allah, assigning to each of them 5,000 dirhams. To al-Abbas ibn-Abd-al-Muttalib he assigned 5,000 because of his close relationship with the Apostle of Allah." Thus the roll of recipients goes on, till all those who had distinguished themselves in the early days of Islam are provided for. "Then he made assignment to the people according to their ranks (manazil), their reading of the Kuran and their campaigns (Jihad). The remainder of the people he put in a single category, including those Moslems who came to al-Madinah, at 25 dinars a piece and he made grants to others with them." (pp. 243–44 op. cit.)

To keep record of these assignments a register (Diwan) was maintained, because the Muslims had noticed that the kings in Syria kept a register and enrolled the troops. Thus arose the famous department of state "Diwan."

[11] W. Muir, *Rise, Decline and Fall of the Caliphate*, p. 148.

business, arms ; a people whose calling it was to be ready for warlike expedition at a moment's notice."[12]

ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY UNDER THE OMMEYADES

Under the Ommeyades the central administrative machinery consisted of four departments, viz. (*i*) the Diwān-ul-Kharāj, i.e. the board of land tax (*ii*) the Diwān-ul-Khātim or the board of signet, where the ordinances of government were drawn up, confirmed and sealed ; (*iii*) the Diwān-ul-Rasāil, the board of correspondence and (*iv*) the Diwan-ul-Mustaghillāt or board of miscellaneous revenue. There were two other departments subordinate to the Diwan-ul-Kharaj, one that had the charge of the pay of the police, and the other of the soldiers.[13] Revenue collection was entrusted to the Aamils, who also exercised certain executive functions. The head of the revenue department of the province was the Sahib-ul-Kharaj, who was independent of the governor and was appointed directly by the Khalifa. But where governors were also Sahib-ul-Kharāj, as it often happened after Omar II, they gave the charge of revenue collection to their secretaries or Khatibs. The sources of revenue in each province comprised (1) the land tax, (2) the test tax on non-Muslim subjects, (3) poor rates, (4) customs and excise duties, (5) tributes paid under treaties and (6) the fifth of the spoils of war. They formed the provincial exchequer or Diwan out of which the soldiers, the stipendiaries, and public servants were paid, and works of public utility were executed. Any balance that remained was remitted to the imperial treasury. The entire revenues of Islam were thus expended almost as soon as received.

The civil administration followed close on conquest. In Mesopotamia the great net-work of canals was early taken in hand. "The long neglected embankments of the Tigris and Euphrates were placed under special officers ; Syria and Irak were measured field by field ; and the assessment established on a uniform basis."[14] Justice was administered by civil judges who were appointed by the Khalifa and who were also independent of the governor. They received fixed salaries, and bore the title of Hakim. "The judge

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 149–50.
[13] Ameer Ali, *History of the Saracens*, pp. 190–91.
[14] W. Muir, *Rise, Decline and Fall of the Caliphate*, p. 151.

was named and is still named Hakimush-Shara, i.e. ruler through law." In the reign of Khalifa Abdul Malik, Arabic was introduced as the language of the public offices.

GENERAL CAUSES OF ARAB SUCCESSES IN WAR

Such was the administrative organization of the Arabs before the Abbasids. It was far more solid and had immensely greater driving force than that of the contemporary Indian administrative organization. Besides that "the Arabian nation was the champion of Islam; and to fight its battles every Arab was jealously reserved."[15] The wild enthusiasm of the Arabs to fight for the faith was regulated and turned to fruitful purpose by the foresight of the Prophet. "Wars are won in the first place by science but in the second place by discipline, in the third place by enthusiasm. The five "Prayers" constituted a drill, the fasting month, a test of endurance and an education therein; enthusiasm was provoked by the magnificence of the claim to form the leading caste on earth, with a right to the possessions of all, who did not belong to it, and the prospects of spoils on earth and in paradise. Probably, however, even more enthusiasm was inspired by the belief that fighting was in the cause of God."[16] It was indeed this tremendous upsurge of religious fervour combined with requisite amount of discipline and with a hope that fighting of God's battles is bound to be rewarded with rich spoils on earth and the pleasures of paradise in heaven that made the Arabs invincible. Their faith impelled them to conquer the world, and they served God thereby, whereas to the Hindus the world was illusion, Māyā, and it was folly to fight for religion. This psychology made a tremendous difference in the results of conflicts between the Indians and the Muslims. Hence the great scholar Alberuni, remarked that the Hindus never staked "their soul nor body nor property on a religious controversy."[17] For centuries before this time religious tolerance had been accepted as a universal ideal of state-craft in India. Hindu philosophy taught that religions and cults were only paths to seek God, and hence deserved respect. They could neither understand nor appreciate

[15] W. Muir, *Rise and Fall of the Caliphate*, p. 147.
[16] D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammedanism*, p. 76.
[17] Alberuni, *India*, p. 19.

butchering of men in the name of God. Fighting for any purpose other than territorial aggrandizement they did not know, and even this purpose did not evoke as great an enthusiasm and self-sacrifice in them as it did in the Muslims. Neither were the Indians as disciplined as the Arabs. Hence the Indians could not stand in an armed contest with the Arabs at first and with the Turks subsequently.

ARAB CONQUEST AND ADMINISTRATION OF SIND

The conquest of Sind does not seem to have been a very difficult task for the Arabs. It was only a side-line of their main advance into Central Asia. After the fall of the Persian empire at the battle of Nehawand (A.D. 642), they advanced beyond the Oxus and that was a long and pulsatory process. Emulating the glory of those who had accomplished the conquest of Central Asia, the governor of Makran led an army into Sind and, after several abortive attempts, the country fell to Muhammad ibn Kasim in A.D. 712. The Arab rule lasted in all its vigour for about one and a half centuries when gradually the rot set in, and in A.D. 870–71 the Abbasid Khalifas lost all effective control over it. It then came nominally under the Saffarid dynasty and from the Saffarid dynasty under the Samanid dynasty, both of which practically left Sind to go its own way.[18] Then it broke up into petty principalities. Al-Masudi who visited the Indus valley in A.D. 915–16 noticed two independent Arab kingdoms with Multan and Mansurah as their capital. These two Arab principalities seem to have continued their existence till the invasion of Mahmud Ghaznavi. The other principalities were of little importance though they were ruled by Muslim chiefs. One of them Turan "was under the authority of a native of Basra, named Abul-Qassam tax-gatherer, administrator, judge and general who could not distinguish three and ten."[19]

The government the Arabs established in Sind was in line with that in other countries under them. More or less military in character their rule seems to have changed its tone in India. Elsewhere the natives were scrupulously kept out of administration if they did not embrace Islam. Here however they were freely associated in the administration of the country. Sisakar the minister of Dahir was, after the defeat and death of his master, taken into service

[18] op. cit., p. 13. [19] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I, p. 456.

by Muhammed ibn Kasim who "treated him with much kindness and conferred upon him the office of wazir."[20] He enjoyed the Muslim chief's confidence to a very great extent. Muhammed ibn Kasim also "appointed people from among the villagers and the chief citizens to collect the fixed taxes from the cities and villages, that there might be a feeling of strength and protection."[21] As in the sphere of government so in that of religion the fanaticism of Arabs was considerably relaxed. The people of Sind, as idolaters were treated with much consideration. After they made their submission and agreed to pay the poll-tax the Khalifa orderd that "we cannot in any way stretch out our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given them to worship their gods. Nobody must be forbidden or prevented from following his own religion."[22] Thus they were allowed to build their temples. Muhammed ibn Kasim "also enjoined them to maintain the indigent Brāhmaṇs with kindness and consideration, observe rites and customs of their ancestors, and give oblations and alms to the Brāhmaṇs, according to former practice."[23] Such was the liberal attitude of the Muslim Arabs towards the idolatrous Indians. It made a favourable impression and induced many Indians to embrace Islam, which kept the torch of Islamic rule in India burning till the invasion of Mahmud Ghaznavi.

Now as to the actual administration it seems that the Arabs retained the machinery as they found it, introducing modifications wherever necessary. Nevertheless, their main reliance was on their military power, and to some extent on the loyalty of the people. The local chiefs and governors, wherever they willingly submitted or submitted after defeat, were reinstated but only after they agreed to the payment of certain tribute. In the administration of Dahir the subordinate chiefs and governors were called variously as Thakurs, Rawats, or Ranas.[24] We are told that when one of the powerful and loyal chieftains of Dahir was seized and brought with his family and twenty well-known Thakurs before Muhammed ibn Kasim he treated him with kindness and respect, made over the country of Bait (?), to him and bestowed on him a green umbrella surmounted by a peacock, a robe of honour, and chair along with

[20] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I, Chachnama, p. 176.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 183. [22] *Ibid.*, p. 186.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 186. [24] *Ibid.*, Chachnama, pp. 165, 167, 187, etc.

a hundred thousand dirhams. "Historians relate that the first umbrella of Ranagi or chiefship which he gave was this to Moka." All his Thakurs also received robes and saddled horses.[25] Again when Dhalila was conquered Muhammed ibn Kasim "called Nuba son of Dharan and having made a compact with him invested him with honours and conferred on him the entire governorship of the fort and its dependencies from the eastern to the western boundaries."[26]

Similarly did he treat another local chief by name Kaka, of the territory of Budhiya under whom he placed one Abdul Malik as his lieutenant to punish all enemies and rebels.[27] But generally he appointed an Arab governor over the local chiefs, and entrusted him with the collection of tributes and with keeping chiefs under control. For example, when the provinces of Siwistan (Seistan) and Budhiya were conquered "he appointed his functionaries to discharge the civil duties of the territory and brought the neighbouring places under his rule."[28] He appointed Rawats there and they appear to have been petty chieftains like village headmen or Muqaddams. Important towns and forts were placed under competent officials and commanders. When Multan was taken Amir Daud Nasr was appointed its governor. "Akrama son of Rihan Shami was appointed governor of the territory around Multan and Ahmad son of Harima son of Atba Mendani was appointed governor of the forts of Ajtahad and Karur."[29] Similarly did he appoint special officers and governors when Alor was taken. Sometimes he sent detachments with his lieutenants, who were charged with the task of bringing unsubdued parts of the country under Arab control; and after they subdued those parts they were ordered to take up their residence there with a military contingent. From Bahrawar for example, he sent Sulaiman son of Pathan and Aba Fazzatul Kashari with a body of men "towards the territory of the people of Bahraj. They took up their residence there; and Umar son of Hajjaz-ul-Akbari Hanafi was appointed their chief and a body of famous warriors were placed under him."[30] He stationed two thousand foot soldiers with Kais Bin Abdul malik and Khalid Ansari in Siwistan (Seistan) and a number of his trusted men to take possession of Debal and Nirun. One of his own companions by name of Malik Maula was appointed

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 165.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 162.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[29] *Ibid.*, Chachnama, p. 207.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

ruler of Karwail and a contingent of three hundred were posted there.[31]

Government of important cities received careful attention and Muhammed ibn Kasim took care that influential local men assisted the Arabs in the affairs of government. It is said for example, that for the management of the city of Brahmanabad he appointed one Wida son of Hamiduddin Najdi and gave him overseers and assistants. "He entrusted four persons from among the merchants of the city with all matters concerning property. He strictly ordered that they should inform him (Wida) fully and particularly of all matters and that nothing should be decided without consulting him."[32] He regulated the practice of alms-giving to the indigent Brahmins in that city. He ruled that three dirhams out of every hundred dirhams capital be set apart from which alms may be given as much as necessary. The officers and nobles of the city, according to the former practice received their allowances.

As in the management of the cities and towns so in the management of the country-side, the Arabs followed local practice as far as possible. We are told that when the chiefs and merchants of the country of Samanis made their submission to Muhammed ibn Kasim "he fixed revenue upon them and appointed a person from each tribe as the head of his tribe." The agriculturists were also taken under protection. The artisans and merchants were not heavily taxed. From those who embraced Islam only a tenth part of their wealth and the produce of the land was taken; but those who followed their own religion were required to pay "from the produce of manual industry or from the land, the usual sums according to the established custom of the country, and bring it to the government collectors."[33] He treated the Jats of Lohana according to the practice in vogue under Chach and Dahir, and that was with the advice of Sisakar the Hindu minister of Muhammed ibn Kasim.[34] In regard to the collection of revenue, the Arabs were "compelled to seek in the political institutions of their subjects the means of realizing the exactions which as victors they felt it their right to demand."[35] Hence they had to maintain the native officials in Sind. Further the people of Sind were recruited in the

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 190.
[32] *Ibid.*, Chachnama, p. 189.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 190–91.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 187.
[35] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Appendix, p. 461.

army as auxiliaries and even employed to fight the foreign wars of the Arabs.

Sind yielded, it is said a sum of 11,500,000 dirhams and 150 pounds of aloe wood, and this amount comprised the land-tax, the poll-tax, the customs duties and all other miscellaneous items. "The land tax was usually rated at two-fifths of the produce of wheat and barley, if the fields were watered by public canals; three-tenths if irrigated by wheels or other artificial means; and one fourth if altogether unirrigated. If arable land were left uncultivated it seems to have paid one dirham per jarib, and one tenth of probable produce....Of dates, grapes and garden produce one third was taken either in kind or money; and one fifth (khams) of the yield of wines, fishing pearls, and generally of any product not derived from cultivation was to be delivered in kind or paid in value, even before the expenses had been defrayed....The customs and transit dues for which unbelievers had to pay a double rate and the taxes on trades and manufacturers, and handicrafts were also important sources of public revenue."[36] These were the original institutes of Omar, when he got Sawad surveyed and assessed. But since in Sind the collection was under tax-farmers, the above mentioned rates might have been more often than not, treated as a bare minimum for their purpose. Sindian cultivators had also to pay other taxes like the baj, and the ushari and in accordance with an old law of Omar's had to feed every Muhammedan traveller for three days and nights.[37] But apart from all this, much land was alienated as iktaat or beneficiary grants for public services and as wakf for sacred edifices and institutions. Those who received beneficiary grants held them on the condition of continued military services, and thus there was the jagir system started from the beginning of Muslim rule in India. But these grantees were not allowed to take to agriculture, their land being cultivated for them by natives of the country. Those soldiers who did not receive grants in land received stipends from public revenue, to which they themselves contributed nothing in the shape of land tax.

It is difficult to say anything definite in regard to the administration of justice. Those who were employed for the collection of taxes had nothing to do with the administration of justice. "The powers of life and death were exercised by every chief who could

[36] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Appendix, p. 474. [37] *Ibid*, p. 176.

maintain the slightest show of independence, as well as by the Amirs ; but under the latter, legal formalities were more rigorously, if not justly, observed. The Qazi, who was appointed to the judgement seat by their orders, professed in controversies between Muhammedans to decide according to the precepts of the Kuran, while even between Hindus and Muhammedans the same unerring guide was appealed to, under which, of course, the former obtained a very small modicum of justice. Public and political offences whether by one party or the other were tried by the same standard ; but in all suits for debts, contracts, adultery, inheritance, the rights of property, and the like, the Hindus being left without any form of law or any established judiciary to appeal to, had to accommodate their own differences, and therefore, maintained their own panchayats or arbitration committees in full efficiency."[38] It appears therefore that the Hindu institutions continued to exist for the dispensation of justice, which was done according to their own law codes, customs, etc. It is, however, maintained that the public tribunals were to the Hindus the only means of extortion and forcible conversion. There were judicial penalties for riding on horseback with a saddle, while adoption of Muslim costume and wearing of beards were compulsory. Thus it is that the primary obligation inseparably connected with the institution of a government, that is, purity of justice, seems to have been ignored by the Arab rulers of Sind. And though the governors were frequently changed, degeneration set in soon enough, and the conquerors and the conquered drifted apart because there was little sympathy between them ; and that ultimately contributed to the decline of Arab rule in Sind.

Another cause that contributed to accentuate that decline was the sectarian feuds among the Arabs themselves. For example two Yamanian tribes of Sakasaks and Sakifis started their feuds soon after the occupation of Sind. Under the Khilafat of Mutasim, the Yamanian and Nizarian tribes broke out into open hostility. Then there was the religious persecution of the adherents of Ali. Thus it appears that religious tolerance was a principle unknown to the Arabs in Sind, though they had to be very lenient towards the idolaters.

Such in brief was the rule of the Muslim Arabs in Sind. Their advent was only an episode in the history of India, and their govern-

[38] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Appendix, p. 478.

ment had little to contribute to the evolution of Indian polity. Muslim contribution in any appreciable degree came later after the foundation of the first Muslim empire in India in 1206. The Arab rule in Sind failed to produce any effect on the form and character of Hindu political institutions. On the other hand the Muslim methods of government as devised by the Khalifas had in many instances to yield place to the Hindu methods in Sind. In architecture and arts, customs and manners they left but little impress upon the country and the people. The inherent weakness in the Arab rule in Sind, as in any other parts of their empire spread over the three continents, was that the central authority counted for little, since vast distances helped the local chiefs or governors to defy it with impunity.

CHAPTER XI

DELHI SULTANATE AND FOUNDATION OF INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY

DISINTEGRATION OF THE EMPIRE OF THE KHALIFAS

THE vast and magnificent empire of Islam over which the Khalifas held sway from Baghdad, started on its downward course from the middle of the ninth century. The fiery Turkoman chiefs who were at this time "the virtual arbiters of the fate of the caliphate," raised puppets to the throne and allowed them no power and authority.[1] During the convulsions that followed the death of Muntassir B'Illah (A.D. 862) the provincial governors graudally established themselves in semi-independence, and the supremacy of the Khalifas dwindled into a mere shadow of suzerainty. About three quarters of a century later under Abul Abbas Muhammed (A.D. 933–40) vanished the last vestiges of the power and dignity that had yet remained to them. With the exception of Baghdad and its environs nothing now remained in their hands, while "the governor of each province assumed an independent role."[2] And when the Caliphate found itself too feeble to carry the banners of Islam into foreign lands, there arose other peoples who did it more successfully.

INVASION OF INDIA BY GHAZNAVIDS AND GHORIS

It was during these years of trouble that Trans-Oxiana became virtually independent under its governor, Ismail the Samanid. Saman was a Persian, and owner of camels and leader of caravans. His family first rose to prominence when his grandson Ahmad was made governor of Farghana by Mamun in A.D. 819. The independent rule of the Samanids lasted from A.D. 874 to 999. Like the Khalifas, the Samanids employed the Turkish slaves in their court and kingdom. One of these Alaptigin rebelled and established himself at Ghazni. His slave and son-in-law Sabuktigin ruled Ghazni from

[1] Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, p. 290. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 301.

A.D. 977 to 998. It was he who made vast conquests and came into conflict with Jaipal king of Kabul and the Punjab, and forced him to cede Kabul. At his death his empire extended from the Oxus to the Indus, and from Persia to the Pamirs. His son and successor Mahmud of Ghazni had a passion for invading India, which he did seventeen times, in consequence of which he carried away enormously rich booty, annexed the Punjab, and struck terror among the Hindus of Northern India. He appeared to be invincible and through him the might of Islam. He had taken a vow to exterminate idolatry in India, and his sword and ferocity led to the conversion of large numbers to Islam. With his death in A.D. 1030 started a period of confusion, that culminated in the overthrow of the Ghaznavids by the chiefs of Ghor. Alauddin Hussain razed Ghazni to the ground while, after him his two nephews conquered and ruled almost the entire dominion of Mahmud of Ghazni. The younger chief of Ghor Muizzuddin Muhammed came into conflict with Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi after the Punjab had been annexed. In A.D. 1192 Prithviraj was defeated and killed; and his entire dominion extending as far as Delhi was annexed. Ajmer and the country round about were gradually reduced.

Muhammed Ghori left his trusted but capable lieutenant Qutb-uddin Aibak in charge of his Indian possessions. He found that Muslims had yet to exert a great deal before the country became theirs. For some years he marched north and south, east and west, between Rajputana and Oudh, subduing those who had not been subdued, and breaking those who had rebelled. Since the Chauhans of Delhi were defiant he made Delhi his headquarters (A.D. 1193) and since then Delhi has practically remained the capital of India, as it has always been the gateway on land to Northern India. For about six years neither he nor his lieutenants knew any respite and yet the chiefs of that part of Northern India, which came under the Muslims, could not be completely broken. There were, until the middle of the sixteenth century, many instances of the Hindu chiefs regaining their lost power.

Very different however was the experience of the Muslims in the east. After the conquest of Bihar the intrepid and restless Ikhtiyarud-din son of Bakhtiyar of the Turkish tribe of Khalj pushed into Bengal, and when he reached its capital Nadiya, he had only 18 companions by his side, while the main body was

coming behind. With these eighteen, mounted companions he put the king of Bengal to flight and made short work of his palace guards.

But before Khilji entered Bengal the faint-hearted Bengalees had, in large numbers, fled the city in anticipation of the fulfilment of a prophecy in their sacred books that the Turks were destined to take the city. With this sort of courage, the Bengalees could never shake off the Muslim yoke, and though there were rebellions of the ambitious Muslim governors, the people of the country remained generally tame.

FIRST MUSLIM EMPIRE IN INDIA (A.D. 1200–1400)

By A.D. 1206 the controlling hand of Muhammed Ghori was removed by assassination, and Qutb-uddin Aibak assumed the title of Sultan. He was acknowledged as sovereign by Ikhtiyaruddin of Bengal and Nasiruddin Qabacha the governor of Multan and Uch. That is the beginning of the Muslim empire in India, the well-known Delhi Sultanate. The Slave dynasty, the dynasty founded by Aibak ruled for full ninety years, and counted among its kings strong and ruthless rulers like Balban, and pious puppets like Nasiruddin. The empire comprised almost the whole of Northern India without Orissa, and was further extended by the Khiljis who ruled over the Delhi Sultanate after them. Their rule lasted for thirty years, and was marked by the reign of Sultan Allauddin which witnessed the conquest of the Deccan and in many ways opened a new page in the administrative organization of the Delhi Sultanate. After the Khiljis the Tughlaqs ruled for about a century from A.D. 1320 to 1413. The empire of the Khiljis that comprised the whole of Northern India and a major part of the Deccan gradually shrank in extent; and the innovations of Muhammed bin Tughlaq marked a departure in the policy of Muslim statecraft in India. His reign of twenty-six years, A.D. 1325–1351 was a period of ruthless oppression and utter confusion. The rot had set in, and the empire eventually crashed to its fall with the invasion of Amir Taimur in A.D. 1398. The Delhi Sultanate existed only in name when Taimur left India after having annexed the Punjab to his already vast dominions. Then a number of phantom kings passed across the stage of history leaving no trace behind. An empire that

had taken full two hundred years to be conquered and consolidated, and which extended over nearly the whole of India had now completely disintegrated. Numerous states with varying sizes and degrees of power and independence had risen, and their mutual warfare filled the next century. That was the prelude to another foreign invasion, that of Babar and the foundation of another empire, that of the Mughals.

CHANGE IN THE OUTLOOK AND TECHNIQUE OF ISLAMIC STATE IN INDIA

The period of two hundred years covered by the rise and fall of the Delhi Sultanate was marked by many crude attempts at government, by administrative policies that sought to adjust the interests of Muslim rulers and their Hindu subjects. It is a period when the Muslim rulers of Delhi found themselves in an anomalous position undertaking the task of governing millions of idolaters, in accordance with the laws of the Quran. Islamic statecraft encountered some of the most baffling problems, and those problems the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate tried to solve in a way that ran counter to the basic principles of Islamic state. For, the ideals of an Islamic state could be best realized in an Islamic country, since the Islamic state could best function there. In India the Islamic state very early encountered the problem of a Dar-ul-Harb, whose interests were opposed to those of the Dar-ul-Islam, and for this problem the Islamic state in India had to find a solution. That created indeed an incompatibility between the ideals of the Islamic state and Islamic faith. The Islamic state as founded by Muhammed and continued by the Khalifas was a theocracy. The offices of the secular and spiritual ruler were combined in the same person. In actual working each supplemented the other. For, Islam as a creed gave law unto the state, that is, the organization of the fraternity of Muslims for the satisfaction of their secular needs. Every Muslim was a warrior of God for the propagation of the faith, and therefore the spoils of the war like the power of the state was shared by him. The Muslims, wherever they went, formed a ruling and privileged minority, and specially so in India, where they were far outnumbered by their Hindu subjects. Such a vast non-Muslim population as they found in India, could not be ruled, as the Muslim rulers

gradually realized, in accordance with the laws of the Quran or laws dominated by the spirit of Islam. The laws of theocracy had to be relaxed, since the rulers in spite of their zeal for the faith could not by means of the sword or otherwise, convert the teeming millions of India into Islam. Indeed, as the militant force of Islam spent itself and the rulers adopted the country as their own, and the Hindus got reconciled to their masters and their government, there started a process of mutual adjustment. Human nature asserted itself over the artificial barriers created by religion. Living side by side, breathing the same air, drinking the same water, and cradled in the lap of the same motherland the Hindu subject and the Muslim ruler gradually began to ignore their differences and animosities. Common avenues of religious approach and common media for the exchange of thought and ideals were found. Religious movements were started that sought to embrace the Hindu and the Muslim without any distinction, while Urdu a mixture of the Hindi, Persian and Arabic, became the medium of self-expression both for the Hindu and the Muslim in Northern India. These facts foreshadowed a change in outlook and in keeping with this changed outlook Muslim statecraft received a new orientation that imparted its character to the Islamic state in India. Rulers like Alauddin Khilji and Muhammed bin Tughlak during this period, and Sher Shah and the great Mughals afterwards, felt that the laws of the Quran might be sacred enough to command respect, might be theoretically binding, but as applied to Indian conditions they fell short of their purpose.

They realized that India could not be governed by the rulings of the Prophet or the learned opinions of the Muslim jurists and theologians. The needs of the Muslim rule in India were different from those of the Muslim rule in Persia or Arabia where the population was Muslim. The vast extent of the country and its teeming millions required a substantial modification of the technique of Muslim theocracy. Moreover very often the Muslim officers in India were seditious, self-seeking and dishonest, while the Hindu subjects were defiant, treacherous, and self-asserting at the slightest opportunity. There appears to have developed more or less a common attitude amongst the Muslim officers recruited from the country and the subject population in relation to the Central authority. The country was insecure within and threatened constantly by the

Mongols from without. In exigencies like these, Muslim rulers could hardly think of the welfare of the state in terms of the welfare of the Muslim population only, or of the glorification of Islam that meant religious persecution of the Hindus. They had to think of the "good of the state and the benefit of the people" and not of what was in accordance with the laws of the Quran or sayings of the Prophet. And what they thought was for the good of the state, for the so called Dar-ul-Islam as well as Dar-ul-Harb they decreed. Such was the change that had been forced upon the mental outlook of the Muslim rulers by the conditions in India. This changed outlook of Muslim rulers manifested itself in two ways. In the first place it called for a fresh adjustment of the relations between the Islamic state and the Islamic faith, and in the second place it sought to evolve a new technique of statecraft hitherto unknown to Muslim theocracy.

A NEW ADJUSTMENT IN SPHERES OF THE ISLAMIC STATE, ISLAMIC FAITH

A new adjustment of the relations between the Islamic state and the Islamic faith postulated a new definition of their relative position, and the recognition of a basic difference in their competence, the latter of which Muslim canon law could not countenance. In effect it meant that the spheres of the Islamic faith and state should be clearly defined and their competence determined. For, the areas over which Islamic state could claim to rule in India, Islamic faith could not. And it came to be regarded as a point of honour that the rulers of the state should not take orders from the custodians of the faith in India, i.e. the clergy and the canon lawyers of Islam. Now for several reasons affairs in the Muslim world had developed a situation, in which Muslim rulers often found themselves constrained to accept guidance which gradually amounted to dictation by the Muslims lawyers and theologians. These causes were operative at the seat of the Caliphate, Baghdad when the Abbasids were ruling.

RISE OF THE SCHOOLS OF MUSLIM LAW

The Abbasids rose to power on the fall of the Ommeyeds, and that was as a result of religious revival. The impious Ommeyades,

under whom Islam remained in name were overthrown because the religious sentiment of the people was against them. They had treated the laws and sayings of the Prophet with scant respect. Their will was law. And with their accession to the Caliphate, the great body of the immediate companions of Muhammed, who had formed a deliberative council to aid the Khalifa in his task, remained at Medina spinning theories of law and state and lamenting the good old days. Meanwhile life and government at Damascus flowed in other channels. But since their rule could not be shaken off, the Muslims accepted the position that unbelief on the part of government that is strong and just, is better than true belief and anarchy. In course of time this was included in the spoken words of the Prophet. With the fall of the Ommeyads and rise of the Abbasids the old Muslim party anticipated a revival of the old traditions of the Islamic state. They anticipated that the canon law should rule the state and the Islamic state should exist for the true faith only. But most of them had to be disappointed. For, though the state was put upon a pious footing and the canon law was also formally restored there was a change in spirit. Canon law was modified to suit the purposes of the Abbasid rulers. Canon lawyers who were employed by them found it a delightful intellectual work to bend and twist the meaning of the sacred law in a manner that would make it adaptable to the needs and exigencies of a secular state. The Abbasides did not, like the Ommeyades, dispense with canon law, and make their will prevail in the matters of administration. They sought to maintain the canon law, but with convenient and ingenious construction put on it by their jurists. They therefore patronized the jurists, and with their encouragement developed the schools of law founded by Ābu Hanifā (died A.H. 150), Malik ibn Hanbal (died A.H. 241), Ash Shafii (died A.H. 204), Ahmad ibn Hanbal (died A.H. 241). These four different schools divided the allegiance of the entire Muslim world. The Hanifite school was followed by the Muslims of Central Asia and Northern India, and by the Turks; the Malikite school by those of upper Egypt; the Shafite school by those of Lower Egypt, Syria, Southern India and Malay Archipelago; and the Hanbalite school by the Wahabites in Central Arabia. Now these admitted the authority of the rulers of the time as a matter of expediency, and thereby accepted a new category of authority that was rather secular and

had hardly any pretensions to be spiritual. Thus were the Abbasids aided in their task as rulers by the exponents of the canon law. And since as the secular heads of the state they could not often promulgate law with the stamp of authority which Muhammed had, they had to take the ruling of the Mujtahids. The broad principles of law had been already settled by the great masters of the four schools. They were authorities of the first degree (Mujtahidun Mutlaq) second to Muhammed in virtue of his inspiration only. Second came the masters who had authority within the separate schools (Mujtahidunfi-l-Madhahib) to determine the questions that arose there; third, masters of still lesser rank for minor points (Mujtahidun bilfatwa); and so the chain runs on.[3]

DIFFERENCE IN THE NATURE OF ARAB RULE IN SIND AND TURKISH RULE IN THE DELHI SULTANATE

With these traditions of law and government Islam entered India. Its first entry, that is into Sind, took place when the Ommeyads were ruling from Damascus. Muhammed ibn Kasim's campaign in Sind "was not a holy war waged for the propagation of the faith, but a mere war of conquest,"[4] because the Ommeyades were no ardent believers in Islam and indeed were definitely impious. That fact substantially modified the nature of Arab rule in Sind. Not only as we have seen, were the Hindus tolerated but they enjoyed privileges in matters religious and political, and were even associated with the rulers in the administration of the country. But the second entry of Islam through the North-Western gateway of India was with a different role. The Turks entered India fired with the zeal of exterminating idolatry and of propagating the faith. When therefore the first permanent dominion was established with Delhi as its capital, it marked the triumph of Islam. The Islamic state existed for the Islamic faith and the canon law prevailed everywhere. The tenor of government came in line with the spirit of canon law. And since there was the Abbasid tradition of ruling the state in accordance with the canon law interpreted by the Mujtahids the problem of the Indian rulers was easy. They had only to conform

[3] D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory*, pp. 112–13.

[4] C.H.I., Vol. III, p. 4.

to that tradition. There was only this difference, that as the laws had, by now, fully developed, there could not be any new construction put on them, to suit the convenience of Indian rulers. And since the Indian rulers were Sultans and not Khalifas they were guided all the more closely by the example set by the Khalifas. That was, in the case of Indian rulers, tantamount to the acceptance of the guidance of the Mujtahids in matters of the state. And for the Muslim rulers from Qutbuddin Aibak to Firoz Tughlaq it came to this that at the instance of Mujtahids they had to promulgate policies which were in conformity with the Hanifite school of law and ordered persecution of the Hindus and sectarians other than the Sunnis. "Whatever was unlawful and forbidden by or opposed to the law was set aside"[5] by Firoz Shah. That was also the attitude of the founder of the Tughlaq dynasty. Guided by the Ulemas and Mujtahids, Firoz Shah for example persecuted "the sect of Shias also called Rawafiz" because they "had endeavoured to make proselytes . . . gave instruction and lectures upon the tenets of their sect. . . ."[6] Guided by them he imposed Jazia on the Brahmins who had been exempt from the tax till then.[7] It was in conformity with the Law to levy no other taxes than the Kharaj, i.e. tenth from the cultivated lands, the Jazia, i.e. poll tax, the Zakat, i.e. alms and a fifth of the spoil and of the produce of the mines. It was religious duty to keep the Hindus in perpetual abasement, to kill them and despoil their wealth, or failing all these levy Jazia for tolerating them.

It was unlawful to let the Muslim women go out of the city in broad daylight and visit the tombs on holy days. To use vessels of gold and silver at the royal table was a violation of the law, and so was the use of garments made of such trimmings of gold brocade and embroidery as exceeded four inches in breadth. Indeed in thousand and one things, in details of daily life and conduct, the policy of the state did prevail. And as interpreters of law the authority of the Ulemas and Mujtahids also obtained unchallenged. The Sultans of Delhi had to depend upon them for legal rulings and to that extent their absolute authority or sovereignty was impaired.

[5] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, p. 380.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 379.
[7] *Ibid.* p. 366.

SIGNIFICANCE OF KHUTBA FOR SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE

But the authority of the Ulemas and Mujtahids was not limited to giving legal rulings only. When a king came to the throne, they were called upon to read the Khutba, and that was the public proclamation that the king had been duly chosen, and had the sanction of the religion and of the people. The significance of this act in its Indian setting could be best understood in the light of its past history.

Islamic theory, and traditions of the Koreishites favoured election of the Khalifa and so were the first four Khalifas elected by the Muslim congregation. But under the Ommeyads the Khalifa almost invariably nominated his successor in his lifetime. When the nomination was made the dignitaries of the empire including the kazis and generals of the army took an oath of allegiance, and that was repeated when he actually succeeded to the Caliphate. This oath of allegiance, being Ijmaa-ul-Ummat (concensus of the people) imparted a sacredness to the personality of the Khalifa, and that was enhanced when public prayers were offered for the accepted Pontiff in the mosques of Mecca and Medina. Under the Abbasids the practice of nomination by the reigning Khalifa obtained more or less regularly except when the nomination was nullified by powerful court intrigues or coups of the army leaders and body guards. Harun al Rashid had nominated his five-year-old son to be his successor, and also heirs presumptive, viz. Al Mamun and Al Motamin. In India as well as in Ghazni, the Sultans claimed rulership by virtue of conquest, and therefore the principle of election was discounted. The rulers like the Abbasids nominated their heirs, though here again it was ultimately not the Ijmaa-ul-Ummat, but the strength of the candidate's personality and the support he received from the Amirs and the army, which won the throne for him. The predominance of secular considerations and interest in the accession of the ruler to the throne postulated the necessity of the religious sanction that could impart a sanctity to the office and person of the ruler. Further the Indian Sultans were Muslim rulers ; in theory at least, champions of Islam in a heathen country ; and therefore, the sanction of Islam was essential to make sovereignty de facto, sovereignty de jure. That was accomplished only when the Khutba was read in the name of the new king. And it

was through this dependence of the king upon the religious sanction obtained through the Khutba that he had to regard the authority of the Ulemas as even superior to his. For it was not merely that his title to be legitimate had to be publicly vouchsafed by the Ulemas; his moral authority and justice in order to be effective required the support of the rulings of the Ulemas and Mujtahids also. In matters of law and justice the king had to take their ruling as final; and even in matters of state policy they were ready to interfere whenever they found an opportunity.

POSITION OF DELHI SULTANS VIS-A-VIS ISLAMIC THEOCRACY

The position of the Indian Sultan was not a very enviable one. They found themselves in a position of partial vassalage, and they realized that it could not be conducive to the good of the ruler himself or to the state as a whole. For one thing, the canon law as interpreted by the Mujtahids could not suit the exigencies of a state in which a vast population exerted a pressure which the Muslim Kings could with difficulty counteract, and in which if the Hindu subjects were rebellious, the Muslim officers were defiant. It was therefore expedient that the vast heathen population should be, without detriment to the interest of Islam, placated, and that the rebellious as well as defiant Muslim officers should be severely punished. But that was not lawful.

And yet at a time when the Mongols threatened the country, and for about a century before the invasion of Taimur they repeatedly invaded the country; when the new Muslims were a source of constant trouble, as in the reign of Alauddin Khilji; and when the foreign Ameers fomented disaffection in the provinces of the empire, as in the reign of Muhammed Tughlak, the Delhi Sultans could not adhere steadfastly to a course of administrative action that engendered the glorification of Islam by slaughter or conversion of Hindus en masse. When the roads in the empire were unsafe; when the trade declined, famines occurred, the revenues dwindled, lawlessness and brigandage spread, and other hindrances to the peace and prosperity of the empire raised their heads, the Sultans, at least those who had the power to check them, could not sit quiet. They had to improvise laws, and policies which, though they often ran counter to the dictates of the canon lawyers, were

nevertheless productive of the good of the state. Of course in those days in the vocabulary of rulers, the good of the state was synonymous with the good of the rulers and its content consisted in a stable source of revenue, a country free from external danger, a strong governmental organization and unbroken loyalty of the people to the kings. In India it also meant that the socalled Dar-ul-Islam and Dar-ul-Harb be united in loyalty to the Sultan and support his rule and authority. But in order to ensure that, the peculiar significance of Dar-ul-Islam and Dar-ul-Harb in the phraseology of Muslim statecraft should cease to be. And it had to cease, for the simple reason that in India within the ambit of the same empire of Delhi there could not be one region subject to perpetual religious war waged by another region. At least within the bounds of the Delhi Sultanate the two regions could not persist in maintaining hostile relations; for, that would mean a house divided against itself. And that postulated a theory of government different from the accepted theory of Islamic theocracy, and the recognition of a distinction between the competence of the Islamic faith and of the Islamic state in India.

ALAUDDIN'S PRINCIPLES OF STATECRAFT

It was the need of this recognition, which induced the rulers to free themselves from the hold of the Ulemas and Mujtahids in the conduct of government. This attitude was clearly demonstrated by the government of Alauddin Khilji. Ziauddin Barni alludes to this in the plainest terms. "When he became king" Barni writes "he came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing, and the rules and decrees of law are another. Royal commands belong to the king, legal decrees rest upon the judgement of Kazis and Muftis. In accordance with this opinion whatever affairs of state came before him, he only looked to the public good without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful. He never asked for legal opinion about political matters ...."[8] In this context it will be worth while to narrate the conversation that he had with Qazi Mughisuddin of Bayana.

When asked by Alauddin as to how the Hindus were to be treated, the Qazi replied that their wealth ought to be despoiled and they

[8] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, p. 183.

themselves ought to be enslaved and kept in eternal abasement, if they could not be exterminated. And he invoked the authority of Abu Hanifa in support of his views. The Sultan smiled and said "I do not understand any of the statements thou hast made; but this I have discovered that the Khuts (land owners) and Mukaddims (headmen) ride upon fine horses, wear fine clothes, shoot with Persian bows, make war upon each other and go out hunting; but of the Kharaj (tribute), Jazia (Poll tax), Kari (house tax) and Chari (pasture tax) they do not pay one jital. They levy separately Khut's share from the villages, give parties and drink wine and many of them pay no revenue at all, either upon demand or without demand. Neither do they show respect for my officers. . . I have therefore, taken my measures, and have made my subjects obedient. . . ."

The next question that he asked the Qazi was how to deal with dishonest revenue officers and clerks, who were Muslim and whose hands he had cut off for "robbing the treasury." The Qazi said that they should be paid adequate salaries and when found dishonest in spite of that, they should be punished either by fine or imprisonment only. Upon that the Sultan remarked "I have ordered such stipends to be settled on the various revenue officers as will maintain them in respectability, and if notwithstanding, they resort to dishonesty and reduce the revenue I deal with them as thou hast seen."

The third question that the Sultan asked was whether the enormous wealth, that he had brought from Deogiri belonged to him or to the state. The Qazi replied "the treasure obtained at Deogiri was won by the prowess of the army of Islam and whatever treasure is so acquired belongs to the public treasury." That appeared to the Sultan most unreasonable, and he frowned and told him that this treasure had been won by him, at the risk of his own life and that of his servants. 'How can the treasure won like this belong to the state'?"

Lastly when asked what right the Sultan and his children had upon the public treasury, the Qazi replied "If your majesty will follow the example of the most enlightened Khalifas and will act upon the highest principle, then you will take for yourself and your establishment the same sum as you have allotted to each fighting man: two hundred and thirty-four tankas." In sullen resentment he listened to all these and then added "you have

declared my proceedings in these matters to be unlawful. Now see how I act. When troopers do not appear at the muster, I order three years pay to be taken from them. I place wine drinkers and wine sellers in pits of incarceration. If a man debauches with another man's wife, I effectually prevent him from again committing such an offence and the woman I cause to be killed. Rebels good and bad, old hand or novices, I slay ; their wives and children I reduce to beggary and ruin. Extortion I punish with the torture of the pincers and the stick ; and I keep the extortioner in prison, in chains and fetters until every jital is restored." "Will thou call all these unlawful ?" That last interrogative was like the call of death for the Qazi and he thought his turban was going to be his winding sheet. Yet in utmost humility and trembling with fear, but true to his calling, the Qazi said "all this is unlawful and finds no support in the sayings of the Prophet or in the expositions of the learned." The Sultan went away in grim silence and the next day in the court, he rewarded him for his knowledge of the law and closed the talk with these remarks. "I issue such orders as I conceive to be for the good of the state and the benefit of the people. Men are heedless, disrespectful, and disobey my commands ; I am then compelled to be severe to bring them into obedience. I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful ; whatever I think to be for the good of the state or suitable for the emergency, that I decree."[9] That is the epitome of Alauddin's statecraft. Whatever he thought was for the good of the state or suitable for the emergency he decreed. He did not care if that was lawful or unlawful. For him that was lawful, which was for the good of his state ; that is to say helped to eradicate the evils from which his state suffered. He did not decree policies merely because they were calculated to contribute to the edification of his faith, and fostered the ideals of Islam. He made it thus plain to the custodians of canon law that there was a distinction between their sphere and his sphere ; and that within his sphere his will must be supreme and effective.

MUHAMMED TUGHLAQ'S PRINCIPLE OF GOVERNMENT

That is also the tenor of the talk that Muhammed bin Tughlaq once had with the historian Ziauddin Barni. Discussing the cause

[9] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, pp. 186–88.

of revolts in his empire and the punishment he inflicted on the people, he asked the historian under what circumstances siyāsat or punishment — capital punishment in this context — would be justified. To that Barni replied "under seven circumstances, and whatever goes beyond or in excess of these causes produces disturbances, troubles, and insurrection and inflicts injury on the country: (*1*) apostasy from the true religion and persistence therein; (*2*) wilful murder; (*3*) adultery of a married man with another man's wife; (*4*) conspiracy against the king; (*5*) heading a revolt or assisting rebels; (*6*) joining the enemies or rivals of the king, conveying news to them or aiding or abetting them in any way; (*7*) disobedience, productive of injury to the state." And the Sultan next asked whether the Prophet had said anything about these seven offences in respect of their punishment by the kings. To that Barni replied that "the Prophet had declared his opinion upon three offences out of these seven, viz. apostasy, murder of a Musalman, and adultery with a married woman. The punishment of the other four offences is a matter rather of policy and good government." This opinion seems to have commended itself to the Sultan, and he only added to it "I punish the most trifling act of contumacy with death. This I will do until I die or until the people act honestly, and give up rebellion and contumacy."[10] He had determined to do that because as he expressed on another occasion to Ziauddin he had been very much troubled by the foreign Ameers.[11] But all the same we discern from his talk that he severely punished not merely the first three categories of offence which was in consonance with the commands of the Prophet, he punished with equal severity the last four categories also, even though they had not been countenanced by the Prophet. In that, he was actuated, as Barni said, by considerations of "policy and good government." From the standpoint of our study, therefore, we notice here another example of a Sultan, who had his own course of action in matters of government, unimpeded by considerations of what was lawful or unlawful.

SPHERES OF ISLAMIC STATE AND RELIGION DISTINGUISHED

Thus it is that we notice gradual development in the Delhi sultanate, of a tendency to question the adequacy of canon law in

[10] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, Tarikhi Firoz Shahi, p. 255. [11] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

matters of administration, and the competence of the canon-lawyers and theologians to dictate to the state, or those who had the charge of the state. And to question the competence of the canon lawyers and theologians in dictating to the state, was to emphasize that the spheres of the Islamic state and Faith in India as also their competence were not coextensive ; that there were areas where the state could alone function and where the consideration of the Faith had to be excluded. This conclusion is forced on us when we scrutinise some of the administrative policies of Alauddin Khilji and Muhammed bin Tughlaq.

Alauddin, for example, appropriated to his own use four-fifths of the spoils ; and so did Muhammed bin Tughlaq, whereas they could lawfully claim only one-fifth. Alauddin had raised the Kharaj to 50 per cent of the produce and Muhammed bin Tughlaq to 20 per cent of the produce, while the rate approved by the law was only 10 per cent. Both of them levied Abwabs (cesses) in excess of what was sanctioned by the law. Alauddin made numerous laws to regulate the prices of food stuffs, the pay of soldiers, the vinting and selling of wine, and even marriages amongst the nobles. He himself acted as the highest court, and inflicted severe punishments on culprits whatever be their rank or status, be they Muslims or non-Muslims. Of him Ziauddin Barni wrote that "he disregarded the provisions of law, even in the punishments, which he awarded."[12] Muhammed bin Tughlaq "made himself the supreme court of appeal and when his verdict disagreed with that of the Muftis who had tried the case he first used every argument to change their opinion ; if he failed, persisted in his own and then reversed their judgments : not only so but to the more highly placed of his most trusted officers he also gave judicial powers, in spite of the fact that they were not Qazis, Muftis, or skilled canonists."[13] Thus we can maintain that during the period of the Delhi Sultanate there was an attempt to distinguish between the spheres of Islamic state and religion, and that attempt took the form of the king seeking to resist the interference of the Mujtahids and Ulemas in the matters of the state, and his making himself the sole arbiter, (in the words of Alauddin)

[12] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 206.

[13] G. Gardner Brown, "Some Aspects of the Character and Policy of Muhammed bin Tughlaq," *The Journal of U.P. Historical Society*, June 1918.

"of what was the good of the state" or (in the words of Barni) of matters "of policy and good government."

FOUNDATION OF INDO-ISLAMIC STATE

Indeed political expediency — what Alauddin termed "the good of the state" and Barni "matters of policy and good government" had already forced a new departure from strict law upon the Muslim kings dating back to the time of Ghaznavids and Muhammed Kasim. It was no negligible factor in assisting the Sultans of Delhi to insist upon a demarcation of the spheres of the Islamic Faith and the state, and to recognize that their competence was not compatible. It was well-known for example that Muslim theocracy always adopted the policy of disarming the non-Muslim population and of excluding them from any share in the administration and military service of the state. In India, however, it was not possible to conduct government by that policy of exclusion. For one thing, the Muslim population could not take up unaided the duties of defence, of maintaining internal peace, and of conducting the various departments of state. The Muslims when they conquered India and settled down, found that they had to utilize the existing institutions of government at least in its foundations and lower structure, since they had nothing adequate to substitute for it. That is seen from the beginning of the Muslim rule in India. Muhammed ibn Kasim had to grant substantial privileges to the Hindus in this regard and left the local administration and collection of taxes, practically entirely in their hands. Fanatically orthodox kings like Mahmud of Ghazni and his successors could not dispense with the need of employing Hindu armies to reinforce their own. That was the clearest indication of the fact that the claim of political expediency could not be lightly treated even though it ran counter to the spirit of Islamic law. They had to employ Hindu generals like Sewand Rai, Jai Sen, Vijai Rai and others to fight their battles.[14] We knew for example that in the reign of Masud the Hindu general Tilak with his Hindu army was sent from Ghazni against the rebel governor of the Punjab Ahmad Niyaltagin whom he defeated and killed. In the same reign another Hindu army with a large number of Hindu officers under the supreme command of Ahmad Ali Noshtigin was

[14] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, pp. 59, 60, 125, 127–34.

employed to quell a rebellion in the Gurdez and Sistan regions.[15] Under the Delhi sultanate the Hindu chiefs from the rank of semi-independent kings like the chief of Kulbarga[16] down to the Mukaddims,[17] the Ranas, and the Mahants [18] of villages, were retained, and each one of them in his own sphere acted as an agent of the Central government. They realized royal revenues and, following their own old custom, dispensed justice. Many of them had to render military service with the Hindu regiments. We are told, for example, that when Malik Kafur was deputed by Alauddin to attack Warangal, Rai Rayan Ram Deo of Deogiri behaved as dutifully as any vassal of Delhi and added to the imperial army "a force of Maharattas both horse and foot."[19] Alauddin's palace — Hazar Sutun — is said to have been guarded by Paiks, most of whom appear to have been Hindus ; and indeed but for the presence of the Hindu commanders like Randhol and Hindu soldiery, the usurpation of the Delhi throne by Khusru, who killed Sultan Qutbuddin and took the style of Sultan Nasiruddin, would not have been possible. Examples of such association of the Hindus in the civil and military departments of the state could be multiplied and therefore, it can be maintained that in India the Muslim rulers early recognized in principle that the policy of exclusion which was a technique of Muslim theocracy, could not be accepted in consideration of the political expediency. And the new technique of government that thus began to evolve, along with the recognition that polity and government are one thing and the rules and decrees of canon law another, (to use the language of Barni) truly laid the foundation of a new state which we may designate as the Indo-Islamic state. With these preliminary observations we may pass on to study the details of administrative machinery or the structure of the Indo-Islamic state.

STRUCTURE OF THE STATE

(*i*) *The Sultan*

At the head of the state was the king who bore the title of Sultan. Originally the title was a gift of the Khalifa. It was for the first

[15] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 130–32.
[16] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 248.
[17] *Ibid.*, 185.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 261.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 202.

time bestowed upon Ashnas, the commander of the Turkish guards by Khalifa Jaafar Harun Wasik b' Illah (A.D. 842–849).[20] He appointed Ashnas, the Sultan or lieutenant of the empire and decorated him with a jewelled girdle and a sword. The word Sultan is Arabic and means a ruler. The ceremony that marked the conferring of the title indicated that the highest civil and military powers were combined in the person, who received that title. After Ashnas the bestowal of the title practically remained in abeyance till the rise of the Buyids — the mayors of the palace. Muiz-ud-Dowla Ahmad was the first Buyid prince to have received that title (A.D. 944) and his name was inscribed on the coinage and recited in the cathedral services along with the Khalifa's. "The title was not however confined to the Buyid princes. It was conferred on mighty conquerors like Mahmud of Ghazni, Tughril, Malik Shah, Saladin, etc. Practically once assumed or conferred it became hereditary in the family although on each succession, a formal investiture was applied for, and, almost as a matter of course, granted with the usual robes of honour."[21] Mahmud of Ghazni's successors all assumed the title of Sultan and after them the chiefs of Ghor. But with the death of Sultan Muhammed Ghori the provincial viceroys — Tajuddin Yildiz governor of Kirman and Qutb-uddin Aibak assumed the title of Sultan. And since in India Qutb-uddin Aibak founded a dynasty and an empire, every one of those, who sat on the throne of that empire, assumed the title of Sultan. Nevertheless, there were occasions when Delhi Sultans like Iltutmish and Firoz Shah sought either from the Khalifas of Baghdad or of Egypt confirmation of their title, though that did not add to their actual power or dignity. But it was significant from another standpoint. It was an act, that to the Indian Muslims, appeared as imparting a moral legitimacy and religious sanction to the temporal authority of the Sultan. And since Sultan Muiz-ud-Dowla Ahmad had his name inscribed on the coinage and recited in the Khutba along with Khalifa's, the Delhi sultans could without compunction strike coins and have Khutba recited in their names. There were, however,

[20] Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, p. 286. The formation of a standing military corps composed of Turks and other foreigners, which ultimately proved the ruin of the Caliphate was begun by the Khalifa al-Mutasim b' Illah (A.D. 833–42).

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 412.

Sultans like Muhammed bin Tughlaq who even got the name of the Khalifa recited in the Khutba.[22]

The Sultan was, except for the authority of the Ulemas and Mujtahids, an absolute ruler. As we have already observed the Abbaside traditions of submitting the matters of canon law and religion to their judgment, were followed in India. That constituted a category of authority, which most of the Sultans could not dispense with, and under which some of the powerful ones smarted bitterly. But if the Khalifas like Abu Jaffar Harun Wasik b' Illah (A.D. 842–849) could find their attempts frustrated by these jurists[23] Delhi Sultans could not have much success in opposing them. With the exception of Alauddin Khilji and Muhammed bin Tughlaq none dared defy their authority, and take a course of action different to that prescribed by the law and suggested by the canon jurists. How the rest of the Delhi Sultans used to be guided by these reactionary canonists could be understood from the example of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. "There was in Delhi a man named Ruknuddin who was called Mahdi....He led people astray into mystic practices and perverted ideas by maintaining that he was Ruknuddin, the Prophet of God. The elders brought the facts of this case to my attention and gave evidence of what they heard him say. When he was brought before me I investigated the charges of error and perversion brought against him and he was convicted of heresy and error. The doctors of the Law said he was an infidel, and worthy of death for having spread such vile and pernicious ideas among the people of Islam....I ordered....that in accordance with the decision of the doctors, learned in the holy Law, the guilty should be brought to punishment...."[24] Similarly did he treat one Ain Mahru, a Shaikh of Gujerat, who used to say "Ana-l-Hakk" (I am God)

(*a*) *Sultan as the Fountain of Justice and Honour, and Lord of the Land and Water.*

From these facts, as well as from the examples of other Sultans, we can maintain that the Sultan was the highest court in the realm. That was in keeping with the Islamic theory that the king was the

[22] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 250.
[23] Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, p. 286.
[24] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, p. 379.

fountain of justice, even though that justice had to be dispensed among the people in accordance with the canon law and with the interpretation of the jurists. He was also the fountain of honour, since he could pick up a man from the dust and elevate him to the highest rank in the state. Like the Khalifas the Sultans had their own Amirs, Amir-ul-Umaras, and Maliks, and a Sultan like Alauddin could make the eunuch Kafur not merely a Malik[25] but a Naib, i.e. deputy of the Emperor. The title Malik was the highest title, equivalent to Sultan in dignity and importance.[26] The Sultan was also the lord-paramount of land and water, and could make grants of land or confiscate properties of all descriptions when he pleased. Alauddin, it has been said, ordered that "wherever there was a village held by proprietary right (milk), in free gift (inam) or as a religious endowment, (wakf) it should, by one stroke of the pen, be brought back under the exchequer,"[27] and all land of the above description was confiscated. In the second year of his reign Alauddin confiscated the property of the Maliks and Amirs of the late Sultan. Their houses were confiscated and their villages were brought under the state exchequer.[28] In fact the Sultan was the supreme ruler of his realm, since he was the lord of the army. But often unless he was a powerful and strong man, his authority was successfully defied by his nobles, who also maintained armies. The nobles, very much like the medieval barons received vast jagirs, in return for which they had to maintain a stipulated military contingent for the service of the Sultan. By means of their wealth and army, they very often proved a menace to the paramountcy of the Sultan also.

(b) *Sultan as Leader in Prayer — Importance of Imam*

In theory, the Sultan, though he could not claim the religious supremacy of Khalifa, was the leader in prayer. That was his right by virtue of his office. He was in theory Khalifa's representative, since he received investiture of his office from him. The custom that

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[26] Malik is an Arabic word and was, for the first time, conferred by Khalifa al-Muktafi bi' amr Illah (A.D. 1135–1160) upon Nuruddin Mahmud, Ruler of Aleppo. *A Short History of the Saracens*, pp. 341–42.

[27] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III (Tarikhi Firoz Shahi), p. 179.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

the Walis or Naibs, i.e. provincial governors of the Khalifa led the public or Cathedral service and prayers, and delivered the friday sermon (khutba), had been established for a long time. Therefore, the Indian Sultan had the right to lead the public prayers and deliver the friday sermon. Actually, however, the Delhi Sultans attended the prayers, which were conducted by the Imam, a special officer appointed for the purpose. And when the Sultans had to remain away from the capital, their place was taken by their Naibs or deputies. But when the Sultans attended the public prayers as on fridays or on holidays like the Id, it was more out of political motives than of any other. Thus it was that the office of Imam came to be regarded as one of the important offices in the realm.

(c) *Traditions of Elective Kingship Give Place to Nomination*

In theory again kingship amongst the Muslims was elective, since the earliest Khalifas had been elected. But that tradition had long been discontinued, and the office of the Khalifa had become hereditary. In the days of al-Jahiliya, i.e. before Islam arose in Arabia, the tribes elected their own chiefs. But the principle of election had given place, as we have seen, during the Caliphate of the Umeyyads and during some of the greatest Abbasides like Harun al Rashid, al-Mamun, etc. to virtual nomination. That is borne out by what al-Mamun once told a Khariji leader when the latter in the open court asked him "Tell me regarding this seat which thou occupiest — dost though sit there with the unanimous consent of the people or by violence and force ?" Al-Mamun at once replied : "Neither the one nor the other ; but one who governed the affairs of the Moslems bequeathed it to me and to my brother, and when the authority devolved upon me I felt that I needed the unanimous consent of the people, but I saw that if I abandoned the government the security of Islam would be disturbed, the highways would be infested with robbers and public affairs would fall into confusion ....wherefore I arose in defence of the people, until they should be of accord upon the man whom they should approve....now when they agree upon a man, I will abdicate in his favour."[29] This example of the Caliphate, was naturally followed everywhere else, though there were instances of election of the chief by the people.

[29] Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, p. 281.

It is said that after the death of Bilkatigin the Turkish Chief of Ghazni and master of Amir Subukti-gin, people got disgusted with his successor, Amir Pari on account of his wickedness (fasād) and "raised Sabuktigin with unanimous consent to the chieftainship of Ghazni."[30] After the death of Maudud the grandson of Mahmud of Ghazni, Ali son of Masud and Muhammed, son of Maudud "uncle and nephew were raised jointly to the throne by the Turks and nobles."[31] The force of popular opinion is seen clearly in the election of Alauddin Masud Shah (A.D. 1242–46) who succeeded Muizuddin Bahram Shah. The generals and nobles agreed to make Alauddin "king although Malik Izzuddin Balban had previously seated himself on the throne. This Balban had caused his name to be proclaimed as king through the city, but it was not accepted."[32] Firoz Shah Tughlaq also owed his elevation to the throne to the unanimous consent of the nobles and generals, who excluded Dawar Malik, Muhammed Tughlaq's sister's son from succession, and proclaimed Firoz Shah as their Sultan in spite of his unwillingness.[33] It may therefore be maintained, that the principle that regulated the succession in the Delhi Sultanate was either nomination of the dying king or of the nobles and generals, followed by the recognition by the people,— a principle, which Mamun so ably adumbrated to the Khariji leader. But in actual fact however succession to the Sultanate like that to the Caliphate seems to have been secured often by blood-shed, or determined by parties of powerful nobles and army leaders. The methods which Alauddin Khilji or Muhammed bin Tughlaq adopted, and the part that the Turkish slaves called "the Forty" played in the matter of succession under the Delhi Sultanate are reminiscent of what occurred in Baghdad, and illustrate the disparity between theory and practice.

(*ii*) *The Nobles*

Next to the king stood the nobility. They were the recipients of vast jagirs, imposing titles, and big army commands or governorships. In the reign of Balban "the cavalry and infantry, both old and new were placed under the command of Maliks of experience,

[30] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, Tabkati Nasiri, p. 268.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 274. [32] *Ibid.*, p. 342.
[33] *Ibid.*, Vol. III (Tarikhi Firoz Shahi), p. 276.

of chiefs who held the first rank in their profession and were brave, dignified and faithful."[34] On occasions like the accession to the throne or victories, the Sultan invariably gave promotions and titles. When Alauddin ascended the throne "he gave to his brother the title Ulugh Khan, to Malik Nusrat Jalesari that of Nusrat Khan, to Malik Huzab-baruddin that of Zafar Khan, and to Sanjar his wife's brother who was Amir-i-Majlis, that of Alp Khan. He made his friends and principal supporters Amirs, and the Amirs he promoted to be Maliks. Every one of his old adherents he elevated to a suitable position and to the Khans, Maliks and Amirs he gave money so that they might procure new horses and fresh servants."[35] After the conquest of Gwalior Shamsuddin Iltutmish ordered promotions in the ranks of the nobles and great officers. "Malik Ziauddin Muhammed Junaidi was appointed chief justice and the commander-in-chief, Rashid-uddin was made Kotwal, and Minhaj Siraj the well wisher of this government was made law officer (Sadar), and was entrusted with the supervision of the preaching and of all religious, moral and judicial affairs."[36]

(*iii*) *Jagir System*

The three classes of nobles were Amirs, Maliks, and Khans in the ascending order. When Alauddin ascended the throne he made his friends and principal supporters Amirs, and the Amirs he promoted to be Maliks, and the Maliks he elevated to be Khans.[37] Of Balban it is said that "from being a Malik he became a Khan and from being a Khan he became King."[38] These nobles enjoyed big jagirs and maintained large armies. Malik Bakbak who was a Sar-jāndār under Balban "held a jagir of four thousand horses, and the fief of Badaun."[39] At the accession of Sultan Muhammed bin Tughlaq to the throne, Firoz Tughlaq, then eighteen years of age, was appointed deputy of the Lord Chamberlain (Naib-i-Amir Hajib) with the title of Naib Barbak, and received the command of 12,000 horse.[40] In the reign of Alauddin Masud Shah (A.D. 1242)

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 157. [35] *Ibid.*, p. 157.
[36] Tabkati Nasiri, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 327.
[37] *Ibid.*, Vol. III (Tarikhi Firoz Shahi), p. 157.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 99. [39] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 274.

the districts of Nagor, Mandawar and Ajmer were assigned to Malik Izzuddin Balban and the country of Badaun was given to Malik Tajuddin Sanjar Katlak.[41] Indeed the custom of giving Jagirs to the nobles obtained extensively in the Delhi Sultanate. Sultan Balban once ordered his Ariz (Muster-Master) to make out a list of Shamsi military grantees of land with a view to ascertaining how many of them actually rendered military service, how many of them were incapable of it, and yet how many others did not render any military service. "It then appeared that about two thousand horsemen of the army of Shamsuddin (Iltutmish) had received villages in the Doab by way of pay."[42] Alauddin Khilji some time after he had secured the throne seized, blinded and killed the nobles who had been traitors to the former Sultan and "their houses were confiscated and their villages were brought under the public exchequer."[43]

Of Firoz Shah Ziauddin, Barni writes that "the Sultan showed great liberality in his grants of revenue....To some he gave 10,000 tankas, to others 5,000 and to others 200 according to the respective ranks and claims of the different office-bearers....Sultan Alauddin used to speak of this practice with disapprobation."[44] It was only Alauddin who not merely disapproved of it, but took measures to stop it. But even he could not put an end to it; for we know occasions when even he granted villages in free gift. When Alāul Mulk, the Kotwal of Delhi gave Alauddin advice to desist from his dreams of founding a religion and conquering the world, which he approved, he gave two villages in inam.[45] But much more than what Alauddin had confiscated of the Jagirs Firoz Shah gave away to state officials. The system obtained universally and contributed to the deterioration of the administrative efficiency. For jagirs meant hereditary office, and hereditary office as always was responsible for corruption and inefficiency in government. We know, for example, Firoz Shah not only granted jagirs extensively, he made a rule that after the death or disability of an officer in the army he was to be succeeded by his son; if he had no son by his son-in-law; if he had no son-in-law by his slave; if he had no slave

[41] Tabkati Nasiri, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 342.
[42] Tarikhi Firoz Shahi, *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 107. [43] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 289.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

by his nearest relation ; and if he had no relations by his wives.[46] Of course that was in regard to the regulation of succession to jagirs, and therefore the historian remarks that "during the whole of his (Firoz Shah) reign he made it a rule, that under all circumstances the succession of every person should be clearly determined."[47] This certainly points to the universal prevalence of the jagir system. But in spite of that, however, the Sultan was both in theory and practice the master of all land and water, and owner of all property. The property that he gave away, he could take back. Therefore, very often properties lapsed to the royal treasury after the death of nobles and their sons had to begin life as commoners.

(*iv*) *Extent of the Empire and Administrative divisions.*

As for the extent of the empire it varied from time to time. The empire at the time of Sultan Mahmud comprised the Punjab and Multan in India, and the extensive trans-frontier territories, with it capital at Kabul. During the lifetime of Muhammed Ghori practically the whole of Northern India from Gujerat in the west to Bengal in the east with a fair portion of Malwa was conquered, and Qutbuddin Aibak ruled over these territories as the viceroy from his headquarters at Delhi. With the establishment of the Slave dynasty in India and the Mongol invasion of Central Asia, the trans-frontier territories were lost and the Sultans of Delhi directed their efforts to the conquest of entire India. Under the Khiljis the empire increased vastly in extent, and during the early years of Muhammed Tughlaq, the empire comprized "Hindustan, Gujerat, Malwa, the Maharatta (country), Tilang, Kampila, Dhursamundar, Ma'bar Lakhnauti, Satgaon (Chittagong), Sunargaon and Tirhut."[48] Of course Hindustan included the U.P., the Punjab, Sind, Malwa and part of Rajputana. That was practically the whole of India, and it may be said that there were two distinct categories of administrative areas within it. One was directly and the other indirectly under the rule of the Sultanate. The areas indirectly under the Sultanate were actually administered by the local princes, of the status of feudatory chiefs. It was the settled policy of the Sultanate, coming down from the time of Ghaznavids,[49] to bestow upon the

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 289. [47] *Ibid.* [48] *Ibid.* Vol. III, p. 236.
[49] Al Utbi-Tarikhi Yamini, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 18 & 32.

conquered princes their own territories on conditions of vassalage and payment of tribute. When Shamsuddin Iltutmish, for example, conquered Jalor from its Hindu ruler Uddy Shah, he restored it to him "in the name of tribute and after the customs of service."[50] Similarly did Muhammed Ghori bestow the principality of Ajmer on the son of Rai Pithora and the principality of Delhi on its rulers, on "the conditions of tribute and the usages of service."[51] When Malik Naib Kafur conquered Deogiri and brought its ruler Ram Deo a captive to Delhi he was released and "confirmed in his possession" by Sultan Alauddin Khilji. "The Rai was ever afterwards obedient and sent his tribute regularly as long as he lived."[52] The designation of these local chiefs varied from country to country. In Gujerat they were known as Mukaddims, Ranas, and Mahants[53] while in Malwa, Maharastra, and Hindustan they were known as Rais.[54] The ruler of Deogiri Ram Deo had been honoured by Alauddin Khilji with the title of Rai Rayan.[55] Such princes must have been numerous in the country and a very strict watch was kept over them and many of them were often required to be present at the court.

