

#### CHAPTER IV

### THE THEORY OF THE POWER-STATE: IBN KHALDŪN'S STUDY OF CIVILIZATION

IN a world in which everything is related to God and his plan we can hardly expect an independent political theory. Yet a North African Muslim of the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406),<sup>1</sup> did in fact propound a theory of the power-state which transcends the opinions generally held in the Middle Ages. Not only is the state an end in itself with a life of its own, governed by the law of causality, a natural and necessary human institution; it is also the political and social unit which alone makes human civilization possible. It is this human civilization which is the object of his inquiry and the subject of his “new science of history”. In the *Muqaddima* (Introduction) to his *Universal History* (*kitāb al-‘ibar*) he composed a *Summa*, not of theology but of civilization, founded on that Islamic civilization with all of whose aspects he was thoroughly familiar. His political theory is part of his description of ‘*umrān*, in the specific sense of “civilization”. The close connection between civilization and politics as the art of government is apparent from Ibn Khaldūn’s terminology; for ‘*umrān* is synonymous with *madanīya*<sup>2</sup> and *ḥadāra*, settled urban life (as distinct from *badāwa*, rural life). *Ḥadāra* in turn is equivalent to *tamaddun*, to live or become organized in a city (*madīna*) in the sense of the Greek *polis*.

Ibn Khaldūn’s empiricism, manifest in his “new science”, is matched by his traditionalism. This means that he is deeply rooted in the traditional beliefs and convictions of Islam and steeped in the traditional sciences. Chief among them are *Fiqh*, the science of law, and *Tafsīr*, that of the exegesis of the Qur’ān. Both his empiricism and his traditionalism—the former as a scientific method and the latter as an educational background and as an attitude to God and man, to culture and civilization—were formed and developed in his active career as judge (*qāḍī*) of the Mālikī rite and as statesman in the service of several Muslim rulers of North African principalities.

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The vicissitudes of fortune and his varied experience in and out of favour with his masters gave his penetrating, scholarly mind a rare insight into the motives of human action. His realistic approach to man in the state made him recognize the will to power and domination as the principal driving force; but he was convinced that the higher aspirations of rational man could only develop in a society efficiently organized in an effective political organization, and only the state could provide it. Hence his interest in politics springs from his Islamic heritage, with its stress on the "community of the faithful", the *umma* or *jamā'a* of orthodox Islam. Together with his impartial observation, this living heritage enabled him to deduce a general law which he applied to the whole of human civilization.

It is true that his concept of universal civilization is derived exclusively from a dispassionate study of the Islamic empire of his day, with its variety of political entities and cultural levels. But this does not seriously affect his generalizations, nor impair the validity of most of them in the realm of human culture and civilization. It is no exaggeration to say that Ibn Khaldūn's "new science of history" represents a medieval witness to the premature birth of modern scientific inquiry into the human *group*,<sup>3</sup> transcending the bounds of Islam, and it is no coincidence that he speaks of *insāniya*, *humanitas*, of the citizens of the state, a concept which we usually associate with the Renaissance and the humanism of the West. (The parallel with Dante and his Christian humanism is an interesting sidelight on the ground common to leading thinkers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, despite the differences, which are chiefly doctrinal.)<sup>4</sup> But while Ibn Khaldūn's approach, method and results are significant in the history of the human mind, we must not forget that his ideas are unique in fourteenth-century Islam, and bore no fruit for centuries. They are not the organic growth of the modern age. He lived in a time of transition, when the medieval order was gradually giving way to a new grouping of political, economic and spiritual forces. This may have helped him to formulate his ideas on the inevitable birth, growth, peak, decline and fall of society and culture in accordance with the unalterable law of causality.

Having made this claim, I must emphasize that for Ibn Khaldūn, Islam, in the form of the *khilāfa*, is the choicest fruit of a God-

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guided and God-centred human association. It is the ideal, the best way to the fulfilment of man's destiny, to the attainment of happiness in this world *and* in the world to come. In writing his *Summa* of civilization he was not concerned with the individual believer but with the human group; he saw it as the creator of culture and civilization in the natural and necessary framework of the state built on power and maintained by the force of law and arms under a single sovereign ruler. Monarchy already typifies an advanced stage in the development of political authority and organization.

It is necessary briefly to sketch the cycle of political life within which the several elements of human association, political, economic, legal (both religious and secular) and cultural, influence each other to the advantage or disadvantage of the state.

Ibn Khaldūn distinguishes three kinds of state according to their government and purpose: *siyāsa dīniyya*, government based on the divinely revealed law (*Shar'*), the ideal Islamic theocracy; *siyāsa 'aqliyya*, government based on a law established by human reason; and *siyāsa madaniyya*, government of the ideal state of the philosophers, *madīna fāḍila*, Plato's *Republic*.<sup>5</sup>

The state as such is the natural result of human life which requires association (*ijtimā'*) and organization: "human association is necessary; the philosophers express this in the saying: 'man is a citizen by nature'. This means that association is indispensable; it is civilization (*madaniyya*), in their terminology synonymous with '*umrān*.'"<sup>6</sup> Mutual help is necessary to satisfy man's need for food, clothing and housing, and man must unite with many of his kind to assure his protection and defence. Experience forces men to associate with others and experience, together with reflection, enables man to live.<sup>7</sup> In addition to this rational explanation Ibn Khaldūn states that "this association is necessary for mankind, otherwise their existence and God's will to make the world habitable with them would not be perfect".<sup>8</sup>

The provision of the necessities of life is followed by a desire for its comforts, and so the stages of food-gathering and cattle-raising are supplemented by the arts and crafts which provide better and more varied food, more comfortable houses and elegant clothes in the cities. Both rural and city life (*badāwa* and *ḥadāra*) are necessary for the growth and development of civilization, the

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former being the natural foundation of the latter. But only a life of ease and leisure, the consequence of a well-functioning, differentiated economy, stimulates the will to power.

To translate the will into reality requires the effective support of like-minded men, held together by a common bond; in the first place, the ties of blood and family tradition which create a sense of solidarity and mutual responsibility, or a common outlook which shows itself in united action and serves as an important driving force in the formation of states and dynasties. Ibn Khaldūn calls it '*Aṣabīya*'<sup>9</sup> and gives as its aim *mulk*, dominion, rule. It is as necessary as association itself, for the latter alone is not sufficient to protect man's life and property.

