

slightness of the sun's deviation from the zenith in the south. Let us explain and prove this statement. The result will clarify the reason why civilization in the third and fourth zones is so highly developed and extends also to the fifth, <sixth,> and seventh zones.

We say: When the south and north poles (of heaven) are upon the horizon, they constitute a large circle that divides the firmament into two parts. It is the largest circle (in it) and runs from west to east. It is called the equinoctial line. In astronomy, it has been explained in the proper place that the highest sphere moves from east to west in a daily motion by means of which it also forces the spheres enclosed by it to move. This motion is perceptible to the senses. It has also been explained that the stars in their spheres have a motion that is contrary to this motion and is, therefore, a motion from west to east. The periods of this movement differ according to the different speeds of the motions of the stars.

Parallel to the courses of all these stars in their spheres, there runs a large circle which belongs to the highest sphere and divides it into two halves. This is the ecliptic (zodiac). It is divided into twelve "signs." As has been explained in the proper place, the equinoctial line intersects the ecliptic at two opposite points, namely, at the beginning of Aries and at the beginning of Libra. The equinoctial line divides the zodiac into two halves. One of them extends northward from the equinoctial line and includes the signs from the beginning of Aries to the end of Virgo. The other half extends southward from it and includes the signs from the beginning of Libra to the end of Pisces.

When the two poles fall upon the horizon <which takes place in one particular region> among all the regions of the earth, a line is formed upon the surface of the earth that faces the equinoctial line and runs from west to east. This line is called the equator. According to astronomical observation, this line is believed to coincide with the beginning of the first of the seven zones. All civilization is to the north of it.

The north pole gradually ascends on the horizon of the cultivated area (of the earth) until its elevation reaches sixtyfour degrees. Here, all civilization ends. This is the end of the seventh zone. When its elevation reaches ninety degrees on the horizon - that is the distance between the pole and the equinoctial line-then it is at its zenith, and the equinoctial line is on the horizon. Six of the signs of the zodiac, the northern ones, remain above the horizon, and six, the southern ones, are below it.

Civilization is impossible in the area between the sixtyfourth and the ninetieth degrees, for no admixture of heat and cold occurs there because of the great time interval between them. Generation (of anything), therefore, does not take place.

The sun is at its zenith on the equator at the beginning of Aries and Libra. It then declines from its zenith down to the beginning of Cancer and Capricorn. Its greatest declination from the equinoctial line is twenty-four degrees.

Now, when the north pole ascends on the horizon, the equinoctial line declines from the zenith in proportion to the elevation of the north pole, and the south pole descends correspondingly, as regards the three (distances constituting geographical latitude).³⁹ Scholars who calculate the (prayer) times call this the latitude of a place. When the equinoctial line declines from the zenith, the northern signs of the zodiac gradually rise above it, proportionately to its rise, until the beginning of Cancer is reached. Meanwhile, the southern signs of the zodiac correspondingly descend below the horizon until the beginning of Capricorn is reached, because of the inclination of the (two halves of the zodiac) upwards or downwards from the horizon of the equator, as we have stated. The northern horizon continues to rise, until its northern limit, which is the beginning of Cancer, is in the zenith. This is where the latitude is twenty-four degrees in the Hijaz and the territory adjacent. This is the declination from the equinoctial at the horizon of the equator at the beginning of Cancer. With the elevation of the north pole (Cancer) rises, until it attains the zenith. When the pole rises more than twenty-four degrees, the sun

descends from the zenith and continues to do so until the elevation of the pole is sixty-four degrees, and the sun's descent from the zenith, as well as the depression of the south pole under the horizon, is the same distance. Then, generation (of anything) stops because of the excessive cold and frost and the long time without any heat.

At and nearing its zenith, the sun sends its rays down upon the earth at right angles. In other positions, it sends them down at obtuse or acute angles. When the rays form right angles, the light is strong and spreads out over a wide area, in contrast to what happens in the case of obtuse and acute angles. Therefore, at and nearing its zenith, the heat is greater than in other positions, because the light (of the sun) is the reason for heat and calefaction. The sun reaches its zenith at the equator twice a year in two points of Aries and Libra. No declination (of the sun) goes very far. The heat hardly begins to become more temperate, when the sun has reached the limit of its declination at the beginning of Cancer or Capricorn and begins to rise again toward the zenith. The perpendicular rays then fall heavily upon the horizon there (in these regions) and hold steady for a long time, if not permanently. The air gets burning hot, even excessively so. The same is true whenever the sun reaches the zenith in the area between the equator and latitude twenty-four degrees, as it does twice a year. The rays exercise almost as much force upon the horizon there (at this latitude) as they do at the equator. The excessive heat causes a parching dryness in the air that prevents (any) generation. As the heat becomes more excessive, water and all kinds of moisture dry up, and (the power of) generation is destroyed in minerals, plants, and animals, because (all) generation depends on moisture.

Now, when the beginning of Cancer declines from the zenith at the latitude of twenty-five degrees and beyond, the sun also declines from its zenith. The heat becomes temperate, or deviates only slightly from (being temperate). Then, generation can take place. This goes on until the cold becomes excessive, due to the lack of light and the obtuse angles of the rays of the sun. Then, (the power of) generation again decreases and is destroyed. However, the destruction caused by great heat is greater than that caused by great cold, because heat brings about desiccation faster than cold brings about freezing.

Therefore, there is little civilization in the first and second zones. There is a medium degree of civilization in the third, fourth, and fifth zones, because the heat there is temperate owing to the decreased amount of light. There is a great deal of civilization in the sixth and seventh zones because of the decreased amount of heat there. At first, cold does not have the same destructive effect upon (the power of) generation as heat; it causes desiccation only when it becomes excessive and thus has dryness added. This is the case beyond the seventh zone. (All) this, then, is the reason why civilization is stronger and more abundant in the northern quarter. And God knows better!

The ⁴⁰ philosophers concluded from these facts that the region at the equator and beyond it (to the south) was empty. On the strength of observation and continuous tradition, it was argued against them that (to the contrary) it was cultivated. How would it be possible to prove this (contention)? It is obvious that the (philosophers) did not mean to deny entirely the existence of civilization there, but their argumentation led them to (the realization) that (the power of) generation must, to a large degree, be destroyed there because of the excessive heat. Consequently, civilization there would be either impossible, or only minimally possible. This is so. The region at the equator and beyond it (to the south), even if it has civilization as has been reported, has only a very little of it.

Averroes ⁴¹ assumed that the equator is in a symmetrical position ⁴² and that what is beyond the equator to the south corresponds to what is beyond it to the north; consequently, as much of the south would be cultivated as of the north. His assumption is not impossible, so far as (the argument of) the destruction of the power of generation is concerned. However, as to the region south of the equator, it is made impossible by the fact that the element of water covers the face of the earth in the south, where the corresponding area in the north admits of generation. On account of the greater amount of water (in the

south), Averroes' assumption of the symmetrical (position of the equator) thus turns out to be impossible. Everything else follows, since civilization progresses gradually and begins its gradual progress where it can exist, not where it cannot exist.

The assumption that civilization cannot exist at the equator is contradicted by continuous tradition. And God knows better!



After this discussion, we wish to draw a map of the earth,⁴³ as was done by the author of the *Book of Roger*. Then, we shall give a detailed description of the map.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE MAP⁴⁴

THIS DESCRIPTION is twofold. There is a detailed description and a general description.

The detailed description consists of a discussion of each country, mountain, sea, and river of the cultivated part of the earth. This discussion will be found in the following section.

The general description consists of a discussion of the division of the cultivated part of the earth into seven zones, their latitudinal (extension), and the length of their days. Such is the contents of this section.

Let us begin to explain these things. We have mentioned before that the earth floats upon the elemental water like a grape.⁴⁵ God's plan for civilization and for the elemental generation of life resulted in making part of (the earth) free of water.

The part that is free of water is said to constitute one-half the surface of the earth. The cultivated part is one-fourth of it. The rest is uncultivated. According to another opinion, the cultivated part is only one-sixth of it. The empty areas of the part which is free of water lie to the south and to the north. The cultivated area in between forms a continuum that stretches from west to east. There is no empty area between the cultivated part and the (Surrounding) Sea in these two directions.

They further said: Across the cultivated part of the earth an imaginary line runs from west to east facing the equinoctial line (of the firmament) in regions where the two poles of the firmament are on the horizon. At this line civilization begins. It extends from there northwards.

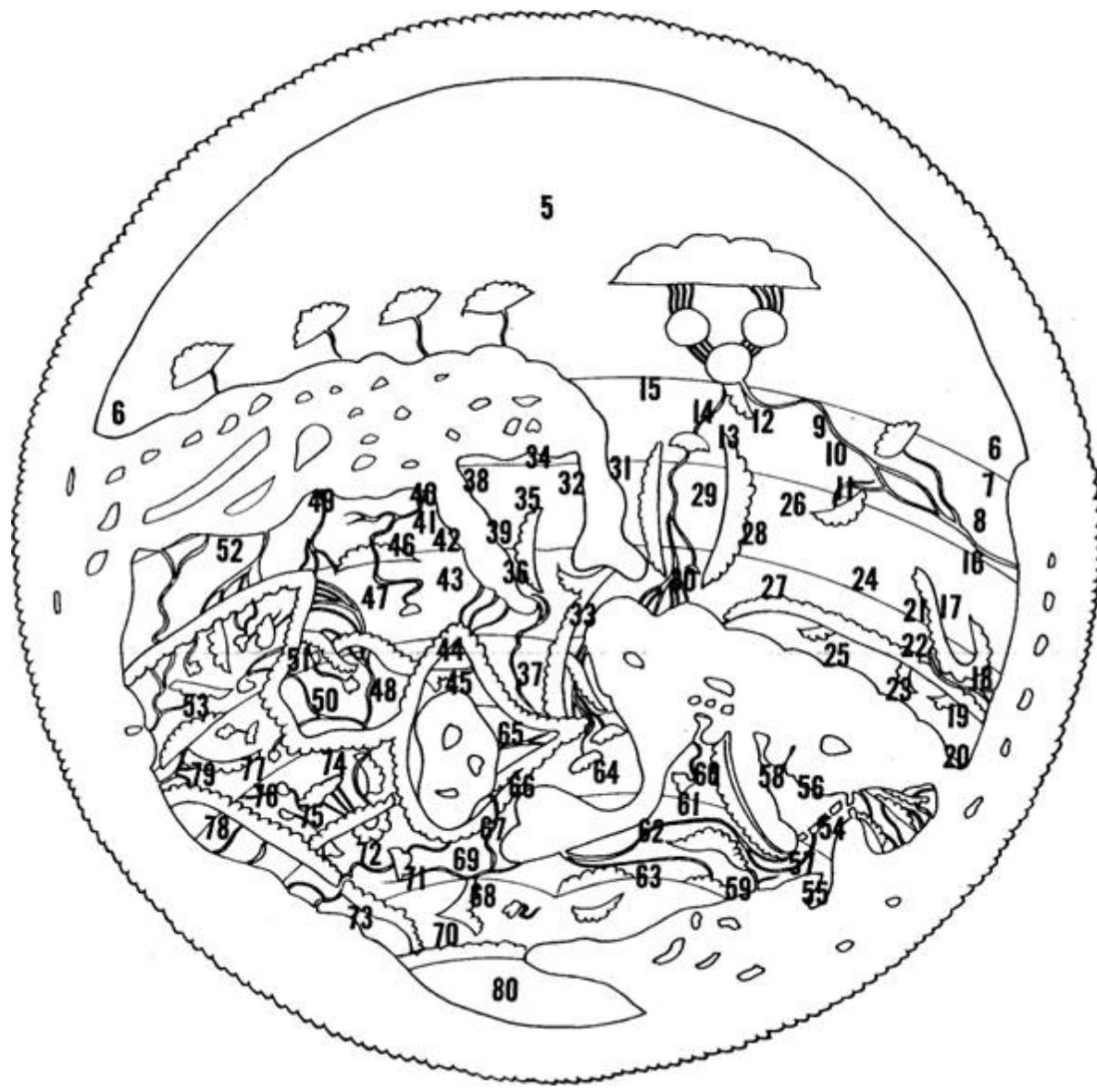
Ptolemy said: "As a matter of fact, civilization extends beyond that line to the south." He indicated the latitudinal extension, as will be mentioned.⁴⁶

Ishaq b. al-Hasan al-Khazini⁴⁷ expresses the opinion that beyond the seventh zone (to the north) there is another civilization. He indicated its latitudinal extension, as we shall

KEY TO THE MAP

1 South	41 Mukrin
2 West	42 Kirmin
3 North	43 Firs
4 East	44 <i>al-Bahlus</i>
5 Empty beyond the equator because of the heat	45 Azerbaijan

6	Equator	46	Desert	
7	Lamlam Country	47	Khurasin	
8	Maghzawah (Maguzawa?)	48	Khuwirizm	
9	Kanem	[Country]	49	Eastern India
10	Bornu		50	Tashkent
11	Gawgaw		51	Soghd
12	Zaghiy		52	China
13	at-Tijuwin		53	Tughuzghuz
14	Nubia		54	Gascogne
15	Abyssinia		55	Brittany
16	Ghanah		56	Calabria
17	Lamtah		57	France
18	as-Sus		58	Venice
19	Morocco		59	Germany (Alaminiyah)
20	Tangier		60	Macedonia
21	Sinhijah		61	Bohemia
22	Dar'ah		62	Jathuliyah
23	Ifriqiyah		63	Jarmaniyah
24	Fezzan		64	al-Baylagin
25	Jarid		65	Armenia
26	Kawir		66	Tabaristan
27	Desert of Berenice		67	Alans
28	Inner Oases		68	Bashqirs
29	Upper Egypt		69	Bulgars
30	Egypt		70	Pechenegs
31	Beja		71	Stinking Land
32	Hijiz		72	Waste Country
33	Syria		73	Magog
34	Yemen		74	Ghuzz
35	Yamimah		75	Tiirgish
36	al-Basrah		76	Adhkish
37	'Iraq		77	Khallukh
38	ash-Shihr		78	Gog
39	Oman		79	Kimik
40	Western India		80	Empty in the north because of the cold



mention.⁴⁸ Al-Khazini is one of the leading scholars in this craft (geography).

* Further, the ancient philosophers divided the cultivated part of the earth in the north into seven zones by means of imaginary lines running from west to east. They maintain that these zones have different latitudinal extensions. This will be discussed in detail.

The first zone runs along the equator, north of it. South of it, there is only the civilization to which reference was made by Ptolemy. Beyond that are waste regions and sandy deserts, up to the circle of water which is called the Surrounding Sea. To the north, the first zone is followed, successively, by the second through the seventh zones. (The seventh zone) constitutes the northern limit of civilization. Beyond it are only empty and waste regions, down to the Surrounding Sea as (in the south). However, the empty regions in the south are much larger than those in the north.*

As to latitudes and length of days in the various zones, it should be known that the two poles of the firmament are upon the horizon at the equator in the west and the east.

It should be known that, as was mentioned above, the philosophers divided the cultivated part of the earth into seven parts from south to north. These parts they called zones. The whole of the cultivated area is distributed over these zones. Each zone extends from west to east.

The first zone runs from west to east with the equator as its southern border.

Beyond it, there are only waste regions and sandy deserts, and civilization of a sort that, if it actually exists, is more like non-civilization. To the north, the first zone is followed, successively, by the second through the seventh zones. The seventh zone constitutes the northern limit of civilization. Beyond it (to the north) are only empty and waste regions until the Surrounding Sea is reached. The situation is the same here as it is beyond the first zone to the south. However, the empty areas in the north are much smaller than those in the south.

The sun there is at the zenith. As we follow the cultivated part of the earth farther and farther north, the north pole ascends slightly, and the south pole descends correspondingly, (at the horizon). Furthermore, the sun moves a corresponding distance from (its zenith at) the equinoctial line. These three distances are equal to each other. Each of them is called geographical latitude. This is well known to the scholars who determine the (prayer) times.

People hold different opinions as to the latitudinal extension (of the cultivated part of the earth) and as to the latitudinal extension (breadth) of the various zones. Ptolemy holds the opinion that the latitudinal extension of the entire cultivated part of the earth is $77\frac{1}{2}$. The latitudinal extension of the cultivated part beyond the equator to the south is 11° .^{48a} Thus, the latitudinal extension of the zones in the north is $66\frac{1}{2}$. According to him, the first zone extends to 16° ; ^{48b} the second to 20° ; the third to 27° ; the fourth to 33° ; the fifth to 38° ; the sixth to 43° ; the seventh to 48° .⁴⁹ He then determined the degree on the firmament as having a length of $66\frac{2}{3}$ miles, (were it to be) measured on the surface of the earth.⁵⁰ Thus, the first zone from south to north is 1,067 miles (wide); the second zone, 2,333 miles; the third zone, 2,790 miles; the fourth zone, 2,185 miles; the fifth zone, 2,520 miles; the sixth zone, 2,840 miles, and the seventh zone, 3,150 miles.

*The length of night and day differs in the various zones by reason of the declination of the sun from the equinoctial line and the elevation of the north pole above the horizon. This causes a difference in the arcs of day and night.

The length of night and day dyers in the different zones by reason of the declination of the sun from the equinoctial line and the elevation of the north pole above the horizon. This causes a deference in the arcs of day and night.

At the boundary of the first zone, the longest night-which occurs when the sun enters Capricorn-and the longest day which occurs when the sun enters Cancer-reach a maximum of thirteen hours. The same is the case at the boundary of the second zone in the north. The length of day there reaches its maximum of thirteen and one-half hours when the sun enters Cancer, the summer tropic. The longest night -when the sun enters Capricorn, the winter tropic is as long. For the shortest day and night, there thus remains the difference between thirteen and one-half and twenty-four, which is the combined number of hours of day and night, or one complete revolution of the firmament. The same is the case also at the boundary of the third zone in the north, where night and day reach a maximum length of fourteen hours; at the boundary of the fourth zone, where they reach a maximum length of fourteen and one-half hours; at the boundary of the fifth zone, where they reach a maximum length of fifteen hours; at the boundary of the sixth zone, where they reach a maximum length of fifteen and one-half hours; and at the boundary of the seventh zone, where they reach a maximum length of sixteen hours. There, civilization ends. The difference in the maximum length of night and day in the various zones, consequently, is an evenly distributed, gradual increase of half an hour in each, all the way from the first zone in the south to the last zone in the north.

In connection with these zones, "geographical latitude" refers to the distance between the sun at its zenith in a given place and the equinoctial line where it is at the

zenith on the equator. It likewise corresponds to the depression of the south pole below the horizon in that particular place, as well as to the elevation of the north pole. As was mentioned before,⁵¹ these three distances are equal to each other. They are called "geographical latitude."

At the boundary of the first zone, the longest night which occurs when the sun enters Capricorn - and the longest day - which occurs when the sun enters Cancer - reach, according to Ptolemy, a maximum of twelve and one-half hours; at the boundary of the second zone, a maximum of thirteen hours; at the boundary of the third zone, a maximum of thirteen and one-half hours; at the boundary of the fourth zone, a maximum of fourteen hours; at the boundary of the fifth zone, a maximum of one half-hour more; at the boundary of the sixth zone, a maximum of fifteen hours; and at the boundary of the seventh zone, a maximum of one half-hour more. For the shortest day and night, there thus remains the difference between the last figure and twenty-four, which is the combined number of hours of day and night, or one complete revolution of the firmament. The difference in the maximum length of night and day in the various zones, consequently, is an evenly distributed, gradual increase of half an hour in each, all the way from the first zone in the south to the last zone in the north.*

Ishaq b. al-Hasan al-Khazini maintains that the latitudinal extension of civilization beyond the equator (to the south) is $16^{\circ} 25'$, and the longest night and day there, thirteen hours. The latitudinal extension of the first zone and the length of day and night there are the same as beyond the equator (to the south). The second zone extends to 24° ,^{51a} and the length of its (longest) day and night at its farthest point is thirteen and one-half hours. For the third zone, the figures are 30° and fourteen hours. For the fourth zone, they are 36° and fourteen and one-half hours. For the fifth zone, they are 41° and fifteen hours. For the sixth zone, they are 45° and fifteen and one-half hours. For the seventh zone, they are $48\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ and sixteen hours. The latitudinal extension of civilization beyond the seventh zone (to the north) reaches from the boundary of the seventh zone to (latitude) 63° , and the length of the (longest) day and night to twenty hours.

Other leading scholars in the discipline, apart from Ishaq al-Khazini, maintain that the latitudinal extension of the cultivated area beyond the equator (to the south) is $16^{\circ} 27'$. The first zone extends to $20^{\circ} 15'$; the second to $27^{\circ} 13'$; the third to $33^{\circ} 20'$; the fourth to $38\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$;⁵² the fifth to 43° ; the sixth to $47^{\circ} 53'$; or, according to another opinion, to $46^{\circ} 50'$; and the seventh to $51^{\circ} 53'$. Civilization beyond the seventh zone extends to 77° .

In Abu Jafar al-Khazini,⁵³ one of the leading scholars in the discipline, one also finds that the latitudinal extension of the first zone is from 1° to $20^{\circ} 13'$; of the second, to $27^{\circ} 13'$; of the third, to $33^{\circ} 39'$; of the fourth, to $38^{\circ} 23'$; of the fifth, to $42^{\circ} 58'$; of the sixth, to $47^{\circ} 2'$; and of the seventh, to $60^{\circ} 45'$.⁵⁴

This is as much as I know about the different opinions concerning latitudinal extension and length of day and night in the zones and concerning their width as indicated in miles.

God "created everything. Then, He determined it."⁵⁵

The geographers have subdivided each of the seven zones lengthwise from west to east in ten equal sections. They mention the countries, cities, mountains, and rivers of each section, and the traveling distances between them.

We shall now briefly summarize the best-known countries, rivers, and seas of each section. Our model will be the data set forth in the *Nuzhat al-mushtaq* which al-'Alawi al-

Idrisi al-Hammudi composed for the Christian king of Sicily, Roger, the son of Roger. Al-Idrisi's family had given up its rule of Malaga, and he had settled at (Roger's) court in Sicily. He composed the book in the middle of the sixth [twelfth] century. He utilized many books by authors such as al-Mas'udi, Ibn Khurradadhbih, al-Hawgali, al-'Udhri, Ishaq al-Munajjim,⁵⁷ Ptolemy and others.

We shall begin with the first zone and go on from there to the last one.

The first zone

The Eternal Islands (the Canaries) from which Ptolemy began the determination of geographical longitude, are in the west. They are not part of the land mass of the first zone. They lie in the Surrounding Sea. A number of islands constitute them. The largest and best known are three in number. They are said to be cultivated.

We have heard ⁵⁸ that European Christian ships reached them in the middle of this century, fought with the (inhabitants), plundered them, captured some of them, and sold some of the captives along the Moroccan coast where they came into the service of the ruler. After they had learned Arabic, they gave information about conditions on their island. They said that they tilled the soil with horns. Iron was lacking in their country. Their bread⁵⁹ was made of barley. Their animals were goats. They fought with stones, which they hurled backwards. Their worship consisted of prostrations before the rising sun. They knew no (revealed) religion and had not been reached by any missionary activity.

These islands can be reached only by chance, and not intentionally by navigation. Navigation on the sea depends on the winds. It depends on knowledge of the directions the winds blow from and where they lead, and on following a straight course from the places that lie along the path of a particular wind. When the wind changes and it is known where a straight course along it will lead, the sails are set for it, and the ship thus sails according to nautical norms evolved by the mariners and sailors ⁶⁰ who are in charge of sea voyages. The countries situated on the two shores of the Mediterranean are noted on a chart (*sahifah*) which indicates the true facts regarding them and gives their positions along the coast in the proper order. The various winds and their paths are likewise put down on the chart. This chart is called the "compass."⁶¹ It is on this (compass) that (sailors) rely on their voyages. Nothing of the sort exists for the Surrounding Sea. Therefore, ships do not enter it, because, were they to lose sight of shore, they would hardly be able to find their way back to it. Moreover, the air of the Surrounding Sea and its surface harbors vapors that hamper ships on their courses. Because of the remoteness of these (vapors), the rays of the sun which the surface of the earth deflects, cannot reach and dissolve them. It is, therefore, difficult to find the way to (the Eternal Islands) and to have information about them.

The first section of the first zone contains the mouth of the Nile which has its origin in the Mountain of the Qumr, as we have mentioned.⁶² (This Nile) is called the Sudanese Nile. It flows toward the Surrounding Sea and into it at the island of Awlil.⁶³ The city of Sila,⁶⁴ Takrur,⁶⁵ and Ghanah⁶⁶ are situated along this Nile. At this time, all of them belong to the Mali people,⁶⁷ a Negro nation. Moroccan merchants travel to their country.

Close to it in the north is the country of the Lamtunah and of the other groups of the Veiled Berbers (Sinhajah), as well as the deserts in which they roam. To the south of this Nile, there is a Negro people called Lamlam. They are unbelievers. They brand themselves on the face and temples. The people of Ghanah and Takrur invade their country, capture them, and sell them to merchants who transport them to the Maghrib.

There, they constitute the ordinary mass of slaves. Beyond them to the south, there is no civilization in the proper sense. There are only humans who are closer to dumb animals than to rational beings. They live in thickets and caves and eat herbs and unprepared grain. They frequently eat each other.⁶⁸ They cannot be considered human beings. All the fruits of the Negro territory come from fortified villages in the desert of the Maghrib, such as Touat (Tawat, Tuwat), Tigurarin,⁶⁹ and Ouargla (Wargalan).⁷⁰ In Ghanah, an 'Alid king and dynasty are said to have existed. (These 'Alids) were known as the Banu Salih. According to the author of the *Book of Roger*, (Salih) was Salih b. 'Abdallah b. Hasan b. al-Hasan, but no such Salih is known among the sons of 'Abdallah b. Hasan.⁷¹ At this time the dynasty has disappeared, and Ghanah belongs to the Mali ruler.

To the east of this territory, in the third section of the first zone, is the territory of Gawgaw⁷² It lies along a river that has its origin in certain mountains there, flows westward, and disappears in the sand in the second section. The realm of Gawgaw was independent. The Mali ruler then gained power over the territory, and it came into his possession. At this time it is devastated as the result of a disturbance that happened there and that we shall mention when we discuss the Mali dynasty in its proper place in the history of the Berbers.⁷³

To the south of the country of Gawgaw lies the territory of Kanim, a Negro nation⁷⁴ Beyond them are the Wangarah⁷⁵ on the border of the (Sudanese Nile) to the north. To the east of the countries of the Wangarah and the Kanim, there is the country of the Zaghay⁷⁶ and the Tajirah,⁷⁷ adjoining the land of the Nubah in the fourth section of the first zone. The land of the Nubah is traversed by the Egyptian Nile throughout its course from its beginning at the equator to the Mediterranean in the north.

This Nile originates at the Mountain of the *Qmr*, sixteen degrees above⁷⁸ the equator. There are different opinions as to the correct form of the name of this mountain. Some scholars read the name as *qamar* "moon," because the mountain is very white and luminous. Yaqut, in the *Mushtarak*,⁷⁹ as well as Ibn Sa'id,⁸⁰ reads *qumr*, with reference to an Indian people.⁸¹

Ten springs issue from this mountain. Five of them flow into one lake and five into another lake. There is a distance of six miles between the two lakes. From each of the two lakes, three rivers come forth. They come together in a swampy [?] lake (*batihah*) at the foot of which a mountain emerges. This mountain cuts across the lake at the northern end and divides its waters into two branches. The western branch flows westward through the Negro territory, and finally flows into the Surrounding Sea. The eastern branch flows northward through the countries of the Abyssinians and the Nubah and the region in between. At the boundary of Egypt, it divides. Three of its branches flow into the Mediterranean at Alexandria, at Rosetta,⁸² and at Damietta. One flows into a salt lake before reaching the sea.

In the middle of the first zone along the Nile, lie the countries of the Nubah and the Abyssinians and some of the oases down to Assuan. A settled part of the Nubah country is the city of Dongola, west of the Nile. Beyond it are 'Alwah⁸³ and Yulaq.⁸⁴ Beyond them, a six days' journey north of Yulaq, is the mountain of the cataracts. This is a mountain which rises to a great height on the Egyptian side but is much less elevated on the side of the country of the Nubah. The Nile cuts through it and flows down precipitately in tremendous cascades for a long distance. Boats cannot get through. Cargoes from the Sudanese boats are taken off and carried on pack animals to Assuan at the entrance to Upper Egypt. In the same way, the cargoes of the boats from Upper Egypt are carried over the cataracts. The distance from the cataracts to Assuan is a twelve day's journey. The oases on the west bank of the Nile there are now in ruins. They show traces of ancient

settlement.

In the middle of the first zone, in its fifth section, is the country of the Abyssinians, through which a river flows, which comes from beyond the equator and [85](#) flows toward the land of the Nubah, where it flows into the Nile and so on down into Egypt. Many people have held fantastic opinions about it and thought that it was part of the Nile of the Qumr (Mountain of the Moon). Ptolemy mentioned it in the *Geography*. He mentioned that it did not belong to the Nile.

In the middle of the first zone, in the fifth section, the Indian Ocean terminates. It comes down from the region of China and covers most of the first zone to the fifth section. Consequently, there is not much civilization there. Civilization exists only on the islands in (the Indian Ocean) which are numerous and said to number up to one thousand.

(Civilization also exists) on the southern coast of the Indian Ocean, the southernmost limit of the cultivated part of the earth, as also on its northern coast. Of these coasts, the first zone contains only a part of China to the east and the whole of the Yemen in the sixth section of this zone, where two seas branch off northwards from the Indian Ocean, namely, the Red Sea (Sea of al-Qulzum) and the Persian Gulf. Between them lies the Arabian Peninsula, comprising the Yemen, ash-Shihr to the east on the shore of the Indian Ocean, the Hijaz, the Yamimah, and adjacent regions which we shall mention in connection with the second zone and the regions farther north.

On the western shore of the Indian Ocean is Zayla' (Zila'), which is on the boundary of Abyssinia, and the desert plains of the Beja north of Abyssinia, which lie between the mountain of al-'Alliqi [86](#) in the southernmost part of Upper Egypt and the Red Sea which branches off from the Indian Ocean. North of Zayla' (Zila') in the northern part of this section is the straits of Bib al-Mandeb, where the sea that branches off there is narrowed by the promontory of alMandeb which juts into the Indian Ocean from south to north along the west coast of the Yemen for twelve miles. As a result, the sea becomes so narrow that its width shrinks to approximately three miles. This is called Bib al-Mandeb. Yemenite ships pass it on their way to the coast of Suez near Egypt (Cairo). North of Bib al-Mandeb are the islands of Suakin and Dahlak. Opposite it to the west are the desert plains of the Beja, a Negro nation, as we have just mentioned. To the east, on the coast of (the straits of Bib al-Mandeb) is the Tihimah of the Yemen. It includes the place of Haly b. Ya'qub.[87](#)

To the south of Zayla' (Zila') on the western coast of the Indian Ocean are the villages of Berbera which extend one after the other all along the southern coast of the (Indian Ocean) to the end of the sixth section. There, to the east, the country of the Zanj adjoins them. Then [88](#) comes the city of Mogadishu, a very populous city with many merchants, yet nomad in character, on the southern coast of the Indian Ocean. Adjoining it to the east is the country of the Sufilah on the southern coast in the seventh section of the first zone.

East of the country of the Sufilah on the southern shore, lies the country of al-Wiqwiq [89](#) which stretches to the end of the tenth section of the first zone, where the Indian Ocean comes out of the Surrounding Sea.

There are many islands in the Indian Ocean. One of the largest islands is the island of Ceylon (Sarandib) which is round in shape and has a famous mountain said to be the highest mountain on earth. It lies opposite Sufilah. Then, there is the island of Java (Malay Archipelago),[90](#) an oblong island that begins opposite the land of Sufilah and extends northeastward until it approaches the coasts that constitute China's southern boundary. In the Indian Ocean, to the south China is surrounded by the islands of al-Wiqwaq, and to the east by the islands of Korea.[91](#) There are numerous other islands in the Indian Ocean. These islands produce different kinds of perfumes and incense. They also are said to

contain gold and emerald mines. Most of their inhabitants are Magians.⁹² They have numerous rulers. These islands present remarkable cultural features that have been mentioned by geographers.

The northern coast of the Indian Ocean, in the sixth section of the first zone, is occupied by the whole of the Yemen. On the Red Sea side lie Zabid, al-Muhjam,⁹³ and the Tihamah of the Yemen. Next beyond that is Sa'dah, the seat of the Zaydi imams, lying far from the (Indian) Ocean to the south, and from the Persian Gulf to the east. In the region beyond that are the city of Aden and, north of it, San'a'. Beyond these two cities, to the east, is the land of al-Ahqaf and Z, afar. Next comes the land of Hadramawt, followed by the country of ash-Shihr between the (Indian) Ocean in the south and the Persian Gulf. This part of the sixth section is the only part that is not covered by water in the middle region of the first zone. Apart from it, a small portion of the ninth section is not covered by water, as well as a larger area in the tenth section that includes the southernmost limit of China. One of China's famous cities is the city of Canton.⁹⁴ Opposite it to the east are the islands of Korea which have just been mentioned.

This concludes the discussion of the first zone.

The second zone

The second zone is contiguous with the northern boundary of the first zone. Opposite its western limit in the Surrounding Sea are two of the Eternal Islands, which have been mentioned.

At the southernmost part of the first and second sections of the second zone, there is the land of Qamnuriyah.⁹⁵ Then, to the east, there are the southernmost parts of the land of Ghanah. Then, there are the desert plains of the Zaghay Negroes. In the northernmost part, there is the desert of Nisar.⁹⁶ It extends uninterruptedly from west to east. It has stretches of desert which are crossed by merchants on their way from the Maghrib to the Sudan country. It includes the desert plains of the Veiled Sinhajah Berbers. There are many subgroups, comprising the Gudalah,⁹⁷ the Lamtunah, the Massufah,⁹⁸ the Lamtah, and the Watrigah. Directly to the east of the waste regions is the land of Fezzan. Then, there are the desert plains of the Azgar, a Berber tribe, which extend due east in the southernmost part of the third section. This is followed, still in the third section, by part of the country of Kawar, a Negro nation. Then, there is a portion of the land of at-Tajuwin.⁹⁹ The northernmost part of the third section is occupied by the remainder of the land of Waddin, followed directly to the east by the land of Santariyah which is called the Inner Oases.¹⁰⁰

The southernmost limit of the fourth section is occupied by the remainder of the land of at-Tajuwin.

The middle of the fourth section, then, is intersected by Upper Egypt along the banks of the Nile, which flows from its source in the first zone to its mouth at the sea. In this section it passes through two mountain barriers, the Mountain of the Oases in the west, and the Muqattam in the east. At the southern part of the section lie Esna and Armant. There is a continuous riverbank region up to Assyut and Qus, and then to Sawl. There, the Nile divides into two branches. The right branch ends up at al-Lahun, still in the fourth section. The left branch ends up at Dalas. The region between them is the southernmost part of (Lower) Egypt. East of Mount Mugattam are the deserts of 'Aydhab, extending from the fifth section to the Sea of Suez, that is, the Red Sea (Sea of al-Qulzum) which branches off northwards from the Indian Ocean to the south. On the eastern shore of the Red Sea, in the same section, is the Hijaz, extending from the Mountain of Yalamlam to Yathrib (Medina). In the middle of the Hijaz is Mecca-God honor it!-and on its seashore

there is the city of Jiddah, which is opposite 'Aydhab on the western shore of the Red Sea.

In the sixth section to the west is the Najd, having as its southernmost limit Jurash and Tabalah,[101](#) (and extending) up to 'Ukaz in the north. North of the Najd, in the sixth section, is the remainder of the Hijaz. Directly to the east of (the Najd) lies the country of Najran and Janad. North of that is the Yamamah. Directly to the east of Najran, there is the land of Saba' and Ma'rib, followed by the land of ash-Shihr, which ends at the Persian Gulf. This is the other sea that branches off northward from the Indian Ocean, as has been mentioned, and turns westward on its course in the sixth section. The northeastern area of (the sixth section) constitutes a triangle. At its southernmost part is the city of Qalhat, the coast (seaport) of ash-Shihr. North of it, on the coast, is the country of Oman, followed by the country of alBahrayn with Hajar, at the end of the (sixth) section.

The southwestern part of the seventh section contains a portion of the Persian Gulf connecting with the other portion of it in the sixth section. The Indian Ocean covers all the southernmost area of the seventh section. There, Western India lies along it, up to the country of Mukran which belongs to Western India. Opposite it, is the country of at-Tawbaran [102](#) which also belongs to Western India. All of Western India lies in the western part of the seventh section. Western India is separated from Eastern India by stretches of desert, and is traversed by a river (the Indus) which comes from Eastern India and flows into the Indian Ocean in the south. Eastern India begins on the shore of the Indian Ocean. Directly to the east there lies the country of Ballahra.[103](#) North of it is Multan, the home of the great idol.[104](#) The northernmost part of Eastern India is the southernmost part of the country of Sijistan.

The western part of the eighth section contains the remainder of the country of Ballahra that belongs to Eastern India. Directly to the east of it lies the country of Gandhara.[105](#) Then, at the southernmost part (of the section), on the shore of the Indian Ocean, there is the country of Malabar (Munibar). North of it, in the northernmost part (of the section), there is the country of Kabul. Beyond (Kabul) to the east [105a](#) is the territory of the Kanauj, between inner and outer Kashmir at the end of the zone.

The ninth section, in its western part, contains farthest Eastern India, which extends to the eastern part (of the section) and stretches along its southernmost part up to the tenth section. In the northernmost part here, there is a portion of China. It includes the city of Khayghun.[106](#) China then extends over the whole tenth section up to the Surrounding Sea.

Third Zone

The third zone is contiguous with the northern boundary of the second zone. The first section, about one-third of the way from the southernmost part of the zone, contains the Atlas Mountain [107](#) which runs from the western part of the first section at the Surrounding Sea to the eastern end of the section. This mountain is inhabited by innumerable Berber nations, as will be mentioned.[108](#) In the region between this mountain and the second zone, at the Surrounding Sea, there is the *Ribat* (Monastery) Missah.[109](#) East of here are the adjoining countries of (as-)Sus [110](#) and Noun (Nul). Directly to the east of (these countries) is the country of Dar'ah, followed by the country of Sijilmasah and then by a portion of the desert of Nisar, the stretch of desert that we mentioned in describing the second zone.

The Atlas Mountain towers over all these countries of the first section. The western region of the Atlas has few passes and roads but near the Moulouya (Malwiyah) River, and from there on to where it ends, the Atlas has a great number of passes and roads. This region contains the Masmudah nations: at the Surrounding Sea the Saks1wah, then the

Hintatah, the Tinmallal, the Gidmiyah,[111](#) and then the Haskurah who are the last Masmudah in this area. Then there are the Zanigah,[112](#) that is, the Sinhijah- tribes. At the boundary of the first section of the third zone, there are some Zanatah tribes. To the north, Mount Awras (L'Aures), the mountain of the Kutamah, adjoins (the Atlas). After that, there are other Berber nations which we shall mention in their proper places.

The Atlas Mountain in the western part of the section towers over Morocco to the north of it. In the southern part of (Morocco) lie Marrakech, Aghmat, and Tadla. On the Surrounding Sea there, are the *Ribat* Asfi and the city of Sale (Sala). East [112a](#) of the country of Marrakech lie Fez, Meknes, Taza, and Qasr Kutamah,[113](#) This is the area that is customarily called the Farthest Maghrib (Morocco) by its inhabitants. On the shore of the Surrounding Sea in that region lie Arcila (Azila) [114](#) and Larache (al-'Ara'ish). Directly to the east of this area, there is the country of the Middle Maghrib whose center is Tlemcen (Tilimsan). On the shores of the Mediterranean there, lie Hunayn,[115](#) Oran, and Algiers. The Mediterranean leaves the Surrounding Sea at the Straits of Tangier in the western part of the fourth zone, [116](#) and then extends eastward to Syria. Shortly after it leaves the narrow straits, it widens to the south and to the north and enters the third and fifth zones. This is why many places within the third zone are on the Mediterranean coast, from Tangier up to al-Qasr as-saghir, then Ceuta, the country of Badis, and Ghassasah. Algiers, which comes next, is near Bougie (Bajayah) on the east. Then, east of Bougie at the boundary of the first section is Constantine, a day's journey from the Mediterranean. South of these places, toward the south of the Middle Maghrib, is the territory of Ashir, with Mount Titteri, followed by Msila (al-Masilah) and the Zab. The center of (the Zab) is Biskra, north of Mount Awras which connects with the Atlas, as has been mentioned. This is the eastern end of the first section.

The second section of the third zone is like the first section in that about one-third of the distance from its southern (limit) lies the Atlas Mountain which extends across this section from west to east and divides it into two portions. The Mediterranean covers one area in the north. The portion south of the Atlas Mountain is all desert to the west. To the east, there is Ghadames. Directly to the east (of this portion) is the land of Waddan, the remainder of which is situated in the second zone, as has been mentioned. The portion north of the Atlas Mountain between the Atlas and the Mediterranean contains in the west Mount Awras, Tebessa, and Laribus (al-Urbus). On the seacoast is Bone (Bunah). Directly east of these places lies the country of Ifriqiyah, with the city of Tunis, then Sousse (Susah), and al-Mahdiyah on the seacoast. South of these places and north of the Atlas Mountain, is the country of the Djerid (Jarid, al-Jarid), Tozeur (Tuzar), Gafsa (Qafsa), and Nefzoua (Nafzawah). Between them and the coast is the city of Kairouan (al-Qayrawan), Mount Ousselat (Ouselet, Waslat), and Sbeitla (Subaytilah). Directly east of these places lies Tripoli on the Mediterranean. Facing it in the south are the mountains of the Hawwarah tribes, Dammar (Mount Demmer), and Maqqarah (the city of Maggara), which connect with the Atlas and are opposite Ghadames which we mentioned at the end of the southern portion. At the eastern end of the second section lies Suwayqat Ibn Mathkud [116a](#) on the sea. To the south are the desert plains of the Arabs in the land of Waddan.

The third section of the third zone is also traversed by the Atlas Mountain, but at the limit (of the section) the Atlas turns northward and runs due north up to the Mediterranean. There, it is called Cape Awthan. The Mediterranean covers the northern part of the third section, so that the land between it and the Atlas narrows. Behind the mountain to the southwest, there is the remainder of the land of Waddan and the desert plains of the Arabs. Then, there is Zawilat Ibn Khattab,[117](#) followed by sandy deserts and waste regions to the eastern boundary of the section. To the west of the area between the

mountain and the sea, there is Sirte (Surt) at the sea. Then, there are empty and waste regions in which the Arabs roam. Then, there is Ajdabiyah and, where the mountain makes a turn, Barca (Barqah). Next comes Tulaymithah (Ptolemais) on the sea. Then, to the east of the mountain, after it makes the turn, are the desert plains of the Hayyib [118](#) and the Ruwahah, which extend to the end of the section.

The southwestern part of the fourth section of the third zone contains the desert of Berenice. North of it is the country of the Hayyib and the Ruwahah. Then, the Mediterranean enters this section and covers part of it in a southern direction almost to the southern boundary. Between it and the end of the section, there remains a waste region through which the Arabs roam. Directly to the east of it is the Fayyum, at the mouth of one of the two branches of the Nile. This branch passes by al-Lahfin in Upper Egypt, in the fourth section of the zone, and flows into the Lake of the Fayyum. Directly to the east of (the Fayyum) is the land of Egypt with its famous city (Cairo), situated on the other branch of the Nile, the one that passes through Dalas in Upper Egypt at the boundary of the second section. This latter branch divides a I, log second time into two more branches below Cairo, at Shattanawf and Zifta(h). [119](#) The right branch again divides into two other branches at Tarnut. [120](#) All these branches flow into the Mediterranean. At the mouth of the western branch is Alexandria; at the mouth of the middle branch is Rosetta; and at the mouth of the eastern branch is Damietta. Between Cairo and the Mediterranean coast at these points lies the whole of northern Egypt, which is densely settled and cultivated.

The fifth section of the third zone contains all or most of Syria, as I shall describe it. The Red Sea ends in the southwest (of the section) at Suez, because in its course from the Indian Ocean northward, it turns eventually westward. A long portion of its western extension lies in this section, with Suez at its western end. Beyond Suez, on this part of (the Red Sea), there are the mountains of Paran (Faran), Mount Sinai (atTur), Aila (Aylah) in Midyan (Madyan), and, where it ends, al-Hawra'. [121](#) From there, its shoreline turns southward towards the land of the Hijaz, as has been mentioned in connection with the fifth section of the second zone.

A portion of the Mediterranean covers much of the northwestern part of the fifth section. On its (coast) lie alFarama [122](#) and al-'Arish. The end of this portion of the Mediterranean comes close to al-Qulzum. The area in between there is narrow. It becomes a kind of gate leading into Syria. West of this gate is the desert plain (at-Tih), a bare country in which nothing grows, where the Israelites wandered for forty years after they had left Egypt and before they entered Syria, as the Qur'an tells. [123](#) In this portion of the Mediterranean, in the fifth section, lies part of the island of Cyprus. The remainder (of Cyprus) lies in the fourth zone, as we shall mention. Along the coastline of that narrow strip of land between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, are al'Arish, the boundary of Egypt, and Ascalon. Between them, there is a (narrow) strip of land (separating the Mediterranean and) the Red Sea. Then, this portion of the Mediterranean turns to the north into the fourth zone at Tripoli and 'Argah. [124](#) That is the eastern end of the Mediterranean. This portion of the Mediterranean comprises most of the Syrian coast. East and slightly to the north of Ascalon, is Caesarea. Then, in the same general direction, are Acco, Tyre, Sidon, and 'Arqah. The sea then turns north into the fourth zone.

Opposite these places on the coast of this portion of the Mediterranean, in the fifth section, there is a big mountain which rises from the coast at Aila (Aylah) on the Red Sea. It runs northeastward until it leaves the fifth section. It is called Amanus (al-Lukkam). It is a kind of barrier between Egypt and Syria. At the one end, near Aila (Aylah), lies al-'Aqabah which the pilgrims pass through on their way from Egypt to Mecca. After it, to the north, is Abraham's tomb at Mount ash-Sharah [125](#) which is a continuation of the afore-mentioned Amanus north of al-'Aqabah. It extends due east, and then turns slightly

(to the south). East of there is al-Hijr, the land of the Thamild, Tema (Tayma'), and Dumat al-Jandal, the northernmost part of the Hijaz. South of it is Mount Radwa.¹²⁶ Farther south, there are the castles of Khaybar. Between Mount ash-Sharah and the Red Sea lies the desert of Tabuk. North of Mount ash-Sharah is the city of Jerusalem near the Amanus. Then, there is the Jordan and Tiberias. East of it lies the (Jordan) depression (Ghor, al-Ghawr)^{126a} which extends to Adhri'at and the Hawran. Directly to the east of (the Hawran) is Dumat al-Jandal which constitutes the end of the Hijaz and the fifth section. Where the Amanus turns north at the end of the fifth section is the city of Damascus, opposite Sidon and Beirut on the coast. The Amanus lies between (Sidon and Beirut, on the one hand), and (Damascus, on the other). Directly east ¹²⁷ of Damascus and facing it, is the city of Ba'lakk. Then, there is the city of Emesa at the northern end of the fifth section, where the Amanus breaks off. East of Ba'lakk and Emesa are the city Palmyra and desert plains extending to the end of the fifth section.

The southernmost part of the sixth section contains the desert plains of the Arab Bedouins, (which are) located to the north of the Najd and the Yamimah in the area between the Mountain of al-'Arj and as-Sammin and extending to alBahrayn and Hajar at the Persian Gulf. In the northernmost part of the sixth section, to the north of the desert plains, lie al-Hirah, al-Qidisiyah, and the swampy lowlands of the Euphrates. Beyond that to the east is the city of al-Basrah. In the northeastern part of the sixth section, the Persian Gulf ends, at 'Abbidan and al-Ubullah. The mouth of the Tigris is at 'Abbidan. The Tigris divides into many branches and takes in other branches from the Euphrates. All of them come together at 'Abbidan and flow into the Persian Gulf. This portion of the Persian Gulf is wide in the southernmost part (of the section). It narrows toward its eastern boundary, and where it ends in the north it (also) is narrow. On the western coast lie the northernmost portion of al-Bahrayn, Hajar, and al-Ahsa'. To the west of this portion of the Persian Gulf, lie al-Khatt, as-Sammin,¹²⁸ and the remainder of the land of the Yamimah.

The eastern coast comprises the shores of Fars. In their southernmost part, at the eastern end of the sixth section, along a line stretching from the Persian Gulf eastward and beyond it to the south, are the mountains of al-Qufs ¹²⁹ which are in Kirman. North of Hormuz on the coast of the Persian Gulf, are Sirif and Najiram. In the east, toward the end of the sixth section and north of Hormuz, is the country of Firs, comprising, for instance, Sibur, Darabjird, Fasi, Istakhr, ash-Shihijin, and Shiriz, the principal city. North of the country of Firs, at the end of the Persian Gulf, lies the country of Khuzistin which includes al-Ahwiz, Tustar, Jundishibur, Susa (as-Sus), Rimhurmuz, and other cities. Arrajin is on the boundary between Firs and Khuzistin. To the east of the country of Khuzistin are the Kurdish Mountains, which extend to the region of Isfahan. The Kurds live there. They roam beyond the mountains into the country of Firs. They are called *az-zumum*.¹³⁰

The southwestern part of the seventh section contains the remainder of the Mountains of al-Qufs to which are adjacent in the south and north the countries of Kirman (and Mukran). They include the cities of ar-Rudhan, ash-Shirajan, Jiruft (Jayruft), Yazdshir, and al-Fahraj. North of the land of Kirman is the remainder of the country of Fars up to the border of Isfahan. The city of Isfahan lies in the northwest corner of the seventh section. East of the countries of Kirman and Firs, there is the land of Sijistin to the south, and the land of Kuhistan to the north. Between Kirman-Firs and Sijistan-Kuhistin, in the middle of this section, is the great desert which has few roads because of the difficult terrain. Cities in Sijistin are Bust and at-Tiq. Kuhistan belongs to the country of Khurisin. One of Khurisan's best known places is Sarakhs,¹³¹ on the boundary of the section.

The eighth section contains, in the southwest, the plains of the Khalaj,¹³² a Turkish nation. They adjoin the land of Sijistan in the west and the land of Kabul of Eastern India

in the south. North of these desert plains are the mountains and country of al-Ghar starting with Ghaznah, the key to India. Where al-Ghur ends in the north, lies Astarabadh. Then, to the north is the country of Herat in the middle of Khurasan, extending to the boundary of the section. It includes Isfarayin, Qishan, Bushanj, Marw-ar-rudh, at-Taliqan, and al-Juzajan. This part of Khurasan extends to the river Oxus. Khurasanian places on this river are the city of Balkh to the west, and the city of at-Tirmidh to the east. The city of Balkh was the seat of the Turkish realm.

The Oxus comes from the country of Wakhan in the area of Badakhshan which borders on India, in the southeast corner of this section. It soon turns west to the middle of the section. There, it is called the Kharnab River. It then turns north, passes Khurasan, flows due north, and finally flows into Lake Aral in the fifth zone, as we shall mention. In the middle of the eighth section where it turns from the south to the north, five large rivers belonging to the country of Khuttal and Wakhsh¹³³ flow into it on the east. Other rivers, coming from the Buttam Mountains to the east and north of Khuttal, also flow into it. The Oxus, thus, becomes wider and larger, so much so that no other river equals it in these respects. One of the five rivers flowing into the Oxus is the Wakhshab¹³⁴ which comes from the country of Tibet that extends over the southeastern portion of this section. It flows toward the northwest. Its course is blocked by a great mountain which runs from the middle of this section in the south toward the northeast, and leaves this section close to its northern (boundary) to pass into the ninth section. It crosses the country of Tibet toward the southeast portion of this section. It separates the Turks from the country of Khuttal. It has only one road in the middle of this section to the east. Al-Fadl b. Yahya constructed a dam there with a gate in it,¹³⁵ like the Dam of Gog and Magog. When the Wakhshab leaves the country of Tibet and comes up against that mountain, it flows under it for a long distance, until it enters the country of Wakhsh and flows into the Oxus at the border of Balkh. (The Oxus) then sweeps on to at-Tirmidh in the north and flows into the country of al-J(izajan).

East of the country of al-Ghur, in the region between (this country) and the Oxus, is the country of al-Bamiyan, which belongs to Khurasan. There on the eastern bank of the river is the country of Khuttal, most of which is mountainous, and the country of Wakhsh. This is bordered in the north by the Buttam Mountains, which come from the border of Khurasan, west of the Oxus, and run eastward. Finally, where they end, a large mountain range begins, behind which lies the country of Tibet and under which there flows the Wakhshab, as we have stated. (The two mountain ranges) join at the gate of al-Fadl b. Yahya. The Oxus passes between them. Other rivers flow into it, among them the river of the country of Wakhsh, which flows into it from the east, below at-Tirmidh in the north.^{135a} The Balkha River¹³⁶ comes from the Buttam Mountains where it starts at al-Juzajan, and flows into it from the west. On the western bank of this river (Oxus) lies Amul, which belongs to Khurasan. East of this river (Oxus) are the lands of the Soghd and Usrushanah, which belong to the country of the Turks. East of them is the land of Farghanah, which extends to the eastern end of the section. The entire country of the Turks here is crossed by the Buttam Mountains on the north.

In the western part of the ninth section lies the country of Tibet, up to the middle of the section. In the south is India, and in the east, to the boundary of the section, is China. In the northernmost part of this section, north of the country of Tibet, is the country of the Kharlukh,¹³⁷ which belongs to the country of the Turks, extending to the northern boundary of the section. Adjacent to it on the west is the land of Farghanah,¹³⁸ and on the east is the land of the Turkish Tughuzghuz,¹³⁹ extending to the northeastern end of the section.

The southern part of the tenth section is entirely occupied by the remaining northernmost portion of China. In the north is the remainder of the country of the

Tughuzghuz. East of them is the country of the Turkish Kirghiz, [140](#) extending to the eastern end of the section. North of the land of the Kirghiz is the country of the Turkish Kimak. [141](#)

Opposite (the Kirghiz and Kimak countries), in the Surrounding Sea, lies the Hyacinth (Ruby) Island in the middle of a round mountain that completely blocks access to it. Climbing to the top of the mountain from the outside is extremely difficult. On the island, there are deadly snakes and many pebbles of hyacinth (ruby). The people of that region contrive to mine them with the help of divine inspiration.

The regions in the ninth and tenth sections extending beyond Khurasan and Khuttal are desert plains where innumerable Turkish nations roam. They are wandering nomads who have camels, sheep, cattle, and horses for breeding, riding, and eating. There are very many, (indeed) innumerable groups. There are Muslims among them in the area adjacent to the Oxus. They make raids on the unbelievers among them, who follow the Magian [142](#) religion. They sell their captives to their near (neighbors), who export them to Khurasan, India, and the 'Iraq.

The fourth zone

The fourth zone is contiguous with the northern part of the third (zone). Its first section, in the west, contains a portion of the Surrounding Sea which, oblong in shape, extends from the southern to the northern boundary of the section. The city of Tangier is situated on it in the south. North of Tangier, the Mediterranean branches off from this portion of the Surrounding Sea in a narrow straits that is only twelve miles wide, Tarifa and Algeciras (lying) to the north of it and Qasr al-Majaz [143](#) and Ceuta to the south of it. It runs east until it reaches the middle of the fifth section of the fourth zone, gradually widening and eventually covering the (first) four sections and most of the fifth section of the fourth zone, as well as adjacent regions of the third and fifth zones, as we shall mention.

The Mediterranean is also called the "Syrian Sea." It contains many islands. The largest of them, from west to east, are Ibiza, Majorca, Minorca, Sardinia, Sicily-which is the largest of them -the Peloponnesos, Crete, and Cyprus. We shall mention each of them in its particular section.

At the end of the third section of the fourth zone and in the third section of the fifth zone, the Adriatic Sea (Straits of the Venetians) branches off from the Mediterranean. It runs in a northern direction, then turns westward in the northern half of the section, and finally ends in the second section of the fifth zone.

At the eastern boundary of the fourth section of the fifth zone, the Straits of Constantinople branches off from the Mediterranean. In the north, it makes a narrow passage only an arrow shot in width, extending up to the boundary of the zone and on into the fourth section of the sixth zone, where it turns into the Black Sea, running eastward across the whole of the fifth, and half of the sixth, sections of the sixth zone, as we shall mention in the proper place.

Where the Mediterranean leaves the Surrounding Sea through the Straits of Tangier and expands into the third zone, there remains a small portion of this section south of the Straits. The city of Tangier is situated in it, at the confluence of the two seas. After Tangier comes Ceuta on the Mediterranean, then Tetuan (Tittawin), and Badis. The remainder of this section to the east is covered by the Mediterranean, which extends into the third (zone). Most of the cultivated area in this section is north of it and north of the Straits. All this is Spain.

The western part of Spain, the area between the Surrounding Sea and the Mediterranean, begins at Tarifa, at the confluence of the two seas. East of it, on the shore

of the Mediterranean, is Algeciras, followed by Malaga, Almunecar, and Almeria. Northwest of these cities and close to the Surrounding Sea, there is Jerez (de la Frontera), followed by Niebla. Opposite these two cities, in the Surrounding Sea, is the island of Cadiz. East of Jerez and Niebla are Sevilla, followed by Ecija, Cordoba, and Marbella [? [144](#) then Granada, Jaen, and Ubeda, then Guadix and Baza. Northwest of these cities on the Surrounding Sea are Santamaria and Silves. (North)east of these two cities are Badajoz, Merida, and Evora [145](#) followed by Ghafiq [146](#) and Trujillo, and then Calatrava.

Northwest of these cities on the Surrounding Sea, there is Lisbon on the Tajo. East of Lisbon, on the Tajo, are Santarem and Coria. Then, there is Alcantara. Facing Lisbon on the east, there rises the Sierra (de Guadarrama) which starts in the west there and runs eastward along the northern boundary of the section. It ends at Medinaceli beyond the middle of (the section). Below (at the foot of) the Sierra, is Talavera, east of Coria, followed by Toledo, Guadalajara, and Medinaceli. Where the Sierra begins, in the region between the Sierra and Lisbon, is Coimbra. This is western Spain.

Eastern Spain is bordered by the Mediterranean. Here, Almeria is followed by Cartagena, Alicante, Denia, and Valencia, up to Tarragona [147](#) at the eastern boundary of the section. North of these cities are Lorca and Segura, adjacent to Baza and Calatrava, which belong to western Spain. To the east, then, comes Murcia, followed by Jativa north of Valencia, [148](#) then Jucar, [149](#) Tortosa, and [150](#) Tarragona at the boundary of the section. Then, north of these cities, there are the lands of Chinchilla and Huete, which are adjacent to Segura and Toledo in the west. Northeast of Tortosa, then, is Fraga. East of Medinaceli, there is Calatayud, followed by Saragossa and Lerida at the northeastern end of the section.

The second section of the fourth zone is entirely covered by water, except for a portion in the northwest which includes the remainder of the Pyrenees, [151](#) the "Mountain of Passes and Roads." It comes there from the boundary of the first section of the fifth zone. It starts at the southeastern limit of the Surrounding Sea on the boundary of this section, runs southeastward, and enters the fourth zone upon leaving the first section for the second, so that a portion of it falls into the fourth zone. Its passes lead into the adjacent mainland, which is called the land of Gascogne. It contains the cities of Gerona and Carcassonne. On the shores of the Mediterranean in this portion, is the city of Barcelona, followed by Narbonne.

The sea which covers this section contains many islands, most of which are uninhabited because they are small. In the west, there is the island of Sardinia, and in the east the large island of Sicily. Its circumference is said to be seven hundred miles. It contains many cities, the best known among them being Syracuse, Palermo, Trapani, Mazzara, and Messina. Sicily is opposite Ifriqiyah. Between Sicily and Ifriqiyah are the islands of Gozzo and Malta.

The third section of the fourth zone is also covered by the sea, except for three portions in the north. The one in the west belongs to the land of Calabria, the one in the middle to Lombardy, and the one in the east to the country of the Venetians.

The fourth section of the fourth zone is also covered by the sea, as has been mentioned. It contains many islands. Most of them are uninhabited, as is the case in the third section. The inhabited islands are the Peloponnesos, in the northwest, and Crete, which is oblong in shape and stretches from the middle of the section to the southeast. A large triangular area of the fifth section in the southwest is covered by the sea. The western side of (this triangle) goes to the northern boundary of the fifth section. The southern side goes across about two-thirds of the section. There remains at the eastern side of the section a portion of about one-third. Its northern part runs west along the seacoast, as we have stated. Its southern half contains the northernmost region of Syria. It is traversed in the middle by the Amanus. The Amanus eventually reaches the northern end of Syria, where it turns in a northeasterly direction. At the point where it turns, it is called "Chain

Mountain."¹⁵² There, it enters the fifth zone. After it turns, it traverses a portion of the Jazirah in an easterly direction. West of where it turns, there rise contiguous mountain ranges. They finally end at an inlet of the Mediterranean, near the northern end of the section. Through these mountains, there are passes which are called ad-Durub (mountain passes). They lead into Armenia. This section contains a portion of Armenia situated between these mountains and the Chain Mountain.

The southern region, as we have mentioned before, comprises the northernmost region of Syria, and the Amanus extends across it from south to north in the area between the Mediterranean and the boundary of the section. On the seacoast is Antarsus,¹⁵³ at the beginning of the section to the south. It borders on 'Arqah and Tripoli which lie on the shore of the Mediterranean in the third zone. North of Antarsus is Jabalah, followed by Lattakiyah, Alexandretta, and Selefke. North of these cities is the Byzantine territory.

The Amanus, which lies between the sea and the end of the section, is hugged, in Syria in the southwestern part of the section, by the fortress of Ilisn al-Khawabi, which belongs to the Isma'ili Assassins who at this time are called Fidawis. The fortress (also) is called Masyat.¹⁵⁴ It lies opposite Antarsus to the east. On the side opposite this fortress, east of the Amanus, is Salamlyah, north of Emesa. North of Masyat, between the mountain and the sea, lies Antioch. Opposite it, east of the Amanus, is al-Ma'arrab, and east of al-Ma'arrab, al-Marighah. North of Antioch, there is al-Massisah, followed by Adhanah and Tarsus, at the furthest point of Syria. Facing (Antioch), west of the mountain, is Qinnasrin, followed by 'Ayn Zarbah. Opposite Qinnasrin, east of the mountain, is Aleppo, and opposite 'Ayn Zarbah is Manbij, the furthest point of Syria.

The area to the right of the Durub, between them and the Mediterranean, comprises the Byzantine territory (Anatolia). At this time, it belongs to the Turkomans and is ruled by Ibn Uthman (the Ottomans).¹⁵⁵ On the shore of the Mediterranean there, are Antalya and al-'Alaya.

Armenia, which lies between the Durub and the Chain Mountain, comprises Mar'ash, Malatya, and Ankara,^{155a} up to the northern end of the section. In Armenia, in the fifth section, originate the river Jayhan and, to the east of it, the river Sayhan. The Jayhan flows south until it has traversed the Durub. It then passes by Tarsus and al-Massisah, then turns northwestward and eventually flows into the Mediterranean south of Selefke. The Sayhan runs parallel to the Jayhan. It is opposite Ankara and Mar'ash, traverses the Durub Mountains, reaches Syria, then passes by 'Ayn Zarbah, then turns away from the Jayhan, and turns northwestward. It joins the Jayhan west of al-Massisah.

The Jazirah, which is surrounded by the portion of the Amanus that turns into the Chain Mountain, contains in the south ar-Rafiqah and ar-Raqqah, followed by Harran, Saruj, Edessa, Nisibis, Samosata, and Amid, north of the Chain Mountain, at the northeastern end of the section. The Euphrates and the Tigris traverse this area in the middle. They originate in the fifth zone, pass southward through Armenia, and cross the Chain Mountain. The Euphrates, then, flows west of Samosata and Saruj in an easterly direction. It passes west of ar-Rafiqah and ar-Raqqah and on into the sixth section. The Tigris flows east of Amid and shortly thereafter turns to the east. Then, it soon passes on into the sixth section.

The sixth section of the fourth zone contains the Jazirah to the west. Immediately east of it is the country of the 'Iraq, which terminates near the boundary of the section. At the boundary of the 'Iraq is the Mountain of Isfahan which comes from the south of the section and runs in a westerly direction. When it reaches the middle of the northern end of the section, it runs west. Eventually, leaving the sixth section, it joins on its course due west, the Chain Mountain in the fifth section.

The sixth section is divided into two portions, a western and an eastern. The

western portion, in the south, contains the point where the Euphrates leaves the fifth section, and, in the north, the point where the Tigris leaves it. As soon as the Euphrates enters the sixth section, it passes Qirqisiya'. There, a (river) branches off from the Euphrates. It flows north into the Jazirah and disappears there in the ground. Shortly past Qirqisiya', the Euphrates turns south and passes to the west of the Khabir and on west of ar-Rahbah. A (river) branches off there from the Euphrates and flows south. Siffin lies to the west of it. (This river) then turns east and divides into a number of branches. Some of them pass by alKufah, others by Qasr Ibn Hubayrah and al-Jami'ayn (alHillah). Now, in the south of the section all of them enter the third zone and disappear into the ground east of al-Hirah and al-Qadisiyah. The Euphrates flows directly east from arRahbah, and passes north of Hit. It then flows south of azZab^{155b} and al-Anbar, and into the Tigris at Baghdad.

When the Tigris leaves the fifth section for the sixth section, it flows due east, opposite the Chain Mountain which connects with the Mountain of al-'Iraq on its course due west, and passes north of Jazirat Ibn 'Umar. Then it passes Mosul in the same way, and Takrit. It reaches al-Hadithah, turns south, leaving al-Hadithah to the east of it, and likewise the Greater and the Lesser Zab. It flows directly south and to the west of al-Qadisiyah. Eventually it reaches Baghdad and joins with the Euphrates. Then it flows south, to the west of Jarjaraya, and eventually leaves the section and enters the third zone. There it divides into many branches. They unite again and there flow into the Persian Gulf at 'Abbidin. The region between the Tigris and the Euphrates, before they have come together at Baghdad, is the Jazirah. Below Baghdad, another river joins the Tigris. It comes from northeast of (the Tigris). It reaches an-Nahrawin opposite Baghdad to the east. Then it turns south and joins with the Tigris before entering the third zone. For the region between this river and the mountains of al-'Iriq and Kurdistan, there remains Jaluli' and, east of it at the mountain, Hulwin and Saymarah.

The western portion of the section contains a mountain that starts from the Kurdish mountains and runs east toward the end of the section. It is called the Mountain of Shahrazur. It divides the (western portion) into two subdivisions. The southern subdivision contains Khunajin, northwest of Isfahan. This section is called the country of *al-Bahlus*.¹⁵⁶ In the middle of the southern subdivision is Nahiwand, and, in the north, Shahrazur, west of the point where the two mountain ranges meet, and ad-Dinawar (is) on the east, at the boundary of the section. The other subdivision contains part of Armenia, including its principal place, al-Marighah. The portion of the Mountain of al-'Iraq that faces it is called the Mountain of Birimma.¹⁵⁷ It is inhabited by Kurds. The Greater Zab and the Lesser Zib at the Tigris are behind it. At the eastern end of this section lies Azerbaijan, which includes Tabriz and al-Baylagan.¹⁵⁸ In the northeast corner of the section is a small portion of [the Black Sea,] the Caspian (Sea of the Khazars).¹⁵⁹

The seventh section of the fourth zone contains, in the southwest, the largest portion of the country of *al-Bahlus*, including Hamadhin and Qazwin. The remainder of it is in the third zone; Isfahan is situated there. (*Al-Bahlus* and Isfahan) are surrounded on the south by mountains which come from the west, pass through the third zone, leave it in the sixth section for the fourth zone, and join the eastern portion of the Mountain of al-'Iraq, as has been mentioned before. They (also) surround the eastern portion of the country of *al-Bahlus*. These mountains which surround Isfahan run north from the third zone, enter this seventh section, and then inclose the country of *al-Bahlus* on the east. Below (at the foot of) them, is Qishin, followed by Qumm. Near the middle of their course, they turn slightly west; then, describing an arc, they run northeastward, and eventually enter the fifth zone. Where they turn (west) and make the circle, ar-Rayy lies to the east. Where they turn (west), another mountain range starts and runs west to the boundary of the seventh section. South of the mountains there is Qazwin. North of them and alongside the connecting mountains of arRayy, extending in a northeastern direction to the middle of the section

and then into the fifth zone, lies the country of Tabaristan in the region between these mountains and a portion of the Caspian Sea (Sea of Tabaristan). From the fifth zone, it enters the seventh section about halfway between west and east. Where the mountains of ar-Rayy turn west, there lie other, connecting mountains. They run directly east and slightly south, and eventually enter the eighth section from the west. Between the mountains of ar-Rayy and these mountains, at their starting point, there remains Jurjan, which includes Bistam.¹⁶⁰ Behind these (latter) mountains, there is a part of the seventh section that contains the remainder of the desert area between Fars and Khurisan, to the east of Qishin. At its farthest point, near these mountains, is Astaribidh. On the eastern slopes of these mountains, and extending to the boundary of the section, lies the country of Nisabur, which belongs to Khurisin. South of the mountains and east of the desert area, lies Nisabur, followed by Marw ash-Shihijan¹⁶¹ at the end of the section. North of it and east of Jurjan, are Mihrajin, Khazarun, and Tus, the eastern end of the section. All these places are north of the mountains. Far to the north of them is the country of Nasa, which is surrounded by barren stretches of desert, in the northeastern corner of the section.

The eighth section of the fourth zone, in the west, contains the Oxus which flows from south to north. On its western bank, there are Zamm¹⁶² and Amul which belong to Khurasan, as well as at-Tahiriyah and Gurganj which belongs to Khuwarizm. The southwest corner of the section is surrounded by the mountains of Astarabadh, which were found already in the seventh section. They enter this section from the west and encircle the (southwestern) corner, which includes the remainder of the country of Herat. In the third zone, the mountains pass between Herat and al-Juzajan, and eventually connect with the Buttam Mountain, as we mentioned there. East of the Oxus in the south of this section, is the country of Bukhara, followed by the country of the Soghd, with Samarkand as its principal place. Then comes the country of Usritshanah, which includes Khujandah at the eastern end of the section. North of Samarkand and Usritshanah, is the land of Ilaq.¹⁶³ North of Ilaq is the land of Tashkent (ash-Shish), which extends to the eastern boundary of the section and occupies a portion of the ninth section that in the south includes the remainder of the land of Farghanah.

From this portion of the ninth section, comes the river of Tashkent (Syr Darya). It cuts through the eighth section, and eventually flows into the Oxus where the latter leaves the eighth section in the north for the fifth zone. In the land of Ilaq, a river coming from the ninth section of the third zone, from the borders of Tibet, flows into the river of Tashkent, and before the latter leaves the ninth section, the river of Farghanah flows into it. Parallel to the river of Tashkent lies Mount Jabraghun, which starts from the fifth zone, turns southeast, and eventually enters the ninth section and runs along the borders of the land of Tashkent. Then, it turns in the ninth section, continues along the boundaries of Tashkent and Farghanah, goes on to the southern part of the section, and then enters the third zone. Between the river of Tashkent and the bend of this mountain in the middle of the section, there is the country of Farab. Between it and the land of Bukhari and Khuwarizm are barren stretches of desert. In the northeast corner of this section is the land of Khujandah,^{163a} which includes Isbijab¹⁶⁴ and Taraz.¹⁶⁵

The ninth section of the fourth zone, to the west beyond Farghanah and Tashkent, contains the land of the Kharlukh in the south, and the land of the Khallukh¹⁶⁶ in the north. The whole eastern part of the section to its farthest point is occupied by the land of the Kimak. It extends over the whole tenth section to the Qufaya Mountains¹⁶⁷ which are at the eastern end of the section and lie there on a portion of the Surrounding Sea. They are the Mountains of Gog and Magog. All these nations are Turkish peoples.

Most of the first section of the fifth zone is covered by water, except a small portion of the south and of the east. In this western region, the Surrounding Sea enters into the fifth, sixth, and seventh zones from the circle it describes around the zones. The portion to the south that is free from water has a triangular shape. It there touches Spain and comprises the remainder of it. It is surrounded on two sides

by the sea, as if by the two sides of a triangle. It occupies the remainder of western Spain, including Montemayor [168](#) on the seacoast at the beginning of the section in the southwest. Salamanca is to the east, and Zamora to the north. East of Salamanca, at the southern end, is Avila, and east of it, the land of Castilla with the city of Segovia. North of it is the land of Leon and Burgos. Beyond it to the north is the land of Galicia, which extends to the corner of this portion. At the Surrounding Sea there, at the far point of the western side (of the triangle), the portion includes the region of Santiago—that is, (Saint) Jacob.

Of eastern Spain, the triangular portion contains the city of Tudela, at the southern end of the section and to the east of Castilla. To the northeast of Tudela are Huesca and Pamplona directly to the east of (Huesca). West of Pamplona, there is Estella (Qastallah), followed by Najera [169](#) in the region between Estella and Burgos. This (triangular) portion contains a large mountain. It faces the sea and the northeast side of the triangle, in close proximity both to it and to the seacoast at Pamplona in the east. We have mentioned before that it connects in the south with the Mediterranean in the fourth zone. It constitutes a barrier for Spain in the north. Its passes are gates leading from Spain to the country of Gascogne, which belongs to the European Christian nations. In the fourth zone, there belong to (Gascogne) Barcelona and Narbonne on the shore of the Mediterranean; north of them, Gerona and Carcassonne; and in the fifth zone, Toulouse, north of Gerona.

The eastern portion of this section has the shape of an oblong triangle with its acute angle beyond the Pyrenees to the east. On the Surrounding Sea, at the top where it connects with the Pyrenees, this portion includes Bayonne. At the end of it, in the northeastern region of the section, is the land of Poitou, which belongs to the European Christians and extends to the end of the section.

The western region of the second section contains the land of Gascogne. North of it are the lands of Poitou and Bourges. [170](#) Both countries have been mentioned by us. East of the country of Gascogne lies a portion of the Mediterranean. It projects into this section like a tooth, in an easterly direction. To the west, the country of Gascogne juts out into a gulf of the Mediterranean[?]. At the northern extremity of this portion is the country of Genoa, along which to the north lie the Alps. [171](#) At their northern limit lies the land of Burgundy. East of the gulf of Genoa, which comes from the Mediterranean, another gulf comes from the same sea. The two gulfs include a portion of land in the shape of a peninsula on which, in the west, lies Pisa, and in the east the great city of Rome, the capital of the European Christians and the residence of the Pope, their highest religious dignitary. It contains magnificent, historically famous buildings, imposing monuments, [172](#) and gigantic churches. One of the remarkable things at Rome is the river that flows through it from east to west, the bed of which is paved with copper. [173](#) Rome contains the Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul, who are buried in it. North of the country of Rome is the country of Lombardy, which extends to the boundary of the section. On the eastern shore of the gulf on which Rome is situated, lies Naples. It is adjacent to the country of Calabria, which (also) belongs to the lands of the European Christians. North of it, a portion of the Adriatic Sea (Gulf of Venice) comes into this section from the third section, turns west, and faces north in this section, and extends to about one-third of it. A large portion of the country of the Venetians is situated on this portion of the Adriatic Sea, in the south, [174](#) in the region between (the Adriatic Sea) and the Surrounding Sea. North of it lies the country of Aquileia in the sixth zone.

The third section of the fifth zone contains in the west the country of Calabria, between the Adriatic Sea and the Mediterranean. Part of the mainland in the Mediterranean in the fourth zone forms a portion of land in the shape of a peninsula, between two gulfs that extend due north from the Mediterranean into this section.¹⁷⁵ East of the country of Calabria is the country of the Lombards,¹⁷⁶ along a portion of land formed by the Adriatic Sea and the Mediterranean, of which one end enters the fourth zone and the Mediterranean.

To the east, this section is surrounded by the Adriatic Sea, which belongs to the Mediterranean. It flows due north, then turns west opposite the northern end of the section. Alongside it, a large mountain (range) comes from the fourth zone. It faces it (the sea) and runs parallel to it on its way north, then turns west along it in the sixth zone, and eventually ends opposite a straits in the north of it, in the country of Aquileia, a German (Alamanni) nation, as we shall mention. At this straits and between it and this mountain (range), where the mountains and the sea go off to the north, lies the country of the Venetians. Where the mountains and the sea go off to the west, they border the country of Jarwasiyi, and then the country of the Germans (Alamanni), at the end of the straits.

The fourth section of the fifth zone contains a portion of the Mediterranean which enters it from the fourth zone. (This portion of the sea) is strongly indented by arms of the sea which jut out in a northerly direction and are separated by portions of land in the shape of peninsulas. At the eastern end of the section lies the Straits of Constantinople. (This narrow body of water) comes from this southern part (of the section), flows due north, and eventually enters the sixth zone. There, it immediately turns eastward (and joins) the Black Sea in the fifth section; (the latter also occupies) part of the fourth and sixth sections of the sixth zone, as we shall mention. Constantinople is to the east of this straits at the northern end of the section. It is a large city and was the seat of the Byzantine emperors. There are many stories about the magnificent architectural and other monuments there. The portion of this section between the Mediterranean and the Straits of Constantinople comprises the country of Macedonia, which belonged to the (ancient) Greeks, whose royal authority had its origin there. East of the straits and extending to the end of the section, there is a portion of the land of *Batus*.¹⁷⁷ This, I believe, is the desert plains where, at the present time, the Turkomans roam. There is (located) the realm of Ibn 'Uthman (the Ottomans), with its chief city Bursa (Brussa).¹⁷⁸ Before them, it belonged to the Byzantines, from whom it was taken away by other nations, and eventually came into possession of the Turkomans.

The southwestern part of the fifth section of the fifth zone contains the land of *Batus* (Anatolia). North of it and extending to the boundary of the section, is the country of Amorium. East of Amorium is the Qubagib (Tokhma Su)^{178a} which flows into the Euphrates. It has its source in a mountain there and flows south until it joins the Euphrates, before the latter leaves this section and crosses over into the fourth zone. West of (the Euphrates), at the (southern) end of the section, the Sayhan, and west of it, the Jayhan, originate. Both rivers flow alongside (the Euphrates). They have been mentioned before. East of (the Euphrates) there, the Tigris originates. It always flows alongside (the Euphrates), and eventually joins it at Baghdad. In the southeastern corner of this section, behind the mountain where the Tigris originates, lies Mayyafariqin. The Qubaqib, which we have mentioned, divides this section into two portions. The one covers the southwest and contains the land of *Batus* (Anatolia), as we have said. The northernmost part of (the land of *Batus*), the region extending to the northern end of the section and beyond the mountain where the Qubaqib originates, is the land of Amorium, as we have said. The other portion covers the northeastern and southeastern third (of the section). In the south of this the Tigris and Euphrates originate. In the north, there is the country of al-Baylagin, which adjoins the land of Amorium behind Mount Qubagib¹⁷⁹ and extends far. At its end, where the Euphrates originates, is Kharshanah.¹⁸⁰ In the northeast corner is a portion of

the Black Sea that connects with the Straits of Constantinople.

The sixth section of the fifth zone contains in the southwest the country of Armenia, which extends eastward beyond the middle of the section. Arzan (Erzerum) is in the southwest (of Armenia). To the north (of it) lie Tiflis and Dabil. East of Arzan is the city of Khilat, followed by Bardha'ah. In the southeast is the (capital) city of Armenia. There, Armenia, entering the fourth zone, includes. alMaraghah, east of the Mountain of the Kurds which is called Mountain of Barimma, and which has been mentioned before in connection with the sixth section of the fourth zone. In this section, and in the fourth zone, Armenia is bordered to the east by the country of Azerbaijan. (Azerbaijan's) easternmost point in this section is Ardabil, on a portion of the Caspian Sea. The Caspian Sea enters this section from the east from the seventh section, and is called the Sea of Tabaristan (Caspian Sea). On its northern shore, in this section, it contains a portion of the country of the Khazars. They are Turkomans. At the northern end of this portion of the Caspian Sea, a mountain range begins and runs due west to the fifth section, crosses it, encircles Mayyafariqin, and enters the fourth zone at Amid, where it connects with the Chain Mountain in the northernmost part of Syria, and from there (goes on to) connect with the Amanus, as has already been mentioned.

In these mountains in the northern part of this section, there are passes that constitute a sort of gates giving entry from both sides. To the south, is the country of the "Gates," which extends eastward to the Caspian Sea. The city of Derbend,¹⁸¹ which belongs to this country, lies on the Caspian Sea. In the southwest, the country of the "Gates" adjoins Armenia. East of (the country of the Gates), between it and southern Azerbaijan, is the country of Arran (Ar-Ran),¹⁸² which extends to the Caspian Sea. North of these mountains, there lies a portion of this section comprising in the west the realm of the Sarir;¹⁸³ The northwest corner of that portion, which constitutes the (northwest) corner of the whole section, is also occupied by a small portion of the Black Sea that connects with the Straits of Constantinople. (This) has been mentioned before. This portion of the Black Sea is surrounded by the country of the Sarir. Trebizond, which belongs to (that country), lies on it. The country of the Sarir extends between the mountains of the "Gates" and the northern part of the section. It eventually reaches a mountain in the east that constitutes a barrier between it and the land of the Khazars. On the far boundary of the (country of the Sarir), is the city of Sul. Behind this mountain barrier, there is a portion of the land of the Khazars reaching the northeast corner of this section, between the Caspian Sea and the northern end of the section.

The seventh section of the fifth zone is entirely covered in the west by the Caspian Sea, a portion of which protrudes into the fourth zone to the south. On (the shores of) this portion are situated, as we have mentioned in connection with the (fourth zone), the country of Tabaristin and the mountains of the Daylam up to Qazwin. In the west of this portion and connecting with it, there is the small portion that lies in the sixth section of the fourth zone. Connecting with it in the north is the portion that lies in the eastern part of the sixth section above. A part of the northwest corner of this section, where the Volga flows into it, is not covered by the Caspian Sea. In the eastern region of this section there (also) remains a part which is not covered by the Caspian Sea. It consists of desert plains in which the Ghuzz, a Turk nation, roam. They are also called the Khtiz. (Ghuzz) looks like an Arabization, with *kh* becoming *gh*, and doubling of the *z*.¹⁸⁴ This part is surrounded by a mountain (range) to the south that enters the eighth section, runs not quite halfway through the western part, turns north, eventually touches the Caspian Sea, hugs it closely all the way through its remaining portion in the sixth zone, then turns at its end, and separates from it. There, it is called Mount Shiyah.¹⁸⁵ It runs westward to the sixth section of the sixth zone, then turns back south to the sixth section of the fifth zone. It is this end of the mountain (range) that lies in this section between the land of the Sarir and the land of the Khazars. The land of the Khazars extends along the slopes of the mountain called

Mount Shiyah in the sixth and seventh sections, as will be mentioned.

The whole eighth section of the fifth zone contains desert plains where the Ghuzz, a Turkish nation, roam. In the southwest is Lake Aral, into which the Oxus flows. Its circumference is three hundred miles. Many rivers flow into it from these desert plains. In the northeast is the Lake of Ghurghun,¹⁸⁶ a fresh-water lake. Its circumference is four hundred miles. In the northern region of this section stands Mount Murghar,¹⁸⁷ which means "Snow Mountain," because the snow on it never melts. It lies at the far end of the section. South of the Lake of Ghurghun there is a mountain of solid stone where nothing grows. It is called Ghurghun Mountain. The lake is named after it. In the Ghurghun and Murghar Mountains north of the lake, innumerable rivers have their origin. They flow into the lake from both sides.

The ninth section of the fifth zone contains the country of the Adhkish,¹⁸⁸ a Turkish nation, west of the country of the Ghuzz, and east of the country of the Kimak. In the east at its end, (the section) is hugged by the Qifaya Mountains that surround Gog and Magog. They stretch there from south to north, assuming this direction right after entering from the tenth section, which they had, in turn, entered from the end of the tenth section of the fourth zone. There, they border the Surrounding Sea on the northern boundary of the section. They then turn west in the tenth section of the fourth zone and extend almost to the middle of the section. From where they begin to this point, they surround the country of the Kimak. Entering the tenth section of the fifth zone, they cross it in a westerly direction to its end. South of them remains a portion of that section that stretches west in an oblong shape and contains the end of the country of the Kimak.

The mountains, then, enter the ninth section at its northeastern border, soon turn north, and run due north to the ninth section of the sixth zone, where the Dam (of Gog and Magog) is situated, as we shall mention. There remains the portion that is surrounded by the Qufaya Mountains in the northeast corner of this section. It is oblong in shape and stretches southward. It belongs to the country of Gog. The tenth section of the fifth zone is entirely covered by the land of Gog, except for a portion of the Surrounding Sea which covers part of it in the east from south to north, and except for the portion that the Qufaya Mountains leave in the southwest on their way through the section. Everything else is the land of Gog.

The sixth zone

Half of the first section of the sixth zone is mostly covered by the sea, which stretches eastward in a curving line along the northern part, then runs southward along the eastern part, and ends near the southern part (of the section). A portion of land in this part is not covered by the sea. It is similar in shape to a peninsula, formed by two arms of the Surrounding Sea. It is long and wide. All this is the land of Brittany. At the entrance to it, between those two arms (of the sea) and in the southeast corner of this section, there is the country of Sees which is adjacent to the country of Poitou. (The country of Poitou) has been mentioned before in connection with the first and second sections of the fifth zone.

The second section of the sixth zone is entered by the Surrounding Sea in the west and north. In the northwest, it covers an oblong portion (extending) over more than half (the south-north extension) of (the section),^{188a} east of Brittany (which was mentioned) in the first section. (This portion of the sea) connects with the other portion in the north (that extends) from west to east. It widens somewhat in the western half of (the section). There, a portion of the island of England is situated. It is a large, far-flung island which contains a number of cities and is the seat of a magnificent realm. The remainder of (England) lies in the seventh zone. South of and adjacent to this western part and the island located there, (and still) in the western half of this section, are the countries of Normandy and Flanders. Then, there is (northern) France in the southwest of this section, and, east of it, the country

of Burgundy. All these countries belong to the European Christian nations. The eastern half of the section contains the country of the Germans (Alamanni). The south is taken up by the country of Aquileia, with the country of Burgundy farther north, and then the lands of Lorraine and Saxony. On a portion of the Surrounding Sea in the northeast corner, is the land of Frisia. All these countries belong to the German (Alamanni) nations.

The western part of the third section of the sixth zone contains, in the south, the country of Bohemia,¹⁸⁹ and in the north, the country of Saxony. The eastern part contains, in the south, the country of Hungary, and in the north, the country of Poland. (Hungary and Poland) are separated by the Carpathian Mountains (Balwat). They come from the fourth section, run northwest, and eventually end in the country of Saxony at the boundary of the western half (of this section).

The fourth section of the sixth zone, in the south, contains the country of Jathuliyah,^{189a} and, in the north, the country of Russia. They are separated by the Carpathian Mountains, from the beginning of the section in the west to its end in the eastern half. East of the land of Jathuliyah is the country of Jarmaniyyah. In the southeast corner, there is the land of Constantinople and the city of Constantinople at the end of the straits coming from the Mediterranean, where it connects with the Black Sea. A small portion of the Black Sea connecting with the straits appears in the southeast corner of the section. The corner between the straits and the Black Sea contains Musannah [?].¹⁹⁰

The fifth section of the sixth zone, in the south, contains the Black Sea, stretching due east from the straits at the end of the fourth section. It traverses the whole of this section and part of the sixth section, covering a distance (in length) of 1,300 miles from its beginning and (in width) of 600 miles. Beyond the Black Sea in the south of this section, there remains a piece of the mainland which is oblong in shape and stretches from west to east. The (western portion) of it contains Heracleia¹⁹¹ on the shore of the Black Sea, (a city) adjacent to the country of al-Baylaqan in the fifth zone. In the east(ern portion) of it is the land of the Alans, with its principal place, Sinope, on the Black Sea. North of the Black Sea in this section is the land of the Bulgars (Burjan)¹⁹² in the west, and in the east the country of Russia. All (these countries) lie on the shores of the Black Sea. The country of Russia surrounds the country of the Bulgars (Burjan), (bordering it) in the east(ern portion) of this section, in the north(ern portion) of the fifth section of the seventh zone, and in the west(ern portion) of the fourth section of the sixth zone.

The sixth section of the sixth zone contains in the west the remainder of the Black Sea, where it turns slightly north. Between the Black Sea and the northern boundary of the section is the country of the Comans.¹⁹³ Following the northward direction of the Black Sea, there is the remainder of the country of the Alans, which was at the southern end of the fifth section and which here becomes wider as it extends northwards. In the eastern part of this section, the land of the Khazars continues, and farther east lies the land of the Burtas.¹⁹⁴ In the northeast corner is the land of the Bulgars (Bulghar). In the southeast corner is the land of Balanjar,¹⁹⁵ which is there traversed by a portion of Mount Shiyah.¹⁹⁶ These mountains follow (the coast of) the Caspian Sea later on in the seventh section, and, after separating from it, run west across this part (of the sixth section), and enter the sixth section of the fifth zone, where they are linked with the Mountains of the "Gates." The country of the Khazars lies on both sides of them.

The seventh section of the sixth zone contains in the south an area that Mount Shiyah cuts across, to the western boundary of the section, after leaving the Caspian Sea. It is a portion of the country of the Khazars. East of (the country of the Khazars) is the portion of (the coast of) the Caspian Sea that is traversed by Mount (Shiyah) in the northeast. Beyond Mount Shiyah, in the northwest, is the land of the Burps. In the east(ern

portion) of the section is the land of the Bashqirs and the Pechenegs, Turkish nations.

The entire southern part of the eighth section of (the sixth zone) is occupied by the land of the Khulukh Turks.¹⁹⁹ The northern region contains in the west the Stinking Land²⁰⁰ and, in the east, the land Gog and Magog are said to have laid waste before the Dam was constructed. In this Stinking Land, the Volga, one of the largest rivers in the world, originates. It passes through the country of the Turks and flows into the Caspian Sea in the seventh section of the fifth zone. The Volga makes many turnings. It originates in a mountain in the Stinking Land, from which three streams issue and unite to form one river. It flows due west to the boundary of the seventh section of the sixth zone and turns north into the seventh section of the seventh zone, where it flows along the southwestern boundary. It leaves the seventh zone in the sixth section, flows a short distance west, then turns south a second time, and returns to the sixth section of the sixth zone, where a branch comes out of it and flows westward into the Black Sea in that section. (The Volga itself next) passes through a portion of the country of the Bulgars (Bulghar) in the northeast, leaves the sixth zone in the seventh section to turn south a third time, flows through Mount Shiyah, traverses the country of the Khazars, and enters the fifth zone in the seventh section. There it flows into the Caspian Sea, in that portion of the southwest corner of the section which is not covered by the sea.

The ninth section of the sixth zone, in the west, contains the country of the Khifshakh Turks-the Qipchaqs-and the country of the Turgish,²⁰¹ who are also Turks. In the east, it contains the country of Magog which is separated from the west by the aforementioned surrounding^{201a} Qufaya Mountains. They start at the Surrounding Sea in the eastern part of the fourth zone, and follow (the Surrounding Sea) to the northern boundary of the zone. There, they leave it and run northwesterly until they enter the ninth section of the fifth zone, where they return to their former due northerly course into the ninth section of (the sixth zone), which they cross from south to north, bearing a little to the west. There, in the middle of (the mountains), is the Dam built by Alexander. The mountains, then, continue due north into the ninth section of the seventh zone, which they traverse from the south on up to the Surrounding Sea in the north. They follow along it from there westward into the fifth section of the seventh zone, where they encounter a portion of the Surrounding Sea to the west.

In the middle of this ninth section is the Dam built by Alexander, as we have said. Correct information about it is found in the Qur'an. 'Ubaydallah b. Khurradadhbih mentioned in his geographical work²⁰² that al-Wathiq saw in a dream that the Dam had opened. Frightened, he awakened and sent Salim (Sallam) the dragoman to investigate the Dam and to bring back information about it and a description of it, which he did. This is a long story that has nothing to do with the purpose of our work.

The tenth section of the sixth zone is occupied by the country of Magog, extending to the end of (the section). There it borders on a portion of the Surrounding Sea which surrounds (the section) to the east and north. (This portion) is oblong in the north and widens somewhat in the east.

The seventh zone

The Surrounding Sea covers most of the seventh zone in the north (from the beginning) to the middle of the fifth section, where it touches the Qufaya Mountains that surround Gog and Magog.

The first and second sections are covered by water, except for the portion not covered by water where the island of England is located, most of which lies in the second section. In the first section, there is a corner of England which extends towards the north.

The remainder, with a portion of the sea that encircles it, lies in the second section of the sixth zone. It was mentioned there. The channel connecting England with the mainland is there twelve miles wide. Beyond the island of England, in the north of the second section, is the island of Raslandah²⁰³ oblong in shape, stretching lengthwise from west to east.

Most of the third section of the seventh zone is covered by water, except for an oblong portion in the south that is wider in its eastern part. Here, the land of Poland continues. It was mentioned in connection with the third section of the sixth zone, as lying in the north of it. In the western part of the portion of the sea covering this section, there lies a round, wide (island). It is connected with the mainland by an isthmus in the south, which leads to the land of Poland. North of it is the island of Norway,²⁰⁴ oblong in shape, which stretches lengthwise from west to east in the north (of the section).

The fourth section of the seventh zone is entirely covered in the north by the Surrounding Sea from the western to the eastern (boundaries of the section). Its southern part is not covered by the sea. To the west, it contains the land of the Finland [?] ²⁰⁵ Turks. To the east lies the country of Tavast,²⁰⁶ followed by the land of Estonia [?] ²⁰⁷ extending to the eastern boundary of the section. (Estonia) is permanently covered by snow and has little civilization. It borders on the country of Russia in the fourth and fifth sections of the sixth zone.

The fifth section of the seventh zone contains in the west the country of Russia. In the north, (Russia) ^{207a} extends to where the portion of the Surrounding Sea and the Qufaya Mountains meet, as we have mentioned before. The eastern region of the section contains the continuation of the land of the Comans, which lies on (the shore of) a portion of the Black Sea in the sixth section of the sixth zone. It reaches the Lake of T-r-m-y ²⁰⁸ in this section. This is a fresh-water lake into which drain many rivers from the mountains south and north of it. In the northeast of this section is the land of the Nabariyah ²⁰⁹ Turks, which extends to the boundary of the section.

The sixth section of the seventh zone contains in the southwest the continuation of the land of the Comans. In the middle of that region is Lake Gh-n-w-n.²¹⁰ This is a fresh-water lake into which drain the rivers from the mountains in the regions east of it. It is constantly frozen because of the severe cold, except for a short while during the summer. East of the country of the Comans is the country of Russia, which started in the northeast of the fifth section of the sixth zone. In the southeast corner of this (the sixth) section, is the remainder of the land of the Bulgars (Bulghar) that started in the northeastern part of the sixth section of the sixth zone. In the middle of this portion of the land of the Bulgars, there is the point where the Volga makes its first turn to the south, as has been mentioned. The Qufaya Mountains stretch all along the northern boundary of the sixth section from the west to the east.

The seventh section of the seventh zone, in the west, contains the remainder of the land of the Pechenegs, a Turkish nation. Beginning in the northeastern part of the preceding sixth and southwest of this section, it then, in the south, enters the sixth zone. In the east, there is the remainder of the land of the Bashqirs, followed by the remainder of the Stinking Land, which extends to the eastern boundary of the section. The northern boundary of the section is formed by the surrounding Qufaya Mountains stretching (all along it) from the west to the east.

The eighth section of the seventh zone contains in the southwest the continuation of the Stinking Land. East of it is the Sunken ²¹¹ Land, a remarkable place. It is an immense opening in the earth, so deep that the bottom cannot be reached. The appearance of smoke during the day and of fire at night, which by turns flares up and disappears, leads to the conclusion that the place is inhabited. A river is occasionally seen there. It cuts through it

from south to north. In the east of this section is the Waste Country, which borders the Dam. Across the northern limit of the section are the Qufaya Mountains, stretching all along it from the west to the east.

The ninth section of the seventh zone contains in the west the country of the Khifshakh, that is, the Qipchaqs. It is traversed by the Qufaya Mountains where they turn away from the north (of the section) at the Surrounding Sea and run southeast through the middle (of the section). They then leave (this zone) for the ninth section of the sixth zone and pass across it. There, in the middle of them, is the Dam of Gog and Magog, which we have already mentioned. The eastern part of this section contains the land of Magog, behind the Qufaya Mountains, on the sea. It [211a](#) is not very wide and is oblong in shape and surrounds it in the east and north.

The tenth section of the seventh zone is entirely covered by the sea.



This finishes the discussion of the world map with the seven zones.

In the creation of heaven and earth and the difference between night and day, there are signs for those who know. [212](#)

THIRD PREFATORY DISCUSSION

The temperate and the intemperate zones. The influence of the air upon the color of human beings and upon many (other) aspects of their condition.

WE [213](#) HAVE EXPLAINED that the cultivated region of that part of the earth which is not covered by water has its center toward the north, because of the excessive heat in the south and the excessive cold in the north. The north and the south represent opposite extremes of cold and heat. It necessarily follows that there must be a gradual decrease from the extremes toward the center, which, thus, is moderate. The fourth zone is the most temperate cultivated region.

The bordering third and fifth zones are rather close to being temperate. The sixth and second zones which are adjacent to them are far from temperate, and the first and seventh zones still less so. Therefore, the sciences, the crafts, the buildings, the clothing, the foodstuffs, the fruits, even the animals, and everything that comes into being in the three middle zones are distinguished by their temperate (well-proportioned character). The human inhabitants of these zones are more temperate (well-proportioned) in their bodies, color, character qualities, and (general) conditions [214](#) They are found to be extremely moderate in their dwellings, clothing, foodstuffs, and crafts. They use houses that are well constructed of stone and embellished by craftsmanship. They rival each other in production of the very best tools and implements. Among them, one finds the natural minerals, such as gold, silver, iron, copper, lead, and tin. In their business dealings they use the two precious metals (gold and silver). They avoid intemperance quite generally in all their conditions. Such are the inhabitants of the Maghrib, of Syria, the two 'Iraqs, Western India (as-Sind), and China, as well as of Spain; also the European Christians nearby, the Galicians, [215](#) and all those who live together with these peoples or near them in the three temperate zones. The 'Iraq and Syria are directly in the middle and therefore are the most temperate of all these countries.

The inhabitants of the zones that are far from temperate, such as the first, second, sixth, and seventh zones, are also farther removed from being temperate in all their conditions. Their buildings are of clay and reeds. Their foodstuffs are durra and herbs. Their clothing is the leaves of trees, which they sew together to cover themselves, or animal skins. Most of them go naked. The fruits and seasonings of their countries are strange and inclined to be intemperate. In their business dealings, they do not use the two noble metals, but copper, iron, or skins, upon which they set a value for the purpose of business dealings. Their qualities of character, moreover, are close to those of dumb animals. It has even been reported that most of the Negroes of the first zone dwell in caves and thickets, eat herbs, live in savage isolation and do not congregate, and eat each other. [216](#) The same applies to the Slavs. The reason for this is that their remoteness from being temperate produces in them a disposition and character similar to those of the dumb animals, and they become correspondingly remote from humanity. The same also applies to their religious conditions. They are ignorant of prophecy and do not have a religious law, except for the small minority that lives near the temperate regions. (This minority includes,) for instance, the Abyssinians, who are neighbors of the Yemenites and have been Christians from pre-Islamic and Islamic times down to the present; and

the Mali, the Gawgaw, and the Takrur who live close to the Maghrib and, at this time, are Muslims. They are said to have adopted Islam in the seventh [thirteenth] century. Or, in the north, there are those Slav, European Christian, and Turkish nations that have adopted Christianity. All the other inhabitants of the intemperate zones in the south and in the north are ignorant of all religion. (Religious) scholarship is lacking among them. All their conditions are remote from those of human beings and close to those of wild animals. "And He creates what you do not know." [217](#)

The (foregoing statement) is not contradicted by the existence of the Yemen, the Hadramawt, al-Ahqaf, the Hijaz, the Yamimah, and adjacent regions of the Arabian Peninsula in the first and second zones. As we have mentioned, [218](#) the Arabian Peninsula is surrounded by the sea on three sides. The humidity of (the sea) influences the humidity in the air of (the Arabian Peninsula). This diminishes the dryness and intemperance that (otherwise) the heat would cause. Because of the humidity from the sea, the Arabian Peninsula is to some degree temperate.

Genealogists who had no knowledge of the true nature of things imagined that Negroes are the children of Ham, the son of Noah, and that they were singled out to be black as the result of Noah's curse, which produced Ham's color and the slavery God inflicted upon his descendants. It is mentioned in the Torah [219](#) that Noah cursed his son Ham. No reference is made there to blackness. The curse included no more than that Ham's descendants should be the slaves of his brothers' descendants. To attribute the blackness of the Negroes to Ham, reveals disregard of the true nature of heat and cold and of the influence they exercise upon the air (climate) and upon the creatures that come into being in it. The black color (of skin) common to the inhabitants of the first and second zones is the result of the composition of the air in which they live, and which comes about under the influence of the greatly increased heat in the south. The sun is at the zenith there twice a year at short intervals. In (almost) all seasons, the sun is in culmination for a long time. The light of the sun, therefore, is plentiful. [220](#) People there have (to undergo) a very severe summer, and their skins turn black because of the excessive heat. Something similar happens in the two corresponding zones to the north, the seventh and sixth zones. There, a white color (of skin) is common among the inhabitants, likewise the result of the composition of the air in which they live, and which comes about under the influence of the excessive cold in the north. The sun is always on the horizon within the visual field (of the human observer), or close to it. It never ascends to the zenith, nor even (gets) close to it. The heat, therefore, is weak in this region, and the cold severe in (almost) all seasons. In consequence, the color of the inhabitants is white, and they tend to have little body hair. Further consequences of the excessive cold are blue eyes, freckled skin, and blond hair.

The fifth, fourth, and third zones occupy an intermediate position. They have an abundant share of temperance [221](#) which is the golden mean. The fourth zone, being the one most nearly in the center, is as temperate as can be. We have mentioned that before. [222](#) The physique and character of its inhabitants are temperate to the (high) degree necessitated by the composition of the air in which they live. The third and fifth zones lie on either side of the fourth, but they are less centrally located. They are closer to the hot south beyond the third zone and the cold north beyond the fifth zone. However, they do not become intemperate.

The four other zones are intemperate, and the physique and character of their inhabitants show it. The first and second zones are excessively hot and black, and the sixth and seventh zones cold and white. The inhabitants of the first and second zones in the south are called the Abyssinians, the Zanj, and the Sudanese (Negroes).

These are synonyms used to designate the (particular) nation that has turned black. The name "Abyssinians," however, is restricted to those Negroes who live opposite Mecca and the Yemen, and the name "Zanj" is restricted to those who live along the Indian Sea. These names are not given to them because of an (alleged) descent from a black human being, be it Ham or any one else. Negroes from the south who settle in the temperate fourth zone or in the seventh zone that tends toward whiteness, are found to produce descendants whose color gradually turns white in the course of time. Vice versa, inhabitants from the north or from the fourth zone who settle in the south produce descendants whose color turns black. This shows that color is conditioned by the composition of the air. In his *rajas* poem on medicine, Avicenna said:

Where the Zanj live is a heat that changes their bodies
Until their skins are covered all over with black.
The Slavs acquire whiteness
Until their skins turn soft.²²³

The inhabitants of the north are not called by their color, because the people who established the conventional meanings of words were themselves white. Thus, whiteness was something usual and common (to them), and they did not see anything sufficiently remarkable in it to cause them to use it as a specific term.

Therefore, the inhabitants of the north, the Turks, the Slavs, the Tughuzghuz,²²⁴ the Khazars, the Alans, most of the European Christians, the Gog and Magog are found to be separate nations ²²⁵ and numerous races called by a variety of names.

The inhabitants of the middle zones are temperate in their physique and character and in their ways of life. They have all the natural conditions necessary for a civilized life, such as ways of making a living, dwellings, crafts, sciences, political leadership, and royal authority. They thus have had (various manifestations of) prophecy, religious groups, dynasties, religious laws, sciences, countries, cities, buildings, horticulture, splendid crafts, and everything else that is temperate.

Now, among the inhabitants of these zones about whom we have historical information are, for instance, the Arabs, the Byzantines (Rum), the Persians, the Israelites, the Greeks, the Indians, and the Chinese. When ²²⁶ genealogists noted differences between these nations, their distinguishing marks and characteristics, they considered these to be due to their (different) descents. They declared all the Negro inhabitants of the south to be descendants of Ham. They had misgivings about their color and therefore undertook to report the afore-mentioned silly story. They declared all or most of the inhabitants of the north to be the descendants of Japheth, and they declared most of the temperate nations, who inhabit the central regions, who cultivate the sciences and crafts, and who possess religious groups and religious laws as well as political leadership and royal authority, to be the descendants of Shem. Even if the genealogical construction were correct, it would be the result of mere guesswork, not of cogent, logical argumentation. It would merely be a statement of fact. It would not imply that the inhabitants of the south are called "Abyssinians" and "Negroes" because they are descended from "black" Ham. The genealogists were led into this error by their belief that the only reason for differences between nations is in their descent. This is not so. Distinctions between races or nations are in some cases due to a different descent, as in the case of the Arabs, the Israelites, and the Persians. In other cases, they are caused by geographical location and (physical) marks, as in the case of the Zanj (Negroes), the Abyssinians, the Slavs, and the black (Sudanese) Negroes. Again, in other cases, they are caused by custom and distinguishing characteristics, as well as by descent, as in the case of the Arabs. Or, they may be caused by anything else among the conditions, qualities, and features peculiar to the different nations. But to generalize

and say that the inhabitants of a specific geographical location in the south or in the north are the descendants of such-and-such a well-known person because they have a common color, trait, or (physical) mark which that (alleged) forefather had, is one of those errors which are caused by disregard, (both) of the true nature of created beings and of geographical facts. (There also is disregard of the fact that the physical circumstances and environment) are subject to changes that affect later generations; they do not necessarily remain unchanged.

This is how God proceeds with His servants. And verily, you will not be able to change God's way.[227](#)

FOURTH PREFATORY DISCUSSION

The influence of the air (climate) upon human character.

WE [228](#) H A V E S E E N that Negroes are in general characterized by levity, excitability, and great emotionalism. They are found eager to dance whenever they hear a melody. [229](#) They are everywhere described as stupid. The real reason for these (opinions) is that, as has been shown by philosophers in the proper place, joy and gladness are due to expansion and diffusion of the animal spirit. Sadness is due to the opposite, namely, contraction and concentration of the animal spirit. It has been shown that heat expands and rarefies air and vapors and increases their quantity. A drunken person experiences inexpressible joy and gladness, because the vapor of the spirit in his heart is pervaded by natural heat, which the power of the wine generates in his spirit. The spirit, as a result, expands, and there is joy. Likewise, when those who enjoy a hot bath inhale the air of the bath, so that the heat of the air enters their spirits and makes them hot, they are found to experience joy. It often happens that they start singing, as singing has its origin in gladness.

Now, Negroes live in the hot zone (of the earth). Heat dominates their temperament and formation. Therefore, they have in their spirits an amount of heat corresponding to that in their bodies and that of the zone in which they live. In comparison with the spirits of the inhabitants of the fourth zone, theirs are hotter and, consequently, more expanded. As a result, they are more quickly moved to joy and gladness, and they are merrier. Excitability is the direct consequence.

In the same way, the inhabitants of coastal regions are somewhat similar to the inhabitants of the south. The air in which they live is very much hotter because of the reflection of the light and the rays of (the sun from) the surface of the sea. Therefore, their share in the qualities resulting from heat, that is, joy and levity, is larger than that of the (inhabitants of) cold and hilly or mountainous countries. To a degree, this may be observed in the inhabitants of the Jarid in the third zone. The heat is abundant in it and in the air there, since it lies south of the coastal plains and hills. Another example is furnished by the Egyptians. Egypt lies at about the same latitude as the Jarid. The Egyptians are dominated by joyfulness, levity, and disregard for the future. They store no provisions of food, neither for a month nor a year ahead, but purchase most of it (daily) in the market. Fez in the Maghrib, on the other hand, lies inland (and is) surrounded by cold hills. Its inhabitants can be observed to look sad and gloomy and to be too much concerned for the future. Although a man in Fez might have provisions of wheat stored, sufficient to last him for years, he always goes to the market early to buy his food for the day, because he is afraid to consume any of his hoarded food.

If one pays attention to this sort of thing in the various zones and countries, the influence of the varying quality of the air upon the character (of the inhabitants) will become apparent. God is "the Creator, the Knowing One." [230](#) Al-Masudi undertook to investigate the reason for the levity, excitability, and emotionalism in Negroes, and attempted to explain it. However, he did no better than to report, on the authority of Galen and Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kind!, that the reason is a weakness of

their brains which results in a weakness of their intellect. This is an inconclusive and unproven statement. "God guides whomever He wants to guide." [232](#)

FIFTH PREFATORY DISCUSSION

Differences with regard to abundance and scarcity of food in the various inhabited regions ('umran) and how they affect the human body and character.

IT [233](#) SHOULD BE KNOWN that not all the temperate zones have an abundance of food, nor do all their inhabitants lead a comfortable life. In some parts, the inhabitants enjoy an abundance of grain, seasonings, wheat, and fruits, because the soil is well balanced and good for plants and there is an abundant civilization. And then, in other parts, the land is strewn with rocks, and no seeds or herbs grow at all. There, the inhabitants have a very hard time. Instances of such people are the inhabitants of the Hijaz and the Yemen, or the Veiled Sinhajah who live in the desert of the Maghrib on the fringes of the sandy deserts which lie between the Berbers and the Sudanese Negroes. All of them lack all grain and seasonings. Their nourishment and food is milk and meat. Another such people is the Arabs who roam the waste regions. They may get grain and seasonings from the hills, but this is the case only at certain times and is possible only under the eyes of the militia which protects (the hill country). Whatever they get is little, because they have little money. They obtain no more than the bare necessity, and sometimes less, and in no case enough for a comfortable or abundant life. They are mostly found restricted to milk, which is for them a very good substitute for wheat. In spite of this, the desert people who lack grain and season body and better in character than the hill people who have plenty of everything. Their complexions are clearer, their bodies cleaner, their figures more perfect and better, their characters less intemperate, and their minds keener as far as knowledge and perception are concerned. This is attested by experience in all these groups. There is a great difference in this respect between the Arabs and Berbers (on the one hand), and the Veiled (Berbers) [234](#) and the inhabitants of the hills (on the other). This fact is known to those who have investigated the matter.

As to the reason for it, it may be tentatively suggested that a great amount of food and the moisture it contains generate pernicious superfluous matters in the body, which, in turn, produce a disproportionate widening of the body, as well as many corrupt, putrid humors. The result is a pale complexion and an ugly figure, because the person has too much flesh, as we have stated. When the moisture with its evil vapors ascends to the brain, the mind and the ability to think are dulled. The result is stupidity, carelessness, and a general intemperance. This can be exemplified by comparing the animals of waste regions and barren habitats, such as gazelles, wild cows (*maha*), ostriches, giraffes, onagers, and (wild) buffaloes (cows, *bagar*), with their counterparts among the animals that live in hills, coastal plains, and fertile pastures. There is a big difference between them with regard to the glossiness of their coat, their shape and appearance, the proportions of their limbs, and their sharpness of perception. [235](#) The gazelle is the counterpart of the goat, and the giraffe that of the camel; the onagers and (wild) buffaloes (cows) are identical with (domestic) donkeys and oxen (and cows). Still, there is a wide difference between them. The only reason for it is the fact that the abundance of food in the hills produces pernicious superfluous matters and corrupt humors in the bodies of the domestic animals, the influence of which shows on them. Hunger, on the other

hand, may greatly improve the physique and shape of the animals of the waste regions.

The same observations apply to human beings. We find that the inhabitants of fertile zones where the products of agriculture and animal husbandry as well as seasonings and fruits are plentiful, are, as a rule, described as stupid in mind and coarse in body. This is the case with those Berbers who have plenty of seasonings and wheat, as compared with those who lead a frugal life and are restricted to barley or durra, such as the Masmudah Berbers and the inhabitants of as-Sus and the Ghumarah. The latter are superior both intellectually and physically. The same applies in general to the inhabitants of the Maghrib who have plenty of seasonings and fine wheat, as compared with the inhabitants of Spain in whose country butter is altogether lacking and whose principal food is durra. The Spaniards are found to have a sharpness of intellect, a nimbleness of body, and a receptivity for instruction such as no one else has. The same also applies to the inhabitants of rural regions of the Maghrib as compared with the inhabitants of settled areas and cities. Both use many seasonings and live in abundance, but the town dwellers only use them after they have been prepared and cooked and softened by admixtures. They thus lose their heaviness and become less substantial. Principal foods are the meat of sheep and chickens. They do not use butter because of its tastelessness. Therefore the moisture in their food is small, and it brings only a few pernicious superfluous matters into their bodies. Consequently, the bodies of the urban population are found to be more delicate than those of the inhabitants of the desert who live a hard life. Likewise, those inhabitants of the desert who are used to hunger are found to have in their bodies no superfluous matters, thick or thin.

It should be known that the influence of abundance upon the body is apparent even in matters of religion and divine worship. The frugal inhabitants of the desert and those of settled areas who have accustomed themselves to hunger and to abstinence from pleasures are found to be more religious and more ready for divine worship than people who live in luxury and abundance. Indeed, it can be observed that there are few religious people in towns and cities, in as much as people there are for the most part obdurate and careless, which is connected with the use of much meat, seasonings, and fine wheat. The existence of pious men and ascetics is, therefore, restricted to the desert, whose inhabitants eat frugally. Likewise, the condition of the inhabitants within a single city can be observed to differ according to the different distribution of luxury and abundance.

It can also be noted that those people who, whether they inhabit the desert or settled areas and cities, live a life of abundance and have all the good things to eat, die more quickly than others when a drought or famine comes upon them. This is the case, for instance, with the Berbers of the Maghrib and the inhabitants of the city of Fez and, as we hear, of Egypt (Cairo). It is not so with the Arabs who inhabit waste regions and deserts, or with the inhabitants of regions where the date palm grows and whose principal food is dates, or with the present-day inhabitants of Ifriqiyah whose principal food is barley and olive oil, or with the inhabitants of Spain whose principal food is durra and olive oil. When a drought or a famine strikes them, it does not kill as many of them as of the other group of people, and few, if any, die of hunger. As a reason for that, it may tentatively be suggested that the stomachs of those who have everything in abundance and are used to seasonings and, in particular, to butter, acquire moisture in addition to their basic constitutional moisture, and (the moisture they are used to) eventually becomes excessive. Then, when (eating) habits are thwarted by small quantities of food, by lack of seasonings, and by the use of coarse food to which it is unaccustomed, the stomach, which is a very weak part of the body and for that reason considered one of the vital parts, soon dries out and contracts. Sickness and sudden death are prompt consequences to

the man whose stomach is in this condition. Those who die satiation, not of the hunger that now afflicts them for the first time. In those who are accustomed to thirst [235a](#) and to doing without seasonings and butter, the basic moisture, which is good for all natural foods, always stays within its proper limits and does not increase. Thus, their stomachs are not affected by dryness or intemperance in consequence of a change of nourishment. As a rule, they escape the fate that awaits others on account of the abundance of their food and the great amount of seasonings in it.

The basic thing to know is that foodstuffs, and whether to use or not to use them, are matters of custom. Whoever accustoms himself to a particular type of food that agrees with him becomes used to it. He finds it painful to give it up or to make any changes (in his diet), provided (the type of food) is not something that does not fulfill the (real) purpose of food, such as poison, or alkaloids, [236](#) or anything excessively intemperate. Whatever can be used as food and is agreeable may be used as customary food. If a man accustoms himself to the use of milk and vegetables instead of wheat, until (the use of them) gets to be his custom, milk and vegetables become for him (his habitual) food, and he definitely has no longer any need for wheat or grains.

The same applies to those who have accustomed themselves to suffer hunger and do without food. Such things are reported about trained (ascetics). We hear remarkable things about men of this type. Those who have no knowledge of things of the sort can scarcely believe them. The explanation lies in custom. Once the soul gets used to something, it becomes part of its make-up and nature, because (the soul) is able to take on many colorings. If through gradual training it has become used to hunger, (hunger) becomes a natural custom of the soul.

The assumption of physicians that hunger causes death is not correct, except when a person is exposed suddenly to hunger and is entirely cut off from food. Then, the stomach is isolated, and contracts an illness that may be fatal. When, however, the amount of food one eats is slowly decreased by gradual training, there is no danger of death. The adepts of Sufism practice (such gradual abstinence from food). Gradualness is also necessary when one gives up the training. Were a person suddenly to return to his original diet, he might die. Therefore, he must end the training as he started it, that is, gradually.

We personally saw a person who had taken no food for forty or more consecutive days. Our *shaykhs* were present at the court of Sultan Abul-Hasan [237](#) when two women from Algeciras and Ronda were presented to him, who had for years abstained from all food. Their story became known. They were examined, and the matter was found to be correct. The women continued this way until they died. Many persons we used to know restricted themselves to (a diet of) goat's milk. They drank from the udder sometime during the day or at breakfast. [237a](#) This was their only food for fifteen years. There are many others (who live similarly). It should not be considered unlikely.

It should be known that everybody who is able to suffer hunger or eat only little, is physically better off if he stays hungry than if he eats too much. Hunger has a favorable influence on the health and well-being of body and intellect, as we have stated. This may be exemplified by the different influence of various kinds of food upon the body. We observe that those persons who live on the meat of strong, large-bodied animals grow up as a (strong and large-bodied) race. Comparison of the inhabitants of the desert with those of settled areas shows this. The same applies to persons who live on the milk and meat of camels. This influences their character, so that they become patient, persevering, and able to carry loads, as is the case with camels. [238](#) Their stomachs also grow to be healthy and tough as the stomachs of

camels. They are not beset by any feebleness or weakness, nor are they affected by unwholesome food, as others are. They may take strong (alkaloid) cathartics unadulterated to purify their bellies, such as, for instance, unripe colocynths, *Thapsia garganica*, and Euphorbia. Their stomachs do not suffer any harm from them. But if the inhabitants of settled areas, whose stomachs have become delicate because of their soft diet, were to partake of them, death would come to them instantly, because (these cathartics) have poisonous qualities.

An indication of the influence of food upon the body is a fact that has been mentioned by agricultural scholars [239](#) and observed by men of experience, that when the eggs of chickens which have been fed on grain cooked in camel dung, are set to hatch, the chicks come out as large as can be imagined. One does not even have to cook any grain to feed them; one merely smears camel dung on the eggs set to hatch, and the chickens that come out are extremely large. There are many similar things.

When we observe the various ways in which food exercises an influence upon bodies, there can be no doubt that hunger also exercises an influence upon them, because two opposites follow the same pattern with regard to exercising an influence or not exercising an influence. Hunger influences the body in that it keeps it free from corrupt superfluities and mixed fluids that destroy body and intellect, in the same way that food influenced the (original) existence of the body.

God is omniscient.

SIXTH PREFATORY DISCUSSION

The various types of human beings who have supernatural perception either through natural disposition or through exercise, preceded by a discussion of inspiration and dream visions.

IT SHOULD BE KNOWN that God has chosen certain individuals. He honored them by addressing (them). He created them so that they might know Him. He made them connecting links between Himself and His servants. (These individuals) are to acquaint their fellow men with what is good for them and to urge them to let themselves be guided aright. They are to make it their task to keep (their fellow men) out of the fire of Hell and to show them the path to salvation. The knowledge that God gave these individuals, and the wonders He manifested through their statements, indicated that there exist things beyond the reach of man, that can be learned only from God through the mediation of (these individuals), and that (these individuals themselves) cannot know unless God instructs them in them. Muhammad said: "Indeed, I know only what God taught me." It should be known that the information they give is intrinsically and necessarily true, as will become clear when the reality of prophecy is explained.

The sign by which this type of human being can be recognized is that, in the state of inspiration, they seem to be removed from those who are present. This is accompanied by a feeling of being choked that looks like swooning or unconsciousness but has nothing to do with either.^{239a} In reality, it is an immersion in (and) encounter with the spiritual kingdom, the result of perceptions congenial to them but entirely foreign to the (ordinary) perceptions of men. (These extraordinary perceptions) are then brought down to the level of human perceptions in the form of some speech sound the person (who receives the revelation) hears and is able to understand, or in the form of an individual delivering the divine message to him. This state (of remoteness) then leaves him, but he retains the content of the given revelation. When Muhammad was asked about revelation, he said: "At times, it comes to me like the ringing of a bell. This affects me most. When it leaves me, I have retained what was said. At other times, the angel appears to me in the form of a man. He talks to me, and I retain the things he says."²⁴⁰ During that (process, the person who receives the revelation) shows inexplicable signs of strain and choking. A tradition says: "There was some anxiety in connection with the revelation that he had to calm."²⁴¹ A'ishah said: "The revelation would come to him on very cold days. Nevertheless, when it left him, there was sweat on his forehead."²⁴² God says in the Qur'an: "We shall lay upon you a heavy message."²⁴³

Because the act of receiving revelations leads to such conditions, the polytheists used to accuse the prophets of being possessed (by jinn). They said: "He has a *jinni* as his doubleganger, or companion." The outward appearance of the condition they observed misled them. "He whom God leads astray has no guide."²⁴⁴

Another sign by which inspired human beings can be recognized is the fact that (even) before receiving revelations, they are good, innocent, and averse to any blameworthy, sinful action. This is what is meant by 'ismah (immunity from sin and error, infallibility). It looks as if, by nature, they were disposed to avoid and shun

blameworthy actions, and as if such actions were the negation of their very nature. According to (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*, when Muhammad was a young man he carried stones with his uncle al-'Abbas for the restoration of the Ka'bah. He was carrying them in his cloak, and thus, he was undressed. (As this was unbecoming,) he fell down in a swoon that lasted until he was covered with his cloak.²⁴⁵ (On another occasion,) he was invited to a wedding party where there was much merrymaking. He fell fast asleep, and slept until the sun rose. Thus, he had nothing to do with the things the others did on that occasion. God kept him from all that. It was his nature. He even avoided food that was considered objectionable. Thus, he never touched onions or garlic. When he was asked about it, he said: "I communicate with One with whom you do not communicate."²⁴⁶

Attention should be paid (in this connection) to what Muhammad told Khadijah about the revelation when he first experienced it, and she wanted to know what it was like. She asked him to embrace her, and when he did so, it left him. Khadijah, thereupon, said that it was an angel, and not a devil, meaning that (a devil) would not come close to a woman. She also asked him what garments he liked best (for the angel) to wear during the revelation, and he replied, "White and green ones." Whereupon Khadijah said that it was an angel, meaning that green and white are the colors of goodness and of the angels. Black, on the other hand, is the color of evil and of the devils. There are other such stories.

Another sign by which (inspired human beings can be recognized) is the fact that they make propaganda for religion and divine worship by means of prayer, almsgiving, and chastity. Khadijah, as well as Abu Bakr, took that (conduct) as proof of Muhammad's truthfulness. They did not need any further proof of his mission beyond his conduct and character. According to (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*, when Heraclius received the Prophet's letter in which he was asked to become a Muslim, he is said to have called the Qurashites who could be found in his country, among them Abu Sufyan, and to have asked them about Muhammad's condition. One of the questions he asked concerned the things Muhammad commanded them to do. Abu Sufyan's reply was: "Prayer, almsgiving, gifts, and chastity." Similar replies were given to all the other questions Heraclius asked. Heraclius' comment was: "If it is all really as you say, he is a prophet and he will take possession of this very ground upon which I am standing."²⁴⁷ The "chastity" to which Heraclius referred is *'ismah* (immunity from sin and error, infallibility). It is worth noting that Heraclius considered *'ismah* and propaganda for religion and divine worship as proofs of the genuineness of a prophetic mission, and did not require a miracle. This story, therefore, is proof that these qualities are among the signs of prophecy.

Another sign by which (inspired human beings can be recognized) is the fact that they have prestige among their people. According to (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*, God "sent no prophet who did not enjoy the protection of his people."²⁴⁸ Another recension reads: ". . . who did not enjoy wealth among his people."²⁴⁹ This is al-Hakim's correction of the two *Sahihs*²⁵⁰ According to (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*, Abu Sufyan replied to Heraclius' question concerning Muhammad's standing among the Qurashites, (by saying) that he had prestige among them. Whereupon Heraclius said, "Whenever messengers are sent, they have prestige among their people."²⁵¹ That means that (such a man) has group feeling and influence which protect him from harm at the hands of unbelievers, until he has delivered the messages of his Lord and achieved the degree of complete perfection with respect to his religion and religious organization that God intended for him.

Another sign by which (inspired human beings can be recognized) is that they work wonders which attest to their truthfulness. "Wonders" [253](#) are actions the like of which it is impossible for other human beings to achieve. They are, therefore, called "miracles." They are not within the ability of men, but beyond their power. There is a difference of opinion as to how they occur and as to how they prove the truth of the prophets. Speculative theologians base themselves on the doctrine of the "voluntary agent" [254](#) and say that miracles occur through the power of God, and not through the action of the prophet. The Mu'tazilah maintain that human actions proceed from man himself. Still, miracles do not belong to the type of actions that human beings perform. According to all (schools), the prophet's place in the performance of miracles is (circumscribed by) the "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*) [255](#) which he offers by divine permission. That is, the prophet uses the miracles before they occur as proof of the truth of his claims. They thus take the place of an explicit statement from God to the effect that a particular prophet is truthful, and they are definite proof of the truth. An evidential miracle is the combination of a "wonder" and the "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*) that (announces) it. Therefore, the latter constitutes part of the miracle.

The notion of the speculative theologians (concerning the "voluntary agent") is self-explanatory. (The "voluntary agent") is (just) one. For they hold that "essential" means (being just one). [255a](#) According to the notion of the speculative theologians, the "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*) is what makes the difference between (miracles, on the one hand), and acts of divine grace and sorcery (on the other), since (the latter) two need no confirmation of their truthfulness. The "advance challenge" (if it occurs at all in these cases) exists (in them) only by chance.

In the opinion of those who admit the existence of acts of divine grace, if an "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*) occurs in connection with them, and if it is proof of them, it is proof only of saintliness, which is different from prophecy. This is why Professor Abu Ishaq [256](#) and others did not admit the occurrence of wonders as acts of divine grace. They wanted to avoid confusion between the "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*) of the saint and prophecy. We, however, have (just) shown that there is a difference between the two. The "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*) of a saint is concerned with other things than that of a prophet. There can be no doubt that the report on the authority of Professor Abu Ishaq is not clear and has often led to denial of (the possibility) that the wonders of the prophets could have been wrought by (saints), on the grounds that each of the two groups has its own kind of wonders.

The Mu'tazilah do not admit the occurrence of acts of divine grace, because wonders do not belong to the actions of man that are customary and allow of no break (in the customary process).

It is absurd to believe that miracles could be produced fraudulently by a liar. According to the Ash'arites, this is absurd because the essential part of a miracle is defined as "confirmation of truthfulness and right guidance." Were a miracle to occur under the contrary conditions, proof would become doubt, guidance misguidance, and, I might add, the confirmation of truthfulness, untruth. Realities would become absurdities, and the essential qualities would be turned upside down. Something, the occurrence of which would be absurd, cannot be possible. [257](#)

According to the Mu'tazilah, fraudulent miracles are absurd, because it is improper for proofs to turn into doubts and for guidance to turn into misguidance. Such, therefore, could not come from God.

The philosophers hold that wonders are acts of the prophet (who performs them, even though they have no place in the power (of the prophet himself). This is

based upon their doctrine that (there exists) an essential and necessary (causality) and that events develop out of each other according to conditions and reasons that (always) come up anew and, in the last instance, go back to the Necessary *per se* that acts *per se* and not by choice. In their opinion, the prophetical soul has special essential qualities which produce wonders, with the help of the power of (the Necessary *per se*) and the obedience of the elements to Him for purposes of generation. (The role of) the prophet (in this process), in their opinion, is that through those qualities that God put into him, he is by nature fitted for being active among (all) created things, whenever he addresses himself to them and concentrates on them. They hold that wonders are wrought by the prophet (himself), whether there is an "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*) or not. They are evidence of the prophet's truthfulness, in as much as they prove that he is active among the created things, such activity constituting a special quality of the prophetic soul, not because they take the place of a clear assertion of his truthfulness. In their opinion, therefore, (wonders) are no definitive proof (of the prophet's truthfulness), as they are in the opinion of the speculative theologians. "Advance awareness," for them, does not constitute part of the miracle. It does not stand out as the thing that differentiates (miracles) from acts of divine grace. They hold that (miracles) are differentiated from sorcery by the fact that a prophet is by nature fitted for good actions and averse to evil deeds. Therefore, he could not do evil through the wonders he works. The opposite is the case with the sorcerer. All his actions are evil and done for evil purposes.²⁵⁸ Further, (miracles) are differentiated from acts of divine grace by the fact that the wonders of a prophet are of an unusual character, such as ascending to heaven, passing through solid bodies, reviving the dead, conversing with angels, and flying through the air.²⁵⁹ The wonders of a saint, on the other hand, are of a lower order, such as making much out of little, speaking about something that will happen in the future, and similar things inferior to the power of action of prophets. A prophet can produce the wonders of saints, but a saint is not able to produce anything like the wonders of prophets. This has been confirmed by the Sufis in what they have written about the mystic path and reported of their ecstatic experiences.

Now that this has been established, it should be known that the evidence of the noble Qur'an, which was revealed to our Prophet, is the greatest, noblest, and clearest miracle. Wonders are as a rule wrought by a prophet separately and apart from the revelation he receives. The miracle comes as evidence for it(s truthfulness). This is obvious. The Qur'an, on the other hand, is in itself the claimed revelation. It is itself the wondrous miracle. It is its own proof. It requires no outside proof, as do the other wonders wrought in connection with revelations. It is the clearest proof that can be, because it unites in itself both the proof and what is to be proved. This is the meaning of Muhammad's statement, "Every prophet was given signs likely to provide reassurance for mankind. What I have been given is a revelation that was revealed to me. Therefore, I hope to have the greatest number of followers on the day of resurrection."^{259a} He refers to the fact that a miracle which is identical with the revelation (confirmed by it), is of such clarity and force of evidence that it will be found truthful, because of its clarity, by the greatest number of people. Therefore, many are those who consider (the Prophet) truthful and believe. They are the "followers," the nation of Islam.

And God, praised be He, knows better.

All ²⁶⁰ this indicates that the Qur'an is alone among the divine books, in that our Prophet received it directly ²⁶¹ in the words and phrases in which it appears. In this respect, it differs from the Torah, the Gospel, and other heavenly books. The prophets received them in the form of ideas during the state of revelation. After their

return to a human state, they expressed those ideas in their own ordinary words. Therefore, those books do not have "inimitability."²⁶² Inimitability is restricted to the Qur'an. The other prophets received their books in a manner similar to that in which our Prophet received (certain) ideas that he attributed to God, such as are found in many traditions.²⁶³ The fact that he received the Qur'an directly, in its literal form, is attested by the following statement of Muhammad on the authority of his Lord who said: "Do not set your tongue in motion to make haste with (the revelation of the Qur'an). It is up to us to put it together and to recite it."²⁶⁴

The reason for the revelation of these verses was Muhammad's haste to study the (Qur'anic) verses, because he feared that he might forget (them), and because he wished to keep the directly and literally revealed text in memory. God guaranteed him that He (Himself) would "keep" it in the following verse: "We revealed the reminder, and we are keeping it."²⁶⁵ This is the meaning of "keeping" which is peculiar to the Qur'an. The meaning of it is not what the common people think. (Their opinion) is far off the mark.

Many verses of the Qur'an show that He directly and literally revealed the Qur'an, of which every *surah* is inimitable. Our Prophet wrought no greater miracle than the Qur'an and the fact that he united the Arabs in his mission. "If you had expended all the treasures on earth, you would have achieved no unity among them. But God achieved unity among them."²⁶⁶

This should be known. It should be pondered. It will then be found to be correct, exactly as I have stated. One should also consider the evidence that lies in the superiority of Muhammad's rank over that of the other prophets and in the exaltedness of his position.

We shall now give an explanation of the real meaning of prophecy as interpreted by many thorough scholars. We shall then mention the real meaning of soothsaying, dream vision, divination, and other supernatural ways of perception. We say:

(The real meaning of prophecy)

It ²⁶⁷ should be known that we-May God guide you and us ²⁶⁸ notice that this world with all the created things in it has a certain order and solid construction. It shows nexuses between causes and things caused, combinations of some parts of creation with others, and transformations of some existent things into others, in a pattern that is both remarkable and endless. Beginning with the world of the body and sensual perception, and therein first with the world of the visible elements, (one notices) how these elements are arranged gradually and continually in an ascending order, from earth to water, (from water) to air, and (from air) to fire. Each one of the elements is prepared to be transformed into the next higher or lower one, and sometimes is transformed. The higher one is always finer than the one preceding it. Eventually, the world of the spheres is reached. They are finer than anything else. They are in layers which are interconnected, in a shape which the senses are able to perceive only through the existence of motions. These motions provide some people with knowledge of the measurements and positions of the spheres, and also with knowledge of the existence of the essences beyond, the influence of which is noticeable in the spheres through the fact (that they have motion).

One should then look at the world of creation. It started out from the minerals and progressed, in an ingenious, gradual manner, to plants and animals. The last stage ²⁶⁹ of minerals is connected with the first stage of plants, such as

herbs and seedless plants. The last stage of plants, such as palms and vines, is connected with the first stage of animals, such as snails and shellfish which have only the power of touch. The word "connection" with regard to these created things means that the last stage of each group is fully prepared to become the first stage of the next group.

The animal world then widens, its species become numerous, and, in a gradual process of creation, it finally leads to man, who is able to think and to reflect. The higher stage of man is reached from the world of the monkeys, in which both sagacity and perception are found, but which has not reached the stage of actual reflection and thinking. At this point we come to the first stage of man after (the world of monkeys). This is as far as our (physical) observation extends.

Now, in [270](#) the various worlds we find manifold influences. In the world of sensual perception there are certain influences of the motions of the spheres and the elements. In the world of creation there are certain influences of the motions of growth and perception. All this is evidence of the fact that there is something that exercises an influence and is different from the bodily substances. This is something spiritual. It is connected with the created things, because the various worlds must be connected in their existence. This spiritual thing is the soul, which has perception and causes motion. Above the soul there must exist something else that gives the soul the power of perception and motion, and that is also connected with it. Its essence should be pure perception and absolute intellection. This is the world of the angels. The soul, consequently, must be prepared to exchange humanity for angelicity, in order actually to become part of the angelic species at certain times in the flash of a moment. This happens after the spiritual essence of the soul has become perfect in actuality, as we shall mention later on.

(The soul) is connected with the stage next to it, as are all the orders of the *existentia*, as we have mentioned before. It is connected both upward and downward. Downward, it is connected with the body. Through (the body, the soul) acquires the sense perceptions by which it is prepared for actual intellection. [271](#) Upward, it is connected with the stage of the angels. There, it acquires scientific and supernatural perceptions, for knowledge of the things that come into being exists timelessly in the intellections of (the angels). This is in consequence of the well-constructed order of existence mentioned above, which requires that the essences and powers of (the world of existence) be connected with one another.

The human soul cannot be seen, but its influence is evident in the body. It is as if all (the body's) parts, in combination or separately, were organs of the soul and its powers. The powers of action are touching with the hand, walking with the foot, speaking with the tongue, and the total combined motion with the body.

The powers of sensual perception are graded and ascend to the highest power, that is, the power of thinking, for which there exists the term "rational power." Thus, the powers of external sense perception, with the organs of vision, hearing, and all the other (organs), lead up to inward (perception).

The first (inward sense) is the "common sense," [272](#) that is, the power that simultaneously perceives all objects of sensual perception, whether they belong to hearing, seeing, touching, or anything else. In this respect, it differs from the power of external sense perception, as the objects of sensual perception do not all crowd upon external sense perception at one and the same time.

The common sense transfers (the perceptions) to the imagination, which is the power that pictures an object of sensual perception in the soul, as it is, abstracted from all external matter. The organ for the activity of these two powers (common sense and imagination) is the first cavity of the brain. The front part of that cavity is

for the common sense, and the back part for the imagination.

Imagination leads up to the estimative power [273](#) and the power of memory. The estimative power serves for perceiving (abstract) ideas that refer to individualities, such as the hostility of Zayd, the friendship of 'Amr, the compassion of the father, or the savagery of the wolf. The power of memory serves as a repository for all objects of perception, whether they are imagined or not. It is like a storehouse that preserves them for the time when they are needed. The organ for the activity of these two powers is the back cavity of the brain. The front part of that cavity is for the estimative power, and the back for the power of memory.

All these powers then lead up to the power of thinking. Its organ is the middle cavity of the brain. It is the power that causes reflection to be set in motion and leads toward intellection. The soul is constantly moved by it, as the result of its constitutional desire to (think). It wants to be free from the grip of power [274](#) and the human kind of preparedness. It wants to proceed to active intellection by assimilating itself to the highest spiritual group (that of the angels), and to get into the first order of the *spiritualia* by perceiving them without the help of bodily organs. Therefore, the soul is constantly moving in that direction. It exchanges all humanity and human spirituality for angelicity of the highest stage, without the help of any acquired faculty but by virtue of a primary natural disposition that God has placed in it.

As far as this (process) is concerned, human souls are of three kinds. One is by nature too weak to arrive at spiritual perception. Therefore, it is satisfied to move downwards toward the perceptions of the senses and imagination and the formation of ideas with the help of the power of memory and the estimative power, according to limited rules and a special order. In this manner, people acquire perceptive and apperceptive [275](#) knowledge, which is the product of thinking in the body. All this is (the result of the power of) imagination and limited in extent, since from the way it starts it can reach the primary (*intelligibilia*) but cannot go beyond them. Also, if they are corrupt, everything beyond them is also corrupt. [276](#) This, as a rule, is the extent of human corporeal perception. It is the goal of the perceptions of scholars. It is in it that scholars are firmly grounded.

A (second) kind (of soul), through thinking, moves in the direction of spiritual intellection and (a type of) perception that does not need the organs of the body, because of its innate preparedness for it. The perceptions of this kind of soul extend beyond the primary (*intelligibilia*) to which primary human perception is restricted, and cover the ground of inward observations, which are all intuitive [277](#). They are unlimited as to their beginning and their end. They are the perceptions of saints, of men of mystical learning and divine knowledge. The blessed obtain them after death, in Purgatory (*barzakh*). [278](#)

A (third) kind (of soul) is by nature suited to exchange humanity altogether, both corporeal and spiritual humanity, for angelicity of the highest stage, so that it may actually become an angel in the flash of a moment, glimpse the highest group within their own stage, and listen to essential speech [279](#) and divine address during that moment. (Individuals possessing this kind of soul) are prophets. God implanted and formed in them the natural ability to slough off humanity in that moment which is the state of revelation. God freed them from the lets and hindrances of the body, by which they were afflicted as human beings. He did this by means of '*ismah* (immunity from sin and error, infallibility) and straightforwardness, which He implanted in them and which gave them that particular outlook, and by means of a desire for divine worship which He centered in them and which converges from all

sides toward that goal. They thus move toward the (angelic) stage, sloughing off humanity at will, by virtue of their natural constitution, and not with the help of any acquired faculty or craft.

(The prophets) move in that direction, slough off their humanity, and, once among the highest group (of angels), learn all that may there be learned. They then bring what they have learned back down to the level of the powers of human perception, as this is the way in which it can be transmitted to human beings. At times, this may happen in the form of a noise the prophet hears. It is like indistinct words from which he derives the idea conveyed to him. As soon as the noise has stopped, he retains and understands (the idea). At other times, the angel who conveys (the message) to the prophet appears to him in the form of a man who talks to him, and the prophet comprehends what he says. Learning the message from the angel, reverting to the level of human perception, and understanding the message conveyed to him - all this appears to take place in one moment, or rather, in a flash. It does not take place in time, but everything happens simultaneously. Therefore, it appears to happen very quickly. For this reason, it is called *wahy* ("revelation"), because the root *why* has the meaning "to hasten." [280](#)

It should be known that in the judgment of thorough scholars, the first (degree), the state of noise, is that of prophets who are not sent as messengers. The second degree, the state when an angel appears in the form of a man who addresses the prophet, is that of prophets who are sent as messengers. Therefore, it is more perfect than the first (degree). This is the meaning of the tradition in which the Prophet explained revelation, in reply to a question by alHarith b. Hisham. [281](#) Asked how the revelation came to him, Muhammad replied, "At times, it comes to me like the ringing of a bell. This affects me most. When it leaves me, I have retained what was said. At other times, the angel appears to me in the form of a man. He talks to me, and I retain the things he says." The first (case) affected him more, being the first attempt to advance from potential to actual contact (with the supernatural). Thus, it was somewhat difficult. When the Prophet returned, in this case, to the level of human perceptions, all he retained was auditory (impressions). All others were difficult. When the revelation was repeated and the messages became numerous, contact (with the supernatural) became easy. When the Prophet returned to the level of human perceptions, now all his senses-and especially the clearest sense, that of vision-conveyed (the revelation).

The use of the perfect tense "I have retained" in the first case, and of the present tense "I retain" in the second, is a meaningful stylistic distinction. In both cases, the words that were spoken (during the revelation) came in a disguise. In the first case, they appeared in the form of "noise," which, according to accepted usage, is something different from speech. Muhammad indicated that understanding and comprehension followed immediately upon it after it had stopped. He properly used the perfect tense, which is suitable (to signify) what has ended or stopped, in order to indicate comprehension at the moment he perceived that (the noise) had ended and stopped. [282](#) In the second case, the angel appeared in the form of a man who addressed the Prophet and spoke to him. Comprehension (in this case) ran parallel with speech. Therefore, Muhammad properly used the present tense, which of necessity expresses renewed (repeated) activity.

It should be known that, in general, the state of revelation presents difficulties and pains throughout. This has been indicated in the Qur'an: [283](#) "We shall lay upon you a heavy message." 'A'ishah said: "There was some anxiety in connection with the revelation, with which he had to struggle." She said: "The revelation would come to him on very cold days. Nevertheless, when it left him,

there was sweat on his forehead." This is the reason for his well-known remoteness (from sensual perception) and the choking (feeling) when in that condition, of which the Prophet used to speak. The reason, as we have established, is that revelation means leaving one's humanity, in order to attain angelic perceptions and to hear the speech of the soul.²⁸⁴ This causes pain, since it means that an essence leaves its own essence and exchanges its own stage for the ultimate stage (of the angels). This is the meaning of the choking feeling which Muhammad referred to in connection with the beginning of revelation in his statement: "And he (Gabriel) choked me until it became too much for me; then he released me. Then he said, 'Read,' and I replied, 'I cannot read.'²⁸⁵ He did this a second and a third time, as the tradition tells.

Gradual habituation to (the process of revelation) brings some relief, as compared to how it was before. It is for this reason that the earliest passages, *surahs*, and verses of the Qur'an, revealed to Muhammad in Mecca, are briefer than those revealed to him in Medina. One may compare the tradition about how the ninth *surah* (*Surat al-Bara'ah*) was revealed, during the expedition to Tabuk. The whole of this (*long surah*), or most of it, was revealed to Muhammad while he was riding his camel.²⁸⁶ Before this, when he was in Mecca, part of one of the shortest *surahs* in the latter part of the Qur'an²⁸⁷ was revealed on one occasion, and the rest on another occasion. Also, one of the last revelations received in Medina was the "Verse of the Religion,"²⁸⁸ which is very long. Before this, in Mecca, the verses revealed were short, like those of the *surahs ar-Rahman*, *adh-Dhariyat*, *al-Muddaththir*, *ad-Duha*, and *al-'Alaq*,²⁸⁹ and similar *surahs*. This may serve as criterion for distinguishing the Meccan *surahs* and verses from the Medinese. God leads to that which is correct. This is the quintessence of prophecy.

Soothsaying (*kahanah*) is also one of the particular qualities of the human soul. This is as follows.

In the previous discussion, we have always stated that the human soul is prepared to exchange its humanity for the spirituality that lies above (humanity). Human beings have an intimation of that (exchange) in prophets who are by nature fitted to achieve it. It has been established that they neither need acquired qualities for that (exchange), nor are they dependent on any help from perceptions, notions (*tasawwur*), bodily activities, be they speech or motion, or anything else. It is (with them) a natural change from humanity to angelicity in the flash of a moment.

If this is so and if such preparedness exists in human nature, logical classification requires that there must be another kind of human beings, as inferior to the first kind as anything that has something perfect as its opposite, must be inferior to that (perfect) opposite. Independence from all help in (achieving contact with the supernatural) is the opposite of dependence on help in connection with it. They are two very different things.

Now, the classification of the world of existence requires that there must be a kind of human beings fitted by nature for the process of thinking voluntarily under the impulse of their rational power, whenever that power has a desire for it. (But the rational power) is not by nature capable of (the process of supernatural perception). Thus, when its weakness prevents (the rational power) from (contact with the supernatural), it is natural for (the rational power) to get involved with particulars, either of sensual perception or of the imagination, such as transparent bodies, animal bones, speech in rhymed prose, or whatever bird or animal may present itself. (A person whose rational power is thus engaged) attempts to retain such sensual or imaginary perceptions, since he depends on their help in attaining the supernatural perception he desires. They give him a sort of assistance.

The power which in (such persons) constitutes the starting point of supernatural perception is soothsaying. The souls of such persons are inferior by nature and unable to attain perfection. Therefore, they have a better perception of particulars than of universals. They get involved with the former and neglect the latter. Therefore, the power of imagination is [290](#) most strongly developed in those persons, because it is the organ of the particulars. (The particulars) completely pervade (the power of the imagination), [291](#) both in the sleeping and the waking state. They are ever ready and present in it. The power of imagination brings (the particulars) to the attention of (those persons) and serves as a mirror in which they are seen constantly.

The soothsayer is not able to achieve perfection in his perception of the *intelligibilia*, because the revelation he receives is inspired by devils. The highest state this type of person can reach is to achieve disregard for the senses, with the help of rhymed prose and the use of words of an identical structure at the end of successive *cola*, [292](#) and (thereby) to attain an imperfect contact of the sort described (with supernatural things). From that motion and the foreign support that accompanies it, his heart receives some inspiration to express itself in words. The soothsayer, thus, often speaks the truth and agrees with reality. Often, however, what he says are falsehoods, because he supplements his deficiency with something foreign to, different from, and incompatible with, his perceptive essence. Thus, truth and falsehood are umbled together in him, and he is not trustworthy. He often takes refuge in guesses and hypotheses, because, in his self-deception, he desires to have (supernatural) perception and is willing to cheat those who ask him (for information).

Men who use such rhymed prose are distinguished by the name of soothsayers (*kahin, pl. kuhhan*). They rank highest among their kind. Muhammad said, regarding something of the sort, "This belongs to the rhymed prose of the soothsayers." [293](#) The use of the genitive construction ("rhymed prose of") indicates that Muhammad considered rhymed prose a distinctive (mark of the soothsayer). He also questioned Ibn Sayyad, [294](#) in order to find out about him, and he asked him how that thing came to him. Ibn Sayyid replied: "It comes to me in the form of both truth and falsehood." Whereupon Muhammad said, "You are confused with regard to the matter." He meant that prophecy is characterized by truthfulness and can in no way be affected by falsehood. For prophecy is a direct and independent contact of the essence of the prophet with the most high group (the angels). Because of his weakness, the soothsayer depends on the help of foreign notions (*tasawwur*). (These foreign notions) enter into his perception and mingle with the perception toward which he aspires. He thus becomes confused by them. So it is that falsehood makes its way to his (door). It is, therefore, impossible (for his activity) to be prophecy.

We have stated that the highest rank of soothsaying is the state in which rhymed prose is used, because the support derived from rhymed prose is lighter than any other support, such as that derived from vision or hearing. Such light support (as is given by the use of rhymed prose) points to nearness of contact and perception and to a certain freedom from weakness.

Some people assume that soothsaying of this type stopped with the time of prophecy, as the result of the stoning of the devils with meteors, in view of the prophetic mission, which occurred in order to keep them away from heavenly information, as is mentioned in the Qur'in, [295](#) The soothsayers had received heavenly information from the devils, and now, from the day on which the devils were stoned, soothsaying ceased to exist. There is no proof for this contention. Soothsayers obtain knowledge from their own souls as well as from the devils, as

we have established. Furthermore, the verse of the Qur'an shows only that the devils were kept away from one particular kind of heavenly information, namely, that connected with the (prophetic) mission. They were not kept from other information. Also, soothsaying stopped only in view of the existence of prophecy. It may afterwards have returned to its former state. This would seem to be an obvious (fact), because all such (supernatural) perceptions are in abeyance at the time of prophecy, just as stars and lamps lose their brilliance beside the sun. Prophecy is the greatest light, in whose presence every other light is obscured or disappears.

Some philosophers think that (soothsaying) exists only in view of prophecy, and then stops.²⁹⁶ This happens at each occurrence of prophecy. They argue that the existence of prophecy needs a particular constellation that makes it necessary. The perfection of that constellation coincides with the perfection of the particular prophecy to which the constellation has reference. As long as the constellation is imperfect, it requires the existence of some imperfect related element. This is the meaning of "soothsayer," as we have established it. The perfect state of the constellation is preceded by an imperfect one, which requires the existence of one or more soothsayers. When the constellation reaches perfection, the prophet's existence reaches perfection. The constellations that point to the existence of a(n inferior) element such as soothsaying have passed by, and soothsaying ceases to exist.²⁹⁷ This (theory) is based upon the assumption that any part of a particular constellation must exercise part of the influence that the constellation (in its perfect state) would exercise. This assumption is not fully acceptable. It may be that a particular constellation exercises its influence only when it has taken on its proper form. If some aspects are missing, it may exercise no influence whatever, not even, as they say, a restricted influence.

Soothsayers who are a prophet's contemporaries are aware of the prophet's truthfulness and the significance of his miracle, since they derive some intuitive²⁹⁸ experience from prophecy, such as every human being derives from sleep. Intellectual awareness of this relationship is stronger in the soothsayer than in the sleeper. What prevents soothsayers from acknowledging the truthfulness of the prophet, and causes them to deny (him), is simply their misguided desire to be prophets themselves. This leads them to spiteful opposition. This happened to Umayyah b. Abi s-Salt, who desired to be a prophet. It also happened to Ibn Sayyid, Musaylimah, and others.²⁹⁹ When faith gains the upper hand and they stop aspiring to become prophets themselves, they make the most faithful of believers. This happened to Tulayyah al-Asadi and Qarib b. al-Aswad.³⁰⁰ The actions of these two men in the Muslim conquest show that they were faithful believers.

(Dream visions)

Real dream vision is an awareness on the part of the rational soul in its spiritual essence, of glimpse(s) of the forms of events. While the soul is spiritual, the forms of events have actual existence in it, as is the case with all spiritual essences. The soul becomes spiritual through freeing itself from bodily matters and corporeal perceptions. This happens to the soul (in the form of) glimpse(s) through the agency of sleep, as we shall mention. Through (these glimpses) (the soul) gains the knowledge of future events that it desires and by means of which it regains the perceptions that (properly) belong to it. When this process is weak and indistinct, the soul applies to it allegory and imaginary pictures, in order to gain (the desired knowledge). Such allegory, then, necessitates interpretation.³⁰¹ When, on the other hand, this process is strong, it can dispense with allegory. Then, no interpretation is necessary, because (the process) is then free from imaginary pictures.

The occurrence, in the soul, of such glimpse(s) is caused by the fact that the soul is potentially a spiritual essence, supplemented by the body and the perceptions of (the body). Its essence, thus, eventually becomes pure intellection, and its existence becomes perfect in actuality. The soul, now, is a spiritual essence having perception without the help of any of the bodily organs. However, among the *spiritualia*, it is of a lower species than the angels, who inhabit the highest stage, and who never had to supplement their essences with corporeal perceptions or anything else. The preparedness (for spirituality) comes to (the soul) as long as it is in the body. There is a special kind (of preparedness), such as saints have, and there is a general kind common to all human beings. This is what "dream vision" means.

In the case of the prophets, this preparedness is a preparedness to exchange humanity for pure angelicity, which is the highest rank of *spiritualia*. It expresses itself repeatedly during revelations. It exists when (the prophet) returns to the level of corporeal perceptions. Whatever perception (the prophet) has at that moment is clearly similar to what happens in sleep, even though sleep is much inferior to (revelation).

Because of this similarity, the Lawgiver (Muhammad) defined dream vision as being the forty-sixth - or, according to other recensions, the forty-third, or the seventieth-part of prophecy.³⁰² None of these (fractions) is meant to be taken literally. They are to indicate the great degree of difference between the various stages (of supernatural perception). This is shown by the reference to "seventy" in one of the recensions. The number "seventy" is used by the Arabs to express (the idea of) a large number.

The reference to "forty-six" has been explained by some scholars as follows. In its beginning, the revelation took the form of dream visions for six months, that is, for half a year. The whole duration of (Muhammad's) prophecy in Mecca and Medina was twenty-three years. Half a year, thus, is one forty-sixth (of the whole duration of prophecy). This theory cannot be verified. The given (figures) apply only to Muhammad. How can we know whether they also applied to other prophets? Moreover, this (theory) describes the relationship of prophecy to dream vision in point of time only, and does not consider the true character of dream visions in relation to the true character of prophecy. If our previous remarks were clear, it will be realized that the fraction refers to the relationship between the primary preparedness general to all mankind, and the close preparedness limited to the (prophets) and natural to them.

The remote preparedness is commonly found among human beings. However, there are many obstacles and hindrances that prevent man from translating it into actuality. One of the greatest hindrances is the external senses. God, therefore, created man in such a way that the veil of the senses could be lifted through sleep, which is a natural function of man. When that veil is lifted, the soul is ready to learn the things it desires to know in the world of Truth (*haqq*). At times, it catches a glimpse of what it seeks. Therefore, the Lawgiver (Muhammad) classified dream visions among "the bearers of glad tidings" (*mubashshirat*). He said, "Nothing remains of prophecy except the bearers of glad tidings." Asked what they were, he said: "A good dream vision, beheld by - or shown to - a good man."³⁰³

The reason why the veil of the senses is lifted in sleep is as follows.³⁰⁴ The perceptions and actions of the rational soul are the result of the corporeal animal spirit. This spirit is a fine vapor which is concentrated in the left cavity of the heart, as stated in the anatomical works of Galen and others.³⁰⁵ It spreads with the blood in the veins and arteries, and makes sensual perception, motion, and all the other corporeal actions possible. Its finest part goes up to the brain. There, it is tempered

by the coldness of (the brain), and it effects the actions of the powers located in the cavities of the brain. The rational soul perceives and acts only by means of that vaporous spirit. It is connected with it. (This connection is) the result of the wisdom of creation which requires that nothing fine can influence anything coarse. Of all the corporeal matters, only the animal spirit is fine. Therefore, it is receptive to the influence of the essence, which differs from it only in respect of corporeality, that is, the rational soul. Thus, through the medium of (the animal spirit), the influence of the rational soul reaches the body.

We have stated before [306](#) that the perception of the rational soul is of two kinds. There is an external perception through the five senses, and an inward perception through the cerebral powers. All these perceptions divert the rational soul from the perception for which [307](#) it is prepared by nature, (namely, that) of the essences of the *spiritualia*, which are higher than it.

Since the external senses are corporeal, they are subject to weakness and lassitude as the result of exertion and fatigue, and to spiritual exhaustion through too much activity. Therefore, God gave them the desire to rest, so that perfect perception may be renewed afterwards. Such (rest) is accomplished by the retirement of the animal spirit from all the external senses and its return to the inward sense. This process is supported by the cold that covers the body during the night. Under the influence of the cold of the night, the natural heat repairs to the innermost recesses of the body and turns from its exterior to the interior. It thus guides its vehicle, the animal spirit, into the interior of the body. This is the reason why human beings, as a rule, sleep only at night.

The spirit, thus, withdraws from the external senses and returns to the inward powers. The preoccupations and hindrances of sensual perception lessen their hold over the soul, and it now returns to the forms that exist in the power of memory. Then, through a process of synthesis and analysis, (these forms) are shaped into imaginary pictures. Most of these pictures are customary ones, because (the soul) has (only) shortly before withdrawn from the conventional objects of sensual perception. It now transmits them to the common sense, which combines all the five external senses, to be perceived in the manner of (those) five senses. Frequently, however, the soul turns to its spiritual essence in concert with the inward powers. It then accomplishes the spiritual kind of perception for which it is fitted by nature. It takes up some of the forms of things that have become inherent in its essence at that time. Imagination seizes on those perceived forms, and pictures them in the customary molds either realistically or allegorically. Pictured allegorically, they require interpretation. The synthetic and analytic activity which (the soul) applies to the forms in the power of memory, before it perceives its share of glimpses (of the supernatural), is (what is called in the Qur'an) "confused dreams."[308](#)

According to (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*, the Prophet said, "There are three kinds of dream visions. There are dream visions from God, dream visions from the angels, and dream visions from Satan."[309](#) This threefold division agrees with our preceding statement. Clear dream visions are from God. Allegorical dream visions, which call for interpretation, are from the angels. And "confused dreams" are from Satan, because they are altogether futile, as Satan is the source of futility.

