

FOREWORD

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 it.

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 genuine claim to them 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. There are, for instance, Ibn Ishāq;¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī;² Ibn al-Kalbī;³ Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi;⁴ Sayf b. 'Umar al-Asadi;⁵ al-Mas'ūdī;⁶ and other famous historians who are distinguished from the general run.

It is well known to competent persons and reliable experts that the works of al-Mas'ūdī and al-Wāqidi are suspect and objectionable in certain respects. 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 material may be checked.

Most of the histories by these authors cover everything because of the universal geographical extension of the two earliest Islamic dynasties⁷ 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'ūdī and historians of his type, gave an exhaustive history of pre-Islamic dynasties and nations and other affairs in general. Some later historians, on the other hand, showed a tendency towards 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 Ḥayyān, the historian of Spain and the Spanish Umayyads,⁸ and by Ibn ar-Raḡīq, the historian of Ifrīqiyah⁹ and the dynasty in Kairouan (al-Qayrawān).¹⁰

The later historians were all tradition-bound and dull of nature and intelligence, or did not try to avoid being dull. They merely copied their predecessors and followed their example. They disregarded the changes in conditions and in the customs of nations and

¹ Muḥammad b. Ishāq, author of the famous biography (*sīrah*) of Muḥammad. He died in 150 or 151 [A.D. 767/68].

² Muḥammad b. Jarīr, author of the *Annals*, 224/25-310 [839-923].

³ Hishām b. Muḥammad, d. 204 or 206 [819/20 or 821/22].

⁴ The biographer of Muḥammad and historian of early Islam, 130-207 [747-823].

⁵ He died in 180 [796/97].

⁶ 'All b. al-Ḥusayn, d. 345 or 346 [956 or 957].

⁷ The Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids.

⁸ Ḥayyān b. Khalaf, 377-469 [987/88-1076].

⁹ Ifrīqiyah reflects the name of the Roman province of Africa. This geographical term is commonly used by Ibn Khaldūn and has been retained in the translation.

¹⁰ Ibrāhīm b. al-Qāsim, who lived ca. A.D. 1000.

races that the passing of time had brought about. Thus, they presented historical information about dynasties and stories of events from the earliest times 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. It 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. They neglected the importance of change over the generations in their treatment of (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 parrot-like and take care to preserve it as it had been passed down to them, whether 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 adopted by the various dynasties. He must himself inquire why the various dynasties brought pressure 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. 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 their reigns. This was done by Ibn Rashīq in the *Mizān al-'amal*,¹ 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 to be 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, 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 arose in the various generations. I arranged it methodically in chapters dealing with historical facts and reflections. In it I showed how and why dynasties and civilization originated. I based the work on the history of the two races that constitute the population of the

¹ Hasan b. Rashīq, 390 to 456 or 463 [1000 to 1064 or 1070/71].

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 obtain thereafter.

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 historians' errors.

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, as the Nabataeans, 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 Zanâtah who are part of them; with their origins and races; and, in particular, with the royal houses and dynasties of the Maghrib.

Later on, there was my trip to the East, to seek the manifold illumination it offers and to fulfil the religious duty and custom of circumambulating the Ka'bah and visiting Medina, as well as to study the systematic works on history. As a result, I was able to fill the gaps in my historical information about the non-Arab (Persian) rulers of those lands, and about the Turkish dynasties in the regions over which they ruled. I added this information to what I had written here. I inserted it into the treatment of the nations of the various districts and rulers of the various cities and regions that were contemporary with those races. In this connection I was brief and

concise and preferred the easy goal to the difficult one. I proceeded from genealogical tables to detailed historical information.

Thus, this work contains an exhaustive history of the world. It forces stubborn stray wisdom to return to the fold. It gives causes and reasons for happenings in the various dynasties. It turns out to be a vessel for philosophy, a receptacle for historical knowledge. The work contains the history of the Arabs and the Berbers, both the sedentary groups and the nomads. It also contains references to the great dynasties that were contemporary with them, and, moreover, clearly points out memorable lessons to be learned from early conditions and from subsequent history. Therefore, I called the work 'Book of Lessons and Archive of Early and Subsequent History, Dealing with the Political Events concerning the Arabs, Non-Arabs, and Berbers, and the Supreme Rulers who were Contemporary with them.'

I omitted nothing concerning the origin of races and dynasties, the synchronism of the earliest nations, the reasons for change and variation in past periods and within religious groups; also concerning dynasties and religious groups, towns and hamlets, strength and humiliation, large numbers and small numbers, sciences and crafts, gains and losses, changing general conditions, nomadic and sedentary life, actual events and future events—all things expected to occur in civilization. I treated everything comprehensively and exhaustively and explained the arguments and reasons for its existence.

As a result, this book has become unique, as it contains unusual knowledge and familiar if hidden wisdom. Still, after all has been said, I am conscious of imperfections when I look at the work of scholars past and present. I confess my inability to penetrate so difficult a subject. I wish that men of scholarly competence and wide knowledge would look at the book with a critical, rather than a complacent eye, and silently correct and overlook the mistakes they come upon. The capital of knowledge that an individual scholar has to offer is small. Admission (of one's shortcomings) saves from censure. Kindness from colleagues is hoped for. It is God whom I ask to make our deeds acceptable in His sight. He is a good protector.

Chapter 2

Bedouin civilization, savage nations and tribes and their conditions of life, including several basic and explanatory statements

1 Both Bedouins and sedentary people are natural groups

It 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 co-operate toward that end and to start with the simple necessities of life, before they get to conveniences and luxuries.

Some people live by agriculture, the cultivation of vegetables and grains; others by 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, pastures for animals, and other things that the settled areas do not offer. 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, 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. '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.

2 *The Bedouins are a natural group in the world*

We have mentioned in the previous section that the inhabitants of the desert adopt the natural manner of making a living, namely, agriculture and animal husbandry. They restrict themselves to the necessary in food, clothing, and mode of dwelling, and to the other necessary conditions and customs. They do not possess conveniences and luxuries. They use tents of hair and wool, or houses of wood, or of clay and stone, which are not furnished (elaborately). The purpose is to have shade and shelter, and nothing beyond that. They also take shelter in caverns and caves. The food they take is either little prepared or not prepared at all, save that it may have been touched by fire.

For those who make their living through the cultivation of grain and through agriculture, it is better to be stationary than to travel around. Such, therefore, are the inhabitants of small communities, villages, and mountain regions. These people make up the large mass of the Berbers and non-Bedouins.

Those who make their living from animals requiring pasturage, such as sheep and cattle, usually travel around in order to find pasture and water for their animals, since it is better for them to move around in the land. They are called 'sheepmen', that is, men who live on sheep and cattle. They do not go deep into the desert, because they would not find good pastures there. Such people include the Berbers, the Turks, the Turkomans and the Slavs, for instance.

Those who make their living by raising camels move around more. They wander deeper into the desert, because the hilly pastures with their plants and shrubs do not furnish enough subsistence for camels. They must feed on the desert shrubs and drink the salty desert water. They must move around the desert regions during the winter, in flight from the harmful cold to the warm desert air. In the desert sands, camels can find places to give birth to their young ones. Of all animals, camels have the hardest delivery and the greatest need for warmth in connection with it. (Camel nomads) are therefore forced to make excursions deep (into the desert). Frequently, too, they are driven from the hills by the militia, and they penetrate

farther into the desert, because they do not want the militia to mete out justice to them or to punish them for their hostile acts. As a result, they are the most savage human beings that exist. Compared with sedentary people, they are on a level with wild, untamable animals and dumb beasts of prey. Such people are the Bedouins. In the West, the nomadic Berbers and the Zanâtah are their counterparts, and in the East, the Kurds, the Turkomans, and the Turks. The Bedouins, however, make deeper excursions into the desert and are more rooted in desert life because they live exclusively on camels, while the other groups live on sheep and cattle, as well as camels.

It has thus become clear that the Bedouins are a natural group which by necessity exists in civilization.

3 *Bedouins are prior to sedentary people. The desert is the basis and reservoir of civilization and cities*

We have mentioned that the Bedouins restrict themselves to the bare necessities in their way of life and are unable to go beyond them, while sedentary people concern themselves with conveniences and luxuries in their conditions and customs. The bare necessities are no doubt prior to the conveniences and luxuries. Bare necessities, in a way, are basic, and luxuries secondary. Bedouins, thus, are the basis of, and prior to, cities and sedentary people. Man seeks first the bare necessities. Only after he has obtained the bare necessities does he get to comforts and luxuries. The toughness of desert life precedes the softness of sedentary life. Therefore, urbanization is found to be the goal to which the Bedouin aspires. Through his own efforts, he achieves what he proposes to achieve in this respect. When he has obtained enough to be ready for the conditions and customs of luxury, he enters upon a life of ease and submits himself to the yoke of the city. This is the case with all Bedouin tribes. Sedentary people, on the other hand, have no desire for desert conditions, unless they are motivated by some urgent necessity or they cannot keep up with their fellow city dwellers.

Evidence for the fact that Bedouins are the basis of, and prior to, sedentary people is furnished by investigating the inhabitants of any given city. We shall find that most of its inhabitants originated among Bedouins dwelling in the country and villages of the vicinity. Such Bedouins became wealthy, settled in the city, and adopted a life of ease and luxury, such as exists in the sedentary environment.

All Bedouins and sedentary people differ also among themselves in their conditions of life. Many a clan is greater than another, many a tribe greater than another, many a city larger than another, and many a town more populous than another. . . .

4 *Bedouins are closer to being good than sedentary people*

The reason for this is that the soul in its first natural state of creation is ready to accept whatever good or evil may arrive and leave an imprint upon it. Muḥammad said: 'Every infant is born in the natural state. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a heathen.' To the degree the soul is first affected by one of the two qualities, it moves away from the other and finds it difficult to acquire it. When customs proper to goodness have been first to enter the soul of a good person, and his (soul) has thus acquired the habit of (goodness, that person) moves away from evil and finds it difficult to do anything evil. The same applies to the evil person.

Sedentary people are much concerned with all kinds of pleasures. They are accustomed to luxury and success in worldly occupations and to indulgence in worldly desires. Therefore, their souls are coloured with all kinds of blameworthy and evil qualities. The more of them they possess, the more remote do the ways and means of goodness become to them. Eventually they lose all sense of restraint. Many of them are found to use improper language in their gatherings as well as in the presence of their superiors and womenfolk. They are not deterred by any sense of restraint, because the bad custom of behaving openly in an improper manner in both words and deeds has taken hold of them. Bedouins may be as concerned with worldly affairs as (sedentary people are). However, such concern would touch only the necessities of life and not luxuries or anything causing, or calling for, desires and pleasures. The customs they follow in their mutual dealings are, therefore, appropriate. As compared with those of sedentary people, their evil ways and blameworthy qualities are much less numerous. They are closer to the first natural state and more remote from the evil habits that have been impressed upon the souls (of sedentary people) through numerous and ugly, blameworthy customs. Thus, they can more easily be cured than sedentary people. This is obvious. It will later on become clear that sedentary life constitutes the last stage of civilization and the point where it begins to decay. It also constitutes the last stage of evil and of remoteness from goodness. Clearly, the Bedouins are closer to being good than sedentary people. . . .

5 *Bedouins are more disposed to courage than sedentary people*

The reason for this is that sedentary people have become used to laziness and ease. They are sunk in well-being and luxury. They have entrusted the defence of their property and their lives to the governor and ruler who rules them, and to the militia which has the

task of guarding them. They find full assurance of safety in the walls that surround them, and the fortifications that protect them. No noise disturbs them, and no hunting occupies their time. They are carefree and trusting, and have ceased to carry weapons. Successive generations have grown up in this way of life. They have become like women and children, who depend upon the master of the house. Eventually, this has come to be a quality of character that replaces natural disposition.

The Bedouins, on the other hand, live apart from the community. They are alone in the country and remote from militias. They have no walls or gates. Therefore, they provide their own defence and do not entrust it to, or rely upon others for it. They always carry weapons. They watch carefully all sides of the road. They take hurried naps only when they are together in company or when they are in the saddle. They pay attention to the most distant barking or noise. They go alone into the desert, guided by their fortitude, putting their trust in themselves. Fortitude has become a character quality of theirs, and courage their nature. They use it whenever they are called upon or roused by an alarm. When sedentary people mix with them in the desert or associate with them on a journey, they depend on them. They cannot do anything for themselves without them. This is an observed fact. (Their dependence extends) even to knowledge of the country, the directions, watering places, and crossroads. Man is a child of the customs and the things he has become used to. He is not the product of his natural disposition and temperament. The conditions to which he has become accustomed, until they have become for him a quality of character and matters of habit and custom, have replaced his natural disposition. If one studies this in human beings, one will find much of it, and it will be found to be a correct observation.

6 *The reliance of sedentary people upon laws destroys their fortitude and power of resistance*

Not everyone is master of his own affairs. Chiefs and leaders who are masters of the affairs of men are few in comparison with the rest. As a rule, man must by necessity be dominated by someone else. If the domination is kind and just and the people under it are not oppressed by its laws and restrictions, they are guided by the courage or cowardice that they possess in themselves. They are satisfied with the absence of any restraining power. Self-reliance eventually becomes a quality natural to them. They would not know anything else. If, however, the domination with its laws is one of brute force and intimidation, it breaks their fortitude and deprives them of their

power of resistance as a result of the inertness that develops in the souls of the oppressed, as we shall explain.

When laws are (enforced) by means of punishment, they completely destroy fortitude, because the use of punishment against someone who cannot defend himself generates in that person a feeling of humiliation that, no doubt, must break his fortitude.

When laws are (intended to serve the purposes of) education and instruction and are applied from childhood on, they have to some degree the same effect, because people then grow up in fear and docility and consequently do not rely on their own fortitude.

Thus, greater fortitude is found among the savage Arab Bedouins than among people who are subject to laws. Furthermore, those who rely on laws and are dominated by them from the very beginning of their education and instruction in the crafts, sciences, and religious matters, are thereby deprived of much of their own fortitude. They can scarcely defend themselves at all against hostile acts. This is the case with students, whose occupation it is to study and to learn from teachers and religious leaders, and who constantly apply themselves to instruction and education in very dignified gatherings. This situation and the fact that it destroys the power of resistance and fortitude must be understood.

It is no argument that the men around Muḥammad observed the religious laws, and yet did not experience any diminution of their fortitude, but possessed the greatest possible fortitude. When the Muslims got their religion from Muḥammad, the restraining influence came from themselves, as a result of the encouragement and discouragement he gave them in the Qur'ân. It was not a result of technical instruction or scientific education. The laws were the laws and precepts of the religion that they received orally and which their firmly rooted belief in the truth of the articles of faith caused them to observe. Their fortitude remained unabated, and it was not corroded by education or authority. 'Umar said, "Those who are not (disciplined) by the religious law are not educated by God." 'Umar's desire was that everyone should have his restraining influence in himself. His certainty was that Muḥammad knew best what is good for mankind.

(The influence of) religion, then, decreased among men, and they came to use restraining laws. The religious law became a branch of learning and a craft to be acquired through instruction and education. People turned to sedentary life and assumed the character trait of submissiveness to law. This led to a decrease in their fortitude.

Clearly, then, governmental and educational laws destroy fortitude, because their restraining influence is something that comes from outside. The religious laws, on the other hand, do not destroy

fortitude, because their restraining influence is something inherent. Therefore, governmental and educational laws influence sedentary people, in that they weaken their souls and diminish their stamina, because they have to suffer them both as children and as adults. The bedouins, on the other hand, are not in the same position, because they live far away from the laws of government, instruction, and education. . . .

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 says in the Qur'ân: 'We led him along the two paths.'¹ He further says: 'And inspired the soul with wickedness as well as fear of God.'²

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. Evil 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 says:

*Injustice is a human trait. If you find
A moral man, 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 unpreparedness, 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 government auxiliary troops, if (the inhabitants are) prepared and ready to offer resistance.

The 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 defence and protection are successful only if they are a closely knit group of common descent. This strengthens their stamina and makes them feared, since everybody's affection for his family and his group

¹ Qur'ân 90. 10 (10).

² Qur'ân 91. 8 (8).

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.

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 man slinks away and seeks to save himself, because he is afraid of being left without support. 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 defence and military protection, it is equally true with regard to every other human activity, such as prophecy, the establishment of royal authority, or propaganda. 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.

8 Group feeling results only from blood relationship or something corresponding to it

(Respect for) blood 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 unjustly.

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 neighbours, relatives, or a blood relation in any degree 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

kindred.' 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. For a pedigree is something imaginary and devoid of reality. 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 which is of no use to know and which it does no harm not to know.' 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.

9 Purity of lineage is found only among the savage Arabs of the desert and other such people

This is because of the poor life, hard conditions, and bad habitats that are peculiar to the Bedouins. They are the result of necessity, inasmuch as their subsistence depends on camels and camel breeding and pasturage. The camels are the cause of the Bedouins' savage life in the desert, since they feed on desert shrubs and give birth in the desert sands. The desert is a place of hardship and starvation, but to them it has become familiar and accustomed. Generations of Bedouins grew up in the desert. Eventually, they became confirmed in their character and natural qualities. No member of any other nation was disposed to share their conditions. No member of any other race felt attracted to them. But if one of them were to find ways and means of fleeing from these conditions, he would not give them up. Therefore, their pedigrees can be trusted not to have been mixed up and corrupted. They have been preserved pure in unbroken lines. This is the case, for instance, with Muḍar tribes such as the Quraysh, the Kinānah, the Thaḳīf, the Banū Asad, the Hudhayl, and their Khuzā'ah neighbours. They lived a hard life in places where there was no agriculture or animal husbandry. They lived far from the fertile fields of Syria and the 'Irāq, far from the sources of seasonings and grains. How pure have they kept their lineages! These are unmixed in every way, and are known to be unsullied.