The evil inclination in man would inevitably lead to mutual destruction if there were not a universally recognized restraining authority in society which is given force by the '*Aṣabīya*'. This restraining authority is called *wāzi*' or *wāzi*' *wa-ḥākim* (governor, ruler), or *ḥukm wāzi*'; it has power to prevent men from killing or injuring each other, "for hostility and violence are dominant in their animal nature. . . . This *wāzi*' is therefore the one among them who has power and authority and can exercise constraint over them. This is the meaning of dominion (*mulk*), and it is clear to you from this that it is specific and natural to man and indispensable for him."<sup>10</sup>

Power is thus the basis of the state and the necessary instrument of that restraining authority without which man cannot exist. At first, the man who exercises authority is the *ra'īs* or chief who is, like the *shaikh*, *primus inter pares*; his rule, *ri'āsa*, is a principate. In the opinion of Ibn Khaldūn, this rule represents a political organization prior to the state properly so-called. For he believed that the state as the frame of civilization is an urban institution ruled over by a sovereign monarch, *mustabidd*, exercising *istibdād*, that is, a kind of absolute monarchy. He relies on '*Aṣabīya*', but uses it independently for his own ends. The same idea is expressed in the term *infrād bi-l-majd*, "claiming exclusive authority, on the strength of a pre-eminence acquired by personal effort and achievement". This autocracy is achieved sometimes by the first ruler and founder of a dynasty, sometimes by the second and sometimes by the third.<sup>11</sup> The state goes through five phases: conquest, the building up of the dynasty, the attainment of the peak, decline and

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fall, within four generations of a dynasty; it reaches its greatest power in the second generation, in which autocracy is usually achieved.

Ibn Khaldūn describes this process of dynastic development in the chapter "The dynasty has a natural term of life like an individual...":

... the term of life of a dynasty does not normally exceed three generations [of 40 years each]. For in the *first* generation are still preserved the characteristic features of rough, uncivilized rural life (*badāwa*), such as hard conditions of life, courage, ferocity and partnership in authority (*majd*). Therefore the strength of the 'Aṣabiya is maintained... and men submit to their domination. In the *second* generation their condition has changed, under the influence of the rule (*mulk*)... from rural to city-life, from a hard struggle to ease and abundance, from partnership in authority to autocracy... wherefore the strength of the 'Aṣabiya is partly broken... The *third* generation has forgotten the time of *badāwa*... as if it had never existed—unlike the second generation which lives on the memory of the first—and loses the sweetness of force and 'Aṣabiya because they are in possession of power. Ease reaches its peak under them because they become used to a pleasant and abundant life... The 'Aṣabiya collapses completely, and they forget about defence, attack and pursuit (of the enemy)...<sup>12</sup>

Incapable of resisting attack from without, they are obliged to hire supporters. He barely mentions the fourth generation because it no longer commands respect and authority.

The four generations of a dynasty are thus distributed over five phases of the state, which determine the character of the citizens. This character, therefore, varies with each successive phase. "The *first* phase is that in which (the new group bent on dominion) gains its objective and is victorious over its enemies, seizes (the reins of) power (*mulk*) and wrests it from the (ruling) dynasty. In this phase (the ruler) is the exemplary leader of his men to gain authority, acquire property and defend and protect the (newly gained) territory." In accordance with the demands of the 'Aṣabiya, by means of which victory has been won, he does not set himself apart from his citizens.

"In the *second* phase he becomes sovereign and alone exercises rule without his followers; he thwarts their endeavour to share the rule with him... the master of the dynasty strives to hire men,

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acquire clients (*mawālī*) and supporters in order to break the self-reliance of those who make up his *‘Aṣabiya*, and of his kinsmen who claim an equal share in the rule with him. . . until finally he consolidates the rule in his own family to whom alone he reserves the authority which he builds up. . . .”

“The *third* phase is one of quiet ease and leisure to gather the fruits of rule and dominion, since human nature tends to acquire wealth and to leave behind. . . fame.”

He regulates taxes and dues, is moderate in his expenditure, but at the same time erects monuments and palaces, is generous towards his family and supporters and pays his troops regularly and well in order to impress his allies and to put fear into the hearts of his enemies.

In the *fourth* phase “the ruler is satisfied with what his predecessors have built up, lives at peace with friendly and hostile rulers of his kind and imitates his precursors. . . as well as he can. . . .”

“The *fifth* phase is one of extravagance and waste. In this phase the ruler destroys what his ancestors have brought together, for the sake of lust and pleasure. For he is generous towards his intimates and liberal at his banquets in order to win. . . the scum of the people, whom he entrusts with great tasks which they are unable to undertake. . . . In this way he spoils ⟨his chances⟩ with the noble and distinguished among his people and with the followers of his predecessors, so that they are filled with hatred against him and agree among themselves to desert him. Moreover, he loses part of his troops because he spends their pay on his pleasures and prevents them from getting to know him personally. . . . In this phase the natural ageing of the dynasty [that is, the decay] sets in; a chronic disease gets hold of it without remedy or release until it collapses.”<sup>13</sup>

It appears that the generations of a dynasty and the phases of the state it rules do not tally unless we assume that in one generation, the third, a transition of the third to the fourth phase takes place. More important, however, is Ibn Khaldūn’s recognition of the cyclical movement of states and generations of rulers, and of their interdependence, even if this was facilitated by the absolutist character of rule and the identification of the monarch with the state.

Moreover, he saw a connection between the upward and down-

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ward development of the state, the character of rulers and ruled, conditioned by psychological and economic factors, and the stability of the political order in its dependence on defence and security. There is no upward surge towards the millennium. The state is, like a natural organism, subject to growth, maturity and decline.<sup>14</sup>

His whole theory is based on the fundamental distinction between *badāwa*, a life of simplicity, courage, violence and striking power, and *ḥaḍāra*, a life of urban civilization in which these natural qualities are gradually submerged by the desire for peace and security, ease, luxury and pleasure in the wake of autocratic rule.<sup>15</sup> It is significant that Ibn Khaldūn's theory is based on his reading of the history of the Almoravids and Almohads, composed of war-like Berber tribes whose transition from rural to urban life was marked by the stages of political development sketched by him in the *Muqaddīma* and described in great detail in his *kitāb al-'ibar*.

The absolute monarch can maintain his independent rule only through the weakening of that '*Aṣabīya* by whose help he came to power. Since he must rely on an army to preserve order within and to protect his state against attack from without, the weakening of his supporters, originally animated by a strong '*Aṣabīya*, forces him to replace them by mercenaries. This requires considerable sums of money which he must raise by taxation and often by active participation in trade and industry. After a period of expansion and wealth leading to luxury and ease of living, the inevitable decline sets in, forcing him to take measures for self-preservation which alienate his subjects, harm them in their economic activities, and bring about the ruin and destruction of his dynasty and eventually of the state itself.

