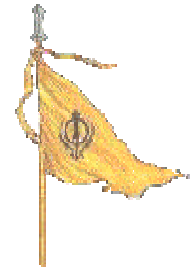




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CHAPTER II

CONCEPT OF RULER

We have no authentic information as to how the State was born. Through inferences and generalization regarding the dim past on the basis of the slender evidence at our disposal, we can deduce that state existed in some form or the other wherever human beings lived together in large numbers. Various theories regarding its origin have been propounded from time to time such as 'The Divine Origin Theory', 'The Social Contract Theory', and 'The Force Theory'. 'The Patriarchal Theory', and 'The Matriarchal Theory'.

The oldest theory is the Divine Origin Theory. According to it the State is established and governed by God Himself or through His special representatives. The chief exponents of this theory in early times were the Jews. In the *Old Testament* there are many references supporting this fact. The Greeks and Romans regarded the State as only indirectly divine. This very theory later on made the rulers dictators. Man had to suffer much at their hands. However, all these theories are speculative in nature.

Almost the first type of State, which emerged from primitive conditions, was the Imperial State. The plateaus of Mexico and Peru produced the earliest form of the State. Then arose many more vast empires such as the Sumerian, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Egyptian, the Chinese etc. For the most part these were merely tax collecting and recruit-raising agencies. As soon as the ruling dynasty became weak, the powerful rivals established the authority. No individual liberty or true political progress was possible.

The second important stage was reached in Greece in the form of city-states. The Sparta city-state alone remained conservative and maintained a steady tradition of

unbroken continuity in its government. In the other city-states the normal political evolution was from monarchy to aristocracy, from aristocracy to tyranny and from tyranny to democracy. It was in Greece where Plato, the great political philosopher, took birth in 427 BC. He was the first to have prescribed some qualifications for the rulers of those city-states. He did not think everyone to be fit to rule. For Plato the individual mind is divided into three elements—Reason, Spirit and Appetite. The lowest is 'Appetite' and the highest is 'Reason'. Reason is the rational element with its main function 'to think and to know'. For him the ruler must be from this category of mind. Plato was the first person to dream of the Philosopher King. According to Plato the foremost task of such a king was to deliver justice. He must be over and above the selfish interests. He must have the capacity to think reasonably and take right decisions. For this he must be properly educated.

In ancient India also such qualifications and duties of the ruler existed in some form or the other. Several terms like *Rajadharma*, *Rajyasastra*, *Dandaniti*, *Nitisastra* etc. indicate this. The terms like *Rajadharma* used by Manu, 'Duties of the Kings' and *Rajyasastra*—'Science of the State' require no explanation. Monarchy was the normal form of government. The term *Dandaniti* is also self-explanatory. These terms have occurred in the epic *Mahabharata*. Kautilya goes to the extent of declaring *Danda* as the real king, the real leader and the real protector—*Arthashastra* VII 17. The rules about the functions and duties of the king and welfare of the state were, therefore, naturally, called *Dandaniti*. In the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya it is written that the king must regard his own happiness as indissolubly connected with that of his subjects—I.19. Just as an expectant mother sacrifices her own desires and pleasures, lest they should be harmful to the child to be born, the king must sacrifice his own conveniences, inclinations and pleasures in order to be of the maximum help and service to his people—Agni Purana, 222.8. The body of the king is not meant for enjoyment and pleasures; he has to put up with great troubles and worries while carrying out the royal duty of protecting the subjects and fulfilling the dharma—Markandya Purana, 130-33. Happiness, it was believed, depended upon virtue and piety, and these could prosper only if the king himself set a proper example and standard. Under a good king, prosperity will prevail—Rg Veda, V.10.

From time to time in almost all the parts of the world various scholars and spiritual

leaders put forward many valuable theories so that the State can become truly a welfare state. But very often the rulers have misused the state power. The rulers in history have often forgotten all such teachings of our great scholars and leaders.

While giving the ideas on Politics the Sikh Gurus had welfare state in their mind. They did not commend any particular form of the state unlike other political philosophers. They were more concerned with the qualifications and duties of the ruler. They took ruler as a general term for the premier of a state. They were not concerned with the prevailing forms such as monarchy, aristocracy or democracy etc. At the most what the Sikh Gurus talked of is the Ideocracy which is called *Halemi Raj* by the fifth Guru. Keeping the Ideocracy in their mind the Gurus prescribed certain qualifications and duties of the rulers.

In Sikhism the main goal of the human being is to be one with the Supreme Being. The fifth Guru says:

Thou hast obtained from God a human's body
Now alone is the time to Attain to thy Lord.

A.G. p. 12

Each and every action of man should be such that takes him more and more near to this Goal. He should not do anything, which may lead him astray. The principal means to achieve this Goal is *Nam-Simran* and good actions. The Fifth Guru says in *Sukhmani*:

Of all religions, this one is the superb
That one Meditates on the Lord's Name and does what is pure.

A.G. p. 266

So the ruler, in Sikhism, should be one who creates such conditions for his subjects as well as for himself so that this goal is achieved easily. Not only that he should not become an obstacle in the path but also he should be helpful by creating a good and peaceful atmosphere in his kingdom so that his subjects find it easier to achieve their Goal.

Only such a person who has become one with God, who has conquered all weaknesses can be able to lead his subjects to the Goal. Only such a person is fit to be the ruler and deserves respect from the subjects because he, automatically, will be

the just ruler. Guru Nanak himself prescribes such qualifications:

Only he should sit on the throne who is worthy of it
And who has realised the Guru's Word and. Silenced the Five desires.