Other Arabs lived in the hills and at the sources of fertile pastures and plentiful living. Among these Arabs were the Ḥimyar and the Kahlān, such as the Lakhm, the Judhām, the Ghassān, the Ṭayy,

the Quḍā'ah, and the Iyād. Their lineages were mixed up, and their groups intermingled. It is known that (genealogists) differ with respect to each one of these families. This came about as the result of intermixture with non-Arabs. They did not pay any attention to preserving the (purity of) lineage of their families and groups. This was done only by (true) Arabs. Furthermore, the Arabs of the fertile fields were affected by the general human trend toward competition for the fat soil and the good pastures. This resulted in intermingling and much mixture of lineages. Even at the beginning of Islam, people occasionally referred to themselves by their places of residence. They referred to the Districts of Qinnasrīn, of Damascus, or of the 'Awāṣim (the border region of northern Syria). This custom was then transferred to Spain. It happened not because the Arabs rejected genealogical considerations, but because they acquired particular places of residence after the conquest. They eventually became known by their places of residence. These became a distinguishing mark, in addition to the pedigree, used by the Arabs to identify themselves in the presence of their amirs. Later on, sedentary Arabs mixed with Persians and other non-Arabs. Purity of lineage was completely lost, and its fruit, the group feeling, was lost and rejected. The tribes, then, disappeared and were wiped out, and with them, group feeling was wiped out. But (the earlier situation) remained unchanged among the Bedouins.

God inherits the earth and all that is upon it.

10 *How lineages become confused*

It is clear that a person of a certain descent may become attached to people of another descent, either because he feels well-disposed toward them, or because there exists an alliance or client(-master) relationship, or yet because he had to flee from his own people by reason of some crime he committed. Such a person comes to be known as having the same descent as those to whom he is attached and is counted one of them with respect to the things that result from (common descent), such as affection, the rights and obligations concerning talion and blood money, and so on. When the things resulting from common descent are there, it is as if (common descent) itself were there, because the only meaning of belonging to one or another group is that one is subject to its laws and conditions, as if one had come into close contact with it. In the course of time, the original descent is almost forgotten. Those who knew about it have passed away, and it is no longer known to most people. Family lines in this manner continually changed from one tribal group to another, and some people developed close contact with others (of a

different descent). This happened both in pre-Islamic and in Islamic times, and between both Arabs and non-Arabs. . . .

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

This is because leadership exists only through superiority, and superiority only through group feeling. 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 him.

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. 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 kin 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.

Many leaders of tribes or groups are eager to acquire certain pedigrees. They desire them because persons of that particular descent possessed some special virtue, such as bravery, or nobility, or fame, however this may have come about. They go after such a family and involve themselves in claims to belong to a branch of it. They do not realize that they thus bring suspicion upon themselves with regard to their leadership and nobility. . . .

These pedigrees are invented by people to get into the good graces of rulers, through (sycophantic) behaviour and through the opinions they express. Their (fabrications) eventually become so well known as to be irrefutable. . . .

Chapter 3

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 large-scale dynastic power are attained only through a group and group feeling

This is because aggressive and defensive strength is obtained only through group feeling which means 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 colouring 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. 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.

2 When a dynasty is firmly established, it can dispense with group feeling

The reason for this is that people find it difficult to submit to general 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.

(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 of group feeling, or of tribal groups of a different descent who have become their clients.

Something of the sort happened to the 'Abbāsids. The group feeling of the Arabs had been destroyed by the time of the reign of al-Mu'tasim and his son, al-Wāthiq. They tried to maintain their hold over the government thereafter with the help of Persian, Turkish, Daylam,¹ Saljūq, and other clients. Then, the (non-Arabs) and their 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 and took possession of (that area). The caliphs were ruled by them. Then (the Daylam), in turn, lost control. The Saljūqs seized power after the Daylam, and the (caliphs) were ruled by them. Then (the Saljūqs), 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 Umayyad dynasty in Spain. When its Arab group feeling was destroyed, 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 'Abbāsids. (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.

¹ Daylam is the name of the region along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea and of the ethnic stock living there, which provided the 'Abbāsīd caliphate with a large group of powerful mercenaries.

They tried to maintain their power with the help of clients and followers and with that of the Zanātah and other Berber tribes which infiltrated Spain from the (African) shore. They imitated the way the Umayyad dynasty in its last stages had tried to maintain its power with their help. (These newcomers) founded large states. Each one of them had control over a section of Spain. They also had a large share of royal authority, corresponding to (that of) the dynasty they had divided up. They thus remained in power until the Almoravids, who shared in the strong Lamtūnah group feeling, crossed the sea. The latter came and replaced and dislodged them from their centres. They obliterated all traces of (the small princes) who were unable to defend themselves because they had no (longer any) group feeling. . . .

3 Members of a royal family may be able to found a dynasty that can dispense with group feeling

This is because the group feeling in which (a member of a royal family) shares may have much power over nations and races, and the inhabitants of remote regions who support his power may be obedient (to that family) and submissive. So, when such a person secedes, leaving the seat of his rule and the home of his might, and joins those inhabitants of remote regions, they adopt him. They support his rule and help him. They take care of establishing his dynasty on a firm basis. They hope that he will be confirmed in his family (rights) and take the power away from his kinsmen. They do not desire to share in any way in his rule, as they subject themselves to his group feeling and submit to the colouring of material superiority firmly belonging to him and his people. They believe, as in an article of faith, in being obedient to (him and his people). Were they to desire to share his rule with him or to rule without him, 'the earth would be shaken'. . . .¹

4 Dynasties of wide power and large royal authority have their origin in religion based either on prophethood or on truthful propaganda.

This is because royal authority results from superiority. Superiority results from group feeling. Only by God's help in establishing His religion do individual desires come together in agreement to press their claims, and hearts become united. The secret of this is that when hearts succumb to false desires and are inclined toward the world, mutual jealousy and widespread differences arise. When they

¹ Qur'ān 99. 1 (1).

are turned toward the truth and reject the world and whatever is false, and advance toward God, they become one in their outlook. Jealousy disappears. Mutual co-operation and support flourish. As a result, the extent of the state widens, and the dynasty grows, as we shall explain now.

5 *Religious propaganda gives a dynasty at its beginning another power in addition to that of the group feeling it possessed as the result of the number of its supporters*

As we have mentioned before, the reason for this is that religious colouring does away with mutual jealousy and envy among people who share in a group feeling, and causes concentration upon the truth. When people come to have the (right) insight into their affairs, nothing can withstand them, because their outlook is one and their object one of common accord. They are willing to die for (their objectives). The members of the dynasty they attack may be many times as numerous as they. But their purposes differ, inasmuch as they are false purposes, and (the people of the worldly dynasty) come to abandon each other, since they are afraid of death. Therefore, they do not offer resistance to (the people with a religious colouring), even if they themselves are more numerous. They are overpowered by them and quickly wiped out, as a result of the luxury and humbleness existing among them, as we have mentioned before.

This happened to the Arabs at the beginning of Islam during the Muslim conquests. The armies of the Muslims at al-Qādisiyah and at the Yarmūk numbered some 30,000 in each case, while the Persian troops at al-Qādisiyah numbered 120,000, and the troops of Heraclius, according to al-Wāqidī, 400,000. Neither of the two parties was able to withstand the Arabs, who routed them and seized what they possessed.

This can also be illustrated (by the situation existing at the time) when the religious colouring changes and is destroyed. The power (of the ruling dynasty) is then wiped out. Superiority exists then merely in proportion to (the existing) group feeling, without the additional (power of) religion. As a result, the dynasty is overpowered by those groups (up to this time) under its control, that are equal or superior to it in strength. It had formerly overpowered the groups that had a stronger group feeling and were more deeply rooted in desert life, with the help of the additional power that religion had given it. . . .

6 *Religious propaganda cannot materialize without group feeling*

This is because every mass (political) undertaking by necessity requires group feeling. This is indicated in Muḥammad's saying: 'God sent no prophet who did not enjoy the protection of his people.' If this was the case with the prophets, who are among human beings those most likely to perform wonders, one would (expect it to apply) all the more so to others. One cannot expect them to be able to work the wonder of achieving superiority without group feeling.

To this chapter belong cases of revolutionaries from among the common people and of jurists who undertake to reform evil practices. Many religious people who follow the ways of religion come to revolt against unjust amirs. They call for a change in, and prohibition of, evil practices. They hope for a divine reward for what they do. They gain many followers and sympathizers among the great mass of the people, but they risk being killed, and most of them actually do perish in consequence of their activities as sinners, unrewarded, because God had not destined them for such (activities). He commands such activities to be undertaken only where there exists the power to bring them to a successful conclusion. Muḥammad said: 'Should one of you see evil activities, he should change them with his hand. If he cannot do that, he should change them with his tongue. And if he cannot do that, he should change them with his heart.'

Rulers and dynasties are strongly entrenched. Their foundations can be undermined and destroyed only through strong efforts backed by the group feeling of tribes and families, as we have mentioned before. Similarly, prophets in their religious propaganda depended on groups and families, though they were the ones who could have been supported by God with anything in existence, if He had wished, but in His wisdom He permitted matters to take their customary course.

If someone who is on the right path were to attempt (religious reforms) in this way, his isolation would keep him from (gaining the support of) group feeling, and he would perish. If someone merely pretends to (achieve religious reforms) in order to gain (political) leadership, he deserves to be hampered by obstacles and to fall victim to perdition. (Religious reforms) are a divine matter that materializes only with God's pleasure and support, through sincere devotion for Him and in view of good intentions toward the Muslims. No Muslim, no person of insight, could doubt this. . . .

Many deluded individuals took it upon themselves to establish the truth. They did not know that they would need group feeling for that.

odd
counterpoint
truth = same!

They did not realize how their enterprise must necessarily end and what they would come to. Toward such people it is necessary to adopt one of the following courses. One may either treat them, if they are insane, or one may punish them either by execution or beatings when they cause trouble, or one may ridicule them and treat them as buffoons.

At the beginning of this century, a man known as al-'Abbās appeared among the Ghumārah. The lowest among the stupid and imbecile members of those tribes followed his blethering. He marched on Bādis, one of the (Ghumārah) cities, and entered it by force. He was then killed, forty days after the start of his mission. He perished like those before him.

There are many similar cases. Their mistake is that they disregard the significance of group feeling (for success) in such matters. If deceit is involved, it is better that such a person should not succeed and be made to pay for his crime.

7 Each dynasty has a certain amount of provinces and lands, and no more.

The reason for this is that the group to which a given dynasty belongs and the people who support and establish it, must of necessity be distributed over the provinces and border regions which they reach and take into possession. Only thus is it possible to protect them against enemies and to enforce the laws of the dynasty relative to the collection of taxes, restrictions, and other things.

When the (various) groups have spread over the border regions and provinces, their numbers are necessarily exhausted. This, then, is the time when the territory (of the dynasty) has reached its farthest extension, where the border regions form a belt around the centre of the realm. If the dynasty then undertakes to expand beyond its holdings, its widening territory remains without military protection and is laid open to any chance attack by enemy or neighbour. This has the detrimental result for the dynasty of the creation of boldness toward it and of diminished respect for it. If the group is a very large one and its numbers are not exhausted when distributed over border regions and territories, the dynasty retains the strength to go beyond the limit (so far reached), until its expansion has gone as far as possible.

The natural reason for this (situation) lies in the fact that the power of group feeling is one of the natural powers. Any power resulting in any kind of action must proceed in its action in such manner.

A dynasty is stronger at its centre than it is at its border regions. When it has reached its farthest expansion, it becomes too weak and incapable to go any farther. This may be compared to light rays

that spread from their centres, or to circles that widen over the surface of the water when something strikes it.

When the dynasty becomes senile and weak, it begins to crumble at its extremities. The centre remains intact until God permits the destruction of the whole dynasty. Then, the centre is destroyed. But when a dynasty is overrun from the centre, it is of no avail to it that the outlying areas remain intact. It dissolves all at once. The centre is like the heart from which the (vital) spirit spreads. Were the heart to be overrun and captured, all the extremities would be routed.

This may be observed in the Persian dynasty. Its centre was al-Madā'in (Ctesiphon). When the Muslims took over al-Madā'in, the whole Persian empire dissolved. Possession of the outlying provinces of the realm was of no avail to Yazdjard.

Conversely, the centre of the Byzantine dynasty in Syria was in Constantinople. When the Muslims took Syria away from the Byzantines, the latter repaired to their centre in Constantinople. The loss of Syria did not harm them. Their rule continued there without interruption until God permitted it to be ended.

Another example is the situation of the Arabs at the beginning of Islam. Since they were a very large group, they very quickly overran neighbouring Syria, 'Irāq, and Egypt. Then, they penetrated Western India (as-Sind), Abyssinia, Ifrīqiyah, and the Maghrib, and later Spain. Their numbers were exhausted by that expansion. No further conquests could be made by them, and the Muslim empire reached its farthest extension.

The situation of later dynasties was the same. Each dynasty depended on the numerical strength of its supporters. When its numbers were exhausted through expansion, no further conquest or extension of power was possible. This is how God proceeds with His creatures.

8 The greatness of a dynasty, the extent of its territory, and the length of its duration depend upon the numerical strength of its supporters

The reason for this is that royal authority exists only through group feeling. Representatives of group feeling are the militiamen who settle in the provinces and territories of the dynasty and are spread over them. The more numerous the tribes and groups of a large dynasty are, the stronger and larger are its provinces and lands. Their royal authority, therefore, is wider.

An example of this was the Muslim dynasty when God united the power of the Arabs in Islam. The number of Muslims who participated in the raid against Tabūk, the Prophet's last raid, was 110,000 Muḍar and Qaḥṭān horsemen and foot soldiers. That number was

augmented by those who became Muslims after the (raid) and down to the time of the Prophet's death. When (all these people) then set out to seek for themselves the royal authority held by (other) nations, there was no protection against them or refuge. They were allowed (to take possession of) the realms of the Persians and the Byzantines who were the greatest dynasties in the world at that time, (as well as the realms) of the Turks in the East, of the European Christians and Berbers in the West (Maghrib), and of the Goths in Spain. They went from the Hijáz to as-Sûs in the far west, and from the Yemen to the Turks in the farthest north. They gained possession of all seven zones.

Thus, the expansion and power of a dynasty correspond to the numerical strength of those who obtain superiority at the beginning of the rule. The length of its duration also depends upon it. The life of anything that comes into being depends upon the strength of its temper. The temper of dynasties is based upon group feeling. If the group feeling is strong, the (dynasty's) temper likewise is strong, and its life of long duration. Group feeling, in turn, depends on numerical strength.

The real reason why (large dynasties last longer) is that when collapse comes it begins in the outlying regions, and the large dynasty has many such provinces far from its centre. Each defection that occurs necessarily requires a certain time. The time required (for collapse) will be long in such cases, because there are many provinces, each of which collapses in its own good time. The duration of a large dynasty, therefore, is long.

This may be observed in the Arab Muslim dynasty. It lasted the longest of (all Muslim) dynasties, counting both the 'Abbāsids in the centre and the Umayyads far away in Spain. Their rule collapsed only after the fourth [tenth] century.

Thus, the life of a dynasty depends upon (the number of) its supporters.

9 A dynasty rarely establishes itself firmly in lands with many different tribes and groups

This is because of differences in opinions and desires. Behind each opinion and desire, there is a group feeling defending it. At any time, therefore, there is much opposition to a dynasty and rebellion against it, even if the dynasty possesses group feeling, because each group feeling under the control of the ruling dynasty thinks that it has in itself enough strength and power.

One may compare what has happened in this connection in Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib from the beginning of Islam to the

present time. The inhabitants of those lands are Berber tribes and groups. The first (Muslim) victory over them and the European Christians (in the Maghrib) was of no avail. They continued to rebel and apostatized time after time. The Muslims massacred many of them. After the Muslim religion had been established among them, they went on revolting and seceding, and they adopted dissident religious opinions many times. They remained disobedient and unmanageable. The 'Irâq at that time was different, and so was Syria. The militia there consisted of Persians and Byzantines respectively. All the inhabitants were a mixed lot of town and city dwellers. When the Muslims deprived them of their power, there remained no one capable of making a defence or of offering opposition.

The Berber tribes in the West are innumerable. All of them are Bedouins and members of groups and families. Whenever one tribe is destroyed, another takes its place and is as refractory and rebellious as the former one had been. Therefore, it has taken the Arabs a long time to establish their dynasty in the land of Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib.

In the age of the Israelites, the same was the case in Syria, where there existed a very large number of tribes with a great variety of group feelings, such as the tribes of Palestine and Canaan, the children of Esau, the Midyanites, the children of Lot, the Edomites, the Armenians [!], the Amalekites, Girgashites, and the Nabataeans from the Jazirah and Mosul. Therefore, it was difficult for the Israelites to establish their dynasty firmly. Time after time, their royal authority was endangered. The (spirit of) opposition (in the country) communicated itself to (the Israelites). They opposed their own government and revolted against it. They thus never had a continuous and firmly established royal authority. Eventually they were overpowered, first by the Persians, then by the Greeks, and finally by the Romans, when their power came to an end in the Diaspora.

On the other hand, it is easy to establish a dynasty in lands that are free from group feelings. Government there will be a tranquil affair, because rebellions are few, and the dynasty there does not need much group feeling. This is the case in contemporary Egypt and Syria. They are free from tribes and group feelings; indeed, one would never suspect that Syria had once been a mine of them, as we have stated. Royal authority in Egypt is most peaceful and firmly rooted, because Egypt has few dissidents or people who represent tribal groups. Egypt has a sultan and subjects. Its ruling dynasty consists of the Turkish rulers and their groups. They succeed each other in power, and the rule circulates among them, passing from one branch to another. The caliphate belongs in name to an

'Abbásid, a descendant of the 'Abbásid caliphs of Baghdad. The same is the case in contemporary Spain. . . .

10 By its very nature, royal authority claims all glory for itself and goes in for luxury and prefers tranquillity and peace

As to claiming all glory for itself, this is because, as we have mentioned before, royal authority exists through group feeling. Group feeling is something composite that results from (amalgamating) 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. In this way, 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 mingling) of the elements. When the elements are combined in equal proportions, no mixing can take place. One (element) must be superior to the others, and when (it exercises) its superiority over them, mixing occurs. In the same way, one of the various tribal group feelings must be superior to all, 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 (leadership), he is too proud to let others share in his leadership and control 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, 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.

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 his authority 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.

As 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, furnishings 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.

As to preferring tranquillity and peace, this is because a nation acquires 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.

When people have acquired 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 tranquillity. Now they seek to enjoy the fruits of royal authority, such as buildings, dwellings, and clothing. They build castles and install running water. They plant gardens and enjoy life. They take pride in clothing, food, household goods, and furnishings, 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.