The political significance of economics is evident from these summary remarks. To my knowledge Ibn Khaldūn was the first medieval thinker to see the importance of economics for politics and for the whole life of any society organized in a state. A few instances may be quoted in which he stresses their interdependence.<sup>16</sup>

The chapter on "The decrease in pay means a decrease in revenue" begins:

The reason is that state and ruler are the largest market in the world. . . . If therefore the ruler keeps back the goods or revenue, or if

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they are not there so that he cannot spend them, the possessions of his trusted friends and defenders will (also) be few; . . . their expenditure decreases—and they form the majority (of buyers) . . . the markets are deserted and the profits from the products decline so that the dues diminish; for dues and taxes come from agriculture, trade, well-frequented markets and from men's desire for profit and gain. The bad effect of all this recoils on the state through the decrease, because the paucity of dues results in diminishing the wealth of the ruler. . . . Money must flow between ruler and subjects, from him to them and from them to him. If, therefore, he holds it back his subjects suffer loss.<sup>17</sup>

This means that a balanced budget is essential for a sound economy and is the key to the stability of the political order. The important place of revenue in political economy is also clear from this quotation:

In the beginning of the state taxes are light in their distribution (on the individual) but considerable in their total, and vice versa. The reason is that the state, which follows the way of religion, only demands the obligations imposed by the *Shari'a*, namely, *zakāt* (poor-tax), *kharāj* (land-tax), and *jizya* (poll-tax), which are light in their distribution. . . . and these are the limits beyond which one must not go.<sup>18</sup>

A rural economy based on agriculture, with a simple standard of living and light taxes, provides an incentive to work hard, with prosperity as the prize. But as soon as autocrats assume power and urban life, with a much higher standard of living, makes greater and greater demands, heavier taxes are levied from farmers, craftsmen and merchants. Production and profits decline, since the incentive has been taken away from all those engaged in the economic life of the state.

Economic and political development go hand in hand: "The wealth of the ruler and his entourage is (greatest) in the middle stage of the dynasty" is the title of a chapter dealing with the strengthening of the ruler's authority at the expense of the *'Aṣabīya* which once supported him, and consequently his need of mercenaries and auxiliaries and of the means to pay for their services becomes greater. This leads inevitably to increased taxation, a luxurious life at court, the decline of the former supporters of the ruler and finally to the ruin of the dynasty and the state.<sup>19</sup> For only taxes and their collection increase the wealth of the ruler . . . and this is possible because he is just and considerate towards the propertied



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classes, and they are full of hope and begin to increase their possessions so that the revenue of the ruler increases greatly. The other kind, that the ruler engages in trade or agriculture, is of immediate detriment to the subjects and disastrous for the revenue. . . .<sup>20</sup>

The vices in the wake of ease, luxury, and the loss of courage, manliness and professional pride spread in the population because of the bad example set by the ruling dynasty and its servants and hangers-on.<sup>21</sup>

It is clear from Ibn Khaldūn's statement that we are dealing not with a state based on the *Sharī'a*, but an autocracy dependent on a mercenary army for the maintenance of power. It is in this power-state that the political and economic egotism of the ruler and his associates leads to abuses much more easily and frequently than in the state based on the moral law founded in revelation.

Ibn Khaldūn, far from moralizing, does not criticize moral offences and shortcomings as an open flouting of moral precepts, or as a sin deserving divine punishment; he sets them in relation to the state, registers their political significance and implications and dispassionately states their disastrous effect on good government and public welfare. Nor does he condone political crimes. Here he stands out as a political scientist who diagnosed the ill-health of the state as an organism comparable to the human body, subject to the same law of cause and effect. Although he observed Islamic states, he deduced this general law for the state as such, and for human civilization as a whole, quite independently of the ideal *khilāfa*. But his remark that the taxes and imposts levied by the autocrat are far in excess of, and at variance with, those demanded by the *Shar'*, the prophetically revealed law of Islam, shows beyond question that it is precisely this ideal law which serves him as the norm and measure. The *Sharī'a* prescribes *zakāt*, *kharāj* and *jizya*, levied on the *Dhimmīs*, the protected non-Muslim "people of the Book" (that is, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians). It guarantees private property as an inalienable right. If the ruler seizes the property of his subjects or forces them to sell it because he has destroyed their livelihood by monopolizing certain crafts or trades, the Muslim Ibn Khaldūn simply states that such an act offends against the *Shar'*. But he comments explicitly that it is detrimental to the interests of the dynasty and does great, even irreparable, harm to the state.

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He devotes a chapter to the relationship between ruler and ruled which has the revealing title: “Exaggerated severity harms and mostly ruins the state (*mulk*).” The welfare of the subjects and of the state rests on good relations between the ruler—be he *malik* (king) or *sultān*—and his subjects.

The essence of the ruler is that he rules over subjects and cares for their affairs. . . . If his dominion over them, with all that it entails, is good, the purpose of the rule is fulfilled to perfection. For if it is good and well ordered, it is an advantage for them, but if it is bad and unjust, it is harmful to them and leads to their destruction. . . . Kindliness towards them belongs to good government, together with their protection, for through protection (of his subjects) the character of the ruler becomes perfect. Kindliness and good treatment also consist in . . . care for their livelihood, and it is a basic principle to be friendly towards the subjects.<sup>22</sup>

We note that the overriding consideration is public welfare and the interests of the state. All depends on the right kind of government, *siyāsa*, to which Ibn Khaldūn devotes a chapter entitled “Human civilization certainly needs political government by which its affairs are arranged in proper order”. In it he says:

We have already stated in another place that association is necessary for man and is the meaning of civilization, of which we treat, and that men, in their association, must needs have a restraining authority (*wāzi*) and a governor (*hākim*) to whom they entrust themselves. His authority over them is based at one time on the law sent down by Allah demanding their obedience, in their belief in reward and punishment. . . ; and at another time (it is based) on rational government [that is, on a law devised by human reason] demanding their obedience to it in the expectation of a reward from the ruler. . . . The advantage of the first [that is, the *siyāsa dīniya*] comes to pass in this world and the next because the law-giver knows what is best for them in the end, and because he looks after the salvation of the servants (of Allah, ‘*ibād*’) in the hereafter. But the advantage of the second accrues in this world only. What you hear of the *siyāsa madaniya* (*politeia*) [the third of the kinds of government mentioned above] does not belong to this chapter; the philosophers mean by it what is incumbent upon every one of the citizens of this community in his own nature, so that they have no need of governors (rulers) altogether. Such a community is called *madīna fāḍila*, the ideal state [that is, Plato’s *Republic*], and the statutes for its government are called *siyāsa madaniya*. Their intention is not a *siyāsa* by which the