As for the other category of territories, they seem to have been divided into provinces, divisions and districts. That there were several well-marked provinces in the empire whose number varied at different times, is well known. We know for example that there were provinces like Katra, Oudh[56] and Gujerat[57] under the early Khiljis; and like Sunargaon, Lakhnauti, the Maharatta country and Telingana,[58] Bidar, Oudh,[59] Multan,[60] and Gujerat[61] under Muhammed Tughlaq.

A province was generally subdivided into several divisions called Shik and each shik had several districts (Iktaat) under it. For instance while the Punjab was a province, Hisar Firoza was a division (shik) which was composed of the districts (Iktaat) of Hansi, Agra, Fatehabad and Sarsuti as far as Salmeh and Khizrabad

[50] Hasan Nizami, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 238.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 216.
[52] *Ibid.*, Vol. III (Tarikhi Firoz Shahi), p. 200.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 261.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 240.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 200.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 178.
[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 242–5.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 248.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 245.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 254.

with a few others.[62] Sultan Muhammed bin Tughlaq divided the Maratha country into four divisions or Shiks.[63] The districts were composed of Parganahs and Parganahs of villages.[64]

(*v*) *Administrative Set-up*

(*a*) Ministers

Corresponding to these administrative divisions there were administrative organizations located at the headquarters. These organizations were composed of various grades of officials, distributed all over the administrative areas. Between these officials and the Sultan there was the central administrative machinery comprising several departments staffed by the highest officials that controlled the affairs of the empire in general. They were immediately below the Sultan and were like his secretaries responsible to him. Their number varied with the extent of territories and variety of departments, while their importance and power were relative to the ability of the Sultan. From the time of Mahmud of Ghazni up to that of Firoz Shah Tughlaq there was something like a council of ministers, whom the Sultan consulted frequently and amongst whom the prime minister or Wazir was regarded as the most powerful and most trusted of the Sultan. In the time of the Ghaznavids there appear to have been five chief officials of the Sultan, viz. the Wazir, the commander-in-chief, the Ariz (paymaster) the Hajib (chamberlain) and the Dewān or secretary of state. Often the Sultans used to have two chief chamberlains as in the reigns of Mahmud of Ghazni[65] and Amir Masud.[66] In addition to these there appear to have been a commander-in-chief, though his usefulness to a king like Mahmud of Ghazni and for that matter, to almost all kings of those days was little indeed. We do not hear of a commander-in-chief under Mahmud of Ghazni, but Masud certainly had one.[67] There was a chief Qazi[68] and Kotwal[69] for the metropolis, and they were regarded as heads of their respective

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 300. [63] *Ibid.*, *p.* 251. [64] *Ibid.*, p. 272.
[65] *Ibid.*, Vol. II (Tarikhi Yamini), p. 35.
[66] *Ibid.*, Vol. II (Baihaki-Tarikh-us-Sabuktigin), p. 135.
[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 94 & 135. [68] *Ibid.*, pp. 94 & 96.
[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 111 & 146.

departments in the realm. Besides these there were two other officers, viz. Mushrif[70] and the Mustaufi,[71] whose duties appear to be very uncertain under the Ghaznavids, while under the Abbasid Khalifas they enjoyed vast powers and high status. Of these however the Wazir, the Dewan, the Ariz and the Hajib enjoyed the utmost confidence of the Sultan, and kept by his side on occasions of important deliberation and private relaxation. They were generally consulted in confidence before any important step was taken.

(*b*) Wazir and His Duties

Of these, however, the office of the Wazir was by far the most important. He was, as Sultan Masud used to say, his Khalifa, i.e. representative, and except for the military affairs[72] he was practically the head of the state. His appointment was a matter of great concern for the king, and was made by a covenant to which the Wazir and the Sultan subscribed in the most solemn manner. The admirable account of the genesis and development of Wazārat, given by Dr. R. P. Tripathi shows the importance of the office in all its aspects. But when Dr. Tripathi talks of the Wazārat under the Ghaznavids and the Sultans of Delhi, he subordinates moderation and accuracy to enthusiasm and generalization. However important the office may have been in theory, the Wazir considered himself and actually was, like a secretary to the Sultan and often had to pay with his life at the displeasure of the royal autocrat. His position was certainly exalted and his power very great; but all that was relative to the character and ability of the Sultan on the one hand and the disposition of the nobility towards him on the other.

Dr. Tripathi himself adduces proofs to bear out this conclusion. The first Wazir of Mahmud of Ghazni, Abdul Abbass Fazl bin Ahmad lost the Sultan's favour and "died under merciless torture,"[73] because of "the jealousy of the nobles, and his refusal to surrender to the Sultan one of his favourite slaves," as also because of the allegation that he had misappropriated some of the state revenue. The next Wazir Abdul Qasim Ahmad bin Hasan al Maimandi besides being an able administrator "was liked not only by the Sultan but by the nobles." But even he "was dismissed and sent

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[72] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 104.

[73] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 165.

a prisoner to one of the forts in India," after eighteen years of Wazārat, because "he did not care to humour the nobles and often disregarded their pleasure." And since the opposition of the nobles had led Mahmud to throw out his Wazir twice, he wanted them to recommend four people out of whom he selected one as his Wazir. Thus Hasnak was selected and he remained Wazir till Mahmud's death. But in the reign of Masud he was dismissed, disgraced, and publicly executed because he had given offence to the Sultan[74] and to some of the nobles like Bu Suhal.[75] His successor Khwaja Ahmad Hasan was an unassumimg, God-fearing, kind-hearted, and honest man without much ambition and greed. He therefore did not stand in the way of the nobles who naturally had little ill-will against him. As Dr. Tripathi mentions "the Vazirs of the early Ghaznavids do not appear to have been . . . men of great wealth and considerable military following."[76] And in medieval times those who had negligible wealth and no military following counted for little in a scheme of government dominated by the nobility that was military in character and headed by the king who was an autocrat. The Wazir therefore had his power borrowed from the Sultan, and even the Sultan could not protect him when the nobles combined against him. That is why we can maintain that in those days either the autocrat, if he was very capable like Balban, Muhammed bin Tughlaq, Mahmud of Ghazni, or Masud could do what he pleased, or the military aristocracy could do what they pleased. Between them there was none who could presume to wield real power. The Wazir and indeed for that matter, any minister of state could have real power if he had the tact to win support of the nobility. Dr. Tripathi himself brings out the importance of all ministers of state when he says that the Sultan consulted them all and not the Wazir only on important matters, noted their opposition and more often overruled them. That is exactly how the medieval autocrats, if they were strong and capable, behaved everywhere, whether in Ghazni or in Delhi. It therefore did not much matter whether a Mahmud of Ghazni entrusted to his Wazir "the affairs of the realm and the administration of the army," or Masud called the Wazir his "Khalifa" and expected the people to obey him implicitly.

[74] Baihaki-*Tarikh-us-Sabuktigin* — Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, pp. 89, 98.
[75] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 722.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

The ministers of the state as a body were important and powerful inasmuch as they had the actual administration in their charge and the Wazir could have exceptional power and prestige only when the Sultan allowed him to have. For often, we know, the Sultan consulted other men than the Wazir in confidence. Abul Fazl Baihaki narrating the events that preceded the appointment of Khwaja Ahmad Hasan as Wazir says that at that time "Bu Suhal Zauzami was connected with him (Amir) and had the arrangement of all his affairs. . . . The Amir was certainly closeted with him and Abdus. Those two persons were his chosen councillors. . . ."[77] It was this Bu Suhal, who instigated the Sultan to bring about the death of Khwaja Hasnak. There are instances when a Wazir was removed from his office and appointed to another office. After the appointment of the Wazir Khwaja Ahmad, "Bu Suhal Hamaduni who had been removed from the post of Wazir" was appointed to "the duty of controlling the financial affairs of the Kingdom."[78] Indeed the secretary and the chamberlain often were regarded as confidants of the Sultan, from the very nature of their office, and instances to this point abound in the history of the Ghazni and Delhi Sultans. To conclude, the Wazir like other ministers fully depended for the stability of his power and prestige upon the strength and whim of the autocrat and upon the disposition of the military aristocracy.

The duties of Wazārat in general comprised the management of the civil affairs of the Kingdom. That is brought out by Baihaki when he narrates the appointment of the Wazir Khwaja Ahmad Hasan. Before his appointment the Khwaja made it a condition that he must be fully informed of his duties. When this was conveyed to Amir Masud he said "I will entrust him (the Khwaja) with all the duties, excepting such as respect conviviality, wine drinking, fighting, the game of chaugan and chankahak."[79] The dispensation of justice was one of his duties, which he performed from day to day in his own court-hall Taram.[80] In his own office he looked to the matters of general administration and "arranged matters to the best of his judgment." His position was that of an officer, who co-ordinated the working of all the different departments of the state and yet had the highest powers of superintendence, direction and control in his hands. That he exercised these general powers of

[77] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p. 62.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 72.

superintendence, direction and control is brought out by one of the significant statements made by Khwaja Ahmad Hasan, Masud's Wazir when issuing instructions to the viceroy of Lahore Ahamad Nialtigin. He is said to have concluded his instructions with these words: "I have no option but to look after all the affairs of the country great and small, and to protect the interest of you and like of you."[81] He could, on occasions, ask the military and civil officers to come so prepared that they might be able to give a ready answer to whatsoever he asked them.[82] Though the affairs of the state were managed by different departments as there were "many ministers" yet the difference between the Wazir and other ministers consisted in this. While "they were only fit to obey orders"[83] he was the only minister who could claim that he "must be allowed and have authority to offer (to the Sultan) such advice and counsel as may be necessary."[84] He was the person to issue something like an instrument of instruction to the provincial viceroys at the time of their appointment.[85] He had his own Hajib (chamberlain)[86] and secretaries[87] and a full paraphernalia befitting his rank.

Besides the Wazir, there were other ministers of state each in charge of a specific department of the state. And it appears that their appointment was very much in the manner of the Wazir's appointment, that is, by a solemn agreement, subscribed to by the king and the officer nominated. There are references to two such appointments one of Ahmad Nialtigin, viceroy of Lahore and the other of Bul Kasim Bul Haka, the superintendent of the news carriers "a most confidential officer" posted in Lahore, but directly "under the orders of the court."[88] The preliminaries of Nialtigin's appointment were that "the Royal diploma and the articles were duly sealed. They were taken to Ahmad and the writings and a solemn oath were put before him. He took the oath according to custom and put his signature to it. Then the papers were shown to the king and given in charge of the record keeper."[89]

(c) Commander-in-Chief

Perhaps as important as the Wazir was the commander-in-chief. Even though the Sultan often led the army in person, it was only

[81] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 121.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 120.
[86] *Ibid.*, p. 120.
[87] *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 128.
[88] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 120.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

when his generals had failed that he took up the command. Therefore the commander-in-chief except in the case of conquerors like Mahmud of Ghazni was an officer of very high power and influence. He had to be consulted on critical occasions like the rebellion of a governor. War councils were held on such occasions and the commander-in-chief and the generals of the army were only invited. We have the account of one such council, convened by Sultan Masud to which "the commander-in-chief and the generals and the officers of the army" were invited.[90] Since the army was outside the competence of the Wazir he was not generally consulted.

(*d*) Chief Chamberlain — Amir-i-Hajib

One of the confidants of the Sultan and therefore an officer of very great influence and rank was the chief chamberlain (Amir-i-Hajib). He always kept by the side of the Sultan both on serious and frivolous occasions. Generally important and confidential messages and petitions were sent to the Sultan through him[91] and the Sultan entrusted to him all confidential communications.[92] He was the controller of the household guards, a part of which formed the bodyguard of the Sultan.[93] On the whole he was a very important and powerful officer in the state by virtue of his closest contact with the Sultan, and could not be treated with scant respect by any one including the Wazir. Sometimes as in the reign of Muhammed, son of Mahmud of Ghazni he was the commander-in-chief also.[94] It may be mentioned that there were several chamberlains, of whom one was the chief. Sometimes the chamberlains (Hajibs) were appointed to important governorships. Ariyaruk at one time Hajib,[95] became governor of Lahore.

(*e*) Secretary of State — Dewān

Very similar to the chamberlain in official influence and status was the Dewān or secretary of state.[96] His office was known as the Dawāt Khānā.[97] His duty was to draft royal firmans and despatches and other documents of great importance. He was generally required to write these things himself.[98] In his office were deposited all the

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 125.
[91] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 81.
[93] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[94] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 270.
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 108.
[96] *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 130.
[97] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

important documents of state, letters of appointment and records of accounts received from the various parts of the kingdom. Often he also enjoyed the confidence of the Sultan and the Wazir. In the reign of Masud, Bu Nasr Mishkan was the secretary of state, and was a medium of the confidential communication between the Sultan and his Wazir.[99] He was a man of great discretion and remarkable honesty.

(*f*) Paymaster General — Ariz

Next to the Dewān in importance was the Ariz or paymaster general. The duties of Masud's Ariz, Bu Suhal Zauzami,[100] have been very well described by Baihaki. After his own appointment the Wazir of Masud sent a message to the Sultan to the effect that "the business of reporting matters was not properly conducted adding that Bu Suhal Zauzami was an honourable and respectable man, and that if his Majesty thought proper, he might be summoned and the robe of appointment conferred on him, in order that he might conduct this most important of all duties." After his formal investiture "the Amir . . . offered him his congratulations, and ordered him to go to the Khwaja under whose directions he was to act ; he also desired him to give special attention to the important matter of military administration."[101] This makes it clear that his two important functions were firstly to organize and control the intelligence department and secondly to see that all information regarding the military administration of the realm reached him "in order that discipline might be preserved in the army."[102] In this matter the Wazir was expected to render "all the guidance and assistance possible." He employed spies as well as reporters in the provinces.

Wazir vis-a-vis *Other Heads of Departments*

In theory all these heads of departments were under the Wazir, who if capable, alert and tactful exercised a good deal of control over them. They certainly took orders from him, and the measure of their obedience to his orders was determined by the Wazir's

[99] *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 73.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 106.
[101] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 73.
[102] *Ibid.*

personal power, and the support he received from the Sultan and the bulk of the military aristocracy. There were instances of nobles or governors insulting the Wazir, and yet let off lightly because the Sultan was so disposed ; while there are instances when the slightest disregard of the Wazir has been punished with death. The Wazir in consonance with Abbasid traditions had often to be regarded as the viceroy in a very real sense, simply because the entire management of the realm depended upon a single autocrat. Therefore he was required to be acquainted with and regulate the working of, the provincial administration and of the Central departments. Though he was like a secretary to the Sultan, in the sense that ultimately all initiative rested with the Sultan, yet in the details of administration the Sultan seldom interfered ; and he had the initiative even in matters of general policy of peace and war unless the Sultan had reasons to determine otherwise. But whatever he did, he had to communicate to, and receive the approval of, the Sultan. Of course as has been emphasized, much depended upon the capacity of the Sultan.

(*g*) Other Officers of Central Administration

No account of the Central administration would be complete without a mention of the officials like the chief judge,[103] the Kotwal,[104] the governor of the prison,[105] the Mushrif[106] and the Mustaufi.[107] The chief judge or Qazi-ul-Quzat was the head of the department of justice, since, as we know, there were several judges under him at the metropolis[108] and in the provinces.[109] The department of justice was an important one, since with it appear to have been combined the business of carrying on civil affairs and the collection of revenues. The duty of the Qazi has been differentiated from that of the governor in the following words: "It is the Kazi's business to carry on civil affairs and collect revenue but the general (governor) at his convenience makes war, takes tribute . . . ."[110] As such the provincial Qazi was under the orders of the Wazir at the capital, though the nominal head of the department must have been the

[103] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 96.
[104] *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 146, 151.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[106] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[107] *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 149.
[108] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[109] *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 117
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

chief judge. On occasions of important trials the Wazir presided over the court consisting of the chief judge, other judges and the assessors.[111]

Kotwal. The Kotwal of the metropolis was generally a military officer of note. He was often deputed to suppress rebellions or repel foreign attacks.[112] He had to take charge of the state prisoners, who deserved special care and attention[113] as in the case of Ariyaruk. He was responsible for the safety and tranquillity of the capital, and when the Sultan and the Wazir were absent from the capital, he was in sole charge of protecting the royal family, the royal treasures and the peace of the capital city.[114] Indeed he was specially exhorted to be careful about these.

Governor of Prison. The governor of prisons was in charge of the public prison. He too was a military officer and usually had a contingent of troops at his command. It is mentioned that when Khwaja Hasnak was to be tried publicly "the governor of the prison was with him and Ali Raiz and many soldiers from every band, and they took him into the Court."[115]

Mushrif-ul-Mumlikāt. The Mushrif-ul-Mumlikāt according to the author of the *History of the Saracens* "was a general controller, whose duty it was periodically to inspect the government offices and report in detail to the sovereign."[116] Dr. Muhammad[117] thinks that Mushrifs were officers of the intelligence department. Dr. Tripathi differs from Dr. Muhammad in holding that the Mushrif had "to keep an account of everything whether large or small that was brought to the government" on the authority of *Siyasatnama* of Nizam-ul-Mulk[118] which appears to be correct. For, the author of the *History of the Saracens*, when he says that the Mushrif-ul-Mumlikāt was general controller very nearly agrees with Dr. Tripathi and so does Baihaki who says that his was "the duty of controlling the financial affairs of the kingdom."[119] He had a number of accountants to help him. The Mushrifs were generally "grandees of the Court" who gradually attained that "rank."[120]

[111] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[112] *Ibid.*, p. 146.
[113] *Ibid.*, p. 111.
[114] *Ibid.*, pp. 151–152.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[116] *History of the Saracens*, p. 419.
[117] *Life and Times of Mahmud of Ghazni*, p. 144.
[118] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 211.
[119] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p. 94.
[120] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

Mustaufi. The Mustaufi according to Dr. Tripathi "had to deal with the collection (hāsil) and balances (bāqi)" and "supervised cash accounts."[121] Baihaki mentions that when Masud determined to go to Hindustan and spend the winter in Waihind, he "passed the greater part of the day in private audience with Mansur Mustaufi on the subject of providing camels for his great treasures, his officers, and his army."[122] But since he could not get sufficient numbers of them he again called him privately and wanted more camels."[123] Now this Bu Mansur Mustaufi has been described as "the keeper of the minister's offices," by Baihaki.[124] He is, according to Ain-i-Akbari, an official in the accounts department mainly connected with the payment of salaries and grant of jagirs.[125] Indeed in the reign of Akbar, Mustaufis were associated in the military and civil side of the accounts department. Under the Ghaznavids the Mustaufi appears to have been an officer who certainly had to do with "cash accounts" as Dr. Tripathi mentions, but whose real position was that of an office superintendent or "the head clerk of a department, an auditor, etc."[126]

(*h*) Provincial Administration

Such was, in outline, the Central government at Ghazni. The provincial government was more or less a replica of the central government. The administration of the Punjab, for example, had a governor or Amir, a Kazi Shiraz and a superintendent of news-carriers as co-ordinate officers at the head of it. The governor was also the general of the army, "one of renown and dignity to lead the forces and to exact tribute. It is the Kazi's business to carry on civil affairs and collect the revenue, but the general at his convenience makes war, takes tribute, seizes upon elephants, and chastises the refractory Hindus."[127] That is to say the Qazi was the head of the civil affairs while the governor, of military affairs. The Qazi was helped by an Aumil (revenue collector) and a Mushrif (accountant general).[128] The governor was associated besides the

[121] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 211.
[122] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p. 149.
[123] *Ibid.*, 152.
[124] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[125] Blochman, pp. 261–63.
[126] *Tabakati-Nasiri*, p. 650, Note 1.
[127] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p. 118.
[128] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Qazi, with the superintendent of the news-carriers "a most confidential person," whose duty was to co-operate with the governor and to report to the court "all that occurs." He was "to act under the order of the court."[129] The governor or Amir had generally a Hajib,[130] a Mustaufi,[131] a Mushrif [132] and a Dabir or secretary who were his subordinates in office. Sometimes when the Governor happened to be a prince of the royal blood, he had as many as three chamberlains. But generally the provincial government worked under the direction of the court, i.e., of the Wazir, though more often if the Governor happened to be capable and ambitious, and the court weak and vacillating, he had his own way.

This was more or less the system of administration under the Sultans of Ghazni. We have already observed that after Masud the rot had set in, and while the Punjab remained under the yoke of Ghaznavids the empire of Mahmud fell to pieces. The Ghori brothers reconquered it, and about the beginning of the thirteenth century and with the accession of Qutbud din Aibak, a new Sultanate was established at Delhi. These Sultans remained in Delhi and made Hindustan the chief object of their attention. Trans-frontier countries of Kabul and Ghazni were entirely neglected. Gradually they conquered nearly the whole of India, and therefore as it has been noted already the system of government that obtained in the Sultanate of Ghazni, and the policy and ideals of that Sultanate had to be modified in the light of the needs and circumstances of the Delhi sultanate. As for the details of the administrative organization, what is significant is, that they became more and more elaborate, and there was a continuous drive towards centralization of power. Now and then there was a capable and strong Sultan, who achieved some additional measure of centralization, and then after him there was a relapse into slackness and disorder. That way the system worked but viewing as a whole there was distinct improvement on the Ghaznavid system. With this preliminary observation we may survey the system of government under the Delhi Sultanate.

[129] *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 120.
[130] *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 134, 135.
[131] *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 134.
[132] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

(*a*) *Nāyāb i Māmlikāt*

The Central organization consisted, as at Ghazni, of the departmental heads, who were directly under the order of the Sultan. Their importance and power depended upon the relative power and ability of the Sultan. He was a puppet in their hands if he was weak and vacillating; he was their master if he was capable and strong. Immediately below the Sultan and unlike the arrangement at Ghazni there was the Nayab-i-Mamlikat who was the deputy or lieutenant of the kingdom.[133] We hear of this officer frequently playing a prominent part as in the reigns of Sultan Ruknuddin Firoz Shah (1236) and Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246–66). He acted as a regent if the king was a minor, and represented him in his absence, and played almost the dictator if the king was weak as in the reign of Nasiruddin, whose Nayab was Balban for a long time and who also combined in his person the office of "leadership of forces".[134] That is to say, he was also the commander-in-chief. Under such circumstances the Nayab of the Delhi sultans was much more a real deputy of the king than the Wazir of the Ghaznavids, who was in charge of the civil side of their government only and whom a king like Masud called his Khalifa, i.e. deputy. We have many instances of the Nayab leading the armies of the realm, and the probability is, that he was also the commander-in-chief of the forces of the state.

(*b*) *Wazir and Other Ministers*

Next to the Nayab came the Wazir who nevertheless was a very powerful and important officer.[135] He performed the functions which were chiefly financial and ecclesiastical. In the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin (A.D. 1246–66) we hear of the offices of Sadr-ul-Mulk, i.e. head of the ecclesiastical department and Wazārat-i-Mamālik, i.e. Wazirship of the realm[136] combined in the same person. We shall see in the sequel what functions the Sadr-ul-Mulk was supposed to perform. After the Wazir in importance were the rest of the

[133] *Tabakati-Nasiri*, Trans. by Raverty, pp. 661, 694, 702, 802.
[134] *Ibid.*, p. 820. [135] *Ibid.*, pp. 661, 693, 710. [136] *Ibid.*, p. 698.

ministers of state. There was the Amir-i-Hajib[137] (Lord Chamberlain) who as usual was a confidant of the king, and on account of that, was of very great influence in the state. We also hear of an officer known as the Malik-ul-Hujjab i.e. head of the chamberlains[138] or Amir-ul-Hujjab, i.e. lord of the chamberlains.[139] It is a well-known fact that the kings of Delhi or of Ghazni had a number of chamberlains. Some of these chamberlains were generally in immediate attendance on the king, some in charge of the various affairs of the king's household, and some deputed to take charge of provincial affairs or expeditionary forces. When their number grew with the growth of the dominions, perhaps there might have arisen the need for appointing an officer to control them, and such an officer was obviously known as Malik-ul-Hujjab. Besides the Amir-i-Hajib there was his deputy called Nayab-i-Amir-i-Hajib.[140] We have already mentioned that Hajib was the "chief of the guards"[141] and the Sipāh-dār under the Ghaznavids corresponding to the Sar-i-Jamdar[142] under the Delhi sultans must have been more or less an under-officer of the lord high chamberlain, Amir-i-Hajib or of Malik-ul-Hujjab.

Next to the Amir-i-Hajib came the Diwani-Ariz-Mamālik[143] i.e. head of the department of the muster rolls of the kingdom. He was very much a military officer and of the class of Amir-ul-Hujjab, the Kotwal, etc.[144] We have already noticed his functions under the Ghaznavids which were virtually the same under the Sultans of Delhi. The Ariz had a deputy also who "administered the business of the army."[145] Then there was the Mushrif-i-Mamālik[146] (secretary of the state or the kingdom) known also as Ashrifi-Mamālik. This office was sometimes combined with Sadr-ul-Mulk as in the twelfth year of Nasiruddin's reign.[147] He was required often by the Sultan to write out important decrees, and it was perhaps in his office that all state documents and papers were deposited.

Then there were two officers most probably of similar status and kindred functions. They were the Sadr-ul-Mulk, i.e. judge or administrator general of the state and the Kazi-mamalik, known also as

[137] *Ibid.*, pp. 661, 684, etc.
[138] *Ibid.*, p. 820.
[139] *Ibid.*, p. 699.
[140] *Ibid.*, pp. 709, 759, 820.
[141] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. II, p. 68.
[142] *Tabakati Nasiri*, pp. 603, 728.
[143] *Ibid.*, pp. 548, 709, 856.
[144] *Ibid.*, p. 709.
[145] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, p. 348.
[146] *Tabakati Nasiri*, pp. 638, 652, 710.
[147] *Ibid.*, pp. 652, 711.

Kazi-ul-Kuzat, i.e. the chief Kazi of the state. The Sadr-ul-Mulk is mentioned to have held twice the office of Mushrifi Mamālik or Ashrafi Mamālik[148] and twice the office of Wazārat[149] in the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin (A.D. 1246–66).

The Sadr-ul-Mulk was perhaps the same as Sadr-i-Jāhān[150] under the Delhi Sultans and certainly under Akbar. During the reign of Akbar he ranked as the fourth officer of the empire. He was in charge of all lands devoted to ecclesiastical and benevolent purposes, i.e. Madad-i-Maash and possessed an almost unlimited authority of conferring such lands independently of the king.[151] He was the final authority in matters of law. He was assisted by the Qazi-Mamālik in the administration of justice and controlled the funds of Bait-ul-Mal equivalent to Akbar's Madad-i-Maash. The Bait-ul-Mal funds were meant according to the Quran "for God, His Apostle, His kindred, the orphan, the poor and the travellers."[152]

The Kazi Mamālik or Kazi-ul-Kuzat perhaps had to take orders from the Sadr-ul-Mulk and his duties were both to administer justice in consonance with canon law, and to administer lands and moneys devoted to ecclesiastical and benevolent purposes. The provincial Qazis like those of Oudh[153] and Gwalior[154] most probably were nominally under him. The Qazis often performed three funtions, viz. "of Kazi, Khatib and Imam and presided over all matters of law."[155] To each Jami Masjid, however, was attached a Khatib,[156] who preached the Khutbah. Often the colleges[157] at the important cities like the capital were left under the supervision of the Qazis. The importance of the department of the Sadr-ul-Mulk could be appreciated when it is realized that it is his edict that legalizes the *julus* or accession of a new king. Perhaps akin to the Qazi was the Amir-i-Dād or the chief magistrate. We hear of an Amir-i-Dād at the city of Gwalior ; another at the city of Delhi ; and yet another at Multan.[158] There were military officers styled either as Malik-ul-Umra, Sipāh-sālār or governor. This points to the conclusion that the Amir-i-Dād may have been in charge of criminal

[148] *Ibid.*, pp. 652, 711. [149] *Ibid.*, p. 698. [150] *Ibid.*, p. 698.
[151] *Aini Akbari*, Blochman's Trans., 271.
[152] *Tabakati Nasiri*, p. 62, note 5. [153] *Ibid.*, p. 664.
[154] *Ibid.*, p. 644. [155] *Ibid.*, p. 620.
[156] *Ibid.*, p. 755. [157] *Ibid.*, p. 644.
[158] *Ibid.*, pp. 644, 605, 482, 476.

jurisdiction, for he is often mentioned either to have been a governor and outside the department of Sadr-ul-Mulk.

These officers formed the Central government, and as such did not merely control their own departments but the corresponding provincial departments. This central organization of "the Muizziah and Shamsiah Sultans of Hind" was adopted with little modification by the Khiljis and the Tughlaqs. That was again very much like what obtained under the Ghaznavids. The only distinctive feature now is the growth of the new office of Nayabat. Malik Nizamuddin who was also the Dadbak, became Nāyāb under Sultan Kaiqubad ;[159] Malik Kafur was the Nāyāb of Alauddin Khilji ;[160] Malik Kiwam-ul-Mulk Khwaja-i-Jahan was the deputy of Muhammed Tughlaq ;[161] and the Khani Jahan, of Firoz Tughlaq.[162] The importance of this office grew gradually and that of Wazarat declined, so much so that in the reign of Alauddin Khilji "the Vazir was forgotten and in fact Malik Tajul Mulk Kajuri came to be regarded as the Vazir of the Sultan."[163] The appointment of Khusro Khan to the Wazarat who was "a much smaller man . . . . only showed how that office was degraded."[164] As the power and importance of the office diminished he gradually came to be solely in charge of the finance department ; so that under Firoz Shah the finance department came to be known as the Diwān-i-Wazārat.[165] All this was only a preliminary to what Akbar did when he made Wakil, his deputy or Nāyab, and Wazir his finance minister. With the Wazir taking sole charge of the finance department, the Ashraf-ul-Mumālik or controller of finances came definitely to be under him. We have the instance of an Ashraf-ul-Mumālik, dismissed by the Wazir in the reign of Firoz Shah.[166] And as early as the time of Illutmish a regular hierarchy of officials came into existence comprising the Wazir, the Naib Wazir, the Mustaufi, the Mushrifi[167] or Ashrafi Mamālik, the Khazinādār, and the Bhāllādār.

[159] *Barni, Tarikhi Firoz Shahi*, Elliot & Downson, Vol. III, p. 126.
[160] *Ibid.*, p. 200.
[161] *Ibid.*, p. 279.
[162] *Ibid.*, p. 293.
[163] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 180.
[164] *Ibid.*, p. 181.
[165] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, pp. 355, 359, 369.
[166] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 369.
[167] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 214.

(c) *Nāyābi Wazir*

Another office that did not exist during the time of Ghaznavids but was created by the Delhi Sultan, as far back as the time of Sultan Iltutmish was the Nayabi Wazir.[168] We notice several Nayabi Wazirs, going out as governors of provinces for example of Telingana,[169] Gujerat,[170] Delhi,[171] etc. Again we hear of two new officers of note, connected with the Royal darbar — one was the Wakil-i-dar[172] and the other Ulugh Bar Bak,[173] the former the proxy (of the king) in the darbar and the latter the master of ceremonies, but not mentioned under the Ghaznavids. Curiously enough the Delhi Sultans seem to have been mindful of the rivers and the boats plying on them in their dominion. They had a Shahnah-i-Bahr,[174] i.e. superintendent of the waterways and boats whose chief business was perhaps to look after the ferries, realize tolls there, and keep a general control over other ancillary matters. This office as well as that of Amir-i-dād did not exist under the Ghaznavids. At least it is difficult to ascertain whether the latter was known to the Ghaznavid administration.

Jalaluddin Khilji created a new office in the Wazārat department, called Diwani Waqoof to deal with "the papers of expenditure"; and Alauddin Khilji, created another new office called the Diwani Mustakhraj, "to enquire into the arrears lying in the name of collectors or agents and realize them"; while Muhammed Tughlaq created a third one called Diwani Amiri Kohi "to look after the agricultural experiments and colonization introduced by the Sultan."[175] All these gradually disappeared after the death of their creators. Firoz Tughlaq organized two new departments, one to take charge of the management of the slaves and the other of the crown lands — Imlaki Khas.[176]

Besides these, there were certain other officers connected with the household of the Delhi Sultans, who also did not exist under the Ghaznavids. We hear for example of the office of Sar-i-jāndār,[177]

[168] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, pp. 253, 368.
[169] *Ibid.*, p. 243.
[170] *Ibid.*, p. 253.
[171] *Ibid.*, p. 368.
[172] *Tabakati Nasiri*, p. 759.
[173] *Ibid.*, p. 694.
[174] *Ibid.*, p. 757.
[175] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 217–219.
[176] *Ibid.*, pp. 220–221.
[177] *Tabakati Nasiri*, p. 603.

i.e. head of the (life) guards, the Amir-i-Shikār, i.e. lord chief huntsman,[178] the Amir-i-Akhur,[179] i.e. lord of the stables, and his deputy, i.e. Nāyāb-i-Amiri-Akhur,[180] the Bahlah-dār, i.e. bearer of the privy purse,[181] the Jāmā-dār or keeper of the wardrobe,[182] the Amir-i-Majlis, i.e. lord of the council,[183] Chāsnigir, i.e. controller of the royal kitchen and his deputy[184] and lastly Shahnagi, i.e. superintendency of other minor household establishments like that of elephants.[185] Of Firoz Shah it is said that he had "thirty-six royal establishments, for which enormous supplies of articles were collected . . . and the annual outlay on which was very large. Some of them were in receipt of a regular payment (rayati) ; others had no fixed income (ghair rayati). Thus among the rayati establishments there were the elephants, horse and camel stables, the kitchen, the butlery, the candle department, the dog-kennels, the water cooling department and other similar establishments. In the establishments which received no regular allowance, such as the wardrobe, the Alam Khana, or insignia, the carpet stores and the like, new goods were procured every year according to the orders given."[186]

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

As under the Ghaznavids, the provincial government retained the same tone, though the details had been worked out with a little more elaboration. There were more officials and more departments, corresponding to those at the Centre. But the provinces were comparatively very large and farflung, and the resources at the command of the governors were considerable. Therefore in the provinces, the officials very often went their own way, copied or even excelled their master the autocrat at the capital, and if a suitable opportunity occurred, they defied him also.[187] The tone of the government was one of autocracy mingled with an intolerance of the central control. From the reign of Aibak up to the end of the fourteenth century, the annals of the Delhi Sultanate are full of trouble stirred by ambitious and defiant governors.

[178] *Ibid.*, p. 603. [179] *Ibid.*, p. 642. [180] *Ibid.*, p. 752.
[181] *Ibid.*, p. 752. [182] *Ibid.*, p. 754. [183, 184 & 185] *Ibid.*, p. 761.
[186] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, p. 356.
[187] For example Malik Sher Khan-i-Sanjar who rebelled in Sind in the reign of Sultan Nasir-ud-din (*Tabakati Nasiri*, p. 695) ; and the rebel leaders in the reign of Muhammed bin Tughlaq (Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, p. 247).

Though it is difficult to describe the details of a provincial government it may be said that at the head of the province was the Nayab, corresponding to Khalifa under the Ghaznavids, but both meaning the representative of the king or viceroy. He was helped by a number of officials directly or indirectly under him. He was generally a big jagirdar and one of the grandees of the court. In the important cities within his jurisdiction, there were Kotwals, Khatibs and Kazis. At the capital of the province there was most probably a miniature of the Central organization, consisting of the Ariz, the Hajib, the Mushrif, the Mustaufi, etc. In charge of the divisions of a province, i.e. Shikk, there seems to have been a Sipāh-sālār, at the head of an army, as for example, at Dipalpur. A dependency of Dipalpur, called Abuhar, most probably the head-quarters of a district of the same name had an Amaldar, who controlled "all the estates, from the highest to the lowest and all the jungles belonging to the Mini and Bhatti tribes."[188] Groups of villages in a district most probably were controlled by local chiefs, who if they happened to be Hindus were called Ranas, or by the Jagirdars of the kingdom, who happened to be Muslim grandees of the court. The revenues of the villages were collected by the Muqaddims and the Chaudhary was a sort of a treasurer and record keeper combined into one. At the strategic places armies were stationed. The names of a few such places are said to be Samana, Amroha, Baran, Kol, Ahmadabad, etc.[189] There was the system of granting lands to soldiers and nobles of the state, in vogue for a very long time, and though Alauddin tried to put a stop to it he did not succeed. In the time of Firoz Shah the system obtained more extensively and with greater vigour than even before. The soldiers generally "received grants of land, enough to support them in comfort and the irregulars (ghair wajh) received payment from the government treasury. Those soldiers who did not receive their pay in this manner were, according to necessity, supplied with assignments (itlak) upon the revenues."[190] Such was the method of payment to the soldiers, while other officials had their own fiefs or assignments on the revenues of the districts. Of Firoz Shah it has been written with pride and satisfaction that he "spread all the revenues of his territories among his people. The various districts of the fiefs were also divided. Khāni-Jāhān the

[188] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 272.

[189] *Ibid.*, p. 248. [190] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 346.

Wazir, exclusive of the allowances for his retainers, friends and sons, received a sum of thirteen lakhs of tankas, or instead of it sundry fiefs and districts. Other chiefs were similarly provided for, according to their merit; some receiving eight lakhs of tankas, others six lakhs, and others four lakhs."[191] The result was that the nobility grew rich and a Naib-Amir of the Majlis-i-Khas is said to have left fifty lakhs of tankas in hard cash, besides houses, valuables and jewels in abundance, at the time of his death. In the time of Alauddin Khilji, Muqaddams and Chaudhuries were in charge of the revenue collection of the villages, and they were retained practically throughout the Muslim rule in India.

In the reign of Firoz Shah "there were audits of the accounts of the fiefs. When the feudatory came up from his fief to Court, he was brought before the exchequer, where an audit of his accounts was held, and the results were reported to the throne. The balance was struck, and the chieftain was questioned, after which he was sent back at once to his fief. The managers (muharrir) of the Karkhanas (royal establishments of Firoz Shah to the number of thirty-six) also had to attend in the exchequer at the end of every year and present abstracts of their accounts, showing the balance of cash and the stores of goods."[192] But in spite of these there was corruption in the administration. In the army it was rampant. It has been pointed out that "horses of little value were often brought to the registry office (Diwan) and were passed as serviceable."[193] False entries were made in the registers to the effect that the requisite number of horses have been produced, if sufficient bribe was paid. Owing to these causes the efficiency of the army and general administration could not be maintained, and its standard fluctuated considerably from reign to reign.

REVENUE, POPULATION AND GENERAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

The revenue of the Delhi Sultanate under Firoz Shah amounted to a little over six crores and eight lakhs of tankas — 60,800,000. But as it has been observed before "all this large revenue was duly apportioned out; each Khan received a sum suitable to his exalted position, the Amirs and Maliks also obtained allowances according

[191] *Ibid.*, p. 347.
[192] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 357.
[193] *Ibid.*, p. 347.

to their dignity, and the officials were paid enough to provide a comfortable living."[194] The army of Firoz Shah consisted of 80,000 and sometimes 90,000 horses exclusive of slaves. The condition of the country and the people was generally prosperous. Of the Doab it is said that there was not a single village that remained waste "nor one span of land uncultivated." The fifty-two parganahs of the Doab were flourishing and a similar state of prosperity was seen everywhere. "In the reign of Alauddin the necessaries of life were abundant through excellent management; but through the favour of God, grain continued cheap throughout the reign of Firoz Shah, without any effort on his part. Grain was so cheap that, in the city of Delhi, *wheat was eight jitals a man* (*maund*), and *gram and barley four jitals a man* (*maund*). A camp follower could give his horse a feed of ten seers of corn (dalida) for one jital. Fabrics of all kinds were cheap and silk goods, both white and coloured, were of moderate price. Orders were given for the reduction of the price of sweetmeats, in unison with the general fall of prices .... If occasionally prices rose from bad seasons and from scarcity of rain and reached one tanka per man (maund) it was only for a short time."[195] Compared to this, the articles in the reign of Alauddin Khilji were not cheaper. Alauddin fixed the price of grain as shown in the following table.[196]

Wheat per man (maund)	7½ Jitals.
Barley ,, ,, ,,	4 ,,
Rice ,, ,, ,,	5 ,,
Mash (or vetch) ,,	5 ,,
Nukhud (or vetch) ,,	5 ,,
Moth (or vetch) ,,	3 ,,

Alauddin Khilji took great pains "to secure low prices for all things sold at the stalls in the markets, from caps to shoes, from combs to needles, etc., etc."[197] Such uniformly low prices of food stuffs as obtained in the time of Alauddin Khilji and Firoz Shah point to the conclusion in the first place that the general condition of the people was not pitiable as it is today. Under that medieval system of economy the country could cheaply supply to the entire

[194] *Ibid.*, p. 346.
[195] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 345.
[196] *Ibid.*, p. 192.
[197] *Ibid.*, p. 196.

people the necessaries of life, and the stark poverty and starvation, that stalks the land today must have been little known. For one thing the population was considerably less. If the empire of Firoz Shah, that comprised more than half of India, and the richest part of it, yielded six crores, the rest of the country might have yielded another four crores. Computing, therefore, the total revenue to be ten crores and the incidence of taxation to be one tanka per head, it is probable that the population of India in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was about one hundred million. That was one of the reasons why the people, in spite of oppressions, internal troubles and foreign invasions were prosperous. The means of communication were very crude. Rivers formed a natural highway for the transit of goods and communication. It has been graphically described, for example, how Firoz Shah brought by river to Delhi one of the Asoka pillars and at a very great expense. In the reign of Muhammed Shah, Malwa was known for its bad roads. Conditions of life under a government that was purely autocratic precluded the possibility of growth of a national idea or unity. All the unity that existed was amongst the Muslims, whose community of interests made them stand shoulder to shoulder as members of an army in occupation.

KING IN THE SULTANATE PERIOD

Lastly we may observe that the king, in the Delhi Sultanate period was generally speaking an autocrat, who claimed to rule by the right of conquest, or hereditary right as the leader of the faithful with the approval of the Khalifa, and in accordance with the sacred law. His Sultanate or sovereignty was a matter of personal power and prestige that he enjoyed in relation to the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. With regard to the former he was the elect of the faithful, and defender of the faith ; with regard to the latter he was only an alien conqueror and absolute ruler. His word was law, so far as it did not contravene the precepts of the Quran or provision of the sacred law. As the deputy of the Khalifa he had the obligation of promoting the cause of Islam and safeguarding the interest of the faithful. As the ruler of the Zimi he was to disarm them, humiliate them, and keep them under subjection. This dual role, enforced on the Delhi Sultans, sometimes produced peculiar

reactions, and curtailed their authority and the content of their Sultanate or sovereignty. Sometimes they chafed under clerical control and disregarded the injunction of the Quran and the canon laws. For example, while taking 1/5th of the booty was a Quranic precept, the kings often violated it by taking as much as they liked. Similarly in the matter of taxation.

It could not be possible for any kings of this period to extend toleration. And though Alauddin Khilji was actuated by the principle "that polity and government are one thing and the rules and decrees of Law are another," yet he did not countenance toleration to the Shiahs and Sunnis or Hindus and Muslims alike. All his innovations were intended to centralize political power in his own hands, and concentrate the entire resources of the state to stem the tide of Mongol invasion and ensure internal peace. In matters of religion he did not interfere. He only stopped the interference of the Muslim theologians and jurists in the matters of the state. Similarly did Muhammed-bin Tughlaq try to eliminate from within the sphere of government any interference on the part of the Muslim clergy. But most of the kings of the Delhi Sultanate felt that the hand of religion lay heavily on the state; and that much of their autocracy was restrained by the authority of the Ulemas, Kazis and Sadrs — those that administered justice, issued religious decrees, and knew the Quranic precepts. They wielded no small measure of authority in the realm and it is their power and influence, which was a check to the otherwise unrestrained autocracy of the king. But gradually the kings, who were competent and strong, took steps to reduce their power and delimit their sphere in the realm. They had been bluntly told by Alauddin Khilji that he issued such orders as were "for the good of the state and the benefit of the people" no matter whether they were lawful or unlawful. Such an attitude on the part of the kings, as we have observed already, was inevitable. Conditions in India in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were different from those in Arabia in the seventh century. The existence of a huge non-Muslim population, which could neither be exterminated nor converted forced that attitude on the kings of the Delhi Sultanate. That was why the Quranic precepts could not be followed in toto in the Muslim administration of India. By seeking to circumvent the Quranic precepts, delimit the influence of the exponents of Muslim law, and ordain their own decree the kings were actually

aiming at an autocracy which was very different from what Islam instituted by combining the state and the Church, but which was tempered by considerations of their own interests and the loyalty of their subjects, i.e. not of the Muslims only but of theHi ndus and Muslims combined.

CHAPTER XII

RISE OF REGIONAL STATES AND AN ERA OF RECONSTRUCTION

AN ERA OF RECONSTRUCTION

THE invasion of Amir Taimur in 1398 and the fall of the Tughlaqs ushered in an era of confusion in the Sultanate of Delhi. The little coherence that still remained in the dominions of the Sultanate disappeared when provinces became independent under their Viceroys. Numerous kingdoms arose in the north and south, east and west; and there were internecine wars amongst them that contributed to shift political supremacy from one region to another. The regional distribution of political power helped to intensify governmental activities. With this was bound to come a greater degree of concentration of authority as also of local interests, and unity. Instead of the Muslim Sultans of Delhi ruling over all the regions of India over the Hindus and Muslims alike, there arose in the various parts of the country independent Hindu and Muslim Kings ruling over the people of both the sects. The universalism of the Delhi Sultanate gave place to the political regionalism that is, the rule of smaller but more compact states. In the kingdoms where the rulers were Hindus, Muslims formed a part of the population, while in the kingdoms where the Muslims were rulers the Hindus formed a part of the population.

Apart from this, the Hindu and Muslim society of this period was deeply affected by new religious movements, that emphasized new ideals, formulated new values, and foreshadowed a new scheme of life. By their protest against the existing order of things they released forces which sought to undermine the foundations of the caste-ridden Hindu society and puritanic Sunni community. But Sunnism had wider ramifications than Hinduism. It had, besides its own social structure, a political organization also, whose end it had clearly set to be the promotion of the faith in terms of Sunni principles. This socio-political structure was violently shaken by the new movements, the new cults that marked a schism in Islam and

engendered a loss of equilibrium and unity in the Indian Sunni community. In this social crisis the custodians of the faith had to count upon the royal support even at the cost of their own prestige. Instead of dictating to the Muslim king and Muslim state they eagerly gave it a free hand to use its own power in its own way to save the situation. This dependence of the custodians of the faith on the rulers of the state, helped the kings build up their own supremacy, that is, the supremacy of royal authority that made for the gradual emergence of that ideal of state known as sovereignty.

With the growing supremacy of the royal power, with the new spirit breathed by religious movements of this period and with a closer contact between the Hindus and Muslims in the newly formed states in the country, all of which postulated a reorientation of the relations between the two communities, the Muslim kings could initiate new policies and adopt new techniques of government. Side by side royal patronage was extended to the language, the art and architecture, the literature and music of the people in a liberal measure. And therefore there evolved new forms of self-expression, that enshrined the thoughts and ideals, the quests and cravings of the Hindu and Muslim, the Sunni and Shiah, the Vaishnav and Sufi alike. A new era of political reconstruction, a new liberalism in statecraft, a new language, a new literature and a new synthesis of the spiritual ideals of the people — these mark the period that preceded the age of Akbar and the Great Mughals.

POLITICAL CONDITION

It is roughly a period of a century and a half, full of the potentialities of a remarkable future, and throbbing with intense political life. The fifteenth century in India may have been, as Rushbrook Williams calls it, "an irrational formless epoch lacking alike in coherence and stability", nevertheless, it supplied the foundations on which the society and state of the sixteenth century were built. This century is unique in many ways in Indian History. For one thing the century was marked by a reshuffling of political forces, which was responsible for the rise of a number of new kingdoms. The tremendous shock of Amir Taimur's invasion brought the whole structure of the Delhi Sultanate to the ground ; and already

enfeebled owing to the weak and selfish policy, the unseemly conduct and incapacity of a number of kings, the Sultanate died a natural death when Taimur returned from Delhi. It is now that we hear of the rise of Sind, Kashmere, Mewar, Malwa, Gujerat, Khandesh, Jaunpur and Bengal as independent states. In addition to these there arose the Bahmani and Vijaynagar kingdoms which dominated the Deccan. Orissa had not been a part of the Delhi Sultanate and therefore remained as independent as ever. In consequence the shadowy Sultanate of Delhi could claim only a few districts around that city. The Sayyids who at first ruled as the deputies of Taimur were content with those few districts and soon quietly made their exit before the powerful chieftain of the Lodi Afghans, Bahlol Lodi. Under the Lodis the Sultanate included the Punjab, the modern U.P. and parts of Bihar. But even they could not hold the sceptre for long. The ablest of them could not be the master of their own house for such was the socio-political organization of the Afghans that the king was considered only as a nominal head and the military feudal aristocracy that had parcelled out the kingdom among themselves virtually ruled. The king was only a primus-inter-pares. That militated against the possibility of a centralized and efficient government and encouraged defiance of central authority, that is, of the king. Under conditions like these the royal authority was more often challenged by the unruly nobility than obeyed with universal respect. A situation was thus created in which the stability of the monarchy was constantly discounted. The king was not the master of his house. And if such was the nature of Afghan polity it could command little respect from those who were around it. Within a short distance from the capital was established the indomitable ruler of Mewar, Rana Sangram Singh, who had defeated the Lodi ruler of Delhi. Northern India indeed lacked all sense of political coherence, administrative unity. And at this juncture the advent of the Mughals resulted in a complete overthrow of the Lodis and the Rajputs, the two prominent powers of Northern India.

The last of the Lodis, Ibrahim Lodi and the greatest of the Rajput kings, Sangram Singh were overthrown by the Mughal conqueror Babar, a great-grandson of Taimur, and the empire of Delhi was founded again only to last for a little more than a decade. But after the Mughals were expelled, Sher Shah resuscitated the

empire and laid its foundations broad and deep, so that Akbar coming later found his task very much simplified. But while the tragic drama of the entry and exit of the Sayyids was enacted at Delhi, while the rise of the Rajputs imperilled the power of the Lodis and while a trial of strength on the fields of Panipat (1526) and Kanwa (1527) between the invading Mughals and resisting Lodis and Rajputs ended in the triumph of the Mughals, while, that is, Northern India was a shifting scene of consequential changes that introduced new factors into the political life of the people, the rest of the country dotted all over by petty states freely indulged in internecine wars and jealousies, that impeded the growth of strong, extensive, and stable monarchies. In the peninsular regions of India the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms were constantly fighting and intriguing against each other, the result of which was the disintegration of the former into five petty Sultanates, viz. Golconda, Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Bedar, and Berar, and the gradual weakening of the latter so that towards the close of this period she was heading towards the fall that came in 1565.

In the central parts of the country a similar struggle was in progress between Mewar, Malwa and Gujerat, the consequence of which was disastrous for Malwa. She was virtually divided into two parts one under the sphere of influence of Mewar, the other of Gujerat. But neither Gujerat nor Mewar was happy over that, for it ultimately brought about clashes between them. Lying as a buffer between the states of the southern and central regions of India, Khandesh played an important part and retained her independence longer than Mewar, Gujerat, and Vijayanagar. In the north, Sind, Multan, and Kashmere did not have such a strong career as the rest because they were exposed to attacks from the flanks, i.e. from the north-west and west owing to their situation on the frontier. In the eastern regions Jaunpur had a precarious independence which ultimately was destroyed by the Lodis. The other two monarchies of the east, Bengal and Orissa lying outside the main currents of political life of India had a comparatively peaceful career of progress and independence, undisturbed by the political jealousies and ambition of the rest. Yet while Bengal was occasionally implicated in rivalries with Jaunpur, Orissa was, like Khandesh, a buffer between the states of the South and the East. Thus situated and entrenched between the sea on the one side and the mountains on

the other, she like Khandesh retained her independence longer than Bengal and other Eastern states.

WRONG INTERPRETATION OF HISTORICAL FACTS

It is misleading to interpret the condition of India at this time on the lines that Rushbrook Williams has adopted. He groups the states into four belts of Hindu and Muslim powers, two in the north and two in the south. "First there is what may be called the Northern belt of Muhammedan powers, which sweeps in a great semi-circle from the mouth of the Sindh to the Bay of Bengal (of course by the Sindh, he means the Indus) . . . . The second group may be termed the southern Muhammedan belt . . . . Wedged in between the Northern and Southern belts of Muhammedan states lies Rajputana, deathless and indomitable after centuries of exterminating warfare. To the south of the Southern Muhammedan belt there lies another great Hindu power, whose wars with its northern neighbours make up much of the history of Southern India during the fifteenth century ; while to the east lies the Hindu kingdom of Orissa . . . . acting as a barrier,[1] more or less effectual to the southerly expansion of Bengal." This suggests that the juxtaposition of political forces followed religious lines. But an actual reference to the facts belies this conclusion.

Mewar, because it was a Hindu state, did not invite the hostility of the Muslim belts of the North and South ; and Vijayanagar and Orissa because they were Hindu states did not necessarily seek to prevent the further expansion of Muslim powers. To imagine that, is to postulate a political relationship between the states, punctuated by religious motives. We have, that is to say, to accept that the states or more appropriately rulers professing the same religion were ranged on the same side. But that does not appear to be a correct reading of the situation. For, in the history of these states there were many occasions when the so-called Muslim states combined with the Hindu states to attack a Muslim state, and Hindu states joined hands with Muslim states to attack a Hindu state.[2] And then there were the Shiah states of Ahmadnagar,

[1] Rushbrook Williams, *An Empire Builder of the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 4-5.

[2] Ferista, Vol. III, pp. 110, 117 ; Vol. II, pp. 379, 407 ; *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 444 ; *Oxford History of India*, p. 290 ; "Burhan Nizam Shah (1508–53),

Bijapur and Golconda, which to the Sunni kings appeared only fit for extermination. But while we cannot deny that pretexts of religion were not wanting to cause a war between these states, it was more often the whims and caprices of the autocrats who had an exaggerated notion of their self-respect and were extremely sensitive that plunged their countries into orgies of bloodshed. We know for example, how for the possession of a beautiful woman — the daughter of a goldsmith,[3] for purchasing horses when they were meant for another king or for naming a bitch after one's enemy there ensued prolonged hostilities between these states. And these are a few of many such incidents. Hence it is not correct to say that relations of the states hinged on their religious affiliations, so that they were divided into two groups of Muslim and Hindu states whose religious antagonism was responsible for all the confusion and conflict of the period.

On the contrary underlying all the confusion and conflict of this period there is a keen political rivalry or struggle for supremacy that only brings out prominently the influence of geographical controls over the political groupings in India. For example, the Raichor Doab was a bone of contention between the Vijayanagar and Bahmani kingdoms,[4] each bent on securing a river line frontier. Similarly Malwa, owing to its geographical situation, was exposed to the free play of political ambitions of Mewar and Gujerat. Jaunpur again similarly situated had to cross swords with, and was ultimately annexed by, the Lodi Afghans of Delhi. The political relations between Bengal, Orissa, and the Bahmani kingdoms were punctuated by the ambitions of Orissa to secure the Godavari frontier[5] on the South and the Ganges frontier in the North, and by the efforts of Bengal and the Bahmani kingdoms to resist that ambition of Orissa. Thus flowed the currents and cross-currents of political ambition aided or retarded by geographical controls, and made these states and not Delhi, the focus of intense political life. There arose new combinations between the states of this period, for example, Muslim kings in defiance of the injunctions of Islam joined hands with the

made a new departure about 1550 by allying himself with the Hindu Raja of Vijayanagar against the Sultan of Bijapur."

[3] Ferista, Vol. III, pp. 380 et seq.

[4] Ferista, Vol. II, pp. 370, 390–91.

[5] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 354.

Hindu kings against Muslim states, that was suggestive of a change in the attitude of the Muslims towards the Hindus. Thus, when the annals of the period are carefully scanned it will be clear that they were marked not so much by an accentuation of Hindu-Muslim antagonism as Rushbrook Williams would have us believe, as by mutual understanding born of a conjunction of unforeseen circumstances. That had to be, because for the first time in Medieval India it was noticed that though hitherto the Hindus had lived under Muslim rule, henceforth the Muslims had to live under Hindu rule.

Further, centuries had passed since Islam had entered sword in hand to extirpate idolatry from India, and time had demonstrated the futility of such an adventure. The hard logic of facts had enforced contacts which clearly suggested that the fanaticism and militant energy of the Muslims was as dangerous as the impotent rage and indignant aloofness of the Hindus to the end of a common good. Thus was revealed a new but common end for the realization of which a fresh adjustment was necessary. It manifested itself in the evolution of a new technique of government, a technique that sought to foster a spirit of co-operation and confidence among the Hindus and Muslims in the political sphere. And if in the political sphere it manifested itself through a new technique of government, in other spheres it did so through the evolution of a new language, of new styles of art and architecture, and of new religious movements. Indeed the cultural achievement of this age was as remarkable as the political. And reserving the latter for a more elaborate treatment in the subsequent pages, we may take stock of the former here.

NEW MEANS OF CONTACT AND UNDERSTANDING EVOLVED

Within a few centuries of their advent into India, the Muslims felt the need for a common medium to facilitate cultural contacts, for the exchange of thought and ideals with the Hindus. The needs of government and human intercourse induced unconscious efforts to devise means by which they could understand and be understood by the people over whom they had imposed their government and amongst whom they had chosen to live. By the time of the Khiljis and Ziauddin Barni the efforts had materialized and the language called Urdu had come into being. And in this period, i.e. the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the language made rapid progress, as prose

and poetry began to enrich it. It facilitated mental and cultural contacts as well as mutual understanding which slowly smoothed many of the angularities from which each community suffered.

Side by side new styles of art and architecture developed, and they owed their origin to the liberal patronage of local kings. The Jahaz Mahal and Hindola Mahal of Mandu that excelled in dignity and grandeur, the Tin Darwaja and the Jami Masjid of Ahmedabad that embodied grace and symmetry as well as "poetry and creative inspiration," the Atala Masjid and Lal Darwaja of Jaunpur that were remarkable for their vigour and simplicity, the Dakhil Darwaja and Sat Gumbaj of Gour that had a "surprising boldness of design" and masterly finish, the austere simplicity of the Jami Masjid of Gulbarga, "the elegance of outline, the unimpeachable proportions and refined details" of the Chand Minar of Daultabad, "the plastic form and mass, the values of contrasted light and shade" of the college of Mahmud Gawan of Bidar — all these bore distinct marks of the happy blending of the Hindu and Muslim genius, of the indigenous and foreign styles of architecture. These were great achievements indeed and they could be possible only because the kings had ceased to look to Delhi for inspiration. And these embodied that spirit of compromise, which ruled the life of the age.

Inspired by the same spirit there surged a new religious movement that inculcated a new ideal and held out promises of a new realization. That movement is popularly known as the Bhakti movement which having been born centuries ago, was now awakened to a new life and inspired India as much by the sublimity of its ideal as by the novel mode of self-realization that it envisaged. People were swept off their feet. What had never been known since after the days of Lord Buddha, Ramananda (born A.D. 1300) did when he preached to the masses of Northern India in their own language. He expounded in a popular way the fascinating doctrines of the Bhakti cult and admitted people of all classes, creeds and sexes to his fold. Kabir who was a Muslim, Rohidas who was a Chamar (cobbler) and an untouchable, and Padmavati a woman and therefore worse than an untouchable, became his great disciples. His work was continued by Vallabha and Chaitanya and a whole galaxy of Maratha saints. India forgot, as it were, the pettiness of worldly life and its interests, miseries, and struggles in the pure ecstacies of a new dream of self-realization. That self-realization could be achieved

through love, which transcends distinctions, transforms life, and unites all, and it was through love alone that the beatific experience which united man to God was possible. Such was the movement, whose ideal of universal brotherhood, brotherhood of man, of Hindu and Muslim, of the prince and the peasant, of the Brahman and the Sudra was to be realized through the medium of love. And what the inspired exponents of the Bhakti cult preached the Sufi poets had sung from the groves of Shiraz and Nishapur, and Muslims were not unacquainted with all that. There was naturally a hearty response from the Muslims, which bore precious fruits in the age of the great Mughals.

When the spirit of the age thus influenced the art and architecture, language and religion, government could not remain isolated and untouched. After all the spirit of life, must be felt everywhere, and perhaps most, where people are concerned for the safety and ordering of life. We have therefore to pass in review what the various states of this period did for the protection and ordering of the life of their subjects, i.e. what administrative policy they adopted in response to this spirit of the age.

CHANGE IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY OF THE STATES

The administrative policy followed by the Muslim kings of this period marked a departure from the hitherto accepted technique of Muslim statecraft. Though as we have already observed even fanatical Sultans like Mahmud of Ghazni, Balban, and others could not set their face against employing the Hindus, that is, the Rajputs to render military service to the state, there was still the religious aversion to appointing the Hindus as ministers in charge of civil departments of the state. There is no instance in the annals of the Delhi Sultanate of a Hindu being charged with the office of minister. It was certainly in consonance with the injunction of Islam, and followed so far in the administrative organization of Muslim polity. In the Delhi Sultanate period an attempt had been made by kings like Alauddin Khilji and Muhammed bin Tughlaq to adopt methods of government which in their opinion promoted the best interests of the state. They did so in contravention of the commands of the Quran or the rulings of the theologians. In this age, however, owing to the dismemberment of the Delhi Sultanate, the rise of many

smaller kingdoms, and the need of new contacts a more liberal attitude suggested itself to the progressive Sultans. If in the previous epoch the Sultans of Delhi like Alauddin Khilji or Muhammed bin Tughlaq sought to circumvent the commands of the Quran or the rulings of the theologians, by asserting their own will in matters of state on the ground that it had been dictated by exigencies of the state, in this period some of the Muslim rulers assumed a distinctly accommodating attitude towards the Hindus which certainly modified the conception of public good as understood by Alauddin Khilji or Muhammed bin Tughlaq. We have already seen that that good consisted in contentment of their subjects, of the Hindus and Muslims in general, so that they might then pay their willing allegiance to the kings. Naturally therefore, this new notion of public good postulated new methods of realizing that good, a changed technique, that is, of statecraft. And one of the methods adopted was to appoint Hindus in Muslim states to exercise civil as well as military authority. It was certainly a new step inasmuch as before this period the Hindus and specially the Rajputs though employed by the Muslim kings for rendering military service, were never associated in the civil administration. This was a matter of religious convention. To associate Hindus in civil government, to let them exercise authority over the faithful, was repugnant to the spirit of the Islamic state. That repugnance was so deep-rooted that even in this period kings were praised for respecting this convention, and when they failed owing to their weakness, they were constrained to conform to it.[6]

APPOINTMENT OF HINDUS TO IMPORTANT POSTS

In spite of that, however, there were a few progressive kings, and they were some of the greatest of the age, who employed the Hindus in civil government. They set an example of liberal government in this period and supplied the foundation for the age of Akbar. In Kashmere, for example, we are told that Sikandar Bootshikan one

[6] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 258 — Sultan Mahmood was constrained by a state clique to adopt the policy that "no Hindu should hold any civil office at court." Ferista, Vol. II, p. 436 — Alauddin Shah Bahmani II is said to have "held conversation neither with Nazareens nor with Brahmins ; nor would he permit them to hold civil offices under government."

of its kings who was an awful fanatic "promoted a Brahmin by name Seeva Dew Bhat to the office of prime minister."[7] Another king of Kashmere had a Hindu by name Malik Taj Bhat as his commander-in-chief.[8] Sultan Mahmud II of Malwa reposed immense confidence in the Rajputs whose leader, Medini Rai became his chief minister and guided him in all state affairs. Most of the civil offices of power and trust at the court were held by the Rajputs.[9] His father also had a Hindu minister by name Basant Rai.[10] In Golconda the Hindus were freely associated in the administration and also rose to high ranks. One Jugdeo Rao who was "the first officer in the state" under Jamshed Kutab Shah became prime minister in the subsequent reign of Ibrahim Kutab Shah.[11] At that time also one Jagat Rao was the governor of the fort of Golconda.[12] Burhan Nizam Shah I of Ahmadnagar had many high civil officers of state who were Hindus, viz. Nursoo Pandit, Sambhaji Chitnavis and Gopal Rao, besides his prime minister who was a Brahman by name Kawur Sein.[13] It is even recorded that "one Mukund Rao Maratha and his brother . . . had both been officers under the Bahmani government."[14]

DEFICIENCY OF THE AFGHANS

But this attitude had little appeal for the Afghan rulers of Delhi because they were firstly a crude, clannish military aristocracy who had recently entered India, and secondly, they were religious fanatics whose ambition was to accomplish a complete extirpation of the Hindu power, and to rule according to Islamic law. But they failed to comprehend the realities of the situation in so far as they did not realize that there were not merely the Hindu Rajputs but Hindustani Muslims also, who had to be extirpated, before the country became theirs. And in their encounter of these two enemies one Hindu, the other Muslim they showed neither the requisite tact to win over the one to destroy the other, nor had they the requisite unity of purpose and solidarity of military organization which would have

[7] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 464.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 478.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 256–58.
[10] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 365.
[11] Ferista, Vol. III, pp. 390, 399.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 393.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 220, 222, 223, 233.
[14] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 31.

helped them in their task. Hence they could count upon the co-operation of none except their own kinsmen, and these were constantly fighting amongst themselves. Consequently they did not succeed in founding an empire. Sher Shah however saw clearly the weakness of the disunited Afghans and their governmental system, and endeavoured to overcome that weakness by overhauling the system and reorganizing it. In doing so he departed from the traditions of Afghan rule and employed the Hindus in the lower rungs of civil administration. We know that he had a Hindu general by name Brahmajit Gaur.[15] It is also said that the Sarkar of Sirhind which had been given in jagir to Masnad-i-Ali Khawas Khan (in the reign of Sher Shah) was actually administered by Khawas Khan's agent Malik Bhagwant.[16] The fact that a Hindu could rise to the rank of a Malik, is significant as it is suggestive of the treatment they received under Sher Shah, even though his attitude was not one of unmixed cordiality towards the Hindus. That way he was less responsive to the spirit of Quranic precepts and ruling of the Ulemas than all other Afghan rulers. Though in his reign Islam was honoured and Hindus were not persecuted,[17] yet he did not subordinate religious considerations to political expediency. And indeed if Sher Shah lacked anything it was this. He was incapable of sound diplomacy. He never understood that the resuscitation of Afghan power and the foundation of an empire could not be accomplished merely by closing up their own ranks to ensure solidarity and by setting up a splendid administrative machinery. He never understood that the task of building up an empire needed far-reaching diplomacy and immense tact. There he pales before Akbar, whose diplomacy transformed the stubborn and powerful Rajputs into extremely helpful allies with whose help he could crush the Afghans. But the greatest of the Afghans did not realize that in order to exterminate the power of the Hindusthani Muslims and Rajputs it would be far more desirable to win over the one by well-timed tact and well-planned diplomacy in order that the destruction of the other would be easy and effective. None of the Lodis and none of the Surs, showed by their action that they comprehended this supreme need of their situation. Therefore, the Hindus were rarely, if at all, employed in the subordinate ranks of

[15] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. IV, *Tarikhi Sher Shahi*, p. 383.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 415. [17] Qanungo, *Sher Shah*, p. 426.

civil administration, while the Hindusthani Muslims were not given positions of trust in the Afghan empire. Many other Muslim rulers of the North or the South were in that respect wiser than the Afghans, and wherever they were so, their rule lasted longer.

