

IBN KHALDUN

MUQADDIMAH

158-161 INVOCATION

IN THE NAME OF GOD; THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE. PRAY, O GOD, FOR OUR LORD MUHAMMAD AND HIS FAMILY AND THE MEN AROUND HIM.

THE SERVANT of God who needs the mercy of God who is so rich in His kindness, 'Abd-ar-Rahman b. Muhammad b. Khaldun al-Hadrami-God give him success!-says:¹ Praised be God! He is powerful and mighty. In His hand, He holds royal authority and kingship.² His are the most beautiful names and attributes. His knowledge is such that nothing, be it revealed in secret whispering or (even) left unsaid, remains strange to Him. His power is such that nothing in heaven and upon earth is too much for Him or escapes Him.

He created us from the earth as living, breathing creatures. He made us to settle³ on it as races and nations. From it, He provided sustenance and provisions for us.

The wombs of our mothers and houses are our abode. Sustenance and food keep us alive. Time wears us out. Our lives' final terms, the dates of which have been fixed for us in the book (of destiny), claim us. But He lasts and persists. He is the Living One who does not die.

Prayer and blessings upon our Lord and Master, Muhammad, the Arab⁴ prophet, whom Torah and Gospel have mentioned and described;⁵ him for whose birth the world that is was (already) in labor before Sundays were following upon Saturdays in regular sequence and before Saturn and Behemoth had become separated;⁶ him to whose truthfulness pigeon and spider bore witness.⁷

(Prayer and blessings) also upon his family and the men around him who by being his companions⁸ and followers gained wide influence and fame and who by supporting him found unity while their enemies were weakened through dispersion. Pray, O God, for him and them, for as long as Islam shall continue to enjoy its lucky fortune and the frayed rope of unbelief shall remain cut! Give manifold blessings (to him and them)!

FOREWARD

HISTORY is a discipline widely cultivated among nations and races. It is eagerly sought after. The men in the street, the ordinary people, aspire to know it. Kings and leaders vie for it.

Both the learned and the ignorant are able to understand it. For on the surface history is no more than information about political events, dynasties, and occurrences of the remote past, elegantly presented and spiced with proverbs. It serves to entertain large, crowded gatherings and brings to us an understanding of human affairs. (It shows) how changing conditions affected (human affairs), how certain dynasties came to occupy an ever wider space in the world, and how they settled the earth until they heard the call and their time was up.

The inner meaning of history, on the other hand, involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep

knowledge of the how and why of events. (History,) therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of (philosophy).⁹

The outstanding Muslim historians made exhaustive collections of historical events and wrote them down in book form. But, then, persons who had no right to occupy themselves with history introduced into those books untrue gossip which they had thought up or freely invented, as well as false, discredited reports which they had made up or embellished. Many of their successors followed in their steps and passed that information on to us as they had heard it. They did not look for, or pay any attention to, the causes of events and conditions, nor did they eliminate or reject nonsensical stories.

Little effort is being made to get at the truth. The critical eye, as a rule, is not sharp. Errors and unfounded assumptions are closely allied and familiar elements in historical information. Blind trust in tradition is an inherited trait in human beings. Occupation with the (scholarly) disciplines on the part of those who have no right is widespread. But the pasture of stupidity is unwholesome for mankind. No one can stand up against the authority of truth, and the evil of falsehood is to be fought with enlightening speculation. The reporter merely dictates and passes on (the material). It takes critical insight to sort out the hidden truth; it takes knowledge to lay truth bare and polish it so that critical insight may be applied to it.

Many systematic historical works have been composed, and the history of nations and dynasties in the world has been compiled and written down. But there are very few (historians) who have become so well known as to be recognized as authorities, and who have replaced the products of their predecessors by their own works. They can almost be counted on the fingers of the hands; they are hardly more numerous than the vowels in grammatical constructions (which are just three). There are, for instance, Ibn Ishaq;¹⁰ at-Tabari;¹¹ Ibn al-Kalbi;¹² Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Waqidi;¹³ Sayf b. 'Umar al-Asadi;¹⁴ al-Mas'udi,¹⁵ and other famous (historians) who are distinguished from the general run (of historians) .

It is well known to competent persons and reliable experts that the works of al-Masudi and al-Waqidi are suspect and objectionable in certain respects.¹⁶ However, their works have been distinguished by universal acceptance of the information they contain and by adoption of their methods and their presentation of material. The discerning critic is his own judge as to which part of their material he finds spurious, and which he gives credence to. Civilization, in its (different) conditions, contains (different) elements to which historical information may be related and with which reports and historical materials may be checked.

Most of the histories by these (authors) cover everything because of the universal geographical extension of the two earliest Islamic dynasties¹⁷ and because of the very wide selection of sources of which they did or did not make use. Some of these authors, such as al-Mas'udi and historians of his type, gave an exhaustive history of the pre-Islamic dynasties and nations and of other (pre-Islamic) affairs in general. Some later historians, on the other hand, showed a tendency toward greater restriction, hesitating to be so general and comprehensive. They brought together the happenings of their own period and gave exhaustive historical information about their own part of the world. They restricted themselves to the history of their own dynasties and cities. This was done by Ibn Hayyan, the historian of Spain and the Spanish Umayyads,¹⁸ and by Ibn ar-Raqiq, the historian of Ifrigiyah and the dynasty in Kairouan (al-Qayrawan).¹⁹

The later historians were all tradition-bound and dull of nature and intelligence, or, (at any rate) did not try not to be dull. They merely copied²⁰ the (older historians) and followed their example. They disregarded the changes in conditions and in the customs of nations and races that the passing of time had brought about. Thus, they presented historical information about dynasties and stories of events from the early period as mere forms without substance,

blades without scabbards, as knowledge that must be considered ignorance, because it is not known what of it is extraneous and what is genuine. (Their information) concerns happenings the origins of which are not known. It concerns species the genera of which are not taken into consideration, and whose (specific) differences are not verified.²¹ With the information they set down they merely repeated historical material which is, in any case, widely known, and followed the earlier historians who worked on it. They neglected the importance of change over the generations in their treatment of the (historical material), because they had no one who could interpret it for them. Their works, therefore, give no explanation for it. When they then turn to the description of a particular dynasty, they report the historical information about it (mechanically) and take care to preserve it as it had been passed on down to them, be it imaginary or true. They do not turn to the beginning of the dynasty. Nor do they tell why it unfurled its banner and was able to give prominence to its emblem, or what caused it to come to a stop when it had reached its term. The student, thus, has still to search for the beginnings of conditions and for (the principles of) organization of (the various dynasties). He must (himself) investigate why the various dynasties brought pressures to bear upon each other and why they succeeded each other. He must search for a convincing explanation of the elements that made for mutual separation or contact among the dynasties. All this will be dealt with in the Introduction to this work.

Other historians, then, came with too brief a presentation (of history). They went to the extreme of being satisfied with the names of kings, without any genealogical or historical information, and with only a numerical indication of the length of reigns.²² This was done by Ibn Rashiq in the *Mizan al-'amal*,²³ and by those lost sheep who followed his method. No credence can be given to what they say. They are not considered trustworthy, nor is their material considered worthy of transmission, for they caused useful material to be lost and damaged the methods and customs acknowledged (as sound and practical) by historians.

When I had read the works of others and probed into the recesses of yesterday and today, I shook myself out of that drowsy complacency and sleepiness. Although not much of a writer,²⁴ I exhibited my own literary ability as well as I could, and, thus, composed a book on history. In (this book) I lifted the veil from conditions as they arise in the various generations. I arranged it in an orderly way in chapters dealing with historical facts and reflections. In it I showed how and why dynasties and civilization originate. I based the work on the history of the two races that constitute the population of the Maghrib at this time and people its various regions and cities, and on that of their ruling houses, both long- and short-lived, including the rulers and allies they had in the past. These two races are the Arabs and the Berbers. They are the two races known to have resided in the Maghrib for such a long time that one can hardly imagine they ever lived elsewhere, for its inhabitants know no other human races.

I corrected the contents of the work carefully and presented it to the judgment of scholars and the elite. I followed an unusual method of arrangement and division into chapters. From the various possibilities, I chose a remarkable and original method. In the work, I commented on civilization, on urbanization, and on the essential characteristics of human social organization, in a way that explains to the reader how and why things are as they are, and shows him how the men who constituted a dynasty first came upon the historical scene. As a result, he will wash his hands of any blind trust in tradition. He will become aware of the conditions of periods and races that were before his time and that will be after it.

I divided the work into an introduction and three books:

The Introduction deals with the great merit of historiography, (offers) an appreciation of its various methods, and cites errors of the historians.

The First Book deals with civilization and its essential characteristics, namely, royal authority, government, gainful occupations, ways of making a living, crafts, and sciences, as well as with the causes and reasons thereof.

The Second Book deals with the history, races, and dynasties of the Arabs, from the beginning of creation down to this time. This will include references to such famous nations and dynasties - contemporaneous with them,²⁵ as the Nabataeans,²⁶ the Syrians, the Persians, the Israelites, the Copts, the Greeks, the Byzantines, and the Turks.

The Third Book deals with the history of the Berbers and of the Zanatah who are part of them; with their origins and races; and, in particular, with the royal authority and dynasties in the Maghrib.

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164 IT SHOULD BE KNOWN that history is a discipline that has a great number of (different) approaches. Its useful aspects are very many. Its goal is distinguished.

(History) makes us acquainted with the conditions of past nations as they are reflected in their (national) character. It makes us acquainted with the biographies of the prophets and with the dynasties and policies of rulers. Whoever so desires may thus achieve the useful result of being able to imitate historical examples in religious and worldly matters.

The (writing³² of history) requires numerous sources and greatly varied knowledge. It also requires a good speculative mind and thoroughness. (Possession of these two qualities) leads the historian to the truth and keeps him from slips and errors. If he trusts historical information in its plain transmitted form and has no clear knowledge of the principles resulting from custom, the fundamental facts of politics, the nature of civilization, or the conditions governing human social organization, and if, furthermore, he does not evaluate remote or ancient material through comparison with near or contemporary material, he often cannot avoid stumbling and slipping and deviating from the highroad of truth. Historians, Qur'an commentators and leading transmitters have committed frequent errors in the stories and events they reported. They accepted them in the plain transmitted form, without regard for its value. They did not check them with the principles underlying such historical situations, nor did they compare them with similar material. Also, they did not probe (more deeply) with the yardstick of philosophy, with the help of knowledge of the nature of things, or with the help of speculation and historical insight. Therefore, they strayed from the truth and found themselves lost in the desert of baseless assumptions and errors.

This is especially the case with figures, either of sums of money or of soldiers, whenever they occur in stories. They offer a good opportunity for false information and constitute a vehicle for nonsensical statements. They must be controlled and checked with the help of known fundamental facts.

For example, al-Mas'udi and many other historians report that Moses counted the army of the Israelites in the desert.³³ He had all those able to carry arms, especially those twenty years and older, pass muster. There turned out to be 600,000 or more. In this connection, (al-Mas'udi) forgets to take into consideration whether Egypt and Syria could possibly have held such a number of soldiers. Every realm may have as large a militia as it can hold and support, but no more. This fact is attested by well-known customs and familiar conditions. Moreover, an army of this size cannot march or fight as a unit. The whole available territory would be too small for it. If it were in battle formation, it would extend two, three, or more times beyond the field of vision. How, then, could two such parties fight with each other, or one battle formation gain the upper hand when one flank does not know

what the other flank is doing! The situation at the present day testifies to the correctness of this statement. The past resembles the future more than one (drop of) water another.

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189 Therefore, today, the scholar in this field needs to know the principles of politics, the (true) nature of existent things, and the differences among nations, places, and periods with regard to ways of life, character qualities, customs, sects, schools, and everything else. He further needs a comprehensive knowledge of present conditions in all these respects. He must compare similarities or differences between the present and the past (or distantly located) conditions. He must know the causes of the similarities in certain cases and of the differences in others. He must be aware of the differing origins and beginnings of (different) dynasties and religious groups, as well as of the reasons and incentives that brought them into being and the circumstances and history of the persons who supported them. His goal must be to have complete knowledge of the reasons for every happening, and to be acquainted with the origin of every event. Then, he must check transmitted information with the basic principles he knows. If it fulfills their requirements, it is sound. Otherwise, the historian must consider it as spurious and dispense with it. It was for this reason alone that historiography was highly considered by the ancients, so much so that at-Tabari, al-Bukhari, and, before them, Ibn Ishaq and other Muslim religious scholars, chose to occupy themselves with it. Most scholars, however, forgot this, the (real) secret of historiography, with the result that it became a stupid occupation. Ordinary people as well as (scholars) who had no firm foundation of knowledge, considered it a simple matter to study and know history, to delve into it and sponge on it. Strays got into the flock, bits of shell were mixed with the nut, truth was adulterated with lies.

"The final outcome of things is up to God."¹⁵⁹

A¹⁶⁰ hidden pitfall in historiography is disregard for the fact that conditions within the nations and races change with the change of periods and the passing of days. This is a sore affliction and is deeply hidden, becoming noticeable only after a long time, so that rarely do more than a few individuals become aware of it.

This is as follows. The condition of the world and of nations, their customs and sects, does not persist in the same form or in a constant manner. There are differences according to days and periods, and changes from one condition to another. This is the case with individuals, times, and cities, and, in the same manner, it happens in connection with regions and districts, periods and dynasties.