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citizens of <this> association are to pursue the public good, for this is not <the same as> the other <siyāsa>. This *madīna fādila* is in their opinion rare or unlikely to come into being, and they discuss it only hypothetically.<sup>23</sup>

We must here interrupt Ibn Khaldūn's account to consider his cursory treatment of the ideal state of the philosophers and his opposition to their views on politics. His realism, based on experience, made him dismiss their hypothesis as mere theory. He strongly objects to their concept of prophecy and the prophetically revealed law, at least as far as Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā are concerned. He refutes as unproven their contention that prophecy is a necessary requirement of human nature and that the *wāzi'* is demanded by the *Shar'*. He simply points to the existence of human organization, both before prophets appeared and since; for a large part of mankind lives without prophets and prophetic laws. Their rulers exercise authority over them by their power or by means of the *'Aṣabīya* which unites their supporters.<sup>24</sup> In his support he adduces the opinion of the *salaf*, the early followers of Muḥammad. The *Shar'*, not reason, is the authority for prophecy. As we saw earlier, the prophetic lawgiver provides in the *Shar'*—and we may add, there alone—for man's welfare in this world and salvation in the next. The believer who obeys this law has the *wāzi'* in himself, for it is inherent in the very nature of revelation. It was only when religion (*dīn*) lost its influence over man and when the *Shar'* became a science<sup>25</sup> that man needed restraining statutes (*aḥkām wāzi'a*). For Ibn Khaldūn the *wāzi'* is thus not an external authority prescribed by the revealed law of Islam, and the prophet is not a ruler. This is most probably a rejection of the political interpretation of prophecy advanced by the *Falāsifa*, with which we shall deal later.

The prophet is primarily a lawgiver; the caliph, his vicegerent and successor, is the ruler under the *Shar'* which bound together the *umma*, the people of Muḥammad, in the *jamā'a*, the community of <right> believers. It ruled supreme as the law of Muslim theocracy in the time of the first four caliphs, the *khulafā rāshidūn*, and of Muḥammad's companions generally. The decline of religion coincided with the transformation of the *khilāfa* of that time into the *mulk* of Mu'āwiya and the Umayyads. This was also the time

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of the transition from *badāwa* to *ḥadāra* and the expansion of Islam into a vast empire. Urban life, guided by the restraining statutes of the *mulk*, led to the gradual loss of courage and self-reliance due to the replacement of the *wāzi*' inherent in the *Shar'* by the *wāzi*' of the state built on the power and conquest of a sovereign ruler. Ibn Khaldūn therefore defines the political system of the Muslim *malik* or *sultān* as *siyāsa 'aqlīya*, even though the primary source of the statutes by which they rule their subjects is the *Sharī'a*. He says:

Politics based on reason can take two forms. In the first care is taken of welfare in general, and of the advantage of the sultan in respect of the maintenance of his rule in particular. . . . Allah has dispensed with it for us in ⟨our⟩ religious community (*milla*) and for the time of the *khilāfa* [that is, of the first four caliphs], because the statutes of the *Sharī'a* dispense with it in respect of the general and the particular welfare. The statutes of the *mulk* are included in it [that is, the *Sharī'a*].

In the second form care is taken of the advantage of the ruler and that the *mulk* should be firmly established for him by force and superior power; the general welfare ⟨of the subjects⟩ takes second place. Such a government (*siyāsa*) is that of ⟨all⟩ the other kings in the world, Muslim and non-Muslim, except that the Muslim kings act in accordance with the requirements of the Islamic *Sharī'a*, as far as they can. Hence their laws are composed of statutes of the *Sharī'a*, rules of right conduct, regulations which are natural for ⟨political⟩ association, and necessary things concerning power and '*Aṣabiya*. The requirements of the *Shar'* come first, then the philosophers with their rules of conduct and ⟨after that⟩ the kings in their way of life.<sup>26</sup>

We note the interplay of factors and forces of different provenance in Ibn Khaldūn's argument: on the one hand Islam as a collective as well as a personal factor, and on the other power and its maintenance.

The distinction between *siyāsa dīnīya*, based on the divinely revealed prophetic law and represented by the *khilāfa*, and *siyāsa 'aqlīya*, founded by conquest, based on laws devised by reason and realized in the *mulk*, the power-state, is fundamental;<sup>27</sup> it underlies Ibn Khaldūn's historical inquiry into existing society and its civilization. He is bent on discovering the principles of political organization, on finding out how the state runs its course and how it works. His point of reference in this analysis is the *Sharī'a* of Islam, the constitution of a theocracy founded by the lawgiver.

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Like Al-Māwardī and the other jurists he defines the *khilāfa* as the lieutenancy of the lawgiver to guard religion and administer the world in the chapters "On the meaning of *khilāfa* and *imāma*" and "On the religious concerns of the *khilāfa*".

His own contribution to political thought consists in two important findings. They are the result of the blending, in his searching mind, of empiricism and traditionalism, and they are: (a) that the *khilāfa* has survived in the *mulk* of the Islamic empire, and (b) that religion, if not the determining factor as it is in the *khilāfa*, still remains an important factor in the *mulk*. He applies his own experience in Islam to society and civilization in general. He thus combines a primarily theological with a power-political concept of the state, without in any way abandoning the accepted Muslim position, since the spiritual and the temporal power are united in the caliph or *imām*. This does not mean, however, that there is simply a difference of degree: religion being either the sovereign ruling factor, a *primus inter pares*, or only one factor among many, though a very important one. For Ibn Khaldūn maintains again and again that dominion is as necessary as the will to power and domination is natural, and that power can be gained and dominion established without the call of religion, so long as 'Aṣabīya unites a large enough group of like-minded enthusiasts to supply the man aspiring to political leadership with sufficient backing. But he would not be a Muslim if he did not stress the support, often decisive, which religion lends to the 'Aṣabīya, transforming a driving force originally based on descent or common material interests into an irresistible spiritual influence reinforced by the energy and striking power of a closely knit group of activists. This applies in particular to Islam in its period of expansion and consolidation into a world power.