A NEW RELIGIOUS POLICY OF TOLERANCE

The other method, by which the conciliatory attitude of the Muslim rulers towards their Hindu subjects expressed itself, was by the introduction of a new religious policy. For the first time in the history of Muslim rule in India a policy of religious tolerance was initiated against the injunctions of the Quran. Though it did not obtain in all the kingdoms and throughout the period, it was introduced here and there, now and then, by progressive and liberal-minded kings. But that certainly pointed to the dawn of a new era, an era in which there was a consideration for the welfare of all communities rather than of the ruling community, an era that for the first time in medieval India demonstrated that in a state where the Muslims and Hindus lived, a policy of religious intolerance would be fatal to its ultimate welfare.

Beginning from Kashmere, we find that Zainul Abidin "recalled the Brahmins who had been expelled, and caused a general toleration of all religions to be publicly notified. Temples were again permitted to be built and each individual worshipped his God agreeably to the faith in which he was educated."[18] He anticipated Akbar in many things. He abolished the Jazia or Poll-tax on Non-Muslims, "shared Akbar's scruples with regard to the taking of life, forbade hunting, and abstained entirely from flesh during the month of Ramzan."[19] Of Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa, it is said, that "he was polite, brave, just and learned, and during his reign his subjects Muhammedan as well as Hindus were happy and maintained a friendly intercourse with each other."[20] In Gujerat one of the vice-roys appointed from Delhi by name Furhut-ul-Mulk "desirous of establishing independence and in order to gain popularity for the furtherance of that object . . . encouraged the Hindu religion and thus rather promoted than suppressed the worship of idols."[21] Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur, who adopted the Shia faith "permitted

[18] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 469.
[19] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 282.
[20] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 234.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

each person the free exercise of the doctrine — my faith for myself and your faith for yourself — which at length gave universal satisfaction."[22] Firoz Shah Bahmani, who had numerous wives belonging to various countries and religions "respected the tenets of all religions."[23] Individual kings apart, "the general attitude of the Muslim rulers of Bengal to their Hindu subjects was one of toleration."[24] Thus practically throughout India the attitude of the Muslim rulers towards their Hindu subjects was, on the whole, undergoing a change that augured well for the future. Of course it has also to be kept in view that the majority of the rulers were swayed by their narrow orthodox ideas which prompted them at times to persecute the Hindus. Nevertheless the attempts that had been made to introduce tolerance indicated that a new ideal of statecraft had already made its appearance, and that its universal adoption was a question of time.

We have even the instance of an Afghan noble embracing Hinduism. Ferista tells us that in the reign of Sultan Sikandar Lodi "Ahmad Khan, the son of Mubarak Khan Lodi, Governor of Lucknow had become a convert to the Hindu doctrines."[25] When we piece together the accounts of Ahmad Khan Lodi and Zain-ul-Abidin we get a glimpse into the nature of the orientation coming over the Muslim outlook in regard to the Hindus.

RISE OF POPULAR LITERATURE

This liberal outlook of the Muslim rulers was further reinforced by their encouragement of the indigenous language and literature. This, in fact, proved a double blessing for the people of the country. It endeared the Muslim rulers to their Hindu subjects, by facilitating mutual understanding. It supplied necessary material for the growth of popular literatures, as different from religious Sanskrit literature. It is wellknown for example that Zain-ul-Abidin "caused the Mahābhārata and the Rājatarangini, to be translated into Persian and several Arabic and Persian works to be translated into the Hindi language."[26] Nusrat Shah of Bengal ordered the Sanskrit Mahābhārata to be translated into Bengali, and there were Muslim

[22] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 25.
[23] Ferista, Vol. II, p. 370.
[24] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 267.
[25] Ferista, Vol. I, p. 582.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

chiefs like Paragal Khan, the general of Hussain Shah, whose encouragement of the language led to its recognition at the courts of Hindu Rajas, who were more inclined to encourage Sanskrit.[27] In Bijapur Ibrahim Adil Shah substituted Canarese and Marathi for Persian as the official languages.[28] Even a religious enthusiast like Bahadur Shah of Gujerat used Gujerati in conversation with another king — Burhan Nizam Shah, on a solemn occasion.[29]

MUSLIM KINGS MARRY HINDU PRINCESSES

In conformity with the spirit of the age and in anticipation of Akbar and the Grand Mughals, we have again many instances of Muslim rulers marrying Hindu princesses on political grounds. Such alliances were evidenced more in the South, than in the North, perhaps because in the South the inclination of the Muslim rulers to conciliate the Hindus was more pronounced than in the North. In Gujerat Muhammed Shah (A.D. 1449) "espoused the daughter" of the Rajput prince of Idur, to whom he restored his ancient rights in that district.[30] When Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur established his independence, he had to cross swords with Mukund Rao Maratha and his brother. After defeating them he espoused their sister and thus won them over to his support.[31] The marriage of Firoz Shah Bahmani with the daughter of Deo Ray of Vijayanagar though calculated to put an end to their hostilities was not fruitful in any way.[32] Without multiplying instances we may say that these facts give an indication of the new spirit that coloured the relations between the Hindus and Muslims in India of this age. This spirit of compromise was responsible for strengthening the foundations of the Indo-Islamic polity which had come into being in the previous epoch.

REGIONAL STATES AND THE EMPIRE OF DELHI

In this epoch we have two distinct groups of states — one, what may be, for the sake of convenience, described as the local or regional

[27] D. C. Sen, *History of the Bengali Language and Literature* (1911 Ed.), pp. 12, 14, 170, 184, 201 and 203.
[28] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 439.
[29] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 224.
[30] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 35.
[31] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 31.
[32] Ferista, Vol. II, pp. 385–87.

states and the other the empire of Delhi. The former comprised the dominions of varying size and power, ruled by the Muslim and Hindu kings in the various parts of the country; while the latter comprised the dominions, again of varying size and power, under the shadowy sovereignty of the Sayyids, the feudal supremacy of the Lodis, and the centralized control of the Surs. They fall into two distinct categories, because the first group, the local monarchies were characterized in general by an administrative system in which both the Muslims and Hindus worked together. In the second that is the empire of Delhi, the Muslims alone were entrusted with the task of administration, in exclusion of the Hindus so far as possible. The first was thoroughly indigenous in character, while the second thoroughly foreign in character. The first was more stable than the second group, because it was founded on the co-operation of the Hindus, and the liberal policy of religious tolerance.

But that apart from the standpoint of governmental structure or the institutional basis of the state, both the groups represented two specimens of the same Indo-Islamic polity. And since the one was indigenous in character, that is, ruled by Hindusthani (Indian) Muslims, who welcomed the co-operation of the Hindus and adopted a liberal attitude towards them, and the other was foreign in character inasmuch as the Lodis and Surs, who were Afghan newcomers, out of distrust employed their own kinsmen only to carry on government, therefore we must not suppose that the one was much more a specimen of Indo-Islamic polity than the other. That is because in their institutional basis both the groups resembled each other and their governmental machinery was built out of the same kind of material. They drew upon the political institutions and traditions obtaining for ages past in India. Whether it be the Bahmani empire in the South or the Delhi empire of Sher Shah Sur in the North, they were all characterized by a synthesis of the Hindu and Muslim political ideals. This synthesis consisted in the incorporation of elements that were typically Indian in a scheme of government of which the builders were foreigners. Indeed the Afghan government of Delhi, specially under Sher Shah and Islam Shah Sur had its foreign character not only completely transformed so that it came in line with governments of the regional states of the country, in many ways it was in advance of the type of governments obtaining in the regional states. It had so profoundly imbibed the

spirit of Indian traditions, so cleverly assimilated the best elements of the Hindu and Muslim political institutions, and so adequately envisaged an administrative norm, that it may be regarded as the best specimen of the Indo-Islamic polity of this age. In achieving this result, this synthesis, the genius of Sher Shah and Islam Shah only was responsible. Hence though in the reigns of Sher Shah and Islam Shah "there was no abolition of the Jazia, no edict against cow slaughter, no patronage of Sanskrit literature for bringing about a cultural union and growth of intellectual sympathy between the two races, and no encouragement to intermarriages" as in the reign of Akbar, yet the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim political ideals and institutions that the Afghan polity of the Surs embodied, entitles them to be regarded as the builders not so much of a strong Afghan empire, as of the most progressive type of Indo-Islamic polity of this age.

POLITICAL IDEAL OF THE INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY

And before we attempt a study of Government in these two sets of states, it would be essential to examine the political ideals that determined their administrative structure. In the previous period, we have noticed that the Muslim Sultans of Delhi were, with rare exceptions, subservient to the custodians of law and religion. Except Alauddin, and Muhammed bin Tughlaq, no Sultan could have the presumption to circumvent the precepts of the Quran or the rulings of the Ulemas pertaining to the matters of state. The Sultans of Delhi depended for the validation of their succession to the throne upon the sanction of canon law. The royal authority could prevail, so long as it did not conflict with it and promoted the cause of Islam.

YUSUF ADIL SHAH PROCLAIMS A NEW STATE RELIGION

That meant subservience of the state to religion, of the authority of Sultans to that of theologians. This position was very often discarded in this period. There were not two, but several instances of Muslim kings, much less powerful than Delhi Sultans seeking to follow a policy, in direct contravention of the Quranic precepts or the rulings of the Ulemas. We have already noticed for example

that Muslim rulers of the regional states of this period disregarded the traditions of Islamic state, when they employed the Hindus in the civil government of their state, extended toleration in religious matters, adopted the language of the country as their official language and directly or indirectly helped the rise of the popular literatures. Some of them even went further. They could even promulgate a new state religion in supersession of the one already existing. Not to speak of extending toleration, Yusuf Adil Shah for example changed from the Sunni to the Shiah faith, and proclaimed that as the official Muslim religion in the state. And the way he did it speaks volumes for the changed outlook, the attitude of the Muslim kings in regard to the Ulemas and theologians. Having summoned an assembly of the learned men of Shiah persuasion he addressed them saying "that when the Prophet appeared to him in a vision, and hailed him with the presage of his present dignity, he then made a vow that if his dream should ever be fulfilled, to promulgate the faith of the Imams. . . ."[33] The claim here made is that of a king having spiritual communion with the Prophet, in fulfilment of which he had proclaimed the Shiah faith. He therefore extended toleration to all, so that people were forbidden "to utter scandalous and abusive epithets against the Sahiba" and "the learned disciples of Jafur and those eminently versed in the tenets of Mohammed Haneef and of the Shafye persuasion lived together in friendship."[34]

Similarly Burhan Nizam Shah "rejected the names of the Sahiba from the Khootba, and substituted those of the Imams."[35] These Shiah kings without exception adopted liberal attitudes and policies in the government of their states. They often formed leagues with the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar against the injunction of Islam, and also employed Hindus in their service. We have also referred to the attitude of Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmere. These instances of kings substituting one faith for another as the official religion of the state and adopting a religious policy that ran counter to the spirit of Islamic polity suggest the emergence of a new ideal of state that is of governmental power, which assumed the form of self-assertion of the kings against the domination of the theologians.

[33] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 22. [34] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[35] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 228. The Sahiba are the first three Khalifas, viz. Abu Bakr, Umar and Usman.

SHER SHAH AND ISLAM SHAH ADOPT IDEALS OF KINGSHIP IN CONFORMITY WITH INDIAN TRADITIONS

But in this respect the Afghan state made a remarkable departure, even though the Hindus were rarely employed in high positions of civil government, no policy of toleration was proclaimed, and no change in religious persuasion was attempted at the royal initiative. The Afghan state under Sher Shah and Islam Shah claimed a very comprehensive competence, through its highly efficient administrative organization. The centralization of authority that they effected, sought to transform not merely the form of Afghan government obtaining at the time of the Lodis, but the ideal of Afghan kingship also. It foreshadowed new principles of governmental organization and new ideals of kingship. Sher Shah's government was founded not on the principles of distribution of power among a feudal nobility, whose tribal allegiance and military power scandalized the central authority, but on the centralization of power that demanded a definite subordination of all groups to the authority of the king and concentration of all the strings of government in the hands of the king.

How in his endeavour Sher Shah was helped by the traditions of government and kingship obtaining in India can be illustrated from the distinction that he made between the customs obtaining in the homeland of the Afghans — the Roh country, and in India. He knew that according to Indian traditions as different from those in the Roh country there was no individual ownership of property, of individual status independent of royal recognition. All land, all property, all honour and all rank was held of him. Hence Sher Shah remarked : "The country of India is completely at the disposal of the king, nor has any one else any share in it, nor is there any regard to elder or younger or to kindred."[36] Thus very early in life he had grasped the significance of the traditions of India, and the effective centralization of power that he could accomplish was inspired by traditions like this. And Islam Shah faithfully followed his father when he "deprived the Amirs of all their war elephants leaving them perhaps only a bad female one for carriage. He appropriated to himself the whole revenues of the kingdom instead of

[36] Elliot & Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 327.

scattering them by assignations."[37] Therefore in the state with reference to the Afghan nobility Sher Shah or Islam Shah was not a *primus-inter-pares*, i.e. first among equals. He was the supreme head of the state. In this respect Islam Shah even surpassed his father. It was his policy to keep the nobility, and indeed all the officers, in a state of constant dread of his power and supreme majesty by a ceremonial which had to be scrupulously adhered to, and which had been designed to impress upon all that he ruled by right divine. This claim of Islam Shah to supreme majesty and rule by right divine, approximated to the ancient Hindu ideal of kingship. We are told that "every Friday the Great Amirs of five thousand, ten thousand, and twenty thousand horse pitched a lofty tent with eight halls and placed on throne a slipper of Salim Shah's, with a quiver which he had given to the Sirdar. First of all the commander of the army, then the civil judge called Amin and afterwards all others in turn offered obeisance to it, by bowing towards it with the utmost reverence ; after which every one went and seated himself in his place."[38] This they did when the army and the officers were in camp or in the country away from the capital. It signifies a plentitude of power that distinguished Islam Shah's position and prestige in the state, and invested him with a halo of divine glory as it were.

Apart from the ceremonial significance, the substance of power was very real. How he brushed aside the authority of Muslim theologians, the only limitation to his supremacy, is clear from the following extract. The historian tells us that "reports came in to him regularly from every part of his territories ; and in return, he wrote mandates concerning every matter and thing whether relating to religion, civil government or revenue . . . . To these mandates whether agreeable to law or not, it was necessary to conform in their minutest particulars. No reference to Kazi or Mufti was allowed."[39] Even in matters purely religious, e.g. apostasy from Islam, which ought to have come within the province of the Ulemas, Islam Shah imposed his own authority. In the famous case of Shaikh Alai, who according to the ecclesiastical head of the empire was a heretic and therefore fit to be punished "Islam Shah refusing to listen to the suggestions of Makhdum-ul-Mulk with reference to

[37] Erskine, *History of India*, Vol. II, p. 474.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 475, Quotation from Badaoni.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 474.

Shaikh's punishment sent him to Hindia."[40] Once again, later on when Shaikh Alai was charged with heresy "Islam Shah for the second time paid no attention to what Makhdum-ul-Mulk said." Such treatment of the custodians of the canon law indicated assertion of the royal authority in the state pertaining to all affairs, whether political, administrative or ecclesiastical. It was the royal absolutism, founded on an administrative centralization and plenitude of power that showed scant respect for the canon laws or the rulings of the Ulemas, when they were in conflict with the will of the sovereign. That way the king was rising to attain a supremacy that approximated to sovereignty in the modern sense of the term, and kingship was therefore liberating itself from the fetters of religion. In every respect, the achievements of this period were a fitting prelude to the age of Akbar, when Indo-Islamic polity reached the highest watermark of its growth.

ASSERTION OF ROYAL SUPREMACY HELPED BY RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

In this self-assertion of kings, this resistance of royal authority to play into the hands of the theologians and jurists, the trend of religious movements of the period helped a great deal. These movements shook the foundations of Sunni orthodoxy in India. It is generally seen that when a community knows of only one creed whose universality it never questions and to which it clings with all its loyalty and fervour, its life tends to be cramped and narrowed in the mould of its own orthodoxy. Its outlook, habits and thought become rigid and exclusive. It assumes an attitude of intolerance towards all forms and kinds of organization, not affiliated to it, but through which life seeks expression. This attitude colours all the organization that that community builds up including the state. Such was the life of the Islamic community in India under the Delhi Sultanate. It was narrow, hidebound, orthodox, and self-complacent. It was confident of its solidarity and strength ; it was not aware of its weakness. But at the end of the period a vast and deep ferment of religious thought took place, and consequently the calm complacency of the orthodox Sunni community in India was violently disturbed. There arose a number of sects within Islam and they preached what to the Sunni community appeared to be

[40] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 502.

rank heresy. They commended a type of public and private conduct, for which there was no justification in the Sunni code of ethics. They upheld ideals of religious life, which the Sunnis definitely abhorred. And sometimes they tried to build up a socio-political system which was not merely the very antithesis, but which sought to annihilate that of the Sunnis.

For, each one of them following the traditions of Islam and its founder, sought to wield supreme political power, as a supplement to its spiritual claims. They interpreted life in a new way and propounded new values, which endeavoured to demolish much of what had been built up by Sunnism in India, viz. the bonds that Sunnism had forged to hold together its social, ecclesiastical, and political structure in India. And to the extent that these became loose and unsteady, the royal authority became strong and assertive. It aspired to become the master of its own house, the state. Formerly royal government and authority was subservient to the authority of Islam. The Islamic state existed for the Islamic faith. In the Delhi Sultanate period, as we have observed this position could not be wholly maintained. It had to be modified to some extent. But in this period, that position had to be slowly relinquished. The royal authority became conscious of its own importance and power in the scheme of society in which people belonged to divergent religious and legal affiliations. When the king was called upon to hold the balance even between the conflicting claims of the Hindus and Muslims, the Sunnis and the Shiahs, the Mahdavis and Roshnias, when that is to say, he was acclaimed as the sole arbiter among these rival groups, his will was bound to have a much larger scope and force than if there were only Hinduism and Islam in India. Thus was helped the royal power in its self-assertion and self-consciousness in this period, though it had to wait for the subsequent period to attain its highest power and prestige when it could dominate religion and definitely rise above its narrow ideals.

RISE OF NEW CULTS OPPOSED TO SUNNISM

(a) *Shiaism in the Deccan*

Viewed in this light many hitherto insignificant episodes of Indian history become full of meaning. To start with, the Shiah faith as promulgated in the states of the Deccan has enormous significance

from this point of view. The rise of the Safwi dynasty in Persia, that championed the Shiah faith and persecuted Sunnis had its repercussions in India, and chiefly where there were many Persian immigrants living. That was in the South, and it was through their influence that the Deccan Sultanates like Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golkunda changed from the Sunni to the Shiah faith. That evidently weakened the hold of the orthodox Sunni divines on the king and his government. If the king could accept or reject a faith at pleasure he could certainly defy the authority of the theologians and jurists when it suited his purpose. Further the Shiah Sultans of the Deccan maintained that they alone could ultimately decide what attitude they should assume towards religion. That certainly was a position very different from the one which the Muhammedan state showed in relation to the Muhammedan faith as it had obtained in India, so far. With two rival sectarians, viz. the Shiahs and Sunnis, to control, the Sultans gradually realized that it would be in the best interest of all if they refused to be influenced by the divines of either sect. That is amply illustrated by the example of Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur. We are told by Ferista that he made it his principle of government "not to permit the populace to utter scandalous and abusive epithets against the Sahiba, so that fanaticism was prevented from spreading its venom. The learned disciples of Jafur and those eminently versed in the tenets of Mahomed Haneef and of the Shafye persuasion lived together in friendship ; and in mosques of different sects each worshipped the true God according to his own belief without interfering in the ceremonies of the other".[41]

This points to an attitude of the king, that seeks to offer freedom of worship to all and demonstrates the determination of a Muslim king to rise above religious partisanship. If the rise of the Shiah sect to political power had this effect in the Deccan, the rise of the Mahdavi and Roshni sects further weakened the hold of the Islamic divines on the royal authority and government in Northern India. To understand that, a brief outline of these movements is necessary.

(b) *Mahdavi Cult in Northern India*

The Mahdavi movement was based on the belief that at the close of a millennium after the birth of Muhammed, a Messiah or

[41] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 24.

redeemer of the sins of mankind would come upon the earth. The belief became very strong towards the close of the fifteenth century, and throughout the sixteenth century; and there was a great deal of stir in Arabia, Persia, Khorasan, Trans-oxiana, and Hindustan. In Hindustan the movement was started by Sayyid Muhammed of Jaunpur (born about A.D. 1443) who claimed that he was the expected Mahdi. He won numerous converts to his doctrines, and they believed that he got inspiration from God and was on the same footing as Muhammed the Prophet. The Quran revealed to Muhammed was to be explained by the Mahdi.

The Mahdi taught that the ultimate goal of life was self-annihilation in God for which a devotee should lead a poor and chaste life, and renounce all the worldly attachments. The injunctions of the Quran were not binding on his followers unless confirmed by the Mahdi, who alone was to be obeyed in preference to all other authorities, even in matters of earthly dominion. They were a brotherhood, of which the members had equal rights and shares in the possession of each and all. They were ever ready to fight if persecuted, and considered as infidels all those who did not believe in the Mahdi. The spirit of brotherhood and equality, obedience to the authority of the Mahdi alone on earth, communistic tendencies with regard to property, and aspiration for supra-mundane attainments ill accorded with the scheme of society built up by Sunnism and with the demands of the Islamic state in India. "They always went armed, carrying a sword and shield or other arms, that they might repel enemies. And whenever they saw any person do what was contrary to the notions of right, they, in the first instance, mildly warned him to desist, but if he persisted they proceeded to compel him by force and violence to alter his conduct."[42] Thus they took law into their hands, without waiting for the state to interfere. They were therefore bound to come into conflict with the state. And it was in the reign of Islam Shah Sur that this cult extended rapidly in the country under the remarkable leadership of Shaikh Alai. Great nobles and powerful governors of Islam Shah like Khawas Khan and Bihar Khan Sarwani became his disciples, besides the innumerable less noted people. Shaikh Alai therefore was called before a gathering of religious divines by the order of Islam Shah and tried for heresy.

[42] Erskine, *History of India*, Vol. II, p. 479.

The historian of Tarikh-i-Daudi tells us that he silenced his opponents by the force of his arguments and brilliancy of his eloquence. Highly impressed, Islam Shah said "O Shaikh, forsake this mode of procedure, in order that I may appoint you censor (Mahtasib) of all my dominions. Up to the present time you have taken upon yourself to forbid without my authority; henceforth you will do so with my consent."[43] To this he refused to subscribe. All along he had treated the king as his equal for his doctrines did not recognize the authority of the king. He was let off in the first instance, but since he did not change his ways he was later on summoned to the Court and flogged to death. The rise and spread of the Mahdavi cult brought into prominence some very significant facts. Firstly it dealt a severe blow at the popular notion of universality of the Sunni creed in India. Secondly it revealed the claims of a co-equal authority in matters temporal and spiritual. In the third place it sought to uphold a system of society, a scheme of values, and a type of authority that violently militated against all those which had been accepted so far, and had, therefore, been universal. The impassioned way the leaders of the cult preached and the implicit faith that they evoked in their converts loosened the grip of the orthodox Sunni society and the authority of the Sunni divines, and consequently exposed their sectarian character.

(c) *Roshnia Cult in the Northwestern regions*

Another like the Mahdavi cult was the Roshnia cult, that was equally militant, and was founded on the notions of the coming of a Messiah. The followers of the cult held that God is the Absolute Reality, "the Universal All-Reason," from whom emanate primal elements of time and space which cause individual existence and the phenomenal universe; and that to God all these will return. This return is facilitated by an indispensable approach from both sides, first from the All-Reason and secondly from the soul of the world. "Corresponding to this gradation, first the soul of Divine Incarnation absorb the full force of the All-Reason, then those of the Prophets whom they first enlighten, and so in descending measure, the souls of apostles and emissaries of prophets. As in men and with similar systematic gradation, these same spiritual

[43] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 502.

powers dwell in celestial phenomena ; first in sunlight, secondly in rain."[44] The divine souls incarnate or manifest themselves as historical persons epoch after epoch. It is the duty of the enlightened to discover or recognize a divine incarnation and proclaim him amongst men so that individual souls will be helped to return to the source from which they sprang. Thus the Messiah or divine Incarnation is virtually the God on earth and therefore greater than any Prophet, e.g. Muhammed, who subordinated himself to God. The implications of these doctrines seek to annihilate Muhammed and his faith, and the social and political structure built on it. The adherents have to treat all other authority, temporal and spiritual, as inferior to that of the Pir-i-Raushan — the divine Incarnation. Theirs was a clarion call to revolution in faith, for they meant to demolish all forms of organization, social or political, which were not founded on the name and authority of their Messiah. The Messiah assumed a double role — that of spiritual and temporal head. And though it had its origin as far back as the ninth century A.D. outside India, about the sixteenth century it gradually spread into India. It was in Kalinjar that its great exponent Suleiman lived, and it was his disciple Shaikh Baiyazid who spread the cult in and around the frontier regions of India. It electrified the tribal people and like wild fire it spread into Afghanistan and India. The doctrines are reminiscent of Indian Vaishnavism, and Persian Sufism, and very unlike the doctrines of Islam and specially of the Sunni sect. It was Akbar who encountered it as a political danger ; but that apart, it gave a tremendous shaking to the hide-bound orthodoxy of Sunni Muslims and their social and political systems. These acquainted the people with a new interpretation of the ultimate values and problems of life, and served to weaken the moorings of their traditional beliefs and political institutions.

(*d*) *Bhakti Cult*

And if the Shiah faith found adherents in the south, the Mahdavi movement in Hindustan, and Roshnia cult in the frontier regions, Vaishnavism claimed the whole of India as the field of its activities. We have already observed how this new cult was based on universal love and brotherhood. It sought to unite the Brāhman and the

[44] Vor Nouer, *Akbar*, Vol. II, pp. 144–45.

Chamār, the prince and the peasant, the Hindu and the Muslim in one brotherhood of man and through that to God. That was a new ideal for the warring creeds and communities of India. And though Sunni Islam could have no sympathy for its doctrines, yet these did not fail to influence the mental make-up of orthodox Hindu and Muslim India. Tarikh-i-Daudi records an incident which suggests the influence of the Bhakti movement. A Brāhman by name Leeladhar in the presence of Muslims asserted in a speech that Islam was true as was his own religion.[45] That was in the reign of Sikandar Lodi and the Brāhman paid dearly for his boldness in asserting that his religion was as true as Islam! We have already observed how in the same reign the son of the governor of Lucknow became a Hindu.[46] Yet the point of view, the outlook that the Brāhman presented, was certainly a new one, and was the precursor of the dawn of a new era.

All those cults which arose in the fold of Islam questioned the adequacy of the accepted doctrines, the scheme of life and the customs of Sunni Muslims. Their rise suggested clearly the emergence of new values and institutions that did not fit in with the existing scheme of society and state. They introduced discordant elements, and on their elimination depended the safety and integrity of the Islamic society in India. They were not, as we have already observed, content with a peaceful propagation of their doctrines. They wanted to demolish whatever the Sunni sect had built and substitute a structure of their own instead. Thereby they threatened to destroy social and religious unity.

SOCIAL RIFT AND RELIGIOUS SCHISM HELP THE GROWTH OF ROYAL SUPREMACY

There was really a social rift and religious schism of the first magnitude; and the hitherto all-powerful divines and custodians of the faith failed to avert the danger by themselves. Perforce they turned to the aid of the state, that is, of the royal power, to restore the unity and equilibrium of the Muslim society and religion. It was this social crisis, this religious schism, which adversely affected the authority of the Ulemas, the divines, the Mujtahids inasmuch as by trying to combat these unforeseen trends in Islam, they

[45] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 464.
[46] Ferista, Vol. I, p. 582.

fully realized the futility of their power. They, therefore, sought the support of the king, whose coercive power alone could keep in check if not entirely crush out of existence, the forces released by these new cults. The king alone was considered capable of restoring the equilibrium and unity of the Muslim society in India. When Shaikh Alai was joined by an "innumerable host of fakirs and darweshes," by nobles like Khawas Khan with their followers, and by the entire army of the king; when a Brāhman could openly preach that fundamentally Islam and Hinduism were based on the same truth; when the Piri-Roushan could claim superiority over Muhammed; or when a king could appreciate the discourse of a divine who said that religions are but various entrances to a palace where sat God like the king, and that the best of men of every faith followed the best of faith,[47] the trend of the times was unmistakable. It was definitely opposed to the orthodoxy, and menacing to the unity, of the Sunni doctrine. In a situation like this, that is, when society was rent by rifts and revolts, and the faith by schisms, the influence of the Sunni theologians and jurists over the state declined visibly. The royal power and support had to be invoked to maintain the social solidarity and religious unity. Consequently the king gained in prestige. Not merely that. As these cults exposed the sectarian character of Sunni doctrines the viewpoint forced on the progressive rulers was that their authority or political power, in order to obtain universally in the state, must be free from a partisan or sectarian spirit also. It envisaged a new ideal for the royal government, and indicated the liberation of the king from the domination of the religious divines. Some of the Muslim kings sought to realize that ideal by ruling in a manner that was best calculated to foster the good of the state, often untrammelled by the injunctions of the Quran or rulings of the Ulemas. That was why they adopted liberal policies of government or built up centralized administrations, extended patronage to the indigenous language, and granted toleration to all religions alike. And that was symbolic of the emergence of the supremacy of the king at the cost of the supremacy of the custodians of law and religion, of the gradual growth of the state through that royal supremacy. Therefore the results of this period marked a step in advance of that of the previous period in regard to the growth of Indo-Islamic polity.

[47] Ferista, Vol. III, pp. 24–25.

Thus, with the appearance of social rifts and religious schisms kingship as an institution gained in importance and power. Kings became comparatively free from clerical domination, which indicated the slow emergence of that ideal of political authority which is known as sovereignty. From now on, the king began to claim a competence and power, that he had never done before. And that was realized through the adoption of a new policy of government and administrative centralization. The climax was reached in the personal supremacy of Islam Shah, who ruled as it were by right divine, claimed supreme authority in matters temporal and ecclesiastical and maintained a prestige that was nothing short of king-worship. With these observations we may attempt a study of the administrative machinery of the Indo-Islamic polity of this period. As has been observed already, we have to study two types—one, represented by the governments of local or regional states, and the other by those of the Delhi empire.

LIMITATIONS OF THE KING AND HIS AUTHORITY

The local or regional states were absolute monarchies. At their head stood the king, whose authority was virtually absolute in all matters of administration. There was only one limitation to his absolutism, and that was the authority of Islamic divines and jurists. Generally speaking matters relating to religion came within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Ulemas and Qazis, who though exercising authority by sufferance of the king were not accountable to the king. They interpreted and applied Islamic law of which the king was not the maker. In theory the king was not above the law. There are instances of kings being treated as common offenders when they violated the law. An extremely interesting and relevant anecdote is told of Sultan Ghyasuddin of Bengal. While practising archery Sultan Ghyasuddin of Bengal by chance wounded a boy, the son of a widow. The woman immediately lodged a complaint at the tribunal of Qazi Sirajuddin and demanded justice. The judge true to his duty sent an officer to summon the king to answer the complaint of the woman. The officer very tactfully conveyed the summons to the king. "The king instantly rose, and concealing a short sword under his garment went before the Qazi ; who far from paying any mark of respect, said to him with a tone of authority

"you have wounded the son of this poor widow ; you must therefore immediately make her an adequate compensation or suffer the sentence of law." The king made a bow and turning to the woman, gave her such a sum of money as satisfied her : after which he said "worthy judge, the complainant has forgiven me." The Qazi asked the woman if such was the fact and if she was satisfied : to which the woman having assented was dismissed. The Qazi then came down from his tribunal and made his obeisance to the king ; who drawing the sword from beneath his garment, said "Qazi, in obedience to your commands as the expounder of the sacred law I came instantly to your tribunal ; but if I had found that you deviated in the smallest degree from its ordinances I swear that with this sword I would have taken off your head ! I return thanks to God that matters have thus happily terminated and that I have in my dominions a judge who acknowledges no authority superior to the law." The judge taking up the scourge said "I also swear by the Almighty God that, if you had not complied with the injunctions of the law, this scourge should have made your back black and blue."[48] This shows the relation of the royal authority to the authority of the sacred law. The fact that the custodians of the law knew no authority superior to theirs, set up, as it were, two co-ordinate authorities in the state. That was a severe limitation to the absolutism of the king, and militated against his attainment of that supremacy which is termed technically as sovereignty of the king. But that was a social need in an age of royal despotism. Independence of judges and impartiality of justice were secured through the medium of the sacred law of which the maker was not the king. Here was an instance of that contrivance to secure social justice, which, in the language of constitutions, is known as checks and balances.

Another limitation to his absolute authority that was likewise of a religious character, was the reading of the Khutba by the Khatibs. It implied that religious sanction had been obtained and therefore the accession of the king to the throne was valid. It is then that the people "unanimously acknowledged him king." This was not a purely formal matter. In an age when religion ruled the life of the people and when there was no law of succession, its necessity was

[48] Stewart, *History of Bengal*, pp. 90–91.

of the utmost importance. Since according to the Holy Quran there was "the sword for him who can wield it and dominion to him who conquers it," the question of succession was not a question of law and right but of power and ability. That was why the throne was desired by the most capable among the sons, and even by the nobles, of a dying king. A minister like Mahmud Khan could sit on the throne of Malwa and found a new dynasty, just as another minister by name Shah Meer did in Kashmere. Or, Ibrahim Lodi who was the third son of Sikandar Lodi could sit on the throne in exclusion of the first and second sons of the Sultan. Such instances are numerous. But the chief feature of almost every succession to the throne was the final resort to force, which invariably required religious sanction for validation as well as for ensuring popular support. Therefore, the reading of the Khutba was indispensable for the king aspiring to secure the throne for himself. This of course did not mean that the mere reading of the Khutba would secure the throne. Its significance was that the followers of the faith would support the person who thereby had been declared as the leader in public prayers, Imam-i-Adil, that is, the king.

For, the Islamic conception of kingship is that the king is the defender of the faith, the leader in public prayers and the uprooter of infidelity.[49] That is to say the power, the king wielded, was held on the condition of rendering service to the faith. And that was why kings, who like Sultan Jalal-uddin of Bengal (A.D. 1392–1409) or Sikandar Butshikan of Kashmere (A.D. 1396-1416) undertook to exterminate idolatry by making forcible conversions, have been extolled as ideal kings. Notwithstanding that, there were many kings in these local kingdoms, who set their face against this ideal of Islamic rule, and as we have noticed already, extended toleration to all religions. The adoption of that policy was symbolic of the gradual emancipation of the king from his subservience to the faith. But taking the period as a whole, we find that the theologians, divines, or jurists wielded an enormous influence over the kings, and thereby influenced the exercise of their authority or functions of their government. Shah Tahir for example had immense influence over Burhan Nizam Shah I,[50] as Moulana

[49] *Muntkhab-ut-Tawarikh* (Asiatic Society Translation), p. 193.

[50] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 228. At the instance of Shah Tahir he changed his faith and became a Shiah. "He also settled pensions on some persons to

Ghiyasuddin a celebrated divine of Persia had over Yusuf Adil Shah[51]; and Shaikh Zaheed of Sunargaon used to be consulted by the king Jelaluddin of Bengal "on all his spiritual affairs."[52] Yet there were kings like Muhammed Shah Bahamani I, who before he listened to them demanded, on his accession to the throne, "a declaration of allegiance from all the holy men of his kingdom who tendered it . . . . "[53] In fact this demand demonstrated that the authority of the king over all sections of people was completely established. In understanding the scope and effectiveness of royal authority or government, this factor has also to be borne in mind.

ROYAL ABSOLUTISM

In spite of certain limitations the king was the virtual lord of his people. Their land, their property, all was held of him and at his pleasure. Therefore when he was so disposed he could attach the property and estate of any of his subjects and servants from the poorest of the poor to the richest of the rich, from the most harmless of his subjects to the most powerful of his ministers, and that, in their lifetime or after their death according to circumstances. Ibrahim Adil Shah, for example, attached all the estates and treasures of his faithful and very competent prime minister Assud Khan, after his death[54] and of his commander-in-chief, by name Seif Ain-ul-mulk even in his lifetime.[55] Every one in his dominion owed his elevation or degradation in rank and status to his pleasure. He was the lord of the land and water, the fountain of justice and honour, besides being as we have seen the defender of the faith, leader in public prayers and uprooter of idolatry. He directly controlled his government, and that way in a very appropriate sense, both reigned and ruled. His ministers were his servants, or his secretaries, whose duty it was to carry out his commands and supervise administration. He was the head of the army and very often, when his generals failed led it in person. For the proper organization

curse and revile the three first Caliphs and their followers in the mosques and streets."

[51] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 25. At the instance of the Maulana, Yusuf Adil Shah proclaimed toleration.

[52] Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 95.

[53] Ferista, Vol. II, p. 323.

[54] Ferista, Vol. III, pp. 100–101.

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 105, et. seq.

and functioning of his civil and military departments he had to be constantly watchful, and issued administrative orders. Revenue, justice, police, military and ecclesiastical departments to name the most important ones, composed his government; and in the regulation of details of these departments his authority was final. In regard to justice, he nominally had the final authority, though in fact with the assistance of the expounders of law. Similarly in his law courts justice was dispensed according to the law, of which he was not the maker. Such was the nature of his authority.

PRIME MINISTER, CALLED WAZIR OR PESHWA

The king had a number of ministers, amongst whom one was the chief or prime minister. In the states of Northern India, he was known as Wazir and of southern India as Peshwa. In southern India Wazir appears to be a categorical designation meaning a minister, whereas Peshwa often means prime minister. This title of prime minister, i.e. Peshwa originated in the reign of Ghyasuddin Bahmani about the end of the fourteenth century. His prime minister, as also the prime ministers of the kings of Bijapur, Golconda, Ahmadnagar bore the designation of Peshwa[56] while in Gujerat, Bengal and Kashmere he was known as Wazir.[57] It is difficult to determine what his special functions were, or what specific departments were placed in his charge. It appears however that he was a very powerful man, and often his power depended upon his capacity for intrigue, tact, and influence over the king. In the states of the South we find that prime minister was sometimes the commander-in-chief of the army also.[58] But if the prime minister became powerful it invariably led to trouble and disaster, and often, to the overthrow of the dynasty. It led to trouble in the case of Asud Khan of Bijapur and Jagdeo Rao of Golconda, and to disaster in the case of Medini Ray of Malwa. In the case of Shah Meer of Kashmere, Mahmud Khan Khilji of Malwa, and Sayid Hussain of Bengal it led to the overthrow of the dynasty, and these three Wazirs usurped the thrones of their incapable masters. But there is no doubt about the fact that the importance of the Wazir was

[56] Ferista, Vol. III, pp. 217, 220.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 219 ; Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 102.
[58] Ferista, Vol. III, pp. 87, 211, 404, 410–414.

very great during the lifetime, and even after the death, of the king. Generally he was a man of outstanding ability, a capable general, a clever diplomat and a good administrator ; or as Ferista described the Peshwa Kunwar Sein of Burhan Nizam Shah I, he was "a person at once endowed with wisdom, penetration and integrity."[59] There are numerous instances of prime ministers being sent at the head of vast armies. On one occasion Bahadur Shah of Gujerat ordered his Wazir Khudawand Khan to march at the head of twenty thousand horse to retrieve a discomfiture.[60] Burhan Nizam Shah's (A.D. 1510) minister Mukamil Khan actually held the offices of Peshwa and Meer Jumla.[61] To avoid troubles of succession, some wise monarchs went out of their way in appointing their brothers or sons as prime ministers, who after the kings generally succeeded to the throne. Alauddin, the third king of the first Muslim dynasty of Kashmere "with a confidence rare among oriental rulers made his next brother Shirashamak his minister" who succeeded him after his death.[62] Similarly Ali Shah the seventh king of the dynasty, appointed his younger brother Shady Khan as his prime minister, who after his death ascended the throne under the style of Zainul Abideen.[63] Sultan Ghyasuddin Khilji of Malwa "nominated his own son Abdul Kadir, prime minister and proclaimed him heir-apparent."[64]

FUNCTIONS OF VAKIL AND WAZIR OFTEN COMBINED

The support of the Wazir counted for much in the matter of succession. In Bengal a eunuch like Sultan Shahzadah could ascend the throne with the help of the Wazir.[65] When a minor succeeded to the throne the adherence of the Wazir became of the utmost significance.[66] When he acted for a minor king he was known as the Vakil or deputy. Sometimes the Vakil was not the prime minister. But when the two offices were combined in the prime minister he ruled with absolute authority, as it happened when Ismail Adil Shah succeeded at the age of thirteen or when Burhan Nizam Shah

[59] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 220. [60] *Ibid.*, p. 219.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 211.
[62] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 277 ; Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 457.
[63] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 467. [64] *Ibid.*, p. 236.
[65] Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 103. [66] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 481.

ascended the throne at the age of seven.[67] A worthless prince like Mallo Adil Shah (A.D. 1534) could ascend the throne only because of the prime minister's support. Ferista narrates how Ismail Adil-Shah just before his death appointed Asud Khan his prime minister to be the protector of his worthless son Mallo Khan and said "that he had full reliance on the minister's abilities, which he was sure would make up for any deficiency or imprudence to which he might be prone."[68] And ultimately it was his support which secured the throne for Mallo Adil Shah. But when Mallo Adil Shah grossly abused his power and abandoned himself to shameless excesses he was deposed and Ibrahim Adil Shah was raised to the throne with Asud Khan's support again. That the position of the prime minister was unique in the state inasmuch as he could demand obedience from the nobility and officials of the highest rank, assign them their duties, and give them a lead in difficult situations is evident from the example of Asud Khan at the seige of Kowilconda just after the death of Ismail Adil Shah. Since the nobility and officers supported two princes in their claim to the throne and there were disorder and discontent in the camp "Asud Khan, who was respected by all . . . . boldly resolved to put an end to them by the exercise of his authority. In the first place he seized and put to death those evil-disposed persons who had excited the princes against each other, and calling together all the nobles he forbade them to visit either of the princes. He directed them, for the present, to attend him, as usual daily at the audience tents in order that they might conduct public affairs till the time should arrive for seating one or other of the princes on the throne. Both parties submitted to these measures; and the whole army approved of the conduct of Asud Khan and promised to fulfil his wishes."[69] This is anticipating Bairam Khan on the eve of the battle of Panipat in A.D. 1556. The significance of Wazārat is amply illustrated by the example of Asud Khan and we may conclude that it was an important office, very nearly resembling the Wazārat of the Delhi Sultanate.

VAKIL–US–SULTANUT

Besides the Wazir or Peshwa there was another minister perhaps of equal, if not of higher, status, and that was the Vakil-us-Sultanut.

[67] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 434. [68] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 73.
[69] Ferista, Vol. III, pp. 74–75.

We hear frequently of such a minister under the Bahmani kings. Shamsuddin Shah Bahmani (A.D. 1396) and his successor had one Meer Faiz Ulla Anjee as their Vakil-us-Sultanut; Humayun Shah Bahmani had Khwaja Mahmud Gawan, and Nizam Shah Bahmani had Khwaja Jahan, at a time when Mahmud Gawan was the Wazir.[69a] In the reign of Firoz Shah Bahmani the Vakil-us-Sultanut bore the title of Malik Naib, i.e. lord deputy. And since Vakil signifies deputy his office was like the one which obtained under the Delhi Sultanate. Perhaps his duty was to deputise the king or govern the capital during his absence, or govern the kingdom when he was a minor.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Next to the Wazir or prime minister was the commander-in-chief. Under Hassan Shah of Kashmere Malik Taj Bhat was the commander-in-chief while Sayyid Hassan was the prime minister. Sultan Fateh Shah of Bengal had the Abyssinian Mulk Anjil as commander-in-chief while his Wazir was another Abyssinian Khan Jahan[70]; and Burhan Nizam Shah had Saif Ainul Mulk as his commander-in-chief,[71] while Shah Tahir and after him Gopal Row became prime ministers. But generally the office was combined with that of some other minister because in those days every civil officer was primarily a military leader also, and there was nothing like separation of functions between civil and military departments of the state. Ibrahim Kutub Shah had Mustafa Khan as his minister and commander-in-chief.[72] Bahadur Shah of Gujerat on one occasion "detached his Wazir Khudawand Khan with twenty thousand horse."[73] Ibrahim Adil Shah I had Asud Khan as his prime minister and commander-in-chief.[74]

MEER NAOBAT OR SAR-I-NAOBAT

Besides the commander-in-chief there was the commander of the household guards, who was not subordinate to the commander-in-chief and enjoyed a position of distinction and responsibility, because

[69a] Ferista, Vol. II, pp. 359, 370, 398, 453 and 465.
[70] Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 102. [71] *Ibid.*, p. 105.
[72] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 404. [73] *Ibid.*, p. 219. [74] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

he commanded the bodyguards of the king and was charged with the safety of the household. This officer was called Meer Naobat or Sar-i-Naobat. Under Ghyasuddin Shah Bahmani, Muhammed Khan became Meer Naobat, and under Shamsuddin Shah Bahmani the office was held by one Saddu a slave of the royal family.[75] In the reign of Burhan Nizam Shah, Mian Jamal-uddin held the office of Sar-i-Naobat.[76] This officer seems to have been attached to the palace establishment. We hear for example Muhammed Shah Bahmani I, had a "bodyguard of four thousand men under the command of a nobleman of high rank styled Meer Naobat. Fifty Silehdars and a thousand body guards attended the palace daily."[77] He had also a band of Silehdars, composed of two hundred youths selected from among the sons of the nobility. There were, besides, chamberlains[78] or Perdehdars.[79]

AMEER JUMLA

Of the ministers one of the most important must have been the finance minister or Ameer Jumla. Under Ahmad Nizam Shah, Nasir-ul-Mulk Gujerati was Meer Jumla,[80] while under Burhan Nizam Shah, Mukamil Khan was both Peshwa and Meer Jumla.[81] In Kashmere we hear of one Shankar Zeina as the Minister of finance.[82]

AMEER-I-DUR, OR KHVANDI-MAJLIS OR WAZIR-I-ASHRAF

There was a minister in charge of ceremonies, whose designation varied in the different states. In Kashmere he seems to be known as Ameer-i-Dur,[83] in Ahmadnagar under Ahmad Nizam Shah as Khvandi-Majlis,[84] and in the Bahmani empire as Wazir-i-Ashraf.[85] He may be known as master of ceremonies or chief usher[86] for in Malwa Sultan Mahmud Khilji had one Malik Barkhoordar as his chief usher.

[75] Ferista, Vol. II, p. 353, 358.
[76] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 212.
[77] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 299.
[78] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 87.
[79] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 453.
[80] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 193.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 211.
[82] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 489.
[83] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 477.
[84] *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIIX, p. 159.
[85] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 377.
[86] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 196.

SADR

There also appears to have been a department like the ecclesiastical department, and though the references to this department and its working are rare, yet we know that in the Bahmani kingdom the officer in charge was known as the Sadr, which also was the title of this officer under the Mughals and Afghans. Muhammed Shah Bahmani II had Shaikh Ahmad as his Sadr.[87]

CHITNAVIS

In the Southern states, there appears to have been a higher officer known as Chitnavis or secretary. His office became widely known under the Marathas. But there is no doubt that he was an important officer, and may have been even of the rank of a minister. That could be inferred because he was at least on one occasion sent as a royal ambassador to a foreign court.[88]

BODY OF EIGHT MINISTERS

Speaking in general terms we may assume that the Deccan states had a body of eight ministers, as first instituted by Muhammed Shah Bahmani I, with modifications about their number and function being introduced according to the needs and resources of individual kings. Sir Wolsley Haig gives the names of eight ministers of Muhammed Shah Bahmani as follows :[89] *i.* Wakil-us-Sultanat — the lieutenant of the kingdom, *ii.* Wazir-i-Kull, the superintending minister, *iii.* Amir-i-Jumlah, the minister of finance, *iv.* Wazir-i-Ashraf, the minister of Foreign Affairs and master of the ceremonies, *v.* Nazir, the Asstt. minister of finance, *vi.* Peshwa, who was associated with the lieutenant of the kingdom, and whose office was, in later times, almost invariably amalgamated with his, *vii.* Kotwal, the chief of police and city magistrate in the capital, and *viii.* Sadr-i-Jahan, the chief justice and minister of religion and endowments.

The administration of a state would normally have these ministers, and they would function as the central authority with the king as their chief or master, whose control would be either real or nominal

[87] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 481.
[88] Ferista, Vol. III, pp. 223, 226.
[89] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 377.

according to his own ability and power. A government run by eight ministers as devised by the Bahmani king, was adopted by the Maratha king Shivaji, and it was later known to be the Astapradhan system of government. There is some propriety in discovering more than superficial resemblance in its number, between the Bahmani ministry and Shivaji's ministry.

PROVINCES OF THE KINGDOMS AND THEIR SUBDIVISIONS

These kingdoms were divided into a number of provinces, over each of which ruled a governor or viceroy. The Bahmani kingdom for example had been divided into four provinces or Turufs, each in charge of a Turufdar. These four were the Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar provinces.[90] Mahmud Shah I of Gujerat divided Gujerat into separate provinces appointing "governors to each . . . ." The provinces were (*a*) Bete and Jugut, (*b*) Songier, (*c*) Godra (*d*) Tanna, (*e*) Ahmadabad.[91] We can take it that wherever the dominions were extensive, they were generally divided into provinces. The provinces were divided into districts, and the districts were composed of the villages and towns. The villages most probably had their own officers like Kulkarnis or accountants[92] and Havaldars or magistrates.[93] The towns and cities had their own officers known as Kotwals.[94]

GRADATION OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Government officials generally held military ranks, and they were graded accordingly. Of the Bahmani kingdom Ferista tells us that "the highest order of nobility under Bahmani kings was confined to the dignity of commander of two thousand into which were admitted only the Turufdars or governors of the four principal divisions of the kingdom. From this rank the grades were continued down as low as two hundred, but none of a lesser rank was considered a noble. An Ameer of a thousand had the privilege of carrying the toghā, the ālum (banner) and drums as insignia of his order.[95] This was perhaps the norm of administrative arrangement adopted

[90] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 374.
[91] Ferista, Vol. IV, p. 62.
[92] Ferista, Vol. III, p. 214.
[93] *Ibid.*, p. 420.
[94] Ferista, Vol. II, pp. 435, 460.
[95] Ferista, Vol. II, p. 399.

in the various Muslim states of India of this period. The Mughal Mansabdari system devised by Akbar appears to be only an improvement on this; and this system certainly supplied the foundation for the military organization of Shivaji. Speaking in general terms we can agree with Briggs when he writes that "the custom of giving military titles descriptive of the number of men commanded by each officer is of very old date in the East. In the Scriptures we read of captains of tens and of hundreds. The Romans even had their centurians. The Tartars had and have their Yoozbashies and Meenbashies, heads of a hundred and heads of a thousand men. The Indian Mahommedans brought the custom with them, and extended it to leaders of five thousand men, which was the highest specific rank; beyond that, they were termed Surlushkur or commander."[96] In this connection we are told that in Ahmad Shah Wali Bahmani's Vakil-us-Sultanat, Khalf Hasan was an officer of twelve hundred horse, while the Amir-ul-Umra Hoshiyar Ainul Mulk, was an officer of fifteen hundred horse. In Malwa Sultan Ghiasuddin, when he nominated his son and heir-apparent to the throne, as his prime minister conferred on him the command of twelve thousand cavalry.[97]

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

The civil government was carried on by the officers in charge of provinces and districts, by Kotwals and Qazis in the cities and towns, by the Havaldars or civil magistrates in the villages. Most of the civil officers were primarily military officers from the governor, for example, to the Havaldar. And in their own sphere they conducted themselves practically independently. The governor realized the revenue of his province, set aside one part for the civil expenses, another part for his own establishment, and a third part for the payment of his regular cavalry or siledars, i.e. mounted mail-clad troopers, and infantry or Bargeers.[98] Sometimes the kings who like Mahmud Shah I of Gujerat cared for the internal peace and prosperity organized a police force, and it is said of him that in order to check brigandage on the high roads of Gujerat he organized a "more active police" and put it in charge of one Mohafiz Khan,

[96] *Ibid.*, footnote.
[97] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 237.
[98] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 79.

who "had at one time in attendance one thousand seven hundred Bargeer-i-khas, or persons equipped by him and riding his own stable horses."[99] A king like Sultan Mahmud Khilji of Malwa saw to it that justice was done promptly to people, who suffered from the negligence of police officers. Of him it is said that "when a merchant had been plundered during the night in Mando and the fact was fully established . . . he was instantly reimbursed for his losses from the public treasury ; and a sum equal to the amount was levied from the police officers whose business it was to trace the robbers and to protect that part of the city."[100] It is also said of Muhammed Shah Bahmani I that "he determined to root out entirely the banditti of the Deccan, so famous in all former ages for their daring robberies on caravans ; for which purpose orders were issued to the governors of provinces to use their utmost endeavours to clear the country of thieves and highway men, by putting them to death without distinction, and to send their heads to the capital for example."[101]

JUSTICE AND MORAL WELFARE

Indeed the concern of the kings in general in the matter of justice to their subjects was like that of a father towards his children. There are numerous instances to illustrate this. We have already narrated the incident of Sultan Ghyasuddin of Bengal appearing before his Qazi. Of Yusuf Shah of Bengal (A.D. 1475) it is said that "he established rules for the strict administration of justice throughout his dominions : and having summoned the judges and municipal officers to attend him, he informed them that the laws were to be administered with impartiality to the poor and the rich, to the weak and the powerful and if he discovered that any of them swayed in their decisions either by interest or affection, he would punish them most severely. He then ordered them to send him a weekly report of their proceedings, and being himself very learned and well-informed in the law, he frequently decided on points which had perplexed the most experienced Qazis and Moofties."[102] Some of the kings even cared for the moral welfare of the people. Of Alauddin Shah Bahmani it is said that he erected "an infirmary for the poor :

[99] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 57.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 234.
[101] Ferista, Vol. II, p. 325.
[102] Stewart, *History of Bengal*, p. 101.

to support the expenses of which he granted considerable tracts of land, and established in it both Musalman and Hindu physicians. To every part of his dominions he sent censors of morals and just judges; and though he drank wine himself he forbade the use of it to others as also the practice of gambling. He put chains on the necks of Kullenders, and idle, dissipated vagabonds, whom he punished by employing them in removing the filth from the streets, in dragging heavy stones, and in the performance of all manner of laborious work, in order that they might reform and either earn their livelihood by industry or quit the country altogether. If any person after admonition and moderate correction was convicted of drinking wine, it was enacted that melted lead should be poured down his throat, whatever might be the rank of the offender."[103] Another king Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmere had such enthusiasm for even-handed justice to all that "he established a code of laws, which were engraved on copper plates, and placed in all the public markets and halls of justice . . . he never put to death any individual of the state for theft or petty crimes; but robbers of all descriptions were fettered and obliged to gain their livelihood by hard work in the construction of public edifices."[104]

ROYAL PATRONAGE TO ART AND LITERATURE

In India the tradition had been long established that the kings encouraged art and literature, and therefore, poets, scholars, artists, etc. were generally attracted to the royal court. Of Sultan Mahmud Khilji it is said that during his whole reign he "gave great encouragement to learned men, and founded several colleges in different parts of the kingdom for the promotion of literature, so that the philosophers and Moulanas of Malwa bore a fair comparison with those of Shiraz and Samarkand."[105] Similarly of the kings of Jaunpur in general and of Ibrahim Shah Sarqi in particular it is said that "he led a peaceful life in the prosecution of literary pursuits and in the promotion of the arts of civilization."[106] It was indeed in Ibrahim's reign that Jaunpur earned the title of "Shiraz of India."[107] The kings of Kashmere were also noted for their encouragement of art and literature. Even a ferocious persecutor like Sikandar Shah

[103] Ferista, Vol. II, p. 434. [104] Ferista, Vol. IV, pp. 469–70.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 197. [106] *Ibid.*, p. 365. [107] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 259.

Butshikan was, like his son Zain-ul-Abidin, a great patron of the scholars, poets and artists. Of the kings of Bengal, Golkunda, Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Gujerat similar accounts are generally given ; and it is due to their encouragement that spoken languages of the country developed into literatures, and local art and architecture acquired some distinctive style of their own.

ADMINISTRATIVE SLACKNESS IN FEUDAL MONARCHIES

We may conclude this brief survey of the administrative organization of the regional kingdoms by mentioning that in all these kingdoms, though power and control were centralized to a much greater degree than in the Delhi Sultanate, yet there was much slackness of government and relaxation of authority as a result of allowing local chieftains to exist and rule in semi-independence within those kingdoms. These were the feudatories who were generally called upon to attend on the king from time to time, or render military service when the king so desired, or even served as governors of different provinces of the kingdoms. The degree of their power, and relations with the central authority largely depended upon the strength and weakness of the central authority. Indeed in most of the kingdoms we find perennial campaigns carried on against refractory rajas and chieftains. Whether in Kashmere or Bengal, in Gujerat or Golkunda, the nature of monarchy was very much of a feudal type. The local chieftains could not be exterminated and expediency very often demanded their retention even after they were punished and humiliated. In Kashmere for example the rulers of Lohkote and Jammu were very powerful feudatories, who often stirred trouble, and even when punished had to be treated with great tact and consideration. The power and influence of a chief like Medini Ray of Malwa are well known. In Gujerat the Rajas of Idur, Dongarpur, and Girnar had to be kept loyal by all sorts of devices even though they proved rebellious very often. Similarly in the Bahmani empire and afterwards in the five sultanates of the Deccan many local chieftains retained their principalities and local independence in matters of administration. Only when in some matters, vital to the interests of the state they came into conflict with royal authority, did the king interfere. Their subjection was marked by the two conditions of

paying annual tribute and rendering service either at the Court or at the camp when necessary.

Though in theory the Muslim king was lord of the land, water, and of all property in the kingdom yet he dared not convert their principalities into crown lands without anticipating great difficulty and serious trouble. The fact was that most of their chieftains were Hindu rajahs and relics of the past Hindu rule. They had been left practically as independent princes by the Delhi Sultans owing to the helplessness of the latter, and they commanded an influence, authority, and popular allegiance, of which the kings of this period could not deprive them. They were in different parts of the country known as Rays, Ranas, Mandaliks, Rajas, Desais, Reddiwars, Zamindars or Poligars. That their existence and authority placed a severe limitation on the universality of the rule of Muslim kings of this period and of the law of Islam, there is no doubt. Local customs and usage in the principalities of these chieftains, were preferred to the law of Islam in matters of justice. That had to be so, partly because of the great antiquity of local customs and usage, and partly on account of the lack of an adequate staff to carry on the administration of the country. For, these monarchies performed only two important functions of government efficiently, viz., collection of revenues, and defence of the kingdom against foreign aggression. Other functions of government, which characterize a modern state, went by default. Therefore, there was hardly anything like a uniform system of law, a standard of justice or a judicial organization sufficiently extensive to take cognizance of all persons and varieties of cases in the country. This latitude in matters of justice left to the local chieftains what practically meant a great deal of administrative independence, and to that extent, restricted the legal supremacy of the Muslim kings. Political supremacy they had — commensurate with their military strength, but their legal supremacy was curtailed, due to the peculiar feudal supremacy of the local chieftains.

CHAPTER XIII

AFGHANS AND THE PATTERN OF A NEW MONARCHY

RISE AND FALL OF THE AFGHAN EMPIRES

DURING the period under review the Afghans took advantage of the political confusion into which Northern India had lapsed, as a result of the dismemberment of the Delhi Sultanate after the invasion of Amir Taimur, and founded an empire that under the Lodis, comprised what we know as the Punjab, the U.P. and parts of Bihar. This empire lasted for three quarters of a century, and due to the inherent defects of Afghan polity fell to pieces by the invasion of Babar. But the Mughal conqueror did not live for more than five years to consolidate what he had conquered while his son and successor Humayun failed to control the situation, that bristled with difficulties. The empire he inherited had neither been securely held nor firmly founded. The Afghans had been only vanquished and dispersed, not crushed. They still cherished the ambition of resuscitating their lost empire after the overthrow of the Mughals. All they lacked was a leader and when that was found in Sher Shah, they rallied round him with all their might and drove out Humayun from India. For a second time the Afghan empire was founded, this time on surer foundations and with territories surpassing in extent the Lodi empire and even equalling the Delhi Sultanate at the height of its glory. It was no mean achievement for any dynasty of rulers. But when we know that it was the work practically of one man, we realize the greatness of his genius. A wonderfully efficient administrative machinery was devised by him. A new tone was imparted to the system of government and new standards of governmental programme was set up for the subsequent rulers of India to adopt. The old cankers of the Afghan character were sought to be eradicated, and under the vigorous and deft hands of that great ruler old political traditions and institutions assumed new forms. He surpassed in his vision and practical sense all rulers of contemporary times, and left behind an ideal of

governmental form and functions which was destined to live for all time to come. He was a unique combination of a great builder, a capable general and a remarkable ruler. But with all these sovereign qualities he did not live long to rule over an empire that he had assiduously built up. As he actually gave vent to his feelings once, he had come by an empire at the evening of life. He lived only for five years, and obviously therefore, could not achieve all that he could have, had he been spared longer. His son and successor proved to be a highly efficient ruler, full of the vigour and vision of his father, and he also did a great deal by way of centralizing power and government. He was fairly successful in consolidating what his father had built up, and in destroying the separatist tendencies of the Afghans. But his death after only ten years of rule, released those pent-up forces of Afghan character which he and his father had sought to control. Their omissions or defective statesmanship, assumed aggravated forms when an unworthy ruler like Muhammed Shah Adil ascended the throne, and the Mughals under Humayun again invaded to win back their lost empire. Within a short time all the coherence and cementing that Sher Shah and Islam Shah had imparted to Afghan social and political structure crumbled away, and the Afghans in their resistance to the invader appeared in disunited tribal groups, which facilitated their conquest by the Mughals.

For one thing, the effect of the disaster of the death of Sher Shah and Islam Shah after only fifteen years of rule, on the cause of empire-building by the Afghans could never be exaggerated. The process of empire building in a country like India takes a very long time in comparison to which the short span of a decade and a half that the Surs had for the purpose, is extremely brief and insufficient. It has to be always borne in mind that within his own lifetime Humayun ruled over India and the trans-frontier regions of Kabul and Kandahar nearly twice as long as the dynasty of the Surs. For in 1540 when Sher Shah expelled Humayun from India, the latter had ruled over it for ten years already, and having been expelled from India he ruled over Kabul till 1555. Then he invaded the Afghan empire after the death of Islam Shah, conquered it, and ruled over it for more than six months before his death in 1556. This itself is no negligible factor in the downfall of the Afghans.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LODI IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION

The characteristic feature of the Lodi imperial organization was a sort of tribal feudalism, which militated against centralization of government and supremacy of the king. That was partly due to the nature of Afghan conquest and partly to their peculiar social organization. And though their tribal grouping was in a way helpful in conquering Hindustan for their leader Bahlol Lodi, once the country was conquered all unity of purpose departed. Their tribal spirit most vigorously insisting on a partition or distribution of the conquered country amongst themselves, and holding the different parts in their own interest rather than in the interest of the king. And after the country had been divided and occupied their tribal strength was demonstrated more fiercely in internecine feuds than in building up a centralized and durable kingdom. This state of affairs impaired all stability and efficiency of government, and rendered the entire structure of the Lodi empire extremely vulnerable to any foreign attack. For there was always some tribal trouble or discontent, some feudal quarrel or ambition brewing within it. To hold these factious elements together was a task, that called for inexhaustible patience and tact, which few could command. It was Bahlol Lodi, who succeeded in utilizing the restless valour and energy of these Afghan tribes in building up an empire by a clever combination of tact and sympathy, of cajolery and coercion. But his empire was a loosely built edifice of doubtful strength. Sikandar Lodi therefore sought to reinforce its foundations, and to that end endeavoured to assert his own authority at the cost of the feudal tribes. His ability and tact brought him some measure of success, but his successor Ibrahim Lodi failed miserably when he pursued the same object. That was due to his lack of tact and ability as a ruler. His obstinacy combined with his unpardonable indifference to Afghan susceptibilities gave rise to disaffection of the tribes and disturbances in the empire. As these rumblings were heard, Babar, waiting for an opportunity in distant Kabul, attacked ; and then came down with a crash the empire that Bahlol had conquered and Sikandar had consolidated.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LODI EMPIRE

The nature of the Lodi conquest of Northern India could be best

understood with reference to the political condition of that part of the country. In A.D. 1444 when the phantom Sultan Muhammed Shah died, the Langahs, who were an Afghan tribe had established themselves in practical independence in Multan. "In the opposite direction Ibrahim Shah of Jaunpur invaded and annexed some of the south-eastern districts of the kingdom; and to the south of Delhi the Raja of Gwalior and other Hindu Chieftains openly repudiated their liability to pay tribute. The Hindus of the Doab always disregarded with impunity an authority which was never asserted and the turbulent tribesmen of Mewat plundered the country to within a short distance of the walls of the city."[1] Taking advantage of this distracted condition Bahlol Lodi, who already held Sirhind, Samana, Dipalpur and Lahore as his fiefs styled himself Sultan Bahlol. Five years later when Sultan Alam Shah was ruling over Delhi, Multan had elected a ruler of its own and the rest of the Punjab as far south as Panipat and Hissar passed into the possession of Bahlol; Bahlol's relative Darya Khan Lodi "held the districts of Sambhal the western limit of which he had pushed forward as far as the fort of Khwaja Khizr on the Jumna near Delhi. Adjoining this petty state on the south, within the limits of the Doab was the state of Koil held by Isa Khan the Turk and south of this state Hassan Khan another Afghan held Rapri. The lower central Doab, including Bhongaon, Patiali and Kampil was held by the Rajput, Raja Partab and to the west of the Jumna Daud Khan Auhadi was independent in Bayana. All these rulers were partisans of Bahlol."[2] And in consequence of a court intrigue when Bahlol captured Delhi and seated himself on the throne on 19 April 1451 the contemptible king Alam Shah withdrew to Budaon and wrote to Bahlol saying "that he had neither fruit nor profit of sovereignty, that his father had styled Bahlol his son and that he himself freely and cheerfully resigned his throne to Bahlol as an elder brother."[3] Thus passed the sovereignty of Delhi from the Sayyids to the Lodis.