"This is how God formerly proceeded with His servants."¹⁶¹

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199 IT¹ SHOULD be known that history, in matter of fact, is information about human social organization, which itself is identical with world civilization. It deals with such conditions affecting the nature of civilization as, for instance, savagery and sociability, group feelings, and the different ways by which one group of human beings achieves superiority over another. It deals with royal authority and the dynasties that result (in this manner) and with the various ranks that exist within them. (It further deals) with the different kinds of gainful occupations and ways of making a living, with the sciences and crafts that human beings pursue as part of their activities and efforts, and with all the other institutions that originate in civilization through its very nature.

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204-209 There ¹³ are many similar things. Only knowledge of the nature of civilization makes critical investigation of them possible. It is the best and most reliable way to investigate historical information critically and to distinguish truth and falsehood in it. It is superior to investigations that rely upon criticism of the personalities of transmitters. Such personality criticism should not be resorted to until it has been ascertained whether a specific piece of information is in itself possible, or not. If it is absurd, there is no use engaging in personality criticism. Critical scholars consider absurdity inherent in the literal meaning of historical information, or an interpretation not acceptable to the intellect, as something that makes such information suspect. Personality criticism is taken into consideration only in connection with the soundness (or lack of soundness) of Muslim religious information, because this religious information mostly concerns injunctions in accordance with which the Lawgiver (Muhammad) enjoined Muslims to act whenever it can be presumed that the information is genuine. The way to achieve presumptive soundness is to ascertain the probity (*ʿadalah*) and exactness of the transmitters.

On the other hand, to establish the truth and soundness of information about factual happenings, a requirement to consider is the conformity (or lack of conformity of the reported information with general conditions). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate whether it is possible that the (reported facts) could have happened. This is more important than, and has priority over, personality criticism. For the correct notion about something that ought to be ¹⁴ can be derived only from (personality criticism), while the correct notion about something that was can be derived from (personality criticism) and external (evidence) by (checking) the conformity (of the historical report with general conditions).

If ¹⁵ this is so, the normative method for distinguishing right from wrong in historical information on the grounds of (inherent) possibility or absurdity, is to investigate human social organization, which is identical with civilization. We must distinguish the conditions that attach themselves to the essence of civilization as required by its very nature; the things that are accidental (to civilization) and cannot be counted on; and the things that cannot possibly attach themselves to it. If we do that, we shall have a normative method for distinguishing right from wrong and truth from falsehood in historical information by means of a logical demonstration that admits of no doubts. Then whenever we hear about certain conditions occurring in civilization, we shall know what to accept and what to declare spurious. We shall have a sound yardstick with the help of which historians may find the path of truth and correctness where their reports are concerned.

Such ¹⁶ is the purpose of this first book of our work. (The subject) is in a way an independent science. (This science) has its own peculiar object—that is, human civilization and social organization. It also has its own peculiar problems, that is, explaining the conditions that attach themselves to the essence of civilization, one after the other. Thus, the situation is the same with this science as it is with any other science, whether it be a conventional ¹⁷ or an intellectual one.

It should be known that the discussion of this topic is something new, extraordinary, and highly useful. Penetrating research has shown the way to it. It does not belong to rhetoric, one of the logical disciplines (represented in Aristotle's *Organon*), the subject of which is convincing words by means of which the mass is inclined to accept a particular opinion or not to accept it. ¹⁸ It is also not politics, because politics is concerned with the administration of home or city in accordance with ethical and philosophical requirements, for the purpose of directing the mass toward a behavior that will result in the preservation and permanence of the (human) species.

The subject here is different from that of these two disciplines which, however, are often similar to it. In a way, it is an entirely original science. In fact, I have not come across a discussion along these lines by anyone. I do not know if this is because people have been unaware of it, but there is no reason to suspect them (of having been unaware of it). Perhaps they have written exhaustively on this topic, and their work did not reach us.¹⁹ There are many sciences. There have been numerous sages among the nations of mankind. The knowledge that has not come down to us is larger than the knowledge that has. Where are the sciences of the Persians that 'Umar ordered wiped out at the time of the conquest!²⁰ Where are the sciences of the Chaldaeans, the Syrians, and the Babylonians, and the scholarly products and results that were theirs! Where are the sciences of the Copts, their predecessors! The sciences of only one nation, the Greek, have come down to us, because they were translated through al-Ma'mun's efforts. (His efforts in this direction) were successful, because he had many translators at his disposal and spent much money in this connection. Of the sciences of others, nothing has come to our attention.

The accidents involved in every manifestation of nature and intellect deserve study. Any topic that is understandable and real requires its own special science. In this connection, scholars seem to have been interested (mainly) in the results (of the individual sciences). As far as the subject under discussion is concerned, the result, as we have seen, is just historical information. Although the problems it raises are important, both essentially and specifically, (exclusive concern for it) leads to one result only: the mere verification of historical information. This is not much. Therefore, scholars might have avoided the subject.

God knows better. "And you were given but little knowledge."²¹

In the field under consideration here, we encounter (certain) problems, treated incidentally by scholars among the arguments applicable to their particular sciences, but that in object and approach are of the same type as the problems (we are discussing). In connection with the arguments for prophecy, for instance, scholars mention that human beings cooperate with each other for their existence and, therefore, need men to arbitrate among them and exercise a restraining influence.²² Or, in the science of the principles of jurisprudence, in the chapter of arguments for the necessity of languages, mention is made of the fact that people need means to express their intentions because by their very nature, cooperation and social organization are made easier by proper expressions²³ Or, in connection with the explanation that laws have their reason in the purposes they are to serve, the jurists mention that adultery confuses pedigrees and destroys the (human) species; that murder, too, destroys the human species; that injustice invites the destruction of civilization with the necessary consequence that the (human) species will be destroyed.²⁴ Other similar things are stated in connection with the purposes embedded in laws. All (laws) are based upon the effort to preserve civilization. Therefore, (the laws) pay attention to the things that belong to civilization. This is obvious from our references to these problems which are mentioned as representative (of the general situation).

We also find a few of the problems of the subject under discussion (treated) in scattered statements by the sages of mankind. However, they did not exhaust the subject. For instance, we have the speech of the Mobedhan before Bahram b. Bahram in the story of the owl reported by al-Mas'udi²⁵ It runs: "O king, the might of royal authority materializes only through the ' religious law, obedience toward God, and compliance with His commands and prohibitions. The religious law persists only through royal authority. Mighty royal authority is accomplished only through men. Men persist only with the help of property. The only way to property is through cultivation.²⁶ The only way to cultivation is through justice. Justice is a balance set up among mankind. The Lord set it up and appointed an overseer for it, and that (overseer) is the ruler."

There also is a statement by Anosharwan²⁷ to the same effect: "Royal authority exists through the army, the army through money, money through taxes, taxes through cultivation, cultivation through justice, justice through the improvement of officials, the improvement of officials through the forthrightness of wazirs, and the whole thing in the first place through the ruler's personal supervision of his subjects' condition and his ability to educate them, so that he may rule them, and not they him."

In the *Book on Politics* that is ascribed to Aristotle and has wide circulation, we find a good deal about (the subject which is under discussion here). (The treatment,) however, is not exhaustive, nor is the topic provided with all the arguments it deserves, and it is mixed with other things. In the book, (the author) referred to such general (ideas)²⁸ as we have reported on the authority of the Mobedhan and Anosharwan. He arranged his statement in a remarkable circle that he discussed at length. It runs as follows:²⁹ "The world is a garden the fence of which is the dynasty. The dynasty is an authority through which life is given to proper behavior. Proper behavior is a policy directed by the ruler. The ruler is an institution supported by the soldiers. The soldiers are helpers who are maintained by money. Money is sustenance brought together by the subjects. The subjects are servants who are protected by justice. Justice is something familiar,³⁰ and through it, the world persists. The world is a garden ...", and then it begins again from the beginning. These are eight sentences of political wisdom. They are connected with each other, the end of each one leading into the beginning of the next. They are held together in a circle with no definite beginning or end. (The author) was proud of what he had hit upon and made much of the significance of the sentences.

When our discussion in the section on royal authority and dynasties³¹ has been studied and due critical attention given to it, it will be found to constitute an exhaustive, very clear, fully substantiated interpretation and detailed exposition of these sentences. We became aware of these things with God's help and without the instruction of Aristotle or the teaching of the Mobedhan.

The statements of Ibn al-Muqaffa³² and the excursions on political subjects in his treatises also touch upon many of the problems of our work. However, (Ibn al-Muqaffa) did not substantiate his statements with arguments as we have done. He merely mentioned them in passing in the (flowing) prose style and eloquent verbiage of the rhetorician.

Judge Abu Bakr at-Turtushi³³ also had the same idea in the *Kitab Siraj al-Muluk*. He divided the work into chapters that come close to the chapters and problems of our work. However, he did not achieve his aim or realize his intention. He did not exhaust the problems and did not bring clear proofs. He sets aside a special chapter for a particular problem, but then he tells a great number of stories and traditions and he reports scattered remarks by Persian sages such as Buzurjmihir³⁴ and the Mobedhan, and by Indian sages, as well as material transmitted on the authority of Daniel, Hermes, and other great men. He does not verify his statements or clarify them with the help of natural arguments. The work is merely a compilation of transmitted material similar to sermons in its inspirational purpose. In a way, at-Turtushi aimed at the right idea, but did not hit it. He did not realize his intention or exhaust his problems.

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208-209 In³⁷ this book, now, we are going to explain such various aspects of civilization that affect human beings in their social organization, as royal authority, gainful occupation, sciences, and crafts, (all) in the light of various arguments that will show the true nature of the varied knowledge of the elite and the common people, dispel misgivings, and remove doubts. We say that man is distinguished from the other living beings by certain qualities peculiar to him, namely: (1) The sciences and crafts which result from that ability to

think which distinguishes man from the other animals and exalts him as a thinking being over all creatures.³⁸ (2) The need for restraining influence and strong authority, since man, alone of all the animals, cannot exist without them. It is true, something has been said (in this connection about bees and locusts. However, if they have something similar, it comes to them through inspiration,³⁹ not through thinking or reflection. (3) Man's efforts to make a living and his concern with the various ways of obtaining and acquiring the means of (life). This is the result of man's need for food to keep alive and subsist, which God instilled in him, guiding him to desire and seek a livelihood. God said: "He gave every thing its natural characteristics, and then guided it."⁴⁰ (4) Civilization. This means that human beings have to dwell in common and settle together in cities and hamlets for the comforts of companionship and for the satisfaction of human needs, as a result of the natural disposition of human beings toward co-operation in order to be able to make a living, as we shall explain. Civilization may be either desert (Bedouin) civilization as found in outlying regions and mountains, in hamlets (near suitable) pastures in waste regions, and on the fringes of sandy deserts. Or it may be sedentary civilization as found in cities, villages, towns, and small communities that serve the purpose of protection and fortification by means of walls. In all these different conditions, there are things that affect civilization essentially in as far as it is social organization.

Consequently,⁴¹ the discussion in this work falls naturally under six chapter headings:

(1) On human civilization in general, its various kinds, and the portion of the earth that is civilized.

(2) On desert civilization, including a report on the tribes and savage nations.

(3) On dynasties, the caliphate, and royal authority, including a discussion of government ranks.

(4) On sedentary civilization, countries, and cities.

(5) On crafts, ways of making a living, gainful occupations, and their various aspects.

And

(6) On the sciences, their acquisition and study.

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Chapter I Human civilization in general

HUMAN¹ SOCIAL ORGANIZATION is something necessary. The philosophers expressed this fact by saying: "Man is `political' by nature."² That is, he cannot do without the social organization for which the philosophers use the technical term "town" (*polis*).

This is what civilization means. (The necessary character of human social organization or civilization) is explained by the fact that God created and fashioned man in a form that can live and subsist only with the help of food. He guided man to a natural desire for food and instilled in him the power that enables him to obtain it.

However, the power of the individual human being is not sufficient for him to obtain (the food) he needs, and does not provide him with as much food as he requires to live. Even if we assume an absolute minimum of food—that is, food enough for one day, (a little) wheat, for instance—that amount of food could be obtained only after much preparation such as grinding, kneading, and baking. Each of these three operations requires utensils and tools that can be provided only with the help of several crafts, such as the crafts of the blacksmith, the carpenter, and the potter. Assuming that a man could eat unprepared grain, an even greater number of operations would be necessary in order to obtain the grain: sowing and reaping, and threshing to separate it from the husks of the ear. Each of these operations requires a number of tools and many more crafts than those just mentioned. It is beyond the power of one man alone to do all that, or (even) part of it, by himself. Thus, he cannot do without a combination of many powers from among his fellow beings, if he is to obtain food for himself and for them. Through cooperation, the needs of a number of persons, many times greater than their own (number), can be satisfied.

Likewise, each individual needs the help of his fellow beings for his defense, as well. When God fashioned the natures of all living beings and divided the various powers among them, many dumb animals were given more perfect powers than God gave to man. The power of a horse, for instance, is much greater than the power of man, and so is the power of a donkey or an ox. The power of a lion or an elephant is many times greater than the power of (man).

Aggressiveness is natural in living beings. Therefore, God gave each of them a special limb for defense against aggression. To man, instead, He gave the ability to think, and the hand. With the help of the ability to think, the hand is able to prepare the ground for the crafts. The crafts, in turn, procure for man the instruments that serve him instead of limbs, which other animals possess for their defense. Lances, for instance, take the place of horns for goring, swords the place of claws to inflict wounds, shields the place of thick skins, and so on. There are other such things. They were all mentioned by Galen in *De usu partium*.³

The power of one individual human being cannot withstand the power of any one dumb animal, especially not the power of the predatory animals. Man is generally unable to defend himself against them by himself. Nor is his (unaided) power sufficient to make use of the existing instruments of defense, because there are so many of them and they require so many crafts and (additional) things. It is absolutely necessary for man to have the co-operation of his fellow men. As long as there is no such co-operation, he cannot obtain any food or nourishment, and life cannot materialize for him, because God fashioned him so that he must have food if he is to live. Nor, lacking weapons, can he defend himself. Thus, he falls

prey to animals and dies much before his time. Under such circumstances, the human species would vanish. When, however, mutual co-operation exists, man obtains food for his nourishment and weapons for his defense. God's wise plan that man(kind) should subsist and the human species be preserved will be fulfilled.