Ibn Khaldūn has correctly deduced that a weakening of the religious *élan* must strengthen the temporal component of the *khilāfa* and inevitably lead to its transformation into absolute monarchy in the form of the *mulk*. On the other hand, religion, whether by prophecy or by a call (*da'wa*) to <its> truth, is the source from which great empires spring. For where otherwise rivalry and discord might threaten to disrupt the 'Aṣabīya, religion unites all hearts, replaces the desire for the vanity of the world with its rejection and turns men to God, seeking right and truth in

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unison.<sup>28</sup> In support of his claim that “the call to religion increases the force of the ‘*Aṣabīya* . . .”,<sup>29</sup> he cites the Lamṭūna and the Almoravids in the Maghreb, whose religious zeal made their ‘*Aṣabīya* irresistible in spite of the numerical superiority of their opponents, and tells how the decline of this zeal led to their destruction at the hands of those whom they had previously subdued. In other words, religious enthusiasm provides a strong incentive for the will to power, and thus sublimates what was originally part of man’s baser nature, which he shares with the animals. This is expressed in *taghallub*, subjugation, and *qahr*, force, which stem from *ghaḍab*—equivalent to the irascible part of the soul—and from *ḥayawāniya*, the concupiscent part. Ibn Khaldūn borrows these terms from the psychology of the *Falāsifa* where they had a Platonic-Aristotelian meaning.

These natural forces spend themselves after an initial effort—the conquest of power and the foundation of the state. As long as religion unites ruler and ruled by stressing the higher purpose of man and his salvation, the life of the state is guaranteed. Ibn Khaldūn is concerned more with the political relevance of religion than with its moral and civilizing aspects. Conversely, he is realist enough to know and to emphasize in the chapter entitled “The religious call (*da‘wa*) is not complete <and effective> without ‘*Aṣabīya*”, that force and power are necessary for the realization of an ideal and for the effective implementation of religious ideas in practical life. He quotes in his support the Hadith: “Allah did not send a prophet without the protection of his tribe.” If this applies to prophets, how much more to others. Ibn Khaldūn extends this principle to the rebellion against tyranny which is demanded by God of those only who have the power to overthrow it. He cites again a suitable prophetic utterance in his support: “He among you who sees something displeasing to Allah, must change it by force, if he is unable by his word; but if not even that, then at least in his heart.” For “only a strong attack, backed by the ‘*Aṣabīya* of tribes and clans, can remove rulers and destroy the edifice of their states which are firmly established”.<sup>30</sup>

It is this combination of religious conviction with political power which determines the nature and purpose of the *khilāfa* which Ibn Khaldūn so clearly recognized. The observer of the state as it is has drawn the conclusion from this knowledge that the

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transformation of the *khilāfa* into the *mulk* is natural and inevitable. At the same time he is convinced that, although the *mulk* is capable of looking after the welfare of man in this world, even this is achieved more perfectly with the aid of the laws of the *Shari'a*, since the prophetic lawgiver knows best what is to man's advantage in both mundane and religious matters. "Therefore if the *mulk* is Islamic it comes second in rank after the *khilāfa*, and they are linked together. But the *mulk* is isolated if it is outside the religious community (*milla*)."<sup>31</sup> Since political association in Islam originally took the form of the *khilāfa*, its significance and character were preserved after its transformation into the *mulk*,

namely, to choose religion and its ways and rites and to follow the paths of right without a visible change, except that the restraining authority (*wāzi'*) which had been religion (*dīn*), was replaced by the '*Aṣabiya* and the sword. This was the case in the time of Mu'āwiya, Merwān and his son 'Abd-al-Malik as well as in the early days of the Abbasid caliphs up to the period of (Hārūn al-)Rashīd and some of his sons. Then the characteristics of the *khilāfa* disappeared, nothing but its name remained and the state became a *mulk* pure and simple. The condition of subjugation reached its peak and was used for purposes of force, a variety of desires and sensual pleasures. Such was the case under the sons of 'Abd-al-Malik and the successors of Hārūn al-Rashīd among the Abbasids. The name *khilāfa* remained, thanks to the continuance of the '*Aṣabiya* of the Arabs. *Khilāfa* and *mulk* intermingled with each other in the two phases, but then the characteristics of the *khilāfa* disappeared with the disappearance of the Arabs, the destruction of their tribes and the ruin of their affairs. . . . It is, therefore, evident that the *khilāfa* at first existed without *mulk*, then their character became intermixed and finally the *mulk* alone remained, isolated (from the *khilāfa*) at the moment when its '*Aṣabiya* became separated from that of the *khilāfa*.<sup>32</sup>

The transference of power from the Arab aristocracy to autocratic rulers in the Persian style, governing after the Persian model, is here explained in terms of the decline of Arab solidarity and striking power ('*Aṣabiya*) and of Islam as a political driving force.

Ibn Khaldūn, as a Muslim observer of history, expresses this transformation as the natural result of psychological conditions which largely determine political developments. He does not condemn it as long as the ruler fulfils his obligations towards his subjects; to protect their life and property and to show concern

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for their welfare. In return his authority is recognized and his rule accepted. Ibn Khaldūn is at pains to point out that the prophetic lawgiver pays due attention to human nature in his law (*Shar'*) and condemns only excess:

Know that the whole world . . . is for the law-giver but a way<sup>33</sup> to the hereafter, for he who has no animal to ride on does not reach his goal. His [the law-giver's] intention is not to forbid or blame man's deeds . . . or to destroy the forces altogether which produce them, but rather to change their direction towards the aims of truth as far as possible, so that all intentions become right and the direction (of man's desires and plans) a single one (namely, to Allah and the hereafter).<sup>34</sup>

In this spirit Ibn Khaldūn examines the criticism of '*Aṣabiya* that it consists of descent and pride of descent. He finds that '*Aṣabiya* properly applied and understood is desirable, provided it is directed towards truth and the cause of Allah. For

if he [the lawgiver] eliminated it, the laws would become inoperative, since they can only fully function with the help of the '*Aṣabiya*. . . . The same applies to the *malik* (king). When the lawgiver reprimanded him he did not mean rightful authority, sufficient compulsion of religion and concern for the (general) welfare, but he blamed useless subjugation. . . . For if the king were sincere that his dominion over men were in the cause of God, and would charge them with service of God and holy war (*jihād*) against his enemies, it would not be blameworthy.<sup>35</sup>

There can be no doubt that Ibn Khaldūn gives religion (that is, in practice, the *Shari'a* of Islam) if not the first at least a very important place in the existing state. His inquiry into Islamic history and his experience of the contemporary Muslim states in the Maghreb taught him that there is always a gap between the ideal demands of the ideal *Shari'a* and political reality. But even if considerations of power politics have at times set aside the *Shari'a*, its theoretical validity and overruling authority have never been questioned. Jurists, like Al-Māwardī, Ibn Jamā'a and Ibn Taymiya, strove to maintain the purity of the law and showed what government ought to be in accordance with its provisions—despite their far-reaching and often compromising concessions. Ibn Khaldūn, no less ready to acknowledge the theoretical authority of the *Shari'a*, turned his attention to the state as it actually was, and showed why it had to be so. Restricting his observation to the