But it was sovereignty devoid of any substance. For, by enthroning himself at Delhi Bahlol had occupied Delhi only. He had yet to conquer the Doab and the rest of Northern India, which occupied him the remaining years of his life. There were powerful enemies on

[1] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, pp. 222–23.
[2] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, pp. 225–26. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 226–27.

all sides. And owing to the slow crumbling away of the Delhi Sultanate, the local chieftains had been inured to habits of disloyalty and turbulence. Most of them had to be conciliated and some of them had to be crushed. "It was Bahlol's policy to conciliate the great fief-holders of the Doab, whose disobedience to Delhi and subservience to Jaunpur had been forced upon them by circumstances and all were treated with leniency."[4] They were treated with leniency in order that they might take his side in his war against the king of Jaunpur, his most dreaded rival. This was not a war of conquest, but a struggle for existence. And Bahlol strained his utmost, now resorting to treachery, now to conciliation, now to open fight, to win victory in this struggle. And he fought for more than a quarter of a century to destroy the Jaunpur kingdom which he annexed and that was all that he could do by way of extending the frontier of his dominion. Multan defied him and remained independent. And since his resources were not very great when he embarked on the adventure of conquering the empire of Delhi, he had to rely on the support of his kinsmen, whose adherence had to be purchased at the cost of royal supremacy. Owing to this dependence he was content to regard himself as a *primus-inter-pares* in his relations with the chiefs of the Afghan tribes. And it may be noted that these were not merely his kinsmen, who possessed jagirs in India but whom he had invited to come to India to help him. He is said to have written letters to them to the following purport. "God in his goodness has granted the kingdom of Delhi to the Afghans, but the other kings of Hind wish to expel them from the country. The honour of our women is concerned ; the lands of Hind are broad and rich, and can afford maintenance to many. Come then, to this country ; the name indeed of sovereignty shall remain with me, but whatever countries we may conquer shall be shared between us as brothers. Sultan Mahmud of Jaunpur is now besieging Delhi, where the families of the Afghans are. If you feel disposed to assist me, you must do so now, with a large force."[5] And the Afghans who came and chose to remain in his service were ennobled and received jagirs in a liberal measure. Bahlol even commanded his nobles saying "every Afghan who comes to Hind from the country of Roh to enter my service, bring him to me. I will give him a jagir more than proportion to his deserts, and such as shall content

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 230. [5] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, pp. 306–7.

him, but if he for reasons of kindred or friendship, prefers remaining in the service of any one of you, do you provide for him to his satisfaction, for if I hear of one Afghan from Roh returning thither again for want of a livelihood or employment, I will resume the jagirs of that noble who may have refused to entertain him."[6]

COUNTRY HELD BY POWERFUL FEUDAL NOBILITY

The result was fully felt in the subsequent reign. Practically the whole of Northern India was given away in jagir to the Afghan chiefs. "One half of the whole country was assigned to the Farmulis and the other half to the other Afghan tribes. At this time the Lohanis and Farmulis predominated. The chief of the Sarwanis was Azam Humayun, and the principal chieftains of the Lodis were four, viz. Mahmud Khan, who held Kalpi in jagir; Mian Alam, to whom Etawa and Chandwar were assigned; Mubarak Khan, whose jagir was Lucknow; and Daulat Khan who held Lahore . . . . Of the Farmulis the districts (ikta) of Saran and Champaran were held by Mian Husain; Oudh, Ambala and Hodhna by Mian Muhammed Kala Pahar; Kanauj by Mian Gadai; Shamsabad, Thanesar and Shahabad by Mian Imad; Marahra by Tatar Khan, brother of Mian Muhammed; and Hariana Desua and other detached parganas by Khwajagi Shaikh Said."[7] Not content with bestowing these vast jagirs Sikandar Lodi ordered "that each jagirdar should possess all the revenues of his tenure, with the exception of those proceeding from imlak and wazaif. Thus were the holders of aima released by this single order of the Sultan as no one now required to have his firman renewed. There was no interference in the concerns of any of the chiefs who went to the wazir's diwan and settled their accounts with him, having drawn them up in the manner most convenient to themselves."[8] Besides this, Sultan Sikandar was so generous that when a parganah was granted in jagir and the jagirdar finding its yield more than official figures, brought it to the notice of the emperor the latter never altered the terms of the grant nor did he resume a portion of the jagir. He addressed every one of the Afghans as a noble even if he happened to be a servant of his own.[9] And when such indulgence was shown one could easily understand why

[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 307–8.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 547–48.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 447–48.
[9] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 471–72.

the nobles of Sikandar's time maintained huge establishments. Some of his great nobles like Azam Humayun for example maintained 45,000 horse and 700 elephants; and Ahmad Khan 20,000 horse. Of the lesser nobles Saif Khan had 6,000 horse under him; Firoz Khan Sarwani also had 6,000 horse; Daulat Khan Khani 4,000 horse and Ali Khan Ushi 4,000 horse.[10]

WEAKNESS OF THE LODI EMPIRE

Accustomed to such indulgence they were loth to tolerate any curtailment of their power or any show of vigour and masterful attitude on the part of the Sultan. But so long as the country had not been conquered and securely held, their firy energy and valour found ample scope in fighting the enemy, but once that was finished their native custom and character prevailed. And "the custom of the Afghans" as Sher Shah once remarked, "is that if any man has four kinsmen more than another, he thinks little of killing or dishonouring his neighbour."[11] An irrepressible tendency to quarrel that fostered indiscipline, a peculiar notion of social justice that found fulfilment in blood feuds, and a loyalty that was given first to the clan or the tribe, and then to the king and the country, profoundly influenced their political organization. Men of the same tribe held together and showed a jealousy and intolerance of other tribes. And since they were a military and ruling aristocracy their frequent quarrels and blood-feuds often assumed ominous proportions, which certainly prejudiced the royal authority and threatened to undermine the foundations of the empire. And as Sher Shah rightly remarked later "the Mughals who conquered the country from Sultan Ibrahim did not do so by the sword but through the quarrels which the Afghans had among themselves."[12] Indeed it was these which constituted an inherent weakness in the Lodi empire and brought about its fall.

TRIBAL SPIRIT OF THE AFGHANS HELPFUL IN THEIR RISE UNDER SHER SHAH

With the defeat and death of Ibrahim Lodi in 1526 the throne passed on to Babar, who thereby only occupied the two imperial

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 545. [11] *Ibid.*, p. 335. [12] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 337.

cities of Agra and Delhi. Because the rest of the country belonged to the Afghan Chiefs, it had to be conquered piecemeal. That was a great handicap for Babar, and after him, for his son Humayun. The tribal organization and loyalty of the Afghans in fact made the task of foundation of an empire very hard for the Mughals. Just as it was difficult for Ibrahim Lodi to control these feudal chieftains, because of their power and resources, and sturdy spirit of independence, equally so was it for the Mughals to conquer the country and bring it under their control because of the presence of these very Afghan chiefs. Wherever the Mughals turned, there they met with enemies — these powerful Afghan chieftains, who held extensive territories and maintained vast military establishments. Indeed it was the presence of these chieftains that prevented the Mughal power from striking firm root in Northern India. There always surged around them a floating mass of unruly elements composed of the vanquished Afghan chiefs and their tribesmen, eager to prey upon the country and its new masters, the Mughals. They needed a point and a purpose to transform them, and that was supplied by Sher Shah. Thus the tribal organization and feudal laxity that was responsible for the fall of Ibrahim Lodi, resisted Mughal subjugation of the country and contributed to the revival of the Afghan power under Sher Shah. Sher Shah had the necessary genius and supreme quality of leadership, to galvanize these diffused elements into a bulwark of strength and with that he expelled Humayun and the Mughals from India. Once again the Afghans ruled over an empire much bigger and stronger than the previous one. But this time their rule lasted only for fifteen years. After that the Mughals returned and definitely subdued the Afghans and their empire on the foundations of which a far more extensive, durable and glorious empire gradually took shape. The genius of Sher Shah had its fulfilment in supplying the foundations for the work of Akbar.

ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SUR DYNASTY

Indeed the achievement of Sher Shah Sur and his son Sikandar Shah Sur was a fitting prelude to the construction programme of Akbar. And the achievement of the Sur dynasty viewed from the standpoint of the evolution of Indo-Islamic polity consisted of two things. Firstly, they set up a centralized government on a

bureaucratic pattern that sought to emphasize efficiency and eliminate corruption. Secondly, an atmosphere favourable for the supremacy of the central authority was fostered by deliberately departing from the political traditions of the Afghans and adopting the Hindu traditions, which exalted kingship and made the king the source of all power, honour, privilege and justice. That was foreign to the Afghan concept of kingship, and to give it a reality a centralized administrative machinery based on bureaucratic control had to be devised. To a very great extent Sher Shah was responsible for it. His state was founded on the twin principles of centralized bureaucratic control and royal supremacy which cut at the root of tribal organization and feudal laxity of the Afghans. Islam Shah as has been already pointed out not only walked in the foot-steps of his father but even surpassed him in effecting an intensive centralization, crushing the pretensions of the Afghan feudal nobility and thereby exalting kingship to super-human heights. None of the Sultans of Delhi whether Balban, Alauddin Khilji, or Muhammed Tughlaq had the courage, and courage backed by adequate resources, to proclaim that his ruling in matters political, legal or religious was final. Badaoni speaking of his methods of centralization writes "that he brought the whole country under his own personal control, and in accordance with the regulations and custom of the Daghi system, which Sher Shah had instituted, the soldiery were paid in cash. A further step was to send written orders to all the Sarkars containing comprehensive instructions on all important points of religion, and all political and civil questions, entering into the minutest essential detail, and dealing with all regulations which might be of service to the soldiery and civil population, to the merchants and other various classes, and which the authorities were bound to follow in their jurisdiction. All these points were written down in these documents whether agreeable to the religious law or not, so that there was no necessity to refer any such matters to the Qazi or Mufti, nor was it proper to do so."[12a] A king who could thus treat the Qazi or Mufti and give his own ruling about all matters, whether it was agreeable to Islamic law or not, would be in no mood to respect the feudal traditions of the Afghans or tolerate their power in any degree. And that is evident from his treatment of the Afghan nobility. Of the most powerful nobles, were Qutb Khan

[12a] *Muntkhab-ut-Tawarikh*, (Translated by Beveridge), Vol. I, p. 496.

Nayab, Isa Khan Niyazi, Khawas Khan and Jalal Khan Jilwani, all of whom he drove to destruction. At one time eminent nobles like Shahbaz Khan Luhani, the brother-in-law of Sher Shah, and tried generals like Brahmajit Gaur along with fourteen other Amirs and Amirs' sons were sent to the prison fortress of Gwalior, and as Badaoni remarks "most of them quitted the body in imprisonment." He even did not spare Haibat Khan Niazi Azam Humayun, the governor of Lahore, in whom Sher Shah reposed immense confidence and who was the leader of the powerful Niyazis of the Punjab. With unflinching determination and vigour he practically destroyed and dispersed their entire clan, and treated the captives irrespective of their sex or age with the utmost humiliation. He bestowed on the harlots the titles that the Niyazi leaders had borne and the tokens of dignity that they had possessed, which, as Badaoni rightly remarks "used to annoy the Afghans, who were all of one tribe and one mind, so that an intense disgust for him had sprung up in their hearts."[13] He could do all this because of his wonderful capacity for organization, leadership and resolute action. He never attempted anything half-heartedly or without proper preparation. He had full confidence in his army and "in the early part of his reign he had detailed five thousand cavalry for the Chief Sarkars of Hindustan."[14] Therein lay his strength and the rest he supplied himself.

DEFICIENCY OF THE SURS

But even in his reign the rumblings of discontent had been heard. Revolt of the nobility had on one occasion even encouraged one of them to assume the signs of sovereignty. On the frontier, the Gakkars proved extremely troublesome and their subjugation though very expensive, was not complete. Apart from all these difficulties, it was impossible to change the character of the Afghans, and make them conform to Indian customs and conventions, inspite of the intensive control, constant preparedness and efficiency of the army, rigorous treatment of the Afghan chiefs, and the great abilities of the king. Afghan unity or solidarity that had been effected was like a rope of sand. Feudal in outlook and intolerant of discipline, they were lacking in some of the highest qualities of statesmanship.

[13] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 498. [14] *Ibid.*, p. 495.

The greatest of them, that is, Sher Shah even had that deficiency. He failed to comprehend that only by unifying the Afghans and building up an efficient system of government an empire could not be established. For, the Afghans could neither forego their nature nor forget their customs, and the admirable system of government was sure to topple down the moment the Afghans were disloyal. Sher Shah did not have much confidence in the Hindus, nor did he value their loyalty to any appreciable extent. He had tried to crush the Rajputs, but when he realized that that was well nigh impossible, and the benefits of annexing Rajputana were very little, he had not cared to conciliate them. He had broken his pledge to Medini Ray of Malwa in a moment of weakness that certainly smacked of religious intolerance. He had not won the love and loyalty of the bulk of his subjects — the Hindus. He had not sanctioned open persecution of Hindus no doubt, but neither had he extended to them religious tolerance. His son Islam Shah had done both. He had done nothing to win the loyalty of the Hindus, and had actually imprisoned and put to death the only Hindu general in the Afghan service — Brahmajit Gaur ; he had humiliated the Afghan nobility, crushed their pretensions, and rubbed them on the wrong side. He had given them much cause for annoyance and disgust, and had thus forfeited their loyalty. It is a pity that Sher Shah and Islam Shah in spite of their wonderful character and abilities failed to comprehend the simple truth that if they were to exalt royal authority and set up an absolute monarchy based on centralized control, which was in line with the ideal and traditions of the Hindu state and not of the Islamic state, as founded by the Delhi Sultans, they should have associated the Hindus in their government and relied on their support. And if they lacked statesmanship, common sense should at least have indicated that in a country where Hindus predominated and where the foundations of government reached back to the very ancient times, their own government should have the loyalty of the Hindus in full measure. That is to say the declared purpose of their government should be conciliatory to the Hindus, and to carry out that purpose Hindus should also be associated with the administration. Now Sher Shah realized instinctively that an efficient system of government was a pre-requisite for the building up of a stable state. And he built up one with a great deal of care and caution. Beginning with the village he built up step by step

a very imposing and solid structure. The structure that is the empire, thus had sound foundations, because the village was taken as the unit of government. That was absolutely on the Hindu model. And in the lower rungs of administration that is village-government, he freely associated the Hindus. But in the higher rungs he exclusively appointed the Afghans. That was followed by his son. And therefore the Hindus had no influence on the broad policies of government. Thus the policy of deliberately neglecting the Hindus and refusing them a share in the administration combined with the policy of deliberately reducing the Afghan nobility into subservience frustrated the ambitions of the Surs to set up an absolute monarchy, and cut short the period of their rule.

This brings out one important fact of Muslim rule in India. The Muslim rulers, whether they were Afghans or Turks, right from the days of the Slave dynasty up to the time of Akbar did not so much as care to understand the Hindus, who formed the subject population. They looked upon them with contempt, and refused in disdain to take interest in their customs and traditions, social and political institutions, and heritage. Though about the fourteenth century, there had evolved a common medium of thought, viz., Urdu, yet it did not go far in the way of helping the Muslims to understand their Hindu subjects. That was partly due to the extreme intolerance and enmity, that their religion enjoined towards all forms of idolatry which explains the most uncompromising and tyrannical disposition of the Muslim rulers of Delhi towards the Hindus in general, and partly to the contemptuous indifference of the Hindus towards their Muslim rulers, enjoined by their (Hindu) religion as well. But as the Muslims were the rulers, a little conciliatory or considerate attitude of theirs towards their subjects could have conquered the latter's apathy, and drawn out the best from them for the service of their rulers. Now the Slaves, the Khiljis, the Tughlaqs, the Lodis and the Surs, all refused to descend from their sovereign pedestal to conciliate the Hindus, and consequently failed to acquire an intimate knowledge of their character, traditions and institutions. They did not realize that for the efficient and stable government of a country, a thorough understanding of the customs and traditions, preferences and prejudices of the people of that country is a necessary preliminary.

AN INTEGRATED AND ORGANIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT LACKING UNDER DELHI SULTANATE

The Muslims before Sher Shah did not care to understand Hindu traditions of government. Hindu traditions of government recognized the autonomous village as the unit of government. Such villages were grouped together to form bigger administrative divisions of various denominations, at the head of which was the king. The king held his office as a sacred trust to be utilized for the welfare of the people. Ideally conceived he was a god in human form and there was hardly any limitation to his power. The sanctity of his person, the divine origin that was attributed to his office, the unlimited power that he wielded, all made for his absolutism, which no Muslim king could claim. The Muslims had failed to establish traditions of absolute monarchy as also an imperial government with solid foundations. All that they had done so far was to superimpose a system of government according to their own notions and traditions, and did not think it worth their while to have proper foundations for that imperial structure. With powerful armies they harried the land, realized tributes, and sought satisfaction of their religious and social interests. They were not concerned with anything beyond this. Consequently the immemorial institutions of Indian polity were not cared for, and functioning in isolation and neglect, they gradually lost their driving force. The Muslim rulers were not interested in keeping these institutions of local government alive for they had no direct dealings with these. They appointed local chiefs whom they held responsible for the maintenance of peace and payment of revenue. When the people were peaceful and the revenue was regularly paid, they were unconcerned about any other thing. The village as the unit of government, groups of villages forming a higher unit, and over them parganahs and Sarkars — all these administrative divisions existed, but without being integrated to an organic system of imperial government. The local chiefs, Hindu or Muslim were virtual rulers of the land. They maintained armies, realized tribute, and played the Sultan within their territory. In such a scheme of imperial government personal allegiance and power only counted. There was nothing like continuity and organic functioning of political institutions. In the entire span of the Delhi Sultanate period we therefore find the imperial

government functioning in a spasmodic manner. If the king was strong and energetic, then the central government worked well. If he was weak, the government became weak. An organic, integrated and sound administrative system did not exist, and along with it never existed those political traditions and institutions that were calculated to build up absolute monarchy in Medieval India.

As we have already noted the Delhi Sultans were at best successful leaders of armies and conquerors of vast territories. They were no spiritual leaders, capable of giving a lead to the Muslim community in matters of religion. Neither did they have any pretensions in that regard. Naturally they could not like Muhammed, claim absolute authority over the people; nor were the Muslim people inclined to tender their entire allegiance to them. In such a situation the building up of an absolute monarchy was impossible, unless they accepted the Hindu political traditions and institutions. For, according to Hindu traditions the king was a virtual god in human form, and their political institutions were hierarchical with a great deal of synthesis and cohesion in them. Unless these were adopted with whatever modifications might be suggested by prevailing conditions, absolute monarchy in India could not be founded by the Muslims. And for that purpose the participation of the Hindus in the government of the country postulating the adoption of a secular policy of government was an imperative necessity. These vital needs of Muslim rule in India were not at all comprehended by the Delhi Sultans. Only Sher Shah partially comprehended them and hence he endeavoured to build up a sound system of government, that was certainly helpful for the establishment of absolute monarchy. But it was a system bereft of life and vitality. To put life into it he needed the co-operation and active support of the Hindus. It was Akbar, who fully comprehended this supreme need of the situation, and therefore so conducted himself that the Hindus were won over, and were induced to vitalize the system of imperial government with their lifeblood. With these observations, we may pass on to a study of the Afghan administrative system.

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT UNDER THE LODIS

The government of the Lodis had been founded on the tribal and feudal ideas of the Afghans in an Indian setting. Their tribal notions

made their government purely personal, while their feudal notions made for a diffusion of governmental power. These two factors militated against centralized control and undermined royal authority to a degree that reduced the king to the status of a *primus inter pares*. The Lodi Sultan was a sovereign by sufferance. At least the first Sultan was certainly of this type. Sikandar Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi sought to deviate from the traditions of nominal sovereignty, and the latter meant to be a sovereign in fact as in name. To achieve that end he sought to limit the power and influence of the Afghan nobility. He ended in a disastrous failure and not only brought about his own ruin, but that of the Afghan empire. Thus in estimating the magnitude or effectiveness of royal authority of the Lodis we have to admit that it was severely limited by the presence and power of feudal and tribal nobility. The attitude of Bahlol Lodi towards his nobles illustrates this. We are told that "in his social meetings he never sat on a throne, and would not allow his nobles to stand ; and even during public audiences he did not occupy the throne, but seated himself upon a carpet. Whenever he wrote a farman to his nobles he addressed them as "Masnad' Ali". If at any time they were displeased with him he tried so hard to pacify them that he would himself go to their houses, ungird his sword from his waist and place it before the offended party ; nay he would sometimes even take off his turban from his head and solicit forgiveness saying "If you think me unworthy of the station I occupy, choose some one else, and bestow on me some other office."[15] Sultan Sikandar made alterations in this position, that suited his power. He treated the nobility with consideration but not on terms of equality. They were made to feel their subordination to him, while Ibrahim Lodi went so far as to crush their power to enhance his own. This attempt of Ibrahim recoiled on him, because the feudal and tribal foundations of government could not be easily undermined. It is in this endeavour of the last two Lodi Sultans to establish absolute monarchy that the influence of Indian political setting or environment comes out. That environment was one pregnant with the traditions of kingship established by Balban, Alauddin, and Muhammed bin Tughlaq. And in their endeavour to go back to them the Lodi Sultans did not only devise a technique of centralizing power that was resented by the Afghan nobility, they adopted

[15] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, pp. 436–37.

the scheme of government, which still survived under the Sayyids in a decadent form. The Lodi Afghans possessed little constructive genius in regard to political institutions, and they did not bring any with them from their own country. So they found it handy to adopt the system of government under the Sayyids, with which they were long familiar in the Punjab. Thus Lodi government, was at its best, a system into the make-up of which had entered the incongruous elements of tribal and feudal notions of the Afghans, and the traditions of autocratic rule established in the Delhi Sultanate period.

KINGSHIP UNDER THE LODIS

In trying to substantiate these conclusions we have first to say that the authority of the Afghan king was not altogether shadowy. He exercised a vast degree of control over the people and their affairs. He was, in theory as in fact, the fountain of justice and the entire land and water was held of him as gift. He was the source of honour and the protector of the faith. Most of the Lodis were almost fanatic followers of their faith, and therefore they did not merely endeavour to stamp out idolatry from the land but peremptorily forbade any deviation from the orthodox Sunni customs. Sikandar Lodi, we are told, abolished the annual procession of the spear of Salar Masud in every province of his dominions and enjoined its discontinuance. "Women also were forbidden to perform pilgrimages to tombs."[16] He put a stop to the display of taziyas during the Muharram. The worship of Sitla or the Deity of Small-pox was abandoned in his time due to the drastic steps he took against it.[17] He was so zealous a Musalman that "he utterly destroyed diverse places of worship of the infidels, and left not a vestige remaining of them. He entirely ruined the shrines of Mathura . . . and turned their principal Hindu places of worship into caravanserais and colleges. . . ."[17a] The Sultans thus exercised their authority in a manner that had immense social and religious significance and that certainly contributed to enhance their prestige. But very often in this regard the scope of their authority was limited by the sanction of the custom and usage prevailing among the people. There were occasions when the Ulema did not countenance the Sultan's interference with what

[16] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 448. [17] *Ibid.*, footnote, 2. [17a] *Ibid.*, p. 447.

was customary even among the Hindus. We are told for instance, that when Sultan Sikandar wanted to go to Kurukshetra to destroy the temple and the Hindus who had assembled there for bathing, the Malik-ul-Ulema told the king much to his chagrin "that it would be very improper for him to destroy an ancient idol-temple and that he ought not to forbid the accustomed rite of performing their ablution in the tank."[18] And the Sultan desisted from his resolve. This suggests the scope of royal authority in regard to what was customary among the people. Indeed in an age, when popular government was unknown, the royal autocrats won the loyalty and affection of the people by respecting their time-honoured traditions and ancient customs. That was specially so with the Afghan Sultans of Delhi because their rule was predominantly a personal rule. It was therefore their personal concern to keep the people satisfied in all possible ways. Of Sultan Sikandar it is said that "he was very just and courageous; his equity beheld the weak and the strong with the same eye; and he was constantly employed in balancing evidence, deciding suits, arranging the affairs of the empire and trying to render his subjects happy; he personally assisted the wretched."[19] It is rather surprising to note that he "allotted lands to the infidels, who submitted to the followers of Islam in their respective countries."[20] Further one of his commands was that "twice a year money should be distributed from the royal treasury to the deserving poor of the different cities."[21] On the occasions of festivals, Ids, and the anniversary of the Prophet's death he "released by a written command all those who were confined on account of balances of public revenue."[22] By benevolent acts like these the Sultans sought to retain the loyalty and affection of the people.

But kingship as an institution gained visibly in prestige in the time of Sikandar Lodi. Unlike the custom in Bahlol's time "every chief had his appointed post in his presence, where he always stood."[23] That was the custom in the court. Outside, in his dominion "it was the custom for every chief when he heard of the coming of a royal order, to go out two or three kos to meet its bearer; a terrace was then erected, on which the messenger placed himself, whilst the nobleman standing beneath received the farman in the most

[18] *Ibid.*, *Tarikhi Daudi*, Vol. IV, pp. 439–40.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 445. [20] *Ibid.*, p. 447. [21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 448. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 450.

respectful manner with both hands and placed it on his head and eyes; if it was to be read privately he did so, and if it was to be made known to the people it was read from the pulpit of the mosque."[24] This shows how gradually the position of the Sultan in relation to his nobility was rising above that of a *primus inter pares.* That was due to the increase in the power of the Sultan ; and this again was due to the ability of Sikandar Lodi to direct all affairs of the kingdom himself. Of him it is said that "he daily received an account of the prices of all things, and an account of what had happened in the different districts of his empire. If he perceived the slightest appearance of anything wrong, he caused instant inquiries to be made about it."[25] In regard to military operations "it was the custom of Sultan Sikandar, whenever he appointed an army to proceed on a distant expedition, to send daily two farmans to it ; one used to arrive in the morning directing the troops to march and to halt at a certain place indicated ; towards the evening another used to arrive, pointing out what they were to do where they were encamped . . . this rule was never infringed and post horses (Dak Chowki) were always kept ready at each Sarai."[26] It was this central direction that enhanced the strength and prestige of Afghan kingship under Sikandar Lodi. And if Ibrahim Lodi went a step further in effecting centralization of power and crushing the pretensions of Afghan nobility, it was because of these measures adopted by his father.

In matters of justice kings like Sikandar Lodi showed particular concern, because that was calculated to enhance, their personal power and prestige. We are told : "so great was Sultan Sikandar's justice that no man could even look sternly at another. His *Vakeel Darya Khan Lohani* was directed to remain all day, until the first watch of the night on the seat of justice ; the Qazi with twelve of the Ulema were always present within the king's own palace. All cases brought before the court of law were tried before these twelve wise men, who decided them and wrote decisions of the nature of which the Sultan received immediate information."[27] Even when the Sultan was out riding, and an oppressed person demanded justice he immediately took steps to give him redress.[28] Owing to such vigilance and readiness to direct and control, kingship became firmly

[24] *Ibid., Tarikhi Daudi,* Vol. IV, p. 448.
[25] *Ibid.,* p. 450. [26] *Ibid.,* p. 466.
[27] *Ibid., Tarikhi Daudi,* Vol. IV, p. 454. [28] *Ibid.,* p. 448.

established and Bahlol's notions of it were gradually transformed. The effect was that Ibrahim Lodi could openly say that "kings have no relations or clans, and that all men and clans were his servants."[29] Indeed the relation between the king and his nobility changed so much in Ibrahim's time that "the proud Afghan nobles who claimed equality with Bahlol Lodi had to stand before the imperial throne with their hands folded."[30] In an atmosphere like this, monarchy was certainly tending to be absolute, when suddenly the crash came and the Lodis fell from power.

MINISTERS OF THE SAYYIDS AND THE LODIS

That was due to the incongruous elements in their system of government, which rendered it weak and unbalanced. For, in its constitution it had the frame of government of the Delhi Sultanate period, worked with the tribal and feudal spirit of the Afghans. In a description of the administrative organization in vogue under the Lodi Afghans, we have therefore to take note of what obtained under the Sayyids. And when we have pieced together Sayyid and Lodi elements we will have a complete picture of government.

Now the Sayyid *roi faineant* was helped by a number of superior officials whom we may, following the tradition of the times, call ministers. The Wazārat was there; and the Wazir was a very important and influential noble. Under the Sayyids we hear of Malik ush Sharq, Malik Tuhfa, Malik Sikandar, and Malik-ush-Sharq Sarwar appointed as Wazir at different times.[31] The Wazir was assisted by the Diwan in charge of the office of Diwan-i-Ashraf,[32] while sometimes the two offices were united in the same person, because of the allied nature of their work. There were also the Ariz-i-Mamālik (muster-master general) and Dabir[33] (secretary),—two different officers, whose function was chiefly in connection with the military organization, in contrast to the Wazir and the Diwan who were connected with the civil government of the kingdom. There is also mention of the keeper of elephants[34] and Hajib (chamberlain)[35] under the Sayyids. But these offices were only a shadow

[29] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 89.
[30] *Ibid.* [31] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, pp. 46, 53, 58, 78.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 78. [33] *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 47. [35] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

of the past, since under the Sayyids the power and prestige of sovereignty had departed. Khizr Khan, the founder of the dynasty issued coins in the name of the Tughlaqs, recited the Khutba in the name of the Mughals, and himself assumed the title of Rayati Ala. That was the measure of his power. His son ceased to do that, but that did not mean any substantial transformation of his status. Indeed the power and prestige went on diminishing from reign to reign, till at last Bahlol Lodi usurped the throne in 1451.

WAZIR, DIWAN AND VAKIL

As for the Lodi monarch he was assisted by a number of ministers, of whom the Wazir was certainly the most important. In the early years of his kingship Bahlol had Hamid Khan as his Wazir,[36] while the Wazir of Sikandar Lodi was one Mian Bhury.[37] The Wazir was the final authority in revenue matters, in the direction and control of which he was assisted by his Diwan.[38] The Diwan was head of the office that maintained records of the accounts, the various kinds of endowments and jagirs.[39] When there was any complaint or revenue suit he, assisted by the Ulema, decided it. Below the Wazir or perhaps exercising co-ordinate authority was the Vakil, who was the head of justice in the kingdom. A noble of the first rank and power was generally in charge of this office. In the time of Sikandar Lodi, Darya Khan Lohani who became the governor of Bihar later on, was the Vakeel and as such "was directed to remain all day, until the first watch of the night on the seat of justice."[40] He was assisted in the discharge of his duties by the Qazi and twelve Ulemas, who "were always present within the king's own palace."[41] These Ulemas assisted the Diwan in revenue suits, or the Qazi and the Vakil in the civil and criminal suits. Besides, they were useful in deciding matters arising out of religious controversy, apostacy, or any other moral and religious lapses.

MUKHTĀR-I-MUTLAQ, BAKSHI, HAJIB AND OTHERS

There appears to have been another important official, referred to as the Mukhtār-i-Mutlaq, who "had the general direction of all

[36] Ferista, Vol. I, p. 550 ; Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 436.
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[38] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 454.
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affairs in the reign of Sikandar, bestowed districts and charitable gifts upon the learned and religious to an extent that had never been known in former reigns."[42] He was also a noble of the first rank and corresponded to the chief Sadr of the Mughal times. Another of the rank of chief nobles was the Bakshi[43] who held charge of the Muster-roll of the army and made payments to the army. He combined in him the two offices of the paymaster general and muster-master general. He generally accompanied the king on military expeditions. There seems to have been a number of lords of the bed chamber or chamberlains (Hajib), who again belonged to the highest rank among the nobles. In the reign of Sikandar nine of the forty-four prominent nobles were at different times, lords of the bed chamber.[44] Besides these ministers there might have been a few others, like the master of the household and master of ceremonies, keeper of elephants, and Dabir, whose names are not mentioned.

CHARACTER OF LODI GOVERNMENT

But in a government that was predominantly military in character there could not have been many civil offices. For, one unique feature of the Lodi government was that prominent nobles were closely associated with the king and consulted in every matter of importance. These, rather than the ministers alone, with the king meant the government. Ferista tells us that Bahlol Lodi had about him thirty-six "chiefs of distinction"[45] while Sikandar Lodi had forty-four "officers of distinction."[46] These were generally connected with him by blood or belonged to the same tribe. In the time of Sultan Bahlol and Sikandar the Lodis and the Farmulis were the most favoured tribes and the Luhanis and Sarwanis came next to them in preference. The Surs and the Niyazis were, as far as possible, excluded from high offices, because "the former were believed to be too ambitious and the latter utterly faithless."[47] It was indeed a small oligarchy that governed the kingdom, in the sense that all these were virtually supreme in their own fiefs which they ruled like the Sultan, and helped the Sultan uphold his dignity and power, as also the integrity of his kingdom. Most of these tribal chiefs held

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 450. [43] *Ibid.*, p. 457. [44] Ferista, Vol. I, p. 566.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 549. [46] *Ibid.*, p. 564.
[47] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 85.

offices of importance, and were ministers of state ; but that did not mean that the rest of the prominent nobles were neglected. Indeed Lodi kingship as Dr. Tripathi rightly says, was a hegemony, and the king acting in consultation with the chief of the nobility meant the central government.

TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS UNDER THE LODIS

In a scheme of government like this, in a kingdom half of which had been given away to one tribe alone and the other half to all others in jagirs, there could not be genuine political divisions comprising definite territorial areas under graded officers. But the Afghans were not required to devise such political or administrative divisions to facilitate the work of government. They found these already existing, ever since the days of the Delhi Sultanate and they had simply to take them over. Hence we hear of territorial divisions like Sarkars[48] and Parganas[49] and officers like governors or Naibs[50] under the Lodis. But it is difficult to ascertain the exact dimensions of each of these divisions as also the function of the governors or Naibs. There is frequent mention of governors, like Tatar Khan Lodi of Lahore,[51] Khan Jahan Qarmali of Bayana, Khawass Khan of Delhi, Safdar Khan of Agra, a dependency of Bayana, Alam Khan of Mewat, Khan Khana Lohani of Rapri and so on.[52] Again in Ferista's list of the forty-four "officers of distinction" we read of Jalal Khan Lodi as the Naib of Kalpi, Ahmad Khan Lodi as the Naib of Etawa, Hussain Khan Farmuli as the Naib of Saharan and Tatar Khan as the governor of Tijara.[53] It has been suggested that Naib corresponded to lieutenant governor and as such ranked below a governor.[54] Naib only means a deputy ; and as we have explained in Chapter II, the provincial governors under the Delhi Sultanate bore the designation of Naib, that is deputy of the Sultan. We can therefore maintain that Naib simply meant a deputy that is of the king, who was really the governor of some territory and certainly of a Sarkar. As we shall observe later, this designation of Naib, was transformed into Nawab, during the decadent days of the Mughal empire.

[48] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 468.
[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 453, 454.
[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 466, 468.
[51] *C.H.I.*, Vol. III, p. 231.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 241.
[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 510–511.
[54] Ferista, Vol. I, p. 565 footnote.

JAGIRS AND MANSABS UNDER THE LODIS

As for the gradation and remuneration of the officials, whether they be governors, ministers, or subordinate officers, it is difficult to say anything definitely. Almost every officer received a jagir or fief, and not cash salaries. In the reign of Khizr Khan the historian tells us "the state officials were confirmed in the parganas, villages and iktas, which they had held in the reign of Sultan Mahmud."[55] Similarly when Mubarak Shah succeeded Khizr Khan the Amir and Maliks, the Imams, Saiyids and Qazis and every one else who held appointments and emoluments in the later reign were confirmed in their iktas, parganas, villages (Dih), parcels of ground (Khati) and allotments (Mahdud) by the new sovereign."[56] He went further and made additional grants to them. Thus the practice of granting jagirs extensively was already well established, and the Lodi Afghans naturally found it easy and profitable to conform to it. When they ruled over the country, they granted vast jagirs to their own kinsmen ; and as we have already noted, a king like Sultan Sikandar did not hesitate to grant lands to the infidels if they submitted to the Muslim chiefs. But alongside the practice of granting jagirs to all officials and the order of Sultan Sikandar "that each jagirdar should possess all the revenues of his tenure with the exception of those proceeding from imlak and wazaif,"[57] we hear of Mansabs and gradation of the Mansabs. Of Sikandar Lodi "Niamatulla (MS. p. 95) informs us that on his accession he gave a splendid festival at which he presented fifty-three nobles each with a horse and an honorary dress conferring upon them exalted Mansabs and rich jagirs."[58] Ahmad Yadgar (MS. p. 103) makes mention of one Bhikan Khan who was a Haft-Hazari,[59] which certainly suggests that there were gradations of the Mansabdars according to the number of men they commanded, like what existed in the time of Akbar and known as the Mansabdari system. But our information on this point is so meagre that it is difficult to state anything definitely. Certain it is, however, that the system of Mansabs was not absolutely unknown in the country. We have already observed how in the Bahmani

[55] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 47.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 54. [57] *Ibid.*, pp. 447–48.
[58] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV., p. 445 (Makhzani Afghana), footnote 1.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 472, footnote 1.

empire a system of regular Mansabs and Mansabdars was actually in vogue. With these observations we may pass on to a study of the governmental system devised by Sher Shah with reference to the new ideology that actuated that great ruler.

CENTRALIZED ADMINISTRATION OF SHER SHAH

Realizing full well that the separatist tendencies of the Afghans had been so accentuated by lavish distribution of jagirs, preferential treatment of the nobility, and lack of central control, that they could not be eradicated by the efforts of Sikandar Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi, Sher Shah made up his mind to stop, as far as possible, the system of jagirs, to insist upon a just and impartial treatment of all his subjects consistent with expediency, and to effect intensive centralization of government in his own hands. These three were the basic principles of his government, his means to realize that new ideal of absolute kingship, which when established, he thought, would remedy the defects in the Afghan polity, and make it enduring. That is why "Sher Shah attended to every business concerning the administration of the kingdom, and the revenues, whether great or small, in his own person."[60] His ideal was, as he is said to have expressed it, that the great should always be active and "they should not consider . . . the affairs and business of the kingdom small or petty, and should place no undue reliance on their ministers. The corruption of ministers of contemporary princes was the means of my acquiring the worldly kingdom I possess."[61] Hence it is that Sher Shah reduced his ministers to the position of secretaries, who were not required to initiate policies or introduce schemes of reform but were only entrusted with the routine work of their departments. Consequently he did not appoint a Wazir, to supervise the revenue and civil administration in general. There is no mention of the Diwan and other ministers, which only points to the inference that possibly there were ministers to carry on the work of administration, but their part was so insignificant in comparison with that of Sher Shah, that they have been completely ignored by the historians. Indeed, that was so. Sher Shah's genius and personality dominated the entire government. It was a one-man rule. His ideal was centralization, and for that purpose he attended to the details of administration, as far as possible, besides laying down the broad principles

[60] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, *Tarikhi Sher Shahi*, p. 410. [61] *Ibid.*, p. 411.

or policies of government. Prof. Qanungo describing the variety of work that Sher Shah took upon himself says that "the duties of Sadr he took upon himself; he dictated the farmans which the Munshis took down, and he despatched — of course with the assistance of clerks — the vast amount of correspondence with the foreign courts and his own nobles. He was his own chancellor of the exchequer, and every day inspected and took account of the treasure which came from all parts of the kingdom."[62] His ministry thus sank into insignificance, and therefore we will take note of what Sher Shah actually accomplished himself.

While it is difficult to credit Sher Shah with any great originality in administrative arrangements, it is hardly fair to say that "like the early Turks and the Lodis, Sher Shah had no definite ideas about provincial organization."[63] In justification of this remark Dr. Tripathi says that "while on the one side there were large provinces as Malwa and the Punjab on the other there were small divisions into which the whole country from Delhi to Bihar was divided."[64] This is not wholly correct. The fact is that Malwa and the Punjab did not constitute as big provinces or governorships as before or after Sher Shah's time. When Sher Shah attempted the conquest of Malwa, it had been divided into four parts each under an independent ruler. Mallu Khan ruled over Mandu, Ujjain, Sarangpur and Ranthambor; Sikandar Khan Miana over Sewas and Hindia; Puran Mal, the regent of Raja Pratap Shah over Chanderi and Raisin; and Bhopal over Bijagarh and Tamha.[65] What Sher Shah did after conquest was to bestow on Shujaat Khan Ujjain, Mandu, Sarangpur and Mansur; on his own son Adil Khan Ranthambor; on Shamskhan, Bihar Khan, and Mir Khan, the country of Sewas and Hindia; and on Shahbaz Khan Sarwani the fort of Raisin.[66] So we cannot conclude that Shujaat Khan held a big governorship, corresponding to the entire province of Malwa. If at all, he held only the country round about Mandu with a big military command and that was because he had to guard the frontier.

Similarly in regard to the Punjab "Haibat Khan Niazi, to whom the title of Azam Humayun had been granted, had one force

[62] Qanungo, *Sher Shah*, p. 360.
[63] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 304.
[64] *Ibid.* [65] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 391.
[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 395, 397 & 403.

consisting of 30,000 horsemen in the neighbourhood of the fort of Rohtas . . . and held in check the country of Kashmere and of the Gakkars. Dibalpur (Dipalpur) and Multan were committed to Fateh Jang Khan and in that fort much treasure was stored ; and in the fort of Milwat . . . . was stationed Hamid Khan Kakar who held such firm possession of the Nagarkot, Jwala, Didhawal and Jammu hills, in fact of the whole country that no man dared to breathe in opposition to him ; and he collected the revenue by measurement of land from the hill people. The Sarkar of Sirhind was given in jagir to Masnad-i-Ali Khawas Khan. . . . And as the headmen and cultivators of the Sarkar of Sambhal had fled from the oppression of Nasir Khan, Sher Shah sent there Masnad-i-Ali Isa Khan . . . ."[67] Thus it will be seen that even the Punjab was cut up into slices and given in charge of several influential nobles. Haibat Khan was really the warden of the North-Western frontier and nominally the governor of the Punjab with Fateh Jang Khan attached to him.[68] Dr. Tripathi's conclusion that there were large provinces and governorships corresponding to the Punjab and Malwa in their modern geographical extent cannot be proved because under Sher Shah Sarkar was the biggest administrative area,[69] and we hear at least of the Sarkar of Sewas in Malwa, and Sarkars of Sambhal and Sirhind in the Punjab,[70] each under its own ruler or governor.

GOVERNORSHIPS UNDER SHER SHAH

And like the Punjab and Malwa the rest of the empire was perhaps divided into Sarkars and Parganas. We hear, for example, of the Sarkars of Delhi, Lucknow, Kalpi and Kanauj and of Parganas like Malkonsah, Hatkant, Gola and Tilhar.[71] The administrative arrangements that Sher Shah made consisted of a number of officials in charge of the Sarkar, and a number of subordinate officials in charge of the Pargana. There were in the Sarkar a chief Shiqdar, and a chief Munsif to "watch the conduct of both of the Amils and the people ; that the Amils should not oppress or injure the people, or embezzle king's revenue ; and if any quarrels arose among the king's amils regarding the boundaries of the parganas they were to settle it."[72] The Amils were in charge of revenue collection of the

[67] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 415. [68] *Ibid.*, p. 398. [69] *Ibid.*, p. 395.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 415. [71] *Ibid.*, pp. 415–17. [72] *Ibid.*, p. 414.

parganas; and they had, besides, their responsibility to the chief Shiqdar and chief Munsif, to send reports, most probably of their collections and the condition of their districts to the emperor direct.[73]

AMILS, SHIQDARS, MUNSIFS, ETC.

The office of the Amil seems to have been one of very great profit and influence, so that Sher Shah is reported to have remarked that "there is no such income and advantage in other employments as in the government of a district."[74] Amildari most probably corresponded to the modern collectorship of an Indian district, and Sher Shah is said to have made it a rule that they must be changed every two years.[75] In the Pargana there were, in addition to an Amil "a Shikkdar, a Munsif, a Treasurer, a Persian writer and a Hinduwi writer." The Shiqdar looked after the revenue collection, punished all lawlessness or contumacy in connection with revenue collection, maintained peace and order in general and thus performed the police functions within his jurisdiction. The Munsif was "appointed for examining the brands in the armies on the frontiers" and it was before him that "at the branding time every man came forward and showed his horse and rendered his account."[76] The Amil after collecting royal revenue handed it over to the treasurer or Fotahdar while the two Karkuns assisted the treasurer and the Munsif in keeping accounts of the revenue collections and records of the branding in the army and accounts rendered by each soldier.

MUNSIFS EXAMINE BRANDING IN THE ARMY

It may be pointed out in this connection that a great deal of confusion has been created by writers like Abbas Khan, who talk of the existence of the chief Munsif in a Sarkar but not of the Munsifs in the Parganas without whom it would be absurd to speak of a chief Munsif. And Prof. Qanungo and Dr. Tripathi have unhesitatingly accepted it. The point is cleared by Wakiat-i-Mushtaki, which mentions that "Munsifs were appointed for examining the brands in the armies on the frontiers."[77] From the same source we

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 413.
[74] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 414.
[75] *Ibid.*
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 551.
[77] *Ibid.*

have it that there were armies not merely on the frontiers but at all strategic points in the country. Sher Shah, it says, "kept an army in the upper country . . . one army in Bengal, one at Rohtas, one in Malwa, one at the fort of Chitor, one in Khajwara, one in the country of Dhandhera, one in Nagore and Judhpur, one in the fort of Ranthambor and Bajwara. No fort in the country was without a garrison or a commandant."[78] Since the whole country was garrisoned, in most of the Parganas there must have been Munsifs. And that is why the author says that in Parganas "at the branding time every man came forward and showed his horse and rendered his account, to the Munsif."[79] Dr. Tripathi has not, most probably, noticed this important piece of information supplied by the Wakiat, and Prof. Qanungo has committed an unpardonable blunder in spinning out an elaborate but erroneous account of the duties of the chief Munsif, without even pausing to think how there could be a chief Munsif if there were no Munsifs subordinate to him.[80]

PARGANAS IN SHER SHAH'S DOMINION

Similarly with regard to the number of Parganas in Sher Shah's dominion, authors from Abbas Khan onwards have written in a manner that serves more to confuse than to clarify ideas about them. Prof. Qanungo discusses Elliot's and Abbas Khan's statements and comes to the conclusion that there were 113,000 villages, which Abbas Khan by mistake called Parganas.[81] Dr. Tripathi rightly criticises Prof. Qanungo's conclusion as absurd, because that would mean that Sher Shah had 565,000 officials and 226,000 semi-officials to manage the affairs of these 113,000 villages.[82] It, however, seems more reasonable to agree with Wakiat-i-Mushtaki when it says that "the whole of the territories in his (Sher Shah's) possession contained 13,000 Parganas."[83] Assuming that as the approximately correct figure we can maintain that there were 65,000 officials in charge of the Parganas. That was the pivot of Sher Shah's imperial administration. For, below these Parganas there were villages, over each of which there were two semi-officials, viz.

[78] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 551.
[79] *Ibid.*
[80] Qanungo, *Sher Shah*, p. 356.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 351.
[82] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 352.
[83] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 551.

the Muqāddam and the Patwari. Above the Parganas there were Sarkars, over which were two very high officials called the Shiqdār-i-Shiqdārān, and Munsif-i-Munsifān. But these were not all the officials in a Sarkar or in a Pargana.

ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UP OF THE SARKAR AND THE PARGANA

In addition to these we hear of the Amir and Faujdar in a Sarkar, and the Qanungo in a pargana. As for instance Bengal, which Sher Shah had divided into parts, had been placed in charge of Qazi Fazilat, who was the "Amir of that whole kingdom."[84] The Sarkar of Delhi was under Mian Ahmad Khan Sarwani, who was its Amir and "Adil Khan and Hatim Khan, Shikkdar and Faujdar."[85] The mention of the Faujdar alongside the Shiqdar and Amir, suggests that while the Faujdar commanded the military contingent stationed at the headquarters of a Sarkar, the Shiqdar, that is the chief Shiqdar watched the conduct both of the Amils and the people, protected the people from the oppression of the Amils, prevented possibilities of embezzlement of royal revenue, settled all boundary disputes, suppressed lawlessness and performed police functions in general; and the Amir acted as the governor of the Sarkar in which capacity he exercised a general control over all the officials in a Sarkar and was ultimately responsible for its prosperity and good government. For, Sher Shah is said to have been so pleased with the performance of Ahmad Khan Sarwani, in charge of the Sarkar of Delhi and Isa Khan Sarwani in charge of the Sarkar of Sambhal, that he once remarked "I have no cause for anxiety from the Sarkar of Delhi to the Sarkar of Lucknow."[86] This specific reference to Ahmad Khan Sarwani who was the Amir of Delhi Sarkar, in exclusion of Adil Khan who was the Shiqdar, and Hatim Khan who was the Faujdar of Delhi Sarkar, brings out the full significance of his office. In his early career Shujaat Khan was a Faujdar in the country of Bihar and Rohtas.[87] Haji Khan and Junaid Khan were Faujdars of the country comprising Mandu, Ujjain and Sarangpore, for some time when Shujaat Khan had been disgraced.[88] This Haji Khan later held "the command of 12,000 horse"— a fact which brings out the real status of the Faujdar. He was virtually the

[84] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 417. [85] *Ibid.*, p. 415. [86] *Ibid.*, p. 416.
[87] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 382. [88] *Ibid.*, p. 395.

colleague of the Amir or the governor of the Sarkar, though in status he ranked below him. The chief Munsif whose duty was to examine branding in the army, was, therefore an important colleague of the Faujdar.

AN ORGANIC AND BALANCED ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY IN THE SARKAR AND THE PARGANA

In the Parganas there were Qanungos, who existed long before Sher Shah, but whose importance diminished at the time of Sher Shah. "Before his time it was not the custom to measure the land, but there was a Qanungo in every Pargana, from whom was ascertained the present, past and probable future state of the Pargana."[89] Therefore, when Sher Shah determined upon survey and assessment of the land for fixing land revenue their importance visibly declined. Sher Shah was very particular about settling terms with the cultivators direct, though he could not dispense with the middlemen, that is the Muqaddams for the realization of revenues. For, we are told that even though "he ordered his governors to measure the land every harvest, to collect the revenue according to the measurement and in proportion to the produce" he had also to order that half a share had to be given to the Muqaddam.[90]

From the foregoing we may conclude that Sher Shah did not maintain big provincial organizations; that his Sarkars were the biggest administrative areas with Parganas, and Sarkars were directly managed by his own officials who were properly graded while the villages were managed by semi-official agencies. The officials in the Sarkar, viz. the chief Shiqdar, Faujdar and the chief Munsif were co-ordinate authorities, only subordinate to the Amir or governor, who was directly responsible to the emperor for the good government in the Sarkar. The chief Munsif supervised the work of the Munsifs and the chief Shiqdar of the Shiqdars in the Pargana, and these two together with the Amils, as we have already observed came in direct touch with the emperor. The Munsif's work was sometimes personally supervised by the emperor who "occasionally made visits to different parts for the purpose."[91] The Faujdar, though nominally under the Amir, since he was posted

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 414. [90] *Ibid.*, Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi, p. 413.
[91] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, Wakiat-i-Mushtaki, p. 551.

within his jurisdiction and expected to help him, had to render accounts and produce his horses properly branded before the chief Munsif in the Sarkar, just as the Shiqdars, Amils and the rest of the Pargana officials had to do the same before the Munsif. Thus it is that Sher Shah imposed a dual control on his officials stationed in the Sarkar and the Pargana and at the same time followed the principle of checks and balances in organizing his administrative machinery. The Sarkar officials were each directly responsible to him though locally to the Amir; and though there were supervising officers, he himself watched the work of the Amil and Munsif in the Pargana. Besides, owing to their direct access to the emperor these were colleagues and thus checks on one another. Sher Shah thus maintained the balance of his scheme of government and there was considerable originality in this device. He had pieced together the various elements so coherently that there arose an organic system of administration in the place of the wrecks and ruins of a decadent administrative machinery. Islam Shah scrupulously followed his father's policy and made no change in the administrative organization.

"In the days of Sher Shah and Islam Shah, the Mukaddams used to protect the limits of their own villages."[92] "Sher Shah had strictly impressed on his Amils (tax collectors) and Amirs (governors) that if a theft or robbery occurred within their limits, and the perpetrators were not discovered then they should arrest the Muqaddams of the surrounding villages and compel them to make it good."[93] From this it follows that in the villages the Muqaddams were held responsible for the peace and tranquillity. To facilitate the task of good government he built roads extensively. One ran from Gaur to the confines of Oudh, another from Benares to Burhanpur, a third one from Agra to Jodhpur and a fourth one from Bayana to Jaunpur on one side and to Ajmer on the other. These roads certainly fulfilled strategic requirements by facilitating the quick movement of troops, as also opened out the countryside, that made detection of crime and control of government easy.

MANSABDARI AND JAGIR SYSTEM

Sher Shah's government did not contain elements of innovation so much as of discipline and efficiency. The whole scheme of

[92] *Ibid.*, 421. [93] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 420.

government appears to have been conceived on military lines. Every employee of the government held a Mansab, that is, military rank, and accordingly got his remuneration. These Mansabs were graded. On one occasion Sher Shah showed his appreciation of the loyalty and ability of Haji Khan by bestowing "on him the command of 12,000 horse."[94] Isa Khan who was in charge of the Sarkar of Sambhal was ordered "to maintain five thousand horse."[95] Shujaat Khan is described as the lord of ten thousand cavalry.[96] He even ordered that persons appointed in the harem establishment should hold military ranks so that they received their salaries after proving that their horses had been branded.[97] It is difficult to maintain that he paid all his employees cash salaries, for we have numerous instances of jagirs being given to big and small officers. When appointing Isa Khan to the government of Sambhal, Sher Shah is reported to have said "I have given to you the Parganas of Kant, Gola and Tilhar for your family and your old horsemen."[98] Shujaat Khan had "Ujjain, Mandu, Sarangpur and Mansur in Jagir."[99] Even the soldiers used to receive Jagirs.[100] We are told how Shujaat Khan induced by his advisers resumed a part of the Jagirs meant for his soldiers and came to grief on that account. Very often the Mansabdars were also paid monthly salaries.[101] He tried to maintain efficiency by forcing the Mansabdars to have their horses branded. "Even in the Harem establishment he gave salaries to no one unless his horses were branded insomuch that even a sweeper caused the stamp to be applied."[102] Maintaining of descriptive rolls of the men and horses was strictly enforced. These facts point to the conclusion that all the officers whether they were employed in the royal household or royal domain in charge of different duties held various military ranks. It is possible that the officers and government employees, stationed in the far-off or outlying places and divisions of the empire held Jagirs whether they be Amirs, Fards (privates) or Girohdars (officers). And though Islam Shah is said to have "resumed all the Jagirs in the provinces of his government and allowed their holders a stipend in money from his treasury instead"

[94] *Ibid.*, p. 396.
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 384.
[96] *Ibid.* ,p. 426.
[97] *Ibid.*, p. 412, Footnote 1.
[98] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 415.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 396.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 425.
[101] *Ibid.*, 413.
[102] *Ibid.*, p. 412, footnote, Wakiati Mushtaki M.S., p. 99.

yet we are also told by the author of Wakiat that "to those who had received stipends during the reign of Sher Shah he gave lands and Parganas."[103] The inference that is forced upon us therefore is, that the Jagir system prevailed during the reigns of Sher Shah and Islam Shah. And to see whether the government employees, that is those who held Mansabs maintained the number of horses indicated by their ranks, properly equipped and branded, and rendered regular accounts of their Jagir, the Munsifs had been appointed in the Parganas and chief Munsifs in the Sarkars. They had to examine the horses and the number of soldiers maintained by the Amirs and Faujdars down to the lowest employee, and thus they were a veritable check on the irresponsibility of the Mansabdar and instrumental in ensuring discipline and efficiency in the army. This task of the Munsifs was further facilitated by the occasional visits of the emperor himself.

MILITARY CHARACTER OF GOVERNMENT

The military character of his government is brought out by the fact that the whole country was under, as it were, an army of occupation. It had been most carefully garrisoned, with special precaution taken to station the strongest detachments on the frontiers and places of strategic importance. We are told that Haibat Khan Niazi with a contingent of 30,000 troops controlled the Gakkar country and the Kabul road; Fateh Jang Khan from Dipalpur and Multan controlled Upper Sind and Qandahar road; Hamid Khan from the fort of Milwat controlled the country round about Nagarkot, Jammu hills and Kashmere road; Khawas Khan and Isa Khan Niazi controlled Rajputana from Jodhpur, Ajmer, and Nagor; Shujaat Khan with 10,000 horse and 7,000 matchlockmen controlled Malwa; and besides these important commands Gwalior had a division with 1,000 matchlockmen; Biana another with 500 matchlockmen; Ranthambor one cavalry division and 1,600 matchlockmen; Chitor 3,000 matchlockmen; Raisin one cavalry detachment and 1,000 matchlockmen; Chunar, one cavalry detachment and 1,000 matchlockmen; Rohtas 10,000 matchlockmen; and one cavalry detachment each in Bengal, Kalpi, Lucknow and Dhunderah.[104] This account may be accepted with the exception

[103] *Ibid.*, pp. 479-80. [104] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 416-17.

that the number of matchlockmen seems to be exaggerated and cannot be correct. Tarikhi-i-Sher Shahi mentions that Sher Shah "always kept 150,000 horse and 25,000 footmen either armed with matchlocks or bows, present with him."[105] Whenever there were any symptoms of disaffection within his dominion he at once ordered an army to be stationed there and to coerce the disaffected into submission. It is said that "when the rebellion and disobedience of the Zamindars who live in the parts about the bank of the rivers Jumna and Chambal became known to Sher Shah, he brought 12,000 horsemen from the Sirhind Sarkar and quartered them in the Pargana of Hat-Kant and that neighbourhood and they repressed the Zamindars and cultivators of those parts."[106] When again the people were disaffected in the Sarkars of Sambhal and Kanauj similar measures were taken against them.[107] Indeed it was this military occupation of the country that was responsible for the peace and order in the country. Islam Shah continued this policy and well-neigh succeeded in crushing the pretensions of the Afghan nobility.

LAND ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION FOR REVENUE

Sher Shah appears to have certainly known that the essential conditions of a stable and strong monarchy were an efficient army and sound finances. He therefore took special care to infuse efficiency into the system of revenue administration. In regard to the collection of land revenue, he introduced the schedule of the crop-rates for assessment. "The good, the middling, and the poor produce from a Bigha of all the leading crops of each of the two seasons were taken into consideration. By adding the good, the middling, and poor produce of a Bigha and dividing the total by three an average of the produce of a Bigha was arrived at. One-third of this average was fixed as the rate of assessment by the government."[108] This was supplemented by the system of measurement of the land, which was carried out wherever it was possible without arousing any strong opposition. "Ahmad Khan was entrusted with the task of measuring the cultivated and uncultivated (Mazrua ra ghair mazrua) lands. This he did with the help of the Brahmans (Hindus). On the

[105] *Ibid.*, p. 415. [106] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 416. [107] *Ibid.*, pp. 415–16.
[108] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 299.

basis of this survey a register was prepared in which were entered the rights of owners and the measurement of all cultivated pieces of land and their different classes."[109] This method of systematic survey and assessment of land revenue combined with the control of the Amils and Shiqdars, and the whole system closely supervised by the emperor himself, assured sound finances for the state and a fair deal to the peasant.

JUSTICE UNDER SHER SHAH

Almost all the Muslim rulers of medieval India cherished notions of the value of justice in the government of the state. But none of them had any definite notions as to how to organize justice. We are told that Sher Shah often observed: "justice is the most excellent of religious rites and it is approved alike by the kings of infidels and of the faithful."[110] We are further told by Abbas Khan that "he appointed courts of justice in every place,"[111] but the kings and their people of those days regarded that dispensation of justice was, like that of charities, a matter of purely personal concern of the king. There were at places judges and law courts no doubt, but there was nothing like a system of judiciary throughout the period. And Sher Shah can claim no credit on this score. His crude sense of justice is brought out by the anecdote narrated in Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh. Prince Adil Khan, it is said, threw a birā of pān (betel leaf prepared for chewing) to the wife of a man in Agra while she was undressed for bathing. This amorous suggestion was resented by the lady, and her husband complained to Sher Shah, who summoned the prince and ordered that man to throw a birā of pān to the prince's wife, while she was undressed and preparing for bath. While this hardly shows any sense of justice it certainly suggests that often in matters of justice the word of the ruler was accepted as law. We are only told that there were Mir-i-Adls and Qazis for trying civil cases.[112]

BENEFICENT ACTIVITIES

Sher Shah and Islam Shah sought to mitigate the military character of their rule, by a great deal of beneficent activities

[109] *Ibid.*, p. 301.
[110] Elliot and Dowson, *Tarikhi Sher Shahi*, Vol. IV, p. 411.
[111] *Ibid.*, p. 417. [112] *Tarikhi Daudi, M.S.* p. 204.

calculated to win the loyalty of the people. Sher Shah, we have observed, constructed roads to connect the various parts of his empire that facilitated movements of the armies, travelling and commerce. Further "for the convenience in travelling of poor travellers, on every road at a distance of two kos, he made a Sarai. . . . Altogether he built 1,700 Sarais on various roads; and in every Sarai he had placed pots full of water that anyone may drink; and in every Sarai he settled Brahmans for the entertainment of Hindus, to provide hot and cold water and beds and food, and grain for their horses; and it was a rule in these Sarais, that whoever entered them received provision suitable to his rank from government."[113]

Though it is possible to believe that Sher Shah built 1,700 Sarais for the convenience of travellers it is not possible to believe that he made such splendid arrangements for the comfort of common Hindu travellers and their beasts of burden. What seems to be true is that in these Sarais officers of government on tour and transfer, generally halted, and it is these who received from government food, bed, etc. suitable to their rank. We cannot accept that such provisions were made for common and indigent people travelling from place to place. This conclusion seems to be corroborated by the fact that Islam Shah in order to mitigate the tedium of the poor travellers added to the number of Sarais and directed that "arrangements for the giving of alms should be made at each of the Sarais" instead of in the royal camp as was the practice in the time of his father. The idea was that indigent travellers should receive a daily pittance in order that they might be contented and at ease.[114]

FEUDAL TRADITIONS OF THE AFGHANS REVIVE

In spite of the centralization of power effected by Sher Shah and Islam Shah, their great military strength and enormous personal prestige approximating to absolute supremacy, monarchy still lacked its proper institutional basis. The Afghans had not relished centralization and much less, royal supremacy. And added to this the law of primogeniture had no meaning for the Afghans. After the death of Sher Shah the eldest son Adil Khan was passed over and the second son Jalal Khan was raised to the throne by a powerful party of nobles. His supporters declared that "sovereignty was nothing

[113] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 418. [114] *Ibid.*, pp. 479–80.

but a magnificent present *bestowed by the grandees of the empire on any individual they chose*, which turn had now fallen to his lot." Here we find the Afghan notions of monarchy reviving again at a very opportune moment. Sher Shah would have treated the claim with unmixed contempt, and so did Islam Shah, the moment he felt his strength, and crushed all opposition. But nevertheless, the Afghans could not forget their tribal traditions and when after the death of Islam Shah, Muhammed Shah Adil murdered his minor son and successor, and seized the throne for himself, it was not regarded as a crime by the Afghan nobility. They acquiesced in the accomplished fact, notwithstanding the dastardly nature of the crime and despicable character of the new Sultan.

Further the feudal tendencies of the Afghans found ample scope when they noticed that the new king was incapable. Without the strength and ability of Islam Shah, he set about enforcing Islam Shah's policy of crushing the pretensions of Afghan nobles. The result was a serious explosion, which rent the empire into shreds. In the Punjab Sikandar Shah Sur, in the Doab and Central Hindustan Ibrahim Shah Sur, and in Bengal Muhammed Shah Sur, assumed independence and proclaimed themselves kings. Muhammed Shah Adil was hard put to it to curb their ambition. And when the country was thus torn with disaffection and broken up into four divisions Humayun, eager to recover his lost empire of Hindustan, invaded from Kabul and took possession of the Punjab and Delhi by the end of 1555. Thus in the words of Dr. Tripathi "the history of the first and second Afghan empire was that of a conflict between the principle of kingship and the ideal of Afghan tribal leadership. In a duel between the king and the nobles the former had no doubt gained some points, but the issues were not fought out in both cases when the Chaghtai invasion cut short the fight and eventually the Afghan power was lost. But the principles were carried over to the Mughals who were called upon to settle it."[115] How far they succeeded in it we shall observe in the sequel. But that they were visibly benefited by the achievement of the Surs there is no doubt. In their determination to throw off their allegiance to the Khalifa and in claiming that status for themselves in India, the Surs not only made a departure from the ancient custom of the Delhi Sultans, but pointed the way to and facilitated the task of Akbar. When,

[115] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 104.

for example, Sher Shah meant to be a king or Sultan in the real sense he could never entertain the idea of seeking anybody's sanction or recognition for his sovereignty, that is, for his power and prestige. His logical mind and his transcendental ability refused to accept the Khalifa's authority as superior to his own; and he regarded such acceptance as derogatory to his status. In the Delhi Sultanate Qutb-uddin-Mubarak Shah alone had assumed the title of Imam or Khalifa. In order to understand the full significance of this step we have to examine the attitude of the Delhi Sultans towards the Khalifa of the Muslim world. That would throw light on the content and character of sovereignty assumed by the Delhi Sultans and give us an accurate idea of the position of the Muslim monarchs in India.