A.G., p. 1039

Such a king gets full respect everywhere. Nanak again writes:

To such throne everyone pays his obeisance, night and day.
This is the true glory that one earns, by attuning to the Guru's Word.

A.G., p. 1039

The third Guru also says:

That king alone must sit on the throne, who is worthy of it,
Yea, he, who Realises the (God's) Truth,
he (alone) is the worthy king.

A.G., p. 1088

In *Adi Granth*, *Janak* has been used as a simile to an ideal ruler, *Janak* mean *Jnani*—one who has the true knowledge, as Bhatt Kal has explained in the *Adi Granth*:

He alone is Janaka, who hitches the chariot (of his mind)
to the state of Ever blessedness.
And gathers the Contentment, and fills the Empty Vessel (of the heart).
Unutterable is the Story of the 'Eternal Abode' and
he alone is Blest with it, whom God Blesses,
O Blessed Guru Ram Das! such a kingship, like Janaka's, becomes only Thee.

A.G., p. 1398

According to *Mahankosh* (the Sikh encyclopaedia) edited by Kahan Singh Nabha, Janak was the king of Mithila. He was son of 'Mith', who in turn was son of 'Nim'. From this Janak, this name has been given to the descendent genealogy. The name of father-in-law of Lord Rama was Sirdhwaj who was the twentieth descendent of Raja Janak. According to Valmik Raja Janak was a great king.¹ Raja Sirdhwaj, the twenty-first Janak, was a great [saint-king](#).¹ It is this Janak referred to in the *Adi Granth*. The fourth Guru says about Janak:

Janak too was attuned to the Lord's Name, Blest by the Guru.

A.G., p. 591

Both these qualities of Janak are a rare combination. It is because of these two qualities (of being saint and king) he is used as a model for an ideal king. Bhatt Kalsahar writes in the *Adi Granth* while addressing to the fourth Guru:

Through Thee, the benign rule of Janak has again come to the world,
the age of truth has dawned.

A.G., p. 1407

The fourth Guru writes about Janak:

And Janak, seated on his kingly throne, anointed his forehead with the
Dust of the Feet of nine seers.

A.G., p. 1309

Keeping this idea of an ideal ruler in mind, some qualifications and duties of the ruler can be deduced from Gurbani. The foremost quality of a ruler is that he/she should be a realised soul. Guru Nanak writes about it:

Only he should sit on the throne, who is worthy of it
And who has realised the Guru's word and silenced the five desires.

A.G., p. 1039

Further:

They should sit on the throne who contemplate the Guru's Word;
And find the Essence of God.
O, such is the True Glory of those who are associated with the Name of God.

A.G., p. 1026

The third Guru writes:

That king alone must sit on the throne, who is worthy of it Yea, he,
who Realises the (God's) Truth, he (alone) is the worthy king.

A.G., p. 1088

According to the Sikh Gurus, only such a person who has realised the Truth is qualified to be a ruler. He must have conquered the Five evils—lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. Only such a ruler can become selfless. Only a realised soul can

truly understand the meaning of 'fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man'. For this he has to renounce worldly passions. "The king should first subdue himself, and then seek to subdue his foes. The conquest of these, viz., the aggregate of five is regarded as the conquest of self. The king who has succeeded in subduing his senses is competent to resist his foes."—The Mahabharata (Anusasna Parva). Only the person who has realised the Soul can be truly just. The Third Guru says:

Who Himself is true, His Throne is True, delivers the True Justice. A.G., p. 949

In Sikhism, great stress is laid on *Raj-yoga*. Only a true *Yogi* can become a true ruler. Here *Yogi* means the person who has realised God through *Nam Simran* and good actions. In the *Adi Granth* the poet (Bhatt) Kalsahar describes the three personalities—Lord Bawan, Lord Rama and Lord Krishna— as *Raja-Yogis*. After that he gives this title to Guru Nanak. To quote him:

In the Satyuga too, you enjoyed the state of Rajyoga, when you deceived Bali,
becoming a dwarf, whose form pleased you.
And in the Treta age too, when you were called Rama of the Raghu clan,
And in the Duapar age too as Krishna, when you Emancipated Kansa.
And blest Ugrasena with kingdom and thy Devotees with the state of fearlessness,
In the *Kali* age you are called Nanak, and Angad and Amardas.
Yea, eternal and moveless is thy rule, O Guru, for
such was the command of the Primeval Lord. A.G., p. 1389

For the fourth Guru he writes that the third Guru has passed the throne of *Raja Yoga* to Guru Ramdas. To quote him:

Throne of Raj-Yoga, he passed on the Guru Ramdas. A.G., p. 1399

So both the terms '*Raj-Yoga*' and '*Janak-Raj*' are synonymous in the *Adi Granth*. And poet Kalsahar on page 1389 in the *Adi Granth* also explains these in the same meaning. Both the terms indicate that the ruler must have attained union with God.