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Islamic states whose law was in theory the *Sharī'a* of Muḥammad, the Prophet of Islam, he does not devote special chapters to the discussion of law as a political factor, though he discusses other factors, stressing their interaction and interdependence. It is the more noteworthy that he emphasized the composite nature of the *mulk* precisely on account of the laws which regulate the life of the state. For whatever the source of the law of the state—whether God through a prophetic lawgiver, or human reason through the leading men of action and sages—a state cannot be established except on a foundation of law. In the chapter “On the meaning of *khilāfa* and *imāma*”, referred to above, Ibn Khaldūn justifies the promulgation of *qawānīn siyāsīya*, political laws—that is, laws regulating the administration of the polity and the relations between the ruler, who has seized power by force, and his subjects—by the need to curb the selfishness and arbitrariness of the ruler. In the absence of such laws the ruler would impose burdens on his subjects which would be too heavy for them to bear, and they would rebel.

If the state is Islamic the government will be a religious one—the *siyāsa dīnīya*—based on God's revealed law, the *Sharī'a*. The government will be a *siyāsa 'aqlīya* if it is based on political laws made by rational man. Such was the case in pre-Islamic Persia.<sup>36</sup> The different kinds of government have already been discussed, and I refer to them here for another reason: to stress the political aspect of law. This is implicit in the term used by Ibn Khaldūn, *qawānīn siyāsīya*, and from his comment: “If the state is without such a *siyāsa*—government on the basis of legally binding rules and regulations—its affairs are not in good order and its authority is not complete.”<sup>37</sup>

It cannot be over-emphasized that Ibn Khaldūn leaves no doubt that the law of the prophetic lawgiver is best and is superior to that of the human lawgiver, who is guided only by his reason. The former implies that

this world alone is not man's goal, for it is altogether useless and vain, since its end is death and destruction. God says: Do you think that we created you for sport? (*Sūra* XXIII, 117.) What is intended for man is his religion, which lets him attain happiness in the hereafter as the way of God. . . . The laws came which placed an obligation upon him in all his

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affairs, like service of God, trade and commerce, including rule (*mulk*) which is natural for human association, so that they (the laws) lead the rule towards the ways of God and everything is within the reach and range of the *Shar'*.<sup>38</sup>

Together with the earlier exposition of the respective spheres of *siyāsa dīniyya* and *siyāsa 'aqliyya* this passage shows that the state based on the religious law of Islam has a duty to care for the individual, who has to give account of his earthly life in the hereafter, as the creature of God, whereas the state based on the law of reason is concerned with the good order of society and the earthly well-being of its members. As a Muslim writing of the Islamic state, Ibn Khaldūn discusses only those aspects of religious law which have a bearing on politics. In the main he follows Al-Māwardī, and expressly quotes him as his source. In writing of the conditions which the caliph must satisfy, he insists—as we saw in chapter II—on descent from the Quraish because of their powerful '*Aṣabīya*, with the help of which they can guarantee and maintain the unity of the Muslim community. This is not surprising, for Ibn Khaldūn proudly traces his own descent from the early Muslims, because the Arabs attach the greatest value to noble descent and have developed the science of genealogy to a fine art. That Ibn Khaldūn considers power based on '*Aṣabīya* to be indispensable follows naturally from his theory of the state. Since it is the caliph's job to look after the temporal and spiritual interests of "the community of the faithful" God must give him the necessary force. "Nobody is charged with a task except he has the power to (fulfil) it."<sup>39</sup>

In yet another respect the difference between religious and temporal law is stressed in a manner typical of Ibn Khaldūn. Mild and just rule encourages self-reliance and personal courage; force and severity instil fear and timidity in the subjects. Therefore the Arabs living in the country are manly, but the urban population, living under restrictive statutes and being educated from childhood to obey for fear of punishment, loses its manliness. Urban life includes an education in the religious sciences, such as reading the Qur'ān and studying under shaikhs and Imams. He says:

Do not try to refute this by (pointing out) that the companions of the Prophet in fact accepted the statutes of religion and of the *Shar'ā*

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without a decline in manliness. On the contrary, they were the most manly (of all). For when the Muslims accepted their religion from the lawgiver, a restraining authority (*wāzi'*) (developed) in their own self from the promises and threats which were recited to them out of the Qur'ān. It did not consist of instruction in the arts and education in the sciences, but they absorbed spontaneously the statutes and *mores* of religion which they received by tradition, because beliefs and convictions were firmly established in them. Therefore the force of their manliness remained as strong as before and the claws of education and authority did not scratch them. . . . But when religion slowly declined among men they accepted restrictive statutes; the *Shar'* became a science and an art which was acquired by education and instruction, and they went over to a settled, civilized life (*ḥaḍāra*) and (acquired) the character-trait of obeying the statutes. Then the force of manliness declined among them. It is thus clear that the statutes of the government and instruction corrupt manliness, because in them the *wāzi'* is external. Yet the *Shari'a* has no deleterious effect because the *wāzi'* is in it as belonging to its essence. Therefore the statutes of the (temporal) government and instruction impress the urban dwellers (adversely) by weakening their souls and breaking their strength.<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, it can be said that the kind of law governing the state depends on the political and historical situation at any given time in its development and on the power of the ruler to enforce the law. Ibn Khaldūn wished to demonstrate this interconnection between law and politics.

We have seen that for Ibn Khaldūn the state, the object of his empirical inquiry, is the cradle of human civilization. The ideal pattern of political organization is the *Shari'a*-state of the formative period of Islam, the time of the first four caliphs. The field of his observation is the Islamic empire of his own day, and in particular in the Maghreb, the scene of his own political and legal activities. His insight into human nature, born of a religious humanism, enabled him to generalize from the facts of Islamic history, as he discovered them in themselves and in their mutual relations.<sup>41</sup> The state as it is, built on force and conquest and maintained by power supported by an adequate army, aroused his historical interest; he set his realistic assessment of social life in the state against his ideal pattern. For his roots are deeply embedded in Islamic civilization, and the spiritual values of Islam are set as the goal of human endeavour.