NATURE OF SOVEREIGNTY OF THE DELHI SULTANS

It may be observed at the outset that any reference to an extraneous power by a ruler in terms of loyalty or subordination takes away much from the content of supremacy of that ruler. In fact such a ruler could never, consistently with the logic of life, be regarded as a sovereign. And unfortunately most of the Muslim rulers of Delhi and even of Ghazni suffered in prestige for that weakness. They had to implicitly or explicitly tender homage to the Khalifa by making loyal reference in their coin legends, or in Khutbas, or by getting formal recognition of their office from him. The historical antecedents of Ghaznavid kingdom forced Mahmud and his successors to seek the recognition of their office from the Khalifa. Mahmud of Ghazni had his title of Sultan confirmed by the Khalifa of Baghdad. Masud sought similar recognition by promising to send the Khalifa a sum of 200,000 Dinars and 10,000 pieces of cloth every year. And the Khalifa was pleased to send him a formal investiture besides conferring upon him the title of Zahir Khilafat ullah Amir-ul-Muminin.[116] The establishment of the Delhi Sultanate and of the sovereignty of Muslim kings really starts with the reign of Iltutmish. And of him we are told that to "buttress his position as an independent Sultan, to win a status in the Muslim law, Iltutmish procured a robe of honour from the Khalifa of Baghdad."[117]

[116] Elliot and Dowson, *Baihaki*, Vol. II, p. 50.
[117] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 26.

Even Balban felt that need, and although the Caliphate had, by that time been destroyed by the Mongols he continued to insert the name of the deceased Khalifa in the Khutba and in the coin legends. He even advised his son to supplicate the Khalifa for confirmation of his sovereignty. With his great power Alauddin Khilji might have thought it proper to drop the meaningless references to the Khalifa. But he did not; because really speaking, it was not so much the Khalifa, as the institution of Khilafat which continued to receive the homage of the entire Muslim world, and therefore, even Alauddin thought it expedient to proclaim himself to his Muslim subjects as the lieutenant of the Khalifa. He therefore took the style of "Yamin-ul-Khilafat Nasiri Amir-ul-Muminin"—Yamin-ul-Khilafat, meaning right hand of Khilafat, and Nasiri Amir-ul-Muminin meaning assistant of the leader of the faithful, i.e. Khalifa. Ghyasuddin Tughlaq did not make any departure from the path of allegiance to the Khalifa and called himself Nasiri Amir-ul-Muminin; Muhammed bin Tughlaq early defied all previous customs when he completely ignored the Khilafat, and inscribed on the coins "Al Sultan Zilli Allah," that is, Sultan the shadow of God. Some of his coin-legends are very significant of his claim, and concept of sovereignty. One of these mentions that "sovereignty is not conferred on every man but is placed on the elect"; and others that "he who obeys Sultan truly obeys God"; that "the Sultan is the shadow of God" and that "God is the supporter of the Sultan."[118] Such announcements might have been resented by his subjects, and when he found his affairs were not going on as satisfactorily as he desired, he completely changed his attitude towards the Khalifa. He sought his grace by receiving the confirmation of the office, and directed that the Khutba should be read and coins should be struck in the name of the Khalifa. It was a complete surrender. By this time the Caliphate had been removed to Egypt, and from that distance the Khalifa's blessings were thought to work as a spell on the entire Muslim community of India. With the succession of Firoz Shah the submission of the Delhi Sultanate to the Egyptian Caliphate was complete. The Slave kings had taken the style of "Nasiri Amir-ul-Muminin" and Muhammed Tughlaq had been constrained to call himself "Yamin-ul-Muminin." But Firoz Shah

[118] H. Wright, *Coins of the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, pp. 58–59; Lanepoole, *Coins of the British Museum — Local Muhammadan Dynasties*, pp. 63, 68.

styled himself as the Nayab or deputy of the Khalifa, and first assumed the title of "Saiful Amir-ul-Muminin" which he changed later on to "Nayab Amir-ul-Muminin" and "Al Khalifai Amir-ul-Muminin." After the Tughlaqs the Lodis realizing the instability of their monarchy called themselves, Nayab or Khalifa of the Amir-ul-Muminin. Such was the attitude of the Delhi Sultans in general towards the Khalifa, to whom they felt beholden if they received confirmation of their office from him, and that was because he was acclaimed as the head of the faithful and the deputy of Muhammed on earth. His religious headship was considered to be a source of all secular power, which the Sultans like those of Delhi held, as it were, of him. Because of that, the Muslim subjects in India could not tender their undivided allegiance to the Delhi Sultans.

THE SURS ASSUME FULL SOVEREIGNTY

Thus their sovereignty was circumscribed by their recognition and allegiance to the superior authority of the Caliphate which, as we have already discussed, was responsible for the clerical domination over the royal authority and government. In order therefore, to maintain the fullest measure of power and prestige, that is, sovereignty with all its implications, the Indian Sultans should not have shown to the Khalifa in coin legends or in Khutbas their loyalty and subordination, however expedient that might appear. It only suggested their helplessness, and imposed uncomfortable limitations on their power and prestige. They could not assert their supremacy so long as they regarded the Khalifa as their superior. It was only Sher Shah and his successors who broke away from this degrading position and asserted supremacy by their own right. We are told that besides styling himself "As Sultan ul Adil Al Amir-ul-Ghazi," Sher Shah called himself "Khalifat uz zaman" and "As Sultan ul Adil Sher Shah Khuld Allah Khilafatu." "The former two titles remind one of the early Turks and Taimur, and the latter speaks for itself. That such a sober, cool and calculating man as Sher Shah should style himself as Khalifa on silver and copper coins is far more significant than the action of Mubarak Shah Khilji."[119] Indeed Sher Shah realized the emptiness of those loyal references to the Khalifa and was fully confident of his own powers and abilities.

[119] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 98.

His claim to Khilafat was not resisted by the orthodox section of Indian Muslims. His thoroughgoing administration supplied the driving power, and his personal character, ability, and learning the requisite qualifications to make good that claim. After him his son Islam Shah bore the title of Khilafatul-Adil, and we know that he actually directed all matters of the realm, religious and secular. His word was law and nobody dared disobey it. These were the preliminaries to the absolute monarchy established by Akbar. The Surs had gone far in realizing the content of sovereignty in their own person, and thus monarchy as an institution had gained in prestige to an unprecedented degree. From the standpoint of the evolution of Indo-Islamic polity therefore, we have to note this development in the concept of Sultanate or Sovereignty in medieval India, and regard that as the contribution of the Surs to the evolution of Indo-Islamic polity.

CHAPTER XIV

MUGHAL RULE AND ROYAL SOVEREIGNTY BY DIVINE RIGHT

MUGHAL RULE — A GLORIOUS PERIOD

MUGHAL rule in India is one of the most glorious periods of Indian history. Coming at the close of the medieval and the dawn of the modern age, it forms a happy transition from orthodoxy to liberalism in religion and culture, and from military despotism to enlightened paternalism in government. Whether the Mughal government was essentially a national government and the Mughal state a culture state we shall examine later on. But that is only one aspect of the Mughal rule in India though that is most important for purposes of our study. Indeed their rule in India is full of remarkable achievements in all the domains of life — in art and culture, religion and politics. It stands without a parallel in the history of Medieval India. The rot that had set in for ages during the Muslim rule suddenly lifts, and life is not only released but enjoys a freshness and exuberance, never known before. New values are formed and new traditions are set up. There open out new avenues of progress and channels of thought. The epoch is enriched by a creative activity that hardly leaves anything untouched and whatever is touched, is transformed. And out of the two centuries of its expanse, i.e. from 1526 to 1740 with a break of fifteen years when the Afghan rule intervened, we have for full one century a demonstration of its full-blooded vigour and wonderful daring, which makes the entire span vibrant with life and dazzles the contemporary world. That century begins with the reign of Akbar and ends with that of Shahjahan (1556–1657), a century that records vast conquests and careful consolidation, formulation of far-reaching policies and a new technique of statecraft, the rise of new forms of art and new movements in religion. Of this century again, Akbar's reign fills one half and leaves on it an indelible impress of the genius of that great king. From the standpoint of the evolution of Indo-Islamic polity his reign forms an interesting epoch and marks the highest development

that monarchy ever attained in both its institutional and ideological aspects.

NATURE OF MUGHAL CONQUEST

And to understand the causes of that development, as also of the other achievements of Mughal rule in general we have to examine the nature of the Mughal conquest of India. For, it was the unique nature of that conquest that set the tone of progress, which came out in the unparalleled achievements of that period. We have, that is to say, to understand how of all Muslim conquerors of India the Mughals alone could achieve so much, and others so little; how for one thing, they could as a dynasty, rule for such a long period and evoke wonderful loyalty of the people; and how of the Mughal rulers, Akbar could raise the institution of monarchy to the highest pitch of power and the most exalted status that monarchy had ever attained which gave a new character to Indo-Islamic state. And yet the Mughals were as much strangers in India as any of their predecessors. We may, therefore, put it categorically that there must have been something unique about their conquest, something peculiar about the methods they adopted to conquer and consolidate their rule, which would explain their unparalleled achievements. For one thing when the Mughals started conquering India the problems that they encountered were unlike those encountered by other Muslim conquerors, and the solutions that the Mughals offered, were naturally unlike those of the others. It was this that essentially determined the lines along which their subsequent activities were to proceed. And the growth of Indo-Islamic polity was conditioned by that also.

Now the Mughal conquest strikes a new note in the history of Muslim conquest of India because it was not merely a physical conquest but a conquest of the heart. And that was, because of the peculiar problems of the situation in which the Mughals found themselves, when they started their conquest. To understand that situation we need not attempt a detailed survey of the political conditions of India on the eve of Babar's invasion. Again it was not merely the conditions obtaining in India on the eve of Babar's invasion that determined the mode of the Mughal conquest. Their real conquest started with Akbar thirty years after Babar, and

continued throughout the sixteenth century. Therefore, we have to take note of the political factors that obtained in India throughout the sixteenth century rather than at the first quarter of it. And we have to pay more attention to the methods adopted by Akbar than to those adopted by Babar and Humayun.

THE AFGHANS AND THE MUGHALS

The political situation of India in the sixteenth century was dominated on the one hand by a confederacy of Rajput princes sometimes very strong and sometimes very weak but always loosely knit, and on the other hand by a number of Muslim states of various sizes and status of which the Afghan empire was the most powerful. Thus Hindustan had to be conquered not from the infidel Rajputs but from the Afghans, who were Muslims like the Mughals. Indeed they had to cross swords with the Muslims first and the Hindus afterwards. The Afghans were brave and wily, and were not prepared to part with their power without a stubborn resistance. Their peculiar political organization, which has been already described at length, rendered the complete occupation of the country by the Mughals a long-drawn and halting process. Babar's victory at Panipat had merely set his foot on the highroads to empire, and long years of trouble and turmoil had to be gone through by his son and grandson before that empire could be definitely won and ruled by the Mughals. For, so long as Babar lived his whole energy and attention had to be devoted to the task of wresting the country from the Afghan aristocracy that had established its power in different parts of the country. That the task had not been completed is plainly demonstrated by the experiences of Humayun, which cost him his throne. His expulsion from India ten years after the death of Babar and the resuscitation of Afghan power under Sher Shah point to the strength and die-hard nature of Afghan resistance. And Humayun's experiences were repeated in the career of young Akbar when as a boy of fifteen he found himself face to face with four Afghan rivals of sufficient power and prestige to the throne of Delhi; and they would have brought him similar misfortune had it not been for the sterling qualities of Bairam Khan, who not only won the second battle of Panipat, but systematically reduced the power of the Afghans in Northern India, within the four years

that he held the reins of Mughal government. The second battle of Panipat, like the first, secured the throne for Akbar and spread a wholesome terror amongst the Afghans. But yet many a field had to be won and many a stroke of diplomacy had to be tried by the astute and tactful Akbar, before Afghan power could be levelled to the dust. In spite of that, however, Afghan resistance continued in the reign of Jahangir and its last recrudescence in the time of Shah Jahan. The early years of Shah Jahan's reign saw its final extinction even though Akbar had successfully decimated its strength and rendered it innocuous.

THE RAJPUTS AND THE MUGHALS

The other enemy that the Mughals had to face were the Rajputs who had risen to the highest pitch of their power and prestige under Rana Sangram Singh when Babar started the conquest of India. Whether he invited Babar or not, is of small concern to us. But what is more important is that the laurels won by Babar on the field of Panipat were not sufficient to carry him through the task of founding an empire in India. Before he could attempt that task he had to cross swords with the Rana, who made no secret of his hostile intentions when he saw that Babar was in no mood to retire to his own country after the manner of Amir Taimur, or Muhammed Ghori or Mahmud Ghaznavi. The results of Panipat had to be confirmed by the victory at Kanwa, where the Rajput confederacy was broken by the terrific blow dealt by Babar. Henceforth the Rajput menace vanished from the political horizon of Hindustan, and Babar could direct his energies towards the systematic conquest of the country. But after Kanwa the Rajputs remained sullenly aloof. Babar left them severely alone, because he had other tasks to perform. And before that task was complete he died, leaving to Humayun the legacy of an empire whose security was likely to be endangered by the unconquered Afghans and the disgruntled Rajputs. The latter since they did not find a leader of sufficient ability did not dare defy the authority of Humayun. Instead at least two of the Rajput states, viz. Amber and Mewar recognized the suzerainty of Humayun. But Humayun was neither a shrewd judge of human character who could mete out the proper treatment to his friends and foes, nor was he a great leader of men who could

command confidence of his people. He failed to comprehend the strong and weak points in the character of those with whom he came into contact whether they be Afghans, Rajputs or his own brothers. Hence he suffered miseries, which few kings have had the misfortune to suffer.

That the brave Rajput was capable of the most desperate daring and stubborn opposition when the enemy meant to conquer him by force, but readily yielded when he appealed to his noble and generous sentiments, Humayun did not know. Neither did he realize that the warlike Afghan was as wily towards his enemy as he was implacable in his enmity. And he possessed neither the capacity nor the inclination to win over the one to crush the other. He did nothing to win the loyalty of those Rajputs who had recognized his suzerainty. When Bahadur Shah of Gujerat attacked Mewar and Rani Karnavati appealed to Humayun in that noble and graceful manner peculiar to Rajputs, that is, sent him her bracelets in token of making Humayun her bracelet-bound-brother, Humayun did not have sufficient chivalry and imagination, as also foresight to respond to her appeal. On the other hand his mad rush through Malwa and Gujerat only to realize that it availed him nothing in the end; then his conflict with Sher Shah who while consolidating his power had kept him in good humour; his defeat, at Chausa and Kanauj; his flight to the Punjab and thence to Sind; his invitation to and retreat from Jodhpur through a burning sea of sand; and ultimately his exit from India have a tragic touch about them. He did not realize that the Mughals were foreigners in India as compared to the Afghans who were children of the soil. And since there was no love lost between the Rajputs and the Afghans, he could at least have enlisted the support of the former when an opportunity had offered itself.

AKBAR AND THE RAJPUTS

But such an egregious blunder Akbar was not destined to commit. Though he ascended the throne at a very young age, he could easily grasp the needs of the situation in which the Mughals in India found themselves. During his contests with his rivals to the throne he had realized how precarious was the position of Mughals in India in general, and of his own in particular. He could not return to Kabul

which had been given away as an appanage to Hakim Mirza; he could not look to Hakim Mirza for assistance against his enemies in Hindustan; he could neither expect much help from his nobles, who were more ready to promote their own interests than their master's; and he had done nothing to win the loyalty of the people whose country he had conquered from the Afghans. But he had been endowed with qualities that marked him out as a born ruler of men. It did not take him long to see that to establish a Mughal empire, he had to supplant the Afghan power and to subdue the Rajputs completely; but that would be tedious, expensive and unwise, and by clever strokes of diplomacy that could be avoided. Here the policy of Sher Shah and Islam Shah towards the Rajputs, came to aid his purpose. Sher Shah had reduced their strength but left them sullen. They hated the Afghan because he lacked the nobility of character even though he could subdue their pride by war and diplomacy. Akbar saw in the Rajputs the right match for the Afghans. Hence he tried conciliation in preference to coercion. The folly of the Afghans lay in trying coercion unrelieved by conciliation. Akbar as has been aptly expressed by Tod "was enabled to gild the chain with which he bound them (Rajputs)." And to that end he pressed to service the tenderest of human relationship, and respected their susceptibilities. Akbar married Rajput princesses, and treated the Rajputs as friends and relations, while Sher Shah had treated them as subjects and enemies after their subjugation. This difference in the policy of the two great kings of India was due to the different problems of empire-building that faced them. For Sher Shah the problem was to drive out the Mughals, and once that was done, the Afghan rule in India was revived, and there was no difficulty. The people were already familiar with the Afghans, whom they were accustomed to obey, and whose rule was, for them, an accepted fact. Hence he did not care, whether Rajputs were reconciled or not. Akbar, on the other, had not merely to revive the Mughal rule, he had to make it acceptable to the people. And all the while he was labouring under the disadvantage that he was a foreigner in India. The people of Hindustan looked upon the Mughals with some suspicion. Hence when he conquered the Rajputs he strove to blot out all traces of bitterness born of conquest, which might rankle in their hearts. Friendship and goodwill made ample amends for the sword and blood, and his respect

for their religion and racial susceptibilities endeared his rule to them. To crown all, matrimonial relationship bridged the gulf between the conqueror and the conquered.

And that evoked a wonderful response from the Rajputs. They gave their willing co-operation and yielded their all to Akbar. They freely shed their blood for the Mughal empire and never hesitated to go as sentinels to watch over its interests to any part of the country, whether it be the bleak and cold regions of Afghanistan or the damp and marshy plains of Bengal. They filled some of the important offices of the empire and influenced the shaping of imperial policy. It was to respect their racial and religious susceptibilities that Akbar issued a series of regulations in reversion of the the anti-Hindu policy of Muslim rule in India. Religious toleration, abolition of the Jazia and pilgrim taxes, association of the Hindus in all the branches of administration, and demolition of the superior prestige of the Ulemas — all these and many others clearly illustrate the policy he followed in marked contrast to his Muslim predecessors on the throne of Delhi. It was because of his intimate relationship with the Rajputs that he introduced these innovations in the Muslim state-craft in India, and it was these innovations that were best calculated to ensure the loyalty of the Hindus and endear his rule to them. Thus the energy and vigour of the warlike Rajput and the willing allegiance and loyalty of the Hindu were secured to supplement the efforts of the Mughals, themselves a race of distinguished fighters and astute statesmen to destroy the Afghan power in India and build up an empire of their own.

SWINGING BACK OF THE PENDULUM — WORK OF AURANGZEB

But all these were a means to an end. The fundamental weakness of the Timurid position in Hindustan, the diehard nature of Afghan opposition, the proud indifference of the Rajputs, and the deep distrust of the people, all these were the realities of a situation that called for the highest qualities of leadership and diplomacy, great foresight, and a clear understanding of the character of the peoples over whom the Mughals were to rule. And Akbar had that transcendental ability which triumphs over the most complex situations and transforms them. Akbar's genius had fully comprehended and completely transformed the situation in which the Mughals had

found themselves at the start of his reign. He had crushed the Afghans and built up an empire on a firm foundation with the help of the Rajputs. But after Akbar and Jahangir, Mughal rule turned a new page. When the last recrudescence of Afghan opposition had died out, and there was no more menace to the Mughal rule in India, when free and full co-operation of the Rajputs and the moral support of the Hindus had laid the foundations of the empire broad and deep, when glorious days of undisturbed prosperity and religious tolerance, of art, literature and culture dawned, the utility of the means, which had helped to bring all this about was forgotten. The potential of the Rajput co-operation and the Hindu loyalty was belittled and there was a reversal of the policy of the Great Akbar. It began in the reign of Shah Jahan and had its fulfilment in the reign of Aurangzeb. In 1632 Shah Jahan prohibited the construction of any Hindu temple in the empire. The pendulum had swung back. There was little need for the co-operation of the people. The empire was so great, so vast, and so mighty that it could dispense with that policy which certainly was unpalatable and blasphemous to a man like Aurangzeb. Consequently there came about a little stiffness in the relations between the Mughals and their people. That stiffness increased as fresh instalments of Aurangzeb's bigotry issued in the shape of reactionary policies. Now the temples of Mathura and Benares are levelled to the dust, and the people lying prostrate before him in protest against Jazia which is reimposed, are trampled to death ; now a Rajput kingdom is annexed and its heirs are coerced so that the whole of Rajputana rises against him ; now the Satnamis are lashed to rebellion and the Marathas are goaded on to defiance by an act of treachery ; and so the story goes on till the whole empire is convulsing with fury, distrust and anarchy. Gradually all peace and prosperity, all moral support and confidence disappear ; and by the time Aurangzeb is laid in his grave the splendid empire that the genius of Akbar had so carefully built up is on the brink of an abyss. Through stress and strain the empire continues for about thirty years — a mere shadow of its former self. Then Nadir Shah's invasion, and the entire structure crashes to the ground. The glory and the greatness, the authority and wealth, everything is gone. Within twenty-five years after Nadir Shah's invasion the Grand Mughal, "the prop of the universe" seeks shelter in the camp of

a body of foreign merchants on the conclusion of the battle of Baxar ; and seven years after Baxar chooses to be a prisoner of the Maratha general Madho Rao Sindhia. That was the heritage left to his posterity by Aurangzeb. Dismemberment of the empire, dishonour of the dynasty, and final domination by a company of merchants trading to the East Indies ! And if the Muslims and the Hindus ever smarted under their political subjection to the British they have to thank this man of religion — this Aurangzeb, who for the sake of his Sunni orthodoxy ruined the great and enduring work of Akbar, plunged India into blood and fire, and left it an easy prey to the British.

How different it was to what Aurangzeb inherited from his ancestors ! The work of Akbar was thoroughly demolished by Aurangzeb. And the work of Akbar consisted, as we have tried to argue in the conquest and consolidation of the Mughal empire by the adoption of a technique dictated by the special needs of the situation, in which the Mughals found themselves in the sixteenth century. It is that technique which defines the nature of Mughal conquest — a conquest achieved not merely by force, but by understanding and mutual trust. It was winning of the heart along with the winning of the country ; it was a conquest that transformed the conqueror and the conquered alike, each of whom readily gave his best to the common service of all and thus helped to evolve a common heritage. It is this achievement of Mughal rule which has compelled historians to call their government "essentially a national government" and their state "a culture state." This naturally suggests an examination of the development of Indo-Islamic polity under the Mughals.

NATURE OF INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY UNDER AKBAR

Just as the period of Mughal rule from Akbar to Aurangzeb stands prominently out of the entire span of Muslim rule in India in point of progress and culture, so does it in point of the development of Indo-Islamic polity. Indeed the Indo-Islamic polity reached the apogee of its development during this period. Never before and never after this period did Indo-Islamic polity reach that height, which it did under Akbar. In its ideological as well as institutional basis the state of Akbar claimed a competence, at once universal

in scope and unlimited in character. And to Akbar as to the age in which he lived whether in Europe or Asia, the state meant the government, and government meant the monarch. Akbar was the state, in the real sense of the word. His was the government; his was the country and the people. It was Akbar's personal qualities which exalted him to the heights never reached before or after by Muslim kings of India. And monarchy as an institution gained that high status through the personality of Akbar. In fact what we understand by the content of sovereignty today, was claimed by Akbar in his capacity of king; and what is most remarkable, is that the claim was conceded. When we say that the modern national state is the sovereign state, we mean that its competence is universally effective, as its character within its territorial ambit, is unlimited. Akbar as the head of the state, raised himself to that position, and therefore, if sovereignty, could reside in an individual person he was the sovereign in the real sense of the word. And to the degree that Akbar could assume sovereign authority, Indo-Islamic polity could claim the attribute of sovereignty as well. We shall examine later the substance of that sovereign authority which Akbar exercised and the Indo-Islamic polity acquired. But here it may be pointed out that the substance of his sovereign authority was virtually conceded to him, by the adoption of that technique of conquest and statecraft, which he himself had hit upon and which exactly satisfied the needs of the situation in which the Mughals found themselves. In other words Akbar's sovereign authority was a direct result of the peculiar nature of his conquest. We may now proceed to elucidate this point in that light and examine the content of the sovereignty of Akbar.

MUGHAL KINGSHIP IN CONTRAST TO THE DELHI SULTANATE

We have pointed out elsewhere that the Delhi Sultans had failed to establish absolute monarchy and the Surs wrecked the ship of the state because they attempted to do that. The main cause appears to have been the peculiar position of the Delhi Sultans in relation to their Muslim subjects. The Muslim rulers in India encountered a problem that they did not encounter elsewhere. When Islam spread into the countries outside Arabia it was for the purpose of conquest and conversion of those countries. A similar purpose

actuated the Muslim conquerors of India. But here though conquest was complete, conversion was not. The mass of the country could not be converted. So that there remained one of the chief functions of the Islamic state unfulfilled ; and that was the constant cry of the orthodox section of the Muslim population and their clergy. Therefore it was the concern of the Ulemas to criticize the state and urge it on to adopt a policy of coercion towards the non-Muslim subjects. Consequently a sort of clerical control came over the working of the state and to the degree that the Sultan was amenable to that control his royal supremacy was limited, which actually had a two-fold effect on the position of the Muslim rulers in relation to their subjects. In the first place the Sultans could not get the entire loyalty of the Muslim population, because in many things they were guided by the Muslim theologians and it was the theologians who really ruled the life of the Muslim people. In the second place the non-Muslim population could not tender willing allegiance to the Sultans, because of their policy of coercion. The Muslim ruler in India could not claim the headship of religion, i.e. Khilafat, while he could not prevent his government from being deeply influenced by religious considerations. In such a predicament the Muslim rulers had to style themselves as agents of the Khalifa, and therefore tolerate clerical interference in the affairs of the state. That rendered well nigh impossible the foundation of an absolute monarchy, and the adoption of Hindu traditions and institutions of government, which would have helped the process. They could not adopt Hindu traditions and institutions of government, because that would have meant first, the reversal of the anti-Hindu policy and co-operation of the Hindus in carrying on the government, and second, the adoption of the principles like kingship by right divine, religious tolerance, etc.

Such a departure from the accepted canons of Muslim statecraft could not be possible under the conditions in which Islam entered India and the Sultans of Delhi found themselves. Mahmud Ghaznavi had set the ideal, and that was followed by Muhammed Ghori, and the dynasties that came to rule over India in consequence of their conquest. As Islamic conquerors were victorious in war they established their rule for the purpose of coercing the infidels of India to embrace the true faith. With such a mental attitude there could not be co-operation with the Hindus, toleration of their religion,

and adoption of their institutions of government. At long last, when the militant attitude had softened down to some extent, and after the break-up of the Sultanate local kings of Hindustan and the Deccan adopted a policy of conciliation and tolerance towards the Hindus, a new atmosphere was created by which Sher Shah was also influenced. He did not adopt a policy of downright religious coercion, but neither did he adopt a policy of religious tolerance. In his administrative policy he emphasized efficiency and discipline, and his genius for organization led him to adopt the technique of Hindu polity, viz. of taking the village as the unit and building up from below. But in working out that policy he did not associate the Hindus freely, and seek their co-operation. That was the weakness of the Afghan polity as reared up by him. And Islam Shah prepared the way for the fall of the Afghans when he attempted to establish an absolute monarchy on such weak foundations. Indeed even if Sher Shah had lived longer the Afghans could not have established absolute monarchy, because of their apathy towards the Hindus, their orthodoxy in religious affairs, and feudal organization.

MUGHALS BRING NEW TRADITIONS OF KINGSHIP AND CULTURE

But when the Mughals came they brought a new outlook with them. For one thing, they were a cultured people, and especially the representatives of the House of Taimur were remarkable for their breadth of vision, and liberal outlook on life and religion. They were great rulers and brought with them traditions of government and kingship which were very different from what the Delhi Sultans had developed or the Afghans were accustomed to. In their liberal outlook, in their love of culture, and in their traditions of government and kingship, they were akin to the Hindus. Their liberalism and culture were the most precious heritage of their house, whose origins go as far back as the days of Amir Taimur. He was a great lover of art, literature and refined pursuits of life, and was responsible for making Samarkand and Bokhara the seats of culture and refinement in Central Asia. Taimur's son Shah Rukh was equally distinguished for his patronage of the greatest scholars and poets and artists of his age, whom he invited to his court from all parts of Asia. And Shah Rukh's son Ulugh Beg was as great a soldier as he was a lover of science. He promoted the cause of science by

building an observatory three-stories high at the foot of a hill in Samarkand and himself compiled some astronomical tables. Yunus Khan, Babar's maternal grand-father was so highly cultured that the traces of his Mongol ferocity had been completely wiped off. He was a poet, painter, penmen, musician, scientist and what not. As for Babar it is difficult to exaggerate his many-sided personality. Great as a soldier and conqueror he was no less a scholar, poet and writer of spirited prose. Wherever he went he won the love of the people and made their country beautiful. In Hindustan amid the din of war he found time to lay out beautiful gardens. In his tempestuous life he snatched moments of peace to write not only his monumental autobiography but a Turki Diwan, a tract on Turkish prosody, and several commentaries in the same language. He was a skilful musician and a connoisseur of art. To crown all he was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Sufism — the Masnavi being a source of delight to him. Such were the invaluable cultural assets of the Timurids. These naturally blunted the edge of orthodoxy and made for a very liberal outlook.

And happily enough their advent into India synchronized with a most liberal movement in the realm of religion. That was the Bhakti movement which preached universal brotherhood, love of God as the symbol of inner sanctity as opposed to the performance of ritual, and absorption in God as the goal of human life ; and condemned ritualism, priesthood and outward shows and forms of religions. The mystical aspect of this movement was akin to that of Sufism and the Mughal Emperors like Akbar and Jahangir fully understood and keenly appreciated the spirit of the movement. It was the element of culture in their mental make-up which thus established a contact with what was essentially Hindu. Akbar for all that we know was so deeply influenced that he contributed several Hindi quatrains to the lyric poetry of the Bhakti cult ; his step-son Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana, who wrote numerous lyric poems in Hindi, showed himself even more deeply imbued with the spirit of the cult. With such mental contact, Akbar could easily win the love of the people over whom he was destined to rule. And for him it was hardly difficult to understand the need for Hindu association and co-operation in carrying on the government of the country. And if Hindu association and the spirit of their culture were not repugnant to him, certainly their political traditions and institutions could not

be. Indeed he must have appreciated equally keenly their traditions of kingship and government which very closely resembled those of the Timurids. Further, Sher Shah had done much by way of building up a sound system of imperial government on a bureaucratic pattern, which admirably suited the Timurid's conception of kingship. All that Akbar had to do was to build up an institution of kingship with which the Mughals were familiar. And here he could draw upon the traditions of his house, that is, the traditions of kingship as founded by Chinghiz Khan and Taimur and continued by their posterity.

SECULAR CHARACTER OF MUGHAL KINGSHIP
RULE BY RIGHT DIVINE

The institution of kingship with which the Timurids were familiar was Turko-Mongol in origin. It can be traced to the family of Chinghiz Khan, whose ancestor Buzanjar Qaan Nairun claimed divine descent, because Alanquwa, Buzanjar's mother, as the legend goes, became pregnant by a ray of divine light. His descendants were therefore called Nairun that is light-born. Chinghiz Khan who was ninth in descent thus combined to the glory of his divine descent, the majesty of imperial power born of world conquest. Sovereignty was regarded as the birth right of his successors. So great was the prestige of his house that a conqueror and ruler like Taimur felt honoured when he assumed the title of Gurgān, that is, son-in-law, because his ancestor Qaracar Nuyan had married a daughter of Chaghtai Khan, the son of Chinghiz, and of Amir (officer) because his branch held in hereditary succession the office of commander-in-chief under the successors of Chinghiz Khan.[1] The Timurids, when rising to the highest pitch of power did not fail to look up to the example of Chinghiz. In a trivial matter like taking possession of one's lady love, Akbar is said to have followed the code prescribed by Chinghiz Khan.[2] The point to be noted is that Chinghiz Khan and his successors were essentially secular rulers who claimed sovereignty by right of conquest as a matter of divine ordination. They did not claim it as the standard bearers of any religion or of

[1] *Akbarnama*, (translated by Beveridge) (Asiatic Society of Bengal Publication), p. 204, footnote 2.

[2] *C.H.I.*, Vol. IV, p. 86.

any Prophet whose commands they were required to spread by means of conquest. They were nobody's deputy or Khalifa. They ruled by their own right—by right divine. Their authority and office required nobody's sanction and certainly not of the Khalifas, the last of whom had surrendered to and was beaten to death, by the orders of their ancestors. Their law was the law of the Mongal tribe or what had been ordained by succession of kings. "While Islamic conception of sovereignty hedged the Khalifa round by the Shariat law, the Mughal sovereign had no such limitations."[3] His will was law only subject to the customs of the tribe. But when his ordinances conformed to the spirit of the tribal code of honour or customs and usage, there was nothing else to circumscribe his sovereignty. He was like the vicegerent of God on earth, and the Mughal Khan could not think of playing the role of a *primus inter pares*. That was not Amir Taimur's conception of sovereignty. He believed that "since God is one and hath no partner, therefore, the vicegerent over land of the Lord must be one."[4] Apart from his claim to vicegerency of God on earth in temporal matters, he claimed vicegerency of Muhammed in religious affairs also. He did not hesitate to raise himself to the status of Khalifa and actually took the style of the promoter and renovator of the religion of Muhammed (Murawwaj wa Muajaddid). He considered himself eighth in the line of such promoters and renovators, his seven predecessors being Umar Abdul Aziz, Mamun, Muqtadirbillah, Azad-ud-daula, Sultan Sanjar, Ghazan Khan and Aljaitu Khan, each dominating the country in which he ruled. Like some of the Khalifas again he read the Khutba in his own name. And Abul Fazl says that after his conquests, the ruler of Egypt "coined much red and white money in his name . . . and from the pulpits of Mecca, Medina and other holy places the Khutba was read in his name."[5] Now although the successors of Taimur were virtually sovereign in their dominions yet they conceded in theory ultimate sovereignty to the representative of Chinghiz Khan — the Grand Khan of the Mongols. It was Abu Sayyid Mirza who made a departure from the convention and called himself "Pad-Shah" in his own right. He was followed by Babar when in 1507 he formally assumed the title of Pad-Shah. "The growth of the Ottoman pretensions in the east, the rise of the Safavis

[3] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 106.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 107. [5] *Akbarnama*, Vol. I, p. 212.

in Persia, and of the Shaibanids in Maawaraunnahar (Central Asia) were calculated to throw into oblivion the descendants of Timur who once exercised sway over all of them. The Ottoman Sultan held the title of Qaisar, the Safvi of Shah, and the Shaibanids of Sultan. Taking a hint probably, from the intentions of Abu Sayyid Mirza, Babar also assumed the high and distinctive title of Pad-Shah."[6] Babar was proud of his ancestry and believed in hereditary right to sovereignty. Therefore, when he entered the Punjab on his final expedition he proclaimed to the people that he was the lawful ruler of that country, because his ancestor Taimur had annexed it. His idea of sovereignty is clear from his remark that "partnership in rule is a thing unheard of."[7] Hence he could not even entertain the idea of calling himself an agent of the Khalifa. The Timurids far from considering themselves inferior to the Ottoman Sultan of Egypt, who was also the Khalifa regarded themselves superior to him. Hence no Timurid could admit of any clerical control imposed upon their earthly power.

"TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY" OF THE KING

Humayun's concept of sovereignty resembled the theory of the early Turks who believed that the king was the shadow of God on earth. His official historian Khwandamir calls him "a personification of the spiritual and temporal sovereignty (Jamai Sultanati Haqiqi va Mājāzi)"[8] and His Majesty the King, the Shadow of God (Hazrati Pād Shāh Zill-i-Ilāhi)."[9] He was believed even to have had the institutions and inspiration from God (Ilhamati Rubbani va Varidati Subbani)."[10] Abul Fazl goes so far as to call him "Insani Kamil" (perfection of humanity). Such notions created an atmosphere in which absolute monarchy could best thrive. But that was not all. Humayun also "believed that just as the sun was the centre of the material world, similarly the king whose destiny was closely associated with that great luminary, was the centre of the human world. Accordingly he constituted the servants of the state in twelve orders of which he himself was the centre. A tent with twelve

[6] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 111.
[7] Babar, *Memoirs*, p. 293.
[8] *Humayun Nama*, British Museum, Or. 1762, f. 126 r.
[9] *Ibid.*, 133r.
[10] *Ibid.*

divisions corresponding to the signs of the Zodiac was constructed to symbolize the lattices through which the light of the empire shone."[11] These fantastic ideas of his expressed themselves through a new form of etiquette that he introduced during his stay at Gaur. There he would "cast a veil over his crown and when he removed it the people used to say "light has shone forth." He also washed his sword in the river and said "upon whom shall I gird the sword ?"[12] These pretensions point to a very exalted notion of kingship, which was very much like that of the Hindus. His belief that he was the Sun amidst the world of human beings must have been suggested by the legendary origin of his ancestry that they were born of divine light.

MUGHAL THEORY OF KINGSHIP SIMILAR TO THE HINDU THEORY

Such were the ideas and traditions of kingship which Akbar inherited. Divine descent, political supremacy, spiritual headship, i.e. Khilafat, and shadow of God : these were the elements that constituted Mughal kingship or Pādshāhi. And this kingship had accrued to Akbar. Here again, Mughal kingship bore a remarkable resemblance to the Hindu concept, that regarded the king as a great god on earth,[13] promulgator of the faith,[14] receptable of the supreme political power,[15] and the maker of the age.[16] And like the Bhakti cult this concept of kingship of the Hindus must have appealed to Akbar. Here he must have found another link in the chain, another point of contact. The Hindu ideal and traditions of kingship were so akin to what he had inherited that in working for a common ideal he found Hindus most useful. In this matter he had their unstinted support because he felt drawn towards them, by a similarity of ideals and outlook. But that was a discovery, which we can assign solely to Akbar's credit, and not to that of his father or grandfather. For it was he who realized the grimness of the situation in which the Mughals found themselves in Northern India

[11] Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, pp. 116-17.
[12] *Badaoni* (translated by Ranking), Vol. I, p. 573.
[13] Manu, *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXV, Ch. VII, 3-8.
[14] धर्मप्रवर्तक (Dharmapravartaka)—Kautalya, Bk. iii, Ch. I.
[15] Banskhera Copper Plate Inscription of Harsha.
[16] Rājā Kālasya Kāranaṃ (राजा कालस्य कारणम्) Mbh. Ch. lxix, 79.

and made deliberate efforts to win over the Rajputs in order to fight the Afghan enemy to the best of advantage. And what he had adopted as a means, as a matter of expediency brought about deep cultural and ideological contacts, in which Akbar discovered the real worth of the Hindus. It was therefore, that through his contact with the Rajputs he understood the Hindus and won them over. The results proved very valuable, for it made the rulers and the ruled forget the distinction and join in a worthy effort to build up a common heritage, political and cultural.

AKBAR AS SULTAN-UL-ISLAM, AMIR-UL-MUMININ (COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL), ZILL-I-ALLAH (SHADOW OF GOD)

With these preliminary observations we may proceed to an examination firstly of the content of kingship that Akbar sought to establish, and secondly the technique that he adopted to establish it. As for the first we have already noted what elements he inherited from his father and his family. Tracing his descent from the two greatest conquerors of Asia — Chinghiz Khan and Amir Taimur, he could not think of kingship as a gift of the nobles or of the Muslim community, that is, what, accrued to him in consequence of their choice. He could not for a moment reconcile himself, without forgetting his illustrious ancestors and family traditions, to the orthodox Islamic theory. Hence even a Bairam Khan in spite of the unparalleled devotion and meritorious services, was not indispensable, for he was in comparison with the Padshah a mere servant, a slave fit to kiss his footstool. A noble was a mere creature and it did not matter however great, helpful, or powerful he was. Hence kingly office could not be a gift at the pleasure of the nobility. Similarly the Muslim community could not have anything like a choice in the matter of conferring kingship on the Zill-i-Ilahi, shadow of God. Akbar considered he had it by birth as by birth he had the right to Khilafat also. For beginning from Amir Taimur to his own father, all had claimed it. Amir Taimur had gone further and had called himself the promoter and renovator of Islam — Murawwaj wa Muajaddid, and had caused the Khutba to be read in his name from the pulpits of Mecca and Medina. Even Shaibani Khan had assumed the titles of "the Imam of the age and the Khalifa of the Merciful." And lastly, if kings of Delhi like Mubarak Shah, Sher

Shah and Islam Shah could assume that title, certainly Akbar could with greater propriety.

As Badaoni put it Akbar "was anxious to unite in his person the spiritual as well as the secular headships, for he held it to be an insufferable burden to subordinate to any one, as he had heard that the Prophet . . . and his lawful successors and some of the most powerful kings as Amir Timur Çahib Qiran and Mirza Ulugh Begi Gurgān and several others had themselves read the Khutba, he resolved to do the same apparently to imitate their example but in reality to appear as the Mujtahid of the age."[17] But Akbar was not to be content with the rank of Mujtahid only. He became Sultan-i-Adil or Imam-i-Adil, which was a higher rank than Mujtahid, and as such claimed infallibility, which had to be conceded to him by the leaders of the Muslim community. The result was that whatever he as "the king of Islam (Sultan-ul-Islam), commander of the faithful (Amir-ul-Muminin), shadow of God (Zill-i-Allah) in the world" decreed had to be obeyed without a demur, for it emanated from "a most just, most wise, and a most God-fearing king." Such was the content of kingship claimed by Akbar. It consisted of "spiritual and secular headships," infallibility of judgment and equity in administration. "A monarch is a pre-eminent cause of good" said Akbar. And the very sight of the king is "a part of divine worship." Therefore he is "styled conventionally the shadow of God."[18] These statements give expression to Akbar's concept of kingship as also indicate its content. Absolute supremacy in all matters — sovereignty in the modern sense of the term, was what he regarded constituted the content of kingship. Akbar's authority was to be supreme in matters pertaining to Islam and to the state. From his pedestal of sovereignty he was to guide his co-religionists and direct the affairs of the state in a spirit of equity. And in the fulfilment of the latter task whether the interests of Islam had to be subordinated or not, he was to be the sole judge. He would not brook interference in this regard from any other agency. For, Padshahi connoted Zill-i-Ilahi — the shadow of God and comprised Sultanat-i-Haquqi va Mujazi — spiritual and temporal sovereignty, which invested him with the role of Amir-ul-Muminin, i.e. leader of the faithful and Sultan-i-Adil, i.e. king who ruled with equity and justice.

[17] Lowe, *Badaoni*, Vol. II, p. 276.

[18] *Ain-i-Akbari*, (translated by Jarrett), Vol. III, p. 398.

AKBAR'S SOVEREIGNTY AS "SULTAN-I-ADIL"

So far with regard to the content of Akbar's kingship. The technique that he adopted to give effect to this kingship, revolutionized the methods of Islamic statecraft in India. He was to be the supreme leader of the Islamic community in India and yet rule in a spirit of equity and justice. Akbar knew full well what this claim actually meant. That such a dual role was fraught with dangers and difficulties he had clearly foreseen. For, it did not require much commonsense to understand that in a country where Hindus were in an overwhelming majority, he could not rule with equity and justice unless he granted substantial concessions to them in the matters of religion and government. The Muslim community was the ruling community, and therefore it deserved special consideration and privileges. But at the same time, all concessions to the Muslim community and all coercion to non-Muslim communities could not go far to promote the interests of the Mughals in India. As has been pointed out already the precarious position of the Mughals in India postulated, as Akbar perceived, the elimination of the political power possessed by a hostile Muslim community, namely the Afghans and the establishment of a contact with the Rajputs that would ensure their support for the Mughals in their fight against the Afghans and subsequently win the loyalty of the Hindus in general. When these two conditions are fulfilled the Mughal empire could be firmly founded and Mughal rule be made acceptable to the people. Hence it would not do if Akbar became merely the Amir-ul-Muminin and the Khalifa of the Age, that is, conducted himself in religious matters as the deputy of Muhammed. He had to as Sultan-i-Adil, rule over the Muslims and non-Muslims with justice and equity. But that was, even for Akbar an impossible adventure. For as the deputy of Muhammed he was charged with the mission of promoting the cause of Islam, which meant extermination of other faiths and propagation of the true faith, while as the Sultan-i-Adil, he could not undertake coercion of the Non-Muslim communities and propagation of Islam. The inherent antithesis of the two roles was so formidable that any attempt to harmonize their claims was sure to provoke terrible penalties. And yet he dared do so and even went farther than that. He gave precedence to his role of Sultan-i-Adil over that of Amir-ul-Muminin, the functions of which he

definitely subordinated to those of the former. Therein consisted the technique he adopted to give shape to his sovereignty, and that was Akbar's unique achievement. It was a unique achievement because while Sher Shah, Islam Shah and Mubarak Shah assumed Khilafat, they did not subordinate the claims of Islam to those of the empire. To them the two were identical or the latter was merged in the former. Their government was not actuated by the principles of equity as the deciding factor between the claims of Islam and the empire. In other words they could not think of assuming the role of Sultan-i-Adil, in the sense that Akbar did, side by side with Khilafat. And when Taimur and Shaibani Khan assumed Khilafat, their problem was absolutely different ; for they ruled over purely Islamic communities, whose notions of equity and justice were in line with the precepts of Islam. In India, that was not possible. That is to say the precepts of Islam, could not be accepted by the Hindus as embodying the spirit of equity in their relations with the Muslims. And the need of ruling in a spirit of equity rather than in conformity with the precepts of Islam was of the utmost urgency for the Mughals, at the time of Akbar's accession to power. Hence Akbar was constrained to adopt it and called it political expediency, which became the guiding principle of his kingship. And for the adoption of this principle he got the legal sanction when he was acclaimed as the Sultan-i-Adil in that famous Mahzar, which is known as the Infallibility Decree. In his plenitude of power he got the Ulemas to agree that "should in future a religious question come up regarding which the opinions of the Mujtahids are at variance and His Majesty in his penetrating understanding and clear wisdom be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation and as a political expedient, any of the conflicting opinions which exist on that point, and should issue a decree to that effect" it would be binding on them and the nation. Further they declared that "should His Majesty think fit to issue a new order we and the nation shall likewise be bound by it ; provided always that such order be not only in accordance with some verse of the Quran but also of real benefit to the nation ; and further that any opposition on the part of his subjects to such an order passed by His Majesty shall involve damnation in the world to come and loss of property and religious privileges in this."[19]

[19] Lowe, *Badaoni*, Vol. II, p. 279.

UTILITY OF THE MAZHAR OR THE INFALLIBILITY DECREE OF AKBAR

This document Mazhar is the instrument that he used for realizing his ideal of kingship or sovereignty. He was to be the final arbiter when there were differences of opinion on religious questions, and issue decrees that were not merely in conformity with Quranic precepts but also with a view to ensuring "real benefit to the nation." Real benefit to the nation consisted in so shaping the administrative policy and conducting its details as may help to stabilize Mughal rule in India. That is to say he had to ordain what was conducive to the good of the entire nation, comprising all the communities and not merely the Islamic community. The latter's claims could not prevail over those of the empire. Its laws and ruling could not be adopted for the government of the empire. What was good for all the communities, what was equitable and just, and what was expedient must be the guiding principles of Akbar's kingship. Therefore it would not do if Islam was meted out a preferential treatment or the Muslims were alone associated in the government and enjoyed all the privileges of power and wealth. And equitable treatment of the claims of all communities and religions in the country postulated a policy of religious tolerance, removal of invidious distinction between Hindus and Muslims, abolition of odious taxes and free association of the Hindus in the administration of the empire. These constituted the technique that he had rightly calculated, would give him the substance of sovereignty and make the Mughal rule acceptable to the people of India. And therefore Akbar could declare subsequently that all religions were of equal worth, and that Islam alone did not embody the Truth. That was only a step towards playing the role of Prophet, of making a new religion. But it was an uphill task too. Tremendous difficulties had to be faced and overcome. For, with the assumption of the role of Sultan-i-Adil and the declaration of his supremacy and infallibility in all matters an atmosphere that had long been surcharged with electricity was ignited. The whole country was ablaze (A.D. 1580) only a few months after that declaration. And that was because it came as a legal and religious consummation of a policy, the details of which he had long devised and adopted in gradual instalments.

AKBAR THE FIRST MUSLIM KING TO DEAL IMPARTIALLY WITH ALL HIS SUBJECTS

Indeed soon after the overthrow of Bairam Khan, when Akbar could have his own way, he decreed administrative policies which none of his predecessors on the throne of Delhi could dare adopt. And "when it is remembered that Akbar was only twenty-one or twenty-two years of age when he abolished the pilgrim tax and the Jaziya, in defiance of the sentiments of his co-religionists and the practice of his predecessors, we may marvel at the strength of will displayed by a man so young, who a little time before seemed to care for nothing but sport."[20] He was truly "the first of Muslim sovereigns of India to conceive the idea of dealing impartially with all his subjects, whether Hindus or Muslims."[21] But the first step that he had taken in this direction was when he was younger still, when he was only nineteen. That was on the occasion of his pilgrimage to Ajmer in January 1562. "On his way to Ajmer Raja Biharimal of Amber, who had been the first Rajput chief to be presented at his court obeyed a summons to wait on him, attended the camp with his whole family, and begged Akbar's acceptance of his daughter in marriage."[22] Akbar married the princess on his return journey and employed Man Singh, in the imperial service. That was a new step, the utility of which Akbar seems to have discovered very early in life. Here his father had already shown the way. In the matter of contracting matrimonial alliances with the nobility of India for political purposes Humayun had made a beginning. He had considered this as a useful means to win the loyalty of the people. We are told that "in 961 when Humayun returned to India he enjoined his nobles to enter into matrimonial alliances with the Zamindars of the country, and after marrying the elder daughter of Jamal Khan, he asked Bairam Khan to marry the younger one."[23] Akbar went a step further and made no distinction between the Muslims and Rajputs. When he married a Rajput princess and employed his new Rajput relations in his government he showed a breadth of vision, a liberal outlook, and a political sagacity that none of his predecessors possessed. And when in the wake of the Rajput alliance and employment of Rajputs in

[20] Smith, *Akbar the Great Mughal*, p. 67. [21] *C.H.I.*, Vol. IV, p. 84.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 81. [23] *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 334.

his government, followed the abolition of the pilgrim tax and Jazia, the country had the "earliest indication of Akbar's noble resolve to be a father to all his people, Hindus as well as Muslims, to be emperor of India, in short, rather than the commander of a small garrison (the faithful ?) alien in religion and to a great extent in blood to the mass of the people."[24]

HINDUS APPOINTED TO THE HIGHEST POSITIONS

This is borne out by his subsequent acts. He abolished, besides these two odious taxes, as many as forty cesses of various descriptions realized by his predecessors from all people, many of which perhaps fell only on the Hindus. In the conduct of government he freely associated the Hindus, giving special treatment to the Rajputs. It is well known for example that Rai Surjan Hada, after he had surrendered Ranthambor in the fourteenth year of Akbar's reign, was made governor of Gaḍhā Kaṭangā. Raja Todar Mall a Khatri of Lahore who has earned fame as a financier and general held very high posts in the empire, becoming Wazir in the twenty-second year and Vakil in the twenty-seventh year of Akbar's reign. Raja Man Singh after a very distinguished career in the imperial service became governor of Zabulistan and then of Bihar. His adoptive father Raja Bhagwan Das became governor of the Punjab. Many Hindus and chiefly Rajputs became big Mansabdars. There were three Mansabdars of the rank of five thousand, two of four thousand and five hundred, five of the two thousand and five hundred besides many others of lesser rank. Mr. Blochmann observes "it is noticeable that Akbar in raising Mansing to a command of seven thousand placed a Hindu above every Muhammedan officer, though soon after M. Shahrukh and M. Aziz Kokah were raised to the same dignity."[25]

It must not be taken for granted, however, that Akbar employed only the Rajputs or his Rajput relations. Though for their martial qualities and rule over India in historical times they were rightly preferred to other sections of the Hindus, yet Akbar did not exclude other sections altogether from his government. We have already noted how Raja Todarmal a Khatri rose to the highest positions of Wazir and Vakil. His son of course entered Akbar's service but did

[24] *C.H.I.*, Vol. IV, p. 82. [25] *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 341.

not achieve any great distinction. Rai Patra Das, another Khatri was commander of seven hundred ; one Parmananda was Mansabdar of five hundred, and yet two others — Mathura Das and Sathura Das — father and son, Mansabdars of two hundred and fifty. Raja Birbal who was a Brahmin is well known for his close association and influence with Akbar. He was a Mansabdar of importance with a Mansab of two thousand, while his son Lalah was a Mansabdar of a lesser rank than him. When Orissa was conquered some Hindu Mansabdars who were not Rajputs, were added to the list. We hear of one Raja Ram Chandra, Zamindar of Orissa, who held a Mansab of five hundred like the sons of Raja Man Singh ; of another Zamindar Nilkantha who held a Mansab of three hundred ; and of two other Zamindars Adwand and Sundar who were Mansabdars of two hundred and fifty. Under Akbar out of the 252 Mansabs ranging from 500 to 5,000, thirty-two were held by the Hindus and of the 163 Mansabs ranging from 200 to 400, twenty-five were held by the Hindus.[26] This points to the conclusion that in all 13.7 per cent of the highest posts of the empire had been conferred on the Hindus. And perhaps larger still must have been the percentage of Hindus among the Mansabdars who held lesser ranks that is ranging from 10 to 150 and whose number was 1,388 in all.[27] Here we notice a marked contrast to the policy followed by all the Sultans of Delhi preceding Akbar.

COW SLAUGHTER FORBIDDEN

In his solicitude to win over the Hindus he forbade the slaughter of cows, and eating of beef. "The origin of this embargo was this" says Badaoni: "that from his tender years onwards the emperor, had been much in company with rascally Hindus and thence reverence for the cow (which in their opinion is the cause of the stability in the world) became firmly fixed in his mind."[28] And when Akbar assumed the role of a Prophet and promulgated Din-i-Illahi or Tauhid-i-Islam (Divine Monotheism) the killing of animals on the first days of the week was strictly prohibited, because this day is sacred to the Sun . . . . This order was extended over the whole

[26] *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 537.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 527.
[28] *Muntkhab-ut-Tawarikh* (translated by Lowe), Vol. II, p. 312.

realm and capital punishment was inflicted on every one who acted against his command."[29]

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE GOOD OF THE EMPIRE

But Hindus were not the only people, he sought to conciliate. He even showed himself equally friendly towards the Jains, the Zoroastrians of India, and the Christians. When he noticed that in his empire there were communities professing various religions, and he had to make Mughal rule acceptable to all of them, he first of all wanted to know what all those creeds contained. That was accomplished by means of the discussions in the Ibādatkhānā. Then as he was convinced that Islam was not the only faith that pointed out the way to truth and wisdom, his attitude towards life and religion changed. He was actuated by a sense of justice towards his subjects and refused to discriminate between one creed and another. Since he had realized that truth was embodied in all religions, he could not be partial to any. That sense of justice prompted him to assume the role of Sultan-i-Adil which as we have already noted raised his authority, as sovereign, above that of Islamic theologians. The Sultan-i-Adil embodied the ideal of justice or what is generally known as the policy of tolerance. The assumption of this role gave form to Akbar's conviction that intolerance as a principle of Islamic rule in India was incompatible with what made for the good of the Mughal empire. That was the purpose of the Infallibility Decree. It laid emphasis on what contributed to the good of the empire and proclaimed impartiality and justice as the guiding principles of Akbar's rule in India.

REBELLION OF ORTHODOX MUSLIMS CRUSHED AND OFFICE OF SADR-I-SUDUR ABOLISHED

But that was incompatible with the principles of Islam and opposed to the notions of justice of the Muslims in India. Toleration of idolatry was like poison to Islam ; and hence soon after the announcement of this decree, the custodians of orthodoxy raised their voice of protest against Akbar. He had apostatised from Islam

[29] *Badaoni*, quoted by Blochmann in *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 200.

because he had introduced a dangerous innovation. At a time when the eastern provinces were in a ferment of disaffection, Mulla Muhammed Yazdi, issued in his capacity as Qazi of Jaunpur, a fatwā or ruling justifying rebellion against Akbar. That became the strength of the rebels, who invited Akbar's younger brother Mirza Muhammed Hakim, ruler of Kabul to invade India and occupy the throne of Delhi. It was a terrible catastrophe, but Akbar's great abilities mastered it completely. Peace in the eastern provinces was restored; the young Mirza was brought to his senses and regretted his hasty action; and the offending Ulemas paid dearly for their initative. The Qazis of Jaunpur and Bengal found a watery grave because the boat by which they were being conveyed by Akbar's order happened to founder in the river. "And one by one he sent all the Mullas against whom he had any suspicions of disaffection to the closet of annihilation."[30]He had by now rendered the clergy prostrate at his feet. He had deprived them of their power and prestige. The triumphant return of Akbar from Kabul sounded the death knell of clerical authority, that was a hindrance or limitation to Akbar's sovereignty. In November 1581, on the day he crossed the Ravi, Akbar abolished the office of Sadr-i-Sadur and instead created six provincial Sadrs.

AKBAR, THE PROPHET OF A NEW FAITH AND HIS OBJECTIVE OF "ONE KING, ONE KINGDOM AND ONE CREED"

But this rising made one thing plain to Akbar. He was now convinced, though he had perceived it dimly before, that the claims of Islam could not be reconciled with those of other faiths in India. Since tolerance ran counter to the spirit of Islam he could not, with any moral justification, decree tolerance, so long as he remained a Muslim, and called himself a follower of Muhammed. "As early as the beginning of 1580, the fathers (Jesuit fathers) when on their way to the capital were told that the use of the name of Muhammed in the public prayers had been prohibited."[31] And if he could not adopt a policy of tolerance, as a follower of Muhammed he had better discard him. For him to retract from the position he had taken was impossible. He had found out the futility of the Mazhar

[30] Lowe, *Badaoni*, Vol. II, p. 285.
[31] Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 214.

or the Infallibility Decree to serve his purpose. It could not morally confer upon Akbar the authority to reconcile the injunctions of the Quran, that is, of the Prophet, with what contributed to the real benefit of the nation, that is, political expediency. In order to make up for this moral inadequacy Akbar had to renounce Islam and proclaim himself as the Prophet of a new religion, which was different from Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism. As the sovereign of the peoples professing all these faiths, he could not, he felt, adhere to any faith that was intolerant of others. Here his experience of the discussions in the Ibādat Khānā showed him the way. He had realized that all these faiths were mutually exclusive, and if any of them had royal patronage it would be certainly aggressive towards others. Hinduism could not agree with Islam, Jainism, or Zoroastrianism in the same way as Islam could not. And Akbar was not far wrong in his conclusions because, we know, how in ancient India previous to the rule of the Imperial Guptas Indian religions regarded one another. Hence Akbar thought there must be a new faith, that would combine the essential elements of all faiths. And Akbar felt that he was best fitted to attempt the foundation of such a faith. Its dominant spirit should be tolerance, and peace with all "Sulh-i-Kul." That was certainly a very fruitful idea, the most brilliant idea that could emanate from anybody's brain. That would, Akbar felt, silence the mutual recriminations and misunderstandings between different religions and make for political prosperity and undivided allegiance to Akbar. To realize his ideal kingship, his conception of sovereignty, he must have undivided allegiance of his peoples. But that was not possible, as he had learnt by bitter experience, if he merely assumed the role of Sultan-i-Adil and decreed just treatment of all — the Muslim, the Hindu, the Parsi and the Jain. That is to say, by adopting the policy of tolerance, he would not be able to win the undivided allegiance of all. His first attempts had been directed to that end, but since he had met with opposition, he now resolved to accomplish the end by a far surer method. He would not promulgate tolerance by a royal decree, that is, by means of an Infallibility Decree. That was authoritarian super-imposition of a royal command. He would give to his people, instead of a command, a creed that would be the embodiment of the spirit of synthesis and tolerance, by reason of which it would be acceptable to all, and rule the life of all, that will facilitate

conformity and eliminate the element of coercion. One king, one kingdom, and one creed: that was his idea, his robust optimism, his profound faith in creating a new religion which, he thought, would envisage a golden era of peace and prosperity, of religious harmony and of universal sovereignty. That fond hope of Akbar's has been very clearly brought out by the Jesuit author Bartoli. Akbar he says called a vast gathering of "all the masters of learning and the military commandants of the cities round about" and addressed them thus: "For an empire ruled by one head it was a bad thing to have the members divided among themselves and at variance one with the other; some being not only different from but hostile to others; whence it came about that there are as many factions as there are religions. *We ought therefore to bring them all into one, but in such fashion that they should be one and all*; with the great advantage of not losing what is good in any one religion while gaining whatever is better in another. In that way honour would be rendered to God, peace would be given to the peoples, and security to the empire."[32] His idea was to found a new faith, what he called the *Din-i-Ilahi*, i.e. Divine Faith or *Tauhid-i-Ilahi*, i.e. Divine Monotheism. It was, as he felt, best calculated to fulfil the threefold purpose of doing honour to God that would make people truly religious, of fostering peace and harmony between intolerant religious factions, and of ensuring the security of the empire by enlisting undivided allegiance of the people. Akbar the Emperor would also be the Prophet of a new faith. He sought to combine Prophethood with political sovereignty; and it must have been suggested to him by the example of Muhammed. But his Din-i-Ilahi was to be different from the faith of Muhammed. It would be a synthesis of what was best in all the creeds followed in India, and would therefore, be acceptable to all. Its acceptance demanded four degrees of devotion to His Majesty consisting in readiness to sacrifice one's life, property, honour and religion. And the highest degree of adherence to this faith was marked by the renunciation of one's former religion. Here lies the key to the understanding of Akbar's motive. His insistence on the renunciation of the existing faiths by their adherents, was suggested by the hope of substituting one faith for many, which would automatically dispense with the need for a policy of tolerance or for a royal decree like the

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 211–12.

Infallibility Decree that had produced such an amount of resentment, and would create an atmosphere of peace. But in spite of that, if Akbar had to order action which has been rightly construed as persecution of Islam and negation of tolerance it was because of the opposition of Islam — its uncompromising attitude towards his policy of government. He could not forgive it and from his bitter experiences of the years 1580 and 1581 he was convinced that Islam could be rendered innocuous and shorn of its sting, its militant attitude, only by means of coercion. If Islam had pricked like a thorn on his side when he wanted to assume the role of Sultan-i-Adil, the thorn must be rendered harmless.

MUGHAL KINGSHIP TILL AURANGZEB EMBODIES UNITY OF SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL SUPREMACY

Thus it was that Akbar in his anxiety to establish Mughal rule in India and make his Padshahi unlimited and universal, what substantially corresponds to sovereignty in the modern sense, adopted a policy of reconciliation and tolerance towards the Hindus ; and since that was incompatible with his role of Khalifa and Amir ul Muminin he was constrained to found a sort of ethico-political creed, that dispensed with the need for policy of tolerance and enjoined undivided allegiance to the Prophet-Emperor. He thus sought to attain a supremacy that was more comprehensive in content than purely political sovereignty and was conceived on the pattern of Muhammed's work.

But how far he was successful in this adventure subsequent history points out in the clearest terms. His attempts were ridiculed by his contemporaries. The Divine Faith evoked little enthusiasm except from those who sought to please Akbar in order to gain some worldly ends. There was almost universal apathy, if not antipathy, and Akbar's staunch friends like Man Singh refused to adhere to the creed. The faith did not survive the founder. Yet it is mistaking the real intention of Akbar to repeat that "the Divine Faith was a monument of Akbar's folly, not of his wisdom."[33] We may however assert that the Divine Faith was an outcome of the desire to unify the highest spiritual and temporal office in his own person, in order to ensure undivided allegiance for the king and consolidate the

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 222.

Mughal empire. For this purpose he had sought at first the sympathetic co-operation of the Hindus; then he assumed the role of Sultan-i-Adil; and since the latter act was resented and opposed he founded, in the manner that he founded an empire, a new faith of which he was the Prophet. His political purpose gave colour to his innate eclectic and mystic nature and he was genuinely sincere, in seeking the good of his people and his own dynasty. To him that good consisted in doing honour to God, in giving peace to the peoples, and establishing security of the empire. His Prophethood reinforcing his political sovereignty could accomplish this. And that was the sole motive of his assuming the role of Prophet. His ideal was to be the founder of a religion-cum-empire. In attaining this, his efforts were productive of far-reaching results. His Din-i-Ilahi died out after his death no doubt, and no emperor claimed Prophethood subsequently. But nevertheless his other claims, that is, to superiority over the theologians and lawyers, to spiritual and temporal leadership, to vicegerency of God, and to decree tolerance and rule in accordance with the good of the nations adhered to the royal office and accrued to his successors. Here was indeed the consummation of that process which had started in the early years of the fourteenth century, with Alauddin Khilji and Muhammed bin Tughlaq — a process that questioned the competence of Muslim theologians in matters of the state, that sought to distinguish the provinces of the Islamic state and the faith, and insisted on a new orientation of the relationship between Indo-Islamic State and Islam in India. It had now terminated with the triumph for Indo-Islamic polity with the king installed on the throne of sovereignty and of Prophethood. Royal supremacy that combined spiritual Prophethood and therefore claimed undivided allegiance of the people formed the content of Akbar's unique achievement. That supplied the substance to his title of "Zill-i-Allah," and created precedent for his successors to follow. Invariably all of them except Aurangzeb claimed the title of Zill-i-Allah, and spiritual and temporal headship, which invested them with a power, dignity and sanctity never enjoyed by their predecessors on the Delhi throne.