The person who has not conquered the weaknesses of common man is not at all fit to sit on the throne. The person who has conquered his weaknesses can never be defeated in any sphere. The ruler should consider himself as a servant to the Master and not master himself. He should take it for granted that he has to answer for his weaknesses to his Master. Guru Nanak writes:

From his mind he forsakes covetousness, avarice and evil, In his fortress he
proclaims the victory of his Monarch and returns not vanquished ever.
He who calls himself the Lord's servant and replies to Him in defiance.
He loses his wages and he is not seated on the throne. A.G., p. 936

The ruler must be full of virtues. He should transcend greed, illusion and sin. He should practise chastity, charity and self-control. He must be manned by Truth. He should always be contented. Guru Nanak indicates all these qualities when he takes his body as fortress and mind as a king. He says:

In the strong fortress of the body with beauteous doors,
abides the mind king with his special assistants.
Whosoever is engrossed in falsehood and avarice,
he obtains not an abode in the Lord-Home.
Through greed and sin one regrets, If the mortal seeks the
Lord's protection, then in this body village of king come and
abide the powerful truth, contentment, chastity, charity and self-control.
Nanak, through the Guru's word one easily meets with Lord,
the Life of the world and honour. A.G., p. 1037

At one place Bhagat Kabir hints at some other qualities which the ruler should possess while fighting the battle with the evil. He has put duality and the three qualities of Maya (illusion), woe and weal, worldly love, evil understanding, covetousness in the category of evil forces and the Divine love, *Nam Simran* (meditation), poise, truth, contentment, company of saints and grace of Lord as the forces of Godliness or Truth. Kabir has asked his king (mind) to use the forces of Godliness against the

forces of evil and he will surely be victorious-A.G., pp. 1161-2.

The ruler should follow the path of Truth and Compassion. Namdev said this when he was tortured by the ruler of his time and when the latter came to know about his saintliness, begged for his pardon. To quote Namdev:

And the test there of is that

Hereafter you (king) will tread the path of Truth and Compassion. A.G., p. 1166

Kabir asks the ruler to inculcate wisdom or *Jnan* and detachment or *Vairag* and he should stop his outgoing mind through meditation. He can inculcate such virtues only through *NamSimran*. Only such a person deserves to be a ruler. To quote Kabir:

He alone is a Sultan, the king, who aims with the two arrows

(of wisdom and Detachment),

And stops the outgoings of his mind,

And gathers the hosts (of virtue) abiding in the (mind's)

Sky, yea, the Tenth Door, O, that Sultan alone is canopied (by God). A.G., p.1160

The ruler must consider himself as the servant to his subjects because God dwells in the subjects as well as in the ruler. Doing all his duties he must not forget the Name of the Lord. While enjoying the facilities, which he gets due to his status, it is tendency of the man to forget His Name. In such a case all these enjoyments will take him to serpent's birth. He will have to pay for his indulgence, as the fifth Guru says:

Dominion over other, vast estates and overlordship

and enjoyments of myriad kinds,

And beauteous gardens and the proud command that runs,

And indulgence in various kinds of colourful shows (all these are vain);

For, if one remembers not the Lord in the heart, one gets the life of a serpent.

A.G., p. 70

He must not at all indulge in enjoying the riches, which he gets. It is of no use to amass riches and live in luxury. If by the use of force one becomes the ruler and issues decrees and while indulging in all these he forgets His Name, all these things and

riches are worthless. He must be careful that while enjoying all these gifts of God he does not forget the Name of the Lord. Guru Nanak elaborates this in the very first hymn of *Siri Raga* in the *Adi Granth*. He says:

I f my palace were raised of jewels and inlaid with rubies, And
 pleasantly plastered with musk and saffron, and sandal paste,
 Would then I lose myself and forget the Lord's Name?
 Even if I were a king, a gatherer of armies,
 and my seat were on a throne.
 And I commanded people about and about,
 And that would be vain, I f I forget thee, O my Loved Lord!

A.G., p. 14

Duties of a Ruler

(1) *Justice*: According to Sikhism every one has to realise God sooner or later. One can only realise Him by adopting His qualities. As He is just God so the man has also to become just, especially the man who is ruling over others. He has to become as just as God does, only then he can find place near Him. So dispensing justice becomes the foremost duty of a ruler. I f a ruler wants to purify himself he can't do so with water. For a ruler it is justice, which makes him pure as Guru Nanak says:

For the monarch through justice and for the learned by
 dwelling on Truth (that the mind is cleansed).

A.G., p. 1240

The ruler should not become a thorn in the eyes of his subjects. Even his *Nam-Simran* is acceptable only when he delivers justice to the subjects. Like this he can become a true ruler. The third Guru says:

Enjoy thou a griefless kingdom by practising Truth, through the Guru's grace,
 While sitting on the throne of truth administer justice and
 this will unite thou with the True one.

A.G., p. 1087

Such a ruler who delivers full justice to his people needs not depend upon

others for help. He becomes self-dependent. The fifth Guru says:

In whose court justice is ever administered
He is self-dependent and leans on none.

A.G., p. 987

Only the government of such a just ruler is stable and he is respected everywhere and lives in history. Says Guru Nanak:

The sovereignty of the truthful king is known in many ages to come,
Only he, whosoever, obeys such lord becomes a noble in his court.

A.G., p. 142

But if any ruler becomes corrupt in delivering justice to his subjects, he loses his right to be a ruler. Guru Nanak even goes to the extent that if the subjects obey the orders of such corrupt ruler, who has failed to deliver justice or who takes bribe for delivering justice, it is the fault more of the subjects than that of the ruler. It is just like the habit of a dog who obeys the just or unjust orders of his master only for a piece of bread. The Guru says:

If the king administers justice only when his palm is greased,
Only in the name of God, none obeys.

Nanak says such men are men only in shape and name,

In deeds they are dogs, waiting for command at his (ruler's) door.