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Something must be said of the causal relation between the state and the higher cultural values to which the arts and sciences point, and to which their pursuit leads. We have considered urban civilization in relation to the origin, growth and decline of the power-state. We have seen the importance of the ruler and his court for the development of arts and crafts, caused by the growing demands of a life of leisure, ease and luxury; and how the close dependence of this life on finance and security eventually curbs the production of luxury goods, and causes its rapid decline. Increased taxation removes the incentive from the craftsmen and reduces the profits of the traders, at the same time reducing the spending power of a diminishing clientele for such goods.

Ibn Khaldūn expresses this relationship thus:

All this comes from state and dynasty, for the state collects the money from the subjects and spends it on the court and its dependants. . . . Thus this money comes in from the subjects and goes out to the supporters of the dynasty (ruling the state), and then to the citizens who join themselves to them—and these are in the majority.<sup>42</sup>

Well-being and wealth increase, especially in the centre of the state, the capital.

This is so only because the ruler is in their midst and his money flows among them, like water which makes the ground in the vicinity green, but what is far away remains dry. We have already said that ruler and state are the market for the world, for all goods are on the markets and in their vicinity, and if you go away from the markets the goods are wanting altogether.<sup>43</sup>

Civilization is thus the direct result of the establishment of the state and depends on its consolidation for growth and stability.

Reflect, [says Ibn Khaldūn] on the deep significance of this (for it is hidden from men) and know that these are matters which stand in a relationship with each other, namely the position of the state as to strength and weakness, the numerical strength of the state or tribe, the size of the city or region, the degree of ease and wealth in life; this is that state and rule are the *form* of the creation, and civilization and everything else (namely) the subjects, the cities and the other phenomena provide the *matter* for them. . . .<sup>44</sup>

This shows that Ibn Khaldūn recognized the inevitable correlation between the political situation and the standard of living, the state

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of civilization of rulers and ruled.<sup>45</sup> Significantly, man's humanity (*insāniya*) is, in his view, profoundly affected by the degree of culture and civilization; it declines with them, and is at its lowest when his moral qualities and his religion have been corrupted.<sup>46</sup>

To turn to the sciences in the strict sense, it must be borne in mind that Ibn Khaldūn was himself versed both in the philosophical and in the traditional sciences. His account of the Muslim sciences is an authoritative summary of their scope, content and meaning. But his attitude to the philosophical sciences is determined by his traditionalism and by his empiricism. For him, the rational sciences are natural to man and are found among all civilized nations.<sup>47</sup> They derive from man's power of reflection, which distinguishes him from the animals. But food and its provision are connected with his animal nature; therefore the sciences and arts take second place after the necessities of life.<sup>48</sup> In the chapter "The sciences only increase where... civilization increases"<sup>49</sup> he speaks of man's quest for what is specific to him, the sciences and the arts and crafts. The third phase of the state<sup>50</sup> is particularly favourable to the development of the sciences, thanks to the liberality of the ruler and the prevailing peace and prosperity. The capital as seat of the ruler becomes a centre of culture; scholars, poets and singers vie with each other at his court. But the more luxury, and with it moral laxity, increase, the less interest there is in spiritual values or the inner life and the less respect for scholars and their work. Here is an invaluable illustration of Ibn Khaldūn's important differentiation between urban civilization and spiritual culture, and the interrelation of the two.

Quite apart from the natural decline of the sciences in the wake of political, social and economic deterioration, Ibn Khaldūn stresses the grave danger of philosophy to religion. And because religion is important for the state, there is a consequent danger to society. It is true, he says, that the philosophical sciences form an integral part of *'umrān* and are useful to everybody. But since philosophy propounds doctrines in opposition to the *Shari'a* and its teachings as they are literally interpreted, speculation is to be discouraged, unless the student has first mastered the religious sciences. On the other hand, he stresses the importance of speculation for the historian and, on the whole, shares the view of Al-Ghazālī, who accepts logic and mathematics, and sees no harm

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in physics as long as the teachings of the Qur'ān are not contradicted, but warns against metaphysics. His sustained attack upon the *Falāsifa* must remain outside the present summary of his views.<sup>51</sup> It is sufficient here to underline the importance of philosophy and of his emphatic refutation of some of the views of the *Falāsifa* "because these sciences are <natural> concomitants of civilization, occur frequently in the cities, and do much damage to religion".<sup>52</sup> Since decline in religion is harmful to the state, whose good order is essential for man and his destiny in this world and in the hereafter, it is clear that Ibn Khaldūn must oppose the views of the *Falāsifa*. He does so as a convinced Muslim, for whom the prophetic law is perfect and alone adequate to lead man to his happiness. This happiness transcends that joy resulting from the perception of all "existing things", which the *Falāsifa* held to be the happiness peculiar to the speculative philosopher. Ibn Rushd would agree with him here, despite his spirited defence of philosophy (*falsafa*).<sup>53</sup>

Ibn Khaldūn doubts whether this happiness is the blessedness in the hereafter promised by the prophetic lawgiver to the obedient believer. But as a political scientist he is equally at variance with the *Falāsifa*, since his method is empirical, not speculative. Observation of reality and experience determine his views, whereas the *Falāsifa* rely on "hypothesis and supposition" in politics.<sup>54</sup>

In one respect he is right, though. The ruler of the state is not the metaphysician—Plato's philosopher-king equated by the *Falāsifa* with the Muslim prophetic lawgiver and *imām*—but the sovereign ruler of the power-state, supported by *'Aṣabīya* and religion.

Ibn Khaldūn's importance was not recognized in his own time, and not until the seventeenth century did Muslim writers take any notice of him, while European scholars discovered him only in the last century. His importance consists in a number of novel insights of permanent value and significance: (1) in his distinction between rural and urban life, and the necessity of the latter for the emergence of civilization and a state in the strict sense of the term; (2) in his postulating the *'Aṣabīya* as the principal driving force of political action; (3) in his projection of Islam into a universal human civilization, thus standing on the soil and in the climate of Islam and looking out towards humanity at large; (4) in his

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realization of the causal interdependence of the several factors of social life in the power-state: economic, military, cultural and religious; (5) in the concept of the parallel existence of the state founded by a prophetic lawgiver, as distinct from the state built on power in response to the human need for political association, and the desire of strong personalities for domination; (6) arising from the last point, in his definition and analysis of the Islamic *mulk*, as a composite structure whose law is a mixture of *Shari'a* and rational, i.e. political, law; (7) in his fundamental recognition of the vital part which religion should play in the life of the state, especially if it transforms the '*Aṣabiya*' into a durable, cohesive spiritual motive power; and (8) in that he postulates a causal law for the state which determines its development in a cycle of origin, growth, peak, decline and fall.