This is what "dream vision" really is, and how it is caused and encouraged by sleep. It is a particular quality of the human soul common to all mankind. Nobody is free from it. Every human being has, more than once, seen something in his sleep that turned out to be true when he awakened. He knows for certain that the soul must necessarily have supernatural perception in sleep. If this is possible in the realm of sleep, it is not impossible in other conditions, because the perceiving

essence is one and its qualities are always present. God guides toward the truth.

Dream words

Note: Most of the (afore-mentioned supernatural perception by means of dream visions) occurs to human beings unintentionally and without their having power over it. The soul occupies itself with a thing. As a result, it obtains that glimpse (of the supernatural) while it is asleep, and it sees that thing. It does not plan it that way.

In the *Ghayah*³¹⁰ and other books by practitioners of magic, reference is made to words that should be mentioned on falling asleep so as to cause the dream vision to be about the things one desires. These words are called by (the magicians) "dream words" (*al-halumah*). In the *Ghayah*, Maslamah mentioned a dream word that he called "the dream word of the perfect nature." It consists of saying, upon falling asleep and after obtaining freedom of the inner senses and finding one's way clear (for supernatural perception), the following non-Arabic words: *tamaghis ba'dan yaswadda waghads nawfana ghadis*.³¹¹ The person should then mention what he wants, and the thing he asks for will be shown to him in his sleep.

A man is said to have done this after he had eaten but little and done *dhikr* exercises³¹² for several nights. A person appeared to him and said, "I am your perfect nature." A question was put to that person, and he gave the man the information he desired.

With the help of these words, I have myself had remarkable dream visions, through which I learned things about myself that I wanted to know. However, (the existence of such dream words) is no proof that the intention to have a dream vision can produce it. The dream words produce a preparedness in the soul for the dream vision. If that preparedness is a strong one, (the soul)^{312a} will be more likely to obtain that for which it is prepared. A person may arrange for whatever preparedness he likes, but that is no assurance that the thing for which preparations have been made will actually happen. The power to prepare for a thing is not the same as power over the thing (itself). This should be known and considered in similar cases. God "is wise and knowing."³¹³

Other types of divination

In the human species we find individuals who foretell things before they take place. They have a special natural qualification for it. Through that qualification, they are distinguished from all other human beings. They do not have recourse to a craft for their predictions, nor do they get them with the help of astral influences or anything else. Their forecasts are the necessary result of their natural disposition. Among such people are diviners ('*arraf*); men who gaze into transparent bodies such as mirrors or bowls of water; men who examine the hearts, livers, and bones of animals; men who draw auguries from birds and wild animals; and men who cast pebbles, grains of wheat, or (date) pits.³¹⁴ All these things are found among mankind; no one can deny them or be ignorant of them. Statements concerning supernatural things are also placed upon the tongues of the insane, who are thus able to give information about (supernatural things). Sleeping and dying persons, being about to die or to fall asleep, likewise speak about supernatural things. Men who have followed Sufi training have, as is well known, as acts of divine grace, obtained perceptions of supernatural things.

The different kinds of supernatural perception

We are now going to discuss all these ways of (supernatural) perception. We are going to start with soothsaying. Then, we shall discuss all the other kinds, one by one. Before that, however, we want to discuss how the human soul, as it exists in all the types of human beings mentioned, is prepared for supernatural perception. This is as follows.

(The soul) is a spiritual essence which, as we have mentioned before, is the only spiritual being that exists potentially. It exchanges potentiality for actuality with the help of the body and (bodily) conditions. This is something everyone can attain to.

Now, everything that exists potentially has matter and form. The form of the soul, through which its existence materializes, is identical with perception and intellection. The soul at first exists potentially. It is prepared for perception and for the reception of the universal and particular forms. Its growth and actual existence then materialize through keeping company with the body, through the things to which (the body) accustoms (the soul) when (the former's) sensual perceptions are foisted upon (the latter), and through the universal ideas which (the soul itself) abstracts from the sensual perceptions of the body. It intellectualizes the forms time after time, until perception and intellection become the actual form of the soul. Thus, its essence materializes. The soul, then, is like matter, and, through perception, the forms come to it one after the other in an uninterrupted sequence.

This is why we find that a child in the earliest stages of his growth is unable to achieve the perception which comes to the soul from its essence, either in his sleep or through removal (of the veil of sense perception), [315](#) or anything else. For the form of the soul, which is its very essence, namely, perception and intellection, has not yet materialized (in the child). Nor has the power of the soul to abstract the universals materialized. Later on, when the essence of (the soul) has materialized in actuality, the soul has two kinds of perception, as long as it remains in the body: one through the organs of the body, for which the soul is enabled by the corporeal perceptions, and the other through its own essence, without any intermediary. The soul is prevented [316](#) from (the latter kind of perception) by its immersion in the body and the senses, and the preoccupations of (body and senses). By means of corporeal perception, for which the senses were originally created, they always draw the soul to the external. Frequently, however, the soul plunges from the external into the internal. Then, the veil of the body is lifted for a moment, either by means of a quality that belongs to every human being, such as sleep, or by means of a quality that is found only in certain human beings, such as soothsaying or casting (of pebbles, etc.), or by means of exercises such as those practiced by (certain) Sufis who practice the removal (of the veil of sense perception). At such moments, the soul turns to the essences of the highest group (the angels), which are higher than itself. (This is possible) because in (the order of) existence the stages of the soul and the angels are connected with each other, as we established earlier. [317](#) These essences are spiritual. They are pure perception and intellects in action. They contain the forms and realities of the *existentia*, as was (just) mentioned. Something of those forms is then disclosed in (the soul). It derives some knowledge from them. Frequently, it transmits the perceived forms to the imagination which, in turn, puts them into the customary molds. (The soul,) then, has recourse to sensual perception to explain the things it has perceived, either in their abstract form or in the molds into which (they were put by the imagination). In this way it gives information about them. This is how the preparedness of the soul for supernatural perception must be explained.

Let us now return to the explanation we promised, of the various kinds (of supernatural perception). Persons who gaze into transparent bodies, such as mirrors, bowls, or water, and (examine) the hearts, livers, and bones of animals, as well as those who cast pebbles and (date) pits, all belong to the class of soothsayers. Only, they are constitutionally less well fitted for supernatural perception than soothsayers. The soothsayer does not need to make much of an effort in order to lift the veil of sensual perception. They, however, expend much effort to concentrate all sensual perception in one particular sense, the noblest one, which is vision. It is applied exclusively to whatever plain visual object has been (selected for concentration), until the perception about which information is to be given appears. It is often thought that the place where those (who gaze into mirrors) see something, is the surface of the mirror. This is not so. They continue gazing at the surface of the mirror until it (the surface) disappears. Between their eyes and the mirror appears a veil like a white cloud. In it, forms are pictured, and (these pictures) are the objects they perceive. This gives them the facts of a negative or positive character they wanted to obtain, and they pass on (these facts) as they perceived them. Neither the mirror nor the forms perceived in it are now present to them. A different kind of perception originates in them in (that state). It is a psychic one that has nothing to do with vision. Through it, objects of psychic perception take on shape (for observation) by sensual perception, as is known. Something similar happens to those who examine the hearts and livers of animals, and to those who gaze into water, bowls, and similar things.

Among these people we have observed persons who keep their senses occupied only by means of incense, as well as incantations, in order to be prepared (for supernatural perception). Then, they tell what they have perceived. They think that they see the forms take on concrete shapes in the air, telling them what they want to know in the form of pictures and allusions. These persons are less remote from sensual perception than the first group. The world is full of remarkable things.

Augury (zajr) is talk about supernatural things which originates in some people when a bird or animal appears, and they reflect about it after it has gone. It is a power in the soul that calls for sagacity and the ability to think about (the things of interest) which augurs see or hear. As we mentioned earlier, [318](#) the power of imagination is strong in augurs, and they exert that power in their researches, while depending on the help given by things they have seen or heard. This gives them some supernatural perception. The power of imagination acts here as it does in sleepers. When the senses are asleep, (the power of imagination) intervenes among the things seen in the waking state, and combines them with the products of its own thinking. Thus, the power of imagination brings about vision.

In the insane, the rational soul is but weakly connected with the body, because the humors, as a rule, are corrupt and have a weak animal spirit. Therefore, the soul belonging to (the body of an insane person) is not deeply immersed in the senses. The painful disease of deficiency that affects it keeps it too much occupied. Frequently, it was pushed into attaching itself to (the insane) by some other Satanic spirituality, which clings to them and which (the soul) itself is too weak to keep away. The insane thus become possessed. [318a](#) When they have become possessed in this manner, either because of the corruption of their constitution as the result of the essential corruption of their soul, or because of the onslaught the Satanic souls make upon them when they are attached to (their bodies), they are totally removed from sensual perception. They perceive a glimpse of the world of their soul. (Their soul) receives the impress of forms which, in turn, are transformed by the imagination. In this condition, they frequently speak without wanting to speak.

(Supernatural) perception in all these (groups) contains truth and falsehood

mixed together. For although they may achieve the loss of sensual perception, it is only with the help of foreign notions (*tasawwur*) that they achieve contact (with the supernatural), as we have established. This leads to untruthfulness, (which is to be found) in these (ways of supernatural) perception.

The diviners ('arraf) somehow enjoy this kind of perception, but they do not have the same contact (with the supernatural). They concentrate their thinking upon the matter in which they are interested and apply guesses and hypotheses to it. They base themselves upon an unfounded assumption as to what basically constitutes contact with, and perception of, (the supernatural). They claim acquaintance with the supernatural, but in reality (their procedure) has nothing to do with it.

This is the manner in which such (supernatural knowledge) is obtained. Al-Mas'udi discussed the subject in his *Muruj adh-dhahab*.³¹⁹ He did not hit upon the right explanation. It is evident from his discussion that he was not firmly grounded in the various kinds of (pertinent) knowledge. He merely reports what he learned from people experienced in the subject, and from others.

All the kinds of (supernatural) perception mentioned are found in man. The Arabs used to repair to soothsayers in order to learn about forthcoming events. They consulted them in their quarrels, to learn the truth by means of supernatural perception. Literature contains much information about this matter. In pre-Islamic times, Shiqq, of the tribe of Anmar b. Nizar, and Satih, of the tribe of Mazin b.

Ghassan,³²⁰ were famous (soothsayers) (The latter) used to fold up like a garment, as he had no bones save for his skull.

A famous story is their interpretation of the dream vision of Rabi'ah b. Nasr, in which they informed him that the Abyssinians would take possession of the Yemen, that the Mudar would rule after them, and that the Muhammadan prophecy would make its appearance among the Quraysh.³²¹ Another famous story is that of the dream vision of the Mobedhan.³²² Satih interpreted it when the Persian emperor (Khosraw) sent 'Abd-al-Masih to him with (the dream). (On that occasion, Satih) informed him about the prophecy (of Muhammad) and the (future) destruction of the Persian realm. All this is well known.

There were also many diviners among the Arabs. They are mentioned by the Arabs in their poems. (One poet) said:

I said to the diviner of the Yamamah: Cure me,
For if you cure me, you are indeed a physician.³²³

Another poet said:

I promised to give the diviner of the Yamamah whatever
he would ask me for,
And (I promised the same) to the diviner of Najd, if they
would cure me (of my love).
But they said: Let God cure you. By God, we have no
Power over (the disease) that you carry around with you
in your body³²⁴

The "diviner of the Yamamah" is Riyah b. 'Ijlah,³²⁵ and the "diviner of Najd" is al-Abraq al-Asadi.

Some people have another way of supernatural perception. It occurs in the

stage of transition from waking to sleeping, and is in (the form of unconsciously) speaking about the thing one wants to know and thereby obtaining supernatural knowledge of the matter as desired. This happens only during the transition from waking to sleeping, when one has lost the power to control one's words. Such a person talks as if by innate compulsion. The most he can do is to hear and understand what (he says).

Words of a similar nature come from those who are about to be killed, at the moment when their heads are being severed from their trunks. We have been informed that certain criminal tyrants used to kill their prisoners in order to learn their own future from the words the prisoners would utter when they were about to be killed. It was unpleasant information they received from them.

In the *Ghayah*,³²⁶ Maslamah similarly mentioned that when a human being is placed in a barrel of sesame oil and kept in it for forty days, is fed with figs and nuts until his flesh is gone and only the arteries and sutures³²⁷ of the skull remain, and is then taken out of the oil and exposed to the drying action of the air, he will answer all special and general questions regarding the future that may be asked. This is detestable sorcery. However, it shows what remarkable things exist in the world of man.

There are men who attempt to obtain supernatural perception through exercise. They attempt an artificial (state of) death through self-mortification.³²⁸ They kill all corporeal powers (in themselves), and wipe out all influences of those powers that color the soul in various ways.³²⁹ This is achieved by concentrated thinking, and doing without food for long (periods). It is definitely known that when death descends upon the body, sensual perception and the veil it constitutes disappear, and the soul beholds its essence and its world. (These men) attempt to produce, artificially before death, the experience they will have after death, and to have their soul behold the supernatural.

Other such people are the men who train themselves in sorcery. They train themselves in these things, in order to be able to behold the supernatural and to be active in the various worlds. Most such live in the intemperate zones of the north and the south, especially in India, where they are called yogis. They possess a large literature on how such exercises are to be done. The stories about them in this connection are remarkable.

The Sufi training is a religious one. It is free from any such reprehensible intentions. The Sufis aspire to total concentration upon God and upon the approach to Him, in order to obtain the mystical experiences³³⁰ of gnosis and Divine oneness. In addition to their training in concentration and hunger, the Sufis feed on *dhikr* exercises³³¹ by which their devotion to that training can fully materialize. When the soul is reared on *dhikr* exercises, it comes closer to the gnosis of God, whereas, without it, it comes to be a Satanic one.

Whatever supernatural knowledge or activity is achieved by the Sufis is accidental, and was not originally intended. Had it been intentional, the devotion of the Sufis (who intended to have supernatural perception) would have been directed toward something other than God, namely, toward supernatural activity and vision. What a losing business that would have been! In reality, it would have been polytheism. A (Sufi) has said, "Whoever prefers gnosis for the sake of gnosis comes out for the second (stage of being)." Through their devotion, (Sufis) intend (to come near) the Master, and nothing else. If, meanwhile, some (supernatural perception) is obtained, it is accidental and unintentional. Many (Sufis) shun (supernatural perception) when it accidentally happens to them, and pay no attention to it.³³²

They want God only for the sake of His essence, and nothing else. It is well known that (supernatural perception) occurs among the (Sufis). They call their supernatural experiences and mind reading "physiognomy" (*firasah*) and "removal" (of the veil of sense perception, *kashf*). Their experiences of (supernatural) activity they call "acts of divine grace" (*karamah*). None of these things is unworthy of them. However, Professor Abu Ishaq al-Isfarayini and Abu Muhammad b. Abi Zayd al-Maliki,³³³ among others, disapproved of it, in order to avoid any risk of (prophetic) miracles becoming confused with something else. However, the speculative theologians rely on the "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*) as the distinguishing characteristic of the (prophetic) miracle. This is sufficient.

According to (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*, Muhammad said, "Among you, there are men who are spoken to, and 'Umar is one of them."³³⁴ The men around Muhammad, as is well known, had experiences of a sort that confirms the fact (that mystics and pious persons may have some sort of supernatural perception). For instance, there is the story of 'Umar saying, "O Sariyah, beware of the mountain!" Sariyah is Sariyah b. Zunaym. He was the general of a Muslim army in the 'Iraq during the conquest. He had gotten into a battle with the polytheists. He thought of withdrawing. Near him, there was a mountain toward which he was directing himself (and where the enemy was lying in ambush). This came (supernaturally) to 'Umar's attention while he was preaching from the pulpit in Medina. He called out to him: "O Sariyah, beware of the mountain." Sariyah heard it, there where he was (in faraway 'Iraq), and he also saw ('Umar) there in person. This story is well known.³³⁵

Something similar happened to Abu Bakr in connection with his last will, addressed to his daughter 'A'ishah. He had given her a certain amount of dates from his orchard, as a gift, and then, (when he was near death), he suggested to her that she harvest them, so that the (other) heirs would not get them. Then he said, "They are your two brothers and your two sisters." Whereupon 'A'ishah said, "There is Asma', but who is the other?" Abu Bakr replied, "I see that the child in Bint Kharijah's womb is a girl," and so it was. This is mentioned in the *Muwatta*' in the chapter on gifts that are not permitted.³³⁶

(The men around Muhammad) and the pious and exemplary men after them had many similar experiences. However, the Sufis say that such experiences are rare in the time of prophecy, because, in the presence of the prophet, the adept of mysticism cannot continue in his mystic state. They go so far as to say that the adept of mysticism who comes to Medina is deprived of his mystic state, so long as he remains there and until he leaves.

May God provide us with guidance, and may He lead us to the truth.

Among the adepts of mysticism are fools and imbeciles who are more like insane persons than like rational beings. Nonetheless, they deservedly attained stations of sainthood and the mystic states of the righteous. The persons with mystical experience who learn about them know that such is their condition, although they are not legally responsible. The information they give about the supernatural is remarkable. They are not bound by anything. They speak absolutely freely about it and tell remarkable things. When jurists see they are not legally responsible, they frequently deny that they have attained any mystical station, since sainthood can be obtained only through divine worship. This is an error. "God bestows His grace upon whomever He wants to."³³⁷ The attainment of sainthood is not restricted to (the correct performance of) divine worship, or anything else. When the human soul is firmly established as existent, God may single it out for whatever gifts of His He wants to give it. The rational souls of such people are not

nonexistent, nor are they corrupt, as is the case with the insane. They (merely) lack the intellect that is the basis of legal responsibility. (That intellect) is a special attribute of the soul. It means various kinds of knowledge that are necessary to man and that guide his speculative ability and teach him how to make a living and organize his home. One may say that if he knows how to make a living, he has no excuse left not to accept legal responsibility, so that he may prepare for his life after death. Now, a person who lacks that (special) attribute (of the soul called intellect) still does not lack the soul itself, and has not forgotten his reality. He has reality, though he lacks the intellect entailing legal responsibility, that is, the knowledge of how to make a living. This is not absurd. God does not select His servants for gnosis only on the basis of (the performance of) some legal duty.

If this is correct, it should be known that the state of these men is frequently confused with that of the insane, whose rational souls are corrupted and who belong to (the category of) animals. There are signs by which one can distinguish the two groups. One of them is that fools are found devoting themselves constantly to certain *dhikr* exercises and divine worship, though not in the way the religious law requires, since, as we have stated, they are not legally responsible. The insane, on the other hand, have no (particular) devotion whatever.

Another sign is that fools were created stupid, and were stupid from their earliest days. The insane, on the other hand, lose their minds after some portion of their life has passed, as the result of natural bodily accidents. When this happens to them and their rational souls become corrupt, they are lost.

A further sign is the great activity of fools among men. It may be good or bad. They do not have to have permission, because for them there is no legal responsibility. The insane, on the other hand, show no (such) activity.

The course of our discussion caused us to insert the preceding paragraph. God leads toward that which is correct.

Other alleged ways of supernatural perception

Some people think that there are ways of supernatural perception not involving remoteness from sensual perception. (Such) are the astrologers who believe in astrological indications, consequences of the positions of (stars) in the firmament, influences of (the stars) upon the elements, and results from the tempering of the natures of (the stars) when they look at each other,³³⁸ as well as effects of such tempers upon the air. Astrologers, (as a matter of fact,) have nothing to do with the supernatural. It is all guesswork and conjectures based upon (the assumed existence of) astral influence, and a resulting conditioning of the air. (Such guesswork) is accompanied by an additional measure of sagacity enabling scholars to determine the distribution (of astral influence) upon particular individuals in the world, as Ptolemy said. We shall explain the futility of astrology in the proper place, if God wills.³³⁹ If it were established (as a fact), it would, at best, be guessing and conjecturing. It has nothing whatever to do with (the supernatural perception) we have mentioned.

Geomancy

Other such people include certain men of the common people who, to discover the supernatural and know the future, invented a craft they called "sand writing" (geomancy)³⁴⁰ after the material one uses for it. This craft consists in forming combinations of dots in four "ranks." (The resulting combinations) differ in that the (four) ranks are made up of different or identical (arrangements) of even or

odd. This makes sixteen combinations. For if (all four ranks) hold evens or (all) odds, we have two combinations. If one rank only has an even, we have four combinations. If two ranks have an even, we have six combinations, and if three ranks have an even, we have four combinations. This makes altogether sixteen combinations.³⁴¹

The sand diviners have given different names to the different combinations and classified them as lucky or unlucky, as is done with the stars. For (the sixteen combinations), they have assumed (the existence of) sixteen "houses." They think that the "houses" are natural and that they correspond to the twelve signs of the zodiac and the four cardines. They have attributed to each combination a "house," lucky (or unlucky) influences, and significance with regard to one particular group (of people) in the world of the elements. (The sand diviners) have thus invented a discipline that runs parallel to astrology and the system of astrological judgments. However, the astrological judgments are based upon natural indications, as Ptolemy assumes. The ³⁴² indications of sand writing, on the other hand, are conventional.

Ptolemy discussed only nativities and conjunctions which, in his opinion, come within the influence of the stars and the positions of the spheres upon the world of the elements. Subsequent astrologers, however, discussed questions (*interrogationes*), in that they attempted to discover the innermost thoughts ^{342a} by attributing them to the various houses of the firmament and drawing conclusions concerning them, according to the judgments governing each particular astral house. They are those mentioned by Ptolemy.

It should be known that the innermost thoughts concern psychic knowledge, which does not belong to the world of the elements. They do not come within the influence of the stars or the positions of the spheres, nor do (the stars and the positions of the spheres) give any indications with regard to them. The branch of questions (*interrogationes*) has indeed been accepted in astrology as a way of making deductions from the stars and positions of the spheres. However, it is used where it is not natural for it to be used.

When the sand diviners came, they discontinued use of the stars and the positions of the spheres, because they found it difficult to establish the altitude of stars by means of instruments and to find the adjusted (positions of the) stars by means of calculations. Therefore, they invented their combinations of figures. They assumed that there were sixteen, according to the houses of the firmament and the cardines, and they specified that they were lucky, unlucky, or mixed, like the planets. They limited themselves to the sextile aspect. They made judgments in accordance with the combinations of figures, as is done in the interrogation (branch of astrology). In both cases, the use made (of the data) is not a natural one, as we stated before.

Many city dwellers who had no work, in order to make a living, ³⁴³ tried sand divination. They composed works teaching the foundation and principles of sand divination. This was done by az-Zanati ³⁴⁴ and others.

Some sand diviners attempt supernatural perception, in that they occupy their senses with study of the combinations of figures. They thus reach a state of preparedness, like those who are by nature fitted for preparedness, as we shall mention later on. These men are the noblest class of sand diviners.

In general, they assume that sand writing originated with the prophets of old. They frequently ascribe its invention to Daniel or Idris, ³⁴⁵ as is being done with all the crafts. They (also) frequently claim that (sand writing) is enjoined by the religious law. As a proof of this (contention of theirs), they quote the following

tradition of Muhammad: "There was a prophet who wrote, and whoever concurs with his writing this is it."³⁴⁶ However, this tradition contains no evidence for the claim that sand writing is enjoined by the religious law, as some people assume. The meaning of the tradition is: "There was a prophet who wrote," that is, the revelation came to him while he was writing. It is not absurd to assume that such was the custom of some prophets, for prophets differ in their ways of perceiving the revelation. God said: "We distinguished the messengers (by giving the ones pre-eminence) over the others."³⁴⁷ When some of them received the revelation, the angel spoke first to them, without any request or motive (on their part). Others had a human motive, resulting from contact with human affairs, in that their people asked them to explain some difficult problem, some obligation of duty, or the like. Therefore, they directed their devotions to the Divine, and in that way God revealed to them what they wanted to know. (Logical) classification here suggests the existence of another division. Revelation may come to a person who is not prepared for it in any way, as in the afore-mentioned instance, or it may come to a person who is prepared for it in some way. In the Israelite stories, it is reported that a prophet was prepared for the coming of the revelation by hearing sweet melodious voices.³⁴⁸ This report is not established as correct, but it is not improbable. God singles out His prophets and messengers for whatever (favors) He wishes. This³⁴⁹ was reported to us on the authority of a great Sufi, who attempts to attain remoteness from sensual perception by listening to music. By this means he becomes completely free for his (supernatural) perceptions, in the station he is in, which (it is true) is inferior to prophecy. "And there is nobody among us who does not have a known station."³⁵⁰

If this is established and if, as we have mentioned before, certain sand diviners attempt to remove (the veil of sense perception) by occupying their senses with the study of combinations of figures, they may attain intuitive supernatural revelation (*kashf*) through complete freedom from sense perception. They may exchange bodily perceptions for spiritual ones-both of which have been explained earlier. This is a kind of soothsaying, of the type of gazing at bones, water, and mirrors, and it distinguishes (these sand diviners) from those who restrict themselves to techniques that achieve supernatural perception by means of sagacity and conjecturing, but who do not relinquish corporeal perception and continue to wander in the realm of guesswork. Some prophets achieved preparedness for being addressed by the angel, in their prophetical station, by writing, exactly as people who are not prophets may achieve preparedness for spiritual perception and the relinquishment of human perception by the same means. In the case of (sand diviners), however, what they achieve is spiritual perception only, whereas prophets achieve an angelic perception by means of divine revelation.

The prophets have nothing to do with the stations of the sand diviners, whose perceptions are based on sagacity and conjecturing. They do not make it part of the religious law for any human being to speak about and discuss the supernatural. The statement in the tradition, "And whoever concurs with his writing - this is it,"³⁵¹ means: He is right, in view of the fact that the writing was supported by the revelation that came to that particular prophet, whose custom it was to have the revelation come to him while he was writing. Or, the tradition may be a compliment and indicate that the prophet had reached a high competence in the use of sand writing - without (implying) the existence of a connection between (revelation) and (sand writing) - because in this way the prophet was prepared for revelation, which, therefore, concurred with (the conclusions reached from sand writing). But were the prophet to take (those conclusions) from the writing alone, without the concurrence of revelation, they would not be right. This is the meaning of the tradition. And God

knows better.

The tradition does not indicate that sand writing is enjoined by religious law, nor that it is permissible to practice sand writing to obtain supernatural perception, as sand diviners in the cities do. Some of them may be inclined to this opinion, on the basis that what (any) prophet did is accepted law, and that sand writing, therefore, is enjoined by the religious law according to the principle, held by some, that the religious law of those who came before us is religious law for us. This does not apply in this (case). Law only results when it is enjoined by messengers upon the various nations. This (particular) tradition, however, indicates no (thing of the sort). It indicates only that the particular condition was that of one of the prophets, and it is possible that it was not enjoined as a religious law. Therefore, it would not be a religious law, neither one restricted to the people of (that particular prophet), nor one common to his people and to others. (The tradition) merely indicates that it is a condition that may occur in the instance of a particular prophet, without being generally applicable to mankind. This is all we wanted to make clear here. God gives the correct inspiration.

If, in their self-deception, (sand diviners) want to discover something supernatural, they take paper, or sand, or flour, and form dots in (four) lines [352](#) in accordance with the number of the four ranks. This is repeated four times. They thus obtain sixteen lines. They then deduct (some) dots in pairs. The remainder, for each line, whether it is even or odd, [353](#) is put into the rank to which it belongs according to order. This results in four combinations, which they arrange to form one continuous line. From them, they then form four other combinations through horizontal confrontation, by considering each rank, the corresponding combination next to it, and the evens or odds found in it. [354](#) These, then, make eight combinations, placed along one line. From each pair of combinations, they then form one combination (to be placed) underneath the (eight), by considering the evens or odds found in each rank of two combinations. Thus, we have four others under (the eight). From these four combinations, they then form two more combinations, which are likewise placed underneath (the four). From these two, they again form one more combination and place it underneath (the two). They then combine this fifteenth combination with the first one and thus form one more combination, which completes the sixteen. [355](#) Then, they evaluate the whole "writing" in a curious manner, as to the good luck or misfortune required by the various combinations, taking them as they stand, speculating on them, analyzing them, combining them, making deductions as to the various kinds of *existentia*, and so on.

This craft is prevalent in (all) civilized (regions). There exists a literature dealing with it. Outstanding ancient and modern personalities were famous for it. But it is obviously based on arbitrary notions and wishful thinking. The truth that should be present to one's mind is that the supernatural cannot be perceived by any craft at all. The only people who can acquire knowledge of the supernatural are those distinguished human beings who are fitted by nature to return from the world of sensual perception to the world of the spirit. The astrologers, therefore, called all people (able to perceive supernatural knowledge) "Venusians," with reference to Venus, because they assumed that the position of Venus in the nativities of these people indicates their ability to have supernatural perception.

If the person who takes up (sand) writing and similar (practices) is one of those distinguished beings, and if his study of dots, bones, and other things is intended to occupy his senses in order that his soul may return momentarily to the world of the *spiritualia*, then (sand writing) occupies the same position as casting

pebbles, examining the hearts of animals, and gazing into transparent mirrors, as we have mentioned.³⁵⁶ If this is not so, and if knowledge of the supernatural is sought by means of (sand writing), (then) it is meaningless in theory and practice.³⁵⁷ "God guides whomever He wants to guide."³⁵⁸

The sign by which persons who are disposed by nature to supernatural perceptions can be recognized, is this: When these persons devote themselves to acquiring a knowledge of things, they suffer a departure from their natural condition. They yawn and stretch, and show symptoms of remoteness from sensual perception. These (symptoms) vary in intensity according to the different degrees to which they possess this natural disposition. Those in whom this sign is not found have nothing to do with supernatural perception. They are merely trying to spread the falsehoods to which they are committed.

(*The hisab an-nim*)

There are (other) groups that also lay down certain rules for the discovery of the supernatural. Their rules do not belong to the first category, that which has to do with the spiritual perceptions of the soul, and also differ from speculations based upon astral influences, as assumed by Ptolemy, as well as from the guesswork and conjecturing with which the diviners work. They are nothing but mistakes which (the people who work with them) throw out like snares for weakminded people. I shall mention only as much of (the subject) as is mentioned in literature and has aroused the interest of distinguished men.

One such rule is the method called *hisab an-nim*.³⁵⁹ It is mentioned at the end of the *Politics* which is ascribed to Aristotle. It serves to predict the victor and the vanquished when kings go to war with each other. The procedure is to add up the numerical total of the letters in the name of each king, according to the system of calculation in which the letters of the alphabet in the sequence *alif, b, j . . .* are given the numerical values of units, tens, hundreds, and thousands from one to a thousand. When that has been done, each total should be divided by nine. The fractional remainder, in both cases, should be kept in mind. The two fractional remainders should be compared. If they are different and both are even or odd numbers, the (king) who has the smaller number will be the victor. If one of them is an even and the other an odd number, the (king) who has the larger number will be the victor. If the two numbers are equal and both even, the object of the inquiry will be the victor. And if both numbers are odd, the (king) who made the inquiry will be the victor. He (Aristotle) reported two verses about this procedure which have wide currency. They are:

I think, in the case of even or odd numbers (for both),
the smaller number will gain the upper hand.

When the numbers differ (as to being even or odd), the
larger number will be the victor.

The object of the inquiry will be victorious, if the num-
bers are both equal and even.

And if they are both equal and odd, the one who made
the inquiry will be victorious.

In order to find out what the fractional remainder will be after dividing by nine, a rule has been laid down by (the persons who practice the *hisab an-nim*), which is well known among them for that purpose. They take the letters that refer to the number one in the four ranks, *alif* for the units, *y* for the tens, *q* for the hundreds, and *sh* for the thousands³⁶⁰ - there is no number higher than one thousand that can be indicated by letters, because *sh* is the last letter of the alphabet(ical arrangement

for numerical purposes) - and arrange these four letters in sequence so as to form a word of four consonants: 'yash. Then, they do the same with the letters that designate the number two in the (first) three ranks, omitting the thousands because there are no letters of the alphabet left for them. These three letters are *b* for two, *k* for twenty and *r* for two hundred. Arranged in sequence, they form the word *bkr*. The same is done with the letters that designate the number three, resulting in the word *jls*, and so on through all the letters of the alphabet. This results in nine words, (nine being) the highest unit. The words are: 'yash, *bkr*, *jls*, *dmt*, *tenth*, *wshk*, *z'dh*, *hfz*, and *tdgh*, here arranged according to numerical sequence. Each of them has its own number, one for 'yash, two for *bkr*, three for *jls*, and so on to nine, which belongs to *tdgh*. If they want to divide a name by nine, they note in which of these nine words each letter of the name appears, substituting the number (of the word) for each letter (of the name), and adding together all the numbers thus obtained. If the sum is greater than nine, they (deduct nine or a multiple of nine from it and) take the fractional remainder. Otherwise, they take (the sum) as it is. The same thing is then done with the other name, and the two results are compared in the manner indicated above.

The secret of this rule is clear. The fractional remainder in a division by nine is the same in any given multiple of the powers of ten.³⁶¹ In a way, (the person making the calculation) just sums up the (unit) number in any given multiple of the powers of ten. The numbers in multiples of higher powers of ten, thus, are like the (corresponding) units. There is no distinction between two, twenty, two hundred, or two thousand.³⁶² Likewise, three, thirty, three hundred, and three thousand, all are three. The numbers are arranged in such a sequence as to indicate nothing but the (unit) number in any given multiple of the powers of ten. The letters that indicate (the same number in) the different powers of ten, the units, tens, hundreds, and thousands, are combined each in one word. The number of the corresponding word is valid for all the letters it contains, whether they are units, tens, hundreds, or thousands. Thus, the number of the word can be used for all the letters it contains, and all of them are added up, as we have said. This procedure has been common among people for a long time.

Some *shaykhs* we knew personally were of the opinion that the correct thing is to use nine other words in place of those (mentioned). They too represent consecutive (numbers). The procedure of dividing by nine is the same. These words are: 'rb, *ysqk*, *jzlt*, *mdws*, *hf*, *tkhdhn*, *ghsh*, *h'*, *tdz*, nine words in all, in numerical sequence. They contain three, four, or two letters, respectively. As one can see, they follow no coherent principle. But our *shaykhs* are transmitting them on the authority of the leading Maghribi scholar in astrology as well as letter magic, Abu l-'Abbas b. al-Banna'.³⁶³ They state on his authority that the use of these words for the division of the *hisab an-nim* is more correct than that of the words 'yqsh, (etc.). And God knows better how it may be.

All these ways of perceiving the supernatural are based upon no proof, and are not verifiable. Thorough scholars do not attribute the book that contains the *hisab an-nim* to Aristotle, because it contains opinions that cannot be verified or proven. This confirms (its spuriousness). The reader should investigate this matter critically, if he is a wellgrounded scholar.

(*The Za'irajah*)³⁶⁴

Another technical rule for alleged discovery of the supernatural is the *za'irajah* which is called "Za'irajah of the world." It is attributed to Abul-'Abbas as-Sabti,³⁶⁵ a very prominent Maghribi Sufi. He lived at the end of the sixth [twelfth]

century in Marrakech, during the rule of the Almohad ruler Ya'qub al-Mansur.³⁶⁶

The *za'irajah* is a remarkable technical procedure. Many distinguished people have shown great interest in using it for supernatural information, with the help of the well-known enigmatic operation that goes with it. For that (purpose), they have been desirous to solve its riddle and uncover its secret. The form of the *za'irajah*³⁶⁷ they use is a large circle that encloses other concentric circles for the spheres, the elements, the created things, the *spiritualia*, as well as other types of beings and sciences. Each circle is divided into sections, the areas of which represent the signs of the zodiac, or the elements, or other things. The lines dividing each section run to the center. They are called chords. Along each chord there are sets of letters that have a conventional (numerical value). Some are *zimam* ciphers, the same as those used for numerals by government officials and accountants in the contemporary Maghrib. Others are the ordinary *ghubar* ciphers.³⁶⁸ Inside the *za'irajah*, between the circles, are found the names of the sciences and of topics of the created (world).³⁶⁹ On the back of (the page containing) the circles, there is a table with many squares, fifty-five horizontally and one hundred and thirty-one vertically.³⁷⁰ Some of the squares are filled in, partly with numbers and partly with letters. Others are empty. The significance of these numbers in their positions is not known, nor are the rules known that govern the distribution of filled and empty squares. The *zd'irajah* is surrounded by verses in the meter *at-tawil* and rhyming on *-la*.³⁷¹ They describe the procedure which must be followed to discover the answer to a particular inquiry from the *zd'irajah*. However, since the verses express their meaning in riddles, they lack clarity. On one side of the *za'irajah* is one verse from a poem ascribed to one of the great Western forecasters of future events, the Sevillian scholar, Malik b. Wuhayb,³⁷² who lived during the reign of the Lamtunah (Almoravids). This is the verse:

A weighty question you have got. Keep, then, to yourself

Remarkable doubts which have been raised and which can be straightened out with diligence.

This is the verse commonly used in attempting to obtain the answer to a question with the help of this or other *za'irajahs*. To obtain the answer to a question, the question is written down in unconnected letters and the ascendant as of that day is determined, that is, one of the signs of the zodiac and the degree (of the sign on the horizon). Then, the *za'irajah* is consulted, and the particular chord of the *za'irajah* that borders the sign of the zodiac of that (particular) ascendant is chosen. This is followed from where it starts to the center, and then on to the circumference of the circle opposite the ascendant. One takes note of all the letters written upon that chord from beginning to end, and of all the numbers written in between. The latter are converted into letters according to their numerical values, transposing all units into tens and all tens into hundreds, and vice versa, as required by the rule governing use of (the *za'irajah*). The letters thus obtained are put alongside the letters of the question, and one also adds all the letters and numbers that are upon the chord bordering the sign, three signs from that of the ascendant. (In this case,) one follows it from where it starts to the center, but not beyond it to the circumference. The numbers are converted into letters as before, and added to the other letters. Then, the afore-mentioned verse by Malik b. Wuhayb, which is the basis and norm of the procedure, is written down in unconnected letters, and put aside. Then the number of the degree of the ascendant is multiplied by the "base" of the sign (of the zodiac). In the language (used here) the "base" is the sign's distance from the last rank, in contrast to the (meaning of) "base" in the language of astronomers [?], where it is the distance from the first rank.³⁷³ The degree is then

multiplied by another number, called the "greatest base" and "principal cycle." The result of these (multiplications) is entered in the squares of the table, following well-known rules and familiar procedures and (using a certain) number of "cycles." Some letters are taken out, others dropped, and the rest matched with what is found among the letters of the verse. Some are transferred to the letters of the question and (the letters) that are with them. Then, these letters are divided by certain numbers called "cycles," and from each "cycle" the letter at which the "cycle" ends, is removed. The (operation) is repeated with the (entire) number of "cycles" specified for that (purpose). The result, finally, is (a number of) unconnected letters which are put together consecutively to form the words of a verse of the same meter and rhyme as the aforementioned verse by Malik b. Wuhayb, which serves as the basis of the operation. We shall mention all this in the chapter on the sciences, in discussing how a *za'irajah* of this kind is used.

We have seen many distinguished people jump at (the opportunity for) supernatural discoveries through (the *za'irajah*) by means of operations of this kind. They think that correspondence (in form) between question and answer shows correspondence in actuality. This is not correct, because, as was mentioned

before,³⁷⁴ perception of the supernatural cannot be attained by means of any technique whatever. It is not impossible that there might be a correspondence in meaning, and a stylistic agreement, between question and answer, such that the answer comes out straight and in agreement with the question. It is not impossible that this could be achieved by just such a technique of separating the letters of the question and those of the chord, entering the numbers that come together as the result of the multiplication of fixed numbers in the table, taking out letters from the table and discarding others, operating repeatedly with a given number of "cycles," and matching the whole thing with the letters of the verse arranged in sequence. Intelligent persons may have discovered the relationships among these things, and, as a result, have obtained information about the unknown through them. Finding out relationships between things is the secret (means) whereby the soul obtains knowledge of the unknown from the known. It is a way to obtain such knowledge, especially suited to people of (mystical) training. This (training) gives the intellect added power for analogical reasoning and thinking, as has been explained before several times.³⁷⁵ It is in this sense that *za'irajahs* are usually ascribed to people of (mystical) training. This particular *za'irajah* is thus ascribed to as-Sabti. I have come across another one which is ascribed to Sahl b. 'Abdallah.³⁷⁶

It is, indeed, a remarkable operation and a wondrous procedure. As it appears to me, the secret of why the answer comes out in rhymed form is to be explained as the result of matching (the letters of the *za'irajah*) with the letters of the verse (by Malik b. Wuhayb). This is why the versified answer has the same meter and rhyme. This can be deduced from the fact that we have come across other similar operations in which the matching (of letters) with the verse was omitted. In those cases, the answer did not come out in the form of a verse. This will be shown when the matter is discussed in its proper place.³⁷⁷

Many people lack the understanding necessary for belief in the genuineness of the operation and its effectiveness in discovering the object of inquiry. They deny its soundness and believe that it is hocus-pocus. The practitioner, they believe, inserts the letters of a verse he (himself) composes as he wishes, from the letters of question and chord. He follows the described technique, which has no system or norm, and then he produces his verse, pretending that it was the result of an operation that followed an established procedure.

This reasoning is baseless and wrong. It is the result of such people's

inability to understand the relations between the *existentia* and things that (can be) known, and the differences between the various kinds of perception and intellect. Anyone who has some perception naturally denies (the existence of) anything he is not capable of perceiving. In order to refute this (denial of the genuineness of the operation of the *za'irajah*), it is sufficient for us (to refer to the fact) that the technique has been observed in operation and that it has been definitely and intelligently established that the operation follows a coherent procedure and sound norms. No one who has much intelligence and sagacity and has had contact with the (operation of the *za'irajah*) would object to this statement. Many an operation with numbers, which are the clearest things in the world, is difficult to grasp, because the (existing) relations are difficult to establish and intricate. This is the case to a much greater degree here, where the relations are so intricate and strange.

Let us mention a problem that will to some degree illustrate the point just stated.

Take a number of dirhams and place beside each dirham three *fals*. Then, take all the *fals* and buy a fowl with them. Then, buy fowls with all the dirhams for the same price that the first bird cost. How many fowls will you have bought?

The answer is nine. As you know, a dirham has twentyfour *Pals*, three *Pals* are one-eighth of a dirham, one is eight times one-eighth. Adding up one-eighth of each dirham buys one fowl. This means eight fowls (for the dirhams), as one is eight times one-eighth.³⁷⁸ Add another fowl, the one that was bought originally for the additional fats and that determined the price of the fowls bought with the dirhams. This makes nine. It is clear how the unknown answer was implied in the relations that existed between the numerical data indicated in the problem. This and similar (things) are at first suspected as belonging to the realm of the supernatural, which cannot be known.

It is thus obvious that it is from the relations existing among the data that one finds out the unknown from the known. This, however, applies only to events occurring in (the world of) existence or in science. Things of the future belong to the supernatural and cannot be known unless the causes for their happening are known and we have trustworthy information about it.

If this is clear, it follows that all the operations of the *za'irajah* serve merely to discover the words of the answer in the words of the question. As we have seen, it is a question of producing from a given arrangement of letters another arrangement of letters. The secret here lies in the existence of a relationship between the two (different arrangements of letters). Someone may be aware of it, whereas someone else may not be aware of it. Those who know the existing relationship can easily discover the answer with the help of the stated rules.

From the (conventional) meanings and the combinations of words, the answer may then also indicate a negative or positive (statement) regarding (the object of) the question. This, however, is on another level. It is not on the same level (as merely discovering the words of the answer). It implies a conformity of the words to the outside (world).³⁷⁹ Such knowledge cannot be acquired through those operations. It remains veiled to human beings.

God claims all His knowledge for Himself. "God knows and you do not know."³⁸⁰

Chapter II

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

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

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

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

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

2. The Arabs ⁶ 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 beyond (these bare necessities). 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.⁷

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-Arabs.

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" (*shawiyah*), 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 and their relatives, the Turkomans and the Slavs,⁸ for instance.

Those who make their living by raising camels move around more. They wander deeper into the desert, because the hilly ⁹ 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.¹⁰ (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 ¹¹ 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 Arabs. In the West, the nomadic Berbers and the Zanatah are their counterparts, and in the East, the Kurds, the Turkomans, and the Turks. The Arabs, however, make deeper excursions into the desert and are more rooted in desert life (than the other groups), 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 Arabs are a natural group which by necessity exists in civilization.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One."¹²

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

We ¹³ have mentioned that the Bedouins restrict themselves to the (bare) necessities in their conditions (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 and an outgrowth (of the necessities). 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 of the Bedouin. He aspires to (that goal) ¹⁴. 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 ¹⁵ 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. This proves that sedentary conditions are secondary to desert conditions and that they are the basis of them. ^{15a} This should be understood.

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* ('umran) than another.

It has thus become clear that the existence of Bedouins is prior to, and the basis of, the existence of towns and cities. Likewise, the existence of towns and cities results from luxury customs pertaining to luxury and ease, which are posterior to the customs that go with the bare necessities of life.

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

The [16](#) reason for it 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. Muhammad said: "Every infant is born in the natural state. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian." [17](#) 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 when customs (proper to evil) have been first to affect him.

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 colored 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 [18](#) 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. It has thus become clear that Bedouins are closer to being good than sedentary people. "God loves those who fear God." [19](#)

This is not contradicted by the statement of al-Hajjaj to Salamah b. al-Akwa', which is included among the traditions of al-Bukhari. When al-Hajjaj learned that Salamah was going to live in the desert, he asked him, "You have turned back and become an Arab?" Salamah replied, "No, but the Messenger of God permitted me to go (back) to the desert." [20](#)

It should be known that at the beginning of Islam, the inhabitants of Mecca were enjoined to emigrate, so as to be with the Prophet wherever he might settle, in order to help him and to aid him in his affairs and to guard him. The Arab Bedouins of the desert were not enjoined to emigrate, because the Meccans were possessed of a strong group feeling for the Prophet to aid and guard him, such as did not exist among the desert Arabs. The emigrants, therefore, used to express an aversion to "becoming Arabs," that is, (to becoming) inhabitants of the desert upon whom

emigration was not obligatory. According to the tradition of Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Muhammad said, when (Sa'd) was ill in Mecca: "O God, give success to the emigration of my companions and do not cause them to turn back." [21](#) That means, God should enable them to stay in Medina and not to have to leave it, so that they would not have to discontinue the emigration they had begun, and return. It is the same meaning as is implied in the expression "turning back" in connection with any enterprise.

It is (also) said that the (prohibition against "turning back") was restricted to the time before the conquest of Mecca, when there was a need for emigration because of the small number of Muslims. After the conquest, when the Muslims had become numerous and strong, and God had guaranteed His Prophet inviolability ('ismah), emigration was no longer necessary. Muhammad said: "There is no emigration after the conquest." [22](#) This has been interpreted as meaning that the injunction to emigrate was no longer valid for those who became Muslims after the conquest. It has also been interpreted (to mean) that emigration was no longer obligatory upon those who had become Muslims and had emigrated before the conquest. (At any rate,) all agree that emigration was no longer necessary after the Prophet's death, because the men around Muhammad had by then dispersed and spread in all directions. The only thing that remained was the merit of living in Medina, which constituted emigration.

Thus, al-Hajjaj's statement to Salamah, who went to live in the desert: "You have turned back and become an Arab?" is a reproach to Salamah for giving up his residence in Medina. It contains an allusion to the words of the aforementioned prayer of the Prophet: "Do not cause them to turn back." The words, "You have become an Arab?" are a reproach, as they imply that Salamah had become one of the Arabs who did not emigrate. In his reply, Salamah denied both insinuations. He said that the Prophet had permitted him to go to the desert. This was a special (permission) in Salamah's case, exactly as, for instance, the testimony of Khuzaymah [23](#) and Abu Burdah's [24](#) lamb were special to the cases of Khuzaymah and Abu Burdah. Or, (it may be) alHajjaj reproached Salamah only because he was giving up his residence in Medina, as he was aware that emigration was no longer necessary after the Prophet's death. Salamah's reply was that it was more proper and better to avail himself of the Prophet's permission, who had distinguished him by this special permission only because (the Prophet) had some motive known to him(self) when he gave it.

In any event, the story does not imply that censure of desert (life) is meant by the expression "to become an Arab." It is known that the legal obligation to emigrate served the purposes of aiding and guarding the Prophet. It did not have the purpose of censuring desert (life). Use of the expression "to become an Arab," to condemn non-fulfillment of the duty (of emigration), is no indication that "becoming an Arab" is something blameworthy. And God knows better.

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

The [25](#) 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 defense 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 them. 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 separate from the community. They are alone in the country and remote from militias. They have no walls and gates. Therefore, they provide their own defense 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 every faint barking and 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 an alarm stirs them. 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 (right) directions, watering places, and crossroads. The reason for this is the thing we have explained. At the base of it is the fact that 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. [25a](#) 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).

"God creates whatever He wishes."[26](#)

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.

'Umar forbade Sa'd (b. Abi Waqqas) to exercise such (arbitrary power) when Zuhrah b. Hawiyah took the spoils of al-Jalinus. The value of the spoils was 75,000 gold pieces. (Zuhrah) had followed al-Jalinus on the day of al-Qadisiyah, killed him, and taken his spoils. Sa'd took them away from him and said, "Why did you not wait for my permission to follow him?" He wrote to 'Umar and asked 'Umar for permission (to confiscate the spoils). But 'Umar replied, "Would you want to proceed against a man like Zuhrah, who already has borne so much of the brunt (of battle),²⁷ and while there still remains so much of the war for you (to finish)? Would you want to break his strength and morale?" Thus, 'Umar confirmed (Zuhrah) in possession of the spoils.²⁸

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.

For this (reason), 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 against the (statement just made) that the men around Muhammad 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 the Lawgiver (Muhammad), the restraining influence came from themselves, as a result of the encouragement and discouragement he gave

them in the Qur'an. It was not a result of technical instruction or scientific education. (The laws) were the laws and precepts of the religion, which 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 educated (disciplined) by the religious law are not educated (disciplined) by God." [30](#) (This statement expresses) 'Umar's desire that everyone should have his restraining influence in himself. It also expresses his certainty that the Lawgiver (Muhammad) 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.

It has thus become clear that 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 (their authority) 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. Therefore, Abu Muhammad b. Abi Zayd, [31](#) in his book on the laws governing teachers and students (*Ahkam al-mu'allimin wa-lmuta'allimin*), said: "The educator must not strike a boy more than three times (in one punishment) as an educational measure." [32](#) (Ibn Abi Zayd) reported this remark on the authority of Judge Shurayh. [33](#) Certain scholar(s) argued in favor of the procedure mentioned, by referring to the threefold choking mentioned in the tradition concerned with the beginning of revelation. [34](#) This, however, is a weak argument. (The tradition about the) choking is not suitable proof, because it has nothing to do with ordinary instruction. God "is wise and knowing." [35](#)

7. Only tribes held together by group feeling can live in the desert.

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

Evil is the quality that is closest to man when he fails to improve his customs and (when) religion is not used as the model to improve, him. The great mass of mankind is in that condition, with the exception of those to whom God gives success. Evil ³⁸ qualities in man are injustice and mutual aggression. He who casts his eye upon the property of his brother will lay his hand upon it to take it, unless there is a restraining influence to hold him back. The poet thus said:

Injustice is a human characteristic. If you find

A moral man, ³⁹ there is some reason why he is not unjust.

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

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

The ⁴¹ restraining influence among Bedouin tribes comes from their *shaykhs* and leaders. It results from the great respect and veneration they generally enjoy among the people. The hamlets of the Bedouins are defended against outside enemies by a tribal militia composed of noble youths of the tribe

who are known for their courage. Their defense and protection are successful only if they are a closely-knit group ⁴² of common descent. This strengthens their stamina and makes them feared, since everybody's affection for his family and his group is more important (than anything else). Compassion and affection for one's blood relations and relatives exist in human nature as something God put into the hearts of men. It makes for mutual support and aid, and increases the fear felt by the enemy.

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

Those who have no one of their own lineage (to care for) rarely feel affection for their fellows. If danger is in the air on the day of battle, such a one slinks away and seeks to save himself, because he is afraid of being left without support ⁴⁴ and dreads (that prospect). Such people, therefore, cannot live in the desert, because they would fall prey to any nation that might want to swallow them

up.

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

God gives success.

8. *Group feeling results only from (blood) relationship or something corresponding to it.*

(Respect for) blood [45](#) 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 [46](#)

Clients and allies belong in the same category. The affection everybody has for his clients and allies results from the feeling of shame that comes to a person when one of his neighbors, relatives, or a blood relation in any degree (of kinship) is humiliated. The reason for it is that a client(-master) relationship leads to close contact exactly, or approximately in the same way, as does common descent. It is in that sense that one must understand Muhammad's remark, "Learn as much of your pedigrees as is necessary to establish your ties of blood relationship." [47](#) It means that pedigrees are useful only in so far as they imply the close contact that is a consequence of blood ties and that eventually leads to mutual help and affection.

Anything beyond that is superfluous. [48](#) For a pedigree is something imaginary and devoid of reality. [49](#) Its usefulness consists only in the resulting connection and close contact. If the fact of (common descent) is obvious and clear, it evokes in man a natural affection, as we have said. If, however, its existence is known only from remote history, it moves the imagination but faintly. Its usefulness is gone, and preoccupation with it becomes gratuitous, a kind of game, and as such is not permissible. In this sense, one must understand the remark, "Genealogy is something that is of no use to know and that it does no harm not to know." [50](#) This means that when common descent is no longer clear and has become a matter of scientific knowledge, it can no longer move the imagination and is denied the affection caused by group feeling. It has become useless.

And God knows better.

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

This ⁵¹ is on account of the poor life, hard conditions, and bad habitats that are peculiar to the Arabs. They are the result of necessity that destined (these conditions) for (the Arabs), in as much as their subsistence depends on camels and camel breeding and pasturage. The camels are the cause of (the Arabs') savage life in the desert, since they feed on the shrubs of the desert and give birth (to their young ones) in the desert sands, as has been mentioned before.⁵² The desert is a place of hardship and starvation, but to them it has become familiar and accustomed. Generations of (Arabs) grew up in the desert. Eventually, they become 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 (do so or) give them up.⁵³ 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 Mudar tribes such as the Quraysh, the Kinanah, the Thaqif, the Banu Asad, the Hudhayl, and their Khuza'ah neighbors. 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 'Iraq, 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 Himyar and the Kahlan, such as the Lakhm, the Judham, the Ghassan, the Tayy, the Quda'ah, and the Iyad. Their lineages were mixed up, and their groups intermingled. It is known that people (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 ⁵⁴ was done only by (true) Arabs. 'Umar said: "Study genealogy, and be not like the Nabataeans of the Mesopotamian lowlands. When one of them is asked about his origin, he says: 'From such and such a village.'" ⁵⁵ 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 Qinnasrin, of Damascus, or of the 'Awisim (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, the group feeling was wiped out. But the (earlier situation) remained unchanged among the Bedouins.

God inherits the earth and whomever 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 (old) 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 has attached himself) 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 which result 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. If one studies the different opinions concerning the pedigree of the family of al-Mundhir [56](#) and others, the matter will become somewhat clearer.

The affair of the Bajilah and 'Arfajah b. Harthamah is an(other) illustration. When 'Umar appointed 'Arfajah their governor, (the Bajilah) asked ('Umar) to withdraw him, saying that he was *a nazif* [57](#) among them, that is, one who had come to them from outside and attached himself to them. They asked that he appoint Jarir (instead). 'Umar asked 'Arfajah about this, and he replied: "They are right, O Commander of the Faithful. I am from the Azd. I shed blood among my people, and joined (the Bajilah)." [58](#) This shows how 'Arfajah had come to mix with the Bajilah, had become of their skin, and was known as one having the same descent as they, to the extent that he could eventually become a candidate for leadership over them, (and would have) had someone not remembered the genealogical ramifications. Had they overlooked it and had (still) more time elapsed, (his foreign origin) would have been forgotten, and he would have been considered one of them in every respect.

This should be understood and pondered as one of God's ways with His creatures. Similar things occur frequently in our own times, and have always been frequent in former times. [59](#)

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

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

Now, a person who has become attached to people of a common descent usually does not share the group feeling that derives from their common descent. He is merely attached to them.⁶² The firmest connection he has with the group is as client and ally. This in no way guarantees him superiority over them. Assuming that he has developed close contact with them, that he has mixed with them, that the fact that he was originally merely attached to them has been forgotten, and that he has become one of their skin and is addressed as one having the same descent as they, how could he, or one of his forebears, have acquired leadership before that process had taken place, since leadership is transmitted in one particular branch that has been marked for superiority through group feeling? The fact that he was merely attached to the tribe was no doubt known at an earlier stage, and at that time prevented him (or rather, his forebears) from assuming leadership. Thus, it could not have been passed on by (a man) who was still merely attached (to the tribe). Leadership must of necessity be inherited from the person who is entitled to it, in accordance with the fact, which we have stated, that superiority results from group feeling.

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.

Such things are frequently found among people at this time. Thus, the Zanatah in general claim to be Arabs. The Awlad Rabab, who are known as the Hijazis and who belong to the Banu 'Amir, one of the branches of the Zughbah, claim that they belong to the Banu Sulaym and, in particular, to the Sharid, a branch of the Bani Sulayin. Their ancestor is said to have joined the Banu 'Amir as a carpenter who made biers. He mixed with them and developed a close contact with them. Finally, he became their leader. He was called by them al-Hijazi.

Similarly, the Banu 'Abd-al-Qawi b. al-'Abbas of the Tiljin claim to be descendants of al-'Abbas b. 'Abd-alMuttalib, because they want to have noble descent (from the family of the Prophet), and hold a mistaken opinion concerning the name of al-'Abbas b. 'Asiyah, the father of 'Abd-alQawi. It is not known that any 'Abbasid ever entered the Maghrib. From the beginning of the 'Abbasid dynasty and thereafter, the Maghrib was under the influence of the Idrisids and the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids), 'Alid enemies of the 'Abbasids. No 'Abbasid would have become attached to a Shi'ah.

Similarly, the Zayyanids, the 'Abd-al-Wadid rulers (of Tlemcen), claim to be descendants of al-Qasim b. Idris, basing their claim on the fact that their family is known to have descended from al-Qasim. In their own Zanitah dialect, they are called Ait al-Qasim⁶³ that is, Banu-l-Qasim. They claim that the Qasim (after whom they are named) was al-Qasim b. Idris, or al-Qasim b. Muhammad b. Idris. If that were true, all that can be said concerning that Qasim is that he fled his own realm and attached himself to (the Zanatah group of the 'Abd-al-Wad). How, then, could he have gained complete leadership over them in the desert? The story is an error resulting from the name of al-Qasim, which is very frequent among the Idrisids. (The Zayyanids), therefore, thought that their Qasim was an Idrisid. (But after all,) they hardly need so spurious a genealogy. They gained royal authority and power through their group feeling, not through claims to 'Alid, 'Abbasid, or other descent.

These things are invented by people to get into the good graces of rulers, through (sycophantic) behavior and through the opinions they express. Their (fabrications) eventually become so well known as to be irrefutable. I have heard that Yaghmrasin⁶⁴ b. Zayyan, the founder of the Zayyanid rule, when he was asked about (the alleged Idrisid descent of his family), denied it. He expressed himself in the Zanatah dialect as follows: "We gained worldly power and royal authority with our swords, not through (noble) family connections. The usefulness of (our royal authority for us)^{64a} in the next world depends on God." And he turned away from the person who, in this way, had hoped to get into his good graces.

Another example is the claim of the Banu Sa'd, *shaykhs* of the Banu Yazid of the Zughbah, to be descendants of (the Caliph) Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. Then, there is the claim of the Banu Salimah, *shaykhs* of the Banu Yatlaltin (Idlelten) of the Titjin, that they belong to the Sulaym, as well as the claim of the Dawawidah, *shaykhs* of the Riyah, that they are descendants of the Barmecides.⁶⁵ We also hear that the Banu Muhanna', amirs of the Tayy in the East, claim to be descendants of the Barmecides. There are many such examples. The fact that these groups are the leaders among their peoples speaks against their claims to such pedigrees, as we have mentioned. Their common descent (with their people) must be pure, and they must enjoy the strongest possible group feeling (in their own tribe, to have gained the leadership). Were this taken into consideration, errors in this matter would be avoided.

The connection of the Mahdi of the Almohads with the 'Alid family should not be considered a case of this type. The Mahdi did not belong to the leading family among his people, the Harghah. He became their leader after he had become famous for his knowledge and religion, and by virtue of the fact that the Masmudah tribe followed his call. Yet, he belonged to a (Harghah) family of medium rank.⁶⁶

God knows the unseen and the visible.

12. *Only those who share in the group feeling (of a group) can have a "house" and nobility in the basic sense and in reality, while others have it only in a metaphorical and figurative sense.*

This is because nobility and prestige are the result of (personal) qualities. A "house" [67](#) means that a man counts noble and famous men among his forebears. The fact that he is their progeny and descendant gives him great standing among his fellows, for his fellows respect the great standing and nobility that his ancestors acquired through their (personal) qualities.

With regard to their growth and propagation, human beings can be compared to minerals. Muhammad said: "Men are minerals. The best ones in pre-Islamic times are also the best ones in Islam, if they are understanding." [68](#) "Prestige" in its proper meaning refers to (family) descent.

We have explained that the advantage of (common) descent consists in the group feeling that derives from it and that leads to affection and mutual help. Wherever the group feeling is truly formidable and its soil kept pure, the advantage of a (common) descent is more evident (than elsewhere), and the (group feeling) is more effective. It is an additional advantage to have a number of noble ancestors. Thus, prestige and nobility become firmly grounded in those who share in the group feeling (of a tribe), because there exists (in them) the result of (common) descent. The nobility of a "house" is in direct proportion to the different degrees of group feeling, because (nobility) is the secret of (group feeling).

Isolated [69](#) inhabitants of cities can have a "house" only in a metaphorical sense. The assumption that they possess one is a specious claim. Seen in its proper light, prestige means to the inhabitants of cities that some of them count among their forefathers men who had good (personal) qualities and who mingled with good people, and (that, in addition, they) try to be as decent as possible. This is different from the real meaning of group feeling, as group feeling derives from (common) descent and a number of forefathers. The terms "prestige" and "house" are used metaphorically in this connection, because there exists in this case a number of successive ancestors who consistently performed good deeds. This is not true and unqualified prestige. [70](#)

A "house" possesses an original nobility through group feeling and (personal) qualities. Later on, the people (who have a "house") divest themselves of that nobility when group feeling disappears as the result of sedentary life, as mentioned before, [71](#) and they mingle with the common people. A certain delusion as to their former prestige remains in their souls and leads them to consider themselves members of the most noble houses. [72](#) They are, however, far from that (status), because their group feeling has completely disappeared. Many inhabitants of cities who had their origins in (noble) Arab or non-Arab "houses" share such delusions.

The Israelites are the most firmly misled in this delusion. They originally had one of the greatest "houses" in the world, first, because of the great number of prophets and messengers born among their ancestors, extending from Abraham to

Moses, the founder of their religious group and law, and next, because of their group feeling and the royal authority that God had promised and granted them by means of that group feeling. Then, they were divested of all that, and they suffered humiliation and indigence. They were destined to live as exiles on earth. For thousands of years, they knew only enslavement and unbelief [73](#) Still, the delusion of (nobility) has not left them. They can be found saying: "He is an Aaronite"; "He is a descendant of Joshua"; "He is one of Caleb's progeny"; "He is from the tribe of Judah." This in spite of the fact that their group feeling has disappeared and that for many long years they have been exposed to humiliation. [74](#) Many other inhabitants of cities who hold (noble) pedigrees but no longer share in any group feeling, are inclined to (utter) similar nonsense.

Abul-Walid b. Rushd (Averroes) erred in this respect. He mentioned prestige in the *Rhetoric*, one of the abridgments of the books of the first science. [75](#) "Prestige," he states, "belongs to people who are ancient settlers in a town." He did not consider the things we have just mentioned. I should like to know how long residence in a town can help (anyone to gain prestige), if he does not belong to a group that makes him feared and causes others to obey him. (Averroes,) in a way, considers prestige as depending exclusively on the number of forefathers. Yet, [76](#) rhetoric means to sway the opinions of those whose opinions count, that is, the men in command. It takes no notice of those who have no power. They cannot sway anyone's opinions, and their own opinions are not sought. The sedentary inhabitants of cities fall into that category. It is true that Averroes grew up in a generation (group) and a place where people had no experience of group feeling and were not familiar with the conditions governing it. Therefore, (Averroes) did not progress beyond his well-known (definition of) "house" and prestige as something depending merely on the number of one's ancestors, and did not refer to the reality of group feeling and its influence among men.

"God knows everything." [77](#)

13. *"House" and nobility come to clients and followers only through their masters and not through their own descent.*

This is because, as we have mentioned before, only those who share in a group feeling have basic and true nobility. When such people take people of another descent as followers, or when they take slaves⁷⁸ and clients into servitude, and enter into close contact with them, as we have said, the clients and followers share in the group feeling of their masters and take it on as if it were their own group feeling. By taking their special place within the group feeling, they participate to some extent in the (common) descent to which (that particular group feeling belongs). Muhammad thus said, "The client of people belongs to them, whether he is their client as a slave, or as a follower and ally."⁷⁹

His own descent and birth are of no help as regards the group feeling of (the master), since (that group feeling) has nothing to do with (his own) descent. The group feeling that belonged to (his own) family is lost, because its influence disappeared when he entered into close contact with that other family and lost contact with the men whose group feeling he had formerly shared. He thus becomes one of the others and takes his place among them. In the event a number of his ancestors also shared the group feeling of these people, he comes to enjoy among (these other people) a certain nobility and "house," in keeping with his position as their client and follower. However, he does not come to be as noble as they are, but remains inferior to them.

This is the case with clients of dynasties and with all servants. They acquire nobility by being firmly rooted in their client relationship, and by their service to their particular dynasty, and by having a large number of ancestors who had been under the protection of (that dynasty). One knows that the Turkish clients of the 'Abjisids and, before them, the Barmecides, as well as the Bane Nawbakht, thus achieved "house" and nobility and created glory and importance for themselves by being firmly rooted in their relationship to the ('Abjisid) dynasty. Ja'far b. Yahyi b. Khilid had the greatest possible "house" and nobility. This was the result of his position as a client of ar-Rashid and his family. It was not the result of his own (noble) descent among the Persians. The same is the case with clients and servants under any dynasty. They have "house" and prestige by being firmly rooted in their client relationship with a particular dynasty and by being its faithful followers. Their original descent disappears (and means nothing), if it is not that of (the dynasty). It remains under cover and is not considered in connection with their importance and glory. The thing that is considered is their position as clients and followers, because this accords with the secret of group feeling which (alone) produces "house" and nobility.

The nobility of (a client) is, in a way, derived from the nobility of his masters, and his "house" is derived from what (his masters) have built. His own descent and birth do not help him. His glory is built upon his relationship as client to a particular dynasty, and upon his close contact with it as a follower and product of its education. His own original descent may have implied close contact with some group feeling and dynasty. If that (close contact) is gone and the person in question has become a client and follower of another (dynasty), his original (descent) is no

longer of any use to him, because its group feeling has disappeared. The new (relationship) becomes useful to him, because (its group feeling) exists.

This applies to the Barmecides. It has been reported that they belonged to a Persian "house," the members of which had been guardians of the fire temples of (the Persians). When they became clients of the 'Abbasids, their original (descent) was not considered. Their nobility resulted from their position as clients and followers of the ('Abbasid) dynasty.

Everything else is unsupported and unrealistic delusions prompted [80](#) by undisciplined souls. (The facts of) existence confirm our remarks. "Most noble among you in God's (eyes) is he who fears God most." [81](#)

14. *Prestige lasts at best four generations in one lineage.*⁸²

It should be known that the world of the elements and all it contains comes into being and decays. This applies to both its essences and its conditions. Minerals, plants, all the animals including man, and the other created things come into being and decay, as one can see with one's own eyes. The same applies to the conditions that affect created things, and especially the conditions that affect man. Sciences grow up and then are wiped out. The same applies to crafts, and to similar things.

Prestige is an accident that affects human beings. It comes into being and decays inevitably. No human being exists who possesses an unbroken pedigree of nobility from Adam down to himself. The only exception was made for the Prophet, as a special act of divine grace to him, and as a measure designed to safeguard his true character.

Nobility originates in the state of being outside, as has been said.⁸³ That is, being outside of ⁸⁴ leadership and nobility and being in a vile, humble station, devoid of prestige. This means that all nobility and prestige is preceded by the non-existence of nobility and prestige, as is the case with every created thing.

It reaches its end in a single family within four successive generations. This is as follows: The builder of the glory (of the family) knows what it cost him to do the work, and he keeps the qualities that created his glory and made it last. The son who comes after him had personal contact with his father and thus learned those things from him. However, he is inferior in this respect to (his father), in as much as a person who learns things through study is inferior to a person who knows them from practical application. The third generation must be content with imitation and, in particular, with reliance upon tradition. This member is inferior to him of the second generation, in as much as a person who relies (blindly) upon tradition is inferior to a person who exercises independent judgment.⁸⁵

The fourth generation, then, is inferior to the preceding ones in every respect. This member has lost the qualities that preserved the edifice of their glory. He (actually) despises(those qualities). He imagines that the edifice was not built through application and effort. He thinks that it was something due his people from the very beginning by virtue of the mere fact of their (noble) descent, and not something that resulted from group (effort) and (individual) qualities. For he sees the great respect in which he is held by the people, but he does not know how that respect originated and what the reason for it was. He imagines that it is due to his descent and nothing else. He keeps away from those in whose group feeling he shares, thinking that he is better than they. He trusts that (they will obey him because) he was brought up to take their obedience for granted, and he does not know the qualities that made obedience necessary. Such qualities are humility (in dealing) with (such men) and respect for their feelings. Therefore, he considers them despicable, and they, in turn, revolt against him and despise him. They transfer (political) leadership from him and his direct lineage to some other related branch (of his tribe), in obedience to their group feeling, as we have stated. (They do so) after they have convinced themselves that the qualities of the (new leader) are

satisfactory to them. His family then grows, whereas the family of the original (leader) decays and the edifice of his "house" collapses.

This is the case with rulers who have royal authority. It also is the case with all the "houses" of tribes, of amirs, and of everybody else who shares in a group feeling, and then also with the "houses" among the urban population. When one "house" goes down, another one rises in (another group of) the same descent. "If He wants them to disappear, He causes them to do so, and brings forth a new creation. This is not difficult for God." [86](#)

The rule of four (generations) with respect to prestige usually holds true. It may happen that a "house" is wiped out, disappears, and collapses in fewer than four (generations), or it may continue unto the fifth and sixth (generations), though in a state of decline and decay. The four generations can be explained as the builder, the one who has personal contact with the builder, the one who relies on tradition, and the destroyer. There could not be fewer.

The fact that prestige lasts four generations is considered (in statements discussed) under the subject of praise and glorification. Muhammad said: "The noble son of the noble (father) of the noble (grandfather) of the noble (great-grandfather): Joseph, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham." [87](#) This indicates that (Joseph) had reached the limit in glory.

In the Torah, there is the following passage: "God, your Lord, is powerful [88](#) and jealous, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and the fourth (generations)." This shows that four generations in one lineage are the limit in extent of ancestral prestige.

The *Kitab al-Aghani* [89](#) reports, in the story of 'Uwayf al-Qawafi, that Khosraw asked an-Nu'man whether there was among the Arabs a tribe that was nobler than other tribes. And when the answer was yes, he asked: "In what respect (does such greater nobility show itself)?" An-Nu'man replied: "(In cases of men) with three successive ancestors who were leaders, and where the fourth generation, then, was perfect. The 'house' thus belongs to his tribe." [90](#) He looked for such people and found that the only ones that fulfilled the condition were the family of Hudhayfah b. Badr al-Fazari, the house of Qays; the family of Hajib b. Zurarah, the house of Tamim; the family of Dhu'l-Jaddayn, the house of Shayban; and the family of al-Ash'ath b. Qays, of the Kindah. [91](#) He assembled those clans and the families attached to them, and appointed impartial judges. Hudhayfah b. Badr stood up; then al-Ash'ath b. Qays, because of his relationship to an-Nu'man; then Bistam b. Qays of the Shayban; then flajib b. Zurarah; and then Qays b. 'Asim. They made long speeches. Khosraw (finally) said: "Each one of them is a chieftain who occupies his proper place."

Those "houses" were the ones that enjoyed the greatest reputation among the Arabs after the Hashimites. To them belonged also the house of the Banu ad-Dayyan, [92](#) of the Banu1-Harith b. Ka'b, the house of the Yemen.

All this shows that prestige lasts at best four generations. And God knows better.

15. *Savage nations are better able to achieve superiority than others.*

It should be known that since, as we have stated in the Third Prefatory Discussion,⁹³ desert life no doubt is the reason for bravery, savage groups are braver than others. They are, therefore, better able to achieve superiority and to take away the things that are in the hands of other nations. The situation of one and the same group changes, in this respect, with the change of time. Whenever people settle in the fertile plains and amass ⁹⁴ luxuries and become accustomed to a life of abundance and luxury, their bravery decreases to the degree that their wildness and desert habits decrease.

This is exemplified by dumb animals, such as gazelles, wild buffaloes (cows), and donkeys, that are domesticated. When they cease to be wild as the result of contact with human beings, and when they have a life of abundance, their vigor and violence undergo change. This affects even their movements and the beauty of their coat.⁹⁵ The same applies to savage human beings who become sociable and friendly.

The reason is that familiar customs determine human nature and character. Superiority comes to nations through enterprise and courage. The more firmly rooted in desert habits and the wilder a group is, the closer does it come to achieving superiority over others, if both (parties are otherwise) approximately equal in number, strength, and group (feeling) .

In this connection, one may compare the Mudar with the Ijimyar and the Kahlan before them, who preceded them in royal authority and in the life of luxury, and also with the Rabi'ah who settled in the fertile fields of the 'Iraq. The Mudar retained their desert habits, and the others embarked upon a life of abundance and great luxury before they did. Desert life prepared the Mudar most effectively for achieving superiority. They took away and appropriated what the other groups had in their hands.

The same was the case also with the Banu Tayy, the Banu 'Amir b. Sa'sa'ah, and the Banu Sulaym b. Mansur ⁹⁶ later on. They remained longer in the desert than the other Mudar and Yemenite tribes, and did not have any of their wealth. The desert habits thus preserved the power of their group feeling, and the habits of luxury did not wear it out. They thus eventually became the most powerful (group) among (the Arabs). Thus, wherever an Arab tribe leads a life of luxury and abundance, while another does not, the one holding fast to desert life the longer will be superior to and more powerful than the other, if both parties are (otherwise) equal in strength and number.

This is how God proceeds with His creatures.

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

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

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

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

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

The power of (a given group feeling) may (also) reach its peak when the ruling dynasty has not yet reached senility. (This stage) may coincide with the stage at which (the ruling dynasty) needs to have recourse to the people who represent the various group feelings (in order to master the situation). In such a case, the ruling dynasty incorporates (the people who enjoy the powerful group feeling) among its clients whom it uses for the execution of its various projects. This, then, means (the

formation of) another royal authority, inferior to that of the controlling royal authority. This was the case with the Turks under the 'Abbasids¹⁰³ with the Sinhajah and the Zanatah in their relation to the Kutamah, and with the Hamdanids in their relation to the (Fatimid) 'Alids and the 'Abbisids.

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

*17. Obstacles on the way toward royal authority
are luxury and the submergence of the tribe in a
life of prosperity.*

The reason for this is that, when a tribe has achieved a certain measure of superiority with the help of its group feeling, it gains control over a corresponding amount of wealth and comes to share prosperity and abundance with those who have been in possession of these things (for a long time). It shares in them to the degree of its power and usefulness to the ruling dynasty. If the ruling dynasty is so strong that no one would think of depriving it of its power or sharing (its power) with it, the tribe in question submits to its rule and is satisfied with whatever share in the dynasty's wealth and tax revenue it is permitted to enjoy. Hopes would not go so high as to (think of) the royal prerogatives or ways to obtain the (royal authority). Members of the tribe) are merely concerned with prosperity, gain, and a life of abundance. (They are satisfied) to lead an easy, restful life in the shadow of the ruling dynasty, and to adopt royal habits in building and dress, a matter they stress and in which they take more and more pride, the more luxuries and plenty they obtain, as well as all the other things that go with luxury and plenty.

As a result, the toughness of desert life is lost. Group feeling and courage weaken. Members of the tribe revel in the well-being that God has given them. Their children and offspring grow up too proud to look after themselves or to attend to their own needs. They have disdain also for all the other things that are necessary in connection with group feeling. This finally becomes a character trait and natural characteristic of theirs. Their group feeling and courage decrease in the next generations. Eventually, group feeling is altogether destroyed. They thus invite (their) own destruction. The greater their luxury and the easier the life they enjoy, the closer they are to extinction, not to mention (their lost chance of obtaining) royal authority. The things that go with luxury and submergence in a life of ease break the vigor of the group feeling, which alone produces superiority. When group feeling is destroyed, the tribe is no longer able to defend or protect itself, let alone press any claims. It will be swallowed up by other nations.

It has thus become clear that luxury is an obstacle on the way toward royal authority. "God gives His kingdom (royal authority) to whomever He wants to give it." [104](#)

18. *Meekness and docility to outsiders that may come to be found in a tribe are obstacles on the way toward royal authority.*

The [105](#) reason for this is that meekness and docility break the vigor and strength of group feeling. The (very fact) that people are meek and docile shows that (their group feeling) is lost. They do not become fond of meekness until they are 1, 256 too weak to defend themselves. Those who are too weak to defend themselves are all the more weak when it comes to withstanding their enemies and pressing their claims.

The Israelites are a good example. Moses urged them to go and become rulers of Syria. He informed them that God had made this their destiny. But the Israelites were too weak for that. They said: "There are giants in that country, and we shall not enter it until the giants have departed." [106](#) That is, until God has driven them out by manifesting His power, without the application of our group feeling, and that will be one of your miracles, O Moses. And when Moses urged them on, they persisted and became rebellious, and said: "Go you yourself and your Lord, and fight." [107](#)

The reason for (their attitude) was that they had become used to being too weak to offer opposition and to press claims. [108](#) (That is the meaning) required by the verse, and it must be interpreted in that manner. (This situation) was the result of the quality of docility and the longing to be subservient to the Egyptians, which the Israelites had acquired through many long years and which led eventually to the complete loss of their group feeling. In addition, they did not really believe what Moses told them, namely, that Syria would be theirs and that the Amalekites who were in Jericho would fall prey to them, by virtue of the divine decree that God had made in favor of the Israelites. They were unable to do (what they were asked to do) and felt too weak to do it. They realized that they were too weak to press any claims, because they had acquired the quality of meekness. They suspected the story their prophet told them and the command he gave them. For that, God punished them by obliging them to remain in the desert. They stayed in the desert between Syria and Egypt for forty years. They had no contact with civilization nor did they settle in any city, [109](#) as it is told in the Qur'an. [110](#) This was because of the harshness the Amalekites in Syria and the Copts in Egypt had practiced against them. Thus, they thought themselves too weak to oppose them. From the context and meaning of the verse, it is evident that (the verse) intends to refer to the implication of such a sojourn in the desert, namely, the disappearance of the generation whose character had been formed and whose group feeling had been destroyed by the humiliation, oppression, and force from which it had (just) escaped, and the eventual appearance in the desert of another powerful generation that knew neither laws nor oppression and did not have the stigma of meekness. Thus, a new group feeling could grow up (in the new generation), and that (new group feeling) enabled them to press their claims and to achieve superiority. This makes it evident that forty years is the shortest period in which one generation can disappear and a new generation can arise. Praised be the Wise, the Knowing One.

This shows most clearly what group feeling means. Group feeling produces

the ability to defend oneself, to offer opposition, to protect oneself, and to press one's claims. Whoever loses (his group feeling) is too weak to do any of these things.

The subject of imposts and taxes belongs in this discussion of the things that force meekness upon a tribe.

A tribe paying imposts did not do that until it became resigned to meek submission with respect to (paying them). Imposts and taxes are a sign of oppression and meekness which proud souls do not tolerate, unless they consider (the payment of imposts and taxes) easier than being killed and destroyed. In such a case, the group feeling (of a tribe) is too weak for its own defense and protection. People whose group feeling cannot defend them against oppression certainly cannot offer any opposition or press any claims. They have submitted to humble (meekness), and, as we have mentioned before, meekness is an obstacle.

(An illustration of this fact) is Muhammad's statement in the *Sahih*,¹¹¹ on the subject of plowing. When he saw a plowshare in one of the houses of the Ansar (in Medina), he said: "Such a thing never entered anyone's house save accompanied by humbleness." This is sound proof for (the contention) that payment of imposts makes humbleness necessary. In addition, the humbleness that is the result of paying imposts is accompanied by character qualities of cunning and deceit, because force rules (under such circumstances). According to the *Sahih*¹¹² the Messenger of God used to decry the payment of imposts. When he was asked about it, he said: "A man who has to pay imposts talks and lies. He promises, and breaks his promise." When one sees a tribe humiliated by the payment of imposts, one cannot hope that it will ever achieve royal authority.

This makes clear that it is erroneous to assume that the Zanatah in the Maghrib were sheep-breeding Bedouins who paid imposts to the various rulers of their time. As one can see, this is a serious error. Had such been the case, the Zanatah would never have achieved royal authority and established a dynasty.

In this connection, one may compare the words of Shahrbaraz, the ruler of Derbend.¹¹³ 'Abd-ar-Rahman b. Rabi'ah came upon him, and Shahrbaraz asked him for his protection with the (promise) that he would belong to him. On that occasion, (Shahrbaraz) said: "Today, I am one of you. My hand is in your hands. I am your sincere friend. You are welcome. God bless us and you. The poll tax we shall pay you will consist in our helping you and doing what you will. But do not humiliate us by (imposing the) poll tax. (Otherwise,) you would weaken us to the point of (becoming the prey of) your enemies."¹¹⁴ This story sufficiently (supports) our preceding remarks.

19] A sign of (the qualification of an individual for) royal authority is his eager desire to acquire praiseworthy qualities, and vice versa.

Royal authority is something natural to human beings, because of its social implications, as we have stated.¹¹⁵ In view of his natural disposition and his power of logical reasoning, man is more inclined toward good qualities than toward bad qualities, because the evil in him is the result of the animal powers in him, and in as much as he is a human being, he is more inclined toward goodness and good qualities. Now, royal and political authority come to man *qua* man, because it is something peculiar to man and is not found among animals. Thus, the good qualities in man are appropriate to political and royal authority, since goodness is appropriate to political authority.

We have already mentioned ¹¹⁶ that glory has a basis upon which it is built and through which it achieves its reality. (That basis) is group feeling and the tribal group (to which an individual belongs).

Glory also depends upon a detail that completes and perfects its existence. (That detail) is (an individual's personal) qualities. Royal authority is a goal of group feeling. Thus, it is likewise a goal of the perfecting details, namely, the (personal) qualities. The existence of (royal authority) without the (simultaneous existence of) the perfecting details would be like the existence of a person with his limbs cut off, or it would be like appearing naked before people.

The existence of group feeling without the practice of praiseworthy qualities would be a defect among people who possess a "house" and prestige. All the more so would it be a defect in men who are invested with royal authority, the greatest possible kind of glory and prestige. Furthermore, political and royal authority are (God's) guarantee to mankind and serve as a representation of God among men with respect to His laws. Now, divine laws affecting men are all for their good and envisage the interests (of men). This is attested by the religious law. Bad laws,¹¹⁷ on the other hand, all result from stupidity and from Satan, in opposition to the predestination and power of God. He makes both good and evil and predetermines them, for there is no maker except Him.

He who thus obtained group feeling guaranteeing power, and who is known to have good qualities appropriate for the execution of God's laws concerning His creatures, is ready to act as (God's) substitute and guarantor among mankind. He has the qualifications for that. This proof is more reliable and solid than the first one.

It has thus become clear that good qualities attest the (potential) existence of royal authority in a person who (in addition to his good qualities) possesses group feeling. Whenever we observe people who possess group feeling and who have gained control over many lands and nations, we find in them an eager desire for goodness and good qualities, such as generosity, the forgiveness of error, tolerance toward the weak, hospitality toward guests, the support of dependents, maintenance of the indigent, patience in adverse circumstances, faithful fulfillment of obligations, liberality with money for the preservation of honor, respect for the religious law and for the scholars who are learned in it, observation of the things to be done or not to be done that (those scholars) prescribe for them, thinking highly of (religious

scholars), belief in and veneration for men of religion and a desire to receive their prayers, great respect for old men and teachers, acceptance of the truth in response to those who call to it, fairness to and care for those who are too weak to take care of themselves, humility toward the poor, attentiveness to the complaints of supplicants, fulfillment of the duties of the religious law and divine worship in all details, avoidance of fraud, cunning, deceit, and of not fulfilling obligations, and similar things. Thus, we know that these are the qualities of leadership, which (persons qualified for royal authority) have obtained and which have made them deserving of being the leaders of the people under their control, or to be leaders in general. It is something good that God has given them, corresponding to their group feeling and superiority. It is not something superfluous to them, or something that exists as a joke [118](#) in connection with them. Royal authority is the good and the rank that most closely correspond to the group feeling they have. We thus know that God granted them royal authority and gave it to them.

Vice versa, when God wants a nation to be deprived of royal authority, He causes (its members) to commit blameworthy deeds and to practice all sorts of vices. This will lead to complete loss of the political virtues among them. (These virtues) continue to be destroyed, until they will no longer exercise royal authority. Someone else will exercise it in their stead. This is to constitute (in addition) an insult to them, in that the royal authority God has given them and the good things He has placed at their disposal are taken away from them. "When we want to destroy a village, we order those of its inhabitants who live in luxury to act wickedly therein. Thus, the word becomes true for it, and we do destroy it." [119](#)

Upon close investigation, many instances of what we have said and outlined will be found among the nations of the past. God "creates whatever He wishes, and His is the choice." [120](#)

It should be known that a quality belonging to perfection, that tribes possessing group feeling are eager to cultivate and which attests to their (right to) royal authority, is respect for (religious) scholars, pious men, noble (relatives of the Prophet), well-born persons, and the different kinds of merchants and foreigners, as well as the ability to assign everybody to his proper station. The respect shown by tribes and persons (in control) of group feelings and families, for men of comparable nobility, tribal position, group feeling, and rank, is something natural. It mostly results from the (human) desire for rank, or from fear of the people of the person to whom respect is paid, or from a wish for reciprocal treatment. However, in the case of people who have no group feeling to make themselves feared, and who have no rank (to bestow) for which one might hope, there can be no doubt as to why they are respected, and it is quite clear what one wants (to find) through them, namely, glory, perfection in personal qualities, and total progress toward (a position of) political leadership. Respect for one's rivals and equals must exist in connection with the special [121](#) political leadership that concerns one's tribe and its competitors (and equals). Respect for excellent and particularly qualified strangers means perfection in general political leadership. The pious are thus respected for their religion; scholars, because they are needed for establishing the statutes of the religious law; merchants, in order to give encouragement (to their profession), so that (their) usefulness may be as widespread as possible. Strangers are respected out of generosity and in order to encourage (them) to undertake certain kinds (of activity). Assigning everybody to his proper station is done out of fairness, and fairness means justice. When people who possess group feeling have that, one knows that they are ready for general political leadership, which means (they are ready for) royal authority. God permits (political leadership) to exist among them, because the (characteristic) sign of (political leadership) exists among them.

Therefore, the first thing to disappear in a tribe that exercises royal authority, when God wants to deprive the members of that tribe of their royal and governmental authority, is respect for these kinds of people. When a nation is observed to have lost (that respect), it should be realized that (all) the virtues have begun to go, and it can be expected that the royal authority will cease to exist in it. "If God wants evil to happen to certain people, nothing can turn it back." [122](#)

20. *While a nation is savage, its royal authority extends farther.*

This is because, as we have said,¹²³ such a nation is better able to achieve superiority and full control, and to subdue other groups. The members of such a nation have the strength to fight other nations, and they are among human beings what beasts of prey are among dumb animals. The Arabs and the Zanatah and similar groups, for instance, are such nations, as are the Kurds, the Turkomans, and the Veiled Sinhajah.

These savage peoples, furthermore, have no homelands that they might use as a fertile (pasture), and no fixed place to which they might repair. All regions and places are the same to them. Therefore, they do not restrict themselves to possession of their own and neighboring regions. They do not stop at the borders of their horizon. They swarm across distant zones and achieve superiority over faraway nations.

One might compare in this connection what `Umar is reported to have said when he received the oath of allegiance and arose to incite the people to the conquest of the 'Iraq. He said: "The Hijaz is your home only in as far as it is a pasturage. Those who dwell there have no power over it except in this respect. Where do (you) newcomers who emigrated (to Medina) stand with regard to God's promise, 'Travel about in the world'?¹²⁴ God promised it to you in His book for your inheritance, when He said, 'In order to give (the true religion) victory over all religions, even if the polytheists dislike it!'"¹²⁵

Another example is the condition of the ancient (preIslamic) Arabs, such as the Tubba's and the Himyar. They are reported¹²⁶ to have marched from the Yemen to the Maghrib at one time, and to the 'Iraq and India at another time. No other nation except the Arabs ever did anything like that.

The condition of the Veiled (Sinhajah) in the Maghrib is another example. When they aspired to royal authority, they swarmed out of their desert plains in the neighborhood of the Sudan, in the first zone, and overran the Spanish realm in the fourth and fifth zones, without any intermediate (stage).

Such is the case with savage nations. Their (dynasties), therefore, extend over a wider area and over regions farther from their (original) center (than do other nations).

God determines night and day.¹²⁷

21. As long as a nation retains its group feeling, royal authority that disappears in one branch will, of necessity, pass to some other branch of the same nation.

The reason for this is that (the members of a particular nation) obtain royal authority only after (proving their) forcefulness and finding other nations obedient to them. (Only a few) are then singled out to become the actual rulers and to be directly connected with the throne. It could not be all of them, because there is not enough room for all to compete (for leadership), and because the existence of jealousy cuts short the aspirations of many of those who aspire to high office.

Those who are singled out to support the dynasty indulge in a life of ease and sink into luxury and plenty. They make servants of their fellows and contemporaries and use them to further the various interests and enterprises of the dynasty. Those who are far away from the government and who are thus prevented from having a share in it, remain in the shadow of the dynastic power. They share in it by virtue of their descent, (but) they are not affected by senility, because they remain far from the life of luxury and the things that produce luxury.

The (passing) days get the upper hand over the original group (in power). Their prowess disappears as the result of senility. (The duties of) the dynasty make them soft.¹²⁸ Time feasts on them, as their energy is exhausted by well-being and their vigor drained by the nature of luxury. They reach their limit, the limit that is set by the nature of human urbanization (*tamaddun*) and political superiority.

Like the silkworm that spins and then, in turn,
Finds its end amidst the threads itself has spun.^{128a}

At that moment, the group feeling of other people (within the same nation) is strong. Their force cannot be broken. Their emblem is recognized to be victorious. As a result, their hopes of achieving royal authority, from which they had been kept until now by a superior power within their own group, are high. Their superiority is recognized, and, therefore, no one disputes (their claim to royal authority). They seize power. It becomes theirs. Then, they have the same experience (their predecessors had) at the hands of those other groups within the nation that remain away from (the government). Royal authority thus continues in a particular nation until the force of the group feeling of (that nation) is broken and gone, or until all its groups have ceased to exist. That is how God proceeds with regard to life in this world. "And the other world, according to your Lord, belongs to those who fear God."¹²⁹

This can be illustrated by what happened among the nations. When the royal authority of 'Ad was wiped out, their brethren, the Thamud, took over. They were succeeded, in turn, by their brethren, the Amalekites. The Amalekites were succeeded by their brethren, the Himyar. The Himyar were succeeded by their brethren, the Tubba's, who belonged to the Himyar. They, likewise, were succeeded, by the Adhwa'.¹³⁰ Then, the Mudar came to power.

The same was the case with the Persians. When the Kayyanid¹³¹ rule was wiped out, the Sassanians ruled after them. Eventually, God permitted them all to be

destroyed by the Muslims.

The same was also the case with the Greeks. Their rule was wiped out and transferred to their brethren, the Rum (Romans).

The same was the case with the Berbers in the Maghrib. When the rule of their first rulers, the Maghrawah and the Kutimah, was wiped out, it went to the Sinhajah. Then it went to the Veiled (Sinhajah), then to the Masmudah, and then to the (still) remaining Zanatah groups.

This is how God proceeds with His servants and creatures.

All this has its origin in group feeling, which differs in the different groups. Luxury wears out the royal authority and overthrows it, as we shall mention later on.

[132](#) When a dynasty is wiped out, the power is taken (away) from (the members of that dynasty) by those people whose group feeling has a share in the (established) group feeling, since it is recognized that submission and subservience (by others) belong to (the established group feeling) and since people are used to the fact that (the established group feeling) has superiority over all other group feelings. (The same group feeling,) now, exists only in those people who are closely related (to the outgoing dynasty), because group feeling is proportionate to the degree of relationship. (It goes on that way until,) eventually, a great change takes place in the world, such as the transformation of a religion, or the disappearance of a civilization, or something else willed by the power of God. Then, royal authority is transferred from one group to another-to the one that God permits to effect that change. This happened to the Mudar. They gained superiority over nations and dynasties, and took power away from all the people of the world, after having themselves been kept out of power for ages.

22. *The vanquished always want to imitate the victor in his distinctive mark(s), his dress, his occupation, and all his other conditions and customs.*

The [133](#) reason for this is that the soul always sees perfection in the person who is superior to it and to whom it is subservient. It considers him perfect, either because the respect it has for him impresses it, or because it erroneously assumes that its own subservience to him is not due to the nature of defeat but to the perfection of the victor. If that erroneous assumption fixes itself in the soul, it becomes a firm belief. The soul, then, adopts all the manners of the victor and assimilates itself to him. This, then, is imitation.

Or, the soul may possibly think that the superiority of the victor is not the result of his group feeling or great fortitude, but of his customs and manners. This also would be an erroneous concept of superiority, and (the consequence) would be the same as in the former case.

Therefore, the vanquished can always be observed to assimilate themselves to the victor in the use and style of dress, mounts, and weapons, indeed, in everything.

In this connection, one may compare how children constantly imitate their fathers. They do that only because they see perfection in them. One may also compare how almost everywhere people are dominated (in the matter of fashion) by the dress of the militia and the government forces, because they are ruled by them.

This goes so far that a nation dominated by another, neighboring nation will show a great deal of assimilation and imitation. At this time, this is the case in Spain. The Spaniards are found to assimilate themselves to the Galician nations in their dress, their emblems, and most of their customs and conditions. This goes so far that they even draw pictures on the walls and (have them) in buildings and houses. The intelligent observer will draw from this the conclusion that it is a sign of domination (by others). God has the power to command. [134](#)

In this light, one should understand the secret of the saying, "The common people follow the religion of the ruler." [135](#) (This saying) belongs to the subject under discussion. The ruler dominates those under him. His subjects imitate him, because they see perfection in him, exactly as children imitate their parents, or students their teachers.

God is wise and knowing.

23. *A nation that has been defeated and come under the rule of another nation will quickly perish.*

The [136](#) reason for this may possibly lie in the apathy that comes over people when they lose control of their own affairs and, through enslavement, become the instrument of others and dependent upon them. Hope diminishes and weakens. Now, propagation and an increase in civilization (population) take place only as the result of strong hope and of the energy that hope creates in the animal powers (of man). When hope and the things it stimulates are gone through apathy, and when group feeling has disappeared under the impact of defeat, civilization decreases and business and other activities stop. With their strength dwindling under the impact of defeat, people become unable to defend themselves. They become the victims of anyone who tries to dominate them, and a prey to anyone who has the appetite. It makes no difference whether they have already reached the limit of their royal authority or not.

Here, we possibly learn another secret, namely, that man is a natural leader by virtue of the fact that he has been made a representative (of God on earth). When a leader is deprived of his leadership and prevented from exercising all his powers, he becomes apathetic, even down to such matters as food and drink. This is in the human character. A similar observation may be made with regard to beasts of prey. They do not cohabit when they are in human captivity. The group that has lost control of its own affairs thus continues to weaken and to disintegrate until it perishes. Duration belongs to God alone.

This may be illustrated by the Persian nation. In the past, the Persians filled the world with their great numbers. When their military force was annihilated in the days of the Arabs, they were still very numerous. It is said that Sa'd (b. Abi Waqqas) counted (the population) beyond Ctesiphon. It numbered 137,000 (individuals), with 37,000 heads of families. But when the Persians came under the rule of the Arabs and were made subject to (oppression by) force, they lasted only a short while and were wiped out as if they had never been. One should not think that this was the result of some (specific) persecution or aggression perpetrated against them. The rule of Islam is known for its justice. Such (disintegration as befell the Persians) is in human nature. It happens when people lose control of their own affairs and become the instrument of someone else.

Therefore, the Negro nations are, as a rule, submissive to slavery, because (Negroes) have little (that is essentially) human and have attributes that are quite similar to those of dumb animals, as we have stated. [137](#)

Or, [138](#) there are those who by accepting slavery hope to obtain high rank or to get money or power. This was the case with the Turks in the East, and with the Galician infidels and European Christians in Spain. Such people are customarily claimed by the dynasty for itself. Thus, they are not ashamed to be slaves, because they hope to be chosen for high position by the dynasty. And God knows better.

24. *Arabs can gain control only over flat territory.*

This [138a](#) is because, on account of their savage nature, (the Arabs) are people who plunder and cause damage. They plunder whatever they are able to lay their hands on without having to fight or to expose themselves to danger. They then retreat to their pastures in the desert. They do not attack or fight except in self-defense. Every stronghold or (locality) that seems difficult (to attack), they bypass in favor of some less difficult (enterprise). They do not attack it. Tribes that are protected against (the Arabs) by inaccessible mountains are safe from their mischief and destructiveness. The Arabs would not cross hills or undergo hardship and danger in order to get to them.

Flat territory, on the other hand, falls victim to their looting and prey to their appetite whenever they (have the opportunity of) gaining power over it, when there is no militia, or when the dynasty is weak. Then they raid, plunder, and attack that territory repeatedly, because it is easily (accessible) to them. Eventually, its inhabitants succumb utterly to the Arabs and then they are pushed around by them in accordance with changes of control and shifts in leadership. Eventually, their civilization is wiped out. God has power over His creatures.

25. *Places that succumb to the Arabs are quickly ruined.*

The [139](#) reason for this is that (the Arabs) are a savage nation, fully accustomed to savagery and the things that cause it. Savagery has become their character and nature. They enjoy it, because it means freedom from authority and no subservience to leadership. Such a natural disposition is the negation and antithesis of civilization. All the customary activities of the Arabs lead to travel and movement. This is the antithesis and negation of stationariness, which produces civilization. For instance, the Arabs need stones to set them up as supports for their cooking pots. So, they take them from buildings which they tear down to get the stones, and use them for that purpose. Wood, too, is needed by them for props for their tents and for use as tent poles for their dwellings. So, they tear down roofs to get the wood for that purpose. The very nature of their existence is the negation of building, which is the basis of civilization. This is the case with them quite generally.

Furthermore, it is their nature to plunder whatever other people possess. Their sustenance lies wherever the shadow of their lances falls. They recognize no limit in taking the possessions of other people. Whenever their eyes fall upon some property, furnishings, or utensils, they take it. When they acquire superiority and royal authority, they have complete power to plunder (as they please). There no longer exists any political (power) to protect property, and civilization is ruined.

Furthermore, since they use force to make craftsmen and professional workers do their work, they do not see any value in it and do not pay them for it. Now, as we shall mention, [140](#) labor is the real basis of profit. When labor is not appreciated and is done for nothing, the hope for profit vanishes, and no (productive) work is done. The sedentary population disperses, and civilization decays.

Furthermore, (the Arabs) are not concerned with laws. (They are not concerned) to deter people from misdeeds or to protect some against the others. They care only for the property that they might take away from people through looting and imposts. When they have obtained that, they have no interest in anything further, such as taking care of (people), looking after their interests, or forcing them not to commit misdeeds. They often level fines on property, because they want to get some advantage, some tax, or profit out of it. This is their custom. It does not help to prevent misdeeds or to deter those who undertake to commit (misdeeds). On the contrary, it increases (misdeeds), because as compared to getting what one wants, the (possible financial) loss (through fines) is insignificant. [141](#)

Under the rule of (the Arabs), the subjects live as in a state of anarchy, without law. Anarchy destroys mankind and ruins civilization, since, as we have stated, the existence of royal authority is a natural quality of man. It alone guarantees their existence and social organization. That was mentioned above at the beginning of the chapter. [142](#)

Furthermore, (every Arab) is eager to be the leader. Scarcely a one of them would cede his power to another, even to his father, his brother, or the eldest (most important) member of his family. That happens only in rare cases and under

pressure of considerations of decency. There are numerous authorities and amirs among them. The subjects have to obey many masters in connection with the control of taxation and law. Civilization, thus, decays and is wiped out.

'Abd-al-Malik asked one Arab who had come to him on an embassy about al-Hajjaj. He wanted him to praise alHajjaj for his good political leadership (for the benefit of) civilization. But the Arab said: "When I left him, he was acting unjustly all by himself."[142a](#)

It is noteworthy how civilization always collapsed in places the Arabs took over and conquered, and how such settlements were depopulated and the (very) earth there turned into something that was no (longer) earth. The Yemen where (the Arabs) live is in ruins, except for a few cities. Persian civilization in the Arab 'Iraq is likewise completely ruined. The same applies to contemporary Syria. When the Banu Hilal and the Banu Sulaym pushed through (from their homeland) to Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib in (the beginning of) the fifth [eleventh] century and struggled there for three hundred and fifty years, they attached themselves to (the country), and the flat territory in (the Maghrib) was completely ruined. Formerly, the whole region between the Sudan and the Mediterranean had been settled. This (fact) is attested by the relics of civilization there, such as monuments, architectural sculpture, and the visible remains of villages and hamlets.

God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it. He is the best heir.[143](#)

26. Arabs can obtain royal authority only by making use of some religious coloring, such as prophecy, or sainthood, or some great religious event in general.

The [144](#) reason for this is that because of their savagery, the Arabs are the least willing of nations to subordinate themselves to each other, as they are rude, proud, ambitious, and eager to be the leader. Their individual aspirations rarely coincide. But when there is religion (among them) through prophecy or sainthood, then they have some restraining influence in themselves. The qualities of haughtiness and jealousy leave them. It is, then, easy for them to subordinate themselves and to unite (as a social organization). This is achieved by the common religion they now have. It causes rudeness and pride to disappear and exercises a restraining influence on their mutual envy and jealousy. When there is a prophet or saint among them, who calls upon them to fulfill the commands of God and rids them of blameworthy qualities and causes them to adopt praiseworthy ones, and who has them concentrate all their strength in order to make the truth prevail, they become fully united (as a social organization) and obtain superiority and royal authority. Besides, no people are as quick (as the Arabs) to accept (religious) truth and right guidance, because their natures have been preserved free from distorted habits and uncontaminated by base character qualities. The only (difficulty) lies in the quality of savagery, which, however, is easily taken care of and which is ready to admit good (qualities), as it has remained in its first natural state and remote from the ugly customs and bad habits that leave their impress upon the soul. "Every infant is born in the natural state," as is stated in the tradition that was quoted above. [145](#)

27. *The Arabs are of all nations the one most remote from royal leadership.*

The [146](#) reason for this is that the Arabs are more rooted in desert life and penetrate deeper into the desert than any other nation. They have less need of the products and grain of the hills, because they are used to a tough and hard life. Therefore, they can dispense with other people. It is difficult for them to subordinate themselves to each other, because they are used to (no control) and because they are in a state of savagery. Their leader needs them mostly for the group spirit that is necessary for purposes of defense. He is, therefore, forced to rule them kindly and to avoid antagonizing them. Otherwise, he would have trouble with the group spirit, and (such trouble) would be his undoing and theirs. Royal leadership and government, on the other hand, require the leader to exercise a restraining influence by force. If not, his leadership would not last.

Furthermore, as we have stated before, [147](#) it is the nature of (the Arabs) not only to appropriate the possessions of other people but, beyond that, to refrain from exercising any (power of) arbitration among them and to fail to keep them from (fighting) each other. When they have taken possession of a nation, they make it the goal of their rule to profit (from their position) by taking away the property of the members of that nation. Beyond that, they do not care to exercise any (power of) arbitration among them. They often punish crimes by fines on property, in their desire to increase the tax revenues and to obtain some (pecuniary) advantage. That is no deterrent (to crime). (Rather,) it is often an incentive (to crime), in view of the fact that incentives to commit misdeeds (may be very strong) and that, in the opinion of (the criminal), payment of a fine is insignificant, weighed against getting what he wants. Thus, misdeeds increase, and civilization is ruined. A nation dominated by the Arabs is in a state no different from anarchy, where everybody is set against the others. Such a civilization cannot last and goes quickly to ruins, as would be the case in a state of anarchy, as we have mentioned before.

For all these (reasons), the Arabs are by nature remote from royal leadership. They attain it (only) once their nature has undergone a complete transformation under the influence of some religious coloring that wipes out all such (qualities) and causes the Arabs to have a restraining influence on themselves and to keep people apart from each other, as we have mentioned. [148](#)

This is illustrated by the Arab dynasty in Islam. Religion cemented their leadership with the religious law and its ordinances, which, explicitly and implicitly, are concerned with what is good for civilization. The caliphs followed one after another. As a result, the royal authority and government of the Arabs became great and strong. When Rustum saw the Muslims assemble for prayer, he said: " 'Umar eats my liver. He teaches the dogs how to behave." [149](#)

Later on, the Arabs were cut off from the dynasty for generations. They neglected the religion. Thus, they forgot political leadership and returned to their desert. They were ignorant of the connection of their group feeling with the people of the ruling dynasty, because subservience and lawful (government) had (now) become strange to them. They became once again as savage as they had been before. The epithet "royal" was no longer applicable to them, except in so far as it

(continued to) apply to the caliphs who were (Arabs) by race. When the caliphate disappeared and was wiped out, governmental power passed altogether out of their hands. Non-Arabs took over the power in their stead. They remained as Bedouins in the desert, ignorant of royal authority and political leadership. Most Arabs do not even know that they possessed royal authority in the past, or that no nation had ever exercised such (sweeping) royal authority as had their race. The dynasties of 'Ad and Thamild, the Amalekites, the Himyar, and the Tubba's testify to that statement, and then, there was the Mudar dynasty in Islam, the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids. But when the Arabs forgot the religion, they no longer had any connection with political leadership, and they returned to their desert origins. At times, they achieve superiority over weak dynasties, as is the case in the contemporary Maghrib. But their domination leads only to the ruin of the civilization they conquer, as we have stated before.

God is the best heir.[150](#)

28. *Desert tribes and groups are dominated by the urban population.*

It [151](#) has been stated by us before [152](#) that desert civilization is inferior to urban civilization, because not all the necessities of civilization are to be found among the people of the desert. They do possess some agriculture at home, (but) they do not possess (all) the materials that belong to it, most of which (depend on) crafts. They do not have any carpenters, tailors, blacksmiths, or other (craftsmen whose crafts) would provide them with the necessities required for making a living in agriculture and other things.

Likewise, they do not have (coined) money (dinars and dirhams). They have the equivalent of it in harvested grain, in animals, and in animal products such as milk, wool (of animals), (camel's) hair, and hides, which the urban population needs and pays the Arabs money for. However, while (the Bedouins) need the cities for their necessities of life, the urban population needs (the Bedouins) for conveniences and luxuries. Thus, (the Bedouins) need the cities for the necessities of life by the very nature of their (mode of) existence. As long as they live in the desert and have not obtained royal authority and control of the cities, they need the inhabitants (of the latter). They must be active in behalf of their interests and obey them whenever (the latter) ask and demand obedience from them.

When there is a ruler in the city, the submissiveness and obedience of (the Bedouins) is the result of the superiority of the ruler. When there is no ruler in the city, some political leadership and control by some of the inhabitants over the remainder must, of necessity, exist in it. If not, the civilization of the city would be wiped out. Such a leader makes (the Bedouins) obey him and exert themselves in behalf of his interests. He does so either by persuasion, in that he distributes money among them and lets them have the necessities they need from his city, which enables their civilization to subsist; or, if he has the power to do so, he forces them to obey him, even if he has to cause discord among them so as to get the support of one party, with the help of which he will then be able to overcome the remainder and thus force the others to obey him, since they fear the decay of their civilization as the result of (the unstable situation). (These Bedouins) often cannot leave the particular districts (where they live and go) to other regions, because all of them are (already) inhabited by (other) Bedouins who took them away (from someone) and kept others out. They have, therefore, no hope of survival except by being obedient to the city. Thus, they are of necessity dominated by the urban population.

God "exercises forceful domination over His servants." [153](#)

Chapter III

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

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

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

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

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

God has power to do what He wishes.

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

The ³ reason for this is that people find it difficult to submit to large dynastic (power) at the beginning, unless they are forced into submission by strong superiority. (The new government) is something strange. People are not familiar with, or used to, its rule. But once leadership is firmly vested in the members of the family qualified to exercise royal authority in the dynasty, and once (royal authority) has been passed on by inheritance over many generations and through successive dynasties, the beginnings are forgotten, and the members of that family are clearly marked as leaders. It has become a firmly established article of faith that one must be subservient and submissive to them. People will fight with them in their behalf, as they would fight for the articles of faith. By this time, (the rulers) will not need much group (feeling to maintain) their power. It is as if obedience to the government were a divinely revealed book that cannot be changed or opposed. It is for some (good reason) that the discussion of the imamate is placed at the end of works dealing with the articles of faith, as if it were one of them ⁴

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

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

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

The same happened to the Umayyad dynasty in Spain. When its Arab group feeling was destroyed, the *reyes de taifas* (small princes) seized power and divided the territory among themselves. In competition with each other, they distributed among themselves the realm of the (Umayyad) dynasty. Each one of them seized the territory under his control and aggrandized himself. (These rulers) learned of the relations that existed between the non-Arabs (in the East) and the 'Abbasids.

(Imitating them,) they adopted royal surnames and used royal trappings. There was no danger that anyone would take (the prerogatives they claimed) away from them or alter (the situation in this respect), because Spain was no (longer the) home of groups and tribes, as we shall mention. They went on in this way, (and it was) as Ibn Sharaf [7](#) described it:

What makes me feel humble in Spain
Is the use of the names Mu'tasim and Mu'tadid there.
Royal surnames not in their proper place:
Like a cat that by blowing itself up imitates the lion.

They tried to maintain their power with the help of clients and followers and with that of the Zanatah 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, when the Arab group feeling weakened and Ibn Abi 'Amir [8](#) obtained control of the dynasty. (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 Lamtunah group feeling, crossed the sea. The latter came and replaced and dislodged them from their centers. They obliterated (all) traces of (the *reyes de taifas*) who were unable to defend themselves because they had no (longer any) group feeling.

Such group feeling makes it possible for a dynasty to become established and protected from the beginning. At-Turtushi thought that the military (strength) of a dynasty as such is identical with (the size of its) army that receives a fixed pay every month. He mentioned this in his *Siraj almuluk*.[9](#) His statement does not take into consideration the (conditions obtaining at the) original foundation of large dynasties. It applies only to the later stages, after the dynasty has been established and after royal authority has become firmly anchored in a given family and its people have adopted (their) definite coloring. (At-Turtushi) had personal contact only with a senile dynasty whose energy was exhausted and which had reverted to maintaining power with the help of clients and followers, then hired servants for (its) defense. He had contact only with the small dynasties (the *reyes de ta'ifas*), at a time when the Umayyad dynasty was already in the state of (complete) dissolution, when its Arab group feeling was wiped out, and when each amir had (independent) control over his particular region. He lived under the administration of the Saragossans al-Musta'in b. Hud and his son, al-Muzaffar. They had no longer any group feeling left, because, for three hundred years, the Arabs had been dominated by luxury and had perished. At-Turtushi thus saw only the kind of ruler who had (independent) control of royal authority to the exclusion of the families to which it belonged, and in whom the coloring of autocratic rule had been firmly established since the time of the dynasty('s power) and when a remnant of group feeling still existed. Therefore, his (royal authority) was not contested, and he could rely for maintenance of his power upon a soldiery with fixed pay. At-Turtushi generalized the condition (observed by him) when he made the statement mentioned. He did not realize how a dynasty originally comes to power, nor that only those who share in a group feeling are able to accomplish (the formation of a dynasty). But this should be realized. It should be understood how God intended these things to be.

"God gives His kingdom (royal authority) to whomever He wants to give it."

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.¹¹ They do not desire to share in any way in his rule, as they subject themselves to his group feeling and submit to the coloring 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."¹²

That is what happened to the Idrisids in Morocco and the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) in Ifriqiyyah and Egypt. Abu Talib's descendants had left the East and removed themselves from the seat of the caliphate, to go to remote regions of the Muslim realm. They aspired to deprive the 'Abbasids of the caliphate whose coloring had (throughout the years) firmly established itself in the descendants of 'Abd-Manaf, first among the Umayyads and then among the Hashimites ('Abbasids). They seceded (from the ruling 'Abbasid dynasty) in the western part of Islam and made propaganda for themselves. The Berbers supported their rule time after time. The Awrahah and Maghilah (supported) the Idrisids, and the Kutamah, the Sinhajah, and the Hawwarah (supported) the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids). These (Berber tribes) cemented the dynasties of (the Idrisids and 'Ubaydids) and firmly established their rule through the group support they gave them. They detached the whole Maghrib and then Ifriqiyyah from the realm of the 'Abbasids. The influence of the 'Abbasid dynasty grew steadily smaller and that of the 'Ubaydid (-Fatimids) larger. Eventually, the latter took possession of Egypt, Syria, and the Hijaz, and shared the Muslim empire half and half with the 'Abbasids.^{12a} Nonetheless, the Berbers who supported the dynasty submitted their own affairs to the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) and obeyed their rule. They merely vied for positions under them. They subjected themselves to the royal authority that had become the established coloring of the Hashimites (the family of Muhammad, the 'AlidFatimids as well as the 'Abbasids), and to the superiority over all nations of the Quraysh and the Mudar. Royal authority, therefore, remained with their descendants down to (the time of) the complete destruction of Arab rule.

"God decides, and no one can change His decision."¹³

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

This [14](#) 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. God said: "If you had expended all the treasures on earth, you would have achieved no unity among them." [15](#) The secret of (this) is that when the hearts succumb to false desires and are inclined toward the world, mutual jealousy and widespread differences arise. (But) when they 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. There are few differences. Mutual cooperation 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 [16](#) we have mentioned before, the reason for this is that religious coloring does away with mutual jealousy and envy among people who share in a group feeling, and causes concentration upon the truth. When people (who have a religious coloring) 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). (On the other hand,) the members of the dynasty they attack may be many times as numerous as they. But their purposes differ, in as much as they are false [17](#) 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 coloring), 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.[18](#)

This happened to the Arabs at the beginning of Islam during the Muslim conquests. The armies of the Muslims at al-Qadisiyah and at the Yarmuk numbered some 30,000 in each case, while the Persian troops at al-Qadisiyah numbered 120,000,[19](#) and the troops of Heraclius, according to alWaqidi, 400,000.[20](#) Neither of the two parties was able to withstand the Arabs. (The Arabs) routed them and seized what they possessed.

Another illustration is the Lamtunah (Almoravid) and Almohad dynasties. In the Maghrib, there existed many tribes equaling or surpassing them in numbers and group feeling. However, their religious organization doubled the strength of their group feeling through (their) feeling of having (the right religious) insight [21](#) and (their) willingness to die, as we have stated, and nothing could withstand them.

This can also be illustrated (by the situation existing at the time) when the religious coloring 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.

An illustration of this is the relationship of the Almohads with the Zanatah. The Zanatah were deeply rooted in the desert and more savage than the Masmudah, but the Masmudah had the religious call to follow the Mahdi. They took on (his religious) coloring. As a result, the strength of their group feeling increased many times over. Therefore, they were at first able to overpower the Zanatah and to make them their followers, even though (the Zanatah) were more strongly rooted in the desert and had a stronger group feeling than they. But (later on) when the Masmudah lost their religious coloring, the Zanatah rose up against them from every side and took their power away from them. "God has the power to execute His

commands."

6. Religious propaganda cannot materialize without group feeling.

This [23](#) is because, as we have mentioned before, every mass (political) undertaking by necessity requires group feeling. This is indicated in the aforementioned [24](#) tradition: "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.

It happened to the Sufi *shaykh* Ibn Qasi, [25](#) the author of the *Kitab Khal' an-na'layn* on Sufism. He rose in revolt in Spain and made propaganda for the truth shortly before the time when the propaganda of the Mahdi (of the Almohads) started. His followers were called *al-Murabitun* [26](#) (Ibn Qasi) had some success, because the Lamtunah (Almoravids) were preoccupied with their own difficulties with the Almohads. (But) there were no groups and tribes there to defend him. When the Almohads took over control of the Maghrib, he soon obeyed them and participated in their cause. He took the oath of allegiance to them at his stronghold, the fortress of Arcos (de la Frontera). He handed his frontier province over to them and became their first missionary in Spain. His revolt was called the revolt of the *Murabitun*.

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) and for good 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 and unrewarded, because God had not destined them for such (activities as they undertake). He commands such activities to be undertaken only where there-exists the power to bring them to a successful conclusion. Muhammad said: "Should one among 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." [26a](#)

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 [27](#) 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, [28](#) 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 towards the Muslims. No Muslim, no person of insight, could doubt this (truth).

In Islam, the first person to start that sort of thing in Baghdad was a certain Khalid ad-Daryush.²⁹ Tahir had revolted. Al-Amin was killed. Al-Ma'mun in Khurasin was slowed down in his advance toward the 'Iraq, and he appointed 'Ali b. Musa ar-Rida, a descendant of al-Husayn, successor to the throne. The 'Abbasids showed their disapproval (of that move). They banded together in order to revolt and to renounce obedience to al-Ma'mun and to choose some one else in his stead. Allegiance was sworn to Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi. Trouble broke out in Baghdad. The troublesome elements among the underworld and the soldiery were given a free hand against the decent citizens. They robbed the people and filled their pockets with loot, which they sold openly in the markets. The inhabitants turned for protection to the authorities, but these did not help them. The religious and good citizens, thereupon, united in order to stop the criminals and to put an end to their misdeeds. At that moment, a man named Khalid ad-Daryush appeared in Baghdad. He appealed to the people to obey the law. Many responded to his call. They fought the troublesome elements and defeated them. Khalid had them beaten and punished. After him, there appeared another man from among the populace of Baghdad,³⁰ by name Abu Hatim Sahl b. Salamah al-Ansari. He hung a copy of the Qur'an around his neck, and appealed to the people to obey the law and to act in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. High and low, Hashimites and others, all followed him. He established himself in the palace of Tahir and took over the government office(s). He went about Baghdad, kept out all those who were frightening wayfarers, and put an end to the payment of protection money³¹ to the underworld. When Khalid ad-Daryush said to him that he (Khalid) was not against the government, Sahl replied that he (for his part) was fighting all those who acted contrary to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, whoever they might be. This happened in the year 201 [817]. Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi sent an army against (Sahl). He was defeated and captured, and his power quickly dissolved. He barely escaped with his life.

Later on, many deluded individuals followed, that example. They took it upon themselves to establish the truth. They did not know that they would need group feeling for that. They did not realize how their enterprise must necessarily end and what they would come to. With respect to 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.³²

Some of these people allied themselves with the Expected Fatimid.³³ They pretended to be, either he himself, or one of his missionaries, despite their ignorance of everything concerning the Fatimid. Most men who adopt such ideas will be found to be, either deluded and crazy, or to be swindlers who, with the help of such claims, seek to obtain (political) leadership -which they crave and would be unable to obtain in the natural manner. They believe that such claims will be instrumental in bringing to them the fulfillment of their hopes. They do not consider the disaster that will overtake them in consequence. The trouble they create will speedily cause their death and bring their trickery to a bitter end.

At the beginning of this century, a man of Sufi leanings, by name at-Tuwayziri, appeared in as-Sus. He went to the Mosque of Massah³⁴ on the shore of the Mediterranean and pretended to be the Expected Fatimid. He was taking advantage of the common people's firm belief in predictions to the effect that the Fatimid was about to appear and that his mission would originate at that Mosque. A number of ordinary Berber groups were attracted to him like moths (to the flame).³⁵

Their chiefs then feared that the revolt might spread. The leader of the Masmudah at that time, 'Umar asSaksiwi,³⁶ secretly sent someone to him, who killed him in his bed.

Also at the beginning of this century, a man known as al-'Abbas appeared among the Ghumarah. He made a similar claim. The lowest among the stupid and imbecile members of those tribes followed his blethering. He marched on Badis, one of the (Ghumarah) cities, and entered it by force. He was then killed, forty days after the start of his mission. He perished like those before him.³⁷

There are many similar cases.³⁸ The mistake (they all make) 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. "That is the sinners' reward."³⁹

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

The [40](#) 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, [41](#) 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 center 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 neighbor. This has the detrimental result for the dynasty of the creation of boldness toward it and of diminished respect for it. (On the other hand,) 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. [42](#)

A dynasty is stronger at its center 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 centers, 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 center remains intact until God permits the destruction of the whole (dynasty). Then, the center is destroyed. But when a dynasty is overrun from the center, it is of no avail to it that the outlying areas remain intact. It dissolves all at once. The center is like the heart from which the (vital) spirit [43](#) spreads. Were the heart to be overrun and captured, all the extremities would be routed.

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

Conversely, the center of the Byzantine dynasty in Syria was in Constantinople. When the Muslims took Syria away from the Byzantines, the latter repaired to their center in Constantinople. The loss of Syria did not harm them. Their rule continued there without interruption until God permitted it to be ended [44](#)

Another example is the situation of the Arabs at the beginning of Islam. Since they were a very large group, they very quickly overran neighboring Syria, 'Iraq, and Egypt. Then, they kept on going, into Western India (as-Sind), Abyssinia, Ifrigiyah, and the Maghrib, and later into Spain. They spread over many provinces and border regions, and settled in them as militiamen. Their numbers were

exhausted by that expansion. No further conquests could be made by them, and the Muslim empire reached its farthest extension. Those borders were not passed, but the dynasty receded from them, until God permitted it to be destroyed.

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 Tabuk, the Prophet's last raid, was 110,000,⁴⁵ (consisting of) Mudar and Qahtin 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 Hijiz to as-Sus in the far west,⁴⁶ and from the Yemen to the Turks in the farthest north. They gained possession of all seven zones.

One may also look at the Sinhajah and Almohad dynasties and their relationship to the 'Ubaydid (-Fitimids) before them. The Kutimah, supporters of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) dynasty, were more numerous than the Sinhajah and the Masmudah. Consequently, their dynasty was larger. They took possession of Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib, as well as of Syria, Egypt, and the Hijaz. One may also look at the later Zanatah dynasty. Since the number of the Zanatah was smaller than that of the Masmudah, their royal authority fell short of that of the Almohads, because (the Zanatah) were numerically inferior to the Masmudah from the very start. One may also consider the situation of the two Zanatah dynasties at this time, the Merinids and the 'Abd-al-Wadids. The Merinids were numerically stronger than the 'Abd-al-Wadids when they first seized power. Therefore, their dynasty was stronger and larger than that of the 'Abd-al-Wadids. Time after time, (the Merinids) defeated (the 'Abd-al-Wadids). It is said that the number of the Merinids at the beginning of their rule was three thousand and that of the 'Abd-al-Wadids one thousand. However, (possession of) dynastic power with (its) life of ease and the (great) number of (its) followers increased their numbers.

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, as we have stated.⁴⁷

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 center. Each defection that occurs necessarily requires a certain time. The time required (for collapse of the dynasty) 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 (fact) may be observed in the Arab Muslim dynasty. It lasted the longest of (all Muslim) dynasties, counting both the 'Abbasids in the center and the Umayyads far away in Spain. Their rule collapsed only after the fourth [tenth] century. [48](#) The 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) lasted about 280 years. The Sinhajah dynasty did not last as long as that of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids), namely, from the time when Ma'add al-Mu'izz entrusted Ifriqiyah to Buluggin b. Zirt in the year 358 [969], up to the time when the Almohads took possession of al-Qal'ah [49](#) and Bougie in the year 557 [1162]. The contemporary Almohad (Hafsid) dynasty has lasted nearly 270 years.

Thus, the life of a dynasty depends upon (the number of) its supporters. "This is how God formerly proceeded with His servants." [50](#)

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

The [51](#) reason for this is the 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 victory of Ibn Abi Sarh [52](#) 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 (Kharijite) religious opinions many times. Ibn Abi Zayd [53](#) said that the Berbers in the Maghrib revolted twelve times and that Islam became firmly established among them only during the governorship of Musi b. Nusayr and thereafter. This is what is meant by the statement reported on the authority of 'Umar, that "Ifriqiyah 'divides' [54](#) the hearts of its inhabitants." The statement refers to the great number of tribes and groups there, which causes them to be disobedient and unmanageable. The 'Iraq at that time was different, and so was Syria. The militia of the ('Iraq and Syria) 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 defense 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.

The same was the case in Syria in the age of the Israelites. At that time, there existed (there) 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, Gergashites, and the Nabataeans from the Jazirah and Mosul [55](#) Therefore, it was difficult for the Israelites to establish their dynasty firmly. Time after time, their royal authority was endangered. The (spirit of) opposition (alive 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. "God has the power to execute His commands." [56](#)

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 seditions and rebellions are few, and the dynasty there does not need much group feeling. This is

the case in contemporary Egypt and Syria. They are (now) free from tribes and group feelings; indeed, one would never suspect that Syria had once been a mine of them, as we have (just) 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. (Egypt's) 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 'Abbasid, a descendant of the 'Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad.

The same is the case in contemporary Spain. The group feeling of the ruler of (Spain), Ibn al-Ahmar (the Nasrids of Granada), was not strong or widespread to begin with. (The Nasrids) belonged to one of the Arab houses that had supported the Umayyad dynasty, a few survivors of which remained. This situation came about as follows: When the Spaniards were no longer ruled by the Arab dynasty (of the Umayyads) and the Lamtanah and Almohad Berbers became their rulers, they detested this domination. Their oppression weighed heavily upon them, and their hearts were full of hate and indignation against (the new rulers).

Near the end of the (Almohad) rule, the Almohad lords handed over many of their strongholds to the abominable (Christian ruler), in order to gain his support for their attempts to capture the capital city of Marrakech. That caused remnants of the people in Spain who represented the ancient group feeling to unite. These were descendants of Arab houses who had to some degree kept away from urban civilization and the cities, and who were firmly rooted in military life. They included Ibn Had (of Saragossa), Ibn al-Ahmar (of Granada), and Ibn Mardanish (of Valencia and Murcia), and others like them. Ibn Had seized power, made propaganda for the 'Abbasid caliphate in the East, and caused the people to revolt against the Almohads. Allegiance to them was denounced, and they were driven out. Ibn Had thus became the independent ruler of Spain. Then, Ibn al-Ahmar rose to power and opposed Ibn Had's propaganda. He made propaganda for Ibn Abi Hafs, the Almohad ruler of Ifriqiyah, and seized power with the help of a group of relatives who were called "the chiefs." He needed no more people than these, because there were so few groups in Spain (at that time) possessing a government (*sultan*) and subjects. Ibn al-Ahmar then sought support against the abominable (Christian ruler) from Zanatah chieftains who came to him from across the sea. These Zanatah chieftains became his associates in defense of the frontier regions and the manning of the garrisons.

Now, the Zanatah (Merinid) ruler of the Maghrib had hopes of gaining power in Spain. But these Zanatah chieftains who were Ibn al-Ahmar's associates defended him. His power, eventually, was firmly established. The people became used to his rule and could do nothing against him. He bequeathed his power to his descendants, who have held it down to the present. One should not think that he was without group support. This was not so. He started out with a group, but it was a small one. However, it was sufficient for his needs, because there were few groups and tribes in (Spain) and, consequently, not much group feeling was needed there, in order to gain the upper hand over the Spaniards.

"God has no need of the worlds." [57](#)

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

As ⁵⁹ to claiming all glory for itself, this is because, as we have mentioned before, royal authority exists through group feeling. Group feeling (such as leads to royal authority) is something composite that results from (the amalgamation of) many groups, one of which is stronger than all the others. Thus, (a group feeling) is able to overcome and gain power over (all the others), and, eventually, brings them all under its sway. Thus, social organization and superiority over men and dynasties come about. The secret here is that a group feeling extending over the entire tribe corresponds to the temper in the things that come into being. Temper is the product (of the mixture) of the elements. It has been explained in the proper place ⁶⁰ that, when the elements are combined in equal proportions, no mixture can take place. One (element) must be superior to the others, and when (it exercises) its superiority over them, mixture occurs. In the same way, one of the various tribal group feelings must be superior to all (others), in order to be able to bring them together, to unite them, and to weld them into one group feeling comprising all the various groups. All the various groups are then under the influence of the superior group feeling.

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

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

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

As ⁶² to going in for luxury, this is because, when a nation has gained the upper hand and taken possession of the holdings of its predecessors who had royal authority, its prosperity and well-being grow. People become accustomed to a great number of things. From the necessities of life and a life of austerity, they progress to the luxuries and a life of comfort and beauty. They come to adopt the customs and (enjoy) the conditions of their predecessors. Luxuries require development of

the customs necessary to produce them. People then also tend toward luxury in food, clothing, bedding (carpets), and household goods. They take pride in such things and vie with other nations in delicacies, gorgeous raiment, and fine mounts. Every new generation wants to surpass the preceding one in this respect, and so it goes right down to the end of the dynasty. The larger the realm ruled by a dynasty, the greater is the share of its people in these luxuries. The limit eventually to be reached is set for a particular dynasty by its own power and by the customs of its predecessors.

This is how God proceeds with His creatures.

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

I wondered at the busy efforts fate made in connection with my relationship with her.

Then, when our relationship had ended, fate became quiet.[64](#)

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

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

This [66](#) can be explained in several ways.

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

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

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

Also, when luxury increases in a dynasty and people's income becomes insufficient for their needs and expenses, the ruler, that is, the government, must increase their allowances in order to tide them over and remedy their unsound condition. The amount of tax revenue, however, is a fixed one. It neither increases nor decreases. When it is increased by new customs duties, the amount to be collected as a result of the increase has fixed limits (and cannot be increased again). And when the tax revenues must go to pay for recently increased allowances that had to be increased for everybody in view of new luxuries and great expenditures, the militia decreases in number from what it had been before the increase in allowances.[67](#)

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

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

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

The new generations grow up in comfort and the ease of luxury and tranquility. The trait of savagery (which former generations had possessed) undergoes transformation. They forget the customs of desert life that enabled them to achieve royal authority, such as great energy, the habit of rapacity, and the ability to travel in the wilderness and find one's way in waste regions. No difference remains between them and ordinary city dwellers, except for their (fighting) skill ⁷¹ and emblems. Their military defense weakens, their energy is lost, and their strength is undermined. The evil effects of this situation on the dynasty show themselves in the form of senility.

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

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

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

This is what happened to the Turkish dynasty in the East. Most members of its army were Turkish clients. The (Turkish) rulers then chose horsemen and soldiers from among the white slaves (Mamelukes) who were brought to them. They were more eager to fight and better able to suffer privations than the children of the earlier white slaves (Mamelukes) who had grown up in easy circumstances as a ruling class in the shadow of the government.

The same was the case with the Almohad (Hafsid) dynasty in Ifriqiyyah. Their rulers often selected their armies from the Zanatah and the Arabs. They used many

of them, and disregarded their own people who had become used to luxury. Thus, the dynasty obtained another, new life, unaffected by senility.

God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it.

12. Dynasties have a natural life span like individuals.

It [72](#) should be known that in the opinion of physicians and astrologers, the natural life (span) of individuals is one hundred and twenty years, that is, the period astrologers call the great lunar year. Within the same generation, the duration of life differs according to the conjunctions. It may be either more or less than one hundred and twenty years. The life (span) of persons who are under some particular conjunction will be a full hundred years. Of others, it will be fifty, or eighty, or seventy years, accordingly as the indications of conjunctions noted by these observers may require. The life of a Muslim lasts between sixty and seventy years.

This is stated in the *hadith* [73](#) The natural life span of one hundred and twenty years is surpassed only on the occasion of rare configurations and extraordinary positions on the firmament. Such was the case with Noah and with a few (individuals) among the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud.

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

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

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

Under the influence of royal authority and a life of ease, the second generation changes from the desert attitude to sedentary culture, from privation to luxury and plenty, from a state in which everybody shared in the glory to one in which one man claims all the glory for himself while the others are too lazy to strive for (glory), and from proud superiority to humble subservience. Thus, the vigor of group feeling is broken to some extent. People become used to lowliness and obedience. But many of (the old virtues) remain in them, because they had had direct personal contact with the first generation and its conditions, and had observed with their own eyes its prowess and striving for glory and its intention to protect and defend (itself). They cannot give all of it up at once, although a good deal of it may

go. They live in hope that the conditions that existed in the first generation may come back, or they live under the illusion that those conditions still exist.

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

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

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

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

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

God determines night and day.⁸³

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

It should be known that these stages are natural ones for 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 obtained, 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 the diverse aspects and ways of (luxury). This concerns, for instance, food, clothing, building, bedding (carpets), utensils, and other household needs. Each one of these things requires special interdependent crafts serving to refine and improve it. (These crafts) increase in number with the (growing) 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 ⁸⁴ 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 of necessity 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.⁸⁵ 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 them 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, bedding (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'udi, at-Tabari, and other (historians) concerning the wedding of al-Ma'mun to Burin, daughter of al-Hasan b. Sahl, one will be amazed.⁸⁶ They tell about the gifts Burin's father made to the retinue of al-Ma'mun when the caliph came by boat to (al-Hasan's) house in Fumm as-silk to ask for Bilran's hand. They tell about the expenditures for the marriage (settlement, *imlak*) and the wedding gifts al-Ma'mun gave her and the expenditures for the wedding. On the wedding day, al-Hasan b. Sahl gave a lavish banquet that was attended by al-Ma'mun's retinue. To members of the first class, al-Hasan 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, (al-Hasan) 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'min had stayed in his house. Also, al-Ma'mun gave Burin a thousand hyacinths (rubies) as her wedding gift (*mahr*) on the wedding night. He burned candles of amber each of which weighed one hundred *mann* [87](#)-a *mann* being one and twothirds pounds (*ritl*). He had put down for her carpets woven with threads of gold and adorned with pearls and hyacinths. When al-Ma'mun saw all this, he said, "That Abu Nuwas is admirable! It is as though he had had this (situation and these carpets) before his eyes when he said, describing wine:

As if its small and large shiny bubbles

Were little pearls upon a ground of gold." [88](#)

One hundred and forty mule loads of wood had been brought three times a day for a whole year to the kitchen and were ready 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 from Baghdad to the royal palaces in the city of al-Ma'mlin [89](#) for the wedding banquet. 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'mun b. Dhi n-nun in Toledo. It was described by Ibn Bassam [90](#) in the *Kitab adh-Dhakhirah* and by Ibn Hayyan.

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 life and their simplicity, they lacked both the means and people with technical ability. It has been said that al-Hajjaj gave a banquet on the occasion of the circumcision of one of his sons. He had one of the Persian landowners brought to him and asked him about the banquets the Persians had given (in former times). He asked him to tell him about the most lavish banquet he had ever attended. The reply was: "Yes, my Lord, I attended the banquet of one of the provincial governors (*marzbans*) of the Persian king, given for the inhabitants of Firs. He used golden plates on tables of silver, four (plates) to each (table). Each (table) was carried by four maidservants, and four persons were seated at each. After they had eaten, the four of them left with the table, the plates on it, and the maidservants." (When he heard that,) al-Hajjaj merely said, "Boy! Have some camels slaughtered and give the people to eat." He realized that he could not afford such sumptuousness as had once actually existed.

The allowances and gratuities the Umayyads gave (their followers) illustrate the point under discussion. In keeping with Arab desert custom, most of (their gratuities) consisted of camels. Then, in the 'Abbisid, the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid), and later dynasties, these gratuities, as one knows, came to be large sums of money, chests of clothes, and horses with their complete trappings.

The same situation prevailed among the Kutamah in their relationship with the Aghlabids in Ifriqiyyah and the Banil Tughsh (Ikhshidids) in Egypt, among the Lamtunah in their relationship with the *reyes de ta'ifas* in Spain and also with the Almohads, and among the Zanatah in their relationship with the Almohads, and so on.

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 'Abbasids. The sedentary culture of the Umayyads in Spain was transferred to the Almohad and Zanatah kings of the contemporary Maghrib. That of

the 'Abbisids was transferred, successively, to the Daylam, to the Saljuq Turks, to the Turks [91](#) in Egypt, and to the Tatars in the two 'Iraqs.

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.[92](#)

God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it.

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

The [93](#) reason for this is that a tribe that has obtained royal authority and luxury is prolific and produces many children, and 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. As we have stated, [94](#) the Arabs at the time of the Prophet and the early caliphs numbered approximately 150,000 Mudar and Qahtan (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'tasim laid siege to the city with 900,000 men.[95](#) 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.

Al-Mas'udi said: [96](#) "The descendants of al-'Abbas b. 'Abd-al-Muttalib were counted in the days of al-Ma'mun, in order to give them pensions. They were found to number 30,000 men and women." It should be noted how great the number had become in less than two hundred years. It should be known that the increase was caused by the luxury and prosperity which the ('Abbasid) dynasty had achieved and in which the new generations had grown up. Otherwise, the number of Arabs, as it had been in the beginning of the conquest, would not even remotely have (permitted) such an increase.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One."[97](#)

15. *The stages of dynasties. How the desert attitude differs among the people in the different stages.* [98](#)

It should be known that a dynasty goes through different stages and encounters new conditions. Through the conditions that are peculiar to a particular stage, the supporters of the dynasty acquire in that stage traits of character such as do not exist in any other stage. Traits of character are the natural result of the peculiar situations in which they are found.

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

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

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

The third stage is one of leisure and tranquillity in which the fruits of royal authority are enjoyed. (These fruits are) the things that human nature desires, such as acquisition of property, creation of lasting monuments, and fame. All the ability (of the ruler) is expended on collecting taxes; regulating income and expenses, bookkeeping and planning [99](#) expenditures; erecting large buildings, big constructions, spacious cities, and lofty monuments; [100](#) presenting gifts to embassies of nobles from (foreign) nations and tribal dignitaries; and dispensing bounty to his own people. In addition, he supports the demands of his followers and retinue with money and positions. He inspects his soldiers, pays them well, and distributes fairly their allowances every month. Eventually, the result of this (liberality) shows itself in their dress, their fine equipment, and their armor on parade days. The ruler thus can impress friendly dynasties and frighten hostile ones with (his soldiers). This stage is the last during which the ruler is in complete authority. Throughout this and the previous stages, the rulers are independent in

their opinions. They build up their strength and show the way for those after them.

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

The fifth stage is one of waste and squandering. In this stage, the ruler wastes on pleasures and amusements (the treasures) accumulated by his ancestors, through (excessive) generosity to his inner circle and at their parties. Also, he acquires bad, low-class followers to whom he entrusts the most important matters (of state), which they are not qualified to handle by themselves, not knowing which of them they should tackle and which they should leave alone. (In addition,) the ruler seeks to destroy the great clients of his people and followers of his predecessors. Thus, they come to hate him and conspire to refuse support to him. (Furthermore) he loses a number of soldiers by spending their allowances on his pleasures (instead of paying them) and by refusing them access to his person and not supervising them (properly). Thus, he ruins the foundations his ancestors had laid and tears down what they had built up. In this stage, the dynasty is seized by senility and the chronic disease from which it can hardly ever rid itself, for which it can find no cure, and, eventually, it is destroyed. We shall explain that in connection with conditions to be discussed later on.[101](#)

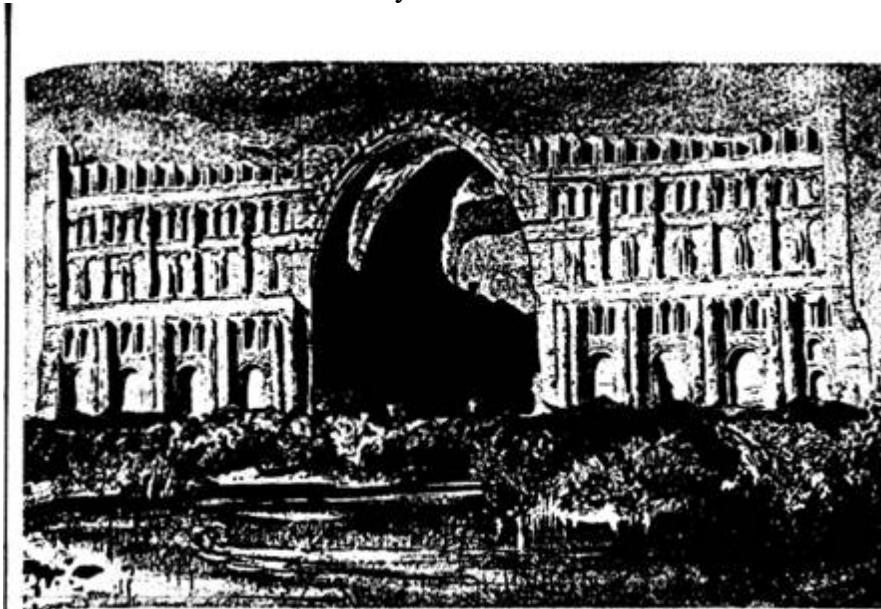
God is the best heir.[102](#)

16. *The monuments of a given dynasty are proportionate to its original power.*¹⁰³

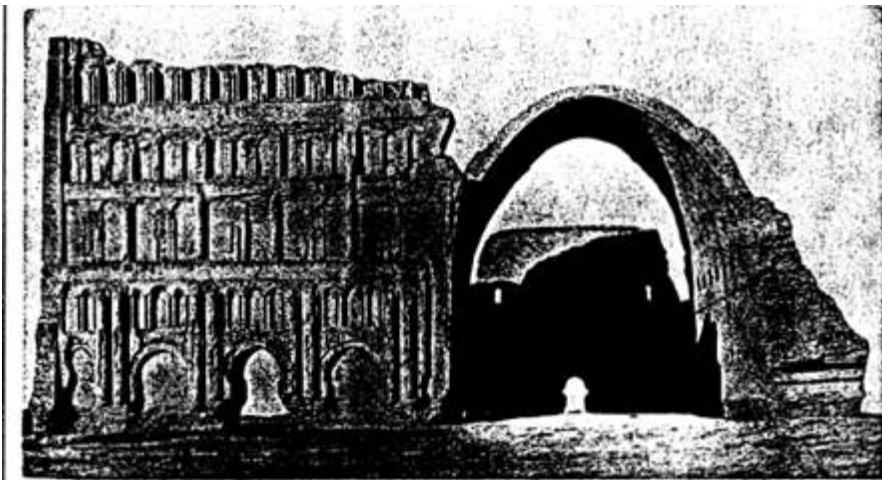
The reason for this is that monuments owe their origin to the power that brought the dynasty into being. The impression the dynasty leaves is proportionate to (that power).

The monuments of a dynasty are its buildings and large (edifices, *haykal*). They are proportionate to the original power of the dynasty. They can materialize only when there are many workers and united action and cooperation. 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 monument (*haykal*) can materialize.

Think of the works of the people of 'Ad and Thamfid, about which the Qur'an tells.¹⁰⁴ Or, one should see with one's own eyes the Reception Hall of Khosraw (*Iwan Kisra*), that powerful achievement of Persian (architecture). Ar-Rashid 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. The story of how he asked Yahya b. Khalid for advice in that affair is well known.¹⁰⁵ It is worth noting that one dynasty was able to construct a building that another dynasty was not able to tear down, even though destruction is much easier than construction.¹⁰⁶ That illustrates the great difference between the two dynasties.



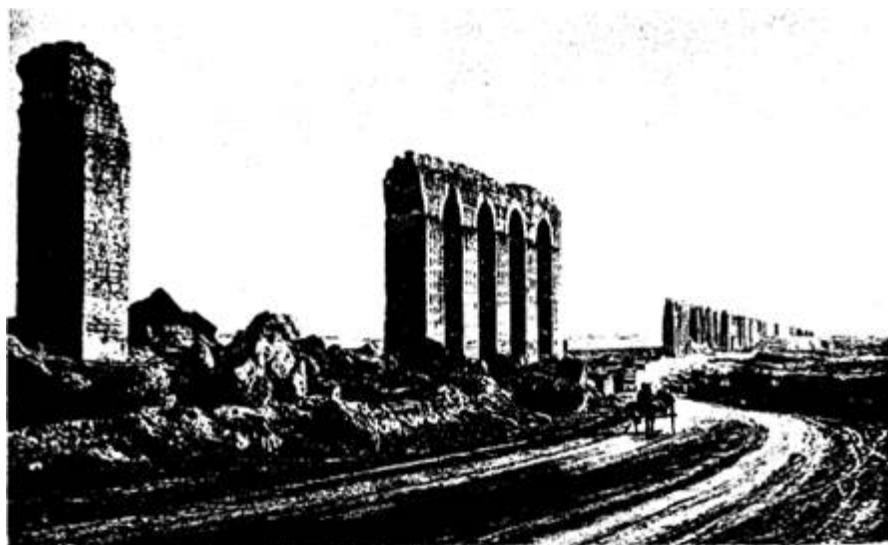
II a. *The Reception Hall of Khosraw in 1869*



II b. The Reception Hall of Khosraw at the beginning of this century



III a. The Roman Bridge in Cordoba



III b. The Roman Aqueduct south of Carthage

One may also compare the Nave [107](#) of al-Walid in Damascus, the Umayyad Mosque in Cordoba, the bridge over the river at Cordoba, 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.

It should be known that all these works of the ancients were possible only through engineering skill and the concerted labor of many workers. Only thus could these monuments (*haykal*) 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.¹⁰⁸ Human beings do not differ in this respect as much as monuments (*haykal*) and relics differ. Storytellers have seized upon the subject and used it to make exaggerated (fables). They have written stories in this vein about the 'Ad and the Thamīd and the Amalekites, which are complete lies. 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.¹⁰⁹ 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.

Also, (the storytellers) say that Og, the son of Anak, was one of the Amalekites or Canaanites¹¹⁰ who fell prey to the children of Israel when they conquered Syria. Now, even those of the children of Israel who at that time were the tallest in body, had bodies in size very like our own bodies. This is proven by the gates of Jerusalem. They were destroyed and have been restored, but their (original) shape and measurements have always been preserved. How, then, could there have been such a difference in size between Og and his contemporaries?

The error of (the storytellers) here 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.

On the authority of the philosophers, al-Mas`udi expressed the following idea, whose only basis is in arbitrary (theorizing):¹¹¹ "When God created the world, the nature (element) that gives bodies their form was completely round [?] ¹¹² and as strong and perfect as could be. Life lasted longer and bodies were stronger, because the nature (element) was then perfect. Death can come only through dissolution of the natural powers. When they are strong, life lasts longer. Thus, in the beginning, the world had (people whose) lives had their full duration and whose bodies were perfect. Because of the deficiency of matter it steadily deteriorated to its present condition, and it will not stop deteriorating until the time of (complete) dissolution and the destruction of the world."

This is an opinion that, as one can see, has only arbitrary (theorizing) as its authority. There is no natural or logical reason for it. We can see with our own eyes the dwellings and doorways of the ancients and the (construction) methods

employed by them in producing their buildings, their monuments (*haykal*), their houses, and (other) dwellings such as the houses of the Thamud, which were hewn out of solid rock, and they were small houses with narrow doors. Muhammad indicated that those (rock dwellings) were the houses (of the Thamud). He prohibited use of their water and (ordered that) the dough for which (the water) had been used be thrown out and (the water) poured on the ground. He said: "Do not enter the dwellings of those who wronged themselves. Only weep (in fear) lest the same misfortune that befell them befall you." [113](#) The same (reasoning) applies to the land of `Ad, to Egypt, Syria, and all the other regions of the earth in the East and the West. The truth is what we have established.

Another (kind of) monument (to the greatness) of a dynasty is the way it handled weddings and (wedding) banquets, as we have mentioned in connection with the wedding of Burin and the banquets of al-Hajjaj and Ibn Dhi n-Nun. All that has been mentioned before. [114](#)

Another monument (to the greatness) of a dynasty is the gifts it made. Gifts are proportionate to (the importance of a dynasty). (This rule) is operating even when the dynasty is close to senility. The aspirations of the members of the dynasty are proportionate to (the strength of) their royal authority and their superiority over the people. These aspirations remain with them until the final destruction of the dynasty.

One may compare the gifts Ibn Dhi Yazan presented to the Qurashite ambassadors. He gave each of them ten pounds (*ritl*) of gold and silver and ten slaves and maidservants and one flask of ambergris. To 'Abd-al-Muttalib, he gave ten times as much. [115](#) Ibn Dhi Yazan's realm, as it was located in the Yemen, was under the complete control of the Persians at that time. His (generosity), however, was caused by his high-mindedness, which stemmed from the royal authority that his family, the Tubba's, had possessed in the Yemen, and from the superiority they had once exercised over the nations of the two 'Irags, India, and the Maghrib. [116](#)

Also, when the Sinhajah (Zirids) in Ifriqiyah presented gifts to an embassy sent them by the amirs of the Zanatah, they gave them large sums of money and full chests of clothes and many fine pack horses. The *History of Ibn arRaqiq* [117](#) contains many stories of this kind.

The way the Barmecides gave allowances and gifts and spent their money was the same. 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. There exist numerous stories in literature to this effect about (the Barmecides). All the (stories) reflect in the proper proportions the (power of the) dynasties (to which they relate).

When Jawhar al-Katib as-Saqlabi, the general of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) army, set out on his conquest of Egypt, he was provided by al-Qayrawan with a thousand loads of money. [118](#) No dynasty today would be able to approach that. [119](#)

There exists in the handwriting of Ahmad b. Muhammad b. 'Abd-al-Hamid a list showing the receipts of the treasury at Baghdad from all regions (of the realm) in al-Ma'mun's day. I copied it from the book of Jirab ad-dawlah: [120](#)

The Saw ad (Southern Mesopotamia)

Crops: 27,780,000 dirhams [121](#)

Different kinds of revenue:

[122](#) 14,800,000 dirhams

Najrani cloaks: 200

Sealing clay: 240 pounds

Kaskar	11,600,000 dirhams
Tigris counties	20,800,000 dirhams
Hulwan	4,800,000 dirhams
Al-Ahwaz	25,000 dirhams 123 Sugar: 30,000 pounds
Firs	27,000,000 dirhams Rose water: 30,000 bottles Black raisins: 20,000 pounds
Kirman	4,200,000 dirhams Yemenite garments: 500 Dates: 20,000 pounds Cumin seeds: 1,000 pounds 124
Mukrin	400,000 dirhams
Western India (Sind) and neighboring Territories	11,500,000 dirhams Indian aloe wood: 150 pounds
Sijistin	4,000,000 dirhams 125 Checkered 126 garments: 300 Sugar-candy: 127 20,000 pounds
Khurasan	28,000,000 dirhams Silver ingots: 1,000 Pack animals: 4,000 Slaves: 1,000 head Garments: 27,000 Myrobalan: 30,000 pounds
Jurjan	12,000,000 dirhams Silk: 1,000 pieces 128
Qumis	1,500,000 dirhams Silver ingots: 1,000
Tabaristan, ar-Ruyan and Nihawand 129	6,300,000 dirhams Tabaristan carpets: 600 pieces Robes: 200 Garments: 500 Napkins: 300 Goblets: 300 130
ar-Rayy	12,000,000 dirhams Honey: 20,000 pounds 131
Hamadhan	11,800,000 dirhams Pomegranate marmalade: 1,000 pounds 132

	Honey: 12,000 pounds
The region between [I] 133 al-Basrah and al-Kufah	10,700,000 dirhams
Masabadhin and ar-Ray-yan 134	4,000,000 dirhams
Shahrazur	6,000,000 dirhams 135
Mosul and environs	24,000,000 dirhams
	White honey: 20,000 pounds
Azerbaijan	4,000,000 dirhams
The Jazirah and neighboring Euphrates districts	34,000,000 dirhams
Karaj 136	300,000 dirhams
Jilan	5,000,000 dirhams
	Slaves: 1,000 head 137
	Honey: 12,000 bags
	Falcons: 10
	Robes: 20
Armenia	13,000,000 dirhams
	Embroidered carpets: 20
	Variegated cloth: 580 pounds 138
	Salted <i>Surmahi</i> fish: 139
	10,000 pounds
	Herring: 140 10,000 pounds
	Mules: 200 Falcons: 30
Qinnasrin	400,000 dinars 141
	Raisins: 1,000 loads
Damascus	420,000 dinars
Jordan	96,000 dinars
Palestine	310,000 dinars
	Raisins: 300,000 pounds 142
Egypt	1,920,000 dinars
Barca (Barqah)	1,000,000 dirhams
Ifriqiyah	13,000,000 dirhams
	Carpets: 120
Yemen	370,000 dinars, 143 excluding garments
Hija'z	300,000 dinars

(End of the list)

Regarding Spain, reliable historians of (that country) have reported that 'Abd-ar-Rahman an-Nasir [144](#) left 5,000,000 dinars weighing altogether 500 hundredweight, in his treasuries.

I have seen in one of the histories of ar-Rashid that in his day the income of the treasury was 7,500 hundredweight [145](#) each year.

Regarding [146](#) the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) dynasty, I have read in the *History* of Ibn Khallikan, with reference to the army commander [147](#) al-Afdal b. Badr al-Jamali who controlled the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) caliphs in Egypt, that when al-Afdal was killed, 600,000 dinars and 250 *irdabbs* of dirhams were found in his treasury, as well as a correspondingly large amount of precious stones for rings, pearls, fabrics, household goods [147a](#), riding animals, and pack animals.

As for the dynasties of our own time, the greatest of them is that of the Turks in Egypt. It became important in the days of the Turkish ruler an-Nasir Muhammad b. Qala'in. At the beginning of his rule, the two amirs, Baybars and Sallar, had gained power over him, and Baybars had deposed him and occupied his throne, with Sallar as his partner. Then, shortly after an-Nasir regained the rule, he seized (Baybars') partner Sallar and cleaned out his treasury. [148](#) I have come across the inventory of that treasury and quote from it:

Yellow hyacinths 149 and rubies 150	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds
Emeralds	19 pounds
Diamonds and cat's-eyes for rings	900 large pieces
Assorted ring-stones	2 pounds
Round pearls, weighing from one <i>mithqal</i> ($1\frac{1}{2}$ dirhams) to one dirham 151	1,150 pieces
Coined gold	1,400,000 dinars
A pool full of pure gold Purses full of gold, discovered between two walls. It is not known how many there were.	
Dirhams	2,071,000
Jewelry	4 hundredweight

Also, a proportionately large amount of fabrics, household goods, riding animals, pack animals, (grain) crops, [152](#) cattle, male and female slaves, and estates.

Still later, we have the Merinid dynasty in Morocco. In their treasury, I came across an inventory in the handwriting of the Merinid minister of finance, Hassun b. al-Bawwaq. [153](#) (The inventory states that) the property left by Sultan Abu Sa'id in his treasury was over 700 hundredweight of gold dinars. He also had other property of a proportionately large amount. His son and successor, Abu 1-Hasan, had even more than that. When he took possession of Tlemcen [154](#) he found more than 300 hundredweight of gold in coins and (gold) jewelry, and a correspondingly large amount of other property in the treasuries of the Sultan of (Tlemcen), the 'Abd al-Wadud Abu Tashfin.

As to the Almohad (Hafsid) rulers of Ifriqiyyah, I lived in the time of their [155](#) ninth ruler, Abu Bakr. He had seized [156](#) Muhammad b. al-Hakim, the commander of his armies, and had cleaned him out. He got forty hundredweight of gold dinars and a bushel of precious stones for rings, as well as pearls. He took an

amount close to that in carpets from his houses, and a correspondingly large amount of estates and other possessions.

I was in Egypt in the days of al-Malik az-Zahir Abu Sa'id Barquq, who had seized power from the descendants of Qala'un, when he arrested his minister of the interior, the amir Mahmud¹⁵⁷ and confiscated his property. The man charged with the confiscation informed me that the amount of gold he cleaned out was 1,600,000 dinars. There was in addition a proportionately large amount of fabrics, riding animals, pack animals, livestock, and (grain) crops.

A ¹⁵⁸ 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.¹⁵⁹ Many excellent men, hearing stories of this kind about past dynasties, have not believed them. This is not right. The 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 'Abbasids, the Umayyads, and the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) 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 a dynasty (leaves behind it) are proportionate to the original strength (of that dynasty). 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, Abu 'Inan, *a shaykh* from Tangier, by name Ibn Battutah,¹⁶⁰ came (back) to the Maghrib. Twenty years before, he had left for the East and journeyed through the countries of the 'Iraq, the Yemen, and India. He had come to the city of Delhi, the seat of the ruler of India, the Sultan Muhammad Shah,¹⁶¹ (The ruler) esteemed Ibn Battutah highly and employed him as Malikite judge in his domain. He then returned to the Maghrib and made contact with the Sultan Abu 'Inan. He used to tell about experiences he had had on his travels and about the remarkable things he had seen in the 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 ¹⁶² 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.¹⁶³ From the mangonels, bags of dirhams and dinars were shot out over the people, until the ruler entered his audience hall.

Ibn Battutah told other similar stories, and people in the dynasty (in official positions) whispered to each other that he must be a liar. During that time, one day I met the Sultan's famous wazir, Faris b. Wadrar. 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 Faris 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 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.¹⁶⁴ 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. (In using the word "possible") 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,¹⁶⁵ 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).