A.G., p. 350

Guru Nanak vehemently condemned corruption in the judicial system of his time. He equally condemned the corruption in this department in the name of God or scriptures, which was in practice in those days. The priests of Islam—the *Kazis*—used to take bribe and do injustice. If any person objected they used to quote the verses from the Holy Scriptures and misinterpreted those to suit their own interests. Guru Nanak writes:

Becoming a judge the Kazi sits to administer justice.

He tells the rosary and mutters God's Name;

Taking bribe, he does injustice.

If someone asks him, then he quotes and reads out some aphorism.

A.G., p. 951

In such a situation it becomes the duty of the ruler to ensure that there is no

corruption in his department of judiciary. He himself should rise above such corrupt practices, deliver justice to his people and punish the guilty.

In Western school Plato was the first to talk of justice in the state. In the *Republic* he tells that society is to be concerned as a system of services in which every member both gives and receives. Justice is the bond which holds a society together, a harmonious union of individuals, each of whom has found his life work in accordance with his natural fitness and his training.

For St. Augustine State without justice is simply robbery writ large. Or in his words, "Justice being taken away, then, what are kingdoms but great robberies."² And he cites the story of Alexander the Great and the pirate who had been captured by that Monarch. When the ruler asked the robber how he could have so much presumption as to dominate the sea and prey upon men the pirate replied "What do you yourself mean by seizing the whole earth, not merely the sea? But because I do it with petty ship, I am called a robber, whilst you who do it with a great fleet are called emperor."³

In the *Mahabharata* Bhisma tells Yudhisthira about the latter's duty to deliver justice to his subjects, while telling him his overall duties He says, "If the king fails to administer justice, he can neither have heaven nor fame. A king should, without doubt, look upon his subjects as his own children. In determining their disputes, however, he should not show compassion. For hearing the complaints and answers of disputants in judicial suits he should always appoint persons possessed of wisdom and knowledge of the affairs of the world, for the state really rests upon a proper administration of justice—Anusasna Parva.

In the Vedic literature justice is one of the fundamental aims of the state. "The king or the head of the state was to be like god Varuna, the upholder of the law and order— the *dhritavrata*; he was to punish the wicked and help the virtuous. Religion was to be promoted, morality was to be encouraged and education was to be patronised—Chhandogya Upanisad, V. 11. 5

Unhappiness, misery and pestilence among the subjects were attributed to failure in duty on the part of the king. When kings are unjust even sugar and salt lose their flavour—Jatakas, Vol.- III, p. 111. The popular notion on this subject is well illustrated by the *Jatakas*. "The ox of a ploughman is struck accidentally by his plough-share; for

this the king is to blame; a milkman is killed by a vicious cow, the blame is assigned to the same quarter; even a frog does not spare the king when it is bitten by hungry crows."--Jatakas, V.pp.101-7. Happiness, it was believed, depended upon virtue and piety and these could prosper only if the king set a proper example and standard.

—Rg Veda, V. 10.

(2) *Duty to Protect the Subjects*: In the *Mahabharata* Bhishma is said to have told king Yudhisthira, "Regarding those that are desirous of kingdom, there is no other eternal duty more obligatory than the protection of subjects. The protection the king grants to his subjects upholds the world. 'Manu the son of Prachetas sang these two verses respecting the duties of king. Listen to them with attention. 'These six persons should be avoided like a leaky boat on the sea, viz., a preceptor that does not speak, a priest that has not studied the scriptures, a king that does not grant protection, a wife that utters what is disagreeable, a cow-herd that likes to rove the village and a barber that is desirous of going to the wood'. Protection of the subjects, O Yudhisthira, is the very cheese of kingly duties. A divine Kavi Usanas of austere penance, the thousand eyed Indra, the Manu, the son of Prachetas, the divine Bharadwaja and the sage Gaurasivas, all devoted to Brahmanand, have composed Treatises on the duties of kings. All of them praise the duty to protection in respect of kings."—Anusasna Parva.

Yajnavalkya Smriti supports the above view. "Narada regards the taxation as the king's pay for the protection of his people. No one ever makes a payment, says Apararka, without expecting a return; the taxes therefore, are paid only as a return for the protection expected from the king."—I . 366.

In the western school of thought Bertrand Russell suggests the idea of a modified state. The state, according to him, should perform the essential functions of preserving internal law and order and affording protection against foreign aggression and some other minor functions. He writes, "I think that its (state's) powers ought to be very strictly limited to what is absolutely necessary. There is no way of limiting its powers except by means of groups which are zealous of their privileges and determined to preserve their autonomy even if this should involve resistance to laws decreed by the state, when these laws interfere in the internal affairs of a group in ways not warranted by the public interest...And a good community does not spring

from the glory of the state, but from the unfettered development of the individuals."⁴

In Sikhism also it is the holy duty of the ruler to protect his subjects. It is his duty to keep the opposite elements together without harming each other. The fifth Guru illustrates with the examples of water and earth, fire and wood, which are kept together and due to the Ruler's control these do not harm each other. To quote him:

He has stringed the whole world with breath and
has kept the fire along with the wood.

He has kept the water and the earth together and
no one bears enmity with (or harms) each other.

A.G., p. 1235

Similarly the fourth Guru illustrates:

(In His kingdom) The earth and water abide in one place and
the fire is locked in wood.

The sheep and the lion, the Lord has kept in one place.

O man! contemplate thou on God and shake thy doubt and dread.

A.G., p. 735

Guru Nanak says that under His rule no enemy or suffering can ever harm us. To quote him:

The Rule is eternal it goes never

Yea, ever lasting is Thy Rule it stays forever... ..