Thus it was that kingship as an institution gained an eminence and status, that is, of sovereignty, which it did not have before Akbar's time. And to the extent that kingship gained in eminence, Indo-Islamic polity attained its highest development. The state

manifested itself through the personality of the king. Those early efforts of Alauddin Khilji and Muhammed bin Tughlaq, substantiated by those of Sher Shah and Islam Shah had their fruition under Akbar, and imparted a new character to Indo-Islamic kingship and through it to the Indo-Islamic polity. These were scrupulously continued by Akbar's successors. And so long as they were continued, Mughal rule correctly reflected the national purpose and in the words of Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan became "essentially a national government." But whenever they were departed from, interminable disaster and inevitable ruin followed. That will be the subject matter of subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER XV

AKBAR AND THE SOVEREIGN SECULAR STATE

STATE BECOMES SECULAR UNDER AKBAR

It has been made sufficiently clear so far how from Taimur to Akbar, the Mughal kings invariably claimed sovereignty by divine right. If Amir Taimur believed that "whenever God Almighty exalts any person to the throne of sovereignty, he confers on him special dignity and wisdom by means of which he renders mankind obedient to him" and therefore "a just king is a shadow of God,"[1] Akbar went further and asserted that "the very sight of kings has been held to be a part of divine worship. They have been styled conventionally the shadow of God, and indeed to behold them is a means of calling to mind the Creator and suggests the protection of the Almighty."[2] Such notions of kingship prompted Akbar to combine the spiritual and temporal supremacy in himself which resulted in centralization of power and helped also the process of secularization of the state. He tried to change the spirit of the Islamic state in India, and he wanted to give a new faith to his people.

Under Akbar the Mughal state became a secular state because it ceased to belong to a "society of believers." Akbar refused to be the head of an Islamic state and the commander of Islamic armies. For, in the first place he had many non-Muslims who were able administrators and brave generals, and his power was based as much on their support as on that of the Muslims. Secondly his aim was not to wage holy wars but to conquer new territories. His ambition was to found an empire that would redound to the glory of the Timurids, to assert an authority that was the gift of God, and to claim a supremacy that was universal. These aims completely

[1] *The Mulfuzat Timury* or Autobiographical memoirs of the Mughal Emperor Timur written in the Turkey language turned into Persian by Abu Talib Hussyny and translated into English by Major Charles Stewart, pp. 6 & 7 (J. Murray, Albemarl Street), 1830.

[2] *Ain-i-Akbari* (translated by Blochman), Vol. III, p. 398.

frustrated the ambition of the Ulemas for domination over the state and gave it a secular character never known before. The way Akbar treated his subjects and the Ulemas, the policy that he adopted of employing all sections of people in the government and of granting sufficient freedom of worship to them, and the attempt that he made of founding a faith to suit the needs of the empire, pointed clearly to a new role which the Indo-Islamic state assumed under Akbar. It was predominantly secular in character and that was adequately reflected in the administrative arrangements made by Akbar. We may therefore, next pass on to an examination of these arrangements.

OFFICE OF THE SADR-I-SUDUR AND HIS POWER TAKEN AWAY

It has been pointed out that Akbar demanded universal obedience as the vicegerent of God and not merely as a Khalifa or deputy of the Prophet. He therefore claimed a competence even superior to that of the Khalifas. That competence consisted in the formulation of the policy and organization of the state at his own will, and in administering justice according to the laws, which he either made himself or countenanced to give effect. It may be mentioned in passing how very early during the Muslim rule in India the "Fakihs" or Muslim legists, had acquired an ascendancy over the state, an ascendancy which made itself felt through the policy that the state pursued and through the justice that the state administered. Though Alauddin Khilji had imperiously told them to keep their hands off the "polity and government," yet no king had succeeded in effectively preventing them from influencing the policy of the state and the administration of justice. For the first time perhaps in the history of the Muslim emperors of Delhi we read in the *Memoirs of Babar* that strong action was taken by him against some of these men. When Shaikh Sharaf of Qarabagh either incited by Abdul Aziz or of his own accord issued a decree in which he charged Babar of some oppression and persuaded the Imams of Lahore to subscribe to it, Babar grew very angry and ordered Qambar-i-Ali Arghun to arrest Shaikh Sharaf and the Imams of Lahore. They were brought to the court but what punishment was inflicted on them is unknown.[3] What a different fate the Kazi-ul-Kuzat and his

[3] *Memoirs of Babar* (translated by Beveridge), Vol. III, pp. 687–8.

associates had when they behaved similarly towards Akbar! He ruthlessly crushed them to submission. One by one he got rid of them by most questionable methods, and not a murmur was heard. When the Ulemas lay prostrate at his feet, he deprived them of their land grants or reduced those grants on one pretext or another.[4] Blochmann remarks truly that "Akbar considerably interfered with Sayurghal lands, arbitrarily resuming whatever lands he liked, and increasing the domain or Khaliçah lands to the ruin of many a Muhammedan (Afghan) family. He also completely broke the power of the Çadr, whose dignity, especially before the Mughal dynasty, had been very great. It was the Çadr or as he was then styled Çadr-i-Jahan, whose edict legalized the Julus or accession of a new king. During the reign of Akbar also he ranked as the fourth officer of the Empire. Their power was immense. They were the highest law-officers; they were in charge of all lands devoted to ecclesiastical and benevolent purposes; and they possessed an almost unlimited authority of conferring such lands independently of the king. They were also the highest ecclesiastical law-officers and might exercise the powers of high inquisitors. Thus Abdun Nabi, during his Çadr-ship ordered two men to be killed for heresy."[5] So great was the deference with which they were regarded at the beginning of his reign that Akbar used to honour Abdun Nabi "by holding the slippers before his feet."[6] But after Abdun Nabi was removed from the office in 1578 the office was shorn of its dignity. In November 1581, the day Akbar crossed the Ravi on his triumphant return from Kabul he created six provincial Sadrs, one for Delhi, Malwa and Gujerat, another for Agra, Kalpi and Kalinjar; the third for the country from Hajipur to the Sarju; the fourth for Bihar; the fifth for Bengal and the sixth for the Punjab. The chief Sadr who had succeeded Abdun Nabi was Sultan Khwaja, a member of the Divine Faith, till his death in 1585. He was succeeded by Amir Fathullah of Shiraj, who held office for another seven years. But the duties of his office were considered so unimportant that when he was sent to the Deccan on a political mission his servant Kamal officiated for him. As Badaoni says Fathullah had not even the power of conferring five Bighas! In fact he was an imaginary Sadr, as all land

[4] *Ain-i-Akbari* (translated by Blochmann), Vol. I, p. 269.
[5] *Ibid.* (translated by Blochmann), Vol. I, pp. 270–71.
[6] *Ibid.*

had been withdrawn.[7] After Fathullah, Sadr Jahan succeeded, but he was a member of the Divine Faith. Thus after Abdun Nabi Akbar selected men as Sadrs who were either most submissive or acknowledged his Prophethood. They took orders from him and were divested of all initiative. In the provinces the Sadrs became dependent on the Diwans and thus lost their power and prestige.

SECULAR TONE OF LAW AND JUSTICE UNDER AKBAR

In matters of Law and Justice Akbar proceeded with a similarly masterly thoroughness. In November 1581, he appointed a principal Qazi for each of the larger cities of the empire. For example Qazi Sadruddin Lahori "whose free-thinking was greater than that of Makhdum-ul-Mulk"[8] was appointed Qazi of Bharoch ; Mulla Abdus Shakur Guldar of Jaunpur ; and Mulla Muhammed Masum, of Bihar. The function of the Qazis was to apply the Holy Law, which was interpreted by the Muftis. But the Holy Law was one of the sources of the Muslim Law, though it was the most important — the others being the established custom of the country, the written decrees of the earlier reigns, and the decrees of the reigning king. In a country like India where the non-Muslims formed the bulk of the population, and under Akbar who sought to conciliate them, what was customary or the will of the reigning king had no negligible effect in modifying the manner in which the Holy Law was followed in the administration of justice. When Akbar turned away from Islamic orthodoxy and inclined towards intellectual eclecticism he issued numerous decrees that impinged upon the religious life of the people, Muslims and non-Muslims. Before him the Muslim kings of Delhi had never tried to flout the Holy Law openly, though they had, with the assistance of the Qazis and Muftis, twisted it to suit their purpose at times. Akbar went much further and actually issued decrees that often ran counter to the spirit of the Muslim Law, and even of Hindu Law. For example he ordered "that Sijdah under the name of Zaminbos ought to be offered to kings. Another was that wine might be drunk, if for the healing of the body, by the advice of the physicians. . . . Another thing was the prohibition to eat beef. . . . It was forbidden to marry one's cousin or near relation because in such cases the sexual appetite is but small. Boys were not to marry

[7] Badaoni, Vol. II, p. 254. [8] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 354.

before the age of sixteen, nor girls before fourteen, because the offspring of early marriages is weakly."[9] Again the killing of animals on the first day of the week was strictly prohibited because the day was sacred to the sun. Slavery consisting in "the restriction of personal liberty and selling of slaves," he strictly forbade. In contravention of the Hindu custom he ruled that a widow must not be suffered to become Suttee against her inclination.[10] In the dispensation of justice the Subahdar or governor of the province was definitely ordered that "he should not interfere with any man's creed."[11]

These rulings are significant of the manner in which royal authority acquired ascendancy over that of the Holy Law. Indeed Akbar claimed that in matters of justice "the supreme authority and the redress of grievances rests with sovereign monarchs," and therefore he was the final court of appeal. This authority had been given to the Qazi and the Mir Adl, who were only "his judiciary delegates."[12] Hence these "judiciary delegates" of his were more inclined to pay heed to his rulings than to those of the Quran. And since in 1579 Akbar had proclaimed himself as Sultan-i-Adil which invested him with the authority to issue decrees that were "not only in accordance with some verse of the Quran" but of benefit to all his people, there could be hardly any questioning of his competence. Therefore, we could safely conclude that his rulings or the laws according to which justice was dispensed in his empire had a definitely secular tone and very little of theological bias. This fact was of immense significance in imparting a secular character to his government, that is, to the Indo-Islamic polity under Akbar.

AKBAR'S KINGSHIP BASED ON PERSONAL AND POPULAR APPEAL

Passing on next to an examination of the features of Akbar's government, we may first note that it was a highly efficient and centralized administration enlivened by a close personal contact of the king. Akbar had discovered that there was always an interdependence between kingship and the administrative organization through which the former manifested itself. Therefore he realized

[9] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 311, 312, 315.
[10] *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, Bk. iii, p. 42 (Ain, iv).
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 38. [12] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Bk. iii, p. 41.

that if he could transform the character of kingship, that of the government would be automatically transformed. To make his government acceptable, to make it enduring and inspire the loyalty and confidence of the people, it won't do if it was merely efficient or based on sound principles. There must be a human touch about it and that could be given through the personality of the king. Kingship could be so constituted as would appeal to the sentiments of the people. In this matter Akbar's close contact and deep sympathy with his people stood him in good stead. It had taught him a new method of approach to the problem of kingship and government, and had revealed to him the immense possibilities of kingship. He conducted himself in a way that enshrined him in the affections of the people. He made kingship an immensely popular institution by arousing in all, a sense of personal attachment for him, which proved an invaluable asset of kingship. By introducing some very graceful customs he drew unto himself the heart of his people. The daily appearance of the king before a huge crowd eager to gather the bliss of the morning or evening surrounded him with a halo of sanctity. The observance of Raksha-Bandhan, Divali, and vernal-festivals, the concourses and debates of the learned and the holy men, the daily court in full ceremony, the visits to the holy shrines, these and many others that filled the routine of his daily life gave rise to a volume of sentiment that sought to idolize the king. Indeed a sort of king worship started, much on the lines of ancient Hindu polity. And that was instrumental in changing the tone of government and the attitude of the people towards it. Because the implications of this sort of king worship weakened the claims on which the clerical supremacy of the Ulemas was based, the entire governmental structure, adhering round the personality of the king became monarchical and secular in tone. The government besides, became popular and broad-based owing to the association of the Muslims and non-Muslims in its actual conduct, and embodied principles that were conducive to the good of all his subjects, and not of any single community or sect.

AKBAR'S GOVERNMENT A BALANCED AND INTEGRATED SYSTEM

Akbar's government was a highly intricate and carefully integrated system, working on the principle of checks and balances. The whole

machinery had a driving force all its own, and fed by its own power. There was a great deal of inter-linking between the departments of state, each exercising a check on the other but at the same time deriving its power and purpose from the king. There was a crude separation of functions with a personal concentration, that is, in the person of the king. The whole system worked automatically with a centrifugal tendency and produced a poise that was a unique achievement of Akbar's creative genius. Akbar's was also a one-man rule, but by that creative touch which was peculiarly Akbar's his government had lost its rigidity and had acquired a plastic form and the attributes of a living system. Akbar's institution of kingship had imparted to the system of government a new vigour and life that enabled it to function as an organism, and to some extent dispense with the need of a powerful personality. Therefore it is that his government survived him for generations and stood the strain of successive centuries and ultimately formed the groundwork for the British administration in India.

His government had a cohesion and potentiality which became the distinguishing features of the Mughal government in general. Delhi sultans had depended upon a crude and handy form of government which functioned fitfully, and mainly to secure the good of the Muslim conquerors in general and the stability of the central authority in particular. It lacked the loyal co-operation of the people as a whole and therefore could not have firm foundations. Sher Shah had tried to supply that foundation but without altering the form and spirit of the government. In its outlook and policy, the government of Sher Shah did not very much depart from the Delhi Sultanate traditions. In organizing the government he had sought efficiency and showed a deep concern for popular welfare. But he had not sought popular co-operation, association and support of the governed — the non-Muslim population. He had never allowed them to influence the policy of the state; he had never cared to consult their preferences or prejudices; he had never tried to modify the policy of his government in the light of what contributed to the good of the Hindus also. There was thus an exclusiveness that permeated his government and rendered it morally unacceptable to the people, even though it was efficient, and vigilant to an uncommon degree. And that was a glaring defect. It could not be remedied by efficiency and vigilance on which Sher Shah laid great

stress. That defect weakened the foundation of government and took away much of its cohesiveness which was the strength of Akbar's government. It was due to the free association of all classes of people in the government, and in shaping its policy with a view to securing the good of all classes of people that the spirit of government was completely changed. A new life was infused as it were, into the form of administration, which thus became a sound and living organism.

WAS AKBAR'S GOVERNMENT "PREDOMINANTLY FOREIGN" AND "ESSENTIALLY MILITARY"?

In this connection it has been pointed out that "the Mughal public service, in fact, was predominantly foreign" because "about seventy per cent of the officials belonged to families which had either accompanied Humayun to India or arrived after Akbar's accession and that the remaining thirty per cent consisted of Indian Muhammedans and Hindus. And although in theory the public service was thrown open as a career to Hindus, in actual practice the number of appointments held by them was decidedly limited."[13] True, but that did not deprive Akbar's government of its outstanding character and merit which consisted in the adoption of a policy that had been designed to serve the "real benefit" of all the people in the empire, and in the determination of which the Hindus played no negligible part. Indeed the substance of that policy had been to a great extent suggested by the Hindu association of Akbar. So it need not matter as to what the percentage of Hindus was to the Muslims in public services. If the general policy of government was morally acceptable to the Hindus, was of "real benefit" to them they could not withhold their support and loyalty to a government, seventy per cent of whose employees might have been Muslims. It is a matter of common knowledge that to make a government acceptable to the people, greater stress has to be laid upon how the power should be exercised than by whom it should be exercised. And it was that which imparted a new character to his government — not so much the fact of the employment of the Hindus. Employment of the Hindus was only a part of that policy, the substance of which had been so determined as to be of real benefit for all. Indeed Akbar showed, as no other rulers of India had before or since shown, a

[13] Edward and Garrett, *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 163.

masterly skill by the way he pieced together the institutions and ideas that he inherited from his family and from his predecessors on the throne of Delhi into a coherent and organic whole. But its cohesiveness and potentiality were due to the embodiment in it of some of the most salutary principles of government which included "that Hindus as well as Muhammedans should be considered eligible for the highest offices in the state, civil or military, and that the adherents of every creed should have complete liberty to worship God after their own fashions."[14]

These principles of government which fostered mutual understanding and co-operation between the conquerors and the conquered could not very well go with what would really make a government "essentially military" in character. That was true of the Delhi Sultanate government, for its activities were all directed towards serving the interests of the state by methods of force, by sheer military domination. But where this policy of military domination yielded place to co-operation and conciliation as under Akbar, it would not be correct to characterize the government as "essentially military." Indeed the care and concern with which the civil departments like the revenue and justice were organized and worked, and the material condition, intellectual needs and cultural claims were attended to, helped the growth of a benevolent and liberal paternalism which was the very antithesis of the military character of government. The fact that "almost all important officials exercising civil jurisdiction were primarily military commanders,"[15] would not impart a military character to a government. The assignment of military ranks to government officials was, under Akbar, considered to be an easy device of making payments to them, and of avoiding administrative complications in that regard. The system only pretended to regard every one of the government employees as holding some military rank, whether he happened to be employed in the kitchen department or in the regular army. It was also a means by which the king assured for himself the supply of auxiliary troops, through his own officers, who were paid for the purpose. He could get some personal service day to day from them, as also make sure of the existence of an auxiliary force through them. In those days regular armies were not much in vogue, for all people possessed arms and in times of need could be called for military

[14] Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 356. [15] *Ibid.*, p. 357.

service. Akbar assigned military ranks to all his officers in order to facilitate their grading and payment, and to have an auxiliary force maintained by them. But that did not mean that they actually maintained the number of troops, indicated by their ranks. Very often they did not. It only meant that they, along with their contingent, may be called upon to render military service at the king's command. But that is not enough to impart a military character to the government. The obligation on the part of all officials to render military service to the king when demanded, is certainly different from imposing a military rule on the people. That is to say a government could be justifiably called to have had an essentially military character when the government is conducted by the employment of undiluted force ; in other words, when the spirit and methods of government are those of military despotism. Hence the Mansabdari system could not be regarded as imparting a military chacacter to Akbar's and to later Mughal government. When we examine the various departments of state subsequently, we will see how the government under Akbar and the later Mughals was far from military in character. It will be more fitting to characterize Akbar's government as a paternal or benevolent autocracy.

AKBAR'S GOVERNMENT, A PATERNAL OR BENEVOLENT AUTOCRACY

The substance of this autocracy consisted in a spirit or an attitude that prompted the king to regard his subjects as his children. He therefore put the welfare of his subjects Hindus and Muslims, as an ideal to be achieved at all costs even at the cost of his own pleasure. Prompted by that spirit he reshaped the institution of kingship that he thought would commend itself to the moral acceptance of his people ; prompted by that spirit he tried to shear off the angularities and expunge the excesses of Islamic rule as evidenced under the Delhi Sultans ; prompted by that spirit he even sought to control the contours of social life of his people in a manner that was befitting the attitude of a father towards his children. For he believed as he said "my subjects are to me in the place of children." This paternal attitude was reinforced by the notion that "a monarch is a pre-eminent cause of good" and that "upon his conduct depends the efficiency of any course of action."[16]

[16] *Ain-i-Akbari*, (translated by Jawett), Vol. III, p. 398.

This was in line with the famous Hindu political ideal that the king is the maker of the age — Rājā Kālasya Kāranam. If, that is to say, Akbar's kingship was the pre-eminent cause of good, which could be realized by his own conduct, then he could not sit idle and let things drift in their own way. He must take due note of the responsibilities of his exalted position, and strive to fulfil them in a spirit that would foster the good of all. That entailed a variety of administrative activities which hardly left any sphere of his people's life untouched. It was because of this that he sought to guide people in matters of food and amusements, social morals, and religious beliefs; and to control the prices of commodities, manufactures, industries, supply of raw materials, wages of the labourers, education, charity and fashion. He issued detailed instructions to his officers and insisted on a scrupulous conformity on their part. And all this, besides his anxiety, as Badaoni put it, "to unite in his person the powers of the state and those of the church."[17] In the latter role he became the self-appointed spiritual guide of the people. We shall examine later on the decrees which were issued to serve the purpose, Akbar had in view, when he said that the king was the pre-eminent cause of good. But nevertheless, a monarch who could strive to keep a close watch over the minutest details of the life of the people, who in his own way could minister to the manifold needs of their body and soul, who could dare to dictate in matters ranging from marriage and morals to the functions of the Kotwals and revenue collectors must have had a unique hold over his people and an extraordinary capacity to command the loyalty and affection of the people. Indeed Akbar had these to a degree which no Muslim king had either before or after him. And what he undertook as the self-imposed functions of kingship adhered to the Mughal kings subsequently. These functions became imperceptibly associated with kingship as an institution and thus became a feature of Indo-Islamic polity. To sum up, Mughal government as founded by Akbar, had a secular colouring with a form that was hierarchical and unitary, and worked in a spirit of paternalism or benevolent autocracy. It was the work of one man, who imparted a new tone to the subsequent administrations of the Mughal emperors and therefore to the Indo-Islamic polity. With this preliminary note we may pass on to a review of the administrative details of his government.

[17] Badaoni, Vol. II, p. 268.

GOVERNMENT OF THE EMPIRE

(*i*) *Administrative Areas*

Broadly speaking the government of the empire was divided into two distinct parts — imperial or Central and provincial or subordinate both organized on a common pattern and integrated into a unitary scheme. The imperial government comprised several departments, the leading strings of which were concentrated in the hands of the emperor. Subordinate or provincial governments followed the lines of the Central organization, and comprised nearly as many departments as there were at the Centre. The head of the province or Subah was the Subahdar or Sipahsalar, who represented the emperor in the province and actually played the king in all but name. The empire was divided into several provinces, called Subahs, whose number was at first twelve and later on, after the conquest of the Deccan became fifteen. Subahs were divided into Sarkars, and Sarkars into Parganahs or Mahals. For example, we are told that the Subah of Allahabad "contains ten Sarkars and 177 Parganahs"[18] and the Subah of Berar "contains sixteen Sarkars and 142 Parganahs,"[19] while "the Subah of Bengal consists of 24 Sarkars and 787 Mahals."[20] Mahals appear to be the synonym for the Parganahs, which signify the lowest territorial subdivisions of the empire. The Parganahs or Mahals were groups of villages formed from the standpoint of administrative and strategic considerations. It was Sher Shah who had formed the Parganahs as the units of his administrative system. He had thirteen thousand Parganahs, while Akbar in all the fifteen Subahs of his empire, which are described in detail by Abul Fazl, had round about three thousand Parganahs.[21] The fifteen Subahs were Allahabad, Agra, Oudh, Ajmer, Ahmadabad, Behar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Malwa, Berar, Khandesh and Ahmadnagar. This points to the conclusion that Sher Shah's Parganahs were much smaller than Akbar's. It is difficult to ascertain how many villages formed a Pargana. The groupings must have followed the lines of administrative convenience and geographical situation. Wherever geographical contiguity or unity was not possible the villages were designated as either "miscellaneous

[18] *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 160.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 231.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 129.
[21] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 115.

villages"[22] or "detached villages,"[23] forming Parganas. The area of a Pargana varied from more than half a million Bighas[24] to just a few hundred.[25] One thing that appears to be remarkable for the times is that each Sarkar and each Pargana had been surveyed and assessed and the nature of population, peculiarities of the place, local produce, trade and industries and other useful information had been ascertained. Therefore though the units were larger than Sher Shah's the probability is that they did not suffer from mismanagement or lack of efficient control.

(*ii*) *Administrative Set-up*

The institutions of Akbar according to Abul Fazl were classified under "three branches,"[26] viz. those for the management of the household, those for the management of the army, and those for the management of the empire. They suggest an arbitrary division of affairs of the empire on the basis, most probably, of the affinity of imperial interests and administrative convenience. Of these the household comprised a net-work of departments, viz. the harem, the imperial treasury, the treasury for precious stones, the mint and the department of currency, the departments that looked after imperial journeys, camp equipage, palace decorations, the imperial kitchen, the imperial stores, the supply of fruits and perfumes, the manufacture of robes, the imperial stables for horses, elephants, camels, mules, etc., imperial buildings, roads and other works of public utility, and charity, and finally the military stores and the arsenal. The army comprised the organization of the Mansabdars, the Ahadis and other kinds of troopers, the departments that looked after the branding of horses, the duties of the Waqianawis, the grant of Sanads, donations, alms and sayurghals, the admiralty and certain other minor affairs like marriages, amusements and education. The empire comprised what we regard strictly as public administration departments that took account of divisions of the empire into Subahs, Sarkars, Mahals or Parganahs; their survey

[22] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 330 (as under Sind-Sagar Doab).
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 340 (as under the Sarkar of Hajkun).
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 285 (as under the Sarkar of Delhi).
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 330.
[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Preface by the author and p. 153.

and assessment; the powers and functions of the provincial governors, commanders of the force and the foujdars; the departments of the judiciary, revenue administration and the control of urban areas besides other minor departments.

In this classification of administrative departments it is difficult to understand why matters like the sayurghal, marriage, education, alms and amusements have been brought under the imperial army. Most probably these matters pertained to those branches of public administration which could be brought neither under the imperial household nor under the imperial executive. Regulation of Sayurghals, marriages, education, alms and amusements were more the functions of the Sadr than of any one else. But as a matter of policy Akbar directly controlled the functions of the Sadr, and most of his Sadrs held only lands and no mansabs. The army also was under the direct control of the emperor. And owing to this direct personal control of the emperor, equally maintained over the army, and the office and functions of the Sadr there was created an administrative affinity which most probably led to the classification of these matters under the imperial army.

The scheme of government described by Abul Fazl as operating under Akbar indicates two things. Firstly it indicates what departments composed the imperial government and what functions each of them performed. It also suggests that there was an adequate staff attached to each department with a proper determination of their ranks and functions. These departmental staffs were, as we shall observe subsequently, divided into four sections according to their importance. Secondly this scheme indicates that there was no differentiation between what were purely personal affairs of the monarch and what pertained to the actual public administration. From the management of the harem to the administration of justice, all came, with equal propriety, within the sphere of the imperial government, and therefore were regarded to have greater or lesser claims on the attention and resources of the monarch. All that concerned the interest of the monarch in any form was a part of the imperial government. That is because the king meant the kingdom and through the king alone was the state manifest. He was the source of all power, honour, and justice. To him belonged the state, its entire land and water, as also the people.

(iii) Staff of the Imperial Administration

Even in a scheme of government, of which, it is said Akbar was the sole architect and of which the sole direction and control vested in him, the imperial staff played a very important role. That is indicated by Abul Fazl, who divides them into four significant categories. They were (*i*) the nobles of the state ; (*ii*) the assistants of victory ; (*iii*) companions of the king and (*iv*) the menials, in the order of their importance.

Among the nobles of the state were included the Vakil who "is the emperor's lieutenant in all matters connected with the realm and household";[27] the Mir Mal perhaps in charge of the emperor's privy purse ; the keeper of the seal ; the Mir Bakhshi roughly corresponding to the pay master general ; the Barbegi or Mir Arz, an officer who presents people at the court, their petitions, etc. ; the Qurbegi or bearer of the imperial insignia ; the Mir Tozak or the master of ceremonies ; the Mir Bahri or harbour master general and admiral ; the Mir Barr or superintendent of imperial forests ; the Mir Manzil or quarter master general ; the Khwansalar or superintendent of the imperial kitchen ; the Mir Munshi or private secretary ; the Qushbegi or superintendent of the aviaries ; and Akhtarbegi or superintendent of the stud. After the nobles came the assistants of victory. In this class were included the Wazir or Diwan ; the Mustaufi, i.e. auditor general or Deputy Diwan ; the Sahib-i-Taujih, or accountant of the army ; the Awarjah Nawis or accountant of the daily expenditure at the court ; the Mir Saman or officer in charge of the court furniture, stores department, etc. ; the Naziri Buyutat or superintendent of the imperial workshops ; the Diwani Buyutat or accountant of the imperial stores and workshops ; the Mushrif or clerk of the treasury ; the Waqia Nawis or the imperial court recorder ; and the Amil or collector of the crown lands. All these worked under the orders of the Wazir. The third class designated as the companions of the king included the Sadr, the Mir Adl, the Qazi, the physician, the astronomer, the poet and the soothsayer. The fourth class designated as menials comprised servants "who at court perform the duties about the king." The table servant, the armour bearer, the servant in charge of the Sharbat

[27] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Abul Fazl's Preface, p. v.

and the water, the servant in charge of the mattresses and the wardrobe belong to this class."[28]

This classification is purely artificial and arbitrary, and does not convey any sense of gradation of officers according to ranks and functions. Neither does it suggest that the three classes, viz. the nobles of state, assistants of victory and companions of the king were respectively in charge of the three branches of government known as the imperial household, the imperial army, and the imperial administration. At best it indicates that the first three classes held mansabs of different denominations whereas the fourth class consisted of the menials.

(*iv*) *Ghushal Khana — Inner Council*

In view of this list it is difficult to agree with Smith that there were four principal ministers of Akbar, viz., the Vakil, the Wazir, the Mir Bakshi and Sadr, or with Dr. Ibn Hassan that there were five, Mir Saman[29] making the fifth. It seems that Akbar, after he personally assumed the charge of government, seldom allowed initiative to his officers, however exalted they be or even when they happened to be the heads of their departments. He was in the habit, however, of consulting those people who, in his opinion, were trustworthy. They owed their importance to the degree they were useful to Akbar in the matter of formulating or executing a policy. It is this which determined their position and importance in the state, and not the fact that they were heads of departments. Indeed it did not very much matter if they happened to be other than these. For example, a man like Abul Fazl or Man Singh or Todar Mal or Birbal, except when any of them was absent from the capital could not be excluded from that body, which Akbar consulted on different occasions before disposing of important affairs of government. It has been rightly suggested that there was some sort of a privy council — not of the cabinet type — which the Mughal emperors consulted every day. It was a fair-sized court and known by the name of Ghusal Khana. Its origin is traced to Sher Shah's reign. Only men of the highest rank were admitted to this court and all business of the highest importance demanding strict secrecy

[28] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Abul Fazl's Preface, p. vii.

[29] Dr. Ibn Hasan, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 235–52.

like war, peace, etc. was discussed and decided here.[30] Though nothing explicit is known of this council under Akbar, yet there are passages in the *Ain-i-Akbari* which point to its existence under him. There is no doubt that it became a useful institution in the subsequent reigns.

Abul Fazl writes that Akbar showed himself to the people twice every day — once in the morning when he was visible from outside the awning to people of all ranks and that was known as Darsan; and second time in the state hall "whither he generally goes after the first watch of the day. But this assembly is sometimes announced towards the close of the day or at night."[31] At night the Court is held in "the private audience hall" where on certain occasions matters pertaining to philosophy, religion, social and political institutions were discussed, while "on other occasions matters referring to the empire and the revenue are brought up, when His Majesty gives orders for whatever is to be done in each case."[32] This appears to be the privy council — the Ghusal Khana of Manucci's description — where perhaps assembled the important officers of the state. In the morning when Akbar appeared in the state hall, he frequently sat at a window opening into it and transacted administrative business. We are told that here Akbar "dispenses justice calmly and serenely or examines into the dispensation of justice or the merit of officers . . . .Every officer of government then presents various reports or explains his several wants and is instructed by His Majesty how to proceed."[33] This suggests that while in the evening at "the private audience hall" general principles, regulations and matters referring to the empire and the revenue were discussed before His Majesty and his rulings received, in the morning every officer was expected to place his difficulties or needs before him and sought his guidance. In the morning all heads of departments and all officers of the imperial government besides many others assembled, while in the evening only his confidants, the important officers and nobles met the king. When he did not deliberate upon state affairs, he held conversations with "eloquent philosophers," "virtuous Sufis," and "unprejudiced

[30] Khosla, *Mughal Kingship and Nobility*, pp. 51 et seq.

[31] *Ain-i-Akbari*, (Translated by Blochmann), Vol. I, p. 155, edited by Lt.-Col. D. G. Phillott and published by A. S. Bengal (1927) and (1939).

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 164. [33] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 165.

historians."[34] From this description we can reasonably conclude that Akbar used to consult a body of men, which comprised not merely the highest officers but others in whom he had confidence at a private assembly. The Vakil, the Wazir or Mushrif-i-Diwan, the Sadr-i-Sudur, the Mir Saman or Khan Saman, the Diwan-i-Kul, the Mir Bakhshi,[35] the Mir Arz and the Mir Munshi were some of the highest as most important of his ministers, whose presence he required at the privy council very often, if not every day as Prof. Khosla suggests. Owing to the importance of their offices and functions they must have been in a position to offer advice whether that advice was accepted or not. But certainly they exerted a sobering influence on the king and by the weight of their words might have been often responsible for the modification of the state policy and administrative arrangements despite Akbar's contention that he found no capable minister. Their function was essentially that of secretaries and not of ministers in the modern sense of the word. They enjoyed a great deal of independence within their respective spheres of departmental routine. The king interfered only when something went grievously wrong.

(v) *Inter-linking of Departments*

As for the organization of departments and allotment of functions to officers there was an inter-linking of functions and departments that helped to maintain a balance in the administration and exerted a healthy check over the incompetence of individual officers or discrepancy in the working of departments. Organic separation of powers and division of state activities accordingly into distinct departments did not exist except in a nebulous form. The entire affairs of the empire had been as we have seen divided into three categories, viz., the imperial household, the army and the imperial administration. Obviously each comprised several departmental establishments at the capital. While some of them had their branches in the provinces, since their activities reached the farthest limits of the empire, others did not. Similarly there were subordinate establishments in the provinces which were not linked up with the

[34] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 164.

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 273–74. Ain 12 under the Army (Bk. II) indicates their order of precedence.

corresponding establishments at the capital. Many of such subsidiary departments controlled and promoted an aspect of imperial interest either in the provinces or at the Centre. For example in the imperial household there were departments like the harem, the kitchen, the stores and stables, which had their own staff of officers to superintend, direct, and control, besides clerks and accountants. But they had no branch offices in the provinces to control. At the same time the imperial treasury included within the imperial household, stood on a different footing and had its branches throughout the empire—a department with which the Wazir and the Vakil were connected. The provincial judiciary consisting of the Mir Adl, the Qazi and the Mufti was a more or less a self-sufficient body; and though reports of miscarriage of justice or deliberate injustice may reach the emperor, yet there was no adequate establishment at the Centre to keep in touch with the working of the provincial judiciary and set things right, when they went wrong. Injustice and oppression always merited punishment, but it was effectively inflicted very rarely. Indeed all these departments so far as their routine work was concerned were independent administrative units. But there was visible inter-dependence either direct or indirect, through the institution, firstly of a common imperial service, namely the Mansabdari system, next a Central Daftar or secretariat comprising the departments of the Abwab-ul-mal, the Abwabut-tahawil, the Taujih, and the Wakianavis, and thirdly the imperial Court and council. In the imperial Court and council day by day matters of imperial interest were discussed and policies were formulated; justice was dispensed as a final court of appeal; new decrees pertaining to the general administration of the empire and the life of the people, concerning marriage, education, food, dress, fashions, etc. were promulgated; and merits of persons, paintings, and works of art were assessed. It was the nerve centre of the empire, from which life and direction flowed into other parts.

(*vi*) *Principal Officers*

(*a*) *Vakil.*

Before we review the working of these departments at the centre, their inter-linking and control over provincial governments, it will be worthwhile to take note of the functions of some of the principal

officials of the empire. The Vakil obviously stands at the head of all officials and "is the emperor's lieutenant in all matters connected with the realm and the household. He graces the council by his wisdom, and settles with penetration the great affairs of the realm. Promotion and degradation, appointment and dismissal depend on his insight . . . . Although the financial offices are not under his immediate superintendence, yet he receives the returns, from the heads of financial offices and wisely keeps abstracts of their returns."[36] He is virtually the vicegerent of the king and is supposed to have attained the four degrees of perfection defined by Akbar later in his reign, viz. readiness to sacrifice Jan (life), Mal (property), Din (religion) and Namus (honour). On all documents pertaining to financial transactions, land-grants, appointments, etc., his seal was invariably affixed, which signified his sanction. He controlled the Sipahsalars and their establishments in the Subahs, supervised the imperial household, and directed the formation of armies and formulation of important measures of administration. His function was, in a way, far more arduous than that of any other minister. He was like the prime minister, a link between the king and the government. Whenever there was a competent Vakil the king was less obtrusive, while if the king was capable like Akbar then he was the sole driving force, and thought it to be the grace of God that he "found no capable minister." It may be pointed out that Akbar had in mind an officer of the type of Vakil and Wazir, when he said that he found no capable minister. The Vakil was frequently a distinguished general. Bairam Khan, Munim Khan, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana and Mirza Aziz Koka who held the office were all generals of great eminence, skill, and bravery. As regards his control over the imperial finances Abul Fazl says that "although the financial offices are not under his immediate superintendence, yet he receives the returns from the heads of all financial offices and wisely keeps abstracts of their returns."[37] "When the Wazir fails to unravel the mysteries of finance and finds it beyond his own ability he refers to the Vakil."[38] The Vakils during the reign were Bairam Khan, Munim Khan, Atgah Khan, Bahadur Khan, Khwajah Jahan, Khan Khanan Mirza Khan, Khani Azam Mirza Aziz Koka.

(*b*) *Wazir or Mushrif-i-Diwan.* Next to the Vakil in importance came the Vizier, also called Diwan. "He is the lieutenant of the

[36] *Ibid.*, Preface to Vol. I, p. 5. [37] *Ibid.* [38] *Ibid.*

emperor in financial matters, superintends the imperial treasuries, and checks all accounts. He is the banker of the cash of the revenue, the cultivator of the wilderness of the world . . . . He is in reality a book-keeper. He explains all matters which appear too intricate for the Mustaufi ; and whatever is beyond his ability he refers to the Vakil." He was the head of "the collectors and those entrusted with income and expenditure,"[39] that is, of the entire finance department, which included what we call in modern times the departments of the civil and military audits and accounts, land revenue, civil and military stores, the imperial exchequer, the general records, and the secret service. Because of the importance of this branch of government, the staff has won the appellation of "the assistants of Victory" from Abul Fazl, and might have been regarded as such by Akbar. The Wazirs of the empire under Akbar were Mir Azizullah Turbati, Khwajah Jalaluddin Mahmud of Khorasan, Khwajah Muinuddin Farankhudi, Khwajah Abdul Majid Asaf Khan, Vizir Khan, Muzaffar Khan, Raja Todar Mall, Khwajah Shah Mansur of Shiraz, Qulij Khan and Khwajah Shamsuddin Khawafi.

In this connection we may take note of two other dignitaries that Abul Fazl mentions, viz. the Mushrif-i-Diwan and the Diwan-i-Kul. According to him when a person fit to be the Vakil is not available, kings often "make a choice of a man who has some of his qualities and appoint him Mushrif-i-Diwan, which office is higher in rank than that of the Diwan, but lower than that of the Vakil."[40] Then while describing the method of payment to the Begums, princes, etc. he says that "the Mushrif (accountant) writes out the receipt, which is signed by the recipient and is then sent to the Diwan for orders. It is then signed by the Mushrif, the Mustaufi, the Nazir-i-Buyutat, the Diwan-i-Kul, the Khan Saman, the Mushrif of the Diwan."[41] Here we have the names of the officers mentioned in the ascending order. The Diwan-i-Kul appears to be like a chief controller of finances, that is, in charge of audits and accounts while the Mushrif-i-Diwan is different, and like the chancellor of the exchequer or the finance minister who is above him. That seems to be corroborated by another statement of his, where he describes the order of the seals, which, by the way, indicates the official order of precedence. He says that after royal Farmans, Parwanchas, and Barats are written out and properly folded, "on the first fold . . .

[39] *Ibid.* [40] *Ibid.*, Preface to Vol. I, p. 6. [41] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 273.

the Vakil puts his seal ; opposite to it but a little lower, the Mushrif of the Diwan puts his seal, in such a manner that half of it goes to the second fold. Then in like manner but a little lower comes the seal of the Sadr . . . . The Mir Mal, the Khan Saman, the Parwanchi, etc. seal on the second fold, but in such a manner that a smaller part of their seals goes to the first fold. The seals of the Diwan, and the Bakhshi do not go beyond the edge of the second fold, whilst the Diwan-i-Juz,[42] the Bakhshi-juz,[43] and the Diwan-i-Buyutat put their seals on the third fold. The Mustaufi puts his seal on the fourth and the Sahibi Taujih on the fifth fold."[44] This account clearly indicates that next to the Vakil in rank was the Mushrif-i-Diwan, then came the Sadr, then the Mir or Khan Saman and then came the Diwan, that is the Diwan-i-Kul, and the Bakhshi that is Mir Bakhshi. If as Blochmann suggests[45] the Diwan-i-Kul was the same as the Wazir then, as Abul Fazl says in his preface to the Aini Akbari, Vol. I, the Mir Saman must be "under his orders." But from the order of affixing their seals on the royal decrees, it is clear firstly that Diwan-i-Kul was inferior while Mushrif-i-Diwan was superior to Mir Saman ; and secondly that the only officer who came next to the Vakil was the Mushrif-i-Diwan. About him Abul Fazl says that his office was "higher in rank than that of the Diwan but lower than that of the Vakil." That description applies also to the rank of the Wazir. Hence we may conclude that Mushrif-i-Diwan corresponded to the Wazir, who controlled the Diwans of the empire and the Amils of the royal domains and many others. There is just a possibility that the office of Vakil was generally hard to fill, owing to the immense responsibility and power attached to it. When therefore a fully competent and absolutely reliable Vakil could not be found a Mushrif-i-Diwan was appointed to relieve the Vakil of some of his more arduous duties and at the same time to extend a helping hand to the Diwan-i-Kul. The Diwan-i-Kul was the controller of the finances of the civil side of the administration while the Mir Bakhshi was controller of the military side. The Mushrif-i-Diwan or the Wazir controlled both when he was required to discharge some of the duties of the Vakil. The Diwan-i-Kul was

[42] Diwan-i-Juz means Provincial Diwan.
[43] Bakshi Juz means Provincial Bakshi.
[44] *Aini Akbari*, Vo. I, pp. 273–74.
[45] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 495, footnote.

the chief of the Diwans of the empire. Now there were as many Diwan-i-Juz or provincial Diwans as there were Subahs, that is, at first twelve and then fifteen. Further for each department of government there was a Diwan. It is definitely mentioned that the imperial workshops had a Diwan ;[46] the accounts of the jagirs were kept by a Diwan-i-Jagir ;[47] there was a separate Diwan for the Ahadis[48] and in the department of public charities — Sayurghals, there was a Diwan-i-Saadat.[49] To control these subordinates was a hard enough task for the Diwan-i-Kul. Hence the control of the treasuries, and there were twelve throughout the empire, viz. nine for different kinds of cash payments and three for precious stones, gold and inlaid jewellery, devolved upon the Mushrif-i-Diwan or Wazir. In this task he had two chief assistants, viz. the Mustaufi and the Mushrif of the treasury.[50] If the Wazir was the chief controller of the imperial treasuries, the Mustaufi was the deputy chief controller, and the Mushrif was what Abul Fazl says "the treasurer general at the court."[51] As chief controller of the treasury or chancellor of the exchequer the Mushrif-i-Diwan naturally controlled the Diwan-i-Kul and the Mir Bakshi, who had to apply to him for their civil and military disbursement. In that capacity again he was regarded as the chief controller of the imperial mints. For, it is said that the currency underwent several changes under Raja Todar Mall and Qulij Khan when they were Wazirs.[52]

(c) *Mir Bakshi.* As for the Mir Bakshi, "his duties as defined by Irvine included the recruiting of the army, and the keeping up of certain registers, comprising the list of high officials (Mansabdars) in proper form ; the roster of palace guards ; the rules as to grants of pay ; the list of officers paid in cash, etc. When an important battle was being arranged it was his business to assign posts to the several commanders in the van, centre, wings, or rearguard and to lay a 'present state' or muster roll of the army before the sovereign. He might or might not assume a high command himself."[53] He combined the offices of paymaster and adjutant general. He was the chief controller of military accounts, under whom served the Sahibi Taujih or military accountant, Bakhshis, and Sub-Bakhshis.[54]

[46] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 272.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 271.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 259.
[49] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 278.
[50] *Ibid.*, Author's Preface to Vol. I, p. 6.
[51] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 14.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 32–34.
[53] Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 358.
[54] *Aini Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 271.

The Bakhshi-juz or provincial Bakhshi was under him also. There was a separate Bakhshi or paymaster for the Ahadis or gentleman-troopers, for the imperial workshops, and several for the army department. The Mir Bakhshis have been Khwajah Jahan, Khwajah Tahir of Sijistan, Maulana Habi Bihzadi, Maulana Darwish Muhammad of Mashad, Maulana Ishqu Muqim of Khorasan, Sultan Mahmud of Badakhshan, Lashkar Khan, Shahbaz Khan, Rai Purkhotam, Shaikh Faridi Bukhari, Qazi Ali of Baghdad, Jafar Beg Asaf Khan, Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmad and Khwajagi Fathullah. These fourteen Mir Bakhshis were appointed during Akbar's reign of fifty years, which gives an average of three and a half years approximately to each. This short tenure of office is indicative of frequent changes which is an essential condition of efficiency and honesty, especially in the matter of such a responsible appointment. The Mir Bakhshi resembled the Diwan-i-kul in his financial duties; but only with this difference that while the former dealt with grants of stipends in jagir or cash, made "for military services" the latter dealt with those made for non-military services for example "the men engaged in the imperial elephant and horse stables and in the waggon department,"[55] or with the salaries of the begums and princes, the stipends of people under the care of the Diwani Saadat, i.e. the grant of Sayurghals, the salaries of some of the officers in the workshops, etc. He was helped by the Mustaufi, his deputy and controlled by the Mushrif-i-Diwan or Wazir, the head of the civil and military finance of the government or the finance minister. It may be observed here that when the writers on the administrative system of Akbar characterize it as essentially military they forget that there was an important enough civil side to his government with a separate establishment to control its finances and internal working all under the Diwan-i-kul.

(*d*) *Sadr-i-Sudur*. Like the Diwan-i-kul the Sadr-i-Sudur was the chief of a purely civil department. His duties are as varied as they are important. He is something like an administrator general, grand inquisitor, controller of the public charities, the highest judicial officer, and the reader of Khutba in one. His class or status is that of the companion of the king. Before Akbar's accession to the throne, Sadr-i-Sudur or Sadr-i-Jahan, as he was generally styled, wielded immense influence and prestige firstly because he legalized

[55] *Aini Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 272.

the julus or accession of a new king, and secondly because he sanctioned all public charities. Charities in land called Madad-i-maash, and in cash called wazifah, were conferred upon four classes of men "first on enquirers after wisdom . . . secondly on such as toil and practice self-denial and . . . have renounced from the society of men, thirdly on such as are weak and poor, . . . fourthly on honourable men of gentle birth who from want of knowledge are unable to provide for themselves by taking up a trade."[56] But before grants are made to these persons circumstances have to be enquired into by experienced and just officers with a kindly disposition. "Such an officer is called Sadr. The Qazi and the Mir Adl are under his orders. He is assisted in his important duties by a clerk, who has to look after the financial business, and is now-a-days styled Diwan-i-Saadat."[57] He was the head of the judiciary of the empire, which consisted of the provincial Sadrs with their Qazis and Mir Adls. But since justice was more or less a local affair, he was not a presiding officer of the highest court of appeal in the empire. There was no gradation of courts of justice. The only court of final appeal was the emperor himself. Hence the duty of the Sadr-i-Sudur was more to keep a control over the provincial Sadrs and grant public charities than to hear appeals from provinces. As the ecclesiastical head he was the guardian of the religion, social morals, and the sacred laws. But under Akbar, as we have already noticed, the importance of the office was very much reduced when he divided the duties of the chief Sadr between several provincial Sadrs. As Abul Fazl says: "His Majesty with the view of teaching wisdom and promoting true piety pays much attention to this department, and appoints disinterested men as Sadrs of districts and Sadrs of the realm."[58] The Sadrs of the empire were Mir Futhullah, Shaikh Gadai, Khwajagi Muhammed Salih, Maulana Abdul Baqi, Shaikh Abdun Nabi, Sultan Khwajah and Miran Sadr Jahan Mufti.

(*e*) *Mir Sāmān*. The Mir Saman was in charge of all the imperial stores and workshops. Under him worked the Diwan-i-Buyutat, the Nazir-i-Buyutat, the Khwan Salar, and the Mir Bakawal and others. The first two were the controller of the stores and workshops maintained by the emperor. There were "nearly one hundred" imperial workshops, for each of which separate treasurers had been

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 278.
[57] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 278.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

appointed.[59] The general supervisor of the workshops and stores was known by the name of Naziri Buyutat, while the Diwani Buyutat looked to their financial side. "The receipts and expenditure of the imperial workshops, the deposits and payments of salaries to the workmen . . . the allowances on account of grain, grass, etc. both in shape of cash and stores" were matters for the Diwan-i-Buyutat.[60] Along with the Mir Bakawal or master of the kitchen he collected for the imperial kitchen whatever will be necessary for three months. The controller of the kitchen department was the Khwānsālār. And he obviously came under the control of the Khan-i-Saman. The imperial arsenal, in which were stores of all sorts of weapons of war, armours of various kinds, guns, matchlocks, etc. must also have been under his control. For, many of the imperial workshops manufactured these, and they were under the control of the Khan-i-Saman.

(*f*) *Mir Arz.* The Mir Arz had a variety of functions chiefly connected with the imperial palace. A trustworthy Mansabdar "fully acquainted with all ceremonies of the court is appointed as Mir Arz."[61] All orders of the King were communicated through him and the commander of the palace guard. These two were "day and night in attendance about the palace, ready for any orders His Majesty may issue."[62] He had therefore to certify as correct the daily reports of the court proceedings, recorded by the Wakianavis department.[63] They were then submitted to the King for approval.

(*g*) *Mir Munshi.* The Mir Munshi was the private secretary of the emperor, and was entrusted with the entire correspondence of the emperor both of general and diplomatic character. He was always a master of literary style and a clever calligraphist. We hear, for example, of Muhammed Asghar, who was the Mir Munshi of Humayun and later on of Akbar. He won the title of Ashraf Khan from Akbar and served as his private secretary till the tenth year of his reign.[64] The most influential as also highly accomplished private secretary that Akbar had was Abul Fazl. Akbar had immense confidence in him and a great respect for his learning and abilities. The correspondence that Akbar carried on with the contemporary kings of Asia like the Shah of Persia or Abdulla Khan Uzbeg of

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 262.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 267.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 269.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

Central Asia was generally drafted by his secretary Abul Fazl. Confidential discussions he often had with him, and a few others who shared his confidence.

(*h*) *Akhtābegi.* Besides these, there were a few others who performed duties around the emperor and occupied high positions. One of them was the Akhtābegi, in charge of the imperial stables. Abul Fazl says that Akbar was very fond of horses because "he believes them to be of great importance in the three branches of government and for expeditions of conquest." There were at one time twelve thousand horses in the imperial stables.[65] Akbar knew the important role of the cavalry of the army and hence took immense care of them. "The Atbegi is in charge of all horses belonging to the government. He directs all officers charged with the management of the horses. This office is one of the highest of the state, and is only held by grandees of high rank; at present it is filled by the Khān Khānān."[66] There was a huge establishment of numerous officials and servants under him. There were Daroghahs holding high mansabs, Mushrifs, inspectors, horse doctors, officers in charge of the saddlery and trappings, trainers, grooms, etc.

(*i*) *Qurbegi and Mir Mal.* Others were the Qurbegi or bearer of the imperial insignia, and the Mir Māl or the officer in charge of the emperor's private purse, etc., whose duties, it is difficult to describe with any degree of accuracy or certainty, because of the lack of relevant data. Mir Māl may be the person of whom Abul Fazl speaks in the following manner. "His Majesty entrusts one of the nobility with a large sum of money, part of which is carried in a purse." Again he may be the same person who "keeps in the public audience hall some gold and silver for the needy," and in the palace a kror of dams in readiness by the order of the emperor.[67]

WORKING OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE

After this brief review of the functions of some of the principal officers of the imperial government we may attempt a description of the working of some of the important departments of state.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 145. The Khan Khanan is Abdur Rahim, Bairam Khan's son.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

(*a*) *Imperial Treasury*

First in point of importance came the treasury. Akbar in his early years found a very competent officer in Itimad Khan, who became his treasurer general and set many things right by making very salutary regulations. Lands which paid rents to the imperial exchequer were separated from the jagir lands, and zealous and upright men who were appointed to realize revenues came to be known as Karoris. The rules of collection, and transmission to the imperial treasury, were that "whenever a (provincial) treasurer had collected the sum of two lakhs of dams he had to send it to the treasurer general at the court together with a memorandum specifying the quality of the sum. A separate treasurer was appointed for the peshkush (tributes) receipts, another for receiving heirless property, another for nazar (presents) receipts, and another for the monies expended in weighing the royal person and for charitable donations. Proper regulations were also made for the disbursements; and honest superintendents, Daroghas and clerks were appointed. The sums required for the annual expenditure are paid at the general treasury to each cash keeper of the disbursements and correct receipts granted for them."[68] The imperial treasury had twelve branches, nine for the different kinds of cash payment and three for precious stones, gold and inlaid jewellery. Each imperial workshop had its separate treasurer, who had to keep daily, monthly, quarterly and yearly accounts of the receipts and disbursements and submit them to the treasurer general.[69]

(*b*) *Imperial Mint*

Next in importance to the imperial treasury came the imperial Mint. It was a highly technical department, in which were employed a large number of trusted officers and workmen expert in minting. There were throughout the empire several mints, each under the supervision of an adequate staff. They were controlled by the Subahdar of the province and ultimately by the Diwan-i-Mushrif or Wazir at the capital. According to Abul Fazl gold coins were struck at four places only in the empire, viz. at the capital, in Bengal, Ahmedabad and Kabul. Silver and copper coins were also minted

[68] *Ibid.* [69] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

there, besides at the ten places, viz. Allahabad, Agra, Ujjain, Surat, Delhi, Patna, Kashmere, Lahore, Multan and Tanda. Copper coins only were struck in twenty-eight other towns, viz. Ajmer, Oudh, Atak, Alwar, Badaon, Benaras, Bhakkar, Bahrah, Patan, Jaunpur, Jalandhar, Hardwar, Hisar Firoza, Kalpi, Gwalior, Gorakhpur, Kalanaur, Lakhnau, Mandu, Nagor, Sarhind, Sialkot, Saronj, Sharanpur, Sarangpur, Sambhal, Kanauj and Ranthambor.[70] This list could not be complete because it was prepared several years before the death of Akbar. Nevertheless, it gives an idea of the places where mints were situated.

As for the organization of a mint we are told that the Darogah was in charge of its entire working, and was the real chief. Under him came the Sarafi, whose chief duty was to determine the degrees of purity of the coins. The Amin appears to be something like a general supervisor of the workmen. "He assists the Darogah and the other workmen, maintains that which is right and prevents quarrels." The Mushrif writes down the daily expenditure and keeps a systematic day book. The treasurer "watches over the profits and is upright in all his dealings." These were controlling officers. The rest were really workmen, employed in the various processes of minting, such as the weighman, the melter of the ore, the plate maker, the melter of the refined metal, the Zarrab who cuts off the gold, silver, and copper ingots into round pieces of the size of the coined money, the engraver, the Sikkachi who places the round pieces of metal between two dies and by the strength of the hammer both sides are stamped, and a few others.[71] There were several kinds of coins each of differing weight and fineness.

(c) *Imperial Household*

Next came the imperial household. It was a little town by itself. There were more than five thousand women, each having a separate apartment. They were divided into sections and managing staff for each section had its duties specified. There were women Darogahs, superintendents, and clerks attached to each section. The whole establishment formed an imperial department, everything being in proper order. The monthly salaries of the women of the highest rank varied from Rs. 1,028 to Rs. 1,610, while of the servants from

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33. [71] *Ibid.*, pp. 20–22.

from Rs. 20 to Rs. 51 and from Rs. 2 to Rs. 40 a month. There was a "clever and zealous writer" who superintended the expenditure of the harem and kept an account of the cash and stores. There were Tahbildars (cash keepers), sub-Tahbildars and the general treasurer, who received petitions from the women and made payments to them. Several ministers were connected at various stages with the management, while the Vakil or the emperor had the final control. "The inside of the harem is guarded by sober and active women ; the most trustworthy of them are placed about the apartments of His Majesty. Outside the enclosure the eunuchs are placed ; and at a proper distance, there is a guard of faithful Rajputs, beyond whom are the porters of the gate."[72]

(*d*) *Imperial Army*

Perhaps the most important, useful and expensive department of state was the army, whose ramifications practically pervaded the entire governmental machinery. With this were connected a number of departments which were like feeders or auxiliaries to it. The imperial stores and stables, the department that looked after the muster of men and animals, and the branding of horses, the establishments for the payment and control of the Mansabdars, the Ahadis, etc., all were inter-linked and together formed the army department. Abul Fazl opens his description of the army by saying "that His Majesty guides the imperial army by his excellent advice and counsel, and checks in various ways the attempts at insubordination."[73]

The army fell into three divisions. Firstly there were those who were supplied by the Zamindars of the country, of course when they were ordered to do so. They may be considered as irregulars. Then there was what we may say a sort of standing army consisting of those cavalry troopers who "are compelled by His Majesty to mark their horses with the imperial brand. They are subject to divisions into ranks and to musters." Another part of the standing army consisted of the Ahadis, and those that were "employed to collect the revenue" and known as Bārāwardi. The third division of the army consisted of the infantry, of which there were several kinds. They were, like the cavalry, a sort of standing army.

[72] *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47. [73] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

Mansabdāri System

The bulk of the army consisted of cavalry troops, since the Mughals by tradition depended more upon cavalry than upon infantry. The immense care that was taken to brand the horses supports this conclusion. Indeed the entire Mansabdāri system was a gradation of the commanders of the cavalry troops. No Mansabdar ever maintained any infantry. There were theoretically sixty-six,[74] but actually thirty-three, grades of mansabs.[75] There were three mansabs ranging between 10,000 and 7,000 that were reserved for the three princes of the royal blood, and the remaining thirty grades were held by the rest. These comprised the commands of 5,000, 4,500, 4,000, 3,500, 3,000, 2,500, 2,000, 1,500, 1,250, 1,000, 900, 800, 700, 600, 500, 400, 350, 300, 250, 200, 150, 120, 100, 80, 60, 50, 40, 30, 20 and 10. The commanders were required to be present regularly with their contingents at the musters, when the horses were branded or if they were already branded, carefully examined, and a descriptive roll was taken down of all men, animals, etc.

Rules of Appointment and Payment

The rule of appointment to these commands was "that every Amir should commence as a commander of twenty (bisti) and be ready with his followers to mount guard . . . as had been ordered ; and when according to the rule he had brought the horses of his twenty troopers to be branded he was then to be made a Sadi or commander of 100 or more. They were likewise to keep elephants, horses, and camels in proportion to their Mansabs, according to the same rule. When they had brought to the musters their new contingent complete, they were to be promoted according to their merits and circumstances to the post of Hazari, Duhazari and even Panj-hazari, which is the highest Mansab ; but if they do not do well at the musters, they were to be put down."[76] In spite of these regulations the Mansabdars often cheated the government. They "put most of their own servants and mounted attendants into soldier's clothes, brought them to the musters and performed everything according to their duties."[77] When they got back to

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 249.
[75] *Ibid.*, pp. 320–587.
[76] Badaoni, Vol. II, p. 190.
[77] *Ibid.*

their Jagirs they gave leave to their mounted attendants. Akbar tried to remedy these defects by making "the branding of horses compulsory in addition to the descriptive roll system."[78] He appointed five experienced officers who looked after the condition of the men, their horses, and the stipulated amount of pay. The men were assembled in an open place, where they were given in charge of the five officers for drawing up their descriptive rolls. At the bottom of these rolls their pay was entered, and having been countersigned by these officers, handed over to a general superintendent or Darogah of the Dagh. The Darogah presented the men and their roll before the emperor, who after a review ordered the pay to be increased or decreased. "When the roll is thus certified, it is also signed by the Waqiah Nawis, the Mir Arz, and the officer commanding the guards. On the strength of this certificate the Darogah of the Dagh marks the horses."[79]

With this careful process of branding and maintaining a descriptive roll Akbar seems to have attained some measure of success. But he could not have succeeded in fully eliminating the defects inherent in the system. For Badaoni says "the whole country with the exception of the Khalisah lands (domains) was held by the Amirs as Jagirs." They were required to bring their horses for muster and for repetition of the branding work once every year. But there were Amirs, who did not bring their horses to muster even once in twelve years, because their Jagirs were very remote. There were frequent occasions when the Mansabdars presented their horses at muster once in three or six years.[80] That was a glaring defect. Only those "near servants of His Majesty who have no leisure to look after jagirs, receive their monthly salaries in cash and muster their horses every eighteen months."[81] But the general rule of payment to all commanders provided that they should have their monthly grants "according to the condition of their contingents. An officer whose contingent comes up to his Mansab is put into the first class of his rank; if his contingent is one half and upwards of the fixed number, he is put into the second class; the third class contains those contingents which are still less."[82] Accordingly it was laid down that a commander of 5,000 of the first class should receive Rs. 30,000, of the second class Rs. 29,000,

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 232. [79] Badaoni, Vol. II, p. 255.
[80] *Ibid.*, p. 257. [81] *Ibid.*, [82] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

and of the third class Rs. 28,000 a month. But this was only on paper, far removed from actual practice, which we shall examine later on.

Next to these troopers maintained by Mansabdars came the Ahadis, somewhat like gentlemen-troopers. They were included among "the immediate servants of His Majesty and are dignified by their independence." They were given proper training and had their own establishments with a separate Diwan, treasurer, Bakshi and a chief or commander, who invariably was a great Amir of the state. "On joining the service an Ahadi generally finds his own horse; but afterwards he gets it from the government." Some of them could be allowed to maintain more than one horse and the limit was five. Ahadis were mustered every four months, when they received their pay certificate signed by the Diwan and the Bakshi. Many Ahadis received as much as Rs. 500 as their salary per month. Their recruitment was more carefully done than that of the ordinary troopers.[83] They were also employed in the establishment for the manufacture of the field guns.[84]

The troopers known as Bārāwardi were generally of poorer stuff. "They receive the means of keeping a horse, and have lands assigned to themselves, without being obliged to mark their horses with the imperial brand."[85] They were employed in the task of collecting revenue of the domain lands — Khalisah, and received as salary about Rs. 75 a month generally.

The third branch of the army — the infantry, fell into several divisions. The Banduqchis or matchlockmen came first and there were 12,000 such men in the service of the emperor. They had their own clerk, treasurer and a Darogah, besides commissioned and non-commissioned officers. They were divided into five classes for purposes of payment of salaries. A thousand of these men were employed to guard the palace and were called the Darbaris. The second class of the infantry comprised the Khidmatiyas whose duty was "to guard the environs of the palace and see that certain orders were carried out. Their chief bore the title of Khidmat Rai, who is always near the person of His Majesty." The third class comprised the runners called Mewrahs who "bring from great distances with zeal anything that may be required. They are

[83] *Aini Akbari*, Vol. I, pp. 259–60.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 119.
[85] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

excellent spies."[86] There were about a thousand in the employ of the king. Besides there were the gladiators or Shamsherbaz, the wrestlers or Pahlwans, the slaves or Chelahs, and the palki-bearers or Kahars, who were also included in the infantry division of the army. They were paid according to the nature of their duties. Of the Kahars or palki-bearers it is said there were several thousands at Court and the best of them "came from the Dakhin and Bengal."[87]

The last class of the infantry was known as the Dākhili troops, who were paid by the state but were under the orders of the Mansabdars. They were known in the descriptive rolls as "half troopers" or Nimāh Suwārān. A fourth part of them were matchlock-bearers, and the others carried bows and arrows. The carpenters, workers in iron, water-carriers, and pioneers belonged to this class.[87a]

When in active service the rule was that in the contingent of a commander of ten thousand others as high as hazaris (commanders of thousand) served; in that of a commander of eight thousand Mansabdars up to eight hundred Hastsadis served; in that of the commander of seven thousand Mansabdars up to seven hundred served; in that of a commander of five thousand others up to five hundred served, and in that of a commander of five hundred, those as high as one hundred served. Mansabdars of lower ranks than hundred did not serve in the contingents of high Mansabdars.[88]

Besides active service, this imperial cavalry was employed for mounting guard at the palace. "The imperial army" says Abul Fazl "has been divided into twelve parts, each of which mounts guard for the space of one month. This gives all troops, whether near or far an opportunity to come to court. . . . But those who are stationed at the frontiers or told off for any important duty, merely send in reports of their exact condition. The imperial army has been divided into twelve other divisions, each of which is selected in turn to come to court for one year and do duty near the person of His Majesty."[89] This statement suggests that some of the imperial army had been always stationed at the frontiers and some of them were by turn in attendance on the emperor. Apart from these, some must have been placed at the disposal of the Sipāhsālārs and Faujdārs in the provinces, and yet some others must have been required for

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 262.
[87] *Ibid.*, p. 264.
[87a] *Aini Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 264.
[88] *Ibid.*, pp. 241–42.
[89] *Aini Akbari*, Vol. I, pp. 267–68.

garrisoning certain strategic points and fortresses. It may, however, be mentioned that quite a large part of the standing army comprising the infantry, matchlockmen, and cavalry remained constantly at the capital ready for service.

(*e*) *Imperial Secretariat*

We have already mentioned elsewhere that the administration of the empire worked and held together by a central system of imperial service, called the Mansabdari system, by the imperial court and council, and by the central Daftar or secretariat. The secretariat comprised the departments of the Abwab-ul-Mal, the Abwab-ul-Tahawil, the Taujih, the Wakianavis and the Sayurghals. The first three combined corresponded to what is known now-a-days as the finance (military and civil) department, the Wakianavis was something like a central intelligence and records department, while the Sayurghal was the department for the grant of charities, endowments, etc. We may examine some of the features of these departments that composed the secretariat of the empire in order to get an idea of the close inter-linking of the various branches of government and how they functioned as an organic whole.

For, with the departments of Abwab-ul-Mal, Abwab-ul-Tahawil and the Taujih were connected all the departments of state, viz. imperial household, imperial treasury, imperial workshops and stores, Jagirs, Sayurghals, military accounts, appointments, revenues of the empire, etc. And the department of Wakianavis maintained a day-to-day record of whatever transpired at the Court, the capital, and the empire. It was something like a central intelligence department, whose utility was very great for understanding the problems of the empire. Those in charge of the Daftar were "impartial officers" under the "immediate control" of the emperor. Their staff consisted of "clever, honest, incorruptible, experienced" writers or clerks. Similarly the dpartment of Wakianavis was under the immediate control of the emperor, who employed a number of clerks and officers to run it. The Mir Arz, the Risaldar, the Wakianavis, and the Parwanchi in the descending order were the officers connected with this department.

