

**B.A. 5<sup>th</sup> Semester (Honours)**

**Paper: Indian Political Thought I**

**Paper Code: C-12**

**Unit V:**

**Q. Who was Ziauddin Barani? Discuss his concepts on Ideal Polity.**

**Answer:**

Ziauddin Barani (1283-1359) was the most important political thinker of the Delhi Sultane, particularly during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, Muhammad Bin Taughlaq and Firoz Taughlaq.

He represented the idea of political expediency in Islamic history. His 'Fatwa-i-Jahandari' was written as *nasihat* (advice) for Muslim kings on statecraft which can be compared with Kautilya's 'Arthashastra' and Machiavelli's 'Prince'.

He was against science and reason and mainly emphasized on religion. He had written a book named 'Tarikh-i-Firoz' Shahi in order to please the then Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq. According to renowned historian Md. Habib, 'Fatwa-i-Jahandari' was written after 'Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi'.

He is known for his idea of 'ideal polity' which can be analysed as follows:

**Ideal Sultan:**

➤ ***Theory of Kingship:***

Ziauddin Barani believed in the Divine Right Theory of the *Sultan* (King). Sultan was considered as '*Zil- i- Ilahi*' i.e. the 'shadow of the Allah'. However, according to Barani, Sultan do not posses absolute sovereignty, thus Barani acknowledged the supremacy of Caliph and Ulema (Priest) above him.

Further Barani made clear cut distinctions between private and political life of Sultan. However, in both the aspects Sultan should be ideal man i.e. he should belong to the family of monarch, and having innate sense of justice. He should also divide his time judiciously between personal needs and political requirements.

He should be wise enough to understand the deception and conspiracies of wicked against him. According to Barani, Sultan should also follow the path of *Shariat* (law of Islam).

Barani had given the laxity in following the Shariat laws to some extent in personal realm to Sultan. However, he appealed that Sultan must follow Shariat laws in political sphere, because if Shariat is not followed in political sphere, it would lead to the disease in administration.

However, if Shariat laws are not applicable sometimes in political sphere, then in exceptional circumstances Sultan can follow *Zabawit Laws* (state laws). Barani asked the king to establish his terror, prestige, pride, high status, domination and superiority.

According to Barani, Sultan should have courage to react to any idea or anyone's wishes at appropriate time because it is essential ingredient for his political existence. Barani viewed that since monarchy is against the spirit of Islam, Sultan should reflect the Supplication, helplessness and humility to compensate the existence of monarchy.

According to Barani, it is also the duty of Sultan to appoint counselors, army and intelligence officers as they were indispensable part of royal functions and the Sultan should listen to their advice from time to time.

In the words of Barani, it is the responsibility of the Sultan to protect old families and ensure their material well-beings because their deprivation could lead to rebellion against Sultanate. The supremacy of Sultan and safety of his Sultanate lies in delivering justice to subjects. The sultan should punish rebellious, cruel and mischievous etc. and forgive to those who accepted their sins.

➤ Nobility:

Nobility was the second component of monarchy. Nobles were individuals who had given right to levy taxes from an '*Iqta*' (particular piece of land). The Iqlas were frequently transferred from one person to another. Therefore, it was non-hereditary. Since basic function of Sultanate was revenue collection and Sultan was unable to do so alone, therefore nobility was indispensable part of Sultanate. Therefore, they must be selected carefully. Thus, Barani set up two criteria for selection of nobles:

- They should be noble born with personal and political loyalty to Sultan.

- They should have political judgement and would render advise to Sultan on any policy matters.
- Ideal Polity:

According to Barani, ideal polity consists of **four** components- *Laws, army, bureaucracy and justice.*

Barani classified **laws** into two categories- shariat laws and Zabawit laws. Shariat laws were derived from teachings and practices of Islam and pious Caliphs while Zabawit laws are formulated by Sultan after consulting nobility to cater the requirements which was not being fulfilled by Shariat laws.

Barani believed that **army** ensures security, sustainability and expansion of state. According to him, the army was divided into **four parts**-

- *Infantry*- foot soldiers or Payaks.
- *Cavalry*- which is further divided into three parts-
  - a) Soldiers with no horse.
  - b) Soldiers with one horse.
  - c) Soldiers with two horses.
- *Elephantry*- Elephants in army with soldiers.
- *Auxiliary*- Consisting of spies, engineers, boats, transporters and scouts.

According to Barani, the main function of the bureaucracy was to measure land and collect taxes and its disbursement among its beneficiaries. It was operated at three levels- central, provincial and local levels. At central level, the Department of Revenue and Finance was headed by Wazir i.e. the Prime Minister. He was the subordinate to Sultan. The provincial level was headed by Walis whereas Muqaddam or Chaudhari was responsible at the local level.

Barani uphold the view that the Sultan should ensure justice in his Sultanate through the remission of land tax, supply of commodities to buyers at fair price as well as dispensing civil and criminal justice.

Thus, we can summarized Barani's concept on Ideal Polity.