Consequently, social organization is necessary to the human species. Without it, the existence of human beings would be incomplete. God's desire to settle the world with human beings and to leave them as His representatives on earth⁴ would not materialize. This is the meaning of civilization, the object of the science under discussion.

The afore-mentioned remarks have been in the nature of establishing the existence of the object in (this) particular field. A scholar in a particular discipline is not obliged to do this, since it is accepted in logic that a scholar in a particular science does not have to establish the existence of the object in that science.⁵ On the other hand, logicians do not consider it forbidden to do so. Thus, it is a voluntary contribution.

God, in His grace, gives success.

When⁶ mankind has achieved social organization, as we have stated, and when civilization in the world has thus become a fact, people need someone to exercise a restraining influence and keep them apart, for aggressiveness and injustice are in the animal nature of man. The weapons made for the defense of human beings against the aggressiveness of dumb animals do not suffice against the aggressiveness of man to man, because all of them possess those weapons. Thus, something else is needed for defense against the aggressiveness of human beings toward each other. It could not come from outside, because all the other animals fall short of human perceptions and inspiration. The person who exercises a restraining influence, therefore, must be one of themselves. He must dominate them and have power and authority over them, so that no one of them will be able to attack another. This is the meaning of royal authority.

It has thus become clear that royal authority is a natural quality of man which is absolutely necessary to mankind. The philosophers mention that it also exists among certain dumb animals, such as the bees and the locusts⁷ One discerns among them the existence of authority and obedience to a leader. They follow the one of them who is distinguished as their leader by his natural characteristics and body. However, outside of human beings, these things exist as the result of natural disposition and divine guidance, and not as the result of an ability to think or to administrate. "He gave everything its natural characteristics, and then guided it."⁸

The philosophers go further. They attempt to give logical proof of the existence of prophecy and to show that prophecy is a natural quality of man. In this connection, they carry the argument to its ultimate consequences and say that human beings absolutely require some authority to exercise a restraining influence. They go on to say that such restraining influence exists through the religious law (that has been) ordained by God and revealed to mankind by a human being. (This human being) is distinguished from the rest of mankind by special qualities of divine guidance that God gave him, in order that he might find the others submissive to him and ready to accept what he says. Eventually, the existence of a (restraining) authority among them and over them becomes a fact that is accepted without the slightest disapproval or dissent.

This proposition of the philosophers is not logical, as one can see. Existence and human life can materialize without (the existence of prophecy) through injunctions a person in authority may devise on his own or with the help of a group feeling that enables him to force the others to follow him wherever he wants to go. People who have a (divinely revealed) book and who follow the prophets are few in number in comparison with (all) the Magians⁹ who

have no (divinely revealed) book. The latter constitute the majority of the world's inhabitants. Still, they (too) have possessed dynasties and monuments, not to mention life itself. They still possess these things at this time in the intemperate zones to the north and the south. This is in contrast¹⁰ with human life in the state of anarchy, with no one to exercise a restraining influence. That would be impossible.

This shows that (the philosophers) are wrong when they assume that prophecy exists by necessity. The existence of prophecy is not required by logic. Its (necessary character) is indicated by the religious law, as was the belief of the early Muslims.

God gives success and guidance.

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323-326 Chapter II

BEDOUIN CIVILIZATION, SAVAGE NATIONS AND TRIBES AND THEIR CONDITIONS (OF LIFE), INCLUDING SEVERAL BASIC AND EXPLANATORY STATEMENTS.¹

1. *Both Bedouins and sedentary people are natural groups.*

IT ² SHOULD BE KNOWN that differences of condition among people are the result of the different ways in which they make their living. Social organization enables them to cooperate toward that end and to start with the simple necessities of life, before they get to conveniences and luxuries.³

Some people adopt agriculture, the cultivation of vegetables and grains, (as their way of making a living). Others adopt animal husbandry, the use of sheep, cattle, goats, bees, and silkworms, for breeding and for their products. Those who live by agriculture or animal husbandry cannot avoid the call of the desert, because it alone offers the wide fields, acres, pastures for animals, and other things that the settled areas do not offer.⁴ It is therefore necessary for them to restrict themselves to the desert. Their social organization and co-operation for the needs of life and civilization, such as food, shelter, and warmth, do not take them beyond the bare subsistence level, because of their inability (to provide) for anything beyond those (things). Subsequent improvement of their conditions and acquisition of more wealth and comfort than they need, cause them to rest and take it easy. Then, they co-operate for things beyond the (bare) necessities. They use more food and clothes, and take pride in them. They build large houses, and lay out towns and cities for protection. This is followed by an increase in comfort and ease, which leads to formation of the most developed luxury customs. They take the greatest pride in the preparation of food and a fine cuisine, in the use of varied splendid clothes of silk and brocade and other (fine materials), in the construction of ever higher buildings and towers, in elaborate furnishings for the buildings, and the most intensive cultivation of crafts in actuality. They build castles and mansions, provide them with running water,⁵ build their towers higher and higher, and compete in furnishing them (most elaborately). They differ in the quality of the clothes, the beds, the vessels, and the utensils they employ for their purposes. Here, now, (we have) sedentary people. "Sedentary people" means the inhabitants of cities and countries, some of whom adopt the crafts as their way of making a living, while others adopt commerce. They earn more and live more comfortably than Bedouins, because they live on a level beyond the level of (bare) necessity, and their way of making a living corresponds to their wealth.

It has thus become clear that Bedouins and sedentary people are natural groups which exist by necessity, as we have stated.

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333-335 7. *Only tribes held together by group feeling can live in the desert.*

It should be known that God put good and evil into the nature of man. Thus, He said in the Qur'an: "We led him along the two paths."³⁶ He further said: "And inspired (the soul) with its wickedness as well as its fear of God."³⁷

Evil is the quality that is closest to man when he fails to improve his customs and (when) religion is not used as the model to improve, him. The great mass of mankind is in that condition, with the exception of those to whom God gives success. Evil³⁸ qualities in man are injustice and mutual aggression. He who casts his eye upon the property of his brother will lay his hand upon it to take it, unless there is a restraining influence to hold him back. The poet thus said:

Injustice is a human characteristic. If you find
A moral man,³⁹ there is some reason why he is not unjust.

Mutual aggression of people in towns and cities is averted by the authorities and the government, which hold back the masses under their control from attacks and aggression upon each other. They are thus prevented by the influence of force and governmental authority from mutual injustice, save such injustice as comes from the ruler himself.

Aggression against a city from outside may be averted by walls, in the event of negligence,⁴⁰ a surprise attack at night, or inability (of the inhabitants) to withstand the enemy during the day. (Or,) it may be averted with the help of a militia of government auxiliary troops, if (the inhabitants are otherwise) prepared and ready to offer resistance.

The⁴¹ restraining influence among Bedouin tribes comes from their *shaykhs* and leaders. It results from the great respect and veneration they generally enjoy among the people. The hamlets of the Bedouins are defended against outside enemies by a tribal militia composed of noble youths of the tribe

who are known for their courage. Their defense and protection are successful only if they are a closely-knit group⁴² of common descent. This strengthens their stamina and makes them feared, since everybody's affection for his family and his group is more important (than anything else). Compassion and affection for one's blood relations and relatives exist in human nature as something God put into the hearts of men. It makes for mutual support and aid, and increases the fear felt by the enemy.

This may be exemplified by the story in the Qur'an about Joseph's brothers. They said to their father: "If the wolf eats him, while we are a group, then, indeed, we have lost out."⁴³ This means that one cannot imagine any hostile act being undertaken against anyone who has his group feeling to support him.

Those who have no one of their own lineage (to care for) rarely feel affection for their fellows. If danger is in the air on the day of battle, such a one slinks away and seeks to save himself, because he is afraid of being left without support⁴⁴ and dreads (that prospect). Such people, therefore, cannot live in the desert, because they would fall prey to any nation that might want to swallow them up.

If this is true with regard to the place where one lives, which is in constant need of defense and military protection, it is equally true with regard to every other human activity, such as prophecy, the establishment of royal authority, or propaganda (for a cause). Nothing can be achieved in these matters without fighting for it, since man has the natural urge to offer resistance. And for fighting one cannot do without group feeling, as we mentioned at the beginning. This should be taken as the guiding principle of our later exposition.

God gives success.

8. Group feeling results only from (blood) relation

ship or something corresponding to it.

(Respect for) blood⁴⁵ ties is something natural among men, with the rarest exceptions. It leads to affection for one's relations and blood relatives, (the feeling that) no harm ought to befall them nor any destruction come upon them. One feels shame when one's relatives are treated unjustly or attacked, and one wishes to intervene between them and whatever peril or destruction threatens them. This is a natural urge in man, for as long as there have been human beings. If the direct relationship between persons who help each other is very close, so that it leads to close contact and unity, the ties are obvious and clearly require the (existence of a feeling of solidarity) without any outside (prodding). If, however, the relationship is somewhat distant, it is often forgotten in part. However, some knowledge of it remains and this causes a person to help his relatives for the known motive, in order to escape the shame he would feel in his soul were a person to whom he is somehow related treated unjustly⁴⁶

Clients and allies belong in the same category. The affection everybody has for his clients and allies results from the feeling of shame that comes to a person when one of his neighbors, relatives, or a blood relation in any degree (of kinship) is humiliated. The reason for it is that a client(-master) relationship leads to close contact exactly, or approximately in the same way, as does common descent. It is in that sense that one must understand Muhammad's remark, "Learn as much of your pedigrees as is necessary to establish your ties of blood relationship."⁴⁷ It means that pedigrees are useful only in so far as they imply the close contact that is a consequence of blood ties and that eventually leads to mutual help and affection. Anything beyond that is superfluous.⁴⁸ For a pedigree is something imaginary and devoid of reality.⁴⁹ Its usefulness consists only in the resulting connection and close contact. If the fact of (common descent) is obvious and clear, it evokes in man a natural affection, as we have said. If, however, its existence is known only from remote history, it moves the imagination but faintly. Its usefulness is gone, and preoccupation with it becomes gratuitous, a kind of game, and as such is not permissible. In this sense, one must understand the remark, "Genealogy is something that is of no use to know and that it does no harm not to know."⁵⁰ This means that when common descent is no longer clear and has become a matter of scientific knowledge, it can no longer move the imagination and is denied the affection caused by group feeling. It has become useless.

And God knows better.

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338-339 11. *Leadership over people who share in a given group feeling cannot be vested in those not of the same descent.*⁶⁰

This is because leadership exists only through superiority, and superiority only through group feeling, as we have mentioned before.⁶¹ Leadership over people, therefore, must, of necessity, derive from a group feeling that is superior to each individual group feeling. Each individual group feeling that becomes aware of the superiority of the group feeling of the leader is ready to obey and follow (that leader).

Now, a person who has become attached to people of a common descent usually does not share the group feeling that derives from their common descent. He is merely attached to them.⁶² The firmest connection he has with the group is as client and ally. This in no way guarantees him superiority over them. Assuming that he has developed close contact with them, that he has mixed with them, that the fact that he was originally merely attached to them has been forgotten, and that he has become one of their skin and is addressed as one having

the same descent as they, how could he, or one of his forebears, have acquired leadership before that process had taken place, since leadership is transmitted in one particular branch that has been marked for superiority through group feeling? The fact that he was merely attached to the tribe was no doubt known at an earlier stage, and at that time prevented him (or rather, his forebears) from assuming leadership. Thus, it could not have been passed on by (a man) who was still merely attached (to the tribe). Leadership must of necessity be inherited from the person who is entitled to it, in accordance with the fact, which we have stated, that superiority results from group feeling

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349-351 16. *The goal to which group feeling leads is royal authority.*

This ⁹⁷ is because, as we have mentioned before, ⁹⁸ group feeling gives protection and makes possible mutual defense, the pressing of claims, ⁹⁹ and every other kind of social activity. We have also mentioned before ¹⁰⁰ that according to their nature, human beings need someone to act as a restraining influence and mediator in every social organization, in order to keep the members from (fighting) with each other. That person must, by necessity, have superiority over the others in the matter of group feeling. If not, his power to (exercise a restraining influence) could not materialize. Such superiority is royal authority (*mulk*). It is more than leadership. Leadership means being a chieftain, and the leader is obeyed, but he has no power to force others to accept his rulings. Royal authority means superiority and the power to rule by force.

When a person sharing in the group feeling ¹⁰¹ has reached the rank of chieftain and commands obedience, and when he then finds the way open toward superiority and (the use of) force, he follows that way, because it is something desirable. He cannot completely achieve his (goal) except with the help of the group feeling, which causes (the others) to obey him. Thus, royal superiority is a goal to which group feeling leads, as one can see.