The Abwab-ul-Mal made all entries referring to the revenue of the country. This part of the Daftar explained the revenue of

the empire, recorded the details of any increase or decrease, and specified every source of income in the empire like presents, tributes, etc. It must have been a very big department, whose ramifications spread over the whole empire. It took account of the periodical changes that were introduced in the system of revenue collection, the assessment of the land after survey, the various kinds of taxes, the areas under cultivation in the various Subahs, the quality of land and their produce, etc., etc. With this department must have been connected the Amils or collectors, the Fotahdars or treasurers, the Sipahsalars or governors of the Subahs. The imperial treasury and the imperial mint must have been also linked up. Then the department of Abwab-ul-Tahawil explained the manner in which the sums for the household have been expended ; it contained the debits and credits entered on account of the cash-keepers employed at court, and lastly the accounts of daily expenditure, etc. for things bought and sold. With this department were connected all the spending establishments on the civil side ; and therefore, the imperial harem, the imperial workshops, the imperial stores, arsenals, imperial journeys, Sayurghals, etc. must have been linked up with it. Lastly the Taujih contained all entries referring to the pay of the army and showed the manner in which the pay was given out. The institution of military Mansabs, the establishment of the infantry, the imperial stables, the admiralty, etc. must have been connected with it. In the Abwab-ul-Tahawil and the Taujih were kept all sanads, that is written statements of accounts, or vouchers on the basis of which people received payment of their claims. Here came the Farman-i-Sabtis, that is, royal charters of appointment to the offices of Vakil, Wazir, Bakhshi, Sadr and Sipahsalar and the ranks of Amir-ul-Umra, Mansabs, etc. They were issued when Sayurghals were granted or people were appointed for taking charge of a newly conquered territory. When a Mansab or a jagir for military service is granted, the papers passed through the Diwan-i-jagir, the Bakhshis, and the Bakhshi general to the emperor for confirmation and grant of salary certificate, and then again through the Sahibi Taujih, the Mustaufi, the Mushrifi Diwan, and the Vakil for final disposal, and issue of the Farman (of appointment) with a salary certificate. When payments in cash were ordered, generally for men in the imperial workshops and stables the papers passed through the Sahibi Taujih, the Nazir and the Diwani Buyutat, the

Diwani Kul, the Khani-Saman, the Mushrifi Diwan and the Vakil, before they were laid before the emperor and finally disposed of. The Farmans in favour of Mansabdars were similarly made up, of course without being sent to the officers of the workshops and stables. In the case of the Sayurghals the Farmans after having been signed by the Mustaufi were entered in the Daftars of the Diwan-i-Saadat, and then signed and sealed by the Sadr and the Diwan-i-kul. When Parwanchas (that was the technical name) were issued for payment of salaries to the Begums, the princes, the people under the care of Diwani Saadat, Chelahs (slaves), and certain officers in workshops, and of allowances for the food of Bargir horses, the papers passed through the Mushrif, the Mustaufi, the Naziri Buyutat, the Diwan-i-kul, the Khan-i-Saman and the Mushrif-i-Dewan. In the case of Parwanchas for the Ahadis, the papers passed through the Mustaufi, the Diwan, the Bakhshis and the Ahadibashi or commander of the Ahadis.[90]

But if dealings of a strictly administrative nature were recorded in these three departments, in the department of the Wakianavis was maintained a daily record of whatever transpired throughout the empire whether of administrative or general interest. In this department were recorded the "orders and the doings of His Majesty and whatever the heads of departments report ; what His Majesty eats and drinks ; when he sleeps and when he rises ; the etiquette in the state hall ; the time His Majesty spends in the harem ; when he goes to the general and private assemblies ; the nature of hunting parties ; the slaying of animals ; when he marches and when he halts ; the acts of His Majesty as the spiritual guide of the nation ; vows made to him ; his remarks ; what books he has had read out to him ; what alms he bestows ; what presents he makes ; the daily and monthly exercises which he imposes upon himself ; appointments to Mansabs ; contingents of troops ; salaries ; Jagirs ; Irmas money ; Sayurghals ; the increase or decrease of taxes, contracts ; sales ; money transfers ; Peshkash ; despatch ; the issue of orders ; the papers which are signed by His Majesty ; the arrival of reports ; the minutes thereon ; the arrivals of courtiers ; their departures ; the fixing of periods (of inspection) ; the inspection of guards ; battles ; victories and peace ; obituaries of well-known persons ; animal fights and bettings on them ; the dying of horses ; capital

[90] *Ibid.*, pp. 270–72.

punishments ; pardons granted by His Majesty ; the proceedings of general assemblies ; marriages, births ; chaughan games, chaupar nard, chess, card games, etc. ; extraordinary phenomena ; the harvests of the year ; the reports on events."[91] The department, as it will be seen from the above, prepared something like a bulletin of daily events at the court and the empire, the imperial decrees, the imperial engagements and amusements, appointments, promotions or punishments, condition of crops, the reports received from the provinces of the empire, etc. This supplemented the work done at the other three departments. Very often their work was only a repetition of what was done in those departments. But as a central intelligence or record office it did most valuable work. There was a rule like that of Sher Shah that all district collectors — Amils of the provinces must submit to the Court every month "a statement of the condition of the people, of the jagirdars, the neighbouring residents, the submission of the rebellious, the market prices, the current rents of tenements, the state of the destitute poor, of artificers and all other centingencies."[92] These reports were laboriously incorporated in the records of the Wakianavis department, as also the reports brought by the secret agencies or spies. Several writers were employed and after a day's account was completely recorded, it was corrected by one of the emperor's servants, and laid before him for approval. It was then abridged and duplicates were kept. Lastly all these were sealed and signed by various officials to testify to their correctness and preserved in the office of the Wakianavis.

The only remaining department of the secretariat is that of Sayurghals. We have already noticed how the department, also known as the Diwan-i-Saadat concerned itself with the grant of subsistence allowances called Wazifāh (or paid in cash) and Madadimāsh (or given in the form of lands). At the head of it was the Sadr with "the Qazi and the Mir Adl under his orders." The rule according to which grants were made was "that all Sayurghal land should consist of one half of the tilled land, and of one half of land capable of cultivation ; if the latter half be not so (i.e. if the whole be tilled land) one-fourth of the whole should be taken away and a new grant be issued for the remainder."[93] And before a Farman confirming such a grant was issued it had to pass through proper official channels. It had to be signed by the Mustaufi, entered in the

[91] *Ibid.*, pp. 268–69. [92] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 47. [93] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 280.

daftars of the Diwani Saadat, and lastly signed and sealed by the Sadr and the Diwan-i-kul. After these formalities, the Farman was considered to have become valid and could therefore be handed over to the grantee.

From this examination of the process of the working of the central government it may have been realized how all the departments of state had been inter-linked. All the nerve centres had been connected, as it were, with the heart, which was the imperial secretariat. In this secretariat the finance department dominated, while a few others that were included in it were rather of a secondary importance. These were fed and kept going by the finance department alone. Indeed there were very few functions other than the organization of a sound system of finance and the maintenance of an efficient military force with which the state in those days primarily charged itself. Survey and assessment of land, realization of royal revenues, maintenance of internal peace and order, and preparedness for external and internal defence were the chief activities of the state. Beneficent activities like the encouragement of education, patronage of art and literature, construction of roads, buildings, gardens and works of public utility, dispensation of justice, grants of charitable endowments and similar other things were undertaken by the king with a view to winning the affection of the people and to consolidate kingship or personal rule. And since in those days the state was incarnate in the king and a king could overlook the need of winning the love of the people only at a terrible cost, these had come to be regarded as a part of the programme of the state. Of course they were subsidiary items of the programme. But Akbar was not a man to neglect them. In these he had discovered a very handy means of consolidating personal rule by winning the loyalty of the people.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Now we can pass on to an examination of the working of provincial governments of the empire. We are told that in the twenty-fourth year of the reign each Subah had a Sipahsalar, a Diwan, a Bakhshi, a Sadr-i-juz, a Mir Adl, a treasurer or Khazinadar, a Kotwal, a Mir Bahr, and a Wakianavis.[94] But since the Diwan was found to

[94] *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 271, 430; Vol. II, p. 49.

have too much work, a Wazir was appointed to each province in 1595.[95] His functions were of course akin to those of the Diwan and between them they managed the entire revenue collection, assessment, etc. The provincial heads of departments were under the general supervision of the Sipahsalar the provincial governor, who watched their conduct, their honesty, loyalty or efficiency in work. But for departmental control they came under the imperial or central government. That is to say the imperial Wazir or Mushrif-i-Diwan controlled the provincial Wazir and Diwan, the imperial Bakhshi controlled the provincial Bakhshi, and similarly did the imperial Sadr, treasurer, Mir Bahr, and Wakianavis control the corresponding heads of provincial departments. The only exception appears to be in the case of the Kotwal of the province. Most probably there was a Kotwal for each important city in the province, but under the control of the Sipahsalar. He was in no way connected with the imperial secretariat and had nothing to do with the Kotwal of the imperial city. Similarly there was no central control of how justice was done in the provinces. That is to say, there was nothing like an hierarchy of courts of law, so that appeals could lie from lower or provincial to the central courts. Provinces were self-sufficient units for purposes of justice and suppression of crimes. Only those who had sufficient money and influence in higher circles could register an appeal to the court of the emperor. The Sipahsalar was the representative of the king in matters of justice, and therefore, appeals against the judgment of the Qazis and Sadrs could be brought to him. It is enjoined that "in judicial investigations he should not be satisfied with witnesses and oaths, but pursue them by manifold inquiries."

(*i*) *Sipāhsālār*

The good government of the province depended entirely on the ability, tact, vigilance and general conduct of the Sipahsalar. He was in all respects the king of his province, though under the strict control and vigilance of the king and the Vakil. He was retained in his office only for a short time and during the pleasure of the king. He was expected to be impartial in justice, non-interfering in religious matters, benevolent, and generous towards the people.

[95] Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, p. 670.

The divisions of the province he gave in charge of trustworthy Faujdars. He was expected to maintain the safety of the roads. He employed spies for the purpose of secret intelligence. He appointed and controlled the conduct of the tax-collectors. He encouraged talent, and befriended the deserving and the needy. He had to improve the condition of the agriculturists, build reservoirs, wells and aqueducts for them, and construct gardens, and sarais for public convenience. He was, besides everything else, the head or commander-in-chief of the provincial army.

(*ii*) *Faujdār*

The province was divided into Sarkars each under a Faujdar. He held the first place as "a subordinate and assistant" of the Sipahsalar and was directly appointed by Akbar. He had manifold duties to perform. If a cultivator, or tax-collector — Amil, or an assignee of government estates proved rebellious, then he took effectual steps to crush their rebellion. He was entrusted with the peace and tranquillity of his division, maintenance of an adequate army in a state of preparedness, and the due execution of all orders issued from the imperial court.[96]

(*iii*) *Kotwal*

The Faujdar was assisted in his duties by the Kotwal, who was in charge of the police functions of important cities and towns. It may be mentioned that he was a highly responsible and heavily worked officer. He resembled the Nāgaraka of Kautilya's Arthasastra. He kept a register of houses and frequented roads, and bound the dwellers of the city to efforts of co-operation in times of crisis and danger. He entrusted various parts of the city to his confidential agents, who kept a close watch over the movements of the residents within their areas, the people who came in and went out of the city, the handicrafts, and trades, sales of commodities, animals, precious metals, circulation of coins, weights and measures, and sundry other things peculiar to urban areas. He freely employed spies and received their reports about the general tendencies of the people, secret crimes, disaffection, etc. and took adequate measure against them. He was a censor of social morals to some extent.

[96] *Aini Akbari*, Vol. II, pp. 40–41.

He was required to prohibit women from riding on horseback. He directed that ox or buffalo or horse or camel should not be slaughtered. He was to "forbid the restriction of personal liberty and the selling of slaves." He was not to suffer a woman to be burnt against her inclination. He was to forbid circumcision before the age of twelve. He was required to allot separate quarters to people like the butchers, hunters of animals, washers of the dead, sweepers and others akin to these. He forbade the slaughter of animals on certain days, and saw to the observation of certain festivals like the Nauroz as ordered by Akbar.[97]

(*iv*) *Qazi and Mir Adl*

Most probably at the Sarkar headquarters were the justices of peace — the Qazis and the Mir Adls. The Qazi conducted a thorough investigation by questioning the litigants. He recorded "separately the evidence of each witness" and after the completion of the judicial inquiry he was required to let some time pass. Then he took up the case, reinvestigated it, and passed judgment. This was all the function of the Qazi, while that of the Mir Adl was to "carry out his (Qazi's) finding."[98]

(*v*) *Amil*

One of the most important of the local officers in the administration was the Amil or collector of the revenue. Most probably there was one in each Sarkar. He was considered as "the representative of the lord paramount" and was expected to "establish himself where every one may have easy access." He collected land revenue through the agency of his subordinates, like the Karkun (registrar of collections), the Mukaddam (chief village revenue officer), and the Patwari (land steward) no doubt, but he was exhorted to take personal interest and care to see that the villagers, the peasantry were not oppressed by the headman. He was desired to "deal with each husbandman" directly so that they may be saved from innumerable hardships and petty tyrannies. The collector took "security from land surveyors, assessors, and other officers of revenue" during their employment. This is suggestive of the control that the collector exercised over the survey of land, assessment,

[97] *Ibid.*, pp. 43–45. [98] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

etc. He was to see that the cultivator brought the revenue himself at definite periods and was given a receipt for the payment made. He instructed the village Patwari to enter in detail in the memorandum, what he received from the cultivator ; and if there remained any arrears, a report accordingly had to be sent to him attested by the headman of the village. He also with the treasurer, controlled the treasury. "Whatever is paid into the treasury he shall himself examine and count, and compare it with the day-ledger of the Karkun. This he shall verify by the signature of the treasurer and placing it in bags under seal shall deposit it in a strong room and fasten the door thereof with several locks of different construction. He shall keep the key of one himself and leave the others with the treasurer." At the end of the month he shall take the account of the daily receipts and expenditure and dispatch it to the Court. When two lakhs of dams were collected he was required to send the sum through trusty agents to the imperial treasury. Lastly every month he was required to "submit a statement of the condition of the people, of the jagirdars, the neighbouring residents, the submission of the rebellious, the market prices, the current rents of tenements, the state of the destitute poor, of artificers and all other contingencies."[99] He was indeed the predecessor of the collector in the old British Indian district. He was the link between the people and the king ; and upon his ability, honesty and integrity depended the good government of the country and stability of the monarchy. His official designation was Amil. He was constantly informed from the Centre as to what taxes he was to collect and how he was to behave towards the people. Lastly, "should there be no Kotwal, the collector must take the duties of that office upon himself." There were also Kroris who were especially created by Akbar to collect taxes from a region that yielded one crore of dams. Akbar at first divided his empire into several such revenue districts, but later on gave up the system. They were something like the Zamindar of British India and really revenue farmers.

(*vi*) *Bitikchi*

It may be inferred from the above that the manifold duties, with which the collector was charged could not be satisfactorily

[99] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

performed without the help of a large subordinate staff. The most helpful of these was the Bitikchi — scribe, perhaps like the registrar of a modern office. He took note of the state of crops, supplied by the Qanangos. He recorded all engagements made by the agriculturists, defined village boundaries, and estimated the areas of the waste and arable land. "He shall note the names of the Munsif, the superintendent, the land surveyor, and Thanadar, also that of the cultivator and headman, and record below, the kind of produce cultivated."[100] Revenue collection of the village was done by the Patwari and the Mukaddam, who gave a Sarkhat, i.e. a memorandum to the cultivator. It was the duty of the Bitikchi to examine the rolls of the Patwari and the Mukaddam called Khasrā, side by side with the Sarkhat. He was required to send to the Court monthly reports on the collections and arrears of revenue within the collector's jurisdiction and receipts and disbursements of the treasury.

(*vii*) *Fotāhdār*

Like the registrar, the Bitikchi, the Fotahdar or treasurer occupied a very responsible position. He "shall keep the treasure in a strong room with the knowledge of the Shiqdar and the registrar, and count it every evening and cause a memorandum thereof to be signed by the collector, and compare the day-ledger with the registrar's account and authenticate it by his signature."[101] He was required to sanction no disbursement without the vouchers of the Diwan. "If any expenditure should be necessary that admits of no delay, he may act under the authority of the registrar and Shiqdar and represent the case to government."[102] Thus the control of all disbursements had been vested in the Diwan ; while the collector only looked after the income of the treasury.

PARGANA

So far with regard to the Sarkars. Sarkars were composed of Parganas, and the Parganas of villages. In the Pargana headquarters were most probably the Thanadar, who held charge of police outpost, the treasurer or Fotahdar, and the Shiqdar who was

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 51. [101] *Ibid.*, p. 53. [102] *Ibid.*

the chief financial officer and as such a colleague of the Fotahdar. There were the Qanango and the Tahsildar, who were essentially revenue officers. The former was "the refuge of the husbandmen"[103] because from him "was ascertained the present, past, the future state of the Pargana."[104] He was conversant with the general economic condition of the Pargana, and was actively concerned in the survey and assessment of the land. The Tahsildar was, most probably, in charge of the collection of the royal revenue.

Besides these two, the Munsif is also mentioned. It is possible that while the Qanango and the Tahsildar were concerned solely with the assessment and the collection of land revenue of a Pargana, the Munsif had to look after the general administration of the Pargana. In Sher Shah's administration he had to check the branding of the army and take the musters on the frontiers. Under the regime of Akbar the Munsif might be doing similar work also, because we are told that each Pargana was expected to supply its own quota of military force to the provincial and imperial army, and in the list of officials in a Pargana there is none excepting the Munsif who could be charged with this function.

In the village, several of whom were grouped into a Pargana, the Patwari and the Mukaddam were something like intermediaries between the government and the peasantry. The Patwari and the Mukaddam collected revenues from the village, kept rolls of the agriculturists, their possession in land and the rent due from them. They were required to give to the peasants what is known as Sarkhat or memorandum. The Patwari kept a copy of the land survey of the village called the Khasra. The Mukaddam most probably was responsible for the general peace and order in the village,[105] besides being in charge of collecting the royal revenue. Such was the village administration under Akbar.

UNIVERSAL COMPETENCE OF INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY UNDER AKBAR

We may close this study of Akbar's administrative system with a few general observations about the peculiarities of the polity of which he was the founder. Akbar's was a contructive genius but

[103] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[104] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 414.
[105] *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, pp. 49-53, 72, 88.

it was in synthesis rather than in originality that he most excelled. He had a great talent for discovery and interpretation. He had discovered some of the most fruitful ideas and institutions in the drifting and decaying mass of Hindu political traditions, and he adapted them to his own purpose with the greatest deliberation and enthusiasm. Hindu political traditions regarded the king as a representative of God on earth, and Akbar found in this idea an effectual means of evoking the affection and loyalty of his people. When he deliberately associated the Hindus in his administration or entered into matrimonial alliances, he was not merely doing what was most expedient, or pressing the tenderest of emotional relationships to the service of the state, he was actually rearing supports for his absolute kingship or kingship by right divine; because he knew that the Hindus in general, and Rajputs in particular, could alone appreciate this claim and substantiate it by their loyalty. To strengthen those supports or props he adopted some of their monarchial traditions like the weighing of the king against precious metals, — the Hindu Tulādāna, which were distributed; the Darshan from the Jharokha, and the observance of many Hindu festivals like the Rakshabandhan, Diwali, etc. He extended patronage, against Quranic injunctions, to painters, musicians, Hindu philosophers, saints and spiritual men, and encouraged Sanskritic learning and Hindi literature. When he decreed religious tolerance for the Hindu and other non-Muslim creeds, or when he constructed highways from Upper India to the Deccan through a gap in the Satpura range and from Lahore to Agra, he was continuing a policy upheld by Hindu traditions of government established as far back as the time of the Mauryas. When he imposed a marriage tax, he was doing what the Hindu rulers of Vijayanagar could do. When he appointed two marriage overseers — Taibegi, to enquire into the circumstances of the bride and bridegroom, condemned dowries, ill-sorted unions, and the Suttee he was actuated by an ideal of paternalism of which Hindu theorists speak so highly, as an asset of a good king. When he sought to regulate popular amusements, fasts, food, dress, etc. he was only in line with the traditions of Mauryan polity and ideals of the Arthasastra. By playing the role of a king of this description he was conducting himself in a manner that could make him acceptable to the Hindus and obliterate the trace of his foreign origin. That was his discovery.

Besides that, he had interpreted the spirit of the times as no one else similarly placed could. For, when he proclaimed himself as founder of a religion it was only to emulate the example of so many others of the age. If their claim could go unchallenged, certainly Akbar's could, specially when the attempt was inspired by a genuine desire for political amity and national unity. Even in this attempt of his he did not appear to the Hindus and Muslims to have been adopting a novel line of action or departing from his kingly duties. For, to the Hindus he appeared to play the role of a spiritual guide, to be the maker of the age — Kālasya Kāranam ; while to the Muslims he appeared to play the double role of the Prophet-king, i.e., Muhammed. There was a great deal of interest, genuine affection and loyalty aroused by these experiments of his. And the sum total of their results formed the substance of the Indo-Islamic polity that rose under him.

Therefore the Indo-Islamic polity of Akbar's time embodied a synthesis of those elements that were found most adaptable in the political traditions of the Hindus ; of those institutions which came down to him as the legacies of the Caliphate, the Timurid sovereignty and the Delhi Sultanate ; and of that ideal of Prophet-King, which was Akbar's own creation and by means of which he sought to build up political solidarity. These factors imparted a new character to the Indo-Islamic polity, which sought to harmonize the conflicting claims of the state and religion, and in which religion was not to dominate the state. It had to be a synthesis, of the Hindu traditions and Muslim institutions, and all bearing the imprint of Akbar's genius. And because of this synthesis Indo-Islamic polity under Akbar claimed a competence which had never been claimed by the Delhi Sultanate before nor conceded by the subjects. Akbar's state sought to attain as comprehensive a control as possible over the life of the people. Apart from the Din-i-Ilahi, which had been designed to reconcile the political allegiance with the religious affiliations of the people, the attempt to control and direct life flowing in all channels as we have seen already, certainly suggested a universality, which was a characteristic attribute of Akbar's state. Rulings in regard to food, amusements, dress, social morals, marriages, dowries, the Suttee, education, commodity-prices, all point to the inference that Indo-Islamic polity had now acquired that new characteristic, which centuries before Asoka's state had acquired. So we may, in

conclusion, maintain that the Indo-Islamic polity of Akbar's time was characterized by a synthesis and a universality that adhered to it long after the death of its founder, and because of which it long survived the tragedies and tribulations of many successive generations.

CHAPTER XVI

AURANGZEB'S COMMUNALISM UNDERMINES THE FOUNDATIONS OF INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY

TRADITIONS OF MONARCHY BUILT BY AKBAR

WHEN Akbar died in 1605 he left behind a state which was unique in many ways. Apart from its vast extent, enormous resources, sound administrative machinery and imperial splendour it was distinguished by certain new institutions and traditions, created by him. Its universal competence and sovereign authority found expression through the personality of the king, who ruled by right divine, as the shadow of God, and claimed infallibility in temporal and spiritual matters. The institution of kingship had been exalted to superhuman heights, as the person of the king had come to be associated with divine sanctity. The government had ceased to be as under previous Muslim rulers, semi-religious and partisan in outlook. It had become secular and exercised a control over the claims of the religions in the country in a way that contributed to the good of all. Akbar's state had proclaimed tolerance towards all religions. In administration, it had the co-operation of all communities in the country. The picturesque and popular elements of kingship had been carefully cultivated by the adoption of Hindu customs like the Jharokha-i-Darshan, and weighing of the king on his birthdays against precious metals and goods ; by the celebration of popular festivals like Rakhi, Divali, Nawroz, Muharram, etc. ; by personal association with the philosophers, saints and learned men ; and by a liberal encouragement of the artistic and literary activities of the people irrespective of their caste or creed. Such were the traditions associated with the institution of monarchy that Akbar had built up.

AKBAR'S SUCCESSORS FAIL TO CONTINUE HIS TRADITIONS

And these had their foundations in a new spirit that actuated Akbar in his dealings with the people. That was the spirit of

paternalism or benevolent autocracy, as we have already described it, based on understanding and appreciation of the sentiments of the people. He loved to freely associate with his people in order that he might understand them through their preferences and prejudices; and he had succeeded in an uncommon degree. That was why he could wield an authority over the people, which few could claim and fewer still could exercise. He was first the king of his peoples' hearts, and next of an empire. There lies his own greatness as also of the traditions and institutions he left behind. Therefore those that succeeded him on the throne had a very difficult task before them. They had to continue those institutions and traditions only in a spirit that gave them life. His successors had to bring to bear on their task of governing the empire the talents and sympathies, courage and understanding which had characterized Akbar, and which alone could keep those institutions and traditions alive. It was not easy, for example, to impress upon the people that the king was really the shadow of God or that he held "temporal and spiritual sovereignty." For Sunni Muslim kings who took the style of the Khalifa of the Faith, it was not easy to understand the full implications of a policy of religious tolerance, and to adopt it as the guiding principle of the state, against a background of iconoclastic zeal and clerical domination that had marked the spirit of the Delhi Sultanate. Apart from that, the conditions that compelled Akbar to adopt a policy of tolerance might change after him. And so it came to be. In the first place the conditions that obtained at the time of Akbar's succession to the throne did not obtain at the time of any of his three successors. Mughal rule in India had been rendered an accomplished fact and acceptable to all sections of the people. The Rajputs who had been the enemies of the Mughals, had been carefully won over and their fiery energies had been employed for the conquest of an empire, and for the extermination of the Afghan power. A sound system of government had been organized; the props of an absolute monarchy had been firmly reared; royal authority had been given a divine halo and the royal person a divine sanctity; and the state had been supplied the moral foundation of popular support. Little of an arduous nature of what a builder or a founder of an empire has to undertake had been left for Jahangir, Shahjahan or Aurangzeb. They thought that they could go their own ways. The problems of empire-building,

of organizing a state had been solved. But yet Akbar's traditions and institutions were as much necessary for the building up of an empire as they were salutary for its continuance and prosperity. It depended upon the talent and capacity of the successors of Akbar to realize their worth and continue them. But knowing human nature as it is — slothful, pleasure-loving, obstinate, narrow and selfish, now swayed by an infatuation for power and splendour, now swung to a rigid obstinacy in the name of the faith — it was but natural that in the plentitude of power inherent in Akbar's absolute monarchy and dazzled by the halo of glory that surrounded their persons, his successors would deviate from the way shown by him. Under new conditions they might find new modes of subscribing to Akbar's institutions and traditions ; a new spirit arising under new conditions might even introduce modifications in or radical departures from them. And that was what happened. Akbar's institutions and traditions were sometimes adhered to, but always with a spirit that was unlike Akbar's. Even when they were continued to a great extent under Jahangir and to a lesser extent under Shahjahan, that spirit of sympathetic understanding and reverent appreciation was feeble. Under Aurangzeb it totally disappeared. The cause was obvious. The problems of Akbar did not exist at the time of Jahangir, Shahjahan or Aurangzeb. It was not necessary that the Rajputs should be coaxed and conciliated after the Afghan power had been completely smashed and the Mughal authority firmly founded ; that the Hindus should be treated with consideration and their religion tolerated after their submission was complete. It was not realized that Afghan power had been crushed and the empire of Hindustan had been conquered because of Rajput co-operation ; and if the empire was to embark on further conquests as in the Deccan under Aurangzeb, their co-operation was still a compelling necessity. It was not realized that if tolerance of Hinduism secured the loyalty and support of the Hindus, the reverse of tolerance would mean rebellion and discontent everywhere, as it happened in the reign of Aurangzeb. And since Rajputs were Hindus, their alienation and enmity would be an inevitable result.

SUCCESSORS OF AKBAR SHOW UNDERSTANDING IN POLITICAL MATTERS

But that is not to suggest that the Mughal emperors who followed Akbar were totally devoid of a capacity for understanding their

people. They certainly showed a genuine regard for the welfare of their people, and to that end they were even prepared to forego their own pleasure and forget their family ties or personal considerations. "Kingship" wrote Jahangir "regards neither son nor son-in-law. No one is a relation to a king."[1] To Aurangzeb, kingship meant "the protection of the realm and the guardianship (of the people) and not the enjoyment of bodily repose or the lusts of the flesh."[2] All of them considered kingship as a sacred trust. To Jahangir, for example, it consisted in impartial justice, and "divine compassion." Writing of the treatment of his people by Akbar, for which Jahangir felt great admiration he says that "as in the wide expanse of the Divine Compassion there is room for all followers of all creeds, so on the principle that the Shadow (of God) must have the same properties as the Light, in his dominions . . . there was room for the professors of opposite religions, and for beliefs good and bad, and the road to altercation was closed."[3] These words express fully the sentiment of the writer. Jahangir had a regard for the institutions and traditions of Akbar. Actuated by that "divine compassion" which he attributes to his father, he issued at the commencement of his reign, twelve rules of conduct (Dastur-ul-Amal) for his officials throughout the empire. One of these rules, which was in conformity with Akbar's regulations, commanded "that each year from the 18th of Rabiulawwal, which is my birthday, for a number of days corresponding to the years of my life, they should not slaughter animals (for food). Two days in each week are also forbidden, one of them Thursday the day of my accession and the other Sunday, the day of my father's birth. He held this day in great esteem on this account, and because it was dedicated to the sun, and also because it was the day on which the Creation began."[4] This order must have greatly pleased the Hindus and Jains generally who abhorred slaughtering of animals for food. Long afterwards he wrote that "sixteen and seventeen years ago I had vowed with God at Allahabad that when I reached fifty I would give up shooting with gun and bullet and would injure no living thing with my own hand."[5] These ideas of his to which he conformed

[1] Jahangir's *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 52.
[2] J. N. Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 134.
[3] Jahangir's *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 37.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 7–10. [5] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 35.

in practice, were admirably suited to make a strong appeal to the imagination of the people. Further, he had issued another code of official conduct in which he had enjoined that his officers "should not force Islam on any one."[6] That was a privilege of the emperor and till the time of Aurangzeb this privilege was not openly exercised. Jahangir's notions of justice were so strong that besides the usual provisions for its dispensation to his people, which he considered inadequate he introduced his famous chain of justice. On one occasion when "a widow woman complained that Muqarrab Khan had taken her daughter by force in the port of Cambay" writes Jahangir "after much search I discovered that one of his servants had been guilty of this outrage and had him put to death and reduced Muqarrab Khan's Mansab by half and made an allowance to the woman who had been thus injured."[7] Shahjahan and Aurangzeb held no public darbar on Wednesday, for that day they always set apart for dispensation of justice to the people. On that day was held a court of law and Aurangzeb called this Wednesday session of justice, Diwani Mazalim of which we will give a brief description later.

In matters of taxation the tenor of Mughal policy was not to countenance illegal exactions and treat the peasantry with consideration. Instances of the abolition of abwabs or illegal imposts decreed by the emperors are numerous. The imposts abolished by Akbar are mentioned in the *Aini Akbari*, vol. ii, pp. 66–67. Jahangir abolished cesses called Tamgha and Mirbahari "together with taxes of all descriptions which the jagirdars of every Subah and every Sarkar had been in the habit of exacting on their own account."[8] Aurangzeb is said to have abolished as many as forty-one Abwabs according to the Mirati Ahmadi.[9] But very often imperial orders were defied by the revenue collectors, for while the Emperors were forever issuing orders to their officers to show leniency and consideration to the peasants in collecting the revenue, to give up all Abwabs, and to relieve local distress, the revenue officers were consistently defying the imperial order and were squeezing as much as possible from the peasantry. Besides that, the emperors generally were concerned about protecting the peasantry from damages to their crops while they marched with their armies. It is said that when

[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 205. [7] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 172.
[8] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VI, p. 493.
[9] J. N. Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 90–91.

Shahjahan moved from one place to another, he ordered the Bakshi of the Ahadis to take charge of one side of the road with his archers and the Mir Atish with his matchlockmen of the other. In spite of that if damage was done to the crops or other interests of the people "Daroghas, Mushrifs and Amins were appointed to examine and report on the extent of damage, so that Raiyats and Jagirdars under 1,000 might be given as compensation for the individual loss they had sustained."[10]

SPIRIT OF RELIGIOUS POLICY GRADUALLY CHANGES AFTER AKBAR

In matters of spiritual import some of the emperors took a lively interest and descended from their high pedastal of authority to participate, with the humblest of their subjects, in discussions about the nature of God and reality. Jahangir, it is said, could join "the Pandits, that is, the wise men of the Hindus"[11] with as much intellectual fervour and lack of convention as he showed in joining an assembly of Muslim mystics "engaged in Sama and Wajd (dervish dancing and ecstacy) in which hilarity and frenzy were not wanting."[12] He could go on foot to see a great Sanyasi or saint by name Jadrup who lived near Ujjain ;[13] and when the Sanyasi came to reside at Mathura he could thus speak of him without reserve. "As I valued his society, I hastened to wait on him, and for a long time enjoyed his company without the presence of any stranger. In truth his existence is a great gain to me ; one can be greatly benefited and delighted."[14] Indeed few Muslim emperors could write in this strain about Hindu saints. Jahangir had inherited to some extent the nature of his father.

JAHANGIR'S DISREGARD OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

But in spite of his sympathy and liberal outlook Jahangir was the first to have tainted the fair record of the Mughal rule by the slights, he deliberately inflicted on Hinduism. During his stay in Ajmer he chanced to go to Pushkar and he writes "for two or three days I shot waterfowl in that tank and returned to Ajmer." But

[10] Elliot and Dowson Vol. VII, p. 43.
[11] Jahangir's *Memoirs*, Vol. I, pp. 32–33.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 173. [13] *Ibid.*, pp. 356–7. [14] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 104.

before he returned to Ajmer, he had added to the outrage he had committed by shooting waterfowl on the tank. There were temples old and new round about the tank and he was told that one of them had been recently built at a cost of one lakh of rupees by Rana Shankar one of the "high nobles" of Jahangir. "I went to see the temple" he writes. "I found a form cut out of black stone, . . . I ordered them to break that hideous form and throw it into the tank. After looking at this building there appeared a white dome on the top of a hill to which men were coming from all quarters. When I asked about this they said that a Jogi lived there . . . I ordered them to break down that place and turn the Jogi out of it, as well as to destroy the form of an idol there was in the dome."[15] This was in the seventh year of his reign. In the sixteenth year he visited the hill fort of Kangra and to celebrate its conquest which was a hard enough task ordered "the call to prayer and the reading of the Khutba and the slaughter of a bullock which . . . were carried out in my presence."[16] And yet the conquest of Kangra had been accomplished with the assistance of a Hindu prince. Such were the actions of the son of Akbar and the Hindu princess of Jaipur. This flagrant disregard of the religious sentiment of the Hindus showed the emergence of a new tendency which was to gather force in the subsequent reigns.

SHAHJAHAN DISCARDS RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

With the accession of Shahjahan the policy of tolerance was openly discarded, and the destruction of Hindu temples systematically taken up. "It had been brought to the notice of His Majesty" writes the author of Badshah Nama "that during the late reign many idol temples had been begun, but remained unfinished at Benares, the great stronghold of infidelity. The infidels were now desirous of completing them. His Majesty, the defender of the faith, gave orders that at Benares and throughout all his dominions in every place, all temples that had been begun should be cast down."[17] In consequence seventy-six temples were destroyed in the district of Benares alone. This was in the sixth year of his reign (1632). "The defender of the Faith," as Abdul Hamid Lahori called

[15] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 254–55. [16] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 223.
[17] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, p. 36.

Shahjahan, showed an inclination for forcible conversion also. In 1633, 400 christian prisoners were brought to the presence of the faith-defending emperor. He ordered that the principles of the Muhammedan religion should be explained to them and that they should be called upon to embrace it. Some of these embraced Islam but the majority refused. Hence "these were distributed among the Amirs who were directed to keep these despicable wretches in rigorous confinement. When any one of them accepted the true faith, a report was to be made to the Emperor, so that provision might be made for him."[18] In 1635 after the death of the rebel Bundela prince Jhujhar Singh, Khan Dowran came from Chanda and presented his wives, Durgabhan his son and Durjansal his grandson. "By the Emperor's order they were made Musalmans . . . Rani Parbati being severely wounded was passed over; the other women were sent to attend upon the ladies of the imperial palace."[19] And so the tale goes on till it reaches its climax under Aurangzeb. Jahangir began the demolition and desecration of their shrines, Shahjahan went a step further when he started forcible conversion in addition to that. And Aurangzeb added to both these the imposition of jaziya and a government conducted strictly on the lines of Quranic law.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION OF AURANGZEB

Aurangzeb had sufficiently indicated his bigotry even when he was viceroy of Gujerat. In 1644, he had desecrated the recently built Hindu temple of Chintaman in Ahmedabad by killing a cow in it and then turned the building into a mosque, though Shahjahan ordered the place to be restored to the Hindus. In April 1669 as emperor and "Director of the Faith," as the author of Maasiri Alamgiri calls him, he ordered "the governors of provinces to destroy with a willing hand the schools and temples of the infidels, and they were strictly enjoined to put an entire stop to the teaching and practising of idolatrous forms of worship." In January 1670, writes the same author with much jubilation that "this justice-loving monarch . . . . commanded the destruction of the Hindu temple of Mathura known by the name of Dehra Kesu Rai . . . . On the same spot was laid at great expense the foundation of a vast mosque."

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 42. [19] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

After the destruction of the temple the richly-jewelled idols taken from them "were transferred to Agra and there placed beneath the steps leading to the Nawab Begam Sahib's mosque in order that they might ever be pressed under foot by the true believers."[20] The same year all faujdars of Thanas, civil officers, agents of Jagirdars, Kroris and Amlas from Katak to Medinipur "were ordered that every idol-house built during the last ten or twelve years whether with brick or clay should be demolished without delay."[21] In 1679 when Khan Dowran returned from Jodhpur after demolishing its temples and bringing with him several cartloads of idols richly adorned, they were ordered to be "cast in the quadrangle of the court and under the steps of the Jama Mosque for being trodden upon."[22] Even Amber was not spared. Thus the story goes on till the end of the reign. Aurangzeb knew well how to add insult to injury. He did not merely pull down the temples, but scattered their idols under the steps of the mosques to be trodden upon. In 1668 Aurangzeb revived Firoz Tughlak's policy of forbidding the Hindus throughout his dominions to hold fairs near their holy places. "The Hindu festival of lamps (Diwali) and the spring carnival (Holi) were ordered to be held only outside bazars and under some restraints."[23] The consequence was a hostile Hindu reaction. But Aurangzeb was not to be daunted. The next step was the imposition of Jaziya in 1679 more than a hundred years after its abolition (1564) by Akbar. It marked out the non-muslims as a degraded people, whose degradation was to be demonstrated by payment of that tax. It was not merely the tax that was humiliating ; the mode of payment was still more so. "As the scholars and divines of the time informed Aurangzeb, the books on Muslim Canon Law lay down that the proper method of collecting the jaziya is for the zimmi to pay the tax personally ; if he sends money by the hand of an agent it is to be refused ; the taxed person must come on foot and make the payment standing, while the receiver should be seated and after placing his hand above that of the Zimmi should take the money and cry out 'O, zimmi, pay the commutation money'."[24]

[20] *Maasiri Alamgiri*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, pp. 184–85.

[21] Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 283. Quotation from Muragat-i-Abdul Hasan.

[22] *Maasiri Alamgiri*, text, p. 175.

[23] Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, pp. 278–79.

[24] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 269.

The rates of taxation were 12, 24 and 48 dirhams a year, to be realized from the poor, middling and rich class Hindus. Apart from its religious significance, it was imposed in utter disregard of the principles of taxation. It weighed most heavily on the poor, and did not affect the rich and middle classes much. All government officials were exempt. Thus the tax was unfair in its incidence, besides creating an invidious distinction between the Muslims and non-Muslims. The Hindus protested against it by all peaceful methods but to no effect. When on a Friday, it is said, a vast multitude of Hindus determined to seek relief thronged the road from the fort to the Jamma Mosque as the emperor was going to public prayer, they were driven out and trampled down by the elephants at his command.

AURANGZEB'S POLICY OF POLITICAL DISCRIMINATION AND SUNNI ORTHODOXY

These outrages on Hindu religious sentiment proceeded hand in hand with a severe policy of political discrimination. In 1665 discriminating customs duties had been imposed in favour of the Muslims. While the Hindus had to pay 5 per cent the Muslims paid only 2½ per cent of the value of the commodities. "In 1671 an ordinance was issued that the rent-collectors of the crown-lands must be Muslims, and all viceroys and Taluqdars were ordered to dismiss their Hindu head clerks (Peshkars) and accountants (Diwanian) and replace them by Muslims."[25]

Such actions of Aurangzeb irrevocably alienated the Hindus. He had made all his non-Muslim subjects his bitter enemies. And yet he did not care. He had decreed these with the deliberate determination of ruling the empire according to the injunctions of Islam. He had chosen his path. There was nothing like hesitancy in his attitude nor lack of sincerity in what he believed to be right. He was as deeply in earnest in his endeavours to rule the empire in strict conformity with the precepts of Islam, as Akbar was in deviating from those precepts and adopting the principle of Sulh-i-kul — universal harmony. Hence Akbar could build up an empire that his father and grand-father had failed, while Aurangzeb was directly responsible for wrecking the empire, that three generations of kings

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

had rendered it powerful, rich, and prosperous. The painful reactions of his administrative and religious policies had nothing to offset or neutralize them. He gradually abolished all those institutions and practices, which had been adopted by Akbar and continued by his successors, because they were calculated to arouse a great deal of popular sentiment in favour of monarchy. He discontinued Jharokha-i-darshan; he put a ban on music; painting was discouraged as definitely irreligious; and he detested the observance of festivals like the Nawroz, Rakhi and Dashera. Association with the philosophers, the scholars, the saints of any religion other than Islam was regarded as apostacy. Thus, there was a complete abandonment of Akbar's institutions and traditions which meant loss of popular support.

EFFECT OF AURANGZEB'S TREATMENT OF HIS FATHER AND BROTHER

All this had been preceded by a bloody war of succession, which had revealed Aurangzeb as one utterly selfish and unscrupulous, full of deceit and ambition, devoid of filial piety or fraternal affection. As Sarkar says "Aurangzeb's treatment of his father outraged not only the moral sense but also the social decorum of the age. Rebellion against a reigning father was the curse of the Mughal imperial family. Jahangir had risen against Akbar's government, and Shahjahan against Jahangir. They had unhesitatingly encountered or even slain their father's generals or rival brothers, but shrunk from facing their fathers in battle. At the arrival of the emperor in person the rebellious prince had either made his submission or fled in shame. But Aurangzeb's ambition had ridden over decency and the established conventions of society."[26] To his contemporaries like Shah Abbas II of Persia, Amanat Khan Khwafi, Diwan of Lahore, or Niccolao Manucci his conduct appeared degrading and inhuman. Of him the Diwan of Lahore wrote "who has heard of such deeds among the descendants of Adam?" By his cruel treatment of his father, brothers and other relations he lost popular respect. And it was extremely unfortunate that he started his reign with this serious handicap.

But far more unfortunate was it, that he thought he could recover this loss of self-respect and popular support by living an austere

[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 144–45.

and puritanic life which would demonstrate to the world that he had, as he himself wrote, taken up "the perilous load of the crown out of sheer necessity and not from free choice — for restoring peace and the rules of Islam in the realm so as to be able to answer on the day of reckoning, and for saving the people from destruction and the affairs of . . . the ancestral kingdom from confusion."[27] He styled himself a "faqir" or mendicant decreed by the divine will to rule over a fast degenerating empire, and he tried to behave in that way. He ruled like a "Faqir" or Dervish of Islam and not like a king of India. He was in dead earnest when he said that, and his genuine regard for the injunctions of Islam made him blind to the demands that Mughal kingship and the kingdom of Hindusthan made on him.

It is the height of injustice to denounce him as a hypocrite or tyrant. That he was impelled to action by the genuine motives of regenerating a fast declining empire there is no doubt. He did not spare himself to that end. His austere habits, abstemious life, unflagging zeal for work, and readiness to sacrifice the considerations of his health and happiness on the altar of duty have remained beyond doubt. In his own way and after his own convictions he worked for a great cause, viz. that of regenerating an empire and reconstructing it according to the laws of the Quran and to that end he was resolved to scorn the seductions of wealth, luxury, and pleasures of a mighty empire, and led the life of a puritan and a Dervish. Brought up in an environment of aesthetic grandeur and self-indulgence of the Mughal Court (under Jahangir and Shahjahan) who except Aurangzeb could have the strength of character, and conviction to shun these for the realization of an ideal, which by itself and divested of its bearings on rulership of Hindustan, may be easily considered as worth cherishing and worth dying for ?

It is easy to exaggerate the follies of Aurangzeb, which even his greatest biographer — Sarkar has not been able to guard against. But that could be true from one point of view only — from the point of view that was foreign to Aurangzeb. But the paternal despots that the Mughals were, looked at things from nobody else's point of view than their own. From his own point of view, however, Aurangzeb was seeking to realize an ideal in his statecraft. He was not a hypocrite ; and he was not a tyrant. He was a Dervish,

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

a mendicant — Haqeer, Faqeer, Khadim-e-Alamgir. And when he wrote this of himself he was not deceiving himself or the people. His own court historian wrote of him that "his imperial robe of state thinly veiled the Darvish's frock that he wore beneath it."[28]

AURANGZEB UNDERMINED THE FOUNDATIONS OF MONARCHY

Aurangzeb undermined the foundations of monarchy which were the work of Akbar and the props of the empire. The monarchy had lost its halo of moral sanctity and divine glory, its sublime and picturesque elements. When people saw the "shadow of God", the "spiritual and temporal sovereign", and "the king of kings" reduced to the pitiable position of a prisoner within the harem of the Agra fort, as Shahjahan had been; or when they found him behaving as a sectarian and fanatic who could outrage some of the most cherished sentiments of the human heart with utter unconcern and dismiss some of the wisest institutions and practices with a bigoted scorn as Aurangzeb did, the veil of divine glory, of moral sanctity, and of earthly dignity that had surrounded the person of the king fell off the eyes of the people. With kingship thus shorn of its moral foundations, political dignity, and spiritual prestige, Aurangzeb could not govern India to the happiness and satisfaction of the people or of his own. And all because, he failed to understand that with the traditions and institutions of Akbar continued by Jahangir and Shahjahan, he could not rule the empire with the idiosyncrasies of a fanatic Sunni Muslim.

AURANGZEB'S FUTILE AMBITION TO ESTABLISH AN ISLAMIC POLITY

But in a way such a reactionary government was inevitably brought about by the force of changed circumstances and the inherent nature of the Islamic state. In order to establish an empire and make the Mughal rule acceptable to the people Akbar had sought co-operation of the Hindus and adopted the principle of Sulhi-kul. That had been successfully accomplished by the time of Akbar's death, since the Rajputs had been won over and the Afghan power was destroyed. Of the Rajputs there only remained the Rana of Mewar, who had not submitted, and the Afghans though conquered showed signs of discontent in Bengal under

[28] *Maasiri Alamgiri*, Text p. 333; Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 145.

Usman. In Jahangir's reign the Rana submitted; and Usman was crushed. Thus disappeared the last traces of the hostile elements from the Mughal empire. At the beginning of Shahjahan's reign there were prospects of undisturbed peace and prosperity everywhere. Only Khan Jahan Lodi revolted early in the reign, and when he was quickly crushed the recrudescence of Afghan power became extinct for ever. And since there was no enemy like the Afghan to fight, and the Mughals had no fear of being treated as foreigners and their rule being considered as alien, the Mughal emperors grew careless of the value of the Hindu loyalty and Rajput co-operation. They became gradually conscious of the claims or precepts of their own religion. The Muslim in them asserted and had the better over the king. In the reign of Shahjahan therefore, we have the beginning of how an Islamic state was expected to conduct its affairs in a country of its conquest. Aurangzeb was thus prompted to reverse the policy of Akbar and discard his institutions and traditions, in order to adopt those which were in keeping with the inherent nature of the Islamic state. Indeed Akbar's rule, his institutions and traditions were as much an exception to the general conduct of Islamic state, as they had been a direct result of the trend of the times — the times that had seen the rule of Zainul Abidin in Kashmere, of Hussain Shah and Nasrat Shah in Bengal, of the Adil Shahis in Bijapur, of Sher Shah's in Hindustan. Influenced by the traditions of those times, as also by his own understanding of the situation in which the Mughals found themselves in India, Akbar had built up those institutions and traditions, which were meant to establish an empire on the solid support of the people. To discard them and to adopt the institutions and traditions peculiar to the Islamic state in a country like India, after centuries of the establishment of an Indo-Islamic polity, at the foundations of which the elements of ancient Hindu and medieval Islamic polity co-mingled, was to set the hand of progress back indeed. Aurangzeb did not realize that that simply could not be. His methods of government, his puritanic outlook, his ideals of religious reform, his mendicancy in the jewelled purples, and his violent persecution of non-Islamic creeds, constituted an anachronism at the time; and in that sense he, as a king, was a miserable misfit.[29] After centuries of

[29] Prince Akbar, when he revolted against him, addressed him a letter in justification of his conduct, in which he wrote that "the whole realm was by

modification, centuries of mutual adjustment, the Islamic state could not return to its pristine purity. In India what had been established centuries by now, was an Indo-Islamic polity and not a pure Islamic polity. And Aurangzeb vowed to demolish its structure and rear in its place a purely Islamic polity in the same way — he must have thought — as he had destroyed thousands of Hindu temples and shrines and had built mosques in their places. In doing this in his iconoclastic zeal, he was running against a wall. Men like Mahmud of Ghazni, Balban, Alauddin Khilji and Sikandar Lodi in spite of their religious zeal had not been able to resist the demands of their office and claims of kingship. None of them was so obstinate. And where they had yielded Aurangzeb thought he would not. Therein lay his folly. And persisting in that folly he frustrated the immense possibilities of a glorious rule ; and the polity that he so laboriously wanted to prop up ignominiously toppled down after him. It demonstrated the futility of attempting to establish a government of a sectarian character in a country like India.

ISLAMIC STATE UNDER AURANGZEB TAKES UP PROPAGATION OF ISLAM

Aurangzeb wanted to force a polity on the people that was founded on principles of Islam. Thereby he thought he would have the loyalty and support of the Muslims, and the irresistible assistance of God to carry him through his task. As he wrote to his father in a fit of righteous self-exaltation, "If God had not approved of my enterprise how could I have gained victories which are only His gifts ? . . . Nothing can happen without God's will. Therefore this great event (referring to his victory in the war of succession) is not due to any mortal's power or will."[30] He was convinced that God will help him in reviving the Islamic polity in the land of the infidels as He had helped in his "desire to put an end to Dara's usurpations, his lapse from Islam, and his exaltation of idolatry throughout the empire."[31] And his conception of Islamic polity consisted, firstly in putting an end to idolatry and directing all his resources and authority for missionary propaganda of the true

this time tired at seeing his tyrannical acts, more especially the abrogation of the rights and privileges that his far-off ancestors had conceded to different persons in Hindustan." Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. II, p. 245.

[30] Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 134. [31] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

Faith. Idolatry and all forms of polytheism have to be put down because polytheism is *shirq* that is "associating others (false gods) with God"[32] which is the rankest ingratitude (kufr) to the Almighty Creator. Hence the Kafirs — that is guilty of Kufr — have no right to exist. But since the empire over which Aurangzeb had been destined to rule contained millions of them, and could not be massacred in a Jihad or holy war, they have to be publicly degraded, deprived of all rank, office, and royal favours, and forced to pay the jaziya for the privilege of life left to them. They had also to pay a customs duty from which all Muslims were exempt.[33] The revenue thus derived from the Zimmi population was to be spent in aiding the missionary propaganda of the True Faith. When therefore the Hindus and other Zimmis were thus taxed, their temples and shrines demolished, the public practice of their Faith severely put down,[34] and they were excluded from public offices, Aurangzeb thought he was serving the cause of the True Faith, the commands of God. For, was he not thereby putting an economic and moral pressure on the Zimmis to accept Islam ? Besides that as Sarkar writes "infidels were bribed into accepting the royal faith by the offer of money, allowances, robes of honour, posts, liberation from prison, or succession to disputed property."[35] Such were the temptations offered by the state to propagate the religion of the dominant minority.

MORAL REGULATIONS OF AURANGZEB'S ISLAMIC STATE

Secondly all administrative questions had to be decided and acts decreed in strict conformity with the canon law and precedents set by orthodox Khalifas. Thus Kalima was removed from the coinage, the Nawroz festival was stopped, a censor of public morals (Muhtasib) was appointed, cultivation of Bhang was forbidden, old mosques and monasteries were ordered to be repaired and kept in good condition, music was banned, the Hindu practice of saluting by hand was substituted by Salam Alekum, the tika that the emperor used to put on the forehead of a prince when he succeeded to his

[32] Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 579.
[33] Elliot and Dowson, *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. VII, p. 293.
[34] *Maasiri Alamgiri* (Eng. translation published by R. A. S. B. 1947), pp. 51, 52, 61. Vol. VII, pp. 184–85.
[35] Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 276.

ancestral kingdom was discontinued, Jharokha-i-Darshan was given up,[36] drinking of wine, etc. was forbidden, public women and dancing girls were ordered to marry and give up their profession, and all forms of innovation or apostacy from Islam were severely punished. He even ordered that "no Mohomedan should wear a beard longer than four finger breadths" and an officer was appointed to enforce that.[37] Such were his notions of reviving a purely Islamic polity.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETERIORATION OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE AFTER AKBAR

With these preliminary observations we may pass on to a review of the organization of government during the period from the death of Akbar to that of Aurangzeb. It may be pointed out that the machinery of government as devised by Akbar was elaborated in the subsequent reigns in response to the needs of the expanding empire. Sometimes new departments were created with new functions to perform, and great efforts were made for the improvement of the administrative efficiency and promptness. But there is overwhelming evidence to show that the improvements effected did not keep pace with the growing demands of the imperial administration. Instead of efficiency and soundness of administration increasing, there was a deterioration slowly perceptible. There were several causes for this. The increasing extent of the empire exerted a steady pressure on the nerve centre of the imperial administration at Delhi or Agra, which could not be adequately stemmed. The result was a gradual slackening of the central control over the local or provincial administration, and a deplorable weakness in the Central organization.

Towards the end of Akbar's reign had been visible the first sparks of that ambition of the princes of the royal blood to seize the throne during the life-time of their fathers, which from time to time blazed forth in violence and fury, and in the reign of Shahjahan precipitated a major crisis for the integrity of the imperial administration. The revolt of Jahangir against Akbar, of Khusrau and Shahjahan against Jahangir, of Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad against Shahjahan and of Prince Akbar against Aurangzeb are some of the most disgusting

[36] Elliot and Dowson, *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. VII, p. 284.
[37] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. II, pp. 5–14.

episodes of Mughal history. They demonstrated two things in the most convincing manner; first, that there was nothing like a law of succession and second, that the empire was regarded more or less as a personal property, for the possession of which royal descent and a powerful sword were the only qualifying conditions. This was an important factor in weakening the loyalty of the people and shattering the soundness of the imperial administration. If the heirs presumptive to the Mughal throne could rise against their fathers and thus could ride rough-shod over social decorum, moral duty, and political obligations, then the attitude of the common people to the government could not be very respectful.

The personal rule of the emperors, who were often swayed by their own whims and caprices, their preferences and prejudices (even though they often made an honest effort to rise above these) was responsible for episodes like the domination of Nurjahan, the activities of Mahabat Khan, the revolt of Khan Jahan Lodi, and the rising of the Satnamis. The ease with which Mahabat Khan could seize the emperor, the way Khan Jahan Lodi conducted the affairs of the Deccan and ultimately rebelled, and the formidable proportions that the rising of the Satnamis assumed speak eloquently of the inherent weakness of the Mughal government. Lastly, since it was a personal rule, the ability of the king to attend to the details of the administration, to enunciate policies from time to time which solved the problems of the empire, and to meet the claims of the diverse communities of the empire with vision and courage was the chief factor in maintaining the driving force of this government. But an empire that comprised nearly the whole of India and Afghanistan, presented difficulties and problems that were too complex and baffling even for a talented and hardworking king like Aurangzeb, not to speak of Jahangir and Shahjahan who though capable were inclined to be self-indulgent. There is to all human ability a limit beyond which it cannot go. The demands of the Mughal empire were distinctly of a nature that called for abilities far above the capacity of its rulers. The efficiency of government under Akbar depended upon his own transcendental abilities. He could initiate measures of far-reaching importance and attend with meticulous care to the details of the administrative machinery which he had devised. Subsequently as the empire increased in extent, the details of administration increased enormously, and it was

practically impossible for the emperor to attend to them personally with care. The initiation of policies to suit the needs of an expanding empire demanded a vision which they did not possess. Hence with the extension of the empire there was a definite deterioration in the working of the government. This deterioration was very rapid, and undermined the strength of the empire, in the reign of Aurangzeb. That was because Aurangzeb with his great abilities sought, like Akbar to set up an absolutism, the tone of which resembled that of Akbar. Just as Akbar endeavoured to order the life and conscience of the people, so did Aurangzeb try ; but only with this difference, that while Akbar erred on the side of liberalism, Aurangzeb erred on the side of fanaticism and bigotry. And what is more, Aurangzeb tried to remove the blemishes from Islamic polity, which according to him had their origin in the liberalism and tolerance of Akbar and their growth in the intellectual sympathy of Jahangir and Shahjahan. But an absolutism that ran counter to the deep-rooted convictions and traditions of the people could not endure. Akbar's absolutism respected the vital sentiments of the people as a whole, while that of Aurangzeb systematically and deliberately outraged them. Hence his absolute rule, precipitated a popular reaction, the stubbornness of which resulted in the successful defiance of Mughal government — a result which engendered the degeneration of the administration and undermined the strength of the empire. Mughal monarchy was an absolute monarchy, and Mughal rule a personal rule, that is autocracy. Under Akbar it had a deep veneer of paternalism, consisting in a progressive form of liberalism and tolerance ; under Jahangir and Shahjahan, that paternalism began to drop much of its liberalism and tolerance ; while under Aurangzeb it was completely dominated by the spirit of religious persecution and political partisanship. That was why Aurangzeb's personal rule was responsible for the deterioration of the government and the decay of the empire.

But that is not to suggest that Aurangzeb did not sincerely work for the good and greatness of the empire — for the efficiency and soundness of its machinery. He worked hardest for it, more than his two predecessors. And if he failed he could not understand its cause. It was as much beyond his comprehension, as it was foreign to his convictions. It only demonstrated one important truth — that in India as in any country, political power can never be founded

on religious separatism and that sectarian fervour and political sagacity are mutually exclusive.

SUBAHS OF THE EMPIRE

The Mughal empire under Akbar extended from Kashmere, Kabul and Quandahar including the whole of northern India as far south as the Tapti river and the tract now called Berar. It was divided into fifteen Subahs. Under Shahjahan a large part of the Deccan was conquered and the kingdom of Ahmadnagar was wiped out of existence. In the reign of Aurangzeb, Bijapur and Golconda were conquered and annexed, along with the rich districts of the Karnatic. The Mughal empire under Aurangzeb therefore comprised twenty Subahs and they were all under the direct control of the emperor, with his seat of government at Delhi or Agra. According to Manucci and Munt-Khab-ul-Lubab there were fifteen subahs in Hindustan and six in the Deccan. The Subahs in Hindustan were Akbarabad (Agra), Shahjahanbad (Delhi), Ajmer, Allahabad, Oudh, Ahmedabad, Lahore, Kabul, Bihar, Thattah, Malwa, Multan, Kashmere, Bengal, and Orissa; while the Subahs in the Deccan were Aurangabad, Berar, Khandesh, Bidar, Bijapur and Hyderabad. These yielded a revenue of nearly 18–19 crores of rupees a year.[38] The form of the imperial organization as also the tone of the government had been set by Akbar; and Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb while keeping to the lines of his imperial organization, slowly changed the tone of government in a way that was in agreement with their mental make-up, spiritual moorings, and the conditions of the times.

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE

It has been explained that Akbar's imperial organization was composed of several departments and there was a close inter-linking amongst them. The management of the household, of the factories (karkhanas), of the army and of the public administration did not know of any differentiation. And as it was under Akbar, so it continued under Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. Each department

[38] Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. II, p. 416; *Muntkhab-ul-Lubab*, British Museum Addl. MS. no. 26,253, fol. 51 et seq.

had its own staff, its regular routine of work and its own records. Because all the departments of state were inter-linked, and ultimately controlled and supervised by the royal autocrat, there were necessarily maintained voluminous records, comprising correspondence, decrees, decisions, orders of transfer, appointments, promotions, etc., accounts of income and expenditure, nominal rolls, descriptive rolls, history of the services of officers, news letters and despatches and thousand other items of imperial interest, very often in duplicate and triplicate. Hence it was called a Kaghzi Raj or paper government.

The departments of government remained practically the same in this period as they were under Akbar. Prof. Sarkar gives a list of eight chief departments of the state, viz. (1) the exchequer and revenue, (2) the imperial household, (3) the military pay and accounts, (4) canon law both civil and criminal, (5) religious endowments and charity, (6) censorship of public morals, (7) the artillery, and (8) the intelligence and posts. This seems to be a faulty arrangement, and has not been supported by proper evidence. There are no departments mentioned that dealt with the army, the grant of military jagirs, the Ahadis, the prices of commodities and markets, etc. It would be more appropriate to say that the main departments of state were the finance, the army with which was combined the military pay, commissariat and accounts, the imperial household, law and justice, religious endowments and charity, censor of public morals, and the central intelligence or the department of Wakianavis. The secretariat or the Dafter created by Akbar continued to function with equal, if not greater efficiency. Besides these there was a large number of imperial Karkhanas, i.e., factories and stores with their own superintendents or Daroghas, all under the control of the Mir Saman or Khani Saman.[39]

OFFICERS OF STATE

(*i*) *Vakil and* (*ii*) *Wazir*

In the time of Akbar the highest officer of state was the Wakil whom Abul Fazl called "emperor's lieutenant in all matters connected with the realm and household." The Wazir was subordinate

[39] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p. 22.

to him and was also called the Diwan. But really the office of the Wazir was a part of that of the Wakil, and therefore often rulers tried to find, says Abul Fazl, one man who could fill both the offices.[40] That was difficult and hence only one office was retained, that of the Wazir. An exception was made by Shahjahan when he appointed Asaf Khan as his Wakil, at the request of his wife.[41] That was because he happened to be the father of his best beloved wife, and more than that had been primarily responsible for his accession to the throne. In the reigns of Jahangir and Aurangzeb we hear only of the Wazir. He continued as in the time of Akbar to control the finances of the empire. In that capacity he was virtually regarded as the prime minister and controlled the provincial Diwans, the Diwan-i-Kul, the Diwan-i-tan, the Diwan-i-Khalsa, the Diwan-i-Buyutat, the Diwan-i-Sadat and other Diwans, who had to deal with the financial aspects of the departments. Since the Wazir was the highest officer of the revenue department, control over all other departments, gradually passed into his hands as a matter of course. In his office were received all revenue papers and returns, and despatches from the provinces and field armies.[42] As Abul Fazl speaks of the Wakil, so of the Wazir we can say that "he receives the returns from the heads of all financial offices and wisely keeps abstracts of their returns."[43] He also acted as the king's representative on many ceremonial occasions. He wrote letters "by order" (Hasb-ul-hukm) that is, of the emperor. Some of the famous Wazirs of the Mughal period were masters of Persian prose, and they acted as secretaries in drafting royal letters to foreign rulers on behalf of their masters.[44]

Indeed the Wazir was secretary to the emperor as well, his "first minister and principal counsellor." Besides being the head of the revenue department, "he it is" says Manucci "who confers all offices, upon the nobles as upon subordinates."[45] As the first official of the empire he had multifarious duties to perform like the emperor, whose real lieutenant he was. He was the most heavily worked and

[40] *Aini Akbari*, Preface, p. vii.
[41] Saksena, *History of Shahjahan*, p. 65.
[42] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p. 23.
[43] *Aini Akbari*, Preface, p. vi.
[44] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 23–24.
[45] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 419.

responsible officer, because he had to look after the finances, the appointments and promotions, the war and peace, the relations with the foreign powers, internal order, disposition of the princes of the blood royal, and a thousand other things that pertained to the well-being of the empire. Naturally therefore in the control of finances he had his principal helpers or deputies in the Diwan-i-tan and the Diwan-i-Khalsa, as in the control of the military he was helped by the Mir Bakshi and the Sahibi Tauji. Some of the Wazirs during the period under review were Sharif Khan of Jahangir who held a rank of 5,000 Zat and 5,000 Suwar and bore the title of Amir-ul-Umara,[46] Mir Jumla under Shahjahan, and Jafar Khan and Asad Khan under Aurangzeb.[47]

In a detailed account given by Sarkar of the manifold duties of the Wazir in the capacity of Diwani Ala or Diwani Kul we find that he controlled practically all the departments of the state. Accounts of expenditure incurred for all sorts of things from maintaining deer parks and supplying food for cattle, to what was needed by the Begums, princes, and the emperor himself were sent to him. The imperial kitchen, betel-leaf department, payment to the Ahadis, the entire stores of the imperial household — all these came within his control.

His chief deputies namely the Diwani Khalsa and the Diwan-i-tan had to perform a vast number of responsible functions. The Diwani Khalsa was in charge of "the posting of the Subahdars, Faujdars, Amins, Diwani officers Kroris and Daroghas of the provinces, of the Fotahdars, clerks of issue (bar-amad-navisan), Daroghas of Amins, Mushrifs and Khazanchis of (provincial) treasuries, of the Sazawals of papers, the Amins and Kroris of arrears, the collectors of the Mutaliba (recovery of loans or advances made by government) and (the dues from) the Zamindars."[48] He also had to draw up a statement of the income and expenditure of the imperial camp and all the Subahs, and kept records of the allowances granted to the Begums and lists of Mahals (villages) of crownlands, workmen and other statistical abstracts.

The Diwan-i-tan was in charge of the regulation of Jagirs and assignments of land revenue in lieu of pay and allowances. He

[46] Jahangir, *Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 14.
[47] Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, pp. 63–68.
[48] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 41–42.

received all the revenues of the empire, realized the property of deceased persons whether nobles or poor men, resumed the property of those persons who were removed from office and carried out alterations in offices or in allowances.[49] He dealt with all matters relating to the Jagirs and cash Tankha, the Zamindars, Jagirdars and Mansabdars, recovery of advances made to Mansabdars, grant of subsistence allowance (Madad-i-maash) and the writing office from which were issued Farmans in terms of the emperor's dictation — Parwanahs by order (Hasbul hukm).