"Say: God, give me more knowledge." ¹⁶⁶

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

It [167](#) should be known that, as we have stated, 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. [168](#) With the approach of the second stage, the ruler shows himself independent of his people, [169](#) 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 power), the ruler needs other friends, not of his own skin, whom he can use against (his own people) and who will be his friends in their place. These (new friends) 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 many honors. 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 (even) 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 the ruler (shows against them). 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 Waggas, 'Ubaydallah b. Ziyad b. Abi Sufyan, al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf, al-Muhallab b. Abi Sufrah, Khalid b. `Abdallah al-Qasri, Ibn Hubayrah, Musa b. Nusayr, Bilal b. Abi Burdah b. Abi Musa al-Ash'ari, Nasr b. Sayyir, and other Arab personalities. For a while [170](#) the 'Abbasid 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 and followers such as the Barmecides, the Banu Sahl b. Nawbakht, [171](#) and, later, the

Buyids, and Turkish clients such as Bughi, Wasif, Utamish, Bakiyik (Bayakbak), Ibn Tulun, and their descendants, among other non-Arab clients. Thus, the dynasty came to belong to people other than those who had established it. The 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.*

It should be known that followers in a dynasty occupy different positions in (the) dynasty depending on whether their close contact with the ruler is of old or of recent date. The reason for this is that the purpose of group feeling, which is defense and aggression, can materialize only with the help of a common descent. For, as we have stated before,¹⁷² blood relations and other close relatives help each other, while strangers and outsiders do not. Client relationships¹⁷³ and contacts with slaves or allies have the same effect as (common descent). The consequences of (common) descent, though natural, still are something imaginary.¹⁷⁴ 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 obtained 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 obtain) royal authority, they are a model in their ways.¹⁷⁵ 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 obtained 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 (existing) 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 to the ruler) than they were before (the ruler obtained) royal authority.

Second: Followers from before (the time the ruler obtained) royal authority had the status of followers long before the dynasty (came to power).¹⁷⁶ It is, thus, no longer clear (to contemporaries) how the close contact (originally) 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 obtained) 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 (known) dynasties and other cases of (political) leadership will show this to be so. Follower relationships formed before leadership and royal authority were obtained, 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 obtained do not show the same close connection that exists in the first (group). One may observe this with one's own eyes.

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 impending. 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. (Thus, they are familiar with him) and, as a result (of their familiarity with him), they become proud and overbearing towards him. This is the reason 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.¹⁷⁷

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."

"God is the friend of the believers." ¹⁷⁸

19. *Seclusion* [178a](#) 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 the 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 fulfill 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 he exercises the control, and he uses the fact as a tool to achieve royal authority. He keeps the child away from his people. He accustoms him to the pleasures of his 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, [179](#) being addressed as Sire (*mawla*), 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 (defense 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 coloring 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 Buyids and the Turks, with Kaffir al-Ikhshidi [180](#) and others in the East, and with alMansur b. Abi 'Amir 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 the 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. [181](#)

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

"God gives His kingdom (royal authority) to whomever He wants to give it."¹⁸²

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 coloring of royal authority and superiority. (The coloring,) then, continues to exist. Through it, the identity and persistence of the dynasty are assured.

Now, the person who gains superiority (over the ruler) may have a share in the group feeling that belongs to the tribe which has obtained 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 coloring 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.¹⁸³ 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 it¹⁸⁴ and contrive to appropriate (the royal prerogatives) for themselves, to his exclusion. He has no definite coloring 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.

Something of the sort happened to 'Abd-ar-Rahman b. al-Mansir b. Abi 'Amir.¹⁸⁵ He aspired to share the title of caliph with Hisham and his house. He was not satisfied with control of the executive power and the resulting forms (of honor) with which his father and brother had been satisfied. He sought to be entrusted with the caliphate by his caliph, Hisham. The Marwanids (Umayyads) and the other Qurashites were furious to see him do that. They took the oath of allegiance to a cousin of the caliph Hisham, Muhammad (b. Hisham) b. 'Abd-al-Jabbir b. an-Nasir, and revolted against (the party of Ibn Abi 'Amir). That caused the ruin of the 'Amirid dynasty and the destruction of their caliph (Hisham) al-Mu'ayyad. In (al-Mu'ayyad's) place, someone else from among the leaders of the dynasty was chosen, (and his house remained in power) down to the end of the dynasty and the dissolution of their pattern of royal authority.

God is the best heir.

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

Royal [186](#) authority is an institution that is natural to mankind. We have explained before [187](#) that human beings cannot live and exist except through social organization and cooperation for the purpose of obtaining their food and (other) necessities of life. When they have organized, necessity requires that they deal with each other and (thus) satisfy (their) needs. Each one will stretch out his hand for whatever he needs and (try simply to) take it, [188](#) since injustice and aggressiveness are in the animal nature. The others, in turn, will try to prevent him from taking it, motivated by wrathfulness [189](#) and spite and the strong human reaction when (one's own property is menaced). This causes dissension. (Dissension) leads to hostilities, and hostilities lead to trouble and bloodshed and loss of life, which (in turn) lead to the destruction of the (human) species. Now, (the human species) is one of the things the Creator has especially (told us) 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 (actually) exercises authority. In this connection, group feeling is absolutely necessary, for as we have stated before, [190](#) aggressive and defensive enterprises can succeed only with the help of group feeling. As one can see, royal authority of this kind is a noble institution, toward which all claims are directed, and (one) that needs to be defended. Nothing of the sort can materialize except with the help of group feelings, as has been mentioned before.

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

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

Then, there are people whose group feeling is not strong enough to gain control over all the other group feelings or to stop everyone, so that there exists an authority superior to theirs. Their royal authority is also defective, and not royal authority in the real meaning of the term. It is exercised, for instance, by provincial amirs and regional chieftains who are all under one dynasty. This situation is often found in farflung dynasties. I mean that there are rulers of provincial and remote regions who rule their own people but also obey the central power of the dynasty. Such was the relationship of the Sinhajah with the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids); of the Zanatah with the (Spanish) Umayyads at one time and with the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids)

at another; of the non-Arab (Persian) rulers with the 'Abbasids; of the Berber amirs and rulers with the European Christians (in the Maghrib) prior to Islam; and of the rulers of the (old) Persian successor states with Alexander and his Greeks.

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

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

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

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

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

It should be known that an alert and very shrewd person rarely has the habit of mildness. Mildness is usually found in careless and unconcerned persons. The least (of the many drawbacks) of alertness (in a ruler) is that he imposes tasks upon his subjects that are beyond their ability, because he is aware of things they do not perceive and, through his genius, foresees the outcome of things at the start. (The ruler's excessive demands) may lead to his subjects' ruin. Muhammad said: "Follow the pace of the weakest among you," [195a](#)

The Lawgiver (Muhammad), therefore, made it a condition that the ruler not be too shrewd. The source for (this statement) is a story about Ziyad b. Abi

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

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

"God creates whatever He wishes."¹⁹⁹

23. *The meaning of caliphate and imamate.*

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

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

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

This is because the purpose of human beings is not only their worldly welfare. This entire world is trifling and futile. It ends in death and annihilation. God says: "Do you think that we created you triflingly?" [204](#) The purpose (of human beings) is their religion, which leads them to happiness in the other world, "the path of God to whom belongs that which is in heaven and that which is on earth." [205](#) Therefore, religious laws have as their purpose to cause (human beings) to follow such a course in all their dealings with God and their fellow men. This (situation) also applies to royal authority, which is natural in human social organization. (The religious laws) guide it along the path of religion, so that everything will be under the supervision of the religious law. Anything (done by royal authority) that is dictated by force, superiority, or the free play of the power of wrathfulness, is tyranny and injustice and considered reprehensible by (the religious law), as it is also considered reprehensible by the requirements of political wisdom. Likewise, anything (done by royal authority) that is dictated (merely) by considerations of policy or political decisions without supervision of the religious law [206](#) is also reprehensible, because it is vision lacking the divine light. "He for whom God makes no light has no light whatever." [207](#) The Lawgiver (Muhammad) knows better than the mass itself what is good for them so far as the affairs of the other world, which are concealed from the mass itself, are concerned. At the Resurrection, the actions of human beings, whether they had to do with royal authority or anything else, will all come back to them. Muhammad said: "It is your own actions that are brought back to you."

Political laws consider only worldly interests. "They know the outward life
[208](#)

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

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

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

24. *The differences of Muslim opinion concerning the laws and conditions governing the caliphate.*²¹⁰

We have (just) explained the real meaning of the institution of (the caliphate). It substitutes for the Lawgiver (Muhammad) in as much 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 ²¹¹ later times, he has (also) 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 name "*imam*" is derived from the comparison (of the caliph) with the leader (*imam*) of prayer, since (the caliph) is followed and taken as a model like the prayer leader. Therefore (the caliphate) is called the "great imamate."

The name "caliph" (*khalifah*) is given to the caliph, because he "represents" (*kh-lf*) the Prophet in Islam. One uses "caliph" alone, or "caliph of the Messenger of God." There is a difference of opinion concerning the use of "caliph of God." Some consider (this expression) permissible as derived from the general "caliphate" (representation of God) of all the descendants of Adam, implied in the verse of the Qur'an, "I am making on earth a caliph," and the verse, "He made you caliphs on earth." ²¹² But, in general, it is not considered permissible to use (the expression "caliph of God"), since the verse quoted has no reference to it (in connection with the caliphate in the specific sense of the term). Abu Bakr forbade the use (of the expression "caliph of God") when he was thus addressed. He said, "I am not the caliph of God, but the caliph (representative, successor) of the Messenger of God." Furthermore, one can have a "caliph" (representative, successor) of someone who is absent, but not of someone who is present (as God always is).

The position of imam is a necessary one. The consensus of the men around Muhammad 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 Abu 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 indicated by the intellect (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 position of imam) intellectually (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 (disagreement) leads to trouble which, in turn, may lead to the destruction and uprooting of mankind. Now, the preservation of the (human) 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 prophecy as something (intellectually) necessary for mankind. We [213](#) have already shown the incorrectness of (their argumentation). 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 the Magians [214](#) and other nations who had no scriptures and had not been reached by a prophetic mission.

Or, we might say (against the alleged rational necessity of the caliphate): 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. (Disagreement) 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 (the position of imam) is indicated by the religious law, that is, by general 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-Asamm [215](#) and certain Kharijites, 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 position of imam is not necessary. Those (who so argue) are refuted by the general consensus. The reason why they adopted such an opinion was that they (attempted 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 practiced them, and that it encouraged the desire to abolish them.

It should be known that 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. (On the other hand,) the religious law praises justice, fairness, the fulfillment of religious duties, and the defense of the 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 [216](#) 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.[217](#) 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).[218](#)

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 (the existence of) 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 general consensus, (it must be added that the institution of the imamate) is a community duty [219](#) and is left to the discretion of all competent Muslims. [220](#) 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 Messenger and the people in authority among you." [221](#)

It [222](#) 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. Those traditions are found in the book, "On Leadership (*imarah*)," in the *Sahih* by Muslim. [223](#) They expressly indicate that this is so.

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.

Among the famous authorities who are reported to have held this opinion is Professor Abu Ishaq al-Isfariyini, [224](#) the leading speculative theologian. The Imam al-Haramayn [225](#) also showed himself inclined toward it in his *Kitab al-Irshad*. The opinions of the Spaniards and Maghribis often make it evident that they, too, were inclined toward it. The numerous religious scholars in Spain rendered the oath of allegiance to the Umayyads and gave the Umayyad 'Abd-ar-Rahman an-Nasir and his descendants the title of Commander of the Faithful. This title is characteristic of the caliphate, as we shall mention [226](#) Somewhat later, the Almohads in the Maghrib did the same thing.

Some scholars have rejected (the possibility of more than one imam) with reference to the general consensus. This is no evident (proof), for if there existed a general consensus on the point, neither Professor Abfi Ishaq nor the Imam al-Haramayn would have opposed it. They knew better (than any one else) what the consensus meant. Indeed, the imam al-Mazari [227](#) and an-Nawawi [228](#) have been refuted [229](#) on the basis of the afore-mentioned evident sense of the traditions (in Muslim's *Sahih*).

Certain more recent scholars have occasionally argued in favor of (a single imam) with the argument of mutual antagonism [230](#) referred to by the divine revelation in the verse, "If there were other gods except God in the two (heaven and earth), they (heaven and earth) would have been destroyed." [231](#) However, nothing of relevance in this connection can be deduced from the verse, because its (force as an) argument is in the field of the intellect. God called our attention to (the verse), so that we might have a rational proof of the oneness of God in which we are enjoined to believe, and so that, as a result, (this dogma) might be more firmly grounded. (On the other hand,) what we want to find out in connection with the imamate is why it is forbidden to set up two imams (at the same time), and that is something that belongs to the field of religious law and religious obligations (rather than to the field of the intellect). Thus, the (verse of the Qur'an quoted) cannot be used for any deduction (in this connection), unless we establish it as belonging to the field of the religious law by the addition of another premise, namely, that (quite generally) from an increase in number there results corruption, and we are to keep away from anything that may lead to corruption. Then, (the verse) can be used for deductions in the field of religious law. And God knows better.

The conditions 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 condition, that is, (5) Qurashite descent.

(1) (The necessity of) knowledge as a condition 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 ('adalah) [232](#) is required because (the imamate) is a religious institution and supervises all the other institutions that require (probity). Thus, it is all the more necessary that (probity) be a condition required of (the imamate). There is no difference of opinion as to the fact that the (imam's) 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 (made or adopted by the imam).

(3) Competence means that (the imam) 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 go (to war). 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 fulfill his functions of protecting the religion, leading in the holy war against the enemy, maintaining the (religious) laws, [233](#) and administering the (public) interests.

(4) Freedom of the senses and limbs from defects or incapacitations 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 condition of the imamate, because all such defects affect the (imam's) full ability to act and to fulfill his duties. Even in the case of a defect that merely disfigures the appearance, as, for instance, loss of one limb, the condition of freedom from defects (remains in force as a condition in the sense that it) aims at perfection (in the imam).

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 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 (the imam). If not, the Muslims must look for help. (They must look to) 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 condition of Qurashite origin is based upon the general consensus on this point that obtained in the men around Muhammad on the day of the SagIfah. [234](#) On that day, the Ansar intended to render the oath of allegiance to Sa'd b. 'Ubadah. They said: "One amir from among us, and another from among you." [235](#) But the Qurashites argued against them with Muhammad's statement, "The imams are from among the Quraysh." [236](#) They also argued that Muhammad had exhorted them "to do good to (those of the Ansar) who do good, and leave unpunished those of them who do evil." [237](#) Now, (the Qurashites) said, if the leadership were to be given to (the Ansar), the latter would not have been recommended (to their care as indicated in Muhammad's statement). The Ansar bowed to these arguments and retracted their

statement (just quoted), "One amir from among us, and another from among you." They gave up their intention to render the oath of allegiance to Sa'd. It is also well established by sound tradition that "this thing (the Muslim state) will always remain with this Qurashite tribe." [238](#) There are many other similar proofs.

However, the power of the Quraysh weakened. Their group feeling vanished in consequence of the life of luxury and prosperity they led, and in consequence of the fact that the dynasty expended them all over the earth. (The Qurashites) thus became too weak to fulfill the duties of the caliphate. The non-Arabs gained superiority over them, and the executive power fell into their hands. This caused much confusion among thorough scholars (with regard to Qurashite origin as a condition of the caliphate). They eventually went so far as to deny that Qurashite descent was a condition (of the imamate). They based themselves upon the evident sense (of certain statements), such as Muhammad's statement, "Listen and obey, even should an Abyssinian slave, with (a head as black as) a raisin, be your governor." [239](#) This (statement), however, is no valid proof in connection with (the problem in question). It is just a hypothetical parable which, in an exaggerated form, is meant to stress the duty of obedience.

There [240](#) is also 'Umar's statement, "If Salim, the client of Abu Hudhayfah, were alive, I would appoint him,"-or: "... I would not have had any objection against him." [241](#) This statement also has nothing to do (with the problem in question). It is known that the opinion of one of the men around Muhammad (such as 'Umar, in this particular case) does not constitute a proof. Furthermore, people's clients belong to them. [242](#) Salim's group feeling in his capacity as client was that of the Qurashites. And it is (group feeling) that is important when specific descent is made a condition (of the imamate). 'Umar had a high opinion of the caliphate. He thought, as he looked at it, that the conditions governing it were (all but) disregarded. Thus, he turned to Salim, because, in his opinion, the latter abundantly fulfilled the conditions governing the caliphate, including his client relationship which provided for group feeling, as we shall mention. [243](#) Only, a pure (Qurashite) descent was not there. ('Umar) considered it unnecessary, because the importance of descent lies solely in group feeling, and (group feeling) may result from a client relationship (such as that of Salim, as well as from common descent). The reason for 'Umar's (statement) was his desire to look after (the best interests of) the Muslims and to entrust their government to a man beyond reproach who (would not commit acts for which he, 'Umar,) would be held responsible.

Among those who deny that Qurashite descent is a condition (of the imamate) is Judge Abu Bakr al-Bagillani. [244](#) 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 condition of Qurashite origin (for the imamate), even though it meant agreeing with the Kharijites.

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 condition of competence, which requires that (the imam must) 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 (of the imamate) would no longer be considered, and this would be contrary to the general consensus.

We shall now discuss the wisdom of making descent a condition of the

imamate, so that the correct facts underlying all those opinions will be recognized. We say:

All religious laws must have (specific) purposes and significant meanings of their own, on account of which they were made. If we, now, investigate the wisdom of Qurashite descent as a condition (of the imamate) and the purpose which the Lawgiver (Muhammad) had in mind, (we shall find that) in this connection he did not only think of the blessing that lies in direct relationship with the Prophet, as is generally (assumed). Such direct relationship exists (in the case of Qurashite descent), and it is a blessing. However, it is known that the religious law has not as its purpose to provide blessings. Therefore, if (a specific) descent be made a condition (of the imamate), there must be a (public) interest which was the purpose behind making it into law. If we probe into the matter and analyze it, we find that the (public) interest is nothing else but regard for group feeling. (Group feeling) gives protection and helps people to press their claims. The existence of (group feeling) frees the incumbent in the position (of imam) from opposition and division. The Muslim community accepts him and his family, and he can establish friendly terms with them.

Now, the Quraysh were the outstanding, original, and superior leaders of the Mudar. Their number, their group feeling, and their nobility gave them power over all the other Mudar. All other Arabs acknowledged that fact and bowed to their superiority. Had the rule been entrusted to anybody else, it may be expected that their opposition and refusal to submit would have broken the whole thing up. No other Mudar tribe would have been able to sway them from their attitude of opposition and to carry them along against their will. The community would have been broken up. The whole thing would have been torn by dissension. The Lawgiver (Muhammad) warned against that. He showed himself desirous to have them agree and to remove dissension and confusion from among them, for the sake of establishing close contact and group feeling and improved protection. (No dissension or confusion but rather) the opposite (could be expected to be the case), were the Quraysh to be in power. They were able, through superior force, to drive people into doing what was expected of them. There was no fear that anybody would oppose them. There was no fear of division. The Quraysh were able to assume the responsibility of doing away with (division) and of preventing people from (splitting up). Therefore, Qurashite descent was made a condition of the institution of (the imamate). The Quraysh represented the strongest (available) group feeling. (Qurashite descent of the imam,) it was thus (hoped), would be more effective (than anything else) in organizing the Muslim community and bringing harmony into it. When Qurashite affairs were well organized, all Mudar affairs were likewise well organized. Thus, all the other Arabs obeyed them. Nations other than the Arabs submitted to the laws of the Muslim community. Muslim armies entered the most remote countries. That happened in the days of the conquests. It remained that way later on in the (Umayyad and 'Abbasid) dynasties, until the power of the caliphate dissolved and the Arab group feeling vanished. The great number of the Quraysh and their superiority over the Mudar subtribes is known to all diligent students of, and experts in, Arab history, biography, and relevant conditions. Ibn Ishaq mentioned this in the *Kitab as-siyar*, and (so did) other (authors).²⁴⁵

If it is established that Qurashite (descent) as a condition (of the imamate) was intended to remove dissension with the help of (Qurashite) group feeling and superiority, and if we know that the Lawgiver (Muhammad) does not make special laws for any one generation, period, or nation, we also know that (Qurashite descent) falls under (the heading of) competence. Thus, we have linked it up with (the condition of competence) and have established the overall purpose of (the

condition of) Qurashite (descent), which is the existence of group feeling. Therefore, we consider it a (necessary) condition for the person in charge of the affairs of the Muslims that he belong to people who possess a strong group feeling, superior to that of their contemporaries, so that they can force the others to follow them and the whole thing can be united for effective protection. (Such group feeling as a rule) does not comprise all areas and regions. Qurashite (group feeling), however, was all-comprehensive, since the mission of Islam, which the Quraysh represented, was all-comprehensive, and the group feeling of the Arabs was adequate to that mission. Therefore, (the Arabs) overpowered all the other nations. At the present time, however, each region has people of its own who represent the superior group feeling (there).

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 not 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-Khatib,²⁴⁶ 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-Khatib'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 (actions). Therefore, women are directly told (to fulfill 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.

And God, He is exalted, knows better.

25. *Shi'ah tenets concerning the question of the imamate.*

It should be known that, linguistically, *Shi'ah* means "companions and followers." In the customary usage of old and modern jurists and speculative theologians, the word is used for the followers and descendants of 'All. The tenet on which they all agree is that the imamate is not a general (public) interest to be delegated to the Muslim nation for consideration and appointment of a person to fill it. (To the Shi'ah,) it is a pillar and fundamental article of Islam. No prophet [247](#) is permitted to neglect it or to delegate (the appointment of an imam) to the Muslim nation. It is incumbent upon him to appoint an imam for the (Muslims). The imam cannot commit [248](#) sins either great or small. 'Ali is the one whom Muhammad appointed. The (Shi'ah) transmit texts (of traditions) in support of (this belief), which they interpret so as to suit their tenets. The authorities on the Sunnah and the transmitters of the religious law do not know these texts. Most of them are supposititious, or some of their transmitters are suspect, or their (true) interpretation is very different from the wicked interpretation that (the Shi'ah) give to them.

According to (the Shi'ah), these texts fall into the two categories of express and implied statements. [249](#) An express statement, for instance, is the following statement (by Muhammad): "Ali is master of those whose master I am." [250](#) As they say, such a position of master (mentioned in the tradition) applies only to 'Ali. 'Umar thus said to him: "You have become the master of all believers, men and women."

Another tradition of this sort is the following statement of (Muhammad): "Your best judge is 'Ali." Imamate means exclusively the activity of judging in accordance with the divine laws. (The activity of) judging and being a judge is (what is) meant by "the people in authority" whom God requires us to obey in the verse of the Qur'an: "Obey God, and obey the Messenger and the people in authority among you." [251](#) Therefore, 'All and no other was arbitrator in the question of the imamate on the day of the Saqifah. [252](#)

Another statement of this sort is the following statement by (Muhammad): "He who renders the oath of allegiance to me upon his life is my legatee and the man who will be in charge of this authority here after me." Only 'Ali rendered the oath of allegiance to him (in this manner).

An implied (argument), according to the Shi'ah, is the fact that the Prophet sent 'All to recite the *surat al-Bara'ah* [253](#) at the festival (in Mecca) when it had (just) been revealed. He first sent Abu Bakr with it. Then it was revealed to Muhammad that "a man from you,"-or: "... from your people"- "should transmit it." Therefore, he sent 'Ali to transmit it. As they say, this proves that 'Ali was preferred (by Muhammad). Furthermore, it is not known that Muhammad ever preferred anyone to 'All, while he preferred Usamah b. Zayd [254](#) and 'Amr b. al-' As [255](#) to both Abu Bakr and 'Umar during two different raids. According to (the Shi'ah), all these things prove that 'Ali and no one else was appointed (by Muhammad) to the caliphate. However, some of the statements quoted are little known, and others require an interpretation very different from that which (the Shi'ah) give.

Some (Shi'ah) hold the opinion that these texts prove both the personal appointment of 'All and the fact that the imamate is transmitted from him to his successors. They are the Imamiyah. They renounce the two *shaykhs* (Abu Bakr and 'Umar), because they did not give precedence to 'Ali and did not render the oath of allegiance to him, as required by the texts quoted. The Imamiyah do not take the imamates (of Abu Bakr and 'Umar) seriously. But we do not want to bother with transmitting the slanderous things said about (Abfi Bakr and 'Umar) by (Imamiyah) extremists. They are objectionable in our opinion and (should be) in theirs.

Other (Shi'ah) say that these proofs require the appointment of 'All not in person but as far as (his) qualities are concerned. They say that people commit an error when they do not give the qualities their proper place. They are the Zaydiyah. They do not renounce the two *shaykhs* (Abu Bakr and 'Umar). They do take their imamates seriously, but they say that 'All was superior to them. They permit an inferior person to be the imam, even though a superior person may be alive (at the same time).²⁵⁶

The Shi'ah ²⁵⁷ differ in opinion concerning the succession to the caliphate after 'Ali. Some have it passed on among the descendants of Fatimah in succession, through testamentary determination (*nass*). We shall mention that later on. They (who believe this) are called the Imamiyah, with reference to their statement that knowledge of the imam and the fact of his being appointed are an article of the faith. That is their fundamental tenet.

Others consider the descendants of Fatimah the (proper) successors to the imamate, but through selection (of an imam) from among the Shi'ah. The conditions governing (selection of) that imam are that he have knowledge, be ascetic, generous, and brave, and that he go out to make propaganda for his imamate. They (who believe this) are the Zaydiyah, so named after the founder of the sect, Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn, the grandson of Muhammad. He had a dispute with his brother Muhammad al-Bagir concerning the condition that the imam has to come out openly. Al-Bagir charged him with implying that, in the way Zayd looked at it, their father Zayn-al-'abidin would not be an imam, because he had not come out openly and had made no preparations to do so. He also accused him of holding Mu'tazilah tenets which he had learned from Wasil b. 'Ata. When the Imamiyah discussed the question of the imamates of the two *shaykhs* (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) with Zayd, and noticed that he admitted their imamates and did not renounce them, they disavowed him and did not make him one of the imams. On account of that fact, they are called "Disavowers" (*Rafidah*).

Some (Shi'ah) consider as successors to the imamate, after 'All-or after his two sons, Muhammad's grandsons (al-Hasan and al-Husayn), though they disagree in this respect-(al-Hasan's and al-Husayn's) brother, Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyah, and then the latter's children. They are the Kaysiniyah, so named after Kaysin, a client of ('Ali's).²⁵⁸

There are many differences among these sects which we have omitted here for the sake of brevity.

There are also (Shi'ah) sects that are called "Extremists" (*ghulah*). They transgress the bounds of reason and the faith of Islam when they speak of the divinity of the imams. They either assume that the imam is a human being with divine qualities, or they assume that he is God in human incarnation. This is a dogma of incarnation that agrees with the Christian tenets concerning Jesus. 'Ali himself had these (Shi'ah) who said such things about him burned to death. Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyah was very angry with alMukhtir b. Abi 'Ubayd when he learned that al-Mukhtar had suggested something along these lines concerning him.

He cursed and renounced al-Mukhtir openly. Ja'far as-Sidq did the same thing with people about whom he had learned something of the sort.

Some (Shi'ah) extremists say that the perfection the imam possesses is possessed by nobody else. When he dies, his spirit passes over to another imam, so that this perfection may be in him. This is the doctrine of metempsychosis.

Some extremists stop (*w-q-f*) with one of the imams and do not go on. (They stop with the imam) whom they consider (to have been) appointed as the (last one). They (who believe this) are the Wiqifiyah. Some of them say that the (last imam) is alive and did not die, but is removed from the eyes of the people. As a proof for that (theory), they adduce the problem of al-Khidr.²⁵⁹

Something of that sort has been stated with regard to 'Ali himself. He is said to be in the clouds. The thunder is his voice, and lightning his whip.²⁶⁰ Something similar has also been stated with regard to Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah. He is said to be in the Mountain of Radwi in the Hijiz. The poet of (the sect holding that belief), Kuthayyir,²⁶¹ says:

Indeed, the Qurashite imams,
The champions of the Truth, are four, all alike: 'Ali and his three sons,
They are the grandsons of Muhammad. To them, no
obscurity is attached.
One grandson is the grandson of faith and piety. Another was "removed"
through Kerbela.
And there is a grandson who will not taste death, until He shall lead an army
preceded by the flag.
He is "removed," and has not been seen among them for a time,
In Radwi, having with him honey and water.

The extremist Imimiyah, in particular the Twelvers, hold a similar opinion. They think that the twelfth of their imams, Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-'Askari, to whom they give the epithet of al-Mahdi, entered the cellar of their house in al-Hilla and was "removed" when he was imprisoned (there) with his mother. He has remained there "removed."²⁶² He will come forth at the end of time and will fill the earth with justice. The Twelver Shi'ah refer in this connection to the tradition found in the collection of atTirmidhi regarding the Mahdi.²⁶³ The Twelver Shi'ah are still expecting him to this day. Therefore, they call him "the Expected One." Each night after the evening prayer, they bring a mount and stand at the entrance to the cellar where (the Mahdi is "removed"). They call his name and ask him to come forth openly. They do so until all the stars are out.²⁶⁴ Then, they disperse and postpone the matter to the following night. They have continued that custom to this time.

Some of the Wigifiyah say that the imam who died will return to actual life in this world. They adduce as a proof (for the possibility of this assumption) the story of the Seven Sleepers, the one about the person who passed by a village, and the one about the murdered Israelite who was beaten with the bones of the cow that (his people) had been ordered to slaughter, all of them stories included in the Qur'in.²⁶⁵ They further adduce similar wonders that occurred in the manner of (prophetic) miracles. However, it is not right to use those things as proof for anything except where they properly apply.

The (extremist Shi'ah) poet, as-Sayyid al-Himyari,²⁶⁶ has the following verses on this subject:

When a man's head has become gray
And the barbers urge him to dye his hair, His cheerfulness is gone and no
longer there.
Arise, O companion, and let us weep for (our lost) youth.
What is gone of it will not return
To anyone until the Day of the Return,
Until the day on which people will return
To their life in this world before the Reckoning.
I believe that this is a true belief.
I do not doubt the Resurrection.
In fact, God has spoken about people
Who lived after they had decomposed and become dust.

The religious authorities (*imams*) of the Shi'ah have themselves made it superfluous for us to bother with the arguments of the extremists, for they do not refer to them and thus invalidate the use (the extremists) make of their (arguments).

The Kaysiniyah consider (Muhammad's) son Abu Hisham successor to the imamate after Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah. They are therefore called the Hishimiyyah. Then, they split. Some of them transferred the imamate after Abu Hisham to his brother 'Ali and then to 'Ali's son al-Hasan. Others thought that when Abu Hisham died in the land of ash-Sharif [267](#) upon his return from Syria, he appointed as his heir Muhammad b. 'Ali b. 'Abdallih b. 'Abbis, who, in turn, appointed as his heir his son Ibrihim who is known as the Imam. Ibrihim appointed as his heir his brother 'Abdallah b. al-Harithiyah who got the surname of as-Saffah, who, in turn, appointed as his heir his brother Abu Ja'far'Abdallah, who got the surname of al-Mansur. (The imamate) was then passed on to his children in succession through testamentary determination (*nass*) and appointment ('ahd), right down to the last of them. Such is the tenet of the Hashimiyyah who support the 'Abbasid dynasty. Among them were Abu Muslim, Sulayman b. Kathir, Abu Salimah al-Khallal, and other members of the (early) 'Abbasid Shi'ah [268](#) Their right to the power is often supported by the argument that their right goes back to al-'Abbas. He was alive at the time of Muhammad's death, and he had the best title to become Muhammad's heir because of the group feeling attaching to paternal uncles (al-'Abbas being the paternal uncle of Muhammad).

The Zaydiyah consider the succession to the imamate in the light of their view concerning (the institution). (The imam) is chosen by competent [268a](#) Muslims and not appointed by testamentary determination (*nass*). They acknowledge as imams, 'Ali, his son al-Hasan, (al-Hasan's) brother al-Husayn, (al-Husayn's) son 'Ali Zayn-al-'abidin, and ('Ali's) son, the head of the Zaydiyah, Zayd b. 'All. Zayd came forth in al-Kufah and made propaganda for the imamate. He was killed and his body exhibited in al-Kunasah. [269](#) The Zaydiyah acknowledge the imamate of (Zayd's) son Yahya, as his (father's) successor. Yahya went to al-Khurasan and was killed in al-Juzajan [270](#) after he had appointed Muhammad b. 'Abdallah b. Hasan b. al-Hasan, (Muhammad's) grandson, as his heir. Muhammad is called "the Pure Soul" (*an-Nafs as-zakiyah*). He came forth in the Hijaz and took the surname of al-Mahdi. Al-Mansur's armies went against him. He was routed and killed. His brother Ibrahim was appointed his successor. He appeared in al-Basrah. With him was 'Isa b. Zayd b. 'All. Al-Mansur himself, or his generals, went against him with the army. Both Ibrahim and Isa were routed and killed [271](#) Ja'far as-Sadiq had told them all that (in advance). (His prediction) was considered one of Ja'far's acts of divine grace. [272](#)

Other (Zaydis) assumed that the imam after Muhammad b. 'Abdallah, the Pure Soul, was Muhammad b. al-Qasim b. 'All b. 'Umar,²⁷³ 'Umar being the brother of Zayd b. 'Ali. Muhammad b. al-Qasim came forth in at-Taliqin. He was captured and brought to al-Mu'tasim, who imprisoned him. He died in prison.

Other Zaydis say that the imam after Yahya b. Zayd was his brother 'Isa, who had participated with Ibrahim b. 'Abdallah in his fight against al-Mansur. They consider his descendants the successors to the imamate. The impostor who appeared among the Negroes (Zanj during their revolt) considered him his ancestor. We shall mention that in connection with the history of the Zanj.²⁷⁴

Other Zaydis say that the imam after Muhammad b. 'Abdallah was his brother Idris who fled to the Maghrib and died there. His son Idris b. Idris seized power and laid out the city of Fez. His descendants succeeded him as rulers in the Maghrib, until they were destroyed, as we shall mention in connection with Idrisid history.²⁷⁵ Thereafter, the Zaydi power became disorganized and remained so.

The missionary who ruled Tabaristan, al-Hasan b. Zayd b. Muhammad b. Isma'il b. al-Hasan b. Zayd b. al-Hasan, Muhammad's grandson, as well as his brother, Muhammad b. Zayd, also were Zaydis. Zaydi propaganda was then continued among the Daylam by the (Husaynid) an-Nasir al-Utrush. The Daylam accepted Islam from him. He was al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. 'Umar, the brother of Zayd b. 'Ali. His descendants founded a dynasty in Tabaristan. They made it possible for the Daylam to obtain royal authority and control over the caliphs in Baghdad. We shall mention this in connection with the history of the Daylam.²⁷⁶

The Imamiyah considered (the following) as successors to the imamate after 'All al-Wasi (the "Legatee") by appointment as heirs. 'Ali's son al-Hasan, (al-Hasan's) brother al-Husayn, (al-Husayn's) son 'Ali Zayn-al-'abidin, ('Ali's) son Muhammad al-Baqir, and (Muhammad's) son Jafar as-Sadiq. From there on, they split into two sects. One of them considers (Ja'far's) son Ismail as Ja'far's successor to the imamate. They recognize Ismail as their imam. They are called the Isma'iliyah. The other considers (Ja'far's) son, Musa al-Kazim, as Ja'far's successor to the imamate. They are the Twelvers, because they stop with the twelfth imam. They say that he remains "removed" until the end of time, as has been mentioned before.²⁷⁷

The Isma'ilis say that the imam Ismail became imam because his father Ja'far appointed him (through *nasr*) to be his successor. (Isma'il) died before his father, but according to (the Isma'ilis) the fact that he was determined by his father as his successor means that the imamate should continue among his successors. This is analogous to the story of Moses and Aaron.²⁷⁸ As they say, Isma'il's successor as imam was his son Muhammad, the Concealed One (*al-Maktab*).²⁷⁹ He is the first of the hidden imams. According to the Isma'ilis, an imam who has no power goes into hiding. His missionaries remain in the open, in order to establish proof (of the hidden imam's existence) among mankind.

When the imam has actual power, he comes out into the open and makes his propaganda openly. As they say, after Muhammad, the Concealed One, the hidden imams were: his son Jafar al-Musaddiq, Ja'far's son Muhammad al-Habib, the last of the hidden imams, and Muhammad's son 'Ubaydallah al-Mahdi. For him, open propaganda was made among the Kutamah by Abu 'Abdallah ash-Shi'i. People followed his call, and he brought al-Mahdi out of his confinement in Sijilmasah. Al-Mahdi became the ruler of al-Qayrawan and the Maghrib. His descendants and successors ruled over Egypt, as is well known from their history.

The Isma'ilis are called "Isma'ilis" with reference to their recognition of the imamate of Isma'il. They are also called "Batinis" with reference to their speaking about the *batin*, that is, the hidden, imam. They further are called "heretics," because of the heretical character of their beliefs. They have an old and a new persuasion. Neo-Isma'ili propaganda was made at the end of the fifth [eleventh] century by al-Hasan b. Muhammad as-Sabbah. He ruled over certain fortresses in Syria and the 'Iraq.²⁸⁰ His propaganda persisted there until the Turkish rulers in Egypt and the Tatar rulers in the 'Iraq destroyed it in their respective territories. The persuasion for which as-Sabbah made propaganda is mentioned in ash-Shahrastani's *Kitab al-milal wa-n-nihal*.²⁸¹

Among recent Shi'ah, the name of Imamiyah is often restricted to the Twelvers. They acknowledge the imamate of Musa al-Kazim b. Ja'far because his elder brother, the imam Ismail, had died while their father Ja'far was still alive. Jafar then appointed Musa (through *nasr*) as imam. The imams after Musa were 'Ali ar-Rida, who was appointed by al-Ma'mun as his successor (to the caliphate),²⁸² but died before al-Ma'mun, so that nothing came of it. The imams after 'Ali, then, were ('Ali's) son Muhammad at-Taqi, (Muhammad's) son 'Ali al-Hadi, ('Ali's) son al-Hasan al'Askari, and (al-Hasan's) son Muhammad, the Expected Mahdi, whom we have mentioned before.²⁸³

There are many divergences within each of these Shi'ah persuasions. However, the sects mentioned are the most prominent ones. For an exhaustive study of Shi'ah sects, one should consult the books on religions and sects (*al-milal wa-n-nihal*) by Ibn Hazm,²⁸⁴ ash-Shahrastani, and others. They contain additional information.

"God leads astray whomever He wants to lead astray, and He guides whomever He wants to guide."²⁸⁵

26. *The transformation of the caliphate into royal authority.*

It ²⁸⁶ should be known that 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. ²⁸⁷ 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. ²⁸⁸

Group feeling is necessary to the Muslim community. Its existence enables (the community) to fulfill what God expects of it. It is said in (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*: "God sent no prophet who did not enjoy the protection of his people." ²⁸⁹ Still, we find that the Lawgiver (Muhammad) censured group feeling and urged (us) to reject it and to leave it alone. He said: "God removed from you the arrogance of the pre-Islamic times and its pride in ancestors. You are the children of Adam, and Adam was made of dust." ²⁹⁰ God said: "Most noble among you in God's (eyes) is he who fears God most." ²⁹¹

We also find that (the Lawgiver Muhammad) 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 recommended friendship among all Muslims and warned against discord and dissension.

It should be known that in the opinion of the Lawgiver (Muhammad), all of this world is a vehicle for (transport to) the other world. He who loses the vehicle can go nowhere. When the Lawgiver (Muhammad) 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. ²⁹² Every intention should thus eventually become the right one and the direction (of all human activities) one and the same. It was in this sense that Muhammad said: "He who emigrates to God and His Messenger emigrates to God and His Messenger, but he who emigrates to gain worldly goods or to marry a woman emigrates to where he emigrates." ²⁹³

The Lawgiver (Muhammad) did not censure wrathfulness ²⁹⁴ in 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. Muhammad censured the wrathfulness that is in the service of Satan and reprehensible purposes, ²⁹⁵ 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 Muhammad.

Likewise, when (the Lawgiver Muhammad) 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)," ²⁹⁶ (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 fulfillment 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. ²⁹⁷

Likewise, when the Lawgiver (Muhammad) 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. Solomon said: "O my Lord . . . give me royal authority, such as will not fit anyone after me." ²⁹⁸ He was sure of himself. (He knew) that, as prophet and king, he would have nothing to do with anything worthless. ²⁹⁹

When 'Umar b. al-Khattib went to Syria and was met by Mu'awiyah in full royal splendor as exhibited both in the number (of Mu'awiyah's retinue) and his equipment, he disapproved of it and said: "Are these royal Persian manners (*kisrawiyah*), O Mu'awiyah?" Mu'awiyah replied: "O Commander of the Faithful, I am in a border region facing the enemy. It is necessary for us to vie with (the enemy) in military equipment." 'Umar was silent and did not consider Mu'awiyah to be wrong. ³⁰⁰ He had used an argument that was in agreement with the intentions of the truth and of Islam. If the intention (implied in 'Umar's remark) had been to eradicate royal authority as such, 'Umar would not have been silenced by the answer with which Mu'awiyah (excused) his assumption of royal Persian manners. He would have insisted that Mu'awiyah give them up altogether. 'Umar meant by "royal Persian manners" the attitude of the Persian rulers, which consisted in doing worthless things, constantly practicing oppression, and neglecting God. Mu'awiyah replied that he was not interested in royal Persian manners as such, or in the worthlessness connected with them, but his intention was to serve God. Therefore, ('Umar) was silent.

The same applies to the attitude of the men around Muhammad towards abolishing royal authority and its conditions, and forgetting its customs. (The men around Mubammad) were wary of the admixture of worthless things that might be found in (royal customs).

When the Messenger of God was about to die, he appointed Abu Bakr as his representative to (lead the) prayers, since (praying) was the most important religious activity. People were, thus, content to accept (Abu Bakr) 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 authority, because royal authority was suspected of being worthless, and because at that time it was the prerogative of unbelievers and enemies of Islam. Abu Bakr discharged the duties of his office in a manner pleasing to God, following the Sunnah of his master (Muhammad). He fought against apostates until all the Arabs were united in Islam. He then appointed 'Umar his successor. 'Umar followed Abu Bakr's example and fought against (foreign) nations. He defeated

them and permitted the Arabs to appropriate the worldly possessions of (those nations) and their royal authority, and the Arabs did that.

(The caliphate), then, went to 'Uthman b. 'Affan and 'Ali. 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 Mudar. In the Hijaz, the Mudar 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 Rabi'ah and Yemenites who controlled them.³⁰¹ They had no envy of the abundance of (those regions). They often ate scorpions and beetles. They were proud to eat *'ilhiz*, 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 prophecy of Muhammad with which God honored 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 (sole) garment with pieces of leather.³⁰² 'Ali used to say: "Gold and silver! Go and lure others, not me!"³⁰³ Abu Musa³⁰⁴ refrained from eating chicken, because chickens were very rare among the Arabs of that time and not (generally) known to them. Sieves were altogether non-existent among (the Arabs), and they ate wheat (kernels) with the bran.^{304a} Yet, the gains they made were greater than any ever made by other human beings.

Al-Mas'udi³⁰⁵ says: "In the days of 'Uthman, the men around Muhammad acquired estates and money. On the day 'Uthman was killed, 150,000 dinars and 1,000,000 dirhams were in the hands of his treasurer. The value of his estates in Wadi I-Qura and Hunayn 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. Talhah's income from the 'Iraq was 1,000 dinars a day, and his income from the region of ash-Sharah³⁰⁶ was more than that. The stable of 'Abd-ar-Rahman 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. Thabit 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-Basrah and other residences in Egypt and al-Kufah and Alexandria. Talhah built one in al-Kufah and had his residence in Medina improved. He used plaster, bricks, and teakwood. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas built himself a residence in al-'Aqiq, (a suburb of Medina). He made it high and spacious, and had balustrades put on top of it. Al-Miqdad^{306a} built his residence in Medina and had it plastered inside and out. Ya'l'a b. Munyah³⁰⁷ 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'udi.

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 ³⁰⁸ 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 expenditures followed a plan and served the truth and its ways, the amassing (of 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 ³⁰⁹ showed itself, and with it, there came (the use of) superiority and force. Royal authority, as (the early Muslims) saw it, belonged in the same category as luxury and amassed property. (Still,) they did not apply their superiority to worthless things, and they did not abandon the intentions of the religion or the ways of truth.

When trouble arose between 'All and Mu'awiyah 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. It was for this that they fought. Even though 'Ali was in the right, Mu'awiyah's intentions were not bad ones. He wanted the truth, but he 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'awiyah 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'awiyah felt that.³¹⁰ They banded together around him and were willing to die for him. Had Mu'awiyah 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.

'Umar b. 'Abd-al-'Aziz used to say when(ever) he saw al-Qasim b. Muhammad b. Abi Bakr: ³¹¹ "If I had anything to say about it, I would appoint him caliph." Had he (really) wanted to appoint him as his successor, he could have done it, but he was afraid of the Umayyads who held the executive authority, for reasons mentioned by us. He was not able to take the power away from them, because to do so would have caused a split. All this was the consequence of the tendencies inherent in royal authority, as the necessary consequence of group feeling.

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.³¹²

Likewise, Mu'awiyah appointed Yazid as his successor, because he was afraid of the dissolution of the whole thing, in as much as the Umayyads did not like to see the power handed over to any outsider. Had Mu'awiyah appointed anyone else his successor, the Umayyads would have been against him. Moreover, they had a good opinion of (Yazid). No one could have doubts in this respect, or suspect that it was different with Mu'awiyah.³¹³ He would not have been the man to appoint Yazid

his successor, had he believed him to be (really) so wicked. Such an assumption must be absolutely excluded in Mu'awiyah's case.

The same applies to Marwan b. al-Hakam and his son(s). 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 (that was worthless). 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). It is further attested by the information that the ancients had about their conditions. Malik used the precedent of 'Abd-al-Malik (b. Marwan) as argument in the *Muwatta*.³¹⁴ Marwan belonged to the first class of the men of the second generation, and his excellence is well known.³¹⁵ The sons of 'Abd-al-Malik, then, came into power one after the other. Their outstanding religious attitude is well known. 'Umar b. 'Abd-al-'Aziz reigned in between them. He eagerly and relentlessly aspired to (follow) the ways of the first four caliphs and the men around Muhammad.

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 'Abbasid propaganda in the place of (the Umayyads'). Thus, the 'Abbasids took over the government. The probity of the 'Abbasids was outstanding. They used their royal authority to further, as far as possible, the different aspects and ways of the truth. (The early 'Abbasids,) eventually, were succeeded by the descendants of ar-Rashid. 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 (He permitted) the Arabs to be completely deprived of their power, which He gave to others. "God does not do an atom of injustice."³¹⁶ Whoever considers the biographies of these caliphs and their different approaches to truth and worthlessness knows that what we have stated is correct.

Al-Mas'udi³¹⁷ reports a similar judgment concerning the Umayyads on the authority of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur. "When al-Mansur's paternal uncles mentioned the Umayyads in his presence, he said, "Abd-al-Malik was a tyrant who did not care what he did. Sulayman was concerned only with his stomach and with sexual pleasure. 'Umar was a one-eyed man among the blind. Hisham was their man." He continued: "The Umayyads continued to hold on to the power that had been established for them and to preserve it, and to protect the power that God had given them. They aspired to lofty matters and rejected base ones. Eventually, the power passed to their wasteful descendants who were only concerned with the gratification of their desires and with sinful pleasures. They were ignorant of God's attitude to sinners, and they felt safe from His punishment. At the same time, they prostituted the caliphate. They made light of the privileges of leadership and showed themselves too weak for political leadership. Therefore, God stripped them of their power. He humiliated them and deprived them of their prosperity."

"Then, 'Abdallah b. Marwan was brought into the presence (of al-Mansur). He had fled from the 'Abbasids and gone to the country of the Nubian king. He now told al-Mansur about an experience he had had with that ruler. He said: I had been staying there a little while when their ruler came to me. He sat down on the ground, although I had valuable carpets spread out (to sit on).³¹⁸ I asked him what it was

that prevented him from sitting upon our garments, and he replied, 'I am a ruler, and it behooves every ruler to humble himself before the greatness of God, since God has raised him (to his exalted position).' Then, he asked me why we drank wine, though it is forbidden in our Scripture. I replied: 'Our slaves and followers made bold to do that.' Then he asked why we permitted our animals to ride down the green crops, although destruction is forbidden us in our Scripture. I replied: 'Our slaves and followers did that in their ignorance.' Then, he asked why we wore brocade and gold and silk, although this was forbidden us in our Scripture. I replied: 'We lost our royal authority and accepted the help of non-Arab peoples who adopted our religion. They wore these things against our will.' The Nubian ruler, thereupon, reflected a while. He drew figures on the ground with his hand and said (to himself), 'Our slaves and followers and non-Arabs who adopted our religion ...' Then he raised his head to me and said, 'It is not as you say. No, you are people who have declared (to be) permitted that which had been forbidden you by God. You committed deeds you had been forbidden to do. And you used your royal authority unjustly. Therefore, God stripped you of your power. He humiliated you because of your sins. God is taking a revenge which has not yet finished its full course. I am afraid that you will be punished while you are staying in my country, and that the punishment will then affect me, too. Hospitality lasts three (nights). Therefore, get yourself the provisions you need and leave my country!' Al-Mansur wondered (at that story) and reflected (some time about it)."

It has thus become clear how the caliphate is 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, while the mass (of the people, at least,) escaped.

When 'Uthman was besieged in his house, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, 'Abdallah b. 'Umar, Ibn Ja'far,³¹⁹ 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 keeps 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, 'Ali himself was advised by al-Mughirah to leave az-Zubayr, Mu'awiyah, and Talhah 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. 'Ali, however, refused. He wanted to avoid deceit, because deceit is forbidden by Islam. Al-Mughirah came back to him the following morning and said: "I gave you that advice yesterday, but then I reconsidered and realized that it was not right and was not good advice. You were right." 'Ali 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 (of yesterday)." ³²⁰ To such a degree were these early Muslims concerned with improving their religion at the expense of their worldly affairs, while we patch our worldly affairs by tearing our religion to pieces. Thus, neither our religion lasts nor (the worldly affairs) we have been patching.^{320a}

It ³²¹ has thus been shown how the form of government came to be royal authority. However, there remained the traits that are 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'awiyah, Marwan, his son 'Abd-al-Malik, and the first 'Abbasid caliphs down to ar-Rashid 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 'Abbasids after al-Mu'tasim 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 (Arab) 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 the royal authority belonged to them with all its titles and attributes. The caliph had no share in it. The same was done by the Zanatah rulers in the Maghrib. The Sinhajah, for instance, had such a relationship with the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids), and the Maghrawah and also the Banu Yafran (Ifren) with the Utinayyad caliphs in Spain and the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) in al-Qayrawan.

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.

God determines night and day.³²²

27. The meaning of the oath of allegiance.

It [323](#) 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 in any of (those affairs) 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 sale). Therefore, the oath of allegiance was called *bay'ah*, the infinitive of *ba'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. It also is the meaning of *bay'ah* in the traditions concerning the oath of allegiance rendered to the Prophet on the night of al-'Aqabah and at the Tree, [324](#) and wherever else the word occurs.

The word is used for "oath of allegiance to the caliphs" and in *ayman al-bay'ah* "declarations (of loyalty) in connection with the oath of allegiance." The caliphs used to exact an oath when the contract was made and collected the declarations (of loyalty) from all Muslims. This then was called *ayman al-bay'ah* "declarations (of loyalty) in connection with the oath of allegiance." It was as a rule obtained by compulsion. Therefore, when Malik pronounced the legal decision that a declaration obtained by compulsion was invalid, the men in power (at the time) disliked (the decision) and considered it an attack upon the declarations (of loyalty) made in connection with the oath of allegiance. The imam (Malik), as a result, suffered his well-known tribulations. [325](#)

The oath of allegiance that is common at present is the royal Persian custom of greeting kings by kissing the earth (in front of them), 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 (custom), since such an abject form of greeting and politeness is one of the consequences and concomitants of obedience. (The usage) 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 practiced) 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.

God "is strong and mighty." [326](#)

28. *The succession.*

It should be known that 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.³²⁷ (The caliph) is the guardian and trustee of (the Muslims). 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 their affairs as he had done (while alive), whom they can trust to look after them as they had trusted him then.

(Such 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, Abu Bakr appointed 'Umar as his successor in the presence of the men around Muhammad. They considered (this appointment) permissible and considered themselves obliged by it to render obedience to 'Umar. Likewise, 'Umar appointed six persons, the remnant of the ten (men to whom Paradise had been guaranteed),³²⁸ to be members of (an electoral) council (*shura*), and he put it up to them to make the choice for the Muslims. Each one deferred to (the judgment) of the next man, until it was the turn of 'Abd-arRahman b. 'Awf. He applied his independent judgment and discussed the matter with the Muslims. He found that they agreed upon 'Uthman and 'Ali. He (himself) preferred 'Uthman as the person to receive the oath of allegiance, because ('Uthman) agreed with him concerning the obligation to follow the example of the two *shaykhs* (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) in every case, without making use of his independent judgment. Thus, 'Uthman was confirmed, and it was considered necessary to obey him. A great number of the men around Muhammad were present on the first and on the second (occasion).³²⁹ None of them expressed the slightest disapproval. This shows that they were agreed upon the correctness of the procedure and recognized its legality. It is recognized that consensus constitutes proof.

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 the affairs of the Muslims as long as he lives. He is all the more responsible for not tolerating while he is (alive the possibility that there might arise evil) developments after his death. This is against those who say that (the imam) is suspect with regard to (the appointment of) his son or father, and also against those who consider him suspect with regard to (appointment of) his son only, not his father. In fact, he could hardly be suspected in this respect in any way. Especially if there exists some reason for (the appointment of a successor), such as desire to promote the (public) interest or fear that some harm might arise (if no successor were appointed), suspicion of the imam is out of the question.

This, for instance, was the case with Mu'awiyah's appointment of his son Yazid.³³⁰ The action met with agreement of the people, and, therefore, is in itself an argument for the problem under discussion (namely, that the imam is not suspect with regard to whomever he might appoint). But Mu'awiyah himself preferred his son Yazid to any other successor, because he was concerned with the (public) interest of preserving unity and harmony among the people, (and realized that he

could achieve this purpose only by appointing Yazid), since the men who possessed executive authority, that is, the Umayyads, agreed at that time upon Yazid. The Umayyads were then agreeable to no one except (Yazid). The Umayyads constituted the core (group) of the Quraysh and of all the Muslims, and possessed superiority (Mu'awiyah,) therefore, preferred (Yazid) to anyone else who might have been considered more suited for the caliphate. He passed over the superior person in favor of the inferior one, [331](#) because he desired to preserve agreement and harmony, which is the more important thing in the opinion of the Lawgiver (Muhammad). No other motive could be expected of Mu'awiyah. His probity and the fact that he was one of the men around Muhammad preclude any other explanation. The presence of the men around Muhammad on that occasion and their silence are the best argument against doubt in this matter. They were not persons to tolerate the slightest negligence in matters of the truth, nor was Mu'awiyah one of those who are too proud to accept the truth. They were all above that, and their probity precludes it. The fact that 'Abdallah b. 'Umar avoided the issue must be ascribed to his general avoidance of participation in any business, whether permissible or forbidden. He is well known for this (kind of attitude). Ibn az-Zubayr was the only one left to oppose (Mu'awiyah's) appointment, upon which the great mass had agreed. Small minorities of persons holding divergent opinions, it is well known, (are treated by jurists as not authoritative).

After Mu'awiyah, caliphs who were used to choose the truth and to act in accordance with it, acted similarly. Such caliphs included the Umayyads 'Abd-al-Malik and Sulayman and the 'Abbasids as-Saffah, al-Mansur, al-Mahdi, and ar-Rashid, and others like them whose probity, and whose care and concern for the Muslims are well known. They cannot be blamed because they gave preference to their own sons and brothers, in that respect departing from the Sunnah of the first four caliphs. Their situation was different from that of the (four) caliphs, who lived in a time when royal authority as such did not yet exist, and the (sole) restraining influence was religious. Thus, everybody had his restraining influence in himself. Consequently, they appointed the person who was acceptable to Islam, and preferred him over all others. They trusted everybody who aspired to (the caliphate) to have his own restraining influence.

After them, from Mu'awiyah on, the group feeling (of the Arabs) approached its final goal, royal authority. The restraining influence of religion had weakened. The restraining influence of government and group was needed. If, under those circumstances, someone not acceptable to the group had been appointed as successor (to the caliphate), such an appointment would have been rejected by it. The (chances of the appointee) would have been quickly demolished, and the community would have been split and torn by dissension.

Someone asked 'Ali: "Why do the people disagree concerning you, and why did they not disagree concerning Abu Bakr and 'Umar?" 'Ali replied: "Because Abu Bakr and 'Umar were in charge of men like me, and I today am in charge of men like you." [331a](#) He referred to the restraining influence of Islam.

When al-Ma'mun appointed 'Ali b. Mitsa b. Ja'far as Sadiq his successor and called him ar-Rida, the 'Abbasids greatly disapproved of the action. They declared invalid the oath of allegiance that had been rendered to al-Ma'mun, and took the oath of allegiance to his uncle Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi. There was so much trouble, dissension, and interruption of communications, and there were so many rebels and seceders, that the state almost collapsed, [332](#) Eventually, al-Ma'mlin went from Khurasan to Baghdad and brought matters back to their former conditions.

Such (differences as the one just cited between caliphate and royal authority)

must be taken into consideration in connection with (the problem of) succession. Times differ according to differences in affairs, tribes, and group feelings, which come into being during those (times). Differences in this respect produce, differences in (public) interests, and each (public interest) has its own particular laws. This is a kindness shown by God to His servants.

However, Islam does not consider preservation of (the ruler's) inheritance for his children the proper purpose in appointing a successor. The (succession to the rule) is something that comes from God who distinguishes by it whomsoever He wishes.

It is necessary in (appointing a successor) to be as wellintentioned as possible. Otherwise, there is danger that one may trifle with religious institutions.

God's is the kingdom (royal authority).³³³ He gives it to those of His servants to whom He wants to give it.

There are some matters in this connection which need explanation.

First: There is the wickedness Yazid displayed when he was caliph. One should beware of thinking that Mu'awiyah could have known about it. Mu'awiyah's probity and virtue were too great. While he lived, he censured Yazid for listening to music and forbade him to do it, and (listening to music) is a lesser sin than (Yazid's later wickedness) and is judged differently by the different schools.

When Yazid's well-known wickedness showed itself, the men around Muhammad disagreed about what to do with him. Some were of the opinion that they should revolt against him and declare the oath of allegiance that had been rendered to him invalid on account of (his wickedness). This was the attitude taken by al-Husayn, 'Abdallah b. az-Zubayr, and others. Others rejected that (course of action), because it threatened to stir up a revolt and to cause much bloodshed. In addition, (they knew that) they would be too weak to achieve success. Yazid's strength at that time lay in the Umayyad group feeling and in the Qurashite majority who exercised all executive authority. It was they who controlled the group feeling of all the Mudar. Thus, they possessed greater strength than anyone else, and no resistance to them was possible. Therefore, (the above-mentioned persons knew that they) were not in a position to do anything against Yazid. They prayed that he might find guidance or that they might be relieved of him. This was the course the majority of the Muslims followed. Both parties (of the opposition to Yazid) used their independent judgment. Neither of them may be considered at fault. It is well known that all their intentions were determined by piety and championship of the truth. May God enable us to follow their model.

Second: There is the matter of the appointment of a successor by the Prophet. The Shi'ah claim that Muhammad appointed 'Ali his heir. This is not correct. No leading transmitter of traditions has reported such a thing. It is stated in (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih* that Muhammad asked for ink and paper in order to write his will, and that 'Umar prevented it.³³⁴ This clearly shows that (the appointment of 'Ali as successor) did not take place.

There also is the following statement by 'Umar, made after he had been stabbed and when he was asked about appointing a successor: "Were I to appoint a successor, it would be because someone who is better than I appointed a successor"- meaning Abu Bakr- "and were I not to appoint a successor, it would be because someone who is better than I did not" -meaning the Prophet.³³⁵ And the men around Muhammad were present and agreed with him that the Prophet³³⁶ had not appointed a successor.

There is also the statement of 'Ali to al-'Abbas. Al'Abbas invited 'All to go in

to the Prophet (with him), and they both were to ask the Prophet how they stood with regard to being appointed as his successor. 'All, however, refused and said: "If he keeps us from (the caliphate), we cannot hope ever to get it." [337](#) This shows that 'All knew that Muhammad had not made a will and had not appointed anyone his successor.

The doubt of the Imamiyah in this matter is caused by the fact that they assume the imamate to be one of the pillars of the faith. [338](#) This is not so. It is one of the general (public) interests. The people are delegated to take care of it. If it were one of the pillars of the faith, it would be something like prayer, and (Muhammad) would have appointed a representative (caliph), exactly as he appointed Abu Bakr to represent him at prayer. (Had he done so,) it would have become generally known, as was the case with the matter of prayer. That the men around Muhammad considered the caliphate as something analogous to prayer and on the strength of that attitude argued in favor of Abu Bakr's caliphate, saying, "The Messenger of God found him acceptable for our religion. So, why should we not accept him for our worldly affairs?" [339](#) is merely another proof of the fact that no appointment of an heir had taken place. It also shows that the question of the imamate and succession to it was not as important then as it is today. Group feeling, which determines unity and disunity in the customary course of affairs, was not of the same significance then (as it was later on). (At that time,) Islam was winning the hearts of the people and causing them to be willing to die for it in a way that disrupted the customary course of affairs. That happened because people observed with their own eyes the presence of angels to help them, the repeated appearance of heavenly messages among them, and the constant (Qur'anic) recitation of divine pronouncements to them in connection with every happening. Thus, it was not necessary to pay any attention to group feeling. Men generally had the coloring of submissiveness and obedience. They were thoroughly frightened and perturbed by a sequence of extraordinary miracles and other divine happenings, and by frequent visitations of angels.³⁴⁰ Such questions as that of the caliphate, of royal authority, succession, group feeling, and other such matters, were submerged in this turmoil the way it happened.

These helpful (circumstances) passed with the disappearance of miracles and the death of the generations that had witnessed them with their own eyes. The coloring mentioned changed little by little. The impression the wonders had made passed, and affairs took again their ordinary course. The influence of group feeling and of the ordinary course of affairs manifested itself in the resulting good and bad institutions. The (questions of) caliphate and royal authority and that of the succession to both became very important affairs in the opinion of the people. It had not been this way before. It should be noted how unimportant the caliphate was in the time of the Prophet, (so unimportant that) he did not appoint a successor to it. Its importance then increased somewhat during the time of the (early) caliphs because there arose certain needs in connection with military protection, the holy war, the apostasy (of Arab tribes after Muhammad's death), and the conquests. The (first caliphs) could decide whether they would (appoint successors) or not. We mentioned this on the authority of 'Umar. Subsequently, as at the present time, the matter has become most important in connection with harmony in (military) protection and the administration of public interests. Group feeling has come to play a role in it. (Group feeling is) the secret divine (factor that) restrains people from splitting up and abandoning each other. It is the source of unity and agreement, and the guarantor of the intentions and laws of Islam. When this is understood, God's wise plans with regard to His creation and His creatures will become clear. [341](#)

Third: There are the wars that took place in Islam among the men around

Muhammad and the men of the second generation. It should be known that their differences concerned religious matters only, and arose from independent interpretation of proper arguments and considered insights. Differences may well arise among people who use independent judgment. Now, we may say that in the case of problems that are open to independent judgment, the truth can lie only on one side, and that he who does not hit upon it is in error. But, since it has not been clearly indicated by general consensus on which side (the truth lies), every side may be assumed to be right. The side that is in error is not clearly indicated, either. To declare all sides to be at fault is not acceptable according to the general consensus. Again, we may say that all sides have the true answer and that "everybody who uses independent judgment is right."³⁴² Then, it is all the more necessary to deny that any one side was in error or ought to be considered at fault.

The differences between the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation were no more than differences in the independent interpretation of equivocal religious problems, and they have to be considered in this light. Differences of the sort that have arisen in Islam include those (1) between 'All on the one hand, and Mu'awiyah, as well as az-Zubayr, Talhah, and 'A'ishah on the other, (2) between al-Husayn and Yazid, and (3) between Ibn az-Zubayr and 'Abd-al-Malik.

(1) As for the case of 'Ali, (the following may be said:) When 'Uthman was killed, the (important Muslims) were dispersed over the various cities. Thus, they were not present when the oath of allegiance was rendered to 'Ali. Of those who were present, some rendered the oath of allegiance to him. Others, however, waited until the people should come together and agree upon an imam. Among those who waited were, for instance, Sa'd (b. Abi Waggas), Sa'id (b. Zayd), ('Abdallah) b. 'Umar, Usamah b. Zayd, al-Mughirah b. Shu'bah, 'Abdallah b. Salim, Qudamah b. Maz'un, Abu Sa'id (Sa'd b. Malik) al-Khudri, Ka'b b. 'Ujrah, Ka'b b. Malik, an-Nu'man b. Bashir, Hassan b. Thabit, Maslamah b. Makhlad,³⁴³ Fudalah b. 'Ubayd, and other important personalities from among the men around Muhammad. Those who were in the various cities also refrained from rendering the oath of allegiance to 'Ali and were in favor of seeking revenge for 'Uthman, and so they left matters in a state of anarchy. Eventually, the Muslims formed an (electoral) council (shard) to determine whom they should appoint. They suspected 'Ali of negligence when he kept silent and did not help 'Uthman against his murderers, but they did not suspect him of having actually conspired against 'Uthman. That would be unthinkable. When Mu'awiyah openly reproached 'Ali, his accusation was directed exclusively against his keeping silent.

Later on, they had differences. 'Ali was of the opinion that the oath of allegiance that had been rendered to him was binding and obligatory upon those who had not yet rendered it, because the people had agreed upon (rendering the oath) in Medina, the residence of the Prophet and the home of the men around Muhammad. He thought of postponing 'Uthman's revenge until unity was established among the people and the whole thing was well organized. Then it would be feasible. Others were of the opinion that the oath of allegiance rendered to 'All was not binding, because the men around Muhammad who controlled the executive power were dispersed all over the world and only a few had been present (when the oath to 'All was rendered). (They thought that) an oath of allegiance requires the agreement of all the men who control the executive power and that there was no obligation to confirm a person who had received it from others or merely from a minority of those men. (Thus, they thought that) the Muslims were at the time in a state of anarchy and should first seek revenge for 'Uthman and then agree upon an imam. This opinion was held by Mu'awiyah, by 'Amr b. al-'As, by the Mother of the

Muslims, 'A'ishah, by az-Zubayr and his son 'Abdallah, by Talhah and his son Muhammad, by Sa'd, by Sa'id, by an-Nu'man b. Bashir, by Mu'awiyah b. Hudayj, and by others among the men around Muhammad who followed the opinion of those mentioned and who hesitated, as we have mentioned, to render the oath of allegiance to 'Ali in Medina.

However, the men of the second period after them agreed that the oath of allegiance rendered to 'All had been binding and obligatory upon all Muslims. They considered ('Ali's) opinion the correct one and clearly indicated that the error was on Mu'awiyah's side and on that of those who were of his opinion, especially Talhah and az-Zubayr, who broke with 'Ali after having rendered the oath of allegiance to him, as has been reported. Still, it was not considered acceptable to declare both parties at fault, for such a thing is not done in cases of independent judgment. It is well known that such became the general consensus among the men of the second period as to one of the two opinions held by the men of the first period. 'Ali (himself), when asked about those who had died in the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin, replied: "By God, all of them who die with pure heart will be admitted by God to paradise." He referred to both parties. This remark was reported by at-Tabari and by others.³⁴⁴

The probity of none of these men should be doubted. No aspersion should be cast on them in this connection. It is well known who they were. Their words and deeds are models to be followed. Their probity is perfect, in the view of orthodox Muslim opinion. The only exception would be a statement by the Mu'tazilah with regard to those who fought 'Ali,³⁴⁵ but no true believer pays attention to this statement or stoops to consider it seriously. He who looks at the matter impartially will find excusable, not only the differences among all the people (the Muslims) with regard to the affair of 'Uthman, but also all the subsequent differences among the men around Muhammad. He will realize that (these quarrels) were temptations inflicted by God upon the Muslim nation, while He vanquished the enemies of the Muslims and made the Muslims rulers of the lands and country of their enemies, and while they established cities in the border territories, in al-Basrah and al-Kufah (the 'Iraq), in Syria, and in Egypt.

Most of the Arabs who settled in those cities were uncivilized. They had made little use of the Prophet's company and had not been improved by his way of life and manners, nor had they been trained in his qualities of character. Moreover, they had been uncivilized in pre-Islamic times, had been possessed by group feeling and overbearing pride, and had been remote from the soothing influence of the faith. When the (Muslim) dynasty came to be powerful, (these Arabs) were dominated by (Meccan) emigrants and (Medinese) Ansar, belonging to the Quraysh, the Kinanah, the Thaqif, the Hudhayl, and the inhabitants of the Hijaz and Yathrib (Medina), who had been first to adopt the faith of Islam. They were scornful and disliked the situation. They saw that they themselves possessed the older pedigree and the greater numerical strength, and that they had beaten the Persians and Byzantines. They belonged to such tribes as the Bakr b. Wa'il, the 'Abd-al-Qays b. Rabi'ah, the Kindah and the Azd of the Yemen, the Tamim and the Qays of the Mudar, among others. They grew scornful of the Quraysh and overbearing against them. They weakened in their obedience to them. They gave as the reason for their (attitude) the unjust treatment they received from them. They sought protection against them. They accused them (the Quraysh, etc.) of being too weak for military expeditions and of being unfair in distributing (the booty).

These complaints spread and reached the Medinese with their well-known attitude. They considered the matter important and informed 'Uthman about it. He sent to the cities to get reliable information. He sent ('Abdallah) b. 'Umar,

Muhammad b. Maslamah, Usamah b. Zayd, and others. They noticed nothing in the (conduct of the) amirs (of the cities) that might call for disapproval, and found no fault with them. They reported the situation (to 'Uthman) as they saw it. But the accusations on the part of the inhabitants of the cities did not stop. The slanderous stories and rumors grew continually. Al-Walid b. 'Uqbah, the governor of al-Kufah, was accused of drinking wine. A large number of Kufians testified against him, and 'Uthman punished him (as required by the religious law) and deposed him. Then, some of the people of those cities came to Medina to ask for the removal of the governors. They complained to 'All, 'A'ishah, az-Zubayr, and Talhah. 'Uthman deposed some of the governors, but the people still continued their criticisms. Then, Sa'id b. al-'As, the governor of al-Kufah, went on a mission (to 'Uthman). When he returned, he was intercepted by (the Kufians) on the road and sent back deposed. Then differences broke out between 'Uthman and the men around Muhammad who were with him in Medina. They resented his refusal to depose (his officials), but he did not want to (depouse them) except for cause.

They then shifted their disapproval to other actions of ('Uthman's). He followed his own independent judgment, and they did the same. Then, a mob banded together and went to Medina, ostensibly in order to obtain redress of their grievances from 'Uthman. In fact, they thought of killing him. There were people from al-Basrah, al-Kufah, and Egypt among them. 'Ali, 'A'ishah, az-Zubayr, Talhah, and others took their side, attempting to quiet things down and to get 'Uthman to accept their view of the situation. He deposed the governor of Egypt, and the people who had come to Medina left, but then, after having gone only a short distance, they came back. They had been deceived, they believed, by a forged letter which they had found in the hand of a messenger who was carrying it to the governor of Egypt. (The letter stated) that they were to be killed (upon their return to Egypt). 'Uthman swore that (the letter was not genuine), but they said: "Let us have your secretary Marwan." Marwan, too, swore (that he had not written the letter). Then 'Uthman said: "No more evidence is needed." Thereupon, however, they besieged 'Uthman in his house. They fell upon him in the night when (his defenders) were not careful, and killed him. That opened the door to the (ensuing) trouble.

All the (persons involved in the affair of 'Uthman) can be excused in connection with the occurrence. All of them were concerned with Islam and were not neglectful with regard to any aspect connected with the Muslim religion. After the event, they considered the matter and applied their independent judgment. God observes their circumstances. He knows these men. We can only think the best of them. What we know about their conditions, as well as the statements of the Speaker of the Truth (Muhammad praising those men), require us to do so.

(2) As to (the case of) al-Husayn, (the following may be said:) When the great mass of Yazid's contemporaries saw his wickedness, the Shi'ah in al-Kufah invited al-Husayn to come to them, saying that they would take his side. Al-Husayn was of the opinion that a revolt against Yazid was clearly indicated as a duty, because of his wickedness. (That duty, he felt,) was especially incumbent upon those who had the power to execute it. He felt that he had (that power) in view of his qualifications and strength. His qualifications were as good as he thought, and better. But, regrettably enough, he was mistaken with regard to his strength. The group feeling of the Mudar was in the Quraysh, that of the Quraysh in 'Abd-Manaf, and that of 'Abd-Manaf in the Umayyads. The Quraysh and all the others conceded this fact and were not ignorant of it. At the beginning of Islam, it had been forgotten. People were diverted by fearful wonders and by the Revelation, and by frequent visitations of angels in aid of the Muslims. [346](#) Thus, they had neglected

their customary affairs, and the group feeling and aspirations of pre-Islamic times had disappeared and were forgotten. Only the natural group feeling, serving the purpose of military protection and defense, had remained and was used to advantage in the establishment of Islam and the fight against the polytheists. The religion became well established in (this situation). The customary course of affairs was inoperative, until prophecy and the terrifying wonders stopped. Then, the customary course of affairs resumed to some degree. Group feeling reverted to its former status and came back to those to whom it had formerly belonged. In consequence of their previous state of obedience, the Mudar became more obedient to the Umayyads than to others.

Thus, al-Husayn's error has become clear. It was, however, an error with respect to a worldly matter, where an error does not do any harm. [347](#) From the point of view of the religious law, he did not err, because here everything depended on what he thought, which was that he had the power to (revolt against Yazid). Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn az-Zubayr, Ibn 'Umar, (al-Husayn's) brother Ibn al-Hanafiyah, and others, criticized (al-Husayn) because of his trip to al-Kufah. They realized his mistake, but he did not desist from the enterprise he had begun, because God wanted it to be so.

The men around Muhammad other than al-Husayn, in the Hijaz and with Yazid in Syria and in the 'Iraq, and their followers, were of the opinion that a revolt against Yazid, even though he was wicked, would not be permissible, because such a revolt would result in trouble and bloodshed. They refrained from it and did not follow al-Husayn (in his opinion), but they also did not disapprove of him and did not consider him at fault. For he had independent judgment, being the model of all who ever had independent judgment. One should not fall into the error of declaring these people to be at fault because they opposed al-Husayn and did not come to his aid. They constituted the majority of the men around Muhammad. They were with Yazid, and they were of the opinion that they should not revolt against him. Al-Husayn, fighting at Kerbela', asked them to attest to his excellence and the correctness of his position. He said: "Ask Jabir b. 'Abdallah, Abu Sa'id (al-Khudri), Anas b. Malik, Sahl b. Sa'd, Zayd b. Arqam, and others." [348](#) Thus, he did not disapprove of their not coming to his help. He did not interfere in this matter, because he knew that they were acting according to their own independent judgment. For his part, he also acted according to independent judgment.

Likewise, one should not fall into the error of declaring that his murder was justified because (it also) was the result of independent judgment, even if (one grants that) he (on his part) exercised the (correct) [349](#) independent judgment. This, then, would be a situation comparable to that of Shafi'ites and Malikites applying their legal punishment for drinking date liquor (*nabhdh*) [350](#) to Hanafites. It should be known that the matter is not so. The independent judgment of those men did not involve fighting against al-Husayn, even if it involved opposition to his revolt.

Yazid and the men around him [351](#) were the only ones who (actually) fought against (al-Husayn). It should not be said that if Yazid was wicked and yet these (men around Muhammad) did not consider it permissible to revolt against him, his actions were in their opinion binding and right. It should be known that only those actions of the wicked are binding that are legal. The (authorities) consider it a condition of fighting evildoers that any such fighting be undertaken with a just ('adil) imam. This does not apply to the question under consideration. Thus, it was not permissible to fight against al-Husayn with Yazid or on Yazid's behalf. In matter of fact, (Yazid's fight against al-Husayn) was one of the actions that confirmed his wickedness. Al-Husayn, therefore, was a martyr who will receive his reward. He

was right, and he exercised independent judgment. The men around Muhammad who were with Yazid [352](#) were also right, and they exercised independent judgment. Judge Abu Bakr b. al-'Arabi al-Maliki [353](#) erred when he made the following statement in his book *alQawasim wa-l-'Awasim*: "Al-Husayn was killed according to the law of his grandfather (Muhammad)." Ibn al-'Arabi fell into that error because he overlooked the condition of the "just ('adil) imam" which governs the fighting against sectarians.

(3) Ibn az-Zubayr felt about his revolt as al-Husayn had (about his). He was under the same impression (as al-Husayn regarding his qualifications). But his error with regard to his power was greater (than that of al-Husayn). The Banu Asad were no match for the Umayyads in either pre-Islamic or Islamic times. It does not apply in the case of Ibn Zubayr, as it does in the case of Mu'awiyah against 'Ali, that the error is expressly indicated to lie on his opponent's side. In (the case of Mu'awiyah against 'Ali), the general consensus has decided the question for us. [354](#) In (the case of Ibn az-Zubayr), we do not have (a general consensus). The fact that Yazid was in error was expressly indicated by the fact of Yazid's wickedness, but 'Abd-al-Malik, who had to deal with Ibn az-Zubayr, possessed greater probity than anybody else. It is sufficient proof of his probity that Malik used 'Abd-al-Malik's actions as proof, [355](#) and that Ibn 'Abbas and Ibn 'Umar rendered the oath of allegiance to 'Abd-al-Malik and left Ibn az-Zubayr with whom they had been together in the IHijaz. Furthermore, many of the men around Muhammad were of the opinion that the oath of allegiance rendered to Ibn az-Zubayr was not binding, because the men who held the executive power were not present, as (they had been) when it was rendered to ('Abd-al-Malik's father) Marwan. Ibn az-Zubayr held the opposite opinion. However, all of them were using independent judgment and were evidently motivated by the truth, even though it is not expressly indicated to have been on one side. Our discussion shows that the killing of Ibn az-Zubayr did not conflict with the basic principles and norms of jurisprudence. Nonetheless, he is a martyr and will receive his reward, because of his (good) intentions and the fact that he chose the truth.

This is the manner in which the actions of the ancient Muslims, the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation, have to be judged. They were the best Muslims. If we permitted them to be the target of slander, who could claim probity! The Prophet said: "The best men are those of my generation, then those who follow them," repeating the latter sentence two or three times- "Then, falsehood will spread." [356](#) Thus, he considered goodness, that is, probity, a quality peculiar to the first period and to the one that followed it.

One should beware of letting one's mind or tongue become used to criticizing any of (the ancient Muslims). One's heart should not be tempted by doubts concerning anything that happened in connection with them. One should be as truthful as possible in their behalf. They deserve it most. They never differed among themselves except for good reasons. They never killed or were killed except in a holy war, or in helping to make some truth victorious.

It should further be believed that their differences were a source of divine mercy for later Muslims, so that every (later Muslim) can take as his model the old Muslim of his choice and make him his imam, guide, and leader. If this is understood, God's wise plans with regard to His creation and creatures will become clear.

29. *The functions of the religious institution of the caliphate.*

It [357](#) has become clear that to be caliph in reality means acting as substitute for the Lawgiver (Muhammad) with regard to the preservation of the religion and the political leadership of the world.[358](#) The Lawgiver was concerned with both things, with religion in his capacity as the person commanded to transmit the duties imposed by the religious laws to the people and to cause them to act in accordance with them, and with worldly political leadership in his capacity as the person in charge of the (public) interests of human civilization.

We have mentioned before that civilization is necessary to human beings and that care for the (public) interests connected with it is likewise (something necessary), if mankind is not to perish of neglect.[359](#) We have also mentioned before that royal authority and its impetus suffice to create (the institutions serving) the (public) interest,[360](#) although they would be more perfect if they were established through religious laws, because (the religious law) has a better understanding of the (public) interests.

Royal authority, if it be Muslim, falls under the caliphate and is one of its concomitants. (The royal authority) of a non-Muslim nation stands alone. But in any case, it has its subordinate ranks and dependent positions which relate to particular functions. The people of the dynasty are given (particular) positions, and each one of them discharges (the duties of) his position as directed by the ruler who controls them all. Thus, the power of the ruler fully materializes, and he is well able to discharge his governmental (duties).

Even though the institution of the caliphate includes royal authority in the sense mentioned, its religious character brings with it special functions and ranks peculiar to the Muslim caliphs. We are going to mention the religious functions peculiar to the caliphate, and we shall come back later on to the functions of royal government.[361](#)

It should be known that all the religious functions of the religious law, such as prayer, the office of judge, the office of mufti, the holy war, and market supervision (*hisbah*) fall under the "great imamate," [362](#) which is the caliphate. (The caliphate) is a kind of great mainspring and comprehensive basis, and all these (functions) are branches of it and fall under it because of the wide scope of the caliphate, its active interest in all conditions of the Muslim community, both religious and worldly, and its general power to execute the religious laws relative to both (religious and worldly affairs).

The leadership of prayer is the highest of (all) these functions and higher than royal authority as such, which, like (prayer), falls under the caliphate. This is attested by the (circumstance) that the men around Muhammad deduced from the fact that Abu Bakr had been appointed (Muhammad's) representative as prayer leader, the fact that he had also been appointed his representative in political leadership. They said: "The Messenger of God found him acceptable for our religion. So, why should we not accept him for our worldly affairs?" [363](#) If prayer did not rank higher than political leadership, the analogical reasoning would not have been sound.

If this is established, it should be known that city mosques are of two kinds, great spacious ones which are prepared for holiday [364](#) prayers; and other, minor ones which are restricted to one section of the population or one quarter of the city and which are not for the generally attended prayers. Care of the great mosques rests with the caliph or with those authorities, wazirs, or judges, to whom he delegates it. A prayer leader for each mosque is appointed for the five daily prayers, the Friday service, the two festivals, the eclipses of (the sun and the moon), and the prayer for rain. This (arrangement) is obligatory only in the sense that it is preferable and better. It also serves the purpose of preventing the subjects from usurping one of the duties of the caliphs connected with the supervision of the general (public) interests. The (arrangement) is considered necessary by those who consider the Friday service necessary, and who, therefore, consider it necessary to have a prayer leader appointed.

Administration of the mosques that are restricted to one section of the population or to one quarter of the city rests with those who live nearby. These mosques do not require the supervision of a caliph or ruler.

The laws and conditions governing the office of (prayer leader) and the person entrusted with it are known from the law books. They are well explained in the books on administration (*al-Ahkam as-sultaniyah*) by al-Mawardi [365](#) and other authors. We shall not, therefore, mention them at any length. The first caliphs did not delegate the leadership of prayer. The fact that certain of the caliphs were stabbed in the mosque during the call to prayer, being expected (by the assassins to be there) at the prayer times, shows that the caliphs personally led the prayer and were not represented by others. This custom was continued by the Umayyads later on. They considered it their exclusive privilege and a high office to lead the prayer. The story goes that 'Abd-alMalik said to his doorkeeper (*hajib*): "I have given you the office of keeper of my door, (and you are entitled to turn away anyone) save these three persons: the person in charge of food, because it might spoil if kept back; the person in charge of the call to prayer, because he calls the people to God; and the person in charge of the mails, because delaying the mail might mean the ruin of the remote provinces." [366](#)

Later, when the nature of royal authority, with its qualities of harshness and unequal treatment of the people in their religious and worldly affairs, made itself felt, (the rulers) chose men to represent them as prayer leaders. They reserved for themselves the leadership of prayer at certain times and on general (festive) occasions, such as the two holidays and the Friday service. This was for purposes of display and ostentation. Many of the 'Abbasid and 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) (caliphs) did this at the beginning of their respective dynasties.

(The office of mufti)

As to the office of mufti, the caliph must examine the religious scholars and teachers and entrust it only to those who are qualified for it. He must help them in their task, and he must prevent those who are not qualified for the office from (becoming muftis). (The office of mufti) is one of the (public) interests of the Muslim religious community. (The caliph) has to take care, lest unqualified persons undertake to act as (mufti) and so lead the people astray.

Teachers have the task of teaching and spreading religious knowledge and of holding classes for that purpose in the mosques. If the mosque is one of the great mosques under the administration of the ruler, where the ruler looks after the prayer leaders, as mentioned before, teachers must ask the ruler for permission to (teach there). If it is one of the general mosques, no permission is needed. However,

teachers and muftis must have some restraining influence in themselves that tells them not to undertake something for which they are not qualified, so that they may not lead astray those who ask for the right way or cause to stumble those who want to be guided. A tradition says: "Those of you who most boldly approach the task of giving *fatwas* are most directly heading toward hell." [367](#) The ruler, therefore, has supervision over (muftis and teachers) and can give, or deny, them permission to exercise their functions, as may be required by the public interest.

(The office of judge)

The office of judge is one of the positions that come under the caliphate. It is an institution that serves the purpose of settling suits and breaking off disputes and dissensions. It proceeds, however, along the lines of the religious laws laid down by the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Therefore, it is one of the positions that belongs to the caliphate and falls under it generally.

At the beginning of Islam, the caliphs exercised the office of judge personally. They did not permit anyone else to function as judge in any matter. The first caliph to charge someone else with exercise of (the office of judge) was 'Umar. He appointed Abu d-Darda' [368](#) to be judge with him in Medina, he appointed Shurayh as judge in al-Basrah, and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as judge in al-Kufah. On appointing (Abu Musa), he wrote him the famous letter that contains all the laws that govern the office of judge, and is the basis of them. He says in it: [369](#)

Now, the office of judge is a definite religious duty and a generally followed practice.

Understand the depositions that are made before you, for it is useless to consider a plea that is not valid.

Consider all the people equal before you in your court and in your attention, so that the noble will not expect you to be partial and the humble will not despair of justice from you.

The claimant must produce evidence; from the defendant, an oath may be exacted.

Compromise is permissible among Muslims, but not any agreement through which something forbidden would be permitted, or something permitted forbidden.

If you gave judgment yesterday, and today upon reconsideration come to the correct opinion, you should not feel prevented by your first judgment from retracting; for justice is primeval, and it is better to retract than to persist in worthlessness.

Use your brain about matters that perplex you and to which neither Qur'an nor Sunnah seem to apply. Study similar cases and evaluate the situation through analogy with those similar cases.

If a person brings a claim, which he may or may not be able to prove, set a time limit for him. If he brings proof within the time limit, you should allow his claim, otherwise you are permitted to give judgment against him. This is the better way to forestall or clear up any possible doubt.

All Muslims are acceptable as witnesses against each other, except such as have received a punishment [370](#) provided for by the religious law, such as are proved to have given false witness, and such as are suspected (of partiality) on (the ground of) client status or relationship, for God, praised be He, forgives because of oaths [? [371](#)] and postpones (punishment) in face of the evidence.

Avoid fatigue and weariness and annoyance at the litigants.

For establishing justice in the courts of justice, God will grant you a rich reward and give you a good reputation. Farewell.

End of 'Umar's letter.

Although the personal exercise of the office of judge was to have been the task of (the caliphs), they entrusted others with it because they were too busy with general politics and too occupied with the holy war, conquests, defense of the border regions, and protection of the center. These were things which could not be undertaken by anyone else because of their great importance. They considered it an easy matter to act as judge in litigation among the people and, therefore, had themselves represented by others in the exercise of (the office of judge), so as to lighten their own (burden). Still, they always entrusted the office only to people who shared in their group feeling either through (common) descent or their status as clients. They did not entrust it to men who were not close to them in this sense.

The laws and conditions that govern the institution (of the judiciary) are known from works on jurisprudence and, especially, from books on administration (*al-Ahkam assultaniyah*). In the period of the caliphs, the duty of the judge was merely to settle suits between litigants. Gradually, later on, other matters were referred to them more and more often as the preoccupation of the caliphs and rulers with high policy grew. Finally, the office of judge came to include, in addition to the settling of suits, certain general concerns of the Muslims, such as supervision of the property of insane persons, orphans, bankrupts, and incompetents who are under the care of guardians; supervision of wills and mortmain donations and of the marrying of marriageable women without guardians (*wali*) to give them away ³⁷² according to the opinion of some authorities; supervision of (public) roads and buildings; examination of witnesses, attorneys, and court substitutes, ³⁷³ to acquire complete knowledge and full acquaintance relative to their reliability or unreliability. All these things have become part of the position and duties of a judge.

Former caliphs had entrusted the judge with the supervision of torts. ³⁷⁴ This is a position that combines elements both of government power and judicial discretion. It needs a strong hand and much authority to subdue the evildoer and restrain the aggressor among two litigants. In a way, it serves to do what the judges and others are unable to do. It is concerned with the examination of evidence, with punishments not foreseen by the religious law, with the use of indirect and circumstantial evidence, with the postponement of judgment until the legal situation has been clarified, with attempts to bring about reconciliation between litigants, and with the swearing in of witnesses. This is a wider field than that with which the judges are concerned.

The first caliphs exercised that function personally until the days of the 'Abbasid al-Muhtadi. Often, they also delegated it to their judges. 'All, ³⁷⁵ for instance, (delegated torts) to his judge, Abu Idris al-Khawiani; ³⁷⁶ al-Ma'min to Yahya b. Aktham; ³⁷⁷ and al-Mu'tasim to Ibn Abi Du'id. ³⁷⁸ They also often entrusted the judges with leadership of the holy war in summer campaigns. Yahyi b. Aktham thus went on a summer campaign against the Byzantines in the days of al-Ma'mun. The same was done by Mundhir b. Sa'id, ³⁷⁹ judge under the Spanish Umayyad 'Abd-ar-Rahman an-Nasir. Making appointments to these functions was the task of the caliphs or of those to whom they entrusted it, such as a minister to whom full powers were delegated, or a ruler who had gained superiority.

(The police)

In the 'Abbasid dynasty and in the dynasties of the Umayyads in Spain and under the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) in Egypt and the Maghrib, the control of crimes and imposition of punishments required by the religious law was also a special (task) and was delegated to the chief of police (*sahib ashshurtah*).³⁸⁰ The police is another religious function that under these dynasties belonged to the positions connected with the religious law. Its field is somewhat wider than that of the office of judge. It makes it possible for suspects to be brought into court. It decides upon preventive punishments before crimes have been committed. It imposes the punishments required by the religious law where they are due, and determines compensation in cases of bodily injury where the law of talion applies. It imposes punishments not provided for by the religious law, and provides for corrective measures against those who did not execute the crimes (they planned).

The proper functions of the police and of torts were forgotten during the dynasties in which the nature of the caliphate was no longer remembered. Torts were transferred to the ruler whether he had been delegated by the caliph to take care of them or not. The police function was split into two parts. One of them was that of taking care of suspects, imposing the punishments required by the religious law, and amputating (criminals condemned for crimes punished by the amputation of a limb), and seeing to it that the laws of talion were applied where appropriate. For these duties, the dynasties appointed an official who exercised his office in the service of the political (establishment) without reference to the religious laws. (That official) was sometimes called *wall* (governor), and sometimes *shurtah* (police). The remaining (former police functions dealt with) punishments not provided for by the religious law and the imposition of punishments for crimes fixed by the religious law. They were combined with the functions of judge previously mentioned. They became part of the official duties of the office (of judge), and have so remained down to this time.

This position was taken away from the people who shared in the group feeling of the dynasty. When there was a religious caliphate, the caliph entrusted the function, since it was a religious office, only to Arabs or to clients-allies, slaves, or followers-who shared in their group feeling and upon whose ability and competence to execute the tasks they could rely.

When the character and appearance of the caliphate changed and royal and government authority took over, the religious functions lost to some degree their connection with (the powers in control), in as much as they did not belong among the titles and honors of royal authority. The Arabs later on lost all control of the government. Royal authority fell to Turkish and Berber nations. These caliphal functions, as far as their character and the group feeling that belonged to them was concerned, were even more remote from them (than from their predecessors). This was because the Arabs had been of the opinion that the religious law was their religion and that the Prophet was one of them and that his religious laws distinguished them in their thought and action from the (other) nations. The non-Arabs did not think that way. If they had some respect for (these functions) it was merely because they had become Muslims. Therefore, they came to entrust them to men outside their own group who had become familiar with (these functions) in the dynasties of former caliphs. Under the influence of the luxury of the dynasties to which they had been accustomed for hundreds of years, these people had forgotten the old desert period and desert toughness. They had acquired (the habits of) sedentary culture, luxurious customs, tranquility, and lack of ability to take care of themselves. In the kingdoms that succeeded the (rule of the) caliphs, the functions of the caliphate became the prerogative of this kind of urban weakling. They were no

longer exercised by people of prestige, but by persons whose qualifications were limited, both by their descent (which was different from that of the men in power) and by the (habits of) sedentary culture to which they had become accustomed. They were despised as sedentary people are, who live submerged in luxury and tranquility, who have no connection with the group feeling of the ruler, and who depend on being protected (by others). Their position in the dynasty derives from the fact that (the dynasty) takes care of the Muslim religious community and follows the religious laws, and that these persons know the laws and can interpret them through legal decisions (*fatwa*). They have no standing in the dynasty because they are honored as personalities. Their standing merely reflects an affectation of respect for their position in the royal councils, where it is desired to make a show of reverence for the religious ranks. They do not have executive authority to make decisions in (these councils). If they participate in (the making of decisions), it is just as a matter of form, with no reality behind it. Executive authority in reality belongs to those who have the power to enforce (their decisions). Those who do not have the power (to enforce their decisions) have no executive authority. They are merely used as authorities on religious law, and their legal decisions (*fatwa*) are accepted. This is indeed the fact. God gives success.

Some scholars think that this is not right, and that rulers who keep jurists and judges out of (their) councils act wrongly, since Muhammad said, "The scholars are the heirs of the prophets." [381](#) However, it should be known that it is not as (such scholars) thinks [382](#) Royal and governmental authority is conditioned by the natural requirements of civilization; were such not the case, it would have nothing to do with politics. The nature of civilization does not require that (jurists and scholars) have any share (in authority). Advisory and executive authority belongs only to the person who controls the group feeling and is by it enabled to exercise authority, to do things or not do them. Those who do not have group feeling, who have no control over their own affairs, and who cannot protect themselves, are dependent upon others. How, then, could they participate in councils, and why should their advice be taken into consideration? Their advice as derived from their knowledge of the religious laws (is taken into consideration) only in so far as they are consulted for legal decisions (*fatwa*). Advice on political matters is not their province, because they have no group feeling and do not know the conditions and laws which govern (group feeling). To pay honor to (jurists and scholars) is an act of kindness on the part of rulers and amirs. It testifies to their high regard for Islam and to their respect for men who are in any way concerned with it.

To understand Muhammad's statement, "The scholars are the heirs of the prophets," it should be realized that the jurists of this time and of the recent past have represented the religious law mainly by ruling on ritual practices and questions of mutual dealings (among Muslims). They make (such rulings) for those who need them to be able to act in accordance with them. This has been the goal of (even) the greatest among (them). They are identified with (the religious law) only to a limited extent (and are known to be experts in it only) under certain conditions. The early Muslims, as well as pious and austere Muslims, on the other hand, represented the religious law in (all its aspects) and were identified with (all of) it and known to have had a thorough (practical) knowledge of its ways. People who represent the religious law without (recourse to the process of) transmission, may (be called) "heirs." Such, for instance, were the men mentioned in al-Qushayri's *Risalah*. [383](#) People who combine the two things [384](#) are religious scholars, the real "heirs," such as the jurists among the men of the second generation, the ancient Muslims, and the four imams, [385](#) as well as those who took them as models and followed in their steps. In the case of a Muslim who has only one of the two things, the better claim

to be called an "heir" goes to a pious person rather than to a jurist who is not pious. The pious man has inherited a quality. The jurist who is not pious, on the other hand, has not inherited anything. He merely makes rulings for us as to how to act. This applies to the majority of contemporary (jurists) [386](#) "except those who believe and do good, and they are few." [387](#)

The position of official witness (‘adalah) [388](#)

(The position of official witness) is a religious position depending on the office of judge and connected with court practice. The men who hold it give testimony-with the judge's permission-for or against people's (claims). They serve as witnesses when testimony is to be taken, testify during a lawsuit, and fill in the registers which record the rights, possessions, and debts of people and other (legal) transactions. This is the significance of the position.

We [389](#) have mentioned "the judge's permission" because people may have become confused, and (then) only the judge knows who is reliable and who not. Thus, in a way, he gives permission (and he does so only) to those of whose probity he is sure, so that people's affairs and transactions will be properly safeguarded.

The prerequisite governing this position is the incumbent's possession of the quality of probity (‘adalah) according to the religious law, his freedom from unreliability. Furthermore, he must be able to fill in the (court) records and make out contracts in the right form and proper order and correctly, (observing) the conditions and stipulations governing them from the point of view of the religious law. Thus, he must have such knowledge of jurisprudence as is necessary for the purpose. Because of these conditions and the experience and practice required, (the office) came to be restricted to persons of probity. Probity came to be (considered) the particular quality of persons who exercise this function. But this is not so. Probity is one of the prerequisites qualifying them for the office.

The judge must examine their conditions and look into their way of life, to make sure that they fulfill the condition of probity. He must not neglect to do so, because it is his duty to safeguard the rights of the people. The responsibility for everything rests with him, and he is accountable for the outcome.

Once (official witnesses) have been shown clearly to be qualified for the position, they become (more) generally useful (to the judges). (They can be used) to find out about the reliability of other men whose probity is not known to the judges, because of the large size of cities and the confused conditions (of city life). (It is necessary to know their reliability) because it is necessary for judges to settle quarrels among litigants with the help of reliable evidence. In assessing the reliability of (the evidence), they usually count upon these professional witnesses. In every city, they have their own shops and benches where they always sit, so that people who have transactions to make can engage them to function as witnesses and register the (testimony) in writing.

The term "probity" (‘adalah) thus came to be used both for the position whose significance has just been explained and for "probity (reliability)" as required by the religious law, which is used paired with "unreliability." The two are the same, but still, they are different. And God knows better.

Market supervision (bisbah) and mint

The office of market supervisor (*hisbah*) is a religious position. It falls under the religious obligation "to command to do good and forbid to do evil," which rests

with the person in charge of the affairs of the Muslims. He appoints to the position men whom he considers qualified for it. The obligation thus devolves upon the appointee. He may use other men to help him in his job. He investigates abuses and applies the appropriate punishments and corrective measures. He sees to it that the people act in accord with the public interest in the town (under his supervision). For instance, he prohibits the obstruction of roads. He forbids porters and boatmen to carry too heavy loads. He orders the owners of buildings threatening to collapse, to tear them down and thus remove the possibility of danger to passersby. He prevents teachers in schools and other places from beating the young pupils too much.³⁹⁰ His authority is not restricted to cases of quarrels or complaints, but he (has to) look after, and rule on, everything of the sort that comes to his knowledge or is reported to him. He has no authority over legal claims in general but he has authority over everything relating to fraud and deception in connection with food and other things and in connection with weights and measures. Among his duties is that of making dilatory debtors pay what they owe, and similar things that do not require hearing of evidence or a legal verdict, in other words, cases with which a judge would have nothing to do because they are so common and simple. (Such cases,) therefore, are referred to the person who holds the office of market supervisor to take care of them.

The position of (market supervisor), consequently, is subordinate to the office of judge. In many Muslim dynasties, such as the dynasties of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) in Egypt and the Maghrib and that of the Umayyads in Spain, (the office of market supervisor) fell under the general jurisdiction of the judge, who could appoint anyone to the office at discretion. Then, when the position of ruler became separated from the caliphate and when (the ruler) took general charge of all political matters, the office of market supervisor became one of the royal positions and a separate office.

The mint [391](#)

The office of the mint is concerned with the coins used by Muslims in (commercial) transactions, with guarding against possible falsification or substandard quality (clipping) when the number of coins (and not the weight of their metal) is used in transactions, and with all else relating to (monetary matters.) Further, the office is concerned with putting the ruler's mark upon the coins, thus indicating their good quality and purity. The mark is impressed upon the coins with an iron seal that is especially used for the purpose and that has special designs (legends) on it. It is placed upon the dinar and the dirham after their proper weight has been established, and is then beaten with a hammer until the designs have been impressed upon the coin. This then indicates the good quality of the coin according to the best methods of melting and purification customary among the inhabitants of a particular region under the ruling dynasty. (The metal standard) is not something rigidly fixed but depends upon independent judgment. Once the inhabitants of a particular part or region have decided upon a standard of purity, they hold to it and call it the "guide" (*imam*) or "standard" (*'iyar*). They use it to test their coins. If they are substandard, they are bad.

Supervision of all these things is the duty of the holder of the office (of the mint). In this respect, it is a religious office and falls under the caliphate. It used to belong to the general jurisdiction of the judge, but now has become a separate office, as is the case with that of market supervision.

This is all that is to be said about caliphal positions. There were other positions that disappeared when the things that were their concern disappeared.

Further, there are positions that became positions of rulers other than the caliph. Such are the positions of amir and wazir, and those concerned with warfare and taxation. They will be discussed later on in their proper places.

The position concerned with (prosecution of) the holy war ceased to exist when the holy war was no longer waged, save in a few dynasties which, as a rule, classify the laws governing it under the governmental (and not the caliphal) authority. Likewise, the office of marshal of the nobility consisting of relatives of the caliphs, whose descent gives them a claim to the caliphate or to an official pension, disappeared when the caliphate ceased.

In general, the honors and positions of the caliphate merged with those of royal authority and political leadership. This is the present situation in all dynasties.

God governs all affairs in His wisdom.

30. *The title of "Commander of the Faithful," which is characteristic of the caliph.*

It was created in the period of the first four caliphs. This is because the men around Muhammad and all the other early Muslims called Abu Bakr, when he received the oath of allegiance, "representative" (*khalifah*, caliph) of the Messenger of God. This form (of address) was used until he died. Then, the oath of allegiance was rendered to 'Umar who was appointed by (Abu Bakr), and people called 'Umar "Representative of the Representative of the Messenger of God." However, they considered the title somewhat cumbersome. It was long and had a succession of genitives. (With successive caliphs,) that (style) would become longer and longer and end up as a tongue twister, and (the title) would no longer be distinct and recognizable because of the great number of dependent genitives. Therefore, they tried to replace the title by some other one appropriate to a (caliph).

The leaders of (military) missions used to be called "*amirs*," *a fail* (formation) connected with *imarah* (commandership). Before becoming Muslims, people used to call the Prophet "Amir of Mecca" and "Amir of the Hijaz." The men around Muhammad also used to call Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas "Commander (*amir*) of the Muslims," because he commanded the army at al-Qadisiyah. (The army there) at that time was the largest agglomeration of Muslims (that existed).

Now, it so happened that one of the men around Muhammad addressed 'Umar as "Commander of the Faithful" (*amir al-mu'minin*). People liked (this form of address) and approved it. Thus, they called 'Umar by (this title). It is said that the first to call him by this title was 'Abdallah b. Jahsh.³⁹² According to others, it was 'Amr b. al-'As and alMughirah b. Shu'bah. Again, according to others, it was a messenger [?] ³⁹³ who brought (the news) of victory from a (military) mission. He entered Medina and asked for 'Umar with the words, "Where is the Commander of the Faithful?" The men around ('Umar) heard this and liked it. They said: "Indeed, you give him the right title. He is truly the Commander of the Faithful." Thus, they called 'Umar (Commander of the Faithful), and this became his title among the people. The caliphs who succeeded him inherited the title as a characteristic which no other person shared with them. This was the case with all the Umayyads.

The Shi'ah used the title of Imam for 'Ali, ascribing to him the "imamate," which is a related expression for caliphate. (They called him Imam,) in order to display the novel theory that 'Ali was more entitled to lead the prayer (*imamah*) than Abu Bakr. They restricted the title (of Imam) to ('Ali) and to those after him whom they considered his successors to the caliphate. All these men were called Imam as long as their propaganda for them was clandestine. But when they eventually seized power (openly), they changed the title of their successors to that of Commander of the Faithful. This was done by the 'Abbasid Shi'ah. They had always called their leaders Imam down to Ibrahim, for whom they came out into the open and unfurled the banner of war. When (Ibrahim) died, his brother as-Saffah was called Commander of the Faithful. The same was the case with the extremist Shi'ah in Ifriqiyah. They always called their leaders, who were descendants of Ismail, Imam, until 'Ubaydallah al-Mahdi came to power. They continued to call him, and also his son and successor Abul-Qasim, Imam. But when their power was secure, their successors were called Commander of the Faithful. The same was the case with the

Idrisids in the Maghrib. They called Idris, and also his son and successor Idris the Younger, Imam. This is (Shi'ah) procedure.

The caliphs inherited the title of Commander of the Faithful from each other. It became a characteristic of the ruler of the Hijaz, Syria, and the 'Iraq, the regions that were the home of the Arabs and the center of the Muslim dynasty and the base [394](#) of Islam and Muslim conquest. Therefore, (it was no longer distinctive) when the ('Abbasid) dynasty reached its flowering and prime, (and) another style of address gained currency, one that served to distinguish them from each other, in as much as the title of Commander of the Faithful was one they all had. The 'Abbasids took surnames such as as-Saffah, al-Mansur, al-Mahdi, al-Hadi, ar-Rashid, and so on, and thus created a sort of cover to guard their proper names against abuse by the tongues of the common people and protect them against profanation. (They continued with that custom) down to the end of the dynasty. The 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) in Ifriqiyah and Egypt followed their example.

The Umayyads refrained from that (for a long time). The earlier Umayyads in the East had done so, in keeping with their austerity and simplicity. Arab manners and aspirations had not yet been abandoned in their time, and (the Umayyads) had not yet exchanged Bedouin characteristics for those of sedentary culture. The Umayyads in Spain also refrained from such titles, because they followed the tradition of their ancestors. Moreover, they were conscious of their inferior position, since they did not control the caliphate which the 'Abbasids had appropriated, and had no power over [395](#) the Hijaz, the base of the Arabs and Islam, and were remote from the seat of the caliphate around which the group feeling (of the Arabs) centered. By being rulers of a remote region, they merely protected themselves against the persecution of the 'Abbasids. Finally, however, at the beginning of the fourth [tenth] century, the (Umayyad) 'Abd-arRahman the Last [396](#) (III) an-Nasir (b. Muhammad) b. alamir 'Abdallah b. Muhammad b. 'Abd-ar-Rahman II, appeared on the scene. It became known how greatly the liberty of the caliphate in the East had been curtailed and how the clients of the 'Abbasids had taken control of the dynasty and had achieved complete power to depose, replace, kill, or blind the caliphs. 'Abd-ar-Rahman III, therefore, adopted the ways of the caliphs in the East and in Ifriqiyah: He had himself called Commander of the Faithful and assumed the surname of an-Nasir-li-din-Allah. This custom, which he had been the first to practice, was followed and became an established one. His ancestors and the early (Umayyads) had not had it.

This situation prevailed down to the time when Arab group feeling was completely destroyed and the caliphate lost its identity. Non-Arab clients gained power over the 'Abbasids; followers (of their own making) gained power over the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) in Cairo; the Sinhajah gained power over the realm of Ifriqiyah; the Zanitah gained power over the Maghrib; and the *reyes de taifas* in Spain gained power over the Umayyads. (Each of) these (groups) took over part of (the caliphate). The Muslim empire dissolved. The rulers in the West and the East adopted different titles. Formerly, they had all been called by the name of *Sultan*.

The non-Arab rulers in the East were distinguished by the caliphs with special honorific surnames indicating their subservience and obedience and their good status as officials. (Such surnames included) Sharaf-ad-dawlah, 'Adud-ad-dawlah, Rukn-ad-dawlah, Mu'izz-ad-dawlah, Nasir-ad-dawlah, Nizam-al-mulk, Bahi'-al-mulk, Dhakhirat-al-mulk, and so on. [396a](#) The 'Ubaydid (-Fatimids) used also to distinguish the Sinhajah amirs in that manner. When these men gained control over the caliphs, they were satisfied to keep these surnames and did not adopt caliphal titles out of deference to the institution and in order to avoid any

usurpation of its peculiar characteristics, as is customary among those who gain power and control (over an existing institution), as we have stated before.³⁹⁷ However, later on, the non-Arabs in the East strengthened their grip on royal authority and became more and more prominent in state and government. The group feeling of the caliphate vanished and dissolved completely. At that time, these non-Arabs were inclined to adopt titles that were characteristic of royal authority, such as an-Nasir and al-Mansur. This was in addition to the titles they had previously held and which indicated that they were no longer clients and followers through the fact that they were simply combinations with *din* (religion), such as Salah-ad-din, Asad-ad-din, and Nur-ad-din.^{397a}

The *reyes de taifas* in Spain, who had a powerful grip on (the caliphate) by virtue of the fact that they shared in its tribal group feeling, divided up and distributed among themselves the caliphal titles. They had themselves called an-Nasir, al-Mansur, al-Mu'tamid, al-Muzaffar, and so on. Ibn Sharaf criticized them for this in these verses:

What makes me feel humble in Spain
Is the use of the names Mu'tasim and Mu'tadid there.
Royal surnames not in their proper place:
Like a cat that by blowing itself up imitates the lion.³⁹⁸

The Sinhajah restricted themselves to the display titles that the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) caliphs had given them, such as Nasir-ad-dawlah, Sayf ad-dawlah, ³⁹⁹ and Mu'izz-ad-dawlah. They kept to this (even) when they exchanged the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) propaganda for that of the 'Abbasids. Later on, as the distance between them and the caliphate grew, they forgot the period of (the caliphate). They forgot these titles and restricted themselves to the name of Sultan. The same was the case with the Maghrawah rulers in the Maghrib. The only title they adopted was that of Sultan, in accordance with Bedouin custom and desert austerity.

At the time when the name of the caliphate had become extinct and its influence non-existent, the Lamtunah (Almoravid) ruler Yusuf b. Tashfin made his appearance among the Berber tribes in the Maghrib. He became the ruler of both shores. He was a good and conservative man who, consequently, in order to comply with all the formalities of his religion, wished to submit to the caliphal authority. He addressed himself to the 'Abbasid al-Mustazhir and sent to him two *shaykhs* from Sevilla as his ambassadors, 'Abdallah b. al-'Arabi and ('Abdallah's) son, Judge Abu Bakr.⁴⁰⁰ They were to transmit the oath of allegiance to (al-Mustazhir) and were to ask him to appoint and invest Ibn Tashfin as ruler over the Maghrib. They returned with the caliphal appointment of Ibn Tashfin as ruler over the Maghrib and with (permission to) use the caliphal style in dress and flag. In (the document, the caliph) addressed (Ibn Tashfin) as "Commander of the Muslims," ⁴⁰¹ in order to honor and distinguish him. Ibn Tashfin, therefore, took that as his title. Others say that he had been called "Commander of the Muslims" before that, out of deference to the high rank of the caliphate, because he and his people, the Almoravids, practiced Islam and followed the Sunnah.

The Mahdi (of the Almohads) followed upon the (Almoravids). He made propaganda for the truth. He adopted the tenets of the Ash'arites and criticized the Maghribis for having deviated from them by returning to the ancestral tradition of rejecting allegorical interpretation of explicit statements of the religious law, a rejection that leads to (anthropomorphism),⁴⁰² as is known from the Ash'arite school. He called his followers Almohads (champions of the strict oneness of God), displaying (by the choice of that name) his disapproval (of anthropomorphism). He

followed the opinion of the 'Alids with regard to "the Infallible Imam" [403](#) who must exist in every age and whose existence preserves the order of the world. (Al-Mahdi) was at first called Imam, in accordance with the afore-mentioned Shi'ah practice with regard to the title of their caliphs. The word *al-ma'sum* (infallible) was linked (with Imam) to indicate his tenet concerning the infallibility of the Imam. In the opinion of his followers, he was above the title of Commander of the Faithful. (To avoid this title) was in accordance with the tenets of the old Shi'ah, and (he also avoided it), because to use it meant sharing it with the foolish young descendants of the caliphs who were alive in the East and the West at that time. 'Abd-al-Mu'min, who was appointed successor to (the Mahdi), did adopt the title of Commander of the Faithful. His successors, the caliphs of the Banu 'Abd-al-Mu'min, followed his example, and so did their successors, the Hafsidhs in Ifriqiyah. [404](#) They appropriated it exclusively as their own, since their *shaykh*, the Mahdi, had made (religious) propaganda (justifying the use of) that (title) and since the power belonged to him and to his friends (clients) who succeeded him and to nobody else, because Qurashite group feeling had completely ceased to exist. Thus, (the use of the title) came to be their custom.

When governmental (authority) in the Maghrib lapsed and the Zanatah took power, their first rulers continued the ways of desert life and simplicity and followed the Lamtunah (Almoravids) in using the title of Commander of the Muslims, out of deference to the high rank of the caliphate. They rendered obedience, first to the caliphate of the Banu 'Abdal-Mu'min, and afterwards to that of the Hafsidhs. The later (Zanatah) rulers aspired to the title of Commander of the Faithful, and are using it at this time to comply fully with royal aspirations and the ways and characteristics of royal authority. "God has the power to execute His commands."

[405](#)

31. *Remarks on the words "Pope" and "Patriarch"
in the Christian religion and on the word
"Kohen" used by the Jews.*

It [406](#) should be known that after the removal of its prophet, a religious group must have someone to take care of it. (Such a person) must cause the people to act according to the religious laws. In a way, he stands to them in the place (*khalifah*, caliph) of their prophet, in as much as (he urges) the obligations which (the prophet) had imposed upon them. Furthermore, in accordance with the aforementioned [407](#) need for political leadership in social organization, the human species must have a person who will cause them to act in accordance with what is good for them and who will prevent them by force from doing things harmful to them. Such a person is the one who is called ruler.

In the Muslim community, the holy war is a religious duty, because of the universalism of the (Muslim) mission and (the obligation to) convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or by force. Therefore, caliphate and royal authority are united in (Islam), so that the person in charge can devote the available strength to both of them [408](#) at the same time.

The other religious groups did not have a universal mission, and the holy war was not a religious duty to them, save only for purposes of defense. It has thus come about that the person in charge of religious affairs in (other religious groups) is not concerned with power politics at all. (Among them,) royal authority comes to those who have it, by accident and in some way that has nothing to do with religion. It comes to them as the necessary result of group feeling, which by its very nature seeks to obtain royal authority, as we have mentioned before, [409](#) and not because they are under obligation to gain power over other nations, as is the case with Islam. They are merely required to establish their religion among their own (people).

This is why the Israelites after Moses and Joshua remained unconcerned with royal authority for about four hundred years [410](#) Their only concern was to establish their religion. The person from among them who was in charge of their religion was called the Kohen. He was in a way the representative (caliph) of Moses. He regulated the prayers and sacrifices of the Israelites. They made it a condition for (the Kohen) to be a descendant of Aaron, as it had been destined for him and his children by divine revelation. [411](#) For (supervision of the) political matters which naturally arise among human beings, the Israelites selected seventy elders who were entrusted with a general legal authority. The Kohen was higher in religious rank than they and more remote from the turbulent legal authority. This continued to be (the situation among the Israelites) until the nature of group feeling made itself fully felt and all power became political. The Israelites dispossessed the Canaanites of the land that God had given them as their heritage in Jerusalem and the surrounding region, as it had been explained to them through Moses. The nations of the Philistines, the Canaanites, the Armenians [!], [412](#) the Edomites, the Ammonites, and the Moabites fought against them. During that (time), political leadership was entrusted to the elders among them. The Israelites remained in that condition for about four hundred years. They did not have any royal power and were annoyed by

attacks from foreign nations. Therefore, they asked God through Samuel, one of their prophets, that He permit them to make someone king over them. Thus, Saul became their king. He defeated the foreign nations and killed [413](#) Goliath, the ruler of the Philistines. After Saul, David became king, and then Solomon. His kingdom flourished and extended to the borders of the Hijaz and further to the borders of the Yemen and to the borders of the land of the Romans (Byzantines). After Solomon, the tribes split into two dynasties. This was in accordance with the necessary consequence of group feeling in dynasties, as we have mentioned before. One of the dynasties was that of the ten tribes in the region of Nablus, the capital of which is Samaria (Sabastiyah), [414](#) and the other that of the children of Judah and Benjamin in Jerusalem [415](#) Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, then deprived them of their royal authority. He first (dealt with) the ten tribes in Samaria (Sabastiyah), [416](#) and then with the children of Judah in Jerusalem. Their royal authority had had an uninterrupted duration of a thousand years. Now he destroyed their temple, burnt their Torah, and killed their religion. He deported the people to Isfahan [417](#) and the 'Iraq. Eventually, one of the Persian Kayyanid (Achaemenid) rulers brought them back to Jerusalem, seventy years after they had left it. They rebuilt the temple and reestablished their religion in its original form with priests only. The royal authority belonged to the Persians.

Alexander and the Greeks then defeated the Persians, and the Jews came under Greek domination. The Greek rule then weakened, and, with the help of (their) natural group feeling, the Jews rose against the Greeks and made an end to their domination over them. (Jewish) royal authority was in charge of their Hasmonean priests. (The Hasmoneans) fought the Greeks. Eventually, their power was destroyed. The Romans defeated them, and (the Jews) came under Roman domination. (The Romans) advanced toward Jerusalem, the seat of the children of Herod, relatives by marriage of the Hasmoneans and the last remnant of the Hasmonean dynasty. They laid siege to them for a time, finally conquering (Jerusalem) by force in an orgy of murder, destruction, and arson. They laid Jerusalem in ruins and exiled (the Jews) to Rome and the regions beyond. This was the second destruction of the temple. The Jews call it "the Great Exile." After that, they had no royal authority, because they had lost their group feeling. They remained afterwards under the domination of the Romans and their successors. Their religious affairs were taken care of by their head, called the Kohen.

The Messiah (Jesus) brought (the Jews) his religion, as is known. He abolished some of the laws of the Torah. He performed marvelous wonders, such as healing the insane [418](#) and reviving the dead. Many people joined him and believed in him. The largest group among his following were his companions, the Apostles. There were twelve of them. He sent some of them as messengers (Apostles) to all parts of the world. They made propaganda for his religious group. That was in the days of Augustus, the first of the Roman emperors, and during the time of Herod, the king of the Jews, who had taken away royal authority from the Hasmoneans, his relatives by marriage. The Jews envied (Jesus) and declared him a liar. Their king, Herod, wrote to the Roman Emperor, Augustus, and incited him against (Jesus). The Roman Emperor gave (the Jews) permission to kill him, and the story of Jesus as recited in the Qur'an occurred [419](#)

The Apostles divided into different groups. Most of them went to the country of the Romans and made propaganda for the Christian religion. Peter was the greatest of them. He settled in Rome, the seat of the Roman emperors. They [420](#) then wrote down the Gospel that had been revealed to Jesus, in four recensions according to their different traditions. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Jerusalem in Hebrew. It

was translated into Latin by John, the son of Zebedee, one of (the Apostles). (The Apostle) Luke wrote his Gospel in Latin for a Roman dignitary. (The Apostle) John, the son of Zebedee, wrote his Gospel in Rome. Peter wrote his Gospel in Latin and ascribed it to his pupil Mark. These four recensions of the Gospel differ from each other. Not all of it is pure revelation, but (the Gospels) have an admixture of the words of Jesus and of the Apostles. Most [421](#) of (their contents) consists of sermons and stories. There are very few laws in them.

The Apostles came together at that time in Rome and laid down the rules of the Christian community. They entrusted them to Clement, a pupil of Peter, noting in them the list of books that are to be accepted and in accordance with which one must act.

(The books which) belong to the old religious law of the Jews are the following:

The Torah, which consists of five volumes.
The Book of Joshua.
The Book of Judges.
The Book of Ruth.
The Book of Judith. [422](#)
The four Books of Kings.
The Book of Chronicles. [423](#)
The three Books of Maccabees, by Ibn Gorion. [424](#)
The Book of Ezra, the religious leader.
The Book of Esther [425](#) and the story of Haman.
The Book of Job the Righteous. The Psalms of David.
The five Books of David's son, Solomon.
The sixteen Prophecies of the major and minor prophets.
The Book of Jesus, the son of Sira, the minister of Solomon.

(The books of) the religious law of Jesus that was received by the Apostles are the following:

The four recensions of the Gospel.
The Book of Paul which consists of fourteen epistles.
The Katholika (General Epistles) which consist of seven epistles, the eighth being the Praxeis (Acts), stories of the Apostles.
The Book of Clement which contains the laws.
The Book of the Apocalypse (Revelation) which contains the vision of John, the son of Zebedee.

The attitude of the Roman emperors toward Christianity varied. At times, they adopted it and honored its adherents. At other times, they did not recognize it and persecuted its adherents and killed and exiled them. Finally, Constantine appeared and adopted Christianity. From then on, all (the Roman emperors) were Christians. [426](#)

The head of the Christian (community) and the person in charge of (Christian religious) institutions is called Patriarch. He is their religious head and the representative (caliph) of the Messiah among them. He sends his delegates and representatives to the remote Christian nations. They are called "bishop," that is, delegate of the Patriarch. The man who leads the prayers and makes decisions in religious matters is called "priest." The person who withdraws from society and retires into solitude for worship is called "monk." The latter usually seek solitude in (monastic) cells.

The Apostle Peter, the chief Apostle and oldest of the disciples, was in Rome

and established the Christian religion there. Nero, the fifth Roman emperor, killed him [427](#) Successor to Peter at the Roman see was Arius.

Mark the Evangelist spent seven years in Alexandria and Egypt and the Maghrib making propaganda. After him came Ananias, who was called Patriarch. He was the first Patriarch there. He appointed twelve priests to be with him, and it was arranged that when the Patriarch died, one of the twelve should take his place, and one of the faithful [428](#) be elected to take his place as the twelfth priest. Thus, the patriarchate fell to the priests.

Later on, dissension broke out among the Christians with regard to the basic principles and articles of their religion. They assembled in Nicea in the days of Constantine, in order to lay down (the doctrine of) true Christianity. Three hundred and eighteen bishops agreed upon one and the same doctrine of Christianity. They wrote it down and called it "the Creed." They made it the fundamental principle to which they would all have reference. Among the things they set down in writing was that with respect to the appointment of the Patriarch as the head of Christianity, no reference should be made to the independent judgment of the priests, as Ananias, the disciple of Mark, had prescribed. That point of view was abolished. The Patriarch was to come from a large group and to be elected by the leaders and chiefs of the believers. It has been so ever since. Later on, other dissensions arose concerning the basic principles of Christianity. Synods concerned with regulating (the religion), were assembled, but there was no dissension with regard to the basic principles (of the method of selecting the Patriarch). It has remained the same ever since.

The Patriarchs always appointed bishops as their delegates. The bishops used to call the Patriarch "Father," as a sign of respect. The priests similarly came to call the bishop "Father," when he was not together with the Patriarch, as a sign of respect. This caused confusion in the use of the title over a long period, ending, it is said, with the Patriarchate of Heraclius in Alexandria. It was considered desirable to distinguish the Patriarch from the bishop in the matter of respect (shown to him by style of address). Therefore, the Patriarch was called "Pope," that is, "Father of fathers." The name (of "Pope") first appeared in Egypt, according to the theory expressed by Jirjis b. al-'Amid [429](#) in his *History*. It was then transferred to the occupant of the most important see in (Christianity), the see of Rome, which was the see of the Apostle Peter, as we have mentioned before. The title of Pope has remained characteristic of the see of Rome down to this day.

Thereafter, there were dissensions among the Christians with regard to their religion and to Christology. They split into groups and sects, which secured the support of the various Christian rulers against each other. At different times there appeared different sects. Finally, these sects crystallized into three groups, which constitute the (Christian) sects. Others have no significance. These are the Melchites, the Jacobites, and the Nestorians. We do not think that we should blacken the pages of this book with discussion of their dogmas of disbelief. In general, they are well known. All of them are disbelief. This is clearly stated in the noble Qur'an. (To) discuss or argue those things with them is not up to us. It is (for them to choose between) conversion to Islam, payment of the poll tax, or death.

Later on, each sect had its own Patriarch. The Patriarch of Rome is today called "Pope." He is of the Melchite persuasion. Rome belongs to the European Christians. Their royal authority is established in that region.

The Patriarch of the (Christian) subjects [430](#) in Egypt is of the Jacobite persuasion. He resides among them. The Abyssinians follow the religion of (the Egyptian Christians). The Patriarch of Egypt delegates bishops to the Abyssinians, and these bishops arrange religious affairs in Abyssinia. The name of "Pope" is

specially reserved for the patriarch of Rome at this time. The Jacobites do not call their patriarch "Pope." The word (Pope) is pronounced *Pappa*.

It is the custom of the Pope with respect to the European Christians to urge them to submit to one ruler and have recourse to him in their disagreements and agreements, in order to avoid the dissolution of the whole thing. His purpose is to have the group feeling that is the strongest among them (concentrated upon one ruler), so that (this ruler) has power over all of them. The ruler is called "Emperor" (*Emperador*), with the middle letter [431](#) (pronounced somehow) between *dh* and *z*. (The Pope) personally places the crown upon the head of (the emperor), in order to let him have the blessing implied (in that ceremony). The emperor, therefore, is called "the crowned one." Perhaps that is the meaning of the word "emperor."

This, briefly, is our comment on the two words Pope and Kohen.

"God leads astray whomever He wants to lead astray, and He guides whomever He wants to guide." [432](#)

32. *The ranks of royal and governmental authority and the titles that go with those ranks.*

It [433](#) should be known that, by himself, the ruler is weak, and he carries a heavy load. He must look for help from his fellow men. He needs their help for the necessities of life and for all his other requirements. How much more, then, does he need it to exercise political leadership over his own species, over the creatures and servants of God whom God entrusted to him as subjects. He must defend and protect the community from its enemies. He must enforce restraining laws among the people, in order to prevent mutual hostility and attacks upon property. This includes improving the safety of the roads [434](#) He must cause the people to act in their own best interests, and he must supervise such general matters involving their livelihood and mutual dealings as foodstuffs and weights and measures, in order to prevent cheating. [435](#) He must look after the mint, in order to protect the currency used by the people in their mutual dealings, against fraud. [436](#) He must exercise political leadership and get people to submit to him to the degree he desires and be satisfied, both with his intentions regarding them and with the fact that he alone has all the glory and they have none. This requires an extraordinary measure of psychology. [437](#) A noble sage has said: "Moving mountains from their places is easier for me than to influence people psychologically. [437a](#)

It is better that such help be sought from persons close to the ruler through common descent, common upbringing, or old attachment to the dynasty. This makes such persons and the ruler work together in the same spirit. God said: "Give me my brother Aaron as helper (wazir) from my family. Give me strength through him and let him participate in my business." [438](#)

The person from whom the ruler seeks help may help him with the sword, or with the pen, or with advice and knowledge, or by keeping the people from crowding upon him and diverting him from the supervision of their affairs. (The ruler may) also entrust the supervision of the whole realm to him and rely upon his competence and ability for the task. Therefore, the help the ruler seeks may be given by one man, or it may be distributed among several individuals.

Each of the different (instruments) through which help may be given has many different subdivisions. "The pen" has such subdivisions, for instance, as "the pen of letters and correspondence," "the pen of diplomas [439](#) and fiefs," and "the pen of bookkeeping," which means the offices of chief of tax collections and allowances and of minister of the army. "The sword" includes such subdivisions, for instance, as the offices of chief of military operations, chief of police, chief of the postal service, [440](#) and administration of the border regions.

It should further be known that governmental positions in Islam fell under the caliphate, because the institution of the caliphate was both religious and worldly, as we have mentioned before. [441](#) The religious laws govern all (governmental positions) and apply to each one of them in all its aspects, because the religious law governs all the actions of human beings. Jurists [442](#) therefore, are concerned with the rank of ruler or sultan and with the conditions under which it is assumed, whether

by gaining control over the caliphate [443](#)-this is what is meant by sultan-[444](#) or by the caliph delegating (power) -that is what they mean by wazir, as will be mentioned. (They are also concerned with) the extent of (the ruler's) jurisdiction over legal, financial, and other political matters, which may be either absolute or circumscribed. Furthermore, (they are concerned with the causes) that necessitate (the ruler's) removal, should (such causes) present themselves, and with other things connected with the ruler or sultan. Jurists are likewise concerned with all the positions under the ruler and sultan, such as the wazirate, the tax collector's office, and the administrative functions. [445](#) Jurists must concern themselves with all these things, because, as we have mentioned before, in Islam the caliphate is an institution of the Muslim religious law, and as such determines the position of the ruler or sultan.

However, when we discuss royal and governmental positions, it will be as something required by the nature of civilization and human existence. It will not be under the aspect of particular religious laws. This, one knows, is not our intention in this book. There is no need to go into details with regard to the religious laws governing these positions. The subject is fully treated in the books on administration (*al-Ahkam as-sultaniyah*), such as the work (of that title) by Judge Abul-Hasan al-Mawardi and the works of other distinguished jurists. Those who want to know the details should look them up there. If we discuss the caliphal positions and treat them individually, it is only in order to make the distinction between them and the governmental (*sultan*) positions clear, and not in order to make a thorough study of their legal status. This is not the purpose of our book. Thus, we shall discuss those matters only as the necessary result of the nature of civilization in human existence.

God gives success.

The wazirate

The wazirate is the mother of governmental functions and royal ranks. The name itself simply means "help." *Wizarah* (wazirate) is derived either from *mu'azarah* "help," or from *wizr* "load," as if the wazir were helping the person whom he supports to carry his burdens and charges. Thus, the meaning comes down to no more than "help." [446](#)

We mentioned before, at the beginning of this section, [447](#) that the conditions and activities of the ruler are restricted to four fields:

(1) (His activities) may concern ways and means of protecting the community, such as the supervision of soldiers, armaments, war operations, and other matters concerned with military protection and aggression. The person in charge is the wazir, as the term was customarily used in the old dynasties in the East, and as it is still used at this time in the West.

(2) Or, they may concern correspondence with persons far away from the ruler in place or in time, [448](#) and the execution of orders concerning persons with whom the ruler has no direct contact. The man in charge is the secretary (*katib*).

(3) Or, they may concern matters of tax collection and expenditures, and the safe handling of these things in all their aspects. The man in charge is the chief of tax and financial matters. In the contemporary East, he is called the wazir.

(4) Or, they may concern ways to keep petitioners away from the ruler, so that they do not crowd upon him and divert him from his affairs. This task reverts to the doorkeeper (*hajib*), who guards the door.

The (ruler's) activities do not extend beyond these four fields. Each royal and

governmental function belongs to one of them. However, the most important field is the one that requires giving general assistance in connection with everything under the ruler's direct control. This means constant contact with the ruler and participation in all his governmental activities. (All the activities) that concern some particular group of people or some particular department are of lower rank. (Among such activities are) the (military) leadership of a border region, the administration of some special tax, or the supervision of some particular matter, such as surveillance (*hisbah*) of foodstuffs, or supervision of the mint.⁴⁴⁹ All these activities are concerned with particular conditions. The persons in charge are, therefore, subordinate to those in general supervision, and the latter outrank them.

It was this way throughout the whole pre-Islamic period. When Islam appeared on the scene and power was vested in the caliph, the forms of royal authority no longer existed, and all its functions disappeared, except for some advisory and consultative ones that were natural and continued to exist because they were unavoidable. The Prophet used to ask the men around him for advice and to consult them on both general and special (private) matters. In addition, he discussed other very special affairs with Abu Bakr. Certain Arabs familiar with the situation in the Persian, Byzantine, and Abyssinian dynasties, called Abu Bakr, therefore, Muhammad's "wazir." The word *wazir* was not known (originally) among the Muslims, because the simplicity of Islam had done away with royal ranks. The same relationship (as that between Muhammad and Abu Bakr) existed between 'Umar and Abu Bakr, and between 'Ali and 'Umar, and 'Uthmin and 'Umar.

No specific ranks existed among the (early Muslims) in the fields of tax collection, expenditures, and bookkeeping. The Muslims were illiterate Arabs who did not know how to write and keep books. For bookkeeping they employed Jews, Christians, or certain non-Arab clients versed in it. (Bookkeeping) was little known among them. Their nobles did not know it well, because illiteracy was their distinctive characteristic.

Likewise, no specific rank existed among (the early Muslims) in the field of (official) correspondence and (the transmission in writing) of orders to be executed. They were illiterate, and everyone could be trusted to keep a statement secret and to forward it safely (to its destination). Also, there were no political matters that would have required the use of (confidential secretaries), because the caliphate was a religious matter and had nothing to do with power politics. Furthermore, secretarial skill had not yet become a craft, its best (products or representatives) recommended to the caliph. Every individual was capable of explaining what he wanted in the most eloquent manner. The only thing lacking was the (technical ability to) write. (For this,) the caliph always appointed someone who knew how to write well, to do such writing as there was occasion for.

Keeping petitioners away from the gates (of the caliph's court) was something that the religious law forbade (the caliphs) to do, and they did not do it. However, when the caliphate changed to royal authority and when royal forms and titles made their appearance, the first thing the dynasty did was to bar the masses from access (to the ruler). The rulers feared that their lives were in danger from attacks by rebels and others, such as had happened to 'Umar, to 'Ali, to Mu'awiyah, to 'Amr b. al-'As, and to others. Furthermore, were the people given free access (to the ruler), they would crowd upon him and divert him from state affairs. Therefore, the ruler appointed some person to take care of this for him and called him "doorkeeper" (*utjib*). It has already been mentioned that 'Abd-al-Malik said to a doorkeeper whom he was appointing: "I have given you the office of keeper of my door, (and you are entitled to turn away anyone) save these three persons: the muezzin, because he is the missionary of God; the person in charge of the mails, for

it (always) is something (important) that he brings; and the person in charge of food, lest it spoil."⁴⁵⁰

Afterwards, royal authority flourished. The (official) councilor and assistant for tribal and group affairs and good relations (with the various tribes and groups) made his appearance. For him, the name of wazir was used. Bookkeeping remained in the hands of clients, Jews, and Christians. For (official) documents, a special secretary was appointed, as a precaution against possible publication of the ruler's secrets, something that would be disastrous to his role as political leader. This secretary was not as important as the wazir, because he was needed only for written matters, and not for matters that could be discussed orally. At that time, speech still preserved its old position and was uncorrupted.⁴⁵¹ Therefore, the wazirate was the highest rank throughout the Umayyad dynasty. The wazir had general supervision of all matters delegated to him⁴⁵² and in which he acted in a consultative capacity, as well as all other matters of a defensive or offensive nature. This also entailed the supervision of the ministry (*diwan*) of the army,⁴⁵³ the assignment of military allowances at the beginning of each month, and other matters.

Then the 'Abbasid dynasty made its appearance. Royal authority flourished. The royal ranks were many and high ones. At that time, the position of wazir assumed an added importance. He became the delegate (of the caliph) as executive authority. His rank in the dynasty became conspicuous. Everyone looked toward the wazirate and submitted to it. Supervision of the bookkeeping office was entrusted to (the wazir), because his function required him to distribute the military allowances. Thus, he had to supervise the collection and distribution of (the money), and the supervision of (that task) was added to his (duties). Furthermore, supervision of "the pen" and (official) correspondence was entrusted to him, in order to protect the ruler's secrets and to preserve good style, since the language of the great mass had (by that time) become corrupt. A seal was made to be placed upon the documents of the ruler, in order to preserve them from becoming public. (That seal) was entrusted to (the wazir).

Thus, the name of wazir came to include the functions of both "the sword" and "the pen," in addition to all the other things for which the wazirate stood and in addition to its function of giving assistance (to the ruler). In the days of ar-Rashid, Jafar b. Yahya was actually called "sultan," an indication of the general extent of his supervising power and control of the dynasty. The only governmental rank that he did not hold was the office of doorkeeper, and he did not hold it because he disdained to accept such an office.

Then the 'Abbasid dynasty entered the period when control over the caliphs⁴⁵⁴ was exercised (by others). That control was at times in the hands of the wazir. At other times, it was in the hands of the ruler. When the wazir gained control, it was necessary for him to be appointed the caliph's delegate to comply fully with the religious laws, as mentioned before.⁴⁵⁵ At that time, the wazirate was divided into an "executive wazirate"-this happened when the ruler was in control of his affairs and the wazir executed his decisions and a "delegated wazirate" -which happened when the wazir controlled the ruler and the caliph⁴⁵⁶ delegated all the affairs of the caliphate, leaving them to his supervision and independent judgment. This has caused a difference of opinion as to whether two wazirs could be appointed at the same time to the "delegated wazirate." The same difference of opinion has existed with regard to the appointment of two imams at the same time, as was mentioned before in connection with the laws governing the caliphate.

(The ruler) continued to be controlled in this way. NonArab rulers seized

power. The identity of the caliphate was lost. The usurpers were not interested in adopting the caliphal titles, [457](#) and they disdained to share the same title with the wazirs, because the wazirs were their servants. Therefore, they used the names "amir" and "sultan." Those in control of the dynasty were called *amir al-umara'* or *sultan*, in addition to the ornamental titles which the caliph used to give them, as can be seen in their surnames.[458](#) They left the name wazir to those who held the office (of wazir) in the private retinue of the caliph. So remained the case down to the end of the ('Abbasid) dynasty.

In the course of this long period, language had become corrupt [459](#) It became a craft practiced by certain people. Thus, it came to occupy an inferior position, and the wazirs were too proud to bother with it. Also, the wazirs were non-Arab, and neither eloquence (nor good style) could be expected of their language. People from other classes were chosen for (matters requiring Arabic eloquence and a good style). It was their specialty, and it came to be something that was at the service of (and subordinate to) the wazir.

The name *amir* was restricted to the men in charge of war operations and the army and related matters, although (the amir) had power over the other ranks and exercised control over everything, either as (the ruler's) delegate or through being in control (of the government). This remained the situation.

Very recently, the Turkish dynasty has made its appearance in Egypt. (The Turkish rulers) noticed that the wazirate had lost its identity, because the (amirs) had been too proud to accept it and had left it to men who were inclined to hold it in the service of the secluded (and powerless) caliph. The authority of the wazir had become secondary to that of the amir. (The wazirate) had become a subordinate, ineffectual office. Consequently, the persons who held high rank in the (Turkish) dynasty (as, for example, the amirs), disdained to use the name of wazir. The person in charge of legal decisions and supervision of the army at the present time, they call "deputy" (*na'ib*).[460](#) They used the name wazir to designate (the person in charge of) tax collection.

The Umayyads in Spain at first continued to use the name wazir in its original meaning. Later, they subdivided the functions of the wazir into several parts. For each function, they appointed a special wazir. They appointed a wazir to furnish an accounting of (government) finances; another to for (official) correspondence; another to take care of the needs of those who had suffered wrongs; and another to supervise the situation of people in the border regions. A (special) house was prepared for (all these wazirs). There, they sat upon carpets spread out for them and executed the orders of the ruler, each in the field entrusted to him. One of the wazirs was appointed liaison officer between the wazirs and the caliph. He had a higher position than the others, because he had constant contact with the ruler. His seat was higher than that of the other wazirs. He was distinguished by the title of "doorkeeper" (*hajib*). So it continued down to the end of the (Umayyad) dynasty. The function and rank of *hajib* took precedence over the other ranks. Eventually, the *reyes de taifas* came to adopt the title. The most important among them at that time was called "doorkeeper" (*hajib*), as we shall mention.[461](#)

Then, the Shi'ah dynasty (the 'Ubaydid-Fatimids) made its appearance in Ifriqiyyah and al-Qayrawan. The people who supported it were firmly rooted in desert life. Therefore, they at first neglected such functions and did not use the proper names for them. Eventually, however, the dynasty reached the stage of sedentary culture, and (people) came to follow the tradition of the two preceding dynasties (the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids) with regard to the use of titles, as the history of the ('Ubaydid-Fatimid dynasty) reveals.

When, later on, the Almohad dynasty made its appearance, it at first neglected the matter because of its desert attitude, but eventually it, too, adopted names and titles. The name wazir was used in its original meaning. Later the tradition of the (Spanish) Umayyad dynasty was followed with regard to government matters and the name wazir was used for the person who guarded the ruler in his court and saw to it that embassies and visitors to the ruler used the proper forms of greeting and address, and that the requisite manners were observed in his presence. The office of doorkeeper was considered by (the later Almohads) a much higher one. [462](#) It has continued to be this way down to the present time.

In the Turkish dynasty in the East, the (official) who sees to it that people use the proper modes of address and greeting at court and when embassies are presented to the ruler, is called the *dawadar*. [463](#) His office includes control of the "private secretary" (*katib as-sirr*) and of the postmasters (intelligence agents) who are active in the ruler's interest both far and near. Such is the condition of the Turkish dynasty at this time.

God takes charge of affairs.

The office of doorkeeper (hijibah)[464](#)

We have already mentioned [465](#) that in the Umayyad and 'Abbasid dynasties the title of doorkeeper (*hajib*) was restricted to the person who guarded the ruler from the common people and would not give them access to him, or only in such ways, and at such times, as he determined. (The office of doorkeeper) was lower in rank at that time than the other functions and subordinate to them, because the wazir could intervene whenever he saw fit. This was the situation during the whole 'Abbasid period, and the situation still persists at this time. In Egypt, (the office of doorkeeper) is subordinate to the person in charge of the highest function there, who is called "deputy" (*na'ib*).

In the Umayyad dynasty in Spain, the office of doorkeeper was that of the person who guarded the ruler from his entourage and from the common people. He was the liaison officer between the ruler and the wazirs and lower (officials). In the (Umayyad) dynasty, the office of doorkeeper was an extremely high position, as (Umayyad) history shows. Men like Ibn Hudayr [466](#) and others held the office of doorkeeper in (the Umayyad dynasty).

Later, when the (Umayyad) dynasty came under the control of others, the person in control was called doorkeeper (*hajib*), because the office of doorkeeper had been such a distinguished one. Al-Mansir b. Abi 'Amir, as well as his two sons, [467](#) were *hajibs*. After they had openly adopted the external forms of royal authority, they were succeeded by the *reyes de taifas*. The latter, also, did not fail to use the title of *jib*. It was considered an honor to possess it. The most powerful of (the *reyes de taifas*) used the royal style and titles, and then inevitably mentioned the titles *hajib* and *dul l-wizaratayn* (Holder of the Two Wazirates), meaning the wazirates of "the sword" and "the pen." The title of *hajib* referred to the office that guarded the ruler from the common people and from his entourage. *Dhu l-wizaratayn* referred to the fact that (the holder of the title) combined the functions of "the sword" and "the pen."

In the dynasties of the Maghrib and Ifriqiyyah, no mention was made of the title of (doorkeeper), on account of their Bedouin attitude. Occasionally, but rarely, it is found in the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) dynasty in Egypt. That was at the time when (the 'Ubaydid-Fatimids) had become powerful and used to sedentary culture.

In the Almohad dynasty which made its appearance (subsequently), sedentary culture, which calls for the use of titles and the separation of government functions with distinctive names, only became firmly established late (in the dynasty). The only rank they had at first was that of wazir, which they used for the secretary who participated with the ruler in the administration of his special (private) affairs. Men such as

Ibn 'Atiyah [468](#) and 'Abd-as-Salam al-Kumi [469](#) held the position. (Such a wazir) had, in addition to his main duty, to take care of bookkeeping and all the financial business. Later on, the name of wazir was given to relatives of the (Almohad) dynasty, such as Ibn Jami' [470](#) and others. The name of doorkeeper (*hajib*) was not known at that time in the (Almohad) dynasty.

In the Hafsid dynasty of Ifriqiyah, the top position was at first in the hands of a wazir who gave advice and counsel. He was called "*Shaykh* of the Almohads." He had to take care of appointments and dismissals, the leadership of the army, and war operations. Bookkeeping and the ministry (*diwan* of tax collection) were another, separate rank. The person in charge of it was called *Sahib al-ashghal* (Manager of Financial Affairs) [471](#) He had complete charge of income and expenditures. He audited the finances, collected payments, and punished defaulters. One condition was that he be an Almohad. "The pen" was also a separate office under (the Almohads). It was only entrusted to a person with good knowledge of (official) correspondence and who could be trusted with secrets. Since people (of consequence in the dynasty) had no professional knowledge of writing and the proper use of their language for (official) correspondence, a particular descent was not a condition of appointment to that office.

The royal authority of the (Hafsid) ruler was very farflung, and a great number of dependents lived in his house. Therefore, he needed a steward to be in charge of his house. (That steward had the duty) properly to apportion and fix the salaries, allowances, garments, kitchen and stable expenditures, and other things. He was in control of the stores (in the treasuries) and had the duty of telling the tax collectors to provide for (the quantities and amounts of money) needed. He was called doorkeeper (*hajib*). Occasionally, the function of signing (official) documents [472](#) was added to his duties, if he happened to have a good knowledge of writing. However, that function was occasionally given to somebody else. It continued to be this way. The ruler stayed in seclusion, [473](#) and the doorkeeper (*hajib*) became the liaison officer between the people and all the officials. In the later (years) of the dynasty, the offices of "the sword" and of war operations were added to his duties. At this time it also became his duty to give advice and counsel. Thus, his office became the highest in rank and included all government functions. For some time after (the reign of) the twelfth ruler [474](#) of the (Hafsid), the government was controlled by others, and the ruler kept in seclusion. Afterwards, his grandson Sultan Abul-'Abbas, regained control of his affairs. He removed the vestiges of seclusion and (outside) control by abolishing the office of doorkeeper (*hajib*), which had been the stepping stone toward (control of the government) [475](#) He handled all his affairs himself without asking anyone else for help. This is the situation at the present time.

There is no trace of the title of doorkeeper (*hajib*) among the Zanatah dynasties in the Maghrib, of which the most important is the dynasty of the Merinids. Leadership of war operations and of the army belongs to the wazir. The rank of "the pen," as far as it is concerned with bookkeeping and (official) correspondence, goes to the person who knows these things well, even though it may be in the private possession of certain houses among followers of the dynasty. Sometimes, (the office) is kept in (the same family), sometimes it is shared with

others.

They have a separate rank for the office (whose function it is to) guard the ruler's door and to protect the ruler himself from the common people. The person who holds that office is called by them *mizwar*,⁴⁷⁶ that is, commandant of the elite troops (*jindar*) who are employed at the court of the ruler and responsible for executing his orders, enforcing the punishments he metes out, executing the severe measures he takes, and guarding the inmates of his prisons. Their chief (the *mixwar*) has charge of the court. He has to see to it that people behave properly in the (reception) hall where the common people (are received). His office is something like a minor wazirate.

The dynasty of the 'Abd-al-Wadids shows no trace of any of these titles, nor does it have separate (government) functions, because of its Bedouin character and insufficient (power). (The 'Abd-al-Wadids) occasionally use the name doorkeeper (*hajib*) for the person in charge of the ruler's personal household affairs, as was also the case in the Hafsid dynasty. He is given combined charge of bookkeeping and (official) documents, as also was the case among (the Hafsid). The reason for this is that (the 'Abd-al-Wadids) simply followed the tradition of the dynasty to which they had been subservient and whose propaganda they had been supporting when they started their career.

Present-day Spaniards call the person in charge of bookkeeping and of the ruler's activities and of all the other financial matters, *wakil* (manager). The wazir (there) has the same duties as the wazir (usually has), but he is also in charge of (official) correspondence. The ruler (himself) puts his signature to all documents. Thus, the Spaniards do not have a separate office of signer of documents ('alamah) as other dynasties have.

In the Turkish dynasty in Egypt, the name of doorkeeper (*hajib*) is used for persons of authority (*hakim*) among the men who hold power, that is, the Turks. These persons have to enforce the law among the people in the town. There are numerous (*hajibs*). The office of (*hajib*) among (the Turks) is lower than that of *na'ib*, which has general jurisdiction over both the ruling class and the common people. The *na'ib* has the authority to appoint and remove certain officials at the proper times. He may grant and fix small salaries. His orders and decrees are executed as those of the ruler. He is the ruler's delegate in every respect. The doorkeepers (*hajib*), on the other hand, have jurisdiction over the various classes of common people and over the soldiers only when a complaint (against them) is lodged with them. They can use force against those who do not want to submit to (their) judgment. They rank below the *na'ib*.

In the Turkish dynasty, the wazir is the person in charge of collecting all the different kinds of taxes: the land tax, customs duties, and the poll tax. He also (is in charge of) the disposition of (the tax revenue) for government expenditures and the fixed stipends (for soldiers and government employees). In addition, he can appoint or remove all officials, whatever their rank and description, who are concerned with tax collection and disbursement.⁴⁷⁷ It is a custom of (the Turks) that the wazir be appointed from among the Copts in charge of the office of bookkeeping and tax collection, because in Egypt they have been familiar with these matters since ancient times. Occasionally, the ruler appoints to that office a member of the ruling group, one of the Turkish grandees or one of their descendants, as occasion may arise.

God administers and governs all affairs in His wisdom. There is no God but Him.

The ministry of taxation is an office that is necessary to the royal authority. It is concerned with tax operations. It guards the rights of the dynasty in the matters of income and expenditures. It takes a census of the names of all soldiers, fixes their salaries, and pays out their allowances at the proper times. In this connection recourse is had to rules set up by the chiefs of (tax) operations and the stewards of the dynasty. They are all written down in a book which gives all the details concerning income and expenditures. It is based upon a good deal of accounting, which is mastered only by those who have considerable skill in (tax) operations. The book is called the *diwan*. At the same time, (the word *diwan*) designates the place where the officials who are concerned with these matters have their offices.

The name is said to have had the following origin. One day, Khosraw looked at the secretaries in his ministry (*diwan*). They were all engaged in their separate calculations, and it looked as if they were talking to themselves. The king exclaimed: "Dewaneh"-which is Persian for "crazy." [478](#) As a result, the place where they were working was called by that name. The ending *-eh* was dropped, because the word was so much used, and dropping the *-eh* made it easier to pronounce. The word thus became *diwan*. Later, it came to signify the (tax) book which contained the rules and computations.

Another story is that *diwan* is the Persian name for the devils. The secretaries were called "devils" because of their quick comprehension, their understanding of both the obvious and the difficult, and their ability to combine random and disparate facts. The name was then extended to designate the offices where they worked. In this sense, the name *diwan* was taken over by the secretaries in charge of (official) correspondence and used to designate the place where their offices were located in the ruler's court, as will be mentioned later on. [479](#)

One person is in charge of this office. He supervises all the operations of this kind. Each branch has its own supervisor. In some dynasties supervision of the army, of military fiefs, of keeping count of allowances, and of other (such) things, is constituted as separate offices. (Whether this is done or not) depends on the organization of a given dynasty and the arrangements made by its first rulers.

It should be known that the office of (tax collections) originates in dynasties only when their power and superiority and their interest in the different aspects of royal authority and in the ways of efficient administration have become firmly established. The first to set up the *diwan* in the Muslim dynasty was 'Umar. [480](#) The reason is said to have been the arrival of Abu Hurayrah with money from al-Bahrain. (The Muslims) thought that it was a very large sum, and they had trouble with its distribution. They tried to count the money and to establish how it should be paid out for allowances and claims. On that occasion, Khalid b. al-Walid advised the use of the *diwan*. He said: "I have seen the rulers of Syria keeping a *diwan*." 'Umar accepted the idea from Khalid.

It has also been said that the person who advised 'Umar to introduce the *diwan* was al-Hurmuzan. [481](#) He noticed that (military) missions were dispatched without a *diwan* (a muster roll). He asked ('Umar): "Who would know if some of (the soldiers) disappeared? Those who remain behind might leave their places and abscond with the money that had been given to them for their services (if they could assume that their desertion would not be noticed). Such things should be noted down exactly in a book. Therefore, establish a *diwdn* for them." 'Umar asked what the word *diwdn* meant, and it was explained to him. When he agreed to (have a *diwdn*), he ordered 'Aqil b. Abi Talib, [482](#) Makhramah b. Nawfal, [483](#) and Jubayr b. Mut'im, [484](#) all of them secretaries of the Quraysh, to write down the *diwan* of the

Muslim army.

(The *diwan* was arranged) according to family relationships and began with the relatives of the Prophet and continued according to the degree of relationship. This was the beginning of the ministry (*diwan*) of the army.

Az-Zuhri [485](#) reported on the authority of Sa'id b. alMusayyab [486](#) that this took place in al-Mubarram of the year twenty [December, 640/January, 641].

After the advent of Islam, the ministry (*diwan*) of the land tax and tax collections remained as it had been. The [487](#) (*diwan*) of the 'Iraq used Persian, and that of Syria Byzantine Greek. The secretaries of the *diwans* were Muslim subjects of the two groups. Then, with the appearance of 'Abd-al-Malik b. Marwan, the form of the state became that of royal authority. People turned from the low standard of desert life to the splendor of sedentary culture and from the simplicity of illiteracy to the sophistication of literacy. Experts in writing and bookkeeping made their appearance among the Arabs and their clients. Thus, 'Abd-al-Malik ordered Sulayman b. Sa'd, then governor of the Jordan (province), to introduce the use of Arabic in the *diwan* of Syria. Sulayman completed the task in exactly one year to the day. Sarhitn, [488](#) 'Abd-al-Malik's secretary, looked at (the situation) and said to the Byzantine secretaries: "Seek you a living in another craft, because God has taken this one from you."

Al-Hajjaj ordered his secretary Salih b. 'Abd-ar-Rahman to introduce the use of Arabic, instead of Persian, in the *diwan* of the 'Iraq. Salih knew how to write both Arabic and Persian. He had learned it from Zadanfarrfikh, his predecessor as secretary to al-Hajjaj. When Zadan was killed in the war against 'Abd-ar-Rahman b. al-Ash'ath [489](#) al-Hajjaj appointed Salih as his successor. (Salih now carried out al-Hajjaj's order and introduced the use of Arabic in the *diwan*). He succeeded in doing that and in overcoming the reluctance of the Persian secretaries. 'Abd-al-Hamid b. Yahya [490](#) used to say: "Salih was an excellent man. He was a great boon to the secretaries."

Later on, in the 'Abbasid dynasty, the office was added to the duties of (the wazir) who supervised the man in charge of it. This was the case under the Barmecides and the Banu Sahl b. Nawbakht and other 'Abbasid wazirs.

Certain religious laws attach to the office. They concern the army, the income and expenditures of the treasury, and it, is the differing tax situations of the different regions, which depend on whether they had surrendered (peacefully) to the Muslim conquerors or had been conquered by force. Then, there is the question as to who makes appointment to the office. There are also the conditions governing the person in charge and the secretaries, as well as the rules according to which the accounts are to be kept. All (these legal problems) belong to the books on administration (*al-Ahkam as-sultaniyah*) and are written down in them. It is not the purpose of this book to deal with them. We discuss the subject only as it has to do with the nature of royal authority, in the discussion of which we are presently engaged.

This office constitutes a large part of all royal authority. In fact, it is the third of its basic pillars. Royal authority requires soldiers, money, and the means to communicate with those who are absent. The ruler, therefore, needs persons to help him in the matters concerned with "the sword," "the pen," and finances. Thus, the person who holds the office (of tax collections) has (a good) part of the royal authority for himself.

This was the case under the Umayyad dynasty in Spain and under its successors, the *reyes de ta'ifas*. In the Almohad dynasty, the man in charge of (the

office) was an Almohad.

He had complete freedom to levy, collect, and handle money, to control the activities of officials and agents in this connection, and then to make disbursements in the proper amounts and at the proper times. He was known as *Sahib al-ashghal* (financial affairs manager). Occasionally, in some places, the office was held by persons who had a good understanding of it, but were not Almohads. [491](#)

The Hafsids gained control over Ifriqiyah at the time when the exodus from Spain took place. Exiled (Spanish) notables came to (the Hafsids). [492](#) Among them, there were some who had been employed in this (type of work) in Spain, such as the Banu Sa'id, [493](#) the lords of Alcala near Granada, who were known as the Banu Abi l-Husayn. (The Hafsids) liked to have them for this (type of work). They entrusted them with the supervision of (tax) affairs, which was what they had been doing in Spain. They employed them and the Almohads alternately for this purpose. Later on, the accountants and secretaries took the office over for themselves, and the Almohads lost it. As the position of doorkeeper (*hajib*) became more and more important, and as his executive power came to extend over all government affairs, the institution of the *Sahib al-ashghal* ceased to be influential [494](#) The person in charge of it was dominated by the doorkeeper (*hajib*) and became (no more than) a mere tax collector. He lost the authority he had formerly had in the dynasty.

In the contemporary Merinid dynasty, the accounting of the land tax and (military) allowances is in the hands of one man. He audits all accounts. Recourse is had to his *diwan*, and his authority is second (only) to the authority of the ruler or wazir. His signature attests to the correctness of the accounts dealing with the land tax and (military) allowances.

These are the principal governmental ranks and functions. They are high ranks, involving the exercise of general authority and (requiring) direct contact with the ruler.

In the Turkish dynasty, the functions (under discussion) are divided. The person in charge of the *diwan* of (military) allowances is known as inspector of the army (*nazir al-jaysh*). The person in charge of finances is called the wazir. He has supervision over the dynasty's *diwan* of general tax collection. This is the highest rank among the men who are in charge of financial matters. Among (the Turks), supervision of financial matters is spread over many ranks, because the dynasty rules a large (territory) and exercises great powers, and its finances and taxes are too vast to be handled by one man all by himself, however competent. Therefore, for the general supervision of (financial affairs), the man known as wazir is appointed. In spite of his (important position), he is second to one of the clients of the ruler who shares in the ruler's group feeling and belongs to the military (caste) and who is called *Ustadh-ad-dar*. [495](#) This official outranks the wazir, who does all he can to do his bidding. He is one of the great amirs of the dynasty and belongs to the army and the military (caste).