Even if an individual tribe has different "houses" and many diverse group feelings, still, there must exist a group feeling that is stronger than all the other group feelings combined, that is superior to them all and makes them subservient, and in which all the diverse group feelings coalesce, as it were, to become one greater group feeling. Otherwise, splits would occur and lead to dissension and strife. "If God did not keep human beings apart, the earth would perish."¹⁰²

Once group feeling has established superiority over the people who share (in that particular group feeling), it will, by its very nature, seek superiority over people of other group feelings unrelated to the first. If the one (group feeling) is the equal of the other or is able to stave off (its challenge), the (competing people) are even with and equal to each other. (In this case,) each group feeling maintains its sway over its own domain and people, as is the case with tribes and nations all over the earth. However, if the one group feeling overpowers the other and makes it subservient to itself, the two group feelings enter into close contact, and the (defeated) group feeling gives added power to the (victorious) group feeling, which, as a result, sets its goal of superiority and domination higher than before. In this way, it goes on until the power of that particular group feeling equals the power of the ruling dynasty. Then, when the ruling dynasty grows senile and no defender arises from among its friends who share in its group feeling, the (new group feeling) takes over and deprives the ruling dynasty of its power, and, thus, obtains complete royal authority.

The power of (a given group feeling) may (also) reach its peak when the ruling dynasty has not yet reached senility. (This stage) may coincide with the stage at which (the

ruling dynasty) needs to have recourse to the people who represent the various group feelings (in order to master the situation). In such a case, the ruling dynasty incorporates (the people who enjoy the powerful group feeling) among its clients whom it uses for the execution of its various projects. This, then, means (the formation of) another royal authority, inferior to that of the controlling royal authority. This was the case with the Turks under the 'Abbasids'¹⁰³ with the Sinhajah and the Zanatah in their relation to the Kutamah, and with the Hamdanids in their relation to the (Fatimid) 'Alids and the 'Abbasids.

It is thus evident that royal authority is the goal of group feeling. When (group feeling) attains that goal, the tribe (representing that particular group feeling) obtains royal authority, either by seizing actual control or by giving assistance (to the ruling dynasty). It depends on the circumstances prevailing at a given time (which of the two alternatives applies). If the group feeling encounters obstacles on its way to the goal, as we shall explain, it stops where it is, until God decides what is going to happen to it.

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Chapter III

ON DYNASTIES, ROYAL AUTHORITY,
THE CALIPHATE, GOVERNMENT RANKS,
AND ALL THAT GOES WITH THESE THINGS.
THE CHAPTER CONTAINS BASIC AND
SUPPLEMENTARY PROPOSITIONS

1. *Royal authority and large¹ dynastic (power) are attained only through a group and group feeling.*

THIS ² IS BECAUSE, as we established in the first chapter, aggressive and defensive strength is obtained only through group feeling which means (mutual) affection and willingness to fight and die for each other.

Now, royal authority is a noble and enjoyable position. It comprises all the good things of the world, the pleasures of the body, and the joys of the soul. Therefore, there is, as a rule, great competition for it. It rarely is handed over (voluntarily), but it may be taken away. Thus, discord ensues. It leads to war and fighting, and to attempts to gain superiority. Nothing of all this comes about except through group feeling, as we have also mentioned.

This situation is not at all understood by the great mass. They forget it, because they have forgotten the time when the dynasty first became established. They have grown up in settled areas for a long time. They have lived there for successive generations. Thus, they know nothing about what took place with God's help at the beginning of the dynasty. They merely notice that the coloring of the men of the dynasty is determined, that people have submitted to them, and that group feeling is no longer needed to establish their power. They do not know how it was at the beginning and what difficulties had to be overcome by the founder of (the dynasty). The inhabitants of Spain especially have forgotten group feeling and its influence, because so long a time has passed, and because as a rule they have no need of the power of group feeling, since their country has been annihilated and is depleted of tribal groups.

God has power to do what He wishes.

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374-376 2. *When a dynasty is, firmly established, it can dispense with group feeling.*

The ³ reason for this is that people find it difficult to submit to large dynastic (power) at the beginning, unless they are forced into submission by strong superiority. (The new government) is something strange. People are not familiar with, or used to, its rule. But once leadership is firmly vested in the members of the family qualified to exercise royal authority in the dynasty, and once (royal authority) has been passed on by inheritance over many generations and through successive dynasties, the beginnings are forgotten, and the members of that family are clearly marked as leaders. It has become a firmly established article of faith that one must be subservient and submissive to them. People will fight with them in their

behalf, as they would fight for the articles of faith. By this time, (the rulers) will not need much group (feeling to maintain) their power. It is as if obedience to the government were a divinely revealed book that cannot be changed or opposed. It is for some (good reason) that the discussion of the imamate is placed at the end of works dealing with the articles of faith, as if it were one of them ⁴

(The rulers) maintain their hold over the government and their own dynasty with the help, then, either of clients and followers who grew up in the shadow and power ⁵ of group feeling, or (with that) of tribal groups of a different descent who have become their clients.

Something of the sort happened to the 'Abbasids. The group feeling of the Arabs had been destroyed by the time of the reign of al-Mu'tasim and his son, al-Wathiq. They tried to maintain their hold over the government thereafter with the help of Persian, Turkish, Daylam, Saljuq, and other clients. Then, the Persians (non-Arabs) and clients gained power over the provinces (of the realm). The influence of the dynasty grew smaller, and no longer extended beyond the environs of Baghdad. Eventually, the Daylam closed in upon (that area) and took possession of it. The caliphs were ruled by them. Then (the Daylam), in turn, lost control. The Saljugs seized power after the Daylam, and the (caliphs) were ruled by them. Then (the Saljugs), in turn, lost control. Finally, the Tatars closed in. They killed the caliph and wiped out every vestige of the dynasty.

The same happened to the Sinhajah in the Maghrib. Their group feeling was destroyed in the fifth [eleventh] century, or before that. Dynastic (power), but of decreasing importance, was maintained by them in al-Mahdiyah, in Bougie, in al-Qal'ah, ⁶ and in the other frontier cities of Ifriqiyah. Frequently, some rival aspirant to royal authority would attack these frontier cities and entrench himself in them. Yet, they retained government and royal authority until God permitted their dynasty to be wiped out. Then the Almohads came, fortified by the strong group feeling among the Masmudah, and obliterated all traces of the (Sinhajah dynasty).

The same happened to the Umayyad dynasty in Spain. When its Arab group feeling was destroyed, the *reyes de taifas* (small princes) seized power and divided the territory among themselves. In competition with each other, they distributed among themselves the realm of the (Umayyad) dynasty. Each one of them seized the territory under his control and aggrandized himself. (These rulers) learned of the relations that existed between the non-Arabs (in the East) and the 'Abbasids. (Imitating them,) they adopted royal surnames and used royal trappings. There was no danger that anyone would take (the prerogatives they claimed) away from them or alter (the situation in this respect), because Spain was no (longer the) home of groups and tribes, as we shall mention. They went on in this way, (and it was) as Ibn Sharaf ⁷ described it:

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388-389 10. *By its very nature, the royal authority claims all glory for itself and goes in for luxury and prefers tranquility and quiet.* ⁵⁸

As ⁵⁹ to claiming all glory for itself, this is because, as we have mentioned before, royal authority exists through group feeling. Group feeling (such as leads to royal authority) is something composite that results from (the amalgamation of) many groups, one of which is stronger than all the others. Thus, (a group feeling) is able to overcome and gain power over (all the others), and, eventually, brings them all under its sway. Thus, social organization and superiority over men and dynasties come about. The secret here is that a group feeling

extending over the entire tribe corresponds to the temper in the things that come into being. Temper is the product (of the mixture) of the elements. It has been explained in the proper place ⁶⁰ that, when the elements are combined in equal proportions, no mixture can take place. One (element) must be superior to the others, and when (it exercises) its superiority over them, mixture occurs. In the same way, one of the various tribal group feelings must be superior to all (others), in order to be able to bring them together, to unite them, and to weld them into one group feeling comprising all the various groups. All the various groups are then under the influence of the superior group feeling.

This highest group feeling can go only to people who have a "house" and leadership among (the tribe). One of those people must be the leader who has superiority over them. He is singled out as leader of all the various group feelings, because he is superior to all the others by birth. When he is singled out for (the position of leadership), he is too proud to let others share in his leadership and control over (the people) or to let them participate in it, because the qualities of haughtiness and pride are innate in animal nature. Thus, he develops the quality of egotism (*ta'alluh*), which is innate in human beings.

Moreover, politics requires that only one person exercise control. Were various persons, liable to differ among each other, to exercise it, destruction of the whole could result. "If there were other gods except God in the two (heaven and earth), they (heaven and earth) would have been destroyed." ⁶¹

Thus, the aspirations of the various group feelings are blunted. People become tame and do not aspire to share with the leader in the exercise of control. Their group feeling is forced to refrain (from such aspirations). The leader takes charge all by himself, as far as possible. Eventually, he leaves no part in the power to anyone else. He thus claims all the glory for himself and does not permit the people to share in it. This may come to pass already with the first ruler of a dynasty, or it may come to pass only with the second or the third, depending on the resistance and strength of the various group feelings, but it is something unavoidable in a dynasty. This is how God proceeds with His servants.

As ⁶² to going in for luxury, this is because, when a nation has gained the upper hand and taken possession of the holdings of its predecessors who had royal authority, its prosperity and well-being grow. People become accustomed to a great number of things. From the necessities of life and a life of austerity, they progress to the luxuries and a life of comfort and beauty. They come to adopt the customs and (enjoy) the conditions of their predecessors. Luxuries require development of the customs necessary to produce them. People then also tend toward luxury in food, clothing, bedding (carpets), and household goods. They take pride in such things and vie with other nations in delicacies, gorgeous raiment, and fine mounts. Every new generation wants to surpass the preceding one in this respect, and so it goes right down to the end of the dynasty. The larger the realm ruled by a dynasty, the greater is the share of its people in these luxuries. The limit eventually to be reached is set for a particular dynasty by its own power and by the customs of its predecessors.

This is how God proceeds with His creatures.

As ⁶³ to preferring tranquility and quiet, this is because a nation obtains royal authority only by pressing its claims, having in mind the purpose of obtaining superiority and royal authority. When this purpose is accomplished, all efforts cease.

I wondered at the busy efforts fate made in connection with my relationship with her. Then, when our relationship had ended, fate became quiet. ⁶⁴

When people have obtained the royal authority, they no (longer) do the tiresome chores they had been used to undertake while still in search of it. They prefer rest and quiet and tranquility. Now they seek to enjoy the fruits of royal authority, such as buildings, dwellings, and clothing. They build castles and install running water.⁶⁵ They plant gardens and enjoy life. They prefer rest to tiresome chores. They take pride in clothing, food, household goods, and bedding (carpets), as much as possible. They get used to this (attitude) and pass it on to later generations. It continues to grow in their midst, until God permits His command to be executed.

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390-394 11. *When the natural (tendencies) of the royal authority to claim all glory for itself and to obtain luxury and tranquility have been firmly established, the dynasty approaches senility.*

This ⁶⁶ can be explained in several ways.

First: As we have stated, the (royal authority), by its very nature, must claim all glory for itself. As long as glory was the common (property) of the group, and all members of the group made an identical effort (to obtain glory), their aspirations to gain the upper hand over others and to defend their own possessions were expressed in exemplary unruliness and lack of restraint. They all aimed at fame. Therefore, they considered death encountered in pursuit of glory, sweet, and they preferred annihilation to the loss of (glory). Now, however, when one of them claims all glory for himself, he treats the others severely and holds them in check. Further, he excludes them from possessing property and appropriates it for himself. People, thus, become too lazy to care for fame. They become dispirited and come to love humbleness and servitude.

The next generation (of members of the dynasty) grows up in this (condition). They consider their allowances the government's payment to them for military service and support. No other thought occurs to them. (But) a person would rarely hire himself out to sacrifice his life. This (situation) debilitates the dynasty and undermines its strength. Its group feeling decays because the people who represent the group feeling have lost their energy. As a result, the dynasty progresses toward weakness and senility.

Second: As we have said before, royal authority by its very nature requires luxury. People get accustomed to a great number of things. Their expenses are higher than their allowances and their income is not sufficient to pay for their expenditures. Those who are poor perish. Spendthrifts squander their income on luxuries. This (condition) becomes aggravated in the later generations. Eventually, all their income cannot pay for the luxuries and other things they have become used to. They grow needy. When their rulers urge them to defray the costs of raids and wars, they cannot get around it (but they have no money). Therefore, (the rulers) impose penalties on the (people) and deprive many of them of their property, either by appropriating it for themselves or by handing it over to their own children and supporters in the dynasty. In that way, they make the people too weak (financially) to keep their own affairs going, and their weakness (then reacts upon the ruler and) weakens him.

Also, when luxury increases in a dynasty and people's income becomes insufficient for their needs and expenses, the ruler, that is, the government, must increase their allowances in order to tide them over and remedy their unsound condition. The amount of tax revenue, however, is a fixed one. It neither increases nor decreases. When it is increased by new customs duties, the amount to be collected as a result of the increase has fixed limits (and

cannot be increased again). And when the tax revenues must go to pay for recently increased allowances that had to be increased for everybody in view of new luxuries and great expenditures, the militia decreases in number from what it had been before the increase in allowances.⁶⁷

Luxury, meanwhile, is still on the increase. As a result, allowances become larger, and the militia decreases in number. This happens a third and a fourth time. Eventually, the army is reduced to the smallest possible size. The result is that the military defense of the dynasty is weakened and the power of the dynasty declines. Neighboring dynasties, or groups and tribes under the control of the dynasty itself, become bold and attack it, and God permits it to suffer the destruction that He has destined for (all) His creatures.

Furthermore, luxury corrupts the character. (Through luxury,) the soul acquires diverse kinds of evil and sophisticated customs, as will be mentioned in the section on sedentary culture.⁶⁸ People lose the good qualities that were a sign and indication of (their qualification for) royal authority.⁶⁹ They adopt the contrary bad qualities. This points toward retrogression and ruin, according to the way God has (planned it) for His creatures in this connection. The dynasty shows symptoms of dissolution and disintegration. It becomes affected by the chronic diseases of senility and finally dies.