11 When the natural tendencies of royal authority to claim all glory for itself and to acquire luxury and tranquillity have been firmly established, the dynasty approaches senility

This can be explained in several ways.

First: As we have stated, (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, 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 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 expenditure. 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. 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 to keep their own affairs going, and their weakness then recoils 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 expenditure, the militia decreases in number from what it had been before the increase in allowances.¹

Luxury, meanwhile, is still on the increase. As a result, allowances become larger, and the militia decreases in number. This happens a

¹ That is, since the allowances to be paid are higher than before, and the tax income has not increased, fewer men can be hired.

third and a fourth time. Eventually, the army is reduced to the smallest possible size. The result is that the military defence of the dynasty is weakened and the power of the dynasty declines. Neighbouring 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 His creatures.

Furthermore, luxury corrupts the character, through luxury the soul acquiring diverse kinds of evil and sophisticated customs, as will be mentioned in the section on sedentary culture. People lose the good qualities that were a sign and indication of royal authority. They adopt the contrary bad qualities. This points toward retrogression and ruin, according to the way God (has planned) 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, royal authority, by its very nature, requires tranquillity. When people become accustomed to tranquillity 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 accustomed.

The new generations grow up in comfort and the ease of luxury and tranquillity. The trait of savagery (that 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 skill and emblems. Their military defence 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 peace, tranquillity, 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 defence. 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 them 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.

That was what happened to the Turkish dynasty in the East. Most members of its army were Turkish clients. The 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 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 dynasty in Ifrīqiyah. Their rulers often selected their armies from the Zanātah 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.

12 *Dynasties have a natural life span like individuals*

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. 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 among the peoples of 'Ād and Thamūd.

The same applies to the life span of dynasties. Their duration may differ according to the conjunctions. However, as a rule no dynasty lasts beyond the life span of three generations.¹ 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.

Our statement is confirmed by the significance of the (forty-year) sojourn of the children of Israel in the desert. 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 assump-

¹ The following assumption of a period of forty years does not square with the remarks Ibn Khaldūn makes here about the length of human life.

tion that forty years, which is identical with the (average) life of a single individual, must be considered the duration of a generation.

We have stated that 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 vigour 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. 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, 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 to support him. 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.

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 them. When senility becomes preponderant, there may be no claimant (for dynastic 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 put off for a single hour, nor can it be advanced.

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. . . .

13 *The transition of dynasties from desert life to sedentary culture*

It should be known that these stages are natural for the growth of dynasties. The superiority through which royal authority is achieved is the result of group feeling and of the great energy and rapacious habits which go with it. As a rule, these things are possible only in connection with desert life. The first stage of dynasties, therefore, is that of desert life.

When royal authority is acquired, it is accompanied by a life of ease and increased opportunities. Sedentary culture is merely a diversification of luxury and a refined knowledge of the crafts employed for its diverse aspects and ways. This concerns, for instance, food, clothing, building, carpets, utensils, and other household needs. Each one of these things requires special interdependent crafts serving to refine and improve it. These increase in number with the variety of pleasures and amusements and ways and means to enjoy the life of luxury the soul desires, and (with the growing number of) different things to which people get used.

The sedentary stage of royal authority follows the stage of desert life. It does so of necessity, as a result of the fact that royal authority is necessarily accompanied by a life of ease. In the sedentary stage and under (sedentary) conditions, the people of a given dynasty always follow the traditions of the preceding dynasty. They observe with their own eyes the circumstances (under which the preceding dynasty lived), and, as a rule, learn from them.

Something of the sort happened to the Arabs during the conquest by which they came to rule the Persians and Byzantines and made their daughters and sons their servants. At that time, the Arabs had no sedentary culture at all. The story goes that when they were given a pillow they supposed it was a bundle of rags. The camphor they

found in the treasuries of the Persian king was used by them as salt in their dough. There are many similar things. The Arabs, then, enslaved the people of the former dynasties and employed them in their occupations and their household needs. From among them, they selected skilled masters of the various (crafts), and were in turn taught by them to handle, master, and develop these for themselves. In addition, the circumstances of the Arabs' life widened and became more diversified. Thus, they reached the limit in this respect. They entered the stage of sedentary culture, of luxury and refinement in food, drink, clothing, building, weapons, carpets, household goods, music, and all other commodities and furnishings. The same (perfection they showed) on their gala days, banquets, and wedding nights. In this respect, they surpassed the limit.

Looking at the reports of al-Mas'ûdî, aṭ-Ṭabarî, and other (historians) concerning the wedding of al-Ma'mûn to Bûrân, daughter of al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, one will be amazed. They tell about the gifts Bûrân's father made to the retinue of al-Ma'mûn when the caliph came by boat to (al-Ḥasan's) house in Fumm aṣ-ṣilḥ to ask for Bûrân's hand. They tell about the expenditure for the wedding and the gifts al-Ma'mûn gave her. On the wedding day, al-Ḥasan b. Sahl gave a lavish banquet that was attended by al-Ma'mûn's retinue. To members of the first class, al-Ḥasan distributed lumps of musk wrapped in papers granting farms and estates to the holders. Each obtained what chance and luck gave him. To the second class, he distributed bags each of which held 10,000 dinars. To the third class, he distributed bags with the same amount in dirhams. In addition to all this, he had already spent many times as much when al-Ma'mûn had stayed in his house. Also, al-Ma'mûn gave Bûrân a thousand hyacinths (rubies) as her wedding gift on the wedding night. He burned candles of amber each of which weighed one hundred *man*—a *man* being one and two-thirds pounds. He had laid down for her carpets woven with threads of gold and adorned with pearls and hyacinths. One hundred and forty mule-loads of wood had been brought three times a day for a whole year to the kitchen in readiness for the wedding night. All that wood was consumed that very night. Palm twigs were set alight by pouring oil on them. Boatmen were ordered to bring boats to transport the distinguished guests on the Tigris. The boats prepared for that purpose numbered 30,000, and they carried people back and forth all day long. There were many other such things.

A similar occasion was the wedding of al-Ma'mûn b. Dhî n-nûn in Toledo.

All these people had previously been in the first stage of desert life. They had been completely incapable of such things, because, in

their low standard of living and their simplicity, they lacked both the means and the people with technical ability. . . .

Sedentary culture was always transferred from the preceding dynasty to the later one. The sedentary culture of the Persians was transferred to the Arab Umayyads and 'Abbāsids. The sedentary culture of the Umayyads in Spain was transferred to the Almohad and Zanātah kings of the contemporary Maghrib. That of the 'Abbāsids was transferred, successively, to the Daylam, to the Saljūq Turks, to the Turks in Egypt, and to the Tatars in the two 'Irāqs.

The larger a dynasty, the more important is its sedentary culture. For sedentary culture is the consequence of luxury; luxury is the consequence of wealth and prosperity; and wealth and prosperity are the consequences of royal authority and related to the extent of territorial possessions which the people of a particular dynasty have gained. All the elements of sedentary culture are, thus, proportionate to the greater or smaller extent of royal authority. Upon close and careful examination this will be found to be a correct statement as regards civilization and dynasties.

14 *Luxury will at first give additional strength to a dynasty.*

The reason for this is that a tribe that has acquired royal authority and luxury is prolific and produces many children, so that the community grows. Thus, the group grows. Furthermore, a greater number of clients and followers is acquired. The new generations grow up in a climate of prosperity and luxury. Through them, (the dynasty) gains in numbers and in strength, because a great number of groups form at that time as the result of the numerical increase. When the first and second generations are gone and the dynasty starts to become senile, its followers and clients cannot do anything on their own to put the dynasty and its royal authority on a firmer basis, because they never had authority of their own but were dependent on the men of (the dynasty) and (merely) supported it. When the roots are gone, the branches cannot be strong on their own, but disappear completely, and the dynasty no longer retains its former strength.

This is exemplified by what happened to the Arab dynasty in Islam. The Arabs at the time of the Prophet and the early caliphs numbered approximately 150,000 Muḍar and Qaḥṭān (tribesmen). The life of luxury reached its climax in the dynasty. The (population) grew rapidly with the growth of prosperity. The caliphs acquired many clients and followers. Thus, the (original) number increased many times. It is said that during the conquest of Amorium, al-Mu'taṣim laid siege to the city with 900,000 men. This number

can hardly fail being correct, if one thinks of (the large size of) the Muslim militia of the border regions both far and near, in both the East and the West, and adds the soldiers directly in the service of the ruler, together with all the clients and followers. . . .

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

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 dictated 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 its sources. 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 takes as much, or more, care to keep his people at a distance and to subdue them, as the first members of the dynasty did 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: 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 planning expenditure; erecting large buildings, big constructions, spacious cities, and lofty monuments; 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 armour 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. 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. 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. 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.

16 *The monuments of a given dynasty are proportionate to its original power*

The reason for this is that monuments owe their origin to the power that brought the dynasty into being. The impression the dynasty leaves is proportionate to that power.

The monuments of a dynasty are its buildings and large (edifices). They are proportionate to the original power of the dynasty. They can materialize only when there are many workers and united action and co-operation. When a dynasty is large and far-flung, with many provinces and subjects, workers are very plentiful and can be brought together from all sides and regions. Thus, even the largest edifice can be constructed.

Think of the works of the people of 'Ād and Thamūd, about which the Qur'ān tells. Or, one should see with one's own eyes the Reception Hall of Khosraw, that powerful achievement of Persian (architecture). Ar-Rashīd intended to tear it down and destroy it. He could not do so for all his trouble. He began the work, but then was not able to continue. It is worth noting that one dynasty was able to construct a building that another dynasty was unable to tear down, even though destruction is much easier than construction. That illustrates the great difference between the two dynasties.

One may also compare the Mosque of al-Walid in Damascus, the Umayyad Mosque in Córdoba, the bridge over the river at Córdoba, and, as well, the arches of the aqueduct over which water is brought into Carthage, the monuments of Cherchel in the Maghrib, the pyramids of Egypt, and many other such monuments that may still be seen. They illustrate differences in strength and weakness that have existed among the various dynasties.

All these works of the ancients were possible only through engineering skill and the concerted labour of many workers. Only thus could these monuments and works be constructed. One should not think, as the common people do, that it was because the ancients had bodies larger in size than our own. Human beings do not differ in this respect as much as monuments and relics differ. Storytellers have seized upon the subject and used it to make exaggerated (fables). One of the strangest of these stories is about Og, the son of Anak, one of the Canaanites against whom the children of Israel fought in Syria. According to these storytellers, he was so tall that he took fish out of the ocean and held them up to the sun to be cooked. To their ignorance of human affairs, the storytellers here add ignorance of astronomical matters. They believe that the sun is heat and that the heat of the sun is greatest close to it. They do not know that the heat of the sun is its light and that its light is stronger near the

earth (than it is near the sun) because of the reflection of the rays from the surface of the earth when it is hit by the light. Therefore, the heat here is many times greater (than near the sun). When the zone in which the reflected rays are effective is passed, there will be no heat there, and it will be cold. (That is) where the clouds are. The sun itself is neither hot nor cold, but a simple uncomposed substance that gives light.

The error of (storytellers) results from the fact that they admired the vast proportions of the monuments left by nations (of the past), but did not understand the different situation in which dynasties may find themselves with respect to social organization and co-operation. They did not understand that (superior social organization) together with engineering skill made the construction of large monuments possible. Therefore, they ascribed such monuments to a strength and energy derived by the peoples of the past from the large size of their bodies. But this is not so. . . .

Another (kind of) monument (to the greatness) of a dynasty is the way it handled weddings and banquets, as we have mentioned.

Another monument of a dynasty is the gifts it made. Gifts are proportionate to (the importance of a dynasty). This holds true even when the dynasty is close to senility.

The way the Barmecides gave allowances and gifts and spent their money illustrates this. Whenever they provided for a needy person, it meant property, high office, and prosperity for that person for ever after. It was not just an allowance that was spent in a day or sooner. . . .

A person who looks at these (data) should bear in mind the relative (importance) of the various dynasties. He should not reject (data) for which he finds no observable parallels in his own time. Otherwise, many things that are possible would (be considered impossible by him and) escape his attention. Many excellent men, hearing stories of this kind about past dynasties, have not believed them. This is not right. Conditions in the world and in civilization are not (always) the same. He who knows a low or medium (level of civilization) does not know all of them. When we consider our information about the 'Abbāsids, the Umayyads, and the 'Ubaydid (-Fāṭimids), and when we compare what we know to be sound in it with our own observations of the less important dynasties (of today), then we find a great difference between them. That difference results from differences in the original strength of (those dynasties) and in the civilizations (of their realms). As we have stated before, all the monuments of a dynasty are proportionate to its original strength. We are not entitled to reject any such (information) about them. Much of it deals with matters that are extremely well known

and obvious. Part of it is traditional information known through a continuous tradition. Part of it is direct information based upon personal observation of architectural monuments and other such things.

One should think of the various degrees of strength and weakness, of bigness and smallness, in the various dynasties as they are known through tradition, and compare that information with the following interesting story. In the times of the Merinid Sultan, Abū 'Inān, a *shaykh* from Tangier, by name Ibn Baṭṭūtah,¹ came back to the Maghrib. Twenty years before, he had left for the East and journeyed through the countries of the 'Irāq, the Yemen, and India. He had come to the city of Delhi, the seat of the ruler of India, the Sultan Muḥammad Shāh.² (The ruler) esteemed Ibn Baṭṭūtah highly and employed him as Mālikite judge in his domain. He then returned to the Maghrib and made contact with the Sultan Abū 'Inān. He used to tell about experiences he had had on his travels and about the remarkable things he had seen in different realms. He spoke mostly about the ruler of India. He reported things about him that his listeners considered strange. That, for instance, when the ruler of India went on a trip, he counted the inhabitants of his city, men, women, and children, and ordered that their requirements for (the next) six months be paid them out of his own income. When he returned from his trip and entered (the city), it was a festive day. All the people went out into the open country and strolled about. In front of (the ruler), in the crowd, mangonels were set up on the backs of pack animals.³ From the mangonels, bags of dirhams and dinars were shot out over the people, until the ruler entered his audience hall.

Ibn Baṭṭūtah told other similar stories, and people in (high positions) whispered to each other that he must be a liar. During that time, one day I met the Sultan's famous wazir, Fāris b. Wadrār. I talked to him about this matter and intimated to him that I did not believe that man's stories, because people in the dynasty were in general inclined to consider him a liar. Whereupon the wazir Fāris said to me: 'Be careful not to reject such information about the conditions of dynasties, because you have not seen such things yourself. You would then be like the son of the wazir who grew up in prison. The wazir had been imprisoned by his ruler and remained in prison several years. His son grew up in prison. When he reached the age of reason, he asked his father about the meat which he had been

¹ Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh, 703-779 [1304-1377].

² Muḥammad Shāh ruled from 1323 to 1351, and it was during his reign that Ibn Baṭṭūtah was in Delhi.

³ These, of course, were elephants.

eating. (His father) told him that it was mutton, and he asked him what that was. When his father described a sheep to him in all details, (the son) said, "Father, you mean, it looks like a rat?" His father was angry with him and said, "What has a sheep to do with a rat?" The same happened later about beef and camel meat. The only animals he had seen in prison were rats, and so he believed that all animals were of the same species as rats.'

It often happens that people are (incredulous) with regard to historical information, just as it also happens that they are tempted to exaggerate certain information, in order to be able to report something remarkable. We stated this earlier at the beginning of the book. Therefore, a person should look at his sources and rely upon himself. With a clear mind and straightforward, natural (common sense) he should distinguish between the nature of the possible and the impossible. Everything within the sphere of the possible should be accepted, and everything outside it should be rejected. We do not have in mind 'possible' in the absolute sense of what is intellectually possible. That covers a very wide range, so that it cannot be used to determine what is possible in actual fact. What we have in mind is the possibility inherent in the matter that belongs to a given thing. When we study the origin of a thing, its genus, (specific) difference, size, and strength, we can draw conclusions as to (the possibility or impossibility) of the data (reported in connection with it). We adjudge to be impossible everything outside the sphere of (the possible, in this sense).

17 The ruler seeks the help of clients and followers against the men of his own people and group feeling

A ruler can achieve power only with the help of his own people. They are his group and his helpers in his enterprise. He uses them to fight against those who revolt against his dynasty. It is they with whom he fills the administrative offices, whom he appoints as wazirs and tax collectors. They help him to achieve superiority. They participate in the government. They share in all his other important affairs.

This applies as long as the first stage of a dynasty lasts, as we have stated. With the approach of the second stage, the ruler shows himself independent of his people, claims all the glory for himself, and pushes his people away from it with the palms of his hands. As a result, his own people become, in fact, his enemies. In order to prevent them from seizing power, and in order to keep them away from participation in it, the ruler needs other friends, not of his own kin, whom he can use against (them) and who will be his friends in

their place. These become closer to him than anyone else. They deserve better than anyone else to be close to him and to be his followers, as well as to be preferred and to be given high positions, because they are willing to give their lives for him, preventing his own people from regaining the power that had been theirs and from occupying with him the rank to which they had been used.

In this (situation), the ruler cares only for his new followers. He singles them out for preference and for many honours. He distributes among them as much (property) as (he does among) most of his own people. He confers upon them the most important administrative positions, such as the offices of wazir, general, and tax collector, as well as royal titles which are his own prerogative, and which he does not share with his own people. (He does this) because they are now his closest friends and most sincere advisers. This, then, announces the destruction of the dynasty and indicates that chronic disease has befallen it, the result of the loss of the group feeling on which the (dynasty's) superiority had been built. The feelings of the people of the dynasty become diseased as a result of the contempt in which they are held and the hostility of the ruler. They hate him and await the opportunity of a change in his fortune. The great danger inherent in this situation reverts upon the dynasty. There can be no hope it will recover from that illness. The (mistakes of the) past grow stronger with each successive generation and lead eventually to loss of the (dynasty's) identity.

This is exemplified by the Umayyad dynasty. For their wars and for administrative purposes, they had recourse to the support of Arabs such as 'Amr b. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqâs, 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd b. Abi Sufyân, al-Hajjâj b. Yûsuf, and others. For a while the 'Abbâsid dynasty, too, used the support of Arab personalities. But when the dynasty came to claim all the glory for itself and kept the Arabs from aspiring to administrative positions, the wazirate fell to non-Arabs such as the Barmecides and others. Thus, the dynasty came to belong to people other than those who had established it. Power went to people other than those who had first won it.