(iii) Mir Bakhshi

The Mir Bakhshi, as in the time of Akbar, combined the functions of the pay master general and the adjutant general. Indeed he was more of a military officer than an accountant general. Irvine points out how when an important battle was being arranged it was his business to assign posts to several commanders in the van, centre, wings or rear-guard, and to lay a muster-roll of the army before the emperor. According to Manucci he was "in charge of all the cavalry of the empire."[50] Since every officer of the empire held a military command which entitled him to a particular pay and rank, the Mir Bakshi had practically to control the payment of salaries to all these officers. That, however, was in an indirect way. He was the sanctioning authority of their salaries, while actual payment was made by the Diwan-i-tan. He was the chief recruiting officer, for in his "hands lay the presentation of new men to the emperor and on his verdict a great deal depended as to the rank (Mansab) which might be accorded." Under Aurangzeb there were three other Bakhshis at headquarters, who helped the Mir Bakhshi in the task of recruitment and promotion of the Mansabdars. One of the Bakhshis was connected with the Ahadis. The Mir Bakhshi or Bakhshi-ul-Mamalik often bore the title of Amir-ul-Umara and held the supreme command in a battle if the emperor or the Wazir was not present.[51] The Mir Bakhshi was assisted by an adequate staff because he had much "desk-work" to do, besides recruiting men in the army. He had to maintain a list of Mansabdars with their postings either at the Court or the provinces, and a roster of the

[49] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 419. [50] *Ibid.*
[51] Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, pp. 37–40.

guard-mounting at the palace ; he had to prepare rules relating to the grants of pay, supervise branding, verifying the troopers' horses and prepare a register of the absentees, deaths, dismissals, cash advances, etc. This meant heavy ministerial work[52] for which the assistance of the three other Bakhshis was necessary. The ministerial staff was perhaps controlled as in the time of Akbar by the Sahibi-Tauji, who was obviously subordinate to the Mir Bakhshi.

(*iv*) *Mansabdars*

(*a*) *Organization.* Though the Mir Bakhshi was, to all practical purposes, the controlling authority of the army, the supreme command was vested in the emperor who was regarded as the commander-in-chief of the army. On important occasions he himself led the army in battle, or otherwise nominated somebody to lead it. The internal organization of these armies was on the lines of the Mansabdari system, devised and elaborated by Akbar and followed throughout the Mughal period. According to Blochman, the Mansabdars of the ranks between 5,000 and 500 numbered 249 under Akbar, 439 under Jahangir and 563 under Shahjahan ; while those between 400 and ten numbered 1,551 under Akbar and 2,502 under Jahangir.[53] All Mansabdars fell into two divisions, according to the nature of service they were called upon to render at any time. They were either present at the gracious stirrup (Hoozar-i-rikab) which meant they were in personal attendance on the emperor, or on duty elsewhere (Tainat). They were grouped into three classes, viz. those between 20 and 400 were known as Mansabdars, those between 500 and 2,500 as Umara (nobles) and those between 3,000 and 7,000 were Amir-i-Azam (great nobles). All Mansabdars except those above 5,000 came under three classes, viz. first, second and third according to their Zat and Suwar ranks they held. "From 5,000 downwards an officer was first class, if his rank in Zat and Suwar were equal ; second class, if his Suwar was half his Zat rank ; and third class if the Suwar were less than half the Zat or there were no Suwar at all."[54]

(*b*) *Salary.* Much criticism has been made by modern writers of the inflated salaries paid to these Mansabdars. Practically all except

[52] *Ibid.* [53] *Aini Akbari*, Vol. I, pp. 535–36.
[54] Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 6.

Irvine think that the Mughal officials received salaries which were "according to modern ideas, enormous." Moreland's calculation followed by text-book writers of the class of Edward and Garrett, seems to have been lacking in reality. As it appears from Abul Fazl's table of salaries paid to the Mansabdars (Blockman's, *Aini Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 248), a Mansabdar of 5,000 received a monthly salary of Rs. 30,000. But that was true only on paper. Actually Mansabdars of 5,000 received much less, that is, at the rate of about Rs. 20,000 a month. And that was because they were never paid every month and for twelve months in the year. They were lucky if they were paid once in three or four months. Under ideal conditions most probably they received only seven or eight months' pay altogether in a year. After careful study Irvine had come to the conclusion "that few of the officers received the whole twelve months' pay, the number of month's pay sanctioned per annum ranging from four to twelve. They were also liable to pay a fixed quota of their own allowances towards the expenses of the emperor's elephants and cattle, an item known as Khuraki-Dawab, feed for four-footed animals."[55] Then there were deductions at the source, e.g. "four dams in the 100 if the officer drew seven or eight months' pay and two dams in the 100 if he drew less than that number of months." In addition to this they had to pay in Alamgir's reign at the rate of Re. 1 (12 d.) per cent on Shahjahan's coinage, and at the rate of Re. 1 (8 d.) per cent on that of the reigning emperor.[56] Lastly all Mansabdars, Ahadis and Barqandazes (matchlockmen) were subject to the deduction of one day's pay in every month except Ramzan. These deductions, besides others, like those made as a result of disciplinary action or on leave salary, reduced the pay of a Mansabdar to a considerable extent. All these deductions have been overlooked by Moreland and those who have agreed with him. Far more reliable is the calculation of Irvine, who gives the annual salary of a 5,000 Mansabdar of the first class as approximately Rs. 2,50,000. But he is wrong when he says that this sum was sufficient for maintaining 5,000 troopers of Zat rank and as many again of the Suwar rank, that is, ten thousand of both the ranks in all. For if according to him each trooper was paid Rs. 16 a month and only six months in the year the total amount thus disbursed would come to more than nine lakhs and a half. But he actually

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 7. [56] Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 19.

meant, that a first class Amir of 5,000 was expected to maintain not 5,000 troopers and 5,000 Suwars but much less. For it is well-known that a very dutiful Mansabdar was he who brought to the muster about 2,000 troopers out of the 5,000 indicated by his rank. That is more reasonable. And accepting that, we find he spent at least Rs. 1,44,000 on them calculating at the rate of Rs. 12 a month paid to each trooper for six months in the year and not Rs. 16 a month as Irvine suggests. But that was not all. Besides the troopers he had to maintain his transport consisting of 160 carts, 20 mules and 80 camels in addition to 100 elephants and 300 horses. These were almost indispensable and must be costing more than Rs. 40,000 a year. So that there remained only Rs. 65,000 to him out of which to maintain his household consisting of numerous relations, dependents, servants, singers, dancers and musicians; make charities, an item which could not be neglected; offer occasional presents to the emperor and his official superiors at the Court, reward his subordinates and in all respects keep up his personal dignity, which in those days was a very costly and essential item of expenditure. And for all these purposes Rs. 65,000 was not sufficient; so that most of the grandees of the empire often incurred heavy debts to meet their wants. They often died leaving these debts unpaid. It was Akbar who had instituted a department for giving loans to Mansabdars at a reasonable rate of interest. That only proves that the enormous salaries which they received were not really enormous from the point of view of the expenditure they were called upon to incur on various accounts.

We have next to consider whether the salaries were out of proportion to the services rendered by them. A Mansabdar of 5,000 was a noble of the first rank, one of the prominent officers of the empire, an able general and very often a governor of some Subah or province. And such a man with a military contingent of 2,000 cost the empire two and half lakhs a year. Now compare that with what a governor of an Indian province cost the Indian treasury under the British. The annual personal salary of the governor of Bombay, Bengal, Madras or United Provinces was Rs. 1,20,000 and the total annual allowances made to him for the maintenance of his establishment came to Rs. 6,70,300 in Bengal, Rs. 5,76,100 in Madras and Rs. 5,38,600 in Bombay — that is, between five and a half to six lakhs a year. To this we have to add £2,000 as cost of

his equipment when coming from England.[57] In all it swells to an amount of six to six and a half lakhs a year; and that for securing the services of a man on the purely civil side of the administration. And if we were to add to it what a first class general is paid and the cost of a contingent of 2,000 of the Indian Army every year, then we may have a fair idea of the comparative cost of a governor and a Mansabdar of 5,000. And roughly it works out to this — that with a military contingent of 2,000 a general of outstanding ability and a first rank governor of the Mughal empire cost two and a half lakhs a year, while without a military contingent, a first rank governor today costs six lakhs a year and a contingent of 2,000 with a general of the first rank might be costing India between ten to twelve lakhs a year. This gives us a total of sixteen to eighteen lakhs a year as against two and a half lakhs of the Mughal Mansabdar. And accepting Moreland's calculations that the purchasing power of a Mughal rupee was six times that of a modern rupee (1938) we can still say that a Mughal Mansabdar of 5,000 cost less for the services he rendered to the empire than what India paid under the British for similar services. Hence while speaking of Mughal officials in general, several factors have to be taken into consideration and we may conclude by saying that the salaries were not enormous according to the Anglo-Indian standards.

(c) *Jagir*. Far from enjoying an "enormous" salary, the demands on their finances were so frequent and heavy that they were often in debt; and therefore a Jagir was very often preferred to cash salary. Jagirs were granted as early as Akbar's time and under Shahjahan they were given on a most extensive scale. Jagirs were generally granted in provinces, at the extremities of the empire, in those parts which had not been fully conquered. By this means the central government served two purposes. Firstly, the Jagirdars took it upon them to subdue the parts fully, establish order and realize their own income out of it, so that the central government was relieved of the duty of collecting and bringing in the revenue from distant places. Secondly, the peculiar task of Jagirdars compelled them to maintain an army on a sound footing, so that it was of some real utility for the central government in times of need.

(d) *Chelahs*. Besides "the mercenaries in their employ, over whom they had a very loose hold, commanders were in the habit of getting

[57] Palande, *Indian Administration*, p. 174.

together, as the kernel of their force, a body of personal dependents or slaves, who had no one to look to except their master. Such troops were known by the Hindi name of Chela (a slave). They were fed, clothed, and lodged by their employer, had mostly been brought up and trained by him, and had no other home than his camp."[58] This was started by Akbar, and his successors followed him.[59] The practice spread from the Court to the nobles.

(*e*) *Ahadis*. In addition to the Chelas there were the Ahadis or gentlemen troopers. They enjoyed a rank between the common troopers and the Mansabdar. They were chiefly employed in the palace for rendering personal service to the Emperor. They appear to have had "the emperor for their immediate colonel," according to the *Seirul Mutakherin* quoted by Irvine, because they were around the person of the emperor. But actually they had an officer who commanded them and he was Darogha-i-Khas Chauki or officer of the chosen sentinels. Of these Manucci says they were "all picked men, and of the noblest families. Ordinarily they number four thousand horsemen."[60] They were handsomely paid. According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, some of them drew as much as Rs. 500 a month while in the time of Bahadur Shah they received Rs. 40 a month directly from the imperial treasury. Perhaps they formed some sort of a bodyguard to the emperor though it is contended that the Wālā Shāhis were really like the emperor's bodyguards. These were raised and paid by the emperor out of his privy purse. And of the four Bakhshis — the Mir Bakshi and three assistants, the third was known as the Bakshi of the Wālā Shāhis, and the fourth as the Bakhshi of the Ahadis.[61]

(*f*) *Artillery*. One of the most important branches of the army was the artillery. According to Manucci under Aurangzeb the artillery department was wholly manned by a force of 12,000 Rajputs.[62] The department consisted of a manufacturing department; a magazine or ordnance department, the field artillery in actual use and the guns in use in the forts. Of these the Khāni-Sāmān was head of the first two and the Mir Atash of the last two.[63] As under Akbar the artillery department was included in the imperial

[58] Irvin, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 11.
[59] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 423. [60] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 422.
[61] Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 40.
[62] Vol. II, p. 422. [63] Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

household.[64] This department was wholly imperial in the sense that it was directly maintained and administered by the state. The Khān-i-Sāmān controlled the manufacture of fire-arms and field guns, as also the ammunition stores. In a battle it was the Mir Atash who controlled the disposition of the artillery. The Mir Atash or Atish was perhaps called the Darogha of the artillery.[65] The two officers were independent of each other. There were two types of artillery — the heavy guns and the light pieces. "The Moghals were very fond of large ordnance, but such pieces were really more for show than use."[66] The large guns made more noise than execution and very often they were made of brass. Their transport was a problem and wherever it was considered safe to leave them behind they were left behind.

(v) *Mughal army*

We may conclude this section with a review of the strength of the Mughal army. It is difficult to determine the exact number of the Mughal army at any period. Sarkar computes the strength of Shahjahan's army in 1648 at 440,000, comprising 200,000 cavalry 8,000 Mansabdars, 7,000 Ahadis, 40,000 infantry musketeers and artillery men, and 185,000 cavalry commanded by princes and nobles. There were also local militia posted in the Parganas and Sarkars under the Faujdars, Karoris and Amlas.[67] Besides these there were irregular contingents raised and commanded by tributary chiefs. They were not paid by the state, and could not be very much relied upon. Taking all these into account perhaps Shahjahan was right when he wrote before his captivity that he had 900,000 troops at his disposal. But excluding these irregulars under the Rajas and tributary chiefs it appears that Shahjahan had more than half a million troopers, while under Akbar they numbered a quarter of a million.[68] But in point of efficiency Akbar's army far excelled that in subsequent reigns. That was why Manucci wrote in the time of Aurangzeb that a European army of 30,000 would be sufficient to conquer the entire empire.[69]

[64] *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, pp. 109–17.
[65] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, p. 344.
[66] Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
[67] J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 20.
[68] Moreland, *India at the death of Akbar*, p. 76.
[69] *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. II p. 441.

(*vi*) *Imperial household*

Since the life of the emperor was the most precious for the empire to continue, a great deal of care was bestowed on the organization of the household. According to Prof. Sarkar it was under the Khān-i-Sāmān or Lord High Steward,[70] but that does not seem to be correct. For the Khān-i-Sāmān or Mir Sāmān was really the controller of imperial stores and factories, and therefore has been called really "the Diwan of expenditure." Equally important were the superintendent of the guards outside, and the women-officers and amazonian guards inside the palace. There was also the imperial treasury located within the vaults of the palace and most carefully and strongly guarded. According to Abul Fazl a number of departments like the supplies and stores, the management of the imperial stables, the palace decorations, etc. were connected with the palace organization. And therefore a number of very high officials were connected with the palace organization. Owing to the enormous expenditure the finance minister or the Diwan-i-Ala was directly connected, though actually the money was spent by the Mir Saman. Similarly the Mir Bakhshi was connected because he had to finally sanction the cost of the mounting of guards at the palace, though actually the Darogha-i-Khas Chauki commanded them. Lastly the Vakil in the time of Akbar, and the Wazir in the subsequent reigns had, next to the emperor, to look after the general management of the imperial household. The whole organization underwent little change after what Akbar had done. As in his time a number of high officials were in charge of the various departments connected with it. There was the Mir Arz, the palace commandant or Darogha-i-Khas Chauki, the master of the elephants, the tent master or Mir Manzil, the keeper of wardrobe, the Mir-Bakawal, the master of the horses or Atbegi, and the treasurer besides the Mir Saman or Khani Saman.

(*a*) *Seraglio.* The imperial household besides its outer adjuncts of Karkhānās, consisted of the Mahal or Seraglio where lived about two thousand women of different races. "For, just as the king has his officers outside, he has the same among the fair sex within the Mahal. Among these ladies are some who occupy the same offices that are held by the grandees outside ; and it is by the mouth

[70] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p. 22.

of these illustrious persons, when the king does not come forth, that the officials outside receive the orders sent them from within. All the persons employed in these offices are carefully selected; they have much wit and judgment, and know all that is passing in the empire. For the officials outside are required to send written reports into the Mahal of all that the king ought to know. To these reports the women officials reply as directed by that prince." When the Wakianavis and Khufianavis send their reports, "these news letters are commonly read in the king's presence by women of the Mahal at about nine o'clock in the evening . . . . " The reports of the spies are similarly read out by the women officials. When the emperor sleeps "he is guarded by women slaves, very brave and highly skilled in the management of the bow and other arms."[71] He takes rest wherever it pleases him. "In spite of his being well guarded he still changes the place at various times for fear of any treachery."[72] That was exactly what Megasthenes wrote of the Chandra Gupta Maurya. Naturally therefore the most diligent attention had to be paid to the safety of the emperor's person.

(*b*) *Mir Saman, His Duties and Office.* That was why besides the women there were also eunuchs to the number of several thousands. Of these there were ordinary ones and the principal ones. "Among the principal eunuchs there is always one set above the rest who directs and looks after every thing that goes on in the Mahal. The man holding this office is highly esteemed by the King. He has a large allowance, has charge of the treasury, is master of the wardrobe, decides on the details and the pattern of the Saropas to be prepared; in short, it is he who has charge of all the Mahal expenditure, of the clothes, the linen and the precious stones, of the jewellery, of every thing that goes into and comes out of the palace."[73] This officer was known as the Mir-Saman or Khan-i-Saman — the grand steward of the royal household as Manucci calls him. His was a very responsible work. He maintained and checked by comparing with records the entire stock of articles in the palace. He bought fresh stock in time and stored them for future needs. Very often he was expected to buy things of his own money and supplied them when needed at the market rate. He controlled the entire expenditure of the Karkhanas. The chief duties that he was expected to do can be enumerated as comprising (*i*) attestation of the salary bills of

[71] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 330–32. [72] *Ibid.*, p. 463. [73] *Ibid.*, pp. 35–51.

the workmen and menials ; (*ii*) appointment, dismissal and posting of Daroghas, Amins, Mushrifs and Tahvildars of the various Karkhanas ; (*iii*) laying down the rules for the work of the Karkhanas ; (*iv*) taking care of the Nazar, charity fund, and presents ; (*v*) fixing the daily rations of cattle ; (*vi*) permits for the distribution of food from the royal kitchens ; (*vii*) escheat of property ; (*viii*) taking the income from gardens and rents from shops and residential houses ; (*ix*) the diaries and awārijā of Subahs ; (*x*) initialling the petitions from officers asking for advances ; (*xi*) arrangements for the marriages of the princes ; (*xii*) expenditure on lodgings and buildings belonging to the state ; and (*xiii*) sundry other duties pertaining to the control of the Karkhanas and the royal income and expenditure.[74] In the matters of state buildings and imperial tent equippage he was assisted by Mir Manzil. As Manucci says he was perhaps the man who when the emperor was travelling moved in company with the Mir Manzil one day ahead at the least and chose the site where the royal tents should be pitched.[75] He controlled the Nazirs of the palace, who were the principal eunuchs acting as guardians or superintendents of the property, lands and income of each queen, princess or other lady of quality in the imperial household.[76]

The duties of the Mir Saman were so varied, heavy, and exacting that he had a number of assistants who held high offices. One of them of special importance was the Diwani Buyutat. He was specially helpful in controlling the Karkhanas. Ain-i-Akbari mentions two officers, Naziri Buyutat or superintendent of the Karkhanas and the Diwani Buyutat or the accountant of the Karkhanas.[77] Sarkar's list of the duties of the Diwani Buyutat shows that he had principally to aid the Khani Saman in making provision for the Karkhanas, fixing prices of articles, estimating the treasury of the Karkhanas maintaining their daily accounts and disbursing money for payment of salaries to the workmen and purchase of articles required for manufacture.[78] His duty "to safeguard the property for the heirs of the deceased" was indeed negligible. Therefore he could be considered more as an officer connected with the Karkhanas than

[74] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 50–52.
[75] Manucci *Storia do Mogor* Vol. II, p. 73. [76] *Ibid.*, pp. 350–51.
[77] *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. vi.
[78] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 52–54.

with registering the "property of deceased persons," as Sarkar thinks. Very rarely was property of the deceased persons returned by the state to their heirs, in Mughal India.

(c) *Darogha-i-Khas Chouki.* "As regards the royal establishment, there is an officer styled Darog Do Cossa Choqui (Daroghah of the Khas Chouki) that is officer of the chosen sentinels; the reason is that the company to which this name is given are all picked men and of the noblest families. Ordinarily they number four thousand horsemen. This officer has charge of the Gusal Cana (Ghusal Khana). Under his orders are some slave officers with their men, who are called Cheala (Chelah), that is branded."[79] It is therefore incorrect to say with Sarkar that the Khan-i-Saman was the head of the department of the imperial household. According to Manucci the Mir Saman, same as Khani Saman was in "charge of the whole expenditure of the royal household in reference to both great and small things."[80] That is to say he controlled the expenditure and supplies, while the Darogha-i-Khas Chouki controlled the guards, the slaves and other servants employed in the palace. Besides these two officers, the emperor closely watched all that happened there, because ultimately he was personally affected if anything went wrong. It may be mentioned here that all the writers on the Mughal government including Sarkar have ignored one important principle of Mughal organization. That was the principle of the Mughals to employ two co-ordinating officers at the head of each institution, whether it be a provincial government, imperial household, or the finance department. This was very necessary in those days to maintain efficiency, and honesty, and above all, personal control by the emperor. We have made a pointed reference to that while discussing the principles underlying the organization of Akbar's government.

(vii) *Law and justice*

One of the most important departments of state was that of law and justice. It resembled, to some extent, the judiciary or judicial department of India today. The emperor by virtue of his sovereignty was the source of justice and therefore was the supreme court of justice. Under him came the chief Qazi of the empire or

[79] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 422. [80] *Ibid.*, p. 419.

Qazi-ul-Quzāt. He always accompanied the emperor, when he moved out. "Every city even every large village had its local Qazi's. These posts were often sold for bribes and the Qazis department became a by-word and a reproach in Mughal times."[81] Manucci mentions many instances to bear it out.[82] The Qazi wielded the highest judicial powers, the only limitation being that "when he condemns any one to death he cannot order execution without first reporting to the king three times."[83] He tried all criminal suits according to the canon law, while the civil suits were tried according to the common law by the Adils or civil judges.[84] He was assisted by two Muftis, who were conversant with legal procedure, precedents and principles. They were very much like the modern advocate general employed by the government. The Mufti was expected to advise the Qazi in regard to decisions in law suits. When he noticed the Qazi going to give a wrong verdict he humbly pointed out what he should do. It was expected of the Mufti to "train himself during his leisure hours by copying learned legal decisions and discussions of judicial principle from authoritative text-books (Manual 45-46)."[85] These books dealt with Muslim law and jurisprudence. The Qazi thus had his task simplified, and therefore he was urged by the government to be just, honest, and impartial and to hold trials in the presence of the parties in the court-house at the seat of government. He was forbidden to accept presents and perquisites or to attend entertainments given by people. He was required to write the decrees, sale deeds, mortgage bond, and other legal documents very carefully; and to regard poverty (faqr) as his glory (Manual pp. 43–44).[86] The last injunction was respected more in its breach than in observance.

The final court of appeal was the emperor himself. He tried personally in open court all cases both appellate and original, once a week, on Wednesdays. The method of work is thus described by Sarkar. "The emperor came direct from the darshan — window to the Diwani-i-Khas (a hall of private audience) at about 8 a.m. and sat on the throne of justice till midday. This room was filled with

[81] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p. 27.
[82] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 419–20.
[83] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 419.
[84] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 27 and 106.
[85] *Ibid.*, p. 28. [86] *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.

the law-officers of the crown, the judges of canon law (Qazis), judges of common law (Adils), Muftis, theologians (Ulema), jurists learned in precedents (Fatwa), the superintendent of the law court (Darogha-i-Adālat), and the Kotwal or prefect of the city police. None else among the courtiers was admitted unless his presence was specially necessary. The officers of justice presented the plaintiffs one by one and reported their grievances. His majesty very gently ascertained the facts by inquiry, took the law from the Ulema and pronounced judgment accordingly.

Many persons had come from far-off provinces to get justice from the highest power in the land. Their complaints could not be investigated except locally, and so the emperor wrote orders to the governors of those places urging them to find out the truth, and either do them justice there or send the parties back to the capital with their reports."[87] The descriptions given by William Finch,[88] Edward Terry,[89] Bernier[90] and Manucci,[91] practically corroborate the above picture of Sarkar. The Mughal emperors tried to do their duty to their people in as just a manner as possible. They were inspired by a sense of justice no doubt, but in actual practice they failed miserably. As Terry observed "trials are quick," and so the execution. "The governors in cities and provinces proceed in like form of justice." It had to be so because there did not exist that elaborate gradation of law-courts, the proper definition of their jurisdiction, and regular codification of law with which we are familiar today. The only redeeming feature was that the tortuous and expensive processes of the modern system of justice did not exist. There did not exist a litigant temper among the people, and justice was dispensed on the basis of compromise or retribution.

With the department of justice was connected the Kotwal who, Manucci says, "is subordinate to the Qazi and receives orders from him." He was a sort of "lieutenant of police" or like our city superintendent of police. He had manifold duties to perform, the chief of which was to keep peace and order in the city, detect crimes, watch the movements and activities of the people, and collect the income from the city. "Under his orders there is a considerable body

[87] Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Chap. ii.
[88] Purchas, iv, 72 & 73. [89] *Ibid.*, ix, 47.
[90] *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, p. 263.
[91] *Storia*, Vol. II, p. 462.

of cavalry and a great number of foot soldiers ; for, in every ward there is a horseman and twenty to thirty foot soldiers, who in a sort of way go rounds." The Kotwal produced the thieves and criminals before the Qazi, and if he failed, he had to make good to the people what had been taken from them. It was the duty of the Kotwal to prevent distillation of arrack (spirit), and send reports regularly of what went on in the city.

(vii) Religious endowments and charities

The department of religious endowments and charities was under Sadr-i-Sudur or Sadr-i-Jahan. His duties were practically as they were in the time of Akbar. He was the "judge and superviser of the endowments of land made by the emperor or by the princes for the support of pious men, scholars, and monks. It was his duty to see that such grants were applied to the right purpose and also to scrutinize applications for fresh grants." He was also a civil judge but much of his jurisdiction was limited by the authority of the censor of public morals or Muhtasib. The Sadr-i-Sudur issued instructions to the provincial Sadrs as to how they should work and conduct themselves.

Just as Akbar had tried to reform the habits and lives of the people by special decrees and ordinances, so did Aurangzeb try by appointing a censor of morals, who had to act in strict conformity with the Quranic precepts. Aurangzeb appointed one Mulla Arz Wajih a noted Turani theologian as the censor, and gave him the rank of commander of one thousand horse. A contingent of Mansabdars and Ahadis was placed at his disposal to enforce the orders issued by the emperor. Aurangzeb also ordered the provincial governors to help in this pious work of moral reform, and urged them till the end of his life to enforce the canonical rules about the things to be done (Amr) and things to be forbidden (Nihi). The censor — Muhtasib had to punish severely, immorality, distillation and drinking of intoxicating liquors and drugs, gambling, and idolatry in all forms and violation of Quranic precepts. Besides these duties he saw to it that nobody encroached upon the public roads and bazar areas, that nobody threw dirt and sweepings on the public roads, and that professional women were kept out of the city.

(*ix*) *Imperial secretariat*

As in the time of Akbar all the departments of state were connected with the Daftar or imperial secretariat, which comprised the Abwabul Mal, Abwab ut Tahawil, Taujih and the central intelligence. The last was staffed by numerous clerks, and secret reporters and diary writers called Khufianavis and Waqianavis respectively. All estimates or Dauls, memoranda or Yad-dasht, and confirmation orders or Arzi mukarrar that pertained to the various departments, all reports received from the provinces, all that was done at the Court and indeed the copies of all despatches, decrees, etc. issued by the emperor were retained here. A detailed list of the duties of this office has been given in the previous chapter as a quotation from the Aini Akbari. These need hardly any alteration in the light of what Sarkar speaks on the authority of the Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Alamgir namah, and his so called "manual of officers' duties." But Sarkar does not mention the prominent members of the staff of this important office of the empire. He simply mentions that the news-letters of the empire were "sent to an officer of the court named the Darogha of Dak Chouki, i.e. superintendent of posts and intelligence."[92] From his account it would appear as if the posts and intelligence department had a separate existence from the central intelligence or Wakianavis department. This is a mistake resulting from too great a reliance on the authorities on the reign of Aurangzeb and failure to supplement these by the Aini Akbari. The Aini Akbari mentions that the abridgement of all the reports "is signed and sealed by the Waqianavis, and the Rishaldar, the Mir Arz and the Darogha."[93] This of course gives the officers in an ascending order. The Darogha of Dak Chouki as given by Sarkar is the same as the Darogha we have mentioned. The Mir Arz must have been connected with the department because of the duties he was called upon to perform and which we have mentioned in the previous chapter.

Now into this department came all sorts of reports from all parts of the empire. There were two sets of news reporters called the Waqianavis and the Khufianavis. The Waqianavis reported directly. The rule for these reporters as laid down in the Manual

[92] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p. 74.
[93] *Aini Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 259.

was that the Wakianavis should report once and the Khufianavis twice a week. Besides these, the despatches from the Nazim and the Diwan came twice, and the Akhbars of the Harkarahs once a month in addition to the urgent matters which were reported immediately. The Khufianávises, as the name signifies, were confidential agents, and all people were in mortal dread of these men. These worked also as spies, and also sent their reports direct to the emperor. "These news letters are commonly read in the king's presence by women of the Mahal at about 9 O'clock in the evening."[94] These women were officers of the harem. The news letters came in once every week, and were passed to the emperor unopened though the Mir Arz, who was an official of the imperial household also.

(*x*) *Ghusal Khana — Daulat Khana-I-Khas*

The departments of state were co-ordinated by means of a central secretariat, and their heads were brought in daily contact with the emperor by means of a secret council. This council was known by the name of Ghusal Khana. We have in the last chapter stated that there was a secret or privy council that Akbar consulted from time to time. This had become a definite institution in the subsequent reigns. Though it means "bathing house" it stood for the small council that met here. It had acquired a connotation like the cabinet in the British Constitution. According to Dr. Saksena, who refers to Abdul Hamid Lahori's Pādshāhnāma Vol. II, p. 220, the Diwan-i-Khas was known as Ghusal Khana in the reign of Akbar and Jahangir. Shahjahan called it Daulat-Khana-i-Khas. Shahjahan had his Shahburj where the secret council was held.[95] "Herein are good counsels given" writes Manucci, "and just orders are sent forth." It was, he says, full of "architectural adornments of curious enamel work, with many precious stones." It was in the charge of the commandant of the palace or Daroghā-i-Khās-Chouki. But it is possible that a special officer was appointed as the superintendent of Ghusal Khana for, we know that one Mirza Muhammed held that position under Aurangzeb.[96] According to Manucci "it is a secret place where the second audience is given and the council

[94] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 331.
[95] Saksena, *History of Shahjahan*, pp. 241–42.
[96] Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII, p. 315.

sits. Into it only the principal lords and officers enter."[97] According to Dr. Saksena the king went from Diwan-i-Khas to the Shahburj. "With the exception of the princes (of the royal blood, he means) and three or four other officers none was allowed entry. No officer could stay there beyond the time taken by his business. In the Shahburj secret decisions were taken, and confidential orders drafted, and despatched to provincial officers. Also the business relating to Khalsa (crown lands), Talab (salary), or Tankhwah (pay) which could not be transacted in the Diwan-i-Khas was transacted here."[98] This was in the morning. Once again in the evening he held a council in Shahburj for half an hour, before retiring into the harem for the night. In the time of Akbar this council was held generally after night fall and not in the morning.

As we noticed under Akbar, the empire was held together by the four central institutions, viz. the imperial court, the imperial council, a centralized service called the Mansabdari system, and the imperial secretariat. And to what has been said of these under Akbar, there is hardly anything of importance to add, except that the imperial court under Shahjahan excelled that of Akbar in grandeur and brilliance. Under Aurangzeb it retained its resplendent grandeur no doubt but became less gay and more puritanic. The council met more frequently than at the time of Akbar, and the Mansabdari system perceptibly deteriorated in efficiency. Owing to the vast extent of the empire and increasing revenues bigger Mansabs were now created above the rank of 5,000 and granted to the nobles of the empire. For example on one occasion Jahangir raised Itibar Khan the governor of Agra to the mansab of 6,000 Zat and 5,000 suwar.[99] Shahjahan on his accession to the throne promoted Mahabat Khan to a Mansab of 7,000 Zat and 7,000 suwar, and Asaf Khan to the still higher rank of 8,000 Zat and 8,000 suwar.[100] As for the princes of royal blood Mansabs ranged from 30,000 to 50,000.

(*xi*) *Provincial Government*

After this review of the central government we may pass on to the organization of the provincial government. It was modelled

[97] Manucci, Storia, Vol. II, p. 400. [98] Saksena, *History of Shahjahan*, p. 242. [99] Jahangir's *Memoirs*, Vol. II, pp. 257–58. [100] Saksena, *History of Shahjahan*, p. 64.

on the lines of the central government with slight modifications here and there. The government consisted of the governor, officially called Nazim and popularly Subahdar, the Diwan, the Bakshi, the Khazinadar, the Qazi, the Sadr, the Buyutat and the censor. They always resided at the head-quarters of the province and were under the direct control of their respective chiefs at the seat of empire. The Subahdar represented the authority of the emperor, and was the viceroy for all practical purposes. He was the head of the provincial military and civil administration. He was very often a general of considerable ability and led the army into the battle when required. Though nominally under him, the Diwan possessed a co-ordinate authority, and was directly under the orders of the Wazir. The policy of the Mughal government was to place the two vital props of the imperial government, viz. the army and the finance under two co-ordinate officers, viz. the Subahdar and the Diwan. The provincial government was the link between the people living in rural areas and the emperor living at the capital. It kept in touch with the people by means of (*i*) the Faujdars posted to the subdivisions, (*ii*) the lower officials of the revenue department, (*iii*) the visits of the Zamindars to the Subahdar's court and (*iv*) the tours of the Subahdar.[101]

(*xii*) *Provincial Government Officers*

(*a*) *Subahdar*. The main functions of the Subahdar were to maintain order, to make proper arrangements for the collection of revenues and to execute the royal decrees sent from time to time. In the Manual he is exhorted to appoint reliable officers in his province, and leave a trustworthy friend at the court to represent him there. He was to ascertain from well-informed people the general condition of the peasantry and the disposition of the Zamindars. The refractory Zamindars were to be chastised as also the lawless men. The ryots were to be encouraged to extend cultivation, and to be protected against all sorts of oppression by petty revenue or government officers. He was not to interfere in the matters of Khalsa Mahals or crown lands, which were directly under the control of the Diwan-i-Khalsa. He was to cherish the Shaikhs and Qazis

[101] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p. 56.

and support with cash and kind the poor Darvishes. He was to realize the tribute due from the vassal princes living close to his frontier and arrange to send it to the Court. He was advised to conciliate the Zamindars with presents, if necessary; for it was cheaper to keep them in hand thus than to employ troops to force them to submission. He was to be very careful about recommending the Mansabdars under him for promotion, because generally the emperor values and gives effect to his recommendations. He must never release robbers and culprits by taking money and presents from them because that was tantamount to bribery and led to wholesale corruption. He had to send two despatches a month to the court by Dak-chauki reporting all the occurrences of his province. He had also to maintain the Dak-chauki in the most serviceable condition. He had to keep an army in a state of constant readiness for action anywhere they were required. If the emperor did not grant him resources for the maintenance of such an army, he could do so at his own expense and recover the cost from the revenues of the province.[102] Generally the Subahdars resorted to the latter alternative.

(*b*) *Diwan.* Next to the Subahdar came the provincial Diwan who was "the rival of the Subahdar." Each sought to watch the other and thus restrain the other in all matters. The Diwan was controlled by the imperial diwan and was in direct correspondence with him. He was exhorted by the imperial diwan at the time of his appointment to send reports twice every month about the occurrences within his jurisdiction, and the cash balance that was with him. He was asked to appoint honest men as Amin and to see that cultivation increased. A sanad or letter of appointment of a provincial Diwan in the reign of Aurangzeb thus enumerated his duties!

"Cause the extension of cultivation and habitation in the villages. Watch over the imperial treasury, that nobody may draw any money without due warrant. When due money is paid into the treasury from the chests of the fotahdars and other sources give receipts (qabz-ul-wasul) to their agents. See that no official (amil) exacts any forbidden cess (abwab). At the end of every agricultural season ascertain from the original rough papers (first

[102] *The Manual*, 13–14, 27–32, quoted in Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 57–61.

note) the extortions and peculations of the Amils, and recover for the imperial treasury whatever may be due from them on this account. Report bad or dishonest Amils to government. If any Amil has let arrears (of revenue) accumulate for many years, you should collect the due amount from the villages in question by easy instalments at the rate of 5 per cent every season. The taqavi loan given last year by government should be realized in the first season of the present year. If they fail to pay, or delay payment, government will compel the Diwan and the Amin to make the amount good. Send the papers of your department to the imperial records office according to the regulations."[103]

With regard to the duties of the rest of the provincial officers we need not dwell upon them because they were like those of the officers under Akbar. Aurangzeb added a new officer to the staff of provincial government, and that was the Amin-i-Jaziya.[104] He was appointed sometime after 1679, when Jaziya was reimposed. His business was to collect the tax most strictly, without admitting of any extenuating circumstances. Over the collectors or Amins of Jaziya there was appointed in 1687 an Inspector General of Jaziya, who toured the country and supervised the collection.[105] Besides the collector of Jaziya, Aurangzeb created another office for the province and that was of the censor. There was at the seat of the empire a Muhtasib whose duties we have already described. Corresponding to him and appointed by him were the provincial censors.

(c) *Sarkar, Parganah and Village Officers.* A province was divided into several Sarkars or districts, and each district into several Parganahs or groups of villages as divided by Akbar. We have already noted in the previous chapter that the functions of officials in charge of those divisions under Akbar, did not undergo any material change. Without repeating them therefore we may only make here a few special observations on the functions of those officers in the succeeding reigns.

We have already observed that Akbar had created the Karori system and gave it up subsequently. But the title of Karori seems to have survived Akbar's time, though it had no reference to the

[103] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, Aurangzeb's Farman to Rasik Das, pp. 62–63.

[104] Muntkhab-ul-Lubab, Elliot & Dowson, Vol. VII, p. 310.

[105] Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 273.

amount of revenue the officer collected. It simply meant "a collector of state dues," and there were also Karoris of Ganjs or markets. We have it from the Manual that the Karori "ought to maintain a body of militia proportionate to his jurisdiction and collect the revenue without negligence and at the right time. He should not demand mahsul (the state due in cash or kind) from places not yet capable of paying, lest their ryots should run away. He should urge his subordinate not to realize anything in excess of the regulations . . . . He should be honest."A sanad (letter of appointment) granted to a new Karori thus details the instructions : "Collect the revenue season by season as assessed by the Amin, and pay it to the Fotahdar. With the advice of the Faujdar and Amin carefully deposit the (accumulated) money in the imperial treasury, giving a receipt for it to the Fotahdar. Send to the government record office your abstract accounts and statements of income and disbursement and other papers as laid down in the regulations. Do not collect any Abwab, such as Nahib, the collector's perquisites (Tahsildari), etc. lest the money should be taken back from the offender and he be dismissed." The Karori, it appears from the above, was most probably a tax-farmer — like the modern Malguzar, who collected royal revenues and got a certain percentage on his collection. He was not a regular state employee. The chief colleagues of the Karori as is evident from the above extract were, the Faujdar, the Amin and the Fotahdar or treasurer. In the previous chapter we have noticed the duties of the Faujdar and the treasurer called Khazinadar under Akbar.

The Manual of the duties of officers (963–65) thus speaks of the Amin's work : "He should make the assessment according to the rules and let none steal government money. The Amin's work is to cause the kingdom to be cultivated. Before the commencement of the season of cultivation he should take from the Qanungoes the preceding ten year's papers of the revenue assessment and area of the villages, ride to the villages in company with the Karoris, Chaudhuries, Qanangoes, and Zamindars ; inquire into the condition of the villages as regards their area and the actual number of ploughs with the real area, and if the two do not agree call upon the Qanungo to explain the excess and censure the headman saying "why did the Qanungo give a false return and why did the head man tell lies ? "

"Then inquire whether the existing ploughs are sufficient for the cultivators of the village. If not then grant Taqavi (agricultural loans) proportioned to the area of the cultivable soil of the village for the purchase of oxen and seeds, taking bonds from the headman for the recovery of the loan with the first instalment of the (next) year's revenue and indemnity bond (Muchilka) from the Karoris saying that they would realize the loan with the first instalment of the (next) year."

The above extract brings out the important functions that the Amin performed in the village — in helping cultivation and ameliorating the condition of the peasantry. To the Indian peasant constantly relying on the monsoon, the grant of Tacavi or agricultural loan was extremely welcome and helpful. This was granted by him to the headman of the village as representing the village interest, after taking a Tamassuk (bond) from him; and that Tamassuk had to be endorsed by the Chaudhuri, sealed by the Qazi, and attested by the Qanungo and Zamindar. In the management of the village, the Qanungo played an equally important part. He was, as the name implies, fully conversant with the rules and practices that obtained in the village. He was expected to know all about the land — procedure and precedents in regard to the collection of the revenue survey and assessment, the value, tenure, extent and transfers of lands, etc. The Manual thus issues instructions to a new Qanungo: "The emperor's business goes on in reliance on your papers. To your office belong the papers of division (Taqsim), comparison (Muazana), etc. . . . Keep two copies of the records — one in your own house and the other in your office (in charge of your Gumastah) so that one at least may be saved in case of fire and flood."[106]

CURRUPTION AND DETERIORATION IN GOVERNMENT

The above extracts clearly bring out the important role that the headman, the Zamindar, the Qanungo and the Amin played in the village. They ruled the life of the village, ruined or raised, and more often ruined than raised, the material condition of the peasantry to fulfil their own greed. The poor and helpless villager was like a rat in their trap. The government had wisely associated

[106] Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp. 86–90.

these in the village administration in order that each might prove a brake to the rapacity of the other. But that was never realized. Each had his own turn, and when his turn came he had to be propitiated. Their interests never clashed, for each could make his own pile when his opportunity came, and he was never obstructed by the others. This unholy conspiracy sometimes could be checked by a vigilant Diwan or Subahdar. But that was rather the exception than the rule in the period that began with the reign of Aurangzeb. With the war of succession preceding his coronation, with rebellions and disorders punctuating his reign, and with the interminable war in the Deccan exhausting the strength and resources of the empire, the efficiency of administration was irrevocably undermined and with that the condition of the peasantry became pitiable. The way the Diwan and his underlings in the revenue department behaved is a grim commentary on the efficiency of the Mughal administration during this period. In 1662 the Subahdar of Orissa wrote: "The Mahals of crown land have been reduced to desolation and their affairs have fallen into confusion in consequence of the harsh assessment of an unreasonable amount of revenue and the neglect of details by the (new) Diwan, Muhammed Hashim. He transacts business in this way: when a candidate for Karoriship accepts the post, Hashim imposes on him the paper assessment of the Parganah and sends him there before he can learn about the (actual) yield of the place. After a short time another man is secured for the post and Hashim Khan taking money from this man, dismisses the former Karori, appoints the second man and makes him promise a larger revenue than the first collector had been engaged for. After a little time, a third man appears, offering a still higher sum to the state, and he is sent as collector to the Parganah . . . . The Khan has thus increased the revenue (on paper) twofold in some places and threefold in others, while the ryots unable to pay, have fled away and the villages have turned a wilderness."[107] That was in the province of Orissa. In the province of Gujerat we are told that the governor, Faujdars, government tax-collectors and rich men indulged in all sorts of private trade. Even Azimush Shan, Aurangzeb's grandson when he was governor of Bengal could not resist the temptation of making money in this way, for which he had to be censored by Aurangzeb. Government officials of the

[107] Sarkar, *Studies in Aurangzeb's Reign*, p. XIV.

lower ranks extorted money from the people by all sorts of pretexts. In the city of Patan the officials imposed for instance a heavy tax on grazing of cattle and exacted it by violence. Because the lands on the banks of the rivers Sabarmati and Wartak were very fertile, the Faujdars and Karoris forced the owners of these lands to pay them Rs. 10 to Rs. 15. No resident of Ahmedabad could cut a tree standing on his ancestral homeland without paying some perquisites to the officials. Practically all articles of human consumption when taken out of or brought in to the city to be sold were taxed in an arbitrary manner by the officials. The list of various illegal imposts has been elaborately explained by Prof. Sarkar and though each emperor issued periodical decrees for their abolition they had only a temporary effect and then were completely ignored. The petty and the high officials went their own way and adopted various methods of satisfying their greed for money. And the helpless peasantry was crushed beneath the burden of taxes so that nothing was left to them for the payment of government dues, for which various forms of humiliating punishment like flogging used to be inflicted.[108] It was in a way inevitable. For, from the emperor downwards all were accustomed to expect presents as a form of social etiquette. The Subahdars became impoverished in trying to satisfy the demands of the emperor, and the lower officers of the Subahdars', and the people of the lower officers'. Thus it was a vicious circle and the government was steeped in corruption as were the people in poverty and misery.

[108] Manucci, *Storia*, Vol. II, pp. 450–51.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

ARAB RULE DID NOT HAVE AN ENDURING EFFECT

WE may conclude our study of Indo-Islamic polity with a review of the results achieved by Muslim rule in India for five hundred years extending from A.D. 1206 when the first permanent Muslim state called the Delhi Sultanate was established, to A.D. 1707 when Aurangzeb died bringing down with him the splendid structure of the Mughal empire which four generations of kings had built up. It must be borne in mind that though the Arab rule was established in Sind as early as A.D. 712, and lasted for nearly a century and a half it left no enduring marks, and therefore, did not contribute anything significant to the development of Indo-Islamic polity. That was the first contact of the Muslims with the Hindus, but it had neither the sting of a religious war, nor the zeal of proselytisation which could have embittered the relations between them. It was just a military conquest. The political settlement and rule of the Muslims that followed was designed on the pattern of what obtained elsewhere in the Caliphate. The Arabs did not exclude the Hindus from a share in their country's government, though that share was limited to a narrow and comparatively less important sphere of government. The Hindu chiefs were generally treated with kindness and respect. Some of them retained their territory and rule, and were even placed over Muslim officers. Religious tolerance was not a policy of the Caliphate, but on the payment of a poll-tax the non-Muslims in Sind were allowed a fair measure of freedom to live in their own way and follow their religion without hindrance or persecution. There was a rough and crude adjustment attempted between the Arab system and the Indian system, the former obtaining at the higher levels of direction and control, and the latter at the base of the administration. Local government was carried on entirely with the assistance of the local men on traditional lines, and according to the customs and usage prevailing among the social groups. These adjustments did not go far or deep

enough, so that after a century and a half of Arab rule, when they fell, they left hardly any results behind.

RULE OF THE GHAZNAVIDS AND DELHI SULTANS

In the tenth and eleventh centuries the Turks who had embraced Islam, and had founded kingdoms in Central Asia made persistent efforts to conquer Afghanistan and the Punjab from their Hindu rulers. They succeeded, and the Muslim rule was established on both sides of the Indian frontier, Afghanistan to the west and the Punjab to the east. The work of Mahmud of Ghazni was, in this respect, very important. He annexed the Punjab after his repeated raids into Northern India. Though a religious fanatic he followed an enlightened policy in his administration. He did not make any discrimination in appointing Hindus to positions of trust and authority. His example was followed by his successors, and Hindus like Siwand Rai, Bijai Rai and Tilak rose to the ranks of generals and provincial governors. They were employed even to crush disloyal and rebellious governors. This policy of associating the idolatrous Hindus in the government, ran counter to the spirit of Islamic polity and traditions. A non-Muslim was never allowed to fight for an Islamic state, or to serve it in any civilian capacity. This departure from the universal practice of Islamic state was significant, in-as-much as it marked the emergence of a new spirit in Islamic polity in its Indian environment.

The pattern of government, however, followed the lines of what obtained under the Caliphate. The king was known as Sultan, a title which for the first time Caliph Wasik-b-Illah had conferred on Ashnas the Commandant of the Turkish guards. The Sultan had a number of ministers each in charge of a department of state, and at their head stood the prime minister or the Wazir. He occupied a pre-eminent position among the highest officers of the state as under the Abbasids. He was in over-all charge of the entire government while other ministers were in charge of specific departments, all of which came to be called the Diwan, corresponding to the modern secretariat. The highest officers bore the title of Ameer, and the Wazir, often bore the title of Ameer-ul-Umara. The provincial governors were called Naibs or deputies. After the Wazir and governors in importance came the chamberlain or Hajib, the Ariz

or the chief of the army, the Kotwal or the chief of the police, the Mushrif, in charge of the military arsenal, the chief justice or Qazi, and the head of the ecclesiastical department or the Sadr. The office of the Sultan's personal secretary was called Dawat Khana. The capital city was in charge of the Kotwal, who was a very influential officer, and similarly every other town or city was in charge of a Kotwal. The governors of provinces enjoyed almost complete freedom in the matter of administration, and played the Sultan in their territories. Some of the officers were appointed directly by the Sultan, and others by himself. That, roughly, was the scheme of government under the Ghaznavids, and that was adopted by the Sultans of Delhi, after the Delhi Sultanate was founded in A.D. 1206.

DELHI SULTANS RULE AS AGENTS OF THE CALIPH

For about a hundred years the Delhi Sultans were busy conquering and consolidating their conquests in Northern India. They professed to rule as the agents of the Caliph, even though the Caliphate in Baghdad had by now been wiped out by the Mongols. They often sent messengers to Cairo, where the Caliphate had been shifted, to receive the investiture of office and blessings from the Caliph. That attitude brought upon them the obligation that they must rule according to the Shariat, i.e., sacred law, and in strict adherence to the Quranic injunctions. Religious persecution and political oppression of the Hindus became, therefore, the main objectives of the Delhi Sultanate. The Ulemas and Qazis, i.e. the Muslim theologians and jurists attained a considerable importance, because the Sultans did not have any pretension to sanctity of their personal authority or knowledge of the sacred laws. The theologians and scholars of the sacred law pointed out to the Sultan what was lawful and unlawful, and how he should rule in order that his government may approximate to the ideals of the Islamic state. Their authority was invoked for the administration of royal justice, as much as for the validation of the royal succession, the latter being accomplished through the Khutba recited from the pulpits of Mosques. The Islamic state thus professed to exist for the promotion of the Islamic faith and the interests of the Muslims, as a community. It functioned in co-operation with the custodians of the faith, and

very often was subservient to them in matters of a purely political import. It thus assumed a partisan character and ceased to receive any co-operation from the Hindus. The Muslims alone were expected to rule the country and fight for its peace and protection, while the Hindus were excluded from all share in the government and from military service. Such a state could not either be secure, or achieve much by way of safeguarding the interests of the Muslim community for whom it professed to exist. It could not enjoy either the support or loyalty of all the sections of its subjects except by force. The consequence was disastrous. The Hindus who could not be cowed down by force or won over by conversion proved implacable in their hostility. The Indian converts to Islam, who were employed in government, proved disloyal and rebellious at the slightest opportunity. To add to these difficulties the Mongol invaders were constantly knocking at the gateways of Northern India, and at times, raiding as far as Delhi. In a situation like this, the Delhi Sultans realized the unwisdom of carrying on their government on purely Islamic principles, for the promotion of the Islamic faith, and in the interest of the Muslim community. Islamic political institutions and principles had to be adapted to the needs of this situation, to suit the Indian environment. Hence a spirit of compromise, of accommodation which, for the first time, had been noticed in the enlightened policy of the Ghaznavids, became now perceptible in the policy of some of the outstanding rulers of the Delhi Sultanate.

DEFECTS OF SULTANATE GOVERNMENT

Capable and farseeing rulers of the Delhi Sultanate were aware of two deficiencies in their government. The first was that the government was run on purely Islamic ideals ; and the second, as a concomitant to that, the Muslim theologians and scholars of the canon law wielded an influence over government that cut across the authority of the king and imposed limitations on royal sovereignty. They therefore maintained that the spheres of polity and government were different from those of Islam and its canons, and therefore, the domination of the custodians of Islam and its canons should be removed in order that the authority of the king, as the sole guardian of the common good of the empire may prevail. Ala-ud-din

Khilji and Muhammed-bin-Tughlaq, who held this view, could not fully realize it, because a centralized and efficient administrative system had not been built up, and the co-operation and political traditions of the Hindus had not been utilized to strengthen the institution of Muslim kingship in India. Muslim kingship in India lacked tradition. It had no foundation in popular allegiance, and it had no sanctity about it. Kingship or Sultanate was a grant of the Caliph to a successful military leader or murderer or intriguer. The Sultans of the Slave Dynasty were practically all military leaders and upstarts; and Ala-ud-din Khilji and Muhammed-bin-Tughlaq were both murderers, besides being successful military leaders. There was nothing sacred about the status that they thus acquired or about the confirmation that they received of that status from the Caliph. Naturally Muslim kingship during the Delhi Sultanate period lacked the element of sanctity, and since it was partisan in character it had no foundation in the loyalty of the people. Therefore, all endeavours to eliminate clerical influence from the state and government, in order to prop up the authority of the king and establish royal sovereignty were bound to fail.

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT AND DISINTEGRATION OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

The system of government that obtained under the Delhi Sultanate followed the patterns of the Ghaznavids. There were the Wazir, the Diwan, the Sadr, the Hajib, the Mustaufi, the Bakshi and a few others of less importance. Under Balban, and Ala-ud-din Khilji it worked with efficiency, and the outstanding feature of their government was not so much a new department added here, or a new function undertaken there, as the overall control and centralization that was effected by them. Authority of the king, the powers that he assumed and exercised over his people irrespective of the clerical influence, increased immensely. Muhammed-bin-Tughlaq had made it a rule that in all matters, whether pertaining to the secular or religious affairs his decision must be final. When the attitude of the kings to impose their supremacy over the state, untrammelled by the considerations of Islamic precepts and authority of the custodians of Islamic law became pronounced through their state policies, the disintegration of the Delhi

Sultanate came. The political unity of India was lost. Throughout the country a number of independent kingdoms arose, some of which were ruled by Hindu Kings and others by Muslim Kings. In all these states the Hindus and Muslims lived side by side. Consequently there arose an attitude of tolerance on the part of the Muslim kings in relation to their Hindu subjects, in response to the same attitude of the Hindu kings towards their Muslim subjects. Indeed there was nothing new about this attitude of the Hindu kings, since tolerance was an ancient political tradition of the Hindus. In Kashmere, Malwa, Bijapur and Bengal, the policy of some of the Muslim kings was not merely tolerant but enlightened and progressive. Many of them anticipated Akbar in their liberalism, patronage of talent, promotion of culture, and broad-based policies of government. In Orissa, Vijayanagar and Rajputana the rulers were Hindus and they only followed their own political traditions which postulated religious tolerance and even-handed justice to all.

KINGSHIP OF THE SURS AND CENTRALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

The period of regional states thus ushered in an era of political reconstruction. It lasted for nearly a century and a half, A.D. 1400–1550. During this period three dynastic empires rose and fell with Delhi as the capital, and with portions of the Indo-Gangetic plains as their territorial extent. The Lodis built up a polity which was feudal in structure. The King was like a *primus-inter-pares*—first among equals, the equals being the feudal nobles. The state functioned as a partisan organization, with a narrow policy of religious intolerance characterizing its functions. The administrative set-up was on the Sultanate pattern. The Wazir, Sadr, Hajib, Mustaufi, Ariz, etc., formed the central government. Provincial and local governments were in charge of the feudal nobles, who after realizing taxes and money when needed, let the villages go their own way and take care of themselves. The Afghan Lodis were overthrown by the Mughals, and subsequently, the Mughals were overthrown by the Afghan Surs. The Surs successfully eliminated some of the worst features of Afghan polity, as established by the Lodis, and built up a new polity on sound and stable foundations. Their great king Sher Shah established a highly centralized system of government on bureaucratic lines which was a model of efficiency and a

welfare state. His policy of government was liberal, and he refused to deviate from his notions of what was for the good of the state and his subjects, by purely religious considerations. He made no discrimination between the Hindus and the Muslims in making appointments to the offices of the state, high or low. His criterion in this matter was merit and not community. He associated the Hindus in the departments of administration, and one of his trusted generals was a Hindu. A secretariat with a number of departments controlled by ministers like the Wazir, Diwan, Bakshi, Sadr and a few others constituted the central government. The provincial and local administration was organized on a uniform pattern. The entire structure was hierarchical, the lowest units being controlled by those above them, and these by the Central administration, under the direct supervision of Sher Shah himself. The lowest units of administration were villages or groups of villages, each having a uniform set of officials with clearly defined powers and functions. In reconstructing this administrative machinery he had two objectives in view. One was to centralize control in order that government ran effectively ; and the other was to protect the peasantry and the people from all types of tyrannies and extortions. The revenue administration, based on an elaborate system of survey and assessment of land, and the police arrangements for internal security were the outstanding features of his government. Extensive works of public utility, a postal system, currency reforms, and liberal encouragement to art and literature were some of the benevolent activities of the state, and through these, Sher Shah won a measure of popular loyalty, never known before. Thus centralization of power, achieved through an efficient administrative system, and support and loyalty of the people contributed to the stability and prestige of kingship as an institution under Sher Shah.

His son and successor Islam Shah, however, went a step further in this respect. He raised the prestige of kingship even higher, and made it the symbol of supreme power, or sovereignty as embodied in his own person. He dominated over the custodians of religion and canon law, and made them take orders from him. In all matters, whether secular or religious his injunctions and rulings were taken as final. That was very nearly the completion of the process which had started in the time of Ala-ud-din Khilji. Its first stage, which called for the recognition that the spheres of government and polity

were distinct from those of Islam and its laws, had been reached by the time of Muhammed-bin-Tughlaq. Its second stage, which sought to eliminate clerical influence from government and polity in order to establish the supremacy of the latter, through the personality and power of the king, was completed by Islam Shah. That also marked an important phase in the evolution of Indo-Islamic polity.

AKBAR'S KINGSHIP REVIVES THE ANCIENT INDIAN IDEAL

The work of Islam Shah was pushed forward by Akbar. When he ascended the throne he had indeed no kingdom to rule. He had to start from the very foundations. And during the fifty years of his career he not only built up a stable and extensive empire, but gave it a system of government and polity, which marked the completion of the process started by Ala-ud-din Khilji. The state under Akbar became the finest specimen of Indo-Islamic polity. Akbar utilized the highly centralized system of government built by Sher Shah, and infused his own ideal into it. That ideal was embodied in a new theory of kingship — kingship by divine right. Here he drew upon the past traditions and political institutions of his dynasty which traced its descent from Chinghiz Khan on the maternal side, and Amir Taimur on the paternal side. Chinghiz Khan claimed divine ancestry as born of Divine Light, and he and his lineal descendants called themselves, Neirun or Light-born. All of them claimed kingship by right divine. Amir Taimur had married into the royal house of Chinghiz Khan. Besides being a great conqueror and empire-builder, he was also a strong adherent of the ideal of kingship by divine right. He held that kings were shadows of God on earth, and therefore, were spiritual and temporal heads by virtue of their birth and position. Thus in the Mughal royal family the tradition of kingship by divine right had a long history, and that was why, Babar, Humayun and Akbar were all imbued with that ideal. But for monarchy by divine right, which connotes royal absolutism, a highly efficient and centralized system of government is an essential adjunct. And Sher Shah had built up such an administrative system. Islam Shah had laid the foundations of royal absolutism, when he smothered the authority and influence of the custodians of Islam and its canon law. Thus the

ground-work had been prepared for Akbar to build up a polity to suit the ideal of kingship which he had inherited from his dynasty.

But that was not all. He not merely built up a new institution of kingship in India on the traditions of his dynasty, but reinforced the institution of Mughal kingship by adopting Hindu political traditions and institutions. That was the unique achievement of Akbar's genius, and nobody else's. Hindu, i.e. ancient Indian political traditions made the King "a veritable God in human form," "promulgator of the social and moral order," and "maker of the age." If Akbar were to assume that role, or be, in the words of his ancestor Amir Taimur, the "shadow of God," he must effect a reorientation of the Mughal rule and policies of the Islamic state of which he was the head. His rule must be generally acceptable to all alike, and particularly to the Hindus. He, therefore, respected their religious susceptibilities, entered into matrimonial alliances with the Rajputs and did all he could to win the love and loyalty of the Hindus. He set aside the authority and influence of the custodians of Islamic law and religion, he abolished the office of the chief Sadr, and himself assumed the role of "infallible" guide in matters of religion. He ended by making himself the Prophet of a new religion—Din-i-Ilahi or Divine Faith, which embodied the essential elements of Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, and even Zoroastrianism. That had been designed to eliminate conflicts between the religious groups in his empire. It was the instrument by which he thought, he could combine spiritual headship with the headship of the state, so that the allegiance of the people would not be divided and he would have the entire loyalty and allegiance of all his people. Thus he posed himself as the real promulgator of a new social and moral order or Dharmapravartaka, in the words of Kautilya, and the "maker of the age" or Kālasya Kāranam in the words of the Epics of the Hindus. He, and therefore the state under him, became the pre-eminent source of the well-being of the people, as manifested through the manifold achievements and progress of the age. That was the secret of his success — why kingship was hailed by the people.

INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY : A SYNTHESIS ACCOMPLISHED BY AKBAR

Thus the Mughal traditions and ideals of kingship were blended with those of the Hindus into a beautiful synthesis, and kingship

as embodied in Akbar became the political institution *par excellence*. The system of government built up on the lines of bureaucratic centralization by Sher Shah, and further reinforced by the improvements of Akbar, supplied the structural support to that institution of kingship. Akbar's kingship symbolized the new state, which became secular in content and character, because it functioned as the supreme arbiter between religious groups, proclaimed religious tolerance, and became to some extent what we now call a welfare state. Its competence became universal, as in the time of the Guptas and Asoka in ancient India. Akbar could dictate rules of social behaviour, stop Suttee, regulate marriage, prescribe food and attempt a host of other things, which we associate with the regime of Asoka. The new state, monarchical in form, secular in character, and sovereign in authority became the best specimen of Indo-Islamic polity, because it was the finest synthesis of the ideals and institutions of the Mughals and of the Hindus. This institution of kingship with all these traditions, was handed down to the successors of Akbar.

As regards his system of administration, he attempted centralization in two ways. He organized a central secretariat and a central service. The central secretariat was an elaborate network of departments, interlinked and co-ordinated to function in a harmonious way. The main principle which regulated the functioning of the entire secretariat was the principle of "checks and balances." It thus had its own momentum and equilibrium, and therefore lasted for a long time after Akbar. The central service was known as the Maṇsabdari system. The employees of the state were all graded into thirty-three ranks, and each rank had its conditions of service and salary well-defined. There was little distinction drawn between the executive and the judiciary and between civil and military employment. An efficient system of revenue administration formed the backbone of the state finances. The entire administrative set-up was an organic whole well-suited to the institution of absolute kingship of Akbar's ideal.

DEVIATION FROM THE TRADITIONS OF INDO-ISLAMIC POLITY

The ideal and institution of kingship and the system of government built up by Akbar continued intact for some time. The first signs of deviation from the traditions of Indo-Islamic polity became visible

about fifty years later in the reign of Shahjahan. When Shahjahan shaped his policy of government on Islamic principles, and countenanced religious persecution of the Hindus he departed from the ideal of secularism or non-partisan state, that Indo-Islamic polity had become since the days of Akbar. Of course as in the time of Akbar and Jahangir the Hindus continued to carry on the government in co-operation with the Muslims, and to occupy high official positions like the Muslims, but a sort of distrust had been engendered by his policy of religious intolerance and deviation from the traditions of kingship established by Akbar. Aurangzeb, after Shahjahan, went even further, and made a determined effort to install a purely Islamic state on the basis of Quranic precepts and the holy law. A policy of unmitigated religious persecution was launched, not merely against the Hindus, but against all those who were not Sunni Muslims. Even the Shiah Muslims were not spared. That went hand in hand with forcible conversion, and destruction of the Hindu shrines. Imperial decrees were issued from time to time to enforce the letter and spirit of the holy law, in all spheres of government. The Poll tax and Pilgrim tax, which had been abolished by Akbar more than a century ago, were revived. Discrimination was made on the basis of religion in making appointments to government offices. There was a complete reversal of the policy and traditions of Akbar. Brick by brick, as it were, the structure of the Indo-Islamic polity of Akbar had been pulled down, and a communal, partisan state had been reared on its ruins. It could not last long, since it meant the complete undoing of all the labour, all the cementing that had gone on for five centuries of Muslim rule in India. Aurangzeb did not realize that it was too late in the day to think of establishing an Islamic polity six centuries after Islam entered India. If a purely Islamic polity could not be established in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, because, as Ala-ud-din Khilji and Muhammed-bin-Tughlaq realized, it was a misfit in the Indian environment, it was politically outrageous, and historically anachronistic to think of doing so in the seventeenth century, after people had seen the glory and greatness of Mughal rule under Akbar. That was why the Mughal Empire fell to pieces after Aurangzeb. Along with it the structure of Indo-Islamic polity no doubt fell to pieces, but its traditions and ideals continued in the states that rose on the ruins of the Mughal Empire in India.

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RELIGIOUS POLICY OF THE MUGHAL EMPERORS

Sri Ram Sharma

In this study in which the author has consulted a great deal of historical data including the theories of the early Arab jurists, the practices of Muslim kings elsewhere and the discussions of writers outside India, he has assessed the merits and demerits of the Mughal religious policy on the principle of historical relativity. While concurring with the view that, despotic the Mughal emperors certainly were, he considers that the State under them could not be called a theocracy, for Islam did not set up an organized church, ordain a system of priests, or establish a hierarchy of religious officials. Since this meant in practice only a limited despotism, it left a wide margin of freedom to the citizens.

Professor Sharma has taught history, politics and public administration at the Punjab, Bombay and Poona Universities for many years, and is at present Director of the Institute of Public Administration, Chandigarh and Principal of the D.A.V. College, there.

THE RISE OF MUSLIM POWER IN GUJARAT

S. C. Misra

This study traces the history of Gujarat from the beginning of Muslim rule by the close of the thirteenth century to the end of the reign of Ahmad Shah in the middle of the fifteenth. The history of Gujarat is sketched against the background of the Turkish and post-Turkish rule in Delhi and the emergent kingdoms of Malwa, the Deccan and Rajputana.

The first part deals briefly with the changing patterns in Delhi since the beginning of Muslim rule, especially with the change in the structure of the ruling elite and their socio-political concepts. The second part sketches the history of Gujarat as a part of the Sultanate of Delhi, until it became independent. The third and last part sketches the history of the Sultanate of Gujarat from its foundation by Muzaffar Shah to the end of the reign of Ahmad Shah.

While mainly concerned with political history and institutions, this study also essays an examination of the cultural, socio-religious and economic structure on which these institutions functioned. Not only Persian and Arabic literary, numismatic and epigraphic material has been used for this book, but also Rajput and Jain Sources, in order to give a fuller picture of the age.

Dr. Misra is Reader and Head of the Department of History in the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and author of a number of papers and books on the Muslim period of Indian History.

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