Other functions are subordinate to that of (the wazir) among (the Turks). All of them have reference to financial matters and bookkeeping, and are restricted in their authority to particular matters. There is, for instance, the inspector of the privy purse (*nazir al-khass*)-that is, the person who handles the ruler's private finances, such as concern his fiefs or his shares in the land tax and taxable lands that are not part of the general Muslim fist [496](#) He is under the control of the amir, the *Ustadh-ad-dar*, but if the wazir is an army man, the *Ustadh-ad-dar* has no authority over him. The inspector of the privy purse also is under the control of the treasurer of the finances of the ruler, one of the latter's mamelukes, who is called *Khazindar*

(treasurer), because his office is concerned with the private property of the ruler. Such is the nomenclature [497](#) used in connection with the function of (financial administration) in the Turkish dynasty in the East. We have mentioned how it was handled in the Maghrib.

God governs all affairs. There is no Lord except Him.

The ministry (diwan) of (official) correspondence and writing

This office is not required by the nature of royal authority. Many dynasties were able to dispense with it completely, as, for example, the dynasties rooted in the desert and which were not affected by the refinements of sedentary culture and high development of the crafts.

In the Muslim dynasty, the Arabic language situation and (the custom of) expressing what one wanted to express in good form intensified the need for the office. Thus, writing came to convey, as a rule, the essence of a matter in better stylistic form than was possible in oral expression. The secretary to an (Arab) amir was customarily a relative and one of the great of his tribe. This was the case with the caliphs and leading personalities among the men around Muhammad in Syria and the 'Iraq, because of the great reliability and genuine discretion (of relatives and tribesmen).

When the language became corrupt and a craft (that had to be learned), [498](#) (the office) was entrusted to those who knew (Arabic) well. Under the 'Abbasids, it was a high office. The secretary issued documents freely, and signed his own name to them at the end. He sealed them with the seal of the ruler, which was a signet upon which the name of the ruler or his emblem was engraved. It was impressed on a red clay mixed with water and called sealing clay. The document was folded and glued, and then both sides was sealed with (the seal). Later on, the documents were issued in the name of the ruler, and the secretary (merely) affixed his signature ('alamah) [499](#) to them at the beginning or end. He could choose where he wanted to put it as well as its wording.

The office then lost standing through the fact that officials of other government ranks gained in the ruler's esteem or because the wazir gained control over (the ruler). The signature of a secretary became ineffective (as a sign of authority) and was replaced by the signature of his superior, and this was now considered decisive. (The secretary) affixed his official signature, but the signature of his superior made the document valid. This happened in the later (years) of the Hafsid dynasty, when the office of doorkeeper (*hajib*) gained in esteem and the doorkeeper became the delegate of the ruler and then came to control him. The signature of the secretary became ineffective (as a sign of authority) but was still affixed to documents, in acknowledgment of its former importance. The doorkeeper (*hajib*) made it the rule for the secretary to sign letters of his by affixing a handwritten (note) for which he [500](#) could choose any formula of ratification he wished. The secretary obeyed him and affixed the usual mark. So long as the ruler was in control of his own affairs, he saw to the matter himself (and made it the rule for the secretary) to affix the signature.

One of the functions of the secretary's office is the *tawqi*. It means that the secretary sits in front of the ruler during his public audiences and notes down (*yuwaqqi'*), in the most concise and stylistically most perfect manner, the decisions he receives from the ruler concerning the petitions presented to him. These decisions are then issued as they are, or they are copied in a document which must be in the possession of the petitioner. The person who formulates a *tawqi'* needs a

great deal of stylistic skill, so that the *tawqi'* has the correct form. Ja'far b. Yahya used to write *tawqi'*s on petitions for arRashid and to hand the petition (with the *tawqi'*) back to the petitioner. Stylists vied with each other to obtain his *tawqi'*s, in order to learn the different devices and kinds of good style from them. It has even been said that such petitions (with Ja'far's *tawqi'* on them) were sold for a dinar.⁵⁰¹ Things were handled in this manner in (various) dynasties.

It should be known that the person in charge of this function must be selected from among the upper classes and be a refined gentleman of great knowledge and with a good deal of stylistic ability. He will have to concern himself with the principal branches of scholarship, because such things may come up in the gatherings and audiences of the ruler. In addition, to be a companion of kings calls for good manners and the possession of good qualities of character. And he must know all the secrets of good style, to be able to write letters and find the words that conform to the meaning intended.

In some dynasties, the rank (of secretary) is entrusted to military men, since (some) dynasties, by their very nature, have no regard for scholarship, on account of the simplicity of group feeling (prevailing in them). The ruler gives his government offices and ranks to men who share in his group feeling. Appointments to the financial administration, to "the sword," and to the office of secretary, are made from among them. "The sword" requires no learning. But the financial administration and the secretaryship need it, for the latter requires a good style and the former requires accounting skill. Therefore, (rulers) select people from the (learned) class for the office of secretary, when there is need for it, and entrust it to them. However, the secretary is subordinate to the higher authority exercised by the men who share in the ruler's group feeling, and his authority derives from that of his superior. This is the case with the Turkish dynasty in the East at this time. The office of chief secretary belongs to the "secretary of state" (*Sahib al-insha'*). However, the secretary of state is under the control of an amir from among the men who share in the group feeling of the ruler. This man is known as the *Dawidár*.⁵⁰² The ruler usually relies upon him, trusts him, and confides in him, whereas he relies upon the (secretary) for matters that have to do with good style and the conformity (of the expression) to what one wants to express,⁵⁰³ and other, related matters.

The ruler who selects and picks a (secretary) from the rank and file has many conditions to consider. (These conditions governing the secretary) are best and most completely presented in the *Epistle* that the secretary 'Abd-al-Hamid addressed to his fellow secretaries. It runs as follows;⁵⁰⁴

And now: May God guard you who practice the craft of secretaryship, and may He keep you and give you success and guidance. There are prophets and messengers and highly honored kings. After them come different kinds of men, all of them made by God. They are of different kinds, even if they are all alike in fact. God occupied them with different kinds of crafts and various sorts of businesses, so that they might be able to make a living and earn their sustenance. He gave to you, assembled secretaries, the great opportunity to be men of education and gentlemen, to have knowledge and (good) judgment.⁵⁰⁵ You bring out whatever is good in the caliphate and straighten out its affairs. Through your advice, God improves the government for the benefit of human beings and makes their countries civilized. The ruler cannot dispense with you. You alone make him a competent ruler. Your position with regard to rulers is that (you are) the ears through which they hear, the eyes

through which they see, the tongues through which they speak, and the hands through which they touch. May God give you, therefore, enjoyment of the excellent craft with which He has distinguished you, and may He not deprive you of the great favors that He has shown unto you.

No craftsman needs more than you to combine all praiseworthy good traits and all memorable and highly regarded excellent qualities, O secretaries, if you aspire to fit the description given of you in this letter. The secretary needs on his own account, and his master, who trusts him with his important affairs, expects him, to be mild where mildness is needed, to be understanding where judgment is needed, to be enterprising where enterprise is needed, to be hesitant where hesitation is needed. He must prefer modesty, justice, and fairness. He must keep secrets. He must be faithful in difficult circumstances. He must know (beforehand) about the calamities that may come. He must be able to put things in their proper places and misfortunes into their proper categories. He must have studied every branch of learning and know it well, and if he does not know it well, he must at least have acquired an adequate amount of it. By virtue of his natural intelligence, good education, and outstanding experience, he must know what is going to happen to him before it happens, and he must know the result of his actions before action starts. He must make the proper preparations for everything, and he must set up everything in its proper, customary form.

Therefore, assembled secretaries, vie with each other to acquire the different kinds of education and to gain an understanding of religious matters. Start with knowledge of the Book of God and religious duties. Then, study the Arabic language, as that will give you a cultivated form of speech. Then, learn to write well, as that will be an ornament to your letters. Transmit poetry and acquaint yourselves with the rare expressions and ideas that poems contain. Acquaint yourselves also with both Arab and nonArab political events, and with the tales of (both groups) and the biographies describing them, as that will be helpful to you in your endeavors. Do not neglect to study accounting, for it is the mainstay of the land tax register. [506](#)
Detest prejudices with all your heart, lofty ones as well as low ones, and all idle and contemptible things, for they bring humility and are the ruin of secretaryship. Do not let your craft be a low one. Guard against backbiting and calumny and the actions of stupid people. Beware of haughtiness, foolishness, and pride, for they mean acquiring hostility without (even the excuse of) hatred. Love each other in God in your craft. Advise your colleagues to practice it in a way befitting your virtuous, fair, and gifted predecessors.

If times go hard for one of you, be kind to him and console him, until everything be well with him again. Should old age make one of you unable to get around and pursue his livelihood and meet his friends, visit him and honor him and consult him, and profit from his outstanding experience and mature knowledge. Every one of you should be more concerned for his assistants, who may be useful when needed, than for his own children or brothers. Should some praise come (to one of you) in the course of his work, he should ascribe the merit to his colleague; any blame he should bear all by himself. He should beware of mistakes and slips and of being annoyed when conditions change. For you, assembled secretaries, are more prompt to be blamed than Qur'an readers, [507](#) and blame is more detrimental to you than to them. You know that everyone of you has a master, one who gives from his own as much as can be expected, and (every one of you) has the obligation to repay him, since he deserves it, with fidelity, gratefulness, tolerance, patience, good counsel, discretion, and active interest in his affairs, and to show (his good intentions) by his actions whenever his master needs him and his resources. Be

conscious of (your obligations) - God give you success - in good and bad circumstances, in privation as in munificence and kindness, in happiness as in misfortune. Any member of this noble craft who has all these qualities has good qualities indeed.

If any one of you be appointed to an office, or if some matter that concerns God's children be turned over to one of you, he should think of God and choose obedience to Him. He should be kind to the weak and fair to those who have been wronged. All creatures are God's children. He loves most those who are kindest to His children. Furthermore, he should judge with justice, he should honor the noble (descendants of Muhammad), augment the booty (gained in wars against infidels), and bring civilization to the country. He should be friendly to the subjects, and refrain from harming them. He should be humble and mild in his office. He should be kind in handling the land tax registers [508](#) and in calling in outstanding claims.

You should explore the character of him with whom you associate. When his good and bad sides are known, you will be able to help him to do the good things that agree with him, and be able to contrive to keep him from the bad things he desires. You must be able to do that in the subtlest and best manner. You know that a person who is in charge of an animal and understands his job, endeavors to know the character of the animal. If it is inclined to gallop, [509](#) he does not goad it when he is riding it. If it is inclined to kick, he takes precautions with its forelegs. If he fears that it will shy, he takes precautions with its head. If it is restive, he gently subdues its desire to go where it wants to go. If it still continues, he pulls it slightly to the side, then has its halter loosened. This description of how to take care of an animal contains good points for those who want to lead human beings and deal with them, serve them, and have intimate contact with them. The secretary, with his excellent education, his noble craft, his subtlety, his frequent dealings with people who confer with him and discuss things with him and learn from him or fear his severity, needs to be kind to his associates, [509a](#) to flatter them, and to supply their wants, even more than the person in charge of an animal which cannot answer, does not know what is right, does not understand what is said to it, and goes only where its master who rides upon it makes it go. Be kind - God show mercy unto you-when you look after things. Use as much reflection and thought as possible. God permitting, you will thus escape harshness, annoyance, and rudeness on the part of your associates. They will be in agreement with you, and you will have their friendship and protection, if God wills.

None of you should have too sumptuous an office or go beyond the proper limits in his dress, his mount, his food, his drink, his house, his servants, or in the other things pertaining to his station, for, despite the nobility of the craft by which God has distinguished you, you are servants who are not permitted to fall short in their service. You are caretakers whom one does not permit to be wasteful or spendthrift. Try to preserve your modesty by planned moderation in all the things I have mentioned and told you. Beware of the wastefulness of prodigality and the bad results of luxury. They engender poverty and bring about humiliation. People who (are prodigal and live in luxury) are put to shame, especially if they be secretaries and men of education.

Things repeat themselves. One thing contains the clue to another. Let yourselves be guided in your future undertakings by your previous experience. Then, choose the method of doing things that is most definite, most accurate, and that promises the best result. You should know that there is something that defeats accomplishment, namely, talking about things. The person who does it is prevented from using his knowledge and his ability to think. Therefore, everyone of you, while

he is in his office, should endeavor to talk no more than is sufficient; he should be concise in the matters he brings up and in the answers he gives; and he should give thought to all the arguments he advances. His work will profit from that. It will prevent too much preoccupation with other things. He should implore God to grant him success and to support him with His guidance, for he must fear making mistakes that might hurt his body and (cast doubt upon) his intelligence and education. When any one of you says or thinks that the high quality and efficiency of his work is obviously the result of his own cleverness and knowledge of how to do things, he provokes God. God will let him depend upon himself alone, and then he will find that he is not adequate to his task. This is no secret to those who reflect.

None of you should say that he has a better understanding of affairs, or knows better how to handle difficult matters, than other members of his craft, than those who serve together with him. Of two persons, discerning people consider him the more intelligent who throws off conceit and thinks his colleagues more intelligent and more skillful than he. But at any rate, both parties should acknowledge the excellence of God's favors. No one should let himself be deceived by his own opinions and consider himself free from mistakes. Nor should he strive to outdo his friends, equals, colleagues, or his family. Everybody must give praise to God, in humility in the face of His greatness, in meekness in the face of His might, and in fulfillment of the command to speak of God's favors.⁵¹⁰

In this letter of mine, let me refer to the old proverb: "He who accepts good advice ⁵¹¹ all is successful." This is the essence of this letter and the best that is said in it, after the references to God it contains. Therefore, I have placed it at the end, and I close the letter with it. May God take care of us and of you, assembled students and secretaries, in the same way He takes care of those whom, as He knows in His prescience, He will make happy and guide aright. He can do it. It is in His hand.

Farewell, and God's mercy and blessings upon you.

The police ⁵¹²

In Ifriqiyah, the holder (of the office of chief of police) is at this time called the "magistrate" (*hakim*). In Spain, he is called the "town chief" (*sahib al-madinah*). In the Turkish dynasty (in Egypt), he is called the "governor" (*wali*). It is an office that is subordinate to the person in charge of "the sword" in the dynasty, who at times uses the (chief of police) to execute his orders.

The office of (chief of) police was originally created by the 'Abbasid dynasty. The person who held it had (a twofold duty. He had,) firstly, to concern himself with crimes in the investigating stage, and, secondly, to execute the legal punishments. The religious law cannot concern itself with suspicions of possible criminal acts. It can concern itself only with executing the legal punishments. Political leadership, on the other hand, has to concern itself with the investigating stage, in which is (ascertained the commission of crimes) necessitating (legal punishments). It does this through the magistrate, who, being in the possession of all the circumstantial evidence, forces (the criminal) to confess, as is required by the general (public) interest. The person in charge of the investigating stage and of executing afterwards the legal punishments due, when the judge has no (longer) anything to do with (the case), was called "chief of police." Occasionally, he was given sole jurisdiction over capital crimes and legal punishments, and those matters were taken away from the judge's jurisdiction. This rank was considered one of great reputation, and was entrusted to high military leaders and important clients of the court entourage. It implied no general executive power over all classes, its

jurisdiction extending only over low and suspect elements and (involving) the restraining of turbulent and criminal people.

Among the Spanish Umayyads, the (office of chief of police) acquired great celebrity. It was divided into a "great police" and a "small police." The jurisdiction of the "great police" was made to extend over both the upper and the lower classes. It had jurisdiction over government dignitaries, and, in cases of wrongdoing, could restrain them, their relatives, and other persons of rank who were connected with them as clients. The chief of the "small police" was concerned only with the common people. The chief of the "great police" had his seat at the gate of the palace of the ruler. He had footmen (*raji*) who occupied places near him,[513](#) which they did not leave except to go about his business. (The office) was entrusted only to great personalities of the dynasty. It even became a stepping stone to the wazirate and to the office of doorkeeper (*hajib*).

In the Almohad dynasty in the Maghrib, (the office) enjoyed a certain reputation, even though it did not have general (jurisdiction). It was entrusted only to important Almohad personalities. It did not have authority over government dignitaries. Nowadays, its importance has greatly decreased. It no longer is the preserve of Almohad personalities, and may be entrusted to any follower (of the dynasty) who (is able to) take charge of it.

In the Merinid dynasty at this time in the West, (the office) is vested in the houses of Merinid clients and followers.

In the Turkish dynasty in the East, (the office) is entrusted to Turkish personalities or to descendants of the people of the preceding Kurdish dynasty. (Incumbents) are chosen for (the office) in both regions [514](#) according to the energy and resolution they show in enforcing the law. The purpose is to cut down corruption, to stamp out criminality, to destroy and dissolve the homes and centers of criminal activity, and to enforce the punishments imposed by the religious law and by the political authorities, as concern for the general (public) interests in a town requires.

God causes the change of night and day.[515](#)

The admiralty

(The admiralty) is one of the ranks and functions of the dynasty in the realm of the Maghrib and Ifriqiyyah. It is subordinate to the person in charge of "the sword" and comes under his authority in many respects. In customary usage, the person in charge of the admiralty is called *Almiland*,[516](#) with an emphatic *l*. (The word) is derived from the language of the European Christians. It is the technical term for the office in their language.

The rank (of admiral) is restricted to the realm of Ifriqiyyah and the Maghrib, because both Ifriqiyyah and the Maghrib are on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Along its southern shore the lands of the Berbers extend from Ceuta to Alexandria and on to Syria. Along its northern shore are the countries of Spain and of the European Christians (Franks), the Slavs, and the Byzantines, also extending to Syria. It is called the Byzantine Sea or the Syrian Sea,[517](#) according to the people who inhabit its shores. Those who live along the coast and on the shores of both sides of the Mediterranean are more concerned with (maritime) conditions than any other maritime nation.

The Byzantines, the European Christians, and the Goths lived on the northern shore of the Mediterranean. Most of their wars and most of their commerce was by

sea. They were skilled in navigating (the Mediterranean) and in naval war. When these people coveted the possession of the southern shore, as the Byzantines (coveted) Ifriqiyyah and as the Goths (coveted) the Maghrib, they crossed over in their fleets and took possession of it. Thus, they achieved superiority over the Berbers and deprived them of their power. They had populous cities there, such as Carthage, Sbeitla, Jalula,⁵¹⁸ Murnaq,⁵¹⁹ Cherchel, and Tangier. The ancient master of Carthage used to fight the master of Rome and to send fleets loaded with armies and equipment to wage war against him. Thus, (seafaring) is a custom of the inhabitants of both shores of the Mediterranean, which was known in ancient as in modern times.

When the Muslims took possession of Egypt, 'Umar b. al-Khattab wrote to 'Amr b. al-'As and asked him to describe the sea to him. 'Amr replied: "The sea is a great creature upon which weak creatures ride -like worms upon a piece of wood."

⁵²⁰ Thus, he recommended at that time that the Muslims be kept away from seafaring. No Arab traveled by sea save those who did so without 'Umar's knowledge and were punished by him for it. 'Umar thus punished 'Arfajah b. Harthamah al-Azdi, the chief of the Bajilah.⁵²¹ He sent him on a raid against Oman, and he learned (later that he had raided it by sea). ⁵²² He disapproved of his having made the raid by sea, and told him so in no uncertain terms. Thus it remained until Mu'awiyah's reign. He permitted the Muslims to go by sea and to wage the holy war in ships. The reason for this was that on account of their Bedouin attitude, the Arabs were at first not skilled in navigation and seafaring, whereas the Byzantines and the European Christians, on account of their experience of the sea and the fact that they had grown up traveling in ships, were used to the sea and well trained in navigation.

The royal and governmental authority of the Arabs became firmly established and powerful at that time. The nonArab nations became servants of the Arabs and were under their control. Every craftsman offered them his best services. They employed seagoing nations for their maritime needs. Their own experience of the sea and of navigation grew, and they turned out to be very expert. They wished to wage the holy war by sea. They constructed ships and galleys and loaded the fleet with men and weapons. They embarked the army and fighters to fight against the unbelievers across the sea. This was the special concern of the provinces and border regions closest to the shores of the Mediterranean, such as Syria, Ifriqiyyah, the Maghrib, and Spain. The caliph 'Abdal-Malik recommended to Hassan b. an-Nu'man,⁵²³ the governor of Ifriqiyyah, that a shipyard ⁵²⁴ be set up in Tunis for the production of maritime implements, as he was desirous of waging the holy war. From there, the conquest of Sicily was achieved in the days of Ziyadat-Allah I b. Ibrahim b. al-Aghlab under the leadership of the chief mufti, Asad b. al-Furat ⁵²⁵ Pantelleria ⁵²⁶ also was conquered in his day. Mu'awiyah b. Iludayj ⁵²⁷ had been sent on a raid against Sicily in the days of Mu'awiyah b. Abi Sufyan, but God had not enabled him to conquer it. It was conquered by the Aghlabid ruler and his general, Asad b. al-Furat.

Thereafter, under the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) and the (Spanish) Umayyads, the fleets of Ifriqiyyah and Spain constantly attacked each other's countries in civil war operations, and they thoroughly devastated the coastal regions. In the days of 'Abd-ar-Rahman an-Nasir, the Spanish fleet had grown to about two hundred vessels, and the African fleet to the same number, or close to it. The fleet admiral in Spain was Ibn Rumahis. The port used by (the Spanish fleet) for docking and hoisting sail was Pechina and Almeria. The fleet was assembled from all the provinces. Each region where ships were used contributed one fleet (unit) under the supervision of a commander in charge of everything connected with fighting, weapons and

combatants alike. There also was a captain who directed the movement of the fleet, using either the wind or oars. He also directed its anchoring in port. When the whole fleet was assembled for a large-scale raid or for important government business, it was manned in its home port. The ruler loaded it with men (drawn from) his best troops and clients, and placed them under the supervision of one commander, who belonged to the highest class of the people of his realm and to whom all were responsible. He then sent them off, and awaited their victorious return with booty.

During the time of the Muslim dynasty, the Muslims gained control over the whole Mediterranean. Their power and domination over it was vast. The Christian nations could do nothing against the Muslim fleets, anywhere in the Mediterranean. All the time, the Muslims rode its wave for conquest. There occurred then many well-known episodes of conquest and plunder. The Muslims took possession of all the islands that lie off its shores, such as Majorca, Minorca, Ibiza, Sardinia, Sicily, Pantelleria, Malta, Crete, Cyprus, and of all the other provinces of the Byzantines and the European Christians (on its shores). Abu 1-Qasim ash-Shi'i [528](#) and his descendants sent their fleets on raids against the island of Genoa from al-Mahdtyah. They returned victorious with booty. Mujahid al-'Amiri, the master of Denia, one of the *reyes de taifas*, conquered the island of Sardinia with his fleet in the year 405 [1014/15].[529](#) The Christians reconquered it in due course.

During all that (time), the Muslims were gaining control over the largest part of the high sea. Their fleets kept coming and going, and the Muslim armies crossed the sea in ships from Sicily to the great mainland opposite Sicily, on the northern shore. They fell upon the European Christian rulers and made massacres in their realms. This happened in the days of the Banu Abul-Husayn,[530](#) the rulers of Sicily, who supported the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) propaganda there. The Christian nations withdrew with their fleets to the northeastern side of the Mediterranean, to the coastal regions inhabited by the European Christians and the Slavs, and to the Aegean islands,[531](#) and did not go beyond them. The Muslim fleet had pounced upon them as eagerly as lions upon their prey. They covered most of the surface of the Mediterranean with their equipment and numbers and traveled its lanes (on missions both) peaceful and warlike. Not a single Christian board floated on it.

Eventually, however, the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) and Umayyad dynasties weakened and softened and were affected by infirmity. Then, the Christians reached out for the eastern islands of the Mediterranean, such as Sicily, Crete, and Malta, and took possession of them. They pressed on against the shores of Syria during this interval, and took possession of Tripoli, Ascalon, Tyre, and Acco. They gained control over all the seaports of Syria. They conquered Jerusalem and built there a church as an outward manifestation of their religion and worship. They deprived the Banu Khazrun of Tripolitania [532](#) and (they conquered) Gabes and Sfax, and imposed a poll tax upon their inhabitants. Then they took possession of al-Mahdtyah, the (original) seat of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids), and took it away from the descendants of Buluggtn b. Zirt. In the fifth [eleventh] century, they had the lead in the Mediterranean. In Egypt and Syria, interest in the fleet weakened and eventually ceased to exist. Since then, they have shown no concern for the naval matters with which they had been so exceedingly concerned under the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) dynasty, as is known from 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) history. In consequence, the identity of the office of the admiralty was lost in those countries. It remained in Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib, but only there. At the present time, the western Mediterranean has large fleets and is very powerful. No enemy has trespassed on it or been able to do anything there.

In Lamtunah (Almoravid) times, the admirals of the fleet in (the West) were

the Banu Maymun, chieftains from the peninsula of Cadiz,⁵³³ which they (later on) handed over to (the Almohad) 'Abd-al-Mu'min, to whom they paid obedience. Their fleets, (assembled) from the countries on both shores, reached the number of one hundred.

In the sixth [twelfth] century, the Almohad dynasty flourished and had possession of both shores. The Almohads organized their fleet in the most perfect manner ever known and on the largest scale ever observed. Their admiral was Ahmad as-Siqilli, who belonged to the Sadghiyan, a branch of the Sadwikish,⁵³⁴ who lived on the island of Jerba. The Christians had captured him there, and he had grown up among them. The ruler of Sicily (Roger II) selected him for his service and employed him in it, but he died and was succeeded by his son, whose anger (Ahmad) somehow aroused. He feared for his life and went to Tunis, where he stayed with the chief of Tunis, one of the Banu 'Abd-al-Mu'min. He went on to Marrakech, and was received there by the caliph Yusuf al-'Ashrt b. 'Abd-al-Mu'min⁵³⁵ with great kindness and honor. (The caliph) gave him many presents and entrusted him with command of his fleet. (As commander of the fleet) he went to wage the holy war against the Christian nations. He did noteworthy and memorable deeds during the Almohad dynasty.

In his period, the Muslim fleet was of a size and quality never, to our knowledge, attained before or since. When Salah-ad-din Yusuf b. Ayyub, the ruler of Egypt and Syria at this time, set out to recover the border cities (ports) of Syria from the Christian nations and to cleanse Jerusalem of the abomination of unbelief and to rebuild it, one fleet of unbelievers after another came to the relief of the border cities (ports), from all the regions near Jerusalem which they controlled. They supported them with equipment and food. The fleet of Alexandria could not stand up against them. (The Christians) had had the upper hand in the eastern Mediterranean for so long, and they had numerous fleets there. The Muslims, on the other hand, had for a long time been too weak to offer them any resistance there, as we have mentioned. In this situation, Salah-ad-din sent 'Abd-al-Karim b. Munqidh, a member of the family of the Banu Munqidh, the rulers of Shayzar, as his ambassador to Ya'qub al-Mansur, the Almohad ruler of the Maghrib at that time.⁵³⁶ Salahaddin had taken Shayzar away from the Banu Munqidh but had spared them to use them in his government. Now, he sent 'Abd-al-Karim, a member of that (family), to the ruler of the Maghrib to ask for the support of his fleets, to prevent the fleets of the unbelievers from achieving their desire of bringing relief to the Christians in the Syrian border cities (ports). ('Abd-al-Karim) carried a letter from (Salah-addin) to that effect. The letter had been composed by (alQadi) al-Fadil al-Baysani.⁵³⁷ It began with these words: "May God open to our Lord the gates of success and good fortune." The letter is quoted by the 'Imad al-Isfahani in the *Fath alQudsi*.⁵³⁸ Al-Mansur was greatly annoyed with the (members of the embassy),⁵³⁹ because they did not address him as Commander of the Faithful; but he concealed his annoyance and treated them with great kindness and honor. He sent them back to (Salah-ad-din) who had sent them, and did not comply with his request.

This (story) is evidence (for the facts that) the ruler of the Maghrib alone possessed a fleet, that the Christians controlled the eastern Mediterranean, and that the dynasties in Egypt and Syria at that time and later were not interested in naval matters or in building up government fleets.

Ya'qub al-Mansur then died, and the Almohad dynasty became infirm. The Galician nations seized control of most of Spain. The Muslims took refuge in the coastal region and took possession of the islands of the western Mediterranean. They regained their former strength, and their power on the surface of the Mediterranean

grew. Their fleets increased, and the strength of the Muslims became again equal to that of (the Christians). This happened in the time of (the Merinid) Sultan, Abul-Hasan,⁵⁴⁰ the Zanatah ruler in the Maghrib. When he desired to wage the holy war, his fleet was as well equipped and numerous as that of the Christians.

Then, the naval strength of the Muslims declined once more, because of the weakness of the ruling dynasty. Maritime habits were forgotten under the impact of the strong Bedouin attitude prevailing in the Maghrib, and as the result of the discontinuance of Spanish habits. The Christians resumed their former, famous maritime training, and (renewed) their constant activity in (the Mediterranean) and their experience with conditions there. (They again showed) their former superiority over others on the high seas of (the Mediterranean) and in (Mediterranean) shipping. The Muslims came to be strangers to the Mediterranean. The only exceptions are a few inhabitants of the coastal regions, who are active on (the sea). They ought to have many assistants and supporters, or they ought to have support from the dynasties to enable them to recruit help and to work toward the goal of (increased seafaring activities).

The rank (of admiral) has been preserved to this day in the dynasties of the Maghrib. There, the identity (of the admiralty is still preserved), and how to take care of a fleet, how to build ships and navigate them, is known. Perhaps some political opportunity will arise in the coastal countries, and the Muslims will (once again) ask the wind to blow against unbelief and unbelievers. The inhabitants of the Maghrib have it on the authority of the books of predictions that the Muslims will yet have to make a successful attack against the Christians and conquer the lands of the European Christians beyond the sea. This, it is said, will take place by sea.

"God is the friend of the believers."⁵⁴¹

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

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

The same is the case at the end of the dynasty when its group feeling weakens, as we have mentioned, and its people decrease in number under the influence of senility, as we have stated before.[543](#) The dynasty then needs the support of the military. The dynasty's need of the military for the purpose of protection and defense is as strong then as it was at the beginning of (the dynasty) for the purpose of getting established. In these two situations, "the sword," thus, has the advantage over "the pen." At that time, the military have the higher rank. They enjoy more benefits and more splendid fiefs.

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

It is in this sense that Abu Muslim wrote the following reply to al-Mansur when he ordered him to come (to him): "And now: We remember the following admonition of the Persians: 'The most fear-ridden thing there is, is the wazirs when the mob has calmed down!'" [544](#)

This is how God proceeds with his servants.

34. *The characteristic emblems of royal and government authority.*

It should be known that the ruler has emblems and arrangements that are the necessary result of pomp and ostentation. They are restricted to him, and by their use he is distinguished from his subjects, his intimates, and all other leaders in his dynasty.

We shall mention the best-known emblems as well as (our) knowledge permits. "And He knows more than any scholar." [545](#)

The "outt" (alah)

One of the emblems of royal authority is the "outfit" (*alah*), that is, the display of banners and flags and the beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets and horns. In the *Book on Politics* ascribed to Aristotle, Aristotle mentioned that its real significance is to frighten the enemy in war. [546](#) Frightful sounds do have the psychological effect of causing terror. Indeed, as everyone knows from his own (experience), this is an emotional [547](#) element that plays a role on battlefields. The explanation given by Aristotle - if it was he who gave it - is correct in some respects. But the truth is that listening to music and sounds no doubt causes pleasure and emotion in the soul. The spiritual temper of man is thereby affected by a kind of drunkenness, which causes him to make light of difficulties and to be willing to die in the very condition in which he finds himself. This (state of affairs) exists even in dumb animals. Camels are influenced by the driver's call, and horses are influenced by whistling and shouting, as everyone knows. The effect is greater when the sounds are harmonious ones, as in the instance of music. [548](#) It is known what happens to people who listen to music. The non-Arabs, therefore, take musical instruments, drums or trumpets, onto the battlefield with them. Singers with instruments surround the cavalcade of the ruler and sing. Thus, they move the souls of brave men emotionally and cause them to be willing to die.

In the wars of the Arabs (in northwestern Africa), we have seen persons in front of the cavalcade sing poetical songs and make music. The minds of heroes were stirred by the contents of the songs. They hurried to the battleground, and everybody went forth eagerly to meet his rival. The same was the case with the Zanatah, one of the nations of the Maghrib. A poet went in advance of the battle lines and sang. His music was such as to move firmly anchored mountains and to cause men who would otherwise not think of it, to seek death. That music is called *tazugait* [549](#) by (the Zanatah).

The origin of it all is the cheerfulness created in the soul (through music). It leads to bravery, just as drunkenness leads to (bravery), as the result of the cheerfulness which it produces. And God knows better.

The great number of flags, their manifold colors, and their length, are intended to cause fright, nothing more. (Fright) produces greater aggressiveness in the soul. Psychological conditions and reactions are strange. God is "the Creator, the Knowing One." [550](#)

The various rulers and dynasties differ in their use of such emblems. Some

of them use a great many, others few, according to the extent and importance of the given dynasty.

Flags have been the insignia of war since the creation of the world.⁵⁵¹ The nations have always displayed them on battlefields and during raids. This was also the case in the time of the Prophet and that of the caliphs who succeeded him.

The Muslims, however, refrained from beating drums and blowing trumpets at the beginning of Islam. They wanted to avoid the coarseness of royal authority and do without royal customs. They also despised pomp, which has nothing whatever to do with the truth. The caliphate then came to be royal authority, and the Muslims learned to esteem the splendor and luxury of this world. Persian and Byzantine clients, subjects of the preceding (pre-Islamic) dynasties, mixed with them and showed them their ways of ostentation and luxury. Among the things the Muslims came to like was the "outfit" (*alah*). Therefore, they used it and permitted their officials to use it, to increase the prestige of royal authority and its representatives. 'Abbasid or 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) caliphs would often grant permission to display their flags to officials such as the master of a border region or the commander of an army. Such officials then, setting out on a mission or going from the house of the caliph or from their own houses to their offices, were accompanied by a cavalcade of people carrying flags and the attributes of the "outfit" (*alah*). The only distinction between the cavalcade of an official and that of the caliph was the number of flags, or the use of particular colors for the caliph's flag. Thus, black was used for the flags of the 'Abbasids. Their flags were black as a sign of mourning for the martyrs of their family, the





I. Muslim Coins

1. Arab-Sassanian dirham issued by al-Hajjaj, struck at Bishapur in the year 78 [697/981]
2. Umayyad dirham of the reformed type, dated 79 [698/991], struck at Damascus
3. Dinar of the Almohad Abu Ya'qub Yusuf I, without date or name of mint
4. Anonymous Almohad dirham, without date or name of mint
5. Triple dinar of Sultan Barquq, struck at Cairo

Hashimites, and as a sign of reproach directed against the Umayyads who had killed them. Therefore, the 'Abbasids were called "the black ones" (*al-musawwidah*).

When the Hashimites divided into factions and the 'Alids (descendants of Abu Talib) went against the 'Abbasids on every possible occasion, they wanted to differ from them in the color of their flag, and so they used white flags. Therefore, they were called "the white ones" (*al-mubayyidah*). White was used by the 'Alids throughout the reign of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids). It was also used by the 'Alids who seceded at that time in the East, such as the (Zaydi) missionaries in Tabaristan and in Sa'dah (in the Yemen), and those other ('Alids) who made propaganda for the extremist (Shi'ah), such as the Qarmatians. When al-Ma'mun gave up wearing black and using the (black) insignia of his dynasty, he turned to green and used green flags.

(The details of the "outfit") could be increased ad infinitum. When al-'Aziz Nizar set out to conquer Syria,⁵⁵² the "outfit" (*alah*) of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) was composed of five hundred banners and five hundred trumpets. The Sinhajah and the other Berber rulers in the Maghrib did not affect special colors, but they embroidered their flags in gold and made them of pure colored silk. They always permitted their officials to use these flags. But when the Almohads and, later on, the Zanatah (Merinids) made their appearance, they restricted the use of the "outfit" (*alah*) of drums and banners to the ruler, and forbade all other officials to use it. It formed a special cavalcade in the procession which followed immediately behind the ruler. It was called the "rear guard" (*sagah*). They used a larger or smaller number (of instruments), according to the different customs of the various dynasties. Some of them restricted themselves to seven, as a lucky number. This was the case in the dynasties of the Almohads and the Banu al-Ahmar (Nasrids) in Spain. Others went up to ten or twenty, as was the case with the Zanatah. In the days of Sultan Abul-Hasan, as we learned personally,⁵⁵³ it went up to one hundred drums and one hundred banners of colored silk interwoven with gold, both large and small. They permit their governors, officials, and generals to use one small flag of white linen and a small drum in wartime. They do not permit them any more.

The contemporary Turkish dynasty in the East uses, in the first place, one large flag, surmounted by a big tuft of hair. It is called the *chalish* or *chatr*.⁵⁵⁴ (It ⁵⁵⁵ is used) with the army in general. Then, there is another flag (carried) over the ruler and called the *'isabah* or *shatfah*.⁵⁵⁶ It is the ruler's insignia. There are many other flags which they call *sanjaq*,⁵⁵⁷ which means "flag" in (Turkish). They use an excessively large number of drums, which they call.^{k6s} They permit any amir or general to use whatever (insignia) he desires, with the exception of the *'isabah*,⁵⁵⁸

which is reserved to the ruler.

The contemporary Galicians, a European Christian nation in Spain, use only a few flags, which fly high in the air. In addition, they make a kind of music with string and wind instruments on the battlefields. This is (all) the information we have about them and the non-Arab rulers who live beyond them.

"In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the difference of your tongues and colors, there are, indeed, signs for those who know." [559](#)

Throne, dais, couch, chair-(they all mean) pieces of wood or ottomans set up for the ruler, so that he may have a higher seat than the other people at court and so that he will not be on the same level with them. This has always been a royal custom, even before Islam and in the non-Arab dynasties. (The pre-Islamic rulers) sat upon thrones of gold. Solomon, the son of David, had a throne of ivory overlaid with gold. However, dynasties use a throne only after they have become flourishing and luxurious, as is the case with all pomp, as we have stated. [560](#) Dynasties that are in the beginning stage and still keep the Bedouin attitude do not desire it.

The first to use a throne in Islam was Mu'awiyah. He asked the people for permission to use one, saying that he had become corpulent. [560a](#) So they permitted him to use one, and he did. His example was followed by (all the later) Muslim rulers. (The use of an ornate throne) came to indicate a tendency toward pomp.

One day 'Amr b. al-'As was in his castle in Egypt, sitting on the ground with the Arabs. The Muqawqis [561](#) came to the castle. He had men carry out a throne of gold, so that he could sit upon it like a king. He sat on it in front of the Arabs. They were not jealous of him, because they felt that they had to give him the protection upon which they had agreed, and because they rejected royal pomp. Later on, the 'Abbasids, the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids), and all the other Muslim rulers in both the East and the West, had thrones, daises, and couches that eclipsed (in splendor those of) the Persian and Roman Emperors.

God causes the change of night and day. [562](#)

The mint [563](#)

(The mint) is concerned with the stamping of the dinars and dirhams used in (commercial) transactions. This is done with a die of iron, upon which pictures or words are engraved in reverse. The stamp is pressed upon the dinar or the dirham, and the designs (legends) of those engravings appear on the coin clearly and correctly. Before this is done, the standard of purity of the particular coin, the result of repeated refinings, is taken into consideration, and the individual dinars and dirhams are given the proper, fixed weight that has been agreed upon. Then, the number of coins (and not their weight only) can be made use of in transactions. If the individual pieces have not been given the weight fixed upon, then the weight of the coins must be taken into consideration.

The word *sikkah* (mint) refers to the stamp, that is, the piece of iron used for the purpose (of stamping the coins). The word was then used to designate the result of (the application of the stamp), that is, the engravings that appear upon dinars and dirhams. The word was further used to designate control of (the process of engraving) and supervision of the whole operation, of everything dealing with coinage and all the conditions that govern it. Such (control and supervision) is (exercised by) the office (of the mint). The word has thus come to designate (that office), and is customarily so used in governmental usage. It is an office that is necessary to the royal authority, for it enables people to distinguish between good

and bad coins in their transactions. That (the coins) are not bad is guaranteed by the engravings known to have been stamped upon them by the ruler.

The non-Arabs used (coins) and engraved special pictures on them, for example, a picture of the ruler at the time of issue, a fortress, [564](#) some animal or product, or something else. This remained the practice of the non-Arabs down to the end of their power. When Islam appeared, the practice was discontinued, because of the simplicity of Islam and the Bedouin attitude of the Arabs. In their transactions, they used gold and silver according to weight. They also had Persian dinars and dirhams. They used them, too, according to weight and employed them as their medium of exchange. The government paid no attention to the matter. As a result, the frauds practiced with dinars and dirhams eventually became very serious.

According to the reports of Sa'id b. al-Musayyab and Abu z-Zinad, [565](#) Abd-al-Malik ordered al-Hajjaj to coin dirhams, and bad coins (began to) be distinguished from good ones. This took place in 74 [699/94], or, according to al-Mada'ini, [566](#) in 75 [694/95]. In the year 76 [695/96], ('Abd-al-Malik) ordered that dirhams be coined in all the other regions. The legend upon them was: "God is one, God is the *samad*." [567](#)

Later on, in the days of Yazid b. 'Abd-al-Malik, Ibn Hubayrah became governor of the 'Iraq and improved the mint. Then Khalid al-Qasrt, and after him Yusuf b. 'Umar, made great efforts to improve it.

It is also said that the first to coin dinars and dirhams (in Islam) was Mus'ab b. az-Zubayr. [568](#) He did it in the year 70 [689/90] in the 'Iraq, upon the order of his brother 'Abdallah, who was then in charge in the Hijaz. The legend on his coins was, on the one side, "blessing," and on the other (there was) the name of God. A year later, al-Hajjaj changed the legend, and the new legend was: "In the name of God-al-Hajjaj." [569](#)

The weight of the dirhams was fixed at what it had been in the days of 'Umar. At the beginning of Islam, the weight of the dirham had been six *danaqs*. The weight of the *mithqal* was one dirham and three-sevenths of a dirham, so that ten dirhams made seven *mithqals*. The reason for this was that the weight of the dirham had varied in the days of the Persians. A dirham corresponding to the weight of a *mithqal* might weigh twenty, or twelve, or ten carats. When it was necessary to determine the weight (of the dirham) for the charity tax, the average of the three values was taken, that is fourteen carats. Thus, the *mithqal* (of twenty carats) was one dirham and three-sevenths of a dirham (of fourteen carats). It is said that the *baghli* (dirham) had eight *danaqs*, the *tabari* (dirham) four, the *maghribi* (dirham) three, and the *yaman* (dirham) one. [570](#) 'Umar gave orders to investigate and determine which dirham was most commonly used in transactions. It turned out to be the *baghli* and the *tabari* (dirhams). Together they weighed twelve *danaqs*. Thus, the (weight of the) dirham was (fixed at) six *danaqs*. When three-sevenths of that weight was added, it was a *mithqal*, and when threetenths of a *mithqal* were taken away, it was a dirham.

When 'Abd-al-Malik saw fit to use the mint to protect against fraud the two coins (the gold dinar and the silver dirham) that were current in Muslim transactions, he determined their values as what they had been in the time of 'Umar. He used the iron stamp, but engraved words on it, rather than pictures, because eloquent words were obviously more congenial to the Arabs. Moreover, the religious law forbids pictures.

After ('Abd-al-Malik), the coinage remained the same for the whole Muslim period. Both the dinar and the dirham were round. The inscription on them was

written in concentric circles. On one side, the legend included the names of God with the formulas: "There is no God but God" and "Praised be God," and the prayer for the Prophet and his family; on the other side, it included the date and the name of the caliph. (Coins were of) this type during the period of the 'Abbasids, the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids), and the (Spanish) Umayyads. The Sinhajah had no mint except at the end of their rule when al-Mansur, the master of Bougie, used one. This has been mentioned by Ibn Hammad in his *History*.⁵⁷¹

For the Almohads, al-Mahdi set the precedent of coining square dirhams and engraving a square on the round dinar.⁵⁷² He covered one side of the coins with the formulas: "There is no God but God" and "Praised be God," and the other with a legend of several lines containing his name, (which was replaced by) his successors with their names. This became the practice of the Almohads. Their coinage has kept that shape down to this time. It has been reported that before al-Mahdi came forth, he was described as "master of the square dirham" by the practitioners of magic who predicted the coming of his dynasty.

The present day inhabitants of the East have no coinage of fixed value. For their transactions, they use dinars and dirhams by weight, and their value is determined through standard weights corresponding to so-and-so many (dirhams, or dinars). The mint engraves ⁵⁷³ on them the formula "There is no God but God" and the prayer for the Prophet, as well as the ruler's name, as is also the practice of the Maghribis.

"This is the decision of the Mighty, the Knowing One."⁵⁷⁴

Note: ⁵⁷⁵ We shall conclude our discussion of the mint by explaining the meaning of "the legal dirham" and "the legal dinar" and their value.

The dirham and the dinar differ in value and weight in different regions, cities, and provinces. The religious law has had occasion to refer to these (coins) and has mentioned them in connection with many laws concerning the charity tax, marriage (fees), fixed legal fines, and other things. Therefore, the religious law must have its own (dirham and dinar) with a specific value given to them by (the religious law itself) and agreeing with the intention of (the religious law). These coins are then the ones to which the laws refer. They are different from the non-legal (coins).

It should be known that since the beginning of Islam and the time of the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation, the legal dirham is by general consensus the one, ten of which are equal to seven *mithqal* of gold, and an ounce of gold is forty dirhams. Thus, the legal dirham is seven-tenths of a dinar. A gold *mithqal* weighs seventy-two average-sized grains of wheat. Consequently, the dirham, which is seven-tenths of a *mithqal*, has a weight of fifty and two-fifths grains. All these values are accepted by general consensus. The pre-Islamic dirham was of several kinds. The best was the *tabari*, a dirham of eight *danaqs*, and the *baghli*, a dirham of four *danags*.⁵⁷⁶ For the legal dirham, they took the mean, that is, six *danaqs*. The charity tax on one hundred *baghli* dirhams or one hundred *tabari* dirhams was fixed at five such "mean" dirhams.

People do not agree, however, that (the value of legal dirhams) was established (only) by 'Abd-al-Malik and by general consensus later on, as we have reported and as was mentioned by al-Khattabi ⁵⁷⁷ in the *Kitab Ma'alim as-sunan* and by al-Mawardi in the *Kitab al-Ahkam as-sultaniyah*.⁵⁷⁸ Thorough scholars of recent times do not think so, because it would imply that legal dirhams and dinars were not known in the time of the man around Muhammad and subsequently, even though legal tariffs such as the charity tax, marriage (fees), fixed legal fines, and

other such things are based on them, as we have (just) mentioned. The truth is that the value of (legal dirhams and dinars) was known at the (earliest) times (of Islam) for the implementation of laws involving tariffs based on (legal dirhams and dinars), but their value was not individually specified outside. It was an internal custom of the Muslims, which had become accepted under the influence of the religious law, and which used a fixed value and weight for (dirhams and dinars).

The Muslim dynasty thereafter became great and flourishing. Conditions called for individual specification of the value and the weight of dirhams and dinars, in accordance with the religious law, in order to obviate the (constant) obligation to determine their value. This (situation) developed in the days of 'Abd-al-Malik. He specified the individual value of (the dinar and the dirham) outside (in real money), as it had been in theory.⁵⁷⁹ On the coins, he engraved his name and date after the two confessions of faith: ("I confess there is no God but God" and "I confess that Muhammad is the Messenger of God"). 'Abd-al-Malik withdrew the pre-Islamic coins altogether. They were eventually purified (melted down) and (re-)engraved with a legend, so that (in their original form) they became non-existent. This is the inescapable truth.

Later on, officials of the mint in the various dynasties deliberately disregarded the legal value of dinar and dirham. Their value became different in the different regions. The people reverted to a theoretical knowledge of (the legal dinar and dirham), as had been the case at the beginning of Islam. The inhabitants of every region calculated the legal tariffs in their own coinage, according to the relationship that they knew existed between the (actual) value of (dirhams and dinars in their coinage) and the legal value.

The weight (in gold) of the dinar is seventy-two averagesized grains of wheat. This is reported by thorough scholars and is the general consensus from which only Ibn Hazm deviates. Ibn Hazm thought that the weight of the dinar is eighty-four grains. This was reported as Ibn Hazm's opinion by Judge 'Abd-al-Haqq.⁵⁸⁰ Thorough scholars have refuted (Ibn Hazm's opinion). They considered it an unfounded assumption or an error, and rightly so. "God causes the truth to come true in His words."⁵⁸¹

It is also known that the legal ounce is not the one which is commonly used among the people, because the commonly used (ounce) differs according to the various regions, while the legal ounce is a theoretical unit which admits of no differences.

God "created everything. Then, He determined it."⁵⁸²

The seal ⁵⁸³

(Use of) the seal is one of the government functions and a royal office. The sealing of letters and diplomas was known to rulers before and after Islam. It has been established in the two *Sahih*s that when the Prophet wanted to write to the Byzantine Emperor, he was told that the non-Arabs accepted only sealed letters. Thus, he took a silver seal (ring) and had the following legend engraved upon it: "Muhammad, the Messenger of God." Al-Bukhari said that he had the three words ⁵⁸⁴ written in three lines and that he used that ring for sealing. (Muhammad) said: "No one else should use a similar legend." He continued: "Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthman used that ring for sealing. Then, it fell from 'Uthman's hand into the well of Arts. There was much ⁵⁸⁵ water in it, and its bottom could never be reached later on. 'Uthman was worried about the happening and considered it a (bad) omen. He had

another ring made like it."

The way of engraving the seal, as well as its use for sealing, have different aspects. This is because the word "seal" is used for the instrument that is placed on the finger. From it, (the verbal form) *takhattama* "He puts the seal on" is derived. (Or, the word) is used to designate "end" or "completion." In this meaning, one says *khatantu al-amra* "I reached the end of the matter," or *khatantu al-Qur'ana* "I finished reading the Qur'an"; also *khatam an-nabiyyin* "the last of the prophets," [587](#) and *khatimat al-amr* "the end of the matter." The word is also used for the stopper with which bottles or barrels are closed. In this sense, one uses (the form) *khitam*. Thus it is said in the Qur'an: *wa-khitamuhu miskun* "its stopper is musk." [588](#) Those who interpret the word here to mean "end" or "completion" are wrong. (Their interpretation is based on the assumption) that the last impression they have of their drink is the smell of musk. However, this is not the intended meaning. It is derived here from *khitam* in the meaning of "stopper." A stopper of clay or pitch is put upon the wine in the barrel. This preserves (the wine) and gives it a good smell and taste. In an exaggerated manner, the wine of paradise was thus described (in the Qur'an) as being closed with a stopper of musk, which is better smelling and tasting than clay or pitch, which are customarily used (for the purpose) in this world.

If (the word) "seal" is correctly used in all these meanings, it is (also) correctly used for designating the result that comes from (the application of sealing in all these meanings). This is as follows: When words or shapes are engraved upon (a seal) and it is then put into a paste of clay or an ink solution and placed upon a paper surface, those words (or shapes) will be reproduced on that surface. The same is the case if (the seal) is impressed on some soft material such as wax. The engraved legend remains impressed on it. If the legend consists of words, they are to be read from the left, if the engraving started correctly from the right, and from the right if the engraving started from the left, because the process of sealing reverses the direction of the writing on the (paper) surface and appears on it as the opposite of what it had been on the engraving, with right and left transposed. It is (also) possible to use the seal by putting it in ink and clay and placing it upon the (paper) surface. The words then appear engraved on it. This (process of sealing) expresses the idea of "end" or "completion," in the sense that a writing thus (sealed) is correct and valid. A particular letter somehow becomes effective through the use of such a signature ('alamah) [589](#) Without it, it would be invalid and imperfect. The sealing may (also) be (effected) through something written by hand at the end or the beginning of a letter, some well-chosen words of praise and glory (the formulas "Praised be God" and "Glory to God"), or the name of the ruler or amir, or of the writer of the letter, whoever he may have been, or through terms descriptive of the writer. Such (formulas) written by hand indicate the correctness and validity of the letter. They are commonly known under the name of "signature" ('alamah), but are also called "seal" because they are compared to the impression of the seal ring.

The "seal" the judge sends to litigants is connected with this usage. That "seal" is his signature and hand, validating his decisions. The "seal" of the ruler or caliph, that is, his signature, is also connected with the usage referred to. When ar-Rashid wanted to make Jafar wazir in the place of his brother al-Fadl, he said to their father Yahya b. Khilid: "Father, I want to change my 'seal' from my right hand to my left hand." He thus used the word "seal" for the wazir, since it was one of the duties of the wazir in ('Abbasid) times to put his signature on letters and diplomas. The correctness of the use (of "seal") in this meaning is confirmed by at-Tabari's report on Mu'awiyah's negotiations with al-Hasan. When Mu'awiyah wanted to persuade al-Hasan to enter into an armistice, he sent him a blank sheet of paper, which he "sealed" at the bottom, and he wrote to him: "(Write down) on this

sheet of paper, which I have sealed at the bottom, whatever conditions you want to make. They are granted." [590](#) "Sealing" here means a handwritten or other signature at the end of a sheet of paper.

It is also possible to impress a seal upon some soft substance, so that the letters of the legend appear on that substance, and to place the substance (with the seal impression) on the knots of the strings with) which letters are tied, [590a](#) and upon places for deposits (such as storehouses, strong boxes, etc.). This (use of the root *khtm*) is derived from the meaning of "stopper" mentioned before. In both cases, (we are dealing with) the result of (the application of) the seal, and, therefore, (the word) "seal" can be used in this sense.

The first to introduce the sealing of letters, that is, the use of the signature, was Mu'awiyah. He ordered 'Amr b. az-Zubayr to be given 100,000 (dirhams) by Ziyad (b. Abthi) in al-Kufah. The letter (containing the order) was opened, and the figure was changed from 100,000 to 200,000. When Ziyad presented his account (and the excess payment was noticed), Mu'awiyah disavowed it. He held 'Amr responsible for the money and kept him in prison until ('Amr's) brother 'Abdallah paid (the sum) for him. On that occasion, Mu'awiyah introduced the ministry (*diwan*) of the seal. This was mentioned by at-Tabari [591](#) who finished his statement by saying that "he tied the letters with strings. Formerly, they had not been tied:" It means, he closed them.

The ministry (*diwan*) of the seal is composed of the secretaries who see to it that the letters of the ruler are expedited and sealed, either by means of a signature, or by tying them. The word *diwan* is used for the place where these secretaries had their office, as we mentioned in connection with the ministry (*diwan*) of taxation. [592](#)

Letters are tied either by piercing the paper and tacking (the letter) together (with a string), as is the custom of the secretaries of the Maghrib, or by gluing the top of the sheet to the part of the letter over which the top is folded, as is the custom of the people in the East. Over the place where the letter is pierced and tacked, or where it is glued, a signature is placed. It guarantees that the letter has not been opened and that its contents have not been read. The people of the Maghrib place a piece of wax where the letter is pierced and tacked, and seal it with a seal upon which some signature is engraved for use in sealing, and the engraving is impressed upon the wax. In the old dynasties of the East, the place where the letter was glued was also sealed with an engraved seal that was put into a red paste of clay prepared for that (purpose). The engraving of the seal was impressed upon the clay. Under the 'Abbasid dynasty, this clay was called "sealing clay." It was imported from Siraf. [593](#) It seems that this clay was restricted to the purpose of sealing.

(The use of) the seal, which is the (hand)written signature or engraving used for closing and tying letters, was peculiar to the ministry of correspondence (*diwan ar-rasa'il*). In the 'Abbasid dynasty, it belonged to the wazir. Later on, custom differed. It went to those who were in charge of (official) correspondence and the office of the secretaries in the (various) dynasties. In the dynasties of the Maghrib, people came to consider the seal ring as one of the royal marks and emblems. They made artistic seal rings of gold inlaid with gems of hyacinth (ruby), turquoise, and emerald. The ruler according to their custom wore the seal ring as an insignia, exactly as the Prophet's cloak and stick [594](#) were used in the 'Abbasid dynasty and an umbrella in the 'Ubaydid (-Fatimid) dynasty.

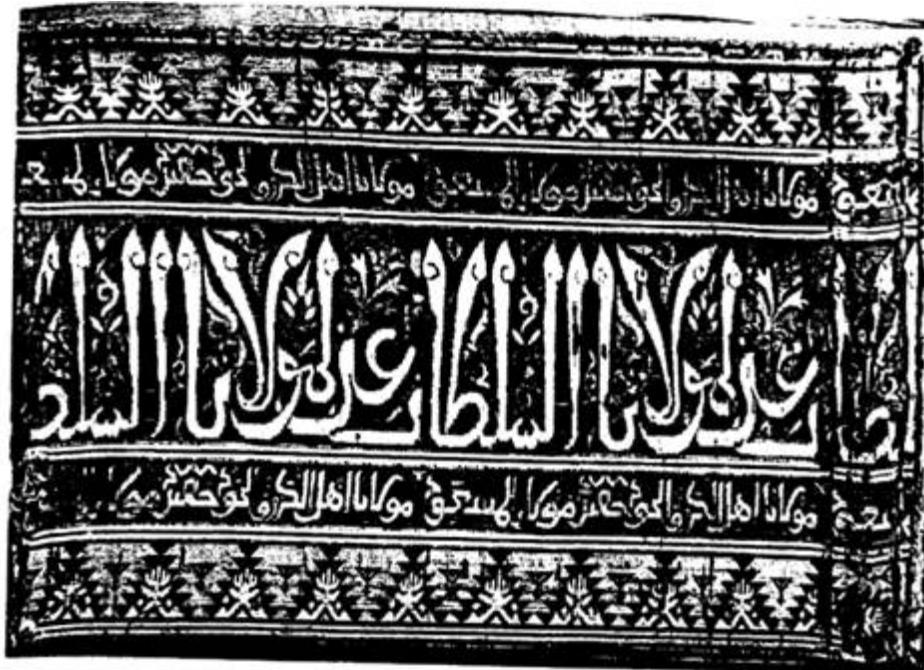
God governs all affairs in His wisdom.

The tiraz

It is part of royal and governmental pomp and dynastic custom to have the names of rulers or their peculiar marks embroidered on the silk, brocade, or pure silk garments that are prepared for their wearing. The writing is brought out by weaving a gold thread or some other colored thread of a color different from that of the fabric itself into it. (Its execution) depends upon the skill of the weavers in designing and weaving it. Royal garments are embroidered with such a *tiraz*, in order to increase the prestige of the ruler or the person of lower rank who wears such a garment, or in order to increase the prestige of those whom the ruler distinguishes by bestowing upon them his own garment when he wants to honor them or appoint them to one of the offices of the dynasty.

The pre-Islamic non-Arab rulers used to make a *tiraz* of pictures and figures of kings, or (other) figures and pictures specifically (designed) for it. The Muslim rulers later on changed that and had their own names embroidered together with other words of good omen or prayer. In the Umayyad and 'Abbasid dynasties, the *tiraz* was one of the most splendid things and honors. The houses within the palaces in which such garments were woven were called "*tiraz* houses." The person who supervised them was called "*tiraz* master." He was in charge of the craftsmen, the implements, and the weavers in (the *tiraz* houses), the payment of their wages, the care of their implements, and the control of their work. (The office of *tiraz* master) was entrusted by the 'Abbasids to their intimates and their most trusted clients. The same was the case with the Umayyads in Spain and their successors, the *reyes de taifas*, as well as with the 'Ubaydid (-Fatimids) in Egypt and the eastern non-Arab rulers contemporary with them. When luxury and cultural diversity receded with the receding power of the (great) dynasties, and when the number of (small) dynasties grew, the office and its administration completely ceased to exist in most dynasties. When, at the beginning of the sixth [twelfth] century, the Almohads succeeded the Umayyads, they did not have the *tiraz* at the beginning of their dynasty, because they had been taught by their imam Muhammad b. Tumart al-Mahdi the ways of religion and simplicity. They were too austere to wear garments of silk and gold. The office (of the *tiraz*), therefore, had no place in their dynasty. Their descendants in the later (years) of the dynasty, however, re-established it in part, but it was not nearly as splendid (as before).

At the present time, we have personally seen quite a lot of (*tiraz* manufacture) in the flourishing and proud Merinid dynasty in the Maghrib. The Merinids had learned it from the contemporary dynasty of the Ibn al-Ahmar (Nasrids) in Spain. They (in turn) followed the *tiraz* customs of the *reyes*



a

II. *Tiraz*

- a. Probably from Northwestern Africa
- b. Hispano-Moresque (Granada?), 15th century

de taifas and achieved in this respect something that speaks for itself.

In the contemporary Turkish dynasty of Egypt and Syria, the *tiraz* is very much cultivated in accordance with the importance of the realm (of that dynasty) and the civilization of its country. However, the *tiraz* is not produced within the houses and palaces of the dynasty, and it is not an office of the dynasty. (The *tiraz* which is required by the dynasty is woven by craftsmen familiar with the craft, from silk and pure gold. They call it *zarkash*, a Persian word. The name of the ruler or

amir is embroidered on it. It is made by craftsmen for the dynasty, together with other fine products, such as are fitting for (the dynasty) and are produced for it.

God determines night and day. He is the best heir.[596](#)

Large tents and tent walls

It should be known that one of the emblems of royal authority and luxury is small and large tents and canopies of linen, wool, and cotton, with linen and cotton ropes. They are used for display on journeys. They are of different kinds, large or small, according to the wealth and affluence of the dynasty. At the beginning of the dynasty, the same type of housing used by the people of the dynasty before they have achieved royal authority, continues to be used. At the time of the first Umayyad caliphs, the Arabs continued to use the dwellings they had, tents of leather and wool. Only a very few of the Arabs had at that date ceased to live in the Bedouin manner. When they went on raids or went to war, they traveled with all their camels, their nomad households (*hilal*), and their dependent women and children, as is still the case with the Arabs at this time. Their armies, therefore, consisted of many nomad households, and the distance between the encampments was great. The groups were widely separated, and each group was too far away to see the other, as is still the case with the Arabs.

That was why 'Abd-al-Malik used to need "drivers" (*saqah* "rear guard") to keep the people together and make them follow him, in the event they did not move after he had started to move. It is reported that 'Abd-al-Malik employed al-Hajjaj for that purpose upon Rawh b. Zinba's [597](#) recommendation. The story of how al-Hajjaj, as soon as he was appointed to that office, had the large and ordinary tents of Rawh burned when he discovered they were not on the move the day 'Abd-al-Malik had begun to move, is well known. The fact that al-Hajjaj was entrusted with the office shows what rank he held among the Arabs. [598](#) The task of getting them to move was entrusted only to a person in no danger of being attacked by stupid Arab groups, one who possessed a group feeling sufficient to forestall such attacks. Therefore, 'Abd-al-Malik singled out al-Hajjaj for the rank, because he was confident that al-Hajjaj possessed enough group feeling and energy for it.

The Arab dynasty then adopted diverse ways of sedentary culture and ostentation. People settled in towns and cities. They were transformed from tent dwellers into palace dwellers. They exchanged the camel for the horse and the donkey as riding animals. Now, they used linen fabrics for their dwellings on their journeys, fashioning them into houses (tents) of various shapes and sizes, round, [599](#) oblong, or square. In this connection, they displayed the greatest possible pomp and art.

Amirs and army leaders surrounded their large tents and canopies with a tent wall of linen. In the language of the Berbers of the Maghrib, the tent wall is called *afrag*. [600](#) It is restricted to the ruler there. No one else has it. In the East, it is used by every amir, whether he is the ruler or not.

(The habits of) luxurious living then caused women and children to stay behind in their palaces and mansions. People, therefore, traveled light. The spaces between the encampments of the army became less far apart. Army and ruler encamped in one and the same camp, which was completely within the field of vision (of a single observer). It was a pretty sight because of the various colors. This remained the way dynasties displayed their luxury.

It has also been this way in the Almohad and Zanatah dynasties whose shadow extends over us. At the beginning of their power, when they traveled they

used the ordinary sleeping tents they had used before they achieved royal authority. However, eventually, the dynasty adopted the ways of luxury, and people began to dwell in palaces. Then, they turned to using tents both large and small to a greater extent than they had intended (when they started using them).

It is a great luxury. However, armies become more vulnerable to night attacks when they are assembled in one place, where a sudden attack may involve them all. Furthermore, they do not have their families and children with them, and it is for their families and children they would be willing to die. Therefore, other protective measures are needed in this connection, as we shall mention.⁶⁰¹

God "is strong and mighty." ⁶⁰²

The prayer enclosure (magsurah) and the prayer during the (Friday) sermon

These two things are caliphal prerogatives and royal emblems in Islam. They are not known in non-Muslim dynasties.

The enclosure for the ruler to pray in is a latticed screen around the prayer niche (*mihrab*), and the space immediately adjacent. The first to use one was Mu'awiyah b. Abi Sufyan, after a Kharijite had stabbed him. The story is well known.

It is also said that the first to use one was Marwan b. alHakam, after a Yemenite had stabbed him.⁶⁰³ Afterwards, all the caliphs used it. It became a custom distinguishing the ruler from the rest of the people during prayer. It arises only when dynasties are luxurious and flourishing, as is the case with all pomp.

It remained this way in all Muslim dynasties when the 'Abbasid dynasty dissolved and the number of different dynasties in the East grew. It also remained so in Spain when the Umayyad dynasty was destroyed and the *reyes de ta'ifas* became numerous. As for the Maghrib, the Aghlabids used it in al-Qayrawan. It was used later on by the'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) caliphs and by their Sinhajah governors of the Maghrib, by the Banu Badis in al-Qayrawan and by the Banu Hammad in al-Qal'ah.⁶⁰⁴ When the Almohads then took possession of all the Maghrib and Spain, they abolished the institution of (the prayer enclosure) in accordance with the desert attitude that characterized them. But then the dynasty flourished and acquired its share of luxury. When the third Almohad ruler, Ya'qub al-Mansur, appeared, he used a prayer enclosure. Afterwards, its use remained a custom of the rulers of the Maghrib and of Spain. The same was the case with all other dynasties. This is how God proceeds with His servants.

As to the prayer from the pulpit (*minbar*) during the (Friday) sermon, it should be said that the caliphs at first directed the prayers themselves. Therefore, they used to say a prayer (for themselves), after the obligatory prayer for the Prophet and the blessings for the men around him had been spoken.

The first to use a pulpit was 'Amr b. al-'As when he built his mosque in Egypt. 'Umar (b. al-Khattab) wrote to him: "And now: I have heard that you use a pulpit and thus raise yourself above the necks of the Muslims. Is it not sufficient for you that you are standing while the Muslims are at your heels? Therefore, I urge you to smash it to bits."⁶⁰⁵

When pomp came into being and the caliphs came to be prevented from (personally delivering) the sermon and leading the prayer, they appointed delegates for both (tasks). The preacher mentioned the caliph from the pulpit. He mentioned his name in praise and prayed for him, because God had appointed him in the

interest of the world, and because a prayer at such an hour was thought likely to be heard. Also, the ancients had said: "He who has a good prayer shall say it for the ruler."

The first to pray for the caliph during the sermon was Ibn 'Abbas. As 'Ali's governor in al-Basrah, he prayed for 'Ali during his sermon. He said: "O God, help 'Ali, (who represents) the truth." [606](#) This practice was continued afterwards. [607](#)

Only the caliph was (mentioned). But when the time came that the caliphs were secluded and under the control of others, the men who were in control of the (various) dynasties often shared the (prayer) with the caliph, and their names were mentioned after his.

When these dynasties disappeared, (the custom) also disappeared. Only the ruler was privileged to be mentioned in the prayer from the pulpit, and no one else. No one was permitted to share that privilege with the ruler or to aspire to do so.

The founders of dynasties often neglected this institution when the dynasty still had a low standard of living and preserved the negligent and coarse Bedouin attitude. They were satisfied with a summary, anonymous reference to the one entrusted with the affairs of the Muslims. Such a sermon was called an "Abbasid sermon." This meant that the summary prayer could refer only to the 'Abbasid caliph, following the ancient tradition. They did not think of going beyond that, of clearly indicating the ruler and pronouncing his name.

The story goes that the amir Abu Zakariya' Yahya b. Abi Hafs took Tlemcen away from the founder of the 'Abdal-Wadid dynasty, Yaghamsin b. Zayyan. [608](#) He then decided upon returning him to power under certain conditions, which he stipulated. Among them was the condition that his (Abu Zakariya's) name should be mentioned from the pulpits of (Yaghamsin's) province. On that occasion, Yaghamsin said: "They (the pulpits) are those pieces of wood [609](#) of theirs from which they mention whomever they like."

Also, the ambassador of al-Mustansir, the third [610](#) Hafsid caliph in Tunis, was at the court of the founder of the Merinid dynasty, Ya'qub b. 'Abd-al-Haqq. One day, he was late in attending the Friday service. Ya'qub was informed that the ambassador did not attend the service because the sermon did not include mention of his ruler. Thereupon, Ya'qub gave permission to pray for him. This was one of the reasons why the Merinids took up the (Hafsid) propaganda.

Such was the attitude of dynasties at the beginning, when they still had a low standard of living and preserved the Bedouin outlook. But when their political eyes were opened and they looked toward (all) the aspects of royal authority and perfected the details [611](#) of sedentary culture and the ideas of ostentation and pomp, they adopted all the external attributes (of royal authority) and exhausted all the possibilities in this respect. They disliked the idea that anyone else might share in them, and they were afraid that they might lose them and that their dynasty would be deprived of the effect of them.

The world is a garden, [612](#) and God watches over everything. [613](#)

35. Wars and the methods of waging war practiced by the various nations.

Wars and different kinds of fighting have always occurred in the world since God created it. The origin of war is the desire of certain human beings to take revenge on others. Each (party) is supported by the people sharing in its group feeling. When they have sufficiently excited each other for the purpose and the two parties confront each other, one seeking revenge and the other trying to defend itself, there is war. It is something natural among human beings. No nation and no race (generation) is free from it.

The reason for such revenge is as a rule either jealousy and envy, or hostility, or zeal in behalf of God and His religion, or zeal in behalf of royal authority and the effort to found a kingdom.

The first (kind of war) usually occurs between neighboring tribes and competing families.

The second (kind of war) - war caused by hostility - is usually found among savage nations living in the desert, such as the Arabs, the Turks, the Turkomans, the Kurds, and similar peoples. They earn their sustenance with their lances and their livelihood by depriving other people of their possessions. They declare war against those who defend their property against them. They have no further desire for rank and royal authority. Their minds and eyes are set only upon depriving other people of their possessions.[614](#)

The third (kind of war) is the one the religious law calls "the holy war."

The fourth (kind of war), finally, is dynastic war against seceders and those who refuse obedience.

These are the four kinds of war [614a](#) The first two are unjust and lawless, the other two are holy and just wars.

Since the beginning of men's existence, war has been waged in the world in two ways. One is by advance in closed formation. The other is the technique of attack and withdrawal.

The advance in closed formation has been the technique of all the non-Arabs throughout their entire existence. The technique of attack and withdrawal has been that of the Arabs and of the Berbers of the Maghrib.

Fighting in closed formation is more steady and fierce than fighting with the technique of attack and withdrawal. That is because in fighting in closed formation, the lines are orderly and evenly arranged, like arrows or like rows of worshipers at prayer. People advance in closed lines against the enemy. This makes for greater steadiness in assault and for better use of the proper tactics. It frightens the enemy more. A closed formation is like a long wall or a well-built castle which no one could hope to move. In the divine revelation, it is said: "God loves those who fight in His behalf in a line, as if they were a strongly constructed building."[615](#) That means, they steady each other. A tradition says: "One believer is to another believer like a building of which every part supports the rest."[616](#)

This makes it obvious what great wisdom there is in requiring that the lines

be kept steady and in forbidding anyone to fall back during an attack. Battle lines are intended to preserve order, as we have stated. Those who turn their backs to the enemy bring disorder into the line formation. They are guilty of the crime of causing a rout. They somehow cause the Muslims to be routed and enable the enemy to gain power over them. This is a great sin, because the resulting damage is general and affects Islam, in that it makes a breach in the protecting fence. Therefore, it is considered one of the great sins.⁶¹⁷ All this evidence shows that fighting in close formation is more important (than any other kind) in the opinion of the Lawgiver (Muhammad).

Fighting with the technique of attack and withdrawal is not as fierce or as secure against the possibility of rout, as is fighting in closed formation, unless there is set up a steady line formation to the rear, to which the fighting men may fall back in attack and withdrawal throughout the fighting. Such a line formation would take the place of the closed formation, as we shall mention later on.⁶¹⁸

The ancient dynasties had many soldiers and a vast realm. They subdivided their armies into smaller units.⁶¹⁹ The reason for this was that their soldiers grew exceedingly numerous and were assembled from the most remote regions. This made it unavoidable that some of the soldiers would not know others, when they mingled on the field of battle and engaged the enemy in shooting and close fighting. It was feared lest, on such occasions, they would fall to fighting each other because of the existing confusion and their ignorance of each other. Therefore, they divided the armies into smaller units and put men who knew each other together. They arranged the units in an arrangement resembling the natural one of the four directions (of the compass). The chief of all the armies, either the ruler himself or a general, was in the center.⁶²⁰ This arrangement was called "the battle order" (*ta'biyah*). It is mentioned in the history of the Persians, that of the Byzantines, and that of the (Umayyad and 'Abbasid) dynasties at the beginning of Islam. In front of the ruler stood one army with its own battle lines, its own general and its own flag.⁶²¹ It was called "the advance guard." Then, to the right of the ⁶²² place where the ruler was, stood another army. It was called "the right flank." There was another army to the left, called "the left flank." Then, there was another army behind the army, called "the rear guard." The ruler and his entourage stood at the middle of these four (armies). The place where he was, was called the center. When this ingenious arrangement was completed - covering an area within the field of vision (of a single observer) or extending over a wider area but with at most one or two days' (journey) between each of the two armies, and utilizing the possibilities suggested by the greater or smaller number of soldiers then, when the battle order was thus set up, the advance in closed formation could begin. This may be exemplified by the history of the (Muslim) conquests and the history of the (Umayyad and 'Abbasid) dynasties. There also is the wellknown story mentioned above from the history of 'Abd-alMalik, of how his armies fell back while he was on the move because (the elements of) the battle order were so widely separated, and how someone was needed to drive them from behind and al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf was appointed for that purpose.⁶²³

Much the same sort of arrangement was also to be found among the Spanish Umayyads. It is not known among us now, because we live in a time when dynasties possess small armies which cannot mistake each other on the field of battle.⁶²⁴ Most of the soldiers of both parties together could nowa-days be assembled in a hamlet or a town. Everyone of them knows his comrade and calls him by his name and surname in the thick of battle. Therefore, this particular battle order can be dispensed with.

One of the techniques of the people who use the technique of attack and withdrawal, is to set up, behind their armies, a line formation (barricade) of solid objects and dumb animals to serve as a refuge for the cavalry during attack and withdrawal. It is intended to steady the fighters, so that they will fight more persistently and have a better chance of winning.

Those who fight in closed formation do the same, in order to increase their steadfastness and power. The Persians who fought in closed formation used to employ elephants in their wars. They made them carry wooden towers like castles, loaded with combatants, weapons, and flags. They disposed them in successive lines behind them in the thick of battle, as if they were fortresses. This fortified them psychologically and gave them added confidence.

In this connection, one may compare what happened at al-Qadisiyah. On the third day, the Persians pressed the Muslims hard with (the elephants), [625](#) Eventually, some outstanding Arabs counterattacked, infiltrated among the elephants, and struck them on the trunk with their swords. (The elephants) fled and turned back to their stables in al-Mada'in. This paralyzed the Persian camp, and they fled on the fourth day.

The Rum (Byzantines), the Gothic rulers in Spain, and most other non-Arab peoples used to employ thrones for the purpose of steadyng the battle lines. A throne would be set up for the ruler in the thick of battle and surrounded by those of the ruler's servants, entourage, and soldiers who were thought to be willing to die for him. Flags were run up at the corners of the throne. A further wall of sharpshooters and foot soldiers was put around it. The throne thus assumed considerable dimensions. It became, for the fighters, a place to fall back upon and a refuge in attack and withdrawal. This was what the Persians did in the battle of al-Qadisiyah. Rustum sat upon a throne that had been set up for him there. Finally, the Persian lines became disordered, and the Arabs penetrated to (Rustum's) throne. He abandoned it and went to the Euphrates, where he was killed.

The Arabs and most other Bedouin nations that move about and employ the technique of attack and withdrawal, dispose their camels and the pack animals carrying their litters in lines to steady the fighting men. (Such lines) become for them a place to fall back upon. They call it al follows this technique can be observed to be more steady in battle and to be better protected against being surprised and routed. This is a well attested fact, but it has been altogether neglected by the contemporary dynasties. Instead, they dispose the pack animals carrying their baggage and large tents behind them, as a rear guard. These animals cannot take the place of elephants and camels. Therefore, the armies are exposed to the danger of being routed, and they are always ready to flee in combat.

At the beginning of Islam, all battles were fought in closed formation, although the Arabs knew only the technique of attack and withdrawal. Two things at the beginning of Islam caused them to (fight in closed formation). First, their enemies fought in closed formation, and they were thus forced to fight them in the same way. Second, they were willing to die in the holy war, because they wished to prove their endurance and were very firm in their belief. Now, the closed formation is the fighting technique most suitable for one willing to die.

The first to abandon the line in war and to use the battle order by regiments was Marwan b. al-Hakam [627](#) in fighting the Kharijite ad-Dahhak and, after him, al-Khaybari. AtTabari said in connection with the killing of al-Khaybari: "The Kharijites appointed as their leader Shayban b. 'Abdal-'Aziz al-Yashkuri, who had the surname of Abu d-Dalfa'. Marwan, thereafter, fought them in regiments and

abandoned the line from that day on."

When the line was discontinued, the practice of fighting in closed formation was forgotten. Then, when luxury penetrated the various dynasties, the use of the (rally) line behind the fighters was forgotten. This was because when they were Bedouins and lived in tents, they had many camels, and the women and children lived in camp with them. Then they achieved royal luxury and became used to living in palaces and in a sedentary environment and they abandoned the ways of the desert and waste regions. At that time, they forgot the period of camels and litters, and it was difficult for them to use them. When they traveled, they left their women behind. Royal authority and luxury caused them to use tents both large and small. They restricted themselves to pack animals carrying baggage and tents. They used these things to form their (protective) line in war. It was by no means sufficient. These things, unlike one's own family and property, do not inspire any willingness to die. [628](#) People, therefore, have little endurance. The turmoil of the battle frightens them, and their lines crumble.

We have mentioned the strength that a line formation behind the army gives to the fighters who use the technique of attack and withdrawal. Because of (this fact), the Maghribi rulers have come to employ groups of European Christians in their army, and they are the only ones to have done that, for their compatriots know only the technique of attack and withdrawal. The position of the ruler is strengthened by establishing a line formation in support of the fighting men ahead of it. The men in such a line formation must be people who are used to hold firm in closed formation. If not, they will run away like the men who use the technique of attack and withdrawal, and, when they run away, the ruler and the army will be routed. Therefore, the rulers of the Maghrib had to use soldiers from a nation used to hold firm in closed formation. That nation was the European Christians. The line formation around their (army) is formed by European Christians. The Maghribi rulers do that despite the fact that it means utilizing the aid of unbelievers. They do not think much of it, because the necessity (of using such men) exists, as we have shown. They fear that their own line formation might run away, and (they know that) the European Christians know only how to hold firm, because it is their custom to fight in closed formation. They are, therefore, more suitable for the purpose than others. However, the Maghribi rulers employ (such European Christians) only in wars against Arab and Berber nations, in order to force them into submission. They do not use them for the holy war, because they are afraid that they might take sides against the Musliris. Such is the situation in the Maghrib at this time. We have shown the reason for it. "God knows everything." [629](#)

We hear that the fighting (technique) of the contemporary Turkish nations is the shooting of arrows. Their battle order consists of a line formation. They divide their army into three lines, one placed behind the other. They dismount from their horses, empty their quivers on the ground in front of them, and then shoot from a sitting position. Each line protects the one ahead of it against being overrun by the enemy, until victory is assured for one party. This is a very good and remarkable battle order.

In war, the ancients followed the method of digging trenches around their camps when they were about to attack. (They did that) because they were afraid of treacherous night attacks and assaults by night upon the camp, since darkness and wildness multiply fear. Under such conditions, the soldiers might seek refuge in flight and would find in the darkness a psychological protection against the shame of (fleeing). If all the soldiers were to have the same (idea), the camp would be disorganized, and there would be a rout. Therefore, they were accustomed to dig trenches around the camp, when they encamped. They set up their tents and made

trenches all around them on every side, lest the enemy be able to get through them in a night attack, in which case they would abandon each other.

The dynasties used to have the strength and power to do such things involving large concentrations of manpower, wherever they settled, because civilization was prosperous and royal authority impressive. But when civilization was ruined and (the strong dynasties) were succeeded by weak dynasties with few soldiers and no workers, the thing was altogether forgotten, as if it had never been.

God is the best of those who have power.

One should think of the admonitions and encouragement that 'Ali gave his men on the day of Siffin. One will find in them a good deal of military knowledge. No one had better insight into military matters than 'All. He said in one of his speeches: "Straighten out your lines like a strongly constructed building.[630](#)

"Place the armed men in front, and those who are not armed in the rear.

"Bite on your molars. This makes it harder for sword blows to harm the head.

"Keep (something) wrapped around [?] the tips of the spears. This preserves the sharpness of points.

"Keep the eyes down. This keeps the soul more concentrated and gives greater peace to the heart.

"Kill (all) noises. This drives vacillation away more effectively and is more becoming to dignity.

"Do not hold your flags inclined and do not remove them. Place them in the hands only of those among you who are brave.

"Call upon truth and endurance for aid, for 'after endurance there is victory.'

"

Al-Ashtar [631](#) on that day, to encourage the Azd, said: "Bite on your molars and meet the people (enemy) head on. Be violent like men who, long frustrated from their revenge, are now out to revenge their fathers and their brothers, who are full of wrath against the enemy, and who have prepared themselves for death, so that they shall not be prevented from taking revenge and not be disgraced in this world."

Abu Bakr as-Sayrafi, the poet of the Lamtunah (Almoravids) and the Spaniards, has referred to many such things in a poem in which he praises Tashfin b. 'Ali b. Yusuf and describes his steadfastness during a battle in which he participated.[632](#) He refers to his military affairs.in words of admonition and warning that make a great deal of knowledge concerning warfare available to (the reader). He says in (the poem):

O you veiled [633](#) people!
Who among you is the high-minded, inspiring ruler?
Who is the one whom the enemy surprised in the dark,
And everyone dispersed, but he was not discouraged?
And the knights came, but fighting with spears kept them
From him. The loyalty (of his troops) confounded them,
and they turned back.
And the gleam of helmets made the night appear
Like the morn sparkling over the heads of the soldiers.
Where [634](#) have you taken refuge (now), O Banu Sinhajah?
You (who) were the refuge in fear.
You have turned away from Tashfin.

If he wished, he could punish you.
A pupil that no eyelid of yours has ever protected,
And a heart that the ribs have betrayed.

You are nothing but lions of the thicket,⁶³⁵
Each one (of you) watching for every (possible) unpleasantness (that might
befall).

O Tashfin, make the night an excuse for your soldiers,
And irresistible destiny not to be repelled.

The following verses of the poem are about warfare:

I shall give you the political education that
The Persian kings before you were desirous to obtain.
Not that I am experienced in it, but it is
A memento that spurs on the believers, and is useful.
Put on the double coat of mail that

A Tubba' exhorted skillful craftsmen to make,⁶³⁶
And the fine Indian dagger, because it is
More effective against thick armor and pierces it better.
Use a number of fast horses (and horsemen) -
A strong fortress that cannot be repelled!
Dig a trench for yourself when you encamp,
Regardless of whether you are in victorious pursuit or being pursued.
Do not cross a river. Encamp on its bank.
It separates your soldiers from the enemy.
Go into battle in the afternoon,

Having behind you a mountain pass ⁶³⁷ that is unapproachable.
When the soldiers are in straits on a narrow
Battlefield, the points of their spears will give them (elbow) room.
Attack the enemy right away, do not hesitate
A moment, for to show signs of hesitation is disastrous.
Take for your patrols men of energy,
In whom truthfulness is an unmistakable characteristic.
Do not listen to the liar who comes to you with alarming news.
A person under the influence of a lie (acts) senselessly ⁶³⁸ whatever he may
do.

The statement, "Attack the enemy right away, do not hesitate, etc," is
contrary to the general practice of warfare. 'Umar said to Abu 'Ubayd b. Masud ath-
Thaqafi, when he entrusted him with the war against Firs and the 'Iraq: ⁶³⁹ "Listen
to the men around Muhammad and let them participate in the command. Do not
answer hastily, (answer) only when everything is clear to you. It is war, and only the
calm man, who knows when there is an opportunity and when he has to restrain
himself, is suited for warfare." According to another (report), he said to him: "The
only thing that prevents me from putting Salit in command is his rashness in war.
Rashness in war, unless everything is clear, is disastrous. By God, if it were not for
that, I should have made him commander, but only a calm man is suited for
warfare." This is what 'Umar said. It is proof that in war it is better to go slow than
to be hasty, until the situation in a particular battle is clear. This is the contrary of
what as-Sayrafi said, unless he means attacking after. everything is clear. This is a
possible explanation. And God knows better. There is no certainty of victory in war,
even when the equipment and the numerical (strength) that cause victory (under
normal circumstances), exist. Victory and superiority in war come from luck and
chance. This is explained by the fact that the causes of superiority are, as a rule, a

combination of several factors. There are external factors, such as the number of soldiers, the perfection and good quality of weapons, the number of brave men, (skillful) arrangement of the line formation, the proper tactics, and similar things. Then, there are hidden factors. (These hidden factors) may be the result of human ruse and trickery, such as spreading alarming news and rumors to cause defections (in the ranks of the enemy) occupying high points, so that one is able to attack from above, which surprises those below and causes them to abandon each other; hiding in thickets or depressions and concealing oneself from the enemy in rocky terrain, so that the armies (of one's own side) suddenly appear when (the enemy) is in a precarious situation and he must then flee to safety (instead of defending himself), and similar things. These hidden factors may also be celestial matters, which man has no power to produce for himself. They affect people psychologically, and thus generate fear in (them). They cause confusion in the centers of (armies), and there are routs. Rout very often are the result of hidden causes, because both parties make much use of (the opportunities offered by) them in their desire for victory. One of them must by necessity be successful in their use. Wherefore, Muhammad said:

"War is trickery."⁶⁴⁰ An Arab proverb says: "Many a trick is worth more than a tribe."^{640a}

It is thus clear that superiority in war is, as a rule, the result of hidden causes, not of external ones. The occurrence of opportunities as the result of hidden causes is what is meant by the word "luck," as has been established in the proper place. Considering the fact that superiority may be the result of celestial factors, as we have explained, one understands Muhammad's statement: "I was helped through the terror (that befell the enemy) for the length of one month's journey."⁶⁴¹ (The same fact explains) Muhammad's victory with small numbers over the polytheists during his lifetime, and the victories of the Muslims during the Muslim conquests after (Muhammad's death). God took care of His Prophet. He threw terror into the hearts of the unbelievers. (That terror,) eventually, seized control over their hearts, and they fled. (This, then, was) a miracle wrought by God's Messenger. Terror in the hearts of their enemies was why there were so many routs during the Muslim conquests, but it was a factor concealed from the eyes.

At-Turtushi⁶⁴² mentions that one of the reasons for victory in war is that one side may have a larger number of brave and famous knights than the other. For instance, one side may have ten or twenty famous heroes, and the other only eight or sixteen. The side that has more, even if only one more, will be victorious. He states this very 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 (single) 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 that has a single (comprehensive) group feeling is stronger than, and superior to, the side that is made up of several different groups. These different groups are likely to abandon each other, as is the case with separate individuals who have no group feeling at all, each of the groups being in the same position as an individual. Thus, the side composed of several different groups cannot stand up to the side whose group feeling is one. This should be understood. It should be realized that this is a better explanation than the one attempted by at-Turtushi. At-Turtushi's (explanation) was suggested by the fact that the importance of group feeling was no longer known in his generation and in the place where he lived.⁶⁴³ (People in this situation) think of defense, military protection, and the pressing of claims, in terms of individuals and masses of individuals. They do not consider group feeling or common descent in this connection. We explained this at the beginning of the book.⁶⁴⁴

Moreover, such and similar things, if correct, still belong among the external causes (of victory), such as the existence of an identical number of soldiers on both sides, the proper tactics, the quantity of weapons, and similar things. How could such things guarantee victory, considering that we have just established that none of them is a match for the hidden causes, such as ruse and trickery, or for the celestial factors, such as divine terror and defection? This should be known, and the conditions of the world should be understood. God determines night and day.⁶⁴⁵

The idea of victory in war as depending on hidden and unnatural causes (reminds us) of the related situation that exists with regard to fame and renown. Fame and renown are rarely to be found in their proper places anywhere in any class of people, whether they be rulers, scholars, pious men, or the virtuous in general. Many people are famous and renowned, yet do not deserve it. Many are reputed villains, yet they are just the opposite. Many have been passed over by fame, and yet they may deserve it and be more entitled to it (than others). Sometimes, fame and renown are to be found in their proper places and do conform to the actual merit of the person who enjoys them.

The reason for this is that fame and renown are the result of (historical) information. In the process of transmission, the (original) intentions are forgotten, and bias and partisanship affect the information, as do unfounded assumptions as well as ignorance of the conformity of the stories to (actual) conditions,⁶⁴⁶ resulting from the fact that they have become obscured by falsification and artifice, or from the ignorance of the transmitter. (The information is also) affected by the desire to insinuate oneself into the good graces of great men of the world and other persons of high rank through eulogizing and praising (them), embellishing the facts and spreading fame in this manner⁶⁴⁷ The (human) soul is ardently in love with praise, and people go all out for this world and for the rank or wealth that belong (to this world). As a rule, they have no desire for virtue, and they do not care for those who have it. In view of all this, how could (we expect) there to be any conformity with the truth? Thus, renown results from hidden causes and does not conform (to reality). Things that result from hidden causes are what we express by the word "luck," as has been established.

36. *Taxation and the reason for low and high (tax revenues).*

It [648](#) should be known that at the beginning of the 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 (*sunan*) of the religion, it imposes only such taxes as are stipulated by the religious law, such as charity taxes, the land tax, and the poll tax. They mean small assessments, because, as everyone knows, the charity tax on property [649](#) is low. The same applies to the charity tax on grain and cattle, and also to the poll tax, the land tax, and all other taxes required by the religious law. They have fixed limits that cannot be overstepped.

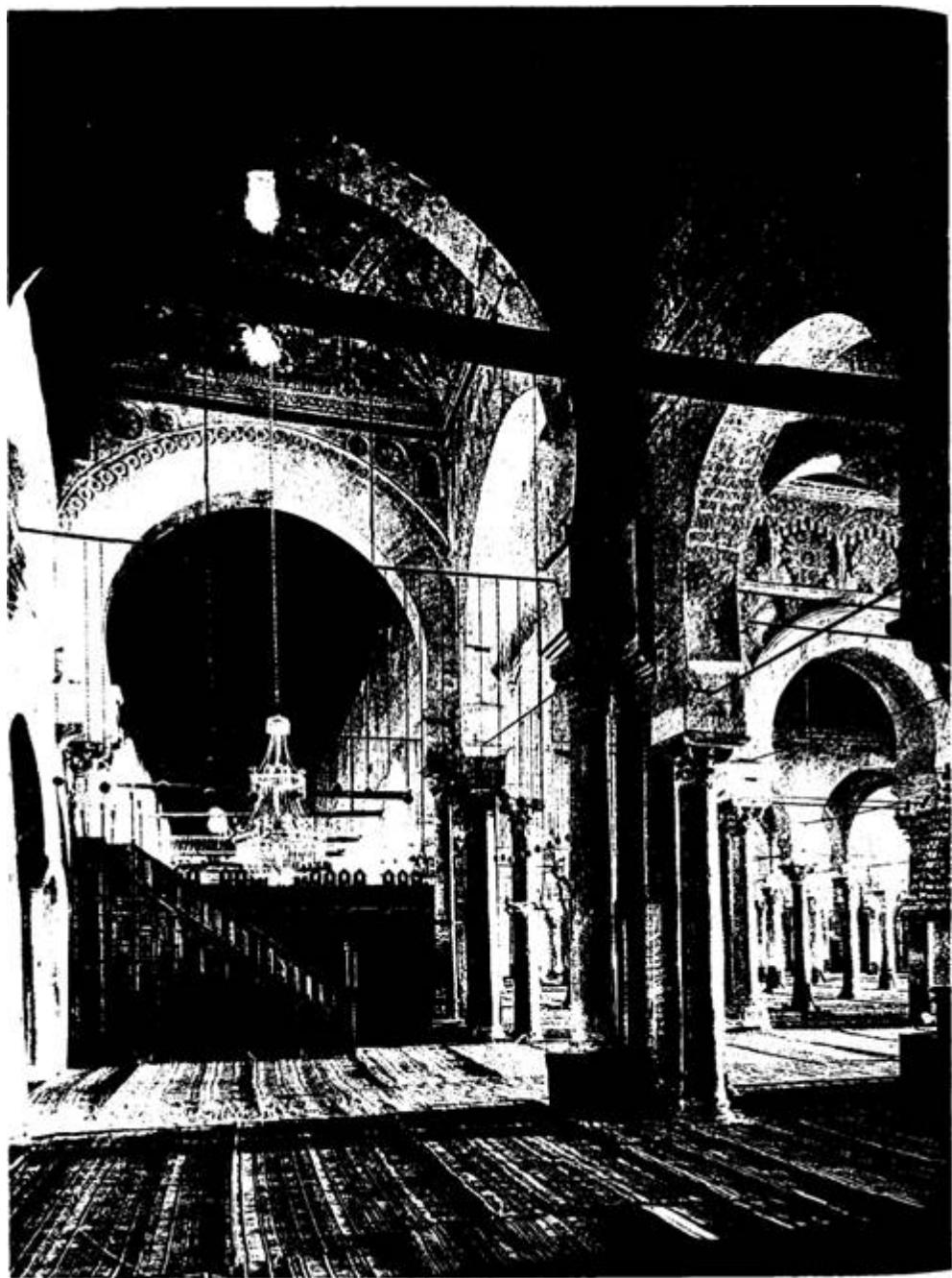
When the dynasty follows the ways of group feeling and (political) superiority, it necessarily has at first a desert attitude, as has been mentioned before. The desert attitude requires kindness, reverence, humility, respect for the property of other people, and disinclination to appropriate it, [650](#) 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 laborers, 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, as we shall mention later on. [651](#) 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.

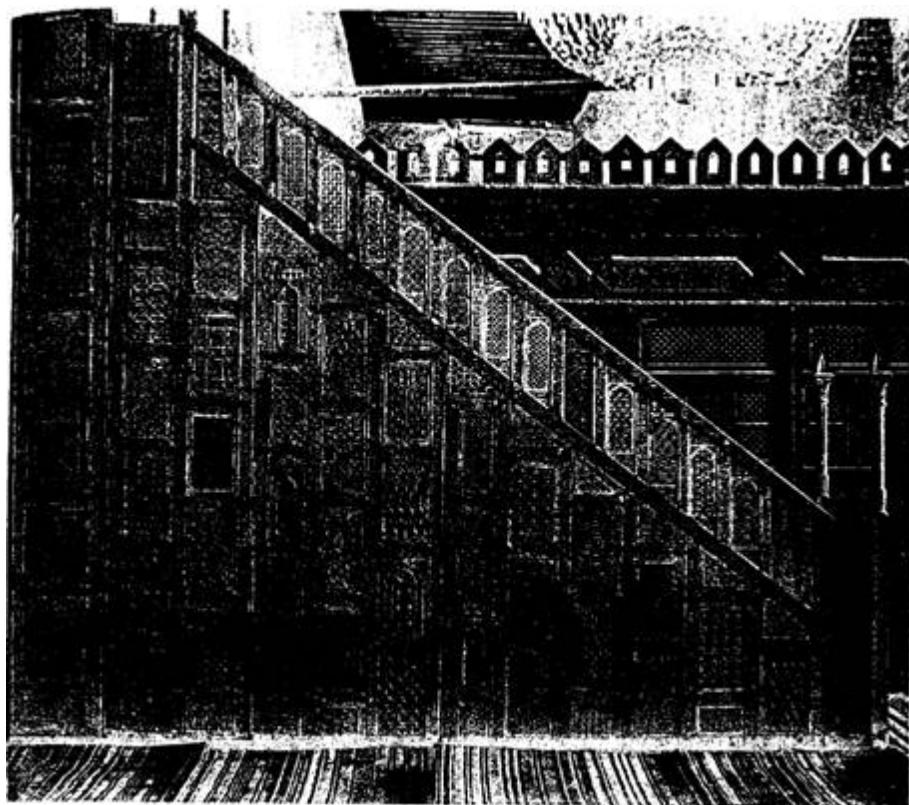
The assessments increase beyond the limits of equity. The result is that the interest of the subjects in cultural enterprises disappears, since when they compare expenditures and taxes with their income and gain and see the little profit they make, they lose all hope. Therefore, many of them refrain from all cultural activity. The result is that the total tax



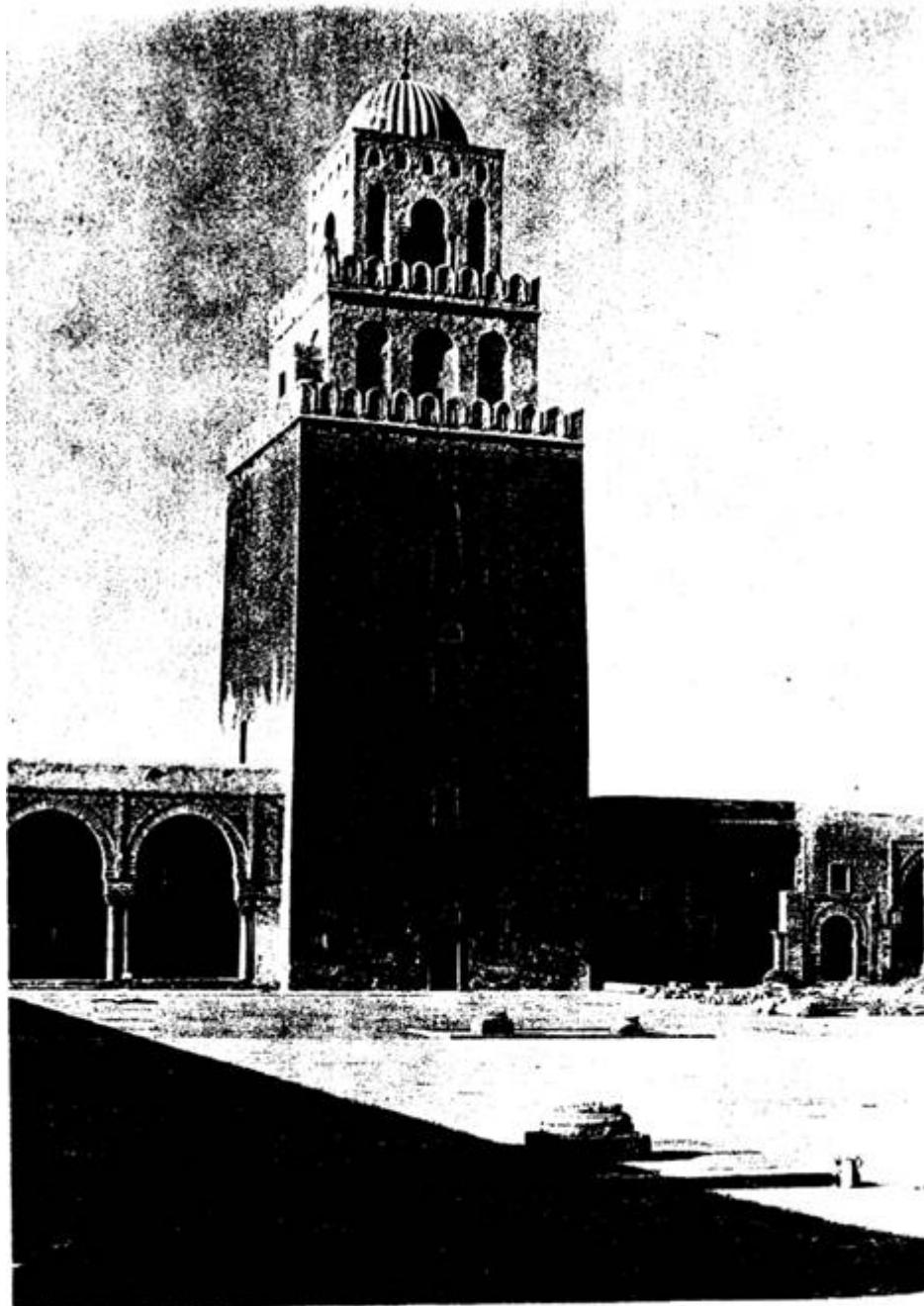
III. The Great Mosque of Tunis



IV. *Minbar* and *Maqsurah* of the Great Mosque of al-Qayrawan



V. *Minbar* and *Maqsurah* of the Great Mosque of al-Qayrawan: detail



V1. The Minaret of the Great Mosque of al-Qayrawan

revenue goes down, as (the number of) the individual assessments goes 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. Thus, the total revenue continues to decrease, while the amounts of individual imposts and assessments continue to increase, because it is believed that such an increase will compensate (for the drop in revenue) in the end. Finally, civilization is destroyed, because the incentive for cultural activity is gone. It is the dynasty that suffers from the situation, because it (is the dynasty that) profits from cultural activity.

If (the reader) 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.

God owns all things.

37. In the later (years) of dynasties, customs duties are levied.

It should be known that at the beginning, dynasties maintain the Bedouin attitude, as we have stated [652](#) 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 expenditures, 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 expenditures for his entourage and the great number of allowances he has to grant. The (available) 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 (ever) more money to meet his expenditures. [653](#) At first, the amounts of individual imposts and assessments are increased, as we have stated. 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. [653a](#) (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 the 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 'Abbasid and 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) dynasties. Taxes were levied even upon pilgrims making the pilgrimage. Salah-ad-din Ibn Ayyub abolished all such institutions and replaced them with good works. The same also happened in Spain at the time of the *reyes de ta'ifas*. Yusuf b. Tashfin, the Almoravid amir, put an end to it. The same has also been happening in the cities of the Jarid in Ifriqiyah, ever since their chiefs gained control over them. [654](#)

God "is kind to His servants." [655](#)

38. *Commercial activity on the part of the ruler is harmful to his subjects and ruinous to the tax revenue.* [656](#)

It should be known that a dynasty may find itself in financial straits, as we have mentioned before, on account of its luxury and the number of (its luxurious) habits and on account of its expenditures and the insufficiency of the tax revenue to pay for its needs and expenditures. It may need more money and higher revenues. Then, it sometimes imposes customs duties on the commercial activities of (its) subjects, as we have mentioned in the previous section. 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 (of a part of their fortune). (This happens) when officials and tax collectors are observed to have appropriated a good deal of tax money, which their accounts do not show. [657](#)

Sometimes, the ruler himself may engage in commerce and agriculture, from desire to increase (his) revenues. He sees that merchants and farmers make (great) profits and have plenty of property. (He sees) 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 (enter business 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 products and the available merchandise), if it occurs to him. (He can do it) 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, sugar, and other kinds of agricultural products, or goods of any kind, become available, the ruler cannot wait for a (favorable) 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. [658](#)

This becomes an often repeated process. The trouble and financial difficulties and the loss of profit which it causes the subjects, takes 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 might be levied on (the ruler's commercial activities). If, however, the same deals were made by others (and not by the ruler), the customs duties (levied in connection with them) would be included in the tax total.

Furthermore, (the trading of the ruler) may cause the destruction of civilization and, through the destruction and decrease of (civilization), 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 expenditures. This will ruin their situation. This should be understood.

The Persians made no one king except members of the royal house. Further, they chose him from among those (members of the royal house) 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 neighbors. 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. (The revenue from taxes) can be improved only through the equitable treatment of people with property and regard for them. This makes 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. Other (measures) taken by the ruler, such as engaging in commerce or agriculture, soon turn out to be harmful to the subjects, to be ruinous to the revenues, and to decrease cultural activity.

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 afore-mentioned (procedure). The ruler is often influenced to choose such a (course) by that sort of people - I mean, merchants and farmers - who bring him into contact with the profession in which they have been reared. They influence the ruler to choose this (course). 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.

May God inspire us to choose the right course for ourselves, and may He make us profit from our beneficial actions. There is no Lord except Him.

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 [659](#) 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, as we have stated before. [660](#) Under these circumstances, their leader refrains in their favor from (claiming) the revenues which they would like to have. He feels compensated for (his restraint) 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 the authority of (his position) 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 (*hajib*), 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 (complete) 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 [661](#). Moreover, the revenue from taxes decreases, as we have stated before [662](#) because there are many allowances to be paid and expenditures to be made. The revenues from the land tax decrease. The dynasty's need for money becomes more urgent. The intimates, the doorkeepers (*hajib*), and the secretaries no longer live under the shadow of prosperity and luxury, as their positions lose importance and the authority of the ruler's (position) 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 (by their fathers) 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. (As a result,) the dynasty becomes detestable [663](#) to them, and, in turn, it is the dynasty that suffers therefrom. 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.

One may compare what happened in this regard to the 'Abbasid wazirs, such as the Banu Qahtabah, the Barmecides, the Banu Sahl, the Banu Tahir, and others. One may further (compare) what happened at the time of the dissolution of the Umayyad dynasty in Spain in the days of the *reyes de taifas*, to the Banu Shuhayd, the Banu Abi 'Abdah, the Banu Hudayr, the Banu Burd, and others. The same is happening in the dynasty we have lived to see in our own time. "This is how God proceeds. . . And verily, you will not be able to change God's way." [664](#)

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 (to do) 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 the ruin of himself. (This would be) 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 the person (who may have the desire to escape). They want to avoid the chance that someone (outside) might come to know (their secrets) and their circumstances (through that person), and they are averse to letting him become the servant of others.

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

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 in as much 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 deprive him of (his property) by indirect threats and intimidation or by open force. They consider (his property) as revenue or as government 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, as we have mentioned,⁶⁶⁵ it is all the more understandable that their eyes can fall upon tax monies and government property, to which they have access by law and custom.

One may compare what happened to the Judge of Jabalah.⁶⁶⁶ He had revolted against Ibn 'Ammar, the master of Tripoli. The European Christians took Jabalah away from him. He fled to Damascus and then to Baghdad, which was under the rule of Sultan Barkiyaruq b. Malikshah. That was at the end of the fifth [eleventh] century. The wazir of the Sultan went to the Judge of Jabalah and borrowed most of his money from him. Then, they cleaned him out completely. It was an inestimable amount.

Sultan Abu Yahya Zakariya' b. Ahmad al-Lihyani, the ninth or the tenth of the Hafsid rulers in Ifriqiyah,⁶⁶⁷ intended to get away from the responsibility of royal authority and to go to Egypt. He wanted to escape the ruler of the western border regions when (the latter) prepared for a raid on Tunis. (Ibn) al-Lihyani, therefore, pretended to make a trip to the border region of Tripoli, in order to conceal the preparations (for his escape). There, he boarded ship and escaped to Alexandria. He had taken with him all the property and treasures he found in the treasury, and he had sold all the furniture, real property, and jewelry in the Hafsid treasures, even including the books. He took all that along with him to Egypt. He took up residence with al-Malik an-Nasir Muhammad b. Qala'un in the year 719 [1319].⁶⁶⁸ (Al-Malik an-Nasir) treated him hospitably and gave him a place of honor. But he did not cease to deprive him of his treasure, gradually, by indirect demands, until he had gotten it all. The only livelihood remaining to Ibn al-Lihyani was the salary that al-Malik an-Nasir granted him until his death in 728 [1327/28], as we shall mention in his history.⁶⁶⁹

This and similar things belong among the delusions to which the people of dynasties fall prey, when they suspect that the ruler is a danger to them. They may indeed escape with their lives, if they succeed in escaping. But to imagine that it is a necessity is an erroneous and baseless assumption. The renown they obtain in government service suffices for them to find livelihoods for themselves, either in the form of a salary paid by a ruler or in the form of a position in the profitable exercise of commerce and agriculture. Dynasties are (inter) related,⁶⁷⁰ but The soul is ambitious, if it is given the opportunity.⁶⁷¹ But if it is reduced to little, it is satisfied.

God "gives sustenance. He is strong and solid."⁶⁷²

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

The [673](#) reason for this is that dynasty and government serve as the world's greatest market place, [674](#) 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 [675](#) will be small. The gifts which they, in their turn, had been used to give to their entourage and people, stop, and all their expenditures are cut down. They constitute the greatest number of people (who make expenditures), and their expenditures provide more of the substance of trade than (the expenditures of) any other (group of people). Thus (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 (in general) 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 and that has a deficit, because under these circumstances the property of the ruler decreases in consequence of the decrease in revenues from the land tax. As we have stated, the dynasty is the greatest market, the mother and base of all trade. (It is the market that provides) the substance of income and expenditures (for trade). 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.

This is how God proceeds with His servants.

41. *Injustice brings about the ruin of civilization*

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

One may compare (here) the story which al-Mas'udi tells in connection with the history of the Persians. [677](#) In the days of King Bahram b. Bahram, the Mobedhan, the chief religious dignitary among the Persians, expressed to the King his disapproval of the latter's injustice and neglect for the consequences that his injustice must bring upon the dynasty. He did this through a parable, which he placed in the mouth of an owl. The King, hearing the cry of (an owl), asked (the Mobedhan) whether he understood what it was saying. (The Mobedhan) replied: "A male owl wanted to marry a female owl. The female owl, as a condition prior to consent, asked the male owl for the gift of twenty villages ruined in the days of Bahram, that she might hoot in them. (The male owl) accepted her condition and said to her: 'If the King continues to rule, I shall give you a thousand ruined villages. This is of all wishes the easiest to fulfill!'"

The King was stirred out of his negligence by that story. He had a private (talk) with the Mobedhan and asked him what he had in mind. (The Mobedhan) replied: "O King, the might of royal authority materializes only through the religious law, obedience toward God, and compliance with His commands and prohibitions. The religious law persists only through royal authority. Mighty royal authority is achieved only through men. Men persist only with the help of property. The only way to property is through cultivation. The only way to cultivation is through justice. Justice is a balance set up among mankind. The Lord set it up and appointed an overseer of it, and that is the ruler. You, O King, went after the farms and took them away from their owners and cultivators. They are the people who pay the land tax and from whom one gets money. You gave their farms as fiefs to (your) entourage and servants and to sluggards. They did not cultivate (the farms) and did

not heed the consequences. (They did not look for the things) that would be good for the farms. They were leniently treated with regard to the land tax (and were not asked to pay it), because they were close to the king. The remaining landowners who did pay the land tax and cultivated their farms had to carry an unjust burden. Therefore, they left their farms and abandoned their settlements. They took refuge in farms that were far away or difficult (of access), and lived on them. Thus, cultivation slackened, and the farms were ruined. There was little money, and soldiers and subjects perished. Neighboring rulers coveted the Persian realm, because they were aware of the fact that the basic materials that alone maintain the foundation of a realm had been cut off."

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

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

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

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

(4) progeny, and (5) property.

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

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

"Your Lord does not do injustice to His servants." [678](#)

It should not be objected that punishment for highway robbery is provided for in the religious law, [679](#) and that (highway robbery) is an injustice that can be committed only by someone who has the ability to commit it, in as much as the highway robber, when he commits the robbery, must have the ability to do it. The reply to that would be twofold:

First, it may be said that the punishment laid down for (highway robbery) is for crimes against life or property that (the highway robber) commits. This is an opinion held by many. The (punishment applies) only after one has gained power over him and brought him to account for his crime. [680](#) Highway robbery itself has no fixed legal punishment.

Second, it may be said that the highway robber cannot be described as having the ability (to commit injustice), because we understand by ability to commit injustice that the person has a free hand and there is no rival power, which means that he has (a power to) bring about (complete) ruin. The ability of the highway robber is merely an ability to cause fear. (This fear) then enables the highway robber to take away the property of others. Everyone may defend himself against it, according to both the religious and the political law. It is not, then, an ability that could bring about (complete) ruin.

God has power to do what He wishes.

One of the greatest injustices and one which contributes most to the destruction of civilization is the unjustified imposition of tasks and the use of the subjects for forced labor. This is so because labor belongs to the things that constitute capital, as we shall explain in the chapter on sustenance. [681](#) Gain and sustenance represent the value realized from labor among civilized people. All their efforts and all their labors are (means) for them (to acquire) capital and (to make a) profit. They have no other way to make a profit except (through labor). 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 labor unrelated to their (ordinary ways of) making a living, they no longer have any profit and are thus deprived of the price of their labor, 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.

"God gives sustenance to whomever He wishes to give it, without

accounting." [682](#)

An injustice even greater and more destructive of civilization and the dynasty than (the one just mentioned) 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 (at the moment) with the hope that the market will fluctuate in favor of the merchandise that had been sold to them at such a high price, and that their loss will be canceled 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. [683](#)

This (situation) affects all kinds of merchants, those resident in town and those who import merchandise from elsewhere. (It also affects) the peddlers and shopkeepers who deal in food and fruit, as well as 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. [684](#) It causes (all) 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, as we have stated before. [685](#) 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 (the property) is taken outright and if the hostile acts are extended to affect the property, the wives, the lives, the skins, [685a](#) and the honor 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 expenditures increase, and much spending is done. The 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.

God determines all affairs. There is no Lord except Him.

42. *How it happens that access to the ruler becomes restricted [686](#) in the dynasty. (Such restriction becomes important when the dynasty grows senile.)*

It should be known that at the beginning, as we have mentioned before, [687](#) 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 special (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 (only) 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. (That person) is stationed at the (ruler's) door to exercise his function.

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 handled 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, (rulers) introduced another entrance restriction even more selective than the first. (The first) concerns special friends of the ruler and prevents everyone else's admission. The second restriction concerns the meetings with those friends (of the rulers), and prevents admission of everyone else from among the common people.

The first entrance restriction is in existence at the beginning of a dynasty, as we have said. It originated in the days of Mu'awiyah and 'Abd-al-Malik and the Umayyad caliphs. The person in charge of entrance restrictions was called by them "doorkeeper" (*hajib*), a word properly derived from the same root (as the word "entrance restriction").

Then, the 'Abbasid 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" (*hajib*) 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 'Abbasid 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. As a rule, it comes into existence only in the later (years) of a dynasty, as we have mentioned before in connection with the seclusion of the ruler.⁶⁸⁸ 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,⁶⁸⁹ especially when the soil is prepared and all the requirements and symptoms are there.

"God has the power to execute His commands."⁶⁹⁰

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 have fears 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 [691](#) 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 who is related (to the dynasty) gains control there. 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, its authority far-flung, and the group feeling of the Banu 'Abd-Manaf was one and supreme over all the Mudar. Therefore, no dissension made itself felt over the whole period of (the Arab Muslim dynasty), except for the disturbances caused by the Kharijites, who were willing to die for their heresy. That (however) had nothing to do with royal authority and (political) leadership, and they were not successful, because they were up against a strong group feeling. Then, the Umayyads lost control, and the 'Abbasids took over. The Arab dynasty had, by then, achieved the utmost superiority and luxury, and was beginning to shrink. (At that time,) 'Abd-ar-Rahman I ad-Dakhil took refuge in Spain, the most remote region of the Muslim dynasty. He founded a realm there and severed it from the 'Abbasid cause. Thus, he made two dynasties out of one. Then, Idris took refuge in the Maghrib and seceded and seized power there. His son and successor commanded the Awrabah, the Maghilah, and the Zanitah Berbers, and took possession of both the Maghribis (Morocco and Algeria).

Later on, the 'Abbasid dynasty shrank more and more. The Aghlabids were stirred up to resist (the 'Abbasids). Then, the Shi'ah (the 'Ubaydid-Fatimids) seceded. The Kutimah and the Sinhajah supported them, and they took possession of Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib, and then conquered Egypt, Syria, and the Hijaz. They defeated the Idrisids and divided the ('Abbasid) dynasty into two more, so that the Arab ('Abbasid) dynasty now consisted of three (independent) dynasties: the 'Abbasids at the center 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(-Fatimids) in Ifriqiyah, Egypt, Syria, and the Hijaz. These dynasties continued to exist until their destruction was imminent or complete.

In the same way, the 'Abbasid dynasty also split into other dynasties. There were the Hamdinids and their successors, the Banu 'Uqayl, in the Jazirah and Mosul. There were the Tulunids and their successors, the Banu Tughsh (Ikhshidids), in Egypt and Syria. In the remote (East), there were the Siminids in Transoxania and Khurisin, and the 'Alawids (Zaydis) among the Daylam and in Tabaristan. This, finally, led to Daylam domination of Firs and the two 'Iraqs, including Baghdad and

the caliphs. Then, there came the Saljuqs. They took possession of all that (area). Later on, their dynasty, too, split after having flourished, as is known from their history.

The same thing may also be observed of the Sinhajah dynasty in the Maghrib and Ifriqiyah. When it reached its zenith in the days of Badis b. al-Mansur,⁶⁹² Badis' uncle Hammad revolted against him and cut off the Maghrib provinces between Mount Awras and Tlemcen and the Moulouya (Malwiyah River) and took them for himself. He founded al-Qal'ah⁶⁹³ in the Mountain of the Kutamah near Msila (al-Masilah). He settled there and took possession of their center Ashir on Mount Titteri. He thus founded another realm split off from that of the family of Badis. The family of Badis remained in al-Qayrawan and environs. This remained this way, until the power of both of them was completely destroyed.

The same was the case with the Almohad dynasty. When the shadow it cast began to shrink, the Hafsids revolted in Ifriqiyah. They made themselves independent there and founded their own realm for their descendants in that region. Their power flourished and reached the limit, but then, one of their descendants, the amir Abu Zakariya' Yahya, the son of Sultan Abu Ishaq Ibrahim, the fourth Hafsid caliph, seceded in the western provinces and founded a new realm in Bougie and Constantine and environs. He passed it on to his children. (Abu Zakariya' and his children) thus split the dynasty in two. Then (his children) took possession of the capital in Tunis. Later on the realm was again divided, among their descendants, and then they regained full power.

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 and with the non-Arab rulers in the East. It also was the case in the Sinhajah (Zirid) realm in Ifriqiyah. In the later (years) of the Sinhajah dynasty, every castle in Ifriqiyah was in the possession of an independent rebel, as we shall mention.⁶⁹⁴ The same was the case with the Jarid and the Zab in Ifriqiyah shortly before the present time, as we shall also mention.⁶⁹⁵

This is the case with every dynasty. Inevitably, luxury, ease, and a decrease in the extent of its power cause it to be affected by the symptoms of senility. Then, members of the ruling family or people of the dynasty who have gained control divide it among themselves, and numerous dynasties come into existence where (there had been one).

God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it.

44. *Once senility has come upon a dynasty, it cannot be made to disappear.*

We have already cited the symptoms and causes of senility, one by one.⁶⁹⁶ We have explained that it is natural for the causes of senility to affect the dynasty. All of them are natural in (a dynasty). If, then, senility is something natural in (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 (senility) resulted from shortcomings or negligence on the part of former people of the dynasty. This is not so. These things are natural to the dynasty. Customs (that have developed in the dynasty) 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 (from doing that) and expose him if he were to do it. Were he to do it, he would be accused of craziness and insanity 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 (at the time the dynasty grows 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-a-vis the dynasty, because the presumption of pomp remains.⁶⁹⁷ 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.

This should be considered, and one should not disregard the wise planning that God employs in having His creation follow its course toward the destiny He has determined for it. "Each term has a book."⁶⁹⁸

45. How disintegration befalls dynasties.

It should be known that 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.

It should be known that, as we have stated, the dynasty can be founded and established only with the help of group feeling.⁶⁹⁹ 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 ⁷⁰⁰ 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 ⁷⁰¹ The group feeling that the ruler had through them is destroyed. (That group feeling) was the major group feeling, which united all the other groups and subordinated them to itself. It dissolves and its grip weakens. Its place is taken by the inner circle of clients and followers who enjoy the favors 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 group feeling), because it lacks direct and close blood relationships. We have mentioned before that the importance and strength of a group feeling results from close and direct blood relationships, ⁷⁰² because God made it that way.

The ruler thus isolates himself from his family and helpers, those who have natural affection (for him). This (in turn) is sensed by the people of other groups. Very naturally, they become audacious vis-a-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 coloring 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 cause (of the dynasty) there. Rebels who are members of the ruling family and other (types of rebels) 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. (They hope that) they will be secure from capture by the (government) militia. This (process) keeps on and the authority of the ruling dynasty continues gradually to shrink until the rebels reach places extremely close to the center of the dynasty. The dynasty then often splits into two or three dynasties, depending on its original strength, as we have stated.⁷⁰³ People who do not share in the group feeling of (the dynasty) take charge of its affairs, though they obey the people who do share in the group feeling of (the dynasty) 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-Manaf. It was even possible for Sulayman b. 'Abd-al-Malik in Damascus to order the killing of 'Abd-al-'Aziz b. Musa b. Nusayr in Cordoba. He was killed, and (Sulayman's) order was not disobeyed.⁷⁰⁴ Then, luxury came to the Umayyads, and their group feeling was wiped out. (The Umayyads) were destroyed, and the 'Abbasids made their appearance. They curbed ⁷⁰⁵ the Hashimites. They killed all the 'Alids (descendants of Abu Talib) and exiled them. In consequence, the group feeling of 'Abd-Manaf dissolved and was wiped out. The Arabs grew audacious vis-a-vis (the 'Abbasids). 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 center 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 colored 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 is often more secure (than ever), as far as rebels and rivals are concerned, because the coloring of submissiveness and subservience 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 comes 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. "Each term has a book," ⁷⁰⁶ and each dynasty has an end. God determines night and

day.⁷⁰⁷

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 before⁷⁰⁸ It has the qualities of kindness to subjects, planned moderation in expenditures, 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 expenditures. Therefore, the dynasty does not need much money.

Later comes domination and expansion. Royal authority flourishes. This calls for luxury. (Luxury) causes increased spending. The expenditures of the ruler, and of the people of the dynasty in general, grow. This (tendency) spreads to the urban population. It calls for increases in soldiers' allowances and in the salaries of the people of the dynasty⁷⁰⁹ Extravagant expenditures mount. It spreads to the subjects, because people follow the religion (ways) and customs of the dynasty.⁷¹⁰

The ruler, then, must impose duties on articles sold in the markets, in order to improve his revenues. (He does so,) because he sees the luxury of the urban population testifying to their prosperity, and because he needs the money for the expenditures 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 it, 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.⁷¹¹ Eventually, their wealth is gone, 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 expenditures and soldiers' salaries. He never gets enough. Senility affects the dynasty more and more. The people of (other) regions grow bold against it.

At each of these stages, the strength of the dynasty crumbles. Eventually, it reaches complete ruin. It is open to domination by (any) aggressor. Anyone who wants to attack it can take it away from those who support it. If this does not occur, it will continue to dwindle and finally disappear⁷¹²-like the wick of a lamp when the oil is exhausted, and it goes out.

God owns all things and governs the whole creation. There is no God but Him.

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 [713](#)

Above, in the third (chapter) of this *Muqqadimah*, [714](#) in the chapter on the caliphate and royal authority, we stated that each dynasty has its specific share of provinces and districts and no more. [715](#) (Its expansion) depends [716](#) on the distribution of the dynasty's group (strength) for the (military) protection of its territory and regions. Wherever its numbers go, their advance (eventually) comes to a stop at (what is called) 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. (At this time,) the character of the militia softens, and they lose their toughness. This makes them cowards and lazy fellows. They are caught up in the effeminacy [717](#) of sedentary culture. 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. The first element of disintegration afflicts the dynasty, that which comes through the soldiers and militia, as has been mentioned. [718](#)

This is paralleled by extravagance in expenditures. (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. [719](#) At this time, the income of the dynasty is too small to pay for such expenditures, 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 neighbors. 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 of (the dynasty) [720](#) 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 comes about in the second, smaller, area.

The [721](#) 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. [722](#) 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, [723](#) 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 changes the previous norms (of the dynasty) 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. And thus befalls what God has destined to befall.

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

Then, dissension arose among the sons of ar-Rashid. '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 (however) still increased. Al-Mu'tadid appeared. He changed the norms of the dynasty and adopted another policy [724](#) He gave the outlying regions, over which the governors had won control, to them as fiefs. Thus, for instance, the Samanids (were given) Transoxania, the Tahirids the 'Iraq and Khurasin, the Saffarids Western India (Sind) and Firs, the Tulunids Egypt, and the Aghlabids Ifriqiyah. Then, the power of the Arabs was broken up. The non-Arabs achieved superiority. The Buyids and the Daylam gained control of the Muslim dynasty. They kept the caliphs in seclusion. The Samanids remained in control of Transoxania. The Fatimids [725](#) pushed out of the Maghrib into Egypt and Syria and gained possession of (those countries). Then arose the dynasty of the Saljuq Turks. The Saljugs gained domination over the Muslim empire. They kept the caliphs in seclusion, until their dynasties were destroyed.

From the time of an-Nasir [726](#) on, the caliphs were in control of an area smaller than the ring around the moon, namely, the Arab 'Iraq up to Isfahan, Firs, and al-Bahrayn. For some (time), the dynasty continued in that manner, until the power of the caliphs was destroyed by Hulagu b. Tuli b. Dushi Khan, the ruler of the Tatars and Mongols. They defeated the Saljugs and took possession of the part of the Muslim empire that had been theirs.

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

until the dynasty is destroyed. (The fact) can be exemplified by examination of any dynasty, large or small. This is how God proceeds with dynasties, until the dissolution destined by Him comes upon His creatures. "Everything perishes except His face (person)." [727](#)

47. How a new dynasty originates.

It should be known that when the ruling dynasty starts on the road to senility and destruction, the rise and beginning of the new dynasty takes place in two ways:

(The one way is) for provincial governors in the dynasty 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 'Abbasid dynasty when it started on the road to senility and its shadow receded from the remote regions. The Samanids gained control over Transoxania, the Hamdinids over Mosul and Syria, and the Tulunids over Egypt. 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 neighboring nations and tribes to revolt against the dynasty. He either makes propaganda for some particular cause to which he intends to win the people, as we have indicated, [728](#) 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. (His people) 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.

This was the case with the Saljugs in relation to the descendants of Sebuktigin, and with the Merinids in the Maghrib in relation to the Almohads.

"God has the power to execute His commands." [729](#)

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

We have (just) mentioned that new dynasties originate in two ways. The one way (is for them to originate) with the governors of outlying regions when the shadow of the ruling dynasty recedes from those regions and its waves are rolled back. As a rule, such (governors) do not attack the (ruling) dynasty, as we have mentioned before, because all they have to do is to be satisfied with what they already have. That is as far as their power goes. The other way is that of men who make propaganda for some cause and of rebels who rebel against the (ruling) dynasty. It is inevitable that they attack (the ruling dynasty), because their power warrants such (a course). 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 (all the time), until by perseverance they achieve domination and victory. As a rule, they do not gain victory through sudden action.

The reason for this is that victory in war, as we have mentioned before,⁷³⁰ 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 imaginary (psychological) factors, as has been mentioned above. Trickery is one of the most useful things employed in warfare. It is the thing most likely to bring victory. A tradition says: "War is trickery."⁷³¹

Accepted custom has made obedience to the ruling dynasty a necessity and an obligation, as has been mentioned before in more than one place.⁷³² 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. Still, others are 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 ruler of the ruling dynasty. 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 upon the ruling dynasty in concert with (the founder of the new dynasty). Victory and domination are the result.

Furthermore, the ruling dynasty has many luxuries. The royal authority of (the people of the ruling dynasty) had been firmly established. They had enjoyed prosperity and pleasures. 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.⁷³³ With all this, they frighten their enemies.

The people of the new dynasty do not have (such things). They have the desert attitude and are poor and indigent. This leaves them unprepared for such

(things). What they hear about the conditions and excellent state of preparedness of the ruling dynasty makes them apprehensive. They are afraid to do battle against (the ruling dynasty) on account of it. 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). This is how God proceeds with His servants.

The men of the new dynasty differ from the men of the ruling dynasty with regard to descent, customs, and all other things. The (persistent) attacks and their desire to gain the upper hand estrange the men of the new dynasty 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 men of the ruling dynasty, either secretly or openly, reaches the men of the new 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,⁷³⁴ (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. The senility and decay of (the ruling dynasty), 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 districts and outlying regions from (the ruling dynasty). Thus, they become spirited enough (to attempt) sudden action. The apprehensions that had hitherto weakened their resolution disappear. The long wait comes to an end, and sudden action finally brings domination.

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

The same was the case with the 'Alids (Zaydis) in Tabaristan at the time their propaganda appeared among the Daylam. They had to wait a long time before they gained domination over that region. The 'Alid rule then ended, and the Daylam aspired to rule over Firs and the two 'Irigs. They waited (patiently) for many years, until they were able to cut off Isfahan and Firs (and take it for themselves). Then, they gained domination over the caliph in Baghdad.

The same was the case with the 'Ubaydid(-Fitimids). Their missionary in the Maghrib, Abu 'Abdallah ash-Shi'i,⁷³⁵ stayed for more than ten years among the Kutimah Berbers waiting to gain victory over the Aghlabids in Ifriqiyah. (The 'Ubaydid-Fitimids) then took possession of the Maghrib, and, later on, aspired to become rulers of Egypt. They spent about thirty years waiting for their chance, constantly sending armies and fleets against Egypt. Support for Egypt's defense against (the 'Ubaydid-Fitimids) came from Baghdad and Syria, by land and by sea. They took possession of Alexandria, the Fayyum, and Upper Egypt. Their propaganda progressed from there to the Hijiz and found a home in Mecca and Medina. Then, their general, Jawhar al-Kitib,⁷³⁶ moved against the (capital) city of Egypt with his armies and took possession of it. He uprooted the dynasty of the Banu Tughsh (Ikhshidids) and founded Cairo. His caliph, Ma'add al-Mu'izz-li-din-Allih, came to (Cairo) and chose it as his residence. This was about sixty years after the ('Ubaydid-Fitimids) had (for the first time) gained domination over Alexandria.

The same was the case with the Saljuq Turk rulers. They gained the upper

hand over the Siminids and went beyond Transoxania, but then they had to spend about thirty years waiting to gain the upper hand over the (dynasty of) Ibn Sebuktigin in Khurasin [737](#) After some time, they advanced against Baghdad and took possession of it and of the caliph there.

The same was the case with the Tatars who succeeded the Saljugs. They came out of the steppe in 617 [1220/21], but it took them forty years thereafter to gain domination.

The same was also the case with the inhabitants of the Maghrib. The Lamtunah Almoravids declared themselves against their Maghrawah rulers. They waited for years to gain the upper hand over them. Then, the Almohads came forth with their propaganda against the Lamtunah. They spent about thirty years fighting them, until they gained domination over their capital in Marrakech. The same was the case with the Zanatah Merinids. They declared themselves against the Almohads and spent about thirty years waiting to gain possession of Fez. They cut off (Fez) and environs from the Almohad realm. Then, they spent another thirty years fighting (the Almohads) until they gained domination over their capital in Marrakech. All this is mentioned in the histories of these dynasties.

A struggle of this sort, 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. "And verily, you will not be able to change God's way." [738](#)

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, [739](#) and in the corresponding [740](#) 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 (governing the relationship) between new and ruling dynasties. Thus, (the rapid conquest) was one of the miracles of our Prophet. The fact of the appearance of (such miracles) in Islam is generally acknowledged. Miracles cannot be used as analogies for ordinary affairs and constitute no argument against (them).

49. *There is an abundant civilization (large population) at the end of dynasties, and pestilences and famines frequently occur then.*

In the previous (discussion) [741](#) 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 [742](#) kind and benevolent rule serves as an incentive to the subjects and gives them energy for cultural activities. (Civilization) will be abundant, and procreation will be 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 [743](#) At that time, civilization has reached the limit of its abundance and growth.

It should not be objected here that it was stated before [744](#) 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. [745](#) Or, trouble occurs as the result of the unrest of the subjects and the great number of rebels (who are provoked) 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 strong or weak, little or much. Grain, fruits, and (the amount of) milk given by animals varies 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 has its reason in the large number of famines just mentioned. Or, it has its reason in 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 (climate) through (too) large a civilization (population). [746](#) It results from the putrefaction and the many evil moistures with which (the air) has contact (in a dense civilization). Now, air nourishes the animal spirit [747](#) 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 or great, - putrefaction grows and multiplies under (its influence), 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, it has been clarified by science [748](#) in the proper place that it is necessary to have empty spaces and waste regions interspersed between civilized 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 settled cities than elsewhere, as, for instance, in Cairo in the East and Fez in the Maghrib.

God determines whatever He wishes.

50. *Human civilization requires political leadership for its organization.*

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

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

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

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

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

The best and most comprehensive written exposition of this subject is the

letter of Tahir b. al-Husayn, al-Ma'mun's general, to his son 'Abdallah b. Tahir when (al-Ma'mun) appointed him governor of ar-Raqqah, Egypt, and the intervening territories. On that occasion, his father Tahir wrote him the famous letter. In it, he exhorted him and gave him his advice concerning all religious and ethical matters. (He discussed) all (important) political problems as handled by the religious law and all problems of power politics that he would have to know in his government and administration. He urged him to strive for virtue and good qualities, in a manner so exemplary that no king or commoner can do without (these exhortations). This is the text of the letter, as copied from at-Tabari's work: [751](#)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

And now: It is your duty to fear the one and only God, to be afraid of Him, to watch Him, to keep away from His wrath, and to guard your subjects night and day. With the help of the good health with which God has clothed you, apply yourself to thinking of your resurrection and the place where you will be going, as well as to the things that will be your concern and for which you will be held responsible. Also, apply yourself to working in that sense in such a way that on the Day of Resurrection, God will protect you and save you from His retribution and painful punishment.

God has been benevolent to you. He has made it obligatory for you to show kindness to those of His servants whom He has made your subjects. He has made it your duty to be just to them, to see to it that His rights and punishments are observed in connection with them, to defend them and protect their families and women, to prevent bloodshed, to make their roads [752](#) safe, and to

VII. Tahir's Letter to his Son, 'Abdallaht Text showing corrections From MS. C (Atif Effendi 1936)

enable them to live in peace. God will punish you in connection with the duties He has placed upon you (if you do not take care of them properly). He will make them your concern and hold you responsible for them and reward you for (the good deeds) you have done or (the evil deeds you have) not done.

Keep your mind, brain, and eye free for that. Let nothing draw your attention from it. It is your principal and crucial task. It is the first thing through which God will give you successful guidance. Let the first thing to which you apply yourself and on which you work, be unfailing fulfillment of the duty of the five daily prayers that God has imposed upon you. Let people come to you to pray together with you, and perform (the prayers at the proper times) [753](#) with all their rites. (That is,) perform the ablutions before the prayers. Begin the prayers with the mention of God. Use the proper chant when you recite the Qur'an. Perform the requisite bows and prostrations and pronounce your profession of the faith properly. Let your intention in prayer be sincere in the presence of your Lord. Urge and instigate those who are with you and under your control to (perform the prayers). Prayer, as God said in the Qur'an, "restrains from sin and evil." [754](#)

Then, let this be followed by adopting the ways of the Messenger of God, by constant application of his qualities, and by imitation of the pious ancient Muslims

after him. If you have a task before you, let yourself be helped in doing it by asking God whether you should do it or not, by fearing Him, by applying what God has revealed in His Book with regard to things to be done and things not to be done, the things that are permitted and the things that are forbidden, and by taking as your guide the directions contained in the traditions of the Messenger of God. Act, then, as you owe it to God to act.

Do not be swayed from justice according to your likes and dislikes, either on behalf of a person close to you or on behalf of one remote from you. Favor jurisprudence and the jurists, the religion (Islam) and theologians, the Book of God and those who live by it. For the best ornament of a man is judicial interpretation of the faith, search for it, admonition to others to follow it, and knowledge of how one can get close to God. Religion (Islam) is the leader and guide to everything that is good. It commands the doing of good and prohibits the committing of sins and crimes. Through (religion), man's knowledge of God and respect for Him grows with God's help, and he will attain the highest rank in the other world. In addition, when people notice your (religious attitude) they will have respect for your rule and reverence for your government. They will be friendly to you and trust in your justice.

Be moderate in everything. There is nothing more clearly useful, safer, and in every way better, than (moderation). Planned moderation calls for right guidance. Right guidance leads to success. Success leads to happiness. The preservation of Islam and of the model ways (of the Prophet) is accomplished through moderation. Give preference to it in all your worldly affairs.

Do not fall behind in your pursuit of the other world, [755](#) of good deeds, of kind behavior, of the right path. One cannot do enough pious deeds, if they are to help one to find God's face and satisfaction and the company of God's saints in His noble abode.

You should know that planned moderation in worldly matters gives strength and protects against sins. You have nothing that is better than (moderation) to guard your person and your rank [756](#) and to try to improve your affairs. Therefore, use it and be guided by it. Then, your affairs will succeed. Your power will increase. Your private and public affairs will be in order.

Have a good opinion of God, and your subjects will cause you no trouble. In all your affairs, try to get in touch with Him, and you will always enjoy His favor.

Do not suspect anyone who works for you with regard to the work with which you have entrusted him, before you have discovered what is the matter with him. For it is a crime to suspect innocent persons and to have a bad opinion of them. Therefore, make it your duty to have a good opinion of the men around you. Drive away bad opinions of them, and do not harbor any such opinions. That will help you to gain their following and to train them. Do not let Satan, the enemy of God, gain entry to your affairs. Just a little weakness on your part is sufficient for him. He will cause you so much grief through your having a bad opinion of the men around you, that it will disturb the pleasure of your life. You should know that having a good opinion (of others) gives you strength and rest, and you will be competent to handle your affairs to your satisfaction. It will enable you to cause people to love you and to be straightforward in everything.

Do not let your good opinion of the men around you and your kindness to your subjects prevent you from making inquiries, from investigating your affairs, from taking personal charge of the business of (your) officials, from protecting (your) subjects, or from looking [757](#) after the things that sustain and benefit them. On the contrary, consider it your most important task to take personal charge of the

affairs of (your) officials and to protect your subjects by looking after their needs and providing for their requirements. This, more than anything else, helps to preserve the religion (of Islam) and gives life to the Sunnah (of the Prophet).

In all these things, have pure intentions. Pay special attention to improving yourself as a person, one who realizes that he will be held responsible for his deeds, that he will be rewarded for his good deeds, and punished for his evil deeds. For God made the religion a refuge and a power. He lifts up those who follow it and honor it.

Therefore, lead those whom you govern and rule along the path of religion and the way of right guidance.⁷⁵⁸ Apply the punishments that God has ordained for criminals, according to their station and according to what they deserve. Do not disregard it and do not make light of it. Do not postpone the punishment of those who must be punished. If you fall short in this respect, it will help spoil the good opinion (people have) of you. In this regard, let your actions be guided by the well-known traditions (*sunan*). Keep away from innovations and doubts. Your religion will then be healthy and your manliness unimpaired.

If you enter into an agreement, fulfill it. If you have promised to do a certain good deed, keep your (promise). Accept favors and repay them. Close your eyes to the defects of those of your subjects who may have them. Refrain from lies and falsehoods. Despise (liars and keep)⁷⁵⁹ away calumniators. Your affairs will begin to fail, so far as their effects both in this world and the other world are concerned, as soon as you give access to a liar or boldly use lies yourself. Lying is the beginning of crimes and falsehood, and calumny their end. The calumniator is not safe himself. No friend of a man who listens to (calumny) is safe.⁷⁶⁰ Nothing works out well for a person who is governed by (calumny).

Love good and righteous people. Be honestly helpful to noble men. Be friendly to the weak. Keep in touch with your blood relatives.⁷⁶¹ Desire thus to see the face of God and to strengthen His cause, and wish (thus) for His reward and the other world. Keep away from evil desires and injustice. Pay them no notice and show your subjects that you are free of (them). Be just in governing your subjects. Treat them honestly and with the kindness through which you will reach the path of right guidance.

Control yourself and do not get angry. Prefer dignity and mildness. Beware of sharpness, levity, and deceitfulness in any (enterprise) you engage in.

Beware of saying: "I am in authority. I may do what I want to do." This soon reveals a lack of sense on your part and little certainty of the one and only God. Let your intention with regard to (God) and your certainty of Him be sincere. You should know that royal authority belongs to God. He gives it to whomever He wants to give it and takes it away from whomever He wants to take it away.⁷⁶²

The change from (divine) favor to (divine) vengeance occurs nowhere faster than with men in authority who do not acknowledge⁷⁶³ (divine) favors, and with people enjoying good positions in the government, who are ungrateful for the favors and benefactions of God and consider themselves superior beings because of the bounty that God has given them.

Do not be greedy. Let the treasures and riches you gather and hoard up be piety, the fear of God, justice, the improvement of your subjects, the cultivation of their country, the supervision of their affairs, the protection of the mass of them,⁷⁶⁴ and support of the unfortunates. You⁷⁶⁵ should know that property, once it is gathered and stored in treasuries, does not bear fruit, but if it is invested in the

welfare of the subjects and used for giving them what is due to them and to prevent them from need, then it grows and thrives. The common people prosper. (The proper use of money) is an ornament to high officials, and it means a time of prosperity. It brings strength and protection. Therefore, let it be your way of gathering up treasures to spend money on building up Islam and the Muslims. Distribute to the officials of the Commander of the Faithful who preceded you [766](#) that which is due them. Give your subjects their share. Pay attention to the things that might improve their situation and livelihood. If you do that, the (divine) favor will always be with you. You will make it obligatory for God to increase (His favors to you). In this way, you will also be better able to levy the land tax and to collect the property of your subjects and your provinces. Because everybody experiences justice and kindness from you, everybody will be more amenable [767](#) to obeying you and more favorably disposed towards everything you want. Therefore, exert yourself in the way that I have outlined to you in this chapter. Be very much concerned [768](#) in this respect. Of (all) your money, there will remain only what was honestly spent in behalf of God. [769](#)

Acknowledge the gratefulness of those who express their thanks, and reward them for it.

Beware of forgetting the terror of the other world on account of this world and its temptations, so that you become neglectful of your duties. Neglect causes shortcomings, and shortcomings cause ruin. Whatever you do, you should do for God and in God, and hope for a reward. God has poured His favors upon you in this world and showed you His bounty. Therefore, take refuge in giving thanks to God. Rely upon Him, and He will give you more good things and benefactions. God gives His reward according to the gratefulness of those who express their thanks, and the way of life of those who do good deeds. He bestows His favors and shows His grace where they are deserved. [770](#)

Do not consider (any) sin lightly. Do not support an envious person. Do not pity a sinner. Do not be friendly with an ungrateful person. Do not connive with an enemy. Do not trust a calumniator. Do not rely upon a deceiver. Do not conclude a friendship with an immoral person. Do not follow a seducer. Do not praise a hypocrite. Have contempt for nobody. Do not refuse a poor petitioner. Do not (try to) improve a worthless person. Pay no attention to buffoons. Do not break a promise. Do not fear pride. [771](#) Show no anger. Do not be ostentatious. Do not walk arrogantly. Do not justify a stupidity [772](#) Do not neglect your search for the other world. Do not waste your days in finding fault. Do not close your eyes to an evildoer, because you are afraid of him or because you have a prejudice (in his favor). Do not seek the reward of the other world in this world.

Consult frequently with jurists. Accustom yourself to being mild and prudent. Learn from men of experience and intelligence who are understanding and wise. Do not permit extravagant [773](#) or stingy people to give you advice. Do not listen to what they say, because the damage they can cause is greater than their usefulness. Nothing can ruin your projects on behalf of your subjects more quickly than avarice. You should realize that if you are greedy, you take much and give little. If you are this way, you will have little success, for your subjects will be willing to like you only if (you) keep away from their property and do not treat them unjustly. You will keep the sincere friendship of your friends [774](#) by being generous to them and giving them fine gifts. Shun avarice. You should know that avarice is the first sin that man commits against His Lord and that the sinner is disgraced. Thus, God says in the Qur'an: "Those who are preserved from their own avarice are,

indeed, generous." [775](#) Therefore, be really generous [776](#) Give all the Muslims shares and portions in the booty you take. Be assured that generosity is one of the best things for a human being to practice. Make generosity one of your character qualities. [Be really generous.] Accept (generosity) as your constant practice.

Supervise the registers and contracts of the soldiers. Augment their salaries. Give them a good livelihood, and God will thus remove their indigence. They will be a strong (support) for you, and their hearts will be readily and gladly willing to obey you and serve you. It is sufficient happiness for a man in authority that his soldiers and subjects find mercy in his justice, protection, fairness, attentiveness, kindness, piety, and largesse. Therefore, avoid the unpleasantness of one of the two alternatives [777](#) by being conscious of the excellence of the other alternative and by always acting in accordance with it. Then, you will find success, well-being, and prosperity, if God wills.

You should know that the office of judge holds a place with God to which nothing else compares. It is God's scales in which the conditions of men on earth are equalized. Making decisions [778](#) and dispensing justice in judicial procedure and in all actions brings well-being to the subjects. The roads, then, are safe. The person who was treated unjustly finds justice. Everyone obtains his right. The livelihood of all is safeguarded. Proper obedience is paid. God gives good health and well-being. The religion can endure. The Sunnah and the religious laws function properly. Right and justice are applied in judicial procedure.[779](#)

(As a judge) be firm in behalf of God. Abstain from corruption.[780](#) Go and apply the legal punishments. Do not make haste. Stay away from anger and unrest. Be satisfied with an oath. Let your breath be calm and your cheek cool.[781](#) Make use of your experience. Be attentive when you are silent, and precise when you speak. Treat the plaintiff fairly. Hesitate when there is a doubt. Have much evidence produced. Do not show prejudice in favor of any of your subjects. Do not give anyone preferred treatment. Do not expose yourself to censure. Be steadfast and slow. Observe. Look out. Reflect. Think things over. Consider them. Be humble in the presence of your Lord. Be kind to all (your) subjects. Let the truth govern you. Do not shed blood hastily, for God considers the unlawful and violent shedding of blood as something very grave.

Consider the land tax. It maintains the subjects. Through it, God has strengthened and exalted Islam, helped and protected the Muslims, confounded and annoyed the enemies of Islam and the Muslims, and humbled and humiliated the unbelievers who are their subjects.[782](#) Therefore, distribute (the land tax) among those to whom it belongs, and do it justly, fairly, equitably, and generally. Do not make a noble man (*sharif*) pay less because of his nobility, or a rich man because of his wealth, or one of your secretaries, or one of your intimates and entourage. Do not ask for more than is tolerable. Do not charge anyone too much. Treat all the people justly. This makes it easier to gain their friendship and is more certain to achieve general satisfaction.

You should know that by your appointment, you were made treasurer, guardian, and shepherd. The people under your jurisdiction are called subjects (*ra'iyyah* "flock"), because you are their shepherd and overseer. (Therefore,) accept from them what they give you of their affluence, and use it for the administration of their affairs, for their welfare, and for providing for their needs. Employ for them understanding, skilled, and experienced men, who have theoretical knowledge of, and are able to act with, political wisdom and moderation. Give them good salaries. This is one of the duties incumbent upon you in connection with the task with which

you have been entrusted. Let nothing divert your attention or distract you from it. When you give preference to this matter and take charge of it properly, you will cause an increase in the favors your Lord bestows upon you, and favorable comment on your activities. You will also gain through it the love of your subjects and promote the (general) welfare. The (general) well-being of your country will be improved. Cultural activity will expand in your region. The fertility of your districts will be evident. Your income from the land tax will be large. Your property will be extensive. You will have the attachment [783](#) of your soldiers and be able to satisfy everybody through generous gifts from you. Your political leadership will be praised. Your justice will be approved by the enemy. In all your affairs, you will be just, capable in deed, powerful, and well equipped. [784](#) Therefore, strive for this (goal). Do not give anything else preference over it. Then, the results of your rule will find praise, if God wills.

Appoint a trusted (official) in every district under your jurisdiction, to inform you about your officials and to write you concerning their manner of life and activities. Thus, you will have eventually something like personal contact with every official in his area of jurisdiction and personally observe all his affairs.

If you want to order (your official to do) something, consider what the result of the thing you want done will be. If you see that the result will be healthy and sound, and if you hope for a good return from it and good council [785](#) and benefit, send (your order) out. If not, refrain from (any immediate action) and consult people of insight and knowledge about (the matter). Then, prepare for action. A man often looks at something he wants to do and finds it to be as he desires. This pleases and deceives him. Failure to consider what the result may be, could be his ruin and destruction.

Whatever you want to do, do it resolutely and address yourself to it forcefully after (having asked) God's help. Always ask your Lord whether you should do a particular thing. Finish the work you have to do today and do not postpone it until tomorrow. Do much of it yourself. For every tomorrow has its own business and events that will keep you from doing the work you should have done today but postponed. You should know that when a day is gone, it is gone with all there was in it. If you postponed the work that you should have done (yesterday), you will have to do two days' work (today). That will be difficult for you and will eventually make you ill. (On the other hand,) if you do each day the work that you should do, you will give rest to your body and soul and discharge your tasks as ruler well.

Consider the free (noble) people who are advanced in age and of whose sincere intentions you can be certain, and whose love for you, whose helpfulness as advisers, whose active interest in your affairs you have observed. Select them for your service and be benevolent toward them.

Have regard for the descendants of great houses who have become needy. Provide for their requirements and improve their condition, so that indigence will no longer be able to touch them.

Devote yourself to looking after the affairs of the poor and indigent, those who are not able to bring before you complaints about injustices they have suffered, [786](#) and other lowly persons who do not know that they may ask for their rights. Inquire about these people in all secrecy, and put good men from among your subjects in charge of them. Command them to report to you their needs and conditions, so that you will be able to look into the measures through which God might improve their affairs.

Have regard also for people who have suffered accidents, and for their widows and orphans. Give them stipends from the treasury, following the example of the Commander of the Faithful - God give him power! - in being kind to them and giving them presents, so that God may thereby improve their livelihood and give you a blessing and increased (favors).

Give the blind stipends from the treasury. Give to those of them who know the Qur'an and know most of it by heart a higher salary than to others.

Set up houses for Muslims who are ill, to shelter them. (Appoint) attendants in these houses who will handle them kindly, and (appoint) physicians who will treat their diseases. Comply with their desires so long as it does not lead to waste in the treasury.

You should know that when people are given their rights and when their dearest wishes are fulfilled, they are still not satisfied and are not quiet, but want to bring their needs to the attention of those in charge of them, because they desire to receive more and to get (additional) kindnesses from them. Often, the person who looks after the affairs of the people is annoyed by the great number of matters referred to him, which occupy his thought and mind, and cause him embarrassment and difficulties.

The person who desires justice, knowing what is good for him in this world and how excellent the reward in the other world will be, is not like the person who advances [787](#) toward the things that bring him close to God and who seeks (God's) mercy.

Let people frequently come to see you and show them your face. Let not your guards hinder them. Be humble toward them. Show them your smiling countenance. Be lenient with them when (you put) questions and speak to them. Be benevolent to them in your generosity and bounty.

If you give, do it kindly and pleasantly. (Do it) for the sake of doing a good deed and of receiving the reward (for it in the other world). Do it without causing trouble, and do not remind (the person to whom you give something) of your gift (in the expectation of a gift in return). Such a gift will be a profitable transaction, if God wills.

Learn from the affairs of the world that you are able to observe personally, and from the persons in authority and in positions of leadership who lived before your time in past centuries and among nations that disappeared. Then, in all your conditions, seek God's protection and love, act in accordance with His religious law and Sunnah, and establish His religion and Scripture. Keep away from the things that are different from that, or in opposition to it, and that provoke the wrath of God.

Be acquainted with the property that your officials collect and use for their expenditures. Do not take any forbidden property, and do not be a wasteful spender.

Sit down often with scholars and seek their advice and company.

Let it be your desire to follow and establish the Sunnah (of the Prophet) and to prefer noble and lofty character qualities.

Consider those the most honorable of your proteges and intimates who, when they notice a fault (in you), are not deterred by their respect for you from informing you about it in secret or from calling your attention to the shortcoming that lies in that fault. People of that sort are your most sincere friends and helpers.

Look at those of your officials who are present at your residence, and at your secretaries. Appoint for each one of them a time of the day in which he may come to you with his documents and orders and (also present to you) the needs of your officials and the affairs of your districts and subjects with which he is concerned.

Lend your ear and your eye, your mind and your intellect, to the things of that sort which he presents to you. Go over it again and think it over. If it is reasonable and appears effective, order it to be done and ask God about it. If not, have it checked and investigated.

Do not remind your subjects or anyone else to whom you show a favor, of it (in the expectation of a gift). Accept from no one anything except faithfulness, straightforwardness, and support for the affairs of the Muslims. Do not do any favors for anyone except under these (conditions).

Understand this letter of mine that I am addressing to you. Study it carefully and always act in accordance with it. Ask God for help in all your affairs. Ask Him whether or not you should do a thing. God is with goodness and with good people. Let your most important activity and greatest desire be what is pleasing to God and means order in his religion, might and steadfastness in His people, and justice and welfare in the Muslim group and the protected religions. I am asking God to give you help and success and right guidance and shelter. Farewell!

The historians report that people liked the letter when it appeared, and it found wide circulation. Al-Ma'mun heard about it. When it had been read to him, he said: "Abu t-Tayyib—that is, Tahir—did not omit any of the matters that concern this world, the religion, administration, (the formation of) opinion, politics, the improvement of the realm and the subjects, the preservation of the government, obedience to the caliphs, and maintenance of the caliphate. He has dealt very well with all these matters, and has given directions (how to handle) them." Al-Ma'mun then ordered the letter to be sent to all officials in the various regions, so that they might use it as a model and act accordingly.

This is the best treatment of this type of politics that I have found. God inspires whomever of His servants He wants to inspire.

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

It has been well known (and generally 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 the religion and make justice triumph. The Muslims will follow him, and he will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdi. Following him, the Antichrist will appear, together with all the subsequent signs of the Hour (the Day of Judgment), as established in (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*. After (the Mahdi), Isa (Jesus) will descend and kill the Antichrist. Or, Jesus will descend together with the Mahdi, and help him kill (the Antichrist), and have him as the leader in his prayers.

Evidence for this matter has been found in the traditions that religious leaders have published. They have been (critically) discussed by those who disapprove of (the matter), and have often been refuted by means of certain (other) traditions.^{[788](#)}

The more recent Sufis have another theory and a sort of argument concerning the Fatimid. They like to base themselves upon the removal (of the veil, *kashf*), which is the basis of their various (mystical) paths.

We are now going to mention here the various traditions concerning (this matter). (We are also going to mention) the attacks upon these traditions by those who disapprove (of the matter), and the evidence upon which they base their disapproval. This, then, will be followed by a report on the statements and opinions of the Sufis. Thus, the true situation will become clear, if God wills.

We say: A number of religious leaders have published traditions concerning the Mahdi, among them at-Tirmidhi,^{[789](#)} Abu Dawud,^{[790](#)} al-Bazzar,^{[791](#)} Ibn Majah,^{[792](#)} al-Hakim,^{[793](#)} atTabarani,^{[794](#)} and Abu Ya'la al-Mawsill.^{[795](#)} They mention a number of the men around Muhammad as transmitters of these traditions: 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn 'Umar, Talhah, Ibn Mas'ud,^{[796](#)} Abu Hurayrah, Anas, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri,^{[797](#)} Umm Habibah,^{[798](#)} Umm Salimah,^{[799](#)} Thawban,^{[800](#)} Qurrah b. Iyas,^{[801](#)} 'Ali al-Hilali,^{[802](#)} and 'Abdallah b. al-Harith b. Jaz^{[803](#)} among others. (They also mention) their chains of transmitters, which have often been found objectionable by those who disapprove (of the matter). We shall mention this now, because *hadith* scholars acknowledge negative criticism to have precedence over positive criticism. If we find that some person in the chain of transmitters is accused of negligence, poor memory, weakness, or poor judgment, it affects and weakens the soundness of the tradition. It should not be said that the same faults often affect the persons (mentioned as authorities in) the two *Sahih*s. The general consensus of *hadith* transmitters confirms the soundness of the contents of (the two *Sahih*s) as presented by al-Bukhari and Muslim. The uninterrupted general consensus in Islam also confirms the acceptability of (the two *Sahih*s) and the necessity of acting in accordance with their contents. General consensus is the best protection and defense. Works other than the two *Sahih*s are not on the same level with them in this respect. How we have to proceed in discussing the transmitters mentioned in (the two *Sahih*s) is indicated in the statements of authoritative *hadith* scholars on that

(subject).

As-Suhayli [804](#) reports with reference to Abu Bakr b. Abi Khaythamah [805](#) that the latter did a thorough job of collecting the traditions of the Mahdi. (As-Suhayli) said: "The tradition with the strangest chain of transmitters is the one mentioned by Abu Bakr al-Iskaf [806](#) in the *Fawa'id alakhbar*. It goes back to Malik b. Anas, who had it on the authority of Muhammad b. al-Munkadir, [807](#) who had it on the authority of Jabir, [808](#) who said that the Messenger of God said: 'He who does not believe in the Mahdi is an unbeliever, and he who does not believe in the Antichrist is a liar.' He said something similar with regard to the rising of the sun in the west, I think." One could not find a more extremist statement. The soundness of his chain of transmitters between (Abu Bakr) and Malik b. Anas (also) is problematic. Abu Bakr al-Iskaf is considered by (*hadith* scholars) as suspect and as a forger of traditions.