No adversary, no pain, can touch him, nor sin contaminates.

A.G., p. 567

As the servant of the Master has not to be afraid of anyone, similarly the subjects should not be afraid of any one. It is the ruler who has to ensure the security of his subjects. The fifth Guru says:

To whom can Thy servant now pay obeisance

When Thou, the king, Preservest his Honour.

A.G., p. 376

In an ideal state described by the fifth Guru, none can harm others because of the

protection provided to everyone by the ruler. Everyone lives in perfect peace and enjoys life. All over there is courtesy, modesty and humbleness. He says:

The Merciful Master has now given the command.

No one now domineers and annoys another.

All abide in peace and this now has become a benign regime. A.G., p. 74

The tenth Guru says that if the ruler protects his subjects then the latter need not worry about their protection, just as if anyone gets the shelter of a lion, one does not then need to be afraid of goats etc. Guru Gobind Singh writes in the *Zafarnama*, the epistle of victory, addressed to Aurangzeb:

And when the lion brave and bold

Doth shelter one from the nasty foe,

The timid goat, buffalo, dapple deer can never near his sojourn dare go. V-17

(3) *Duty to Protect the Subjects from Exploitation*: It is a common tendency among men to exploit others at any opportune time. It is the rich who always exploit the poor. It is the duty of the ruler to protect his people from such exploitation. Guru Nanak called the rulers of his times, who exploited their subjects, as blood sucking kings and ferocious tigers who lick up the blood of the poor subjects and his courtiers dogs. When they will be called for settlement of their accounts, such rulers will be dishonoured for it. In a very scathing attack he writes:

The kings are like whores; the courtiers like dogs;

For they awaken those that sleep in God's peace.

The king's servants tear (the docile subjects) with their nails,

And, like curs, lick up all the blood that they spill.

But, hark, where men are to be judged (at the Lord's Court)

Their noses will be chopped off, for, God will trust them not. A.G., p. 1288

Amassing wealth by exploiting the subjects is bitterly condemned by the fifth

Guru also. He says that God will give such wealth away to someone else one day. Such wealth takes the man astray. To quote him:

Becoming, a king, one has dominion over all,
And through oppression, one gathers riches
Gathers he the bagful, bit by bit, But God (in His Justice)
snatches it away and gives it to another.

A.G., p. 392

Sikhism condemns the exploitation of the subjects through heavy taxation. Kabir condemns such rulers who realise more tax than is due. He says that at least he will not pay such undue tax. He says that the officials, who come to collect the tax, measure the land unlawfully and try to extract even more. But when he reports the matter to the higher authorities and checks his accounts then there stands nothing due. So he condemns the realisation as well as payment of undue taxes. To quote him:

In the fortress, the five are like the king's officials,
who make ever a fresh demand for Revenue.
But I am the Tenant of no one, then why am I asked to pay?
O Saints, the Tax-gatherers torture me each day,
And so I raise my hands to God and lo, He saves me.
The nine Assessors and the ten Judges leave no one in Peace,
For they measure not the Farms honestly, and want their palms to be greased.

A.G., p. 793

It behoves the ruler not to appoint such officials who realise the amount of tax, which is not due to the concerned person. Ravidas, through metaphors, points to the Ideal State in his verses. In such a State, he says, there is no pain or worry because there is no such tax, there is no awe, none commits error etc. He writes:

'Griefless' is the name of my state
Where abide not either pain or care
No anguish there of tax on goods,
Neither fear, nor error, nor dread, nor decline.

A.G., p. 345

Guru Nanak says that if any clothe is defiled with blood then how a person who sucks the blood of the poor through exploitation can be without stain? He cannot be truthful. To quote him:

If blood sticks to the clothes, the clothes become impure,
Will the minds of those be pure who suck the blood of
human beings?

A.G., p. 140

It is the duty of the ruler to see whether one's due is being paid to the same person or anyone else who has not put any labour is taking away the prize, which often happens. The person who labours with all his sweat and blood is not given the price and the 'owner' takes away the entire prize without putting any kind of effort. It is just like that a poor peasant who sows the seeds, puts his labour for the crop to come up, guards it for the whole time but it is reaped by the owner of the land and that poor fellow cannot do anything except to watch helplessly. The fifth Guru puts it like this:

As is the watchman over the farm of another,
And the farm remains with the master,
while the watchman passes away.
The watchman suffers hard to protect the farm,
But for this, he goes away (in the end) with empty hands.

A.G., p. 179

The notion of the kingship as a trust was there in ancient India. The king was particularly enjoined to note that the treasury was not his private or personal property. In the *Mahabharata* it is written, "If a king misappropriates public funds and diverts them to his personal use, he will be guilty of sin and be condemned to hell."—I V. 2. 3-5.

(4) *To Fulfill the Basic Needs of the Subjects:* It is the duty of the ruler to fulfill the basic needs such as livelihood, of his people. Just as the King God first of all manages the livelihood and then he creates the creature, similarly the ruler should take the duty to provide his subjects the things of basic necessity as his foremost task. Only such a ruler can expect any respect from the public. The fifth Guru says:

In every home rings the praise of this King,
 in every home are men Zealous of Him.
 He first Provides Succour and
 thereafter Createth He the creatures.

A.G., p. 1235

The subjects of such a ruler are always satiated because they are fed to the full and they always enjoy life. The people need not worry about their livelihood and other basic needs. They are always happy and delightful because of such amenities. The fifth Guru addresses to the King of kings:

Content is he and ever at Peace
 of whom Thou art the King and Master.