Third: As we have mentioned,⁷⁰ royal authority, by its very nature, requires tranquility (and rest). When people become accustomed to tranquility and rest and adopt them as character traits, they become part of their nature. This is the case with all the things to which one grows used and accustomed.

The new generations grow up in comfort and the ease of luxury and tranquility. The trait of savagery (which former generations had possessed) undergoes transformation. They forget the customs of desert life that enabled them to achieve royal authority, such as great energy, the habit of rapacity, and the ability to travel in the wilderness and find one's way in waste regions. No difference remains between them and ordinary city dwellers, except for their (fighting) skill⁷¹ and emblems. Their military defense weakens, their energy is lost, and their strength is undermined. The evil effects of this situation on the dynasty show themselves in the form of senility.

People, meanwhile, continue to adopt ever newer forms of luxury and sedentary culture and of quiet, tranquility, and softness in all their conditions, and to sink ever deeper into them. They thus become estranged from desert life and desert toughness. Gradually, they lose more and more of (the old virtues). They forget the quality of bravery that was their protection and defense. Eventually, they come to depend upon some other militia, if they have one.

An example of this is the nations whose history is available in the books you have. What I have said will be found to be correct and admitting of no doubt.

In a dynasty affected by senility as the result of luxury and rest, it sometimes happens that the ruler chooses helpers and partisans from groups not related to (the ruling dynasty but) used to toughness. He uses (these people) as an army which will be better able to suffer the hardships of wars, hunger, and privation. This could prove a cure for the senility of the dynasty when it comes, (but only) until God permits His command regarding (the dynasty) to be executed.

This is what happened to the Turkish dynasty in the East. Most members of its army were Turkish clients. The (Turkish) rulers then chose horsemen and soldiers from among the white slaves (Mamelukes) who were brought to them. They were more eager to fight and

better able to suffer privations than the children of the earlier white slaves (Mamelukes) who had grown up in easy circumstances as a ruling class in the shadow of the government.

The same was the case with the Almohad (Hafsid) dynasty in Ifriqiyah. Their rulers often selected their armies from the Zanatah and the Arabs. They used many of them, and disregarded their own people who had become used to luxury. Thus, the dynasty obtained another, new life, unaffected by senility.

God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it.

12. *Dynasties have a natural life span like individuals.*

It ⁷² should be known that in the opinion of physicians and astrologers, the natural life (span) of individuals is one hundred and twenty years, that is, the period astrologers call the great lunar year. Within the same generation, the duration of life differs according to the conjunctions. It may be either more or less than one hundred and twenty years. The life (span) of persons who are under some particular conjunction will be a full hundred years. Of others, it will be fifty, or eighty, or seventy years, accordingly as the indications of conjunctions noted by these observers may require. The life of a Muslim lasts between sixty and seventy years. This is stated in the *hadith* ⁷³ The natural life span of one hundred and twenty years is surpassed only on the occasion of rare configurations and extraordinary positions on the firmament. Such was the case with Noah and with a few (individuals) among the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud.

The ⁷⁴ same is the case with the life (span) of dynasties. Their durations may differ according to the conjunctions. However, as a rule no dynasty lasts beyond the life (span) of three generations. ⁷⁵ A generation is identical with the average duration of the life of a single individual, namely, forty years, (the time) required for growth to be completed and maturity reached. God said: "Until when he reaches his maturity and reaches the age of forty years...." ⁷⁶ Therefore, we have said that the (average) duration of the life of an individual is identical with the duration of a generation.

Our statement is confirmed by the significance of the (forty-year) sojourn of the children of Israel in the desert. ⁷⁷ Those forty (years) were intended to bring about the disappearance of the generation then alive and the growth of another generation, (one) that had not witnessed and felt the humiliation (in Egypt). This is proof of the assumption that (a period of) forty years, which is identical with the (average) life of a single individual, must be considered the duration of a generation.

We have stated ⁷⁸ that the duration of the life of a dynasty does not as a rule extend beyond three generations. The first generation retains the desert qualities, desert toughness, and desert savagery. (Its members are used to) privation and to sharing their glory (with each other); they are brave and rapacious. Therefore, the strength of group feeling continues to be preserved among them. They are sharp and greatly feared. People submit to them.

Under the influence of royal authority and a life of ease, the second generation changes from the desert attitude to sedentary culture, from privation to luxury and plenty, from a state in which everybody shared in the glory to one in which one man claims all the glory for himself while the others are too lazy to strive for (glory), and from proud superiority to humble subservience. Thus, the vigor of group feeling is broken to some extent. People become used to lowliness and obedience. But many of (the old virtues) remain in them, because they had had direct personal contact with the first generation and its conditions, and had observed with their own eyes its prowess and striving for glory and its intention to protect

and defend (itself). They cannot give all of it up at once, although a good deal of it may go. They live in hope that the conditions that existed in the first generation may come back, or they live under the illusion that those conditions still exist.

The third generation, then, has (completely) forgotten the period of desert life and toughness, as if it had never existed. They have lost (the taste for) the sweetness of fame and (for) group feeling, because they are dominated by force. Luxury reaches its peak among them, because they are so much given to a life of prosperity and ease. They become dependent on the dynasty and are like women and children who need to be defended (by someone else). Group feeling disappears completely. People forget to protect and defend themselves and to press their claims. With their emblems, apparel, horseback riding, and (fighting) skill,⁷⁹ they deceive people and give them the wrong impression. For the most part, they are more cowardly than women upon their backs. When someone comes and demands something from them, they cannot repel him. The ruler, then, has need of other, brave people for his support. He takes many clients and followers. They help the dynasty to some degree, until God permits it to be destroyed, and it goes with everything it stands for.

As one can see, we have there three generations. In the course of these three generations, the dynasty grows senile and is worn out. Therefore, it is in the fourth generation that (ancestral) prestige is destroyed. This was stated before in connection with (the subject) that glory and (ancestral) prestige are restricted to four generations.⁸⁰ We have proved it with natural and evident arguments based on premises that we established before. The reader should consider that. As an impartial person, he should not disregard the truth.

Three generations last one hundred and twenty years, as stated before. As a rule, dynasties do not last longer than that many years, a few more or a few less, save when, by chance, no one appears to attack (the dynasty). When senility becomes preponderant (in a dynasty), there may be no claimant (for its power, and then nothing will happen), but if there should be one, he will encounter no one capable of repelling him. If the time is up, (the end of the dynasty) cannot be postponed for a single hour, no more than it can be accelerated.⁸¹

In this way, the life (span) of a dynasty corresponds to the life (span) of an individual; it grows up and passes into an age of stagnation and thence into retrogression. Therefore, people commonly say that the life (span) of a dynasty is one hundred years. The saying means the same as what (I have just explained).

One should consider this and derive from it a rule for finding the correct number of ancestors in a pedigree, if one is uncertain about it but knows the time interval that the pedigree covers. For each hundred years, one should figure three ancestors. If the result tallies with the total number of (ancestors indicated in the pedigree, it) is correct. If it is one generation short, there must be an error in the number of (ancestors indicated in the pedigree, and) there must be one (ancestor) too many in it. If (the result) indicates one generation too many, one (ancestor) must have been omitted (from the pedigree). In the same way, one may figure out the number of years, if one knows the correct number of ancestors⁸²

God determines night and day.⁸³

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399-401 15. *The stages of dynasties. How the desert attitude differs among the people in the different stages.*⁹⁸

It should be known that a dynasty goes through different stages and encounters new conditions. Through the conditions that are peculiar to a particular stage, the supporters of the

dynasty acquire in that stage traits of character such as do not exist in any other stage. Traits of character are the natural result of the peculiar situations in which they are found.

The conditions and stages of a dynasty are as a rule no more than five (in number).

The first stage is that of success, the overthrow of all opposition, and the appropriation of royal authority from the preceding dynasty. In this stage, the ruler serves as model to his people by the manner in which he acquires glory, collects taxes, defends property, and provides military protection. He does not claim anything exclusively for himself to the exclusion of (his people), because (such an attitude) is what is required by group feeling, (and it was group feeling) that gave superiority (to the dynasty), and (group feeling) still continues to exist as before.

The second stage is the one in which the ruler gains complete control over his people, claims royal authority all for himself, excluding them, and prevents them from trying to have a share in it. In this stage, the ruler of the dynasty is concerned with gaining adherents and acquiring clients and followers in great numbers, so as to be able to blunt the aspirations of the people who share in his group feeling and belong to his group, who are of the same descent as he himself and have the same claim to royal authority as he has. He keeps them from power and bars them from the sources of (power). He stops them from getting to it, and, eventually, all the power is in the hands of his family. He reserves all the glory that he is building up to the members of his own house. He spends as much, or more, care to keep (his people) at a distance and to subdue them, as the first members of the dynasty expended in the search for power. The first (members of the dynasty) kept strangers away, and all the people who shared in their group feeling supported them in this. He, on the other hand, keeps (his) relatives away, and he is supported in this effort only by a very small number of people, who are not related to him. Thus, he undertakes a very difficult task.

The third stage is one of leisure and tranquillity in which the fruits of royal authority are enjoyed. (These fruits are) the things that human nature desires, such as acquisition of property, creation of lasting monuments, and fame. All the ability (of the ruler) is expended on collecting taxes; regulating income and expenses, bookkeeping and planning⁹⁹ expenditures; erecting large buildings, big constructions, spacious cities, and lofty monuments;¹⁰⁰ presenting gifts to embassies of nobles from (foreign) nations and tribal dignitaries; and dispensing bounty to his own people. In addition, he supports the demands of his followers and retinue with money and positions. He inspects his soldiers, pays them well, and distributes fairly their allowances every month. Eventually, the result of this (liberality) shows itself in their dress, their fine equipment, and their armor on parade days. The ruler thus can impress friendly dynasties and frighten hostile ones with (his soldiers). This stage is the last during which the ruler is in complete authority. Throughout this and the previous stages, the rulers are independent in their opinions. They build up their strength and show the way for those after them.

The fourth stage is one of contentment and peacefulness. The ruler is content with what his predecessors have built. He lives in peace with all his royal peers. He adopts the tradition of his predecessors and follows closely in their footsteps. He imitates their ways most carefully. He thinks that to depart from tradition would mean the destruction of his power and that they knew better (what is good for the preservation of) the glory they themselves had built.

The fifth stage is one of waste and squandering. In this stage, the ruler wastes on pleasures and amusements (the treasures) accumulated by his ancestors, through (excessive) generosity to his inner circle and at their parties. Also, he acquires bad, low-class followers to whom he entrusts the most important matters (of state), which they are not qualified to handle

by themselves, not knowing which of them they should tackle and which they should leave alone. (In addition,) the ruler seeks to destroy the great clients of his people and followers of his predecessors. Thus, they come to hate him and conspire to refuse support to him. (Furthermore) he loses a number of soldiers by spending their allowances on his pleasures (instead of paying them) and by refusing them access to his person and not supervising them (properly). Thus, he ruins the foundations his ancestors had laid and tears down what they had built up. In this stage, the dynasty is seized by senility and the chronic disease from which it can hardly ever rid itself, for which it can find no cure, and, eventually, it is destroyed. We shall explain that in connection with conditions to be discussed later on.¹⁰¹

God is the best heir.¹⁰²

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417-421 21. *The true character and different kinds of royal authority.*

Royal¹⁸⁶ authority is an institution that is natural to mankind. We have explained before¹⁸⁷ that human beings cannot live and exist except through social organization and cooperation for the purpose of obtaining their food and (other) necessities of life. When they have organized, necessity requires that they deal with each other and (thus) satisfy (their) needs. Each one will stretch out his hand for whatever he needs and (try simply to) take it,¹⁸⁸ since injustice and aggressiveness are in the animal nature. The others, in turn, will try to prevent him from taking it, motivated by wrathfulness¹⁸⁹ and spite and the strong human reaction when (one's own property is menaced). This causes dissension. (Dissension) leads to hostilities, and hostilities lead to trouble and bloodshed and loss of life, which (in turn) lead to the destruction of the (human) species. Now, (the human species) is one of the things the Creator has especially (told us) too preserve.

People, thus, cannot persist in a state of anarchy and without a ruler who keeps them apart. Therefore, they need a person to restrain them. He is their ruler. As is required by human nature, he must be a forceful ruler, one who (actually) exercises authority. In this connection, group feeling is absolutely necessary, for as we have stated before,¹⁹⁰ aggressive and defensive enterprises can succeed only with the help of group feeling. As one can see, royal authority of this kind is a noble institution, toward which all claims are directed, and (one) that needs to be defended. Nothing of the sort can materialize except with the help of group feelings, as has been mentioned before.

Group feelings differ. Each group feeling exercises its own authority and superiority over the people and family adhering to it. Not every group feeling has royal authority. Royal authority, in reality, belongs only to those who dominate subjects, collect taxes, send out (military) expeditions,¹⁹¹ protect the frontier regions, and have no one over them who is stronger than they. This is generally accepted as the real meaning of royal authority.

There are people whose group feeling falls short of accomplishing (one or another of these things which constitute) part of (real royal authority), such as protecting the frontier regions, or collecting taxes, or sending out (military) expeditions. Such royal authority is defective and not royal authority in the real meaning of the term. This was the case with many of the Berber rulers of the Aghlabid dynasty in al-Qayrawan, and with the non-Arab (Persian) rulers at the beginning of the 'Abbasid dynasty.