With their chain of transmitters going back to Ibn Mas'ud, at-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawild have published the following tradition through 'Asim b. Abi n-Najid, [809](#) one of the seven authoritative Qur'an readers, on the authority of Zirr b.

Hubaysh, [810](#) on the authority of 'Abdallah b. Masud, on the authority of the Prophet: "If no more than one day remained of the world-said Za'idah [811](#) -God would cause that day to last until there be sent a man from me -or: from my familywhose name will tally with my name, and the name of whose father will tally with the name of my father."

This is the recension of Abu Dawud. Abu Dawud did not add any remarks critical of it, and he said in his well-known *Epistle* [812](#) that everything to which he did not append critical remarks in his book was all right.

The recension of at-Tirmidhi has: "The world will not be destroyed until the Arabs shall be ruled by a man from my family, whose name will tally with my name."

Another recension has: "... until a man from my family takes charge."

He (at-Tirmidhi) states in connection with both recensions that it is a good and sound tradition. He also transmitted the tradition through 'Asim, with a chain of transmitters that stops with Abu Hurayrah.

Al-Hakim said that the tradition was transmitted by ath-Thawri, [813](#) Shu'bah, [814](#) Za'idah, and other Muslim religious leaders, on the authority of 'Asim. He said: "Everything transmitted by 'Asim, on the authority of Zirr, on the authority of 'Abdallah, is sound, according to the rules I have laid down for using information derived from 'Asim as evidence, for he is an authoritative Muslim religious leader."

However, [815](#) Ahmad b. Hanbal said about 'Asim that he was a pious man, a reader of the Qur'an, and a good and reliable person, but that al-A'mash [816](#) had a better memory than he. Shu'bah used to prefer al-A'mash to him for establishing (the soundness of) traditions. Al-'Ijli [817](#) said: "There was some difference of opinion about his (reliability) with regard to Zirr and Abu Wa'il." [818](#) In this way, he alluded to the weakness of the material he transmitted on their authority. Muhammad b. Sa'd said: "He was reliable; however, he made many errors in his traditions." [819](#) Ya'qub b. Sufyan [820](#) said: "There is some confusion in his traditions." 'Abd-arRahman b. Abi Hatim [821](#) said: "I said to my father: [822](#) 'Abu Zur'ah [823](#) says that 'Asim is reliable.' My father replied: 'He does not fall into that category. Ibn 'Ulayyah [824](#) discussed 'Asim (adversely) and said: 'Everyone named 'Asim has a bad memory.'"

" Abu Hatim said: "So far as I am concerned, he falls into the category of truthful transmitters whose traditions are all right. But he was not a (great) *hadith* expert." [825](#) An-Nasa'i [826](#) expressed a different opinion about him. Ibn Khirash [827](#) said: "His traditions contain things that are unknown." Abu Ja'far al-'Ugayli [828](#) said: "There was nothing the matter with him except a bad memory." Ad-Daraqutni [829](#) said: "There was something the matter with his memory." Yahya al-Qattan [830](#) said: "I have never found a man named 'Asim who did not have a bad memory." He further said: "I heard Shu'bah say: 'We were told by 'Asim b. Abi n-Najud' "-reporting the identical tradition. Adh-Dhahabi [831](#) said: "He is reliable in his reading of the Qur'an, but not quite reliable in his traditions. He is a truthful person who commits errors in judgment. He is 'good' in his traditions." Were someone to argue that (al-Bukhari and Muslim) published traditions of his, (we should reply that) they published them when there were also other (authorities for the same tradition), and that they did not use him as their basic authority. And God knows better.

Abu Dawud published a tradition relating to 'All in the chapter (on the Mahdi), as transmitted. by Fitr b. Khalifah, [832](#) on the authority of al-Qasim b. Abi Bazzah, [833](#) on the authority of Abu t-Tufayl, [834](#) on the authority of 'Ali, on the authority of the Prophet, who said: "If only one day of the whole duration of the world remained, God would send a man of my family who will fill the world with justice, as it had been filled with injustice." [835](#)

Fitr b. Khalifah was considered reliable by Ahmad (b. Hanbal), Yahya b. al-Qattan, Ibn Ma'in, [836](#) an-Nasa'i, and others, but al 'Ijli said: "He is 'good' in his traditions, (but) he has some pro-Shi'ah bias." Ibn Ma'in once said: "He is a reliable person and a Shi'ah." Ahmad b. 'Abdallah b. Yunus [837](#) said: "We used to go and see Fitr, but he is rejected, and we did not write down (traditions) on his authority." Another time, he said: "I used to go and see him but always left him like a dog." Ad-Daraqutni said: "He is not utilized as evidence." Abu Bakr b. 'Ayyash [838](#) said: "I gave up transmitting traditions on his authority only because of his bad dogmatic opinions." Al-Juzajani [839](#) said: "He is wayward and not reliable." End of the quotation.

With a chain of transmitters going back to 'Ali, Abu Dawud also published the following tradition, on the authority of Harun b. al-Mughirah, [840](#) on the authority of 'Amr b. Abi Qays, [841](#) on the authority of Shu'ayb b. Khalid, [842](#) on the authority of Abu Ishaq as-Sabi'i, [843](#) who said that 'All, looking at his son al-Hasan, said: "This son of mine is a lord, as he was called by the Messenger of God. From his spine, there will come forth a man who will be called by the name of your Prophet and who will resemble him physically, but will not resemble him in character." He then mentioned the story, "He will fill the earth with justice...."

Harun said: [844](#) We were told by 'Amr b. Abi Qays, on the authority of Mutarrif b. Tarif, [845](#) on the authority of Abu 1-Hasan [846](#) on the authority of Hilal b. 'Amr: [847](#) I heard 'Ali say: The Prophet said: "A man will come forth from Beyond the River (Transoxania) whose name will be al-Harith b. llarrath. In his *avant-garde*, there will be a man whose name will be Mansur. He will pave the way -or: prepare the way -for the family of Muhammad, as the Quraysh prepared the way for the Messenger of God. Every believer must help him-or, he said, respond to his call."

Abu Dawud made no critical remarks about this (tradition). In another passage, he said: "Harun is a Shi'ah." AsSulaymani [848](#) said: "He is disputed." Concerning 'Amr b. Abi Qays, Abu Dawud said: "There is nothing wrong with him, but his traditions contain errors." Adh-Dhahabi said: "He is trustworthy, but there are doubts concerning him." As to Abu Ishaq as-Sabi'i, even though traditions on his authority are published in the two *Sahihs*, it is well established that he became confused at the end of his life. His transmission on the authority of 'Ali is not continuous. The same applies to Abu Dawud's transmission on the authority of Harun b. al-Mughirah.

Abul-Hasan and Hilal b. 'Amr, (mentioned) in the second chain of transmitters, are little known. Abul-Hasan is known only from the fact that Mutarrif b. Tarif transmits (material) on his authority. End of the quotation.

The following tradition, furthermore, was published by Abu Dawud, as well as by Ibn Majah and al-Hakim in the *Mustadrak*, through 'Ali b. Nufayl, [849](#) on the authority of Sa'id b. al-Musayyab, on the authority of Umm Salimah, who said: "I heard the Messenger of God say: 'The Mahdi is one of my family, one of the descendants of Fatimah!'" This is Abu Dawud's recension. He did not make any critical remarks concerning it. Ibn Majah's recension has: "The Mahdi is one of Fatimah's descendants." Al-Hakim's recension has: "I heard the Messenger of God mention the Mahdi. He said: 'Yes, he is a fact, and he will be one of the children of Fatimah!'" Neither (Hakim) nor anyone else discussed the soundness of the tradition (critically). Abu Ja'far al-'Ugayli declared it to be weak. He said: "'Ali b. Nufayl has not been followed in this tradition, and it is known only through him."

Abu Dawud also published the following tradition of Umm Salimah, which was transmitted by Abul-Khalil Salih, [850](#) on the authority of one of his colleagues, on the authority of Umm Salimah, on the authority of the Prophet, who said: "There will be a difference of opinion at the death of a caliph. A man from Medina will leave and flee to Mecca. People from Mecca will come to him and will drive him out. [851](#) He will be unwilling. They will render the oath of allegiance to him between the Corner (*rukñ*) of the Ka'bah and the *Maqam Ibrahim*. A mission will be sent to him from Syria. He will disappear with them into the desert between Mecca and Medina. When the people see that, the saints [852](#) from Syria will come to him, and groups of 'Iraqis, and they will render the oath of allegiance to him. Then, a man from the Quraysh will arise, whose maternal uncles are from the Kalb. He will send a (military) mission to them, and it will defeat them. This is the mission of the Kalb. No success will come to those who did not witness (the seizing of) booty by the Kalb. He will distribute the money and act among the people according to the Sunnah of their Prophet. He will plant Islam firmly upon earth. He will last seven years. Then, he will die, and the Muslims will pray for him." Abu Dawud said: "Someone said on the authority of Hisham: [853](#) 'Nine years!' Others said: 'Seven years!'"

Abu Dawud also transmitted the same tradition according to Abul-Khalil's recension, on the authority of 'Abdallah b. al-Harith, [854](#) on the authority of Umm Salimah. This clears up the identity of the transmitter, whose name was not mentioned in the first chain of transmitters. The persons in it are persons mentioned in the two *Sahihs*. One could not attack them or find fault with them.

(The tradition,) furthermore, is stated (by Abu Dawud) to have been transmitted by Qatadah [855](#) on the authority of Abul-Khalil. Qatadah did not actually hear the traditions he transmits, from his authorities. He says: "on the authority of," but does not say: "I heard from . . ." In cases of transmitters about

whom there is doubt whether they actually heard their traditions from their authorities, a tradition is accepted only when it expressly states that they actually heard it. In this case, moreover, the tradition does not expressly state that it is concerned with the Mahdi, although Abu Dawud did, it is true, mention it in his chapters dealing with the Mahdi.

Abu Dawud, followed by al-Hakim, also published the following tradition of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri through 'Imran al-Qattan,[856](#) on the authority of Qatadah, on the authority of Abu Nadrah,[857](#) on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, who said: The Messenger of God said: "The Mahdi is from me. He has a bald forehead and an aquiline nose. He will fill the earth with equity and justice, as it had been filled with injustice and crime. He will rule seven years."

This is Abu Dawud's recension. He did not make any remarks critical of it. Al-Hakim's recension has: "The Mahdi is from us, the people of the House. He has a well formed, aquiline nose, and a bald (forehead). He will fill the earth with equity and justice, as it had been filled with injustice and crime. He will live this long-and he opened out his left hand and two fingers of his right hand, the thumb and index finger, bending (the other) three down." Al-Hakim said: "This is a sound tradition, according to the rules laid down by Muslim (for sound traditions), but neither (al-Bukhari nor Muslim) published it." End of the quotation.

Scholars differ as to whether 'Imran al-Qattan can be used as evidence. Al-Bukhari published traditions of his only as additional evidence, and not as the sole basis. Yahya al-Qattan used not to transmit any traditions on his authority. Yahya b. Main said: "He is not strong." Once he said: "He is nothing." Ahmad b. Hanbal said: "I hope that he is sound in his traditions." Yazid b. Zuray'[858](#) said: "He was a Kharijite and considered it permissible to put the people of the Qiblah [859](#) to the sword." An-Nasa'i said: "He is weak." Abu 'Ubayd al-Ajurri [860](#) said: "I asked Abu Dawud about him, and he replied that he was a transmitter of 'good' traditions and that he had heard only good things (about him). Another time, I heard him mention him and say that he was weak." In the days of Ibrahim b. 'Abdallah b. Hasan,[861](#) he gave an unfortunate legal opinion that led to bloodshed.

At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, and al-Hakim published the following tradition of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri through Zayd al-Ammi,[862](#) on the authority of Abus-Siddiq an-Naji,[863](#) on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, who said: "We feared that something might happen after our Prophet (had died). Therefore we asked him, and he said: 'In my nation, there will come forth the Mahdi. He will live five, or seven, or nine'-increasing the number, as if in doubt.' He said: 'We asked what (the numbers meant). He replied: 'Years.' Then he continued: 'Someone will come to the Mahdi and say to him: "O Mahdi, give me something." ' He said: 'And (the Madhi) will pour into his garment as much as he can carry! '"

This is the recension of at-Tirmidhi, who said: "It is a 'good' tradition. It was transmitted in more than one way, on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, on the authority of the Prophet."

The recension of Ibn Majah and al-Hakim has: "There will be in my nation the Mahdi. If he lives (among you) a short time, it will be seven years; if not, it will be nine. My nation will experience a prosperity the like of which they have never experienced before. The earth will bring forth its food and will not hoard any of it. There will be piles of money. A man will get up and say: 'O Mahdi, give me something,' and he will reply: 'Just take! '"[864](#)

Ad-Daraqutni, Ahmad b. Hanbal, and Yahya b. Main said that Zayd al-

'Ammi was all right. Ahmad added that he was superior to Yazid ar-Raqashi [865](#) and Fadl b. 'Isa. [866](#) However, Abu Hatim said concerning him that he was weak, and that his traditions may be written down but not used as evidence. Yahya b. Main said of him in connection with another tradition: "(He is) nothing." He once also said: "His traditions may be written down, but he is weak." AlJuzajani said: "He is just holding on (*mutamasik*)."
Abu Zur'ah said: "He is not strong, his traditions are futile, and he is weak." Abu Hatim said: "He is not such (a good man). [867](#) Shu'bah transmitted traditions on his authority." An-Nasa'i said: "He is weak." Ibn 'Adi [868](#) said: "Most of his traditions and authorities are weak, even though Shu'bah transmitted traditions on his authority. Shu'bah possibly did not transmit traditions on the authority of anyone weaker than he."

It has been said that at-Tirmidhi's tradition is an interpretation of Jabir's, and Abu Sa'id's traditions, which are transmitted by Muslim in the *Sahih*. [969](#) Jabir said: "The Messenger of God said: 'At the end of my nation, there will be a caliph who will not count money, but just throw it around!'" Abu Sa'id's tradition reads: "... among your caliphs a caliph who will throw the money around." As transmitted by another chain of transmitters, the tradition on the authority of (Jabir and Abu Sa'id) reads: "At the end of time, there will be a caliph who will distribute money without counting it." End of the quotation.

Muslim's traditions do not mention the Mahdi, and there is nothing in them to show that the Mahdi is meant in them.

Another tradition was transmitted by al-Hakim through 'Awf al-A'ribi, [870](#) on the authority of Abu s-Siddiq an-Naji, on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, who said: "The Messenger of God said: 'The Hour will not arise before the earth is filled with injustice, crime, and transgression. Then there will come forth from my family one who will fill it with equity and justice, as it had been filled with crime and transgression!'"

Al-Hakim said with regard to (this tradition): "It is sound according to the conditions (for the soundness of traditions) laid down by (al-Bukhari and Muslim), though none of them published it."

The following tradition, furthermore, was transmitted by al-Hakim through Sulayman b. 'Abid, [871](#) on the authority of Abu s-Siddiq an-Naji, on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri: "The Messenger of God said: 'At the end of my nation, there will come forth the Mahdi. God will give him spring rain to drink, and the earth will sprout forth its plants. He will give money away in fairness. [872](#) The cattle will become numerous, and the nation will be great. He will live seven, or eight—that is, seasons!'" (Al-Hakim) said with regard to (this tradition) that it is a sound one as far as its chain of transmitters is concerned, though neither (al-Bukhari nor Muslim) published it. Also, none of the authors of the six authoritative collections of traditions published a tradition of Sulayman b. 'Abid. However, Ibn Hibban [873](#) mentioned him in the *Thiqat* (on reliable transmitters). We have seen nobody who discussed him (adversely).

This tradition was also transmitted by al-Hakim through Asad b. Musa, [874](#) on the authority of Hammad b. Salamah, [875](#) on the authority of Matar al-Waraq [876](#) and Abu Harun al-Abdi, [877](#) on the authority of Abu s-Siddiq an-Naji, on the authority of Abu Sa'id, as follows: "The Messenger of God said: 'The earth will be filled with injustice and crime, and there will come forth a man from my family. He will rule seven or nine, and the earth will be filled with justice and equity, as it had been filled with injustice and crime!'"

Al-Hakim said with regard to (this tradition) that it was sound according to the conditions (for the soundness of traditions) laid down by Muslim. He mentioned Muslim because he published traditions on the authority of Hammad b. Salamah and his *shaykh*, Matar al-Warraq. He published no traditions on the authority of Hammad's other *shaykh*, Abu Harun al-'Abdi. Abu Harun is very weak and suspected of lying. There is no need to present in detail the opinions of the religious leaders who consider (Abu Harun) weak.

Asad b. Musa, who transmits the tradition on the authority of Hammad b. Salamah, is called "The Lion (*asad*) of the Sunnah." Al-Bukhari said that he is known (favorably) with regard to the traditions he transmits. [878](#) He used him to support the reliability of traditions in his *Sahih*. Abu Dawud and an-Nasa'i used him as evidence. However, (an-Nasa'i) said on another occasion: "He is reliable, but it would have been better for him if he had not become an author." Abu Muhammad b. Hazm [879](#) said regarding him: "He is not known (favorably) with regard to the traditions he transmits."

The tradition was also transmitted by at-Tabarani in his *Medium Mu'jam*, as transmitted by Abul-Wasil 'Abd-alHamid b. Wasil, [880](#) on the authority of Abu s-Siddiq an-Naji, on the authority of al-Hasan b. Yazid as-Sa'di, [881](#) one of the Banu Bahdalah, on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, who said: "I heard the Messenger of God say: 'There will come forth a man from my nation who will talk according to my Sunnah. God will send upon him rain from heaven, and the earth will sprout forth for him its blessing. The earth will be filled through him with equity and justice, as it has been filled with injustice and crime. He will direct the affairs of this nation for seven years, and he will settle in Jerusalem.' "

At-Tabarani said concerning (this tradition): "It was transmitted by a number of persons on the authority of Abu s-Siddiq. None of them inserted another transmitter between him and Abu Sa'id, except Abu 1-Wasil. He transmitted it on the authority of al-Hasan b. Yazid, on the authority of Abu Sa'id." End of the quotation.

This al-Hasan b. Yazid was mentioned by Ibn Abi Hatim, [881a](#) who has no more information on him than that chain of transmitters, in which he appears as a transmitter on the authority of Abu Sa'id, and in which Abu s-Siddiq appears as a transmitter on his authority. In the *Mizan*, adh-Dhahabi said that he was little known but was mentioned by Ibn Hibban in the *Thiqat* (on reliable transmitters) [882](#) No tradition of Abul-Wasil, who functions as transmitter of (this tradition) on the authority of Abu s-Siddiq, was published by any of the six authors of authoritative collections of traditions. He was mentioned by Ibn Hibban in the *Thiqat* (on reliable transmitters), in the second class. (Ibn Hibban) said regarding him: "He transmitted traditions on the authority of Anas, and Shu'bah and 'Attab b. Bashir [883](#) transmitted traditions on his authority."

In his *Kitab as-Sunan*, Ibn Majah published the following tradition of 'Abdallah b. Masud through Yazid b. Abi Ziyad, [884](#) on the authority of Ibrahim, [885](#) on the authority of 'Algamah, [886](#) on the authority of 'Abdallah, who said: "While we were with the Messenger of God, there came some Hashimite youths. When he saw them, tears welled forth from his eyes and his color changed." He said: "I said: 'For some time now we have observed something in your face we do not like.' He answered: 'For us, the people of the House, God has chosen the other world instead of this one. After me, my people will experience misfortune, exile, and banishment, until people shall come from the East with black flags. They will ask for goodness

but they will not be given it. They will fight and they will be victorious. And they will be given what they had asked for, but they will not accept it. Eventually, they will hand (the earth) over to a man of my family. He will fill it with equity, as they had filled it with injustice. Those among you who live to see that happen shall go to them, even if it is necessary to creep over the snow.' " End of the quotation.

The *hadith* transmitters know this tradition as "the tradition of the flags." Its transmitter is Yazid b. Abi Ziyad. Shu'bah said regarding him: "He was a person who traced back to Muhammad traditions that are not known to have been transmitted with a chain of transmitters going back to him." Muhammad b. Fudayl [887](#) said: "He is one of the great religious leaders of the Shi'ah." Ahmad b. Hanbal said: "He was no *hadith* expert." Once he said: "He is not such (a good man)." Yahya b. Main said: "He is weak." Al-'Ijli said: "His traditions are permissible. At the end, he used to understand things." Abu Zur'ah [888](#) said: "He is soft." [889](#) His traditions may be written down, but they cannot be used as evidence." Abu Hatim said: "He is not strong." Al-Juzajant said: "I heard them declare his traditions weak." Abu Dawad said: "I do not know anyone who omitted his traditions, but I like others better than him." Ibn 'Adi said: "He belongs to the Shi'ah of al-Kilfah. In spite of his weakness, his traditions may be written down." [890](#) Muslim transmitted traditions of his but only when the same traditions were also transmitted with other chains of transmitters. In general, the majority considered him weak. Religious leaders have pronounced openly on the weakness of the tradition of the flags that was transmitted by him on the authority of Ibrahim, on the authority of 'Alqamah, on the authority of 'Abdallah. Waki' b. al-Jarrah [891](#) said regarding it: "It is nothing." The same was said by Ahmad b. Hanbal. Abu Qudamah [892](#) said: "I heard Abu Usamah [893](#) say, regarding Yazid's tradition about the flags on the authority of Ibrahim: 'Were he to swear me fifty oaths, I should not believe him. Is that Ibrahim's way? Is that 'Algamah's way? Is that 'Abdallah's way?' " Al

the *Du'af'd* (on weak transmitters). Adh-Dhahabi said: "It is not sound." [894](#)

The following tradition of 'Ali was published by Ibn Majah, as transmitted by Yasin al-'Ijli, [895](#) on the authority of Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyah, [896](#) on the authority of Ibrahim's father, on the authority of his grandfather ('Ali), who said: "The Messenger of God said: 'The Mahdi is from among us, the people of the House. God will give him success in one night!'"

Although Ibn Ma'in said, regarding Yasin al-'Ijli, that there was nothing wrong with him, al-Bukhari said that he was disputed. [897](#) In al-Bukhari's terminology, that is a strong expression for declaring a transmitter weak. The tradition of Yasin was quoted by Ibn 'Adi in the *Kamil* and by adh-Dhahabi in the *Mizdn*, with disapproval. (Adh-Dhahabi) said: "It is known as his (tradition)." [898](#) The following tradition of 'Ali was published by at-Tabarani in his *Medium Mu`jam*: " 'All said to the Messenger of God: 'Will the Mahdi be from among us or from among other people, O Messenger of God?' Muhammad replied: 'Indeed, he will be from among us. Through us, God will bring about the end, as he brought about the beginning. Through us, they shall be saved from polytheism, and through us, God shall unite them after open hostilities, as he united them through us after the hostilities of polytheism.' 'Ali said: 'Will they be believers or unbelievers?' Muhammad replied: 'Rebel(s) and unbeliever(s).' " End of the quotation.

(The chain of transmitters of this tradition) includes 'Abdallah b. Lahi'ah. [899](#) He is weak, and it is well known what the matter is with him. (The same chain) also includes 'Amr b. Jabir al-Hadrami. [900](#) He is even weaker than Ibn Lahi'ah. Ahmad b. Hanbal said: "He ('Amr b. Jabir) transmitted disapproved things on the authority

of Jabir.⁹⁰¹ I have heard that he used to lie." An-Nasa'i said: "He is not reliable." Ibn Lahi'ah said: "He was a stupid, weak-minded *shaykh*. He used to say: 'Ali is in the clouds! He was sitting with us, and when he saw a cloud, he would say: 'There goes 'Ali passing by in a cloud!'" ⁹⁰²

Another tradition of 'Ali was also published by at-Tabarani: "The Messenger of God said: 'At the end of time, there will be a rebellion in which people will be caught as firmly as gold is embedded in the ore. Do not slander the Syrians, but only the bad ones among them, because among them there are (also) saints.'⁹⁰³ Soon a downpour will be sent from heaven upon the Syrians. It will divide them so much that if nothing (stronger) than foxes were going to fight them, they would be defeated. At that time, there will come forth one from among my family and there will be with him three flags (regiments), comprising, according to the highest figure given, fifteen thousand men, or, according to the lowest figure, twelve thousand men. Their order of the day will be: Kill, kill. They will encounter seven flags (regiments), each of which will be commanded by a man who seeks royal authority. But God will kill all of them. He will restore to the Muslims their unity, prosperity, remote (possessions), and judgment! " End of the quotation.

The chain of transmitters of that tradition includes 'Abdallah b. Lahi'ah. He is weak, and it is well known what the matter is with him. (The tradition) was transmitted by al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak*. He said: "It is sound with regard to the chain of transmitters, but (al-Bukhari and Muslim) did not publish it." (Al-Hakim's) recension has: ". . . Then, there will appear the Hashimite, and God will restore to the people their unity, etc." (Al-Hakim's) chain of transmitters does not include Ibn Lahi'ah. It is, as he states, a sound chain.

The following tradition of 'Ali was published by al-Hakim in the *Mustadrak*, as transmitted by Abu t-Tufayl, on the authority of Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyah, who said: "We were with 'Ali, and someone asked him about the Mahdi. 'Ali replied: 'Look here!' Then he made a seven with his fingers and said: 'He is the one who will come forth at the end of time. When someone says (at that time): God, God! he will be killed. God will gather for him people who are scattered like stray clouds. He will unite them. They will be neither sad nor glad over anyone who joins them. In number they will be like the fighters at Badr, whom men of former times did not surpass and men of later times fell short of. They will also be like the number of the companions of Saul who crossed the river with him!'" ⁹⁰⁴ Abu t-Tufayl said: "Ibn al-Hanafiyah said: 'Do you want (to hear) it?' I said: 'Yes.' (So) he continued: 'He will come forth between these two mountains!'" ⁹⁰⁵ I said: 'By God, I shall assuredly not leave them until I die!'" -And he died in it, that is, Mecca.

Al-Hakim said: "This is a sound tradition according to the conditions (for sound traditions) laid down by (al-Bukhari and Muslim)." End of the quotation.

However, it is (sound) only according to the conditions laid down by Muslim, for in (the chain of transmitters) there occur the names of 'Ammar ad-Duhni ⁹⁰⁶ and Yunus b. Abi Ishaq.⁹⁰⁷ Al-Bukhari did not publish any traditions of these two men. It also includes 'Amr b. Muhammad al-'Angazi.⁹⁰⁸ Al-Bukhari did not publish traditions of his as evidence, though he did publish them to support the reliability of traditions. In addition, there also is the pro-Shi'ah sentiment of 'Ammar ad-Duhni. Although Ahmad (b. Hanbal), Ibn Ma'in, Abu Hatim, an-Nasa'i, and others considered him reliable, 'Ali b. al-Madini ⁹⁰⁹ said on the authority of Sufyan ⁹¹⁰ that Bishr b. Marwan ⁹¹¹ had disqualifed him. "In what respect?" I (Sufyan) asked. He replied: "In respect to his pro-Shi'ah sentiment."

The following tradition of Anas b. Malik was published by Ibn Majah, as transmitted by Sa'd b. 'Abd-al-Hamid b. Ja'far,[912](#) on the authority of 'Ali b. Ziyad al-Yamami,[913](#) on the authority of 'Ikrimah b. 'Ammar,[914](#) on the authority of Ishaq b. 'Abdallah,[915](#) on the authority of Anas, who said: "I heard the Messenger of God say: 'We, the descendants of 'Abd-al-Muttalib, are the lords of the inhabitants of Paradise. I, Hamzah, 'Ali, Jafar, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and the Mahdi.' "[916](#) End of the quotation.

Muslim published traditions of 'Ikrimah b. 'Ammar, but only where the same tradition is reported by others. Some scholars considered him weak, others reliable. Abu Hatim ar-Razi said: "He transmits traditions from authorities without stating whether he actually heard them from them. His traditions are acceptable only if he expressly states that he heard them."[916a](#)

In the *Mizan*, adh-Dhahabi said with regard to 'Ali b. Ziyad: "It is not known who he is." Then, he said: "It should be 'Abdallah b. Ziyad."[917](#) Sa'd b. 'Abd-al-Hamid was considered reliable by Ya'qub b. Shaybah.[918](#) Yahya b. Main said regarding him: "There is nothing wrong with him." However, ath-Thawri discussed him (adversely), because, it is said, he saw him give legal opinions on certain problems and make mistakes. Ibn Hibban said: "He belongs among those who made atrocious mistakes. He may not be used as evidence." Ahmad b. Hanbal said: "Sa'd b. 'Abd-al-Hamid claims that he heard the books of Malik when they were presented. The scholars disapprove of this statement of his. He is here in Baghdad and never made the pilgrimage, so how could he have heard them?" Adh-Dhahabi placed him among those whom it would be no slander to discuss (adversely).

The following tradition was published by al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak*, as transmitted by Mujahid [919](#) on the authority of Ibn Abbas, with a chain of transmitters stopping with the latter and not continued back to the Prophet: "Mujahid said: 'Abdallah b. 'Abbas said to me: 'If I had not heard that you are like a member of the family of Muhammad, I would not tell this tradition.' He said: Mujahid replied: 'I shall keep it in confidence. I shall not tell it to anyone to whom you might object.' Thereupon, Ibn 'Abbas said: 'From among us, the people of the House, there will be four: As-Saffah, al-Mundhir, al-Mansur, and the Mahdi.' He said: Mujahid asked him to explain those four to him, and Ibn 'Abbas replied: 'As-Saffah often kills his supporters and forgives his enemies. Al-Mundhir, I believe he said, 'will give away a great deal of money. He will not consider himself a great man and will hold on to (even) his smallest rights. Al-Mansur will be given half as much help against his enemies as the Messenger of God was given. Muhammad's enemies were terrified by him for a space of two months,[920](#) and al-Mansur's enemies will be terrified by him for a space of one month. The Mahdi will be the one who will fill the earth with justice, as it had been filled with injustice. The cattle will be safe from wild animals, and the earth will cast out the treasures of its interior.' He said, and I asked him what the treasures of the interior of the earth were. He replied: 'Something like gold and silver columns.' " End of the quotation.

Al-Hakim said: "This is a sound tradition as regards the chain of transmitters. But neither (al-Bukhari nor Muslim) published it. It is transmitted by Ismail b. Ibrahim b. Muhajir,[921](#) on the authority of his father. Ismail is weak, and his father Ibrahim is considered weak by most scholars, even though Muslim published traditions of his."

The following tradition by Thawban was published by Ibn Majah. Thawban said: "The Messenger of God said: 'Three will fight with each other at (the place

where) your treasure (is). All of them are the sons of a caliph. None of them will get it. Then, black flags will arise from the East. They will kill you in a slaughter such as there has never been before.' He then mentioned something that I do not remember. He continued: 'When you see him, render the oath of allegiance to him, even if you must creep over the snow. For he is the representative of God, the Mahdi.' " End of the quotation.

The persons named in (the chain of transmitters of this tradition) are persons whose names occur in the *Sahih*.⁹²² However, among them is that of Abu Qilabah al-Jarmi.⁹²³ Adh-Dhahabi and others mentioned that Abu Qilabah reported traditions he had not himself heard from his authorities. The chain of transmitters also includes Sufyan ath-Thawri. He is known for reporting traditions he had not heard from his authorities. Each of the two merely said that he had a tradition on the authority of such-and-such a person, without stating that he had heard it from him. Therefore, their traditions are not acceptable. The chain of transmitters further includes 'Abd-ar-Razzaq b. Hammam,⁹²⁴ who is known for his pro-Shi'ah sentiments. At the end of his life he became blind and confused. Ibn 'Adi said: "He reported traditions on the virtues (of Muhammad and the early Muslims), with regard to which no one agrees with him. Scholars considered him to have pro-Shi'ah sentiments." End of the quotation.

The following tradition of 'Abdallah b. al-Harith b. Jaz' az-Zubaydi was published by Ibn Majah through Ibn Lahi'ah, on the authority of Abu Zur'ah 'Amr b. Jabir al-Hadrami, on the authority of 'Abdallah b. al-Harith b. Jaz', who said: "The Messenger of God said: 'People will come forth from the East. They will pave the way for the Mahdi,' " that is, (for) his rule.

At-Tabarani said: "Ibn Lahi'ah stands alone with this tradition." We mentioned earlier, in connection with the tradition of 'Ali, published by at-Tabarani in his *Medium Mu'jam*, that Ibn Lahi'ah was weak and that his authority, 'Amr b. Jabir, was even weaker than he.⁹²⁵

The following tradition was published by al-Bazzir in his *Musnad* and by at-Tabarani in his *Medium Mu'jam*-the recension (quoted here) is that of at-Tabarani-on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, on the authority of the Prophet, who said: "In my nation, there will be the Mahdi. If he lives (among you) only a short time, it will be seven, eight, or nine. My nation will experience a prosperity the like of which it has never experienced before. The heavens will rain upon them. The earth will not hoard any of its plants. There will be piles of money. A man will get up and say: 'O Mahdi, give me something,' and the Mahdi will reply: 'Just take!'"⁹²⁶

At-Tabarani and al-Bazzar said: "Muhammad b. Marwan al-'Ijli⁹²⁷ stands alone with this tradition." Al-Bazzar added: "We do not know whether anyone followed him in this tradition." Abu Dawud, as well as Ibn Hibban, by the way he mentions him in the *Thiqdt* (on reliable transmitters), considered him reliable. Yahya b. Ma'in said regarding him: "He is all right." Once, he said: "There is nothing wrong with him." Still, opinions about him differ. Abu Zur'ah said: "In my opinion, he is not such (a good man)." 'Abdallah b. Ahmad b. Hanbal⁹²⁸ said: "I saw Muhammad b. Marwan al-Ugayli tell traditions while I was present. I did not write them down. I purposely omitted to do so. One of our colleagues wrote down traditions on his authority, in a way that suggested he considered him weak."

The following tradition of Abu Hurayrah was published by Abu Ya'la al-Mawsili in his *Musnad*. Abu Hurayrah said: "My friend Abul-Qasim (the Prophet Muhammad) said: 'The Hour will not arise before there shall have come forth against them a man from my family. He will beat them until they return to the truth.'

He said. And I asked: 'How long will he rule?' He replied: 'Five and two.' He said. And I asked: 'What is meant by five and two?' He replied: 'I do not know.' " End of the quotation.

The chain of transmitters includes Bashir b. Nahik. [929](#) Abu Hatim said, regarding him: "He may not be used as evidence." Still, both (al-Bukhari and Muslim) used him as evidence, and the scholars considered him reliable. They paid no attention to Abu Hatim's statement that he may not be used as evidence.

However, (the chain of transmitters also) includes Murajja b. Raja' al-Yashkuri. [930](#) Opinions differ concerning him. Abu Zur'ah said: "He is reliable." Yahya b. Main said: "He is weak." Abu Dawud said: "He is weak," but once he said: "He is all right." Al-Bukhari has one fragment [931](#) of his in his *Sahih*. [932](#)

The following tradition of Qurrah b. Iyas was published by Abu Bakr al-Bazzar in his *Musnad*, and by at-Tabarani in his *Large* and *Medium Mu'jams*. [933](#) Qurrah said: "The Messenger of God said: 'The earth will be filled with injustice and crime. When it is filled with injustice and crime, God will send a man from me whose name will be my name, and whose father's name will be my father's name. He will fill it with justice and equity, as it had been filled with injustice and crime. Heaven will not withhold its rain, nor the earth its plants. He will remain among you seven, or eight, or nine' " -that is, years.

The chain of transmitters of that tradition includes Dawud b. al-Muhabbar b. Qahdham, [934](#) on the authority of his father. Both Dawud and his father are very weak.

The [935](#) following tradition of Umm Habibah was published by at-Tabarani in his *Medium Mujam*. (Umm Habibah) said: "I heard the Messenger of God say: 'People will come forth from the East. They will come for a man who is at the House. They will eventually come into a desert land, and he will then disappear with them. Those who are left behind will join them. They will suffer the same fate.' [936](#) I said: 'O Messenger of God, how about those who were sent against their will?' He replied: 'They will suffer the same fate as the people have suffered. Then, God will resurrect each man according to the intention (that had guided him in his actions).' " End of the quotation.

The chain of transmitters of that tradition includes Salamah b. al-Abrash, [937](#) who is weak. It also includes Muhammad b. Ishaq. [938](#) He transmits traditions he did not hear, and he says that he had them "on the authority of" someone. His traditions are acceptable only where he expressly states that he heard them.

The following tradition of ('Abdallah) b. 'Umar was (also) published by at-Tabarani in his *Medium Mu'jam*. Ibn 'Umar said: "The Messenger of God was in the company of some (Meccan) Emigrants and (Medinese) Helpers (*Ansar*). 'All b. Abi Talib was on his left, and al-'Abbas on his right. Al-'Abbas got into a dispute with one of the *Ansdr*, and the latter used insulting language to al-'Abbas. Thereupon, the Prophet took the hand of al-'Abbas and the hand of 'Ali and said: 'The spine of this one will produce descendants until the whole earth shall be filled with injustice and crime, and the spine of that one will produce descendants until the whole earth shall be filled with equity and justice. When you see this (happen), then take care of the Tamimite youth. He will advance from the East. He will be in charge of the flag of the Mahdi.' " End of the quotation.

The chain of transmitters of this tradition includes 'Abdallah b. 'Umar al-'Umari [939](#) and 'Abdallah b. Lahi'ah. Both are weak.

The following tradition of Talhah b. 'Ubaydallah, on the authority of the

Prophet, was published by at-Tabarani in the *Medium Mu'jam*. The Prophet said: "There will be a rebellion. When one side rests, the other side will become restless. Finally, a herald will call from heaven: 'Your Commander is such-and-such.' " End of the quotation.

The chain of transmitters of that tradition includes al-Muthanna b. as-Sabbah,⁹⁴⁰ who is very weak. The tradition does not expressly mention the Mahdi, but (scholars) have included it in their chapters dealing with (the Mahdi) and in his biography, by association.

These are all the traditions published by the religious authorities concerning the Mahdi and his appearance at the end of time. One has seen what they are like. Very few⁹⁴¹ are above criticism.

Those who disapprove of the (Mahdi) matter frequently keep to the tradition of Muhammad b. Khalid al-Janadi,⁹⁴² on the authority of Aban b. Salih b. Abi 'Ayyash⁹⁴³ on the authority of al-Hasan al-Basri,⁹⁴⁴ on the authority of Anas b. Malik, on the authority of the Prophet, who said: "There is no Mahdi except Jesus, the son of Mary."

Yahya b. Ma'in said, regarding Muhammad b. Khalid al-Janadi, that he was reliable. Al-Bayhaqi⁹⁴⁵ said: "Muhammad b. Khalid stands alone with (this tradition)." Al-Hakim said, regarding Muhammad b. Khalid, that he was a little-known personage.

There are differences in the chain of transmitters of (this tradition). Sometimes it is transmitted as quoted. In this form, it is attributed to Muhammad b. Idris ash-Shafi'i. Sometimes the tradition is transmitted on the authority of Muhammad b. Khalid, on the authority of Aban, on the authority of al-Hasan, on the authority of the Prophet, thus skipping one link in the chain. Al-Bayhaqi says: "Thus, (the tradition) is one transmitted by Muhammad b. Khalid, who is little known, on the authority of Aban b. Abi 'Ayyash, who is not accepted, on the authority of al-Hasan, on the authority of the Prophet, which makes it a tradition with an interrupted chain of transmitters. In general, the tradition is weak and disturbed."

It has also been said that the statement: "There is no Mahdi except Jesus," means that nobody spoke in the cradle (*mahd*) except Jesus. ⁹⁴⁶ This interpretation is intended to prevent use of (the tradition) as evidence (for Mahdism) or its combination with the (other) traditions (that speak about the Mahdi).⁹⁴⁷ It is refuted by the story of Jurayj⁹⁴⁸ and similar miracles (which show that Jesus was not the only infant to speak in the cradle).

(*Sufi opinions about the Mahdi*)

The ancient Sufis did not go into anything concerned with (the Mahdi). All they discussed was their (mystic) activity and exertion and the resulting ecstatic experiences and states. It was the Imamiyah and the extremist Shi'ah who discussed the preferred status of 'Ali, the matter of his imamate, the claim (made in his behalf) to have received the imamate through the last will (of the Prophet),⁹⁴⁹ and the rejection of the two *Shaykhs* (Abu Bakr and 'Umar), as we have mentioned in connection with the discussion of Shi'ah dogmatics.⁹⁵⁰ Thereafter, there originated among them the dogma of the Infallible Imam⁹⁵¹ Much was written on (Shi'ah) dogmatics. The Isma'iliyah Shi'ah made its appearance. It asserted the divinity of the imam through incarnation. Others asserted that the (dead) imams would return, either

through metempsychosis or (in the very form they had had during their lifetime). Still others expected the coming of imams who would be cut off from them through death. Others, finally, expected that the family of Muhammad would return to power. They deduced this from the afore-mentioned traditions concerning the Mahdi, and from other traditions.

Among the later Sufis, removal (of the veil, *kashf*) and matters beyond the veil of sense perception likewise came to be discussed. A great many Sufis came to speak about incarnation and oneness. [951a](#) This gave them something in common with the Imamiyah and the extremist Shi'ah who believed in the divinity of the imams and in the incarnation of the deity in them. The Sufis also came to believe in a "pole" (*qutb*) and in "saints" (*abdal*). This (belief) looked like an imitation of the opinions of the extremist Shi'ah concerning the imam and the 'Alid "chiefs" (*nugabd'*). [952](#)

The Sufis thus became saturated with Shi'ah theories. (Shi'ah) theories entered so deeply into their religious ideas that they based their practice of using a cloak (*khirgah*) on the (alleged) fact that 'All clothed al-Hasan al-Basri in such a cloak and caused him to agree solemnly that he would adhere to the mystic path. (The tradition thus inaugurated by 'Ali) was continued, according to the Sufis, through al-Junayd, [953](#) one of the Sufi *shaykhs*.

However, it is not known with certainty that 'Ali did any such thing. The (mystic) path was not reserved to 'Ali, but all the men around Muhammad were models of the (various) paths of religion. The fact that (the Sufis) restrict (precedence in mysticism) to 'All smells strongly of pro-Shi'ah sentiment. This and other afore-mentioned Sufi ideas show that the Sufis have adopted, pro-Shi'ah sentiments and have become enmeshed in them.

Therefore, the books of the extremist Isma'iliyah (Shi'ah) and the books of the later Sufis are full of ideas concerning the expected Fatimid. They were passed on through dictation and teaching. All (these speculations) are built upon brittle foundations. This applies to both parties. Some (Sufis and Shi'ah) occasionally base themselves in this connection on astrological discussions of astral conjunctions. (The result is) a sort of predictions (*maldhim*), as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Most (prominent) among the later Sufis who discuss the Fatimid are Ibn al-'Arabi al-Hatimi, [954](#) in the '*Anqa' Mughrib*; Ibn Qasi, [955](#) in the *Kitab Khal' an-na'layn*; 'Abd-al-Haqq b. Sab'in; [956](#) and one of (Ibn Sab'in's) pupils, Ibn Abi Watil, [957](#) in his commentary on the *Kitab Khal' an-na'layn*. When they speak about (the Fatimid), they mostly speak in riddles and parables. Occasionally, they make a minimum of explicit statements, or their commentators make explicit statements.

According to Ibn Abi Watil, the sum of their beliefs in connection with (the Fatimid) is that (in pre-Islamic times) there had been error and blindness. Then, truth and right guidance made their appearance through prophecy. Prophecy was followed by the caliphate, and the caliphate, in turn, was followed by royal authority. Royal authority, then, reverted to tyranny, presumptuousness, and worthlessness. They said: And since it has been observed to be God's procedure to have things return to their original state, prophecy and truth will by necessity be revived through sainthood (*wilayah*). Sainthood will be followed by the stage that properly comes after it (caliphate). (This,) in turn, will be followed by the time of the Antichrist (*dajl*), which will take the place of royal authority and the rule of power. Then, unbelief will return to the old position it occupied before the coming of the prophecy (of Muhammad).

This refers to the caliphate which came after the prophecy, and to the royal authority which followed the caliphate. These are three stages. Likewise, the sainthood of the Fatimid, who will revive prophecy and righteousness, the stage (caliphate) that properly follows upon the Fatimid, and then the time of the Antichrist, which will follow after it and which is that state of worthlessness alluded to in the expression "appearance of the Antichrist" - these are three stages corresponding to the first three. Then, disbelief will return to the existence it had had before the prophecy (of Muhammad).

Now, the caliphate, they continued, belongs legally to the Quraysh, according to the general consensus which cannot be weakened by the disapproval of people who have insufficient knowledge.⁹⁵⁸ Therefore, the imamate belongs, of necessity, to a person who is even closer to the Prophet than the Quraysh. (This he may be) either externally, by being a descendant of 'Abd-al-Muttalib, or inwardly, by belonging to Muhammad's "family," according to the real meaning of "family," which means those at the time of whose presence the one who is their "family" is not absent.⁹⁵⁹

In his *Kitab 'Anqa' Mughrib*, Ibn al-'Arabi al-Hatimi called (the Mahdi) "the Seal of the Saints."⁹⁶⁰ He is known under the name of "the silver brick," with reference to a tradition reported by al-Bukhari in the chapter on the Seal of the Prophets (in the book on *Mandqib*), which says: "Muhammad said: 'I and the prophets before me are like a man who built a house and finished it save for one brick still to be placed. I am this brick.'"⁹⁶¹ Therefore, the (scholars) interpret "the Seal of the Prophets"⁹⁶² as the brick needed for the completion of the building. It means the prophet who has obtained the perfect prophecy. Sainthood in its different degrees is compared (by the Sufis) to prophecy. The perfect (saint) is considered to be the "seal" of the saints, that is, the saint who is in the possession of the rank that is the final ("sealing") stage of sainthood, exactly as "the Seal of the Prophets" was the prophet who was in possession of the rank that is the final ("sealing") stage of prophecy. In the tradition quoted, the Lawgiver (Muhammad) used the phrase, "the brick (that completes) the house," for that final stage. The two things correspond to each other. Thus, (they may be compared) to bricks (of different materials). In the case of prophecy, the brick is gold. In the case of sainthood, the brick is silver. The difference in importance existing between the two stages corresponds to the difference (in value) that exists between gold and silver. "Gold brick" is used as a name for the Prophet, and "silver brick" as a name for the expected Fatimid saint. The one is "the Seal of the Prophets," and the other "the Seal of the Saints."

Ibn al-'Arab!⁹⁶³ said, as reported by Ibn Abi Watil: This expected imam is a member of the family of Muhammad and a descendant of Fatimah. His appearance will take place when *kh-f-j* years have passed after the Hijrah. -He wrote down three letters. He meant their numerical value, ⁹⁶⁴ *kh* being 600, *f* 80, and *j* 3. This makes 683 years, or the end of the seventh [thirteenth] century. When this time had passed and (the Mahdi) had not appeared, some of those who accepted the tradition were forced to assume that the number meant the date of the birth of (the Mahdi) - "appearance" meaning birth - and that he would come forth in 710 [1310]. He would be the imam who would come forth from the region of the Maghrib. He said: If, as Ibn al-'Arabi thinks, his birth is in the year 683 [1284/85], he must be twenty-six years old at the time of his appearance. He said: They (also) thought that the Antichrist would come forth in the year 743 [1342/43]⁹⁶⁵ of the Muhammadan day. In their opinion, the Muhammadan day begins with the day of the death of the Prophet and lasts to the completion of the year 1000.

In his commentary on the *Kitab Khal' an-na'layn*, Ibn Abi Watil said: The expected saint who will take charge of God's command, who is referred to under the names of Muhammad al-Mahdi and Seal of the Saints: He is no prophet. He is a saint, sent by his spirit and his friend. Muhammad said: "The scholar is among his people what the prophet is in his nation." He also said: "The scholars of my nation are like the prophets of the children of Israel." The glad tidings of his (coming) will never cease (to be heard) from the beginning of the Muhammadan day to shortly before the year 500 [1106/7], which is the middle of (that) day. They will become stronger and more numerous as the result of the *shaykhs'* jubilant announcements of the approach of (the Mahdi's) coming and the coming of his period, from the end of (the year 500) onward.

Al-Kindi,[966](#) he continued, mentioned that that saint will be the person who will say the noon prayer with the people. He will renew Islam and cause justice to triumph. He will conquer the Spanish peninsula and reach Rome and conquer it. He will travel to the East and conquer it. He will conquer Constantinople, and rule over the whole earth will be his. The Muslims will become strong, Islam will be exalted, and the pristine religion (*din al-hanifyah*) will come forth. From noon prayer to afternoon prayer, will be (one) prayer time. Muhammad said: "(The time) between the two is a (prayer) time."[967](#)

Al-Kindi also said: "The sum total of the numerical value of the Arabic letters that have no diacritical points - he means, the letters at the beginning of certain *surahs* of the Qur'an [968](#) is 743 Antichristian (years). Then, Jesus will descend at the time of the afternoon prayer. The world will be prosperous. The sheep will go with the wolf. After the (non-Arabs) have become Muslims with Jesus, the non-Arab kingdom will last 160 years in all-that is; (the sum of the letters) *q - y - n*. Forty of these 160 years will be the rule of justice."

Ibn Abi Watil said: Muhammad's statement, "There is no Mahdi except Jesus," means that there is no one who is guided (*mahdi*) as well as Jesus. It has also been said (to mean that) nobody spoke in the cradle except Jesus. This (interpretation, however,) is refuted by the story of Jurayj and other (stories).[969](#)

It has been mentioned in (the sound tradition) of the *Sahih* that Muhammad said: "This (Muslim) state will not cease to be until the Hour arises," or: ". . . until the (Muslims) have been ruled by twelve caliphs"-that is, from the Quraysh [970](#) The facts suggest that some of them were at the beginning of Islam, and that some of them will be at its end. Muhammad said: "The caliphate after me will last for thirty,[971](#) or thirty-one, or thirty-six (years)." It ends with the caliphate of al-Hasan and the beginning of the caliphate of Mu'awiyah. The beginning of the rule of Mu'awiyah is a caliphate only according to the original meaning of the word. He is the sixth of the caliphs. The seventh caliph is 'Umar b. 'Abd-al-'Aziz. The remaining five (of the twelve caliphs mentioned in the tradition) are five of 'Ali's descendants, members of Muhammad's family.

This is supported by (Muhammad's) statement, "You are the possessor of its two periods (*garn*)-meaning (the two periods of) the nation (the beginning and the end). That is, you ('Ali) are the caliph at its beginning, and your descendants will be caliphs at its end. The tradition is often used as evidence by those who believe in "the return" (of conditions).[972](#) The first (to return) is the person to whom they refer in connection with "the rising of the sun from the west."[973](#)

Muhammad said: "When the emperor of the Persians has perished, there will be no Persian emperor after him, and when the Byzantine emperor has perished, there will be no Byzantine emperor after him. By God, I assure you, the treasures of

both of them will be spent in God's behalf." - 'Umar b. al-Khattab spent the treasure of the Persian emperor in behalf of God. "He who will destroy the Byzantine emperor and will spend his treasures in God's behalf will be the expected (Mahdi) when he conquers Constantinople. The ruler of Constantinople will be an excellent one, and the army (that will conquer Constantinople) will be an excellent one." [974](#) This was said by Muhammad. "And the duration of his rule will be a few (years)." A "few" means between three and nine, or up to ten. Forty is also mentioned. In some recensions, it is seventy. "Forty" refers to the length of the period of (the Mahdi) and of the period of the four remaining caliphs of his family who will be in charge of his affairs after him -all of them be blessed.

He continued: The astrologers mentioned that the duration of his rule and that of the members of his family after him will be 159 years. The form of government will thus be a caliphate and a rule of justice for forty or seventy years. Then conditions will change, and (the form of government) will be royal authority. End of the quotation from Ibn Abi Watil.

In another passage, he said: "The final descent of Jesus will be at the time of the afternoon prayer, when threefourths of the Muhammadan day have passed."

He said: "Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kindi stated in the *Kitab al-Jafr* [975](#) in which he mentioned the conjunctions: When the conjunction reaches Aries at the beginning of *d-h* [976](#) that is, in the year 698 [1298/99] of the Hijrah-the Messiah will descend. He will rule the earth as it pleases God." [977](#)

He continued: "It has been stated in the tradition that Jesus will descend at the white minaret east of Damascus. He will descend between two yellowish colored ones, that is, two light saffron-yellow colored garments. [978](#) He will place his hands upon the wings of two angels. His hair is as long as though he had just been released from a dungeon. When he lowers his head, it rains, and when he lifts it up, jewels resembling pearls pour down from him. He has many moles on his face. Another tradition has: 'Square built and reddish white!' Still another has: 'He will marry in the *gharb*'-(the word) *gharb* meaning 'bucket as used by Bedouins.' [979](#) Thus, the meaning is that he will take a woman from among (the Bedouins) as his wife. She will bear his children."

(The tradition also) mentions that (Jesus) will die after forty years. It is (also) said that Jesus will die in Medina and be buried at the side of 'Umar b. al-Khattab. And it is said that Abu Bakr and 'Umar will rise from the dead between two prophets (Muhammad and Jesus).

Ibn Abi Watil continued: "The Shi'ah say that he is the Messiah, the chief Messiah from the family of Muhammad. Some of the (Shi'ah) referred to him the tradition: 'There is no Mahdi except Jesus.' That is: There will be no Mahdi except the Mahdi whose relationship to the Muhammadan religious law is like the relationship of Jesus to the Mosaic religious law, in that he follows it and does not abrogate it."

There are many similar such statements. The time, the man, and the place are clearly indicated in them. But the (predicted) time passes, and there is no slightest trace of (the prediction coming true). Then, some new suggestion is adopted which, as one can see, is based upon linguistic equivocations, imaginary ideas, and astrological judgments. The life of every one of those people is spent on such things.

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 Fatimah. Others speak about him (only) in

general terms. We have heard that from a number of them. The greatest of these Sufis is Abu Ya'qub al-Badisi, the chief saint of the Maghrib. He lived at the beginning of the eighth [fourteenth] century. His grandson, our colleague, Abu Zakariya' Yahya, told me that on the authority of his father Abu Muhammad 'Abdallah, on the authority of his father, the mentioned saint Abu Ya'qub.[980](#)

This is all we have read or heard about (such) discussions by those Sufis and all the information *hadith* scholars relate concerning the Mahdi. As much as it has been in our power, we have presented the material exhaustively. 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, until God's will with regard to them materializes. We have established this before, with natural arguments which we presented to the reader.[981](#)

The group feeling of the Fatimids and the Talibids, 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 Talibids-Hasanids, Husaynids, and Ja'farites [982](#) - in the Hijaz, 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 Mahdi 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 Fatimid who would make propaganda for (the cause of the Mahdi) among people anywhere at all, without the support of group feeling and power, by merely relying on his relationship to the family of Muhammad - 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 Mahdi and who are not guided in this connection by any intelligence or helped by any knowledge, assume that the Mahdi may appear in a variety of circumstances and places. They follow blindly the well-known (traditions) about the appearance of a Fatimid. They do not understand the real meaning of the matter, as we have explained it. They mostly assume that the appearance will take place in some remote province and at the limits of civilization, such as the Zab in Ifriqiyah or as-Sus in the Maghrib. There are many people of weak intelligence who journey to a monastery (*ribat*) at Massah [983](#) near as-Sus. They assume that they (will be able) to meet him there, thinking that he will appear at that monastery and that the oath of allegiance will be rendered to him there. Also, that monastery is close to the Veiled Gudalah, and they believe that (the Mahdi) will be one of them, or that they will be in charge of his propaganda. This is a conjecture that has no basis except the fact that these nations are strange ones and too remote (for others) to have a definite knowledge of their numbers and their weakness or strength. Also, the regions where they live are out of the reach of the (ruling) dynasties and outside of their authority. Therefore, (people) firmly imagine that the Mahdi will appear there, since these regions are not under the control of (ruling) dynasties and out of the reach of law and force. They have nothing else to go on except that. Many weak-minded people, therefore, go to that place (Ribat Massah), 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.

Our *shaykh*, Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Abili, told me that at the beginning of

the eighth [fourteenth] century, during the reign of Sultan Yusuf b. Ya'qub ⁹⁸⁴ a man who practiced Sufism came forth in the Ribat Massah. He was known as at-Tuwayziri, a gentilic formation from Tozeur (Tf zar), in the diminutive form. He claimed to be the expected Fatimid. Many of the Zanigah ⁹⁸⁵ and Guzfilah inhabitants of as-Sus followed him. His power grew and was about to flourish. The Masmudah chiefs feared that he might become dangerous to their rule. Therefore, as-Saksiwi hired someone who killed him in his home, at night, and his power dissolved. ⁹⁸⁶

Likewise, in the last decade of the seventh [thirteenth] century, a man who had the name al-'Abbas appeared among the Ghumarah. He claimed to be the Fatimid. He gained followers among the great mass of the Ghumarah. He entered Badis by force and burned down the business section of the city. Then, he traveled to the place al-Mazammah. There, he was killed by deceit, and thus failed (to achieve his purpose). ⁹⁸⁷

There are many things of the sort. Our afore-mentioned *shaykh* told me a strange story of this type. On his pilgrimage (to Mecca), upon leaving the Monastery of the Worshippers (Ribat al-'Ubbad), ⁹⁸⁸ which is the burial place of Shaykh Abu Madyan on the mountain overlooking Tlemcen, he met a man from Kerbela who belonged to the family of Muhammad. He had many followers and was held in high esteem. He also had many pupils and servants. (The *shaykh*) said: People from his native town paid for his expenses in most countries. He said (further): We became good friends on the road, and it became clear to me what the matter was with (that man and his people). They had come from their home at Kerbela on behalf of the (Fatimid) business and in order to make propaganda for the Fatimid in the Maghrib. But when (the man) observed the Merinid dynasty, whose ruler Yusuf b. Ya'qub was at that time laying siege to Tlemcen ⁹⁸⁹ he said to the men around him: "Go back, for we have fallen victim to an error. This is not our time." ⁹⁹⁰ This statement, coming from that man, shows that he realized that power can materialize only with the help of a group feeling equaling that of the people in power at the time. When he realized that he was a stranger without power in (the Maghrib), and that none of the inhabitants of the Maghrib at the time was able to resist the group feeling of the Merinids, he gave up, admitted his error, and did not pursue his ambitions. It still remained for him (to realize) that the group feeling of the Fatimids and all the Quraysh had disappeared, especially in the Maghrib. However, his bias in favor of his cause did not permit him to realize this. "God knows, and you do not know." ⁹⁹¹

In recent times there has been a movement among the Arab population of the Maghrib to make propaganda for the Truth and for living by the Sunnah, but which does not make propaganda for the Fatimid or anybody else. At times, a few individuals have aimed at re-establishing the Sunnah and changing reprehensible ways. Such individuals occupy themselves with this (purpose) and gain many followers. They are mostly concerned with the improvement of the safety of the roads, since most of the corruption of the Bedouins has something to do with that, on account of the way Bedouins make their livelihood, as we have mentioned before. ⁹⁹² These individuals consider it their task to change reprehensible ways (among the Bedouins) through improving the safety of the roads as much as possible. However, the religious coloring cannot be firmly established in the Arabs. For them, repentance and return to the religion merely mean refraining from raids and robberies. That is the only thing they understand by repentance and becoming religious. (Raids and robberies) were the sins they committed before they repented,

and these were the things of which they repented. Therefore, those who follow the (new religious) propaganda and live, as they think, by the Sunnah, are not deeply immersed in the different ways of seeking and following (religious models). Their religion is merely abstinence from robbery and injustice and from making the roads unsafe. Beyond that, they continue most eagerly to search for worldly goods and for ways of making a living. There is a great difference between looking for religious ethics and searching for worldly (goods). It is impossible that the two things could go together. No religious coloring can establish a hold over such people, and they cannot completely keep away from worthlessness. (Reformers) cannot ever become numerous. The chief differs from his followers in that religion and saintliness are firmly established in him. If he perishes, their rule dissolves, and their group feeling disappears.

This happened in the seventh [thirteenth] century in Ifriqiyah to a man of the Banit Ka'b of the Sulaym, by name Qisim b. Mari [993](#) b. Ahmad. Later on, it happened to another man, of the Riyah Bedouins, who belonged to one of the subtribes of the Riyah, known as the Muslim. His name was Sa'idah. He was more religious and devoted than the former (Qasim). In spite of that, his followers were not successful, for the reasons mentioned. We shall mention (these events) in their proper places in connection with the discussion of the Sulaym. and Riyah. [994](#)

After that, there appeared (other) people to make such (religious) propaganda. They adopted similarly deceptive ideas. They followed the Sunnah in name only, but did not live by it, except for a very few. Neither they nor any of their successors had any success.

This is how God proceeds with His servants.

52. *Forecasting the future of dynasties and nations, including a discussion of predictions (malahim) and an exposition of the subject called "divination" (jafr).*

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 happen to

them, whether it will 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 strive to make a living out of (predicting the future), because they know that the people are most eager to know it. Therefore, they set themselves up in the streets and in shops and offer themselves to (the people) who (wish to) consult them about (such things). All day long, the 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 from sand writing (geomancy).⁹⁹⁵ They are called "astrologers" (*munajjim*). Others make their predictions by casting pebbles and grains (of wheat). These are called "calculators" (*hasib*).⁹⁹⁶ Still others make their predictions by looking into mirrors and into water. They are called "drawers of circles" (*darib al-mandal*).⁹⁹⁷ These are reprehensible things, which are very common in cities. (They are reprehensible) because their reprehensible character is established by the religious law, and because supernatural knowledge is veiled (and hidden) from human beings, except for those to whom God Himself has revealed (certain supernatural knowledge) in (their) sleep or through sainthood.

Rulers and amirs who want to know the duration of their own dynasties show the greatest concern for these things and the greatest curiosity in this respect. Therefore, the interest of scholars has been directed to the subject of (predicting the duration of dynasties). Every nation has had its soothsayers, its astrologers, and its saints, who have spoken about things of this kind. (They have spoken) about a particular royal authority they were expecting, or a dynasty they felt was coming. (They have also spoken) of wars and battles with (other) nations that were going to occur, about how long the ruling dynasty would last, how many rulers it would have, and they have also attempted (to give) the names. Things like this are called "forecasting" (*hadathan*).

The Arabs had soothsayers and diviners to whom they had recourse in this respect. They forecast the royal authority and dynasty the Arabs were going to have. Shiqq and Satih thus interpreted the dream of the Yemenite ruler Rabi'ah b. Nasr. (Their interpretation) informed the Yemenites that the Abyssinians would take possession of their country, which would later on revert to them. Next, Islam and the

Arab dynasty would make their appearance. Satih likewise interpreted a dream of the Mobedhan. The Persian emperor (Khosraw) had sent information about (that dream) to Satih through 'Abd-al-Masih. (Satih) told him about the future appearance of the Arab dynasty.[998](#)

There were also soothsayers among the Berber race. The most famous of them was Musa b. Salih of the Banu Yafran (Ifren), or of the Ghumart.[999](#) He made forecasts in poems in the native (Berber) idiom. (These poems) contain many forecasts. Most of them are concerned with the royal authority and rule over the Maghrib which the Zanatah were going to obtain. They have had wide circulation among the Berbers. (The Berbers) have sometimes thought that Musa was a saint. At other times, (they seem to think) that he was a soothsayer. In their self-deception, a few assert occasionally that he was a prophet, because they think that he lived long before the Hijrah. And God knows better. In this respect, (each) group used to base itself upon the information of prophets, when, as happened among the Israelites, any existed in its own time. Successive prophets (among the Israelites) told them similar things when bothered with questions.

During the Muslim dynasty many such things occurred. (Some predictions) had reference to how long the world in general would last. Others had reference to a particular dynasty and its particular life.

At the beginning of Islam, (predictions) were based upon statements reported on the authority of the men around Muhammad and, especially, on that of Jewish converts to Islam such as Ka'b al-ahbar, [1000](#) Wahb b. Munabbih, [1001](#) and other such persons. Often, part of the relevant information was obtained from the explicit wording of the transmitted (statements) and permissible interpretations. Jafar as-Sadiq and other members of the family of Muhammad also made many such predictions. They based themselves, it would seem, upon removal (of the veil, *kashf*), which they enjoyed on account of (their) sainthood. Things of this sort are not unknown in (the experience of) other saints from among their people and descendants. Muhammad said: "Among you there are men who are spoken to."[1002](#) They are the ones who are most deserving of their noble ranks and their gifts of divine grace.

After the early years of Islam, people applied themselves to the sciences and the (various) technical terminologies. The books of the (Greek) philosophers were translated into Arabic. The main basis for predictions now were astrological discussions. Matters concerning royal authority and dynasties and all other matters of general importance were considered as depending on the conjunctions of the stars. Nativities and interrogations and all other private matters were considered to depend on people's "ascendants"- that is, on the constellations of the firmament at the time when (these matters) were brought up.

We shall now mention what the traditionists have to say on this subject. Later on, we shall return to the astrological discussions.

With regard to how long Islam and the world in general will last, traditionists have at their disposal the material contained in the work of as-Suhayli.[1003](#) As-Suhayli derived it from at-Tabari. It leads to the conclusion that the world will last five hundred years after the coming of Islam. Since it has become obvious that this is not true, the theory has been demolished.

At-Tabari based himself in this respect on a statement reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbis, which says that this world constitutes a single week of the weeks of the other world.[1004](#) He did not bring any proof for it. The statement may possibly mean that this world is to be measured in days corresponding to the days of

the creation of heaven and earth. They were seven, and each of them is a thousand years, according to the verse of the Qur'an: "A day with your Lord is a thousand years as you count days." [1005](#) He said: Now, it is established in (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih* [1006](#) that Muhammad said: "Your term, as compared to the term of those who were before you, (will extend) from the afternoon prayer to sunset." [1007](#) He also said: "I and the Hour were sent like these two," [1008](#) and he pointed with the index finger and the middle finger. Now, the time between the afternoon prayer and sunset, when the shadow of every object becomes twice as long as (the object itself), is approximately one-half of one-seventh (of the day). And the middle finger is longer than the index finger by about the same amount (onefourteenth). Consequently, the length of the duration (of the world after the coming of Islam) would be one-half of one-seventh of the whole week (of 7,000 years). This would be five hundred years. This figure is supported by the statement of Muhammad, "God is indeed not unable to make this nation last longer than half a day." [1009](#) This shows that the duration of the world before Islam was 5,500 years. On the authority of Wahb b. Munabbih, it is stated that it was 5,600 years [1010](#) that is, the period that had passed (before the coming of Islam. On the authority of Ka'b and Wahb, [1011](#) it is stated that the entire duration of the world is 6,000 years. As-Suhayli said: "There is nothing in the two traditions to support his (at-Tabari's) interpretation (concerning the fivehundred-year duration of Islam), and what has actually happened has turned out to be different. The statement of Muhammad, 'God is indeed not unable to have this nation last longer than half a day,' does not imply that a longer period than half a day is excluded. And his statement, 'I and the Hour were sent like these two,' refers to the closeness (of the Hour) and to the fact that there will be no other prophet and no other religious law (in the short time) between (Muhammad) and the Hour.

As-Suhayli then turned to another source for determining the duration of Islam, in the hope that he might find the correct answer. He took the letters at the beginning of the *surahs*, [1012](#) disregarded repetitions, and thus found that there were fourteen letters, which can be arranged to form the sentence '*lm yst' ns hq krh*'. [1013](#) He added up the numerical value of these letters, which comes to 903, [1014](#) to be added to the time which had already passed of the last millennium before the coming of (Muhammad). (The total) then, was the length of the duration of Islam. As-Suhayli said: "It is not unlikely that this is the information those letters were intended to convey."

I say: The fact that it is "not unlikely" does not imply that it is evident, or that it must be understood this way. As-Suhayli was influenced by the story of the two sons of Akhtab, one of the Jewish rabbis (who had contact with Muhammad), which occurs in Ibn Ishaq's *Sirah*. [1015](#) These were Abu Yasir and his brother Huyayy. They had heard about the letters '*lm*', which belong to the letters at the beginning of the *surahs*, and interpreted them as indicating, by their numerical value, the length of the duration (of Islam). Their numerical value was seventy-one. They considered that (too) short a period, and Huyayy went to the Prophet and asked him whether there were other such (letters). Muhammad mentioned '*lms*'. (Huyayy) asked for more, and Muhammad mentioned '*lr*'. Again, (Huyayy) asked for more, and Muhammad mentioned '*lmr*'. (The numerical value of '*lmr*') was 271. (Huyayy) considered that (too) long a period and said: "We are in confusion concerning your future, O Muhammad. We do not know whether you have been given little or much (time)." Whereupon they (the Jews) left him. Abu Yasir said to them: "How do you know? Perhaps he was given the total of the numerical value of all the letters,

namely, 704 years." [1016](#) Said Ibn Ishaq: "In consequence, the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed: 'It contains clearly understood verses that are the mother of the book (and other ambiguous ones ...).'" [1017](#)

This story does not prove that the duration of Islam can be estimated at that figure. The assumption that the letters refer to such figures (giving the duration of Islam) is neither natural nor rational. It is merely the result of the conventional and technical procedure which is called *hisab al jummal* (counting the numerical value of letters). It is, indeed, an old and well-known procedure, but the fact of the antiquity of a technical procedure does not make it conclusive evidence (for whatever one wants to prove by it). Furthermore, neither Abu Yasir and his brother Huyayy, nor any of the Jewish scholars for that matter, were the sort of men whose opinion with regard to such a matter (as the duration of Islam) could be considered proof of it(s being as they say). They were Bedouins of the Hijaz and did not know any crafts or sciences. They did not even know their own religious law, nor did they understand their own Scriptures and religion. [1018](#) They had picked up this (method of calculating by the numerical value of letters), just as the common people of every religious group pick it up. Thus, as-Suhayli has no proof for his claims concerning (the duration of Islam).

For specific forecasts concerning particular dynasties, Islam has a general traditional basis in the tradition of Hudhayfah b. al-Yaman, [1019](#) published by Abu Dawud through his *shaykh* Muhammad b. Yahya adh-Dhuhli, [1020](#) on the authority of Sa'id b. Abi Maryam, [1021](#) on the authority of 'Abdallah b. Farrikh, [1022](#) on the authority of Usamah b. Zayd al-Laythi, [1023](#) on the authority of a son of Qabisah b. Dhu'ayb, [1024](#) on the authority of his father, who said: "Hudhayfah b. al-Yaman said: 'By God, I do not know whether my companions have forgotten it or merely pretend to have forgotten it. By God, no leader of a disturbance who had three hundred or more (men) with him, up to the end of the world, was omitted by the Messenger of God. He mentioned his name, the, name of his father, and the name of his tribe!'" [1025](#)

Abu Dawud did not make any remarks critical of (this tradition). It has been mentioned before that Abu Dawud said in his *Epistle* that everything to which he did not append critical remarks in his book was all right. [1026](#) If (this tradition) is sound, it still is a general one. In order to explain its general meaning and to indicate what is not clearly expressed in it, one requires other traditions with good chains of transmitters.

The tradition occurs in works other than (Abu Dawud's) *Kitab as-Sunan*, in another form. In the two *Sahih*s, there also occurs the following tradition of Hudhayfah, who said: "The Messenger of God stood up to give us a sermon. He did not omit anything, but talked about everything that would happen in his place here until the coming of the Hour. Some remember it, and some have forgotten it, (but) the men around him who (were present on that occasion) know it." [1027](#)

Al-Bukhari's recension reads: "He did not omit, but mentioned everything down to the coming of the Hour."

The work of at-Tirmidhi includes the tradition of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, who said: "The Messenger of God said the afternoon prayer with us one day in the daytime. Then he stood up to give a sermon. He did not leave anything out, but informed us about everything that will happen down to the coming of the Hour. Some remember it, and some have forgotten it." [1028](#)

All these traditions must be referred to the traditions concerning the disturbances (of the Last Day) and the conditions governing it, as they are established in (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*. They do not refer to anything else. This is what is expected from the Lawgiver (Muhammad) when he speaks in such generalities. The additional information Abu Dawud supplies, and which he stands alone in transmitting, is unusual and not to be approved of. Moreover, the religious leaders hold different opinions concerning the personalities (mentioned by Abu Dawud). Ibn Abi Maryam said regarding Ibn Farrukh that his traditions are not approved of. Al-Bukhari said: "Some of his traditions are acknowledged, and others are not." Ibn 'Adi said: "His traditions are not to be retained."

Usamah b. Zayd has traditions of his published in the two *Sahihs*, and he was considered reliable by Ibn Main. However, al-Bukhari published traditions of his only in order to support (the reliability of traditions). Yahya b. Sa'id and Ahmad b. Hanbal considered him weak. Abu Hatim said: "His traditions may be written down, but they may not be used as evidence."

The son of Qabisah b. Dhu'ayb is little known.

Thus, the additional information occurring in Abu Dawud in connection with the tradition mentioned, is weak in all these respects, in addition to the aforementioned fact that it is unusual.

As a basis for specific forecasts concerning dynasties, one uses the *Kitab al-Jafr*.¹⁰²⁹ People think that it contains information about all these things in the form of traditions or astrological predictions. They do not (think) beyond that, and they do not know its origin nor its basis. It should be known that the *Kitab al-Jafr* had its origin in the fact that Harun b. Sa'id al-'Ijli,¹⁰³⁰ the head of the Zaydiyah, had a book that he transmitted on the authority of Ja'far as-Sadiq. That book contained information as to what would happen to the family of Muhammad in general and to certain members of it in particular. The (information) had come to Ja'far and to other 'Alid personages as an act of divine grace and through the removal (of the veil, *kashf*) which is given to saints like them. (The book was) in Ja'far's possession. It was written upon the skin of a small ox. Harun al-'Ijli transmitted it on (Ja'far's) authority. He wrote it down and called it *al-Jafr*, after the skin upon which it had been written, because *jafr* means a small (camel or lamb). (*Jafr*) became the characteristic title they used for the book.

The *Kitab al-Jafr* contained remarkable statements concerning the interpretation of the Qur'an and concerning its inner meaning. (The statements in it) were transmitted on the authority of Ja'far as-Sadiq. The book has not come down through continuous transmission and is not known as a book as such. Only stray remarks unaccompanied by any proofs (of their authenticity) are known from it. If the ascription to Ja'far as-Sadiq were correct, the work would have the excellent authority of Jafar himself or of people of his family who enjoyed acts of divine grace. It is a fact that Ja'far warned certain of his relatives about accidents that would occur to them, and things turned out as he had predicted. He warned Yahya, the son of his uncle Zayd, about his impending debacle, but he disobeyed him, revolted, and was killed in alJuzajan, as is well known.¹⁰³¹ If acts of divine grace occur also to others, they should all the more occur to (members of Muhammad's family), in view of their knowledge, their religion, the tradition of Muhammad's prophecy (which they represent), and God's concern for the noble root (Muhammad) which extends to partiality for its goodly branches.

Much of this material is reported among members of the family of Muhammad, but it is not attributed to the *Jafr* (just mentioned). In the history of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids), there is much of it. An illustration is the story reported by Ibn

ar-Raqiq [1032](#) about a meeting between Abu 'Abdallah ash-Shi'i and 'Ubaydallah al-Mahdi, who was with his father Muhammad al-Habib. [1033](#) (Al-Mahdi and his father) discussed matters with (Abu 'Abdallah) [1034](#) and sent the latter to Ibn Hawshab, their missionary in the Yemen. (Ibn Hawshab) ordered Abu 'Abdallah to go to the Maghrib and spread (Fatimid) propaganda there. He did so in the knowledge that the ('Ubaydid-Fatimid) dynasty would materialize in (the Maghrib). Later on, when 'Ubaydallah was building al-Mahdiyah in Ifriqiyah and their dynasty was flourishing, he said: "I am building this city so that the Fatimids may find protection in it for one hour of a (certain) day," and he showed the (people around him) the place within the city where "the Man of the Donkey" would stop. ('Ubaydallah's) grandson Ismail al-Mansur heard of this story, and when "the Man of the Donkey," Abu Yazid, came to besiege him in al-Mahdiyah, [1035](#) al-Mansur always inquired where he had last stopped. Eventually, he was informed that Abu Yazid had reached the place his grandfather 'Ubaydallah had indicated. Now, he was sure of victory. He went out of the town, routed (Abu Yazid), and pursued him as far as the region of the Zab, where he defeated and killed him. (The 'Alids) have many such stories to tell.

Astrologers, in making forecasts concerning dynasties, base themselves upon astrological judgments. For matters of 11,186 general importance such as royal authority and dynasties, they use the conjunctions, especially those of the two superior planets. The superior planets, Saturn and Jupiter, are in conjunction once every twenty years. After twenty years, their conjunction reoccurs in another sign of the same triplicity [1036](#) (but) in trine dexter, [1037](#) and again (twenty years later) in another (sign). This is repeated in the same triplicity twelve times. It takes sixty years (for three conjunctions) in the three signs (of the first triplicity), and another sixty years each for a second, third, and fourth time. The twelve repetitions in the triplicity, with four recurrences, thus take 240 years. The movement (of the conjunction) in each sign is toward the trine dexter. It moves on from the one triplicity into the adjacent triplicity, that is, into the sign that is adjacent to the sign of the triplicity in which the conjunction had last taken place.

The conjunctions of the two superior planets are divided into great, small, and medium. [1038](#) The great conjunction is the meeting of the two superior planets in the same degree of the firmament, which reoccurs after 960 years. The medium conjunction is the conjunction of the two superior planets in each triplicity with its twelve repetitions; after 240 years, they move on to another triplicity. The small conjunction is the conjunction of the two superior planets in the same sign; after twenty years, they have a conjunction in another sign in trine dexter at the same degree and minute. For instance, if the conjunction occurs in the first minute of Aries, it will reoccur after twenty years in the first minute of Sagittarius, and then again after twenty years in Leo. [1039](#) All the (signs) mentioned are fiery, and all the conjunctions are small ones.

The conjunction then reoccurs in the beginning of Aries after sixty years. This is called "the cycle of the conjunction" or "the reoccurrence of the conjunction." After 240 years, (the conjunction) moves on from the fiery (triplicity) to the earthy (triplicity), which comes after (the fiery one). This, then, is the medium conjunction.

Then, the conjunction moves on to the airy and watery triplicities, and then reoccurs in the beginning of Aries after 960 years. This, then, is the great conjunction.

The great conjunction indicates great events, such as a change in royal

authority or dynasties, or a transfer of royal authority from one people to another. The medium conjunction (indicates) the appearance of persons in search of superiority and royal authority. The small conjunction (indicates) the appearance of rebels or propagandists, and the ruin of towns or of their civilization.

In between these conjunctions, there occurs the conjunction of the two unlucky planets (Saturn and Mars) in the sign of Cancer once every thirty years. It is called *ar-rabi`* (the fourth). [1040](#) The sign of Cancer is the ascendant of the world.

It is the detriment [1041](#) of Saturn and the dejection [1042](#) of Mars. This conjunction strongly indicates disturbances, wars, bloodshed, the appearance of rebels, the movement of armies, the disobedience of soldiers, plagues, and drought. These things persist, or come to an end, depending on the luck or ill luck (prevailing) at the time of conjunction of (the two unlucky planets), as determined by the direction of the signifier in it.

Jirash b. Ahmad al-Hasib [1043](#) said in the book that he composed for Nizam al-Mulk: "The return of Mars to Scorpio has an important influence upon the Muslim religious group, because it is its signifier. The birth of the Prophet took place when the two superior planets were in conjunction in the sign of Scorpio. Whenever the conjunction reoccurs there, trouble is brewing for the caliphs. There is much illness among scholars and religious personalities, and their conditions are reduced. Occasionally, houses of worship are destroyed. It has been said that the conjunction occurred at the deaths of 'Ali, of the Umayyad Marwan, and of the 'Abbasid al-Mutawakkil. If such judgments are taken into consideration, together with the judgments based upon the conjunctions, they are exceedingly reliable."

Shadhan al-Balkhi [1044](#) mentioned that Islam would last 310 years. This has proved to be wrong.

Abu Ma'shar [1045](#) said: "(Islam) will have many differences after the 150's." This was not correct.

Jirash said: "I have seen in the books of the ancients that the astrologers informed Khosraw that the Arabs would gain royal authority and the prophecy (of Muhammad) would appear among them. The signifier of the Arabs is Venus, which was then in its exaltation. The royal authority of the Arabs would last forty years."

Abu Ma'shar said in the *Book of Conjunctions*: "When the section [1046](#) reaches the twenty-seventh (degree) [1047](#) of Pisces, in which Venus has its exaltation, and when, at the same time, the conjunction occurs in Scorpio, which is the signifier of the Arabs, then the Arab dynasty will make its appearance, and there will be a prophet among them. The power and duration of his rule will correspond to the remaining degrees of the exaltation of Venus—that is, approximately eleven degrees of the sign of Pisces. That will be a period of 610 years. Abu Muslim [1048](#) appeared when Venus moved on, and the section occurred in the beginning of Aries, with Jupiter ruling the field." [1049](#)

Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kindi said that Islam would last 693 years; he said, 'because in the conjunction that dominates Islam, Venus was in $28^{\circ} 42'$ [1050](#) of Pisces. The remainder, thus, was $11^{\circ} 18'$. There are sixty minutes to the degree. Thus, it will be 693 years.' He said (further): "This is the duration of Islam as generally agreed upon by the philosophers. The figure is supported by the letters that occur at the beginning of certain *surahs*, if one omits the repetitions and counts the numerical value of the letters." I say: This is what was mentioned by as-Suhayli. The

most likely assumption is that al-Kindi was as-Suhayli's source for the remarks we reported on as-Suhayli's authority. [1051](#)

Jirash said: "The sage Hurmuzdafrid [1052](#) was asked about the duration of the rule of Ardashir and his children, the Sassanian rulers. He replied: 'The signifier of his rule is Jupiter. Jupiter was in exaltation (when Ardashir appeared). Thus, Jupiter gives (the Sassanians) the longest and best years, that is, 427. Then, Venus will rule and be in exaltation. Venus signifies that the Arabs will come to power, [1053](#) because the ascendant of the conjunction is Libra, and it is ruled by Venus, which, at the time of the conjunction, will be in exaltation. This indicates that (the Arabs) will rule 1,060 years."

Khosraw Anosharwan asked his wazir, the sage Buzurjmihr, about the transfer of royal authority from the Persians to the Arabs. Buzurjmihr informed him that the founder of Arab rule would be born in the forty-fifth year of his reign. He would take possession of the East and the West. Jupiter would turn over the rule to Venus, and the conjunction would move on from the airy (triplicity) into Scorpio, which belongs to the watery (triplicity). (Venus) is the signifier of the Arabs. All the indications mentioned imply that Islam will have a duration corresponding to the period of Venus, that is, 1,060 years.

Khosraw Aparwez asked the sage Ulyus [1054](#) about the same matter, and Ulyus gave a reply similar to that which Buzurjmihr had given (to Khosraw Anosharwan).

Theophilus, [1055](#) the Byzantine astrologer of the Umayyad period, said that the Muslim dynasty would have the duration of the great conjunction, that is, 960 years. When the conjunction occurs again in the sign of Scorpio, as it had at the beginning of Islam, and when the position of the stars in the conjunction that dominates Islam has changed, it will be less effective, or there will be new judgments that will make a change of opinion necessary.

Jirash said: "They are agreed that the destruction of the world will come through water and fire. Water and fire will gain preponderance until all created things have perished. This will take place when Regulus crosses 24° , (thus entering) the field of Mars. [1056](#) This will be the case after 960 years have passed."

Jirash mentioned that among other gifts, the ruler of Zabulistan—that is, Ghaznah-sent his sage Dhuban to alMa'mun. (Dhuban) made for al-Ma'mun astrological elections that favored al-Ma'mun's going to war against his brother and appointing Taeir as commander-in-chief. AlMa'mun thought highly of (Dhuban's) wisdom, and asked him how long the ('Abbasid) rule would last. (Dhuban) informed him that the children of his brother (al-Mu'tasim), and not his own descendants, would rule, and that the nonArab Daylam would gain control over the caliphate. At first they would exercise good government, for fifty years. Then, their condition would deteriorate. Eventually, the Turks would make their appearance from the northeast. Their rule would extend to Syria and the Euphrates. [1057](#) They would conquer the Byzantine territory. Then, there would happen what God would want to happen. Al-Ma'mun asked (Dhuban) where he got his information from, and (Dhuban) replied that he had it from the books of the philosophers and from the astrological judgments of the Indian Sassah b: Dahir, the inventor of chess. [1058](#)

I say: The Turks to whose appearance after the Daylam (Dhuban) referred, are the Saljugs. The (Saljuq) dynasty was destroyed at the beginning of the seventh [thirteenth] century.

Jirash said: "The conjunction will move on into the watery triplicity in the

sign of Pisces in the year 833 of the era of Yazdjad. [1059](#) From there, it will move on to the sign of Scorpio-where there had occurred the conjunction under which Islam (originated) [1060](#)-in the year (8)53." He said: "(The conjunction) in Pisces is the beginning of the movement, [1061](#) and the conjunction in Scorpio will produce the indications applying to Islam." He said: "The revolution of the first year of the first conjunction in the watery triplicity will be (completed) on Rajab 2, 868 [March 11, 1464]." [1062](#) He did not discuss this matter more fully.

With regard to individual dynasties, the astrologers base themselves on the medium conjunction and the constellation of the firmament when it takes place. In their opinion, it indicates the origin of a dynasty, its forms of civilization, the nations that will support it, the number and names of the rulers, the length of their lives, the sects and religions (that will be found in that dynasty), the customs of the rulers, and the wars they will wage. This was mentioned by Abu Ma'shar in his *Book of Conjunctions*. Such indications may (also) be derived from the small conjunction, if the medium conjunction indicates (such a course). The discussion of dynasties is thus derived from (these conjunctions).

Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kindi, astrologer to ar-Rashid and al-Ma'mun, composed a book on the conjunctions affecting Islam. The Shi'ah called the book *al-Jafr*, after the name of their own book, which is attributed to Ja'far as-Sadiq. In his book, al-Kindi is said to have made complete forecasts concerning the 'Abbasid dynasty. He indicated that the destruction of (the 'Abbasid dynasty) and the fall of Baghdad would take place in the middle of the seventh [thirteenth] century and that its destruction would result from [1063](#) the destruction of Islam. [1064](#)

We have not found any information concerning (al-Kindi's) book, and we have not seen anyone who has seen it. Perhaps it was lost with those books which Hulagu, the ruler of the Tatars, threw into the Tigris [1065](#) when the Tatars took possession of Baghdad and killed the last caliph, al-Musta'sim. In the Maghrib, there exists a fascicle considered to belong to (al-Kindi's) book. It is called the *Small Jafr*. But it is obvious that it was composed for the Banfi 'Abd-al-Mu'min, for it mentions in detail the early Almohad rulers. The forecasts of the work are right with respect to the preceding period, and they are wrong for the later period.

In the 'Abbasid dynasty, there were astrologers and books on forecasts after al-Kindi. One may compare the story reported by at-Tabari in the history of al-Mahdi on the authority of Abu Budayl, one of the followers of the dynasty. (Abu Budayl) said: [1066](#) "Ar-Rabi' and al-Hasan sent for me, when they were on an expedition together with ar-Rashid during the days of (ar-Rashid's) father (al-Mahdi). I came to them in the middle of the night. They had with them one of the 'dynasty books'-that is, (a book of) forecasts. The duration of al-Mahdi's reign was given in it as ten years. I said: 'This book will not remain unknown to al-Mahdi, and there have already passed (that many) years of his reign. When he sees (the book, it will be as bad as if) you (were to) announce his own death to him.' They asked me what might be done, and I called for the copyist 'Anbasah, a client of the family of Budayl, and said to him: 'Copy this leaf, and write forty instead of ten.' He did so, and, indeed, if I had not seen the ten on that leaf, and the forty on this one, I would not have doubted that it was the same (original leaf that formed part of the manuscript)."

Later on, works in poetry and prose and *in rajaz* verse dealing with forecasts concerning dynasties were written in considerable quantity. Much of it found its way into the hands of the people. It is called "predictions" (*malahim*). Some of these works concern forecasts about Islam in general. Others are about particular

dynasties. All of these works are attributed to famous persons. But there is nothing to support ascribing them to the persons on whose authority they are transmitted.

One such prediction work is the poem by Ibn Murranah [1067](#) in the meter *tawil* with the rhyme on *r*. [1068](#) It has a wide circulation among the people in the Maghrib. The common people think that it has to do with general forecasts, and they apply many of its forecasts to the present and the future. But our *shaykhs* informed us that it refers in particular to the Lamtunah (Almohad) dynasty, since its author lived shortly before (the dynasty came to power). In (the poem), he mentioned that the Lamtunah took Ceuta out of the hands of the clients of the Hammudids [1069](#) and that they gained control of the Spanish shore.

Another prediction work in the hands of the inhabitants of the Maghrib is a poem called *at-Tubba'iyah*, which begins:

I feel happy, [1070](#) but not joyful.
A bird in captivity may also feel happy.
I do not (feel happy) because of something entertaining that I see,
But because I am remembering something.

(This poem) is said to contain about five hundred or a thousand verses. In it, (the poet) mentioned much about the Almohad dynasty, and he referred to the (expected) Fatimid and other things. It is obvious that it is a forgery.

Another prediction work in the Maghrib is a *zajal* "playpoem" (*mal'abah*) [1071](#) which is attributed to a Jew. (The poet) mentioned in it the judgments of the conjunctions of the two superior, the two unlucky, and other planets for his time. He mentioned that he would die a violent death in Fez, and people think that that actually happened. (The poem) begins:

The color of that blue [1072](#) one leaves no choice.
O people, understand this indication! The planet Saturn shows this mark
And has changed its whitish color, [1073](#) that meant wellbeing.
A blue sash instead of a (whitish) turban,
And a blue cape instead of a (whitish) cloak.

At the end of (the poem, the poet) says:

Completed is this rhyming by a Jewish man,
Who will be hanged on a holiday at the river of Fez,
Until people come to him from the desert,
And he will be killed, [1074](#) O people, in a riot. [1075](#)

(The poem) comprises about five hundred verses. They are concerned with judgments based on the conjunctions referring to the Almohad dynasty.

Another Maghribi prediction work is a poem in the meter *mutaqarib* with the rhyme on *b*, which deals with forecasts concerning the Almohad Hafsid dynasty in Tunis. It is attributed to Ibn al-Abbar. The judge of Constantine, the great preacher, Abu 'Ali b. Badis, [1076](#) who knew what he was saying and who was versed in astronomy, told me that this Ibn al-Abbar was not the *hadith* expert and secretary who was killed by al-Mustansir. [1077](#) He was a tailor in Tunis, whose identity became confused with that of the *hadith* expert. My father used to recite me verses from this prediction poem, and some of them have stuck in my memory. (The poem) starts:

Let my excuse be a fickle time,
Which deceives (people) with its flashing, toothy (smile).

(Other verses of the poem,) mentioning al-Lihyani, the ninth Hafsid ruler,[1078](#) are:

He will send a leader from his army,
And he will remain there on a lookout,
News about him will reach the *shaykh*,
And he will advance like a mangy camel.
The justice of his ways will become apparent.
That is the policy of a person who knows how to attract others.

(Other verses of the poem) deal with general conditions in Tunis:

Do you not see that institutions have been wiped out
And the rights of persons of position are not observed?
Therefore, start leaving Tunis!
Say goodbye to its familiar places, and go!
Disturbances will eventually take place there.
They will affect the innocent as much as the guilty.

In the Maghrib, I came across another prediction work concerning the Hafsid rulers in Tunis. The poem mentions the famous Sultan Abu Yahya (Abu Bakr), the tenth Hafsid ruler, and it mentions as his successor his brother Muhammad. (The poet) says:

And afterwards, Abu 'Abd-allah,[1079](#) his brother,
Who will be known as al-Wathhab

(Thus it is found) in the original manuscript.[1080](#) However, the person mentioned did not succeed his brother as ruler of Tunis, though it was his ambition to become ruler until he died.

Another Maghribi prediction work is a "play-poem" attributed to al-Hawshini. It is written in the vulgar language, in the "local meter."[1081](#) It begins:

Leave me alone, O my incessant tears.
The rains have slowed down, but you have not.
All the rivers are full.
But you continue to fill and become like a pool [?].
The whole country is wet,
And you know how (bad) are the times.
The summer and the winter have gone by [?],
And the fall and the spring are passing.

They [1082](#) replied, seeing that the claim (to be sad) was sound:
Let me weep! Who could give me an excuse (not to weep)!
Oh, look at these times.
This period is a difficult and bitter one.

It is a long (poem), which the common people of Morocco know by heart. It is most likely a forgery, because nothing that is said in it is correct, unless it is provided with a twisted interpretation by the common people, or with a fanciful one by the educated people who accept the poem.

In the East, I came across a prediction work attributed to Ibn al-'Arabs al-Hitimi.[1083](#) It consists of a long, enigmatic discussion. Its interpretation is known only to God. The work is interspersed with magic squares, mysterious hints, complete outlines of animals, separate heads, and strange representations of two animals.[1084](#) It contains at the end a poem rhyming on *l*. The most likely assumption is that the whole work is incorrect, because it has no scientific basis,

astrological or otherwise.

I [1085](#) heard some distinguished [1086](#) people in Egypt transmit a remarkable statement from a prediction work by Ibn al-'Arab[. The work may be different from the one (just mentioned). Ibn al-'Arab[speaks about the horoscope of the foundation of Cairo. According to that horoscope, he gives the city a duration of 460 years, which would take us down to the 830's [1426-35]; for, if we convert the 460 years, which are solar years, into lunar years, figuring three years more for each century, we shall have to add altogether fourteen years. Thus, it would come to 474 years, which have to be added to 358 [969], the year Cairo was founded. That would take us to the year 832 [1428/29]. Consequently, (Cairo will be destroyed at that time) if the statement by Ibn al-'Arab[is correct and the astrological indications are true.

An [1087](#) Egyptian whose knowledge I trust mentioned to me on the authority of Ibn al-'Arabi's prediction work, that (the years are to be figured) from the 320's, or 303, or 313, or 320. And God knows better about all this.

I have also heard that in the East there are other prediction works. They are attributed to Avicenna and Ibn'Aqb.[1088](#) They contain no indication whatever that (their contents) are correct, because (correct predictions) can be derived only from astral conjunctions.

The [1089](#) prediction works by Ibn Abi 1-'Aqb are not authentic. In the biography of Ibn al-Qurayah, Ibn Khallikan quotes from the *Kitab al-Aghani* to the effect that Ibn Abi 1-'Aqb—that is, Muhammad b. 'Abdallah b. Abi1-'Aq—belongs to things that are well known but have no outside existence, such as Majnun Layli and Ibn al-Qurayah.[1090](#) And God knows better.

In the East, I further came across a prediction work with forecasts concerning the Turkish dynasty. The work is attributed to a Sufi called al-Bijarbaqi.[1091](#) The whole is a letter puzzle. It starts as follows:

If you want to discover the secret of *al jafr*, O my intimate,
The science of the best of legatees, the father of al-Hasan,[1092](#)
Be understanding and comprehend letters and their numerical value,
And the description, and act as a clever and intelligent person would act.
I shall not mention what was before my age.
But I shall mention the time that will come.

Baybars will be given a *h* to drink after the five of them [1093](#)
And a *h-m* with restlessness, sleeping in blankets [mountain dens?].

Further verses are:

A *sh*, which has a trace (of something) under its navel,
Has the power (to decide), the power, that is, of a benign person.
And Egypt and Syria, together with the land of the 'Iraq, belong to him,
And Azerbaijan, as his realm, down to the Yemen.

Further verses are:

And the family of Nawwar, when its outstanding (man) [1094](#)
The intrepid, the sharp one, who is meant by the branch, obtained . . . [?]

Further verses are:

Remove a happy one [Sa'id?], weak of age. An *s* has come,
Not a *l'*, and a *q* and an *n*, which got stuck in a quiver.
Brave people who have intelligence and considered opinions
And will be given a *h* to drink, and where then will be the owner of a

branch?

Further verses are:

After a *b* of years, he will be killed.
The *m* of the realm, the eloquent one, will follow the disgraced one.
This is the lame Kalbite [?]. Be concerned with him!
In his time, there will be disturbances, and what disturbances!
From the East, the Turkish army will come, which will be preceded by
A *q* free from [1095](#) the *q*, which will be attracted by the disturbances.
Before that-Woe until all Syria!
Show grief and mourning for the people and the country!
Behold, suddenly, alas, Egypt is shaken by an
Earthquake, which will remain unsettled for a year.
T, t, and 'ayn will all be held captive,
And they will perish, and he will spend money freely.
The *q* will send a *q* toward the most praiseworthy of them [their Ahmad?].
Do not worry about him, for that fortress is strong.

Further verses are:

They will set up his brother, who is the best of them [their Salih?],
<*Lam*,> *lam-atif, sh* is repeated for that.

Further verses are:

Their rule will materialize with the *h*. None
Of the sons will ever come close to the rule.

There is another verse, which is said to be a reference to alMalik az-Zahir Barquq [1096](#) and the coming of his father to him to Egypt. It runs:

His father will come to him after an emigration And a long absence and a
hard and filthy life.

The poem has many verses. The likelihood is that it is a forgery. In ancient times, forgeries of poems of this type were numerous and widely practiced.

The historians of Baghdad report that in the days of alMuqtadir, there lived in Baghdad a skillful copyist by the name of ad-Daniyali. [1097](#) He gave leaves the appearance of being worn and wrote upon them in an ancient handwriting.

In his (forgeries), he referred to the men of the dynasty, under letters from their names, and hinted at the high positions and ranks to which he knew they aspired. (He gave the impression) that (his forgeries) were prediction works. In this manner, he obtained from them the worldly goods that he was after. In one of the documents, he wrote an *m* repeated three times, and he went with the document to Muflih, alMuqtadir's client, who was an important official, and said to him: "This refers to you. It means Muflih, the client (mawla) of al-Muqtadir." In this connection, he mentioned the government position to which, he knew, (Muflih) aspired. For (Muflih's benefit), he had invented telltale allusions from Muflih's generally known circumstances. (Ad-Daniyali) thus deceived (Muflih), and (Muflih) gave him a fortune. Later on, the wazir al-Husayn b. al-Qasim b. Wahb, who was out of office (at the time), got in touch with Muflih. [1098](#) He had similar leaves prepared for him and referred to the name of the wazir with such letters and allusions fixed (beforehand). He said that (Ibn Wahb) would become wazir to the eighteenth caliph. Under his direction, the affairs (of the government) would be in order. He would defeat his enemies, and the world would be highly civilized in his time. (Ibn Wahb) let Muflih see the leaves. He (had also) mentioned in them other events and predictions of the same kind,

things that had already happened and others that had not yet happened. The whole he attributed to Daniel. Muflīh liked the work and let al-Muqtadir see it. Al-Muqtadir's attention was directed through all these allusions to Ibn Wahb, because they obviously fitted him. Tricks of this sort, which were completely based on falsehood and on ignorance of such puzzles, were the reason for (Ibn Wahb's) becoming wazir.

It is obvious that the prediction work that is ascribed to al-Bajarbagi is a work of this kind.

I asked Akmal-ad-din,¹⁰⁹⁹ the *shaykh* of the non-Arab Hanafites in Egypt, about this prediction work and about the Sufi (author), al-Bajarbagi, to whom it is attributed, since he was informed about the Sufi orders. He said: "Al-Bajarbaqi belonged to the Sufis known as Qalandariyah, who practice the innovation of shaving their beards. He was talking about what was going to happen by means of the removal (of the veil, *kashf*), and was hinting at personalities whose identity he knew. He referred to them cryptically with letters that he made up freely. (He did this) for whomever of them he saw. Occasionally, he put that (material) into poetical form and from time to time produced a few verses. These verses were later on circulated in his name. People were eager to get them. They considered them an enigmatic prediction work. The verses were then constantly added to by forgers of this type, and the common people occupied themselves with trying to decipher them. But it is impossible to decipher them, because only previously known or established rules can lead to the decipherment of such puzzles. In this (particular case), the only clues to the meaning of the letters are in the poem itself."¹¹⁰⁰ The statement quoted from so excellent a person (as Shaykh Akmal-ad-din) is to me an altogether adequate answer to the problem that, I felt, was posed by the prediction work of al-Bajarbagi.

"We would not be persons who are guided aright, had God not guided us."
¹¹⁰¹

Later on,¹¹⁰² I came across the History of Ibn Kathir.¹¹⁰³ It was in Damascus where I stopped with the Sultan's cavalcade in the year 802 [1400], at a time when I was chief Malikite judge in Egypt.

In the biography of (al-Bajarbaqi) relative to the year 724 [1324], Ibn Kathir says: "Shams-ad-din Muhammad al-Bajarbaqi. He is considered the founder of the unorthodox sect of the Bajarbagiyah, which is known for its denial of the Creator. (Al-Bajarbaqi's) father, Jamal-ad-din `Abd-arRahim b. `Umar al-Mawsilt, was a pious Shafi'ite who taught in Damascus colleges. His son grew up among jurisconsults. He studied a little and then turned to mysticism. A group of people who believed in him and followed his order adhered to him. Later on, the Malikite judge condemned him to death, and he fled to the East. He then was able to prove that those who had testified against him were hostile to him, and the Hanbalite (judge) reversed the former judgment. (AlBajarbagi) remained in al-Qabun (near Damascus) for a number of years. He died during the night of Wednesday, Rabi` II, 16, 724 [night of April 11/12, 1324].

Ibn Kathir says: Al-Bajarbagi composed a *jafr* poem which runs as follows:
¹¹⁰⁴

Listen and comprehend letters and their numerical values,
And the description, and be understanding, like a clever and intelligent
person.
The Lord of the heavens will tell, concerning Egypt and what is to be in
Syria
Of good things and of tribulations.

Baybars will be given a goblet to drink after the five of them,
And a *h-m* with restlessness, sleeping in blankets [mountain dens?].
Alas, Damascus -what descended upon its territory!
They destroyed a mosque of God. How (beautifully) had it been constructed!
Woe unto it, how many acted wrongly with regard to the religion! How
many did they kill!
How much blood, of scholars and lowly people, did they shed!
How much (noise) could be heard, and how many captives there were! How
many did they rob
And then burn, of young men and old;
Existence is dark, and the land is blacked out.
Even the pigeons there mourn on the branches.
Oh, (poor) creatures, is there no helper for the religion?
Get up (all of you) and go to Syria, from the plains and the rugged hills!
The Arabs of the `Iraq and of Lower and Upper Egypt are coming.
The firm resolution is to bring death to unbelief in (Damascus).

Chapter IV

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

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

THE EXPLANATION FOR THIS IS that building and city planning are features of sedentary culture brought about by luxury and tranquility, as we have mentioned before ² Such (features of sedentary culture) come after Bedouin life and the features that go with it.

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

Then, when the town has been built and is all finished, as the builder saw fit and as the climatic and geographical conditions required, the life of the dynasty is the life of the town. If the dynasty is of short duration, life in the town will stop at the end of the dynasty. Its civilization will recede, and the town will fall into ruins. On the other hand, if the dynasty is of long duration and lasts a long time, new constructions will always go up in the town, the number of large mansions will increase, and the walls ⁴ of the town will extend farther and farther. Eventually, the layout of the town will cover a wide area, and the town will extend so far and so wide as to be (almost) beyond measurement. This happened in Baghdad and similar (cities).

The Khatib mentioned in his *History* that in the time of al-Ma'min, the number of public baths in Baghdad reached 65,000. ⁵ (Baghdad) included over forty of the adjacent neighboring towns and cities. It was not just one town surrounded by one wall. Its population was much too large for that. The same was the case with al-Qayrawan, Cordoba, and al-Mahdiyah in Islamic times. It is the case with Egypt and Cairo at this time, so we are told.

The dynasty that has built a certain town may be destroyed. Now, the mountainous and flat areas surrounding the city are a desert ^{5a} that constantly provides for (an influx of) civilization (population). This (fact), then, will preserve the existence of (the town), and (the town) will continue to live after the dynasty is

dead. (This situation) can be observed in Fez and Bougie in the West, and in the non-Arab 'Iraq in the East, which get their civilization (population) from the mountains. When the conditions of the inhabitants of the desert reach the utmost ease and (become most) profitable, (the situation thus created causes the inhabitants of the desert to) look for the tranquility and quiet that human beings (desire) by nature. Therefore, they settle in towns and cities and form an (urban) population.

Or, it may happen that a town founded (by a dynasty now destroyed) has no opportunity to replenish its civilization (population) by a constant influx of settlers from a desert near the town. In this case, the destruction of the dynasty will leave it unprotected. It cannot be maintained. Its civilization will gradually decay, until its population is dispersed and gone. This happened in Baghdad, Egypt,⁶ and al-Kufah in the East, and in al-Qayrawan, al-Mahdiyah, and Qal'at Bani Hammad ⁷ in the West, as well as in other cities. This should be understood.

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

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

2. Royal authority calls for urban settlement.

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

A city situated in a district where (rivals of the dynasty) are found, may often become a place of refuge for a person who wants to attack (the tribes and groups in authority) and revolt against them and deprive them of the royal authority to which they have aspired.⁸ He fortifies himself in the city and fights them (from there).

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

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

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

3. Only a strong royal authority is able to construct
large cities and high monuments.

We have mentioned this before in connection with buildings and other dynastic (monuments).¹¹ (The size of monuments) is proportionate to the importance of (the various dynasties). The construction of cities can be achieved only by united effort, great numbers, and the co-operation of workers. When the dynasty is large and far-flung, workers are brought together from all regions, and their labor is employed in a common effort. Often, the work involves the help of machines, which multiply the power and strength needed to carry the loads required in building. (Unaided) human strength would be insufficient. Among such machines are pulleys¹² and others.

Many people who view the great monuments and constructions of the ancients, such as the Reception Hall of Khosraw (*Iwan Kisra*), the pyramids of Egypt, the arches of the Malga (at Carthage) and those of Cherchel in the Maghrib, think that the ancients erected them by their own (unaided) powers, whether (they worked) as individuals or in groups. They imagine that the ancients had bodies proportionate to (those monuments) and that their bodies, consequently, were much taller, wider, and heavier than (our bodies), so that there was the right proportion between (their bodies) and the physical strength from which such buildings resulted. They forget the importance of machines and pulleys and engineering skill implied in this connection. Many a traveled person can confirm what we have stated from his own observation of building (activities) and of the use of mechanics to transport building materials among the non-Arab dynasties concerned with such things.

The common people call most of the monuments of the ancients found at this time, 'Adite monuments, with reference to the people of 'Ad. The common people think that the buildings and constructions of 'Ad are so big because the bodies of (the 'Adites) were so big and their strength many times greater (than our strength). This is not so. We have many monuments of nations whose body measurements are well known to us. (These monuments) are as big or bigger than such (famed monuments) as, for instance, the Reception Hall of Khosraw (*Iwan Kisrd*) and the buildings of the Shi'ah 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids) in Ifriqiyyah, or those of the Sinhajah, whose monument, still visible to this day, is the minaret of Qal'at Banu Hammad.

The same applies to the building (activity) of the Aghlabids in the Mosque of al-Qayrawan, and of the Almohads in Rabat (Ribat al-Fath), and to the forty years building (activity) of Sultan Abul-Hasan in al-Mansurah, opposite Tlemcen.¹³ It also applies to the arches supporting the aqueduct by means of which the inhabitants of Carthage brought water to their city, and which are still standing at this time. There are also other buildings and monuments (*hayakil*), the history of whose builders, whether ancient or recent, is known to us, and we can be certain that the measurements of their bodies were not excessive. This belief is founded solely upon (the tales of) storytellers who eagerly tell stories about the people of 'Ad and Thamud and the Amalekites. In fact, we find the houses of the Thamud still existing at this time in Petra, where they are cut into the rock. It is established by (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih* that those houses actually were theirs.¹⁴ The Hijazi (pilgrim) caravan has passed by them for very many years, and it has been observed that those

houses are not larger than usual inside, nor in size and height (generally)

In their belief that (the ancients had excessively large bodies, the storytellers) exaggerate so much that they believe that Og, the son of Anak, one of the Amalekites (or Canaanites),¹⁵ used to take fish fresh out of the water and cook them in the sun. They have that idea because they think that the heat of the sun is greater close to it. They do not know that the heat of the sun here among us is its light, because of the reflection of the rays when they hit the surface of the earth and the air. The sun itself is neither hot nor cold. It is a star of an uncomposed (substance) that gives light. Something of this was mentioned before in the second chapter; there we mentioned that (the size of the monuments ¹⁶ of) dynasties is proportionate to their original power.

"God creates whatever He wishes."¹⁷

4. Very large monuments are not built by one dynasty alone.

The reason for this is the afore-mentioned need for cooperation and multiplication of human strength in any building activity. Sometimes buildings are so large that they are too much for (human) strength, whether it is on its own or multiplied by machines, as we have (just) stated. Therefore, the repeated application of similar strength is required over successive periods, until (the building) materializes. One (ruler) starts the construction. He is followed by another and (the second by) a third. Each of them does all he can to bring workers together in a common effort. Finally, (the building) materializes, as it was planned, and then stands before our eyes. Those who live at a later period and see the building think that it was built by (but) a single dynasty.

In this connection one should compare what the historians report about the construction of the Dam of Ma'rib. Its construction was (started by) Saba' b.

Yashjub.¹⁸ He caused seventy rivers to flow into it. Death prevented him from completing it, and it was then completed by the Himyarite rulers who succeeded him.

Something similar has been reported with regard to the construction of Carthage, its aqueduct, and the 'Adite arches ¹⁹ supporting it. And the same is the case with most great buildings. This is confirmed by the great buildings of our own time. We find one ruler starting by laying out their foundations. Then, if the rulers who succeed him do not follow in his steps and complete (the building), it remains as it is, and is not completed as planned.

Another confirmation of our theory is the fact that we find that (later) dynasties are unable to tear down and destroy many great architectural monuments, even though destruction is much easier than construction, because destruction is return to the origin, which is non-existence, while construction is the opposite of that.²⁰ Thus, when we find a building that our human strength is too weak to tear down, even though it is easy to tear something down, we realize that the strength used in starting such a monument must have been immense and that the building could not be the monument of a single dynasty.

This is what happened to the Arabs with regard to the Reception Hall of Khosraw (*Iwan Kisra*). Ar-Rashid had the intention of tearing it down. He sent to Yahya b. Khalid, who was in prison, and asked him for advice. Yahya said: "O Commander of the Faithful, do not do it! Leave it standing! It shows the extent of the royal authority of your fore-fathers, who were able to take away the royal authority from the people who built such a monument." Ar-Rashid, however, mistrusted Yahya's advice. He said that Yahya was motivated by his affection for the non-Arabs and that he (ar-Rashid) would indeed bring it down. He started to tear it down and made a concerted effort to this effect. He had pickaxes applied to it, and he had it heated by setting fire to it, and he had vinegar poured upon it. Still, after all these (efforts), he was unable (to tear it down). Fearful of the disgrace (involved in his inability to demolish the monument), he sent again to Yahya and asked him for advice, whether he should give up his efforts to tear it down. Yahya replied: "Do not do that! Get on with it, so that it may not be said that the Commander of the Faithful and ruler of the Arabs was not able to tear down something that non-Arabs had built." Thus, ar-Rashid recognized (his disgrace) and was unable to tear it down.²¹

The same happened to al-Ma'mun in (his attempt) to tear down the pyramids in Egypt. He assembled workers to tear them down, but he did not have much success. The workers began by boring a hole into the pyramids, and they came to an interior chamber between the outer wall and walls farther inside. That was as far as they got in their attempt to tear (the pyramid) down. Their efforts are said to show to this day in the form of a visible hole. Some think that al-Ma'mun found a buried treasure between the walls.²² And God knows better.

The same applies to the arches of the Malga (at Carthage, which are still standing) at this time. The people of Tunis need stones for their buildings, and the craftsmen like the quality of the stones of the arches (of the aqueduct). For a long time, they have attempted to tear them down. However, even the smallest (part) of the walls comes down only after the greatest efforts. Parties assemble for the purpose. (They are) a well-known (custom), and I have seen many of them in the days of my youth.

"God has power over everything." ²³

5. Requirements, for the planning of towns and the consequences of neglecting those requirements.

Towns are dwelling places that nations use when they have reached the desired goal of luxury and of the things that go with it. Then, they prefer tranquility and quiet and turn to using houses to dwell in.

The purpose of (building towns) is to have places for dwelling and shelter. Therefore, it is necessary in this connection to see to it that harmful things are kept away from the towns by protecting them against inroads by them, and that useful features are introduced and all the conveniences are made available in them.

In connection with the protection of towns against harmful things, one should see to it that all the houses of the town are situated inside a protective wall. Furthermore, the town should be situated in an inaccessible place, either upon a rugged hill or surrounded by the sea or by a river, so that it can be reached only by crossing some sort of bridge.²⁴ In that way, it will be difficult for an enemy to take the town, and its inaccessibility and fortress (character) will be increased many times,

In connection with the protection of towns against harm that might arise from atmospheric phenomena, one should see to it that the air where the town is (to be situated) is good, in order to be safe from illness. When the air is stagnant and bad, or close to corrupt waters or putrid pools or swamps, it is speedily affected by putrescence as the result of being near these things, and it is unavoidable that (all) living beings who are there will speedily be affected by illness. This fact is confirmed by direct observation. Towns where no attention is paid to good air, have, as a rule, much illness. In the Maghrib, Gabes in the Jarid, in Ifriqiyah, is famous for that. Very few of its inhabitants or those who come there (from elsewhere) are spared some (form of) the putrid fever. It has been said that this (condition) is recent there, that it did not use to be that way. Al-Bakri ²⁵ gives an account of how this happened. A copper vessel was found during an excavation there. The vessel was sealed with lead. The seal was broken, and (a puff of) smoke came out of the vessel and disappeared in the air. Feverous diseases began to occur in that place from that time on.

(Al-Bakri) meant to imply that the vessel contained some magic spell against (the occurrence of) pestilence, and that when it was gone its magic efficacy also disappeared. Therefore, putrescence and pestilence reappeared. The story is an example of the feeble beliefs and ideas of the common people. Al-Bakri was neither learned nor enlightened enough to reject such (a story) and see through its nonsensical character. He reported it as he had heard it. The truth lies in the fact that it mostly is the stagnancy of putrid air that causes the putrefaction of bodies and the occurrence of feverous diseases. When the wind gets into (the putrid air), and disperses it left and right, the effect of putrescence is lessened, and the occurrence of illness among living beings decreases correspondingly. When a place has many inhabitants and its people move around a great deal, the air necessarily is made to circulate, and there originates a wind that gets into stagnant air ²⁶ This, (in turn,) helps the air to keep moving and circulating. Where there are few inhabitants, the air

is not helped to move and circulate, so it remains stagnant. Its putrescence increases and its harmfulness grows. When Ifriqiyyah enjoyed a flourishing civilization and a large population, Gabes had many inhabitants whose constant activity helped to keep the air circulating and to keep the harm resulting from (stagnant air) at a minimum by dispersing it. There was not much putrescence or illness there at that time. But when the number of inhabitants (in Gabes) became fewer, the air there, which was putrefied through the corruption of the water (of the town), became stagnant, and putrescence and the occurrence of disease increased. This is the only correct explanation (of the prevalence of feverous diseases in Gabes).

We have seen the contrary occur in places founded without regard for the quality of the air. At first they had few inhabitants, and, consequently, the occurrence of disease was high. Then, when the (number of) inhabitants increased, the situation changed. An example is the royal residence in Fez at this time, which is called the New Town.²⁷ Many such (examples) exist in the world. If the reader will examine them, my statements will be found to be correct.

As of recent times,²⁸ the corruption of the air has disappeared in Gabes, and the putrescence no longer exists there. The ruler of Tunis besieged Gabes and cut down the palm grove that surrounded the town. Part of (the town) was thus opened up, and the surrounding air could circulate and the winds could get into it. Thus, the putrescence disappeared from the air.

God governs all affairs.

In connection with the importation of useful things and conveniences into towns, one must see to a number of matters.²⁹ There is the water (problem). The place should be on a river, or springs with plenty of fresh water should be facing it. The existence of water near the place simplifies the water problem for the inhabitants, which is urgent. The existence of (water) will be a general convenience to them.

Another utility in towns, for which one must provide, is good pastures for the livestock of (the inhabitants). Each householder needs domestic animals for breeding, for milk, and for riding. (These animals) require pasturage. If (the pastures) are nearby and good, that will be more convenient for them, because it is troublesome for them to have the pastures far away.

Furthermore, one has to see to it that there are fields suitable for cultivation. Grain is the (basic) food. When the fields are near, the (needed grain) can be obtained more easily and quickly.

Then, there also is (the problem of) a woods to supply firewood and building material. Firewood is a matter of general concern, as it is used for making fires to generate heat. Timber, too, is needed, for roofing and for the many other necessities for which timber is employed.

One should also see to it that the town is situated close to the sea, to facilitate the importation of foreign goods from remote countries. However, this is not on the same level with the afore-mentioned (requirements). All the (requirements) mentioned differ in importance according to the different needs and the necessity that exists for them on the part of the inhabitants.

The founder (of a town) sometimes fails to make a good natural selection, or he sees only to what seems most important to him or his people, and does not think of the needs of others. The Arabs did that at the beginning of Islam when they founded towns in the 'Iraq, the Hijaz,³⁰ and Ifriqiyyah. They saw only to what seemed important to them, namely, pastures for (their) camels and the trees and brackish water suitable to (camels). They did not see to it that there was water (for

human consumption), fields for cultivation, firewood, or pastures for domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, and so on.³¹ Among the cities (founded by the Arabs) were al-Qayrawan, al-Kufah, al-Basrah, Sijilmasah, and the like. (These cities) were, therefore, very ready to fall into ruins, in as much as in connection with them no attention had been paid to the natural (requirements of towns).

In connection with coastal towns situated on the sea, one must see to it that they are situated on a mountain or amidst a people sufficiently numerous to come to the support of the town when an enemy attacks it. The reason for this is that a town which is near the sea but does not have within its area tribes who share its group feeling, or is not situated in rugged mountain territory, is in danger of being attacked at night by surprise. Its enemies can easily attack it with a fleet and do harm to it. They can be sure that the city has no one to call to its support and that the urban population, accustomed to tranquility, has become dependent (on others for its protection) and does not know how to fight. Among (cities) of this type, for instance, are Alexandria in the East, and Tripoli, Bone, and Sale in the West.

Tribes and groups living nearby, where a call for help or the sounds of fighting can reach them, and roads (too) rugged to be used by those who want to reach (the town) built upon a hilltop in mountainous country, constitute the principal defenses (of towns) against (their enemies). (The enemies) will give up attacking the town. Its rugged situation stops them, and they fear that the town's call for help will be answered. This applies to Ceuta, Bougie, and even to Collo (al-Qull),³² despite its small size.

This should be understood. It may be illustrated by the fact that Alexandria was designated a "border city" by the 'Abbasids although the 'Abbasid propaganda extended beyond Alexandria to Barca (Barqah) and Ifriqiyyah. (The term "border city" for Alexandria) expressed ('Abbasid) fears that attacks (against Alexandria) could be made from the sea. (Such fears were justified in the case of Alexandria) because of its exposed situation. (Its exposed situation) probably was the reason why Alexandria and Tripoli were attacked by the enemy in Islamic times on numerous occasions,

6. The mosques and venerated buildings of the world.

It should be known that God singled out some places of the earth for special honor. He made them the homes of His worship. (People who worship in them) receive a much greater reward and recompense (than people who worship elsewhere). God informed us about this situation through the tongues of His messengers and prophets, as an act of kindness to His servants and for the purpose of facilitating their ways to happiness.

We know from the two *Sahih*s that the most excellent places on earth [33](#) are the three mosques of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. Mecca is the house of Abraham. God commanded Abraham to build it and to exhort the people to make the pilgrimage thither. He and his son Ishmael built it, as is stated in the Qur'an. [34](#) He fulfilled God's commandment in this respect. Ishmael dwelt there with Hagar and the Jurhum (tribe) who lived with them, until they both died and were buried in the *hijr* [35](#) of (the Ka'bah).

Jerusalem is the house of David and Solomon. God commanded them to build the mosque there and to erect its monuments (*hayakil*). Many of the prophets, descendants of Isaac, were buried around it.

Medina is the place to which our Prophet emigrated when God commanded him to emigrate and to establish the religion of Islam there. He built his sacred mosque in Medina, and his noble burial place is on (Medina's) soil.

These three mosques are the consolation of the Muslims, the desire of their hearts, and the sacred asylum of their religion. There are many well-known traditions about their excellence and the very great reward awaiting those who live near them and pray in them. We shall give (in the following pages) some references to the history of the origin of these three mosques and tell how they gradually developed and eventually made their full-fledged appearance in the world.

Mecca is said to have originated when Adam built it opposite the "much-frequented house." [36](#) Later on, Mecca was destroyed in the Flood. There is no sound historical information in this connection on which one may rely. The information is merely derived from the indication in the verse of the Qur'an, "And when Abraham raised the foundations of the house ..." [37](#)

Then, God sent Abraham, whose story and that of his wife Sarah and her jealousy of Hagar are known. God revealed to Abraham that he should [38](#) separate from Hagar and exile her together with her son Ishmael to Paran (Faran), the mountains of Mecca beyond Syria and Aylah. Abraham sent her out there, and she reached the place of the House. There, she became thirsty, and God in His kindness caused the water of the well of Zamzam to gush forth for Hagar and Ishmael. He also caused a group of Jurhumites to pass by them. They took in Hagar and Ishmael and dwelt with them around the Zamzam, as is well known and stated in its proper place. Ishmael built a house for shelter where the Ka'bah is situated. He built a circular hedge of doom palms around it and turned it into an enclosure for his sheep and goats. Abraham came several times from Syria to visit him. On his last visit, he was ordered to build the Ka'bah on the site of the enclosure. He built it with the help of his son Ishmael. He exhorted the people to make pilgrimage to (the Ka'bah).

Ishmael stayed there. When his mother Hagar died, he buried her there. He himself continued to serve (the Ka'bah) until he died. He was buried next to his mother Hagar, and his descendants took charge after him of the affairs of the House together with their maternal uncles from the Jurhum. Then, after them, there came the Amalekites. The situation remained unchanged.³⁹

People eagerly came there from all directions. There were all kinds of people, descendants of Ishmael as well as others, from near and far. It has been reported that the Tubba's used to make the pilgrimage to the House and to venerate it. It has also been reported that the Tubba' called Tiban As'ad Abu Karib ⁴⁰ clothed it with curtains and striped Yemenite cloth and ordered it cleaned and had a key made for it. It has furthermore been reported that the Persians used to make pilgrimage to it and present sacrificial gifts to it. The two golden gazelles that 'Abd-al-Muttalib found when the Zamzam was excavated are said to have been one of the sacrificial gifts presented (to the Ka'bah) by (the Persians).⁴¹

The Jurhum, as descendants of the maternal uncles of the children of Ishmael, continued their administration of the House after them. Eventually, the Khuza'ah ousted them and remained there after them, as long as God wanted them to remain. Then, the descendants of Ishmael became numerous and spread. They branched out into the Kinanah, who, in turn, branched out into the Quraysh and others. The administration of the (Ka'bah by the) Khuza'ah deteriorated. The Quraysh took it away from them. They ousted them from the House and took possession of it themselves. Their chief at the time was Qusayy b. Kilab. He rebuilt the House and gave it a roof of doom-palm and date-palm boughs. Al-A'shah said:

I swear by the two garments of the monk (of al-Lujj) and by (the building) that

Was built by Qusayy all alone and by Ibn Jurhum.⁴²

During the (Qurashite) administration later on, the House was hit by a flood - or, it is said, by a fire - and was destroyed. The (Quraysh) rebuilt it with money collected from their own property. A ship had been wrecked on the coast near Jidda. They bought its wood for the roof (of the Ka'bah). The height of its walls was (just) over a fathom, and they made them eighteen cubits (high). The door had been level with the ground, and they raised it (just) above one fathom in height, so that floodwaters could not enter it. They did not have enough money to finish it. Therefore, they shortened its foundations, and omitted six cubits and one span. (That area) they surrounded with a low wall. In making the circumambulation (of the Ka'bah), one keeps outside this wall. This (area) is the *hijr*.

The House remained in this state, until Ibn az-Zubayr, who wanted to be caliph, fortified himself in Mecca. The armies of Yazid b. Mu'awiyah, under al-Husayn b. Numayr as-Sakuni, advanced against him ⁴³ in the year 64 [683]. (The House) was set afire, it is said, by means of naphtha, which the armies of Yazid shot against Ibn az-Zubayr. Its walls began to crack. Ibn az-Zubayr had it torn down and rebuilt it most beautifully. There was a difference of opinion among the men around Muhammad with regard (to the manner in which the Ka'bah) was to be reconstructed. Ibn az-Zubayr argued against the others with the following remark, which the Messenger of God had made to 'A'ishah: "If your people had not but recently been unbelievers, I would have restored the House on the foundations of Abraham and I would have made two doors for it, an eastern and a western one." ⁴⁴ (Ibn az-Zubayr), therefore, tore it down and laid bare the foundations of Abraham. He assembled the great personalities and dignitaries (of Mecca) to look at them. Ibn 'Abbas advised him to think of preserving the *qiblah* for the people (during the

reconstruction). Therefore, he set up a wooden scaffolding over the foundations and placed curtains over it, in order to preserve the *qiblah* (and keep it visible as a temporary measure). He sent to San'a' for gypsum and quicklime, which he had brought back (to Mecca). He asked about the original stone quarry used in constructing (the Ka'bah). As many stones as were needed by him were brought together. Then, he started construction over the foundations of Abraham. He built the walls twentyseven cubits high, and he made two doors for (the Ka'bah) on a level with the ground, as it was said in the tradition (quoted). He made floors and wall coverings of marble for (the Ka'bah), and he had keys and doors of gold fashioned for it.

Later on, in the days of 'Abd-al-Malik, al-Hajjaj came to besiege Ibn az-Zubayr. He bombarded the mosque from mangonels until its walls cracked. After Ibn az-Zubayr's defeat, al-Hajjaj consulted 'Abd-al-Malik concerning (Ibn az-Zubayr's) reconstruction of the House and additions to it. 'Abd-al-Malik ordered him to tear it down and rebuild it upon the foundations of the Quraysh. The Ka'bah has this (appearance) today. It is said that he ('Abd-al-Malik) regretted his action when he learned that Ibn az-Zubayr's transmission of the tradition of 'A'ishah was a sound one. He said: "I wish I had left it to Abu Khubayb (Ibn az-Zubayr) to rebuild the House as he had undertaken to do it." [45](#)

Al-Hajjaj tore down six cubits and a span of (the Ka'bah), where the *hijr* is, and rebuilt (the Ka'bah) upon the foundations of the Quraysh. He walled in the western door and that part of the eastern door that today is below the threshold. He left the rest entirely unchanged. The whole building as it now stands is the building of Ibn az-Zubayr. In the wall, between his building and that of al-Hajjaj, one can distinctly see a crack in the wall where the two buildings are connected. The one construction is separated from the other by a crack in the wall, originally one finger wide, now repaired.

There is a weighty problem here. (The situation described) is in disagreement with what the jurists say relative to circumambulation (of the Ka'bah). The person who makes the circumambulation must be careful not to lean over the *shadharwan* understructure [46](#) running underneath the foundation walls. Were he to do so, his circumambulation would be inside the House. This (restriction) is based upon the assumption that the walls cover only a part of the foundations, a part that is not covered by the walls being where the *shadharwan* understructure is. (The jurists) also state with regard to kissing the Black Stone, that the person who makes the circumambulation must straighten up again when he has kissed the Black Stone, lest part of his circumambulation be inside the House.

Now, if all the walls belong to the building of Ibn az-Zubayr, which was erected upon the foundations of Abraham, how could there occur what (the jurists) say could occur, (namely, that unless due caution is practiced, part of the circumambulation might fall inside the Ka'bah)? There is no escape from (the difficulty), except by assuming one of two alternatives. Al-Hajjaj may have torn down the whole and rebuilt it, as a number of persons have reported, (but not covered the whole of Ibn az-Zubayr's foundation). However, this assumption is refuted by the crack visible between the two buildings and the differences of technical detail between the upper and lower parts. The other alternative would be that Ibn az-Zubayr did not fully restore the House upon the foundations of Abraham. He would only have done this in the case of the *hijr*, so as to include it. (The Ka'bah) today, although built by Ibn az-Zubayr, would thus not be on the foundations of Abraham. This is unlikely. But it is one of the two possible alternatives. And God knows better.

The area (courtyard) around the House, that is, the Mosque, was an open

space to be used by those who were making the circumambulation. In the days of the Prophet and his successor, Abu Bakr, there were no walls surrounding it. Then the number of people (who made pilgrimage to the Ka'bah) increased. 'Umar bought the (adjacent) houses and had them torn down, and added their (sites) to the Mosque (area). He surrounded it with walls less than a fathom high. The same was done, successively, by 'Uthman, Ibn az-Zubayr, and al-Walid b. 'Abd-al-Malik. The latter rebuilt (the Mosque) with marble columns. Al-Mansur and his son and successor al-Mahdi added to it. Subsequently, no further additions were made, and the Mosque has remained as it was then down to our time.

Indications that God has honored the House and been greatly concerned with it are too impressive for them all to be recorded. It is sufficient to mention that He made it the place where the revelation and the angels came down, and a place for worship and fulfillment of the religious duties and rites of pilgrimage. The sacred precinct of the House has been singled out for more venerable rights and privileges than any other place. God has forbidden anyone who opposes the religion of Islam to enter the sacred precinct. He enjoined those who enter it to wear no sewn garments but a piece of cloth (*izar*) to cover them.⁴⁷ He has granted asylum and protection against all harm to those who take refuge in it and to the cattle that graze on its pastures. No one has anything to fear there. No wild animal is hunted there. No tree is cut down for firewood.

The limits of the sacred precinct, which is invested with so much sanctity, extend, in the direction of Medina, three miles to at-Tan'im; ⁴⁸ in the direction of the 'Iraq, seven miles to the pass of the mountain of al-Munqata'; in the direction of al-Ji'rannah, nine miles to ash-Shi'b; ⁴⁹ in the direction of at-Ta'if, seven miles to Batn Namirah; and, in the direction of Jidda, ten miles to Munqata' al-'Asha'ir.

This is the importance and history of Mecca. Mecca is called "the Mother of Villages."⁵⁰ The name of the Ka'bah is derived from *ka'b* (cube), because of its heights.⁵¹

Mecca is also called Bakkah.⁵² Al-Asma'i⁵³ says: "(It is called Bakkah,) because the people 'squeezed' (*bakka*) -that is, pushed-each other toward it." Mujahid⁵⁴ says: "The *b* of Bakkah was changed into *m*, as one says *lazim* and *lazib* 'clinging, adhering,' because of the proximity of the place of articulation of the two sounds." An-Nakha'i⁵⁵ says: "Bakkah means the House, and Mecca the place." Az-Zuhri⁵⁶ says; "Bakkah means the whole mosque, and Mecca the sacred precinct."

Ever since pre-Islamic times, Mecca has been honored by the nations. Their rulers sent property and treasures there. (This was done, for instance,) by the Persian emperor (Khosraw) and others. The story of the swords and the two gazelles that 'Abd-al-Muttalib found when the Zamzam was excavated is well known.⁵⁷

During the conquest of Mecca, the Messenger of God found in the cistern there seventy thousand ounces of gold, which were gifts to the House by the rulers (of the foreign nations). Their value was 2,000,000 dinars of a weight of two hundred hundredweight. 'Ali b. Abi Talib told Muhammad that he should use the money for his war, but Muhammad did not do that. He ('Ali) later on mentioned (the same thing) to Abu Bakr, but he could not move him. This is stated by al-Azraqt.⁵⁸ In al-Bukhari, there is the following story with a chain of transmitters going back to Abu Wa'il,⁵⁹ who said: "I was with Shaybah b. 'Uthman.⁶⁰ He said: 'Umar b. al-Khattab was with me. He said: My intention is not to leave any gold or silver in (Mecca), but I shall distribute it among the Muslims. I replied: You will not do that. He asked: Why? I said: (Because) it was not done by your two masters (*sahib*). He

said: They are the two men who must be taken as models." The story was (also) published by Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah.⁶¹

The money remained (in Mecca) up to the time of the disturbance caused by al-Aftas, that is, al-Husayn b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. 'Ali Zayn-al-'Abidin, in the year 199 [815].⁶² When (al-Aftas) conquered Mecca, he went to the Ka'bah and took everything that was in the treasury. He said: "What would the Ka'bah do with that money? It lies there unused. We are more entitled to use it for our war (than is the Ka'bah to hold it)." So he took it out and used it. Since then, there has been no treasure in the Ka'bah.

Jerusalem is "the Most Remote Mosque." ⁶³ It began in the time of the Sabians as the site of a temple to Venus. The Sabians used oil as a sacrificial offering and poured it upon the rock that was there. The temple (of Venus) was later on totally destroyed. The children of Israel, when they took possession of (Jerusalem), used it as the *qiblah* for their prayers. This happened in the following manner: Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, in order to give them possession of Jerusalem, as God had promised to their father Israel and his fathers Isaac and Jacob ⁶⁴ before him. Now, while they were staying in the desert, God commanded Moses to use a tabernacle ⁶⁵ of acacia wood, whose measurements, description, effigies (*hayakil*),⁶⁶ and statues were indicated (to Moses) in a revelation. The tabernacle was to contain an ark, a table with plates, and a candelabrum with candles, and (Moses was to) make an altar for sacrifices. All this is very fully described in the Torah. (Moses) made the tabernacle and placed in it the ark of the covenant - that is, the ark in which were kept the tablets fashioned in replacement of the tablets that had been sent down with the ten commandments and had been broken - and he placed the altar near it. God told Moses that Aaron should be in charge of the sacrifices. (The Israelites) set up the tabernacle among their tents in the desert. They prayed to it, offered their sacrifices upon the altar in front of it, and went there in order to receive revelations. When they took possession of Syria,⁶⁷ they deposited it in Gilgal in the Holy Land between Benjamin and Ephraim. The tabernacle remained there fourteen years, for seven years of war, and for seven years after the conquest, when the country was being divided. When Joshua died, the Israelites transferred it to Shiloh, close to Gilgal, and surrounded it with walls. It remained in this situation for three hundred years, until the Philistines took it away from (the Israelites), as was mentioned before,⁶⁸ and achieved superiority over them. Then, (the Philistines) returned the tabernacle. After the death of Eli the priest, the Israelites transferred the tabernacle to Nob. Later on, in the days of Saul, it was transferred to Gibeon ⁶⁹ in the land of Benjamin. When David became ruler, he transferred the tabernacle and the ark to Jerusalem. He made a special tent for it, and placed it upon the Rock.

The tabernacle remained the *qiblah* of (the Israelites). David wanted to build a temple upon the Rock in its place, but he was not able to complete it. He charged his son Solomon to take care of (the building of the temple). Solomon built it in the fourth year of his reign, five hundred years after the death of Moses. He made its columns of bronze, and he placed the glass pavilion ⁷⁰ in it. He covered the doors and the walls with gold. He also used gold in fashioning its effigies (*hayakil*), statues, vessels, chandeliers, and keys. He made the back(room) ⁷¹ in (the form of) a vault. In it, the ark of the covenant was to be placed. He brought it from Zion, the place of his father David. The tribes and priests carried it, and it was deposited in the vault. The tabernacle, the vessels, and the altar were put in the places prepared for them in the Mosque. Things remained that way as long as God wished.

Later on, the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, eight hundred years after its construction. Nebuchadnezzar burned the Torah and the staff (of Moses), melted the effigies (*hayakil*), and scattered the stones. Later on, the Persian rulers permitted the children of Israel to return. Ezra, the Israelite prophet at that time, rebuilt (the temple) with the help of the Persian ruler, Bahman (Artaxerxes), who owed his birth to the children of Israel who were led into captivity by

Nebuchadnezzar.⁷² (Bahman) ⁷³ set limits upon the reconstruction of (the temple) by (the Israelites) which made it a smaller building than that of Solomon. (The Israelites) did not go beyond that plan.

The ⁷⁴ vaulted halls underneath the temple in two superimposed stories, the columns of the upper story of which rest upon the vault of the lower story, are thought by many people to have been Solomon's stables. This is not so. The vaulted halls were built in order to avoid any contamination of the temple in Jerusalem. According to Jewish law, something unclean that is deep down in the earth and separated from the surface by a layer of earth, so that a straight line would connect the unclean object in the earth with the object on the surface, could be suspected of making the object on the surface unclean. And a suspicion has the same implication as a fact in (Jewish legal) opinion. Therefore, (the Israelites) built these vaulted halls in this form, with the columns of the upper ⁷⁵ hall resting upon the vaults of (the lower), so that there would be no straight line (between the object underground and the object upon the surface), along which contamination could spread, and thus any suspicion of the contamination of the temple was avoided. This makes for greater ritual cleanliness and holiness for the temple.⁷⁶

Then, the Greek, Persian, and Roman rulers successively had control over the children of Israel. During that period, a flourishing royal authority was enjoyed by the children of Israel and exercised by the Hasmoneans who were (Jewish) priests. The Hasmoneans, in turn, were succeeded by Herod, a relative of theirs by marriage, and by his children. Herod rebuilt (the temple in) Jerusalem very splendidly, after the plan of Solomon. He completed it in six years. Then, Titus, one of the Roman rulers, appeared and defeated the (Jews) and took possession of their realm. He destroyed Jerusalem and the temple there. The place where the temple had been standing he ordered to be turned into a field.

Then, the religion of the Messiah was adopted by the Romans. It became their religious practice to venerate the Messiah (Jesus). The Roman rulers vacillated, adopting Christianity at one time and giving it up at another, until Constantine appeared.⁷⁷ His mother Helena became a Christian.⁷⁸ She traveled to Jerusalem in search of the wood upon which the Messiah had been crucified, in the opinion of (the Christians). The priests ⁷⁹ informed her that his cross had been thrown to the ground and had been covered with excrements and filth. She discovered the wood and built "the Church of the Excrements"⁸⁰ over the place where those excrements had been. The Church is considered by the Christians to stand upon the grave of the Messiah. Helena destroyed the parts of the House (the Temple) that she found standing. She ordered dung and excrements to be thrown upon the Rock, until it was entirely covered and its site obscured. That she considered the proper reward for what (the Jews) had done to the grave of the Messiah. Opposite "the (Church of the) Excrements," they later on built Bethlehem, the house where Jesus was born.⁸¹

Things remained this way until the coming of Islam and the Muslim conquest. 'Umar was present at the conquest of Jerusalem, and he asked to see the Rock. The place was shown to him. It was piled high with dung and earth. He had it laid bare, and he built upon it a mosque in the Bedouin style. He gave it as much

veneration as God allowed and as befitted its excellence, as preordained and established in the divine Qur'an. [82](#) Al-Walid b. 'Abd-al-Malik later on devoted himself to constructing the Mosque of (the Rock) in the style of the Muslim mosques, as grandly as God wanted him to do it. He had done the same with the Mosque in Mecca and the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, as well as the Mosque of Damascus. The Arabs used to call (the Mosque of Damascus) the Nave (*balat*) of al-Walid. [83](#) Al-Walid compelled the Byzantine Emperor to send workers and money for the building of these mosques, and they (the Byzantine artisans) were to embellish them with mosaics. The Byzantine Emperor complied, and the construction of the mosques was able to materialize according to plan.

During the fifth [eleventh] century and (especially) at the end of it, the power of the caliphate weakened. Jerusalem was in the possession of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids), the Shi'ah caliphs of Cairo. Their power, (too,) crumbled. The European Christians advanced toward Jerusalem and took possession of it. They also took possession of all the border cities of Syria. Upon the holy Rock they built a church which they venerated and in the construction of which they took great pride. Eventually, Salah-ad-din b. Ayyub al-Kurdi became the independent ruler of Egypt and Syria. He wiped out the influence and heresy of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimids). He advanced toward Syria and waged the holy war against the European Christians there. He deprived them of possession of Jerusalem and the other border cities of Syria they were holding. This took place around the year 580 [1184/85]. Salah-ad-din destroyed the Christian church, uncovered the Rock, and rebuilt the Mosque in about the same form in which it is still standing at this time.

One should not bother about the famous problem arising from the sound tradition that the Prophet, when he was asked about the first "house" to be erected, replied: "First Mecca, and then Jerusalem." And when he was asked how long the time interval between the two buildings had been, he replied: "Forty years." [84](#)

Now, the interval between the construction of Mecca and the construction of Jerusalem corresponds to the interval between Abraham and Solomon, because it was Solomon who built the temple in Jerusalem. That is considerably more than a thousand years.

It should be known that the word "erected" that is used in the tradition was not intended to refer to "construction," but it was intended to refer to the first House to be specially designated for divine worship. It is not an unlikely assumption that Jerusalem was designated for divine worship a long time, such as (the period mentioned), before Solomon (built his temple). It has been reported that the Sabians built a temple to Venus upon the Rock. That was perhaps because (Jerusalem) was (already) a place of divine worship. In the same way, pre-Islamic (Arabs) placed idols and statues in and around the Ka'bah. The Sabians who built the temple of Venus lived in the time of Abraham. It is, therefore, not an unlikely assumption that there was an interval of forty years between the time when Mecca was made a place of divine worship and the time when the same occurred in Jerusalem, even if there was no building there (at that early date), as is well known. The first to build (a temple in) Jerusalem was Solomon. This should be understood, as it is the solution to the problem raised by the tradition.

Medina, a city that was (originally) called Yathrib, was built by Yathrib b. Mahla'il (Mahalalel), an Amalekite, and named after him.

The children of Israel took Medina away from the (Amalekites), together with the other parts of the Hijaz of which they took possession. Then, (the Aws and the Khazraj), descendants of Qaylah [85](#) who belonged to the Ghassanids, settled as neighbors of (the children of Israel in Arabia) and took (Medina) and its castles

away from them. Because of God's preordained concern for Medina, the Prophet was commanded to emigrate there, and he did so in the company of Abu Bakr. The men around him followed him. He settled there and built his Mosque and his houses in the place God had prepared for that (purpose) and had predestined since eternity for that honor. The descendants of Qaylah received him hospitably and helped him. Therefore, they were called "the Helpers" (*al-Ansar*). Islam spread from Medina and eventually gained the upper hand over all other (organizations). (Muhammad) defeated his own people. He conquered Mecca and took possession of it. The Helpers thought that he would now move away from them and return to his own country.⁸⁶ This thought weighed upon them. However, the Messenger of God addressed ⁸⁷ them and informed them that he would not move. Thus, when he died, he was even buried in Medina.

In praise of (Medina's) excellence, there exist sound traditions, as everybody knows. Scholars disagree as to whether Medina should be considered as more excellent than Mecca. Malik expressed himself in favor (of Medina), because he accepted the clear statement to that effect on the authority of Rafi' b. Khudayj,⁸⁸ which said that the Prophet had said: "Medina is better than Mecca." (This tradition) was transmitted by 'Abd-al-Wahhab ⁸⁹ in the *Ma'unah*. There are other such traditions the explicit wording of which indicates the same thing. Abu Hanifah and ash-Shafi'i were of a different opinion. At any rate, (Medina) comes right after the Sacred Mosque (of Mecca). The hearts of people everywhere long for it.

One should see how, through God's preordained concern for them, these venerated mosques are gradated in their excellence, and one should understand God's secret (plans) with regard to (His) creation and the well-considered gradation He established for the affairs of. the religion and the world.

We have no information about any mosque on earth other than these three, save for stories about the Mosque of Adam on the Indian island of Ceylon. But there exists no well-established information about that mosque upon which one may rely.

The ancient nations had mosques which they venerated in what they thought to be a spirit of religious devotion. There were the fire temples of the Persians and the temples of the Greeks and the houses of the Arabs in the Hijaz, which the Prophet ordered destroyed on his raids. Al-Mas'udi mentioned some of them.⁹⁰ We have no occasion whatever to mention them. They are not sanctioned by a religious law. They have nothing to do with religion. No attention is paid to them or to their history. In connection with them, the information contained in historical works is enough. Whoever wants to have historical information (about them) should consult (the historical works).

"God guides whomever He wants to guide."⁹¹

7. *There are few cities and towns* [92](#) *in Ifriqiyyah and the Maghrib.*

The reason for this is that these regions belonged to the Berbers for thousands of years before Islam. All (their) civilization was a Bedouin (civilization). No sedentary culture existed among (the Berbers) long enough to reach any degree of perfection. The dynasties of European Christians and Arabs who ruled (the Berbers) did not rule long enough for their sedentary culture to take firm root (among them). The customs and ways of Bedouin life to which they were always closer, continued among them. Therefore, they did not have many buildings. Furthermore, crafts were unfamiliar to the Berbers, because they were firmly rooted in desert life, and the crafts result from sedentary culture. Now, buildings can materialize only with the help of (the crafts). One needs skill to learn them, and since the Berbers did not practice them, they had no interest in buildings, let alone towns.

Furthermore, (the Berbers) have (various) group feelings and (common) descent. No (Berber group) lacks these things. (Common) descent and group feeling are more attracted to desert (than to urban life). Only tranquility and quiet call for towns. The inhabitants of (towns) come to be dependent on their militia. Therefore, desert people dislike settling in a town or staying there. Only luxury and wealth could cause them to settle in a town, and these things are rare among men.

Thus, the whole civilization of Ifriqiyyah and the Maghrib, or the largest part of it, was a Bedouin one. People lived in tents, (camel) litters, sleeping tents, and mountain fastnesses.

On the other hand, the whole civilization of the non-Arab countries, or the largest part of it, was one of villages, cities, and districts. This applies to Spain, Syria, Egypt, the non-Arab Iraq, and similar countries. Only in the rarest cases do non-Arabs have a (common) descent which they guard carefully and of which they are proud when it is pure and close. It is mostly people of (common) descent who settle in the desert, because close (common) descent constitutes closer and stronger (bonds than any other element). Thus, the group feeling that goes with (common descent) likewise is (stronger). It draws those who have it to desert life and the avoidance of cities, which do away with bravery and make people dependent upon others. This should be understood and the proper conclusions be drawn from it.

8. *The buildings and constructions in Islam are comparatively few considering (Islam's) power and as compared to the dynasties preceding (Islam).*

The reason for this is the very same thing that we mentioned concerning the Berbers.⁹³ The Arabs, too, are quite firmly rooted in the desert and quite unfamiliar with the crafts. Furthermore, before Islam, the Arabs had been strangers to the realms of which they then took possession. When they came to rule them, there was not time ⁹⁴ enough for all the institutions of sedentary culture to develop fully. Moreover, the buildings of others which they found in existence, were sufficient for them.

Furthermore, at the beginning, (their) religion forbade them to do any excessive building or to waste too much money on building activities for no purpose. When the reeds which the Muslims had used before, in building al-Kufah, caught fire, and the Muslims asked 'Umar for permission to use stones, his advice was: "Do, but no one should build more than three houses.⁹⁵ Do not vie with each other in building. Adhere to the Sunnah, and you will remain in power." He imposed this (condition) upon the delegation, and then he ordered the people not to build buildings higher than was proper. Asked what "proper" was, he replied: "What does not lead you to wastefulness and does not take you away from purposeful moderation."

The influence of the religion (Islam) and of scrupulousness in such matters then faded. Royal authority and luxury gained the upper hand. The Arabs subjected the Persian nation and took over their constructions and buildings. The tranquility and luxury they now enjoyed led them to (building activities). It was at that time that they erected buildings and (large) constructions. But that also was the period close to the destruction of the dynasty. There was only a little time left for extensive building activities and town and city planning. This had not been the case with other nations. The Persians had had a period of thousands of years. The same was the case with the Copts, the Nabataeans, and the Romans (Byzantines, Rum), as well as the first Arabs, 'Ad and Thamud, the Amalekites, and the Tubba's. They had a great deal of time, and the crafts became firmly established among them. Thus, their buildings and monuments were more numerous and left a more lasting imprint (than the buildings of the Muslim Arabs).

Upon close scrutiny, this will be found to be as I have stated.

God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it.

9. Buildings erected by Arabs, with very few exceptions, quickly fall into ruins.

The reason for this is the Bedouin attitude and unfamiliarity with the crafts, as we have mentioned before.⁹⁶ Therefore, the buildings (of the Arabs) are not solidly built.

There may be another aspect, more pertinent to the problem. That is, as we have stated,⁹⁷ that the Arabs pay little attention in town planning to making the right choice with regard to the site (of the town), the quality of the air, the water, the fields, and the pastures (belonging to it). Differences with respect to these things make the difference between good and bad cities as regards natural civilization. The Arabs have no interest in these things. They only see to it that they have pastures for their camels. They do not care whether the water is good or bad, whether there is little or much of it. They do not ask about the suitability of the fields, the vegetable plots, and the air, because they (are used to) moving about the country and importing their grain from remote places. In the desert the winds blow from all directions, and the fact that the Arabs travel about guarantees them winds of good quality. Winds turn bad only when people settle and stay in one place and there are many superfluities there.

One may cite the Arabs' planning of al-Kufah, al-Basrah, and al-Qayrawan. All they looked for when planning (those cities) was pasturage for their camels and nearness to the desert and the caravan routes. Thus, (those cities) do not possess a natural site. They had no sources from which to feed their civilization (population) later on. Such a source must exist if civilization is to continue, as we have stated before.⁹⁸ The sites of (those cities) were not naturally suited for settlement. They were not situated in the midst of nations capable of repopulating them (once their original population started to disintegrate). At the first intimations of the disintegration of (Arab) power and of the disappearance of the group feeling that protected them, (those cities) fell prey to ruin and disintegration and were as if they had never been. "God decides, and no one can change His decision."⁹⁹

10. *The beginnings of the ruin of cities.*

It should be known that when cities are first founded, they have few dwellings and few building materials, such as stones and quicklime, or the things that serve as ornamental coverings for walls, such as tiles, marble, mosaic, jet,¹⁰⁰ shells (mother-of-pearl), and glass. Thus, at that time, the buildings are built in Bedouin (style), and the materials used for them are perishable.

Then, the civilization of a city grows and its inhabitants increase in number. Now the materials used for (building) increase, because of the increase in (available) labor and the increased number of craftsmen. (This process goes on) until (the city) reaches the limit in that respect, as was discussed before.

The civilization of the city then recedes, and its inhabitants decrease in number. This entails a decrease in the crafts. As a result, good and solid building and the ornamentation of buildings are no longer practiced. Then, the (available) labor decreases, because of the lack of inhabitants. Materials such as stones, marble, and other things, are now being imported scarcely at all, and (building materials) become unavailable. The materials that are in the existing buildings are reused for building and refinishing. They are transferred from one construction to another, since most of the (large) constructions, castles, and mansions stand empty as the result of the scarcity of civilization (population) and the great decrease in (population) as compared with former times. (The same materials) continue to be used for one castle after another and for one house after another, until most of it is completely used up. People then return to the Bedouin way of building. They use adobe instead of stone and omit all ornamentation. The architecture of the city reverts to that of villages and hamlets. The mark of the desert shows in it. (The city) then gradually decays and falls into complete ruin, if it is thus destined for it.

This is how God proceeds with His creatures.

11. *With regard to the amount of prosperity and business activity (in them), cities and towns differ in accordance with the different size of their civilization (population).*

The [101](#) reason for this is that, as is known and well established, the individual human being cannot by himself obtain all the necessities of life. All human beings must co-operate to that end in their civilization. [102](#) But what is obtained through the co-operation of a group of human beings satisfies the need of a number many times greater (than themselves). For instance, no one, by himself, can obtain the share of the wheat he needs for food. But when six or ten persons, including a smith and a carpenter to make the tools, and others who are in charge of the oxen, the plowing of the soil, the harvesting of the ripe grain, and all the other agricultural activities, undertake to obtain their food and work toward that purpose either separately or collectively and thus obtain through their labor a certain amount of food, (that amount) will be food for a number of people many times their own. The combined labor produces more than the needs and necessities of the workers.

If the labor [103](#) of the inhabitants of a town or city is distributed in accordance with the necessities and needs of those inhabitants, a minimum of that labor will suffice. The labor (available) is more than is needed. Consequently, it is spent to provide the conditions and customs of luxury and to satisfy the needs of the inhabitants of other cities. They import (the things they need) from (people who have a surplus) through exchange or purchase. Thus, the (people who have a surplus) get a good deal of wealth.

It will become clear in the fifth chapter, which deals with profit and sustenance, [104](#) that profit is the value realized from labor. When there is more labor, the value realized from it increases among the (people). Thus, their profit of necessity increases. The prosperity and wealth they enjoy leads them to luxury and the things that go with it, such as splendid houses and clothes, fine vessels and utensils, and the use of servants and mounts. All these (things) involve activities that require their price [?], [105](#) and skillful people must be chosen to do them and be in charge of them. As a consequence, industry and the crafts thrive. The income and the expenditure of the city increase. Affluence comes to those who work and produce these things by their labor.

When civilization (population) increases, the (available) labor again increases. In turn, luxury again increases in correspondence with the increasing profit, and the customs and needs of luxury increase. Crafts are created to obtain (luxury products). The value realized from them increases, and, as a result, profits are again multiplied in the town. Production there is thriving even more than before. And so it goes with the second and third increase. All the additional labor serves luxury and wealth, in contrast to the original labor that served (the necessities of) life. The city that is superior to another in one (aspect of) civilization (that is, in population), becomes superior to it also by its increased profit and prosperity and by its customs of luxury which are not found in the other city. The more numerous and the more abundant the civilization (population) in a city, the more luxurious is the life of its inhabitants in comparison with that (of the inhabitants) of a lesser city.

This applies equally to all levels of the population, to the judges (of the one city) compared with the judges (of the other city), to the merchants (of the one city) compared with the merchants (of the other city), and, as with the judges and merchants, so with the artisans, the small businessmen, amirs, and policemen.

This may be exemplified, for instance, in the Maghrib, by comparing the situation of Fez with other Maghribi cities, such as Bougie, Tlemcen, and Ceuta. A wide difference, both in general and in detail, will be found to exist between (them and Fez). The situation of a judge in Fez is better than that of a judge in Tlemcen, and the same is the case with all other population groups. The same difference exists between Tlemcen on the one hand and Oran or Algiers on the other, and between Oran or Algiers and lesser cities, until one gets down to the hamlets where people have only the necessities of life through their labor, or not even enough of them.

The only reason for this is the difference in the labor (available) in (the different cities). They all are a sort of market for their labor (products), and the money spent in each market corresponds to (the volume of business done in it). The income of a judge in Fez suffices for his expenditures, and the same is the case with a judge in Tlemcen. Wherever income and expenditure (combined) are greater, conditions are better and more favorable. (Income and expenditure) are greater in Fez, since its production thrives because of luxury requirements (there). Therefore, greater opulence exists (in Fez). The same applies to Oran, Constantine, Algiers, and Biskra, until, as we have stated, one gets down to the cities whose labor does not pay for their necessities. They cannot be considered cities. They belong to the category of villages and hamlets. Therefore, the inhabitants of such small cities are found to be in a weak position and all equally poor and indigent, because their labor does not pay for their necessities and does not yield them a surplus which they can accumulate as profit. They have no increasing profit. Thus, with very few exceptions, they are poor and needy.

This can (even) be exemplified by the condition of the poor and the beggars. A beggar in Fez is better off than a beggar in Tlemcen or Oran. I observed beggars in Fez who, at the time of the sacrifices (of the 'Id festival), begged for enough to buy their sacrificial animals. I saw them beg for many kinds of luxuries and delicacies such as meat, butter, cooked dishes, garments, and utensils, such as sieves and vessels. If a beggar were to ask for such things in Tlemcen or Oran, he would be considered with disapproval and treated harshly and chased away. At this time, we hear astonishing things about conditions in Cairo and Egypt as regards luxury and wealth in the customs of the inhabitants there. Many of the poor in the Maghrib even want to move to Egypt on account of that and because they hear that prosperity in Egypt is greater than anywhere else. The common people believe that this is so because property is abundant in those regions,¹⁰⁶ and (their inhabitants) have much property hoarded, and are more charitable and bountiful than the inhabitants of any other city. (However,) this is not so, but, as one knows, the reason is that the civilization (population) of Egypt and Cairo is larger than that of any other city one might think of. Therefore, (the inhabitants of Egypt) enjoy better (living) conditions.

Income and expenditure balance each other in every city. If the income is large, the expenditure is large, and vice versa. And if both income and expenditure are large, the inhabitants become more favorably situated, and the city grows.

No (phenomenon) of this sort one may hear about should be denied, but all these things should be understood to be the result of much civilization and the resulting great profits which facilitate spending and giving bounties to those who ask for them. This might be compared with the difference existing in one and the same town with regard to the houses dumb animals keep away from or frequent. The premises and courtyards of the houses of the prosperous and wealthy (inhabitants of

the town), who set a good table and where grain and bread crumbs lie scattered around, are frequented by swarms of ants and insects. There are many large rats in their cellars, and cats repair to them.¹⁰⁷ Flocks of birds circle over them and eventually leave, satiated and full with food and drink. (But) in the premises of the houses of the indigent and the poor who have little sustenance, no insect crawls about and no bird hovers in the air, and no rat or cat takes refuge in the cellars ¹⁰⁸ of such houses, for, as (the poet) said:

The bird swoops down where there is grain to pick up And frequents the mansions of noble (generous) persons. ¹⁰⁹

God's secret (plan) in this respect should be scrutinized. One may compare the swarms of human beings with the swarms of dumb animals, and the crumbs from tables with the surplus of sustenance and luxury and the ease with which it can be given away by the people who have it, because as a rule they can do without it, since they have more of it. It should be known that favorable conditions and much prosperity in civilization are the results of its large size.