A.G., p. 400

According to Guru Nanak only such a person is fit to be a king or ruler who takes proper care of his subjects. It is his duty to ensure that each and every person in his dominion gets the things of bare necessities of day-to-day. Only such a government can rule successfully and is a true government. To quote Guru Nanak:

Only His is the true government who nourishes the people day and night.

A.G., p. 1331

Only such a ruler is free from any stain or stigma in whose dominion everyone is happy and gay and has no scarcity of anything of the basic necessity. Guru Nanak commends such a ruler:

O king !Thou art free from Flaw
 for your people are blissful.

A.G., p. 1190

In Vedic India also the State was to secure not only moral but also material well-being of its citizens. The kingdom of King Parikshit, idealised in the *Atharvaveda* (xx.127), flowed with milk and honey. All round welfare of the public was clearly regarded as the chief aim of the state during the Vedic and Upanisadic ages, i.e., down to 600 BC.

In the *Mahabharata* Bhisma teaches Yudhisthira that the ruler must feed his subjects. He should ensure that none has slept hungry any day. To quote him, "He should feed those that have not been fed and enquire after those that have been fed."—Anusasna Parva.

(5) *To Uphold Fundamental Rights of the Citizens:* It is the moral duty of the ruler to guarantee personal liberty and other fundamental rights. He is to protect the honour of his people because death is better than a life of dishonour. The foremost freedom should be that of conscience. It was for this freedom that the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, laid down his life in 1675. Aurangzeb, the then ruler, did not provide his subjects with this freedom. He was trying to impose his own religion, culture and thoughts upon his subjects.

Guru Nanak in his times vociferously condemned not only such rulers who were trying to impose their culture and faith on their subjects but also condemned such people who adopted the culture and faith of the ruling class under pressure. He condemned the wearing of blue (Islamic) clothes by the Hindus who had also started reading Islamic scriptures. In *Asa ki Var* he writes:

Who (Hindu) Decked Himself in (the Muslim) blue and
assumed the attributes of a Turk and a Pathan.
They seek approval of the Muslim rulers by wearing blue
Within, they worship (their idols); (outside) they read
Quran and observe the codes of the Turks.
Shed Thy Deceit and Hypocrisy, O Brahmin.

A.G., pp.470-2

He even condemned the adoption of the language of the other people under pressure. When the Hindus adopted the Islamic language and script in the place of Sanskrit and Devnagri, he criticised the Hindus for this.

In every house all the persons say 'Mian' (Islamic language),
Your language has become different, O men (Hindus).

A.G p. 1191

He bitterly criticised such kings who imposed their faith and culture on the subjects. He attacked their policy of repression of others' faith when the Muslim

rulers levied tax on the Hindu temples and their religious rites and practices, even though the Guru himself did not believe in those beliefs, rites and practices. What he wanted to speak against was the forcible suppression of the feelings of anyone. While condemning such tax he says:

Ah! Tax is levied on the temples of gods.

Such a practice has come into vogue.

A.G., p. 1191

In the western school of thought Hegel regards freedom as the very essence of man. It is his distinctive quality. To remove freedom is to renounce one's humanity.

While discussing the rights Herbert Spencer condemned the barbarous government, which interfere with the operation of the law of the energy of faculty. Firstly the government can efface itself for the sake of the law of equal freedom by admitting the rights of the citizens "to ignore the state". State intervention, by and large, affords greater scope for the love of power, the selfishness, the injustice and untruthfulness. State intervention constitutes a proposal to improve life by breaking through the fundamental conditions to life. —Man versus State.

John Locke was a great defender of natural rights. For him the state was constituted for the protection of natural rights. The state is a contract entered into by Locke's natural man. Men are bound together by a common natural reason; they are at the same time strongly egoistic and always in danger of breaching peace. While on the whole and on most occasions they respect one another's natural rights, their periodic breaches of peace essentially lead them to contract for entry into the state. In his *Second Treatise on Civil Government* Locke clearly says that the state was contracted because the enjoyment of the freedom and security of the state of nature is very uncertain and constantly exposed to the invasion of others—Second treatise VI. Therefore, the function of the state is to redress the injuries that may happen to any member of the commonwealth—Second treatise, VII. 89.

Harold J. Laski, the great English Political thinker of early 20th century is of the opinion, "A state is known by the rights that it maintains. The state briefly does not create but recognizes rights. Rights are those conditions of social life without which no man can seek in general to be himself at his [best](#)."⁵ For him without rights there can't be any liberty. He does not want to reduce the individual to the position of a

sheer member of a herd. He describes three aspects of liberty. Firstly private liberty— "...the opportunity to exercise freedom of choice in those areas of life where the results of any effort mainly affects me in that isolation by which, at least ultimately, I am always surrounded". Example of this liberty is, of course, religion also. Private liberty will go to stray dogs if law fails to protect an individual in the matters of access to public places on grounds of religion, caste, creed or sex or if there is discrimination in the matters of employment. "Second is political liberty and the third one is economic liberty which means that the citizens should be free from the constant fear of employment and [insufficiency](#)."⁶

Bertrand Russell was very emphatic in minimising the state's powers to interfere in human rights. In his words, "I think that its (state's) powers ought to be very strictly limited to what is absolutely necessary. There is no way of limiting its powers except by means of groups, which are zealous of their privileges and determined to preserve their autonomy even if this should involve resistance to laws decreed by the state, but the community, the world-wide community of all human beings, present and future, that we ought to serve. And a good community does not spring from the glory of the state, but from the unfettered development of [individuals](#)."⁷