This is how God proceeds with His servants.

18 The situation of clients and followers in dynasties

Followers occupy different positions in a dynasty depending on whether their close contact with the ruler is of old or of recent standing. The reason for this is that the purpose of group feeling, which is defence and aggression, can be fulfilled only with the help of a common descent. For, as we have stated before, blood relations and other close relatives help each other, while strangers and outsiders

do not. Client relationships and contacts with slaves or allies have the same effect as (common descent). The consequences of common descent, though natural, still are something imaginary. The real thing to bring about the feeling of close contact is social intercourse, friendly association, long familiarity, and the companionship that results from growing up together, having the same wet nurse, and sharing the other circumstances of death and life. If close contact is established in such a manner, the result will be affection and co-operation. Observation of people shows this to be so.

Something similar can be observed in connection with the relation between master and follower. Between the two, there develops a special closeness of relationship which has the same effect (as common descent) and strengthens the close contact. Even though there is no common descent, the fruits of common descent are there.

Whenever such a client relationship exists between a tribe and its clients before the tribe has acquired royal authority, the roots of the relationship are more firmly intertwined, the feelings and beliefs involved are more sincere, and the relationship itself is more clearly defined, for two reasons.

First: Before people acquire royal authority, they are a model in their ways. Only in the rarest cases is a distinction made between common descent and the client relationship. The position (of clients) is the same as that of close or blood relatives. However, if they choose followers after they have acquired royal authority, their royal rank causes them to make a distinction between master and client, and another between close relatives and clients or followers. The conditions of leadership and royal authority require this in view of distinctions and differences in rank. The situation (of followers), therefore, is different. They are now on the same level as strangers. The close contact between (the ruler and his followers) weakens, and co-operation, therefore, becomes less likely. This means that followers are now less (close) than they were before (he acquired) royal authority.

Second: Followers from before (the time the ruler acquired) royal authority had the status of followers long before the dynasty (came to power). It is, thus, no longer clear (to contemporaries) how the close contact came about. As a rule, it is supposed to be a case of common descent, and in this case the group feeling is strengthened. On the other hand, (follower relationships formed) after (the ruler has acquired) royal authority are of recent date and equally well known to most people. (The origin of) the close contact is clear, and it is clearly distinguishable from common descent. The group feeling, in the latter case, is weak in comparison with the group feeling that results from the client relationship that existed before the dynasty (came to power).

A look at dynasties and other cases of (political) leadership will show this to be so. Follower relationships formed before leadership and royal authority were secured, will be found to show a stronger and closer contact between masters and followers. The latter occupy the same position with their master as do his children, his brothers, and other blood relatives. On the other hand, follower relationships formed after royal authority and political leadership were acquired do not show the same close connection that exists in the first (group).

At the end of their power, dynasties eventually resort to employing strangers and accepting them as followers. These people, however, do not acquire any such glory as the men who had become followers of the dynasty before it came to power were able to build up for themselves. Their status as followers is too recent in origin. Also, the destruction of the dynasty is imminent. Therefore, they occupy a very low and humble position. In taking them on as followers and replacing his old clients and original followers by them, the ruler is motivated by the fact that (his old clients and followers) have become overbearing. They show little obedience to him. They look at him in the same way as his own tribe and relatives do. Close contact existed between him and them for a very long time. They had grown up together with him, had had connections with his ancestors and older members of his family, and were aligned with the great men of his house. As a result, they become proud and overbearing towards him. This is why the ruler comes to shun them and use others in their place. It has been only for a short time that he has come to care for these others and to use them as followers. Therefore, they do not attain positions of glory but retain their position as outsiders.

This is the case with dynasties at their end. As a rule, the words 'followers' and 'clients' are used for the first group. The more recent followers are called 'servants' and 'helpers'.

19 Seclusion of, and control over, the ruler (by others) may occur in dynasties

When royal authority is firmly established in one particular family and branch of the tribe supporting the dynasty, and when that family claims all royal authority for itself and keeps the rest of the tribe away from it, and when the children of that family succeed to royal authority in turn, by appointment, then it often happens that their wazirs and entourage gain power over the throne. This occurs most often when a little child or a weak member of the family is appointed successor by his father or made ruler by his creatures and servants. It becomes clear that he is unable to fulfil the functions of ruler. Therefore, they are fulfilled by his guardian, one of his father's

wazirs, someone from his entourage, one of his clients, or a member of his tribe. (That person) gives the impression that he is guarding the power of the (child ruler) for him. Eventually, it becomes clear that it is he who exercises control, using the fact as a tool to achieve royal authority. He keeps the child away from his people. He accustoms him to the pleasures of a life of luxury and gives him every possible opportunity to indulge in them. He causes him to forget to look at government affairs. Eventually, he gains full control over him. He accustoms the (child ruler) to believe that the ruler's share in royal authority consists merely in sitting on the throne, shaking hands, being addressed as Sire, and sitting with the women in the seclusion of the harem. All (exercise of the) actual executive power, and the personal handling and supervision of matters that concern the ruler, such as inspection of the army, finances, and (defence of) the border regions, are believed (by the child ruler) to belong to the wazir. He defers to him in all these things. Eventually the wazir definitely adopts the colouring of the leader, of the man in control. The royal authority comes to be his. He reserves it for his family and his children after him.

Such was the case with the Būyids and the Turks, with Kāfūr al-Ikhshidī and others in the East, and with al-Manṣūr b. Abī 'Āmir in Spain.

It may happen that a ruler who is secluded and deprived of authority becomes aware of his situation and contrives to escape from it. He thus regains royal authority for his family. He stops the person who has gained power over it, either by killing him or by merely deposing him. However, this happens very rarely. Once a dynasty has fallen into the hands of wazirs and clients, it remains in that situation. Rarely is it able to escape from it, because (such control by others) is mostly the result of living in luxury and of the fact that the royal princes have grown up immersed in prosperity. They have forgotten the ways of manliness and have become accustomed to the character traits of wet nurses, and they have grown up that way. They do not desire leadership. They are not used to exercising sole power, the prerogative of superiority. All their ambition requires is the satisfactions of pomp and having a great variety of pleasures and luxuries. Clients and followers gain superiority when the family of the ruler is in sole control over its people and claims all royal authority for itself to their exclusion. This is something that happens to dynasties of necessity, as we have stated before.

These are two diseases of dynasties which cannot be cured, except in very rare cases.

20 *Those who gain power over the ruler do not share with him in the special title that goes with royal authority*

This is because the first men to achieve royal and governmental authority at the beginning of the dynasty do so with the help of the group feeling of their people and with the help of their own group feeling which causes their people to follow them until they and their people have definitely adopted the colouring of royal authority and superiority. The colouring, then, continues to exist. Through it the identity and persistence of the dynasty are assured.

The person who gains superiority (over the ruler) may have a share in the group feeling that belongs to the tribe which has gained royal authority or to its clients and followers. However, his group feeling still is comprised by, and subordinate to, the group feeling of the family of the ruler. He cannot (take on) the colouring of royal authority. Thus, in gaining control, he does not plan to appropriate royal authority for himself openly, but only to appropriate its fruits, that is, the exercise of administrative, executive, and all other power. He gives the people of the dynasty the impression that he merely acts for the ruler and executes the latter's decisions from behind the curtain. He carefully refrains from using the attributes, emblems, or titles of royal authority. He avoids throwing any suspicion upon himself in this respect, even though he exercises full control. For, in his exercise of full control, he takes cover behind the curtain the ruler and his ancestors had set up to protect themselves from their own tribe when the dynasty came into being. He disguises his exercise of control under the form of acting as the ruler's representative.

Should he undertake to adopt (any of the royal prerogatives), the people who represent the group feeling and tribe of the ruler would resent it and contrive to appropriate (such prerogatives) for themselves, to his exclusion. He has no definite colouring to (make him appear suited for the royal prerogatives) or cause others to submit to him and obey him. (Any attempt by him to appropriate the royal prerogatives) would, thus, instantly precipitate his doom. . . .

21 *The true character and different kinds of royal authority*

Royal authority is an institution that is natural to mankind. We have explained before that human beings cannot live and exist except through social organization and co-operation 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 satisfy their needs. Each one will stretch out his hand for whatever he needs and (try simply to) take it, since injustice and aggressiveness are in the animal nature. The others, in turn, will try to prevent him

from taking it, motivated by wrathfulness and spite and the strong human reaction when one's own property is menaced. This causes dissension, which leads to hostilities, and hostilities lead to trouble and bloodshed and loss of life, which lead to the destruction of the species. Now, (the human species) is one of the things the Creator has especially (enjoined us) to 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 exercises authority. In this connection, group feeling is absolutely necessary, for as we have stated before, 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, 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.

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 far-flung 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.

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

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 ruler and subjects. Government becomes a reality when (a ruler) rules over subjects and handles their affairs. A ruler is he who has subjects, 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'. 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 ruin. If the ruler continues to keep a forceful grip on his subjects, group feeling will be destroyed. If the ruler is mild and overlooks the bad sides of his subjects, they will trust him and take refuge with him. They 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 kindness to, and protection of, one's subjects. 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 the way they live. These things are important for the ruler in gaining the love of his subjects.

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. Muḥammad said: 'Follow the pace of the weakest among you.'

Muḥammad therefore made it a condition that the ruler should not be too shrewd. For this quality is 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.

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. And so it is with all the other human qualities. For this reason, the very clever person is said to have the qualities of a devil. He is called a 'satan', or 'a would-be satan', and the like.

23 *The meaning of caliphate and imamate*

Royal authority implies a form of organization necessary to mankind. It requires superiority and force, which express the wrathfulness 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, and this may be beyond their ability. This situation will differ according to the intentions to be found in different generations. It is for this reason difficult to be obedient to the ruler. Disobedience 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.

If these norms are ordained by the intelligent and leading personalities and minds of the dynasty, the result will be a political (institution) with 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) with 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. The purpose (of human beings) is their religion, which leads them to happiness in the other world. Therefore, religious laws have as their purpose to cause (them) 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 dic-

tated 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 by considerations of policy or political decisions without supervision of the religious law, is also reprehensible, because it is vision lacking the divine light. 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.

Political laws consider only worldly interests. On the other hand, the intention the Lawgiver has concerning mankind is their welfare in the other world. 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; then 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. (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. (Worldly interests) have bearing upon (the interests in the other world), since according to Muḥammad all worldly conditions are to be considered in their relation to their value for the other world. Thus, (the caliphate) in reality is a substitute for Muḥammad inasmuch as it serves, like him, to protect the religion and to exercise leadership of the world.

24 *The differences of Muslim opinion concerning the laws and conditions governing the caliphate*

We have explained the real meaning of the (caliphate). It is a substitute for Muḥammad inasmuch as it serves, like him, to preserve the religion and to exercise (political) leadership of the world. (The institution) is called 'the caliphate' or 'the imamate'. The person in charge of it is called 'the caliph' or 'the imam'.

In later times, he has been called 'the sultan', when there were numerous (claimants to the position) or when, in view of the distances (separating the different regions) and in disregard of the conditions governing the institution, people were forced to render the oath of allegiance to anybody who seized power. . . .

The position of imam is a necessary one. The consensus of the men around Muḥammad and the men of the second generation shows that (the imamate) is necessary according to the religious law. At the death of the Prophet, the men around him proceeded to render the oath of allegiance to Abū Bakr and to entrust him with the supervision of their affairs. And so it was at all subsequent periods. In no period were the people left in a state of anarchy. This was so by general consensus, which proves that the position of imam is a necessary one.

Some people have expressed the opinion that the necessity of the imamate is apparent for rational reasons, and that the consensus which happens to exist merely confirms the authority of the intellect in this respect. As they say, what makes (the imam rationally) necessary is the need of human beings for social organization and the impossibility of their living and existing by themselves. One of the necessary consequences of social organization is disagreement, because of the pressure of cross-purposes. As long as there is no ruler who exercises a restraining influence, this leads to trouble which, in turn, may lead to the destruction and uprooting of mankind. Now, the preservation of the species is one of the necessary intentions of the religious law.

This very idea is the one the philosophers had in mind when they considered prophethood as something (intellectually) necessary for mankind. We have already shown the incorrectness of their reasoning. One of its premises is that the restraining influence comes into being only through a religious law from God, to which the mass submits as a matter of belief and religious creed. This premise is not acceptable. The restraining influence comes into being as the result of the impetus of royal authority and the forcefulness of the mighty, even if there is no religious law. This was the case among heathens and other nations who had no scriptures and had not been reached by a prophetic mission.

Or, we might say: In order to remove disagreement, it is sufficient that every individual should know that injustice is forbidden him by the authority of the intellect. Then, their claim that the removal of disagreement takes place only through the existence of the religious law in one case, and the position of the imam in another case, is not correct. It may (be removed) as well through the existence of powerful leaders, or through the people refraining from disagreement and mutual injustice, as through the position of the imam. Thus, the intellectual proof based upon that premise does not stand up. This shows that the necessity of (an imam) is indicated by the religious law, that is, by the consensus, as we have stated before.

Some people have taken the exceptional position of stating that the

position of imam is not necessary at all, neither according to the intellect nor according to the religious law. People who have held that opinion include the Mu'tazilah al-Aṣamm and certain Khârijites, among others. They think that it is necessary only to observe the religious laws. When Muslims agree upon (the practice of) justice and observance of the divine laws, no imam is needed, and the imamate is not necessary. Those (who so argue) are refuted by the consensus. They adopted such an opinion because they were (attempting to) escape the royal authority and its overbearing, domineering, and worldly ways. They had seen that the religious law was full of censure and blame for such things and for the people who practised them, and that it encouraged the desire to abolish them.

The religious law does not censure royal authority as such and does not forbid its exercise. It merely censures the evils resulting from it, such as tyranny, injustice, and pleasure-seeking. Here, no doubt, we have forbidden evils. They are the concomitants of royal authority. The religious law praises justice, fairness, the fulfilment of religious duties, and the defence of religion. It states that these things will of necessity find their reward (in the other world). Now, all these things are concomitants of royal authority, too. Thus, censure attaches to royal authority only on account of some of its qualities and conditions, not others. (The religious law) does not censure royal authority as such, nor does it seek to suppress it entirely. It also censures concupiscence and wrathfulness in responsible persons, but it does not want to see either of these qualities relinquished altogether, because necessity calls for their existence. It merely wants to see that proper use is made of them. David and Solomon possessed royal authority such as no one else ever possessed, yet they were divine prophets and belonged, in God's eyes, among the noblest human beings that ever existed.

Furthermore, we say to them: The (attempt to) dispense with royal authority by (assuming) that the institution (of the imamate) is not necessary does not help you at all. You agree that observance of the religious laws is a necessary thing. Now, that is achieved only through group feeling and power, and group feeling, by its very nature, requires royal authority. Thus, there will be royal authority, even if no imam is set up. Now, that is just what you (wanted to) dispense with.

If it has been established that the institution (of the imamate) is necessary by the consensus, (it must be added that this institution) is a community duty and is left to the discretion of all competent Muslims. It is their obligation to see to it that (the imamate) is set up, and everybody has to obey (the imam) in accordance with the

verse of the Qur'an, 'Obey God, and obey the apostle and the people in authority among you.'¹

It is not possible to appoint two men to the position (of imam) at the same time. Religious scholars generally are of this opinion, on the basis of certain traditions.

Others hold that (the prohibition against two imams) applies only to two imams in one locality, or where they would be close to each other. When there are great distances and the imam is unable to control the farther region, it is permissible to set up another imam there to take care of public interests. . . .

The pre-requisites governing the institution of (the imamate) are four: (1) knowledge, (2) probity, (3) competence, and (4) freedom of the senses and limbs from any defect that might affect judgment and action. There is a difference of opinion concerning a fifth pre-requisite, that is, (5) Qurashite descent.

(1) The necessity of knowledge as a pre-requisite is obvious. The imam can execute the divine laws only if he knows them. Those he does not know, he cannot properly present. His knowledge is satisfactory only if he is able to make independent decisions. Blind acceptance of tradition is a shortcoming, and the imamate requires perfection in all qualities and conditions.

(2) Probity is required because (the imamate) is a religious institution and supervises all the other institutions that require (this quality). There is no difference of opinion as to the fact that his probity is nullified by the actual commission of forbidden acts and the like. But there is a difference of opinion on the question of whether it is nullified by innovations in dogma.

(3) Competence means that he is willing to carry out the punishments fixed by law and to go to war. He must understand warfare and be able to assume responsibility for getting the people to fight. He also must know about group feeling and the fine points (of diplomacy). He must be strong enough to take care of political duties. All of which is to enable him to fulfil his functions of protecting religion, leading in the holy war against the enemy, maintaining the (religious) laws, and administering the (public) interests.

(4) Freedom of the senses and limbs from defects or disabilities such as insanity, blindness, muteness, or deafness, and from any loss of limbs affecting (the imam's) ability to act, such as missing hands, feet, or testicles, is a pre-requisite of the imamate, because all such defects affect his full ability to act and to fulfil his duties. Even in the case of a defect that merely disfigures the appearance, as, for instance,

¹ Qur'an 4: 59 (62).

loss of one limb, the condition of freedom from defects (remains in force as a condition in the sense that it) aims at his perfection.

Lack of freedom of action is connected with loss of limbs. Such a lack may be of two kinds. One is forced (inaction) and complete inability to act through imprisonment or the like. (Absence of any restriction upon freedom of action) is as necessary a condition (of the imamate) as freedom from bodily defects. The other kind is in a different category. (This lack of freedom of action implies that) some of (the imam's) men may gain power over him, although no disobedience or disagreement may be involved, and keep him in seclusion. Then, the problem is shifted to the person who has gained power. If he acts in accordance with Islam and justice and praiseworthy policies, it is permissible to acknowledge (him). If not, Muslims must look for help from persons who will restrain him and eliminate the unhealthy situation created by him, until the caliph's power of action is re-established.

(5) The pre-requisite of a Qurashite origin is based upon the consensus on this point that obtained in the men around Muḥammad on the day of Abū Bakr's elevation to the caliphate. . . .