"God has no need of the worlds." ¹¹⁰

12. *Prices in towns.*

It should be known that all markets cater to the needs of people. Some of these needs are necessities, foodstuffs, for instance, such as wheat and barley; [111](#) corresponding foods, such as beans, chick-peas, peas, and other edible grains; and wholesome foods such as onions, garlic, and the like. Other things are conveniences or luxuries, such as seasonings, fruits, clothes, utensils, mounts, all the crafts, and buildings. When a city is highly developed and has many inhabitants, the prices of necessary foodstuffs and corresponding items are low, and the prices for luxuries, such as seasonings, fruits, and the things that go with them, are high. When the inhabitants of a city are few and its civilization weak, the opposite is the case.

The reason for this is that the different kinds of grains belong among the necessary foodstuffs. The demand for them, therefore, is very large. Nobody would neglect (to provide for) his own food or that of his establishment for a month or a year. Thus, the procurement of (grain) concerns the entire population of a city, or the largest part of them, both in the city itself and in its environs. This is inevitable. Everybody who procures food for himself has a great surplus beyond his own and his family's needs. This surplus is able to satisfy the needs of many of the inhabitants of that particular city. No doubt, then, the inhabitants of a city have more food than they need. Consequently, the price of food is low, as a rule, except when misfortunes occur due to celestial conditions that may affect (the supply of) food in certain years. If people did not have to store food against such possible mishaps, it could be given away entirely gratis, since it would be plentiful because of the large civilization (population of the city).

All other conveniences, such as seasonings, fruits, and whatever else belongs to them, are not matters of general concern. Their procurement does not engage the labor of all the inhabitants of a city or the largest part of them. Then, [112](#) when a city has a highly developed, abundant civilization and is full of luxuries, there is a very large demand for those conveniences and for having as many of them as a person can expect in view of his situation. This results in a very great shortage of such things. Many will bid for them, but they will be in short supply. They will be needed for many purposes, and prosperous people used to luxuries will pay exorbitant prices for them, because they need them more than others. Thus, as one can see, prices come to be high.

Crafts and labor also are expensive in cities with an abundant civilization. There are three reasons for this. First, there is much need (of them), because of the place luxury occupies in the city on account of the (city's) large civilization. Second, industrial workers place a high value on their services and employment, (for they do not have to work) since life is easy in a town because of the abundance of food there. Third, the number of people with money to waste is great, and these people have many needs for which they have to employ the services of others and have to use many workers and their skills. Therefore, they pay more for (the services of) workers than their labor is (ordinarily considered) worth, because there is competition for (their services) and the wish to have exclusive use of them. Thus, workers, craftsmen, and professional people become arrogant, their labor becomes expensive, and the expenditures of the inhabitants of the city for these things increase.

Foodstuffs in small cities that have few inhabitants are few, because (these cities) have a small (supply) of labor and because, in view of the small size of the city, the people fear food shortages. Therefore, they hold on to (the food) that comes into their hands and store it. It thus becomes something precious to them, and those who want to buy it have to pay higher prices. (Oh the other hand,) they also have no demand for conveniences, because the inhabitants are few and their condition is weak. Little business is done by them, and the prices there, consequently, become particularly low.

Customs duties and other duties that are levied on (foods) in the markets and at the city gates on behalf of the ruler, and that tax collectors levy on profits from business transactions in their own interest, enter into the price of foodstuffs. Prices in cities, thus, are higher than prices in the desert, because customs duties and other duties and levies are few or non-existent among (the Bedouins), while the opposite is the case in cities, especially in the later (years) of a dynasty.¹¹³

The cost of agricultural labor also enters into the price of foodstuffs. It is reflected in these prices.¹¹⁴ This has happened in Spain at the present time. The Christians pushed the Muslims back to the seacoast and the rugged territory there, where (the soil) is poor for the cultivation of grain and little suited for (the growth of) vegetables. They themselves took possession of the fine soil and the good land. Thus, (the Muslims) had to treat the fields and tracts of land, in order to improve the plants and agriculture there. This treatment required expensive labor (products) and materials, such as fertilizer and other things that had to be procured. Thus, their agricultural activities required considerable expenditures. They calculated these expenditures in fixing their prices, and thus Spain has become an especially expensive region, ever since the Christians forced (the Muslims) to withdraw to the Muslim-held coastal regions, for the reason mentioned.

When they hear about the high prices in (Spain), people think that they are caused by the small amount of foodstuffs and grain in the country. This is not so. As we know, the (people of Spain), of all civilized people, are the ones most devoted to agriculture. It rarely happens among them that a man in authority or an ordinary person has no tract of land or field, or does not do some farming. The only exceptions are a few craftsmen and professional people, or fighters in the holy war who are newcomers to the country. The ruler, therefore, includes in the allowances these men receive, rations consisting of the grain they (need) for food and for fodder. The reason for the high prices in (Spain) of the various kinds of grain is the one we have stated.

The Berber countries are in the contrary position. Their fields are fine and their soil is good. Therefore, they did not have to procure anything (from outside) in order to be able to cultivate agriculture, which is widely and generally practiced there. This is the reason for the cheapness of foodstuffs in their country.

God determines night and day.¹¹⁵

13. *Bedouins are unable to settle in a city with a large civilization (population).*

The reason for this is that luxury increases in a city with a large civilization, as we have stated before. The needs of the inhabitants increase on account of the luxury. Because of the demand for (luxury articles), they become customary, and thus come to be necessities. In addition, all labor becomes precious in the city, and the conveniences become expensive, because there are many purposes for which they are in demand in view of the prevailing luxury and because the government makes levies on market and business transactions. This is reflected in the sales prices. Conveniences, foodstuffs, and labor thus become very expensive. As a result, the expenditures of the inhabitants increase tremendously in proportion to the civilization of (the city). A great deal of money is spent. Under these circumstances, (people) need a great deal of money for expenditures, to procure the necessities of life for themselves and their families, as well as all their other requirements.

The income of the Bedouins, on the other hand, is not large, because they live where there is little demand for labor, and labor is the cause of profit. Bedouins, therefore, do not accumulate any profit or property. For this reason, it is difficult for them to settle in a big city, because conveniences there are (many) [116](#) and things to buy are dear. In the desert, (the Bedouins) can satisfy their needs with a minimum of labor, because in their lives they are little used to luxuries and all their requirements. They are not, therefore, obliged to have property.

Every Bedouin who is attracted to city life quickly shows himself unable (to compete) and is disgraced. The only exceptions are such (Bedouins) as have previously accumulated property and obtained more of it than they needed and therefore achieved the amount of tranquility and luxury that is natural to civilized people. They, then, may move to a city, and their condition, as regards customs and luxury, can blend with that of its inhabitants. This is the way the civilization of cities begins.

God "comprises every thing." [117](#)

14. *Differences with regard to prosperity and poverty
are the same in countries as in cities.*

It should be known that the condition of the inhabitants in regions that have an abundant civilization and contain numerous nations and many inhabitants is favorable. They have much property and many cities. Their dynasties and realms are large. The reason for all this is the aforementioned great amount of (available) labor and the fact, which we shall mention later on, that it brings wealth. A great surplus of products remains after the necessities of the inhabitants have been satisfied. (This surplus) provides for a population far beyond the size and extent of the (actual one), and comes back to the people as profit that they can accumulate, as we shall mention in the chapter on (the ways of) making a living and the explanation of sustenance and profit.¹¹⁸ Prosperity, thus, increases, and conditions become favorable. There is luxury and wealth. The tax revenues of the ruling dynasty increase on account of business prosperity. Its property increases, and its authority grows. It comes to use fortresses and castles, to found towns, and to construct cities.

This ¹¹⁹ may be exemplified by the eastern regions, such as Egypt, Syria, the non-Arab 'Iraq, India, China, and the whole northern region, beyond the Mediterranean. When their civilization increased, the property of the inhabitants increased, and their dynasties became great. Their towns and settlements became numerous, and their commerce and conditions improved.

At this time, we can observe the condition of the merchants of the Christian nations who come to the Muslims in the Maghrib. Their prosperity and affluence cannot be fully described because it is so great. The same applies to the merchants from the East and what we hear about their conditions, and even more so to the Far Eastern merchants from the countries of the non-Arab 'Iraq, India, and China. We hear remarkable stories reported by travelers about their wealth and prosperity. These stories are usually received with skepticism. The common people who hear them think that the prosperity of these peoples is the result of the greater amount of property owned by them,¹²⁰ or of the existence of gold and silver mines in their country in larger number (than elsewhere), or of the fact that they, to the exclusion of others; appropriated the gold of the ancient nations. This is not so. The only gold mine about whose existence in these regions we have information, lies in the Sudan country, which is nearer to the Maghrib (than to any other country). Furthermore, all the merchandise that is in their country is exported by them for commerce. If they possessed ready property in abundance, they would not export their merchandise in search of money, and they would have altogether no need of other people's property.

Astrologers have noticed this and been amazed by the favorable conditions and abundance of property in the East. They came and said that the gifts of the stars and the shares (of good fortune) were larger in the nativities of the East than in the nativities of the West. This is correct from the point of view of the correspondence between astrological judgments and terrestrial conditions, as we have stated.¹²¹ But astrologers give us only the astrological reason. They ought also to give us the terrestrial reason. The (terrestrial reason) is the large extent and concentration of civilization in the eastern regions, as we have mentioned. A large civilization yields large profits because of the large amount of (available) labor, which is the cause of

(profit). Therefore, the East enjoys more prosperity than all other regions. This is not exclusively the result of the influence of the stars. Our previous indications have made it clear that the influence of the stars cannot produce such a result all by itself. The (existence of a) correspondence between astrological judgments and terrestrial civilization and nature is something inevitable.

The relationship between prosperity and civilization may be exemplified by the regions of Ifriqiyah and Barca (Barqah). When their population decreased and their civilization shrank, the condition of their inhabitants decayed. They became poor and indigent. The tax revenues from (the region) decreased. The property of the dynasties that ruled there became small. Formerly, the Shi'ah (Fatimid) and Sinhajah (Zirid) dynasties had enjoyed a well-known prosperity and large tax revenues. They had been able to spend a great deal and pay large allowances. This went so far that, most of the time, money was brought from al-Qayrawan to the ruler of Egypt for his needs and important business. The property of the dynasty was so extensive that Jawhar al-Katib carried with him, on his expedition to conquer Egypt, one thousand loads of money from which he paid the salaries and allowances of the soldiers and the expenditures of the raiders.¹²²

The region of the Maghrib was inferior to Ifriqiyah in ancient times. Still, it had no little (wealth). During the Almohad dynasty, its condition was favorable and its revenues abundant. At this time, the Maghrib has gone down in this respect because of the decrease and shrinkage of civilization there. Most of the Berber civilization (population) there is gone, and has obviously and palpably become inferior to what it used to be. Its condition has almost become similar to that of Ifriqiyah. Formerly, its civilization had extended from the Mediterranean to the Sudan country between the longitude(s) of as-Sus in the far West ¹²³ (in Morocco) and Barca (Barqah). Today, all or most of it is a waste, empty, and desert area, except for the coastal regions or the hills near it.

God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it. He is the best heir.

15. *The accumulation of estates and farms in cities* [124](#)
Their uses and yields.

It [125](#) should be known that the accumulation of numerous estates and farms by the inhabitants of towns and cities does not come all at once and not at one time. No one person would have enough wealth to acquire limitless (real) property. [126](#) Even if prosperity were as great as possible, the acquisition and accumulation of (real) property would be gradual. It may come about through inheritance from one's forefathers and blood relatives, so that eventually the property of many comes to one person, who thus possesses much. Or it may be through fluctuation in the (real estate) market.

When one dynasty ends and another begins, the militia vanishes. There is no protection, and the city collapses and is ruined. At that time, (the possession of) real estate does not make a person happy, because it is of little use in the general upheaval. (Real estate) values fall, and (real estate) can be acquired for low prices. It then passes through inheritance into the possession of someone else. (By that time,) the city has regained its youthful vigor as the new dynasty flourishes, and conditions in it are in excellent shape. The result is that one may be happy with the possession of estates and farms, because they will then be very useful. Their value increases, and they assume an importance they did not have before. This is the meaning of "fluctuation in (the real estate market)." The owner of (real estate) now turns out to be one of the wealthiest men in the city. That is not the result of his own effort and business activity, because he would be unable to achieve such a thing by himself.

Estates and farms do not yield their owner a sufficient income for his needs. (The income from them) will not pay for the customs of luxury and the things that go with it. As a rule, it serves only to help provide for the necessities of life.

We have heard from scholars that the motive in the acquisition of estates and farms is a concern for the helpless children a person may leave behind. Income from (the real estate) is to serve the purpose of providing for their education, care, and upbringing, as long as they are unable to earn their own living. When they are able to earn their own living, they will do it by themselves. (But) there often are children who are unable to earn their own living because of some weakness of the body or some defect in (the part of) the mind that provides the ability to make a living. The real property then becomes their support. This is the motive of persons who spend a great deal of money acquiring (real estate).

(The motive is) not to accumulate capital through (such acquisitions) or to provide for extravagant living. This is achieved only by a few and is achieved only rarely through market fluctuations, through the acquisition of a great deal of (real estate), and through the upgrading of (real estate) as such and its value in a certain city. But then, if someone achieves it, the eyes of amirs and governors are directed to him (and his real estate). As a rule, they take it away, or they urge him to sell it to them. Such (real estate) spells harm and hardship to its owners.

"God has the power to execute His commands." [127](#)

16. *Capitalists among the inhabitants of cities need rank and protection.*

This is because a sedentary person who has a great deal of capital and has acquired a great number of estates and farms and become one of the wealthiest inhabitants of a particular city, who is looked upon as such and lives in great luxury and is accustomed to luxury, competes in this respect with amirs and rulers. The latter become jealous of him. The aggressiveness that is natural to human beings makes them cast their eyes upon his possessions. They envy him them and try every possible trick to catch him in the net of a government decision and to find an obvious reason for punishing him, so as to confiscate his property. Government decisions are as a rule unjust, because pure justice is found only in the legal caliphate that lasted only a short while. Muhammad said: "The caliphate after me will last thirty years; then, it will revert to being tyrannical royal authority." [128](#)

Therefore, the owner of property and conspicuous wealth in a given civilization (community) needs a protective force to defend him, as well as a rank [128a](#) on which he may rely. (This purpose may be met by) a person related to the ruler, or a close friend of (the ruler), or a group feeling that the ruler will respect. [129](#) In its shade, he may rest and live peacefully, safe from hostile attacks. If he does not have that, he will find himself robbed by all kinds of tricks and legal pretexts.

"God decides, and no one can change His decision." [130](#)

17. *Sedentary culture in cities comes, from the dynasties.*

*It is firmly rooted when the dynasty is continuous
and firmly rooted.*

The reason for this is that sedentary culture is a condition that is the result of custom and goes beyond the necessary conditions of civilization. How far beyond, differs in accordance with unlimited differences in the prosperity and the numerical strength or weakness of the nations. (Sedentary culture) [131](#) occurs in the (nations) when much diversity develops among its various subdivisions. It is thus on the same level as the crafts. Each particular kind of craft needs persons to be in charge of it and skilled in it. The more numerous the various subdivisions of a craft are, the larger the number of the people who (have to) practice that craft. The particular group (practicing that craft) is colored by it. As the days follow one upon the other, and one professional coloring comes after the other, the craftsmen become experienced in their various crafts and skilled in the knowledge of them. Long periods of time a(experiences) add to establishing the crafts and to causing them to be firmly rooted.

This [132](#) happens mostly in cities, because cities have a highly developed civilization and their inhabitants are very prosperous, and the dynasty is at the root of it, because the dynasty collects the property of the subjects and spends it on its inner circle and on the men connected with it who are more influential by reason of their position than by reason of their property. The money comes from the subjects and is spent among the people of the dynasty and then among those inhabitants of the city who are connected with them. They are the largest part (of the population). Their wealth, therefore, increases and their riches grow. The customs and ways of luxury multiply, and all the various kinds of crafts are firmly established among them. This (then) is sedentary culture.

Therefore, cities in remote parts of the realm, even if they have an abundant civilization, are found to be predominantly Bedouin and remote from sedentary culture in all their ways. This is in contrast with (the situation in) towns that lie in the middle, the center and seat of the dynasty. The only reason is that the government is near them and pours its money into them, like the water (of a river) that makes green everything around it, and fertilizes the soil adjacent to it, while in the distance everything remains dry. We have stated before that dynasty and government are the world's market place. [133](#) All kinds of merchandise are found in the market and near it. Far from the market, however, goods are altogether non-existent. As a particular dynasty continues to rule and its rulers succeed each other in a particular city, sedentary culture becomes increasingly firmly established and rooted among the inhabitants of that city.

This may be exemplified by the Jews. Their rule in Syria lasted about 1,400 years. Sedentary culture thus became firmly established among them. They became skilled in the customary ways and means of making a living and in the manifold crafts belonging to it as regards food, clothing, and all the other parts of (domestic) economy, so much so that these things, as a rule, can still be learned from them to this day. Sedentary culture and its customs became firmly rooted in Syria through them and (through) the Roman dynasties which succeeded them for six hundred years. Thus, they had the most developed sedentary culture possible.

The same was the case with the Copts. Their political power lasted three thousand years. The customs of sedentary culture were thus firmly rooted in their country, Egypt. They were succeeded there by the Greeks and the Romans, and then by Islam, which abrogated everything. The customs of sedentary culture have, thus, always continued in (Egypt).

The customs of sedentary culture became likewise firmly rooted in the Yemen, because the Arabs ruled continuously in the Yemen for thousands of years, ever since the time of the Amalekites and the Tubba's who were succeeded by the rule of the Mudar.

The same was the case with the sedentary culture in the 'Iraq which, for thousands of years, was ruled continuously by the Nabataeans and the Persians, that is, the Chaldaeans, the Kayyanids (the Achaemenids), the Sassanians (alKisrawiyah), and, after them, the Arabs. Down to this time there has never been upon the face of the earth a people with more sedentary culture than the inhabitants of Syria, the 'Iraq, and Egypt.

The [134](#) customs of sedentary culture also became firmly rooted in Spain, which, for thousands of years, was ruled continuously by the great Gothic dynasty, later succeeded by the Umayyad realm. Both dynasties were great. Therefore, the customs of sedentary culture continued and became firmly established in (Spain).

Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib had no great royal authority before Islam. The Romans (Byzantines, Rum) [135](#) and European Christians had crossed the sea to Ifriqiyah and had taken possession of the coast. The obedience the Berbers who lived there paid them was not firmly grounded. They were there only temporarily. No dynasty was close to the people of the Maghrib. From time to time, they offered their obedience to the Goths across the sea. When God brought Islam and the Arabs took possession of Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib, the Arab rule lasted for only a short while at the beginning of Islam. At that time, the (Arabs) were in the stage of Bedouin life. Those who stayed in Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib did not find there any old tradition of sedentary culture, because (the original population of Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib) had been Berbers immersed in Bedouin life. Very soon, the Berbers of Morocco revolted under Maysarah al-Matghari in the days of Hisham b. 'Abd-al-Malik, [136](#) and never again later reverted to Arab rule. They were independent. If they rendered the oath of allegiance to Idris, his rule over them cannot be considered an Arab rule, because the Berbers were in charge of it, and there were not many Arabs in it. Ifriqiyah remained in the possession of the Aghlabids and the Arabs who were with them. They had some sedentary culture as the result of the luxury and prosperity of the royal authority and the large civilization of al-Qayrawan that were theirs. The Kutamah and then the Sinhajah after them inherited it from the Aghlabids. But all that was brief and lasted less than four hundred years. Their dynasty ended, and the coloring of sedentary culture (that existed there) changed, as it had not been firmly established. The Hilal, who were Arab Bedouins, gained power over the country and ruined it.

Some obscure traces of sedentary culture have remained there down to the present time. They can be noticed among those who had ancestors in al-Qal'ah, [137](#) al-Qayrawan, or alMahdiyah. Some traces of sedentary culture can be found in the (domestic) economy and the customs of (these people). They are mixed with other things, but the person who comes from a sedentary environment and knows about (sedentary culture) can discern them. That is the case with most cities in Ifriqiyah, but not in the Maghrib and the cities there, because since the time of the Aghlabids, the Shi'ah (Fatimids), and the Sinhajah, the ruling dynasty in Ifriqiyah has been firmly rooted there for a longer period (than the dynasties in the Maghrib).

The Maghrib, on the other hand, has received a good deal of sedentary culture from Spain since the dynasty of the Almohads, and the customs of sedentary culture became established there through the control that the ruling dynasty of the Maghrib exercised over Spain. A good many of the inhabitants of (Spain) went to (the Almohads in the Maghrib), voluntarily or involuntarily. One knows how far-flung the influence (of the Almohad dynasty) was. It possessed a good deal of firmly established sedentary culture, most of it due to the inhabitants of Spain. Later on, the inhabitants of eastern Spain were expelled by the Christians and moved to

Ifriqiyyah.¹³⁸ In the cities there, they left traces of sedentary culture. Most of it is in Tunis, where it mixed with the sedentary culture of Egypt and (Egyptian) customs imported by travelers. Thus, the Maghrib and Ifriqiyyah had a good deal of sedentary culture. But emptiness took its place, and it disappeared. The Berbers in the Maghrib reverted to their Bedouin ways and Bedouin toughness. But, at any rate, the traces of sedentary culture are more numerous in Ifriqiyyah than in the Maghrib and in the cities of (the Maghrib). The old dynasties had lasted longer in Ifriqiyyah than in the Maghrib, and the customs of the people of Ifriqiyyah had been close to the customs of the Egyptians because of the great amount of intercourse between (the Egyptians and the people of Ifriqiyyah).

This secret should be understood, because it is not known to the people. It should be known that these are related matters: The strength and weakness of a dynasty, the numerical strength of a nation or race, the size of a town or city, and the amount of prosperity and wealth. This is because dynasty and royal authority constitute the form of the world and of civilization, which, in turn, together with the subjects, cities, and all other things, constitute the matter of (dynasty and royal authority).¹³⁹

The tax money reverts to the (people). Their wealth, as a rule, comes from their business and commercial activities. If the ruler pours out gifts and money upon his people, it spreads among them and reverts to him, and again from him to them. It comes from them through taxation and the land tax, and reverts to them through gifts. The wealth of the subjects corresponds to the finances of the dynasty. The finances of the dynasty, in turn, correspond to the wealth and number of the subjects. The origin of it all is civilization and its extensiveness. If this is considered and examined in connection with the (various) dynasties, it will be found to be so.

"God decides, and no one can change His decision."¹⁴⁰

18. *Sedentary culture is the goal of civilization.*

It means the end of its life span and brings about its corruption.

We have explained before [141](#) that royal authority and (the foundation of) dynasties are the goal of group feeling, and that sedentary culture is the goal of Bedouin life, and that any civilization, be it a Bedouin civilization or sedentary culture, whether it concerns ruler or commoner, [142](#) has a physical [143](#) life, just as any individual created (being) has a physical life.

Reason and tradition make it clear that (the age of) forty years means the end of the increase of an individual's powers and growth. When a man has reached the age of forty, nature stops growing for a while, then starts to decline. It should be known that the same is the case with sedentary culture in civilization, because there is a limit that cannot be overstepped. When luxury and prosperity come to civilized people, it naturally causes them to follow the ways of sedentary culture and adopt its customs. As one knows, sedentary culture is the adoption of diversified luxuries, the cultivation of the things that go with them, and addiction to the crafts that give elegance to all the various kinds of (luxury), such as the crafts of cooking, dressmaking, building, and (making) carpets, vessels, and all other parts of (domestic) economy. For the elegant execution of all these things, there exist many crafts not needed in desert life with its lack of elegance. When elegance in (domestic) economy has reached the limit, it is followed by subservience to desires. From all these customs, the human soul receives a multiple coloring that undermines its religion and worldly (well-being). (It cannot preserve) its religion, because it has now been firmly colored by customs (of luxury), and it is difficult to discard such coloring. (It cannot preserve) its worldly (well-being), because the customs (of luxury) demand a great many things and (entail) many requirements for which (a man's) income is not sufficient.

This [144](#) is explained by the fact that the expenditures of the inhabitants of a city mount with the diversification of sedentary culture. Sedentary culture differs according to the differences in civilization. When a civilization grows, sedentary culture becomes more perfect. We have stated before [145](#) that a city with a large civilization (population) is characterized by high prices in business and high prices for its needs. (The prices) are then raised still higher through customs duties; for sedentary culture reaches perfection at the time when the dynasty has reached its greatest flourishing, and that is the time when the dynasty levies customs duties because then it has large expenditures, as has been stated before. [146](#) The [147](#) customs duties raise the sales (prices), because small businessmen and merchants include all their expenses, even their personal requirements, in the price of their stock and merchandise. Thus, customs duties enter into the sales price. The expenditures of sedentary people, therefore, grow and are no longer reasonable but extravagant. The people cannot escape this (development) because they are dominated by and subservient to their customs. All their profits go into (their) expenditures. One person after another becomes reduced in circumstances and indigent. Poverty takes hold of them. Few persons bid for the available goods. Business decreases, and the situation of the town deteriorates.

All this is caused by excessive sedentary culture and luxury. They corrupt the city generally in respect to business and civilization. Corruption of the individual inhabitants is the result of painful and trying efforts to satisfy the needs caused by their (luxury) customs; (the result) of the bad qualities they have acquired in the process of obtaining (those needs); and of the damage the soul suffers after it has obtained them, through acquiring (still) another (bad luxury) quality.¹⁴⁸ Immorality, wrongdoing, insincerity, and trickery, for the purposes of making a living in a proper or an improper manner, increase among them. The soul comes to think about (making a living), to study it, and to use all possible trickery for the purpose. People are now devoted to lying, gambling, cheating, fraud, theft, perjury, and usury. Because of the many desires and pleasures resulting from luxury, they are found to know everything about the ways and means of immorality, they talk openly about it and its causes, and give up all restraint in discussing it, even among relatives and close female relations, where the Bedouin attitude requires modesty (and avoidance of) obscenities. They also know everything about fraud and deceit, which they employ to defend themselves against the possible use of force against them and against the punishment expected for their evil deeds. Eventually, this becomes a custom and trait of character with most of them, except those whom God protects.

The city, then, teems with low people of blameworthy character. They encounter competition from many members of the younger generation of the dynasty, whose education has been neglected and whom the dynasty has neglected to accept. They, therefore, adopt the qualities of their environment and company,¹⁴⁹ even though they may be people of noble descent and ancestry. Men are human beings and as such resemble one another. They differ in merit and are distinguished by their character, by their acquisition of virtues and avoidance of vices. The person who is strongly colored by any kind of vice and whose good character is corrupted, is not helped by his good descent and fine origin. Thus, one finds that many descendants of great families, men of a highly esteemed origin, members of the dynasty, get into deep water and adopt low occupations in order to make a living, because their character is corrupt and they are colored by wrongdoing and insincerity. If this (situation) spreads in a town or nation, God permits it to be ruined and destroyed. This is the meaning of the word of God: "When we want to destroy a village, we order those of its inhabitants who live in luxury to act wickedly therein. Thus, the word becomes true for it, and we do destroy it."¹⁵⁰

A possible explanation of this (situation) is that the profits (the people) make do not pay for their needs, because of the great number of (luxury) customs and the desire of the soul to satisfy them. Thus, the affairs of the people are in disorder, and if the affairs of individuals one by one deteriorate, the town becomes disorganized and falls into ruins.

This is the meaning of the statement by certain knowing people,¹⁵¹ that if orange trees are much grown in a town, the town invites its own ruin. Many common people avoided the growing of orange trees around (their) houses on account of this ominous (statement).¹⁵² But this is not what is meant, nor is it meant that orange trees are a bad omen¹⁵³ (and cause the ruin of a city). What is meant is that gardens and irrigation are the results of sedentary culture. Orange trees, lime trees, cypresses, and similar plants having no edible fruits¹⁵⁴ and being of no use, are the ultimate in sedentary culture, since they are planted in gardens only for the sake of their appearance, and they are planted only after the ways of luxury have become diversified. (Now,) this is the stage in which one must fear the destruction and ruin of a city, as we have stated. The same has been said with regard to oleander, which is in the same category. Its only purpose is to give color to gardens

with its red and white flowers. That is a luxury.

Among the things that corrupt sedentary culture, there is the disposition toward pleasures and indulgence in them, because of the great luxury (that prevails). It leads to diversification of the desires of the belly for pleasurable food and drink.¹⁵⁵ This is followed by diversification of the pleasures of sex through various ways of sexual intercourse, such as adultery and homosexuality. This leads to destruction of the (human) species. It may come about indirectly, through the confusion concerning one's descent caused by adultery. Nobody knows his own son, since he is illegitimate and since the sperm (of different men) got mixed up in the womb.¹⁵⁶ The natural compassion a man feels for his children and his feeling of responsibility for them is lost. Thus, they perish, and this leads to the end of the (human) species. Or, the destruction of the (human) species may come about directly, as is the case with homosexuality, which leads directly to the non-existence of offspring. It contributes more to the destruction of the (human) species (than adultery), since it leads to (the result) that no human beings are brought into existence, while adultery only leads to the (social) non-existence of those who are in existence. Therefore, the school of Malik ¹⁵⁷ is more explicit and correct with regard to homosexuality than the other schools. This shows that it understands the intentions of the religious law and their bearing upon the (public) interest better (than the other legal schools).

This should be understood. It shows that the goal of civilization is sedentary culture and luxury. When civilization reaches that goal, it turns toward corruption and starts being senile, as happens in the natural life of living beings. Indeed, we may say that the qualities of character resulting from sedentary culture and luxury are identical with corruption. Man is a man only in as much as he is able to procure for himself useful things and to repel harmful things, and in as much as his character is suited to making efforts to this effect. The sedentary person cannot take care of his needs personally. He may be too weak, because of the tranquility he enjoys. Or he may be too proud, because he was brought up in prosperity and luxury. Both things are blameworthy. He also is not able to repel harmful things,¹⁵⁸ because he has no courage as the result of (his life in) luxury and his upbringing under the (tyrannical) impact of education and instruction.¹⁵⁹ He thus becomes dependent upon a protective force to defend him.

He then usually becomes corrupt with regard to his religion, also. The (luxury) customs and his subservience to them have corrupted him, and his soul has been colored by (luxury) habits,¹⁶⁰ as we have stated. There are only very rare exceptions. When the strength of a man and then ¹⁶¹ his character and religion are corrupted, his humanity is corrupted, and he becomes, in effect, transformed (into an animal).

It is in this sense that those government soldiers who are close to Bedouin life and (Bedouin) toughness are more useful than those who have grown up in a sedentary culture and have adopted the character qualities of (sedentary culture). This can be found (to be the case) in every dynasty. It has thus become clear that the stage of sedentary culture is the stopping point in the life of civilization and dynasties.

"God is one and powerful."¹⁶²

19. *Cities that are the seats of royal authority fall into ruins when the ruling dynasty falls into ruins and crumbles.*¹⁶³

We have found out with regard to civilization that, when a dynasty disintegrates and crumbles, the civilization of the city that is the seat of the ruler of (that dynasty) also crumbles and in this process often suffers complete ruin. There hardly ever is any delay. The reasons for it are several:

First: At the beginning of the dynasty, its necessary Bedouin outlook requires it not to take away people's property and to eschew (too great) cleverness.¹⁶⁴ This causes the taxes and imposts, which provide the dynasty with its substance, to be kept low. The expenditures are small, and there is little luxury. When a city that had been a royal capital comes into the possession of a new dynasty that knows little of luxury, luxury decreases among the inhabitants of that city controlled by it, because the subjects follow the dynasty. They revert to the character of the dynasty, either voluntarily, because it is human nature to follow the tradition of their masters, or involuntarily, because the character of the dynasty calls for abstention from luxury in all situations and allows little profit, which is what constitutes the material for (the formation of luxury) customs. As a result, the sedentary culture of the city decreases, and many luxury customs disappear from it. That is what we mean when we speak about the ruin of a city.

Second: Royal authority and power are obtained by a dynasty only through superiority, which comes only after hostilities and wars. Hostility requires incompatibility between the people of the two dynasties and mutual disapproval¹⁶⁵ with regard to (luxury) customs and conditions. The victory of one of the two rivals causes the disappearance of the other. Thus, the conditions of the previous dynasty, especially the conditions of luxury, are disapproved of and considered detestable and evil by the people of the new dynasty. They disappear among them, because the (new) dynasty disapproves of them. Eventually, however, new luxury customs gradually originate among them. They produce a new sedentary culture. The period in between sees a dwindling and decrease of the first sedentary culture. This is what is meant by disintegration of civilization in a city.

Third: Each nation must have a home, (a place) where it grows up and from which the realm took its origin. When (its members) take possession of another home,¹⁶⁶ (the latter) is ranked second to the first (home), and the (latter's) cities are ranked second to the cities of the first. When the realm expands and its influence grows, it is inevitable that the seat of government be amidst the provinces belonging to the dynasty, because it is a sort of center for the whole area. Thus, the (new seat of government) is remote from the site of the former seat of government. The hearts of the people are attracted to the (new seat of government), because the dynasty and government (are there). Civilization (the population) moves there and disappears slowly from the city that was the former seat of government. Sedentary culture depends upon an abundant civilization (population), as we have said before.¹⁶⁷ (With the transfer of the population,) the sedentary and urban culture (of the former seat of government) decreases. This is what is meant by its disintegration.

This happened to the Saljugs when they moved their seat of government

from Baghdad to Isfahan; to the Arabs before them when they moved from al-Mada'in to al-Kufah and al-Basrah; to the 'Abbasids when they moved from Damascus to Baghdad; and to the Merinids in the Maghrib when they moved from Marrakech to Fez. In general, when a dynasty chooses a city for its seat of government, it causes disintegration of the civilization in the former seat of government.

Fourth: When the new dynasty achieves superiority over the previous dynasty, it must attempt to transfer the people and partisans of the previous dynasty to another region where it can be sure that it will not be secretly attacked by them. Most of the inhabitants of a capital city are partisans of the (ruling) dynasty. They belong either to the militia who settled there at the beginning of the dynasty, or they are the dignitaries of the city. All their various classes and types have, as a rule, some contact with the dynasty. Most of them have grown up in the dynasty and are partisans of it. Even though they may not be (connected with the dynasty) through power and group feelings, they are (connected with it) through inclination, love, and faith. It is the nature of a new dynasty to wipe out all the traces of the previous dynasty. Therefore, it transfers (the population) from the capital city (of the old dynasty) to its own home, which is firmly in its possession. Some are brought there as exiles and prisoners, others as honored and well-treated guests, so that no antagonism can arise. Eventually, the capital city (of the previous dynasty) holds only salesmen, itinerant farm workers, hoodlums, and the great mass of common people. The place of the (transferred population) is taken by the militia and partisans of (the new dynasty). They will be sufficient to fill the city. When the various classes of dignitaries have left the city, its inhabitants decrease. This is what is meant by disintegration of the civilization of (the capital city).

Then, (the former capital city) must produce a new civilization under the shadow of the new dynasty. Another sedentary culture corresponding to the importance of the dynasty, arises in it. This may be compared to a person who has a house the interior of which is dilapidated. Most of the installations and conveniences of the rooms do not agree with his plans. He has the power to change these installations and to rebuild them according to his wishes and plans. Thus, he will tear down the house and build it up again.¹⁶⁸ Much the same sort of thing happens in cities that once were seats of government. We have personally seen it and know it. God determines night and day.¹⁶⁹

In ¹⁷⁰ sum, the primary natural reason for this (situation) is the fact that dynasty and royal authority have the same relationship to civilization as form has to matter.¹⁷¹ (The form) is the shape that preserves the existence of (matter) through the (particular) kind (of phenomenon) it represents. It has been established in philosophy that the one cannot be separated from the other. One cannot imagine a dynasty without civilization, while a civilization without dynasty and royal authority is impossible, because human beings must by nature co-operate,¹⁷² and that calls for a restraining influence. Political leadership, based either on religious or royal authority, is obligatory as (such a restraining influence). This is what is meant by dynasty. Since the two cannot be separated, the disintegration of one of them must influence the other, just as its non-existence would entail the non-existence of the other.

A great disintegration results only from the disintegration of the entire dynasty. This happened to the dynasties of the Persians, the Byzantines, and the Arabs, (that is, the Arabs) in general as well as the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids. An individual reign, such as those of Anosharwan, Heraclius, 'Abd-al-Malik b. Marwan, or ar-Rashid, cannot exercise a sweeping disintegrating influence. Individuals follow

upon each other and take over the (existing) civilization. They preserve its existence and duration, and they are very similar to each other. The real dynasty, the one that acts upon the matter of civilization, belongs to group feeling and power. These remain with the individual members of the dynasty. But when the group feeling is lost and replaced by another group feeling that influences the (existing) civilization and when all powerful members (of the dynasty) are wiped out, a great disintegration sets in, as we have established.

God has power to do what He wishes. "If He wants them to disappear, He causes them to do so, and brings forth a new creation. That is not difficult for God."

[173](#)

20. *Certain cities have crafts that others lack.*

This is because it is clear that the activities of the inhabitants of a city necessitate each other, since mutual co-operation is innate in civilization. The necessary activities are restricted to certain inhabitants of the city. They are in charge of them and become experts in the craft(s) belonging to them. These activities become their particular job. They make their living through them and derive their sustenance from them, because (these activities of theirs) are matters of general concern in the city and generally needed. On the other hand, activities not required in a city are not regarded, since there is no profit in them for those who occupy themselves with them.

The activities required for the necessities of life, such as those of tailors, smiths, carpenters, and similar occupations, exist in every city. But activities required for luxury customs and conditions exist only in cities of a highly developed culture, that have taken to luxury customs and sedentary culture. Among such activities are those of glassblowers, goldsmiths, perfumers, cooks, coppersmiths, biscuit bakers, *harisah* bakers,¹⁷⁴ weavers of brocade, and the like. (These activities) exist in different degrees. In accordance with increase in the customs of sedentary culture and the requirements of luxury conditions, there originate crafts (especially) for this kind (of luxury requirements). (The crafts of this) kind will, thus, exist in a particular city, but not in others.

(Public) baths fall into this category. They exist only in densely settled cities of a highly developed civilization as a kind of indulgence resulting from luxury and wealth. Therefore, public baths do not exist in medium-sized towns. It is true that some rulers and chiefs desire (to have baths in their medium-sized cities). They construct them and put them into operation. However, since there is no demand for them from the mass of the people, they are soon neglected and fall into ruins. Those in charge of them speedily leave them, because they have little profit and income from them.

"God holds (His hands) tight together but also opens (them) wide."¹⁷⁵

21. *The existence of group feeling in cities and the superiority of some of the inhabitants over others.*

It [176](#) is clear that it is in the nature of human beings to enter into close contact and to associate (with each other), even though they may not have a common descent. However, as we have mentioned before, [177](#) such association is weaker than one based upon common descent, and the resulting group feeling is only part of what (group feeling) resulting from common descent is. Many inhabitants of cities come into close contact through intermarriage. This draws them together and, eventually, they constitute individual related groups. The same friendship or hostility that is found among tribes and families, is found among them, and they split into parties and groups.

When senility befalls a dynasty and its shadow recedes from the remote regions (of the realm), the inhabitants of the cities of (that dynasty) have to take care of their own affairs and to look after the protection of their own place. They revert to the council (government), and (people of the) higher class keep separated from people of the lower class. (Human) souls, by their very nature, are prone to seek superiority and domination. Because the air is clear of forceful government and dynasty, the elders desire to gain complete control. Everybody vies with everybody else. They try to have followers, such as clients, partisans, and allies, join them. They spend whatever they possess on the rabble and the mob. Everybody forms a group with his fellows, and one of them achieves superiority. He then turns against his equals, in order to slow them down, [178](#) and persecutes them with assassination or exile. Eventually, he takes away all executive power from them and renders them innocuous. [179](#) He obtains sole control of the entire city. He then is of the opinion that he has created a realm that he may leave to his descendants, but the same symptoms of power and senility to be found in a large realm are also to be found in his smaller realm.

Some of these people occasionally aspire to the ways of the great rulers who are masters of tribes and families and group feelings, who go into combat and wage wars, and who control large regions and provinces. They adopt the custom of sitting upon a throne. They use an "outfit," [180](#) organize cavalcades for traveling about the country, use seal rings, are greeted (ceremoniously), and are addressed as Sire (*mawla*), which is ridiculous in the eyes of all who can observe the situation for themselves. They adopt royal emblems to which they are not entitled. They were pushed into following such (improper aspirations) only by the dwindling influence of the (ruling) dynasty and the close relationships they had established and that eventually resulted in group feeling. Some of (the people, on the other hand), refrained from (improper aspirations) and lived simply, because they did not want to make themselves the butt of jokes and ridicule,

This happened in our own time in the later (years) of the Hafsid dynasty in Ifriqiyah to inhabitants of places in the Jarid, including Tripoli, Gabes, Tozeur (Tuzar), Nafta (Naftah), Gafsa (Qafsa), Biskra and the Zab, and adjacent regions. They acquired such aspirations when the shadow of the (ruling) dynasty had been receding from them for some decades. They seized power in their respective cities and took control of the judicial and tax administration away from the dynasty. They

paid (the ruling dynasty) some obedience and gave (it) reluctant allegiance, and treated (it) with some politeness, kindness, and submissiveness. However, they did not mean it. They passed (their position) on to their descendants, who (are living) at this time. Among their successors, there originated that cruelty and tyranny that is common among the descendants and successors of rulers. They thought that they ranked with (true) rulers, despite the fact that they had only recently been common people.[181](#)

Something similar happened also at the end of the Sinhajah dynasty. The inhabitants of the cities of the Jarid made themselves independent there and seized control of the (ruling) dynasty. Eventually, they were deprived of their power by the *shaykh* and ruler of the Almohads, 'Abd-alMu'min b. 'Ali. He transferred all of them from their amirates in the Jarid to the Maghrib, and removed all traces of them from (the Jarid), as we shall mention in his history.[182](#)

The same happened also in Ceuta at the end of the dynasty of the Banu 'Abd-al-Mu'min.

As a rule, such leadership goes to members of great and noble houses who are eligible for the positions of elders and leaders in a city. Sometimes, it goes to some person from the lowest class of people. He obtains group feeling and close contact with the mob for reasons that fate (*al-miqdar*) produces for him. He, then, achieves superiority over the elders and people of the higher class when they have lost their own group support.

"God has the power to execute His commands."[183](#)

22. The dialects of the urban population.

The dialects of the urban population follow the language of the nation or race that has control of (the cities in question) or has founded them. Therefore, the dialects spoken in all Muslim cities in the East and the West at this time are Arabic, even though the habit of the Arabic Mudar language has become corrupted and its vowel endings (*i'rab*) have changed.¹⁸⁴ The reason for this is the fact that the Muslim dynasty gained power over (foreign) nations. Religion and religious organization constitute the form for existence and royal authority, which (together) constitute the matter for (religion).¹⁸⁵ Form is prior to matter. Religion is derived from the religious law, which is in Arabic, because the Prophet was an Arab. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid using any language but Arabic in all the provinces of (Islam).

This may be exemplified by 'Umar's prohibition against using the idiom native among the non-Arabs. He said that it is *khubb*, that is, "ruse" and "deceit." Since the religion (Islam) avoided the non-Arab dialects, and the language of the supporters of the Muslim dynasty was Arabic, those (dialects) were avoided altogether in all its provinces, because people follow the government and adopt its religion (ways).¹⁸⁶ Use of the Arabic language became a symbol of Islam and of obedience to the Arabs. The (foreign) nations avoided using their own dialects and languages in all the cities and provinces, and the Arabic language became their language. Eventually, (Arabic) became firmly rooted as the (spoken) language in all their cities and towns. The non :Arab languages came (to seem) imported and foreign there. The Arabic language became corrupt through contact with (foreign languages) in some of its rules ¹⁸⁷ and through changes of the word endings, even though it remained unchanged semantically. (This type of Arabic) was called "the sedentary language" (and was used) in all the cities of Islam.

Furthermore, most of the inhabitants of the cities of Islam at this time are descendants of the Arabs who were in possession of these cities and perished in their luxury. They outnumbered the non-Arabs who lived there and inherited their land and country. Now, languages are inherited. Thus, the language spoken by the descendants has remained close to that of their forefathers, even though its rules have gradually become corrupted by contact with non-Arabs. It was called "sedentary" with reference to the inhabitants of settled region's and cities, in contrast to the language of the desert Arabs, which is more deeply rooted in Arabism.

When non-Arabs, such as the Daylam and, after them, the Saljuqs in the East and the Zanitah and Berbers in the West, became the rulers and obtained royal authority and control over the whole Muslim realm, the Arabic language suffered corruption. It would almost have disappeared, if the concern of the Muslims with the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which preserve Islam, had not (also) preserved the Arabic language. This (concern) became an element in favor of the persistence of the sedentary dialect used in the cities as an Arabic (sedentary dialect in its original form). But when the Tatars and Mongols, who were not Muslims, became the rulers in the East, this element in favor of the Arabic language disappeared, and the Arabic language was absolutely doomed. No trace of it has remained in these Muslim provinces: the 'Iraq, Khurisan, the country. of Firs (southern Persia), Eastern and

Western India, Transoxania, the northern countries, and the Byzantine territory (Anatolia). The Arabic methods (*uslub*) [188](#) of poetry and speech have disappeared, save for a (remnant). Instruction in (what little Arabic is known) is a technical matter using rules learned from the sciences of the Arabs and through memorizing their speech. (It is restricted) to those persons whom God has equipped for it. The sedentary Arabic dialect has largely remained in Egypt, Syria, Spain, and the Maghrib, because Islam still remains (there) and requires it. Therefore, it has been preserved to some degree. But in the provinces of the 'Iraq and beyond (to the East), no trace or source of (the Arabic language) has remained. Even scientific books have come to be written in the non-Arabic (Persian) language, which is also used for instruction in (Arabic) [189](#) in class.

God determines night and day. [190](#)

CHAPTER V

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is the real meaning of "sustenance" among orthodox Muslims. The Mu'tazilah stipulated for the use of the term "sustenance" that it must be possessed rightfully. Whatever is not possessed (rightfully) is not called "sustenance" by them. ⁶ Wrongfully acquired property or anything forbidden was not admitted by

them as something that could be called "sustenance." Yet, God sustains him who acquires property wrongfully, and also the evildoer, the believer as well as the unbeliever. He singles out whomever He wishes for His mercy and guidance. (The Mu'tazilah) have arguments for their theory of "sustenance." This is not the place to discuss them fully.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It should be known that when the (available) labor is all gone or decreases because of a decrease in civilization, God permits profits to be abolished. Cities¹¹ with few inhabitants can be observed to offer little sustenance and profit, or none whatever, because little human labor (is available). Likewise, in cities with a larger

(supply of) labor, the inhabitants enjoy more favorable conditions and have more luxuries, as we have stated before. [12](#)

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

God determines night and day. [13](#)

2. The various ways, means, and methods of making a living.

It should be known that "livelihood (making a living)" means the desire for sustenance and the effort to obtain it. "Livelihood" (*ma'ash*) is a *maf'al* formation from *'aysh* "life." The idea is that *'aysh* "life" is obtained only through the things (that go into making a living), and they are therefore considered, with some exaggeration, "the place of life."¹⁴

Sustenance¹⁵ and profit may be obtained *through* having the power to take them away from others and to appropriate them according to a generally recognized norm. This is called imposts and taxation.

Or (profit may be obtained) from wild animals by killing or catching them whole on land or in the sea. This is called hunting (fishing).

Or (profit may be obtained) either from domesticated animals by extracting surplus products which are used by the people, such as milk from animals, silk from silk worms, and honey from bees; or from plants such as are planted in fields or grow as trees, through cultivating and preparing them for the production of their fruits. All this is called agriculture.

Or profit may be the result of human labor. (Such labor may be applied) to specific materials. Then it is called a craft, such as writing, carpentry, tailoring, weaving, horsemanship, and similar (crafts). Or it may be applied to nonspecific materials. This, then, includes all the (other) professions and activities.

Or profit may come from merchandise and its use in barter; (merchants can make such profit) either by traveling around with (the merchandise) in (various) countries, or by hoarding it and observing the market fluctuations which affect it. This is called commerce.

These are the different ways and means of making a living. Certain thorough men of letters and philosophers, such as al-Hariri¹⁶ and others, had this in mind when they said: "A living is made by (exercising) political power (*imarah*), through commerce, agriculture, or the crafts." (The exercise of) political power is not a natural way of making a living.¹⁷ We do not have to mention it here. Something was said before in the second chapter about governmental tax collection and the people in charge of it.¹⁸ Agriculture, the crafts, and commerce, on the other hand, are natural ways of making a living.

Agriculture is prior to all the other (ways of making a living) by its very nature, since it is something simple and innately natural. It needs no speculation or (theoretical) knowledge. Therefore, (invention) of it is ascribed to Adam, the father of mankind. He is said to have taught and practiced agriculture. This indicates that it is the oldest way of making a living and the one most closely related to nature.

The crafts are secondary and posterior to agriculture. They are composite and scientific. Thinking and speculation is applied to them. Therefore, as a rule, crafts exist only among sedentary peoples. (Sedentary culture) is posterior to Bedouin life, and secondary to it. In this sense, their (invention) was ascribed to Idris,¹⁹ the second father of mankind. He is said to have invented them with the help of divine revelation for the human beings to come after him.

Commerce is a natural way of making profits. However, most of its practices and methods are tricky and designed to obtain the (profit) margin between purchase prices and sales prices. This surplus makes it possible to earn a profit. Therefore, the law permits cunning in commerce, since (commerce) contains an element of gambling. It does not, however, mean taking away the property of others without giving anything in return. Therefore, it is legal.²⁰

And God knows better.

3. Being a servant is not a natural way of making a living.

The ruler must use the services of men, such as soldiers, policemen, and secretaries, in all the departments of political power (*imarah*) and royal authority with which he has to do. For each department, he will be satisfied with men who, he knows, are adequate, and he will provide for their sustenance from the treasury. All this belongs to political power and the living made out of it. The authority of political administration extends to all these men, and the highest royal authority is the (common) source of (power for) their various branches.

.The reason for the existence of servants on a lower level is the fact that most of those who live in luxury are too proud to take care of their own personal needs or are unable to do so, because they were brought up accustomed to indulgence and luxury. Therefore, they employ people who will take charge of such things for them. They give these people wages out of their own (money). This situation is not praiseworthy from the point of view of manliness, which is natural to man, since it is (a sign of) weakness to rely on persons (other than oneself). It also adds to one's duties and expenditures, and indicates a weakness and effeminacy that ought to be avoided in the interest of manliness. However, custom causes human nature to incline toward the things to which it becomes used. Man is the child of customs, not the child of his ancestors.²¹

Moreover, satisfactory and trustworthy servants are almost nonexistent. There are just four categories according to which a servant of this (description)²² can be classified. He may be capable of doing what he has to do, and trustworthy with regard to the things that come into his hands. Or, he may be the opposite in both respects, that is, he may be neither capable nor trustworthy. Or, he may be the opposite in one respect only, that is, he may be capable and not trustworthy, or trustworthy and not capable.

As to the first (kind), the capable and trustworthy servant, no one would in any way be able to secure the employment of such a person. With his capability and trustworthiness, he would have no need of persons of low rank, and he would disdain to accept the wages (they could) offer for (his) service, because he could get more. Therefore, such a person is employed only by amirs who have high ranks, because the need for rank is general.²³

The second kind, the servant who is neither capable nor trustworthy, should not be employed by any intelligent person, because he will do damage to his master on both counts. On the one hand, he will cause losses to his master through his lack of ability, and on the other hand, he will defraud him and deprive him of his property. In any event, he is a liability to his master.

No one would (want, or have occasion to) employ these two kinds of servants. Thus, the only thing that remains is to employ servants of the two other kinds, servants who are trustworthy but not capable, and servants who are capable but not trustworthy. There are two opinions among people as to which of the two kinds is preferable. Each has something in its favor. However, the capable (servant), even when he is not trustworthy, is preferable. One can be sure that he will not cause any damage, and one can arrange to be on guard as far as possible against being defrauded by him. (The servant) who may cause damage, even when he is

reliable, is more harmful than useful because of the damage caused by him. This should be realized and taken as the norm for finding satisfactory servants.

God has power to do what he wishes.

*4. Trying to make money from buried and other treasures
is not a natural way of making a living.*

It should be known that many weak-minded persons in cities hope to discover property under the surface of the earth and to make some profit from it. They believe that all the property of the nations of the past was stored underground and sealed with magic talismans. These seals, they believe, can be broken only by those who may chance upon the (necessary) knowledge and can offer the proper incense, prayers, and sacrifices to break them.

The inhabitants of the cities in Ifriqiyah believe that the European Christians who lived in Ifriqiyah before Islam, buried their property and entrusted its (hiding place) to written lists, until such time as they might find a way to dig it up again. The inhabitants of the cities in the East hold similar beliefs with regard to the nations of the Copts, the Romans (Byzantines), and the Persians. They circulate stories to this effect that sound like idle talk. Thus, a treasure hunter comes to dig where there was money buried, but does not know the talisman or the story connected with it. As a result, he finds the place empty or inhabited by worms. Or, he sees the money and jewels lying there, but guards stand over them with drawn swords. Or the earth shakes, so that he believes that he will be swallowed up, and similar nonsense.

In the Maghrib there are many Berber "students" ²⁴ who are unable to make a living by natural ways and means. They approach well-to-do people with papers that have torn margins and contain either non-Arab writing or what they claim to be the translation of a document written by the owner of buried treasures, giving the clue to the hiding place. In this way, they try to get their sustenance by (persuading well-to-do people) to send them out to dig and hunt for treasure. They fool them by saying that their only motive in asking for help is their wish to find influential protection against seizure and punishment by (local) authorities. Occasionally, one of these treasure hunters displays strange information or some remarkable trick of magic with which he fools people into believing his other claims, although, in fact, he knows nothing of magic and (magical) procedures.

Most weak-minded people wish to do their digging with others and to be protected by the darkness of night while they do it. They are afraid of watchers and government spies. When they do not turn anything up, they put the blame upon their ignorance of the talisman with which the (buried) money was sealed. Thus they deceive themselves as to the failure of their hopes.

In addition to a weak mind, a (common) motive that leads people to hunt for treasure is their inability to make a living in one of the natural ways that lead to profit, such as commerce, agriculture, or the crafts. Therefore, they try to make a living in devious ways, such as (treasure hunting) and the like, not in one of the natural ways. For they are unable to make the effort necessary to earn something, and they trust that they can gain their sustenance without effort or trouble. They do not realize that by trying to make a living in an improper manner, they plunge themselves into much greater trouble, hardship, and expenditure of energy than otherwise. In addition, they expose themselves to (the risk of) punishment.

Occasionally, a principal motive leading people to hunt for treasure is the

fact that they have become used to ever-increasing, limitless luxury and (luxury) customs. As a result, the various ways and means of earning money cannot keep pace with and do not pay for their (luxury) requirements. When such a person cannot earn enough in a natural way, his only way out is to wish that at one stroke, without any effort, he might find sufficient money to pay for the (luxury) habits in which he has become caught. Thus, he becomes eager to find (treasure) and concentrates all his effort upon that. Therefore, most of those who can be observed to be eager to (hunt for treasure) are people used to luxurious living. Among the people of the (various) dynasties and the inhabitants of cities such as Cairo (Egypt), where there is much luxury and (living) conditions are favorable, many are engrossed in the search for (treasure). They question travelers about extraordinary tales of (hidden treasure) with the same eagerness they show for the practice of al-chemistry.²⁵ Thus, we hear that the inhabitants of Cairo (Egypt) consult the Maghribi "students" they meet, in hopes that, with their help, they may perhaps hit upon some buried or other treasure. They further investigate (the possibility of) making water disappear in the soil, because they believe that the majority of all buried treasures are to be found in the canals of the Nile and that the Nile largely covers the buried or hoarded treasures in those regions. Persons who possess the (afore-mentioned) forged records fool them with the excuse that the reason they cannot reach the treasures is because the Nile flows there. In this way they cover up their lies. First, they want to make a living. The person who hears their (stories) wants to make the water disappear in the ground by means of magical operations, so as to obtain what he wants. (People in Egypt) are fond of magic, (a trait) they have inherited from their early forebears in (Egypt). Their magical disciplines and monuments still remain in (Egypt) as the graves (of the ancient Egyptians) and other buildings attest. The story of Pharaoh's magicians testifies to their special (knowledge of magic).²⁶

The inhabitants of the Maghrib circulate a poem among themselves which they ascribe to the sages of the East. As one can see, it shows how to make water disappear in the ground by magical means. This is (the poem):

O you who are looking for the secret of how to make water disappear in the ground,
Listen to the word of truth from an expert!
Put aside all the false statements and deceptive remarks
That people have written in books, And listen to my truthful word and advice,
If you are one of those who do not believe in cheating [being cheated?].
If you seek to make a well disappear, and
How to handle this well has always puzzled the mind,
Make a picture resembling yourself standing, (but)
The head should be that of a young lion, (drawn) as a round shape.
His hands (should) hold the rope that is
Drawing a bucket up from the bottom of a well.
On his breast, there (should be) an h, as you may have seen,
(Written three times), the number of divorce. Be careful not to repeat it more often!
It (should) step upon is without touching (them),
Walking like someone who is courageous, clever, and skillful.
-He means that the is are in front of (the figure), and it looks as if it were walking upon them
Around the whole, there is a line running,
Which should rather be square than round.

Slaughter a bird over it and smear its (blood) upon it,
And immediately after the slaughtering, go and use incense,
Sandarac, frankincense, storax,
And costus root. And cover it with a silken garment,
A red one or a yellow one, not a blue one.
It should have no green or dark (color) in it.
It should be sewn with threads of white Or red wool of purest red coloring.
The ascendant should be Leo, as has already been explained,
And there should be no bright moonlight,²⁷
And the [fall ?] moon should be connected with the lucky position of
Mercury.
A Saturday should be the hour of the operation.

My opinion is that this poem is one of the things with which swindlers fool (other people).

These (swindlers) create remarkable situations and employ astounding techniques. They go so far in their devious lies as to take up residence in famous mansions and houses known as (hiding places of treasures). They undertake excavations there and make underground cells ²⁸ and put signs there which they (then) incorporate in their forged lists. Then, they go to some weak-minded person with these lists. They urge him to rent the mansion and live there. They suggest to him that the mansion contains a buried treasure of indescribable magnitude. They ask for money to buy drugs and incense, in order to break the talismans. They condition him by producing the signs they themselves had placed there and that were of their own manufacture. He gets excited by the things he sees. He is deceived and taken in by them without knowing it. During these (operations), the (swindlers) use among themselves a (special) linguistic terminology with the help of which they inveigle (their victims), and keep them in ignorance of what they say concerning the digging, incense, slaughtering of animals, and the other such things that they do.

The things that have been said about (treasure hunting) have no scientific basis, nor are they based upon (factual) information. It should be realized that although treasures are (sometimes) found, this happens rarely and by chance, not by systematic 'search. (The hiding of treasures) is no matter of general concern, such that people would commonly store their money underground and seal it with talismans, either in ancient or in recent times. Buried treasures (*rikaz*), such as are mentioned in the Prophetic traditions and such as the jurists assume to exist ²⁹ - that is, buried in pre-Islamic times - are found by chance, not by systematic search.

Furthermore, why should anyone who hoards his money and seals it with magical operations, thus making extraordinary efforts to keep it concealed, set up hints and clues as to how it may be found by anyone who cares to? Why make a written list of it, so that the people of any period and region could find his treasure? This would contradict the intention of keeping it concealed.

Furthermore, intelligent people act with some definite, useful purpose in mind. A person who hoards his money does so because he wants his children, his relatives, or someone else to get it. No intelligent person tries to hide his money altogether, from everybody. To do so would merely bring about its destruction or loss, or its going to some member of a future nation unknown to him.

The question has been asked: Where is the property of the nations (that came) before us, and where are the abundant riches known to have existed among those nations? (In reply,) ³⁰ it should be known that treasures of gold, silver, precious stones, and utensils are no different from (other) minerals and acquired

(capital), from iron, copper, lead, and any other real property or (ordinary) minerals. It is civilization that causes them to appear, with the help of human labor, and that makes them increase or decrease. All such things in people's possession may be transferred and passed on by inheritance. They have often been transferred from one region to another, and from one dynasty to another, in accordance with the purposes they were to serve [31a](#) and the particular civilization that required them. If money (at this time) is scarce in the Maghrib and Ifriqiyah, it is not scarce in the countries of the Slavs and the European Christians. If it is scarce in Egypt and Syria, it is not scarce in India and China. Such things are merely materials (*alat*) and acquired (capital). It is civilization that produces them in abundance or causes them to be in short supply. Moreover, minerals are affected by destruction like all other existent things. Pearls and jewels deteriorate more quickly than anything else. Gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin are also affected by destruction and complete annihilation, which destroy their substances in a very short time.

The occurrence of finds and treasures in Egypt is explained by the fact that Egypt was in the possession of the Copts for two thousand [32](#) or more years. Their dead were buried with their possessions of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls. This was the custom of the people of the old dynasties. When the dynasty of the Copts ended and the Persians ruled Egypt, they searched the graves for such objects and discovered them. They took an indescribably large amount of such objects from the graves, from the pyramids, for example, which were the royal graves, and from the other (types of graves). The same was done by the Greeks after them. Those graves afforded opportunities for treasure (hunting and have continued to do so) down to this time. One frequently comes upon buried treasure in them. This may either consist of money buried by the Copts, or (it may be) the specially prepared vessels and sarcophagi of gold and silver with which they honored their dead when they buried them. For thousands of years, the graves of the Copts have been likely to afford opportunities for finding (treasure). Because of the existence of (treasures in graves) the Egyptians have been concerned with the search for treasures and their discovery. When, in the later (years) of a dynasty, duties come to be levied upon various things, they are even levied upon treasure hunters, and a tax has to be paid by those stupid and deluded persons who occupy themselves with (treasure hunting). Greedy people (in the government) who try assiduously to (discover treasures think that they) have thus found the means to discover treasures (for their own benefit) and a promising way to get them out. But all their efforts remain entirely unsuccessful. God is our refuge from perdition. [33](#)

Those who are deluded or afflicted by these things must take refuge in God from their inability to make a living and their laziness in this respect, just as the Messenger of God took refuge from it and turned away from the ways and delusions of Satan. They should not occupy themselves with absurdities and untrue stories.

"God gives sustenance to whomever He wishes to give it, without accounting." [34](#)

5. Ranks are useful in securing property.

This [35](#) is as follows: We find that the person of rank who is highly esteemed is in every material aspect more fortunate and wealthier than a person who has no rank. The reason for this is that the person of rank is served by the labor (of others). They try to approach him with their labor, since they want to be close to (him) and are in need of (the protection) his rank affords. People help him with their labor in all his needs, whether these are necessities, conveniences, or luxuries. The value realized from all such labor becomes part of his profit. For tasks that usually require giving some compensation (to the persons who perform them), he always employs people without giving anything in return. He realizes a very high value from their labor. It is (the difference) between the value he realizes from the (free) labor (products) and the prices he must pay for things he needs. He thus makes a very great (profit). A person of rank receives much (free) labor which makes him rich in a very short time. With the passing of days, his fortune and wealth increase. It is in this sense that (the possession of) political power (*imarah*) is one of the ways of making a living, as we have stated before.[36](#)

The person who has no rank whatever, even though he may have property, acquires a fortune only in proportion to the property he owns and in accordance with the efforts he himself makes. Most merchants are in this position. Therefore, (merchants) who have a rank are far better off (than other merchants).

Evidence for this is the fact that many jurists and religious scholars and pious persons acquire a good reputation. Then, the great mass believes that when they give them presents, they serve God. People, therefore, are willing to help them in their worldly affairs and to work for their interests. As a result, they quickly become wealthy and turn out to be very well off although they have acquired no property but have only the value realized from the labor with which the people have supported them. We have seen much of this in cities and towns as well as in the desert. People do farm work and business for these men, who sit at home and do not leave their places. But still their property grows and their profits increase. Without effort, they accumulate wealth, to the surprise of those who do not understand what the secret of their affluence is, what the reasons for their wealth and fortune are.

"God gives sustenance to whomever He wishes to give it, without accounting."[37](#)

6. *Happiness and profit are achieved mostly by people who are obsequious and use flattery. Such character disposition is one of the reasons for happiness.*

We have stated before in a previous passage [38](#) that the profit human beings make is the value realized from their labor. If someone could be assumed to have no (ability whatever to do any) labor, he would have no profit whatever. The value realized from one's labor corresponds to the value of one's labor and the value of (this labor) as compared to (the value of) other labor and the need of the people for it. The growth or decrease of one's profit, in turn, depends on that. We have also just now explained [39](#) that ranks are useful in securing property. A person of rank has the people approach him with their labor and property. (They do that) in order to avoid harm and to obtain advantages. The labor and property through which they attempt to approach him is, in a way, given in exchange for the many good and bad things they may obtain (or avoid) with the aid of his rank. Such labor becomes part of the profit of (the man of rank), and the value realized from it means property and wealth for him. He thus gains wealth and a fortune in a very short time.

Ranks are widely distributed among people, and there are various levels of rank among them. At the top, they extend to the rulers above whom there is nobody. At the bottom, they extend to those who have nothing to gain or to lose among their fellow men. In between, there are numerous classes. This is God's wise plan with regard to His creation. It regulates their livelihood, takes care of their interests, and insures their permanency.

The existence and persistence of the human species can materialize only through the co-operation of all men in behalf of what is good for them. It has been established that a single human being could not fully exist by himself, and even if, hypothetically, it might happen as a rare exception, his existence would be precarious. Now, such co-operation is obtained by the use of force, since people are largely ignorant of the interests of the (human) species, and since they are given freedom of choice and their actions are the result of thinking and reflection, not of natural (instinct). They thus refrain from co-operating. Therefore, it is obligatory to make them (co-operate), and there must be some motive forcing human beings to take care of their interests, so that God's wise plan as to the preservation of mankind can materialize. This is what is meant by the verse of the Qur'an: "And we placed some of you over others in various grades, so that they might use the others for forced labor. The mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they gather." [40](#)

It has, thus, become clear that rank means the power enabling human beings to be active among the fellow men under their control with permission and prohibition, and to have forceful superiority over them, in order to make them avoid things harmful to them and seize their advantages. (They may act) in justice and apply the laws of religion and politics, and (also) follow their own purposes [41](#) in everything else.

However, the first thing (the just use of rank) was intended by the divine providence as something essential, whereas the second thing (self-seeking use of rank) enters into it as something accidental, as is the case with all evils decreed by

God. Much good can fully exist only in conjunction with the existence of some little evil, which is the result of matter. The good does not disappear with the (admixture of evil), but attaches itself to the little evil that gathers around it. This is the meaning of the occurrence of injustice in the world. It should be understood.

Each class among the inhabitants of a town or zone of civilization has power over the classes lower than it. Each member of a lower class seeks the support of rank from members of the next higher class, and those who gain it become more active among the people under their control in proportion to the profit they get out of it. Thus, rank affects people in whatever way they make their living. Whether it is influential or restricted depends on the class and status of the person who has a particular rank. If the rank in question is influential, the profit accruing from it is correspondingly great. If it is restricted and unimportant, (the profit) is correspondingly (small). A person who has no rank, even though he may have money, acquires a fortune only in proportion to the labor he is able to produce, or the property he owns, and in accordance with the efforts he makes coming and going ⁴² to increase it. This is the case with most merchants and, as a rule, with farmers. It also is the case with craftsmen. If they have no rank and are restricted to the profits of their crafts, they will mostly be reduced to poverty and indigence, and they do not quickly become wealthy. They make only a bare living, somehow fending off the distress of poverty.

If this has been established and if it further has become clear that rank is widely distributed and that one's happiness and welfare are intimately connected with the acquisition of (rank), it will be realized that it is a very great and important favor to give away or grant a rank to someone, and that the person who gives it away is a very great benefactor. He gives it only to people under his control. Thus, giving (rank) away (shows) influence and power. Consequently, a person who seeks and desires rank must be obsequious and use flattery, as powerful men and rulers require. Otherwise, it will be impossible for him to obtain any (rank). Therefore, we have stated that obsequiousness and flattery are the reasons why a person may be able to obtain a rank that produces happiness and profit, and that most wealthy and happy people have the quality (of obsequiousness and use flattery). Thus, too, many people who are proud and supercilious have no use for rank. Their earnings, consequently, are restricted to (the results of) their own labors, and they are reduced to poverty and indigence.

It should be known that such haughtiness and pride are blameworthy qualities. They result from the assumption (by an individual) that he is perfect, and that people need the scientific or technical skill he offers. Such an individual, for instance, is a scholar who is deeply versed in his science, or a scribe who writes well, or a poet who makes good poetry. Anyone who knows his craft assumes that people need what he has. Therefore, he develops a feeling of superiority to them. People of noble descent, whose forebears include a ruler or a famous scholar, or a person perfect in some position, also share this illusion. They are arrogant because of the position their forebears held in their town. They have seen it themselves or have heard about it. They assume that they deserve a similar position because of their relationship to such men and the fact that they are their heirs. In fact, they cling to something that is a matter of the past, since perfection is not passed on by inheritance ⁴³ The same is the case with people who are skillful, experienced, and versed in affairs. Some of them assume that they are perfect and needed on that account.

All these types (of people) are found to be proud. They are not obsequious and do not flatter people of a higher station. They belittle all others, because they believe that they are better than other people. One of them may even disdain to be

obsequious to a ruler and consider such obsequiousness humiliating, abasing, and stupid. He expects people to treat him in accordance with what he thinks of himself, and he hates those who in any respect fail to treat him as he expects to be treated. He often gets to feel very anxious and sad, because they fail (to treat him according to his expectations). He always worries much, because people refuse to give him what he considers his due. People, (in turn,) come to hate him, because of the egoism of human nature. Rarely will (a human being) concede perfection and superiority to another, unless he is somehow forced to do so by superior strength. Such (forcefulness and superior strength) is implied - in rank. Thus, when a haughty person has no rank-and he cannot have any, as has been explained - people hate him for his haughtiness, and he receives no share of their kindness. He obtains no rank from members of the next higher class, because he is hated (by them), and, therefore, he cannot associate with them and frequent their homes. In consequence, his livelihood is destroyed. He remains in a state of indigence and poverty, or (in a state) that is only a little better. The acquisition of wealth is altogether out of the question for him.

In this (sense), it is widely said among the people that a person who is perfect in knowledge obtains no share (in worldly goods). The knowledge that is given to him is taken into account, and this is set apart as his share (in worldly goods). This is the meaning of it. Everyone is successful at the things for which he was created ⁴⁴ God decides. There is no Lord but Him.

In a dynasty, the character quality mentioned may cause disturbances among the ranks. Many people of the low classes come up to fill them, and many people of the higher classes have to step down on that account. The reason is that when a dynasty has reached its limit of superiority and power, the royal clan claims royal and governmental authority exclusively for itself. Everybody else despairs of (getting any share in) it. (All the other people can only) hold ranks below the rank of the ruler and under the control of the government. They are a sort of servant of his. Now, when the dynasty continues and royal authority flourishes, those who go into the service of the ruler, who try to approach him with advice, or who are accepted as followers by him because of their capability in many of his important affairs, will all be equal in rank in his eyes. Many common people will make efforts to approach the ruler with zealous counsel and come close to him through all kinds of services. For this purpose, such people make much use of obsequiousness and flattery toward the ruler, his entourage, and his family, so that eventually they will be firmly entrenched and the ruler will give them a place in the total (picture) of his (administration). Thus, they obtain a large share of happiness and are accepted among the people of the dynasty.

At such a time, the new generation of the dynasty, the children of the people who had seen the dynasty through its difficulties and smoothed its path, are arrogant ⁴⁵ because of the noteworthy achievements of their forefathers. Because of them, they look down on the ruler. They rely on their influence (lasting) and become very presumptuous. ⁴⁶ This makes the ruler hate them and keep away from them. He now leans toward those of his followers who do not rely upon any (achievements of the past) and would not think of being presumptuous and proud. Their behavior is characterized by obsequiousness to (the ruler) and flattery (of him) and willingness to work for his purposes whenever he is ready for some undertaking. Their rank, consequently, becomes important. Their stations become high. The outstanding personalities and the elite ⁴⁷ turn to them, because they receive so many favors from the ruler and have great influence with him. The new generation of the dynasty, meanwhile, keeps its proud attitude and continues to rely upon the (achievements of the) past. They gain nothing from that. It merely alienates them from the ruler and

makes him hate them and give preference to his (newly gained) supporters, until the dynasty is destroyed. This is natural in a dynasty, and this is usually at the origin of the importance of its followers.

God does whatever He wishes.

7. Persons who are in charge of ices dealing with religious matters, such as judge, mufti, teacher, prayer leader, preacher, muezzin, and the like, are not as a rule very wealthy.

The reason for this is that, as we have stated before,⁴⁸ profit is the value realized from labor (products). (This value) differs according to the (varying degrees of) need for (a particular kind of labor). Certain (types of) labor (products) may be necessary in civilization and be a matter of general concern. Then, the value realized from (these products) is greater and the need for them more urgent (than otherwise).

Now, the common people have no compelling need for the things that religious (officials) have to offer. They are needed only by those special people who take a particular interest in their religion. (Even) if the offices of mufti and judge are needed in case of disputes, it is not a compelling and general need. Mostly, they can be dispensed with. Only the ruler is concerned with (religious officials) and (religious) institutions, as part of his duty to look after the (public) interests. He assigns (the religious officials) a share of sustenance proportionate to the need that exists for them in the sense (just) mentioned. He does not place them on an equal footing with people who have power or with people who ply the necessary crafts, even if the things that (the religious officials) have to offer are nobler, as they deal with religion and the legal institutions. He gives them their share in accordance with the general need and the demand of the population (for them). Their portion, therefore, can only be small.

Furthermore, because the things (the religious officials) have to offer are so noble, they feel superior to the people and are proud of themselves. Therefore, they are not obsequious to persons of rank, in order to obtain something to improve their sustenance. In fact, they would not have time for that. They are occupied with those noble things they have to offer and which tax both the mind and the body. Indeed, the noble character of the things they have to offer does not permit them to prostitute themselves openly. They would not do such a thing. As a consequence, they do not, as a rule, become very wealthy.

I discussed this with an excellent man. He disagreed with me about it. But some stray leaves from the account books of the government offices in the palace of al-Ma'mun came into my hand. They gave a good deal of information about income and expenditures at that time. Among the things I noticed, were the salaries of judges, prayer leaders, and muezzins. I called the attention of (the person mentioned) to it, and he realized that what I had said was correct. He became a convert to (my opinion), and we were both astonished at the secret ways of God with regard to His creation and His wise (planning) concerning His worlds.

God is the Creator, and He decides.

8. Agriculture is a way of making a living for weak people and Bedouins in search of subsistence.

This ^{48a} is because agriculture is a natural and simple procedure. Therefore, as a rule, sedentary people, or people who live in luxury, do not practice it. Those who practice it are characterized by humility. When Muhammad saw a plowshare in one of the houses of the Ansar (in Medina), he said: "Such a thing never entered anyone's house save accompanied by humbleness." ⁴⁹ Al-Bukhari explained this (statement) as referring to too intense an occupation with (agriculture) and he entitled the chapter in which he dealt with the tradition in question: "Warning against the consequences of (too intensive an) occupation with agricultural implements or transgression of the stipulated limit." (However,) the reason for it might possibly be that imposts come to be (exacted from farmers) and lead to (their) domination and control (by others). The person who has to pay imposts is humble and poor, because a superior force takes (his possessions) away (from him). Muhammad said: "The Hour will not arise until the charity tax becomes an impost." ⁵⁰ This refers to the tyrannical ruler who uses force against the people, who is domineering and unjust, and who forgets the divine rights of (private) capital and considers all rights to be (subject to) imposts (to be paid) to rulers and dynasties.

God has power to do what He wishes.

9. *The meaning, methods, and different kinds of commerce.*[51](#)

It should be known that commerce means the attempt to make a profit by increasing capital, through buying goods at a low price and selling them at a high price, whether these goods consist of slaves, grain, animals, weapons, or clothing material. The accrued (amount) is called "profit" (*ribh*).

The attempt to make such a profit may be undertaken by storing goods and holding them until the market has fluctuated from low prices to high prices. This will bring a large profit. Or, the merchant may transport his goods to another country where they are more in demand than in his own, where he bought them. This, (again,) will bring a large profit.

Therefore, an old merchant said to a person who wanted to find out the truth about commerce: "I shall give it to you in two words: Buy cheap and sell dear.[52](#) There is commerce for you." By this, he meant the same thing that we have just established.

God "gives sustenance. He is strong and solid."[53](#)

10. *The transportation of goods by merchants.*⁵⁴

The merchant who knows his business will travel only with such goods as are generally needed by rich and poor, rulers and commoners alike. (General need) makes for a large demand for his goods. If he restricts his goods to those needed only by a few (people), it may be impossible for him to sell them, since these few may for some reason find it difficult to buy them. Then, his business would slump, and he would make no profit.

Also, a merchant who travels with needed goods should do so only with medium quality goods. The best quality of any type of goods is restricted to wealthy people and the entourage of the ruler. They are very few in number. As is well known, the medium quality of anything is what suits most people. This should by all means be kept in mind by the merchant, because it makes the difference between selling his goods and not selling them.

Likewise, it is more advantageous and more profitable for the merchant's enterprise, and a better guarantee (that he will be able to take advantage of) market fluctuations, if he brings goods from a country that is far away and where there is danger on the road. In such a case, the goods transported will be few and rare, because the place where they come from is far away or because the road over which they come is beset with perils, so that there are few who would bring them, and they are very rare. When goods are few and rare, their prices go up. On the other hand, when the country is near and the road safe for traveling, there will be many to transport the goods. Thus, they will be found in large quantities, and the prices will go down.

Therefore, the merchants who dare to enter the Sudan country are the most prosperous and wealthy of all people. The distance and the difficulty of the road they travel are great. They have to cross a difficult desert which is made (almost) inaccessible by fear (of danger) and beset by (the danger of) thirst. Water is found there only in a few wellknown spots to which caravan guides lead the way. The distance of this road is braved only by a very few people. Therefore, the goods of the Sudan country are found only in small quantities among us, and they are particularly expensive. The same applies to our goods among them.

Thus, merchandise becomes more valuable when merchants transport it from one country to another. (Merchants who do so) quickly get rich and wealthy. The same applies to merchants who travel from our country to the East, also because of the great distance to be traversed. On the other hand, those who travel back and forth between the cities and countries of one particular region earn little and make a very small profit, because their goods are available in large quantities and there is a great number of merchants who travel with them.

God "gives sustenance. He is strong and solid."⁵⁵

11. *Hoarding.*

Intelligent and experienced people in the cities know that it is inauspicious to hoard grain and to wait for high prices, and that the profit (expected) may be spoiled or lost through (hoarding). The reason may perhaps lie in the facts that people need food, and that the money they spend on it, they are forced to spend. Therefore, their souls continue to cling to (their money). The fact that souls cling to what is theirs may be an important factor in bringing bad luck to the person who takes (someone's money) giving nothing in return.⁵⁶ This, perhaps, is what the Lawgiver (Muhammad) meant when he speaks about taking people's property for nothing. In this particular case, it is not a question of (taking money) giving nothing in return. Still, people cling to (the money spent for food); they had to spend it and had no possible excuse, which is a sort of compulsion.

For things that are traded, other than foodstuffs and victuals, people have no compelling need. It is merely the diversification of desires that calls their attention to them. On such, they spend their money voluntarily and willingly, and they retain no hankering after (the money) they have paid. Thus, the person known to be a hoarder is persecuted by the combined psychic powers of the people whose money he takes away. Therefore, he loses his profit. And God knows better.

In this connection, I heard an interesting story about a *shaykh* of the Maghrib. Our teacher Abu 'Abdallah al-Abili told it to me as follows: "I was in the house of the (chief) judge of Fez, in the time of Sultan Abu Sa`id. He was the jurist Abu1-Hasan al-Malili. He had just been offered, as his salary, the choice of one of the various sorts ^{56a} (of taxes) that were collected by the government." He said: "The judge reflected a while. Then he said: 'The customs duties on wine.' Those of his friends who were present were amused and astonished. They questioned him as to what was in his mind. He replied: 'All tax money is forbidden. Therefore, I choose the tax that is not haunted by the souls of those who had to pay it. Rarely would anybody spend his money on wine unless he were gay and happy with the experience ⁵⁷ of (drinking wine), and did not regret it. His soul, therefore, does not cling to the money he has had to spend!'" This is a remarkable observation.

And God knows better.

12. (Continued) low prices are harmful to merchants who,
(have to) trade at low prices⁵⁸

This is because, as we have stated before,⁵⁹ profit and livelihood result from the crafts or from commerce. Commerce means the buying of merchandise and goods, storing them, and waiting until fluctuation of the market brings about an increase in the prices of (these goods). This is called profit (*ribh*). It provides a profit (*kasb*) and a livelihood for professional traders. When ⁶⁰ the prices of any type of goods, victuals, clothing material, or anything else (that may bring in) capital, remain low and the merchant cannot profit from any fluctuation of the market affecting these things, his profit and gain stop if the situation goes on for a long period. Business in this particular line (of goods) slumps, and the merchant has nothing but trouble. No (trading) will be done, and the merchants lose their capital.

This may be exemplified in the instance of grain. While it remains cheap, the condition of all farmers and grain producers who have to do with any of the various stages of grain production is adversely affected, the profit they make being small, insignificant, or non-existent. They cannot increase their capital, or they find (the increase) to be small. They have to spend their capital. Their condition is adversely affected, and they are reduced to poverty and indigence. This then, in turn, affects the condition of millers, bakers, and all the other occupations that are connected with grain from the time it is sown to the time it can be eaten. Likewise, the condition of soldiers is adversely affected. Their sustenance is provided by the ruler in the form of grain from farmers, through the grant of fiefs. Thus, (when the prices of agricultural products are low) the income from taxation ⁶¹ is small, and soldiers are unable to render the military service for which they exist and for which they receive sustenance from the ruler. Thus, (the ruler) discontinues their sustenance, and their condition is adversely affected.

Likewise, while the prices of sugar and honey remain low, everything connected with (these commodities) is adversely affected, and the merchants who deal in it stop trading. The same is the case with clothing (material), while prices remain low. Thus, prices that are too low destroy the livelihood of the merchant who trades in any particular type of low-priced (merchandise). The same applies to prices that are too high. Occasionally and rarely, they may bring an increase in capital as a result of hoarding (some particular merchandise) and the large profit that goes with (hoarding), but it is medium prices and rapid fluctuations of the market that provide people with their livelihood and profit.

This insight has a bearing upon customs established among civilized people. Low prices for grain, and of other things that are traded, are praised, because the need for grain is general and people,⁶² the rich as well as the poor, are compelled to buy food. Dependent people constitute the majority of people in civilization. Therefore, (low prices for foodstuffs) are of general usefulness, and food, (at least) as far as this particular kind of food (namely, grain) is concerned, weighs more heavily than commerce.⁶³

God "gives sustenance. He is strong and solid." ⁶⁴

13. The kind of people who should
practice commerce, and
those who should not.

We have stated before that commerce means increasing one's capital by buying merchandise and attempting to sell it for a price higher than its purchase price, either by waiting for market fluctuations or transporting the merchandise to a country where that particular merchandise is more in demand and brings higher prices, or by selling it for a high price to be paid at a future date. The profit is small in relation to the capital (invested). However, when the capital is large, the profit becomes great, because many times a little is much.

In the attempt to earn the increase (of capital) that constitutes profit, it is unavoidable that one's capital gets into the hands of traders, in the process of buying and selling and waiting for payment. Now, honest traders are few. It is unavoidable that there should be cheating, tampering with the merchandise which may ruin it, and delay in payment which may ruin the profit, since (such delay) while it lasts prevents any activity that could bring profit. There will also be non-acknowledgement or denial of obligations, which may prove destructive of one's capital unless (the obligation) has been stated in writing and properly witnessed. The judiciary is of little use in this connection, since the law requires clear evidence.

All this causes the merchant a great deal of trouble. He may make a small profit, but only with great trouble and difficulty, or he may make no profit at all, or his capital may be lost. If he is not afraid of quarrels, knows (how to settle) an account, and is always willing to enter into a dispute and go to court, he stands a better chance of being treated fairly by (traders), because he is not afraid and always ready to enter into a dispute. Otherwise, he must have the protection of rank. It will give him respect in the eyes of traders and cause the magistrates to uphold his rights against his debtors. In this way, he will obtain justice and recover his capital from them, voluntarily in the first case, forcibly in the second.

On the other hand, the person who is afraid or unaggressive, and who, in addition, lacks the influence (of rank) with the judiciary, must avoid commerce. He risks the loss of his capital. He will become the prey of traders, and he may not get his rights from them. People as a rule covet the possessions of other people. Without the restraining influence of the laws, nobody's property would be safe. This applies especially to traders and the low-class mob.

14. *The character qualities of merchants are inferior to those of leading personalities and remote from manliness.*⁷⁰

In ⁷¹ the preceding section, we stated that a merchant must concern himself with buying and selling, earning money and making a profit. This requires cunning, willingness to enter into disputes, cleverness, constant quarreling, and great persistence. These are things that belong to commerce. They are qualities detrimental to and destructive of virtuousness and manliness, because it is unavoidable that actions influence the soul. Good actions influence it toward goodness and virtue. Evil and deceitful actions influence it in the opposite sense. If (evil and deceitful actions) come first ⁷² and good qualities later, the former become firmly and deeply rooted and detract from the good qualities, since the blameworthy influence (of the evil actions) has left its imprint upon the soul, as is the case with all habits that originate from actions.

These influences differ according to the different types of merchants. Those who are of a very low type and associated closely with bad traders who cheat and defraud and perjure themselves, asserting and denying statements concerning transactions and prices, are much more strongly affected by these bad character qualities. Deceitfulness becomes their main characteristic. Manliness is completely alien to them, beyond their power to acquire. At any rate, it is unavoidable that their cunning and their willingness to enter into disputes affects their manliness (adversely). The complete absence of (any adverse effect) is very rare among them.

There exists a second kind of merchant, which we mentioned in the preceding section, namely, those who have the protection of rank and are thus spared (the onus) of having anything to do personally with such (business manipulations).⁷³ They are most uncommon. For they are people who have all of a sudden come into the possession of a good deal of money in some unusual way, or have inherited money from a member of their family. Thus, they have obtained the wealth that helps them to associate with the people of the dynasty and to gain prominence and renown among their contemporaries. Therefore, they are too proud to have anything personally to do with such (business manipulations), and they leave them to the care of their agents and servants. It is easy for them to have the magistrates confirm their rights, because (the magistrates) are familiar with their beneficence and gifts. (These merchants) will thus be remote from such (bad) character qualities, since they have nothing to do with the actions that bring them about, as has just been mentioned. Their manliness, therefore, will be very firmly rooted and very remote from these destructive qualities, save for the influences of such evil actions as may slip in behind the scenes.⁷⁴ For they are compelled to supervise their agents and to concur with or oppose the things they do and do not do. However, these (activities) are limited, and their influence is scarcely perceptible.

"God created you and whatever you do." ⁷⁵

14. The character qualities of merchants are inferior to those of noblemen and rulers.

This is because merchants are mostly occupied with buying and selling. This necessarily requires cunning. If a merchant always practices cunning, it becomes his dominant character quality. The quality of cunning is remote from that of manliness which is the characteristic quality of rulers and noblemen.

If the character of (the merchant) then adopts the bad qualities that follow from (cunning) in low-class merchants, such as quarrelsomeness, cheating, defrauding, as well as (the inclination to) commit perjury in rejecting and accepting statements concerning prices, his character can be expected to be one of the lowest sort, for well-known reasons⁷⁶ It is because of the character that one acquires through the practice of commerce that political leaders avoid engaging in it. There are some merchants who are not affected by those character qualities and who are able to avoid them, because they have noble souls and are magnanimous, but they are very rare in this world.

"God guides whomever He wants to guide" ⁷⁷ with His bounty and generosity. He is the Lord of the first ones and the last ones.

15. *The crafts require teachers.*

It [78](#) should be known that a craft is the habit [79](#) of something concerned with action and thought. In as much as it is concerned with action, it is something corporeal and perceptible by the senses. Things that are corporeal and perceptible by the senses are transmitted through direct practice more comprehensively and more perfectly (than otherwise), because direct practice is more useful with regard to them.

A habit is a firmly rooted quality acquired by doing a certain action and repeating it time after time, until the form of (that action) is firmly fixed.[80](#) A habit corresponds to the original (action after which it was formed). The transmission of things one has observed with one's own eyes is something more comprehensive and complete than the transmission of information and things one has learned about. A habit that is the result of (personal observation) is more perfect and more firmly rooted than a habit that is the result of information. The skill a student acquires in a craft, and the habit he attains, correspond to the quality of instruction and the habit of the teacher.

Furthermore, some crafts are simple, and others are composite. The simple ones concern the necessities. The composite ones belong to the luxuries. The simple crafts are the ones to be taught first, firstly because they are simple, and (then) because they concern the necessities and there is a large demand for having them transmitted. Therefore, they take precedence in instruction. (But) the instruction in them, as a consequence, is something inferior.

The mind, (however,) does not cease transforming all kinds of (crafts), including the composite ones, from potentiality into actuality through the gradual discovery of one thing after the other, until they are perfect. This is not achieved all at one stroke. It is achieved in the course of time and of generations. Things are not transformed from potentiality into actuality all at one stroke, especially not technical matters. Consequently, a certain amount of time is unavoidable. Therefore, the crafts are found to be inferior in small cities, and only the simple (crafts) are found there. When sedentary civilization in (those cities) increases, and luxury conditions there cause the use of the crafts, they are transformed from potentiality into actuality.[81](#)

16. *The crafts are perfected only if there exists a large and perfect sedentary civilization.*

The reason for this is that, as long as sedentary civilization is not complete and the city not fully organized, people are concerned only with the necessities of life, that is, with the obtaining of food, such as wheat and other things. Then, when the city is organized and the (available) labor increases and pays for the necessities and is more than enough (for the inhabitants), the surplus is spent on luxuries.

The crafts and sciences are the result of man's ability to think, through which he is distinguished from the animals. (His desire for) food, on the other hand, is the result of his animal and nutritive power. It is prior to sciences and crafts because of its necessary character. (The sciences and crafts) come after the necessities. The (susceptibility) of the crafts to refinement, and the quality of (the purposes) they are to serve in view of the demands made by luxury and wealth, then correspond to the civilization of a given country.

A small or Bedouin civilization needs only the simple crafts, especially those used for the necessities, such as (the crafts of) the carpenter, the smith, the tailor, the butcher, or the weaver. They exist there. Still, they are neither perfect nor well developed. They exist only in as much as they are needed, since all of them are means to an end and are not intended for their own sake.

When civilization flourishes and the luxuries are in demand, it includes the refinement and development of the crafts. Consequently, (these crafts) are perfected with every finesse, and a number of other crafts, in addition to them, is added, as luxury-customs and conditions demand. Among (such crafts are) those of the cobbler, the tanner, the silk weaver,⁸² the goldsmith, and others. When the civilization is fully developed, these different kinds (of crafts are perfected and refined to the limit. In the cities, they become ways of making a living for those who practice them. In fact, they become the most lucrative activities there are, because urban luxury demands them. Other such crafts are those of the perfumer, the coppersmith, the bath attendant, the cook, the biscuit baker, the *harisah* baker,⁸³ the teacher of singing, dancing, and rhythmical drum beating. There are also the book producers who ply the craft of copying, binding, and correcting books. This (last mentioned) craft is demanded by the urban luxury of occupation with intellectual matters. There are other similar (crafts). They become excessive when civilization develops excessively. Thus, we learn that there are Egyptians who teach dumb creatures like birds and domestic donkeys⁸⁴ who produce marvelous spectacles which give the illusion that objects are transformed, and who teach the use of the camel driver's chant,⁸⁵ how to dance and walk on ropes stretched in the air, how to lift heavy animals and stones, and other things. These crafts do not exist among us in the Maghrib, because the civilization of (Maghribi) cities does not compare with the civilization of Egypt and Cairo.

God is wise and knowing.⁸⁶

17. *The crafts are firmly rooted in a city (only) when sedentary culture is firmly rooted and of long duration.*

The reason for this is obvious. All crafts are customs and colors of civilization. Customs become firmly rooted only through much repetition and long duration. Then, their coloring becomes firmly established and rooted in (successive) generations. Once such coloring is firmly established, it is difficult to remove it. Therefore, we find that cities with a highly developed sedentary culture, the civilization (population) of which has receded and decreased, retain traces of crafts that do not exist in other more recently civilized cities, even though they may have reached the greatest abundance (of population). This is only because conditions in those (cities) with the old civilization had become well established and firmly rooted through their long duration and constant repetition, whereas the (other recently civilized cities) have not yet reached the limit ⁸⁷

This is the situation, for instance, in contemporary Spain. There we find the crafts and their institutions still in existence. They are well established and firmly rooted, as far as the things required by the customs of (Spanish) cities are concerned. (They include,) for instance, building, cooking, the various kinds of singing and entertainment, such as instrumental music, string instruments and dancing, the use of carpets in palaces, the construction of well-planned, well-constructed houses, the production of metal and pottery vessels, all kinds of utensils, the giving of banquets and weddings, and all the other crafts required by luxury and luxury customs. One finds that they practice and understand these things better (than any other nation) and that they know well the crafts that belong to them. They have an abundant share of these things and have distinctly more of them than any other city, even though civilization in (Spain) has receded and most of it does not equal that which exists in the other countries of the (Mediterranean) shore. This is only because, as we have mentioned before, ⁸⁸ sedentary culture had become deeply rooted in Spain through the stability given it by the Umayyad dynasty, the preceding Gothic dynasty, and the *reyes de taifas*, successors to (the Umayyads), and so on. Therefore, sedentary culture had reached in (Spain) a stage that had not been reached in any other region except, reportedly, in the 'Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. There, too, the reason was the long duration of the respective dynasties. Thus, the crafts became well established there. All the various kinds of crafts were developed and refined to perfection. Their coloring remained in that civilization and did not leave it, until it was totally destroyed. Like a garment's fast color, (the color held fast until the garment was destroyed).

This was also the case in Tunis. A sedentary culture had been established there by the Sinhajah (Zirid) dynasty and its successors, the Almohads. The crafts were developed to perfection in every respect, though less so than in Spain. However, sedentary culture in Tunis has been greatly enriched by sedentary institutions imported from Egypt. The distance between the two countries is short, and travelers from Tunis visit Egypt every year. Also, (Tunisians) often live in (Egypt) for some time, and then bring back the (Egyptian) luxury customs and technical knowledge they like ⁸⁹ Thus, the situation with regard to (sedentary culture in Tunis) has become similar to that of Egypt, for the reasons mentioned, and

also to that of Spain, because many people from eastern Spain who were exiled in the seventh [thirteenth] century settled in Tunis.⁹⁰ Thus, certain aspects of (sedentary culture) have become firmly rooted there, even though the civilization (population) of (Tunis) at this time is not adequate to them. However, a fast coloring rarely changes, except when its basis ceases to exist. Thus, we also find in al-Qayrawan, in Marrakech, and in Qal'at Ibn Hammad some remnants of such (sedentary culture). All these places, it is true, are nowadays in ruins or destined soon to fall into ruins, and only people who know are able to discern these remnants. They will find, however, traces of the crafts (there) showing what once existed there, like faded writing in a book.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One."⁹¹

18. *Crafts can improve and increase only when many people demand them.*

The [92](#) reason for this is that man cannot afford to give away his labor for nothing, because it is his (source of) profit and livelihood [93](#) Throughout his life, he has no advantage from anything else. Therefore, he must employ his labor only on whatever has value in his city, if it is to be profitable to him.

If a particular craft is in demand and there are buyers for it, (that) craft, then, corresponds to a type of goods that is in great demand and imported for sale. People in the towns, therefore, are eager to learn (that particular) craft, in order to make a living through it. On the other hand, if a particular craft is not in demand, there are no buyers for it, and no one is interested in learning it. As a result, (the craft) is destined to be left alone and disappears because of neglect.

Therefore, it has been said on the authority of 'Ali: "Every man's value consists in what he knows well." [94](#) This means that the craft he knows constitutes his value, that is, the value realized from his labor, which is his livelihood.

There is another secret to be understood in this connection. That is, that it is the ruling dynasty that demands crafts and their improvement. It causes the demand for them and makes them desirable. Crafts not in demand with the dynasty may be in demand with the other inhabitants of a city. However, that would not be the same thing, for the dynasty is the biggest market. [95](#) There, everything can be marketed. It does not make any difference whether it is little or much. Whatever is in demand with the dynasty is of necessity a major article. On the other hand, the demand of the common people for a particular craft is not general, nor is the business that the common people can provide of large volume.

God has power to do what He wishes.

19. *The crafts recede from cities that are close to ruin.*

This is because of what we have explained. The crafts can improve only when they are needed and when they are in demand with many people. When the condition of a city weakens and senility sets in as the result of a decrease of its civilization and the small number of its inhabitants, luxury in the city decreases and (its inhabitants) revert to restricting themselves to the necessities. The crafts belonging to luxury conditions and which depend on (luxury) become few. The master of (a particular craft) is no longer assured of making a living from it. Therefore, he deserts (his craft) for another, or he dies and leaves no successor. As a result, the institutions of the crafts disappear altogether. Thus, for instance, painters, goldsmiths, calligraphers, copyists, and similar artisans who cater to luxury needs disappear. The crafts continue to decrease, as long as the city continues to decrease, until they no longer exist.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One."⁹⁶

20. *The Arabs, of all people, are least familiar with crafts.*

The ⁹⁷ reason for this is that the Arabs are more firmly rooted in desert life and more remote from sedentary civilization, the crafts, and the other things which sedentary civilization calls for, (than anybody else). (On the other hand,) the non-Arabs in the East and the Christian nations along the shores of the Mediterranean are very well versed in (the crafts), because they are more deeply rooted in sedentary civilization and more remote from the desert and desert civilization (than others). They do not even have camels, which make it possible for the Arabs to retreat far into the wilderness of the desert, nor do they have pastures for (camels) or sand suitable for their breeding.⁹⁸

Therefore, we find that the homelands of the Arabs and the places they took possession of in Islam had few crafts altogether, so that (crafts) had to be imported from other regions. One may observe the great number of crafts in non-Arab countries such as China, India, the lands of the Turks, and the Christian nations, and the fact that other nations imported (their own crafts) from them.

The non-Arabs in the West, the Berbers, are like the Arabs in this respect, because for a very long period they remained firmly rooted in desert life. This is attested by the small number of cities in the (Berber) region, as we have stated before.⁹⁹ The crafts in the Maghrib, therefore, are few in number and are not well established. Exceptions are the weaving of wool and the tanning and stitching of leather. For, when they settled down, they developed these (crafts) greatly, because they were matters of general concern and (the wool and leather) needed for them were the most common raw materials in their region, on account of the Bedouin conditions prevailing among them.

On the other hand, the crafts had been firmly rooted in the East for a very long period, ever since the rule of the ancient nations, the Persians, the Nabataeans, the Copts, the Israelites, the Greeks, and the Romans (Rum). Thus, the conditions of sedentary culture became firmly rooted among them. It included the crafts, as we have stated before. Their traces have not been wiped out.

The Yemen, al-Bahrain, Oman, and the Jazirah have long been in Arab possession, but for thousands of years, the rule of these areas has belonged to different (Arab) nations in succession. They also founded cities and towns (there) and promoted the development of sedentary culture and luxury to the highest degree. Among such nations were the 'Ad and the Thamud, the Amalekites and the Himyar after them, the Tubbas, and the other South Arabian rulers (Adhwa). There was a long period of royal authority and sedentary culture. The coloring of (sedentary culture) established itself firmly. The crafts became abundant and firmly rooted. They were not wiped out simultaneously with (each ruling) dynasty, as we have stated. They have remained and have always renewed themselves down to this time, and they have become the specialty of that area. Such (special Yemenite) crafts are embroidered fabrics, striped cloth, and finely woven garments and silks.¹⁰⁰

God inherits the earth and whomever is upon it.

21. *The person who has gained the habit of a particular craft is rarely able afterwards to master another.*

A [101](#) tailor, for instance, who has acquired the habit of tailoring and knows it well and has that habit firmly rooted in his soul, will not afterwards master the habit of carpentry or construction, unless the first habit was not yet firmly established and its coloring not yet firmly rooted.

The reason for this is that habits are qualities and colors of the soul. They do not come all at once. A person who is still in his natural state has (an) easier (time) acquiring certain habits and is better prepared to gain them. When the soul has been colored by a habit, it is no longer in its natural state, and it is less prepared (to master another habit), because it has taken on a certain coloring from that habit. As a result, it is less disposed to accept (another) habit.

This is clear and attested by (the facts of) existence. One rarely finds a craftsman who, knowing his craft well, afterwards acquires a good knowledge of another craft and masters both equally well. This extends even to scholars whose habit has to do with thinking. (The scholar) who has acquired the habit of one particular science and masters it completely will rarely achieve the same mastery of the habit of another science, and if he were to study (another science), he would, except under very rare circumstances, be deficient in it. The reason lies in the significance attaching, as we have mentioned, to preparedness and the fact that he becomes colored by the color that the soul receives from the habit it acquires.

And God knows better.

22. *A brief enumeration of the basic crafts.*

It [102](#) should be known that the crafts practiced by the human species are numerous, because so much labor is continually available in civilization. They are so numerous as to defy complete enumeration. However, some of them are necessary in civilization or occupy a noble (position) because of (their) object. We shall single these two kinds out for mention and leave all others.

Necessary (crafts) are agriculture, architecture, tailoring, carpentry, and weaving. Crafts noble because of (their) object are midwifery, the art of writing, book production, singing, and medicine.

Midwifery is something necessary in civilization and a matter of general concern, because it assures, as a rule, the life of the new-born child. The object of (midwifery) is newborn children and their mothers.

Medicine preserves the health of man and repels disease. It is a branch of physics. Its object is the human body.

The art of writing, and book production, which depends on it, preserve the things that are of concern to man and keep them from being forgotten. It enables the innermost thoughts of the soul to reach those who are far and absent. [103](#) It perpetuates in books the results of thinking and scholarship. It makes four [104](#) out of the (three) orders of existence (as it constitutes a special order of existence) for ideas.

Singing is the harmony of sounds and the manifestation of their beauty to the ears.

All these three crafts call for contact with great rulers in their privacy and at their intimate parties. Thus, they have nobility that other (crafts) do not have. The other crafts are, as a rule, secondary and subordinate. (The attitude toward them, however,) differs according to the different purposes and requirements.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One." [105](#)

23. *The craft of agriculture.*[106](#)

The fruit of this craft is the obtainment of foodstuffs and grains. People must undertake to stir the earth, sow, cultivate the plants, see to it that they are watered and that they grow until they reach their full growth, then, harvest the ears, and get the grain out of the husks. They also must understand all the related activities, and procure all the things required in this connection.

Agriculture is the oldest of all crafts, in as much as it provides the food that is the main factor in perfecting human life, since man can exist without anything else but not without food. Therefore, this craft has existed especially in the desert, since, as we have stated before, it is prior to and older than sedentary life.[107](#) Thus, it became a Bedouin craft which is not practiced or known by sedentary people, because all their conditions are secondary to those of desert life and their crafts, thus, secondary and subsequent to (Bedouin) crafts.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One."[108](#)

24. *The waft of architecture.*

This is the first and oldest craft of sedentary civilization. It is the knowledge of how to go about using houses and mansions for cover and shelter.¹⁰⁹ This is because man has the natural disposition to reflect upon the outcome of things. Thus, it is unavoidable that he must reflect upon how to avert the harm arising from heat and cold by using houses which have walls and roofs to intervene between him and those things on all sides. This natural disposition to think, which is the real meaning of humanity, exists among (men) in different degrees. Some men are more or less temperate in this respect. They use (housing) with moderation, as, for instance, the inhabitants of the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth zones. The inhabitants of the first and seventh zones, on the other hand, are unfamiliar with the use of (housing), because they are intemperate and their thinking does not go far enough to enable them to practice human crafts. Therefore, they take shelter in caverns and caves, just as they (also) eat unprepared and uncooked food.¹¹⁰

Now, the temperate people who use houses for shelter become very numerous and have many houses in one area. They become strangers to each other and no longer know each other. They fear surprise attacks at night. Therefore, they must protect their community by surrounding it with a wall to guard them. The whole thing thus becomes a single town or city in which they are guarded by authorities which keep them apart.¹¹¹ They (also) need protection against the enemy. Thus, they use fortresses and castles for themselves and for the people under their control. These men (who control fortresses and castles) are like rulers or amirs or tribal chieftains of a corresponding position.

Also, building conditions are different in the (various) towns. Each city follows in this respect the procedure known to and within the technical (competence) of (its inhabitants) and corresponding to the climate and the different conditions of (the inhabitants) with regard to wealth and poverty. The situation of the inhabitants within each individual city also (differs). Some use castles and far-flung constructions comprising a number of dwellings and houses and rooms, because they have a great number of children, servants, dependents, and followers. They make their walls of stones, which they join together with quicklime. They cover them with paint and plaster, and do the utmost to furnish and decorate everything. (They do so) in order to show how greatly they are concerned for their shelter. In addition, they prepare cellars and underground rooms for the storage of their food, and also stables for tying up their horses,¹¹² if they are army people and have many followers and guests, such as amirs and people of a corresponding position.

Others build a small dwelling or house for themselves and for their children to live in. Their desire goes no farther, because their situation permits them no more. Thus, they restrict themselves to a mere shelter, which is natural to human beings. Between the two (extremes), there are innumerable degrees.

Architecture is also needed when rulers and people of a dynasty build large towns and high monuments (*hayakil*). They try their utmost to make good plans and build tall structures with technical perfection, so that (architecture) can reach its highest development. Architecture is the craft that satisfies requirements in all these

respects. It is found most (widely represented) in the temperate zones, that is, in the fourth zone and the adjacent area. In the intemperate zones, there is no building activity. The people there use enclosures of reeds and clay as houses, or take shelter in caverns and caves.¹¹³

The architects who exercise the craft differ. Some are intelligent and skillful. Others are inferior.

Furthermore, (architecture) has many subdivisions. Thus, the building material may be smoothed ¹¹⁴ stones or bricks. ¹¹⁵ The walls made of (such material) are joined and firmly held together by clay and quicklime. They thus hold together as fast as if they were of one piece.

Another (material) is simply earth. One builds walls with it by using ¹¹⁶ two wooden boards, the measurements of which vary according to (local) custom. The average measurements are four cubits by two. They are set upon a foundation. The distance between them depends on the width of the foundation the builder considers appropriate. They are joined together with pieces of wood fastened ¹¹⁷ with ropes or twine. The two remaining sides of the empty space between the two boards are joined by two other small boards. Then, one puts earth mixed with quicklime into (this frame). The earth and quicklime are pounded with special mixers used only for this purpose, until everything is well mixed throughout. Earth is then added a second and third time, until the space between the two boards is filled. The earth and quicklime have combined and become one substance. Then, two other boards are set up in the same fashion, and (the earth) is treated in the same manner, until it is ready. (All) the boards ¹¹⁸ are then properly set up piece upon piece, until the whole wall is set up and joined together as tightly as if it were of one piece. This construction is called *tabiyah*,¹¹⁹ and the builder of it is called *tawwab*.

Another technique of construction is the covering of walls with quicklime. The quicklime is first diluted with water and let soak for a week or two depending on how long is required for it to become well-balanced in its temper and to lose any excess igneousness detrimental to its adhesiveness. When this process is completed to the satisfaction of (the builder), he puts it on the wall beginning at the top and rubs it in until it sticks.

Another technique of construction is roofing. Pieces of wood (beams), either carefully smoothed by a carpenter or left rough, are placed over two walls of the house, and more boards are placed on top of them. They are joined together with nails. Upon that, earth and quicklime are poured. They are pounded with mixers until they combine and hold together. The roof is thus covered with quicklime (plaster), exactly as the walls were covered with it.

Another technique of construction is decoration and ornamentation. Thus, figures formed from gypsum are placed upon the walls. (The gypsum) is mixed with water, and then solidified again, with some humidity remaining in it. Symmetrical figures are chiseled out of it with iron drills, until it looks brilliant and pleasant. The walls are occasionally also covered with pieces of marble, brick, clay, shells (mother-of-pearl), or jet. ¹²⁰ (The material) may be divided either into identically shaped or differently shaped pieces. These pieces are arranged in whatever symmetrical figures and arrangements are being utilized by the (various artisans), and set into the quicklime (with which the walls have been covered). Thus, the walls come to look like colorful flower beds.

There are (other techniques of construction), such as the construction of wells and cisterns for running water. In the houses, large, well-cut marble basins are prepared. They have orifices in the middle to permit the water of the cistern to flow

out. The water comes to the cistern from the outside through conduits bringing it into the houses.

There are other similar kinds of architectural activity. The workmen who do all these things differ in skill and intelligence. They grow in number when the civilization of a town increases and widens.

The authorities often have recourse to the opinions of these men, about construction matters which they understand better. For in towns with large populations, people live in very crowded conditions. Therefore, they compete with each other for space and air above and below and for the use of the outside of a building. The owner fears lest (any encroachment) cause damage [121](#) to the walls, and, therefore, forbids it to his neighbor, except where the neighbor has a legal right to it. (People) also have differences over right-of-way and about outlets for running water and about refuse disposed of through subterranean conduits. Occasionally, someone claims somebody else's right to (use of) a wall, eaves, or a gutter, [122](#) because the houses are so close to each other. Or someone may claim that his neighbor's wall is in bad condition and he fears that it will collapse. He needs a judgment against the other party from an expert [123](#) to force the other party to tear the wall down and prevent damage to the neighbor(ing house). Or, a house or courtyard has to be divided between two parties, so that no damage to the house or curtailment of its usefulness is caused, and similar things.

All these matters are clear only to those who know architecture in all its details. They can judge these details by looking at the joints and ties and the wooden parts. [124](#) (They can see whether) the walls are leaning over or are straight, (whether) dwellings are divided as required by their construction and (intended) use, and (whether) water can flow in and out the conduits without causing harm to the houses or walls it flows through, and other things. They know about them and have the experience that others do not have.

However, the quality of (architects) differs in the different groups. It depends on the (ruling) dynasties and their power. We have stated before [125](#) that the perfection of the crafts depends on the perfection of sedentary culture and their extent (depends) on the number of those who demand them. At the beginning, the dynasty is a Bedouin one, and therefore needs for its construction activities (the help of) other regions. This was the case when al-Walid b. 'Abd-al-Malik decided to build the mosques of Medina and Jerusalem and his own mosque in Damascus. He sent to the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople for workmen skilled in construction work, and the Byzantine emperor sent him enough men to build these mosques as he had planned them. [126](#)

Architects also make some use of geometry (engineering). For instance, they use the plumb to make walls perpendicular, and they use devices for lifting water, to make it flow, and similar things. Thus, they must know something about the problems connected with (engineering). They also must know how to move heavy loads with the help of machines. Big blocks of large stones cannot be lifted into place on a wall by the unaided strength of workmen alone. Therefore, the architect must contrive to multiply the strength of the rope by passing it through holes, constructed according to geometrical proportions, of the attachments called *mikhal* "pulleys." [127](#) They make the load easier to lift, so that the intended work can be completed without difficulty. This can be achieved only with the help of geometrical (engineering) principles which are commonly known among men. Such things made it possible to build the (ancient) monuments that are standing to this day. They are believed to have been built in pre-Islamic times and by persons whose bodies were

(of a size) corresponding (to the) large (size of the monuments). This is not so. (The people who built them) used engineering devices, as we have mentioned.[128](#) This should be understood.

"God creates whatever He wishes."[129](#)

25. *The craft of carpentry.*

This craft is one of the necessities of civilization. Its material is wood. This is as follows: God made all created things useful for man, so as to supply his necessities and needs. Trees belong among these things. They have innumerable uses known to everybody. One of their uses is their use as wood when they are dry. The first use of wood is as wood for fires, which man needs to live; as sticks for support, protection (of flocks), and other necessities; and as supports for loads that one fears might topple over. After that, wood has other uses, for the inhabitants of the desert as well as for those of settled areas.

Bedouins use wood for tent poles and pegs, for camel litters for their women, and for the lances, bows, and arrows they use for weapons. Sedentary people use wood for the roofs of their houses, for the locks of their doors, and for chairs to sit on. Wood is the raw material for all these things. The particular form needed in each case is the result of craftsmanship. The craft concerned with that and which gives every wooden object its form is carpentry in all its different grades.

The master of (this craft) must first split the wood into smaller pieces or into boards.¹³⁰ Then, he puts these pieces together in the required form. In this connection, he attempts with the aid of his craft to prepare these pieces by the proper arrangement for (their) becoming parts of the (desired) particular shape. The man in charge of this craft is the carpenter. He is necessary to civilization. Then, when sedentary culture increases and luxury makes its appearance and people want to use elegant types of roofs, doors, chairs, and furniture, these things come to be produced in a most elegant way through mastery of remarkable techniques which are luxuries and in no way necessities. Such (techniques) include, for instance, the use of carvings for doors and chairs. Or, one skillfully turns and shapes pieces of wood in a lathe, and then one puts these pieces together in certain symmetrical arrangements and nails them together, so that they appear to the eye to be of one piece. They consist of different shapes all symmetrically combined. This is done with all the (possible) shapes into which wood may be cut, which turn out to be very elegant things. The same applies to all wooden utensils (*alat*) of whatever kind. Carpentry is also needed for the construction of ships, which are made of boards and nails. Ships are bodies (constructed with the help) of geometry (engineering), fashioned after the form of a fish and the way a fish swims in the water with its fins and belly. The shape is intended to make it easier for the ship to brave the water. Instead of the animal motion that the fish has, the ship is moved by the winds. It is often supported by the movement of oars, as is the case in (naval) fleets.

In view of its origin, carpentry needs a good deal of geometry of all kinds. It requires either a general or a specialized knowledge of proportion and measurement, in order to bring the forms (of things) from potentiality into actuality in the proper manner, and for the knowledge of - proportions one must have recourse to the geometrician.

Therefore, the leading Greek geometers were all master carpenters. Euclid,¹³¹ the author of the *Book of the Principles*, on geometry, was a carpenter and was known as such. The same was the case with Apollonius, the author of the book on *Conic Sections*, and Menelaus,¹³² and others.

It is said that Noah taught carpentry (first) in the world. With its help, he constructed the ship of salvation (the Ark) with which he performed his (prophetic) miracle [133](#) during the Flood. This story may be possible, that is, (Noah) may have been a carpenter. However, there is no reliable proof that he was the first to practice (carpentry), because (the event) lies so far back in the past. (The story) serves to indicate the great age of carpentry. There is no sound information about its (existence) before the story of Noah. Therefore, he was, in a way, considered the first to learn it. The true secrets (significance) of the crafts in the world should be understood.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One." [134](#)

26. *The craft of weaving and tailoring.*

It [135](#) should be known that people who are temperate in their humanity cannot avoid giving some thought to keeping warm, as they do to shelter. One manages to keep warm by using woven material as protective cover against both heat and cold. This requires the interlacing of yarn, until it turns out to be a complete garment. This is spinning and weaving.

Desert people restrict themselves to this. But people who are inclined toward sedentary culture cut the woven material into pieces of the right size to cover the form of the body and all of its numerous limbs in their various locations. They then put the different pieces together with thread, until they turn out to be a complete garment that fits the body and can be worn by people. The craft that makes things fit is tailoring.

These two crafts are necessary in civilization, because human beings must keep warm.

The purpose of (weaving) is to weave wool and cotton yarn in warp and woof and do it well, so that the texture will be strong. Pieces of cloth of certain measurements are thus produced. Some are garments of wool for covering. Others are garments of cotton and linen for wear.

The purpose of tailoring is to give the woven material a certain form in accordance with the many different shapes and customs (that may occur in this connection). The material is first cut with scissors into pieces that fit the limbs of the body. The pieces are then joined together with the help of skillful tailoring according to 'the rules, either by the use of thread, or with bands, or (one) quilts (them), or cuts [136](#) openings. This (craft) is restricted to sedentary culture, since the inhabitants of the desert can dispense with it. They merely cover themselves with cloth. The tailoring of clothes, the cutting, fitting, and sewing of the material, is one of the various methods and aspects of sedentary culture.

This should be understood, in order to understand the reason why the wearing of sewn garments is forbidden on the pilgrimage. According to the religious law, the pilgrimage requires, among other things, the discarding of all worldly attachments and the return to God as He created us in the beginning. Man should not set his heart upon any of his luxury customs, such as perfume, women, sewn garments, or boots. He should not go hunting or expose himself to any other of the customs with which his soul and character have become colored. When he dies, he will necessarily lose them (anyhow). He should come (to the pilgrimage) as if he were going to the Last Judgment, humble in his heart, sincerely devoted to his Lord. If he is completely sincere in this respect, his reward will be that he will shed his sins (and be) like he was on the day when his mother gave birth to him. Praised be You! How kind have You been with Your servants and how compassionate have You been with them in their search for guidance toward You!

These two crafts are very ancient in the world, because it is necessary for man in a temperate civilization to keep warm. The inhabitants of less temperate, hotter zones do not need to keep warm. Therefore, we hear that the Negro inhabitants of the first zone are mostly naked. Because of the great age of these crafts, they are attributed by the common people to Idris, the most ancient of the

prophets.¹³⁷ They are also often attributed to Hermes.¹³⁸ Hermes is said to be identical with Idris.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One."¹³⁹

27. The craft of midwifery.

Midwifery is a craft that shows how to proceed in bringing the new-born child gently out of the womb of his mother and how to prepare the things that go with that. It also shows what is good for (a new-born child), after it is born, as we shall mention. The craft is as a rule restricted to women, since they, as women, may see the pudenda of other women. The woman who exercises this craft is called midwife (*qabilah*, literally, "the woman who receives"). The word implies the meaning of *giving* and *receiving*. The woman in labor in a way *gives* the embryo to the midwife, and the latter *receives* it.

This is as follows: When the embryo has gone through all its stages [140](#) and is completely and perfectly formed in the womb - the period God determined for its remaining in the womb is as a rule nine months - it seeks to come out, because God implanted such a desire in (unborn children). But the opening is too narrow for it, and it is difficult for (the embryo to come out). It often splits one of the walls of the vagina by its pressure, and often the close connection and attachment of (its) covering membranes with the uterus are ruptured. All this is painful and hurts very much. This is the meaning of labor pains. In this connection, the midwife may offer some succor by massaging the back, the buttocks, and the lower extremities adjacent to the uterus. She thus stimulates the activity of the (force) pushing the embryo out, and facilitates the difficulties encountered in this connection as much as she can. She uses as much strength as she thinks is required by the difficulty of (the process). When the embryo has come out, it remains connected with the uterus by the umbilical cord at its stomach, through which it was fed. That cord is a superfluous special limb for feeding the child. The midwife cuts it but so that she does not go beyond the place where (it starts to be) superfluous and does not harm the stomach of the child or the uterus of the mother. She then treats the place of the operation with cauterization or whatever other treatment she sees fit.

When the embryo comes out of that narrow opening with its humid bones that can easily be bent and curved, it may happen that its limbs and joints change their shape, because they were only recently formed and because the - substances (of which it consists) are humid. Therefore, the midwife undertakes to massage and correct (the new-born child), until every limb has resumed its natural shape and the position destined for it, and (the child) has again its normal form. After that, she goes back to the woman in labor and massages and kneads her, so that the membranes of the embryo may come out. They are sometimes somewhat late in coming out. On such an occasion, it is feared that the constricting power (muscle) might resume its natural position before all the membranes are brought out. They are superfluities. They might become putrid, and their putridity might enter the uterus, which could be fatal. The midwife takes precautions against that. She tries to stimulate the ejection, until the membranes which are late in coming out come out, too.

She then returns to the child. She anoints its limbs with oils and dusts it with astringent powders, to strengthen it and to dry up the fluids of the uterus. She smears something upon the child's palate to lift its uvula. She puts something into its nose, in order to empty the cavities of its brain. She makes it gargle with (swallow)

an electuary, in order to prevent its bowels from becoming obstructed and their walls from sticking together.

Then, she treats the woman in labor for the weakness caused by the labor pains and the pain that the separation causes her uterus. Although the child is no natural limb (of the mother), still, the way it is created in the uterus causes it to become attached (to the body of the mother) as if it were an inseparable limb (of her body). Therefore, its separation causes a pain similar to that caused by the amputation (of a limb). (The midwife) also treats the pain of the vagina that was torn and wounded by the pressure of (the child) coming out.

All these are ills with the treatment of which midwives are better acquainted (than anyone else). We likewise find them better acquainted than a skillful physician with the means of treating the ills affecting the bodies of little children from the time they are sucklings until they are weaned. This is simply because the human body, at this stage, is only potentially a human body. After (the child) is weaned, (its body) becomes actually a human one. Then, its need for a physician is greater (than its need for a midwife).

One can see that this craft is necessary to the human species in civilization. Without it, the individuals of the species could not, as a rule, come into being. Some individuals of the species may be able to dispense with this craft. God may arrange it for them that way as a miracle and extraordinary wonder. This, for instance, may be done for the prophets. Or there may be some instinct and guidance given to the child through instinct and natural disposition. Thus, such children may come into existence without the help of midwives.

The miraculous kind (of births) has often occurred. It has, thus, been reported that the Prophet was born with the umbilical cord cut and circumcised, placing his hands upon the earth and turning his eyes toward heaven. The same applies to Jesus (who spoke) in the cradle,¹⁴¹ and other things.

The instinctive kind (of births) is not unknown. Since dumb animals, such as, for instance, bees and others ¹⁴² have remarkable instincts, why should one not assume the same for man who is superior to them, and especially for those human beings who are singled out by acts of divine grace? Furthermore, the common instinct of new-born children that causes them to seek their mother's breast is a clear testimony to the existence of an instinct in them. The ways of divine foresight are too great to be grasped completely.

This explains the incorrectness of the opinion of alFarabi and the Spanish philosophers. They argue for the non-existence of (the possibility) of a destruction of the various species (of beings) and the impossibility of an end of created things, especially of the human species. They say that once there has been an end to (the existence of) individuals of (the human species), a later existence of them would be impossible. (Their existence) depends upon the existence of midwifery, without which man could not come into being, since even if we were to assume that a child might (come into existence) without the help of this craft and without being taken care of by (this craft) until it was weaned, still, it could certainly not survive. (For not only midwifery but also other crafts are needed. However,) the crafts cannot possibly exist without the ability to think, because they are the fruit of thinking and depend on it.

Avicenna undertook the refutation of this opinion, because he was opposed to it and admitted the possibility of an end of the various species (of beings) and of the destruction of the world of creation and its subsequent re-establishment as a consequence of astronomical requirements and strange (astral) positions which, he thought, take place rarely over very long intervals of time. It requires the

fermentation, with the help of appropriate heat, of a kind of clay that corresponds to the temper of (the being to be created). Thus, it comes to be a human being. Then, an animal is destined for that human being. In that animal, an instinctive (desire) is created (which is directed) toward bringing that human being up and being kind to him, until he exists fully and is weaned. Avicenna explained this lengthily in the treatise which he entitled the *Treatise of Hayy b. Yaqzan*.¹⁴³

His argumentation is not correct. We agree with him in regard to the (possibility of the) end of the various species (of beings), but not on the basis of his arguments. His argumentation depends on relating actions to a cause that makes (them) necessary. The theory of the "voluntary agent"¹⁴⁴ is a proof against him. According to the theory of the "voluntary agent," there is no intermediary between the actions and the primeval power, and there is no need for such (a difficult) task. If we accepted (Avicenna's argumentation) for the sake of the argument, (we might say that) it is saying no more than that the continued existence of the individual is the consequence of the instinctive desire to bring him up which has been created in dumb animals. What, then, would be the necessity that might call for (such a procedure), and further, if such an instinctive desire can be created in a dumb animal, what would prevent its creation in the child itself, as we (for our part) assumed at the beginning? It is more likely that an instinct directed toward his own interests is created in an individual than that one directed toward the interests of someone else is created in (someone). Thus, both theories (that of al-Farabi and that of Avicenna) prove themselves wrong in their particular approach, as I have established.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One."¹⁴⁵

28. *The craft of medicine.*¹⁴⁶ *The craft of medicine is needed in settled areas and cities but not in the desert.*

This craft is necessary in towns and cities because of its recognized usefulness. Its fruit is the preservation of health among those who are healthy, and the repulsion of illness among those who are ill, with the help of medical treatment, until they are cured of their illnesses.

It should be known that the origin of all illnesses is in food, as Muhammad said in the comprehensive tradition on medicine, that is reported among physicians but suspected by the religious scholars. ¹⁴⁷ He said: "The stomach is the home of disease. Dieting is the main medicine. The origin of every disease is indigestion." The statement "The stomach is the home of disease," is obvious. The statement: "Dieting is the main medicine," is to be understood in the sense that *himyah* "dieting" means "going hungry," since hunger means refraining (*ihtima'*) from food. Thus, the meaning is that hunger is the greatest medicine, the origin of all medicines. The statement: "The origin of every disease is indigestion," is to be understood in the sense that *baradah* "indigestion" is the addition of new food to the food already in the stomach before it has been digested.

(The statement lends itself to) the following comment. God created man and preserves his life through nourishment. He gets it through eating, and he applies to it the digestive and nutritive powers, until it becomes blood fitting for the flesh and bone parts of the body. Then, the growing power takes it over, and it is turned into flesh and bones. Digestion means that the nourishment is boiled by natural heat, stage by stage, until it actually becomes a part of the body. This is to be explained as follows. The nourishment that enters the mouth and is chewed by the jaws undergoes the influence of the heat of the mouth, which boils it slightly. Thus, its composition is slightly altered. This can be observed in a bit of food that is taken and chewed well. Its composition then can be observed to be different from that of the (original) food.

The food then gets into the stomach, and the heat of the stomach boils it, until it becomes chyme, that is, the essence of the boiled (food). ¹⁴⁸ (The stomach) sends (the chyme) on into the liver, and ejects the part of the food that has become solid sediment in the bowels, through the two body openings. The heat of the liver then boils the chyme, until it becomes fresh blood. On it, there swims a kind of foam as the result of the boiling. (That foam) is yellow bile. Parts of it become dry and solid. They are black bile. The natural heat is not quite sufficient to boil the coarse parts. They are phlegm. The liver then sends all (these substances) into the veins and arteries. There, the natural heat starts to boil them. The pure blood thus generates a hot and humid vapor that sustains the animal spirit. ¹⁴⁹ The growing power acts upon the blood, and it becomes flesh. The thick part of it then becomes bones. Then, the body eliminates the (elements of the digested food) it does not need as the various superfluities, such as sweat, saliva, mucus, and tears. This is the process of nourishment, and the transformation of food from potential into actual flesh.

Now, illnesses originate from fevers, and most illnesses are fevers. The reason for fevers is that the natural heat is too weak to complete the process of

boiling in each of those stages. The nourishment thus is not fully assimilated. The reason for that, as a rule, is either that there is a great amount of food in the stomach that becomes too much for the natural heat, or that food is put into the stomach before the first food has been completely boiled. In such a case, the natural heat either devotes itself exclusively to the new food, so that the first food is left in its (half-digested) state, or it divides itself between the old and the new food, and then is insufficient to boil and assimilate them completely. The stomach sends the (food) in that state into the liver, and the heat of the liver likewise is not strong enough to assimilate it. Often, an unassimilated superfluity, resulting from food that had been taken in earlier, has (also) remained in the liver. The liver sends all of it to the veins unassimilated, as it is. When the body has received what it properly needs, it eliminates the (unassimilated superfluity) together with the other superfluities such as sweat, tears, and saliva, if it can. Often, (the body) cannot cope with the greater part of the (unassimilated superfluity). Thus, it remains in the veins, the liver, and the stomach, and increases with time. Any composite humid (substance) that is not boiled and assimilated undergoes putrefaction. Consequently, the unassimilated nourishment-what is called *khilt* [150](#) becomes putrefied. Anything in the process of putrefaction develops a strange heat. This heat is what, in the human body, is called fever.

This may be exemplified by food that is left over and eventually becomes putrefied, and by dung that has become putrefied. Heat develops in it and takes its course. This is what fevers in the human body mean. Fevers are the main cause and origin of illness, as was mentioned in the (Prophetic) tradition. [151](#) Such fevers can be cured by not giving an ill person any nourishment for a certain number of weeks; then, he must take the proper nourishment until he is completely cured. In a state of health, the same procedure serves as a preventive treatment for this and other illnesses. [152](#)

Putrefaction may be localized in a particular limb. Then, a disease will develop in that limb, or the body will be affected either in the principal limbs or in others, because (that particular) limb is ill and its illness produces an illness of its powers. This covers all illnesses. Their origin as a rule is in the nourishment.

All this is left to (the attention of) the physician.

The incidence of such illnesses is more frequent among the inhabitants of sedentary areas and cities (than elsewhere), because they live a life of plenty. They eat a great deal and rarely restrict themselves to one particular kind of food. They lack caution in taking food, and they prepare their food, when they cook it, with the admixture of a good many things, such as spices, herbs, and fruits, (both) fresh and dry. They do not restrict themselves in this respect to one or even a few kinds. We have on occasion counted forty different kinds of vegetables and meats in a single cooked dish. This gives the nourishment a strange temper and often does not agree with the body and its parts.

Furthermore, the air in cities becomes corrupt through admixture of putrid vapors because of the great number of superfluities (in cities). [153](#) It is the air that gives energy to the spirit and thus strengthens the influence of the natural heat upon digestion. [154](#)

Furthermore, the inhabitants of cities lack exercise. As a rule, they rest and remain quiet. Exercise has no part in their (life) and has no influence upon them. Thus, the incidence of illness is great in towns and cities, and the inhabitants' need for medicine is correspondingly great.

On the other hand, the inhabitants of the desert, as a rule; eat little. Hunger

prevails among them, because they have little grain. (Hunger) eventually becomes a custom of theirs which is often thought to be something natural to them because it is so lasting. Of seasonings they have few or none, The preparation of food boiled with spices and fruits is caused by the luxury of sedentary culture with which they have nothing to do. Thus, they take their nourishment plain and without admixtures, and its temper comes close to being agreeable to the body. Their air has little putrescence, because there is little humidity and putrescence when they stay (anywhere), and the air is changing when they move around. Too, they take exercise, and there is a lot of movement when they race horses, or go hunting, or search for things they need, or occupy themselves with their needs. For all these reasons, their digestion is very good. There is no adding of new food when the old food (has not yet completely been digested). Thus, their temper is healthier and more remote from illness (than that of sedentary people). As a result, their need for medicine is small. Therefore, physicians are nowhere to be found in the desert. The only reason for this is the lack of need for them, because if physicians were needed in the desert they would be there. There would then be a livelihood for them to lead them to settle there.

This is how God proceeds with His servants. "And verily, you will not be able to change God's way." [155](#)

29. *Calligraphy, (the art of) writing, is one of the human crafts.*

(Writing) is the outlining and shaping of letters to indicate audible words which, in turn, indicate what is in the soul. It comes second after oral expression, It is a noble craft, since it is one of the special qualities of man by which he distinguishes himself from the animals. Furthermore, it reveals what is in (people's) minds. It enables the intention (of a person) to be carried to distant places, and, thus, the needs (of that person) may be executed without (him) personally taking care of them. [156](#) It enables (people) to become acquainted with science, learning, with the books of the ancients, and with the sciences and information written down by them. Because of all these useful aspects, (writing) is a noble (craft).

The [157](#) transformation of writing in man from potentiality into actuality takes place through instruction. The quality of writing in a town corresponds to the social organization, civilization, and competition for luxuries (among its inhabitants), and the demand for (all) that, since (writing) is a craft. We have stated before [158](#) that (the crafts) are that way and that they depend on civilization. For this reason, we find that most Bedouins are illiterate. They are not able to read and write. Those of them who do read or write have an inferior handwriting or read haltingly. (On the other hand,) we find that instruction in handwriting in cities with an extraordinarily developed civilization is more proficient, easier, and methodically better (than elsewhere) because the coloring (of the craft of writing) is firmly established in them. Thus, we are told about contemporary Cairo (Egypt) that there are teachers there who are specialized in the teaching of calligraphy. [159](#) They teach the pupil by norms and laws how to write each letter. In addition, they let him teach (others) how to write each letter. This strengthens his (respect for) the rank of knowledge and (for) perception as [160](#) far as teaching is concerned. His habit becomes one of the most perfect kind. This comes from the perfection and abundance of crafts (there), the result of large civilization and the great amount of (available) labor.

Writing [161](#) is not learned that way in Spain and the Maghrib. The letters are not learned individually according to norms the teacher gives to the pupil. Writing is learned by imitating complete words. The pupil repeats (these words), and the teacher examines him, until he knows well (how to write) and until the habit (of writing) is at his finger tips. [162](#) Then, he is called a good (calligrapher).

Arabic writing had already reached its most developed, accurate, and excellent stage in the Tubba' dynasty, because (that dynasty) had achieved a great sedentary culture and luxury. The handwriting there was called the Himyarite script. (Writing) was transplanted from (South Arabia) to al-Hirah, because the dynasty of the family of al-Mundhir was there. They were relatives of the Tubba's and shared their group feeling, and they were the founders of Arab rule in the 'Iraq. Their writing was not as good as that of the Tubba's, because (the time) between the two dynasties was short [163](#) and, (therefore,) sedentary culture and the crafts and other things depending on it were not developed enough for (calligraphy). From al-Hirah, the inhabitants of at-Ta'if and the Quraysh learned (writing), as has been said. The person who learned the art of writing from al-Hirah is said to have been Sufyan b.

Umayyah, or Harb b. Umayyah. He learned it from Aslam b. Sidrah.¹⁶⁴ This is a possible theory. It is a more likely theory than that of those who say that they learned it from the Iyad, the inhabitants of the 'Iraq, because of the verse of an [Iyadi] poet:

People to whom belongs the area of the 'Iraq when
They travel together, as well as writing and pen.

This is an unlikely theory. Even though the Iyad settled in the area of the 'Iraq, they maintained their desert attitude, and handwriting is a sedentary craft. The meaning of the (verse of that) poet is that the Iyad were closer to handwriting and the pen than other Arabs, because they were closer to an urban environment. The theory that the inhabitants of the Hijaz learned (writing) from the inhabitants of al-Hirah, who, in turn, had learned it from the Tubba's and the Himyar, is the most plausible one.

In [165](#) the biography of one of Milik's companions, Ibn Farrukh-'Abdallah b. Farrukh-al-Qayrawani al-Firisi al-Andalusi,¹⁶⁶ in the *Kitab at-Takmilah* of Ibn al-Abbar, I have seen the following remark, reported by Ibn Farrukh on the authority of 'Abd-ar-Rahman b. Ziyid b. An'um,¹⁶⁷ on the authority of his father, who said: "I said to 'Abdallah b. 'Abbas: 'You Qurashites, tell me about the Arabic script. Did you use it in the same way, before God sent Muhammad, with its connected and unconnected letters, such as ', l, m, n?' (Ibn 'Abbas) replied: 'Yes.' I continued: 'From whom did you learn it?' He replied: 'From Harb b. Umayyah.' I asked: 'From whom did Harb learn it?' He replied: 'From 'Abdallah b. Jud'in.' I asked: 'From whom did 'Abdallah b. Jud'in learn it?' He replied: 'From the inhabitants of al-Anbir.' I asked: 'From whom did they learn it?' He replied: 'From a Yemenite newcomer among them.' I asked: 'From whom did he learn it?' He replied: 'From al-Khullajin [168](#) b. al-Qisim, who wrote down the revelation of the prophet Hid. He used to say:

Do you invent a new procedure every year,
Or an opinion that is to be explained in a different way?

Indeed, death is better than a life in which among those who abuse us,
There are the Jurhum and the Himyar.'

End of the quotation from the *Kitab at-Takmilah* of Ibn al-Abbar.

At the end of the passage, Ibn al-Abbir added: [169](#) "I was told this by Abu Bakr b. Abi Jamrah, in his book, on the authority of Abu Bahr b. al-'Asi,¹⁷⁰ on the authority of Abul-Walid al-Waqqashi,¹⁷¹ on the authority of Abu 'Umar at-Talamanki,¹⁷² on the authority of Abu 'Abdallah b. Mufarrij,¹⁷³ who was my written source, on the authority of Abu Sa'id b. Yunus,¹⁷⁴ on the authority of Muhammad b. Musa b. an-Nu'min, on the authority of Yahya b. Muhammad b. Khushaysh, on the authority of 'Uthmin b. Ayyilb al-Ma'ifiri at-Tunisi, on the authority of Buhlul b. 'Ubaydah at-Tujibi, on the authority of 'Abdallah b. Farrukh.

The Himyarites had a script called *musnad*.¹⁷⁵ The letters were written separately. It could be studied only with their permission. The Mudar learned the Arabic script from the Himyar. However, they did not write it well, as is the case with crafts practiced in the desert. The crafts there have no firmly established methods and show no inclination toward accuracy and elegance. There is a wide gap between the desert attitude and craftsmanship, and Bedouins can for the most part dispense with crafts. Thus, the writing of the Arabs was a Bedouin (script), exactly like, or similar to, the writing the Arab (Bedouins) use at this time. Or, we might say that the writing the Arab (Bedouins) use at this time shows a better technique, because (the Arab Bedouins today) are closer to sedentary culture and have more

contact with cities and dynasties (than the Mudar of old). The Mudar were more firmly rooted in desert life and more remote from sedentary areas than the inhabitants of the Yemen, the 'Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. Arabic writing at the beginning of Islam was, therefore, not of the best quality nor of the greatest accuracy and excellence. It was not (even) of medium quality, because the Arabs possessed the savage desert attitude and were not familiar with crafts.

One may compare what happened to the orthography of the Qur'an on account of this situation. The men around Muhammad wrote the Qur'an in their own script, which was not of a firmly established, good quality. Most of the letters were in contradiction to the orthography required by persons versed in the craft of writing. The Qur'anic script of (the men around Muhammad) was then imitated by the men of the second generation, because of the blessing inherent in the use of an orthography that had been used by the men around Muhammad, who were the best human beings after (Muhammad himself) and who had received his revelation from the book and word of God. At the present time, people similarly imitate the handwriting of saints or scholars because of the blessing (inherent in that), and they follow the orthography whether it be wrong or right. One could hardly compare these men to the men around Muhammad or the things they write down to (the divine revelation) they wrote down! Consequently, (the Quranic orthography of the men around Muhammad) was followed and became established, and the scholars acquainted with it have called attention to passages where (this is noticeable).

No attention should be paid in this connection to the assumption of certain incompetent (scholars) that (the men around Muhammad) knew well the art of writing and that the alleged discrepancies between their writing and the principles of orthography are not discrepancies, as has been alleged, but have a reason. For instance, they explain the addition of the *alif* in *la-'adhbahannahu* "I shall indeed slaughter him" as an indication that the slaughtering did not take place (*la-adhbahannahu*). The addition of the *ya'* in *bi-ayyidin* "with hands (power)," they explain as an indication that the divine power is perfect.¹⁷⁶ There are similar things based on nothing but purely arbitrary assumptions. The only reason that caused them to (assume such things) is their belief that (their explanations) would free the men around Muhammad from the suspicion of deficiency, in the sense that they were not able to write well. They think that good writing is perfection. Thus, they do not admit the fact that the men around Muhammad were deficient in (writing). They (want to) consider them as perfect by ascribing good writing to them, and they seek to explain (orthographic peculiarities) that are contrary to good orthographic usage. This is not correct. It should be known that as far as (the men around Muhammad) are concerned, writing has nothing to do with perfection. Writing is an urban craft that serves to make a living, as has been shown above.¹⁷⁷ Perfection in a craft is something relative. It is not absolute perfection. A deficiency from (perfection in the crafts) does not essentially affect one's religion or personal qualities. It merely affects things that have to do with making a living, and (does so) in accordance with the (existing) civilization and co-operation for (civilization), since writing indicates what is in the souls. The Prophet was illiterate. That was perfection so far as he was concerned and it was in keeping with his station, because he was noble and had nothing to do with the practical crafts, all of which are matters connected with making a living and with civilization. (On the other hand,) as far as we are concerned, illiteracy is not a perfection. (Muhammad) was exclusively devoted to his Lord. We, however, must co-operate in order to make life in this world possible for us. The same applies to all the crafts, including even the theoretical¹⁷⁸ sciences. As far as (Muhammad) is concerned, perfection means that he has nothing to do with any of them. The opposite is the case with us.

Later, royal authority came to the Arabs. They conquered cities and took possession of provinces. They settled in al-Basrah and al-Kufah, and the dynasty needed the art of writing. At that time, they (began) writing.¹⁷⁹ They sought to practice and study it, and it came into common use. As a result, a high degree of excellence in (writing) was achieved. (Writing) became firmly established. In al-Kufah and al-Basrah, it reached a great degree of accuracy, but did not reach the limit (of perfection). The Kufic script is still known at this time.

The Arabs then spread over all the regions and provinces and conquered Ifriqiyyah and Spain. The 'Abbasids founded Baghdad. There, the different kinds of writing reached the limit (of perfection), because civilization was highly developed in (Baghdad), since it had become the home of Islam and the center of the Arab dynasty.

The ¹⁸⁰ norms of writing used in Baghdad were different from those in al-Kufah, in that they inclined toward wellshaped letters, brilliancy, and splendor. This difference became established (and lasted) for a long time. The wazir (Aba) 'Ali b. Muglah ¹⁸¹ became its protagonist in Baghdad. He was followed in this respect by the secretary, 'Ali b. Hilal, who is known as Ibn al-Bawwab.¹⁸² The tradition of instruction in the Baghdadi and Kufi writing ended with him in the fourth [tenth] century ¹⁸³ and afterwards. The forms and the norms of the Baghdadi script then departed still further from Kufic, and eventually, there was a complete break. Later on, the differences were accentuated by masters who always tried to find new forms and improved norms of writing, up to the time of such later calligraphers as Yaqut al-Musta'simi ¹⁸⁴ and al-Wall 'Ali al-'Ajami.¹⁸⁵ The tradition of the teaching of writing stopped with them. This (type of calligraphy) was transferred to Egypt where (the script) was somewhat different from the 'Iraqi script. The non-Arabs learned the ('Iraqi script) there (in the 'Iraq). It turned out to be different or completely distinct from the writing of the Egyptians.

The Ifriqi script, the old form of which is (still) known at this time, was close to the forms of the eastern script. Spain became the domain of the Umayyads. Their situation as to sedentary culture, the crafts, and the various scripts was a special one. As a result, the Spanish script, as it is known at the present time, became special, (too).

Civilization and sedentary culture developed greatly everywhere in the (various) Muslim dynasties. Royal authority increased, and the sciences were cultivated. Books were copied, and they were well written and bound. Castles and royal libraries were filled with them in an incomparable way. The inhabitants of the different regions vied with and rivaled each other in this respect.

Then, the Muslim empire became disorganized and shrank. With its shrinking, all these things shrank, too. With the disappearance of the caliphate, Baghdad lost its outstanding position. The position it had held with regard to calligraphy and (the art of) writing, and, indeed, with regard to scholarship (in general) was taken over by Egypt and Cairo. The art of writing continues to be cultivated there at this time. There are teachers of writing there who are employed (just) to teach the letters. For that, they have norms of how the letters are to be drawn and shaped. These norms are generally recognized among them. The student soon learns to draw and form the letters well, as he learns them by sensual perception,¹⁸⁶ becomes skilled in them through practice in writing them, and learns them in the form of scientific norms. Therefore, his letters turn out to be as well formed as possible.

The inhabitants of Spain, on the other hand, were dispersed throughout the

(various) regions when the rule of the Arabs in Spain and that of the Berbers who succeeded (the Arabs), were annihilated and the Christian nations gained the upper hand. From (the time of) the Lamtunah (Almoravid) dynasty down to this time, they have spread all over the coast of the Maghrib and Ifriqiyah. They permitted the people settled (there) to share in the crafts they possessed, and they attached themselves to the ruling dynasty (in Northwest Africa). In this way, their script replaced the Ifriqi script and wiped it out. The scripts of al-Qayrawan and al-Mahdiyah were forgotten, once the customs and crafts of (the two cities) were forgotten. All the various scripts of the inhabitants of Ifriqiyah were assimilated to the Spanish script used in Tunis and adjacent regions, because there were so many Spaniards there after the exodus from eastern Spain.¹⁸⁷ The (old script) has been preserved in the Jarid, where people had no contact with those who wrote the Spanish script and were not in close touch with them, because (the Spaniards who came to Northwest Africa) used to proceed ¹⁸⁸ to the capital city of Tunis. The script of the inhabitants of Ifriqiyah thus became a representative ¹⁸⁹ of the Spanish type of writing. Eventually, the shadow of the Almohad dynasty receded somewhat, and sedentary culture and luxury retrogressed with the retrogression of civilization. At that time, writing also suffered a setback, and its forms deteriorated. The method of teaching writing was no longer known, in consequence of the (general) corruption of sedentary culture and the decrease in civilization. Traces of the Spanish script remain there. They attest to the (perfection in it) which the people had formerly possessed. The existence of such traces is explained by the fact that, as we have mentioned before, ¹⁹⁰ it is difficult to wipe out the crafts once they are firmly established in a sedentary culture.

In the later Merinid dynasty in Morocco, a kind of Spanish script established itself, because (the Spaniards) were close neighbors and the (Spaniards) who left (Spain) soon settled in Fez, and the Merinids employed them during all the days of their rule. (But) in regions far from the seat and capital of the realm, writing was not cared for, and it was forgotten as if it had never been known. The (various) types of script used in Ifriqiyah and the two Maghribis inclined to be ugly and far from excellent. When books were copied, it was useless to look at them critically. (Study of them) merely caused pain and trouble, because the texts were very corrupt and full of clerical errors, and the letters were no longer well formed. Thus, they could be read only with some difficulty. In this way, writing was affected like all the other crafts by the decrease of sedentary culture and the corruption of the (ruling) dynasties.

"God decides and no one can change His decision."¹⁹¹

Professor ¹⁹² Abu 1-Hasan 'Ali b. Hilal al-Katib al-Baghdadi, who is known as Ibn al-Bawwab; ¹⁹³ wrote a poem in the *basit* meter ¹⁹⁴ with the rhyme on *r*, in which he mentions the craft of writing and the matters with which it has to do. The poem belongs among the best things ever written on (the subject). I considered it proper to insert it in this chapter, so that those who want to learn the craft of (writing) may profit from it. It begins:

O you who want to write a calligraphic hand
And desire to write and draw (the letters) well:
If you are truly desirous of mastering the art of writing,
Pray that your Master make it easy (for you)!
Prepare a calamus that is straight
And strong, capable of fashioning elegant writing with craft.
If you propose to nib the calamus, aim
At applying to it the greatest symmetry.

Look at both ends of it, and then nib it
At the end where it is thin and narrow.
Give the part of the calamus that is nibbed a moderate size,
Neither too long nor too short,
And make the split precisely in the middle of the calamus so that the space
nibbed

On both sides of it will be exactly equal.
Eventually, when you have done all this as carefully
As the careful craftsman who knows what is wanted,
Then, turn all your attention toward cutting the point,
For cutting the point is the crux of the procedure.

Do not beg me to reveal its secret.

I am chary of its secret, a thing concealed.
But the sum total of what I want to say is that
The (point) should be something between oblique and round.
Stir the (ink in the) inkstand with soot that is treated
With vinegar or verjuice.

Add to it red pigment that has been diluted
With orpiment and camphor.

Eventually, when (the ink) has fermented,
Go to the clean, pleasant, tested paper.

After cutting it, press it with a press, so as

To remove all trace of crumpling and soiling.[195](#)

Then, make patient imitation your habit.

Only a patient person achieves what he desires.

Begin by writing on a wooden slate, wearing it out [196](#)
With a resolution kept free from haste.

Do not be ashamed of your bad writing

When you begin to imitate (the letters) and draw lines.

The matter is difficult (at the beginning), and then becomes easy.

Many a thing that is difficult (at the beginning) turns out later on to be easy.

Eventually, when you have achieved what you have hoped for,

You will be filled with [197](#) joy and gladness.

Then, thank your God and do His pleasure!

God loves all those who are grateful.

Furthermore, pray that the fingers of your hand will write

Only what is good for you to leave behind in the house of deception.[198](#)

Everything a man does, he will be confronted with on the morrow,

When he is confronted with the written decree (on the Day of Resurrection).

It should be known that writing shows the things that are spoken, just as the things that are spoken show the ideas that are in the soul and the mind. Both writing and speech must express clearly (what they want to express). God said: "He created man, taught him clarity."[199](#) This includes clarity in all the things one expresses.

The perfection of good handwriting consists in the fact that it is clear. (This is achieved) by indicating clearly the conventional [200](#) letters of (the script), arranging and drawing them well. Each letter by itself is distinct from the others, except where connection between the letters within a word is an accepted technicality. This does not apply to letters that have been accepted as letters that should remain unconnected, such as ' when it precedes (another letter) in the word, nor to r, z, d, dh, and others. It is different when (these letters) follow (another letter in a word). It is this way with all (letters).

Later scribes then agreed to connect words with each other and omit letters [201](#) that were known to them but not to others who did not know the code, which, thus, remained unclear to others. These (scribes) are the officials who write government documents and keep court records. It seems that they use such a special code, from which others are excluded, because they have to write a great deal, and they are famous for their writing, and many people connected with them [202](#) know their code. When they write to others who do not know their code, they cannot use it and have to try to write as clearly as possible. Otherwise, their writing would be like non-Arabic writing. It would be in the same category with it in as much as both (types of writing, the code and nonArabic writing) are not (generally) agreed upon (by conventional usage). There is no (real) excuse for (writing in code), except in the case of officials of the government's tax and army (bureaus). They are required to conceal (their affairs) from the people, since (these affairs) are government secrets that have to be kept secret. Therefore, they use a very special code among themselves, which is like a puzzle. It makes use of the names of perfumes, fruits, birds, or flowers to indicate the letters, or it makes use of forms different from the accepted forms of the letters. Such a code is agreed upon by the correspondents between themselves, in order to be able to convey their thoughts in writing. Occasionally, skillful secretaries, though not the first to invent a certain code (and with no previous knowledge of it), nonetheless find rules (for deciphering it) through combinations which they evolve for the purpose with the help of their intelligence, [203](#) and which they call "solving the puzzle (decoding)." Well-known writings on the subject are in the possession of the people.

God is knowing and wise.

30. *The craft of book production.*

Formerly, (people) were concerned with scholarly writings and (official) records. These were copied, bound, and corrected with the help of a transmission technique [204](#) and with accuracy. The reason for this was the importance of the (ruling) dynasty and the existence of the things that depend on sedentary culture. All that has disappeared at the present time as the result of the disappearance of the dynasties and the decrease of civilization. In Islam it had formerly reached tremendous proportions in the 'Iraq and in Spain. All of it depends on civilization, on the extent of the (ruling) dynasties, and on the demand existing in (the dynasties) [205](#) for it. Thus, scholarly works and writings were (formerly) numerous. People were desirous of transmitting them everywhere and at any time. They were copied and bound. The craft of book producers, thus, made its appearance. (They are the craftsmen) concerned with copying, correcting, and binding books, and with all the other matters pertaining to books and writings. The craft of book production was restricted to cities of a large civilization.

Originally, copies of scholarly works, government correspondence, letters of enfeoffment, and diplomas [206](#) were written on parchment especially prepared from animal skins by craftsmen, because there was great prosperity at the beginning of Islam and the works that were written were few, as we shall mention. [207](#) In addition, government documents and diplomas were few in number. Therefore, (the early Muslims) restricted themselves to writing on parchment. This was an expression of respect for what was to be written down, and of desire that it should be correct and accurate. The production of books and writings then developed greatly. Government documents and diplomas increased in number. There was not enough parchment for all that. Therefore, alFadl b. Yahya [208](#) suggested the manufacture of paper. Thus, paper was used for government documents and diplomas. Afterwards, people used paper in sheets for government and scholarly writings, and the manufacture of (paper) reached a considerable degree of excellence.

The concern of scholars and the interest of government people then concentrated on accuracy in scholarly writings and the establishment of their correctness with the help of a chain of transmitters leading back to their writers and authors, because that is the most important element in establishing a correct and accurate (text). Statements are thus led back to those who made them, and decisions (in legal questions, fatwa) are led back to the persons who decided in accordance with them and were able to pronounce them by means of independent judgment. Wherever the correctness of a text is not established by a chain of transmitters going back to the person who wrote that particular text, the statement or decision in question cannot properly be ascribed to its (alleged author). This has been the procedure of scholars and experts in (all matters of religious knowledge) in all times, races, and regions, so much so that the usefulness of the craft connected with the transmission of traditions came to be restricted to this aspect (of the process of transmission). The main fruit of (the craft concerned with the transmission of traditions) is the knowledge of which traditions are "sound," which are "good," which "go back in an uninterrupted chain of transmitters to the Prophet" (*musnad*),

which have a chain of transmitters that "skips the first transmitter on the authority of Muhammad" (*mursal*), which have a chain that "stops with one of the men of the second generation" (*magtu*), and which have a chain that "stops with one of the men around Muhammad" (*mawquf*), in order to be able to distinguish (such traditions) from spurious ones [209](#) This is no longer (a subject of investigation). The cream of it has been churned in the principal collections (of traditions) that have found general acceptance by all Muslims. It would, thus, be a superfluous activity to attempt (to investigate the matter anew). Therefore, the only remaining result to be gained from the process of transmission and occupation with it is that it can serve to establish a correct text of the principal collections of traditions and other books on

jurisprudence used for legal decisions, [210](#) as well as for other writings and scholarly works. (It also serves) to establish uninterrupted connection with their respective authors, so that transmission on their authority or ascription to them is sound. Both in the East and in Spain, this method has been the tried and true path. We find that the copies made in (former) times in those regions are the most exact, well done, and correct. People everywhere at this time possess old copies attesting to the perfection previously reached in this respect. The inhabitants of the various regions have handed them down (and preserved) them to the present, and they do not like to part with them.

At the present time, this method has altogether disappeared in the Maghrib and among Maghribis, because the craft of writing, accuracy, and the transmission technique were cut off there as the result of the destruction of the civilization of (the Maghrib) and its basic [211](#) desert attitude. The principal collections and writings were copied in Bedouin script. They were copied by Berber students in such a bad handwriting and with so much corruption and so many clerical errors that they cannot be understood. They remain incomprehensible to those who examine them critically. Only very rarely are they of any use.

Furthermore, this (situation) has caused disintegration in the field of legal decisions (*fatwa*). Most statements ascribed to the school authorities are not (orally) transmitted but are taken from the writings as they are found there. This has also affected the attempts of some religious leaders to write books. They know little of the technical side of (authorship) and lack the crafts necessary for realizing the purposes of (authorship). Some slight remnant of this institution has remained in Spain. It is about to disappear. (Religious) scholarship has almost completely stopped in the Maghrib.

"God has the power to execute His commands." [212](#)

We now hear that the craft of transmission (technique) still exists in the East. The sciences and crafts are in demand there, as we shall mention later on, [213](#) and, therefore, those who want to, find it easy to establish the correct text of writings. However, the script for good copying surviving there is that of the non-Arabs, and found in their manuscripts.

The copying (of books) has deteriorated in Egypt as it has in the Maghrib, and even more so. "God has the power to execute His commands."

31. *The craft of singing (and music).*

This craft is concerned with the setting of poems to music.²¹⁴ (This is done) by scanning the sounds according to well-known fixed proportions, which causes any sound (complex) thus scanned to constitute a tune, a rhythmic mode. These modes are then combined with each other according to accepted proportions. The result is pleasant to listen to because of its harmony and the quality (that harmony) gives to the sounds. This is as follows: As explained in the science of music, sounds are in certain proportions (intervals) to each other. A sound may be one-half, one-quarter, one-fifth, or one-eleventh of another sound. The difference in interval between the sounds that reach the ear transforms them from simple (sounds) to combinations of (sounds). Not every combination is pleasant to listen to. There are special combinations (that are pleasant). They have been enumerated and discussed by musicologists, as is mentioned in the proper place.

The music produced by the rhythmic modes of singing may be supplemented by scanning other sounds that come from solids and are produced by either beating or blowing into instruments used for the purpose. Such (instrumental music) adds to the pleasure of listening. Various kinds of instruments are used in the contemporary Maghrib. There is the wood-wind instrument called *shabbabah*.²¹⁵ It is a hollow reed with a number of holes on the sides. One blows into it, and it gives a sound. The sound escapes from the hollow of (the reed) straight²¹⁶ through these holes. It is scanned by placing the fingers of both hands upon these holes in conventionally accepted ways. This creates the proper intervals between the sounds and also combines them harmoniously. As a result, they are pleasant to listen to when one hears them, because of the harmony we have mentioned.

Another similar kind of instrument is the wood-wind instrument called *zulami*.²¹⁷ It has the form of a reed, with two wooden parts carved (hollow), hollow but not round, because it is made of two pieces put together. It also has a number of holes. One blows into it through a small connected reed which directs the wind to (the holes). This produces a highpitched tone. The fingers are placed upon (the holes) and the sounds are thus scanned in the same way as on the *shabbabah*.