(6) *Proper Distribution of Wealth*: It is the duty of the ruler to work for the elimination of the improper difference between 'have-s' and 'have-nots'. Especially when in the modern times there is a wide gap between the two, it is the duty of the ruler to lessen this gap and bring both closer to each other. Communists call it equal distribution of wealth and that is what gave birth to communism. According to Communist philosophy modes of production should not be in the hands of capitalist class but in the hands of working class. With this the equal distribution of wealth is possible. FW Coker writes about the ideas of Karl Marx, "the doctrine that wage-workers in fields, factories, and mines are the real producers of wealth, most of which is unjustly taken away from them by employers, traders, and other non-producers; and they proposed collectivist schemes—a state monopoly of the services of marketing and banking, a currency system based on time unit of labour, voluntary co-operative societies-in-order either to ensure an exchange of goods on the basis of the quantities of labour employed in producing them or to secure generally an equitable distribution of wealth among those who create [it](#)."⁸ CL Wayper writes "The class which

exercises ownership of the means of production will dominate the rest when, for instance, the most important factor in the forces of production is agricultural, land owners will be the ruling class. The dominant class alone has freedom, and to preserve this must act the part of oppressors. They, therefore, create an executive and repressive instruments by the use of which they hope to maintain their position and which is called [state](#).”⁹

Egalitarian concept in Sikh society is so deep rooted that this has become a part of their daily prayer, “[Raj Karega Khalsa Aaki Rahe Na Koye...](#)”¹⁰ Generally, the term *Aaki* is misinterpreted. It is often used for the rebellious. Actually both *Aaka* and *Aaki* are Arabic words. The word *Aaka* is quite commonly used for *Malak* or owner and *Aaki* means *Malkiat* or the ownership. So the correct meaning of this couplet should be ‘the Pure shall rule and none other (who is not Pure) will have the ownership’. It is somewhat like the nationalisation of the property. The persons, who are not pure at heart and mind, have tendency to hoard things to exploit others. Such persons should not get chance to accumulate the wealth. Only persons who are pure at heart and mind will never exploit anyone nor accumulate the wealth. They will always seek the welfare of all. Only such persons are fit to rule and such ruler should have the ownership so that the hoarding and exploitation can be put to an end. Almost every devout Sikh recites this couplet twice a day as a part of his daily prayers.

There can't be proper distribution of wealth where the rulers are greedy and lustful. Guru Nanak condemns such rulers who do not maintain proper circulation of wealth and hoard it themselves. To quote Guru Nanak:

Gathers the world's riches, thou the egoistic king !

A.G., p. 1342

The fifth Guru says that such wealth, which is always collected through untruthful means, never helps. He condemns the accumulation of wealth by rulers:

Becoming a king, one has dominion over all.

And through oppression, one gathers riches.

Gathers he the bagful, bit by bit,

But God, (in His Justice) snatches it away and gives it to others.

A.G., p. 392

Kabir also criticises such rulers who accumulate wealth:

The kings wasted their lives gathering riches and
burying their treasures under the earth.
my soul such a world is a blind deep pit,
on all sides the death's net is thrown.

A.G., p. 654

If the ruler himself tries to accumulate wealth, its proper distribution cannot be possible at all. So for this the ruler should, first of all, be contented. The fifth Guru writes that the kingdom of a discontented ruler is of no use—A.G., p. 745. Therefore, it is essential that the ruler himself be contented, only then he can arrange for proper distribution of wealth amongst his subjects. The fifth Guru advises the people to boycott such a ruler who runs after wealth. To quote him:

I will abandon the wealth-accumulating king.

A.G., p. 811

Ravidas calls a state an ideal one where there is proper distribution of wealth, where there are no 'have-nots'. All the necessities of life are available to everyone in sufficient quantity; where all are rich and none poor; all live satisfied. He writes:

Populated and ever famous is that city,
The wealthy and the content dwell there.

A.G., p. 345

In such a state, he says, there is no agony, no grief, and no sorrow. He calls such a state as *Begumpura* or the 'griefless' state:

'Griefless' is the name of my town, where abide not either pain or care. A.G., p. 345

(7) *To Keep the Subjects United*: The ruler has to keep his subjects united so that they can face the enemy from within as well as from without. There can be difference of opinion but that must be taken in a healthy way. There may be living, people from various races, religions, castes and cultures etc. the ruler must behave with all as a common father, just as God treats all of us as His children. As God keeps even the opposite elements in the nature united, for example, earth and water, wood and fire

etc. are kept close to each other without harming each other. The fourth Guru says:

The earth and water abide in one place and the fire is locked in wood.

The sheep and the lion, the Lord has kept in one place.

A.G., p. 1235

Similarly the ruler must keep the people of different belongings united just like the different pearls of a necklace. The fifth Guru says:

He has strung the whole world with breath and
has kept the fire along with the wood.

He has kept the water and the earth together and
no one bears enmity with (or harms) each other.

A.G., p. 735

This will create unity in diversity. The ruler should not have in his mind even an idea to act partially. In the *Mahabharata* Bhishma advises Yudhisthira, "The king should always bear himself towards his subjects as a mother towards the children of her womb."—Anusasna Parva.