Among those who deny that Qurashite descent is a condition of the imamate is Judge Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī. The Qurashite group feeling had come to disappear and dissolve (in his day), and non-Arab rulers controlled the caliphs. Therefore, when he saw what the condition of the caliphs was in his day, he dropped the pre-requisite of a Qurashite origin.

Scholars in general, however, retain Qurashite descent as a condition (of the imamate). (They maintain that) the imamate rightly belongs to a Qurashite, even if he is too weak to handle the affairs of the Muslims. Against them is the fact that this involves dropping the pre-requisite of competence, which requires that he have the power to discharge his duties. If his strength has gone with the disappearance of group feeling, his competence, too, is gone. And if the condition of competence be eliminated, that will reflect further upon knowledge and religion. (In this case, then, all) the conditions governing the institution would no longer be considered, and this would be contrary to the consensus. . . .

When one considers what God meant the caliphate to be, nothing more needs (to be said) about it. God made the caliph his substitute to handle the affairs of His servants. He is to make them do the things that are good for them and forbid them to do those that are harmful. He has been directly told so. A person who lacks the power to do a thing is never told directly to do it. The religious leader, Ibn al-Khaṭīb, said that most religious laws apply to women as they do to men. However, women are not directly told (to follow the religious

laws) by express reference to them in the text, but, in (Ibn al-Khaṭṭīb's) opinion, they are included only by way of analogical reasoning. That is because women have no power whatever. Men control their (actions), except in as far as the duties of divine worship are concerned, where everyone controls his own. Therefore, women are directly told (to fulfil the duties of divine worship) by express reference to them in the text, and not (merely) by way of analogical reasoning.

Furthermore, (the world of) existence attests to (the necessity of group feeling for the caliphate). Only he who has gained superiority over a nation or a race is able to handle its affairs. The religious law would hardly ever make a requirement in contradiction to the requirements of existence. . . .

26 *The transformation of the caliphate into royal authority*

Royal authority is the natural goal of group feeling. It results from group feeling, not by choice but through (inherent) necessity and the order of existence, as we have stated before. All religious laws and practices and everything that the masses are expected to do requires group feeling. Only with the help of group feeling can a claim be successfully pressed, as we have stated before.

Group feeling is necessary to the Muslim community. Its existence enables (the community) to fulfil what God expects of it. Still, we find that Muḥammad censured group feeling and urged us to reject it and to leave it alone. He said: 'God removed from you the arrogance of pre-Islamic times and its pride in ancestry. You are the children of Adam, and Adam was made of dust.' God said: 'Most noble among you in God's eyes is he who fears God most.'¹

We also find that Muḥammad censured royal authority and its representatives. He blamed them because of their enjoyment of good fortune, their senseless waste, and their deviations from the path of God. He enjoined friendship among all Muslims and warned against discord and dissension.

It should be known that in Muḥammad's opinion, all of this world is a vehicle for transport to the other world. He who loses the vehicle can go nowhere. When Muḥammad forbids or censures certain human activities or urges their omission, he does not want them to be neglected altogether. Nor does he want them to be completely eradicated, or the powers from which they result to remain altogether unused. He wants those powers to be employed as much as possible for the right aims. Every intention should thus eventually

¹ Qur'an 49. 13 (13).

become the right one and the direction of all human activities one and the same.

Muḥammad did not censure wrathfulness with the intention of eradicating it as a human quality. If the power of wrathfulness were no longer to exist in man, he would lose the ability to help the truth become victorious. There would no longer be holy war or glorification of the word of God. Muḥammad censured the wrathfulness that is in the service of Satan and reprehensible purposes, but the wrathfulness that is one in God and in the service of God deserves praise. Such praiseworthy wrathfulness was one of the qualities of Muḥammad.

Likewise, when he censures the desires, he does not want them to be abolished altogether, for a complete abolition of concupiscence in a person would make him defective and inferior. He wants the desires to be used for permissible purposes to serve the public interests, so that man becomes an active servant of God who willingly obeys the divine commands.

Likewise, when the religious law censures group feeling and says: 'Neither your blood relatives nor your children will be of use to you (on the Day of Resurrection)',¹ (such a statement) is directed against a group feeling that is used for worthless purposes, as was the case in pre-Islamic times. It is also directed against a group feeling that makes a person proud and superior. For an intelligent person to take such an attitude is considered a gratuitous action, which is of no use for the other world, the world of eternity. On the other hand, a group feeling that is working for the truth and for fulfilment of the divine commands is something desirable. If it were gone, religious laws would no longer be, because they materialize only through group feeling, as we have stated before.

Likewise, when Muḥammad censures royal authority, he does not censure it for gaining superiority through truth, for forcing the great mass to accept the faith, nor for looking after the (public) interests. He censures royal authority for achieving superiority through worthless means and for employing human beings for indulgence in (selfish) purposes and desires, as we have stated. If royal authority would sincerely exercise its superiority over men for the sake of God and so as to cause those men to worship God and to wage war against His enemies, there would not be anything reprehensible in it. . . .

When the Messenger of God was about to die, he appointed Abū Bakr as his representative to (lead the) prayers, since (prayer) was the most important religious activity. People were, thus, content to accept him as caliph, that is, as the person who causes the great mass to act according to the religious laws. No mention was made of royal

¹ Qur'an 60. 3 (3).

authority, because royal authority was suspected of being worthless, and because at that time it was the prerogative of unbelievers and enemies of Islam. Abû Bakr discharged the duties of his office in a manner pleasing to God, following the traditions of his master. He fought against apostates until all the Arabs were united in Islam. He then appointed 'Umar his successor. 'Umar followed Abû Bakr's example and fought against (foreign) nations. He defeated them and permitted the Arabs to appropriate their worldly possessions and their royal authority, and the Arabs did that.

The caliphate, then, went to 'Uthmân b. 'Affân and 'Alî. All these caliphs renounced royal authority and kept apart from its ways. They were strengthened in this attitude by the low standard of living in Islam and the desert outlook of the Arabs. The world and its luxuries were more alien to them than to any other nation, on account of their religion, which inspired asceticism where the good things of life were concerned, and on account of the desert outlook and habitat and the rude, severe life to which they were accustomed. No nation was more used to a life of hunger than the Muḍar. In the Hijâz, the Muḍar inhabited a country without agricultural or animal products. They were kept from the fertile plains, rich in grain, because the latter were too far away and were monopolized by the Rabî'ah and Yemenites who controlled them. They had no envy of the abundance of (those regions). They often ate scorpions and beetles. They were proud to eat *'ilhiḥ*, that is, camel hair ground with stones, mixed with blood, and then cooked. The Quraysh were in a similar situation with regard to food and housing.

Finally, the group feeling of the Arabs was consolidated in Islam through the prophethood of Muḥammad with which God honoured them. They then advanced against the Persians and Byzantines, and they looked for the land that God had truthfully promised and destined to them. They took away the royal authority of (the Persians and the Byzantines) and confiscated their worldly possessions. They amassed enormous fortunes. It went so far that one horseman obtained, as his share in one of the raids, about 30,000 gold pieces. The amounts they got were enormous. Still, they kept to their rude way of life. 'Umar used to patch his (only) garment with pieces of leather. 'Alî used to say: 'Gold and silver! Go and lure others, not me!' Abû Mûsâ refrained from eating chicken, because chickens were very rare among the Arabs of that time and not (generally) known to them. Sieves were altogether nonexistent among (the Bedouins), and they ate wheat kernels with the bran. Yet, the gains they made were greater than any ever made by other human beings.

Al-Mas'ûdî says: 'In the days of 'Uthmân, the men around

Muḥammad acquired estates and money. On the day 'Uthmân was killed, 150,000 dinars and 1,000,000 dirhams were in the hands of his treasurer. The value of his estates in Wâdî l-Qurâ and Ḥunayn and other places was 200,000 dinars. He also left many camels and horses. The eighth part of the estate of az-Zubayr after his death amounted to 50,000 dinars. He also left 1,000 horses and 1,000 female servants. Ṭalḥah's income from the 'Irâq was 1,000 dinars a day, and his income from the region of ash-Sharâh was more than that. The stable of 'Abd-ar-Raḥmân b. 'Awf contained 1,000 horses. He also had 1,000 camels and 10,000 sheep. One-fourth of his estate after his death amounted to 84,000. Zayd b. Thâbit left silver and gold that was broken into pieces with pickaxes, in addition to the (other) property and estates that he left, in the value of 100,000 dinars. Az-Zubayr built himself a residence in al-Baṣrah and other residences in Egypt and al-Kûfah and Alexandria. Ṭalḥah built one in al-Kûfah and had his residence in Medina improved. He used plaster, bricks, and teakwood. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqâṣ built himself a residence in al-'Aqîq, (a suburb of Medina). He made it high and spacious, and had balustrades put on top of it. Al-Miqdâd built his residence in Medina and had it plastered inside and out. Ya'lâ b. Munyah left 50,000 dinars and estates and other things the value of which amounted to 300,000 dirhams.' End of the quotation from al-Mas'ûdî.

Such were the gains people made. Their religion did not blame them for (amassing so much), because, as booty, it was lawful property. They did not employ their property wastefully but in a planned way in all their conditions, as we have stated. Amassing worldly property is reprehensible, but it did not reflect upon them, because blame attaches only to waste and lack of planning, as we have indicated. Since their expenditure followed a plan and served the truth and its ways, amassing (so much property) helped them along on the path of truth and served the purpose of attaining the other world.

Soon, the desert attitude of the Arabs and their low standard of living approached its end. The nature of royal authority—which is the necessary consequence of group feeling as we have stated—showed itself, and with it, there came superiority and force. Royal authority, as (the early Muslims) saw it, belonged in the same category as luxury and amassed property. They did not apply their superiority to worthless things, and they did not abandon the intentions of their religion or the ways of truth.

When trouble arose between 'Alî and Mu'âwiyah as a necessary consequence of group feeling, they were guided in (their dissensions) by the truth and by independent judgment. They did not fight for

any worldly purpose or over preferences of no value, or for reasons of personal enmity. This might be suspected, and heretics might like to think so. However, what caused their difference was their independent judgment as to where the truth lay. It was on this matter that each side opposed the point of view of the other. Even though 'Alī was in the right, Mu'āwiyah's intentions were not evil. He wanted the truth, but missed it. Each was right in so far as his intentions were concerned. Now, the nature of royal authority requires that one person claim all the glory for himself and appropriate it to himself. It was not for Mu'āwiyah to deny (the natural requirement of royal authority) to himself and his people. (Royal authority) was a natural thing that group feeling, by its very nature, brought in its train. Even the Umayyads and those of their followers who were not after the truth like Mu'āwiyah felt that. They banded together around him and were willing to die for him. Had Mu'āwiyah tried to lead them on another course of action, had he opposed them and not claimed all the power for (himself and them), it would have meant the dissolution of the whole thing that he had consolidated. It was more important to him to keep it together than to bother about a course of action that could not entail much criticism.

When royal authority is obtained and we assume that one person has it all for himself, no objection can be raised if he uses it for the various ways and aspects of the truth. Solomon and his father David had the royal authority of the Israelites for themselves, as the nature of royal authority requires, and it is well known how great a share in prophecy and truth they possessed.

Likewise, Mu'āwiyah appointed Yazīd as his successor, because he was afraid of the dissolution of the whole thing, inasmuch as the Umayyads did not like to see the power handed over to any outsider. Had Mu'āwiyah appointed anyone else his successor, the Umayyads would have been against him. Moreover, they had a good opinion of Yazīd. Mu'āwiyah would not have been the man to appoint Yazīd his successor, had he believed him to be really so wicked. Such an assumption must be absolutely excluded in Mu'āwiyah's case.

The same applies to Marwān b. al-Hakam and his sons. Even though they were kings, their royal ways were not those of worthless men and oppressors. They complied with the intentions of the truth with all their energy, except when necessity caused them to do something (unworthy). Such (a necessity existed) when there was fear that the whole thing might face dissolution. (To avoid that) was more important to them than any (other) intention. That this was (their attitude) is attested by the fact that they followed and imitated (the early Muslims).

Then came the later Umayyads. As far as their worldly purposes and intentions were concerned, they acted as the nature of royal authority required. They forgot the deliberate planning and the reliance upon the truth that had guided the activities of their predecessors. This caused the people to censure their actions and to accept the 'Abbāsīd propaganda in the place of the Umayyads'. Thus, the 'Abbāsīds took over the government. The probity of the 'Abbāsīds was outstanding. They used their royal authority to further, as far as possible, the different aspects and ways of the truth. (The early 'Abbāsīds) eventually were succeeded by the descendants of ar-Rashīd. Among them there were good and bad men. Later on, when the power passed to their descendants, they gave royal authority and luxury their due. They became enmeshed in worldly affairs of no value and turned their backs on Islam. Therefore, God permitted them to be ruined, and the Arabs to be completely deprived of their power, which He gave to others. Whoever considers the biographies of these caliphs and their different approaches to truth and worthlessness knows that what we have stated is correct. . . .

It has thus become clear how the caliphate was transformed into royal authority. The form of government in the beginning was a caliphate. Everybody had his restraining influence in himself, that is, (the restraining influence of) Islam. They preferred (Islam) to their worldly affairs, even if (the neglect of worldly affairs) led to their own destruction.

When 'Uthmān was besieged in his house, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar, Ibn Ja'far, and others came and offered to defend him. But he refused and did not permit swords to be drawn among Muslims. He feared a split and wanted to preserve the harmony that would keep the whole thing intact, even if it could be done only at the cost of his own destruction.

At the beginning of his (term of) office, 'Alī himself was advised by al-Mughīrah to leave az-Zubayr, Mu'āwiyah, and Ṭalḥah in their positions, until the people had agreed to render the oath of allegiance to him and the whole thing was consolidated. After that, he might do what he wanted. That was good power politics. 'Alī, however, refused. He wanted to avoid deceit, because deceit is forbidden by Islam. Al-Mughīrah came back to him the following morning and said: 'I gave you that advice yesterday, but then I reconsidered it and realized that it was neither right nor good advice. You were right.' 'Alī replied: 'Indeed, no. I know that the advice you gave me yesterday was good advice and that you are deceiving me today. However, regard for the truth prevented me from following your good advice.' To such a degree were these early Muslims concerned with improving their religion at the expense of their worldly affairs.

It has thus been shown how the form of government came to be royal authority. However, there remained the traits that were characteristic of the caliphate, namely, preference for Islam and its ways, and adherence to the path of truth. A change became apparent only in the restraining influence that had been Islam and now came to be group feeling and the sword. That was the situation in the time of Mu'āwiyah, Marwān, his son 'Abd-al-Malik, and the first 'Abbāsīd caliphs down to ar-Rashīd and some of his sons. Then, the characteristic traits of the caliphate disappeared, and only its name remained. The form of government came to be royal authority pure and simple. Superiority attained the limits of its nature and was employed for particular (worthless) purposes, such as the use of force and the arbitrary gratification of desires and for pleasure.

This was the case with the successors of the sons of 'Abd-al-Malik and the 'Abbāsīds after al-Mu'taṣīm and al-Mutawakkil. They remained caliphs in name, because the Arab group feeling continued to exist. In these two stages caliphate and royal authority existed side by side. Then, with the disappearance of Arab group feeling and the annihilation of the race and complete destruction of (Arabism), the caliphate lost its identity. The form of government remained royal authority pure and simple.

This was the case, for instance, with the non-Arab rulers in the East. They showed obedience to the caliph in order to enjoy the blessings (involved in that), but royal authority belonged to them with all its titles and attributes. The caliph had no share in it.

It is thus clear that the caliphate at first existed without royal authority. Then, the characteristic traits of the caliphate became mixed up and confused. Finally, when its group feeling had separated from the group feeling of the caliphate, royal authority came to exist alone.

27 *The meaning of the oath of allegiance*

It should be known that the *bay'ah* (oath of allegiance) is a contract to render obedience. It is as though the person who renders the oath of allegiance made a contract with his amir, to the effect that he surrenders supervision of his own affairs and those of the Muslims to him and that he will not contest his authority and that he will obey him by (executing) all the duties with which he might be charged, whether agreeable or disagreeable.

When people rendered the oath of allegiance to the amir and concluded the contract, they put their hands into his hand to confirm the contract. This was considered to be something like the action of buyer and seller (after concluding a bargain). Therefore, the oath of

allegiance was called *bay'ah*, the infinitive of *bā'a* 'to sell (or buy)'. The *bay'ah* was a handshake. Such is its meaning in customary linguistic terminology and the accepted usage of the religious law.

The oath of allegiance that is common at present is the Persian custom of greeting kings by kissing the earth, or their hand, their foot, or the lower hem of their garment. The term *bay'ah*, which means a contract to render obedience, was used metaphorically to denote this, since such an abject form of greeting and politeness is one of the consequences and concomitants of obedience. (The practice) has become so general that it has become customary and has replaced the handshake which was originally used, because shaking hands with everybody meant that the ruler lowered himself and made himself cheap, things that are detrimental to leadership and the dignity of the royal position. However, (the handshake is practised) by a very few rulers who want to show themselves humble and who, therefore, themselves shake hands with their nobles and with famous divines among their subjects.

This customary meaning of the oath of allegiance should be understood. A person must know it, because it imposes upon him certain duties toward his ruler and imam. His actions will thus not be frivolous or gratuitous. This should be taken into consideration in one's dealings with rulers.

28 *The succession*

We have been discussing the imamate and mentioned the fact that it is part of the religious law because it serves the (public) interest. (We have stated) that its real meaning is the supervision of the interests of the Muslim nation in both their worldly and their religious affairs. (The caliph) is their guardian and trustee. He looks after their (affairs) as long as he lives. It follows that he should also look after their (affairs) after his death, and, therefore, should appoint someone to take charge of them as he had done, someone they can trust to look after them as they had trusted him then.

The appointment of a successor is recognized as part of the religious law through the consensus of the (Muslim) nation, (which says) that it is permissible and binding when it occurs. Thus, Abū Bakr appointed 'Umar as his successor in the presence of the men around Muḥammad. They considered (this appointment) permissible and considered themselves obliged by it to render obedience to 'Umar. Likewise, 'Umar appointed six persons to be members of (an electoral) council.