One of the best wind instruments at this time is the *bug*²¹⁸ This is a trumpet of copper (brass) which is hollow, one cubit long, widening toward the opening, the diameter of which is less than²¹⁹ the palm of a hand in width. It has the form of a nibbed calamus. One blows into it through a small reed which conveys the wind from the mouth into it. The sound comes out compact and loud. It also has a number of holes, and (makes) a harmonious tune of pleasant effect, which is produced in the same way (as in the aforementioned instruments), by placing the fingers (on the holes).

Then, there are the string instruments. They are all hollow. They may have either the shape of a section of a sphere, as, for instance, the barbiton and the rebec, or a square shape, such as the *ganun*.²²⁰ The strings are placed upon the surface of (the instrument). They are tied at the head to pegs that can be turned, so that it is possible to (tighten or) loosen (the strings) as required, by turning them. The strings are either plucked with another piece of wood or (played) with a string fastened between the two ends of a bow that passes over (the strings of the instrument) after it had been waxed with wax or mastic (*kundur*). Sounds are scanned through

lightening (the pressure of) the hand that guides (the bow) over the strings, or through transferring (the bow) from one string to another. Moreover, in all string instruments, the fingers of the left hand can be used to beat or pluck the ends of the strings. Thus, there originate harmonious, pleasant sounds. Moreover, brass kettles may be beaten with sticks, or pieces of wood may be beaten against each other in a harmonious rhythm. This creates a feeling of pleasure as the result of the music one hears.

Let us explain the reason for the pleasure resulting from music. This is as follows: As has been established in the proper place, pleasure is the attainment of something that is agreeable. (Such a thing,) in sensual perception, can only be a quality. If (such a quality) is proportionate and agreeable to the person who has the perception, it is pleasant. If it is repugnant to him or discordant, it is painful.

Agreeable foods are those whose quality corresponds to the temper of the sense of taste. The same applies to agreeable sensations of touch. Agreeable smells are those that correspond to the temper of the vaporous cordial spirit, because that spirit is what perceives and receives them through the (medium of the) sense (of smell). Thus, aromatic plants and flowers smell better and are more agreeable to the spirit, because heat, which is the temper of the cordial spirit, is preponderant in them. Agreeable sensations of vision and hearing are caused by harmonious arrangement in the forms and qualities of (the things seen or heard). This impresses the soul as harmonious and is more agreeable to it.

If an object of vision is harmonious in the forms and lines given to it in accordance with the matter from which it is made, so that the requirements of its particular matter as to perfect harmony and arrangement are not disregarded that being the meaning of beauty and loveliness whenever these terms are used for any object of sensual perception that (object of vision) is then in harmony with the soul that perceives (it), and the soul, thus, feels pleasure as the result of perceiving something that is agreeable to it. Therefore, lovers who are most deeply in love express their extreme infatuation by saying that their spirit is commingled with that of the beloved.²²¹ In another sense, the meaning of it is that existence is shared by all existent things, as the philosophers say. Therefore, (existent things) love to commingle with something in which they observe perfection, in order to become one with it.

The object that is most suited to man and in which he is most likely to perceive perfect harmony, is the human form. Therefore, it is most congenial to him to perceive beauty and loveliness in the lines and sounds of the human form. Thus, every man desires beauty in the objects of vision and hearing, as a requirement of his nature. Beauty in the objects of hearing is harmony and lack of discordance in the sounds.

This is as follows: Sounds have certain qualities. They may be whispered or loud, soft or strong, vibrant or constrained, and so on. Harmony between them is what gives them beauty. Firstly, the transition from one sound to a contrary or identical sound as well as the return to the first sound, is not made suddenly but gradually. There must be something to bridge the gap between the two sounds. This may be compared with the fact that linguists consider clusters of sounds of discordant or similar articulation ugly. This belongs to the same category. Secondly, the sounds must have harmonious intervals, as was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. The transition from a sound to a sound one-half, one-third, or some other fraction of it, must take place in a harmonious manner according to the rules established by musicologists. When the sounds are harmonious with regard to their qualities, as has been mentioned by musicologists, they are agreeable and pleasant.

Such harmony may be a simple one. Many people are gifted to achieve it by nature. They do not need any (special) instruction or (craft) for it, for we find people who are gifted by nature for the meters of poetry, the rhythms of the dance, and

similar things. The common people call such an aptitude "musicalness" (*midmar*). [222](#) Many Qur'an readers belong in this category. In reciting the Qur'an, they know well how to modulate their voices, as if they were flutes. They thus cause emotion through the beauty of their performance [223](#) and the harmony of their modes.

Harmony may also result from composition. Not all human beings are alike in their knowledge of it, nor are they all equally able by nature to practice it, if they know it. This is the melodious music with which the science of music has to deal, as we shall explain later on among the sciences. [224](#)

Malik disapproved of the use of melodies in reciting the Qur'an, [225](#) and ash-Shafi'i permitted it. Here it is not a question of artistic musical melodies. There can be no difference of opinion as to the fact that they are forbidden. The art of singing is something entirely unconnected with the Qur'an. It is true, in the recitation and pronunciation (of the Qur'an), each letter (sound) requires a certain quantity of sound for its particular pronunciation, in as much as, for instance, the lengthening of vowels in the proper places is concerned, [226](#) the longer or shorter pronunciation of long vowels, [227](#) and similar things. Melodious music also requires a certain quantity of sound to materialize, because, as we have stated, its real meaning is harmony. However, considering the one (thing) ruins the other, [228](#) since they are the opposite of each other. The recitation of the Qur'an must be given preference, in order to avoid any change in traditional transmission in connection with the Qur'an. Thus, melodious music can, by no means, be combined with the pronunciation under consideration in connection with the Qur'an. As regards the difference of opinion (among authorities as to the permissibility of melodious music for the recitation of the Qur'an), the thing (the authorities) have in mind is the plain music to which nature guides the person who is musical (*midmar*), as we have stated. Such a person arranges his sounds in certain harmonious cadences, which those who know about singing, as well as others, perceive (as music). [229](#) This is the point about which the difference of opinion (revolves).

The obvious (fact) is that the Qur'an is (to be) kept free of it, (exactly) as the imam (Malik) thought. The Qur'an is something that causes awe, as it reminds (man) of death and what comes after it. It is not an occasion to give pleasure in the perception of beautiful sounds. It was (in this spirit) that the men around Muhammad recited the Qur'an, as is stated in their biographies.

The statement by Muhammad, "A flute of those belonging to the family of David was brought to him," [230](#) does not refer to cadences and melodious music, but it refers to a beautiful voice, a clear pronunciation in reciting the Qur'an, and a clear distinction in the articulation and enunciation of the letters (sounds).

Since we have mentioned the meaning of singing, it should be known that singing originates in a civilization when it becomes abundant and (people) progress from the necessities to the conveniences, and then to the luxuries, and have a great diversity of (luxuries). Then, the craft of singing originates, because it is required only by those who are free from all the necessary and urgent needs of making a living and care for domestic and other needs. It is in demand only by those who are free from all other worries and seek various ways of having pleasure. In the non-Arab states before Islam, music was highly developed in cities and towns. The (non-Arab) rulers cultivated it eagerly. It went so far that the Persian rulers felt a great concern for musicians. Musicians had a place in their dynasty and attended their sessions and gatherings and sang for them. The same is (still) the case with the non-Arabs at this time in all their regions and provinces.

The Arabs originally had (only) poetry. [231](#) They composed a kind of speech consisting of equal parts of harmonious proportions, as far as the number of

consonants with and without vowels was concerned. Within these parts, they divided speech in such a way that each part made sense by itself and did not have to lean upon the other. Such (part of speech) they called verse. It is agreeable to nature first by its division into parts, then by the harmonious arrangements of its parts at the ends and beginnings,²³² and then by the fact that it conveys the intended meaning and uses expressions conforming to (that meaning).

(The Arabs) appreciated (poetry) very highly. It was distinguished in their speech through a certain nobility, because it alone possessed harmony. They made poetry the archive of their history,²³³ their wisdom, and their nobility, and the touchstone of their natural gift for expressing themselves correctly, choosing the best methods (*uslub*, of expression). They have continued to do so.

The harmony resulting from (a division of speech into) parts, and (into an equal number of) consonants with and without vowels, is just one small drop in the ocean of sound harmony, as is well known from the literature²³⁴ on music. However, (the Arabs) did not know anything except (poetry), because at that time, they practiced no science and knew no craft. The desert attitude was their dominant trait.

Now, camel drivers sang when they drove their camels, and young men sang when they were alone (with each other at times of leisure and recreation).²³⁵ They repeated sounds and hummed them. When such humming was applied to poetry, it was called singing. When it was applied to the praise of God or some kind of recitation (of the Qur'an), it was called *taghbir*. Abu Ishaq az-Zajjaj²³⁶ explained this word as (derived from *al-ghdbir*, that is, melodies) reminding one of *al ghabir* "that which remains," that is, the affairs of the other world.

When (the Arabs) sang, they often effected a simple harmony between the modes, as was mentioned by Ibn Rashiq at the end of the *Kitab al-'Umdah*,²³⁷ and by others. This was called *sinad*. Most (Arab music) was in the light rhythm (*khafif*) that is used for dancing and marching, accompanied by drums and flutes. It causes emotion and makes the seriousminded feel light.²³⁸ The Arabs called that *hazaj*. All these simple types of melodious music are primary ones. It is not unlikely to assume that they can be grasped by nature without any instruction, as is the case with all simple crafts.

The Arabs continued this way during their desert and pre-Islamic period. Then, Islam made its appearance. (The Arabs) took possession of (all) the realms of the world. They deprived the non-Arabs of their rule and took it over. They had their well-known desert attitude and low standard of living. In addition, they possessed the thriving²³⁹ religion (of Islam) and that (Muslim) religious severity which is directed against all activities of leisure and all the things that are of no utility in one's religion or livelihood. Therefore, (music) was avoided to some degree. In their opinion, only the cadenced recitation of the Qur'an and the humming of poetry which had always been their way and custom, were pleasurable things.

Then, luxury and prosperity came to them, because they obtained the spoils of the nations. They came to lead splendid and refined lives and to appreciate leisure. The singers (now) left the Persians and Byzantines. They descended upon the Hijaz and became clients of the Arabs. They all sang accompanied by lutes, pandores, lyres,²⁴⁰ and flutes. The Arabs heard their melodious use of sound, and they set their poems to music accordingly. In Medina, Nashit al-Farlsi,²⁴¹ Tuways, and Sa'ib Khathir, a client of 'Abdallah b. Jafar (b. Abt Talib), made their appearance. They heard the poems of the Arabs and set them to music. They did it well, and they became famous. Ma'bad and his class of singers, as well as Ibn Surayj and his ilk, learned from them. Continual and gradual progress was made in

the craft of singing. Eventually, in the days of the 'Abbasids, (the craft of singing) reached its perfection with Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi, Ibrahim al-Mawsili, (Ibrahim's) son Ishaq, and (Ishaq's) son Hammid.²⁴² (The music) and the (musical) sessions of Baghdad during the ('Abbasid) dynasty have remained a topic of conversation down to the present time.

(People at that time) constantly had games and entertainments. Dancing equipment, consisting of robes and sticks, and poems to which melodies were hummed, were used. That was transformed into a special kind (of entertainment). Other dancing equipment, called *kurraj*, was also used. (The *kurraj*) is a wooden figure (resembling) a saddled horse and is attached to robes such as women wear. (The dancers) thus give the appearance of having mounted horses. They attack and withdraw ²⁴³ and compete in skill (with weapons). There were other such games intended for banquets, wedding parties, festivals, and (other) gatherings for leisure and entertainment. There was much of that sort in Baghdad and the cities of the 'Iraq. It spread from there to other regions.

The Mawsilis had a young (apprentice) servant, by name Ziryab,²⁴⁴ who had learned from them how to sing. He learned so well that they became jealous of him and sent him away to the West. He joined al-Hakam b. Hisham b. 'Abd-ar-Rahman I, the amir of Spain. He (al-Hakam) honored him greatly. He rode out to welcome him. He showered him with gifts, fiefs, and allowances. He gave him a place in his dynasty as one of his boon companions. The musical heritage Ziryab left in Spain was transmitted down to the time of the *reyes de taifas*. In Sevilla, (the craft of singing) was highly developed. After (Sevilla) had lost its affluence, (the craft of singing) was transplanted from there to the coast of Ifriqiyyah and the Maghrib. It spread over the cities there. A sprinkling of it is still left there, despite retrogression in the civilization of the region and the decreasing power of its dynasties.

The craft of singing is the last of the crafts attained in civilization, because it constitutes (the last development toward) luxury with regard to no occupation in particular save that of leisure and gaiety. It also is the first to disappear from a given civilization when it disintegrates and retrogresses.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One."²⁴⁵

32. *The crafts, especially writing and calculation, give intelligence to the person who practices them.* [246](#)

We [247](#) have already mentioned in the book that the rational soul exists in man only potentially. [248](#) Its transformation from potentially into actuality is effected first by new sciences and perception derived from the *sensibilia*, and then by the later acquisition (of knowledge) through the speculative power. Eventually, it comes to be actual perception and pure intellect. Thus, it becomes a spiritual essence, and its existence then reaches perfection.

Therefore it is necessary that each kind of learning and speculation should provide (the rational soul) with additional intelligence. Now, the crafts and the habit of (the crafts) always lead to the obtainment of scientific norms, which results from habit. Therefore, any experience provides intelligence. The habits of the crafts provide intelligence. Perfect sedentary culture provides intelligence, because it is a conglomerate of crafts characterized by concern for the (domestic) economy, contact with one's fellow men, attainment of education through mixing with (one's fellow men), and also administration of religious matters and understanding the ways and conditions governing them. All these (factors) are norms (of how to do things) which, properly arranged, constitute scientific disciplines. Thus, an increase in intelligence results from them.

In this respect, writing is the most useful craft because, in contrast to the (other) crafts, it deals with matters of theoretical, scientific interest. This is explained through (the circumstance) that writing involves a transition from the forms of the written letters to the verbal expressions in the imagination, and from the verbal expressions in the imagination to the concepts (underlying them), which are in the soul. [249](#) The writer, thus, always goes from one indication [250](#) to another, as long as he is wrapped up in writing, and the soul becomes used to the constant (repetition of the process). Thus, it acquires the habit of going over from the indications to the things meant by them. This is what is meant by intellectual speculation, by means of which the knowledge of (hitherto) unknown sciences is provided. As the result of being accustomed to the process of going (over from the indications to the things indicated by them) people acquire the habit of intellection, which constitutes an increase in intelligence and provides an additional insight into affairs and a shrewd understanding of them. This is why Khosraw remarked of his secretaries, when he noticed that they had that kind of insight and shrewd understanding: "Dewaneh," that is (they are) Satans (devils) and crazy. This is said to be the etymology of diwan (the ministry) of the secretaries. [251](#)

Calculation [252](#) is connected with (writing). Calculation entails a kind of working with numbers, "combining" and separating them, [253](#) which requires much deductive reasoning and speculation, and this is what is meant by intelligence.

"God brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers. You did not then know anything. And He gave you hearing and vision and hearts." "You are little grateful." [254](#)

Chapter VI

THE VARIOUS KINDS OF SCIENCES.
THE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION. THE CONDITIONS
THAT OBTAIN IN THESE CONNECTIONS. THE CHAPTER
INCLUDES A PREFATORY DISCUSSION
AND APPENDICES.¹

PREFATORY DISCUSSION ²



On man's ability to think, which distinguishes human beings from animals and which enables them to obtain their livelihood, to co-operate to this end with their fellow men, and to study the Master whom they worship, and the revelations that the Messengers transmitted from Him. God thus caused ³ all animals to obey man and to be in the grasp ⁴ of his power. Through his ability to think, God gave man superiority over many of His creatures.

1. *Man's ability to think.*

I T ⁵ SHOULD BE KNOWN that God distinguished man from all the other animals by an ability to think which He made the beginning of human perfection and the end of man's noble superiority over existing things.

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

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

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

The third degree is the ability to think which provides the knowledge, or hypothetical knowledge, of an object beyond sense perception without any practical activity (going with it). This is the speculative intellect. It consists of both perceptions and apperceptions. They are arranged according to a special order, following special conditions, and thus provide some other knowledge of the same kind, that is, either perceptive or apperceptive. Then, they are again combined with something else, and again provide some other knowledge. The end of the process is to be provided with the perception of existence as it is, with its various genera, differences, reasons, and causes. By thinking about these things, (man) achieves perfection in his reality and becomes pure intellect and perceptive soul. This is the meaning of human reality.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now, the things that come into being [12](#) that are of consequence in the world

of existent things, are those that are orderly. Those that are not orderly are secondary to them. The actions of animals, therefore, are subordinate to (orderly human actions). Consequently, their services are forcibly utilized by man. Thus, human actions control the (whole) world of things that come into being and all it contains. Everything is subservient to man and works for him. This is what is meant by the "appointing of a representative" mentioned in the Qur'an: "I am appointing a representative on earth." [13](#)

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

God created man and gave him superiority over many of His creatures [14](#).

3. The experimental intellect and how it comes into

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

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

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

The concepts bringing this about are not completely divorced from sensual perception and do not require very deep study. All of them are obtained through experience and derived from it. They are particular¹⁷ concepts connected with the *sensibilia*. Their truth or falsehood soon comes out in events. From (events) the student of these concepts can learn them. Each human being can learn as much of them as he is able to. He can pick up (his knowledge) with the help of experience among the events that occur in his dealings with his fellow men. Eventually, he will have what is necessary and must be done, and must not be done, fixed in his (mind). By knowing this well,¹⁸ then, the proper habit of dealing with his fellow men will be obtained by him.

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

to be educated in these things. They are unfamiliar to them, and the knowledge they obtain of them is uneven. Their manners and dealings with others will be badly planned and show defects. Their chances of making a living among their fellow men will be spoiled.

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

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

"God gave you hearing and vision and hearts." "You are little grateful." [20](#)

4. The sciences (knowledge) of human beings and the sciences (knowledge) of angels.

We observe in ourselves through sound intuition [21](#) the existence of three worlds.

The first of them is the world of sensual perception. We become aware of it by means of the perception of the senses, which the animals share with us.

Then, we become aware of the ability to think which is a special quality of human beings. We learn from it that the human soul exists. This knowledge is necessitated by the fact that we have in us scientific perceptions which are above the perceptions of the senses. They must thus be considered as another world, above the world of the senses.

Then, we deduce (the existence of) a third world, above us, from the influences that we find it leaves in our hearts, such as volition and an inclination toward active motions. Thus, we know that there exists an agent there who directs us toward those things from a world above our world. That world is the world of spirits and angels. It contains essences that can be perceived because of the existence of influences they exercise upon us, despite the gap between us and them.

Often, we may deduce (the existence of) that high spiritual world and the essences it contains, from visions and things we had not been aware of while awake but which we find in our sleep and which are brought to our attention in it and which, if they are true (dreams), conform with actuality. We thus know that they are true and come from the world of truth. "Confused dreams," on the other hand, are pictures of the imagination that are stored inside by perception and to which the ability to think is applied, after (man) has retired from sense perception.[22](#)

We do not find any clearer proof than this for (the existence) of the spiritual world. Thus, we have a general knowledge of it, but no particulars. The metaphysicians make conjectures about details concerning the essences of the spiritual world and their order. They call these essences "intellects." However, none of it is certain, because the conditions of logical argumentation as established in logic do not apply to it. One of these conditions is that the propositions of the argument must be primary and essential, but the spiritual essences are of an unknown essentiality. Thus, logical argumentation cannot be applied to them. Our only means of perceiving something of the details of these worlds are what we may glean from matters of religious law, as explained and established by religious faith.

Of the (three) worlds, the one we can perceive best is the world of human beings, since it is existential and attested by our corporeal and spiritual perceptions. The world of the senses is shared by us with the animals, but the world of the intellect and the spirits is shared by us with the angels, whose essences are of the same kind as the essences of that world. They are essences free from corporeality and matter, and they are pure intellect in which intellect, thinker, and the object of thinking are one. It is, in a way, an essence the reality of which is perception and intellect.

The sciences (knowledge) of the (angels), thus, always agree by nature with the things to be known. They can never have any defect. The knowledge of human

beings, on the other hand, is the attainment of the form of the thing to be known in their essences, after it had not been there. It is all acquired. The essence in which the forms of the things to be known are obtained, namely, the soul, is a material substance [23](#) that gradually takes over the forms of existence with the help of the forms of the things to be known that it obtains. Eventually, it reaches perfection, and, through death, its existence fulfills itself as regards both its matter and its form.

The objects in the soul are subject to constant vacillation between negation and assertion. One of the two is sought by means of some middle (term) to connect the two extremes. When that is achieved and the object has become known, it must be explained that there exists agreement (between knowledge and the thing known). Such agreement may often be clarified by technical logical argumentation, but that is from "behind the veil," and it is not like the direct vision [23a](#) that is found in connection with the sciences (knowledge) of the angels.

The "veil" may be removed, and the agreement may, thus, be effected through direct perceptive vision. It has been explained that human beings are ignorant by nature, because vacillation affects their knowledge. They learn through acquisition (of knowledge) and technique, because they obtain the objects they seek by applying their ability to think according to technical rules. The removal of the veil to which we have referred is achieved only through training in *dhikr* exercises [24](#) of which the best is prayer, which forbids sinful and evil actions-through abstinence from all distracting food of consumption - of which the most important part [25](#) is fasting - and through devoting oneself to God with all one's powers.

"God taught man what he did not know." [26](#)

5. The sciences (knowledge) of the prophets.

We find that this kind of human being is in a divine condition that is different from (ordinary) human ambitions and conditions. In prophets, the trend toward the divine is more powerful than their humanity, as far as the powers of perception, the powers of desire—that is, concupiscence and wrath – and the other conditions of the body are concerned. (Prophets) keep away from things human, except in as much as they are necessary for life. They turn toward divine matters, such as worship and the remembrance (*dhikr*) of God, as their knowledge of Him requires. They give information about Him and (transmit) the revelation for the guidance of the nation (of believers) which they received in (their divine) condition. They do that according to one particular method and in a manner known to be peculiar to them. It undergoes no change in them and is like a natural disposition which God has given them.

Revelation has already been discussed by us at the beginning of the book, in the chapter dealing with people who possess supernatural perception [27](#) We explained there that the whole of existence in (all) its simple and composite worlds is arranged in a natural order of ascent and descent, so that everything constitutes an uninterrupted continuum. The essences at the end of each particular stage of the worlds are by nature prepared to be transformed into the essence adjacent to them, either above or below them. This is the case with the simple material elements; it is the case with palms and vines, (which constitute) the last stage of plants, in their relation to snails and shellfish, (which constitute) the (lowest) stage of animals. It is also the case with monkeys, creatures combining in themselves cleverness and perception, in their relation to man, the being who has the ability to think and to reflect. The preparedness (for transformation) that exists on either side, at each stage of the worlds, is meant when (we speak about) their connection. [27a](#)

Above the human world, there is a spiritual world. It is known to us by its influence upon us, in that it gives us the powers of perception and volition. The essences of that spiritual world are pure perception and absolute intellection. It is the world of the angels.

It follows from all this that the human soul must be prepared to exchange humanity for angelicity, in order actually to become part of the angelic species at any time, in a single instant. It will afterwards resume its humanity. But in the world of angelicity, it has meanwhile accepted (ideas) that it is charged to transmit to its fellow human beings. That is the meaning of revelation and being addressed by the angels.

All prophets possess this predisposition. It is like a natural disposition for them. In exchanging (their humanity for angelicity), they experience strain and sensations of choking, as is known in this connection. [28](#)

Their (supernatural) knowledge is one of direct observation and vision. No mistake or slip attaches itself to it, and it is not affected by errors or unfounded assumptions. The agreement in it is an essential one, because the veil of the supernatural is gone, and clear and direct observation has been attained. When [29](#) (the prophets) quit that state and reassume their humanity, this clarity does not quit the knowledge they have, for it has become attached to it in the former condition.

And because they possess the virtue that brings them to that condition, their (experience) constantly repeats itself, until their guidance of the nation (of believers), which was the purpose for which they were sent, is accomplished. Thus, it is said in the Qur'an: "I am merely a human being like you, to whom it has been revealed that your God is one God. Thus, be straightforward with Him and ask Him for forgiveness." [30](#)

This should be understood. One should compare what we said earlier at the beginning of the book, about the different kinds of people possessing supernatural perception. It will constitute clear comment and explanation. There, we have explained the matter at sufficient length.

God gives success.

6. Man is essentially ignorant, and becomes learned through acquiring (knowledge).

We have already explained at the beginning of these sections [31](#) that man belongs to the genus of animals and that God distinguished him from them by the ability to think, which He gave man and through which man is able to arrange his actions in an orderly manner. This is the discerning intellect. Or, when it helps him to acquire from his fellow men a knowledge of ideas and of the things that are useful or detrimental to him, it is the experimental intellect. Or, when it helps him to obtain perception of the existent things as they are, whether they are absent or present, [32](#) it is the speculative intellect.

Man's ability to think comes to him (only) after the animality in him has reached perfection. It starts from discernment. Before man has discernment, he has no knowledge whatever, and is counted one of the animals. His origin, the way in which he was created from a drop of sperm, a clot of blood, and a lump of flesh, [33](#) still determines his (mental make-up). Whatever he attains subsequently is the result of sensual perception and the "hearts" - that is, the ability to think - God has given him. In recounting the favor He bestowed upon us, God said: "And He gave you hearing and vision and hearts." [34](#)

In his first condition, before he has attained discernment, man is simply matter, in as much as he is ignorant of all knowledge. He reaches perfection of his form through knowledge, which he acquires through his own organs. Thus, his human essence reaches perfection of existence.

One may compare the word of God when His Prophet began to receive the revelation. "Recite: In the name of your Lord who created, created man out of a clot of blood. Recite: And your Lord the most noble who taught with the calamus, taught man what he did not know." [35](#) That is, He let him acquire knowledge he did not yet possess, after he had been a clot of blood and a lump of flesh.

Man's nature and essence reveal to us the essential ignorance and acquired (character of the) knowledge that man possesses, and the noble verse of the Qur'an refers to it at the very beginning and opening of the revelation, and establishes through it the fact that (man) has received (from God) as a favor the first of the stages of his existence, which is humanity and its two conditions, the innate one and the acquired one.

"God has been knowing and wise." [36](#)

7. Scientific instruction is a craft.³⁷

This is because skill in a science, knowledge of its diverse aspects, and mastery of it are the result of a habit which enables its possessor to comprehend all the basic principles of that particular science, to become acquainted with its problems, and to evolve the details of it from its principles. As long as such a habit has not been obtained, skill in a particular discipline is not forthcoming.

Habit is different from understanding and knowing by memory. Understanding of a single problem in a single discipline may be found equally in someone well versed in the particular discipline and in the beginner, in the common man who has no scientific knowledge whatever, and in the accomplished scholar. Habit, on the other hand, belongs solely and exclusively to the scholar or the person well versed in scientific disciplines. This shows that (scientific) habit is different from understanding.

All habits are corporeal, whether they are of the body, or, like arithmetic, of the brain and resulting from man's ability to think and so on. All corporeal things are *sensibilia*. Thus, they require instruction. Therefore, a tradition of famous teachers with regard to instruction in any science or craft, is acknowledged (to be necessary) by the people of every region and generation (race).

The fact that scientific instruction is a craft is also shown by the differences in technical terminologies. Every famous authority has his own technical terminology for scientific instruction, as is the case with all crafts. This shows that technical terminology is not a part of science itself. If it were, it would be one and the same with all scholars. One knows how much the technical terminology used in the teaching of speculative theology differs between the ancients and the moderns. The same applies to the principles of jurisprudence as well as to Arabic (philology) and to jurisprudence. It applies to any science one undertakes to study. The technical terminologies used in teaching it are always found to be different. This shows that the (terminologies) are crafts used for instruction, while each individual science as such is one and the same.

If ³⁸ this has been established, it should be known that the tradition of scientific instruction at this time has practically ceased (to be cultivated) among the inhabitants of the Maghrib, because the civilization of the Maghrib has disintegrated and its dynasties have lost their importance, and this has resulted in the deterioration and disappearance of the crafts, as was mentioned before.³⁹ Al-Qayrawan and Cordoba were centers of sedentary culture in the Maghrib and in Spain, respectively. Their civilization was highly developed, and the sciences and crafts were greatly cultivated and very much in demand in them. Since these two cities lasted a long time and possessed a sedentary culture, scientific instruction became firmly rooted in them. But when they fell into ruins, scientific instruction ceased (to be cultivated) in the West, Only a little of it, derived from (al-Qayrawan and Cordoba), continued to exist during the Almohad dynasty in Marrakech. Sedentary culture, however, was not firmly rooted in Marrakech because of the original Bedouin attitude of the Almohad dynasty and because of the shortness of time between its beginning and its destruction. Sedentary culture enjoyed only a very minor continuity there.

After the destruction of the dynasty in Marrakech, ⁴⁰ in the middle of the seventh [thirteenth] century, Judge Abu1-Qasim b. Zaytun ⁴¹ traveled from Ifrigiyah to the East. He entered into contact with the pupils of the imam Ibn alKhatib.⁴² He studied with them and learned their (method of) instruction. He became skilled in intellectual and traditional matters. Then, he returned to Tunis with a great deal of knowledge and a good (method of) instruction. He was followed back from the East by Abu 'Abdallah b. Shu'ayb ad-Dukkali,⁴³ who had traveled from the Maghrib to (Ibn Zaytun). He studied with Egyptian professors and returned to Tunis, where he remained. His (method of) instruction was effective. The inhabitants of Tunis studied with both Ibn Zaytun and Ibn Shu'ayb. Their tradition of scientific instruction was steadily continued by their pupils, generation after generation. Eventually, it reached Judge Muhammad b. 'Abd-as-Salam,⁴⁴ the commentator and pupil of Ibn alH ajib,⁴⁵ and was transplanted from Tunis to Tlemcen through Ibn al-Imam ⁴⁶ and his pupils. Ibn al-Imam had studied with Ibn 'Abd-as-Salam under the same professors in the same classes. Pupils of Ibn 'Abd-as-Salam can be found at this time in Tunis, and pupils of Ibn al-Imam in Tlemcen. However, they are so few that it is to be feared that the tradition may come to an end.

At the end of the seventh [thirteenth] century, Abu 'Ali Nasir-ad-din al-Mashaddali ⁴⁷ traveled eastward ⁴⁸ from Zawahah and got in touch with the pupils of Abu 'Amr b. al-Hajib. He studied with them and learned their (method of) instruction. He studied with Shihab-ad-din al-Qarafi ⁴⁹ in the same classes. He became skilled in intellectual and traditional matters. He returned to the Maghrib with much knowledge and an effective (method of) instruction. He settled in Bougie. His tradition of scientific instruction was steadily continued among the students of Bougie. Imran al-Mashaddali,⁵⁰ one of his pupils, frequently went to Tlemcen. He settled in Tlemcen and propagated his method there. At this time, in Tlemcen and Bougie, his pupils are few, very few.

Fez and the other cities of the Maghrib have been without good instruction since the destruction of scientific instruction in Cordoba and al-Qayrawan. There has been no continuous tradition of scientific instruction in Fez. Therefore, it has been difficult for the people of Fez to obtain the scientific habit and skill.

The easiest method of acquiring the scientific habit is through acquiring the ability to express oneself clearly in discussing and disputing scientific problems. This is what clarifies their import and makes them understandable. Some students spend most of their lives attending scholarly sessions. Still, one finds them silent. They do not talk and do not discuss matters. More than is necessary, they are concerned with memorizing. Thus, they do not obtain much of a habit in the practice of science and scientific instruction. Some of them think that they have obtained (the habit). But when they enter into a discussion or disputation, or do some teaching, their scientific habit is found to be defective. The only reason for their deficiency is (lack of) instruction, together with the break in the tradition of scientific instruction (that affects them). Apart from that, their memorized knowledge may be more extensive than that of other scholars, because they are so much concerned with memorizing. They think that scientific habit is identical with memorized knowledge. But that is not so.

This is attested in the Maghrib (in Morocco) by the fact that the period specified for the residence of students in college there is sixteen years, while in Tunis it is five years. Such a (fixed) period of attendance is recognized as the shortest in which a student can obtain the scientific habit he desires, or can realize that he will never be able to obtain it.

In the Maghrib (in Morocco), the period is so long at the present day for the very reason that the poor quality of scientific instruction there makes it difficult (for the student to acquire the scientific habit), and not for any other reason.

The institution of scientific instruction has disappeared among the inhabitants of Spain. Their (former) concern with the sciences is gone, because Muslim civilization in Spain has been decreasing for hundreds of years. The only scholarly discipline remaining there is Arabic (philology) and literature, to which the (Spanish Muslims) restrict themselves. The tradition of teaching these disciplines is preserved among them, and thus the disciplines as such are preserved. Jurisprudence is an empty institution among them and a mere shadow of its real self. Of the intellectual disciplines, not even a shadow remains, The only reason for that is that the tradition of scientific instruction has ceased (to be cultivated) in Spain, because civilization there has deteriorated and the enemy has gained control over most of it, except for a few people along the coast who are more concerned with making a living than with the things that come after it.

"God has the power to execute His commands." [51](#)

In [52](#) the East, the tradition of scientific instruction has not ceased (to be cultivated). Scientific instruction is very much in demand and greatly cultivated in the East, because of the continuity of an abundant civilization and the continuity of the tradition (of scientific instruction) there. It is true that the old cities, such as Baghdad, al-Basrah, and al-Kufah, which were the (original) mines of scholarship, are in ruins. However, God has replaced them with cities even greater than they were. Science was transplanted from the (early centers) to the non-Arab 'Iraq of Khurasan, to Transoxania in the East, and to Cairo and adjacent regions in the West. These cities have never ceased to have an abundant and continuous civilization, and the tradition of scientific instruction has always persisted in them.

The inhabitants of the East are, in general, more firmly rooted in the craft of scientific instruction and, indeed, in all the other crafts (than Maghribis). In fact, many Maghribis who have traveled to the East in quest of knowledge, have been of the opinion that [53](#) the intellect of the people of the East is, in general, more perfect than that of the Maghribis. They have supposed the rational souls (of the people of the East) to be by nature more perfect than those of the Maghribis. They have claimed that there exists a difference in the reality of humanity between ourselves (the Maghribis) and them, [54](#) because their cleverness in the sciences and crafts seemed remarkable to them. This is not so. There is no difference between the East and the West great enough (to be considered) a difference in the reality (of human nature), which is one (and the same everywhere).

(Such a difference) does in fact exist in the intemperate zones, such as the first and the seventh zones. The tempers there are intemperate, and the souls are correspondingly intemperate, as has been mentioned before [55](#) The superiority of the inhabitants of the East over those of the West lies in the additional intelligence that accrues to the soul from the influences of sedentary culture, as has been stated before in connection with the crafts. [56](#) We are now going to comment on that and to verify it. It is as follows;

Sedentary people observe (a) particular (code of) manners in everything they undertake and do or do not do, and they thus acquire certain ways of making a living, finding dwellings, building houses, and handling their religious and worldly matters, including their customary affairs, their dealings with others, and all the rest of their activities. [57](#) These manners constitute a kind of limitation which may not be transgressed, and, at the same time, they are crafts that (later) generations take over

from the earlier ones. No doubt, each craft that has its proper place within the arrangement of the crafts, influences the soul and causes it to acquire an additional intelligence, which prepares the soul for accepting still other crafts. The intellect is thus conditioned for a quick reception of knowledge.

We hear that the Egyptians have achieved things hardly possible in the teaching of the crafts. For instance, they teach domestic donkeys and (other) dumb animals, quadrupeds and birds, to speak words and to do things that are remarkable for their rarity and that the inhabitants of the Maghrib would not be capable of understanding, let alone teaching.⁵⁸

Good habits in scientific instruction, in the crafts, and in all the other customary activities, add insight to the intellect of a man and enlightenment to his thinking, since the soul thus obtains a great number of habits. We have stated before ⁵⁹ that the soul grows under the influence of the perceptions it receives and the habits accruing to it. Thus, (the people of the East) become more clever, because their souls are influenced by scientific activity. The common people then suppose that it is a difference in the reality of humanity. This is not so. If one compares sedentary people with Bedouins, one notices how much more insight and cleverness sedentary people have. One might, thus, come to think that they really differ from the Bedouins in the reality of humanity and in intelligence. This is not so. The only reason for the difference is that sedentary people have refined technical habits and manners as far as customary activities and sedentary conditions are concerned, all of them things that are unknown to the Bedouins. Sedentary people possess numerous crafts, as well as the habits that go with them, and good (methods of) teaching the crafts. Therefore, those who do not have such habits think that they indicate an intellectual perfection possessed (exclusively) by sedentary people, and that the natural qualifications of the Bedouins are inferior to those of sedentary people. This is not so. We find Bedouins whose understanding, intellectual perfection, and natural qualifications are of the highest rank. The seeming (superiority of) sedentary people is merely the result of a certain polish the crafts and scientific instruction give them. It influences the soul, as we have stated before.⁶⁰ Now, the inhabitants of the East are more firmly grounded and more advanced in scientific instruction and the crafts (than the Maghribis), and the Maghribis are closer to desert life, as we have stated before in the preceding section.⁶¹ This leads superficial people to think that the inhabitants of the East are distinguished from the Maghribis by a certain perfection (of theirs) touching the reality of humanity. That is not correct, as one should be able to understand.

God "gives in addition to the creatures whatever He wishes to give to them."
⁶²

8. *The sciences are numerous only where civilization is large and sedentary culture highly developed.*⁶³

The reason for this is that scientific instruction, as we have just stated, is one of the crafts. We have also stated before that the crafts are numerous only in cities. The quality and the number of the crafts depend on the greater or lesser extent of civilization in the cities and on the sedentary culture and luxury they enjoy, because (highly developed crafts) are something additional to just making a living. When civilized people have more labor available than they need for mere subsistence, such (surplus) labor is used for activities over and above making a living.⁶⁴ These activities are man's prerogative. They are the sciences and the crafts.

People who grow up in villages and uncivilized (thinly populated) cities and who have an innate desire for scientific activity, cannot find scientific instruction in those places. For scientific instruction is something technical, and there are no crafts among the inhabitants of the desert, as we have stated before.⁶⁵ These people, therefore, must travel and seek scientific instruction in cities where (civilization) is highly developed, as is the case with all crafts.

This may be exemplified by our previous statements ⁶⁶ concerning Baghdad, Cordoba, al-Qayrawan, al-Basrah, and al-Kufah. At the beginning of Islam, the civilizations (populations) were large, and sedentary culture existed in them. The sciences were then greatly cultivated there, and the people were widely versed in the various technical terminologies of scientific instruction, in the different kinds of sciences, and in posing problems and (inventing new) disciplines. They exceeded (all) who had come before them and surpassed (all) who came after them. But when the civilization of those cities decreased and their inhabitants were dispersed, the picture was completely reversed. Science and scientific instruction no longer existed in those cities, but were transplanted to other Muslim cities.

We, at this time, notice that science and scientific instruction exist in Cairo in Egypt, because the civilization of (Egypt) is greatly developed and its sedentary culture has been well established for thousands of years. Therefore, the crafts are firmly established there and exist in many varieties. One of them is scientific instruction. This (state of affairs) has been strengthened and preserved in Egypt by the events of the last two hundred years under the Turkish dynasty, from the days of Salah-ad-din b. Ayyub on. This is because the Turkish amirs under the Turkish dynasty were afraid that their ruler might proceed against the descendants they would leave behind, in as much as they were his slaves or clients, and because chicanery and confiscation are always to be feared from royal authority. Therefore, they built a great many colleges, hermitages, and monasteries,⁶⁷ and endowed them with mortmain endowments that yielded income. They saw to it that their children would participate in these endowments, either as administrators or by having some other share in them. (This was their intention) in addition to the fact that they were inclined to do good deeds and hoped for (a heavenly) reward for their aspirations and actions. As a consequence, mortmain endowments became numerous, and the income and profit (from them) increased. Students and teachers increased in numbers, because a large number of stipends became available from the endowments. People traveled to Egypt from the 'Iraq and the Maghrib in quest of

knowledge. Thus, the sciences were very much in demand and greatly cultivated there.[68](#)

"God creates whatever He wishes." [69](#)

9. The various sciences that exist in contemporary civilization.

It should be known that the sciences with which people concern themselves in cities and which they acquire and pass on through instruction, are of two kinds: one that is natural to man and to which he is guided by his own ability to think, and a traditional kind that he learns from those who invented it.

The first kind comprises the philosophical sciences. They are the ones with which man can become acquainted through the very nature of his ability to think and to whose objects, problems, arguments, and methods of instruction he is guided by his human perceptions, so that he is made aware of the distinction between what is correct and what is wrong in them by his own speculation and research, in as much as he is a thinking human being.

The second kind comprises the traditional, conventional sciences. All of them depend upon information based on the authority of the given religious law. There is no place for the intellect in them, save that the intellect may be used in connection with them to relate problems of detail with basic principles. Particulars that constantly come into being are not included in the general tradition by the mere fact of its existence. Therefore, they need to be related (to the general principles) by some kind of analogical reasoning. However, such analogical reasoning is derived from the (traditional) information, while the character of the basic principle, which is traditional, remains valid (unchanged). Thus, analogical reasoning of this type reverts to being tradition (itself), because it is derived from it. [70](#)

The basis of all the traditional sciences is the legal material of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which is the law given us by God and His messenger, as well as the sciences connected with that material, by means of which we are enabled to utilize it. This, further, requires as auxiliary sciences the sciences of the Arabic language. Arabic is the language of Islam, and the Qur'an was revealed in it.

The different kinds of traditional sciences are numerous, because it is the duty of the responsible Muslim to know the legal obligations God placed upon him and upon his fellow men. They are derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, either from the text, or through general consensus, or through combination.

Thus, he must first study the explicit wording of the Qur'an. This is the science of Qur'an interpretation.

Then, he must study the Qur'an, both with reference to the manner in which it has been transmitted and related on the authority of the Prophet who brought it from God, and with reference to the differences in the readings of the Qur'an readers. This is the science of Qur'an reading.

Then, he must study the manner in which the Sunnah is related to its originator (Muhammad), and he must discuss the transmitters who have handed it down. He must know their circumstances and their probity, so that the information one receives from them may be trusted and so that one may be able to know the part of it, in accordance with the implications of which one must act. [71](#) These are the sciences of tradition.

Then, the process of evolving the laws from their basic principles requires some normative guidance to provide us with the knowledge of how that process

takes place. This is the (science of the) principles of jurisprudence.

After one knows the principles of jurisprudence, one can enjoy, as its result, the knowledge of the divine laws that govern the actions of all responsible Muslims. This is jurisprudence.

Furthermore, the duties (of the Muslim) may concern either the body or the heart. The (duties of the heart) are concerned with faith and the distinction between what is to be believed and what is not to be believed. This concerns the articles of faith which deal with the essence and attributes (of God), the events of the Resurrection, Paradise, punishment, and predestination, and entails discussion and defense of these subjects with the help of intellectual arguments. This is speculative theology.

The discussion of the Qur'an and *hadith* must be preceded by the (study of the) philological sciences, because it is based upon them. There are various kinds, such as lexicography, grammar, syntax and style,⁷² and literature. We shall discuss each of these.

These traditional sciences are all restricted to Islam and the Muslims, even though every religious group has to have something of the sort. (The traditional sciences of Islam) are remotely comparable to (those of other religious groups), in that they are sciences of a religious law revealed by God to the lawgiver who transmits it. But as to the particulars, (Islam) is different from all other religious groups, because it abrogates them. All the pre-Islamic sciences concerned with religious groups are to be discarded, and their discussion is forbidden.

The religious law has forbidden the study of all revealed scriptures except the Qur'an. Muhammad said: "Consider the People of the Book neither as truthful nor as untruthful. Just say: 'We believe in what was revealed to us and revealed to you. Our God and your God are one!'"⁷³ And when the Prophet saw a leaf of the Torah in 'Umar's hand, he got so angry that his anger showed in his face. Then, he said: "Did I not bring it to you white and clean? By God, if Moses were alive, he would have no choice but to follow me."⁷⁴

The traditional legal sciences were cultivated in Islam in a way that permitted no further increase. The students of those sciences reached the farthest possible limit in knowledge of them. The various technical terminologies were refined, and order was brought into the various disciplines. The traditional sciences thus achieved exceeding excellence and refinement. Each discipline had its authorities to whom one referred, and its rules that were used for instruction. The West as well as the East had its share of famous traditional scholarship, as we are shortly going to mention, when we enumerate these disciplines. At this time, however, science is at a standstill in the Maghrib, because civilization has decreased there and the tradition of science and scientific instruction has broken off, as we stated in the preceding section.⁷⁵ I do not know what God has done with the East. The assumption is that science is very much cultivated there and that the teaching of the sciences and of all necessary and luxury crafts continues there without interruption. The civilization and sedentary culture of the East are extensive, and students find support there through stipends from mortmain endowments which give them ample sustenance.⁷⁶

God determines night and day.⁷⁷

10. The Qur'anic sciences of Qur'an interpretation and Qur'an reading.

The Qur'an is the word of God that was revealed to His Prophet and that is written down between the two covers of copies of the Qur'an (*mushaf*).

Its transmission has been continuous in Islam. However, the men around Muhammad transmitted it on the authority of the Messenger of God in different ways. These differences affect certain of the words in it and the manner in which the letters were pronounced. They were handed down and became famous. Eventually, seven specific ways of reading the Qur'an became established. Transmission (of the Qur'an readings), with their particular pronunciation, also was continuous. They came to be ascribed to certain men from among a large number of persons who had become famous as their transmitters.

The seven Qur'an readings became the basis for reading the Qur'an. Later on, other readings were occasionally added to the seven. However, they are not considered by the authorities on Qur'an reading to be as reliably transmitted as (the seven).

The seven Qur'an readings are well known from books which deal with them. Certain people have contested the continuity of their transmission. In their opinion, they are ways of indicating the pronunciation, and pronunciation is something that cannot definitely be fixed. This, however, they thought not to reflect upon the continuity of the transmission of the Qur'an. The majority did not admit their view. They asserted the continuity of the transmission of the (seven readings). Others asserted the continuity (of all seven), except with regard to (the fine points of) pronunciation, such as the longer pronunciation of the long vowels and the weakening of the *alif*, ⁷⁸ because the ear is not able to determine how it must be done. This is the correct opinion.

Qur'an readers continued to circulate and transmit those readings, until the sciences were fixed in writing and treated systematically. Those readings, then, were set down in writing, along with the other sciences, and became a special craft and science in itself. People in the East and in Spain handed them down generation after generation. Eventually, Mujahid, a client of the 'Amirids, ⁷⁹ became ruler of eastern Spain. He concerned himself with this particular Qur'anic discipline, because he was held to it by his master, al-Mansur b. Abi 'Amir, who made every effort to instruct him (in it) and to have him study (it) with the authoritative Qur'an readers at his court. Thus, he acquired a very good knowledge of it. Later on, Mujahid became amir of Denia and the eastern islands (the Baleares). As a result, the reading of the Qur'an was greatly cultivated there, because he was an authority in it and because he was much concerned with all sciences in general and with the reading of the Qur'an in particular. In his time, there appeared Abu 'Amr ad-Dani. ⁸⁰ He achieved the greatest perfection in the reading of the Qur'an. The knowledge of it rests with him, and its transmission in its entirety goes through him. He composed numerous works on the subject, which became the authoritative works, and people no longer consulted anyone else. ⁸¹ Among (ad-Dani's) works, the *Kitab at-taysir* became the general reference work.

In the times and generations closely following that, there appeared Abul-

Qasim b. Firruh (ash-Shatibi), of Jativa. He set out to correct and abridge the systematic works of Abu 'Amr (ad-Din!). He versified the whole material in a poem in which he referred cryptically to the names of the Qur'an readers by the letters of the alphabet, according to his own arrangement. His purpose was to be as brief as he could be and to make the subject easier to memorize by means of the rhymed form. He skillfully compressed the whole subject in his poem. People undertook to memorize it and to teach it to children studying (the subject). That was the practice in the cities of the Maghrib and Spain.

The discipline of Qur'an readings is often extended to include also the discipline of Qur'an orthography (*rasm*), which deals with usage of the letters in copies of the Qur'an and with the orthography of the Qur'an. The Qur'an contains many letters that are used differently than is usual in writing. There is, for instance, the addition of the y in *biayydin* "with hands (power)"; ⁸³ the addition of the *alif* in *la'-adhbahannahu* "I shall indeed slaughter him" ⁸⁴ and in *wa-la'-awda'u* "and, indeed, they would walk swiftly"; ⁸⁵ the addition of the w in *jaza'uw-z-zalimina* "the sinners' reward"; ⁸⁶ and the omission of the *alif* in some places and not in others. Then, there are the is that are written in the Qur'an with the letter *t*, while they should be written with the *h* with two dots over it, and other things. An explanation of Qur'anic orthography was given earlier in connection with the discussion of writing. ⁸⁷

When the divergences in the usage and norm of writing made their appearance, it became necessary to deal with them comprehensively. Therefore, they, too, were written down, when scholars fixed the sciences in writing. In the West, they reached the afore-mentioned Abu 'Amr ad-Dani. He wrote a number of books about them, the best known being the *Kitab al-Muqni'*. People took up the book and employed it as a reference work. Abul-Qasim (b. Firruh) ash-Shatibi versified the (*Kitab al-Muqni'*) in his famous poem rhyming on *r*. People eagerly memorized that poem.

Then, there were more orthographic divergences which concerned other words and letters. (These words and letters) were mentioned by Abu Dawud Sulayman b. Najah, ⁸⁸ a client of Mujahid, in his works. He was a pupil of Abu 'Amr ad-Dani, and famous for the fact that he preserved ad-Dani's learning and transmitted his works.

After him, other divergences came up. A modern Maghribi scholar, al-Kharraz, ⁸⁹ composed another *rajaz* poem. In it, he added many divergences to those of the *Muqni'*. He indicated (in each instance) who their transmitters were. This poem became famous in the Maghrib.

People now memorized only it, and they discarded in its favor the works of Abu Dawud, Abu 'Amr, and ash-Shatibi on Qur'an orthography. ⁹⁰

Qur'an interpretation

It should be known that the Qur'an was revealed in the language of the Arabs and according to their rhetorical methods. All Arabs understood it and knew the meaning of the individual words and composite statements. It was revealed in chapters and verses, in order to explain the oneness of God and the religious duties according to the (various) occasions.

Some passages of the Qur'an concern articles of faith. Others concern the duties of the limbs of the body. Some are early and are followed by other, later passages that abrogate the earlier ones.

The Prophet used to explain these things, as it is said: "So that you may explain to the people that which was revealed to them." [91](#) He used to explain the unclear statements (in the Qur'an) [92](#) and to distinguish the abrogating statements from those abrogated by them, and to inform the men around him in this sense. The men around him, thus, became acquainted with (the subject). They knew why individual verses had been revealed, and the situation that had required them, directly on (Muhammad's) authority. Thus, the verse of the Qur'an, "When God's help comes and the victory," [93](#) refers to the announcement of the Prophet's death, and similar things.

These (explanations) were transmitted on the authority of the men around Muhammad and were circulated by the men of the second generation after them on their authority. They continued to be transmitted among the early Muslims, until knowledge became organized in scholarly disciplines and systematic scholarly works were written. At that time, most of these (explanations) were committed to writing. The traditional information concerning them, which had come down from the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation, was transmitted farther. That (material) reached at-Tabari, al-Waqidi, ath-Tha'alibi, [94](#) and other Qur'an interpreters. They committed to writing as much of the traditional information as God wanted them to do.

The linguistic sciences then became technical discussions of the lexicographical meaning of words, the rules governing vowel endings (*i'rab*), and style (*balaghah*) in (the use of) word combinations. Systematic works were written on these subjects. Formerly, these subjects had been habits with the Arabs. [95](#) No recourse to oral and written transmission had been necessary with respect to them. Now, that (state of affairs) was forgotten, and these subjects were learned from the books of philologists. They were needed for the interpretation of the Qur'an, because the Qur'an is in Arabic and follows the stylistic technique of the Arabs. Qur'an interpretation thus came to be handled in two ways.

One (kind of Qur'an interpretation) is traditional. It is based upon information received from the early Muslims. It consists of knowledge of the abrogating verses and of the verses that are abrogated by them, of the reasons why a (given) verse was revealed, and of the purposes of individual verses. All this can be known only through traditions based on the authority of the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation. The early scholars had already made complete compilations on the subject. However, their works and the information they transmit contain side by side important and unimportant matters, accepted and rejected statements. The reason is that the Arabs had no books or scholarship. The desert attitude and illiteracy prevailed among them. When they wanted to know certain things that human beings are usually curious to know, such as the reasons for the existing things, the beginning of creation, and the secrets of existence, they consulted the earlier People of the Book about it and got their information from them. The People of the Book were the Jews who had the Torah, and the Christians who followed the religion of (the Jews). Now, the people of the Torah who lived among the Arabs at that time were themselves Bedouins. They knew only as much about these matters as is known to ordinary People of the Book (in contrast to learned rabbis). [96](#) The majority of those Jews were Himyarites who had adopted Judaism. When they became Muslims, they clung to the (information) they possessed, such as information about the beginning of creation and information of the type of forecasts and predictions. That information had no connection with the (Jewish or Christian) religious laws they were preserving as theirs. Such men were Ka'b al-ahbar, [97](#) Wahb b. Munabbih, [98](#) 'Abdallah b. Salim, [99](#) and similar people.

The Qur'an commentaries were filled with material of such tendencies transmitted on their authority. It is information that entirely depends on them. It has no relation to (religious) laws, such that one might claim for it the soundness that would make it necessary to act (in accordance with it). The Qur'an interpreters were not very rigorous in this respect. They filled the Qur'an commentaries with such material, which originated, as we have stated, with the people of the Torah who lived in the desert and were not capable of verifying the information they transmitted. However, they were famous and highly esteemed, because they were people of rank in (their) religion and religious group. Therefore, their interpretation has been accepted from that time onwards.

Later, scholars applied themselves to verification and critical investigation. Abu Muhammad b. 'Atiyah,¹⁰⁰ a recent Maghribi scholar, made his appearance. He abridged all the commentaries and selected the most likely interpretations. He set that material down in a good book, which is in general circulation among the inhabitants of the Maghrib and of Spain. Al-Qurtubi ¹⁰¹ adopted his method in this respect in another work, which is well known in the East.

The other kind of Qur'an interpretation has recourse to linguistic knowledge, such as lexicography ¹⁰² and the stylistic form (*balaghah*) used for conveying meaning through the appropriate means and methods.¹⁰³ This kind of Qur'an interpretation rarely appears separately from the first kind. The first kind is the one that is wanted essentially. The second kind made its appearance only after language and the philological sciences had become crafts. However, it has become preponderant, as far as certain Qur'an commentaries are concerned.

The commentary in which this discipline is best represented is the *Kitab al-Kashshaf* by az-Zamakhshari,¹⁰⁴ of Khuwarizm in the 'Iraq. However, its author is a Mu'tazilah in his dogmatic views. Therefore, he uses the various methods of rhetoric (*balaghah*), arguing in favor of the pernicious doctrines of the Mu'tazilah, wherever he believed they occurred in the verses of the Qur'an. Competent orthodox scholars have, therefore, come to disregard his work and to warn everyone against its pitfalls. However, they admit that he is on firm ground in everything relating to language and style (*balaghah*). If the student of the work is acquainted with the orthodox dogmas and knows the arguments in their defense, he is no doubt safe from its fallacies. Therefore, he should seize the opportunity to study it, because it contains remarkable and varied linguistic information.¹⁰⁵

Recently, a work by an 'Iraqi scholar, Sharaf-ad-din at-Tibi,¹⁰⁶ of Tabriz in the non-Arab 'Iraq, has reached us. It is a commentary on the work of az-Zamakhshari. At-Tibi follows az-Zamakhshari's work literally, but opposes its Mu'tazilah dogmas and arguments, showing their lack of validity and (always) explaining that an eloquent style exists in a given verse but it reflects the opinions of orthodox Muslims, and not the dogmas of the Mu'tazilah. He does that very well, and he also possesses all the various disciplines of rhetoric (*balaghah*).

"And He knows more than any scholar." ¹⁰⁷

11. The sciences concerned with Prophetic traditions.

The sciences concerned with Prophetic traditions (*hadith*) are numerous and varied. One of them concerns abrogating and abrogated traditions. The permission to abrogate (previous statements) and the occurrence of abrogation have been established in our religious law. It is a favor shown by God to His servants and a kind of relief granted them to help them along in matters affecting their well-being (*masalih*) for which He is responsible to them. God said: "Whenever We abrogate a verse or consign it to oblivion, We bring one that is better, or as good."¹⁰⁸

The ¹⁰⁹ knowledge of abrogating and abrogated verses belongs both to the Qur'an and to the traditions. Everything about (abrogation), as far as it concerns the Qur'an, is included in the Qur'an commentaries. Whatever is restricted to traditions falls under the sciences of tradition.

Two traditions may be mutually exclusive, and it may be difficult to reconcile them with the help of interpretation. If, in such a case, it is known that one is earlier than the other, it is definite that the later (tradition) abrogates (the earlier one).

This is one of the most important and difficult of the sciences of tradition. Az-Zuhri ¹¹⁰ said: "It has been a baffling and impossible task for the jurists to distinguish traditions of the Messenger of God abrogating others, from those that were abrogated by them." Ash-Shafi'i was firmly grounded in this subject. Another ¹¹¹ of the sciences of tradition is the knowledge of the norms that leading *hadith* scholars have invented in order to know the chains of transmitters, the (individual) transmitters, their names, how the transmission took place, their conditions, their classes, and their different technical terminologies. This is because general consensus makes it obligatory to act in accordance with information established on the authority of the Messenger of God. This requires probability for the assumption that the information is true. Thus, the independent student must verify all the means by which it is possible to make such an assumption.

He may do this by scrutinizing the chains of transmitters of traditions. For that purpose, one may use such knowledge of the probity, accuracy, thoroughness, and lack of carelessness or negligence, as the most reliable Muslims describe a transmitter as possessing.

Then, there are the differences in rank that exist among transmitters.

Further, there is the way the transmission took place. The transmitter may have heard the *shaykh* (dictate the tradition), or he may have read (it from a book) in his presence, or he may have heard (it) read in the presence of the *shaykh* and the *shaykh* may have written (it) down for him, or he may have obtained the approval of the *shaykh* for written material (*munawalah*), or he may have obtained his permission to teach certain traditions (*ijazah*).

< Then, there is the difference> with regard to the (degree of) soundness or acceptability of the transmitted material.¹¹² The highest grade of transmitted material is called "sound" by (the *hadith* scholars). Next comes "good." The lowest grade is "weak." (The classification of traditions) includes also: "skipping the first transmitter on Muhammad's authority" (*mursal*), "omitting one link" (*munqati'*),

"omitting two links" (*mu'dal*), "affected by some infirmity" (*mu'allal*), "singular" (*shadhdh*), "unusual" (*gharib*), and "singular and suspect" (*munkar*).¹¹³ In some cases, there is a difference of opinion as to whether (traditions so described) should be rejected. In other cases, there is general agreement that (they should be rejected). The same is ¹¹⁴ the case with (traditions with) sound chains. In some cases, there is general agreement as to their acceptability and soundness, whereas, in other cases, there are differences of opinion. *Hadith* scholars differ greatly in their explanations of these terms.

Then, there follows the discussion of terms applying to the texts of the traditions. A text may be "unusual" (*gharib*), "difficult" (ambiguous, *mushkil*), "(affected by some) misspelling (or misreading)," or "(containing) homonyms" (*muftariq*), or "(containing) homographs" (*mukhtalij*).¹¹⁶

On ¹¹⁷ all these points, *hadith* scholars have laid down a canon explaining the (various) grades and terms, and adequate to protect the transmission from possible defects. The first outstanding *hadith* scholar to lay down such a canon was Abu 'Abdallah al-Hakim.¹¹⁸ He improved it and presented it to its best advantage. His works on the subject are famous.

Other leading *hadith* scholars followed him and wrote works on the subject. The most famous work by a modern scholar on the subject is the book of Abu 'Amr b. as-Salah.¹¹⁹ He lived in the early part of the seventh [thirteenth] century. His example was followed by Muhyi-ad-din an-Nawawi.¹²⁰

The purpose of the discipline is a noble one. It is concerned with the knowledge of how to preserve the traditions (*sunan*) transmitted on the authority of the Master of the religious law (Muhammad), until it is definite which are to be accepted and which are to be rejected.

It should be known that the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation who transmitted the Sunnah were well known in the cities of Islam. There were transmitters in the Hijaz, in al-Basrah and al-Kufah, and then in Syria and Egypt. They were famous in their time. The transmitters of the Hijaz had fewer links in their chains of transmitters (than others), and they were sounder (transmitters), because they were reluctant to accept (as reliable transmitters) those who were obscure and whose conditions were not known.

After the early Muslims, the master of the Hijazi tradition was the imam Malik, the leading scholar of Medina. Then came his colleagues, such as the imam Muhammad b. Idris ash-Shafi'i, Ibn Wahb,¹²¹ Ibn Bukayr¹²² al-Qa`nabi¹²³ Muhammad b. al-Hasan¹²⁴ and after them, the imam Ahmad b. Hanbal, and other later scholars.

At the beginning, knowledge of the religious law was entirely based on (oral) tradition. It involved no speculation, no use of opinion, and no intricate reasoning.¹²⁵ The early Muslims occupied themselves with it, selecting the sound material, and thus eventually perfected it. Malik wrote the *Kitab al-Muwatta'* according to the Hijazi tradition,¹²⁶ in which he laid down the principal laws on the basis of sound, generally agreed-upon (material). He arranged the work according to juridical categories.

The *hadith* experts concerned themselves with knowledge of the recensions of traditions and of the different chains of transmitters, such ¹²⁷ as the Hijazi and the 'Iraqi transmissions and others. A certain tradition may be known in one way only or in numerous ways, and it may be repeated in (different) chapters (of works

of jurisprudence) because it deals with several subjects.

There was Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari, the leading *hadith* scholar of his time. In his *Musnad as-Sahih*, he widened the area of tradition and [128](#) published the orthodox traditions arranged according to subject. He combined all the different ways of the Hijazis, 'Iraqis, and Syrians, accepting the material upon which they all agreed, but excluding the material concerning which there were differences of opinion. He repeated a (given) tradition in every chapter upon which the contents of that particular tradition had some bearing. Therefore, his traditions were repeated in several chapters, because a (single) tradition may deal with different subjects, as we have indicated. His work thus comprised 7,200 traditions, [129](#) of which 3,000 are repeated. In each chapter, he kept separate the recensions with the different chains of transmitters belonging to them.

Then came the imam Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri. He composed his *Musnad as-Sahih*, in which he followed al-Bukhari, in that he transmitted the material that was generally agreed upon, but he omitted the repetitions and did not keep the recensions and chains of transmitters separate. He arranged his work according to juridical categories and the chapter headings of jurisprudence.

Scholars have corrected the two (authors), noting the cases of the sound traditions not (included in their works). [130](#) They have mentioned the cases where (they) neglected (to include traditions which, according to) the conditions governing the inclusion of traditions in their works, (should have been included).

Abu Dawud as-Sijistani, Abu 'Isa at-Tirmidhi, and Abu 'Abd-ar-Rahman an-Nasa'i [131](#) wrote *sunan* works which included more than merely "sound" traditions. Their intention was to include all traditions that amply fulfilled the conditions making them actionable traditions. They were either traditions with few links in the chain of transmitters, which makes them sound (traditions), as is (generally) acknowledged, or they were lesser traditions, such as "good" traditions and others. It was to serve as a guide to orthodox practice.

These [132](#) are the collections of traditions that are used as reference works in Islam. They are the chief orthodox works on traditions. Other collections have been added to these five, such as the *Musnads* of Abu Dawud at-Tayalisi, [133](#) al-Bazzar, [134](#) 'Abd b. Humayd, [135](#) ad-Darimi, [136](#) Abu Ya la alMawsili, [137](#) and the imam Ahmad. According to Ibn as-Salah, their intention was to collect the material transmitted on the authority of the men around Muhammad that cannot be used as argument.

However, it has been transmitted on the authority of the imam Ahmad, that he used to say to his son 'Abdallah concerning his own *Musnad*, which includes 31,000 traditions and the same statement by Ahmad is also transmitted (in the same words) on the authority of a number of his companions, who said that he had instructed them in his *Musnad* : "This work is a selection from among 750,000 traditions. The Prophetic traditions concerning which the Muslims hold divergent opinions (of their genuineness), and which you do not find in it, cannot be used as arguments." This shows that all the material in his *Musnad* can properly be used as argument. This is the opposite of what has been said by Ibn as-Salah. I have quoted (Ahmad's) statement from the *Manaqib al-Imam Ahmad* by Ibn al-Jawzi. [138](#)

At this time, traditions are no longer published, nor are the (publications of) traditions by former scholars corrected. Common (experience) attests the fact that these numerous religious leaders, close to each other in time, were too capable and too firmly possessed of independent judgment to have neglected or omitted any

tradition, so that it is impossible that some later scholar might discover one. (Therefore,) at this time, one is concerned with correcting the principal written works, with fixing the accuracy of their transmission, and [141](#) with establishing continuous chains of transmitters leading back to the authors, chains that are sound throughout. With very few exceptions, no attention has been paid to more than the five main works.

Al-Bukhari's *Sahih* occupies the highest rank among them. People have considered it difficult to comment on the *Sahih* and have found it rather complicated, because it requires a knowledge of numerous recensions and personages from the Hijaz, Syria, and the 'Iraq, as well as knowledge of their conditions and of the different opinions of scholars about them. Constant study is also required to understand the subject headings. Al-Bukhari would make a chapter heading and mention under it a tradition with a certain chain of transmitters or in a certain recension. Then, he would make another subject heading and mention the very same tradition under it, because it (also) deals with the subject of that particular chapter. This applies to every chapter heading, so that the tradition may be repeated in separate [142](#) chapters according to the various different subjects it deals with.

A study [143](#) of the chapter headings should clearly indicate the relation that exists between them and the traditions the chapter contains. However, in many cases, this relation is obscure, and people have lengthily tried to explain it.

This happened in connection with the chapter heading: "The House will be destroyed by an Abyssinian with two little legs." [144](#) It occurs in the book on "Disturbances" (*fitan*). Then, (al-Bukhari) quotes the Qur'an: "And when we made the House a meeting place for the people and a place of safety." [145](#) Nothing is said of the matter mentioned in the chapter heading, and the relationship between the chapter heading and the chapter has remained obscure to scholars. Some have said that the author wrote all the chapter headings down in his draft and wrote the traditions under each chapter heading later, whenever he had the opportunity. He died before he was able to fill in all the chapter headings, and his work was transmitted in this (incomplete form).

However, as I learned from the companions of Judge Ibn Bakkar, [146](#) the judge of Granada who died in the battle of Tarifa in the year 741 [1340], [147](#) and who was well versed in the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari, the chapter heading (quoted) was intended by al-Bukhari to interpret the verse of the Qur'an in the sense that it dealt with "something established by law," and not with "something appointed by divine decree." [148](#) The difficulty results from interpreting "we made" in the sense of "we appointed by divine decree." If (the word in question) is interpreted in the sense of "we established by law," there is no confusion (or contradiction) in the (chapter heading saying that) a man with two little legs will destroy (the House). I learned this explanation from our teacher, Abul-Barakat al-Ballafiqi, [149](#) who had it on the authority of (Ibn Bakkar). Al-Ballafiqi was one of his most important pupils.

Commentators who do not exhaust such problems do not completely fulfill their duties as commentators. Commentators of this sort include Ibn Battal, [150](#) Ibn al-Muhallab, [151](#) Ibn at-Tin, [152](#) and others. I have heard many of our teachers say: "The Muslims still have the obligation to write a commentary on al-Bukhari." They meant that no Muslim scholar has so far completely fulfilled the task of a commentator in the sense indicated.

The *Sahih* of Muslim has been given much attention by Maghribi scholars. They applied themselves to it and agreed that it was superior to the work of al-

Bukhari. Ibn as-Salah said: [153](#) "It is considered superior (by Maghribis and other scholars) to the work of al-Bukhari, because it is free from admixtures of material that is not sound and that al-Bukhari wrote down disregarding his own conditions (of soundness), mostly in connection with the chapter headings."

The imam al-Mazari, [154](#) a Malikite jurist, dictated a commentary on the *Sahih* of Muslim which he entitled *al-Mu'lîm bi fawa'id Muslim*. It contains much important source material from the science of tradition and solid juridical knowledge. The work was later on perfected by Judge 'Iyad. [155](#) He called his work *Ikmal al-Mu'lîm*. The two of them were followed by Muhyi-ad-din an-Nawawl with a commentary containing all the material of the two works and adding to it, thus becoming a complete commentary.

The other three collections of traditions contain the most extensive source material for jurists. Most comment on (that material) is found in the law books, except for those things that are peculiar to the science of tradition. Scholars wrote on (that material) and exhaustively presented in this respect as much as was needed of the sciences of tradition, their subjects, and the collections which contain traditions considered (norms) for action.

It should be known that, at this time, traditions are classified in grade as "sound," "good," "weak," "ill," and so on. The classification was fixed and made known by the leading *hadîth* authorities. It is no longer possible to declare a tradition sound, that had not been (known as) sound before. The *hadîth* authorities made known the traditions in their various recensions and with their chains of transmitters. They were so thorough in this respect that, if a tradition had been transmitted with a chain of transmitters or in a recension not belonging to it, they would have realized that it had been tampered with. Something of the sort happened to the imam Muhammad b. Ismail [156](#) al-Bukhari. He came to Baghdad, and the *hadîth* scholars wanted to examine him. They asked him about several traditions, transposing the chains of transmitters (cited). He said: "I do not know those traditions, but I was told by so-and-so . . ." and then he repeated all the traditions in the correct order, supplying each text with the chain of transmitters to which it belonged. The *hadîth* scholars (in Baghdad), in consequence, acknowledged (al-Bukhari's) leadership. [157](#)

It should also be known that religious leaders of independent judgment differed in the extent of their knowledge of traditions. It is said that the (number of) traditions that Abu Hanifah transmitted came to only seventeen or so. [158](#) Malik accepted as sound only the traditions found in the *Muwatta'*. They are at most three hundred or so. Ahmad b. Hanbal has 50,000 [159](#) traditions in his *Musnad*. Each (authority) has as many traditions as his independent judgment in this respect allowed him to have.

A certain biased, unfair person dared to say that some (of the authorities) knew little about traditions and, therefore, did not transmit many. It is impossible to believe such a thing about the great religious leaders. The religious law is derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and those who know little about traditions definitely have to study and transmit them with eagerness and zeal, in order to be able to derive the religion from (its) sound basic principles and to get the laws from their Master (Muhammad) who brought them from God. Therefore, the great religious leaders who transmitted only a few traditions, did so (not because they knew little about traditions but) because they might have been attacked with regard to the traditions they transmitted, and because their transmission might have been accused of defects, especially since the majority (of scholars) gives preference to

negative (as against positive) personality criticism. Therefore, their independent judgment induced them to leave aside traditions and chains of transmitters in which such (defects) might occur and which are numerous. Therefore, they transmitted few traditions, because of the weakness of the ways of transmission. Furthermore, the Hijazis transmitted more traditions than the 'Iraqis. Medina was the place to which Muhammad emigrated and where the men around him made their home. Those of them who moved to the 'Iraq were more occupied with the holy war (than with the transmission of traditions).

The imam Abu Hanifah transmitted only a few traditions, because he was very strict in applying the conditions governing the transmission and retention of traditions. He declared traditions weak when they were contradicted by decisive logical (arguments). Therefore, it was difficult for him to transmit traditions, and his traditions are few. However, it can by no means be assumed that he purposely omitted to transmit traditions. He would not have done such a thing. He was one of the greatest scholars of independent judgment in the science of tradition. This is proven by the fact that the *hadith* scholars follow his school and refer to it and take it into consideration in rejecting or accepting (arguments).

Other *hadith* scholars, that is, the great majority, permitted a certain latitude in applying the conditions (governing the soundness of traditions). They transmitted many traditions, everyone relying on his own independent judgment. The later (Hanafites) permitted a certain latitude in applying the conditions and transmitted many traditions. At-Tahawi [160](#) was a transmitter who transmitted many traditions. He wrote his *Musnad*, which is an important work. However, it does not have the same value as the two *Sahihs*, because the conditions applied by al-Bukhari and Muslim in their works are those accepted by the general consensus of all Muslims, as has been said. The conditions applied by at-Tahawi, on the other hand, are not generally agreed upon. For instance, he transmits traditions on the authority of persons whose condition is obscure, and other things. Therefore, the two *Sahihs*, as, indeed, the other well-known collections of traditions, are preferable to (at-Tahawi), because his conditions are inferior to theirs. Therefore it is said that the two *Sahihs* are accepted by general consensus, as there is general consensus concerning the soundness of the conditions applied in them and generally agreed upon. No one should be in any doubt about this. Of all people, scholars most deserve that one have a good opinion of them and that one be eager to find sound excuses for them.

Another [161](#) of the sciences of traditions is the application of this canon to the discussion of the traditions, one by one, according to their various chapters and headings, by interpreting these collections of traditions. [162](#) This was done by the *hadith* expert Abu `Umar b. `Abd-al-Barr, [163](#) by Abu Muhammad b. Hazm, [164](#) by Judge 'Iyad, by Muhyi-ad-din an-Nawawi, and by Ibn al-'Attar [165](#) after ('Iyad and an-Nawawi), and by many other leading religious scholars of the West and the East. It is true that their discussions of the traditions contain other things, such as things that have to do with the text, the lexicography, and the grammar (*i'rab*) of the traditions. Still, their discussions of the chains of transmitters of the traditions in accordance with the *hadith* technique, are more comprehensive and longer (than their discussions of other matters).

These are the various sciences of tradition current among leading contemporary authorities.¹⁶⁶

God guides toward the truth and helps to (find) it.

Another of the sciences of tradition is that concerned with the chains of

transmitters and with knowledge of the traditions in accordance with which one must act because they are provided with chains of transmitters fulfilling all the conditions (of trustworthiness). One must act only in accordance with those traditions of the Messenger of God that, in all probability, are true. How it is possible to assume probability must be investigated by independent study. One gets to (the assumption of probability) through knowledge of the probity and accuracy of the transmitters of traditions. Such knowledge is established through information obtained on the authority of religious leaders, which declares a transmitter to be reliable and free from unreliability or negligence. This shows us whether we should accept their (traditions) or reject them.

Furthermore, knowledge of the transmitters includes knowing and distinguishing the different ranks of the individual transmitters among the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation.

The chains of transmitters also differ in respect to continuity or lack of continuity, in that a transmitter may not have known personally the transmitter on whose authority he transmits a tradition. They also differ in respect to their freedom from weaknesses which may affect them adversely. These differences lead to (the designation of) two kinds of chains, and the rule is that the "highest" [115](#) chain is to be accepted, and the "lowest" chain to be rejected. There are differences of opinion with regard to the intermediate kind, according to the transmitted statements of authorities on the subject. They have invented technical terms for (classifying) the various grades (of reliability), such as "sound," "good," "weak," "skipping the first transmitter on Muhammad's authority" (mursal), "omitting one link" (munqati'), "omitting two links" (mu'dal), "singular" (shadhdh), "unusual" (gharib), and the other terms in use among them. Each term has been treated by itself, and the existing disagreements or agreements among linguistic authorities concerning each term have been noted.

Further, there is the study of how the transmission took place. It may have taken place by reading (gira'ah), by writing (kitabah), by getting the approval of the authority for written material (munawalah), or by obtaining the permission of the authority to teach certain traditions (ijizah). One must study the difference in grade assigned to these different types of transmission, and one must also study the differences of opinion among scholars about what is to be accepted here and what to be rejected.

Then, there follows the discussion of terms applying to the texts of traditions. A text may be "unusual" (gharib), or "difficult" (ambiguous, mushkil), or "(affected by some) misspelling (or misreading)," or "(containing) homonyms" (muftariq), or "(containing) homographs" (mukhtalif), or something else of this sort.

This constitutes the largest and preponderant part of the studies of hadith scholars.

The conditions of the transmitters of traditions in early Muslim times, the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation, were known to the people of their respective countries. There were transmitters in the Hijaz, in the 'Iraq in al-Basrah and al-Kufah, and in Syria and Egypt. All of them were well known and famous in their day. The people of the Hijaz in these (early) times had fewer links in their chains of transmitters than others, and they were sounder (transmitters), because they insisted upon probity and accuracy as (necessary) conditions of transmission. They were reluctant to accept (as a reliable transmitter) anyone whose condition in these respects was not known.

These are the collections of traditions that are famous in Islam. They are the chief orthodox works on traditions. Though hadith works are numerous, reference is

as a rule made to the (books mentioned).

The knowledge of all these conditions and technical terms is the science of tradition. The subject of abrogating and abrogated traditions is occasionally taken out and treated as a discipline by itself. The same applies to "unusual" traditions. There are famous works by scholars on that subject. Then, there are the homonyms. Scholars have written a great many works on the science of traditions. An outstanding hadith scholar was Abd 'Abdallah al-Hakim. His works on the subject are famous. He improved the science of tradition and presented it to its best advantage."

The most famous work by a modern scholar on the subject is the book by Abu 'Amr b. as-Salah. He lived in the early part of the seventh [thirteenth] century. His example was followed by Muhyi-ad-din an-Nawawi.

The purpose of the discipline is a noble one. It is concerned with the knowledge of how to preserve the traditions (sunan) transmitted on the authority of the Master of the religious law.

12. Jurisprudence and its subdivision, inheritance laws.

Jurisprudence is the knowledge of the classification of the laws of God, which concern the actions of all responsible Muslims, as obligatory, forbidden, recommendable, disliked, or permissible. These (laws) are derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah (traditions), and from the evidence the Lawgiver (Muhammad) has established for knowledge of (the laws). The laws evolved from the (whole) of this evidence are called "jurisprudence" (*fiqh*).

The early Muslims evolved the laws from that evidence, though, unavoidably, they differed in (the interpretation of) it. The evidence is mainly derived from texts. The texts are in Arabic. In many instances, and especially with regard to legal concepts,¹⁶⁷ there are celebrated differences among them as to the meaning implicit in the words. Furthermore, the traditions (Sunnah) differ widely in respect of the reliability of the recensions. Their legal contents, as a rule, are contradictory. Therefore, a decision is needed. This makes for differences of opinion. Furthermore, evidence not derived from texts causes (still other) differences of opinion. Then, there are new cases which arise and are not covered by the texts. They are referred by analogy to things that are covered by the texts. All of this serves to stir up unavoidable differences of opinion, and this is why differences of opinion occurred among the early Muslims and the religious leaders after them.

Moreover, not all of the men around Muhammad were qualified to give legal decisions. Not all of them could serve as sources for religious (practice). That was restricted to men who knew the Qur'an and were acquainted with the abrogating and abrogated, the ambiguous and unambiguous verses,¹⁶⁸ and with all the rest of the evidence that can be derived from the Qur'an, since they had learned (these matters) from the Prophet directly or from their higher ranking colleagues who had learned it from him. These men, therefore, were called "readers," that is, men who (were able to) read the Qur'an. Because the Arabs were an illiterate nation, those who were able to read the Qur'an were distinguished by the name of "readers." Their ability to read was a remarkable thing in those days.

It continued to be that way at the beginning of Islam. Then, the cities of Islam grew, and illiteracy disappeared from among the Arabs because of their constant occupation with the Qur'an. Now the development (of jurisprudence from its sources) took place. Jurisprudence was perfected and came to be a craft and science. The Qur'an readers were no longer called Qur'an readers but jurists and religious scholars.

The jurists developed two different approaches to jurisprudence. One was the use of opinion (reasoning) and analogy. It was represented by the 'Iraqis. The other was the use of traditions. It was represented by the Hijazis.

As we have stated before,¹⁶⁹ few traditions circulated among the 'Iraqis. Therefore, they made much use of analogy and became skilled in it. That gave them the name of the representatives of opinion (reasoning). Their chief, around whom and whose followers their school centered, was the imam Abu Hanifah. The leader of the Hijazis was Malik b. Anas and, after him, ash-Shafi'i.

Later on, a group of religious scholars disapproved of analogy and rejected its use. They were the Zahirites. They restricted the sources of the law to the texts

and the general consensus. They considered obvious analogy and causality suggested by the texts as resting in the texts themselves, because a text that indicates *a ratio legis* [170](#) permits legal decision for all the cases covered by (such a kind of reasoning). [171](#) The leaders of this school were Dawud b. 'Ali [172](#) and his son and their followers.

These were the three schools famous among the great mass of Muslims. The 'Alids invented their own school and had their own jurisprudence. They based it upon their dogma requiring abuse of some of the men around Muhammad, and upon their stated opinion concerning the infallibility of the imams and the inadmissibility of differences in their statements. All these are futile principles. The Kharijites similarly had their own school. The great mass did not care for these (unorthodox) schools, but greatly disapproved of them and abused them. Nothing is known of the opinions of these schools. Their books are not being transmitted. No trace of them can be found except in regions inhabited (by these sectarians). The (legal text) books of the Shi'ah are thus found in Shi'ah countries and wherever Shi'ah dynasties exist, in the West, the East, and in the Yemen. The same applies to the Kharijites. All of them have (legal) writings and books and hold strange opinions on jurisprudence.

The Zahirite school has become extinct today as the result of the extinction of their religious leaders and disapproval of their adherents by the great mass of Muslims. It has survived only in books, which have eternal life. [173](#) Worthless persons occasionally feel obliged to follow this school and study these books in the desire to learn the (Zahirite) system of jurisprudence from them, but they get nowhere and encounter the opposition and disapproval of the great mass of Muslims. In doing so, they often are considered innovators, as they accept knowledge from books for which no key is provided by teachers. [174](#) That was done by Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi; [175](#) although he occupies a high rank in the expert knowledge of traditions. He turned to the Zahirite school and became skilled in it. He gave his own independent interpretation of their stated opinions. He opposed their leader Dawud and attacked most of the Muslim religious leaders. For that, the scholars took their revenge on him. They greatly vilified his school and completely disregarded his books. It went so far that sale of his books on the market was prohibited. At certain times, they were (even) torn up.

Nothing has remained except the schools of the representatives of opinion (reasoning) in the 'Iraq and of the representatives of traditions in the Hijaz.

The leading authority of the 'Iraqis, around whom their school centered, was Abu Hanifah an-Nu'man b. Thabit. His place in jurisprudence is unrivaled. This has been attested by persons of his own caliber, in particular, Malik and ash-Shafi'i. The leading authority of the IIijazts was Malik b. Anas al-Asbahi, who held the leading position in Medina. He is distinguished by the fact that he added another source of law to those known to other scholars, namely, the practice of the Medinese. He was of the opinion that by virtue of their religion and traditionalism, the Medinese always necessarily followed each immediately preceding generation of Medinese, in respect of what they cared [176](#) to do or not to do. The (process would have gone back) to the generation that was in contact with the actions of the Prophet, and they would have learned from him (what to do and not to do). In (Malik's) opinion, the practice of the Medinese, thus, is basic legal evidence.

Many scholars have thought that the (practice of the Medinese) is (rather) one of the problems of the general consensus. Therefore, they have disapproved of (Malik's use of) it, because use of the general consensus as a source of law is not restricted to the inhabitants of Medina to the exclusion of other (Muslims), but

extends to all Muslims. However, it should be known that general consensus means agreement concerning a religious matter on the strength of independent judgment. Malik did not consider the practice of the Medinese in this light. He considered it in the light of the continuity of personal observation over successive generations, (going) back to the time of the Lawgiver (Muhammad). The necessity of the traditionalism of the Medinese (caused by the fact that they have such excellent models to follow), supports that (attitude). It is true that the problem (of the practice of the Medinese) has been mentioned in the chapter (of legal works) dealing with the general consensus. This is the most appropriate place for it, because both the (practice of the Medinese) and the general consensus are concerned with agreement. However, the agreement of general consensus is the result of independent judgment and opinion (reasoning), in view of the (available) evidence. The agreement of the Medinese, on the other hand, affects their practice in as much as it involves reliance upon personal observation of (the practice of) their predecessors. It would, indeed, have been more appropriate if the problem (of the practice of the Medinese) were mentioned in the chapter on the actions [177](#) of the Prophet, or in connection with (the topic of) evidence concerning which there are differences of opinion - as, for example, (the use as legal evidence) of the law of the religions preceding us (Islam), the (legal) opinions of men around Muhammad, and (the problems of) *praesumptio legis (istishab)*. [178](#)

God gives success.

Malik b. Anas was followed by Muhammad b. Idris al-Muttalibi ash-Shafi'i. He traveled to the 'Iraq after Malik's time. He met the followers of the imam Abu Hanifah and learned from them. He combined the approach of the Hijazis with those of the 'Iraqis. He founded his own school and opposed Malik on many points.

Malik and ash-Shafi'i were followed by Ahmad b. Hanbal. He was one of the highest-ranking *hadith* scholars. [179](#) His followers studied with those of Abu Hanifah, notwithstanding the abundant knowledge of traditions they themselves possessed. They founded another school.

These four authorities are the ones recognized by tradition in the (Muslim) cities. Tradition-bound people obliterated all other (authorities), and scholars no longer admit any differences of opinion. The technical terminology of the sciences has become very diversified, and there are obstacles preventing people from attaining the level of independent judgment. It is also feared that (the existence of differences of opinion) might affect unqualified people whose opinion (reasoning) and religion could not be trusted. Thus, (scholars) came to profess their inability (to apply independent judgment), and had the people adopt the tradition of the (authorities) mentioned and of the respective group of adherents of each. They forbade one to modify his traditional (allegiance), because that would imply frivolity. All that remained after basic textbooks had been produced in the correct manner, and the continuity of their transmission had been established, was to hand down the respective school traditions and, for each individual adherent, to act in accordance with the traditions of his school. Today, jurisprudence means this, and nothing else. [180](#) The person who would claim independent judgment nowadays would be frustrated and have no adherents.

The Muslims today follow the tradition of one of the four (authorities). The adherents of Ibn Hanbal are few in number. [181](#) Most of them are in Syria and in the 'Iraq, that is, [182](#) in Baghdad and environs. They are the people who have the best knowledge of the Sunnah and of the transmission of traditions and [183](#) prefer them to analogical reasoning as a source of law, as far as possible. They [184](#) were strong

and numerous in Baghdad, until they clashed with the Shi'ah in the territory of (Baghdad). That caused much unrest in Baghdad. It stopped when the Tatars took possession of Baghdad, and was never resumed later on. The majority of Hanbalites are now to be found in Syria.

Abu Hanifah's adherents today are the 'Iraqis and the Muslims of India, China, Transoxania, and all the non-Arab (Persian-Turkish) countries. His school had formerly been restricted rather to Baghdad and the 'Iraq. There had been pupils of his at the court of the 'Abbasid caliphs. Their writings were numerous and their disputations with the Shafi'ites were frequent. Their ways of dealing with controversial questions [185](#) were excellent. They made a nice discipline out of (the subject of controversial questions) and developed remarkable ideas in this connection. All that is in the hands of scholars. The Maghrib has some knowledge of it. It was brought there by Judge Ibn al-'Arabi [186](#) and Abul-Walid al-Baji [187](#) from their travels.

Ash-Shafi'i has more adherents in Egypt than anywhere else. His school had formerly spread through the 'Iraq, Khurasan, and Transoxania. The Shafi'ites had shared with the Hanafites the task of giving legal decisions and teaching in all (Muslim) cities. They had many discussion meetings, and the books on controversial questions are full of the various kinds of (Shafi'ite) argumentation. Later on, all this stopped when the eastern countries were wiped out.

When the imam Muhammad b. Idris ash-Shafi'i took up his residence with the 'Abd-al-Hakam family [188](#) in Egypt, a number of them [189](#) studied with him. His pupils in Egypt included al-Buwayti, [190](#) al-Muzani, [191](#) and others. Malikites [192](#) in Egypt were certain members of the 'Abd-al-Hakam family, [193](#) Ashhab, [194](#) Ibn al-Qasim, [195](#) Ibn alMawwaz, [196](#) and, further, al-Harith b. Miskin [197](#) and his family; then, Judge Abu Ishaq b. Sha'ban [198](#) and his followers. Orthodox jurisprudence was then cut off from Egypt by the appearance of the Shi'ah dynasty. 'Alid jurisprudence came into use there. All the other (schools with their) scholars were on the point of complete disappearance, when [199](#) Judge 'Abd-al-Wahhab [200](#) came to Egypt from Baghdad at the end of the fourth [tenth] century, because he was in need and had to seek a livelihood. The 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) caliphs proceeded [201](#) to honor him. They advertised his great qualifications, in order to be able to blame the 'Abbasids for driving out such a religious leader, and showed satisfaction with him. As a result, the Malikite school saw some flourishing in Egypt, until the extremist [202](#) Shi'ah 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) dynasty was wiped out by Salah-ad-din b. Ayyub. That meant the end of 'Alid jurisprudence in Egypt and the return of orthodox jurisprudence among the Egyptians. The jurisprudence of ash-Shafi'i and his 'Iraqi followers now flourished (in Egypt). It turned out to be in a better position than before, and was greatly cultivated. [203](#) The book of ar-Rafi'i [204](#) was imported from the 'Iraq into Syria and Egypt. Among famous Shaft'ites were Muhyi-ad-din an-Nawawi, one of the champions who had grown up in the shadow of the Ayyubid dynasty in Syria, further, 'Izz-ad-din b. 'Abd-as-Salam, [205](#) then, Ibn ar-Rafah [206](#) in Egypt, and Taqi-ad-din b. Daqiqal-'id. [207](#) After the latter two, there was Taqi-ad-din as-Subki. [208](#) Finally, (Shafi'ite leadership) was assumed by the present *Shaykh* of Islam in Egypt, Siraj-ad-din al-Bulqini. [209](#) He is the greatest Shafi'ite in Egypt today and, indeed, the greatest Egyptian religious scholar.

Malik's school was restricted to Maghribis and Spaniards, even though it was also found among other peoples. However, (Maghribis and Spaniards) very rarely follow other schools. (This situation is explained by the fact that) they mostly

traveled to the Hijaz. There, their journey ended. Medina, at that time, was the home of religious scholarship, which spread to the 'Iraq from there. The 'Iraq did not lie in the way of (the travels of the Maghribis and the Spaniards). Thus, they restricted themselves to studying with the scholars of Medina, that is, with Malik, the leading Medinese scholar at that time, as with his teachers before him and with his pupils after him. Thus, Maghribis and Spaniards (always) referred to (Malik) and became his adherents and nobody else's, as the methods of other (authorities) did not reach them. Furthermore, the desert attitude was predominant among Maghribis and Spaniards. They did not care for sedentary culture, such as existed among the 'Iraqis. Therefore, they were more inclined toward the Hijazis, because the Hijazis also had the desert attitude. Thus, the Malikite school among them always retained its simplicity and was not affected by the refinement and improvement of sedentary culture that took effect in other schools.

The school doctrine of each authority became, among his adherents, a scholarly discipline in its own right. They were no longer in a position to apply independent judgment and analogy. Therefore, they had to make reference to the established principles from the school doctrine of their authority, in order to be able to analyze problems in their context and disentangle them when they got confused. A firmly rooted habit was required to enable a person to undertake such analysis and disentanglement and to apply the school doctrine of his particular authority to those (processes) according to the best of his ability. This habit is (what is meant) at this time by the science of jurisprudence.

All Maghribis are adherents of Malik. His pupils were formerly spread over Egypt and the 'Iraq. In the 'Iraq, they were represented by Judge Ismail [210](#) and his contemporaries, such as Ibn Khuwazmandad, [211](#) Ibn al-Muntab, [212](#) Judge Abu Bakr al-Abhari, [213](#) Judge Abul-Hasan b. al-Qassar, [214](#) Judge 'Abd-al-Wahhab, [215](#) and their successors. In Egypt, there was Ibn al-Qasim, Ashhab, Ibn 'Abd-al-Hakam, al-Harith b. Miskin, and their contemporaries. Yahya b. Yahya alLaythi [216](#) traveled from Spain (to the East) and met Malik and transmitted the *Muwatta'* on his authority. He was an important pupil of Malik. Also, 'Abd-al-Malik b. Habib [217](#) traveled from Spain (to the East) and studied with Ibn al-Qasim and his contemporaries. He spread the school of Malik in Spain. He wrote a systematic work on it, in the *Kitab al-Wadihah*. A pupil of his, al-'Utbi, [218](#) wrote the *'Utbiyah*.

Asad b. al-Furat [219](#) traveled from Ifriqiyah (to the East) and studied first with the followers of Abu Hanifah, but then changed over to the school of Malik. He studied with Ibn al-Qasim all the chapters of jurisprudence and wrote down what he learned. He brought his book back to al-Qayrawan. It was called *al-Asadiyah*, after Asad b. al-Furat. Sahnun [220](#) studied it with Asad (himself). He, then, traveled to the East and met Ibn al-Qasim. He studied with him and confronted him with the problems of the *Asadiyah*. He reconsidered many of them, and Sahnun wrote down his own [221](#) problems in a systematic work, and stated which of the problems of the *Asadiyah* he had reconsidered. Ibn al-Qasim and he together wrote to Asad and asked him to delete from the *Asadiyah* the problems that had been reconsidered (by Ibn al-Qasim and Sahnun) and to accept the book of Sahnun. Asad, however, refused to do that. As a result, people disregarded Asad's book and followed the *Mudawwanah* of Sahnun, despite the fact that (in the *Mudawwanah*) different problems were (confusingly) lumped together in the various chapters. Therefore, the *Mudawwanah* was called *Mudawwanah-and-Mukhtalitah* (the "mixed up, confused one"). The inhabitants of al-Qayrawan concentrated upon the *Mudawwanah*, whereas the Spaniards concentrated upon the *Wadihah* and the *'Utbiyah*.

Ibn Abi Zayd, [222](#) then, made a compendium of the *Mudawwanah-and-Mukhtalitah* in a book entitled *al-Mukhtasar*. One of the jurists of al-Qayrawan, Abu Sa'id al-Baradhi'i, [223](#) also made a compendium of it in a book entitled *at-Tahdhib*. The *shaykhs* of Ifriqiyah used the *Tahdhib* as their textbook. They accepted it and disregarded all other works. In the same way, the Spaniards used the '*Utbiyah*' as their textbook and kept away from the *Wadihah* and other works.

Malikite scholars have never ceased writing commentaries, explanations, and synopses of these main works. The people of Ifriqiyah wrote a good deal on the *Mudawwanah*. Scholars such as Ibn Yunus, [224](#) al-Lakhmi, [225](#) Ibn Muhriz, [226](#) at-Tunisi, [227](#) Ibn Bashir, [228](#) and others, wrote on it. The Spaniards wrote a good deal on the '*Utbiyah*'. Scholars such as Ibn Rushd [229](#) and others wrote on it.

Ibn Abi Zayd collected all the problems, contradictions, and statements from the main works in the *Kitab anNawadir*. He dealt with all the stated opinions of the school and listed in detail in that book the contents of all the main works. Most of it was taken over by Ibn Yunus into his book on the *Mudawwanah*.

The Malikite school was very actively cultivated in the two countries (Spain and northwestern Africa), until the dynasties of Cordoba and al-Qayrawan were destroyed. Later on, the Maghribis held on to the (Malikite tradition of the) two (cities).

There [230](#) are three different schools within the Malikite school:

- (1) That of the Qayrawanians. Its founder was Sahnun, who studied with Ibn al-Qasim.
- (2) That of the Cordovans. Its founder was Ibn Habib, who studied with Malik, Mutarrif, [231](#) Ibn al-Mijishim, [232](#) and Asbagh. [233](#)
- (3) That of the 'Iraqis. Its founder was Judge Ismail and his companions.

Eventually, there appeared the book of Abu 'Amr b. alHajib, in which he summarized the various approaches of the Malikite (authorities) to every subject and enumerated their statements on every individual problem. Thus, his work came to be a kind of synopsis of the school.

The Malikite school had been in Egypt since the times of al-Harith b. Miskin, Ibn al-Muyassar, Ibn al-Lahib, Ibn Rashiq, and Ibn Shas. [245](#) *In Alexandria, it was cultivated by the 'Awf and Sanad families, and by Ibn 'Ata'llah.* [246](#) *I do not know from whom Abu 'Amr b. al-Hajib* [247](#) *got his knowledge of the Malikite school, but he lived after the destruction of the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) dynasty and the disappearance of 'Alid jurisprudence and after the orthodox Shafite and Malikite jurisprudence had reappeared (in Egypt).*

The Egyptian school followed that of the 'Iraqis. Judge 'Abd-al-Wahhab moved from Baghdad to Egypt at the end of the fourth [tenth] century, and the Egyptians studied with him. The Malikite school in Egypt had started with al-Harith b. Miskin, Ibn Muyassar, [234](#) Ibn al-Lahib, [235](#) and Ibn Rashiq. [236](#) It had remained under cover because of the appearance of the extremist Shi'ah and 'Alid jurisprudence. [237](#)

The 'Iraqi school was shunned by the inhabitants of al-Qayrawan and Spain, because it was far away, its ways of reaching conclusions were obscure, and they knew little about the sources that (the 'Iraqis) used. Scholars are (basically) men of independent judgment, even when (their opinion) stands apart (and does not agree

with the general opinion), and they do not blindly believe in tradition, nor do they like to use it as (their) method. Therefore, we find that the Maghribis and Spaniards do not accept the opinion of the 'Iraqis, whenever they cannot find a tradition of the imam Malik or one of his companions to support it.

Later on, the various schools merged with each other. In the sixth [twelfth] century, Abu Bakr at-Turtushi [238](#) traveled from Spain (to the East). He stopped and settled in Jerusalem. The Egyptians and Alexandrians studied with him and took over from him elements of the Spanish school into their own Egyptian school. One of his most important followers was the jurist Sanad, the author of the *Tiraz*, [239](#) and his companions. A number of people studied with them. They included the 'Awf family [240](#) and their followers. Abu 'Amr b. al-Hajib studied with them. He was followed by Shihab-ad-din alQarafi. [241](#) In this way, there was a continuity (of Maliki teaching) in those times.

The Shafi'ite school had also been destroyed in Egypt at the time of the 'Alid 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) [242](#) dynasty. Later on, the work of the Khurasanian Shafi'ite ar-Rafi'i [243](#) made its appearance with the jurists who renewed the Shafi'ite school. In Syria, one of the Shafi'ite champions, Muhyi-ad-din an-Nawawi, made his appearance.

Later on, the western school of Malikites also took over elements of the 'Iraqi school through ash-Shirimsihi. [244](#) He was outstanding in Alexandria as representative of the Western and Egyptian school. When the 'Abbasid al-Mustansir, the father of al-Musta' im and son of az-Zahir, built his college in Baghdad, he asked the 'Ubaydid(-Fatimid) caliphs, who at that time were in Cairo, to send him ash

Baghdad, (al-Mustansir) appointed him professor in the Mustansiriyyah College. He remained there until Hulagu took possession of Baghdad in 656 [1258]. He escaped the fury of the catastrophe and went free. He remained living there until he died in the days of Hulagu's son, Ahmad Abagha.

A compendium of the Egyptian school that had taken over elements of the Western school, was made, as we have mentioned, [248](#) in the *Mukhtasar* of Abu 'Amr b. al-Hajib, which mentions the different problems of every juridical subject and enumerates the various statements on each individual problem. Thus, it came to be a kind of synopsis of the school.

When his work reached the Maghrib at the end of the seventh [thirteenth] century, the majority of Maghribi students, and especially the inhabitants of Bougie, concentrated upon it. The chief teacher of the people of Bougie, Abu 'Ali Nasir-ad-din az-Zawawi, [249](#) had been the one who brought the work of Ibn al-Hajib to the Maghrib. He had studied with (Ibn al-Hajib's) followers in Egypt, had copied his *Mukhtasar*, and brought it (to the West). It spread among his pupils in the region of Bougie and was introduced by them into all the other cities of the Maghrib. Contemporary Maghribi students of jurisprudence use and study it, because of the interest the *shaykh* Nasir-ad-din is said to have aroused in it. A number of Maghribi *shaykhs*, such as Ibn 'Abd-as-Salim, Ibn Rashid, [250](#) and Ibn Harun, [251](#) commented on it.

All of them are *shaykhs* of Tunis. Their principal champion in this respect is Ibn 'Abd-as-Salam. In addition, they use the *Kitab at-TahdhIb* as textbook in their teaching.

"God guides whomever He wants to guide." [252](#)

The science of inheritance laws is the knowledge of estate division and the correct determination of the proper shares in an estate with regard to the relation of the individual shares to the basic divisions. It also includes (the knowledge of) the readjustment of shares (*munasakhah*). (Such readjustment) is necessary when one of the (original) heirs dies and his portion is to be distributed among his heirs. This requires a calculation to adjust the first division of the estate, so that all the heirs who are entitled to shares in the estate get (to know) their shares without an (actual) distribution (taking place[?]). Such readjustments may have to be undertaken more than once or twice. Thus, there may be a greater number of them. Every time, a (new) calculation is needed.

Also, the division of an estate may have to consider two possibilities, in that, for instance, one heir may acknowledge an(other) heir, while a (third) heir does not acknowledge (that second heir). Then, the division of the estate is adjusted (and figured out) according to the two possibilities, and the amount of the shares is considered. Then, the estate is divided among the heirs in shares proportionate to the basic fractions. [254](#) All this requires calculation. Therefore, jurists made of it a separate subject, because, in addition to jurisprudence, it requires calculation as the predominant element in it. They considered it a discipline in its own right.

Scholars have written many works on it. The most famous work on the subject among the more recent Spanish Malikites is the work of Ibn Thabit [255](#) and the *Mukhtasar* of Judge Abul-Qasim al-Hawfi, [256](#) and then (the one by) al-Ja'di. [257](#) Among the more recent Africans who wrote on the subject, there is Ibn al-Munammar at-Tarabulusi, [258](#) and others. [259](#)

The Shafi'ites, Hanafites, and Hanbalites have (also) written many works on the subject. They have given important and difficult practical instances showing their competence in jurisprudence and calculation. There is, especially, Abul-Ma'ali (Imam al-Haramayn) [260](#) and similar jurists.

This is a noble discipline. It combines intellectual and traditional knowledge. It figures the claims in inheritance matters in a sound and definite way, whenever those who are charged with the division of an estate do not know the portion (of the estate that should go to each heir) and have difficulties with it.

Religious scholars in the Muslim cities have paid much attention to it. Some authors are inclined to exaggerate the mathematical side of the discipline and to pose problems requiring for their solution various branches of arithmetic, such as algebra, the use of roots, and similar things. They fill their works with such matters. It is not something that is much used by the people, and it is of no practical use for them in their inheritance matters, because it deals with unusual and rare cases. However, it is useful for practice and offers the best opportunity for acquiring the proper habit, (which can then be) applied to actual cases.

Most of the scholars who are concerned with this discipline refer, in order to prove its excellence, to the following tradition, which is transmitted on the authority of Abu Hurayrah: "The *fard'id* (inheritance laws) constitute onethird of (religious) scholarship, and they are the first (discipline) to be forgotten." [261](#) Another recension has: "Onehalf of (religious) scholarship." The tradition was published by the *hadIth* expert Abu Nu'aym. [262](#) People who are concerned with inheritance laws use it as an argument (in favor of the importance of their science), because they think that

fard'īd in the tradition quoted refers to estate division (*furud*). However, it is obvious that such an interpretation is farfetched. *Fard'īd* here is intended to mean "obligations" (*furud*) imposed upon Muslims in connection with religious worship, customs, matters of inheritance, and other things. If understood in this sense, it is correct to state that (the *fard'īd*) constitute one-half or one-third of scholarship. The inheritance laws (by themselves) constitute a much lesser portion of religious scholarship as a whole.

This interpretation of the meaning of *fard'īd* in the tradition quoted, is supported by the fact that the application of the word *fard'īd* to a particular discipline, or its restriction to estate division, is part of the technical terminology the jurists created when the various disciplines and terminologies came into existence. At the beginning of Islam, the word (*fard'īd*) was used only in a general way. It was derived from *fard*, which means "to determine" or "to cut." [262a](#) It was intended to be used for all the *furud* "obligations," as we have stated. Such was its actual use in the religious law.

(In interpreting the tradition quoted,) the word must not be taken to mean anything but what it meant at the time of the (early Muslims). That indicates most correctly what they meant by it.

And God knows better.

13. *The science of the principles of jurisprudence and its subdivisions, dialectics and controversial questions.* [263](#)

It should be known that the science of the principles of jurisprudence is one of the greatest, most important, and most useful disciplines of the religious law. It is concerned with the evidence of the religious law from which the laws and legal obligations of the Muslims are derived.

The basic sources of legal evidence are the Book -that is, the Qur'an - and, then, the Sunnah, which clarifies the Qur'an. At the time of the Prophet, the laws were received (directly) from him. He possessed the Qur'anic revelation, and he explained it directly by his words and deeds. No transmission, speculation, or analogical reasoning was needed. After the Prophet's death, direct (explanation of the Qur'an's legal significance) was no longer possible. The Qur'an was preserved through a general and continuous transmission. As to the Sunnah, the men around Muhammad all agreed that it is necessary for us to act in accordance with whatever of it has reached us, as statement or practice, through a sound tradition that can be assumed to be truthful. It is in this sense that legal evidence is determined by Qur'an and Sunnah.

Then, general consensus (*ijma'*) took its place next to (Qur'an and Sunnah). The men around Muhammad agreed to disapprove of those who held opinions different from theirs. They would not have done that without some basis for doing so, because people like the men around Muhammad do not agree upon something without a valid argument. In addition, the evidence attests the infallibility of the whole group. Thus, general consensus became a valid proof in legal matters.

Then, we looked into the methods according to which the men around Muhammad and the early generations made their deductions from Qur'an and Sunnah. It was found that they compared similar (cases) and drew conclusions from analogy, in that they either all agreed or some of them made concessions in this connection to others. Many of the things that happened after the Prophet are not included in the established texts [264](#) Therefore, they compared and combined them with the established indications that are found in the texts, (and drew their conclusions from analogy) according to certain rules that governed their combinations. This assured the soundness of their comparison of two similar (cases), so that it could be assumed that one and the same divine law covered both cases. This became (another kind of) legal evidence, because the (early Muslims) all agreed upon it. This is analogy (*qiyas*), the fourth kind of evidence.

The great mass of religious scholars is agreed that these are the four basic kinds of evidence. Some scholars differed on the matters of general consensus and analogy. But this is exceptional. Others added further kinds of evidence to the four. [265](#) We do not have to mention them here, because the basis (upon which they rest) is weak, and they are rarely referred to.

The first task of this discipline is to study the (right of) existence of the four kinds of evidence.

(1) Proofs for the Qur'an are the decisively miraculous, (inimitable) character of its text, and the general continuity of its transmission. This leaves no room for

any doubt.

(2) The Sunnah, as it has been transmitted to us, is justified [266](#) by the general consensus (to the effect) that Muslims must act in accordance with traditions that are sound, as we have mentioned before. This is supported by Muhammad's practice, during his lifetime, of sending letters and messengers to the various regions with legal and religious commands and prohibitions.

(3) The general consensus is justified by the fact that the men around Muhammad had agreed to disapprove of those who held opinions different from theirs. In addition, there is the established infallibility of the Muslim nation (as a whole).

(4) Analogy is justified by the general consensus of the men around Muhammad concerning its (admissibility), as we have mentioned before.

These are the basic kinds of evidence.

The transmitted traditions of the Sunnah need verification through an investigation of the ways of transmission and the probity (*'adalah*) of transmitters, so that the likelihood of the truthfulness of the transmitted information, which is the basis for the necessity to act in accordance with it, becomes clear. This also is one of the basic subjects of the discipline. Added to this is the knowledge of abrogating and abrogated traditions, when two traditions are mutually contradictory and the earlier one of the two is sought. [267](#) This, too, is another subject of the discipline.

After that, there comes the study of the meaning of words. This is because one depends upon knowledge of the conventional meanings of single or composite utterances, for deriving ideas in general from word combinations in general. The philological norms needed in this connection are found in the sciences of grammar, inflection, and syntax and style. [268](#) Now, when speech was a habit of those who used it, these (linguistic matters) were neither sciences nor norms. At that time, jurists did not need them, because linguistic matters were familiar to them by natural habit. But when the habit of the Arabic language was lost, [269](#) the experts who made it their specialty determined it once and for all with the help of a sound tradition and of sound rules of analogy they evolved. (Linguistic matters,) thus, became sciences the jurists had to know, in order to know the divine laws. Then, there is certain other, special information to be derived from word combinations. One must derive what constitutes law, among the various ideas, from special indications in word combinations that have a bearing upon law. This is jurisprudence. [270](#) Knowledge of the conventional meanings in general is not sufficient for that. A knowledge of certain other things on which that special information depends, is needed. The laws can be derived from (those things) in accordance with the principles evolved by expert scholars in the religious disciplines, who established those things as norms for the purpose. Among such norms, for instance, are:

The word meaning is not established by analogy [271](#)

A word of two meanings cannot be used to mean both things at the same time.

The use of *wa- "and"* does not imply an order (in time, or classification). [272](#)

If certain special particulars are taken out of some general (term), does it remain proof for the rest?

Does a command imply necessary or voluntary (action), [273](#) immediate or delayed (action)? Does a prohibition imply corruption or soundness (in an action)?

Is something general applicable to something circumscribed?

Is a text indicating the *ratio legis* [274](#) sufficient or not for extension (of a rule to other cases)?

There are other such things. All of them are basic in this discipline, but since they are semantic problems, they have to do with philology.

Next, the study of analogy is a very important basis of this discipline. It helps to ascertain the correctness of both principal and special aspects of laws depending on reasoning and analogy; to examine the particular characteristic of a case on which the law is considered probably to depend, as to whether it (exists) in the principle; and to find out whether that characteristic exists in the special case without anything contradicting (it), which would make it impossible to base the law upon it. There are other problems that belong together with this one. All of them are basic in this discipline.

It should be known that this discipline is of recent origin in Islam. The early Muslims could dispense with it. Nothing more than the linguistic habit they possessed was needed for deriving ideas from words. The (early Muslims themselves also) were the source for most of the norms needed in special cases for deriving laws. They had no need to study the chains of transmitters, because they were close to the (transmitters) in time and had personal knowledge and experience of them. Then the early Muslims died, and the first period of Islam was over. All the sciences became technical, as we established earlier. [275](#) Jurists and religious scholars of independent judgment now had to acquire these norms and basic rules, in order to be able to derive the laws from the evidence. They wrote them down as a discipline in its own right and called it "principles of jurisprudence." The first scholar to write on the subject was ash-Shafi'i. He dictated his famous *Risalah* on the subject. In it, he discussed commands and prohibitions, syntax and style, traditions, abrogations, and the position of *ratio legis* indicated in a text in relation to analogy. [276](#)

Later on, Hanafite jurists wrote on the subject. They verified the basic rules and discussed them extensively. The speculative theologians also wrote on the subject. However, treatment by jurists is more germane to jurisprudence and more suited for (practical application to) special cases, (than treatment of the subject by speculative theologians), because (juridical works) mention many examples and cases and base their problems on legal points. The theologians, on the other hand, present these problems in their bare outlines, without reference to jurisprudence, and are inclined to use (abstract) logical deduction as much as possible, since that is their scholarly approach and required by their method.

Hanafite jurists were especially accomplished in extensive use of legal points and in derivation of the norms from the (actual) problems of jurisprudence, as far as possible. One of their leading scholars, Abu Zayd ad-Dabusi, [277](#) wrote more widely on analogical reasoning than any other (Hanafite). He completed the research methods and conditions governing this discipline. Thus, the technique of the principles of jurisprudence was perfected. The problems were refined and the basic rules were laid down.

Scholars also occupied themselves with the methods of speculative theologians in connection with this discipline. The best books written by theologians on this subject were the *Kitab al-Burhan*, by the Imam al-Haramayn, and the *Mustasfa*, by al-Ghazzali. Both authors were Ash'arites. There were two more books, the *Kitab al-'Umad* by 'Abd-alJabbar, [278](#) and the commentary on it, entitled *al-Mu'tamad*, by Abul-Husayn al-Basri. [279](#) Both authors were Mu'tazilah. These four books were the basic works and pillars of this discipline. They were later on

abridged by two excellent recent theologians, the imam Fakhr-ad-din Ibn al-Khatib, in the *Kitab al-Mahsul*,²⁸⁰ and Sayf-ad-din al-Amidi, in the *Kitab al-Ihkam*.²⁸¹ Their approaches to the discipline differed in (the degree of emphasis they placed upon) verification and argumentation. Ibn al-Khatib was more inclined to present many proofs and arguments, while al-Amidi was eager to verify the views of the schools and to present the problems in detail.

The *Kitab al-Mahsul* was abridged by such pupils of the imam (Fakhr-ad-din) as Siraj-ad-din al-Urmawi,²⁸² in the *Kitab at-Tahsil*, and Taj-ad-din al-Urmawi,²⁸³ in the *Kitab al-Hasil*. Shihab-ad-din al-Qarafi²⁸⁴ selected certain propositions and basic points from these works in a small book which he entitled *at-Tanqihat*. The same was done by alBaydawi in the *Kitab al-Minhaj*.²⁸⁵ Beginners occupied themselves with these two books, and many people wrote commentaries on them.

The *Kitab al-Ihkam* by al-Amidi is more concerned with verifying the problems. It was abridged by Abu 'Amr b. al-Hajib, in the work of his known as the large *Mukhtasar*.

Ibn al-Hajib then made another compendium of it, which is used by students.²⁸⁶ People both in the East and the West studied it and wrote commentaries on it. These compendia represent at its best the approach of the theologians to this discipline.

The Hanafites have written a great deal on their approach (to the discipline). The best writings on it by an early scholar are the works of Abu Zayd ad-Dabusi. The best works on it by a recent scholar are those by Sayf-al-Islam al-Bazdawi,²⁸⁷ a leading Hanafite. They exhaust the subject. Later on, the Hanafite jurist Ibn as-Sa'ati²⁸⁸ combined the approaches of the *Kitab al-Ihkam* and the work of al-Bazdawi in a book entitled *Kitab al-Badi'*. The *Kitab al-Badi'* turned out to be a very well-written and original work. Leading contemporary religious scholars use it for teaching and research. Many non-Arab scholars have been eager to write commentaries on it, and the situation is (still) the same at the present time.

The (foregoing remarks) have explained the real meaning of this discipline, described the subjects with which it deals, and enumerated the works on it known at the present time.

May God let us profit from scholarship and make us scholars through His kindness and generosity.

The controversial questions ²⁸⁹

It should be known that the jurisprudence described, which is based upon religious evidence, involves many differences of opinion among scholars of independent judgment. Differences of opinion result from the different sources they use and their different outlooks, and are unavoidable, as we have stated before.²⁹⁰

(These differences) occupied a very large space in Islam. (Originally,) people could adhere to any (juridical authority) they wished. Later on, the matter was in the hands of the four leading authorities in the Muslim cities. They enjoyed a very high prestige. Adherence was restricted to them, and people were thus prevented from adhering to anyone else. This situation was the result of the disappearance of independent judgment, because (the exercise of independent judgment) was too difficult a matter and because, in the course of time, the scholarly disciplines

constituting material for independent judgment had multiplied. Also, there existed nobody who might have organized a school in addition to the existing four. Thus, they were set up as the basic schools of Islam.

Differences of opinion among their adherents and the followers of their laws received equal status with differences of opinion concerning religious texts and legal principles (in general). The adherents of the four schools held disputations, in order to prove the correctness of their respective founders. These disputations took place according to sound principles and fast rules. Everyone argued in favor of the correctness of the school to which he adhered and which he followed. The disputations concerned all the problems of religious law and every subject of jurisprudence. The difference of opinion was on occasion between ash-Shafi'i and Malik, with Abu Hanifah agreeing with one of them. Or it was between Malik and Abu Hanifah, with ash-Shafi'i agreeing with one of them. Or it was between ash-Shafi'i and Abu Hanifah, with Malik agreeing with one of them. The disputations clarified the sources of the authorities as well as the motives of their differences and the occasions when they exercised independent judgment.

This kind of scholarship was called "controversial questions." The persons who cultivate it must know the basic rules through which laws can be evolved, just as they are known to scholars of independent judgment. However, the latter need those basic rules in order to find the law, while the former need them in order to guard the legal problems that have been evolved against destruction by the arguments of an opponent. It is, indeed, a very useful discipline. It affords acquaintance with the sources and evidence of the authorities, and gives students practice in arguing whatever they wish to prove. Works by Hanafites and Shafi'ites are more numerous on the subject than those by Malikites. As one knows, analogy is for the Hanafites a principle on which many details of their school depend. Therefore, they are the people who speculate and investigate. The Malikites, on the other hand, mostly rely on tradition. They do not speculate. Furthermore, most of them are Maghribis who are Bedouins, who care only a little for the crafts.²⁹¹

There are the following works on the subject: the *Kitab al-Ma'akhidh* ²⁹² by al-Ghazzali, the *Kitab at-Talkhis* by the Malikite Abu Bakr b. al-'Arabi, ²⁹³ who imported (the subject) from the East, the *Kitab at-Ta'liqah* by Abu Zayd adDabusi, and the 'Uyun al-adillah by the Malikite shaykh Ibn al-Qassar. ²⁹⁴ In his *Mukhtasar* on the principles of jurisprudence, Ibn as-Sa'ati has collected all the controversial law that is based on the principles of jurisprudence. ²⁹⁵ In connection with every problem, he noted the controversial questions that are based on it.

Dialectics

"Dialectics" involves knowledge of the proper behavior in disputations among the adherents of the legal schools and others. The choices of rejection and acceptance in disputations are numerous. In arguing and answering, each disputant lets himself go in his argumentation. Some of it is correct.

Some of it is wrong. Therefore, the authorities had to lay down the proper rules of behavior by which the disputants would have to abide. These concern rejection and acceptance; how the person advancing an argument should behave and how the person replying to the argument should behave; when it is permissible for a disputant to advance an argument; how he (should admit) defeat ²⁹⁶ and stop; when he should interrupt or contradict (his opponent); and where he should be silent and permit his opponent to talk and advance his arguments. It has, therefore, been said

that this discipline is the knowledge of the basic rules of proper behavior in arguing, which help either to safeguard an opinion or to demolish it, whether that opinion concerns jurisprudence or any other subject.

There are two methods. There is the method of alBazdawi, which is limited to the evidence of the religious law from texts, general consensus, and argumentation.²⁹⁷ And there is the method of al-'Amidi ²⁹⁸ which applies quite generally to every argument used in argumentation, no matter to which scholarly discipline it belongs.

Most of the (subject) is concerned with argumentation. It is a good procedure, but, by its very nature, it contains much sophistry. If it is considered under the aspect of logic, it is, as a rule, quite similar to sophistical reasoning. However, the (correct) forms of arguments and syllogisms are carefully observed in it, in that the methods of argumentation in this respect are chosen as it is proper.

The 'Amidi just mentioned was the first to write on his method.²⁹⁹ Therefore, its (invention) was ascribed to him, He wrote a brief book, entitled *al-Irshad*. Later on, he was followed by such recent scholars as an-Nasafi ³⁰⁰ and others who walked in his steps and followed the way he had shown. Many works were written on the method. At this time, no regard is paid to it, because scholarship and scientific instruction have dwindled in the Muslim cities. It is, after all, a luxury, and not a necessity.

"God has the power to execute His commands."³⁰¹

14. *The science of speculative theology.*

This is a science that involves arguing with logical proofs in defense of the articles of faith and refuting innovators who deviate in their dogmas from the early Muslims and Muslim orthodoxy.

The real core of the articles of faith is the oneness of God.

Therefore, we shall present here, first, a nice specimen of logical argumentation that will show us the oneness of God in the most direct method and manner. We shall then go back and give a correct description of speculative theology and the (subjects) it studies. We shall also indicate the reason why it developed in Islam and what it was that called for its invention.

We [302](#) say: It should be known that the things that come into being in the world of existing things, whether they belong to essences or to either human or animal actions, require appropriate causes which are prior to (their coming into being). They introduce the things that come into being into the realm dominated by custom, and effect their coming into being. Each one of these causes, in turn, comes into being and, thus, requires other causes. Causes continue to follow upon causes in an ascending order, until they reach the Causers of causes, Him who brings them into existence and creates them, Praised be He, there is no God but Him.

In the process, the causes multiply and widen in extent vertically and horizontally. The intellect becomes confused in the attempt to perceive and enumerate them. Only a comprehensive knowledge can encompass them all, especially (all) human and animal actions. Among the causes of (action), there evidently belong the various kinds of intention and volition, since no action can materialize except through volition and intention: The various kinds of intention and volition are matters pertaining to the soul. As a rule, they originate from previous consecutive perceptions (*tasawwurat*). These perceptions cause the intention to act. The causes of such perceptions are, again, other perceptions. Now, the cause of all the perceptions taking place in the soul is unknown, since no one is able to know the beginnings or order of matters pertaining to the soul. They are consecutive notions that God puts into the mind of man, who is unable to understand their beginnings and ends. As a rule, man is able only to comprehend the causes that are natural and obvious and that present themselves to our perception in an orderly and well-arranged manner, because nature is encompassed by the soul and on a lower level than it. The range of perceptions, however, is too large for the soul, because they belong to the intellect, which is on a higher level than the soul. The soul, therefore, can scarcely perceive very many of them, let alone all of them. This shows the wisdom of the Lawgiver (Muhammad) when he forbade (us) to speculate about causes and to stop with them. Such speculation is a field in which the mind becomes lost and gets nowhere, nor gains any real insight. [303](#) "Say: 'God,' and then let them amuse themselves with their idle talk." [304](#) Man often stops (to speculate about causes) and thereby is prevented from ascending to the next higher stage. His feet slip. He becomes one of those who go astray and perish. We ask God for protection against disappointment and obvious perdition.

One should not think that iman has the power, or can choose at will, to stop

or to retrace his steps. No! Talking about causes results in giving the soul a fast coloring. We do not know how (this comes about), for if we knew it, we could be on guard against it. Therefore, one must be on guard against it by completely abandoning any speculation about the (causes).

Furthermore, the way in which the causes exercise their influence upon the majority of the things caused is unknown.³⁰⁵ They are only known through customary (experience) and through conclusions³⁰⁶ which attest to (the existence of an) apparent (causal) relationship.³⁰⁷ What that influence really is and how it takes place is not known. "And you were given but little knowledge."³⁰⁸ Therefore, we have been commanded completely to abandon and suppress any speculation about them and to direct ourselves to the Causer of all causes, who made them and brought them into existence, so that the soul will be firmly colored with the oneness of God. So were we taught by the Lawgiver (Muhammad) who knows better (than we do) the things that are to the interest of our religion and the ways that lead us to happiness, because he saw that which is beyond sensual perception. He said: "Whoever dies confessing that there is no God but God, enters Paradise."³⁰⁹

A man who stops at the causes is frustrated. He is rightly (said to be) an unbeliever. If he ventures to swim in the ocean of speculation and of research into (causes), (seeking) each one of the causes that cause them and the influence they exercise, I can guarantee him that he will return unsuccessful. Therefore, we were forbidden by the Lawgiver (Muhammad) to study causes. We were commanded to recognize the absolute oneness of God. "Say: 'God, He is one. God is the *samad*. He did not give birth, and He was not born. He has no one like Him.'"³¹⁰

Man³¹¹ should not trust the suggestion that his mind makes, that it is able to comprehend all existing things and their causes, and to know all the details of existence. Such a suggestion of the mind should be dismissed as stupid. It should be known that every person with perception has the superficial impression that the (whole of) existence is comprised by his perceptions, and that it does not extend beyond (the realm of his perceptions).³¹² The matter is different in fact. The truth lies beyond that. One knows that a deaf person feels that the (whole of) existence is comprised in the perceptions of his four senses and his intellect. The whole group of audible things constitutes no part of existence for him. The same applies to a blind person. The whole group of visible things constitutes no part of existence for him. If (people with such defects) were not set right by their adherence to information they receive from their fathers and teachers who are their contemporaries, and from the majority of people in general, they would not admit (the existence of audible things, things visible, etc.). They follow the majority in admitting the existence of these groups (of *sensibilia*), but (the admission) is not in their natural disposition nor in the nature of their sense perception. If dumb animals were asked and could speak, we would find that they would ignore the whole group of *intelligibilia*. It would simply not exist for them.

Now, it might be assumed that there exists another kind of perception different from ours, since our sense perceptions are created and brought into existence. God's creation extends beyond the creation of man. Complete knowledge does not exist (in man). The world of existence is too vast for him. "God has comprehension beyond theirs."³¹³ Therefore, everyone should be suspicious of the comprehensiveness of his perceptions and the results of his perception, and should follow what the Lawgiver (Muhammad) commanded him to believe and to do.. He is more desirous of his happiness (than man himself) and he knows better what is good for him. His level (of perception) is higher than that of human perception. The

territory he covers (in his mind) is wider than that of human intelligence. This does not speak against the intellect and intellectual perceptions. The intellect, indeed, is a correct scale. Its indications are completely certain and in no way wrong. However, the intellect should not be used to weigh such matters as the oneness of God, the other world, the truth of prophecy, the real character of the divine attributes, or anything else that lies beyond the level of the intellect. That would mean to desire the impossible. One might compare it with a man who sees a scale in which gold is being weighed, and wants to weigh mountains in it. The (fact that this is impossible) does not prove that the indications of the scale are not true (when it is used for its proper purpose). However, there is a limit at which the intellect must stop. It cannot go beyond its own level. Thus, it cannot comprehend God and His attributes. It is but one of the atoms of the world of existence which results from (God). This shows that those who give the intellect preference over (traditional) information in such matters are wrong, deficient in understanding, and faulty in reasoning. This, then, explains the true situation in this respect.

If this is clear, it is possible that the ascending sequence of causes reaches the point where it transcends the realm of human perception and existence and thus ceases to be perceivable. The intellect would here become lost, confused, and cut off in the wilderness of conjectures. Thus, (recognition of the) oneness of God is identical with inability to perceive the causes and the ways in which they exercise their influence, and with reliance in this respect upon the Creator of the causes who comprises them. There is no maker but Him. All (causes) lead up to Him and go back to His power. We know about Him only in as much as we have issued from Him. This is the meaning of the statement transmitted on the authority of a certain truthful (person): "The inability to perceive is perception." [314](#)

Such (declaration of the) oneness of God does not merely refer to faith, which is affirmation based upon judgment. It belongs to the talk of the soul.[315](#) Its perfection lies in its acquisition in a form that becomes an attribute of the soul. In the same way, the object of (all human) actions and divine worship is acquisition of the habit of obedience and submissiveness and the freeing of the heart from all preoccupations save the worshiped Master, until the novice on the path to God becomes a holy person.

The difference between "state" [316](#) and knowledge in questions of dogma is the same as that between talking (about attributes) and having them. This may be explained as follows: Many people know that mercy to the orphans and the poor brings (a human being) close to God and is recommendable. They say so and acknowledge the fact.

They quote the sources for it from the religious law. But if they were to see an orphan or a poor person of the destitute classes,[317](#) they would run away from him and disdain to touch him, let alone show mercy to him or any of the higher "stations" [318](#) of sympathy, affection, and charity. Their mercy for the orphan was the result of having reached the station of knowledge. It was not the result of the station of "state" nor of an attribute of theirs. Now, there are people who, in addition to the station of knowledge and the realization of the fact that mercy to the poor brings (a human being) close to God, have attained another, higher "station": they have attained the attribute and habit of mercy. When they see an orphan or a poor person, they approach him and show him (mercy). They wish to receive the (heavenly) reward for the compassion they show him. They are hardly able to refrain from (showing compassion), even if they are repulsed. They give as charity whatever they have available from their own property.

The relationship of man's knowledge of the oneness of God to his possession

of it as an attribute, is of the same character. Knowledge results by necessity from possession of an attribute. It is a kind of knowledge that exists on a more solid basis than knowledge attained previous to the possession of the attribute. An attribute (on the other hand) is not obtained from knowledge alone. There must be an action, and it must be repeated innumerable times. (Only) this results in a firmly rooted habit, in the acquisition of the attribute and real (knowledge). Another kind of knowledge thus makes its appearance. It is the kind that is useful in the other world. The original knowledge which was devoid of being an attribute is of little advantage or use. It is the (kind of) knowledge that the majority of thinkers (possesses). But the (real) object is knowledge as a "state," and it originates from divine worship.

It should be known that, in the opinion of the Lawgiver (Muhammad), perfection with regard to any of the obligations he has imposed (upon Muslims) requires this (distinction). Perfection in matters of belief depends on the other knowledge, that which results from the possession of (these matters) as an attribute. Perfection in matters of divine worship depends on acquisition of (these matters) as an attribute, on real (knowledge) of them.

Divine worship and its continuous practice leads to this noble result. Muhammad says concerning the principal act of divine worship: "My consolation lies in prayer." [319](#) Prayer, for Muhammad, was an attribute and "state" in which he found his ultimate pleasure and consolation. How different is the prayer of the people! Who could bring them to pray in that way! "Woe unto those who pray, who are careless with regard to their prayer." [320](#) O God, give us success. "And guide us on the straight path, the path of those to whom you have shown kindness, not of those with whom you are angry, and not of those who go astray." [321](#) Amen.

It [322](#) is clear from all the statements we have made that the object of all (religious) obligations is the acquisition of a habit firmly rooted in the soul, from which a necessary knowledge results for the soul. It is the (recognition of the) oneness of God, which is the (principal) article of faith and the thing through which happiness is attained. There is no difference whether the obligations of the heart or those of the body are concerned in this respect.

This shows that faith, which is the basis and source of all the (religious) obligations, is of that type and has several degrees. The first degree is the affirmation by the heart of what the tongue says. The highest degree is the acquisition, from the belief of the heart and the resulting actions, of a quality that has complete control over the heart. It commands the actions of the limbs. Every activity takes place in submissiveness to it. Thus, all actions, eventually, become subservient to this affirmation by faith, and this is the highest degree of faith. It is perfect faith. The believer who has it will commit neither a great nor a small sin. The acquisition of the firmly rooted habit (of faith) prevents even the briefest deviation from its ways. Thus, Muhammad says: "An adulterer does not commit adultery, if he commits adultery while he is a believer." [323](#)

Then, there is the tradition of Heraclius, who asked Abu Sufyan b. Harb about the Prophet and his position. He asked whether any of the men around Muhammad would become an apostate, out of displeasure with his religion, after he had become a Muslim. [324](#) The reply was: "No." (Heraclius) remarked: "The same applies to faith when its cheerfulness has penetrated the hearts." [325](#) This means that it is as difficult for the soul to oppose the habit of faith, once it has been firmly established, as is the case with all other habits, once they have become firmly established. For they become a kind of natural disposition. This is the highest degree of faith. It comes second after infallibility, because infallibility is a primary necessity

of prophets, while this (degree of faith) comes to the believers secondarily, as a result of their actions and of their affirmation.

The (varying) firmness of this habit causes differences in faith, as is known from the statements of the early Muslims. Much of it can be found in the chapter headings of alBukhari's chapter on faith. For instance: "Faith consists of words and actions"; "it may be more or less"; "prayer and fasting are part of faith"; "supererogatory (prayer) in Ramadan is part of faith"; and "bashfulness is part of the faith."³²⁶ All these statements envisage perfect faith. We have referred to it and to how the habit of it can be attained. Perfect faith is something connected with action.

Affirmation, the first degree of perfect faith, admits of no differences (in intensity). Those who consider the first (meanings) of terms and thus think of (faith) as affirmation cannot show any differences (in the intensity of their affirmation), as the leading speculative theologians have stated. But those who consider the final (meanings) of terms and thus think of (faith) as the habit that is perfect faith, do show differences (in the intensity of their faith). This does not speak against the unity of the primary reality of (perfect faith), which is affirmation, since affirmation exists in all degrees of (faith). It is the lowest degree for which the term "faith" may be used. It absolves (the person who has it) from the responsibility of disbelief and is the distinguishing element between unbeliever and believer. Anything less would not be sufficient. Thus, by definition, it is a reality that is uniform and admits of no differences. Differences appear only in the "state" that is the result of action, as we have stated. This should be understood.

It should be known that the Lawgiver (Muhammad) described to us this first degree of faith which is affirmation. He specified particular matters he charged us to affirm with our hearts and to believe in our souls, while at the same time acknowledging them with our tongues. They are the established articles of the Muslim faith. When Muhammad was asked about faith, he said: "(Faith is) the belief in God, His angels, His Scriptures, His messengers, the Last Day, and the belief in predestination, be it good or bad."³²⁷

These are articles of faith as established in the science of speculative theology. Let us describe them in summary fashion, so that the real character of speculative theology and the way in which it originated may become clear. We say:

It should be known that the Lawgiver (Muhammad) commanded us to believe in the Creator whom he considered as the sole source of all actions,³²⁸ as we have mentioned before. He informed us that this belief means our salvation, if we have it when we die. However, he did not inform us about the real being of this worshiped Creator, because it is something too difficult for our perception and above our level. He made it our first obligation to believe that He in His essence cannot be compared with created beings. Otherwise, it would not be correct that He was their creator, since in this way there would be no distinction (between Him and them).

Then, he (made it our obligation to believe that) He cannot be described in any way as deficient. Otherwise, He would be similar to created beings. Then, he (made it our obligation to believe in) His oneness as divine being.³²⁹ Otherwise, the creation (of the world) could not have materialized, on account of mutual antagonism.³³⁰ Then, there are the following articles of faith:

God is knowing and powerful. In this way, (all) actions materialize as witness(es), by syllogism,³³¹ to the perfection of the act of creation.

He has volition. Otherwise, no created thing would be differentiated from the other.

He determines the fate of each created thing. Otherwise, volition would be something that comes into being.

He causes our resurrection [332](#) after death. This constitutes the final touch to His concern with the first [333](#) creation. If (created things) were destined to disappear completely, [334](#) their creation would have been frivolous. They are destined for eternal existence after death. [335](#)

Further articles of faith are: God sent (His) messengers in order to save (us) from trouble on the (Day of) Resurrection, because (that Day) may mean either trouble or happiness (for us), and we would not know about it. He wanted to complete His kindness toward us by informing us about this situation and explaining to us the two possibilities and that Paradise means bliss and Hell punishment.

These main articles of faith are proven by the logical evidence that exists for them. Evidence for them from Qur'an and Sunnah (also) is ample. The early Muslims derived them from that evidence. The scholars showed the way to them and the religious leaders verified them. However, later on, there occurred differences of opinion concerning details of these articles of faith. Most of the differences concerned ambiguous [336](#) verses. This led to hostility and disputation. Logical argumentation was used in addition to the traditional (material). In this way, the science of speculative theology originated.

We shall now explain the (preceding) summary statement in detail. In many verses of the Qur'an, the worshiped Master is described as being absolutely devoid (of human attributes) in obvious terms requiring no interpretation. All those verses are negative (in their statements). They are clear on the subject. It is necessary to believe them. Statements of the Lawgiver (Muhammad) and the men around him and the men of the second generation have explained them in accordance with their plain meaning.

Then, there are a few other verses in the Qur'an suggesting anthropomorphism, with reference to either the essence or the attributes (of God). The early Muslims gave preference to the evidence for God's freedom (from human attributes), because it was ample and clear. They knew that anthropomorphism is absurd. They decided that (those) verses were the word of God, and, therefore, believed in them and did not try to investigate or interpret their meaning. This is what is meant by the statement made by most early Muslims: "Let them pass on as they have come." [337](#) That is, believe that they are from God, and do not try to interpret or change them; they may be a temptation. It is, thus, necessary to stop [338](#) and submit to (God).

But there were a few innovators in their time who occupied themselves with the ambiguous verses and [339](#) delved into anthropomorphism. One group operated with the plain meaning of the relevant verses. They assumed anthropomorphism for God's essence, in that they believed that He has hands, feet, and a face. Thus, they adopted a clear anthropomorphism and were in opposition to the verses stating that God is devoid (of human attributes).

The idea of body entails deficiency and imperfection. It is more proper to give preference to the negative verses indicating that God is absolutely devoid (of human attributes), which are very numerous and clear, than to cling to the plain meaning of the (anthropomorphic) verses with which we can dispense, and to try to combine the two indications with the help of interpretation of (the anthropomorphic verses). The (people who gave consideration to the anthropomorphic verses) then tried to escape from the anthropomorphic abomination by stating that (God has) "a body unlike (ordinary human) bodies." This is no defense for them, because it is a

statement contradictory in itself and a combination of negation and assertion, if both (negation and assertion) are used here for one and the same concept of body. But if the two differ among themselves [340](#) and (thus) disavow the commonly accepted concept of body, those (people) rather agree with us that God is devoid (of human attributes). They consider the word "body" to be merely one of His names (used in a peculiar sense in connection with Him). Things like that depend on permission. [341](#)

Another group turned to anthropomorphism with regard to the attributes of God. They assumed direction, sitting, [342](#) descending, voice, letter (sound), and similar things (for God). Their stated opinions imply anthropomorphism. Like the former group, they took refuge in statements such as: "A voice unlike voices"; "a direction unlike directions"; "descending unlike descending." By that, they meant: "(not as those things are used) in connection with (human) bodies." The refutation here is the same as in the former case.

The only thing that remains to be done with the plain (seemingly anthropomorphic) statements is (to follow) the beliefs and theories expressed by the early Muslims. One must believe in the (statements) as they stand, so that it cannot happen that by disavowing their meaning, one disavows them as such, although they are a sound and established part of the Qur'an.

That is what is behind the statements found in the creed of the *Risalah* of Ibn Abi Zayd [343](#) and in his *Mukhtasar* and in the books of the *hadith* expert Ibn 'Abd-al-Barr, [344](#) and others. They try to convey the idea mentioned. One should not close one's eyes to the propositions in their discussion that prove it.

Later on, the sciences and crafts increased. People were eager to write systematic works and to do research in all fields. The speculative theologians wrote on God's freedom (from human attributes). At that juncture, the Mu'tazilah innovation came into being. The Mu'tazilah extended the subject to the negative verses and decided to deny (God's possession of) the ideal attributes [345](#) of knowledge, power, volition, and life, in addition to (denying) their consequences. Their use (in connection with God) would imply, in (Mu'tazilah) opinion, a manifoldness of things primeval. [346](#) This (assumption) is refuted by the (assumption) that the attributes are neither identical with the (divine) essence nor different from it.

The [347](#) Mu'tazilah further decided to deny (God's possession) of the attribute of volition. This forced them to deny predestination, because predestination requires the existence of volition prior to the created things.

They also decided to deny God hearing and vision, because both hearing and vision are corporeal accidents. This (assumption) is refuted by the (assumption) that the meaning of the words (hearing and vision) does not require (the existence of) corporeal shape, but merely the perception of audible or visible things. [348](#)

They further decided to deny God speech for reasons similar to those (they used) in connection with hearing and vision. They did not understand the attribute of speech as an essential function.

Thus, the Mu'tazilah decided that the Qur'an was created. This was an innovation. The early Muslims had openly expressed the contrary view. The damage done by this innovation was great. Certain leading Mu'tazilah indoctrinated certain caliphs with it, and the people were forced to adopt it. The Muslim religious leaders opposed them. Because of their opposition, it was considered permissible to flog [349](#) and kill many of them. This caused orthodox people to rise in defense of the articles of faith with logical evidence and to push back the innovations.

The leader of the speculative theologians, Abul-Hasan al-Ash'ari,[350](#) took care of that. He mediated between the different approaches. He disavowed anthropomorphism and recognized the ideal attributes. He restricted God's freedom (from human attributes) to the extent to which it had been restricted by the early Muslims, and which had been recognized by the proofs stating the general applicability (of the principle) to special cases. He recognized the four ideal attributes, as well as hearing, vision, and speech as an essential function, (and proved his position) with the help of logical and traditional methods. He refuted the innovators in all these respects. He discussed with them (their) stated opinions with regard to (God's concern for human) welfare and with what is best (for man), and their definition of good and evil, which they had invented as the basis for their innovation.[351](#)

He perfected the dogmas concerning the rising of the dead, the circumstances of the Resurrection, Paradise, and Hell, and reward and punishment. He added a discussion of the imamate, because the Imamiyah (Shi'ah) at that time suggested the novel idea that the imamate was one of the articles of faith and that it was the duty of the Prophet as well as the Muslim nation [352](#) to fix (the succession to) the (imamate) and free the person who would become the imam from any responsibility in this respect. (However, in fact,) the imamate is at best a matter of public interest and social organization. It is not an article of faith. (But, because of the Shi'ah attitude, the question of the imamate) was added to the problems of this discipline.

The whole was called "the science of speculative theology." The reason why this name (which, literally, means "science of speech," or "talk") was chosen, may have been that it included the disputation of innovations. That is merely talk and implies no action. Or, the reason may have been that the discipline was invented and cultivated as a consequence of dissension concerning the existence of essential speech.[353](#)

The followers of Abul-Hasan al-Ash'ari became numerous. His approach was later on followed by his pupils, such as Ibn Mujahid [354](#) and others. Judge Abu Bakr alBaqillani [355](#) learned from them. He attacked the problem of the imamate in accordance with the way they had approached it, and improved on it. He laid down the logical premises on which arguments and speculation on the subject depend. He affirmed, for instance, the existence of the atom (*al jawhar al fard*) and of the vacuum. He made statements such as "An accident cannot sustain another accident," and "An accident does not persist two moments." [356](#) There are similar (premises) on which the arguments of (the Ash'arites) depend. He considered the basic premises as secondary only to the articles of faith, as far as the necessity of believing in them was concerned. The arguments depend on them, and if the arguments are wrong, it is possible to conclude that the thing proven (by them) is also wrong.[357](#)

Thus, (al-Ash'ari's) approach was perfected and became one of the best speculative disciplines and religious sciences. However, the forms of its arguments are, at times, not technically perfect), because the scholars (of al-Ash'ari's time) were simple and the science of logic which probes arguments and examines syllogisms had not yet made its appearance in Islam. Even if some of it had existed, the theologians would not have used it, because it was so closely related to the philosophical sciences, which are altogether different from the beliefs of the religious law and were, therefore, avoided by them.

The Ash'arite leader, Judge Abu Bakr (al-Baqillani), was followed by the Imam al-Haramayn Abul-Ma'ali.[358](#) He dictated a comprehensive work on the Ash'arite approach. He was very explicit in it. He then abridged the work in the

Kitab al-Irshad. People use the (*Irshad*) as their guide in matters of (dogmatic) belief.

After that, the science of logic spread in Islam. People studied it. They made a distinction between it and the philosophical sciences, in that (they stated that) logic was merely a norm and yardstick for arguments and served to probe the arguments of the (philosophical sciences) as well as (those of) all other (disciplines).

(Scholars,) then, studied the basic premises the earlier theologians had established. They refuted most of them with the help of arguments leading them to (a different opinion). Many of these (arguments) were derived from philosophical discussions of physics and metaphysics. When they probed them with the yardstick of logic, it showed that they were applicable (only) to those (other disciplines and not to theology, but) they did not believe that if the arguments were wrong, the thing proven (by the arguments) was also wrong, as had been the opinion of the Judge (al-Baqillani). This approach differed in its technical terminology from the older one. It was called "the school of recent scholars." Their approach often included refutation of the philosophers where the (opinions of the) latter differed from the articles of faith. They considered the (philosophers) enemies of the articles of faith, because, in most respects, there is a relationship between the opinions of the innovators and the opinions of the philosophers.

The first (scholar) to write in accordance with the (new) theological approach was al-Ghazzali. He was followed by the imam Ibn al-Khatib.³⁵⁹ A large number of scholars followed in their steps and adhered to their tradition.

The later scholars were very intent upon meddling with philosophical works. The subjects of the two disciplines (theology and philosophy) were thus confused by them. They thought that there was one and the same (subject) in both disciplines, because the problems of each discipline were similar.³⁶⁰

It should be known that the theologians most often deduced the existence and attributes of the Creator from the existing things and their conditions. As a rule, this was their line of argument. The physical bodies form part of the existing things, and they are the subject of the philosophical study of physics. However, the philosophical study of them differs from the theological. The philosophers study bodies in so far as they move or are stationary. The theologians, on the other hand, study them in so far as they serve as an argument for the Maker. In the same way, the philosophical study of metaphysics studies existence as such and what it requires for its essence. The theological study (of metaphysics), on the other hand, is concerned with the *existentia*, in so far as they serve as argument for Him who causes existence. In general, to the theologians, the subject of theology is (to find out) how the articles of faith which the religious law has laid down as correct, can be proven with the help of logical arguments, so that innovations may be repulsed and doubts and misgivings concerning the articles of faith be removed.

If one considers how this discipline originated and how scholarly discussion was incorporated within it step by step,³⁶¹ and how, during that process, scholars always assumed the correctness of the articles of faith and paraded proofs "and arguments (in their defense), one will realize that the character of the subject of this discipline is as we have established it, and one will realize that (the discipline) cannot go beyond it. However, the two approaches have been mixed up by recent scholars. The problems of theology have been confused with those of philosophy. This has gone so far that the one discipline is no longer distinguishable from the other. The student (of theology) cannot learn (theology) from the books of (the recent scholars, and the same situation also confronts the student of philosophy). Such (mixing of theology and philosophy) was done by al-Baydawi, in the *Tawali`*,

and by later, non-Arab scholars, in all their works. However, some students have occupied themselves with the (mixed) approach (in spite of its uselessness for the study of theology), in order to learn the different school opinions and to become versed in the knowledge of argumentation, which is amply represented in (the works which follow the mixed approach).

The approach of the early Muslims can be reconciled with the beliefs of the science of speculative theology only if one follows the old approach of the theologians (and not the mixed approach of recent scholars). The basic work here is the *Kitab al-Irshad*, as well as works that follow its example. Those who want to inject a refutation of the philosophers into their dogmatic beliefs must use the books of al-Ghazzali and the imam ³⁶² Ibn al-Khatib. They do show some divergence from the old technique, but do not make such a confusion of problems and subjects as is found in the approach of the recent scholars who have come after them.

In general, it must be known that this science - the science of speculative theology - is not something that is necessary to the contemporary student. Heretics and innovators have been destroyed. The orthodox religious leaders have given us protection against heretics and innovators in their systematic works and treatments. Logical arguments were needed only when they ³⁶³ defended and supported (their own views with them). Now, all that remains of them ³⁶⁴ is a certain amount of discussion, from most of whose ambiguities and inferences the Creator can be considered to be free. ³⁶⁵

Al-Junayd ³⁶⁶ was once passing a group of theologians discussing the (problem of the freedom of the Creator from human attributes). He asked who they were. He was told that they were people who, by the aid of arguments, were trying to free God from the attributes of createdness and from the qualities that indicate deficiency. Whereupon al-Junayd said: "The denial of a fault where (the existence of) a fault is impossible is (in itself) a fault." ³⁶⁷

However, the usefulness of (speculative theology) for certain individuals and students is considerable. Orthodox Muslims should not be ignorant of speculative argumentation in defense of the articles of orthodox faith. "God is the friend of the believers." ³⁶⁸

15. *An exposition of ambiguity in the Qur'an and the Sunnah and of the resulting dogmatic schools among both the orthodox and the innovators* [369](#)

It should be known that God sent our Prophet Muhammad to us, in order to call us to salvation and bliss. He revealed to him His noble book in the clear Arabic language. He told us in it about the (religious) obligations that would enable us to attain (salvation and bliss). This process included and necessitated references to God's names and attributes, in order to make us acquainted with His essence. (It also included and necessitated) references to the spirit attaching itself to us, and to the revelation and the angels constituting the connection between God and His messengers who were sent to us. The Day of Resurrection and its warning signs have been mentioned to us (in the Qur'an), but the exact time when any of these things is to take place is not indicated. Also, at the beginning of certain *surahs*, the noble Qur'an contains, distributed (in various places, combinations of) individual letters of the alphabet the meaning of which we are not able to understand.

All these particulars of the Qur'an were called "ambiguous" (in the Qur'an itself). Those who followed them were censured, as indicated in the verse: "It is He who revealed the Book to you. It contains unambiguous verses that are the mother of the Book, and other verses that are ambiguous. Those who are inclined in their hearts toward deviation follow that which is ambiguous in the Qur'an, because they desire trouble, and they desire to interpret it. But only God knows how to interpret it. Those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We believe in it. It is all from our Lord.' Only those who have a heart remember." [370](#)

The early Muslim scholars from among the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation understood this verse to mean that the "unambiguous (verses)" are those that are clear and definite. The jurists, therefore, define "unambiguous" in their terminology as "clear in meaning."

Concerning the "ambiguous (verses)," people have different notions. It has been said that they are (verses) requiring study and interpretation in order to establish their correct meaning, because they are in contradiction with other verses or with logic. Therefore, their meaning is obscure and "ambiguous." In this sense, Ibn 'Abbas said: "One must believe in the 'ambiguous (verses),' but one need not act in accordance with them." [371](#) Mujahid [372](#) and 'Ikrimah [373](#) said: "Everything, with the exception of (clearly) unambiguous verses and narrative passages, is ambiguous." This statement was accepted by Judge Abu Bakr (al-Baqillani) and by the Imam al-Haramayn. Ath-Thawri, [374](#) ash-Sha'bi, [375](#) and a number of early Muslim scholars said: "'Ambiguous' is what cannot be known, such as the conditions of the Hour, the dates of the warning signs, and the letters at the beginning of certain *surahs*."

The phrase "Mother of the Book," in the verse quoted, means "the largest and most prominent part of (the Book)," whereas the "ambiguous (verses)" constitute the smallest part of it, and they have no meaning except with reference to the unambiguous (verses). [376](#) (The verse,) then, censures those who follow the "ambiguous (verses)" and interpret them or give them a meaning they do not have in the Arabic language which the Qur'an addresses us in. The verse calls those persons

"deviators" - that is, people who turn away from the truth - unbelievers, heretics, stupid innovators. The verse says that they act so in order to cause trouble - that is, polytheism and confusion among the believers - or in order to be able to interpret the (ambiguous verses) to suit their desires and to use (their interpretations) as a model for their innovations.

God then informs (us in the verse quoted) that He has reserved the interpretation of the (ambiguous verses) exclusively to Himself. Nobody knows their interpretation, save only Him. He says: "But only God knows how to interpret them."

The verse then praises scholars for simply believing in the (ambiguous verses). It says: "Those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We believe in them.' " The early Muslims considered this statement as the beginning of a new sentence. They did not consider it to be coupled (with the preceding statement, in which case it would mean "... Only God knows how to interpret them, and so do those who are firmly rooted in knowledge, who say ...").³⁷⁷ Belief in something not known deserves greater praise (than belief in something visible). Now, assuming that the two sentences are to be coupled with each other, we would have belief in something visible, because (this interpretation) implies that (the scholars) know the interpretation, and that it is not something unknown.

This is confirmed by the continuation of the verse, "It is all from our Lord." That shows that human beings do not know the interpretation of the (ambiguous verses). For the words of the language present to the understanding only those meanings given them by the Arabs. Thus, in cases where it is impossible to relate a certain (piece of) information to the (person) who gives it, we do not know what the words mean. When such information comes to us from God, we leave the knowledge of it to Him and do not bother to find out what it might mean. It would not be possible for us anyhow. 'A'ishah said: "If you see those who dispute about the Qur'an, they are the ones whom God meant (in the verse quoted) -beware of them!"³⁷⁸

This was the opinion of the early Muslims concerning the "ambiguous verses" (of the Qur'an). The traditions contain similarly (ambiguous) expressions which were considered by them in the same light, because the source is one and the same.

Now that the different kinds of "ambiguous" statements have been established by our remarks, let us return to the differences of opinion regarding them found among people (scholars).

The statements that people consider "ambiguous" and that have reference to the Hour and its conditions, to the dates of the warning signs, to the number of the guardians of Hell,³⁷⁹ and similar things, hardly are "ambiguous" statements. They contain no equivocal³⁸⁰ expression or anything else (that may properly be considered ambiguous). They simply (refer to) dates of events, the knowledge of which God has reserved exclusively to Himself, as expressly stated in His Book and through His Prophet. God says: "The knowledge of them is with God."³⁸¹ It is strange that these things could ever have been counted among the "ambiguous" statements.

The (combinations of) individual letters at the beginning of certain *surahs* (*al-huruf al-muqatta'ah*) are, in matter of fact, letters of the alphabet. It is not improbable that they are intended (merely as meaningless letters of the alphabet). Az-Zamakhshari says: "They indicate the wide sweep of the inimitability of the Qur'an. The revealed Qur'an is composed of (letters). Anybody could use them, but since their composition (in the Qur'an), there is a difference in their significance

(and they have acquired a superior, divine quality)." [382](#) Abandonment of the point of view which implies that (these Quranic hetters) do in fact indicate (just meaningless letters), would be justified only on the strength of sound tradition. Thus, it is said that *taha* is an appellation consisting of *tahir* "pure" and *hath* "guide," and so on. [383](#) But it is difficult to have a sound tradition. In this sense, the letters might be (called) "ambiguous."

The ambiguity in statements concerning the revelation, angels, the spirit, and jinn, results from obscurity in the real meaning of (those terms). They are not commonly accepted (terms). Therefore, they are ambiguous. Some people have added (to these things) all related matters, such as the conditions of Resurrection, Paradise, Hell, the Antichrist, the disturbances (preceding the Last Day), the conditions (governing it), and anything that is contrary to familiar custom. They may be right. However, the great mass (of scholars), especially the speculative theologians, do not agree to that. They have determined the significance of those (terms), as we notice, in their works.

Thus, the only ambiguous statements remaining are those concerning the attributes that God has attributed to Himself in His Book and through His Prophet, the plain meaning of which would seem to suggest a deficiency or weakness on the part of God.

After the early Muslims whose opinions (on the subject) we have already clarified, there were differences of opinion among the people concerning these plain statements. There was discussion. Innovations came to affect dogmatic beliefs. Let us explain those opinions and give preference to the sound ones (among them) as against the corrupt ones. I say -and only God can give me success.

It should be known that God described Himself to us in His Book as knowing, powerful, having volition, living, hearing, seeing, speaking, majestic, noble, generous, beneficent, strong, and great. He also established with regard to Himself that He had hands, eyes, a face, a foot, a leg, [384](#) and other attributes. Some of them imply true divinity, such as knowledge, power, volition, as well as life, which is a condition for all of them. Others are attributes of perfection, such as hearing, vision, and speech. Others, again, seem to suggest deficiency, such as sitting, descending, and coming, as well as face, hands, and eyes, which are attributes of created things. The [385](#) Lawgiver (Muhammad) then informed (us) that we shall see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection like the moon on a night when the moon is full, and shall not suffer any harm in seeing Him, as is established in sound tradition (the *Sahih*). [386](#) The early Muslims, the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation, affirmed God's (possession of) the attributes of divinity and perfection. They left to Him (the question of attributes) that seem to suggest deficiency, and did not say anything as to what they might mean. Later on, people held divergent opinions.

The Mu'tazilah came and affirmed those attributes as abstract data of the mind but did not assume the existence of a (divine) attribute persisting in the (divine) essence. This they called "declaration of the oneness of God" (*tawhid*).

Then, they considered man the creator of his own actions, and that the latter have nothing to do with the divine power, especially not man's evil actions and sins, since a wise (Deity) would find it impossible to do them.

They also considered it God's duty to observe what is best for mankind. This they called (divine) justice ('adl). Originally, they had denied predestination. They had maintained that everything starts through knowledge which comes into being (in each particular instance), as well as through power and volition which likewise

(come into being). This is mentioned in (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*,³⁸⁷ and 'Abdallah b. 'Umar refused to have anything to do with Ma'bad alJuhani³⁸⁸ and his companions who held those opinions. The denial of predestination was taken up by the Mu'tazilah Wasil b. 'Ata al-Ghazzal,³⁸⁹ the pupil of al-Hasan al-Basri, at the time of 'Abd-al-Malik b. Marwan, and eventually by Mu'ammar as-Sullami.³⁹⁰ The Mu'tazilah, then, retracted their former opinion in this respect.

One of the Mu'tazilah was Abul-Hudhayl al-'Allaf.³⁹¹ He was the chief of the Mu'tazilah. He had learned the Mu'tazilah approach from 'Uthman b. Khalid at-Tawil,³⁹² who had it from Wasil. He was one of those who denied predestination. He followed the opinions of the philosophers in denying the existential attributes, because the philosophical opinions made their appearance at that time.

Then came Ibrahim an-Nazzam.³⁹³ He professed (belief in) predestination, and (the Mu'tazilah) followed him. He studied the philosophical works. He strictly denied the (existence of the divine) attributes and firmly established the basic (dogmas) of Mu'tazilism. Then came al-Jahiz,³⁹⁴ al-Ka'bī,³⁹⁵ and the Jubba'iyah.³⁹⁶ Their approach was called "the science of speculative theology." (This name, which, literally, means "science of speech," or "talk," was chosen) either because the school implied argumentation and disputation, which is what might be called *talk*, or because it originated from denial of the attribute of *speech*.³⁹⁷ Therefore, ash-Shafi'i used to say: "They deserve to be beaten with palm rods and to be led around (in public)."