Then, there are people whose group feeling is not strong enough to gain control over all the other group feelings or to stop everyone, so that there exists an authority superior to theirs. Their royal authority is also defective, and not royal authority in the real meaning of the term. It is exercised, for instance, by provincial amirs and regional chieftains who are all

under one dynasty. This situation is often found in farflung dynasties. I mean that there are rulers of provincial and remote regions who rule their own people but also obey the central power of the dynasty. Such was the relationship of the Sinhajah with the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids); of the Zanatah with the (Spanish) Umayyads at one time and with the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) at another; of the non-Arab (Persian) rulers with the 'Abbasids; of the Berber amirs and rulers with the European Christians (in the Maghrib) prior to Islam; and of the rulers of the (old) Persian successor states with Alexander and his Greeks.

There are many such (examples), as, upon examination, will be found to be so. God "exercises forceful domination over His servants." ¹⁹²

*22. Exaggerated harshness is harmful to royal authority
and in most cases causes its destruction.*

It ¹⁹³ should be known that the interest subjects have in their ruler is not interest in his person and body, for example, in his good figure, handsome face, large frame, wide knowledge, good handwriting, or acute mind. Their interest in him lies in his relation to them. Royal and governmental authority is something relative, a relationship between two things (ruler and subjects). Government becomes a reality when (there is a ruler who) rules over subjects and handles their affairs. A ruler is he who has subjects (*ra'aya*), and subjects are persons who have a ruler. The quality accruing to the ruler from the fact of his correlative relation with his subjects is called "rulership" (*malakah*).¹⁹⁴ That is, he rules them, and if such rulership and its concomitants are of good quality, the purpose of government is most perfectly achieved. If such rulership is good and beneficial, it will serve the interests of the subjects. If it is bad and unfair, it will be harmful to them and cause their destruction.

Good rulership is equivalent to mildness. If the ruler uses force and is ready to mete out punishment and eager to expose the faults of people and to count their sins, (his subjects) become fearful and depressed and seek to protect themselves against him through lies, ruses, and deceit. This becomes a character trait of theirs. Their mind and character become corrupted. They often abandon (the ruler) on the battlefield and (fail to support his) defensive enterprises. The decay of (sincere) intentions causes the decay of (military) protection. The subjects often conspire to kill the ruler. Thus, the dynasty decays, and the fence (that protects it) lies in ruins. If the ruler continues to keep a forceful grip on his subjects, group feeling will be destroyed, for reasons stated at the beginning.¹⁹⁵ The fence (which protects the dynasty) is torn down, for the dynasty has become incapable of (military) protection. (On the other hand,) if the ruler is mild and overlooks the bad sides of his subjects, they will trust him and take refuge with him. They (then) love him heartily and are willing to die for him in battle against his enemies. Everything is then in order in the state.

The concomitants of good rulership are being kind to one's (subjects) and defending them. The true meaning of royal authority is realized when the ruler defends his subjects. To be kind and beneficent toward them is part of being mild to them and showing an interest in how they are living. These things are important for the ruler in gaining the love of his subjects.

It should be known that an alert and very shrewd person rarely has the habit of mildness. Mildness is usually found in careless and unconcerned persons. The least (of the many drawbacks) of alertness (in a ruler) is that he imposes tasks upon his subjects that are beyond their ability, because he is aware of things they do not perceive and, through his

genius, foresees the outcome of things at the start. (The ruler's excessive demands) may lead to his subjects' ruin. Muhammad said: "Follow the pace of the weakest among you," ^{195a}

The Lawgiver (Muhammad), therefore, made it a condition that the ruler not be too shrewd. The source for (this statement) is a story about Ziyad b. Abi Sufyan. ¹⁹⁶ When 'Umar deposed him (as governor) of the 'Iraq, he asked 'Umar why he had been deposed, whether it was because of his inability or his treachery. 'Umar replied that he had deposed him for neither of those reasons but because he disliked having people become the victim of his superior intelligence. This is (the source for the statement) that the ruler should not be too shrewd and clever, as were Ziyad b. Abu Sufyan and 'Amr b. al-'As. For such (qualities) are accompanied by tyrannical and bad rulership and by a tendency to make the people do things that it is not in their nature to do. This will be mentioned at the end of the book. ¹⁹⁷ God is the best ruler.

The conclusion is that it is a drawback in a political leader to be (too) clever and shrewd. Cleverness and shrewdness imply that a person thinks too, much, just as stupidity implies that he is too rigid. In the case of all human qualities, the extremes are reprehensible, and the middle road is praiseworthy. This is, for instance, the case with generosity in relation to waste and stinginess, or with bravery in relation to foolhardiness and cowardice, ¹⁹⁸ And so it is with all the other human qualities. For this reason, the very clever person is said to have the qualities of devils. He is called a "satan" or, "a would-be satan," and the like.

"God creates whatever He wishes." ¹⁹⁹

23. The meaning of caliphate and imamate.

(As ²⁰⁰ explained,) the real meaning of royal authority is that it is a form of organization necessary to mankind. (Royal authority) requires superiority and force, which express the wrathfulness ²⁰¹ and animality (of human nature). The decisions of the ruler will therefore, as a rule, deviate from what is right. They will be ruinous to the worldly affairs of the people under his control, since, as a rule, he forces them to execute his intentions and desires, which it may be beyond their ability (to do). This situation will differ according to the difference of intentions to be found in different generations. (But) it is for this reason difficult to be obedient to (the ruler). Disobedience ²⁰² makes itself noticeable and leads to trouble and bloodshed.

Therefore, it is necessary to have reference to ordained political norms, which are accepted by the mass and to whose laws it submits. The Persians and other nations had such norms. The dynasty that does not have a policy based on such (norms), cannot fully succeed in establishing the supremacy of its rule. "This is how God proceeded with those who were before." ²⁰³

If these norms are ordained by the intelligent and leading personalities and (best) minds of the dynasty, the result will be a political (institution) on an intellectual (rational) basis. If they are ordained by God through a lawgiver who establishes them as (religious) laws, the result will be a political (institution) on a religious basis, which will be useful for life in both this and the other world.

This is because the purpose of human beings is not only their worldly welfare. This entire world is trifling and futile. It ends in death and annihilation. God says: "Do you think that we created you triflingly?" ²⁰⁴ The purpose (of human beings) is their religion, which leads them to happiness in the other world, "the path of God to whom belongs that which is in

heaven and that which is on earth." ²⁰⁵ Therefore, religious laws have as their purpose to cause (human beings) to follow such a course in all their dealings with God and their fellow men. This (situation) also applies to royal authority, which is natural in human social organization. (The religious laws) guide it along the path of religion, so that everything will be under the supervision of the religious law. Anything (done by royal authority) that is dictated by force, superiority, or the free play of the power of wrathfulness, is tyranny and injustice and considered reprehensible by (the religious law), as it is also considered reprehensible by the requirements of political wisdom. Likewise, anything (done by royal authority) that is dictated (merely) by considerations of policy or political decisions without supervision of the religious law ²⁰⁶ is also reprehensible, because it is vision lacking the divine light. "He for whom God makes no light has no light whatever." ²⁰⁷ The Lawgiver (Muhammad) knows better than the mass itself what is good for them so far as the affairs of the other world, which are concealed from the mass itself, are concerned. At the Resurrection, the actions of human beings, whether they had to do with royal authority or anything else, will all come back to them. Muhammad said: "It is your own actions that are brought back to you."

Political laws consider only worldly interests. "They know the outward life of this world." ²⁰⁸ (On the other hand,) the intention the Lawgiver has concerning mankind is their welfare in the other world. ²⁰⁹ Therefore, it is necessary, as required by the religious law, to cause the mass to act in accordance with the religious laws in all their affairs touching both this world and the other world. The authority to do so was possessed by the representatives of the religious law, the prophets. (Later on, it was possessed) by those who took their place, the caliphs.

This makes it clear what the caliphate means. (To exercise) natural royal authority means to cause the masses to act as required by purpose and desire. (To exercise) political (royal authority) means to cause the masses to act as required by intellectual (rational) insight into the means of furthering their worldly interests and avoiding anything that is harmful (in that respect). (And to exercise) the caliphate means to cause the masses to act as required by religious insight into their interests in the other world as well as in this world. (The worldly interests) have bearing upon (the interests in the other world), since according to the Lawgiver (Muhammad), all worldly conditions are to be considered in their relation to their value for the other world. Thus, (the caliphate) in reality substitutes for the Lawgiver (Muhammad), in as much as it serves, like him, to protect the religion and to exercise (political) leadership of the world.

This should be understood and be kept in mind in the following discussion. God is wise and knowing.

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507-509 33. *The different importance of the ranks of "the sword" and "the pen" in the (various) dynasties.*

It ⁵⁴² should be known that both "the sword" and "the pen" are instruments for the ruler to use in his affairs. However, at the beginning of the dynasty, so long as its people are occupied in establishing power, the need for "the sword" is greater than that for "the pen." In that situation, "the pen" is merely a servant and agent of the ruler's authority, whereas "the sword" contributes active assistance.

The same is the case at the end of the dynasty when its group feeling weakens, as we have mentioned, and its people decrease in number under the influence of senility, as we have stated before. ⁵⁴³ The dynasty then needs the support of the military. The dynasty's need of the

military for the purpose of protection and defense is as strong then as it was at the beginning of (the dynasty) for the purpose of getting established. In these two situations, "the sword," thus, has the advantage over "the pen." At that time, the military have the higher rank. They enjoy more benefits and more splendid fiefs.

In mid-term of the dynasty, the ruler can to some degree dispense with "the sword." His power is firmly established. His only remaining desire is to obtain the fruits of royal authority, such as collecting taxes, holding (property), excelling other dynasties, and enforcing the law. "The pen" is helpful for (all) that. Therefore, the need for using it increases. The swords stay unused in their scabbards, unless something happens and they are called upon to repair a breach. For (purposes) other than that, (swords) are not needed. In this situation, the men of the pen have more authority. They occupy a higher rank. They enjoy more benefits and greater wealth and have a closer and more frequent and intimate contact with the ruler. At such times, (the pen) is the instrument the ruler uses to obtain the fruits of his royal authority. He uses it to supervise and administer his realm and to display its (excellent) condition. At such a time, the wazirs and the military can be dispensed with. They are kept away from the intimate circle of the ruler and have to beware of his moods.

It is in this sense that Abu Muslim wrote the following reply to al-Mansur when he ordered him to come (to him): "And now: We remember the following admonition of the Persians: 'The most fear-ridden thing there is, is the wazirs when the mob has calmed down.' "

544

This is how God proceeds with his servants.

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549-551 41. *Injustice brings about the ruin of civilization*

It ⁶⁷⁶ should be known that attacks on people's property remove the incentive to acquire and gain property. People, then, become of the opinion that the purpose and ultimate destiny of (acquiring property) is to have it taken away from them. When the incentive to acquire and obtain property is gone, people no longer make efforts to acquire any. The extent and degree to which property rights are infringed upon determines the extent and degree to which the efforts of the subjects to acquire property slacken. When attacks (on property) are extensive and general, extending to all means of making a livelihood, business inactivity, too, becomes (general), because the general extent of (such attacks upon property) means a general destruction of the incentive (to do business). If the attacks upon property are but light, the stoppage of gainful activity is correspondingly slight. Civilization and its well-being as well as business prosperity depend on productivity and people's efforts in all directions in their own interest and profit. When people no longer do business in order to make a living, and when they cease all gainful activity, the business of civilization slumps, and everything decays. People scatter everywhere in search of sustenance, to places outside the jurisdiction of their present government. The population of the particular region becomes light. The settlements there become empty. The cities lie in ruins. The disintegration of (civilization) causes the disintegration of the status of dynasty and ruler, because (their peculiar status) constitutes the *form* of civilization and the form necessarily decays when its *matter* (in this case, civilization) decays. ^{676a}

One may compare (here) the story which al-Mas'udi tells in connection with the history of the Persians. ⁶⁷⁷ In the days of King Bahram b. Bahram, the Mobedhan, the chief religious dignitary among the Persians, expressed to the King his disapproval of the latter's injustice and neglect for the consequences that his injustice must bring upon the dynasty. He

did this through a parable, which he placed in the mouth of an owl. The King, hearing the cry of (an owl), asked (the Mobedhan) whether he understood what it was saying. (The Mobedhan) replied: "A male owl wanted to marry a female owl. The female owl, as a condition prior to consent, asked the male owl for the gift of twenty villages ruined in the days of Bahram, that she might hoot in them. (The male owl) accepted her condition and said to her: 'If the King continues to rule, I shall give you a thousand ruined villages. This is of all wishes the easiest to fulfill.' "

The King was stirred out of his negligence by that story. He had a private (talk) with the Mobedhan and asked him what he had in mind. (The Mobedhan) replied: "O King, the might of royal authority materializes only through the religious law, obedience toward God, and compliance with His commands and prohibitions. The religious law persists only through royal authority. Mighty royal authority is achieved only through men. Men persist only with the help of property. The only way to property is through cultivation. The only way to cultivation is through justice. Justice is a balance set up among mankind. The Lord set it up and appointed an overseer of it, and that is the ruler. You, O King, went after the farms and took them away from their owners and cultivators. They are the people who pay the land tax and from whom one gets money. You gave their farms as fiefs to (your) entourage and servants and to sluggards. They did not cultivate (the farms) and did not heed the consequences. (They did not look for the things) that would be good for the farms. They were leniently treated with regard to the land tax (and were not asked to pay it), because they were close to the king. The remaining landowners who did pay the land tax and cultivated their farms had to carry an unjust burden. Therefore, they left their farms and abandoned their settlements. They took refuge in farms that were far away or difficult (of access), and lived on them. Thus, cultivation slackened, and the farms were ruined. There was little money, and soldiers and subjects perished. Neighboring rulers coveted the Persian realm, because they were aware of the fact that the basic materials that alone maintain the foundation of a realm had been cut off."

