

THE
AIN I AKBARI

BY
ABUL FAZL 'ALLAMI

Volume I

ABULFAZL'S PREFACE.

ALLA'HU AKBAR!

O Lord, whose secrets are for ever veiled
And whose perfection knows not a beginning,
End and beginning, both are lost in Thee,
No trace of them is found in Thy eternal realm.
My words are lame; my tongue, a stony tract;
Slow wings my foot, and wide is the expanse.
Confused are my thoughts; but this is Thy best praise,
In ecstasy alone I see Thee face to face!

IT is proper for a man of true knowledge to praise God not only in words, but also in deeds, and to endeavour to obtain everlasting happiness, by putting the window of his heart opposite the slit of his pen, and describing some of the wondrous works of the Creator. Perhaps the lustre of royalty may shine upon him, and its light enable him to gather a few drops from the ocean, and a few atoms from the endless field of God's works. He will thus obtain everlasting felicity, and render fertile the dreary expanse of words and deeds.

I, Abulfazl, son of Mubárik, return thanksgiving to God by singing the praises of royalty, and by stringing its kingly pearls upon the thread of description; but it is not my intention to make mankind, for the first time, acquainted with the glorious deeds and excellent virtues of that remarkable man,* who clothes our wonderful world in new colours, and is an ornament to God's noble creation. It would be absurd on my part to speak about that which is known; I should make myself the butt of the learned. It is only my personal knowledge of him, a priceless jewel, which I send to the market place of the world, and my heart feels proud of being engaged in such an undertaking. But it could not have been from self-laudation that I have taken upon myself to carry out so great a task—a work which even heavenly beings would find beset with difficulties; for such a motive would expose my inability and shortsightedness. My sole object in writing this work was, first, to impart to all that take an interest in this auspicious century, a knowledge of the wisdom, magnanimity, and energy of him who understands the minutest indications of all things, created and divine, striding as he does over the field of knowledge; and, secondly,

to leave future generations a noble legacy. The payment of a debt of gratitude is an ornament of life, and a provision for man's last journey. There may be some in this world of ambitious strife, where natures are so different, desires so numerous, equity so rare, and guidance so scarce, who, by making use of this source of wisdom, will escape from the perplexities of the endless chaos of knowledge and deeds. It is with this aim that I describe some of the regulations of the great king, thus leaving for far and near, a standard work of wisdom. In doing so, I have of course, to speak of the exalted position of a king, and also to describe the condition of those who are assistants in this great office.

No dignity is higher in the eyes of God than royalty; and those who are wise, drink from its auspicious fountain. A sufficient proof of this, for those who require one, is the fact that royalty is a remedy for the spirit of rebellion, and the reason why subjects obey. Even the meaning of the word Pádisháh shews this; for *pád* signifies stability and possession, and *sháh* means origin, lord. A king is therefore the origin of stability and possession. If royalty did not exist, the storm of strife would never subside, nor selfish ambition disappear. Mankind, being under the burden of lawlessness and lust, would sink into the pit of destruction; the world, this great market place, would lose its prosperity, and the whole earth become a barren waste. But by the light of imperial justice, some follow with cheerfulness the road of obedience, whilst others abstain from violence through fear of punishment; and out of necessity make choice of the path of rectitude. *Sháh* is also a name given to one who surpasses his fellows, as you may see from words like *sháh-suwár*, *sháh-ráh*; it is also a term applied to a bridegroom—the world, as the bride, betrothes herself to the king, and becomes his worshipper.

Silly and shortsighted men cannot distinguish a *true* king from a *selfish* ruler. Nor is this remarkable, as both have in common a large treasury, a numerous army, clever servants, obedient subjects, an abundance of wise men, a multitude of skilful workmen, and a superfluity of means of enjoyment. But men of deeper insight remark a difference. In the case of the former, the things just now enumerated, are lasting; but in that of the latter, of short duration. The former does not attach himself to these things, as his object is to remove oppression, and provide for every thing which is good. Security, health, chastity, justice, polite manners, faithfulness, truth, an increase of sincerity, &c., are the result. The latter is kept in bonds by the external forms of royal power, by vanity, the slavishness of men, and the desire of enjoyment; hence everywhere there is insecurity, unsettledness, strife, oppression, faithlessness, robbery.

Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe,* the argument of the book of perfection, the receptacle of all virtues. Modern language calls this light *farr i ízidí* (the divine light), and the tongue of antiquity called it *kiyán khwarah* (the sublime halo). It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of any one, and men, in the presence of it, bend the forehead of praise towards the ground of submission. Again, many excellent qualities flow from the possession of this light. 1. *A paternal love towards the subjects*. Thousands find rest in the love of the king; and sectarian differences do not raise the dust of strife. In his wisdom, the king will understand the spirit of the age, and shape his plans accordingly. 2.

A large heart. The sight of anything disagreeable does not unsettle him; nor is want of discrimination for him a source of disappointment. His courage steps in. His divine firmness gives him the power of requital, nor does the high position of an offender interfere with it. The wishes of great and small are attended to, and their claims meet with no delay at his hands. 3. *A daily increasing trust in God.* When he performs an action, he considers God as the real doer of it, (and himself as the medium,) so that a conflict of motives can produce no disturbance. 4. *Prayer and devotion.* The success of his plans will not lead him to neglect; nor will adversity cause him to forget God, and madly trust in man. He puts the reins of desire into the hands of reason; in the wide field of his desires he does not permit himself to be trodden down by restlessness, nor will he waste his precious time in seeking after that which is improper. He makes wrath, the tyrant, pay homage to wisdom, so that blind rage may not get the upper hand, and inconsiderateness overstep the proper limits. He sits on the eminence of propriety, so that those who have gone astray have a way left to return, without exposing their bad deeds to the public gaze. When he sits in judgment, the petitioner seems to be the judge, and he himself, on account of his mildness, the suitor for justice. He does not permit petitioners to be delayed on the path of hope; he endeavours to promote the happiness of the creatures in obedience to the will of the Creator, and never seeks to please the people in contradiction to reason. He is for ever searching after those who speak the truth, and is not displeased with words that seem bitter, but are in reality sweet. He considers the nature of the words and the rank of the speaker. He is not content with not committing violence, but he must see that no injustice is done within his realm.

He is continually attentive to the health of the body politic, and applies remedies to the several diseases thereof. And in the same manner that the equilibrium of the animal constitution depends upon an equal mixture of the elements,* so also does the political constitution become well tempered by a proper division of ranks; and by means of the warmth of the ray of unanimity and concord, a multitude of people become fused into one body.