It is only natural that a man living in an age of transition should stress now one aspect and now another. Consistency can be as little expected as a complete integration of revolutionary ideas, almost modern in their tendency, and traditional Muslim thinking, into a new coherent philosophy. But, though prematurely, he broke new ground, not least in his insight into the workings of power politics, in his discovery of the importance of the human group animated by '*Aṣabiya*', and in his momentous recognition of the necessity of a healthy economy for a smoothly functioning state, a flourishing society, and a highly developed civilization. Some of the points enumerated constitute a signal contribution to political thought in general, far transcending medieval Islam.

It is not, therefore, out of place to compare some aspects of Ibn Khaldūn's thought with the strikingly similar views of Machiavelli, although there is certainly no connection between the two thinkers, direct or indirect. This similarity concerns points 2, 4 and 7. '*Aṣabiya*' is a term which Ibn Khaldūn coined to express the corporate will of a group. It enables that group, and especially its leader, to realize their united will in political action; and specifically to found and to maintain the state. There is at first sight no comparable term in Machiavelli. But a consideration of his concept of *virtù* makes a comparison with it plausible. *Virtù* originally expressed the personal courage, skill and determination of an individual, but was ultimately used to denote the force inherent in all citizens of the state, particularly in the ruler, and

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it finds its expression in decisive action in the political and social life. It is the determining factor of political action. In contrast with the collective nature of the *'Aṣabīya*, however, *virtù* remains a personal driving force confined to its possessor, and it is in its origin more a spiritual force. Yet in combination with the *virtù* of others, its place in the state and its effective influence on politics make it serve the same purpose as *'Aṣabīya*; this may help the Western reader to understand better the significance of the Arab's concept. Fr. Meinecke defines *virtù* in the Introduction to his German edition of the *Principe* as "heroism and capacity for great historical achievement, and the founding of flourishing and powerful states".<sup>55</sup>

In general, there is in Machiavelli the same appreciation of the role of power and of the will to power to establish, develop and consolidate the state, as, for example, in the third chapter of the *Principe*. Ibn Khaldūn's chapter called "The goal at which the *'Aṣabīya* aims is dominion (*mulk*)" forcefully makes the point that the state is conditioned by the will to power of strong personalities and groups which must be able to rely on a powerful *'Aṣabīya*.<sup>56</sup>

We have seen that in the power-state (*mulk*), in contrast to the *khilāfa* in the strict sense under the first four caliphs, the interest of the state is the overriding consideration. The ruler is responsible for the state, its safety, good order and welfare. To discharge his responsibilities he must have sufficient power. Machiavelli's attitude to the state is basically the same: the interests of the state are paramount. But Machiavelli would go much further than Ibn Khaldūn, who held to Muslim ethics, was prepared to go. *Necessità*, political necessity in the interests of the state, demanded by "Reason of State", made Machiavelli condone morally reprehensible actions, such as violence, treason, breach of faith and even murder. For Ibn Khaldūn these are evil and bound to recoil not only on the perpetrators but on the state as a whole; they must prove injurious in the end. Machiavelli recognizes that they are bad, but he deems them useful for the state and for that reason justifiable.<sup>57</sup> There are other differences between the two. Ibn Khaldūn, as we have seen, observes and diagnoses and draws conclusions as a historian of civilization. Machiavelli is himself a political activist and reformer. He gives advice in the hope that it may lead to the unification of Italy. He is part of the Renaissance.



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Both he and Ibn Khaldūn share an impartial empiricism, both seek the truth in examining political reality. But Ibn Khaldūn inquires into the origin and development of the state in order to find and formulate an underlying law. Machiavelli also recognizes the causality of history and development in cycles. He is influenced by Polybius in his concept of the cyclical change of constitutions. Whether Ibn Khaldūn, or any other Muslim author, knew Polybius is, as far as I know, uncertain and indeed doubtful. Unlike Ibn Khaldūn, Machiavelli is not satisfied with discovering cause and effect in historical and political phenomena; he wants to learn a lesson from the past in order to apply it to the present.

In one respect both men came to practically identical conclusions quite independently. Both stress the importance of religion for the state and the connection between religion and power. In his *Discorsi* Machiavelli says: "If we read Roman history attentively we will always find how much religion contributed to obedience in the army, to courage among the people, to the preservation of morality and to shaming the wicked. . . . As the worship of God is the cause for the greatness of republics, so is its neglect the cause of their ruin. . . ." <sup>58</sup> Religion consolidates the state. Ibn Khaldūn stated that religion without 'Aṣabiya is unable to impress people, impose its law on them and secure their obedience. Only authority backed by effective power can bring success, in religious matters no less than in political affairs. Machiavelli says: "Only he should set out to conquer who has also ability and force. . . ." <sup>59</sup> In the sixth chapter of his *Principe* he speaks of the difficulty of preserving newly won power and says: ". . . but when he must rely on himself and can use coercion, he rarely runs a risk. It is for this reason that all armed prophets have been victorious, and all unarmed ones have perished." This agrees with the quotation from the earlier chapter: "The religious call (*da'wa*) is not complete without 'Aṣabiya", <sup>60</sup> to which this further passage may be added: "The situation of the prophets was the same when they called men to God with the help of clans and groups, and they were fortified by God. . . ."

Machiavelli also resembles Ibn Khaldūn in his evaluation of religion in relation to the state when he claims (*Discorsi* II, 2) that Christianity makes man humble and submissive. From the passage quoted above <sup>61</sup> it is clear that Ibn Khaldūn

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exempts pure Islam from such a charge, at any rate when the *khilāfa* corresponded in reality to its theory as laid down in the *Shari'a*. It is true this formulation happened long after the *khilāfa* had been transformed into the *mulk*, and for this reason Ibn Khaldūn avers that once the *Shar'* had become a science to be studied at a time when religion had lost its impetus, the deference of the students towards their teachers resulted in a decline in manliness and self-reliance. But while he safeguards Islam as a religion and the *khilāfa* as the ideal state he would agree with Machiavelli as far as the *mulk* is concerned, that is, the *mulk* which is based on a mixed government, and whose law contains both the ordinances of the *Shari'a*, and political statutes promulgated by the autocratic ruler.<sup>62</sup>

Machiavelli is at one with him in stressing that the fear of God which religion inspires in man makes him obedient to orders and laws, reliable in keeping an oath or a promise, and easy to rule. In his view, religion is also conducive to the formation of a good army; indeed, he summed up those things which preserve the state in the words: "Religion, laws and army."

It is their insight into human nature and their realization of the importance of force and power, supported by indispensable authority, which links the Muslim historian of human civilization to the man of the Renaissance, who had studied the history of Rome and of Christian Italy.