When the King heard that, he proceeded to look into (the affairs of) his realm. The farms were taken away from the intimates of the ruler and restored to their owners. They were again treated, as they had formerly been treated. They began again to cultivate (their farms). Those who had been weak gained in strength. The land was cultivated, and the country became prosperous. There was much money for the collectors of the land tax. The army was strengthened. The enemies' sources of (strength) were cut off. The frontier garrisons were manned. The ruler proceeded to take personal charge of his affairs. His days were prosperous, and his realm was well organized.

The lesson this (story) teaches is that injustice ruins civilization. The ruin (of civilization) has as its consequence the complete destruction of the dynasty. In this connection, one should disregard the fact that dynasties (centered) in great cities often infringe upon justice and still are not ruined. It should be known that this is the result of a relationship that exists between such infringements and the situation of the urban population. When a city is large and densely populated and unlimited in the variety of its conditions, the loss it suffers from hostile acts and injustice is small, because such losses take place gradually. Because of the great variety of conditions and the manifold productivity of a particular city, any loss may remain concealed. Its consequences will become visible only after some time. Thus, the dynasty which committed the infringements (of justice) may be replaced before the city is ruined. Another dynasty may make its appearance and restore the city with the help of its wealth. Thus, the (previous) loss which had remained concealed, is made up and is scarcely noticed. This, however, happens only rarely. The proven fact is that

civilization inevitably suffers losses through injustice and hostile acts, as we have mentioned, and it is the dynasty that suffers therefrom.

Injustice should not be understood to imply only the confiscation of money or other property from the owners, without compensation and without cause. It is commonly understood in that way, but it is something more general than that. Whoever takes someone's property, or uses him for forced labor, or presses an unjustified claim against him, or imposes upon him a duty not required by the religious law, does an injustice to that particular person. People who collect unjustified taxes commit an injustice. Those who infringe upon property (rights) commit an injustice. Those who take away property commit an injustice. Those who deny people their rights commit an injustice. Those who, in general, take property by force, commit an injustice. It is the dynasty that suffers from all these acts, in as much as civilization, which is the substance of the dynasty,^{677a} is ruined when people have lost all incentive.

It should be known that this is what the Lawgiver (Muhammad) actually had in mind when he forbade injustice. He meant the resulting destruction and ruin of civilization, which ultimately permits the eradication of the human species. This is what the religious law quite generally and wisely aims at in emphasizing five things as necessary: the preservation of (1) the religion, (2) the soul (life), (3) the intellect, (4) progeny, and (5) property.

Since, as we have seen, injustice calls for the eradication of the (human) species by leading to the ruin of civilization, it contains in itself a good reason for being prohibited. Consequently, it is important that it be forbidden. There is ample evidence for that in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It is much too ample to have it accurately or fully presented here.

If injustice were to be committed by every individual, the list of deterring punishments that would then have been given for it (in the religious law) would be as large as that given for the other (crimes) which lead to the destruction of the human species and which everybody is capable of committing, such as adultery, murder, and drunkenness. However, injustice can be committed only by persons who cannot be touched, only by persons who have power and authority. Therefore, injustice has been very much censured, and repeated threats against it have been expressed in the hope that perhaps the persons who are able to commit injustice will find a restraining influence in themselves.

"Your Lord does not do injustice to His servants." ⁶⁷⁸

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558-562...

571-573 50. *Human civilization requires political leadership for its organization.*

We have mentioned before in more than one place that human social organization is something necessary. It is the thing that is meant by "the civilization" which we have been discussing. (People) in any social organization must have someone who exercises a restraining influence and rules them and to whom recourse may be had. His rule over them is sometimes based upon a divinely revealed religious law. They are obliged to submit to it in view of their belief in reward and punishment in the other world, (things that were indicated) by the person who brought them (their religious law). Sometimes, (his rule is based) upon rational politics. People are obliged to submit to it in view of the reward they expect from the ruler after he has become acquainted with what is good for them.

The first (type of rule) is useful for this world and for the other world, because the lawgiver knows the ultimate interest of the people and is concerned with the salvation of man in the other world. The second (type of rule) is useful only for this world.⁷⁴⁹

We do not mean here that which is known as "political utopianism" (*siyasaḥ madaniyah*).⁷⁵⁰ By that, the philosophers mean the disposition of soul and character which each member of a social organization must have, if, eventually, people are completely to dispense with rulers. They call the social organization that fulfills these requirements the "ideal city." The norms observed in this connection are called "political utopias" (*siyasaḥ madaniyah*). They do not mean the kind of politics (*siyasaḥ*) that the members of a social organization are led to adopt through laws for the common interest. That is something different. The "ideal city" (of the philosophers) is something rare and remote. They discuss it as a hypothesis.

Now, the afore-mentioned rational politics may be of two types. The first type of rational politics may concern itself with the (public) interest in general, and with the ruler's interest in connection with the administration of his realm, in particular. This was the politics of the Persians. It is something related to philosophy. God made this type of politics superfluous for us in Islam at the time of the caliphate. The religious laws take its place in connection with both general and special interests, for they also include the maxims (of the philosophers) and the rules of royal authority.

The second type (of rational politics) is the one concerned with the interest of the ruler and how he can maintain his rule through the forceful use of power. The general (public) interest is, here, secondary. This is the type of politics practiced by all rulers, whether they are Muslims or unbelievers. Muslim rulers, however, practice this type of politics in accordance with the requirements of the Muslim religious law, as much as they are able to. Therefore, the political norms here are a mixture of religious laws and ethical rules, norms that are natural in social organization together with a certain necessary concern for strength and group feeling. Examples to be followed in (the practice of) this (kind of politics) are, in the first place, the religious law, and then, the maxims of the philosophers and the way of life of rulers (of the past).

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Chapter IV

COUNTRIES AND CITIES,¹
 AND ALL OTHER (FORMS OF) SEDENTARY
 CIVILIZATION. THE CONDITIONS OCCURRING THERE.
 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY (CONSIDERATIONS)
 IN THIS CONNECTION

1. *Dynasties are prior to towns and cities.
 Towns and cities are secondary (products)
 of royal authority.*

THE EXPLANATION FOR THIS IS that building and city planning are features of sedentary culture brought about by luxury and tranquility, as we have mentioned before² Such (features of sedentary culture) come after Bedouin life and the features that go with it.

Furthermore, towns and cities with their monuments,³ vast constructions, and large buildings, are set up for the masses and not for the few. Therefore, united effort and much co-operation are needed for them. They are not among the things that are necessary matters of general concern to human beings, in the sense that all human beings desire them or feel compelled to have them. As a matter of fact, (human beings) must be forced and driven to (build cities). The stick of royal authority is what compels them, or they may be stimulated by promise of reward and compensation. (Such reward) amounts to so large a sum that only royal authority and a dynasty can pay for it. Thus, dynasties and royal authority are absolutely necessary for the building of cities and the planning of towns.

Then, when the town has been built and is all finished, as the builder saw fit and as the climatic and geographical conditions required, the life of the dynasty is the life of the town. If the dynasty is of short duration, life in the town will stop at the end of the dynasty. Its civilization will recede, and the town will fall into ruins. On the other hand, if the dynasty is of long duration and lasts a long time, new constructions will always go up in the town, the number of large mansions will increase, and the walls⁴ of the town will extend farther and farther. Eventually, the layout of the town will cover a wide area, and the town will extend so far and so wide as to be (almost) beyond measurement. This happened in Baghdad and similar (cities).

The Khatib mentioned in his *History* that in the time of al-Ma'min, the number of public baths in Baghdad reached 65,000.⁵ (Baghdad) included over forty of the adjacent neighboring towns and cities. It was not just one town surrounded by one wall. Its population was much too large for that. The same was the case with al-Qayrawan, Cordoba, and al-Mahdiyah in Islamic times. It is the case with Egypt and Cairo at this time, so we are told.

The dynasty that has built a certain town may be destroyed. Now, the mountainous and flat areas surrounding the city are a desert^{5a} that constantly provides for (an influx of) civilization (population). This (fact), then, will preserve the existence of (the town), and (the town) will continue to live after the dynasty is dead. (This situation) can be observed in Fez and Bougie in the West, and in the non-Arab 'Iraq in the East, which get their civilization

(population) from the mountains. When the conditions of the inhabitants of the desert reach the utmost ease and (become most) profitable, (the situation thus created causes the inhabitants of the desert to) look for the tranquility and quiet that human beings (desire) by nature. Therefore, they settle in towns and cities and form an (urban) population.

Or, it may happen that a town founded (by a dynasty now destroyed) has no opportunity to replenish its civilization (population) by a constant influx of settlers from a desert near the town. In this case, the destruction of the dynasty will leave it unprotected. It cannot be maintained. Its civilization will gradually decay, until its population is dispersed and gone. This happened in Baghdad, Egypt,⁶ and al-Kufah in the East, and in al-Qayrawan, al-Mahdiyah, and Qal'at Bani Hammad⁷ in the West, as well as in other cities. This should be understood.

Frequently it happens that after the destruction of the original builders of (a town, that town) is used by another realm and dynasty as its capital and residence. This then makes it unnecessary for (the new dynasty) to build (another) town for itself as a settlement. In this case, the (new) dynasty will protect the town. Its buildings and constructions will increase in proportion to the improved circumstances and the luxury of the new dynasty. The life (of the new dynasty) gives (the town) another life. This has happened in contemporary Fez and Cairo.

This should be considered, and God's secret (plans) for His creation should be understood.

2. Royal authority calls for urban settlement.

This is because, when royal authority is obtained by tribes and groups, (the tribes and groups) are forced to take possession of cities for two reasons. One of them is that royal authority causes (the people) to seek tranquility, restfulness, and relaxation, and to try to provide the aspects of civilization that were lacking in the desert. The second (reason) is that rivals and enemies can be expected to attack the realm, and one must defend oneself against them.

A city situated in a district where (rivals of the dynasty) are found, may often become a place of refuge for a person who wants to attack (the tribes and groups in authority) and revolt against them and deprive them of the royal authority to which they have aspired.⁸ He fortifies himself in the city and fights them (from there). Now, it is very difficult and troublesome to overpower a city.⁹ A city is worth a great number of soldiers, in that it offers protection from behind the walls and makes attacks difficult, and no great numbers or much power are needed. Power and group support are needed in war only for the sake of the steadfastness provided by the mutual affection (tribesmen) show each other in battle. The steadfastness of (people in a city) is assured by the walls of the city. Therefore, they do not need much group support or great numbers (for defense). The existence of a city and of rivals who fortify themselves in it thus eats into the strength of a nation desiring to gain control and breaks the impetus of its efforts in this respect. Therefore, if there are cities in the tribal territory of (a dynasty, the dynasty) will bring them under its control, in order to be safe from any weakening (of its power, should the cities fall under control of its rivals). If there are no cities, the dynasty will have to build a new (city), firstly, in order to complete the civilization of its realm and to be able to lessen its efforts, and, secondly, in order to use (the city) as a threat against those parties and groups within the dynasty that might desire power and might wish to resist.

It is thus clear that royal authority calls for urban settlement and control of the cities.

"God has the power to execute His commands." ¹⁰

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CHAPTER V

ON THE (VARIOUS) ASPECTS OF MAKING
A LIVING, SUCH AS PROFIT AND THE CRAFTS.
THE CONDITIONS THAT OCCUR IN THIS CONNECTION.
A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS ARE CONNECTED
(WITH THIS SUBJECT).

1. *The real meaning and explanation of sustenance and profit.
Profit is the value realized from human labor.*

IT SHOULD B E KNOWN that man, by nature, needs something to feed him and to provide for him in all the conditions and stages of his life from the time of his (early) growth to his maturity and on to his old age. "God is rich, but you are poor." ¹ God ² created everything in the world for man and gave it to him, as indicated in several verses of the Qur'an. He said: "He created for you everything that is in the heavens and on earth. He subjected the sun and the moon to you. He subjected the sea to you. He subjected the firmament to you. He subjected the animals to you." ³ (The same idea is indicated in) many (other) passages of (the Qur'an), Man's hand stretches out over the (whole) world and all that is in it, since God made man His representative on earth.

Every man tries to get things; in this all men are alike. Thus, whatever is obtained by one is denied to the other, unless he gives something in exchange (for it). When (man) has control of himself and is beyond the stage of (his original) weakness, he strives to make a profit, so that he may spend what God gives him to obtain his needs and necessities through barter. God said: "Thus, ask God for sustenance." ⁴

(Man) obtains (some profit) through no efforts of his own, as, for instance, through rain that makes the fields thrive, and similar things. However, these things are only contributory. His own efforts must be combined with them, as will be mentioned. (His) profits will constitute his livelihood, if they correspond to his necessities and needs. They will be capital accumulation, if they are greater than (his needs). When the use of such accruing or acquired (gain) reverts to a particular human being and he enjoys its fruits by spending it upon his interests and needs, it is called "sustenance." The Prophet said: "The only thing you (really) possess of your property is what you ate, and have thus destroyed; or what you wore, and have thus worn out; or what you gave as charity, and have thus spent." ⁵

When (a person) does not use (his income) for any of his interests and needs, it is not called "sustenance." (The part of the income) that is obtained by a person through his own effort and strength is called "profit." For instance, the estate of a deceased person is called "profit" with reference to the deceased person. It is not called "sustenance," because the deceased person has no use for it: But with reference to the heirs, when they use it, it is called "sustenance."