No suspicion of the imam is justified in this connection, even if he appoints his father or his son his successor. He is trusted to look after

emphatically. He is referring to the external causes we have mentioned before, but he is not right. What is the fact proven to make for superiority is the situation with regard to group feeling. If one side has a group feeling comprising all, while the other side is made up of numerous different groups, and if both sides are approximately the same in numbers, then the side with a united group feeling is stronger than, and superior to, the side that is made up of several different groups. . . .

36 *Taxation and the reason for low and high tax revenues*

It should be known that at the beginning of a dynasty, taxation yields a large revenue from small assessments. At the end of the dynasty, taxation yields a small revenue from large assessments.

The reason for this is that when the dynasty follows the ways of Islam, it imposes only such taxes as are stipulated by the religious law, such as charity taxes, the land tax, and the poll tax. These have fixed limits that cannot be exceeded.

When the dynasty follows the ways of group feeling and (political) superiority, it necessarily has at first a desert attitude, as has been mentioned before. The desert attitude requires kindness, reverence, humility, respect for the property of other people, and disinclination to appropriate it, except in rare instances. Therefore, the individual imposts and assessments, which together constitute the tax revenue, are low. When tax assessments and imposts upon the subjects are low, the latter have the energy and desire to do things. Cultural enterprises grow and increase, because the low taxes bring satisfaction. When cultural enterprises grow, the number of individual imposts and assessments mounts. In consequence, the tax revenue, which is the sum total of (the individual assessments), increases.

When the dynasty continues in power and their rulers follow each other in succession, they become sophisticated. The Bedouin attitude and simplicity lose their significance, and the Bedouin qualities of moderation and restraint disappear. Royal authority with its tyranny and sedentary culture that stimulates sophistication, make their appearance. The people of the dynasty then acquire qualities of character related to cleverness. Their customs and needs become more varied because of the prosperity and luxury in which they are immersed. As a result, the individual imposts and assessments upon the subjects, agricultural labourers, farmers, and all the other taxpayers, increase. Every individual impost and assessment is greatly increased, in order to obtain a higher tax revenue. Customs duties are placed upon articles of commerce and (levied) at the city gates. Then, gradual increases in the amount of the assessments succeed

each other regularly, in correspondence with the gradual increase in the luxury customs and many needs of the dynasty and the spending required in connection with them. Eventually, the taxes will weigh heavily upon the subjects and overburden them. Heavy taxes become an obligation and tradition, because the increases took place gradually, and no one knows specifically who increased them or levied them. They lie upon the subjects like an obligation and tradition.

The assessments increase beyond the limits of equity. The result is that the interest of the subjects in cultural enterprises disappears, since when they compare expenditures and taxes with their income and gain and see the little profit they make, they lose all hope. Therefore, many of them refrain from all cultural activity. The result is that the total tax revenue goes down, as individual assessments go down. Often, when the decrease is noticed, the amounts of individual imposts are increased. This is considered a means of compensating for the decrease. Finally, individual imposts and assessments reach their limit. It would be of no avail to increase them further. The costs of all cultural enterprise are now too high, the taxes are too heavy, and the profits anticipated fail to materialize. Finally, civilization is destroyed, because the incentive for cultural activity is gone. It is the dynasty that suffers from the situation, because it profits from cultural activity.

If one understands this, he will realize that the strongest incentive for cultural activity is to lower as much as possible the amounts of individual imposts levied upon persons capable of undertaking cultural enterprises. In this manner, such persons will be psychologically disposed to undertake them, because they can be confident of making a profit from them.

37 *In the later years of dynasties, customs duties are levied*

At the beginning, dynasties maintain the Bedouin attitude. Therefore, they have few needs, since luxury and the habits that go with it do not yet exist. Expenses and expenditures are small. At that time, revenue from taxes pays for much more than the necessary expenditure, and there is a large surplus.

The dynasty, then, soon starts to adopt the luxury and luxury customs of sedentary culture, and follows the course that had been taken by previous dynasties. The result is that the expenses of the people of the dynasty grow. Especially do the expenses of the ruler mount excessively, on account of his expenditure for his entourage and the great number of allowances he has to grant. The revenue from taxes cannot pay for all that. Therefore, the dynasty must

increase its revenues, because the militia needs ever larger allowances and the ruler needs more money to meet his expenditure. At first, the amounts of individual imposts and assessments are increased; then, as expenses and needs increase under the influence of the gradual growth of luxury customs and additional allowances for the militia, the dynasty is affected by senility. Its people are too weak to collect the taxes from the provinces and remote areas. Thus, the revenue from taxes decreases, while the habits (requiring money) increase. As they increase, salaries and allowances to the soldiers also increase. Therefore, the ruler must invent new kinds of taxes. He levies them on commerce. He imposes taxes of a certain amount on prices realized in the markets and on the various (imported) goods at the city gates. (The ruler) is, after all, forced to this because people have become spoiled by generous allowances, and because of the growing numbers of soldiers and militiamen. In the later (years) of a dynasty, (taxation) may become excessive. Business falls off, because all hopes (of profit) are destroyed, permitting the dissolution of civilization and reflecting upon (the status of) the dynasty. This (situation) becomes more and more aggravated, until the dynasty disintegrates.

Much of this sort happened in the Eastern cities during the later days of the 'Abbāsid and 'Ubaydid-Fāṭimid dynasties. Taxes were levied even upon pilgrims making the pilgrimage. The same also happened in Spain at the time of the *reyes de taifas*

38 *Commercial activity on the part of the ruler is harmful to his subjects and ruinous to the tax revenue*

A dynasty may find itself in financial straits, as we have mentioned before, on account of the number of (its luxurious) habits and on account of its expenditure and the insufficiency of the tax revenue to pay for its needs. It may require more money and higher revenues. Then, it sometimes imposes customs duties on the commercial activities of its subjects. Sometimes, it increases the kinds of customs duties, if (customs duties as such) had been introduced before. Sometimes, it applies torture to its officials and tax collectors and sucks their bones dry. (This happens) when officials and tax collectors are observed to have appropriated a good deal of tax money, which their accounts do not show.

Sometimes, the ruler himself may engage in commerce and agriculture, from desire to increase his revenues. He sees that merchants and farmers make (large) profits and have plenty of property and that their gains correspond to the capital they invest. Therefore, he starts to acquire livestock and fields in order to cultivate them for

profit, purchase goods, and expose himself to fluctuations of the market. He thinks that this will improve his revenues and increase his profits.

However, this is a great error. It causes harm to the subjects in many ways. First, farmers and merchants will find it difficult to buy livestock and merchandise and to procure cheaply the things that belong to (farming and commerce). The subjects have all the same or approximately the same amount of wealth. Competition between them already exhausts, or comes close to exhausting, their financial resources. Now, when the ruler, who has so much more money than they, competes with them, scarcely a single one of them will any longer be able to obtain the things he wants, and everybody will become worried and unhappy.

Furthermore, the ruler can appropriate much of (the agricultural produce and the available merchandise), if it occurs to him. (He can do this) by force or by buying things up at the cheapest possible price. Further, there may be no one who would dare to bid against him. Thus, he will be able to force the seller to lower his price. Further, when agricultural products such as corn, silk, honey, and sugar, etc., or goods of any kind, become available, the ruler cannot wait for a favourable market and a boom, because he has to take care of government needs. Therefore, he forces the merchants or farmers who deal in these particular products to buy from him. He will be satisfied only with the highest prices and more. (The merchants and farmers, on the other hand), will exhaust their liquid capital in such transactions. The merchandise they thus acquire will remain useless on their hands. They themselves will no longer be able to trade, which is what enables them to earn something and make their living. Often, they need money. Then, they have to sell the goods (that they were forced to buy from the ruler), at the lowest prices, during a slump in the market. Often, the merchant or farmer has to do the same thing over again. He thus exhausts his capital and has to go out of business.

This becomes an oft-repeated process. The trouble and financial difficulties and the loss of profit that it causes the subjects take away from them all incentives to effort, thus ruining the fiscal (structure). Most of the revenue from taxes comes from farmers and merchants, especially once customs duties have been introduced and the tax revenue has been augmented by means of them. Thus, when the farmer gives up agriculture and the merchant goes out of business, the revenue from taxes vanishes altogether or becomes dangerously low.

Were the ruler to compare the revenue from taxes with the small profits (he reaps from trading himself), he would find the latter

negligible in comparison with the former. Even if (his trading) were profitable, it would still deprive him of a good deal of his revenue from taxes, so far as commerce is concerned. It is unlikely that customs duties would be levied on (the ruler's commercial activities). If, however, the same deals were made by others, the customs duties would be included in the tax total.

Furthermore, (the trading of the ruler) may cause the destruction of civilization and hence the disintegration of the dynasty. When the subjects can no longer make their capital larger through agriculture and commerce, it will decrease and disappear as the result of expenditure. This will ruin their situation.

The Persians made no one king except members of the royal house. Further, they chose him from among those who possessed virtue, religion, education, liberality, bravery, and nobility. Then, they stipulated in addition that he should be just. Also, he was not to take a farm, as this would harm his neighbours. He was not to engage in trade, as this would of necessity raise the prices of all goods. And he was not to use slaves as servants, since they would not give good and beneficial advice.

It should be known that the finances of a ruler can be increased, and his financial resources improved, only through the revenue from taxes. This can be improved only through the equitable treatment of people with property and regard for them, so that their hopes rise, and they have the incentive to start making their capital bear fruit and grow. This, in turn, increases the ruler's revenues in taxes.

Amirs and other men in power in a country who engage in commerce and agriculture, reach a point where they undertake to buy agricultural products and goods from their owners who come to them, at prices fixed by themselves as they see fit. Then, they resell these things to the subjects under their control, at the proper times, at prices fixed by themselves. This is even more dangerous, harmful, and ruinous for the subjects than the aforementioned (procedure). The ruler is often influenced to choose such a (course) by those sorts of people—I mean, merchants and farmers—who bring him into contact with the profession in which they have been reared. They work with him, but for their own profit, to garner quickly as much money as they may wish, especially through profits reaped from doing business without having to pay taxes and customs duties. Exemption from taxes and customs duties is more likely than anything else to cause one's capital to grow, and it brings quick profits. These people do not understand how much damage is caused the ruler by each decrease in the revenue from taxes. The ruler, therefore, must guard against such persons, and not pay any attention to suggestions that are harmful to his revenues and his rule.

39 *The ruler and his entourage are wealthy only in the middle period of the dynasty*

The reason for this is that at the beginning of the dynasty, the revenues are distributed among the tribe and the people who share in the ruler's group feeling, in accordance with their usefulness and group feeling and because they are needed to establish the dynasty. Under these circumstances, their leader refrains in their favour from (claiming) the revenues which they would like to have. He feels compensated by the control over them that he hopes to establish. They can put pressure on him, and he needs them. His share of the revenues is restricted to the very small (amounts) he needs. Consequently, the members of his entourage and company, his wazirs, secretaries, and clients, usually can be observed to be destitute. Their position is restricted, because it depends on the position of their master, and his authority is narrowed down by the competition of the people who share in his group feeling.

Then, when royal authority has come into its own and the ruler has obtained control over his people, he prevents them from getting (any part of) the revenues, beyond their official shares. Their portions shrink, because their usefulness to the dynasty has diminished. Their influence has been checked, and clients and followers have come to share with them in the support of the dynasty and the establishment of its power. At this time, the ruler disposes alone of the whole income from taxes, or the greater part of it. He keeps this money, and holds it for spending on important projects. His wealth grows. His treasuries are filled. The authority of his position expands, and he dominates all his people. As a consequence, the men of his entourage and retinue, the wazir, the secretary, the doorkeeper, the client, and the policeman, all become more important, and their positions expand. They acquire property and enrich themselves.

Then, when the dynasty starts to become senile, as the result of the dissolution of group feeling and the disappearance of the tribe that founded it, the ruler needs supporters and helpers, because there are then many seceders, rivals, and rebels, and there is the fear of destruction. His revenues then go to his allies and supporters, military men who have their own group feelings. He spends his treasures and revenues on attempts to restore (the power of) the dynasty. Moreover, the revenue from taxes decreases, because there are many allowances to be paid and expenditure to be made. The revenues from the land tax decrease. The dynasty's need for money becomes more urgent. The intimates, the doorkeepers, and the secretaries no longer live under the shadow of prosperity and luxury, as their positions lose importance and the authority of the ruler shrinks.

The ruler's need for money at this time becomes even more urgent. The new generation within his inner circle and entourage spend the money with which their fathers had enriched themselves, for a purpose for which it was not intended, namely, that of helping the ruler. They begin to be no longer as sincerely loyal as their fathers and ancestors had been. The ruler, in turn, becomes of the opinion that he is more entitled than they to the wealth that was acquired during the reign of his predecessors and with the help of their position. He takes it and appropriates it for himself, gradually and according to their ranks. Thus the dynasty makes itself unpopular with them. It loses its entourage and great personalities and its rich and wealthy intimates. A great part of the edifice of glory crumbles, after having been supported and built up to a great height by those who shared in it.

Anticipating such dangerous situations, most of the people in the dynasty try to avoid holding any government position. They try to escape from government control and go to some other region with the government property they have acquired. They are of the opinion that this will be more wholesome for them and give them the opportunity to spend and enjoy (their money) in greater safety. This assumption is a great mistake and a self-deception that will ruin them materially.

It should be known that it is difficult and impossible to escape (from official life) after having once been in it. When the person who has such intentions is the ruler himself, his subjects and the people who share in his group feeling and crowd around him will not for a moment permit him to escape. If any such (intention) on his part becomes visible, it means the destruction of his realm and his own ruin, the usual result in such a case, for it is difficult to escape from the servitude of royal authority, especially when the dynasty has reached its peak and its authority is shrinking, and it is becoming more remote from glory and good qualities, and acquiring bad qualities.

If the person who intends to escape is one of the ruler's inner circle and entourage or one of the dignitaries in his dynasty, he rarely is given the opportunity to do so. The reason is, in the first place, that rulers consider their people and entourage and, indeed, all their subjects as slaves familiar with their thoughts and sentiments. Therefore, they are not disposed to loosen the bonds of servitude binding those persons. They want to avoid the chance that someone (outside) might come to know (their secrets) and their circumstances (through such persons), and they are averse to letting them become the servants of others.

The Spanish Umayyads thus prevented their people from going abroad to fulfil the duty of the pilgrimage. They were afraid they might fall into the hands of the 'Abbāsids. During all their days, none of their people made the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage was again permitted to (Spaniards) who belonged to the dynasties in Spain, only after the Umayyad rule had come to an end, and Spain had reverted to control of the *reyes de taifas*.

In the second place, even if rulers were kind enough to loosen the bonds (of a person who intended to escape from their control), their kindness would not extend to leaving his property alone. They consider it part of their own wealth—in the same way that its owner has been part of their dynasty—inasmuch as it was obtained only through the dynasty and under the shadow of its authority. Therefore, they are most eager to take his property and to let it remain as it is, as something belonging to the dynasty that they are entitled to use.

Furthermore, assuming that he gets away with his property to some other region, which happens in very rare cases, (he is not safe there either, because) the eyes of the rulers in that region fall on him, and they dispossess him by indirect threats and intimidation or by ment property, which should be spent in the public interest. If the eyes of (rulers) can fall upon rich and wealthy people who have acquired their money in the exercise of a profession, it is all the more understandable that their eyes can fall upon tax moneys and government property, to which they have access by law and custom. . . .

40 Curtailment of the allowances given by the ruler implies curtailment of the tax revenue

The reason for this is that dynasty and government serve as the world's greatest market-place, providing the substance of civilization. Now, if the ruler holds on to property and revenue, or they are lost or not properly used by him, then the property in the possession of the ruler's entourage will be small. The gifts which they, in their turn, had been used to give to their entourage and people, stop, and all their expenditure is cut down. They constitute the greatest number of people (who make expenditures), and their expenditure provides more of the substance of trade than that of any other (group). (When they stop spending), business slumps and commercial profits decline because of the shortage of capital. Revenues from the land tax decrease, because the land tax and taxation depend on cultural activity, commercial transactions, business prosperity, and the people's demand for gain and profit. It is the dynasty that suffers

from the situation, because under these circumstances the property of the ruler decreases in consequence of the decrease in revenues from the land tax. The dynasty is the greatest market, the mother and base of all trade, the substance of income and expenditure. If government business slumps and the volume of trade is small, the dependent markets will naturally show the same symptoms, and to a greater degree. Furthermore, money circulates between subjects and ruler, moving back and forth. Now, if the ruler keeps it to himself, it is lost to the subjects.

41 *Injustice brings about the ruin of civilization*

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. 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, affecting all means of making a livelihood, business inactivity, too, becomes general. 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 sparse. The settlements there become empty. The cities lie in ruins. The disintegration 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.

One may compare here the story that al-Mas'ûdî tells in connection with the history of the Persians. In the days of King Bahrâm b. Bahrâm, the Mōbedhân, the chief religious dignitary among the Persians, expressed to the King his disapproval of the latter's injustice and indifference to 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 an owl's cry, asked the Mōbedhân whether he understood what it was saying. He 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 Bahrâm, 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 fulfil."

The King was stirred out of his negligence by that story. He had a private (talk) with the Mōbedhân and asked him what he had in mind. He 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 them 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. Neighbouring 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 teaches is that injustice ruins civilization, which has as its consequence the complete destruction of the dynasty. In this connection, one should disregard the fact that dynasties (centred) 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 consequently.

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 labour, 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 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, inasmuch as civilization, which is the substance of the dynasty, is ruined when people have lost all incentive.

This is what Muḥammad 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) 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 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.

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.

One of the greatest injustices and one contributing most to the destruction of civilization is the unjustified imposition of tasks and the use of the subjects for forced labour. This is so because labour belongs to the things that constitute capital. Gain and sustenance represent the value realized from labour among civilized people. By their efforts and all their labours they (acquire) capital and (make a) profit. They have no other way to make a profit except (through labour). Subjects employed in cultural enterprises gain their livelihood and profit from such activities. Now, if they are obliged to work outside their own field and are used for forced labour unrelated to their (ordinary ways of) making a living, they no longer have any profit and are thus deprived of the price of their labour, which is their capital (asset). They suffer, and a good deal of their livelihood is gone, or even all of it. If this occurs repeatedly, all incentive to cultural enterprise is destroyed, and they cease utterly to make an effort. This leads to the destruction and ruin of civilization.