In addition to all these duties the tenth Guru lays much stress on the unity of thought, word and deed. For him the person who does not have this unity in practice is not at all fit to be a ruler. In the *Zafarnama* Guru Gobind Singh reminds Aurangzeb of his promise not to harm the former while evacuating the Anandpur Fort. Further the Guru condemns Aurangzeb for not keeping his word and contrary to the assurances subjecting the Guru, his family and armies to untold sufferings. The Guru tells the king that one, especially the ruler, must not go back from his promises. Otherwise the ruler is becoming unjust. To quote him:

O mortal man thyself thou do adorn with the bliss of being utter true!

Stick to the position once taken up, Within and without the same be you! V-55

The Guru condemned his injustice of not keeping his promises:

O Aurangzeb proud lord of the world Who adorest a monarch's high throne!

Strange is the justice thou dispenses And the royal qualities by thee shown! V-64

Virtually the whole of the *Zafarnama* is full of such couplets written against this policy of the ruler of his time. Even the fifth Guru says, in general, that the man must keep the unity of thought, word and deed. To quote him:

He pledges his Word but keeps it not, and all the speaks is false
Yea, False is he from within, with I llusion involved.

A.G., p. 1099

In the *Zafarnama* the Guru also writes about some more qualities required of a ruler. For him, he must possess wisdom and wit to settle the matters in time and to such a ruler the Guru pays his [respect](#).¹¹ The ruler must conquer the enemies of the kingdom. He must protect the poor. The Guru gives the example of some ancient Chinese ruler who had these [qualities](#).¹²

Rights of the Ruler

From the preceding analysis about the duties of a ruler it should not be deduced as if a ruler has only obligations and is not entitled to any special privileges. The foremost right of a ruler is that he must have sovereignty. He must be treated as the supreme power of the state. He must have the right to order and get the things done. Otherwise he will not be able to function effectively. He must be able to exercise supreme jurisdiction. While telling about the need of inner life for a saint the fifth Guru says that a king without the above powers is just like a warrior without weapons:

As a Brahmin without a saffron-mark, As a Kingship without command

As a warrior without weapons, So is a Saint without an Inner life.

A.G., p. 1359

The subjects must treat a righteous ruler, as their sovereign king Only then they can get happiness or bliss. A righteous ruler is entitled to respect from his subjects. If the subjects pay full respect to such a ruler who looks after them well, then they have not to worry at all in any matter. They will have full access to him. He will be able to listen to them carefully. Guru Nanak says:

They looked upon him as a king and
were stopped not at the door of his castle.

A.G., p. 57

Without right to get respect what will be the status of the ruler? He must get some status, which he deserves. Guru Nanak gives the example of a cow, which does not yield milk. What is the use of such a cow? How can the vegetation survive without water? Birds can't survive without wings. Similarly no ruler or king can survive or perform his duties, effectively without having some status and respect or rights. To quote him:

Without milk a cow, without wings a bird, without water the vegetation of no avail;
As without obedience a king, so without the Lord's Name
the mind is but a blind spot. A.G., p. 354

The *fifth* Guru says that the ruler must have sovereignty. Only a person having this right can be the ruler. He takes canopy as the symbol of sovereignty:

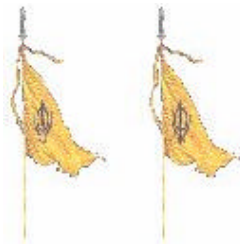
He is the monarch who has the royal umbrella over His head. A.G., p. 258

Another right Guru Nanak concedes to an ideal ruler is that he can levy tax for the earnings of the state. The ruler must have the right to levy the rightful taxes. It becomes the duty of the subjects to pay such rightful taxes so as to maintain the state. He says as the goldsmith solders the gold with the help of heat, one is, soldered with the world through son, soldered with the body by taking meals and the love is soldered with sweet words, similarly the subjects are soldered with the ruler by the payment of such taxes—A.G., p. 143. These are some of the privileges, which a righteous ruler must get. But with getting these rights he must remember his duties. Only such a ruler is acceptable who, getting these rights performs his duties well and actually earns these rights.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Valmiki Ramayana I: 71.
2. St. Augustine, *City of God*, IV. 4.
3. *Ibid.* XIX. 23.
4. B. Russell, *Road to Freedom*, pp. 144-45.
5. H.J. Laski, *A Grammar of Politics*, p. 91.

6. *Ibid.* p. 146.
7. B. Russell, *op. cit.*
8. FW Coker, *Recent Political Thought*, pp. 17-18.
9. CL Wayper, *Political Thought*, p. 206.
10. Bhai Nandlal, *Tankhahnama*, ed. Piara Singh Padam, *Rehtname*, p. 47. This couplet 'Raj Karega Khalsa Aqi Rahe Na Koye...' is often attributed to Guru Gobind Singh. But surprisingly I found in the library of Sant Harnam Singh, 'kile wale', a traditional saint in Punjab, that it was written in some old edition of *Puratan Janam Sakhi*. I found it in the *Bhupatnama* (an account of Guru Gobind Singh) also. It was found in *Rahitnama* by Prahlad Singh also. I wanted to get these Xeroxed but the Sant did not allow taking those books for this purpose even.
11. *Bazebad Azo Mard Tajo Nagi, Baran Aklo Tadbir Hazar Afari V. 56*, Guru Gobind Singh, *The Zafarnamah*, Hikait II, trans. in Punjabi, Giani Narayan Singh, p. 32.
12. *Khasam Afgano Shahi Cheen Dil Phiraz, Garibul Niwazo Ganimul Gudaz. Ibid.*



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