This is the real meaning of "sustenance" among orthodox Muslims. The Mu'tazilah stipulated for the use of the term "sustenance" that it must be possessed rightfully. Whatever is not possessed (rightfully) is not called "sustenance" by them.⁶ Wrongfully acquired property or anything forbidden was not admitted by them as something that could be called "sustenance." Yet, God sustains him who acquires property wrongfully, and also the evildoer, the believer as well as the unbeliever. He singles out whomever He wishes for His mercy and guidance. (The Mu'tazilah) have arguments for their theory of "sustenance." This is not the place to discuss them fully.

It should further be known that profit results from the effort to acquire (things) and the intention to obtain (them). Sustenance requires effort and work, even if one tries to get it and ask for it in the proper ways for getting it.⁷ God said: "Thus, ask God for sustenance."⁸ The effort to (obtain sustenance) depends on God's determination and inspiration. Everything comes from God. But human labor is necessary for every profit and capital accumulation. When (the source of profit) is work as such, as, for instance, (the exercise of) a craft, this is obvious. When the source of gain is animals, plants, or minerals, (this is not quite as obvious, but) human labor is still necessary, as one can see. Without (human labor), no gain will be obtained, and there will be no useful (result).

Furthermore,⁹ God created the two mineral "stones," gold and silver, as the (measure of) value for all capital accumulations. (Gold and silver are what) the inhabitants of the world, by preference, consider treasure and property (to consist of). Even if, under certain circumstances, other things are acquired, it is only for the purpose of ultimately obtaining (gold and silver). All other things are subject to market fluctuations, from which (gold and silver) are exempt. They are the basis of profit, property, and treasure.

If all this has been established, it should be further known that the capital a person earns and acquires, if resulting from a craft, is the value realized from his labor. This is the meaning of "acquired (capital)." There is nothing here (originally) except the labor, and (the labor) is not desired by itself as acquired (capital, but the value realized from it).

Some crafts are partly associated with other (crafts). Carpentry and weaving, for instance, are associated with wood and yarn (and the respective crafts needed for their production). However, in the two crafts (first mentioned), the labor (that goes into them) is more important, and its value is greater.

If the profit results from something other than a craft, the value of the resulting profit and acquired (capital) must (also) include the value of the labor by which it was obtained. Without labor, it would not have been acquired.

In most such cases, the share of labor (in the profit) is obvious. A portion of the value, whether large or small, comes from (the labor). The share of labor may be concealed. This is the case, for instance, with the prices of foodstuffs. The labor and expenditures that have gone into them show themselves in the price of grain, as we have stated before.¹⁰ But they are concealed (items) in regions where farming requires little care and few implements. Thus, only a few farmers are conscious of the (costs of labor and expenditures that have gone into their products).

It has thus become clear that gains and profits, in their entirety or for the most part, are value realized from human labor. The meaning of the word "sustenance" has become clear. It is (the part of the profit) that is utilized. Thus, the meaning of the words "profit" and "sustenance" has become clear. The meaning of both words has been explained.

It should be known that when the (available) labor is all gone or decreases because of a decrease in civilization, God permits profits to be abolished. Cities¹¹ with few inhabitants

can be observed to offer little sustenance and profit, or none whatever, because little human labor (is available). Likewise, in cities with a larger (supply of) labor, the inhabitants enjoy more favorable conditions and have more luxuries, as we have stated before.¹²

This is why the common people say that, with the decrease of its civilization, the sustenance of a country disappears. This goes so far that even the flow of springs and rivers stops in waste areas. Springs flow only if they are dug out and the water drawn. This requires human labor. (The conditions) may be compared with the udders of animals. Springs that are not dug out and from which no water is drawn are absorbed and disappear in the ground completely. In the same way, udders dry up when they are not milked. This can be observed in countries where springs existed in the days of their civilization. Then, they fell into ruins, and the water of the springs disappeared completely in the ground, as if it had never existed.

God determines night and day.¹³

Chapter VI

THE VARIOUS KINDS OF SCIENCES.
 THE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION. THE CONDITIONS
 THAT OBTAIN IN THESE CONNECTIONS. THE CHAPTER
 INCLUDES A PREFATORY DISCUSSION
 AND APPENDICES.

1. *Man's ability to think.*

IT ⁵ SHOULD BE KNOWN that God distinguished man from all the other animals by an ability to think which He made the beginning of human perfection and the end of man's noble superiority over existing things.

This comes about as follows: Perception - that is, consciousness, on the part of the person who perceives, in his essence of things that are outside his essence - is something peculiar to living beings to the exclusion of all other being ⁶ and existent things. Living beings may obtain consciousness of things that are outside their essence through the external senses God has given them, that is, the senses of hearing, vision, smell, taste, and touch. Man has this advantage over the other beings that he may perceive things outside his essence through his ability to think, which is something beyond his senses. It is the result of (special) powers placed in the cavities of his brain. ⁷ With the help of these powers, man takes the pictures of the *sensibilia*, applies his mind to them, and thus abstracts from them other pictures. The ability to think is the occupation with pictures that are beyond sense perception, and the application of the mind to them for analysis and synthesis. This is what is meant by the word *af'idah* "hearts" in the Qur'an; "He gave you hearing and vision and hearts." ⁸ *Af'idah* "hearts" is the plural of *fu'dd*. It means here the ability to think.

The ability to think has several degrees. The first degree is man's intellectual understanding of the things that exist in the outside world in a natural or arbitrary order, so that he may try to arrange them with the help of his own power. This kind of thinking mostly consists of perceptions. It is the discerning intellect, ^{8a} with the help of which man obtains the things that are useful for him and his livelihood, and repels the things that are harmful to him.

The second degree is the ability to think which provides man with the ideas and the behavior needed in dealing with his fellow men and in leading them. It mostly conveys apperceptions, which are obtained one by one through experience, until they have become really useful. This is called the experimental intellect.

The third degree is the ability to think which provides the knowledge, or hypothetical knowledge, of an object beyond sense perception without any practical activity (going with it). This is the speculative intellect. It consists of both perceptions and apperceptions. They are arranged according to a special order, following special conditions, and thus provide some other knowledge of the same kind, that is, either perceptive or apperceptive. Then, they are again combined with something else, and again provide some other knowledge. The end of the process is to be provided with the perception of existence as it is, with its various genera,

differences, reasons, and causes. By thinking about these things, (man) achieves perfection in his reality and becomes pure intellect and perceptive soul. This is the meaning of human reality.

2. The world of the things that come into being as the result of action, materializes through thinking.

It should be known that the world of existent things comprises pure essences, such as the elements, the things resulting from their influence, and the three things that come into being from the elements, namely, minerals, plants, and animals. All these things are connected with the divine power.

It also comprises actions proceeding from living beings, that happen through their intentions, and are connected with the power that God has given them. Some of their actions are well arranged and orderly. Such are human actions. Others are not well arranged and orderly. They are the actions of living beings other than man.

This is because ⁹ thinking perceives the order that exists among the things that come into being either by nature or through arbitrary arrangement. When it intends to create something, it must understand the reason or cause of that thing, or the conditions governing it, for the sake of the order that exists among the things that come into being. (Reason, cause, or conditions) are, in general, the principles of that particular thing, since it is secondary to them, and it is not possible to arrange for something that comes earlier to come later, or for something that comes later to come earlier. Such a principle must have another principle to which its own existence is posterior. This (regression) may go on in an ascending order (from principle to principle), or it may come to an end. Now, when man, in his thinking, has reached the last principle on two, three, or more levels, and starts the action that will bring the (planned) thing into existence, he will start with the last principle that has been reached by his thinking. Thus, (that last principle) will be the beginning of action. He, then, will follow things up to the last element in the causal chain that had been the starting point of his thinking activity.

For instance, if a man thinks of bringing into existence a roof to shelter him, he will progress in his mind (from the roof) to the wall supporting the roof, and then to the foundation upon which the wall stands. Here, his thinking will end, and he will then start to work on the foundation, then (go on to) the wall, and then (to) the roof, with which his action will end. This is what is meant by the saying: "The beginning of action is the end of thinking, and the beginning of thinking is the end of action." ¹⁰

Thus, human action in the outside world materializes only through thinking about the order of things, since things are based upon each other. After (he has finished thinking), he starts doing things. His thinking starts with the thing that comes last in the causal chain and is done last. His action starts with the first thing in the causal chain, which thinking reaches last. Once this order is taken into consideration, human actions proceed in a well-arranged manner.

On the other hand, the actions of living beings other than man are not well arranged. They lack the thinking that acquaints the agent with the order of things governing his actions. Animals ¹¹ perceive only with the senses. Their perceptions are disconnected and lack a connecting link, since only thinking can constitute such (a connecting link).

Now, the things that come into being ¹² that are of consequence in the world of existent things, are those that are orderly. Those that are not orderly are secondary to them.

The actions of animals, therefore, are subordinate to (orderly human actions). Consequently, their services are forcibly utilized by man. Thus, human actions control the (whole) world of things that come into being and all it contains. Everything is subservient to man and works for him. This is what is meant by the "appointing of a representative" mentioned in the Qur'an: "I am appointing a representative on earth."¹³

The ability to think is the quality of man by which human beings are distinguished from other living beings. The degree to which a human being is able to establish an orderly causal chain determines his degree of humanity. Some people are able to establish a causal nexus for two or three levels. Some are not able to go beyond that. Others may reach five or six. Their humanity, consequently, is, higher. For instance, some chess players are able to perceive (in advance) three or five moves the order of which is arbitrary. Others are unable to do that, because their mind is not good enough for it. This example is not quite to the point, because (the knowledge of) chess is a habit, whereas the knowledge of causal chains is something natural. However, it is an example the student may use to gain an intellectual understanding of the basic facts mentioned here.

God created man and gave him superiority over many of His creatures .¹⁴

3. *The experimental intellect and how it comes into*

One knows from philosophical works the statement that "man is political by nature."¹⁵ The philosophers cite that statement in connection with establishing the existence of prophecy and other things. The adjective "political" refers to the "town" (*polis*), which they use as another word for human social organization.

The statement means that a single human being cannot live by himself, and his existence can materialize only in association with his fellow men. (Alone) he would be unable to have a complete existence and lead a complete life. By his very nature, he needs the co-operation of others to satisfy all his needs. Such co-operation requires, firstly, consultation, and, then, association and the things that follow after it. Dealings with other people, when there is oneness of purpose <may lead to mutual affection, and when the purposes differ, they>^{15a} may lead to strife and altercation. Thus, mutual dislike and mutual affection, friendship and hostility, originate. This leads to war and peace among nations and tribes.

(Among human beings,) this does not happen haphazardly, as is the case among stray animals. God caused human beings to act in an orderly and well-arranged manner, as the result of their ability to think, as has been mentioned before.¹⁶ Therefore, God had (their actions) take place among them in an orderly manner, and He enabled them to arrange for (their activities) under political aspects and according to philosophical norms. Those (political aspects and philosophical norms) lead human beings from the things that are detrimental (to them), to those that are in their interest, and from evil to the good, First, however, they must recognize the things that are evil, and the detrimental effect of doing them, from sound experience and current customs. Thus, they are distinguished from stray animals. The result of their ability to think shows itself in the fact that their actions are orderly and not likely to be detrimental.

The concepts bringing this about are not completely divorced from sensual perception and do not require very deep study. All of them are obtained through experience and derived from it. They are particular¹⁷ concepts connected with the *sensibilia*. Their truth or falsehood soon comes out in events. From (events) the student of these concepts can learn them. Each human being can learn as much of them as he is able to. He can pick up (his knowledge) with

the help of experience among the events that occur in his dealings with his fellow men. Eventually, he will have what is necessary and must be done, and must not be done, fixed in his (mind). By knowing this well, ¹⁸ then, the proper habit of dealing with his fellow men will be obtained by him.

Those who follow this (procedure) during their whole life become acquainted with every single problem, (but) things that depend on experience require time. God made it easy for many human beings to obtain this (social knowledge) in a time shorter than the time required to obtain it through experience, if they will follow the experience of their fathers, teachers, and elders, learn from them, and accept their instruction. People can, thus, dispense with lengthy and careful (personal) study of events and need not attempt to pick out concepts from them. But people who have no knowledge or tradition in this respect, or people who are not willing to learn and to follow (others), need long and careful study in order to be educated in these things. They are unfamiliar to them, and the knowledge they obtain of them is uneven. Their manners and dealings with others will be badly planned and show defects. Their chances of making a living among their fellow men will be spoiled.

This is the meaning of the famous saying: "He who is not educated by his parents will be educated by time." ¹⁹ That is, he who does not acquire the manners needed in dealing with human beings from his parents -which includes teachers and elders - and does not learn these things from them, has to fall back upon learning them with the help of nature from the events that happen in the course of time. Thus, time will teach and educate him, because he needs that education, since, by his very nature, he needs the co-operation of others.

Such is the experimental intellect. It is obtained after the discerning intellect that leads to action, as we have explained. After these two intellects, there is the (higher) degree of the speculative intellect. (Many) scholars have undertaken to explain it, and it is, therefore, not necessary to explain it in this book.

"God gave you hearing and vision and hearts." "You are little grateful." ²⁰

Mukaddime / İbn Haldun; haz. Süleyman Uludağ, İstanbul: Dergah, 2007-2008, 2 Cilt

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Türkçe ve İngilizce baskılardan ilgili sayfalar:

TOPIC	Rosenthal	Dergah: 1988-1991	Dergah: 2007-2008	
Society & Politics (‘Umran&‘Asabiyya)	3-12	199 - 205	158-161	
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