An injustice even greater and more destructive of civilization and the dynasty is the appropriation of people's property by buying their possessions as cheaply as possible and then reselling the merchandise to them at the highest possible prices by means of forced sales and purchases. Often, people have to accept (high) prices with the privilege of later payment. They console themselves for the loss they suffer with the hope that the market will fluctuate in favour of the merchandise that had been sold to them at such a high price, and that their loss will be cancelled later on. But then, they are required to make payment at once, and they are forced to sell the merchandise at the lowest possible price. The loss involved in the two transactions affects their capital.

This (situation) affects all kinds of merchants, those resident in town and those who import merchandise from elsewhere, the pedlars and shopkeepers who deal in food and fruit, and the craftsmen who deal in the instruments and implements that are in general use. The loss affects all professions and classes quite generally. This goes on from hour to hour. It causes capital funds to dwindle. The only possibility that remains is for the merchants to go out of business, because their capital is gone, as it can no longer be restored by the profits. Merchants who come from elsewhere for the purchase and

sale of merchandise are slow to come, because of that situation. Business declines, and the subjects lose their livelihood, which, generally, comes from trading. Therefore, if no (trading) is being done in the markets, they have no livelihood, and the tax revenue of the ruler decreases or deteriorates, since, in the middle (period) of a dynasty and later on, most of the tax revenue comes from customs duties on commerce. This leads to the dissolution of the dynasty and the decay of urban civilization. The disintegration comes about gradually and imperceptibly.

This happens whenever the ways and means of seizing property described above are used. On the other hand, if it is taken outright and if the hostile acts are extended to affect the property, the wives, the lives, the skins, and the honour of people, it will lead to sudden disintegration and decay and the quick destruction of the dynasty. It will result in disturbances leading to complete destruction.

On account of these evil consequences, all such (unfair activities) are prohibited by the religious law. The religious law legalizes the use of cunning in trading, but forbids depriving people of their property illegally. The purpose is to prevent such evil (consequences), which would lead to the destruction of civilization through disturbances or the lack of opportunity to make a living.

It should be known that all these (practices) are caused by the need for more money on the part of dynasty and ruler, because they have become accustomed to luxurious living. Their expenditure increases, and much spending is done. Their ordinary income does not meet (the expenditures). Therefore, the ruler invents new sorts and kinds of taxes, in order to increase the revenues and to be able to balance the budget. But luxury continues to grow, and spending increases on account of it. The need for (appropriating) people's property becomes stronger and stronger. In this way, the authority of the dynasty shrinks until its influence is wiped out and its identity lost and it is defeated by an attacker.

42 How it happens that access to the ruler becomes restricted in the dynasty. Such restriction becomes important when the dynasty grows senile

At the beginning, the dynasty is remote from royal aspirations. It needs group feeling through which its power and domination can materialize, and the desert attitude is characteristic of group feeling.

A dynasty based upon religion is remote from royal aspirations. In one based exclusively upon superior (political) power, the desert attitude, through which superiority is achieved, likewise is remote from royal aspirations and ways.

Now, if a dynasty at the beginning of its rule is a Bedouin one, the

ruler possesses austerity and the desert attitude. He is close to the people and easily accessible. Then, when his power is firmly established, he comes to claim all the glory for himself. He needs to keep away from the people and to remain aloof with his friends, in order to be able to talk with them about his (private) affairs, since his following has by then become large. Therefore, he seeks to keep away from the common people as much as possible. He employs someone at his door to admit those of his friends and of the people of the dynasty whom he cannot avoid, and to prevent people (in general) from having access to him.

Then, when royal authority flourishes and royal ways and aspirations make their appearance, the ruler adopts royal character qualities. They are strange, peculiar qualities. They must be carefully dealt with in the proper way by those who are in contact with them. Persons in contact with (rulers) often do not know about these qualities and may do something that (rulers) do not like. He may become displeased with them and get into the mood of punishing them. Thus, knowledge of manners to be used in intercourse with (rulers) became the sole property of their special friends. (The rulers) kept all except their intimates from meeting them at all times, so as to protect themselves against noticing anything that might displease them and in order to protect the people against exposing themselves to punishment. Thus, (they) introduced another entrance restriction even more selective than the first. The first concerns the ruler's special friends and prevents everyone else's admission. The second restriction concerns the meetings with those friends and prevents admission of everyone else from among the common people.

The first entrance restriction originated in the days of Mu'awiyah and 'Abd-al-Malik and the Umayyad caliphs. Then, the 'Abbâsîd dynasty made its appearance. Its famous luxury and power came into being, and the royal qualities reached their proper perfection in it. This called for the second entrance restriction. The name of 'doorkeeper' was restricted to it. The court of the caliphs contained two buildings to house their retinue, one for the special group and another for the common people. This is stated in 'Abbâsîd history.

In the later dynasties, a third entrance restriction came into being. It was even more selective than the two previous ones. This occurred at the period when the attempt was made to seclude the ruler. It resulted from the fact that the first step taken by the men of the dynasty and intimates of the ruler who set up the young princes and attempted to gain control over them, was to keep the inner circle and the special friends of (the young ruler's) father away from him. The person who attempted to gain control over the young ruler suggested to him that it would diminish respect for him and would

destroy the rules of etiquette if these men were to be in contact with him. His purpose was to keep the young ruler from meeting anybody else and see to it that he would become so used to him that he would not want to replace him with anybody else until he securely dominated him. An entrance restriction such as (the third) was obviously required under these circumstances. It indicates the senility and decline of the dynasty. It is one of the things that the members of dynasties are afraid of. Those who support the dynasty will naturally attempt such a thing when the dynasty reaches senility and later-born members of the ruling family lose control. Human beings love very much to gain control over royal authority, especially when the soil is prepared and all the requirements and symptoms are there.

43 *The division of one dynasty into two*

It should be known that the first (perceptible) consequence of a dynasty's senility is that it splits. This is because, when royal authority comes into its own and achieves the utmost luxury and prosperity and when the ruler controls all the glory and has it all for himself, he is too proud to let anyone share in it. As far as possible, he eliminates all claims in this direction by destroying those of his relatives who are possible candidates for his position and whom he suspects.

Those who participate with the ruler in this (activity) often fear for their own (safety) and take refuge in remote parts of the realm. People who are in the same situation as they of running a risk and becoming suspect, join them there and gather around them. At that time the authority of the dynasty has already begun to shrink and to withdraw from the remote parts of the realm. Thus, the refugee related (to the dynasty) gains control. His power grows continually, while the authority of the dynasty shrinks. Eventually he becomes, or almost becomes, an equal partner in the dynasty.

This may be observed in the Arab Muslim dynasty. Its power was great and concentrated and its authority far-flung. Then the Umayyads lost control, and the 'Abbāsids took over. The Arab dynasty had, by that time, achieved the utmost superiority and luxury, and was beginning to shrink. 'Abd-ar-Raḥmān I ad-Dākhil took refuge in Spain, the most remote region of the Muslim dynasty. He founded a realm there and severed it from the 'Abbāsīd cause. Thus, he made two dynasties out of one. Then, Idrīs took refuge in the Maghrib and seceded and seized power there.

Later on, the 'Abbāsīd dynasty shrank more and more. The Aghlabids were stirred up to resist it. Then, the Shi'ah (the 'Ubaydid-Fāṭimids) seceded. The Kutāmāh and the Ṣinhājāh supported them,

and they took possession of Ifrīqiyah and the Maghrib, and then conquered Egypt, Syria, and the Hījāz. They defeated the Idrīsids and divided the ('Abbāsīd) dynasty into two more, so that the Arab ('Abbāsīd) dynasty now consisted of three (independent) dynasties: the 'Abbāsīds at the centre and base of the Arab world and at the source of Islam; the Umayyads, who had renewed their old royal authority and caliphate of the East in Spain; and the 'Ubaydid (-Fāṭimids) in Ifrīqiyah, Egypt, Syria, and the Hījāz. These dynasties continued to exist until their destruction was imminent or complete. . . .

The process of splitting may lead to the formation of more than two or three dynasties that are not controlled by members of the (original) ruling family. This was the case with the *reyes de taifas* in Spain, with the non-Arab rulers in the East, and in other realms. . . .

44 *Once senility has come upon a dynasty, it cannot be warded off*

We have already cited the symptoms and causes of senility, one by one. We have explained that it is natural for the causes of senility to affect the dynasty. If, then, senility is something natural to the life of the dynasty, it must come about in the same way natural things come about, exactly as senility affects the temper of living beings. Senility is a chronic disease that cannot be cured or made to disappear because it is something natural, and natural things do not change.

Many a politically conscious person among the people of the dynasty becomes alert to it and notices the symptoms and causes of senility that have affected his dynasty. He considers it possible to make that senility disappear. Therefore, he takes it upon himself to repair the dynasty and relieve its temper of senility. He supposes that it resulted from shortcomings or negligence on the part of former members. This is not so. These things are natural to the dynasty. Customs that have developed prevent him from repairing it. Customs are like a second nature. A person who, for instance, has seen his father and the older members of his family wear silk and brocade and use gold ornaments for weapons and mounts and be inaccessible to the people in their salons and at prayer, will not be able to diverge from the customs of his forebears in this respect. He will not be able to use coarse dress and apparel and mingle with the people. Custom would prevent him and expose him if he were to do this. Were he to do it, he would be accused of madness for his brusque disregard of custom. There is the danger that it would have bad consequences for his government.

One might contrast (this with) the disregard for custom and

opposition to it shown by the prophets. However, the prophets had divine support and celestial help.

Group feeling has often disappeared (when the dynasty has grown senile), and pomp has taken the place it occupied in the souls of men. Now, when in addition to the weakening of group feeling, pomp, too, is discontinued, the subjects grow audacious *vis-à-vis* the dynasty. Therefore, the dynasty shields itself by holding on to pomp as much as possible, until everything is finished.

At the end of a dynasty, there often also appears some (show of) power that gives the impression that the senility of the dynasty has been made to disappear. It lights up brilliantly just before it is extinguished, like a burning wick the flame of which leaps up brilliantly a moment before it goes out, giving the impression it is just starting to burn, when in fact it is going out.

45 *How disintegration befalls dynasties*

Any royal authority must be built upon two foundations. The first is might and group feeling, which finds its expression in soldiers. The second is money, which supports the soldiers and provides the whole structure needed by royal authority. Disintegration befalls the dynasty at these two foundations.

We shall mention first the disintegration that comes about through might and group feeling, and then, we shall come back and discuss the one that comes about through money and taxation.

A dynasty can be founded and established only with the help of group feeling. There must be a major group feeling uniting all the group feelings subordinate to it. This (major group feeling) is the family and tribal group feeling peculiar to the ruler.

When the natural luxury of royal authority makes its appearance in the dynasty, and when the people who share in the group feeling of the dynasty are humiliated, the first to be humiliated are the members of the ruler's family and his relatives who share with him in the royal name. They are much more humiliated than anyone else. Moreover, luxury has a greater hold on them than on anyone else, because they have a share in royal authority, power, and superiority. Thus, two agents of destruction surround them, luxury and force. (The use of) force eventually leads to their being killed. They become sick at heart when they see the ruler firmly established in royal authority. His envy of them then changes to fear for his royal authority. Therefore, he starts to kill and humiliate them and to deprive them of the prosperity and luxury to which they had become in large measure accustomed. They perish, and become few in number. The group feeling that the ruler had through them is destroyed.

It dissolves and its grip weakens. Its place is taken by the inner circle of clients and followers who enjoy the favours and benefactions of the ruler. A (new) group feeling is derived from them. However, (this new group feeling) does not have anything like the powerful grip (of the other), because it lacks direct and close blood relationships.

The ruler thus isolates himself from his family and helpers, those who have natural affection for him. This is sensed by the people of other groups. Very naturally, they become audacious *vis-à-vis* the ruler and his inner circle. Therefore, the ruler destroys them and persecutes and kills them, one after the other. The later people of the dynasty follow the tradition of the former in that respect. In addition, they are exposed to the detrimental effect of luxury that we have mentioned before. Thus, destruction comes upon them through luxury and through being killed. Eventually, they no longer have the colouring of their group feeling. They forget the affection and strength that used to go with it. They become hirelings for the military protection (of the dynasty). They thus become few in number. As a consequence, the militia settled in the remote and frontier regions becomes numerically weak. This, then, emboldens the subjects in the remote regions to abandon the (dynastic) cause there. Rebels—members of the ruling family and others—go out to these remote regions. They hope that under these circumstances, they will be able to reach their goal by obtaining a following among the inhabitants of the remote regions of the realm, will be secure from capture by the (government) militia. This keeps on and the authority of the ruling dynasty continues gradually to shrink until the rebels reach places extremely close to the centre of the dynasty. The dynasty then often splits into two or three dynasties, depending on its original strength. People who do not share in the group feeling take charge of (dynastic) affairs, though they obey the people who do share in the (dynastic) group feeling and accept their acknowledged superiority.

This may be exemplified by the Arab Muslim dynasty. At the beginning it reached as far as Spain, India, and China. The Umayyads had complete control of all the Arabs through the group feeling of 'Abd-Manâf. It was even possible for Sulaymân b. 'Abd-al-Malik in Damascus to order the killing of 'Abd-al-'Azîz b. Mûsâ b. Nuşayr in Córdoba. He was killed, and Sulaymân's order was not disobeyed. Then, luxury came to the Umayyads, and their group feeling was wiped out. The Umayyads were destroyed, and the 'Abbâsids made their appearance. They curbed¹ the Hâshimites. They killed

¹ Lit., 'lowered the reins', a phrase which is explained to mean gentling a horse. Here Ibn Khaldûn was apparently thinking of his theory that a dynasty tends to repress the members of its own family.

all the descendants of Abû Tâlib and exiled them. In consequence, the group feeling of 'Abd-Manâf dissolved and was wiped out. The Arabs grew audacious *vis-à-vis* the 'Abbâsids. People in the remote regions of the realm, such as the Aghlabids in Ifriqiyah and the inhabitants of Spain and others, gained control over them, and the dynasty split. Then, the Idrisids seceded in the Maghrib. The Berbers supported them, in obedience to their group feeling. Also, they were secure from capture by the soldiers or militiamen of the dynasty.

Men with a cause, for which they make propaganda, eventually secede. They gain control over border areas and remote regions. There, they are able to make propaganda for their cause and achieve royal authority. As a result, the dynasty splits. As the dynasty shrinks more and more, this process often continues until the centre is reached. The inner circle, thereafter, weakens, because luxury undermines it. It perishes and dissolves. The whole divided dynasty weakens. Occasionally, it lingers on long after that. (The dynasty) can dispense with group feeling now, because it has coloured the souls of its subject people with the habit of subservience and submission for so many long years that no one alive can think back to its beginning and origin. They cannot think of anything except being submissive to the ruler. Therefore, he can dispense with group strength. In order to establish his power, hired soldiers and mercenaries are sufficient. The submissiveness generally found in the human soul helps in this respect. Should anyone think of disobedience or secession—which hardly ever happens—the great mass would disapprove of him and oppose him. Thus, he would not be able to attempt such a thing, even if he should try very hard. In this situation, the dynasty often becomes more secure, as far as rebels and rivals are concerned, because submissiveness is firmly established. Individuals would scarcely admit to themselves the least thought of opposition, and the idea of straying from obedience would not enter anybody's mind. (The dynasty), therefore, is safer (than ever) so far as the trouble and destruction that come from groups and tribes are concerned. The dynasty may continue in this condition, but its substance dwindles, like natural heat in a body that lacks nourishment. Eventually, (the dynasty) reaches its destined time.

As for the disintegration that comes through money, it should be known that at the beginning the dynasty has a desert attitude, as was mentioned before. It has the qualities of kindness to subjects, planned moderation in expenditure, and respect for other people's property. It avoids onerous taxation and the display of cunning or

shrewdness in the collection of money and the accounting (required) from officials. Nothing at this time calls for extravagant expenditure. Therefore, the dynasty does not need much money.

Later come domination and expansion. Royal authority flourishes. This calls for luxury, which causes increased spending. The expenditure of the ruler, and of the people of the dynasty in general, grows. This (tendency) spreads to the urban population. It calls for increases in soldiers' allowances and in the salaries of the people of the dynasty. Extravagant expenditure mounts. It spreads to the subjects, because people follow the (ways) and customs of the dynasty.

The ruler, then, must impose duties on articles sold in the markets, in order to improve his revenues; he sees the luxury of the urban population testifying to their prosperity, and because he needs the money for the expenditure of his government and the salaries of his soldiers. Habits of luxury, then, further increase. The customs duties no longer pay for them. The dynasty, by this time, is flourishing in its power and its forceful hold over the subjects under its control. Its hand reaches out to seize some of the property of the subjects, either through customs duties, or through commercial transactions, or, in some cases, merely by hostile acts directed against (property holdings), on some pretext or even with none.

At this stage, the soldiers have already grown bold against the dynasty, because it has become weak and senile as far as its group feeling is concerned. (The dynasty) expects that from them, and attempts to remedy and smooth over the situation through generous allowances and much spending for (the soldiers). It cannot get around that.

At this stage, the tax collectors in the dynasty have acquired much wealth, because vast revenues are in their hands and their position has widened in importance for this reason. Suspicions of having appropriated tax money, therefore, attach to them. It becomes common for one tax collector to denounce another, because of their mutual jealousy and envy. One after another is deprived of his money by confiscation and torture. Eventually, their wealth disappears, and they are ruined. The dynasty loses the pomp and magnificence it had possessed through them.

After their prosperity is destroyed, the dynasty goes farther afield and approaches its other wealthy subjects. At this stage, feebleness has already afflicted its former might. (The dynasty) has become too weak to retain its power and forceful hold. The policy of the ruler, at this time, is to handle matters diplomatically by spending money. He considers this more advantageous than the sword, which is of little use. His need for money grows beyond what is needed for expenditure and soldiers' salaries. He never gets enough. Senility

affects the dynasty more and more. The people of other regions grow bold against it.

46 *The authority of the dynasty at first expands to its limit and then is narrowed down in successive stages, until the dynasty dissolves and disappears*

Each dynasty has its specific share of provinces and districts, and no more. (Its expansion) depends on the distribution of the dynasty's group (strength) for the protection of its territory and regions. Wherever its numbers go, their advance (eventually) comes to a stop at the 'border region'. This surrounds the dynasty on all sides like a belt. Its farthest extension may coincide with the original 'belt' of authority of the preceding dynasty. Or it may be still wider, if the numerical (strength) of the (new) group is greater than that of the preceding dynasty.

All this takes place while the dynasty has the characteristics of desert life and rude courage.

Subsequently, power and superiority come into their own. Bounties and salaries become abundant as a result of improved revenues. Luxury and sedentary culture abound. New generations grow up accustomed to this situation. The character of the militia softens, and they lose their toughness. This makes them cowards and lazy fellows. It causes them to shed the characteristics of courage and manliness. They give up the desert attitude and desert toughness and seek power through assiduous competition for leadership. This causes some of them to kill others. The ruler prevents them from doing that, by killing their great men and destroying their leaders. Thus, amirs and great men no longer exist, and the number of followers and subordinates grows. This blunts the sharp edges of the dynasty and decreases its strength.

This is paralleled by extravagance in expenditure. The people of the dynasty suffer from the pomp of power and limitless ostentation as they compete with each other in matters of food, clothing, large palaces, good weapons, and the horses in their stables. At this time, the income of the dynasty is too small to pay for such expenditure, and thus the second element of disintegration afflicts the dynasty, that which comes through money and taxation. Weakness and destruction are the results of these two elements of disintegration.

The leaders of (the dynasty) often compete with each other. They quarrel, and are too weak to stand up and defend themselves against rivals and neighbours. The people of the border and remote regions often sense the weakness of the dynasty at their backs, and they show their strength. They eventually gain independent control over the

districts in their possession. The ruler is too weak to force them back on the (right) path. Thus, the authority of the dynasty becomes narrower than it had been at the beginning. The administration restricts itself to a smaller area. Eventually, the same weakness, laziness with regard to group strength, and the shortage of money and revenue that had come about in the first, larger, area also come about in the second, smaller, area.

The person in charge of the dynasty now undertakes to change the norms the dynasty had adopted as its policy with regard to soldiers, money, and administrative functions. The purpose is to have norms suitable for balancing the budget, satisfying the militia, safeguarding the administrative districts, distributing the tax revenue for the (soldiers') salaries in the proper manner, and readjusting (the new conditions) to those that had existed at the beginning of the dynasty. However, evil happenings can still be expected from every quarter.

At this later stage, what had happened before in the first stage happens again. The ruler now considers the same (measures) that the first ruler had considered, and applies the old yardstick to the new conditions of the dynasty. He intends to repel the evil consequences of disintegration, which reappears at every stage and affects every part of the realm until the area of the dynasty is again narrower than it had been before, and what had happened before happens again.

Each of the persons who change the previous (dynastic) norms is in a way the builder of a new dynasty and the founder of a new realm. However, the dynasty is eventually destroyed. The nations around it push on to gain superiority over it. They then found a new dynasty of their own.

This may be exemplified by the Muslim dynasty. Through its conquests and victories its authority expanded. Its militia then increased, and its numerical (strength) grew as the result of the bounties and salaries to (the soldiers). Eventually, the power of the Umayyads was destroyed. The 'Abbāsids gained the upper hand. Luxury, then, increased. Sedentary culture emerged, and disintegration made its appearance. The creation of the Marwānid (Umayyad Spanish) and 'Alid (Idrisid) dynasties cut down the authority of the 'Abbāsids in Spain and the Maghrib. These two border regions were cut off from 'Abbāsīd authority.

Then, dissension arose among the sons of ar-Rashīd. 'Alid propagandists appeared in every region, and 'Alid dynasties were founded. Then, after the death of al-Mutawakkil, the amirs gained control over the caliphs and kept them in seclusion. Provincial governors in the outlying regions became independent, and the land tax from

there did not come in any longer. Luxury still increased. Al-Mu'tadid appeared. He changed the norms of the dynasty and adopted another policy. He gave the outlying regions, over which the governors had won control, to them as fiefs. Then, the power of the Arabs was broken up. The non-Arabs achieved superiority. Then arose the dynasty of the Saljûq Turks. The Saljûqs gained domination over the Muslim empire. They kept the caliphs in seclusion, until their dynasties were destroyed. From the time of an-Nâsir¹ on, the caliphs were in control of an area smaller than the ring around the moon. The dynasty continued in that manner until the power of the caliphs was destroyed by Hûlâgû, the ruler of the Tatars and Mongols. They defeated the Saljûqs and took possession of the part of the Muslim empire that had been theirs.

Thus, the authority of the dynasty becomes successively narrower than it had been at the beginning. (This process) continues, stage by stage, until the dynasty is destroyed.

47 How a new dynasty originates

When the ruling dynasty starts on the road to senility and destruction, the rise of the new dynasty takes place in two ways:

(One way is) for provincial governors to gain control over remote regions when (the dynasty) loses its influence there. Each one of them founds a new dynasty for his people and a realm to be perpetuated in his family. His children or clients inherit it from him. Gradually, they have a flourishing realm. They often compete bitterly with each other and aspire to gain sole possession of it. The one who is stronger than his rival will gain the upper hand and take away what the other had.

This happened in the 'Abbâsid dynasty when it started on the road to senility and its shadow receded from the remote regions. The same thing happened in the Umayyad dynasty in Spain. Their realm was divided among the *reyes de taifas* who had been their provincial governors. It was divided into several dynasties with several rulers, who passed their realms on after their death to their relatives or clients. This way of forming a new dynasty avoids the possibility of war between the (new rulers) and the ruling dynasty. (These new rulers) are already firmly established in their leadership and do not want to gain domination over the ruling dynasty. The latter is affected by senility, and its shadow recedes from the remote regions of the realm and can no longer reach them.

The other way is for some rebel from among the neighbouring nations and tribes to revolt against the dynasty. He either makes

¹ The 'Abbâsid who reigned from 1180 to 1225.

propaganda for some particular cause to which he intends to win the people, or he possesses great power and a great group feeling among his people. His power is already flourishing among them, and now he aspires with the help of (his people) to gain royal authority. They are convinced that they will obtain it, because they feel that they are superior to the ruling dynasty, which is affected by senility. Thus, to (the rebel) and his people, it is a fact that they will gain domination over it. They constantly attack it, until they defeat it and inherit its power.

48 A new dynasty gains domination over the ruling dynasty through perseverance, and not through sudden action

We have mentioned the two ways new dynasties originate. The first applies to governors of outlying regions when the shadow of the ruling dynasty recedes from those regions and its waves are rolled back. As a rule, they do not attack the dynasty, because they are satisfied with what they already have. The second applies to men who make propaganda for some cause or rebel against the dynasty. It is inevitable that they attack it, because their power warrants it. They (revolt) only when they have a family with sufficient group feeling and strength to give them success. Indecisive battles take place between them and the ruling dynasty. (Such battles) are repeated and continued, until by perseverance they achieve domination and victory. As a rule, they do not gain victory through sudden action.

Victory in war as a rule is the result of imaginary psychological factors. Numbers, weapons, and proper tactics may guarantee (victory). However, as has been mentioned above, (all these things) are less effective than the factors above-mentioned. Trickery is one of the most useful things employed in warfare. It is the thing most likely to bring victory.

Accepted custom has made obedience to the ruling dynasty a necessity and an obligation. This puts many hindrances in the way of the founder of a new dynasty. It discourages his followers and supporters. His closest intimates may be fully intent upon obeying him and helping him, but there are others more numerous who are affected by weakness and laziness under the influence of the belief that they owe submission to the ruling dynasty. Their zeal slackens. Therefore, the founder of a new dynasty is hardly able to make a stand against the established one. Consequently, he falls back on patience and perseverance, until the senility of the ruling dynasty has become obvious. Then his people lose the belief that they owe submission to the ruling dynasty. They become sufficiently spirited

to make an open attack in concert with (the founder of the new dynasty). Victory and domination are the result.

Furthermore, the ruling dynasty enjoys many luxuries. The authority of its members had been firmly established. To the exclusion of others, they had appropriated a good deal of the revenues from taxes. Thus, they have many horses in their stables and good weapons. There is much royal pomp among them. Gifts from their rulers, given either voluntarily or under constraint, have been showered upon them. With all this, they frighten their enemies.

The members of the new dynasty lack such things. They have the desert attitude and are poor and indigent. This leaves them unprepared. What they hear about the conditions and excellent state of preparedness of the ruling dynasty makes them apprehensive. Therefore, their leader is forced to wait until senility takes hold of the ruling dynasty and its group feeling and fiscal structure are disintegrating. Then, the founder of the new dynasty seizes the opportunity to gain the upper hand, quite some time after his attack had begun.

The men of the new dynasty differ from those of the ruling dynasty with regard to descent, customs, and all other things. (Persistent) attacks and their desire to gain the upper hand estrange them more and more from the men of the ruling dynasty. Consequently, the people of the two dynasties become thoroughly estranged from each other, inwardly and outwardly. No information about the ruling dynasty, either secretly or openly, reaches the would-be dynasty, such as might enable them to find some unpreparedness among them, because all connection and intercourse between the two dynasties has been cut off. They thus continue to exert pressure but they are in a state of fear and shy away from sudden action.

Eventually, God permits the ruling dynasty to end, its life to stop, and disintegration to afflict it from all sides. Its senility and decay, which had been concealed from the people of the new dynasty, now become clear to them. In the meantime, their strength has grown, because they had cut off and taken away outlying regions. Thus, they become spirited enough (to attempt) sudden action, and this finally brings domination.

This may be exemplified by the emergence and beginnings of the 'Abbásid dynasty. The ('Abbásid) Shí'ah remained in Khurásân for ten years or more after the ('Abbásid) propaganda had consolidated, and (the 'Abbásids) had gathered for attack. Then, their victory materialized, and they gained the upper hand over the Umayyads. . . .

A constant struggle marked by (constant) attacks and long perseverance, is characteristic of the relationship between new and ruling dynasties. This is how God proceeds with His servants.

The events of the Muslim conquests cannot be used as an argument against (the preceding remarks). (The Muslims) gained the upper hand over the Persians and the Byzantines in the three or four years that followed the death of the Prophet, and there was no long waiting period. It should be realized that this was one of the miracles of our Prophet. The secret of it lay in the willingness of the Muslims to die in the holy war against their enemies because of their feeling that they had the right religious insight, and in the corresponding fear and defeatism that God put into the hearts of their enemies. All these (miraculous facts) broke through the known custom of a long wait between new and ruling dynasties. (Such miracles) in Islam are generally acknowledged. Miracles cannot be used as analogies for ordinary affairs and constitute no argument against them.

49 *There is overpopulation at the end of dynasties, and pestilences and famines frequently occur then*

It has been established that, at the beginning, dynasties are inevitably kind in the exercise of their power and just in their administration. The reason is either their religion, when (the dynasty) is based upon religious propaganda, or their noble and benevolent attitude toward others, which is required by the desert attitude that is natural to dynasties (at the beginning).

A kind and benevolent rule serves as an incentive to the subjects and gives them energy for cultural activities. (Civilization) becomes abundant, and procreation vigorous. All this takes place gradually. The effects will become noticeable after one or two generations at best. At the end of two generations, the dynasty approaches the limit of its natural life. At that time, civilization has reached the limit of its abundance and growth.

It should not be objected here that it was stated before that in the later years of a dynasty, there will be coercion of the subjects and bad government. This is correct, but it does not contradict what we have just said. Even though coercion makes its appearance at that time and the revenues decrease, the destructive influences of this situation on civilization will become noticeable only after some time, because things in nature all have a gradual development.

In the later years of dynasties, famines and pestilences become numerous. As far as famines are concerned, the reason is that most people at that time refrain from cultivating the soil. For, in the later years of dynasties, there occur attacks on property and tax revenue and, through customs duties, on trading. Or, trouble occurs as the result of the unrest of the subjects and the great number encouraged

by the senility of the dynasty to rebel. Therefore, as a rule, little grain is stored. The grain and harvest situation is not always good and stable from year to year. The amount of rainfall in the world differs by nature. The rainfall may be little or much. Grain, fruits, and the amount of milk given by animals vary correspondingly. Still, for their food requirements, people put their trust in what it is possible to store. If nothing is stored, people must expect famines. The price of grain rises. Indigent people are unable to buy any and perish. If for some years nothing is stored, hunger will be general.

The large number of pestilences are caused by the famines just mentioned; or by the many disturbances that result from the disintegration of the dynasty. There is much unrest and bloodshed, and plagues occur. The principal reason for the latter is the corruption of the air by overpopulation, and the putrefaction and the many evil moistures with which the air has contact (in a densely populated region). Now, air nourishes the animal spirit and is constantly with it. When it is corrupted, corruption affects the temper of the spirit. If the corruption is strong, the lung is afflicted with disease. This results in epidemics, which affect the lung in particular. Even if the corruption is not strong, putrefaction grows and multiplies, resulting in many fevers that affect the tempers, and the bodies become sick and perish. The reason for the growth of putrefaction and evil moistures is invariably a dense and abundant civilization such as exists in the later years of a dynasty. Such civilization is the result of the good government, the kindness, the safety, and the light taxation that existed at the beginning of the dynasty. This is obvious. Therefore, science has made it clear that it is necessary to have empty spaces and waste regions interspersed between urban areas. This makes circulation of the air possible. It removes the corruption and putrefaction affecting the air after contact with living beings, and brings healthy air. This also is the reason why pestilences occur much more frequently in densely populated cities than elsewhere, as, for instance, in Cairo in the East and Fez in the Maghrib.

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. 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 is useful only for this world.

We do not mean here that which is known as 'political utopianism'. 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 fulfils these requirements the 'ideal city'. The norms observed in this connection are called 'political utopias'. They do not mean the kind of politics 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 aforementioned rational politics may be of two types. The first type of rational politics may concern itself with the general interest, 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 (particular) 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 interest is, here, secondary. This is the type of politics practised by all rulers, whether they are Muslims or unbelievers. Muslim rulers, however, practise 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. . . .

51 *The Mahdi. The opinions of the people about him. The truth about the matter*

It has been (accepted) by all Muslims in every epoch, that at the end of time a man from the family (of the Prophet) will without fail make his appearance, one who will strengthen Islam and make justice triumph. Muslims will follow him, and he will gain domination

over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdī. Following him, the Antichrist will appear, together with all the subsequent signs of the Day of Judgment. After the Mahdī, Jesus will descend and kill the Antichrist. Or, Jesus will descend together with the Mahdī, and help him kill the Antichrist.

Such statements have been found in the traditions that religious leaders have published. They have been (critically) discussed by those who disapprove of them and have often been refuted by means of certain traditions. . . .

More recent Sufis have other theories concerning the Mahdī. The time, the man, and the place are clearly indicated in them. But the (predicted) time passes, and there is not the slightest trace of (the prediction-coming true). Then, some new suggestion is adopted which is based upon linguistic equivocations, imaginary ideas, and astrological judgments. The life of every one of those people is spent on such suppositions. . . .

Most of our contemporary Sufis refer to the (expected) appearance of a man who will renew the Muslim law and the ordinances of the truth. They assume that his appearance will take place at some time near our own period. Some of them say that he will be one of the descendants of Fāṭimah. Others speak about him only in general terms.

The truth one must know is that no religious or political propaganda can be successful, unless power and group feeling exist to support the religious and political aspirations and to defend them against those who reject them.

The group feeling of the Fāṭimids and the Ṭālibids, indeed, that of all the Quraysh, has everywhere disappeared. There are other nations whose group feeling has gained the upper hand over that of the Quraysh. The only exception is a remnant of the Ṭālibids—in the Hijāz, in Mecca, al-Yanbu', and Medina. They are spread over these regions and dominate them. They are Bedouin groups. They are settled and rule in different places and hold divergent opinions. They number several thousands. If it is correct that a Mahdī is to appear, there is only one way for his propaganda to make its appearance. He must be one of them, and God must unite them in the intention to follow him, until he gathers enough strength and group feeling to gain success for his cause and to move the people to support him. Any other way—such as a Fāṭimid who would make propaganda for (the cause of the Mahdī) among people anywhere at all, without the support of group feeling and power, by merely relying on his relationship to the family of Muḥammad—will not be feasible or successful, for the sound reasons that we have mentioned previously.

The common people, the stupid mass, who make claims with respect to the Mahdī and who are not guided in this connection by any intelligence or helped by any knowledge, assume that the Mahdī may appear in a variety of circumstances and places. They do not understand the real meaning of the matter. They mostly assume that the appearance will take place in some remote province out of the reach of the (ruling) dynasties and outside their authority. Therefore, they firmly imagine that the Mahdī will appear there, since these regions are not under the control of dynasties and out of the reach of law and force. Many weak-minded people go to those places in order to support a deceptive cause that the human soul in its delusion and stupidity leads them to believe capable of succeeding. Many of them have been killed. . . .

52 Forecasting the future of dynasties and nations, including a discussion of predictions and an exposition of the subject called 'divination'

It should be known that one of the qualities of the human soul is the desire to learn the outcome of affairs that concern (human beings) and to know what is going to befall them, whether it be life or death, good or evil. (This desire is) especially great with regard to events of general importance, and one wants to know, for instance, how long the world or certain dynasties are going to last. Curiosity in this respect is human nature and innate in human beings. Therefore, many people are found who desire to learn about these things in their sleep (through dreams). Stories of soothsayers being approached by rulers and commoners alike, with the request for predictions, are well known.

In the towns, we find a group of people who try to make a living out of predicting the future, because they realize that the people are most eager to know it. Therefore, they set themselves up in the streets and in shops and offer themselves to those who (wish to) consult them. All day long, women and children of the town and, indeed, many weak-minded men as well, come and ask them to foretell the future for them, how it will affect their business, their rank, their friendships, their enmities, and similar things. There are those who make their predictions by writing on sand (geomancy), those who cast pebbles and grains (of wheat), and those who look into mirrors and into water. These things are very common in cities, and their reprehensible character is established by the religious law.

Rulers and amirs who want to know the duration of their own dynasties show the greatest concern for these things. Therefore, the interest of scholars has been directed to the subject of predicting the duration of dynasties. Every nation has had its soothsayers, its

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