Those men firmly established the Mu'tazilah school. They confirmed part of it and rejected (other parts). Eventually, Abul-Hasan al-Ash'ari³⁹⁸ appeared. He disputed (the opinions of) certain Mu'tazilah *shaykhs* concerning the problems of (God's concern for human) welfare and what is best for man. He abolished Mu'tazilism. He followed the opinions of 'Abdallah b. Sa'id b. Kullab,³⁹⁹ Abul-'Abbas al-Qalanisi,⁴⁰⁰ and al-Harith b. Asad al-Muhasibi⁴⁰¹ who were followers of the ancient Muslims according⁴⁰² to the orthodox approach. He strengthened the statements they had made⁴⁰³ with speculative theological arguments. He affirmed the existence of knowledge, power, volition, and life, as attributes persisting in the essence of God. (These attributes) are necessary for the argument of mutual antagonism,⁴⁰⁴ and they establish the correctness of prophetic miracles.

It also was (Ash'arite) doctrine to affirm the existence of (the divine attributes of) speech, hearing, and vision. On the surface, (these attributes) seem to suggest deficiency, (as they seem to be connected) with corporeal voice and corporeal letter (sound). However, among the Arabs, speech has another meaning, different from letter (sound) and voice, namely, "that which goes around in the soul" (*khalad*).⁴⁰⁵ Speech in it is a reality, in contradistinction to the first (kind of speech). They ascribed such (eternal speech) to God. Thus, the suggestion of deficiency was eliminated. They affirmed the attribute of (speech) as one that is primeval and of general application, as is the case with the other attributes. The Qur'an, thus, became a term with a double meaning. It is primeval and persisting in the essence of God. This is essential speech. But it is (also) created, in as much as it consists of combinations of letters (sounds) produced in the recital (of the Qur'an) by (human) voices. When it is called primeval, the first thing is meant. When it is called recitable or audible, this refers to its recitation and written fixation.

His scrupulousness prevented the imam Ahmad (b. Hanbal) from using the word "created" for (the Qur'an in any way). He had not heard from the ancient

Muslims before his time (anything to the effect) that he (was to) say [405a](#) that written copies of the Qur'an are primeval, or that the recitation (of the Qur'an) which is done by (human) tongues was something primeval, as he could observe with his own eyes that it was something created. But only his scrupulousness prevented him from (using the term "created" in those cases). Had he (avoided using it for any other reason), he would have denied something that is necessary. He certainly would not have done that.

Hearing and vision seem to suggest perception by parts of the body. However, linguistically, they also may mean the perception of audible and visible things. [406](#) This, then, eliminates the suggestion of deficiency, because here we have a real linguistic meaning for the two terms (that may be applicable in connection with the divine attributes).

On the other hand, in the case of the expressions sitting, coming, descending, face, hands, eyes, and the like, the (theologians) abandoned their real linguistic meaning, which would suggest deficiency, anthropomorphically, for metaphoric interpretation. It is the method of the Arabs to resort to metaphoric interpretation whenever the real meanings of words present difficulties. This is done, for instance, in connection with the verse of the Qur'an: "(A wall) that wanted to collapse," [407](#) and similar cases. It is a well-known method of the Arabs which is not disapproved of and constitutes no innovation. (It is true,) the (metaphoric) interpretation (of the attributes mentioned) is contrary to the opinions of the early Muslims, who left (the matter to God). However, the theologians were led to adopt it by the fact that a number of followers of the early Muslims, namely, the novelty-conscious [408](#) and more recent Hanbalites, erred with regard to the significance of those attributes. They considered them to be definite attributes of God of which it is not known "how" they are. With regard to the statement, "He sat upright upon the throne," [409](#) they say, "We affirm that He sits, as the word indicates, because we fear to negate Him, but we do not say how, because we fear anthropomorphism, which is denied in negative verses such as (these): 'There is nothing like Him'; [410](#) 'Praised be God, beyond the attributes they give (Him)'; [411](#) 'God is above what evildoers say'; [412](#) and 'He did not give birth, and He was not born.' [413](#)

These people do not realize that it comes under the subject of anthropomorphism for them to affirm the attribute of sitting, because according to the lexicographers, the word "sitting" implies being firmly settled in a place, which is something corporeal. The negation they hate to bring about would (merely) affect the word, and there is nothing dangerous in that. What is to be avoided is the negation of divinity. [414](#) They also hate to assume the imposition of an obligation that (human beings) are unable to fulfill. [415](#) This, however, is a delusion, because ambiguous statements have no bearing upon obligations. Then, they claim that (their opinion) is the opinion of the early Muslims, who, in fact, held no such opinion.

Their opinion was the one we established at the beginning, [416](#) namely, to leave to God (the question of) what is meant by the (attributes), and not to say that one understands them. The (Hanbalites) argue in favor of (God's) sitting, using Malik's statement, "(The fact of God's) sitting is known, but it is not known how (God sits)." Malik did not mean that sitting is known as a definite (attribute) of God. He certainly would not have said such a thing, because he knew the meaning of "sitting." He merely meant that (the meaning of) sitting is known linguistically, and it is something corporeal, but how it takes place - that is, its reality, since the reality of all attributes concerns the how - is not known definitely (in connection) with God. [417](#)

These people also argue in favor of a "place" (for God). They do so by using the tradition of the black (slave girl). The Prophet asked her: "Where is God?" She answered: "In heaven." Whereupon (the Prophet) said (to her owner): "Set her free, for she is a believer." [418](#) Now, the Prophet did not assume that she was a believer because she affirmed the existence of a place for God, but because she believed the plain statements in His Revelation which say that God is in heaven. Thus, she became one of those "firmly rooted (in knowledge)," [419](#) who believe in ambiguous statements without searching for their meaning. It is definite that one has to disavow the existence of a "place" for God. This follows from the logical argument denying (God's) need (for anything), and from the negative evidence that calls for freeing (God) from attributes), as found, for instance, (in the verse), "There is nothing like Him," [420](#) and similar statements. It also follows from the Qur'anic statement, [421](#) "He, God, is in the heavens and upon earth." [422](#) Nothing that exists can be in two places (at the same time). Thus, the verse is not a definite indication that God is located in a certain place, but must mean something else.

These people then extended the interpretation they had invented to the plain meaning of face, eyes, hands, coming, descending, and speech with letter (sound) and voice. They assumed that these words had meanings that were more general than (mere) references to the body. They declared God free from the corporeal meaning of these attributes. However, this is something that is not recognized in the language.

All of them followed this course. The orthodox Ash'arites and the Hanafite theologians shunned them and tried to uproot their dogmatic belief in this respect. An episode that happened between Hanafite speculative theologians in Bukhara and the imam Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari, [423](#) is well known.

The anthropomorphists (*mujassimah*) did something similar in affirming that God has a body but not one like (ordinary human) bodies. The word "body" is not [424](#) used in connection with (God) in the Muslim religio-legal tradition, but they were emboldened in their statement by the fact that they affirmed the (literal) existence of these plain statements. They did not restrict themselves to them, [425](#) but went deeper into the matter and affirmed the corporeality (of God). [426](#) They assumed something like (what has just been mentioned) concerning (the meaning of corporeality). They (wanted to) free (God from human attributes) by the contradictory, nonsensical statement, "A body not like (ordinary human) bodies." But in the language of the Arabs, body is something that has depth and is limited. Other interpretations, such as the one that (body) is something persisting in itself, or is something composed of the elements, and other things, reflect the technical terms of speculative theology, through which (the theologians) want to get at another meaning than that indicated by the language. Thus, the anthropomorphists are more involved (than others) in innovation, and, indeed, in unbelief. They assume puzzling attributes for God which suggest deficiency (on His part) and which are not mentioned in either the Word of God or that of His Prophet.

The differences between the dogmatic opinions of the early Muslims, the orthodox theologians, the noveltyconscious (scholars), [427](#) and the innovators among [428](#) the Mu'tazilah, has thus become clear through our remarks. Among the novelty-conscious (scholars), there are extremists who are called *al-mushabbiyah*, because they come out openly for anthropomorphism (*tashbih*). [429](#) The story goes that one of them even said: "Spare me from speaking about God's beard and genitals. Rather ask me about anything else, whatever you please." [430](#) Unless one tries to explain

such (a remark) in their own interest, by assuming that they want to deal exhaustively with these puzzling plain attributes, and that they consider all of them in the same light as their authorities, it is clear unbelief. God help us!

The books of orthodox scholars are full of argumentations against such innovations and of lengthy refutations of (innovators) with the help of sound evidence. But we have briefly referred to the (subject) in a way that will help to distinguish the details and general outlines of dogmatics. "Praised be God who guided us to this. We would not be persons who are guided aright, had God not guided us." [431](#)

The plain (words) the evidence for and meaning of which are obscure - such as revelation, angels, spirit, jinn, Purgatory (*barzakh*), [432](#) the conditions of the Resurrection, the Antichrist, the disturbances (preceding the Last Day), the conditions (governing it), and everything else that is difficult to understand or contrary to custom - are considered by us in the same light as the Ash'arites, who are orthodox people, considered such details. There is no ambiguity in it, even though we speak of it as ambiguous. Therefore, we want to elucidate the matter and speak clearly about it. We say:

It should be known that the world of man is the most noble and exalted of the worlds of existent things. Even though human reality is a uniform (element) in (the world), it contains different levels which differ from each other through conditions peculiar to them, to such a degree that the realities at each level are different ones.

The [433](#) first level is constituted by the human world of the body including (man's) external sense perception, his thinking which is directed toward making a living, and all the other activities which are granted to him by his present existence.

The second level is constituted by the world of sleep (dream visions). It involves perception by the imagination. Man lets the perceptions of his imagination rove in his inward (being). With his external senses, he perceives some of them as unencumbered by time, place, or any other condition of the body. He sees them in places where he (himself) is not. If they are good, they present him with the glad tidings of pleasure he may expect in this world and the other world as our truthful (Prophet) promised.

These two levels are shared by all human individuals, but, as one has seen, they differ as to the way perceptions are attained in them.

The third level is that of prophecy. It is restricted to the noblest representatives of humankind by virtue of the fact that God has distinguished them through the knowledge of Himself and (the declaration of) His oneness, through His revelation brought to them by His angels, and through the obligation to achieve the improvement of mankind with respect to conditions altogether different from the outward human conditions.

The fourth level is that of death. Here, human individuals leave their outward life for an(other) existence before the Resurrection. (That existence) is called Purgatory (*barzakh*), [434](#) In it, they enjoy bliss or receive punishment, depending on their activities (while alive). Then, they come to the Great Resurrection, where they receive the great reward, that is, either bliss in Paradise or punishment in Hell.

The first two levels are attested by (concrete) intuition [435](#) The third level, that of prophecy, is attested to by the prophetic miracle (s) and the conditions peculiar to the prophets. The fourth level is attested to by the divine revelation given to the prophets (and which speaks) of revivification, [436](#) the conditions of Purgatory

(*barzakh*), and the Resurrection. Moreover, logic requires its (existence). God has called our attention to that in many verses concerned with the rising (of the dead). The best argument for the correctness (of these verses) is that if, apart from their visible (existence in this world), human individuals had no existence after death, where they will encounter conditions befitting them, it would have been something frivolous to create them in the first place. If death is non-existence, it would mean the return of the individual to non-existence. In that case, there would have been no sense in creating them in the first place. It is, however, absurd to assume that the wise (Deity) would act frivolously. [437](#)

Now, after (the existence of) the four levels has been established, we want to explain how human perceptions with regard to those four levels clearly differ. This will reveal the intricacy of (the problem of) ambiguity.

At the first level, human perceptions are clear and obvious. God says: "God brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers. You did not then know anything. And He gave you hearing and vision and hearts." [438](#) With the help of these perceptions, man is able to master the habits of knowledge, to perfect his human reality, and to satisfy the requirements of divine worship which brings him to salvation.

At the second level - that of sleep (dream visions) - human perceptions are the same as those of external sense perception. Although the limbs of the body are not used as they are in the waking state, yet the person who has a (dream) vision ascertains everything perceived by him in his sleep without any doubt or misgiving. The limbs of the body are not employed in their ordinary manner.

Concerning the real character of this state, people are divided into two groups:

The philosophers assume that imaginary pictures are transmitted by the imagination through the motion of thinking to the "common sense" which constitutes the connecting link between external and inner sensual perception. As a result, (these pictures) are represented as something perceived in the external (world) by all the senses. The difficulty here is that true visions from God or the angels are more firmly and definitely perceived than visions of Satanic imaginations, although the imagination active in both is one and the same, as the (philosophers) have established.

The second group is that of the speculative theologians. Their summary statement of the problem is that it is a kind of perception created by God in (the realm of) the senses, and thus takes place in the same way that (perception) takes place in the waking state. This (explanation) is better, even though we are not able to perceive how it takes place.

Perception in sleep is the clearest evidence (we have) for the fact that sensual perception operates at the subsequent levels.

It is not known to us [439](#) how sensual perception takes place on the third level - that of the prophets - but they themselves have a more than certain (knowledge of) perception through intuition. The Prophet sees God and the angels. He hears God's speech from God Himself or from the angels. He sees Paradise, Hell, and the divine throne and chair. He breaks through the seven heavens in his ascension. [440](#) He rides al-Buraq [441](#) and meets the prophets in (the seven heavens) and prays with them. He perceives all kinds of sensual perceptions, exactly as he perceives them at the levels of body and sleep, (but) through a kind of necessary knowledge that God creates for him, and not through ordinary human perception by means of the limbs of the body.

In this connection, no attention should be paid to Avicenna's remarks. He brings prophecy down to the level of sleep and says that the imagination transmits a picture to the "common sense."⁴⁴² The argument against the (philosophers) in this connection is (even) stronger in the case of sleep (dream visions). As we have established, that process of transmission (by the imagination) is by nature one and the same. In this way, revelation and prophetic dream vision would in reality be identical as to their certainty and reality. However, this is not so, as one knows from the dream vision of the Prophet just six months before the Revelation. The dream was the beginning of the Revelation and the prelude to it, which shows that, in reality, it is inferior to (revelation). The same follows from the process of revelation itself. It was a very difficult matter for the Prophet, as is stated in sound tradition (the *Sahih*).⁴⁴³ The Qur'an was (at the beginning) revealed to him in individual verses. Later on, the (long) ninth *surah* (*al-Bara'ah*) was revealed to him in one piece during the expedition to Tabuk while he was riding on his camel.⁴⁴⁴ If the revelation had merely been the result of a process whereby thinking descends to the imagination and from the imagination to the "common sense," there would not have been any difference between those stages (of the revelation).

At the fourth level - that of the dead in Purgatory (*barzakh*), which starts with the grave when they are free from the body, or during their rising when they reassume a body -the dead do have sensual perceptions. In his grave, a dead person sees two angels who question him.⁴⁴⁵ With the two eyes of his head, he sees the seat he will occupy in either Paradise or Hell. He sees the persons who attend the burial and hears what they say, and he hears the tapping of their shoes when they leave him. He hears the (declaration of the) oneness of God or the affirmation of the two confessions of faith which they suggest to him,⁴⁴⁶ and other things. According to sound tradition (the *Sahih*), the Messenger of God was standing at the well of Badr into which the dead Qurashite polytheists had been thrown.⁴⁴⁷ When he called them by their names, 'Umar asked him: "O Messenger of God, are you speaking to those dead bodies?" Muhammad replied, "By Him in Whose hand my soul rests, you people do not hear what I am saying any better than they."⁴⁴⁸

Furthermore, during the rising of the dead and on the Day of Resurrection, the dead behold the different grades of bliss in Paradise and punishment in Hell with their own eyes and ears, exactly as they used to behold (things) during their life. They see the angels and they see their Lord. Thus, sound tradition (in the *Sahih*) mentions, "You will see your Lord on the Day of Resurrection like the moon on a night when the moon is full. You will not suffer any harm in seeing Him."⁴⁴⁹

The dead did not have such perceptions while they were alive. (Still,) they are sensual perceptions like those (they had while they were alive). They take place in the limbs of the body by means of (some kind of) necessary knowledge that God creates, as we have stated. The (explanation for the) secret of it lies in the knowledge that the human soul grows in the body and through the perceptions of the body. When it leaves the body in sleep or in death, or when a prophet, in the state of revelation, changes from human perceptions to angelic ones, the soul takes its means of perceptions along, but free of the limbs of the body. With (these means of perception), the soul perceives, on the (other) level, whatever perceptions it wants to perceive, but these perceptions are on a higher plane than those that the soul had while it was in the body. This was stated by al-Ghazzali, who added that the human soul has a form that it retains after its separation (from the body) and that, just like the body's own structure, includes two eyes, two ears, and all the rest of the limbs of the body serving (man) to attain perception.⁴⁵⁰ I would say, (however,) that al-Ghazzali here refers to the habits obtained through using all those limbs of the body

in addition to (mere) perception. [451](#)

When one understands all this, one will realize that perceptions exist on all four levels. However, they are not everywhere the same as in the life of this world. They differ in intensity according to the conditions affecting them. The theologians have indicated this fact in the summary statement that God creates in (the senses) a necessary knowledge of the thing perceived, whatever it may be. By that, they are referring to the same thing we have been explaining.

This is our brief attempt at classifying the problem of "ambiguity." To attempt to discuss it more widely, would take us beyond comprehension. Let us beseech [452](#) God that He may guide us and that we may learn through His prophets and His Book how to acknowledge His oneness properly and how to attain salvation.

"God guides whomever He wants to guide." [453](#)

16. The science of Sufism.[454](#)

This science belongs to the sciences of the religious law that originated in Islam. Sufism is based on (the assumption) that the method of those people (who later on came to be called Sufis) had always been considered by the important early Muslims, the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation, as well as those who came after them, as the path of truth and right guidance. The (Sufi) approach is based upon constant application to divine worship, complete devotion to God, aversion to the false splendor of the world, abstinence from the pleasure, property, and position to which the great mass aspires, and retirement from the world into solitude for divine worship. These things were general among the men around Muhammad and the early Muslims.

Then, worldly aspirations increased in the second [eighth] century and after. People now inclined toward worldly affairs. At that time, the special name of Sufis (*Sufiyah* and *Mutasawwifah*) was given to those who aspired to divine worship. Al-Qushayri says: "No etymology or analogy can be found for this term in the Arabic language. It is obvious that it is a nickname. Theories deriving the word from *as-safa'* (purity, sincerity), or from *as-suffah* (bench), or from *as-saff* (row) [455](#) are improbable from the point of view of linguistic analogy." (Al-Qushayri) continued: "The same applies to the derivation from *as-suf* (wool), because the Sufis were not the only ones who wore Wool." [456](#)

I say: The most obvious etymology, if one uses one, is that which connects the word with *as-suf*, because Sufis as a rule were characterized by the fact that they wore woolen garments. They were opposed to people wearing gorgeous garments, and, therefore, chose to wear wool.

The Sufis came to represent asceticism, retirement from the world, and devotion to divine worship. Then, they developed a particular kind of perception which comes about through ecstatic experience.[457](#) This comes about as follows. Man, as man, is distinguished from all the other animals by his ability to perceive. His perception is of two kinds. He can perceive sciences and matters of knowledge, and these may be certain, hypothetical, doubtful, or imaginary. Also, he can perceive "states" persisting in himself, such as joy and grief, anxiety and relaxation, satisfaction, anger, patience, gratefulness, and similar things. The reasoning part [458](#) active in the body originates from perceptions, volitions, and states. It is through them that man is distinguished (from the other animals), as we have stated. [459](#) They originate from each other. Thus, knowledge originates from evidence, grief and joy from the perception of what is painful or pleasurable, energy from rest, and inertia from being tired. In the same way, the exertion and worship of the Sufi novice must lead to a "state" that is the result of his exertion. That state may be a kind of divine worship. Then, it will be firmly rooted in the Sufi novice and become a "station" for him. Or, it may not be divine worship, but merely an attribute affecting the soul, such as joy or gladness, [460](#) energy or inertia, or something else.

The "stations" (form an ascending order). The Sufi novice continues to progress from station to station, until he reaches the (recognition of the) oneness of God (*tawhid*) and the gnosis (*ma'rifah*) which is the desired goal of happiness.

Muhammad says: "Whoever dies confessing that there is no God but God, enters Paradise." [461](#)

Thus, the novice must progress by such stages. The basis of all of them is obedience and sincerity. Faith precedes and accompanies all of them. Their result and fruit are states and attributes. They lead to others, and again others, up to the station of the (recognition of the) oneness of God and of gnosis ('irfan). If the result [462](#) shows some shortcoming or defect, one can be sure that it comes from some shortcoming that existed in the previous stage. The same applies to the ideas of the soul and the inspirations of the heart.

The novice, therefore, must scrutinize (*muhasabah*) himself in all his actions and study their concealed import, because the results, of necessity, originate from actions, and shortcomings in the results, thus, originate from defects in the actions. The Sufi novice finds out about that through his mystical experience [463](#) and he scrutinizes himself as to its reasons.

Very few people share the (self-scrutiny) of the Sufis, for negligence in this respect is almost universal. Pious people who do not get that far perform, at best, acts of obedience [464](#) freed from the juridical study of how to be satisfactory [465](#) and conforming (in the execution of the acts of divine worship). The (Sufis), however, investigate the results of (acts of obedience) with the help of mystical and ecstatic experience, in order to learn whether they are free from deficiency or not. Thus, it is evident that the Sufis' path in its entirety depends upon self-scrutiny with regard to what they do or do not do, and upon discussion of the various kinds of mystical and ecstatic experience that result from their exertions. This, then, crystallizes for the Sufi novice in a "station." From that station, he can progress to another, higher one.

Furthermore, the Sufis have their peculiar form of behavior and a (peculiar) linguistic terminology which they use in instruction. [466](#) Linguistic data apply only to commonly accepted ideas. When there occur ideas not commonly accepted, technical terms facilitating the understanding of those ideas are coined to express them.

Thus, the Sufis had their special discipline, which is not discussed by other representatives of the religious law. As a consequence, the science of the religious law came to consist of two kinds. One is the special field of jurists and muftis. It is concerned with the general laws governing the acts of divine worship, customary actions, and mutual dealings. The other is the special field of the "people" (Sufis). It is concerned with pious exertion, self-scrutiny with regard to it, discussion of the different kinds of mystical and ecstatic experience occurring in the course of (self-scrutiny), the mode of ascent from one mystical experience to another, and the interpretation of the technical terminology of mysticism in use among them.

When the sciences were written down systematically and when the jurists wrote works on jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence, on speculative theology, Qur'an interpretation, and other subjects, the Sufis, too, wrote on their subject. Some Sufis wrote on the laws governing asceticism and self-scrutiny, how to act and not act in imitation of model (saints). That was done by al-Muhasibi, in his *Kitab ar-Ri'ayah*. [467](#) Other (Sufi authors) wrote on the behavior of (Sufis) and their different kinds of mystical and ecstatic experience in the "states." Al-Qushayri in his *Kitab ar-Risalah*, and as-Suhrawardi [468](#) in the *Kitab 'Awarif al-ma'arif*, as well as others, did this.

Al-Ghazzali combined the two matters in the *Kitab al-Ihya'*. In it, he dealt systematically with the laws governing asceticism and the imitation of models. Then, he explained the behavior and customs of the people (Sufis) and commented on their technical vocabulary.

Thus, the science of Sufism became a systematically treated discipline in Islam. Before that, mysticism had merely consisted of divine worship, and its laws had existed in the breasts of men. The same had been the case with all other disciplines, such as Qur'an interpretation, the science of tradition, jurisprudence, the principles of jurisprudence, and other disciplines. (They were only later on) treated systematically.

Mystical [469](#) exertion, retirement, [470](#) and *dhikr* exercises [471](#) are as a rule followed by the removal of the veil (*kashf*) of sensual perception. The Sufi beholds divine worlds which a person subject to the senses cannot perceive at all. The spirit belongs to those worlds. The reason for the removal of (the veil) is the following. When the spirit turns from external sense perception to inner (perception), the senses weaken, and the spirit grows strong. It gains predominance and a new growth. The *dhikr* exercise helps to bring that about. It is like food to make the spirit grow. The spirit continues to grow and to increase. It had been knowledge. Now, it becomes vision. The veil of sensual perception is removed, and the soul realizes its essential existence. This is identical with perception. (The spirit) now is ready for the holy gifts, for the sciences of the divine presence, and for the outpourings of the Deity. Its essence realizes its own true character and draws close to the highest sphere, the sphere of the angels. The removal of (the veil) often happens to people who exert themselves (in mystical exercise). They perceive the realities of existence as no one else (does).

They also perceive many (future) happenings in advance. With the help of their minds and psychic powers they are active among the lower *existentia*, which thus become obedient to their will. The great Sufis do not think much of the removal (of the veil) and of activity (among the low *existentia*). They give no information about the reality of anything they have not been ordered to discuss. They consider it a tribulation, when things of that sort happen to them, and try to escape them whenever they afflict them. [472](#)

The men around Muhammad practiced that kind of (mystical) exertion. They had a very abundant share in the acts of divine grace, but they did not bother with them. (The description of) the virtues of Abu Bakr, Umar, [473](#) and Ali contain much (information) to this effect. They were followed in this respect by the Sufis who are mentioned in the *Risalah* of al-Qushayri, [474](#) and their later successors.

Recent mystics, then, have turned their attention to the removal of the veil and the discussion of perceptions beyond (sensual perception). Their ways of mystical exercise in this respect differ. They have taught different methods of mortifying the powers of sensual perception and nourishing the reasoning spirit with *dhikr* exercises, so that the soul might fully grow and attain its own essential perception. When this happens, they believe that the whole of existence is encompassed by the perceptions of the soul, that the essences of existence are revealed to them, and that they perceive the reality of all the essences from the (divine) throne to light rain. [475](#) This was said by al-Ghazzali in the *Kitab al-Ihya'*, after he had mentioned the forms of mystical exercise.

The [476](#) (Sufis) do not consider removal (of the veil) sound, unless it originates in straightforwardness. [477](#) People who do not eat and who retire (from the world), such as sorcerers, Christians, and other ascetics, may obtain removal (of the veil) without the existence of straightforwardness. However, we mean only that removal (of the veil) which originates in straightforwardness. It may be compared with (the reflections of) a mirror. If it is convex or concave, the object reflected by it appears in a distorted form different from the actual form of the object, but if the

mirror is flat, the object appears in its correct form. As far as the "states" impressed upon the soul are concerned, straightforwardness means to the soul what flatness means in a mirror.

The recent (Sufis) who have occupied themselves with this kind of removal (of the veil) talk about the real character of the higher and lower *existentialia* and about the real character of the (divine) kingdom, the spirit, the (divine) throne, the (divine) seat, and similar things. Those who did not share their approach were not able to understand their mystical and ecstatic experiences in this respect. The muftis partly disapprove of these Sufis and partly accept them. Arguments and proofs are of no use in deciding whether the Sufi approach should be rejected or accepted, since it belongs to intuitive [478](#) experience.

Some [479](#) details in explanation:

Hadith scholars and jurists who discuss the articles of faith often mention that God is separate from His creatures. The speculative theologians say that He is neither separate nor connected. The philosophers say that He is neither in the world nor outside it. The recent Sufis say that He is one with the creatures, in the sense that He is incarnate in them, or in the sense that He is identical with them and there exists nothing but Himself either (in the) whole or (in) any part (of it).

Let us explain in detail these dogmatic opinions and the real meaning of each of them, so that their significance will be clarified. We say:

Separateness has two meanings. It may mean "separateness in space and direction." [479a](#) The opposite, then, would be connectedness. In this sense, the statement of (separation) [480](#) implies (that God is in some) place, either directly - which would be direct anthropomorphism (*tajsim*) or in directly - which would be indirect anthropomorphism (*tashbih*) [481](#) in the way in which one speaks about (God's having) direction. It has been reported that an early Muslim scholar similarly professed the separateness of God, but a different interpretation is possible.

The speculative theologians, therefore, did not acknowledge this (kind of) separateness. They said: It cannot be said that the Creator is separate from His creatures, and it cannot be said that He is connected with them, because such a statement can be made only about things in space. The statement that a particular thing [482](#) can be described as devoid of one concept and at the same time of the opposite of that concept depends upon whether the description is sound in the first place (or not). If it is impossible, (the statement is) not (correct). It is, in fact, permissible to describe (a certain thing) as devoid of one concept and at the same time of the opposite of that concept. Thus, a solid substance may be described as not wise and not ignorant, not powerful and not weak, not causing harm [?] and not being harmed. [483](#) Now, the correctness of describing God as separate in the way mentioned is predicated upon the possibility of ascribing direction to Him in the proper meaning of the word, but this cannot be done with the Creator, who is free from (such a description).

This was mentioned by Ibn at-Tilimsani [484](#) in his commentary on the *Luma'* of the Imam al-Haramayn. He said: The Creator can neither be said to be separate from the world, nor to be connected with it. He is not in it and not outside it. That is what is meant by the philosophers when they say that He is neither in the world nor outside it. They base themselves (on the assumption) that there exist substances (atoms) that exist not in space. The speculative theologians did not acknowledge their (existence), because they would have to be considered equal to the Creator in the most specific qualities. That is fully dealt with in the science of speculative

theology.

The other meaning of separateness is "being distinct and different." The Creator is called separate from His creatures in His essence, identity, existence, and attributes. The opposite is being one, mingled, and merged (with something else).

(God's) separateness in this sense is assumed in the dogmas of all orthodox people, such as the great mass of early Muslims, the religious scholars, the speculative theologians, and the ancient Sufis, such as the men mentioned in (al-Qushayri's) *Risalah*, and those who follow them.

A number of recent Sufis who consider intuitive [485](#) perceptions to be scientific and logical, hold the opinion that the Creator is one with His creatures in His identity, His existence, and His attributes. They often assume that this was the opinion of the philosophers before Aristotle, such as Plato and Socrates.

That is what the speculative theologians mean when they speak about the (oneness of God with His creatures) in theology and try to refute it. They do not [486](#) mean that there could be a question of two essences, one of which must be negated or comprised (in the other) as a part (in the whole). That would be clear distinctness, and they do not maintain that to be the case.

The oneness (assumed by the Sufis) is identical with the incarnation the Christians claim for the Messiah. It is even stranger, in that it is the incarnation of something primeval in something created and the oneness of the former with the latter.

(The oneness assumed by the Sufis) is also identical with the stated opinion of the Imamiyah Shi'ah concerning their imams [487](#) In their discussion, the (Shi'ah) [488](#) consider two ways in which the oneness (of the Deity with the imams) is achieved. (1) The essence of the primeval (Deity) is hidden in all created things, both *sensibilia* and *intelligibilia*, and is one with them in both kinds of perception. All of them are manifestations of it, and it has control over them—that is, it controls their existence in the sense that, without it, they would not exist. Such is the opinion of the people who believe in incarnation.

(2) There is the approach of those who believe in absolute oneness. It seems as if in the exposition of the people who believe in incarnation, they have sensed the existence of a differentness contradicting the concept of oneness. Therefore, they disavowed the (existence of differentness) between the primeval (Deity) and the creatures in essence, existence, and attributes. In (order to explain) the differentness of the manifestations perceived by the senses and the intellect, they used the specious argument that those things were human perceptions that are imaginary. By imaginary, they do not mean imaginary as part of the sequence: known, hypothetical, doubtful, but they mean that all those things do not exist in reality and exist only in human perception. Only the primeval (Deity) has real existence (and nothing else) either outwardly or inwardly. Later on, we shall, as far as possible, [489](#) establish this.

In order to understand this intellectually, it is useless to rely upon speculation and argumentation, as is done in connection with human perceptions. This (sort of insight corresponds to) angelic perceptions and is transferred from them (to human beings). Prophets have it through natural disposition. After them, saints have it through divine guidance. But one errs if one wants to obtain it by scientific methods.

Authors have occasionally tried to explain the (Sufi) opinions concerning the revelation (*kashf*) of existence and the order of the realities of existence according to the approach of the people who (have the theory of) "manifestations" (*mazahir*). [490](#)

As compared to people who cultivate speculation, technical terminology, and the sciences, (it must be said that) they have always added obscurity to obscurity.

An example is al-Farghani,⁴⁹¹ the commentator on Ibn al-Farid's *Poem* ⁴⁹² He wrote a preface at the beginning of his commentary. In connection with the origin of the world of existence from the Maker and its order, he mentions that all existence comes forth from the attribute of uniqueness (*wahadniyah*) which is the manifestation of unity (*ahadiyah*).⁴⁹³ Both of them together issue from the noble essence that is identical with oneness and nothing else. This process is called "revelation" (*tajalli*). The first degree of revelation (*tajalli*), in (Sufi) opinion, is the revelation, as such ⁴⁹⁴ of the essence. This implies perfection, because it emanates creation and appearance, according to (God's) statement in the prophetic tradition transmitted by (the Sufis): "I was a concealed treasure. I wanted to be known.

Therefore, I created the creatures, so that they might know Me."⁴⁹⁵ This is perfection in creation descending to the level of existence and particularization of the realities. It is, in (Sufi) opinion, the world of ideas, the nubilous ('*amd'iyyah*) presence,⁴⁹⁶ and Muhammadan reality. It contains the realities of the attributes, the writing tablet and the pen, the realities of all the prophets and messengers, and the whole of the people of the Muhammadan nation. All this is the particularization of the Muhammadan reality. From these realities, other realities issue in the atomic (*haba'iyah*) presence,⁴⁹⁷ which is the level of the ideas (*mithal*). From there, then, issue in succession the (divine) throne, the (divine) seat, the spheres, the world of the elements, and the world of composition. All this is (originally) in the world of mending (*ratq*), but when these things manifest themselves, they are in the world of rending (*fatq*). End of the quotation.

This school is called that of the people of revelation, manifestations, and presences. It is a theory that people cultivating (logical) speculation cannot properly grasp, because it is obscure and cryptic. There also is a great gap between the theories of people who have vision and intuitive experience and those of people who cultivate logical reasoning.⁴⁹⁸ (Sufi) systems (like the one mentioned) are often disapproved of on the strength of the plain wording of the religious law, for no indication of them can be found in it anywhere.

Other (Sufis) turned to affirming absolute oneness. This is a theory (even) stranger than the first one to understand in its implications and details. They believe the components of everything in existence to possess powers that bring the realities, forms, and matters of the existing things into being. The elements come into being through the powers that are in them. The same is the case with matter, which has in itself a power that has brought about its existence. Composite things contain such powers implicit in the power that brought about (their) composition. For instance, the mineral power contains the powers of the elements of matter and, in addition, the mineral power. The animal power contains the mineral power and, in addition, its own power. The same is the case with the human power as compared to animal power. The firmament contains the human power and something in addition. The same applies to the spiritual essences.

Now, the power combining everything without any particularization is the divine power. It is the power distributed over all existing things, whether they are universals or particulars, combining and comprising them in every aspect, with regard to appearance and hiddenness and with regard to form and matter. Everything is one. (Oneness) is identical with the divine essence. In reality, (the divine essence) is one and simple. The thing that divides it is the way (we) look at it. For instance, as to the relationship of humanity to animality, it is clear that the former is included under the latter and comes into being when it comes into being. At times, (the Sufis)

represent the relationship as that of genus to species, (which exists) in every existing thing, as we have mentioned.⁴⁹⁹ Or, they represent it as that of the universal to the particular, according to the theory of ideas (*mithal*). At any rate, they always try to get away from any thought of composition or manifoldness. They think that (manifoldness) is brought about by fancy and imagination.

It appears from the discussion of Ibn Dihaq,⁵⁰⁰ who explains this (Sufi) theory, that what the (Sufis) say about oneness is actually similar to what the philosophers say about colors, namely, that their existence is predicated upon light. When there is no light, no colors whatever exist. Thus, the (Sufis) think that all existing *sensibilia* are predicated upon the existence of some (faculty of) sensual perception⁵⁰¹ and, in fact, that all existing *intelligibilia* and objects of imagination are predicated upon the existence of some (faculty of) intellectual perception. Thus, every particular in existence is predicated upon (the existence of)⁵⁰² the human (faculty) that perceives it. If we assumed that no human being with perception exists, there would be no particularization in existence. Existence would be simple and one.

Thus, heat and cold, solidity and softness, and, indeed, earth, water, fire, heaven, and the stars, exist only because the senses perceiving them exist, because particularization that does not exist in existence is made possible for the (person) who perceives. It exists only in perception. If there were no perceptions to create distinctions, there would be no particularization, but just one single perception, namely, the "I" and nothing else. They consider this comparable to the condition of a sleeper. When he sleeps and has no external sense perception, he loses in that condition all (perception of) *sensibilia*, with the exception of the things that the imagination particularizes for him. They continued by saying that a person who is awake likewise experiences particularized perceptions only through the type of human perception (that exists) in him. If he had not that something in him that perceives, there would be no particularization. This is what the (Sufis) mean when they say "imaginary." They do not mean "imaginary" as a part (in the sequence) of human perceptions.⁵⁰³

This is a short exposition of (Sufi) opinion, as gathered from the discussion of Ibn Dihaq. It is most erroneous. We know for certain that a country which we have quitted on our travels or to which we are traveling, exists, despite the fact that we do not see it any more. We also have definite knowledge of the existence of heaven that overlooks⁵⁰⁴ (everything), and of the stars, and of all the other things that are remote from us. Man knows these things for certain. No one would deny to himself (the existence of) certain knowledge. In addition, competent recent Sufis say that during the removal (of the veil), the Sufi novice often has a feeling of the oneness (of existence). Sufis call that the station of "combination" (*jam'*).⁵⁰⁵ But then, he progresses to distinguishing between existent things. That is considered by the Sufis the station of "differentiation" (*farq*). That is the station of the competent gnostic. The (Sufis) believe that the novice cannot avoid the ravine of "combination," and this ravine causes difficulties for him because there is danger that he might be arrested at it and his enterprise thus come to nought.⁵⁰⁶

The different kinds of mystics have thus been explained.

The recent Sufis who speak of the removal (of the veil) and supersensory perception have delved deeply into these (subjects). Many of them turned to (the theory of) incarnation and oneness, as we have indicated. They have filled many pages with (their exposition of) it. That was done, for instance, by al-Harawi,⁵⁰⁷ in the *Kitab al-Maqamat*, and by others. They were followed by Ibn al-'Arabi and Ibn Sab'in⁵⁰⁸ and their pupils, and then by Ibn al-'Afif ('Afif-ad-din),⁵⁰⁹ Ibn al-Farid,

and Najm-ad-din al-Isra'ili, [510](#) in the poems they composed.

The early (Sufis) had had contact with the Neo-Ismailiyah Shi'ah extremists who also believed in incarnation and the divinity of the imams, a theory not known to the early (Isma'iliyah). Each group came to be imbued with the dogmas of the other. Their theories and beliefs merged and were assimilated. In Sufi discussion, there appeared the theory of the "pole" (*qutb*), meaning the chief gnostic. The Sufis assumed that no one can reach his station in gnosis, until God takes him unto Himself and then gives his station to another gnostic who will be his heir. Avicenna referred to this in the sections on Sufism in the *Kitab al-Isharat*. He said: "The majestic Truth is too exalted to be available equally to all who seek it," [511](#) or to be seen save by one person at a *time*." [512](#)

The theory of (successive "poles") is not confirmed by logical arguments or evidence from the religious law. It is a sort of rhetorical figure of speech. It is identical with the theory of the extremist Shi'ah about the succession [513](#) of the imams through inheritance. Clearly, mysticism has plagiarized this idea from the extremist Shi'ah and come to believe in it.

The (Sufis), furthermore, speak about the order of existence of the "saints" who come after the "pole," exactly as the Shi'ah speak about their "chiefs." [514](#) They go so far (in the identification of their own concepts with those of the Shi'ah) that when they construed a chain of transmitters for the wearing of the Sufi cloak (*khirqah*) as a basic requirement of the mystic way and practice, they made it go back to 'Ali. [515](#) This points in the same direction and can only (be explained as Shi'ah influence). Among the men around Muhammad, 'Ali was not distinguished by any particular practice or way of dressing or by any special condition. Abu Bakr and 'Umar were the most ascetic and pious people after the Messenger of God. Yet, none of these men was distinguished by the possession of any particular religious practice exclusively peculiar to him. In fact, all the men around Muhammad were models of religion, austerity, asceticism, [516](#) and (pious) exertion. This is attested by their way of life and history. Indeed, with the help of these stories, the Shi'ah try to suggest that 'All is distinguished from the other men around Muhammad by being in possession of particular virtues, in conformity with well-known Shi'ah beliefs.

It [517](#) is obvious that the Sufis in the 'Iraq derived their comparison between the manifest and the inner (world) from the Isma'iliyah Shi'ah and their well-known theory concerning the imamate and connected matters, at the time when the Isma'iliyah Shi'ah made its appearance. The (Isma'iliyah Shi'ah) considered the leadership of mankind and its guidance toward the religious law a duty of the imam. Therefore, they assumed that there could be no more than one imam if the possibility of a split were to be avoided, as is established in the religious law. (Correspondingly, the Sufis) then regarded as a duty of the "pole," who is the chief gnostic, the instruction (of mankind) in the gnosis of God. Therefore, they assumed that there could be only one, on analogy from the imam in the manifest (world), and that he was the counterpart of the imam. [518](#) They called him "pole," because the gnosis revolves around him, and they equated the "saints" with the 'Alid "chiefs," in their exaggerated desire to identify (their concepts with those of the Shi'ah).

An instance of what I have just been saying is the lengthy discussion of the Fatimid in Sufi works. [519](#) The early Sufis made neither negative nor affirmative statements on the Fatimid. The lengthy discussion of (recent) Sufis was derived from the discussion (of the subject) and the dogmas (concerning it) expressed by the extremist Shi'ah in their works.

"God guides to the truth." [520](#)

I [521](#) consider it appropriate to quote here a remark made by our *shaykh*, the gnostic and chief saint in Spain, Abu Mahdi 'Isa b. az-Zayyat. [522](#) He repeated it very often. It concerns some verses from the *Kitab al-Maqamat* of al-Harawi which suggest, and almost profess openly, the theory of absolute oneness. These are the verses: [523](#)

The oneness of the Unique One has never been declared (properly) by anyone,

Since anyone who declares His oneness is one who denies (His true oneness).

Declaration of the divine oneness by a person who speaks about His attributes,

Is dualism, [524](#) which the Unique One has nullified.

His (Own) declaration of His (Own) oneness is the (true) declaration of His oneness.

And to describe Him with attributes is deviation. [525](#)

Abu Mahdi says in defense of al-Harawi: People have found it difficult to (explain how one could) use the expression "one who denies" for those who "declare the oneness of the Unique One," and the expression "deviation, heresy," for those who describe Him with attributes. They have disapproved of the verses quoted. They have attacked the author and condemned him. But we say that, according to the view of that group (of Sufis to whom al-Harawi belongs), declaration of the divine oneness means the negation of the very essence of createdness through affirmation of the very essence of primevalness. The whole existence is one reality and one being (*anniyah*). The great mystic, Abu Sa'id al-Kharraz, [526](#) thus said, "The Truth is the very essence of that which is manifest, and the very essence of that which is inwardly hidden."

The (Sufis) are of the opinion that the occurrence of any numerical plurality in that (divine) reality and [527](#) the existence of duality are imaginary and, compared with sensual data, are on the level of shadow pictures, or the pictures [528](#) in mirrors. Everything, except the very essence of primevalness, if one follows it up, turns out to be non-existent. This, they think, is the meaning (of the statement), "God was, and nothing (was) with Him. He is now in the same state in which He was." [529](#) This, too, is what is meant by the verse of Labid, which the Messenger of God considered to be true:

Indeed, everything but God is vanity. [530](#)

(This is what) the (Sufis) say. Consequently, a person who "declares the divine oneness and describes God with attributes" speaks about: (1) a created being who declares the divine oneness -that is, he himself; (2) a created declaration of the divine oneness-that is, his action (of declaring the divine oneness); and (s) a primeval being who is declared to be one-that is, his worshiped Master. Now, it has been mentioned before that declaration of divine oneness is negation of the very essence of createdness, but now, the very essence of createdness is (here) definitely stated (in connection with the declaration of divine oneness) and, in fact, in more than one (way). Thus, the divine oneness is actually denied, and the claim (to have declared the divine oneness) is false. It is the same as if someone were to say to someone else who is with him in a house, "There is nobody in the house except you." Whereupon the other person would reply at once, "This could be correct only

if you were non-existent." And a competent (scholar) remarked in connection with the statement, "God created time," that these words contain a basic contradiction, because the creation of time precedes time, yet is an action that must take place in time.

These things are caused by the difficulty of expressing the realities and the inability of language to convey the truth with regard to them and give them their due. If it is certain that he who declares (the divine) oneness is identical with Him whose oneness is declared,⁵³¹ and that anything else is altogether non-existent, then the (declaration of) divine oneness is truly a sound one. This is what is meant by the (Sufi) statement, "Only God knows God."⁵³²

There is no objection to a person's declaring the oneness of the Truth, while retaining the outlines and traces (of worldliness). This belongs to the chapter (dealing with the fact) that the good actions of pious people may be the bad actions of persons who are close to the Divine. It results from the lack of freedom, servitude, and doubleness⁵³³ (of the human condition). For those who have ascended to the station of "combination," it constitutes a defect. They are conscious of their rank and know that (their imperfection) is a deception resulting from (human) servitude, that vision can eliminate it, and that the very essence of "combination" can cleanse them from the uncleanliness of their createdness. The type (of persons) most firmly rooted in this assumption is that of those who hold the theory of absolute oneness and who say that gnosis, however interpreted, revolves around reaching the Unique One.

The poet uttered the remark (quoted) as an incitement and exhortation, referring to a higher station in which doubleness is eliminated and absolute oneness in (its) essence, not merely as a figure of speech or (some kind of) expression, is attained. Those who are safe and sound⁵³⁴ can rest. Those who have trouble with the reality of (oneness⁵³⁵ ought to become) familiar with (God's) statement, "I am his⁵³⁶ hearing and vision."⁵³⁷ If the concepts are known, there can be no quarrels about the words. All this teaches realization of the fact that there is something above this level, something about which one cannot speak and about which there is no information.

This much of a hint is sufficient. Going deeply into matters like this (lowers) the veil. That is the gist of the wellknown (Sufi) statements.

Here ends the quotation from *shaykh Abu Mahdi b. azZayyat*. I quoted it from the book on love by the wazir Ibn al-Khatib,⁵³⁸ entitled *at-Ta'r f bi-l-hubb ash-sharif* ("Information on the Noble Love [of God]"). I heard it from our *shaykh Abu Mahdi* himself several times. However, I think that the written form (in Ibn al-Khatib's work) preserves it better (than my memory), because it has been a long time (since I heard Abu Mahdi tell it).

God gives success.

Many jurists and muftis have undertaken to refute these and similar statements by recent Sufis. They summarily disapproved of everything they came across in the (Sufi) path. The truth is that discussion with the (Sufis) requires making a distinction. (The Sufis) discuss four topics. (1) Firstly, they discuss pious exertions, the resulting mystical and ecstatic experiences, and - self-scrutiny concerning (one's) actions.

(They discuss these things) in order to obtain mystical experiences, which then become a station from which one progresses to the next higher one, as we have stated.⁵³⁹ (2) Secondly, they discuss the removal (of the veil) and the perceivable

supernatural realities, such as the divine attributes, the (divine) throne, the (divine) seat, the angels, revelation, prophecy, the spirit, and the realities of everything in existence, be it supernatural or visible; furthermore, they discuss the order of created things, how they issue from the Creator Who brings them into being, as mentioned before.

[540](#) (3) The third topic is concerned with activities in the various worlds and among the various created things connected with different kinds of acts of divine grace. (4) The fourth topic (finally) is concerned with expressions that are suspect (if understood) in their plain meaning. Such (expressions) have been uttered by most Sufi leaders. In Sufi technical terminology, they are called "ecstatic utterances" (*shatahat*). [541](#) Their plain meaning is difficult to understand.

They may be something that must be disapproved of, or something that can be approved, or something that requires interpretation.

As for their discussion of pious exertions and stations, of the mystical and ecstatic experiences that result, and of self-scrutiny with regard to (possible) shortcomings in the things that cause these (experiences), this is something that nobody ought to reject. These mystical experiences of (the Sufis) are sound ones. Their realization is the very essence of happiness. [542](#)

As for their discussion of the acts of divine grace experienced by Sufis, the information they give about supernatural things, and their activity among the created things, these (also) are sound and cannot be. disapproved of, even though some religious scholars tend to disapprove. That is not right. Professor Abu Ishaq al-Isfarayini, a leading Ash'arite, argued that these things should be disapproved of, since they might be confused with the (prophetic) miracles. However, competent orthodox scholars have made a distinction between (miracles and acts of divine grace) by referring to "the (advance) challenge" (*tahaddi*), [543](#) that is, the claim (made by a prophet in advance) that the miracle would occur in agreement with the prophetic revelation. It is not possible, they said, that a miracle could happen in agreement with the claim of a liar. Logic requires that a miracle indicate truthfulness. By definition, a (miracle is something that) can be verified. If it were performed by a liar, it (could not be verified, and thus) would have changed its character, which is absurd. In addition, the world of existence attests the occurrence of many such acts of divine grace. Disapproval of them would be a kind of negative approach. Many such acts of divine grace were experienced by the men around Muhammad and the great early Muslims. This is a well-known and famous (fact).

Most of the (Sufi) discussion of the removal (of the veil), of the reception of the realities of the higher things, and of the order in which the created things issue, falls, in a way, under the category of ambiguous statements. [544](#) It is based upon the intuitive experience of (Sufis), and those who lack such intuitive experience cannot have the mystical experience that the (Sufis receive from) it. No language can express the things that (Sufis) want to say in this connection, because languages have been invented only for (the expression of) commonly accepted concepts, most of which apply to the *sensibilia*. [545](#) Therefore, we must not bother with the (Sufi) discussion of those matters. We ought merely to leave it alone, just as we leave alone the ambiguous statements (of the Qur'an and the Sunnah). [546](#) Those to whom God grants some understanding of those (mystical) utterances in a way that agrees with the plain meaning of the religious law do, indeed, enjoy happiness.

(Finally,) there are the suspect expressions which the Sufis call "ecstatic utterances" (*shatahat*) and which provoke the censure of orthodox Muslims. As to them, it should be known that the attitude that would be fair to the (Sufis) is (to observe) that they are people who are removed from sense perception. Inspiration grips them. Eventually, they say things about their inspiration that they do not intend

to say. A person who is removed (from sense perception) cannot be spoken to. He who is forced (to act) is excused (when he acts, no matter what he does). (Sufis) who are known for their excellence and exemplary character are considered to act in good faith in this and similar respects. It is difficult to express ecstatic experiences, because there are no conventional ways of expressing them. This was the experience of Abu Yazid al-Bistami [547](#) and others like him. However, (Sufis) whose excellence is not known and famous deserve censure for utterances of this kind, since the (data) that might cause us to interpret their statements (so as to remove any suspicion attached to them) are not clear to us. (Furthermore, any Sufis) who are not removed from sense perception and are not in the grip of a state when they make utterances of this kind, also deserve censure. Therefore, the jurists and the great Sufis decided that al-Hallaj [548](#) was to be killed, because he spoke (ecstatically) while not removed (from sense perception) but in control of his state. And God knows better.

The early Sufis who are mentioned in (al-Qushayri's) *Risalah*, [549](#) those outstanding Muslims to whom we have referred above, had no desire to remove the veil and to have such (supernatural) perception. Their concern was to follow their models and to lead an exemplary life as far as possible. Whenever they had a (supernatural) experience, they turned away from it and paid no attention to it.

Indeed, they tried to avoid it. [550](#) They were of the opinion that it was an obstacle and a tribulation and belonged to the (ordinary) perceptions of the soul, and, as such, was something created. They also thought that human perception could not comprise all the *existentialia* and that the knowledge of God was wider, His creation greater, and His religious law more certain for guidance (than any mystical experience). [551](#) Therefore, they did not speak about any of their (supernatural) perceptions.

In fact, they forbade the discussion of those things and prevented their companions, for whom the veil (of sense perception) was removed, from discussing the matter or from giving it the slightest consideration. They continued following their models and leading exemplary lives as they had done in the world of sensual perception before the removal (of the veil), and they commanded their companions to do the same. [552](#) Such ought to be the state of the Sufi novice.

God gives success.

17. The science of dream interpretation.

This science belongs to the sciences of the religious law. It originated in Islam when the sciences became crafts [553](#) and scholars wrote books on them. Dream visions and dream interpretation existed among the ancients, as among later generations. It existed among former (pre-Islamic) religious groups and nations. However, their dream interpretation did not reach us, [554](#) because we have been satisfied with the discussions of Muslim dream interpreters. In any case, all human beings can have dream visions, and these visions must be interpreted.

Truthful Joseph already interpreted visions, as is mentioned in the Qur'an. [555](#) (Sound tradition in) the *Sahih*, on the authority of the Prophet and on the authority of Abu Bakr, likewise establishes (the existence of dream visions). Dream vision is a kind of supernatural perception. Muhammad said: "A good dream vision is the forty-sixth part of prophecy." [556](#) He also said: "The only remaining bearer of glad tidings is a good dream vision, beheld by - or shown to - a good man." [557](#) The revelation given to the Prophet began with a dream vision. Every dream vision he saw appeared to him like the break of dawn. When Muhammad went away from the morning prayer, he used to ask the men around him, "Did any one of you see a dream vision during the night?" He asked this question in order to derive good news from dream visions, which might refer to the victory of Islam and the growth of its power. [558](#)

The reason for perception of the supernatural in dream visions is as follows: [559](#) The spirit of the heart, which is the fine vapor coming from the cavity in the flesh of the heart, spreads into the veins and, through the blood, to all the rest of the body. It serves to perfect the actions and sensations of the animal powers. The (spirit) may be affected by lassitude, because it is very busy with the sensual perception of the five senses and with the employment of the external powers. When the surface of the body, then, is covered by the chill of night, the spirit withdraws from all the other regions of the body to its center, the heart. It rests, in order to be able to resume its activity, and all the external senses are (for the time being) unemployed. This is the meaning of sleep, as was mentioned before at the beginning of the book. Now, the spirit of the heart is the vehicle of man's rational spirit. Through its essence, the rational spirit perceives everything that is in the divine world, since its reality and its essence are identical with perception. It is prevented from assimilating any supernatural perception by the veil of its preoccupation with the body and the corporeal powers and senses. If it were without that veil or stripped of it, it would return to its reality, which is identical with perception. It would thus be able to assimilate any object of perception. If it were stripped of part of it, its preoccupation would be less. It is thus able to catch a glimpse of its own world, since external sense perception, its greatest preoccupation, now occupies it less. Its (supernatural perception) corresponds (in intensity) to the degree to which the veil is withdrawn from it. Thus it becomes prepared to receive the available perceptions from its own world that are appropriate for it. When it has perceived these perceptions from its own worlds, it returns with them to its body, since, as long as it remains in its corporeal body, it cannot be active except through corporeal means of perception.

The faculties through which the body perceives knowledge are all connected with the brain. The active part among them is the imagination. It derives imaginary pictures from the pictures perceived by the senses and turns them over to the power of memory, which retains them until they are needed in connection with speculation and deduction. From the (imaginary pictures), the soul also abstracts other spiritual-intellectual pictures. In this way, abstraction ascends from the *sensibilia* to the *intelligibilia*. The imagination is the intermediary between them. Also, when the soul has received a certain number of perceptions from its own world, it passes them on to the imagination, which forms them into appropriate pictures and turns those perceptions over to the common sense. As a result, the sleeper sees them as if they were perceived by the senses. Thus, the perceptions come down from the rational spirit to the level of sensual perception, with the imagination again being the intermediary. This is what dream visions actually are.

The (preceding) exposition shows the difference between true dream visions and false, "confused dreams." All of them are pictures in the imagination while an individual is asleep. However, if these pictures come down from the rational spirit that perceives (them), they are dream visions. But if they are derived from the pictures preserved in the power of memory, where the imagination deposits them when the individual is awake, they are "confused dreams."⁵⁶⁰

It ⁵⁶¹ should be known that true dream visions have signs indicating their truthfulness and attesting their soundness, so that the person who has the dream vision becomes conscious of the glad tidings from God given him in his sleep.

The first of these signs is that the person who has the dream vision wakes up quickly, as soon as he has perceived it. It seems as if he is in a hurry to get back to being awake and having sensual perception. Were he (to continue) to sleep soundly, the perception given him would weigh heavily on him. Therefore, he tries to escape from the state (in which he has supernatural perception) to the state of sensual perception in which the soul is always fully immersed in the body and the corporeal accidents.

Another sign is that the dream vision stays and remains impressed with all its details in the memory of (the person who perceived it). Neither neglect nor forgetfulness affects it. No thinking or remembering is required, in order to have it present (to one's mind). The (dream vision) remains pictured in the mind of (the dreamer) when he awakes. Nothing of it is lost to him. This is because perception by the soul does not take place in time and requires no consecutive order, but takes place all at once and within a single time element. ⁵⁶² "Confused dreams," on the other hand, take place in time, because they rest in the powers of the brain and are brought from the power of memory to the common sense by the imagination, as we have stated. (The process is an action of the body,) and all actions of the body take place in time. Thus, they (require) a consecutive order, in order to perceive anything, with something coming first and something else coming later. Forgetfulness, which always affects the powers of the brain, affects (them). That is not the case with the perceptions of the rational soul. They do not take place in time and have no consecutive order. Perceptions that are impressed in (the rational soul) are impressed all at once in the briefest moment. Thus, after (the sleeper) is awake, (his) dream vision remains present in his memory for quite some time. In no way does it slip his mind as the result of neglect, if it originally made a strong impression. However, if it requires thinking and application to remember a dream vision after a sleeper is awake, and if he has forgotten many of its details before he can remember them again, the dream vision is not a true one but a "confused dream."

These signs belong in particular to (prophetic) revelation. God said to His

Prophet: "Do not set your tongue in motion to make haste with (the revelation of the Qur'an). It is up to us to put it together and to recite it. And when we recite it, follow its recitation. Then, it is up to us to explain it." [563](#) Dream visions are related to prophecy and revelation, as is stated in (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*. Thus, Muhammad said: "A dream vision is the forty-sixth part of prophecy." [564](#) In the same way, the characteristics of dream visions are related to the characteristics of prophecy. One should not consider that as unlikely. It appears to be this way.

God creates whatever He wishes to create.

As to the idea of dream interpretation, the following should be known. The rational spirit has its perceptions and passes them on to the imagination. (The imagination) then forms them into pictures but it forms them only into such pictures as are somehow related to the (perceived) idea. For instance, if the idea of a mighty ruler is perceived, the imagination depicts it in the form of an ocean. Or, the idea of hostility is depicted by the imagination in the form of a serpent. A person wakes up and knows only that he saw an ocean or a serpent. Then, the dream interpreter, who is certain that the ocean is the picture conveyed by the senses and that the perceived idea is something beyond that picture, puts the power of comparison to work. He is guided by further data that establish the character of the perceived idea for him. Thus, he will say, for instance, that the ocean means a ruler, because an ocean is something big with which a ruler can appropriately be compared. Likewise, a serpent can appropriately be compared with an enemy, because it does great harm. Also, vessels can be compared with women, because they are receptacles, and so on. [565](#)

Dream visions may be evident and require no interpretation, because they are clear and distinct, or because (the ideas) perceived in them may be very similar to (the pictures) by which they are represented. Therefore, it has been said in (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*, "There are three kinds of dream visions. There are dream visions from God, dream visions from the angels, and dream visions from Satan." [566](#) Dream visions from God are those that are evident and need no explanation. Dream visions from an angel are true dreams that require interpretation. And dream visions from Satan are "confused dreams."

It should be known that when the spirit passes its perceptions on to the imagination, (the latter) depicts them in the customary molds of sensual perception. Where such molds never existed in sensual perception, (the imagination) [567](#) cannot form any pictures. A (person who was) born blind could not depict a ruler by an ocean, an enemy by a serpent, or women by vessels, because he had never perceived any such things. For him, the imagination would depict those things through similarly appropriate (pictures) derived from the type of perceptions with which he is familiar - that is, things which can be heard or smelled. The dream interpreter must be on guard against such things. They often cause confusion in dream interpretation and spoil its rules.

The science of dream interpretation implies a knowledge of general norms upon which the dream interpreter bases the interpretation and explanation of what he is told. For instance, they say that an ocean represents a ruler. Elsewhere, they say that an ocean represents wrath. Again, elsewhere, they say that it represents worry and calamity. Or, they say that a serpent represents an enemy, but elsewhere they say that it represents one who conceals a secret. Elsewhere again, they say that it represents life, and so on. [568](#)

The dream interpreter knows these general norms by heart and interprets the dreams in each case as required by the data establishing which of these norms fits a particular dream vision best. The data may originate in the waking state. They may

originate in the sleeping state. Or, they may be created in the soul of the dream interpreter himself by the special quality with which he is endowed.

Everyone is successful at the things for which he was created.[569](#)

This science never ceased being transmitted in the circles of the early Muslims. Muhammad b. Sirin [570](#) was one of the most famous experts in (dream interpretation) among them. Certain norms of dream interpretation were written down on his authority. People have transmitted them down to this time.

Al-Kirmani [571](#) wrote on the subject after Ibn Sirin. Recent scholars have written many works on it. The books in use among contemporary Maghribis are the *Mumti'* and other works by Ibn Abi Talib al-Qayrawini, [572](#) a scholar from al-Qayrawan, and the *Kitab al-Isharah* by as-Salimi [573](#) which is one of the most useful and briefest [574](#) books on the subject. There also is the *Kitab al-Marqabah al-'ulya* by Ibn Rashid, [575](#) who belonged to (the circle of) our *shaykhs* in Tunis.

Dream interpretation is a science resplendent with the light of prophecy, because prophecy and dreams are related to each other, and (dreams) played a part in the (prophetic) revelation, as has been established in sound tradition.

"God knows the supernatural." [576](#)

18. *The various kinds of intellectual sciences.*

The intellectual sciences are natural to man, in as much as he is a thinking being. They are not restricted to any particular religious group. They are studied by the people of all religious groups who are all equally qualified to learn them and to do research in them. They have existed (and been known) to the human species since civilization had its beginning in the world. They are called the sciences of philosophy and wisdom. They comprise four different sciences.

(1) The first science is logic. It is a science protecting the mind from error in the process of evolving unknown facts one wants to know from the available, known facts. Its use enables the student to distinguish right from wrong wherever he so desires in his study of the essential and accidental perceptions and apperceptions.⁵⁷⁷ Thus, he will be able to ascertain the truth concerning created things, negatively or positively,⁵⁷⁸ within the limits of his ability to think.

(2) Then, philosophers may study the elemental substances perceptible by the senses, namely, the minerals, the plants, and the animals which are created from (the elemental substances), the heavenly bodies, natural motions, and the soul from which the motions originate, and other things. This discipline is called "physics." It is the second of the intellectual sciences.

(3) Or they may study metaphysical, spiritual matters. This science is called "metaphysics" (*al-'ilm al-ilahi*). It is the third of the intellectual sciences.

(4) The fourth science is the study of quantities (measurements). It comprises four different sciences, which are called the "mathematical sciences" (*ta'alim*).

The first mathematical science is geometry. It is the study of quantities (measurements) in general.⁵⁷⁹ The quantities (measurements) may be either discontinuous, in as much as they constitute numbers, or continuous (as geometrical figures). They may be of one dimension - the line; of two dimensions - the plane; or of three dimensions - the mathematical solid. These quantities (measurements) and the qualities they possess, either by themselves or in combination with each other, are (what is) studied (in geometry).

The second mathematical science is arithmetic. It is the knowledge of the essential and accidental properties of the discontinuous quantity, number.

The third mathematical science is music. It is the knowledge of the proportions of sounds and modes and their numerical measurements. Its fruit is the knowledge of musical melodies.⁵⁸⁰

The fourth mathematical science is astronomy. It fixes the (various) shapes of the spheres, determines the position and number of each planet and fixed star, and makes it possible to learn these things from the visible heavenly motions of each (sphere), their motions, both retrograde and direct, their precession and recession.

These are the basic philosophical sciences. They are seven (in number). Logic comes first. Then comes mathematics, beginning with arithmetic, followed in succession by geometry, astronomy, and music. Then comes physics and, finally, metaphysics. Each of these sciences has subdivisions. One subdivision of physics is medicine. Subdivisions of arithmetic are calculation,⁵⁸¹ the inheritance laws, and

business (arithmetic). A subdivision of astronomy is the astronomical tables (*zij*). They are norms for computing the motions of the stars and adjusting (the data) in order to be able to know their positions, whenever desired. Another subdivision of the study of the stars is the science of stellar judgments (astrology).

We shall discuss all these sciences, one after the other.

It should be known that as far as our historical information goes, these sciences were most extensively cultivated by the two great pre-Islamic nations, the Persians and the Greeks (Rum). According to the information we have, the sciences were greatly in demand among them, because they possessed an abundant civilization and were the ruling nations immediately before Islam and its time. In their regions and cities, the sciences flourished greatly.

The Chaldaeans and, before them, the Syrians, as well as their contemporaries, the Copts, were much concerned with sorcery and astrology and the related subjects of powerful (charms) and talismans. The Persian and Greek nations learned these things from them. The Copts especially cultivated those things, which enjoyed great prominence among them. The Qur'an (*al-matluw*) mentions this fact in the story of Harut and Marut, [582](#) and the affair of the sorcerers. [583](#) There also are the reports of informed persons on the temples of Upper Egypt. [584](#) Later on, these things were declared forbidden and illegal by successive religious groups: As a result, the sciences concerned with them were wiped out and vanished, as if they had never been. Only a small remnant, transmitted by the practitioners of those crafts, has remained. And God knows better whether those crafts are sound. The sword of the religious law hangs over them and prevents choice of them (as a subject of study). [585](#)

Among the Persians, the intellectual sciences played a large and important role, since the Persian dynasties were powerful and ruled without interruption. The intellectual sciences are said to have come to the Greeks from the Persians, (at the time) when Alexander killed Darius and gained control of the Achaemenid empire. At that time, he appropriated the books and sciences of the Persians. However, [586](#) when the Muslims conquered Persia and came upon an indescribably large number of books and scientific papers, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas wrote to 'Umar b. al-Khattab, asking him for permission to take them and distribute them as booty among the Muslims. On that occasion, 'Umar wrote him: "Throw them into the water. If what they contain is right guidance, God has given us better guidance. If it is error, God has protected us against it." [587](#) Thus, the (Muslims) threw them into the water or into the fire, and the sciences of the Persians were lost and did not reach us.

The dynasty of the Rum originally belonged to the Greeks, among whom the intellectual sciences occupied a large place. They were cultivated by famous Greek personalities, among them the pillars of philosophy, and others. The Peripatetic philosophers, in particular the Stoics, [588](#) possessed a good method of instruction in the intellectual sciences. It has been assumed that they used to study in which protected them from the sun and the cold. Their school tradition is assumed to have passed from the sage Luqman [589](#) and his pupils to Socrates of the barrel; so and then, in succession, to Socrates [590](#) pupil, Plato, to Plato's pupil, Aristotle, to Aristotle's pupils, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius, and others.

Aristotle was the teacher of Alexander, the ruler of the (Greeks) who defeated the Persians and deprived them of their realm. He was the greatest Greek scientist and enjoyed the greatest prestige and fame. He has been called "the First Teacher." [591](#) He became world-famous.

When the Greek dynasty was destroyed and the Roman emperors seized power and adopted Christianity, the intellectual sciences were shunned by them, as religious groups and their laws require. (But) they continued to have a permanent life [592](#) in scientific writings and treatments which were preserved in their libraries.

The (Roman emperors) [593](#) later on took possession of Syria. The (ancient) scientific books continued to exist during their (rule). Then, God brought Islam, and its adherents gained their incomparable victory. They deprived the Byzantines (Rum), as well as all other nations, of their realms. At the beginning, they were simple (in their ways) and disregarded the crafts. Eventually, however, the Muslim rule and dynasty flourished. The Muslims developed a sedentary culture, such as no other nation had ever possessed. They became versed in many different crafts and sciences. Then, they desired to study the philosophical disciplines. They had heard some mention of them by the bishops and priests among (their) Christian subjects, and man's ability to think has (in any case) aspirations in the direction of the intellectual sciences. Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, therefore, sent to the Byzantine Emperor and asked him to send him translations of mathematical works. The Emperor sent him Euclid's book and some works on physics. The Muslims read them and studied their contents. Their desire to obtain the rest of them grew. Later on, al-Ma'mun came. He had some (scientific knowledge). Therefore, he had a desire for science. His desire aroused him to action in behalf of the (intellectual) sciences. He sent ambassadors to the Byzantine emperors. (These ambassadors were) to discover the Greek sciences and to have them copied in Arabic writing. He sent translators for that purpose (into Byzantine territory). As a result, a good deal of the material was preserved and collected.

Muslim scientists assiduously studied the (Greek sciences). [594](#) They became skilled in the various branches. The (progress they made in the) study of those sciences could not have been better. They contradicted the First Teacher (Aristotle) on many points. They considered him [595](#) the decisive authority as to whether an opinion should be rejected or accepted, because he possessed the greatest fame. They wrote systematic works on the subject. They surpassed their predecessors in the intellectual sciences.

Abu Nasr al-Farabi and Abu 'Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna) in the East, and Judge Abul-Walid b. Rushd (Averroes) and the wazir Abu Bakr b. as-Sa'igh (Avempace) [596](#) in Spain, were among the greatest Muslim (philosophers), and there were others who reached the limit in the intellectual sciences. The men mentioned enjoy especial fame and prestige.

Many (scientists) restricted themselves to cultivating the mathematical disciplines and the related sciences of astrology, sorcery, and talismans. The most famous practitioners of these sciences were Jabir b. Hayyan in the East, [597](#) and the Spaniard, Maslamah b. Ahmad al-Majriti, and his pupils.

The intellectual sciences and their representatives succeeded to some degree in penetrating Islam. They seduced many people who were eager to study those sciences and accept the opinions expressed in them. In this respect, the sin falls' upon the person who commits it. "If God had wanted it, they would not have done it." [598](#)

Later on, civilizational activity stopped in the Maghrib and in Spain. The sciences decreased with the decrease of civilization. As a consequence, scientific activity disappeared there, save for a few remnants that may be found among scattered individuals and that are controlled by orthodox religious scholars.

We hear that the intellectual sciences are still amply represented among the

inhabitants of the East, [599](#) in particular in the non-Arab 'Iraq and, farther east, in Transoxania. The people there are said to be very successful in the intellectual and traditional sciences, because their civilization is abundant and their sedentary culture firmly established.

In Egypt, I have become acquainted with numerous works by a great scholar of Herat in Khurasan, by name Sa'd-ad-din at-Taftazani.[600](#) Some of his works are on speculative theology, the principles of jurisprudence, and syntax and style (*bayan*). They show that he is well grounded in these sciences. They (also) contain things proving that he has studied and knows the philosophical sciences and is well versed in all the intellectual disciplines. "God aids whomever He wishes to aid."[601](#)

We further hear now that the philosophical sciences are greatly cultivated in the land of Rome and along the adjacent northern shore of the country of the European Christians. They are said to be studied there again and to be taught in numerous classes. Existing systematic expositions of them are said to be comprehensive, the people who know them numerous, and the students of them very many. God knows better what exists there. "He creates whatever He wishes, and His is the choice."[602](#)

19. *The sciences concerned with numbers.*

The first of them is arithmetic. Arithmetic is the knowledge of the properties of numbers combined in arithmetic or geometric progressions.

For instance, in an arithmetic progression, in which each number is always higher by one than the preceding number, the sum of the first and last numbers of the progression is equal to the sum of any two numbers (in the progression) that are equally far removed from the first and the last number, respectively, of the progression. [603](#)

Or, (the sum of the first and last numbers of a progression) is twice the middle number of the progression, if the total number of numbers (in the progression) is an odd number. It can be a progression of even and odd numbers, or of even numbers, or of odd numbers. [604](#)

Or, if the numbers of a (geometrical) progression are such that the first is one-half of the second and the second one-half of the third, and so on, or if the first is one-third of the second and the second one-third of the third, and so on, the result of multiplying the first number by the last number of the progression is equal to the result of multiplying any two numbers of the progression that are equally far removed from the first and the last number, respectively, (of the progression). [605](#)

Or, (the result of multiplying the first number by the last number of a geometrical progression,) if the number of numbers (in the progression) is odd, is equal to the square of the middle number of the progression. For instance, the progression may consist of the powers of two: two, four, eight, sixteen. [606](#)

Or, there are the properties of numbers that originate in the formation of numerical *muthallathah* (triangle), *murabba'ah* (square), *mukhammasah* (pentagon), and *musaddasah* (hexagon) progressions, [607](#) where the numbers are arranged progressively in their rows by [608](#) adding them up from one to the last number. Thus, a *muthallathah* is formed. (Other) *muthallathahs* (are placed) successively in rows under the "sides." Then, each *muthallathah* is increased by the "side" in front of it. Thus, a *murabba'ah* is formed. Then, each *murabba'(ah)* is increased (by the "side") in front of it. Thus, a *mukhammasah* is formed, and so on. The (various) progressions of "sides" form figures. Thus, a table is formed with vertical and horizontal rows. The horizontal rows are constituted by the progression of the numbers (one, two, etc.), followed by the *muthallathah*, *murabba'ah*, *mukhammasah* progressions, and so on. The vertical rows contain all the numbers and certain numerical combinations. The totals and (the results of) dividing some of the numbers by others, both vertically and horizontally, (reveal) remarkable numerical properties. They have been evolved by the inductive method. The problems connected with them have been laid down in the systematic treatments of (arithmeticians).

The same applies to special properties originating in connection with even numbers, odd numbers, the powers of two, odd numbers multiplied by two, [609](#) and odd numbers multiplied by multiples of two. [610](#) They are dealt with in this discipline, and in no other discipline.

This discipline is the first and most evident part of mathematics. It is used in the proofs of the mathematicians.⁶¹¹ Both early and later philosophers have written works on it. Most of them include it under mathematics in general and, therefore, do not write monographs on it. This was done by Avicenna in the *Kitab ash-Shifa'* and the *Kitab an-Najah*, and by other early scholars. The subject is avoided by later scholars, since it is not commonly used (in practice), being useful in (theoretical mathematical) proofs rather than in (practical) calculation. (They handled the subject the way) it was done, for instance, by Ibn al-Banna, ⁶¹² in the *Kitab Raf al-hijab*. They extracted the essence of the subject (as far as it was useful) for the theory of (practical) calculation and then avoided it. And God knows better.

The craft of calculation ⁶¹³

A subdivision of arithmetic is the craft of calculation. It is a scientific craft concerned with the counting operations of "combining," and "separating." The "combining" may take place by (adding the) units. This is addition. Or it may take place by increasing a number as many times as there are units in another number. This is multiplication. The "separating" may take place by taking away one number from another and seeing what remains. This is subtraction. Or it may take place by separating a number into equal parts of a given number. This is division.

These operations may concern either whole numbers or fractions. A fraction is the relationship of one number to another number. Such relationship is called fraction. Or they may concern "roots." "Roots" are numbers that, when multiplied by themselves, lead to square numbers. ⁶¹⁴ Numbers that are clearly expressed are called "rational," and so are their squares. They do not require (special) operations in calculation. Numbers that are not clearly expressed are called "surds." Their squares may be rational, as, for instance, the root of three whose square is three. Or, they may be surds, such as the root of the root of three, which is a surd. They require (special) operations in calculation. Such roots are also included in the operations of "combining" and "separating."

This craft is something newly created. It is needed for business calculations. Scholars have written many works on it. They are used in the cities for the instruction of children. The best method of instruction is to begin with (calculation), because it is concerned with lucid knowledge and systematic proofs. As a rule, it produces an enlightened intellect that is trained along correct lines. It has been said that whoever applies himself to the study of calculation early in his life will as a rule be truthful, because calculation has a sound basis and requires self-discipline. (Soundness and self-discipline) will, thus, become character qualities of such a person. He will get accustomed to truthfulness and adhere to it methodically.

In the contemporary Maghrib, one of the best simple ⁶¹⁵ works on the subject is the small work by al-Hassar.⁶¹⁶ Ibn al-Banna' al-Marrakushi deals with the (subject) in an accurate and useful brief description (*talkhis*) of the rules of calculation.⁶¹⁷ Ibn al-Banna' later wrote a commentary on it in a book which he entitled *Raf al-hijab*.⁶¹⁸ The (*Raf al-hijab*) ⁶¹⁹ is too difficult for beginners, because it possesses a solid groundwork of (theoretical) proofs. It is an important book. We have heard our teachers praise it. It deserves that. In ⁶²⁰ the (work), the author competed with the *Kitab Fiqh alhisab* by Ibn Mun'im,⁶²¹ and the *Hamid* by al-Ahdab. He gave a resume of the proofs dealt with in these two works, but he changed them in as much as, instead of ciphers, he used clear theoretical reasons in the proofs. They bring out the real meaning and essence of (what in the work itself is

expressed by calculations with ciphers).⁶²² All of them are difficult. The difficulty here lies in the attempt to bring proof. This is usually the case in the mathematical sciences. All the problems and operations are clear, but if one wants to comment on them - that is, if one wants to find the reasons for the operations - it causes greater difficulties to the understanding than (does) practical treatment of the problems. This should be taken into consideration.

God guides with His light whomever He wants (to guide).⁶²³

Algebra

Another subdivision of arithmetic is algebra. This is a craft that makes it possible to discover the unknown from the known data, if there exists a relationship between them requiring it. Special technical terms have been invented in algebra for the various multiples (powers) of the unknown. The first of them is called "number,"⁶²⁴ because by means of it one determines the unknown one is looking for, discovering its value from the relationship of the unknown to it. The second is (called) "thing,"⁶²⁵ because every unknown as such refers to some "thing." It also is called "root," because (the same element) requires multiplication in second degree (equations). The third is (called) "property."⁶²⁶ It is the square of the unknown. Everything beyond that depends on the exponents of the two (elements) that are multiplied.⁶²⁷

Then, there is the operation that is conditioned by the problem. One proceeds to create an equation between two or more different (units) of the (three) elements (mentioned). The various elements are "confronted," and "broken" portions (in the equation) are "set"⁶²⁸ and thus become "healthy." The degrees of equations are reduced to the fewest possible basic forms. Thus, they come to be three. Algebra revolves around these three basic forms. They are "number," "thing," and "property."⁶²⁹

When an equation consists of one (element) on each side, the value of the unknown is fixed. The value of "property" or "root" becomes known and fixed, when equated with "number."⁶³⁰ A "property" equated with "roots" is fixed by the multiples of those "roots."⁶³¹

When an equation consists of one (element) on one side and two on the other,⁶³² there is a geometrical solution for it by multiplication in part on the unknown side of the equation with the two (elements). Such multiplication in part fixes the (value) of (the equation). Equations with two (elements) on one side and two on the other are not possible.⁶³³

The largest number of equations recognized by algebraists is six. The simple and composite equations of "numbers," "roots," and "properties" come to six.⁶³⁴

The first to write on this discipline was Abu 'Abdallah al-Khuwarizmi.⁶³⁵ After him, there was Abu Kamil Shuja' b. Aslam.⁶³⁶ People followed in his steps. His book on the six problems of algebra is one of the best books written on the subject. Many Spanish scholars wrote good commentaries on it. One of the best Spanish commentaries is the book of al-Qurashi.⁶³⁷

We have heard that great eastern mathematicians have extended the algebraic operations beyond the six types and brought them up to more than twenty. For all of them, they discovered solutions based on solid geometrical proofs.⁶³⁸

God "gives in addition to the creatures whatever He wishes to give to them."
[639](#)

Business (arithmetic)

Another subdivision of arithmetic is business (arithmetic). This is the application of arithmetic to business dealings in cities. These business dealings may concern the sale (of merchandise), the measuring (of land), the charity taxes, as well as other business dealings that have something to do with numbers. In this connection, one uses both arithmetical techniques, [640](#) (and one has to deal) with the unknown and the known, and with fractions, whole (numbers), roots, and other things.

In this connection, very many problems have been posed. Their purpose is to give (the student) exercise and experience through repeated practice, until he has the firm habit of the craft of arithmetic.

Spanish mathematicians have written numerous works on the subject. The best known of these works are the business arithmetics of az-Zahrawi, [641](#) Ibn as-Samh, [642](#) Abu Muslim b. Khaldun, [643](#) who were pupils of Maslamah al-Majriti, and others.

Inheritance laws [644](#)

Another subdivision of arithmetic is inheritance laws. It is a craft concerned with calculation, that deals with determining the correct shares of an estate for the legal heirs. It may happen that there is a large number of heirs, and one of the heirs dies and his portions have to be (re-)distributed among his heirs. Or, the individual portions, when they are counted together and added up, may exceed the whole estate. [645](#) Or, there may be a problem when one heir acknowledges, but the others do not acknowledge, (another heir, and vice versa). All this requires solution, in order to determine the correct amount of the shares in an estate and the correct share that goes to each relative, so that the heirs get the amounts of the estate to which they are entitled in view of the total amount of the shares of the estate. A good deal of calculation comes in here. It is concerned with whole (numbers), fractions, roots, knowns and unknowns; it is arranged according to the chapters and problems of inheritance law.

This craft, therefore, has something to do with jurisprudence, namely, with inheritance law, as far as it is concerned with the laws concerning the legal shares of inheritance, the reduction of the individual shares ('awl), the acknowledgement or non-acknowledgement (of heirs), wills, manumission by will, and other problems. And it has also a good deal [646](#) to do with arithmetic, in as much as it is concerned with determining the correct amount of the shares in accordance with the law evolved by the jurists.

It is a very important discipline. The scholars who cultivate it have produced traditions attesting to its excellence, such as, for instance: "The *fara'id* (inheritance laws) constitute one-third of (religious) scholarship, and they are the first science to be abolished," [647](#) and other such traditions. However, as was mentioned before, I am of the opinion that according to their plain meaning, all those traditions refer to individual "obligations" (*fara'id*), and not to the inheritance laws (*fara'id*). The latter are too few in number to constitute one-third of (religious) scholarship, whereas individual obligations are numerous.

Scholars, in early and late times, have written extensive works on the subject. Among the best works on the subject according to the school of Malik are the book of Ibn Thabit, the *Mukhtasar* of Judge Abul-Qasim al-Hawfi, and the books of Ibn al-Munammar, al-Ja'di, [648](#) az-Zawdi, [649](#) and others.

But al-Hawfi is pre-eminent. His book is preferable to all the others. A clear and comprehensive commentary on it was written by one of our teachers, Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad b. Sulayman as-Satti, [650](#) the leading *shaykh* of Fez. The Imam alHaramayn wrote works on the subject according to the school of ash-Shafi'i. They attest to his great scholarly capability and his firm grounding in scholarship. The Hanafites and the Hanbalites also (wrote works on the subject). The positions of scholars in scholarship vary. [651](#)

"God guides whomever He wants to guide." [652](#)

20. *The geometrical sciences.*

This science studies quantities (measurements) [653](#) Quantities (measurements) may be continuous, like lines, planes, and (geometrical) solids, or discontinuous, like numbers. It also studies the essential properties of the quantities (measurements), as, for instance:

The angles of any triangle are equal to two right angles.

Parallel lines do not intersect anywhere, even when they extend to infinity.

The opposite angles formed when two lines intersect are equal to each other.

The result of multiplying the first and the third of four quantities in a proportion is equal to that of multiplying the second and the fourth. [654](#) And so on.

The Greek work on this craft which has been translated (into Arabic) is the book of Euclid. It is entitled *Kitab alusul wa-l-arkan* ("Book of Basic Principles and Pillars"). [655](#) It is the simplest [656](#) book on the subject for students. It was the first Greek work to be translated in Islam in the days of Abu Jafar al-Mansur. The existing recensions differ, depending on the respective translators. There are the recensions of }Hunayn b. Ishaq, [657](#) Thabit b. Qurrah, [658](#) and Yusuf b. al-Hajjaj. [659](#)

The work contains fifteen books, four on the planes, one on proportions, another one on the relationship of planes to each other, three on numbers, the tenth on rational and irrational (quantities) [660](#) the "roots" - and five on solids.

Many abridgments of Euclid's work have been written. Avicenna, for instance, devoted a special monograph treatment to it in (the section on) the mathematical disciplines in the *Shifa'*. Ibn as-Salt [661](#) made another abridgment in the *Kitab al-Iqtisar*, and the same was done by others. Many scholars have also written commentaries on it. It is the starting point of the geometrical sciences in general.

It should be known that geometry enlightens the intellect and sets one's mind right. All its proofs are very clear and orderly. It is hardly possible for errors to enter into geometrical reasoning, because it is well arranged and orderly. Thus, the mind that constantly applies itself to geometry is not likely to fall into error. In this convenient way, the person who knows geometry acquires intelligence. It has been assumed that the following statement was written upon Plato's door: "No one who is not a geometer may enter our house." [662](#)

Our teachers used to say that one's application to geometry does to the mind what soap does to a garment. It washes off stains and cleanses it of grease and dirt. The reason for this is that geometry is well arranged and orderly, as we have mentioned.

Spherical figures, conic sections, (and mechanics)

A subdivision of this discipline is the geometrical study of spherical figures (spherical trigonometry) and conic sections. There are two Greek works on spherical figures, namely, the works of Theodosius and Menelaus on planes and sections of (spherical figures). [663](#) In (mathematical) instruction, the book by Theodosius is

(studied) before the book by Menelaus, since many of the (latter's) proofs depend on the former. Both works are needed by those who want to study astronomy, because the astronomical proofs depend on (the material contained in) them. All astronomical discussion is concerned with the heavenly spheres and the sections and circles found in connection with them as the result of the various motions, as we shall mention. (Astronomy,) therefore, depends on knowledge of the laws governing planes and sections of spherical figures.

Conic sections also are a branch of geometry. This discipline is concerned with study of the figures and sections occurring in connection with cones. It proves the properties of cones by means of geometrical proofs based upon elementary geometry. Its usefulness is apparent in practical crafts that have to do with bodies, such as carpentry and architecture. It is also useful for making remarkable statues and rare large objects (effigies, *hayakil*) [664](#) and for moving loads and transporting large objects (*hayakil*) with the help of mechanical contrivances, engineering (techniques), pulleys, and similar things.

There exists a book on mechanics that mentions every astonishing, remarkable technique and nice mechanical contrivance. It is often difficult to understand, because the geometrical proofs occurring in it are difficult. People have copies of it. They ascribe it to the Banu Shakir. [665](#)

Surveying

Another subdivision of geometry is surveying. This discipline is needed to survey the land. This means that it serves to find the measurements of a given piece of land in terms of spans, cubits, or other (units), or to establish the relationship of one piece of land to another when they are compared in this way. Such surveying is needed to determine the land tax on (wheat) fields, lands, and orchards. It is also needed for dividing enclosures [666](#) and lands among partners or heirs, and similar things.

Scholars have written many good works on the subject.

Optics

Another subdivision of geometry is optics. This science explains the reasons for errors in visual perception, on the basis of knowledge as to how they occur. Visual perception takes place through a cone formed by rays, the top of which is the point of vision and the base of which is the object seen. Now, errors often occur. Nearby things appear large. Things that are far away appear small. Furthermore, small objects appear large under water or behind transparent bodies. Drops of rain as they fall appear to form a straight line, flame a circle, and so on.

This discipline explains with geometrical proofs the reasons for these things and how they come about. Among many other similar things, optics also explains the difference in the view of the moon at different latitudes. [667](#) Knowledge of the visibility of the new moon and of the occurrence of eclipses is based on that. There are many other such things.

Many Greeks wrote works on the subject. The most famous Muslim author on optics is Ibn al-Haytham. [668](#) Others, too, have written works on the subject. It is a branch of the mathematical sciences.

21. *Astronomy*.

This science studies the motions of the fixed stars and the planets. From the manner in which these motions take place, astronomy deduces by geometrical methods the existence of certain shapes and positions of the spheres requiring the occurrence of those motions which can be perceived by the senses. Astronomy thus proves, for instance, by the existence of the precession of the equinoxes, that the center of the earth is not identical with the center of the sphere of the sun. Furthermore, from the retrograde and direct motions of the stars, astronomy deduces the existence of small spheres (epicycles) carrying the (stars) and moving inside their great spheres. Through the motion of the fixed stars, astronomy then proves the existence of the eighth sphere. It also proves that a single star has a number of spheres, from the (observation) that it has a number of declinations,⁶⁶⁹ and similar things.

Only astronomical observation can show the existing motions and how they take place, and their various types. It is only by this means that we know the precession of the equinoxes and the order of the spheres in their different layers as well as the retrograde and direct motions (of the stars), and similar things. The Greeks occupied themselves very much with astronomical observation. They used instruments that were invented for the observation of the motion of a given star. They called them astrolabes. The technique and theory of how to make them, so that their motion conforms to the motion of the sphere, are a (living) tradition among the people.⁶⁷⁰

In Islam, only very little attention has been paid to astronomical observation. In the days of al-Ma'mun, there was some interest in it. The construction of the instrument known as the astrolabe was begun but was not completed.⁶⁷¹ When al-Ma'mun died, the institution of astronomical observation was lost and neglected. Later on, (scholars) based themselves upon the ancient observations. These were of no use because of the change in the motions (of the stars) over the course of time. The motion of the instrument used in astronomical observations conforms only approximately to the motion of the spheres and the stars and is not absolutely exact. When a certain amount of time has elapsed, the differences are revealed.

Astronomy is a noble craft. It does not, as is generally thought, teach the real form of the heavens nor the order of the spheres, but it teaches that the forms and shapes of the spheres are the result of those motions. As one knows, it is not improbable that one and the same thing may produce two different results. Therefore, when we say that the motions produce a result, we (merely) deduce from the (existence of) what produces the result that the result exists, but the statement in no way teaches (us) the real character (of the resulting thing). Still, astronomy is an important science. It is one of the pillars of the mathematical disciplines.⁶⁷²

One of the best works on the subject is the *Majisti* (Almagest).⁶⁷³ It is ascribed to Ptolemy, who, as the commentators of the work have established, was not one of the Greek rulers called Ptolemy. The leading Muslim philosophers have abridged Ptolemy's work. Avicenna, for instance, did that. He inserted his abridgment in the mathematical section of the *Shifa'*. Ptolemy's work was also

abbreviated by the Spanish philosopher Averroes, by Ibn as-Samh, and by Ibn as-Salt, [675](#) in the *Kitdb al-Iqtisar*. Ibn alFarghani [676](#) wrote an abridged astronomy. In it, he treated the subject along more easily understandable lines. He omitted the geometrical proofs.

"God taught man what he did not know." [677](#)

Astronomical tables [678](#)

A subdivision of astronomy is the science of astronomical tables. This is a craft based upon calculations according to arithmetical rules. It is concerned with the courses of motions peculiar to each star and with the character of that motion, fast, slow, direct, retrograde, and so on, as proven by astronomical means. This serves to show the positions of the stars in their spheres at any given time, by calculating their motions according to the rules evolved from astronomical works.

This craft follows certain norms. They constitute a sort of introductory and basic material for it. They deal with months and days and past eras. [679](#)

It (further) follows established basic principles. They deal with apogee and perigee, declinations, [680](#) the different kinds of motions, and how (these things) shed light upon each other. They are written down in well-arranged tables, in order to make it easy for students. These tables are called *zij*. The determination of the positions of the stars at a given time by means of this craft is called "adjustment and tabulation." [681](#)

Both early and later scholars have written many works on the subject. Among such scholars, for instance, were alBattani [682](#) and Ibn al-Kammad. [683](#)

Recent contemporary Maghribi scholars are using, as their reference work, the *zij* that is ascribed to Ibn Ishaq. [684](#) It is thought that Ibn Ishaq based his work on astronomical observations. A Jew in Sicily who was skilled in astronomy and the mathematical sciences, and who occupied himself with astronomical observation, sent (Ibn Ishaq) information on the conditions and motions of the stars he had ascertained. Thus, the Maghribis have been using Ibn Ishaq's work, because they assume that it is based upon reliable information.

Ibn al-Banna, [685](#) wrote an abridgment (of Ibn Ishaq's *Zij*) which he entitled *al-Minhaj*. People have been very eager to use the *Minhaj*, because the operations described in it are easy.

(Knowledge of the) positions of the stars in the spheres is the necessary basis for astrological judgments, that is, knowledge of the various kinds of influence over the world of man that are exercised by the stars depending on their positions and that affect religious groups, dynasties, human activities, and all events. We shall explain this later on, and we shall clarify the evidence adduced by astrologers, if God, He is exalted, wills.

22. The science of logic.⁶⁸⁶

(Logic concerns) the norms enabling a person to distinguish between right and wrong, both in definitions that give information about the essence of things, and in arguments that assure apperception.

This ⁶⁸⁷ comes about as follows: The basis of perception is the *sensibilia* that are perceived by the five senses. All living beings, those which are rational as well as the others, participate in this kind of perception. Man is distinguished from the animals by his ability to perceive universals, which are things abstracted from the *sensibilia*. Man is enabled to do this by virtue of the fact that his imagination obtains, from individual objects perceived by the senses and which agree with each other, a picture conforming to all these individual objects. Such (a picture) is a universal. The mind then compares the individual objects that agree with each other, with other objects that (also) agree with them in some respects. It thus obtains a picture conforming to both of the two groups of objects compared), .in as much as they agree with each other. In this way, abstraction continues to progress. Eventually, it reaches the universal (concept), which admits no other universal (concept) that would, agree with it, and is, therefore, simple.

For instance, from the individual specimens of man, the picture of the species to which all the individual specimens conform is abstracted. Then, man (the human species) is compared with the animals, and the picture of the genus to which both men and animals conform is abstracted. Then, this is compared with the plants, until, eventually, the highest genus is reached, which is "substance." ⁶⁸⁸ There is no (other) universal (concept) that would in any way agree with it. Therefore, the intellect stops here and makes no further abstraction.

God created in man the ability to think. Through it, he perceives the sciences and crafts. Knowledge is either a perception (*tasawwur*) of the essence of things - *tasawwur* meaning a primitive kind of perception not accompanied by (the exercise of) judgment - or it is apperception (*tasdiq*), that is, the judgment that a thing is so.

(Man's) ability to think may try to obtain the desired (information) by combining the universals with each other, with the result that the mind obtains a universal picture that conforms to details outside. Such a picture in the mind assures a knowledge of the quiddity of the individual objects. Or, (man's) ability to think may judge one thing by another and draw conclusions (from the one thing as to the other). Thus, (the other thing) is established in (the mind). This is apperception. In fact, (apperception) ultimately reverts to perception, because the only use of having (perception) is (to achieve) knowledge of the realities of things, which is the required goal of apperceptive ⁶⁸⁹ knowledge.

(Man's) ability to think may embark on this (process) in either the right or the wrong way. Selection of the way to be followed by man's ability to think in its effort to attain the knowledge desired, requires discernment, so that (man) can distinguish between right and wrong. This (process) became the canon of logic.

When the ancients first began to discuss (logic), they did so in a sententious, disconnected manner by selecting certain stray propositions. Logical methods were unimproved. The problems of logic were not seen together. Eventually, Aristotle

appeared among the Greeks. He improved the methods of logic and systematized its problems and details. He assigned to logic its proper place as the first philosophical discipline and the introduction to philosophy. Therefore (Aristotle) is called "the First Teacher." [690](#) His work on logic is called "the Text." [691](#) It comprises eight books, three [691a](#) on the forms of analogical reasoning, and five on the matter (to which analogical reasoning is applied).

This is because the objects of apperception are of different kinds. Some of them concern things that are certain by nature. Others concern things that are hypothetical in various degrees. Therefore, logic studies analogical reasoning from the point of view of the desired (information) it is expected to yield. It studies what the premises (of the desired information) ought to be, as seen in this light, and to which kind of certain or hypothetical knowledge the (desired information) belongs. Logic studies analogical reasoning (the syllogism), not with some particular object in mind but exclusively with regard to the way in which it is produced. Therefore, the first study, it is said, is undertaken with regard to matter, that is, the matter that produces some particular certain or hypothetical information. The second study, it is said, is undertaken with regard to the form and the manner in which analogical reasoning (the syllogism) in general is produced. Thus, the number of the books on logic came to be eight.

The first book deals with the highest genera that abstraction among the *sensibilia* may attain in the mind and that admit no (more universal) genera above them. It is called *Kitab al-Maqulat* (*Categories*).

The second book deals with the various kinds of apperceptive propositions. It is called *Kitab al-'Ibarah* (*Hermeneutics*).

The third book deals with analogical reasoning (the syllogism) and the form in which it is produced in general. It is called *Kitab al-Qiyas* (*Analytics*). Here ends the logical study from the point of view of (its) form.

The fourth book is the *Kitab al-Burhan* (*Apodeictica*). It studies the kind of analogical reasoning (the syllogism) that produces certain (knowledge). It also studies (the problem of) why its premises must be certain ones. In particular, it mentions other conditions for yielding certain knowledge. For instance, the (premises) must be essential, primary, and so on. This book contains a discussion of determinatives [692](#) and definitions, because one wants them to be certain, since it is necessary - nothing else is possible - that a definition conform to the thing defined. Therefore, (definitions) were treated by the ancients in this book.

The fifth book is the *Kitab al-Jadl* (*Topics*). *Jadl* ("disputation") is the kind of analogical reasoning that shows how to cut off a troublesome adversary and silence one's opponent, and teaches the famous (methods) to be employed to this end. It is also concerned with other conditions required in this connection. They are mentioned here. The book deals with the "places" (*topoi*) from which the syllogism is evolved by using them to clarify the so-called middle term that brings the two ends of the desired information together. [693](#) It also deals with the conversion of terms.

The sixth book is the *Kitab as-Safsatah* (*Sophistici Elenchi*). Sophistry is the kind of analogical reasoning that teaches the opposite of the truth and enables a disputant to confuse his opponent. The (book) is bad because of its purpose. It was written only so that one might know sophistical reasoning and be on guard against it.

The seventh book is the *Kitab al-Khitabah* (*Rhetoric*). Rhetoric is the kind of analogical reasoning that teaches how to influence the great mass and get them to do

what one wants them to do. It also teaches the forms of speech to be employed in this connection.

The eighth book is the *Kitab ash-Shi'r (Poetics)*. Poetics is the kind of analogical reasoning that teaches the invention of parables and similes, especially for the purpose of (encouraging oneself and others) to undertake something or avoid doing something. It also teaches the imaginary propositions [694](#) to be employed in this connection.

These are the eight books on logic according to the ancients. After logic had been improved and systematized, the Greek philosophers were of the opinion that it was necessary to discuss the five universals providing the perception that [695](#) conforms to the quiddities outside or to their parts or accidents. The (five) are genus, difference, species, property, and general accident. [696](#) Therefore, they took the subject up in a special book concerned with the (five universals), which serves as an introduction to the discipline. Thus, the books on (logic) came to be nine.

All of them were translated in Islam. The Muslim philosophers wrote commentaries and abridgments of them. Al-Farabi and Avicenna, for instance, did this, and, later on, the Spanish philosopher, Averroes. Avicenna wrote the *Kitab ash-Shifa'*, [697](#) which comprises all the seven philosophical disciplines.

Later on, more recent scholars have changed the terminology of logic. They added to the study of the five universals the (study of) its fruit, namely, the discussion of definitions and descriptions which they took over from the *Apodeictica*. They discarded the *Categories*, because (the logicians') study of the book is accidental and not essential. To the *Hermeneutics* they added the discussion of the conversion (of terms), whereas the ancient books included that subject in the *Topics*, [698](#) but, in some respects, it does fall under the discussion of propositions.

Then, they discussed analogical reasoning in as much as it produces the desired information in general, and without regard to any matter. They discarded study of the matter to which analogical reasoning (is applied). That concerned five books, the *Apodeictica*, the *Topics*, the *Rhetoric*, the *Poetics*, and the *Sophistici Elenchi*. Some of them occasionally touched a little on those books. (But in general,) they neglected them, as if they had never been, whereas they are a very important basis of the discipline.

Then, they thoroughly discussed their writings on logic and studied them as a discipline in its own right, not as an instrument for the sciences. This resulted in a long and extensive discussion of the subject. The first to do this was the imam Fakhr-ad-din b. al-Khatib. [699](#) He was followed by Afdal-ad-din al-Khunaji. [700](#) Al-Khunaji's books are used by contemporary easterners as reference works. On logic, he wrote the long *Kitab Kashf al-asrar*, the *Mukhtasar al-mujiz* which is good as a textbook, and the *Mukhtasar al-jumal*. [701](#)

The last-mentioned work consists of four leaves and gives a synopsis of the discipline and its basic principles. Contemporary students use it and profit from it. The books and methods of the ancients are avoided, as if they had never been, although they are full of the results and useful aspects of logic, as we have stated.

God is the guide to that which is correct.

It [702](#) should be known that the early Muslims and the early speculative theologians greatly disapproved of the study of this discipline. They vehemently attacked it and warned against it. They forbade the study and teaching of it. Later on, ever since al-Ghazzali and the imam Ibn al-Khatib, scholars have been somewhat more lenient in this respect. Since that time, they have gone on studying

(logic), except for a few who have recourse to the opinion of the ancients concerning it and shun it and vehemently disapprove of it.

Let us explain on what the acceptance or rejection of (logic) depends, so that it will be known what scholars have in mind with their different opinions. This comes about as follows:

When the theologians invented the science of speculative theology, in order to support the articles of faith with rational evidence, their approach was to use some particular evidence, which they mentioned in their books. Thus, they proved the createdness of the world by affirming that accidents exist and are created, that bodies cannot possibly be free from accidents, and that something that cannot be free from created things must itself be created. Or, they affirmed the oneness of God by the argument of mutual antagonism [703](#) They affirmed the existence of primeval attributes with reference to the four comprehensive (attributes), [704](#) in that they drew conclusions from the visible as to the supernatural. There are other such arguments mentioned in their books..

Then, they strengthened that evidence by inventing basic principles constituting a sort of premises for the evidence. Thus, they affirmed the existence of atomic matter and atomic time and the vacuum. They denied nature [705](#) and the intellectual combination of quiddities. They affirmed that an accident does not persist two moments. [706](#) They also affirmed the existence of the "state," that is, an attribute of something existing, that neither exists nor yet does not exist. [707](#) They have still other basic principles upon which they have built their particular arguments.

It then came to be the opinion of *Shaykh Abul-Hasan (al-Ash'ari)*, Judge Abu Bakr (al-Baqillani), and Professor Abu Ishaq (al-Isfarayini), that the evidence for the articles of faith is reversible in the sense that if the arguments are wrong, the things proven (by them) are wrong. [708](#) Therefore, Judge Abu Bakr thought that the arguments for the articles of faith hold the same position as the articles of faith themselves and that an attack against them is an attack against the articles of faith, because they rest on those (arguments).

Now, if one considers logic, one will find that it all revolves around intellectual combination and the affirmation of the outside existence of a natural universal to which must correspond the mental universal that is divided into the five universals, namely, genus, species, difference, property, and general accident. [709](#) This is wrong in the opinion of the speculative theologians. The universal and essential is to them merely a mental concept having no correspondence outside (the mind), or - to those who believe in the theory of "states" - (it is merely) a "state." Thus, the five universals, the definitions based on them, and the ten categories are wrong, and the essential attribute is a wrong (concept and does not exist). This implies that the essential and necessary propositions on which argumentation is predicated are wrong and that the rational cause is a wrong (concept and does not exist). Thus, the *Apodeictica* is wrong, and the "places" (*topoi*) which are the central part of the *Topics* are a wrong (concept). They were the things from which one derives the middle term that brings the two ends together in analogical reasoning. [710](#)

The only thing that remains is formal analogical reasoning (the syllogism). [711](#) The only remaining definition is the one that is equally true for all details of the thing defined and cannot be more general, because then other matters would enter it, nor can it be more restricted, because then part of those details would be left out. That is what the grammarians express by *jam'* and *man'*, and the speculative

theologians by *tard* and *'aks* (complete identity of the definition and the thing defined, and reversibility of the definition). [712](#)

Thus, all the pillars of logic are destroyed. (On the other hand,) if we affirm their existence, as is done in logic, we (thereby) declare wrong many of the premises of the speculative theologians. This, then, leads to considering wrong their arguments for the articles of faith, as has been mentioned before. This is why the early theologians vehemently disapproved of the study of logic and considered it innovation or unbelief, depending on the particular argument declared wrong (by the use of logic). However, recent theologians since al-Ghazzali have disapproved of (the idea of the) reversibility of arguments and have not assumed that the fact that the arguments are wrong requires as its necessary consequence that the thing proven (by them) be wrong. They considered correct the opinion of logicians concerning intellectual combination and the outside existence of natural quiddities and their universals. Therefore, they decided that logic is not in contradiction with the articles of faith, even though it is in contradiction to some of the arguments for them. In fact, they concluded that many of the premises of the speculative theologians were wrong. For instance, they deny the existence of atomic matter and the vacuum and (affirm) [713](#) the persistence of accidents, and so on. For the arguments of the theologians for the articles of faith, they substituted other arguments which they proved to be correct by means of speculation and analogical reasoning. They hold that this goes in no way against the orthodox articles of faith. This is the opinion of the imam (Fakhr-ad-din Ibn al-Khatib), [714](#) al-Ghazzali, and their contemporary followers.

This should be considered. The methods and sources used by religious scholars to form their opinions should be understood.

God gives guidance and success to that which is correct.

23. *Physics.*

This is a science that investigates bodies from the point of view of the motion and stationariness which attach to them. It studies the heavenly and the elementary bodies (substances), as well as the human beings, the animals, the plants, and the minerals created from them. It also studies the springs and earthquakes that come into being in the earth, as well as the clouds, vapors, thunder, lightning, and storms that are in the atmosphere, and other things. It further studies the beginning of motion in bodies - that is, the soul in the different forms in which it appears in human beings, animals, and plants.

The books of Aristotle on the subject are available to scholars. They were translated together with the other books on the philosophical sciences in the days of al-Ma'mun. Scholars wrote books along the same lines and followed them up with explanation and comment.⁷¹⁵ The most comprehensive work written on the subject is Avicenna's *Kitab ash-Shifa'*. In it, Avicenna treats all the seven philosophical sciences, as we have mentioned before.⁷¹⁶ Avicenna later on abridged the *Kitab ash-Shifa'* in the *Kitab an-Najah* and the *Kitab al-Isharat*. In a way, he opposed Aristotle on most (physical) problems and expressed his own opinion on them. Averroes, on the other hand, abridged the books of Aristotle and commented on them, but followed him and did not oppose him. Scholars have written many works on the subject,⁷¹⁷ but these are the works that are famous at this time and to which attention is paid when one (studies) the craft (of physics).

The people of the East are concerned with Avicenna's *Kitab al-Isharat*. The imam Ibn al-Khatib wrote a good commentary on it. The same was done by al-Amid!⁷¹⁸ Another commentary on the work was written by Nasir-ad-din at-Tusi,⁷¹⁹ who is known as Khawajah (Khoja), an 'Iraqi scholar. He investigated many of the problems (of the *Isharat*) and compared what the imam (Ibn al-Khatib) had to say about them. He went beyond (Ibn al-Khatib's) studies and investigations.

"And He knows more than any scholar."⁷²⁰

24. The science of medicine. [721](#)

Medicine is a craft that studies the human body in its illness and health. The physician attempts to preserve health and to cure illness with the help of medicines and diets, but first he ascertains the illness(es) peculiar to each limb of the body, and the reasons causing them. He also ascertains the medicines existing for each illness. Physicians deduce the (effectiveness of) medicines from their composition and powers. They deduce (the stage of) an illness from signs indicating whether the illness is ripe and will accept the medicine or not. (These signs show themselves) in the color (of the patient), the excretions, and the pulse. The physicians in this imitate the power of nature, which is the controlling element in both health and illness. They imitate nature and help it a little, as the nature of the matter (underlying the illness), the season (of the year), and the age (of the patient) may require in each particular case. The science dealing with all these things is called medicine.

Certain limbs are occasionally discussed as individual subjects and are considered to (form the subjects of) special sciences. This is the case, for instance, with the eye, the diseases of the eye, and the collyria (used in the treatment of eye diseases).

(Scholars) have also added to this discipline the (study of the) uses of the parts of the body, that is, the useful purpose for which each limb of the animal body was created. This is not a medical subject, but it has been made into an annex and subdivision of medicine. Galen has written an important and very useful work on this discipline. [722](#)

Galen is the leading ancient authority on medicine. His works have been translated (into Arabic). He is said to have been a contemporary of Jesus and to have died in Sicily on his wanderings while in voluntary exile. [723](#) His works on medicine are classics which have been models for all later physicians.

There have been leading physicians in Islam of surpassing skill, such as, for instance, ar-Razi, [724](#) al-Majusi, [725](#) and Avicenna. There have also been many Spanish physicians. Most famous among them was Ibn Zuhr. [726](#)

In contemporary Muslim cities, the (craft of medicine) seems to have deteriorated, because the civilization (population) has decreased and shrunk. (Medicine) is a craft required only by sedentary culture and luxury, as we shall explain later on. [727](#)

Civilized Bedouins have a kind of medicine which is mainly based upon individual experience. They inherit its use from the *shaykhs* and old women of the tribe. Some of it may occasionally be correct. However, (that kind of medicine) is not based upon any natural norm or upon any conformity (of the treatment) to the temper of the humors. Much of this sort of medicine existed among the Arabs. They had well-known physicians, such as al-Harith b. Kaladah [728](#) and others.

The medicine mentioned in religious tradition [729](#) is of the (Bedouin) type. It is in no way part of the divine revelation. (Such medical matters) were merely (part of) Arab custom and happened to be mentioned in connection with the circumstances of the Prophet, like other things that were customary in his

generation. They were not mentioned in order to imply that that particular way of practicing (medicine) is stipulated by the religious law. Muhammad was sent to teach us the religious law. He was not sent to teach us medicine or any other ordinary matter. In connection with the story of the fecundation of the palms, he said: "You know more about your worldly affairs (than I)." [730](#)

None of the statements concerning medicine that occur in sound traditions should be considered to (have the force of) law. There is nothing to indicate that this is the case. The only thing is that if that type of medicine is used for the sake of a divine blessing and [731](#) in true religious faith, it may be very useful. However, that would have nothing to do with humoral medicine but be the result of true faith. This happened in the case of the person who had a stomach-ache and was treated with honey, [732](#) and similar stories.

God guides to that which is correct.

25. The science of agriculture. [733](#)

This craft is a branch of physics. It concerns the study of the cultivation and growth of plants through irrigation, proper treatment, improvement of the soil, [734](#) (observance of) the suitable season, and the care for them by applying these things in a way that will benefit them and help them to grow.

The ancients were very much concerned with agriculture. Their study of agriculture was general. They considered the plants both from the point of view of planting and cultivation and from the point of view of their properties, their spirituality, and the relationship of (their spirituality) to the spiritualities of the stars and the great (heavenly) bodies, which is something (also) used in sorcery. Thus, they were very much concerned with the subject.

One of the Greek works, the *Kitab al-Falahah anNabatiyah*, [735](#) was translated. It is ascribed to Nabataean scholars. It contains much information of the type (mentioned). The Muslims who studied the contents of the work (noticed that it belonged to) sorcery, which is barred (by the religious law) and the study of which is forbidden. Therefore, they restricted themselves to the part of the book dealing with plants from the point of view of their planting and treatment and the things connected with that. They completely banished all discussion of the other part of the book. Ibn al-'Awwam [736](#) abridged the *Kitab al-Falahah an-Nabatiyah* in this sense. The other part of it remained neglected. Some of the main problems of (that other part) were transmitted by Maslamah in his magical works. We shall mention that in connection with the discussion of sorcery, if God, He is exalted, wills. [737](#)

There are many books on agriculture by recent scholars. They do not go beyond discussion of the planting and treatment of plants, their preservation from things that might harm them or affect their growth, and all the things connected with that. (These works) are available.

26. The science of metaphysics.

Metaphysics is a science that, (metaphysicians) assume, studies existence as such. First, (it studies) general matters affecting corporeal and spiritual things, such as the quiddities, oneness, plurality, necessity, possibility, and so on. Then, it studies the beginnings of existing things and (finds) that they are spiritual things. It goes on (to study) the way existing things issue from (spiritual things), and also (studies) their order. Then, (it studies) the conditions of the soul after its separation from the body and its return to (its) beginning.

The (metaphysicians) are of the opinion that (metaphysics) is a noble discipline. They assume that it gives them a knowledge of existence as it is. This, they think, is identical with happiness. They will be refuted later on [738](#) In their arrangements, metaphysics comes after physics. Therefore, they called it "that which comes after physics" (metaphysics). [738a](#)

The books of the First Teacher [739](#) on the subject are available to scholars. They were abridged by Avicenna in the *Kitab ash-Shifa'* and the *Najah*. They were also abridged by the Spanish philosopher, Averroes.

Recent scholars wrote systematic treatments of the sciences of the people (the Muslims). Al-Ghazzali, at that time, refuted a good many of the (opinions of the metaphysicians). Recent speculative theologians, then, confused the problems of theology with those of philosophy, because the investigations of theology and philosophy go in the same direction, and the subject and problems of theology are similar to the subject and problems of metaphysics. [740](#)

(Theology and metaphysics,) thus, in a way came to be one' and the same discipline. (The recent theologians,) then, changed the order in which the philosophers (had treated) the problems of physics and metaphysics. They merged the two sciences in one and the same discipline. Now, in (that discipline), they first discussed general matters. This was followed, successively, by (the discussion of) the corporeal things and the matters that belong to them, the spiritual things and the matters that belong to them, and so on to the end of the discipline. The imam Ibn al-Khatib, [741](#) for instance, proceeded in this manner in the *Mabdhith al-mashriqiyah*, and so did all later theologians. The science of speculative theology thus merged with the problems of philosophy, and theological works were filled with the latter. It seemed as if the purpose which theology and philosophy followed in their respective subjects and problems was one and the same.

This confused people, but it is not correct. The problems with which the science of speculative theology deals are articles of faith derived from the religious law as transmitted by the early Muslims. They have no reference to the intellect and do not depend on it in the sense that they could not be established except through it. The intellect has nothing to do with the religious law and its views. Speculative theologians do not use the (rational) arguments they talk about as do the philosophers, in order to investigate the truth of the (articles of faith), to prove the truth of what had previously not been known, and to make it known. (Their use of rational arguments) merely expresses a desire to have rational arguments with which to bolster the articles of faith and the opinions of the early Muslims concerning

them, and to refute the doubts of innovators who believe that their perceptions of (the articles of faith in their interpretation) are rational ones. (Rational arguments were used only) [742](#) after the correctness of the articles of faith, as they had been received and believed in by the early Muslims, had been stipulated by traditional evidence.

There is a great difference between the two positions. The perceptions which the Master of the religious law (Muhammad) had are wider (than those of philosophers), because they go beyond rational views. They are above them and include them, because they draw their support from the divine light. Thus, they do not fall into the canon of weak speculation and circumscribed [743](#) perceptions. When the Lawgiver (Muhammad) guides us toward some perception, we must prefer that (perception) to our own perceptions. We must have more confidence in it than in them. We must not seek to prove its correctness rationally, even if (rational intelligence) contradicts it. We must believe and know what we have been commanded (to believe and to know). We must be silent with regard to things of this sort that we do not understand. We must leave them to the Lawgiver (Muhammad) and keep the intellect out of it.

The only thing that caused the theologians (to use rational arguments) was the discussions of heretics who opposed the early Muslim articles of faith with speculative innovations. Thus, they had to refute these heretics with the same kind of arguments. This (situation) called for using speculative arguments and checking on the early Muslim articles of faith with these arguments.

The verification or rejection of physical and metaphysical problems, on the other hand, is not part of the subject of speculative theology and does not belong to the same kind of speculations as those of the theologians. This should be known, so that one may be able to distinguish between the two disciplines, as they have been confused in the works of recent scholars. The truth is that they are different from each other in their respective subjects and problems. The confusion arose from the sameness of the topics discussed. The argumentation of the theologians thus came to look as though it were inaugurating a search for faith through (rational) evidence. This is not so. (Speculative theology) merely wants to refute heretics. The things it investigates are stipulated (by the religious law) and known to be true. Likewise, recent extremist Sufis, those who speak about ecstatic experiences, have confused the problems of (metaphysics and speculative theology) with their own discipline. They discussed all these things as part of one and the same subject. Thus, they discussed prophecy, union, incarnation, oneness, and other things. In fact, however, the perceptions of the three disciplines are distinct and different from each other. The Sufi perceptions are the ones that are least scientific. The Sufis claim intuitive [744](#) experience in connection with their perceptions and shun (rational) evidence. But intuitive experience is far removed from scientific perceptions and ways and the things that go with them, as we have explained above and as we shall (again) explain later on. [745](#)

God is the guide to that which is correct.

27. The sciences of sorcery and talismans.

These are sciences showing how human souls may become prepared to exercise an influence upon the world of the elements, either without any aid or with the aid of celestial matters. The first kind is sorcery. The second kind is talismans.

These sciences are forbidden by the (various) religious laws, because they are harmful and require (their practitioners) to direct themselves to (beings) other than God, such as stars and other things. Therefore, books dealing with them are almost nonexistent among the people. The only exceptions are the books of the ancient nations from before the time of Moses' prophecy, such as the Nabataeans and the Chaldeans. None of the prophets who preceded (Moses) made or brought any laws. Their books were concerned with exhortations, with the recognition of the oneness of God, and with references to Paradise and Hell [746](#)

The (magical) sciences were cultivated among the Syrian and Chaldean inhabitants of Babel and among the Copts of Egypt, and others. They composed books dealing with them and left information (concerning their occupation with them). Only very few of their books have been translated for us. (One book that was translated), for instance, is the *Falahah anNabatiyah*, [747](#) a Babylonian work. People learned the science of sorcery from that work and developed its manifold branches. Later on, other works on sorcery were composed. Among such works were the *Books (Masahif) of the Seven Stars* and the book of Tumtum the Indian [748](#) on the *Figures of the Degrees (of the Signs of the Zodiac) and the Stars*, and (works by) other (authors). Later on, Jabir b. Hayyan, [749](#) the chief sorcerer of Islam, appeared in the East. He scrutinized the scholarly books and discovered the Art (the craft of sorcery and alchemy). He studied its essence and brought it out. He wrote a number of works on (sorcery). He lengthily discussed both sorcery and the craft of alchemy which goes together with sorcery, because the transformation of specific bodies (substances) from one form into another is effected by psychic powers, and not by a practical technique. Thus it is a sort of sorcery, as we shall mention in the proper place. [750](#)

Then, Maslamah b. Ahmad al-Majriti, [751](#) the leading Spanish scholar in the mathematical (scientific) and magical sciences, made his appearance. He abridged all these books and corrected them and collected all their different approaches in his *Ghayat al-hakim*. Nobody has written on this science since.

Let us present here some prefatory remarks that will explain the real meaning of sorcery. It is as follows. Human souls are one in species. However, they differ in view of their particular qualities. [752](#) They are of different kinds. Each kind is distinguished by a particular quality which does not exist in any other kind (of soul). These qualities come to constitute a natural disposition belonging (exclusively) to its particular kind (of soul).

The souls of the prophets have a particular quality through which they are prepared [753](#) to have divine knowledge, to be addressed by the angels in the name of God, as has been mentioned before, [754](#) and to exercise the influence upon created beings that goes with all that.

The souls of certain sorcerers also have the quality (of being able) to exercise influence upon created beings and to attract the spirituality of the stars, so that they can use it for being active (among created beings) and be able to exercise an influence through either a psychic or a Satanic power. Now, the prophets are able to exercise their influence with the help of God and by means of a divine quality. The souls of soothsayers, on the other hand, have a quality enabling them to observe supernatural things by means of Satanic powers. Thus, every kind (of soul) is distinguished by (its) particular quality, which does not exist in any other kind.

The souls that have magical ability are of three degrees. These three degrees will now be explained here.

The first (kind) exercises its influence merely through mental power, without any instrument or aid. This is what the philosophers call sorcery.

The second (kind) exercises its influence with the aid of the temper of the spheres and the elements, or with the aid of the properties of numbers. This is called talismans. It is weaker in degree than the first (kind).

The third (kind) exercises its influence upon the powers of imagination. The person who exercises this kind of influence relies upon the powers of imagination. He is somehow active in them. He plants among them different sorts of phantasms, images, and pictures, whichever he intends to use. Then, he brings them down to the level of the sensual perception of the observers with the help of the power of his soul that exercises an influence over that (sensual perception). As a result, the (phantasms, etc.) appear to the observers to exist in the external world, while, in fact, there is nothing (of the sort). For instance, a person is said to have seen gardens, rivers, and castles, while, in fact, there was nothing of the sort. This is what the philosophers call "prestidigitation" (*sha'wadhah* or *sha'badhah*).

Those are the different degrees of (sorcery).

Now, the sorcerer possesses his particular quality in potentiality, as is the case with all human powers. It is transformed (from potentiality) into actuality by exercise. All magical exercise consists of directing oneself to the spheres, the stars, the higher worlds, or to the devils by means of various kinds of veneration and worship and submissiveness and humiliation. Thus, magical exercise is devotion and adoration directed to (beings) other than God. Such devotion is unbelief. Therefore, sorcery is unbelief, or unbelief forms part of the substance and motives of sorcery, as has been seen. Consequently, (sorcerers must be killed). Jurists differ (only) as to whether they must be killed because of the unbelief which is antecedent to the practice (of sorcery), or because of their corrupting activity and the resulting corruption of created beings. All this comes from (sorcerers and sorcery).

Furthermore, since the first two degrees of sorcery are real and the third and last degree is not real, scholars differ as to whether sorcery is real or merely imaginary. Those who say that it is real have the first two degrees in mind. Those who say that it is not real have the third and last degree in mind. There is no difference of opinion among them about the matter itself, but (the difference of opinion) results from confusing the different degrees (of sorcery).

And God knows better.

It should be known that no intelligent person doubts the existence of sorcery, because of the influence mentioned, which sorcery exercises. The Qur'an refers to it. It says, "... but the devils were unbelievers, teaching the people sorcery and that which had been revealed in Babel to the two angels, Harut and Marut. Those two always said before they taught anyone, 'We are a temptation. Do not be an unbeliever.' People learned from them how to cause discord between a man and his wife. (However,) they were not able to harm anyone except with God's permission."

The Messenger of God, according to (the sound tradition of) the *Sahih*,⁷⁵⁶ was put under a magic spell, so that he imagined that he was doing a thing while, in fact, he was not doing it. The spell against him was placed in a comb, in flakes of wool, and in the spathe of a palm, and buried in the well of Dharwan⁷⁵⁷ Therefore, God revealed to him the following verses in the *Mu'awwidhatan*: "And (I take refuge in God) from the evil of the women who blow into knots."⁷⁵⁸ 'A'ishah said, "As soon as he recited the Qur'an over one of those knots into which a spell against him had been placed, that particular knot became untied."⁷⁵⁹

There was much sorcery among the inhabitants of Babel, that is, the Nabataean and Syrian Chaldeans. The Qur'an mentions much of it, and there are traditions about it. Sorcery was greatly cultivated in Babel and in Egypt at the time of Moses' prophetic mission. Therefore, the miracle Moses performed (as a proof of his prophecy) was of the kind claimed and bragged about (by sorcerers). The temples in Upper Egypt are remnants (of sorcery) attesting to the (cultivation of sorcery in ancient Egypt).⁷⁶⁰

We have seen with our own eyes (how a sorcerer) formed the picture of a person who was to be cast under a spell. He represented in it the characteristics of things he intended and planned (to make) that person adopt, as already existing in him in the shape of symbols of names and attributes in homonym fashion[?].⁷⁶¹ Then he spoke (magic words) over the picture he had made to take the place of the person who was to be cast under a spell, concretely or symbolically⁷⁶² During the repeated pronunciation of the evil words, he collected spittle in his mouth and spat upon (the picture). Then he tied a knot over the symbol in an object that he had prepared for the purpose,⁷⁶³ since he considered tying knots and (making things) stick together to be auspicious (and effective in magical operations). He also entered into a pact with the jinn, asking them to participate in his spitting during the operation, intending to make the spell forceful. This (human) figure and the evil names have a harmful spirit. It issues from (the sorcerer) with his breath and attaches to the spittle he spits out. It produces (more) evil spirits. As a result, the things that the sorcerer intends (to happen to) the person who is cast under a spell, actually befall him.

We have also observed how people who practice sorcery point at a garment or a piece of leather and inwardly speak (magic words) over it, and behold! the object is torn to shreds. Others point in the same way at the bellies of sheep and goats at pasture with (a) ripping (gesture), and behold! the guts of the animals fall out of their bellies to the ground.⁷⁶⁴

We have also heard that in contemporary India, there still are (sorcerers) who point at a man, and his heart is extracted⁷⁶⁵ and he falls dead. When someone looks for his heart, he cannot find it among his inner parts. Or, they point to a pomegranate. When someone opens it, no seeds are found in it.

We have likewise heard that in the Sudan and in the land of the Turks, there are (sorcerers) who cast a spell on a cloud, and rain falls upon a particular area⁷⁶⁶

Also, we have observed remarkable things as to the efficacy of talismans that make use of "the loving numbers" 220 and 284. The sum of the aliquot parts of each of the loving numbers, such as one-half, one-fourth, one-sixth, one-fifth, and so on, is equal to the other number.⁷⁶⁷ This is why the two numbers are called "loving numbers." It is a tradition among the people who know about talismans that these numbers may effect friendship and union between two lovers. Two effigies are

made, one of them with Venus as the ascendant, when, either in her house or in her exaltation,⁷⁶⁸ she looks at the moon lovingly and invitingly. As the ascendant of the other effigy, the seventh (house counting) from (that of) the first is taken. One of the loving numbers is placed upon the one effigy, and the other upon the other. The larger number is meant for the person whose friendship is sought, that is, the beloved. I do not know whether "larger number" means the higher number, or the one with the greater number of aliquot parts. The result (of the magical operation) is a close connection between the two lovers, so that the one is hardly able to break away from the other. This was reported by the author of the *Ghayah* ⁷⁶⁹ and other authorities on magic, and it is attested by experience ⁷⁷⁰

Then, there is "the lion seal," ⁷⁷¹ which is also called "the pebble seal." ⁷⁷² On a steel thimble,⁷⁷³ the sorcerer engravés the picture of a lion dragging its tail and biting on pebbles which it thus divides into two parts. A snake is represented in front of the lion. It is coiled at the lion's feet stretching upwards opposite the lion's head, so that its open mouth faces the lion's mouth. Upon the lion's back, a crawling scorpion is represented. In order to make the engraving, (the sorcerer) waits for a time when the sun enters the first or third decan ⁷⁷⁴ of Leo, provided (further) that the two luminaries (the sun and the moon) are well and out of their misfortune. When he finds and gets this (constellation), he makes an impression (of the engraving) upon a *mithqal* or less of gold, which he then dips into saffron dissolved in rose water and preserves ⁷⁷⁵ in a yellow silk rag. (People) assume that the person who holds on to it has an indescribable power over rulers and is able to have close contact with them, to serve them, and to use them for his own ends. Likewise, the rulers themselves find in it strength and power over their subjects. This, too, was mentioned by authors on magic in the *Ghayah* ⁷⁷⁶ and other works, and it is attested by experience.

Then, there is the magic square of thirty-six fields that belongs to the sun.⁷⁷⁷ It has been said that it should be made when the sun enters its exaltation and is out of its misfortune, and when the moon is well and under a royal ascendant in which the master of the tenth (house) is considered to look upon the master of the ascendant; lovingly and invitingly and in which exalted indications concerning royal nativities prosper. It is preserved in a yellow silk rag, after having been dipped in perfume. (People) think that it influences one's friendship with rulers and one's (opportunity) to serve them and to be admitted into their company.

There are many similar things. The *Kitab al-Ghayah* by Maslamah b. Ahmad al-Majriti is the systematic treatment of this craft. It has it complete and presents its problems perfectly.

We have been told that the imam Fakhr-ad-din b. alKhatib wrote a book on the subject which he entitled *as-Sirr al-maktoom*. It is said to be in common use among the people in the East. We have not come across it. The imam (Fakhrad-din) is not considered an authority on magic, though the contrary might be the case (and he might have been an authority on magic) ⁷⁷⁸

In the Maghrib, there is a type of magical practitioners who are known as "rippers" (*ba'aj*). They are the people to whom I referred above.⁷⁷⁹ They point at a garment or a piece of leather, and it is torn to shreds. Or they point at the bellies of sheep and goats (with a) ripping (gesture), and they are ripped open. Such (sorcerers) nowadays are called "rippers," (in the Maghrib,) because most of their magical practice concerns ripping animals open. In that way, they frighten the owners of animals into giving them some (animal) they can spare. They keep their

activities very much under cover,⁷⁸⁰ because they are afraid of the authorities. I have met a number of them and witnessed their kind of magical practice. They informed me that they practice devotions and exercises. (Their devotions and exercises) consist, in particular, of heretical prayers and of association with the spiritualities of jinn and stars. These things are written down on a sheet (of paper) they possess, and called *al-Khinziriyah*.⁷⁸¹ They study it together. With the help of such exercises and devotions, they succeed in performing their magical actions. The influence they are able to exercise affects only objects other than free men. It affects, for instance, utensils, animals, and slaves. They express the (idea) by the words,⁷⁸² "things into which there goes money,"⁷⁸³ that is, all the things that are owned, sold, and bought. This is what they think. I questioned one of them, and he told me (what I have mentioned here). Their magical actions are plain fact. We have come across very much of it. We have observed them with our own eyes and have no doubt about it.

This is the situation with regard to sorcery and talismans and their influence in the world.

The philosophers made a distinction between sorcery and talismans. First, however, they affirmed that both (derive their effectiveness) from influences of the human soul. They deduced the existence of an influence of the human soul from the fact that the soul exercises an influence upon its own body that cannot be explained by the natural course of affairs or from corporeal reasons. At times, it results from the qualities of the spirits-such as heat, which originates from pleasure and joy - and at other times, it results from other psychic perceptions⁷⁸⁴ such as the things that result from imagination (*tawahhum*). Thus, a person who walks upon the ledge of a wall or upon a high tightrope⁷⁸⁵ will certainly fall down if the idea of falling down is strongly present in his imagination. Therefore, there are many people who train themselves to get used to such things, so that they are not troubled by their imagination. They can walk upon the ledge of a wall or a high tightrope without fear of falling down. It is thus definite that we have here the result of an influence of the human soul and of the soul's imagining of the idea of falling down. If the soul can thus influence its own body without any natural corporeal causes, it is also possible that it can exercise a similar influence upon bodies other than its own. Its position with regard to its ability to exercise this type of influence is the same with regard to all bodies, since it is neither inherent nor firmly impressed in a (particular) body. Therefore, it is definite that the soul is able to exercise an influence upon other bodies.

Now, the distinction the (philosophers) make between sorcery and talismans is this. In sorcery, the sorcerer does not need any aid, while those who work with talismans seek the aid of the spiritualities of the stars, the secrets of numbers, the particular qualities of existing things, and the positions of the sphere that exercise an influence upon the world of the elements, as the astrologers maintain. The (philosophers, therefore,) say that sorcery is a union of spirit with spirit, while the talisman is a union of spirit with body (substance).⁷⁸⁶ As they understand it, that means that the high celestial natures are tied together with the low (terrestrial) natures, the high natures being the spiritualities of the stars. Those who work with (talismans), therefore, as a rule, seek the aid of astrology.

(The philosophers) think that a sorcerer does not acquire his magical ability but has, by nature, the particular disposition needed for exercising that type of influence.

They think that the difference between miracles and sorcery is this. A

miracle is a divine power that arouses in the soul (the ability) to exercise influence. The (worker of miracles) is supported in his activity by the spirit of God. The sorcerer, on the other hand, does his work by himself and with the help of his own psychic power, and, under certain conditions, with the support of devils. The difference between the two actually concerns the idea, reality, and essence of the matter. We, however, (prefer to) deduce the differentiation merely from obvious signs. That is, miracles are found (to be wrought) by good persons for good purposes and by souls that are entirely devoted to good deeds. Moreover, (they include) the "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*) [787](#) of the claim to prophecy. Sorcery, on the other hand, is found (practiced) only by evil persons and as a rule is used for evil actions, [788](#) such as causing discord between husband and wife, doing harm to enemies, and similar things. And it is found (practiced) by souls that are entirely devoted to evil deeds. This is the difference between (prophecy and sorcery) in the opinion of metaphysicians.

Among the Sufis some who are favored by acts of divine grace are also able to exercise an influence upon worldly conditions. This, however, is not counted as a kind of sorcery. It is effected with divine support, because the attitude and approach (of these men) result from prophecy and are a consequence of it. They enjoy divine support, as befits their state and faith and belief in the cause of God. Were someone among them capable of doing evil deeds, he would not do them, because he is bound by the divine command in whatever he may do or not do. Whatever he is not permitted to do, he would certainly not do. Were he to, he would deviate from the path of truth and would in all likelihood lose his "state."

Miracles take place with the support of the spirit of God and the divine powers. Therefore, no piece of sorcery can match them. One may compare the affair of the sorcerers of Pharaoh with Moses and the miracle of the staff. Moses' staff devoured the phantoms the sorcerers produced, and their sorcery completely disappeared as if it had never been. [789](#)

Also, the following verse was revealed to the Prophet in the *Mu'awwidhatan*: "And (I take refuge in God) from the evil of the women who blow into knots." In this connection, 'A'ishah said: "As soon as he recited the Qur'an over one of the knots into which a spell against him had been placed, that particular knot became untied." [790](#) Sorcery cannot last whenever the name of God is mentioned in a believing state of mind. [791](#)

The historians report that the Darafsh-i-Kaviyan [792](#) - that is, the banner of the Persian emperor - had a magic square of a hundred fields [793](#) woven into it in gold. (That had been done) when there were certain astronomical positions that had been (especially) observed for the purpose of writing down the magic square. The banner was found on the day Rustum was killed at al-Qadisiyah. It was lying on the ground after the flight and dispersal of the Persians. The people who work with talismans and magic squares think that such (a magic square) means victory in war and that a banner containing it or accompanied by it could never be routed. However, (the spell) was counteracted by divine support, which resulted from the faith of the men around the Prophet and their belief in the cause of God. Through the presence of (faith), any magic spell was dissolved and did not last (this time, as it will always happen whenever faith is involved), "and what they did came to naught." [794](#)

The religious law makes no distinction between sorcery, talismans, and prestidigitation. It puts them all into the same class of forbidden things. The Lawgiver (Muhammad) permitted us only those actions that are of relevance to us in

our religion, which concerns the well-being of our life in the other world, and in our livelihood, which concerns the wellbeing of our life in this world. Things that are of no relevance in these two respects and that may cause harm or some kind of harm, are forbidden, (and the strictness of the prohibition is) in proportion to the harm they might do. Among such (irrelevant and harmful) things are sorcery, which causes harm when it is practiced. Talismans belong together with it, because the effect of sorcery and talismans is the same. There is also astrology, which causes a certain harm in that the belief in astral influences, referring as it does to (beings) other than God, corrupts the Muslim faith.

As to things that are of no relevance to us but cause no harm, nothing is easier than not to do them, in order to be close to God,⁷⁹⁵ for "a good Muslim does not do what does not concern him."⁷⁹⁶

Thus, the religious law puts sorcery, talismans, and prestidigitation into one and the same class, because they may cause harm. It brands them as forbidden and illegal.

The speculative theologians said that the difference between miracles and sorcery lies in the "advance challenge" (*tahaddi*),⁷⁹⁷ that is, the claim that a (miracle) will occur just as it has been claimed (in advance that it would happen). It is not possible, they said, that a miracle could happen in agreement with the claim of a liar. Logic requires that a miracle indicate truthfulness. By definition, a miracle is something that can be verified. If it were performed with lying (intentions), it (could not be verified and thus) truth would have changed into falsehood, and that is absurd. Therefore, miracles never occur together with lying (intentions).⁷⁹⁸

As we have mentioned,⁷⁹⁹ the philosophers assume that the difference between miracles and sorcery is the difference between the two extremes of good and evil. Nothing good issues from a sorcerer, and (sorcery) is not employed in good causes. Nothing evil issues from a worker of miracles, and (miracles) are not employed in evil causes. (Miracles and sorcery) are in a way contradictory by their very natures, as are good and evil.

"God guides whomever He wants to guide."⁸⁰⁰

The evil eye

Another psychic influence is that of the eye - that is, an influence exercised by the soul of the person who has the evil eye.⁸⁰¹ A thing or situation appears pleasing to the eye of a person, and he likes it very much. This (circumstance) creates in him envy and the desire to take it away from its owner. Therefore, he prefers to destroy him.

It is a natural gift - I mean, the eye. The difference between it and the (other)⁸⁰² psychic influences is that it appears (and acts) as something natural and innate. It cannot be left alone. It does not depend on the free choice of its possessor. It is not acquired by him. Some of the other (psychic) influences may (also) not be acquired ones, but their appearance (in action) depends on the free choice of the person who exercises them. The thing that characterizes them as natural is their (possessors') potential ability to exercise them, not their (automatic) action.⁸⁰³ Therefore it has been said: "A person who kills by means of sorcery or a miraculous act must be killed, but the person who kills with the eye must not be killed." The only reason for the (distinction) is that the (person who kills with the eye) did not want or intend to do so, nor could he have avoided doing so. The application (of the eye) was

involuntary on his part.

And God knows better.

28. The science of the secrets of letters.

At the present time, this science is called *simiya'* "letter magic." [805](#) The word was transferred from talismans to this science and used in this conventional meaning in the technical terminology of Sufi practitioners of magic. Thus, a general (magical) term came to be used for some particular aspect (of magic).

This science originated in Islam after some time [806](#) of (its existence) had passed. When the extremist Sufis appeared, they turned to the removal of the veil of sense perception, produced wonders, and were active in the world of the elements. At that time, they wrote systematic works on (Sufism) and (Sufi) terminology. They believed in the gradual descent of existence from the One. They believed that verbal perfection consists in helping the spirits of the spheres and the stars (through words). The natures and secrets of the letters are alive in the words, while the words, in turn, are correspondingly alive in the created things. The created things have been moving in the different stages of (creation) and telling its secrets since the first creation. These (Sufi beliefs) caused the science of the secrets of the letters to originate. It is a subdivision of the science of *simiya'* "letter magic." It is an unfathomable subject with innumerable problems. Al-Buni, [807](#) Ibn al-'Arabi, and others in their wake wrote numerous works on it. These authors assume that the result and fruit of letter magic is that the divine souls are active in the world of nature by means of the beautiful names of God and the divine expressions that originate from the letters comprising the secrets that are alive in the created things.

The authorities on letter magic then differed as to the secret of the (magic) activity lying in the letters. Some of them assumed that it was due to inherent temper. They divided the letters into four groups corresponding to the elements. Each nature (element) had its own group of letters. Through this group (of letters), it can be active actively and passively. A technical procedure, which the (authorities on letter magic) call "breaking down" (*taksir*), [808](#) classifies the letters as the elements are classified, as fiery, airy, watery, and earthy. The *alif* is fiery, *b* airy, *j* watery, and *d* earthy. Then, it starts again with the next letter, and so on, through the whole alphabet and the sequence of the elements. Thus, seven letters are fiery, namely, *alif*, *h*, *t*, *m*, *f*, *s*, and *dh*. Seven are airy, namely, *b*, *w*, *y*, *n*, *d*, *t*, and *x*. Seven are watery, namely, *j*, *x*, *k*, *s*, *q*, *th*, and *gh*. And seven are earthy, namely, *d*, *h*, *l*, *'ayn*, *r*, *kh*, and *sh*. [809](#)

The fiery letters serve to repel cold diseases and to increase the power of heat wherever desired, either in the sensual (physical) or in the astrological (sense). Thus, for instance, (one may want to) increase the power of Mars for warfare, the killing (of enemies), and aggressiveness.

In the same way, the watery letters serve to repel hot diseases, such as fevers and others, and to increase the cold powers, wherever desired, either in the sensual (physical) sense or in the astrological (sense). Thus, for instance, (one may want to) increase the power of the moon, and so on.

Other (authorities on letter magic) assumed that the secret of the (magic) activity that lies in the letters was their numerical proportion. The letters of the alphabet indicate numerical values which by convention and nature are generally

accepted to be (inherent in) them. Thus, there exists a relationship between the letters themselves as a result of the relationship of their numerical values. For instance, there is a relationship between *b*, *k*, and *r*, because all three of them indicate two in its different positions. (The letter) *b* indicates two in the units, *k* indicates two in the tens (20), and *r* indicates two in the hundreds (200). Or, there is a special relationship between the letters mentioned and *d*, *m*, and *t*. The (latter group of letters) indicates four, and the proportion of four to two is that of two to one. Then, there are magic squares for words as there are for numbers. Each group of letters has its particular kind of magic square which fits it in view either of the numerical value of the figure [810](#) or of the numerical value of the letters. (Magic) activity based on letter magic thus merges with that based on number magic, because there exists a relationship between letters and numbers.

The real significance of the relationship existing between letters and natural humors and between letters and numbers is difficult to understand. It is not a matter of science or reasoning. According to the (authorities on letter magic), it is based on mystical experience and the removal (of the veil). Al-Buni said, "One should not think that one can get at the secret of the letters with the help of logical reasoning. One gets to it with the help of vision and divine aid."

The fact that it is possible to be active in the world of nature with the help of the letters and the words composed of them, and that the created things can be influenced in this way, cannot be denied. It is confirmed by continuous tradition on the authority of many (practitioners of letter magic).

It has been thought that this activity and the activity of people who work with talismans are one and the same thing. This is not so. The people who work with talismans have made it clear that the influence of a talisman actually comes from spiritual powers derived from the substance of force. These powers exercise a powerful and forceful activity upon the things for which the (talisman) is composed, with the help of spherical secrets, numerical proportions, and vapors that attract the spirituality of the talisman and are mentally enclosed in it. The result is that the high natures come to be tied to the low ones. Talismans, they think, are like a ferment composed of and including earthy, airy, watery, and fiery (elements). Such ferment is instrumental in transforming and changing anything into which it might get, into its own essence and in turning it into its own form. The elixir [811](#) for metals, likewise, is a ferment that by transformation turns the mineral in which it is alive into itself. Therefore, it has been said that the subject of alchemy is body (substance) in body (substance), because all parts of an elixir are corporeal (substances). The subject of talismans, on the other hand, is spirit in body (substance), [812](#) because talismans tie the high natures to the low natures. The low natures are bodies (substances), while the high natures are spiritualities. [813](#)

One should realize that all (magic) activity in the world of nature comes from the human soul and the human mind, because the human soul essentially encompasses and governs nature. Consequently, the real difference between the activity of people who work with talismans and people who work with words is as follows. The activity of people who work with talismans consists in bringing down the spirituality of the spheres and tying it down with the help of pictures or numerical proportions. The result is a kind of composition that, through its nature, effects a transformation and change comparable to those effected by a ferment in the thing into which it gets. The activity of people who work with words, on the other hand, is the effect of the divine light and the support of the Lord which they obtain through exertion and the removal (of the veil). Thus, nature is forced to work (for them) and does so willingly with no attempt at disobedience. Their activity needs no support from the spherical powers or anything else, because the support it has is of a

higher order than (all that).

People who work with talismans, therefore, need (only) a little exercise to give the soul the power to bring down the spirituality of the spheres. Devotions and exercises certainly play a very insignificant role in it. The opposite is the case with people who work with words. Their exercise is the most extensive that can be. It is not for the purpose of being active in the existing things, since that is a veil (standing between them and their real task). Such activity comes to them

accidentally, as an act of divine grace.⁸¹⁴ A person who works with words may have no knowledge of the secrets of God and the realities of divinity, which is the result of vision and the removal (of the veil). He may restrict himself to the various relationships between words and the natures of letters and expressions, and he may become (magically) active with them in this capacity, and that is what people who practice letter magic are commonly supposed to do. But then, there is no difference between such a person and the people who work with talismans. In fact, a person who works with talismans is more reliable than he, because he has recourse to scientific natural principles and orderly norms. A person who works with the secrets of words but is not sincere in his devotion ⁸¹⁵ and (in addition) has no technical norms of evidence on which he may rely and, therefore, lacks the removal (of the veil) that would show him the realities of expressions and the influence of relationships, is in a weaker position (than a person who works with talismans).

The person who works with words may mingle the powers of expressions and words with the powers of the stars. He may then set certain times for mentioning the beautiful names of God or the magic squares composed of them or, indeed, any word.⁸¹⁶ These times must be under the propitious influence of the star ⁸¹⁷ that is related to a particular word. That was done, for instance, by al-Buni in his book entitled *al-Anmat*.⁸¹⁸ The relationship (between star and magic word) is assumed to come from the nubilous (*'amaiyah*) presence,⁸¹⁹ which is the purgatory station (*barzakhiyah*) of verbal perfection and which particularizes itself in the realities in accordance with the relationship they have (to the magic words [?]). They think that those expressions ⁸²⁰ depend on vision to be established. If a person who works with words lacks vision but knows about that relationship through tradition, his actions correspond to those of the person who works with talismans. Indeed, as we have stated, the (latter) is more reliable than he.

In the same way, the person who works with talismans may mingle his actions and the powers of the stars which govern them, with the powers of prayers composed of special expressions indicating a relationship between those expressions and the stars. In his case, however, the relationship of expressions is not, as in the case of people who work with words, the result of direct observation in a state of vision. It is merely based upon the (general) basic requirement of the magic approach, namely, that the stars share in all the substances, accidents, essences, and ideas ⁸²¹ existing in the world of created things. Letters and words belong to the things that exist in it. Thus, each star has its particular share in them. On this basis (magical practitioners) construct strange and disapproved theories. Namely, they divide the *sarabs* and verses of the Qur'an in this manner. That was what Maslamah al-Majriti, for instance, did in the *Ghayah*. It is also obvious from al-Buni's attitude in the *Anmat* that he takes this method into consideration. A critical study of the *Anmat* and of the prayers the work contains and their distribution among the hours of the seven stars, as well as a look at the *Ghayah* and a critical study of the prayers (*qiyamat*) of the stars contained in it ⁸²² - "qiyamat of the stars" is the name they give to the prayers that belong to each individual star, that is, the prayer performed (*yuqdmu biha*) for it - will show that this (procedure) belongs to the substance of

(these works on letter magic) or that the relationship that came about in the original creation and in the purgatory (*barzakh*) of knowledge made all that necessary.

"And you were given but little knowledge." [823](#)

One cannot deny the actual existence of all the sciences declared illegal by the religious law. It is definite that sorcery is true, although it is forbidden. But we are satisfied with the knowledge God taught us.

A few remarks (may help) to make things clear. [824](#)

Letter magic clearly is a kind of sorcery and, as such, attainable through various exercises which are legal according to the religious law. This comes about as follows. We have mentioned before [825](#) that two kinds of human beings are active in the world of created beings. [826](#) Prophets (are active) with the help of the divine power which God gave them by nature. Sorcerers (are active) with the help of the psychic power which is innate in them.

Saints may be active by acquiring the ability to be active through faith (*al-kalimah al-imaniyah*). It is a result of detachment (from *the sensibilia*). They do not have it intentionally. It comes to them spontaneously. If it happens to mighty saints, they avoid it and take refuge in God against it and consider it a temptation. [827](#)

There is, for instance, the story of Abu Yazid al-Bistami [828](#) One evening, when he reached the bank of the Tigris, he was in a hurry. [829](#) The two banks of the river came together (so that he would have been able to cross right over), but Abu Yazid invoked God's protection and said, "I will not sell my share in God for a farthing (*adnaq*)."⁸³⁰ So, he boarded a boat and crossed over with the ferrymen.

An innate ability for sorcery requires exercise, in order to be capable of transformation from potentiality into actuality. Some (magical ability) which is not innate may be acquired, but such (acquired magical ability) is inferior to innate (magical ability). One (would, in any case, have to) exercise to (acquire magical ability), as one does on behalf of (innate magical ability). The (procedure of) such magical exercise is well known. Its various kinds and the ways in which it is executed [830](#) are mentioned by Maslamah al-Majriti in the *Kitab al-Ghayah* and by Jabir b. Hayyan in his *Treatises*, as well as by others. They are employed by many people who want to acquire magical ability and learn its norms and the conditions governing it.

However, [831](#) this magical exercise of early (practitioners) is full of matters of disbelief. For instance, it includes devotions directed to the stars and prayers to them, called *qiyamat*, [832](#) for the purpose of attracting their spirituality. It also includes the belief in influences by (beings) other than God, in that (one's) actions are tied to magical horoscopes and the mutual aspects of the stars in the signs (of the zodiac), in order to obtain the desired results.

*Many people who wished to be (magically) active in the world of existing things were arrested by this (fact). They wanted to obtain the (ability to be magically active) in a way that would have nothing to do with any involvement in disbelief and the practice of it. They turned their exercise into one that was legal according to the religious law. It consisted of *dhikr* exercises and prayers (*subuhat*) from the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions. They learned which of these things were appropriate for (their particular) need from the afore-mentioned division of the world with its essences, attributes, and actions according to the influences of the seven stars. In addition, they also selected the days and hours appropriate to the distribution of (the influences of the stars). They used this kind of legal exercise as a cover, in order to avoid having anything to do with ordinary sorcery, which is

unbelief or calls for unbelief. They kept to a legal (kind of) devotion because of its general and honest character. That was done, for instance, by al-Buni in his *Kitab al-Anmat* and other works of his, and by others. They called this approach "letter magic," since they were very eager to avoid the name of sorcery. In fact, (however,) they fall under the idea of sorcery, even though they have a legal (kind of) devotion. They are not at all free from the belief in influences by (beings) other than God.

These people also want to be (magically) active in the world of existing things. That is something forbidden by the Lawgiver (Muhammad). The miracles performed by the prophets were performed at God's command. He gave the power to perform them. The miracles of the saints were performed, because by means of the creation [833](#) of a necessary knowledge, through inspiration or something else, they obtained (divine) permission to perform them. They did not intend to perform them without permission.

Thus, the trickery of the people who practice letter magic should not be trusted. As I have made it clear, letter magic is a subdivision and kind of sorcery.

God guides toward the truth through His kindness.*

Many people want to be (magically) active but want to avoid having anything to do with any involvement in sorcery and the name and technicalities of sorcery. Therefore, they choose a special exercise consisting of prayers (subuhat) and dhikr exercises. They are legal according to the religious law and yet they correspond to magical exercise in the kind of devotion and the expressions used. They choose the time of certain ascendants, as is done by the people (the learned magicians). They refrain from having any harmful intentions in their devotion, so that, in this manner, they may have nothing to do with sorcery. But they are far off the mark in this (assumption). Any devotion in the intention of being (magically) active is the very same thing as sorcery. Moreover, if one looks at it carefully, the exercise of these people evokes (the idea of) magical exercise in view of the expressions used in it, as (one finds them) in the Anmat and other works of al-Bum.

Now, if the assumption is erroneous that this is a legal way of obtaining the ability to be (magically) active, it should be avoided. One should realize that (magical) activity from the very beginning is not legal and that the great saints keep away from it. The (great saints) who practiced it did so because they had permission, through inspiration or something else. Also, saints are (magically) active through faith (al-kalimah alimaniyah), and not through psychic power.

This is the true character of letter magic. As one can see, it is a subdivision and kind of sorcery.

God guides toward the truth through His kindness.

The Za'irajah [834](#)

A branch of the science of letter magic, (practiced) among the (authorities on letter magic), is (the technique of) finding out answers from questions by means of connections existing between the letters of the expressions (used in the question). They imagine that these (connections) can form the basis for knowing the future happenings they want to know. Here we have something like puzzles and trick problems. [835](#) There are many discussions of the subject by them. The most comprehensive and most remarkable discussion of it is as-Sabti's *Za'irajah of the World*. It has been mentioned before. Here, we shall explain what has been said about how to operate it. We shall quote the poem that, it is thought, as-Sabti wrote on the subject. [836](#) Then, we shall give a description of the *Za'irajah* with its circle

and the table written on the verso. Finally, we shall reveal the truth about it. It is nothing supernatural; (the indications derived from it) result from an agreement in the wording of question and answer. It is (just) one interesting way among others, and a curious one, for finding out the answer from the question with the help of the technique called the technique of "breaking down." [837](#) We have referred to all this before.

We have no authoritative tradition on which we might rely for the correctness of the poem and its attribution to asSabti [838](#) However, we have chosen (for our quotation) what gave the impression of being the best manuscript. This is the poem: [839](#)

There speaks a little Ceutian, [840](#) praising his Lord,
Praying for a guide who was God's messenger to mankind, (namely,)
Muhammad who was sent as a prophet, the Seal of the Prophets,
And expressing his satisfaction [841](#) with the men around him and those who
followed them:

Behold, this is the *Za'irajah of the World* which
You [sing.] see revealed through your [pl.] senses, and through the intellect.
Whoever knows how to compose (the *za'irajah*) will know his body,
And will obtain laws given from on high.

Whoever knows how to tie (it down) will obtain power

And be noted for having obtained the fear of God and everything. [842](#)
He is seen taking on reality in the divine world.

This is the station of those who are perfected through *dhikr* exercises.
These are the secrets that you have to keep concealed.

Set them up in circles and balance (them) with *h*
And with *t* which has a "throne" on which it is engraved,
In poetry and prose, or which one sees arranged as a table.
Set up circles corresponding to the relationship of their spheres
And draw stars for their highest degrees.

Come out for its strings (chords), and draw letters for them,
And repeat the same (letters) on the border of those that are free.

Set up the shape of their *zir*, [843](#) and make its houses,
And verify with *a bamm* wherever their light is apparent.
Present sciences as an engineer for the natures (elements),
And an established knowledge of figurations and the quadrants.

Work with music and the knowledge of their [844](#) letters
And the knowledge of an instrument. And verify and bring about
And make circles and set down their letters in the right relationship.
Set free their world and list the zones in a table.

We have an amir [845](#) who desires Bougie for a Zanatah
Dynasty, which has appeared and which has manifestly seized power,

And a region of Spain, then[. . .] [846](#)
The Banu Nasr [?] came, and their victory followed.
Rulers, knights, and people of wisdom,
If you wish, write them down. Their region is empty.
A Mahdi of the Almohads who rule in Tunis,

Rulers for an East set down in magic squares, [847](#)
Cast a spell over the region, and believe.
If you wish, represent (it) in Latin without linguistic error,
And (Al)fonso and Barcelona. *R* is the letter for it.

Their Franc(is) is *dh*,⁸⁴⁸ and is perfected with *t*.
Rulers of Kinawah.⁸⁴⁹ They have pointed to their *q*.⁸⁵⁰
And the Arabs, our people, have been weakened.
Abyssinian India and Sind (Western India), then Hurmus [?]
And Tatar Persians, and what beyond them... .
Their Byzantine Emperor is a *h*. Their (Persian) Yazdjard
Belongs to *k*. Their Copt was written with a long *l*,
And 'Abbas, all of them noble and venerable.
But (they are) a Turk when the (magical) activity ceases.
If you want to know the rulers exactly and to find them out,
Seal fields, then bring (them) into relation and list (them) in a table
According to the norm and science of the letters
And the knowledge of their nature, and set up the whole of it.
Whoever knows the sciences will know our science.
He will know the secrets of existence and become perfect.
He, then, has firmly rooted knowledge and knows His Lord,
And has a knowledge of predictions which is broken down through *h-m*.
And whenever there comes a name, and the meter prefers it ⁸⁵¹
A wise man will definitely decide that he must be killed.
Letters will come to you. Then, try to pick them.
The letters of Sibawayh will come to you disconnected.
Then, strengthen with transformations and confront and exchange.
With your precious warble shake the parts
.....
.....
Select a (star) rise. Figure out its signs.
Reverse its root [?]. Straighten (it) out with the cycle.
Someone will perceive those things. He will achieve his purpose
And be given their letters in whose arrangement the evidence lies.
If it is lucky and the stars are lucky,
It should suffice you to have royal authority [?] and to in, have reached the
dim star (d) in Ursa Major on high [?].
The melody of their *d* with its bridled *bamm*!
Thus, sound harmonic chimes, and you will find the right place in it,
The strings of their *zir*. To the *h* belongs their *bamm*
And their *mathna*. The *mathlath* has appeared through its *j*.
Make entries with spheres. Straighten things out with a table.
Draw *a b c* and the remaining letters of the alphabet according to their
numerical value
And permit the irregularity of the meter that occurs. Something similar
Has occurred in the prosody of a number of people.
A principle of our religion, a principle of our jurisprudence,
And some knowledge of grammar, keep and obtain!
Bring in the wall [?] for a large tent in harmony [?].
Praise His name and say, "God is great," and "There is no God but God,"
And you will (succeed in) bringing out verses on any desired object
Through natural rhyme and a secret from on high.
If they are thus brought together, the judgment implied in their number will
be acquired,⁸⁵²
And...
And you will bring out verses. Twenty multiplied
By one thousand by nature, O master of the Table,
Will show crafts of multiplication that are perfect.

Thus, (your) wishes will come out right for you, and the (world) on high will come out right for you.

And rhyme with their *zir* and praise with a beat. Set it up in circles for a *zir*, and obtain (it).

Set it up with magic squares and a principle that you prepare From the secrets of their letter, and bring it back in chain form.

[SIGNS] [853](#)

Discussion of how to discover the relationships and qualities of the weights, [854](#) the powers of their opposites, the power of the grade which is distinguished according to the relationship to the place of attached mixtures of natures (elements), and the science of medicine, or the craft of alchemy.

O student of medicine and of Jabir's science (alchemy), [855](#)
And you who know the extent of the powers in succession,
If you want the science of medicine, there must exist a relationship
For the laws of scales, which [856](#) will hit upon a (possible) way.
Your patient will be cured. The elixir will be right.
The soundness of the mixtures of your composition will be apparent.

Spiritual Medicine

And you want Hawush [857](#)-[SIGNS]-and his mind. . .
For Bahram-Birjis [858](#) and seven, who is perfect,
For dissolving pains of cold diseases. Make it correct
This way, and (make) the composition (correct) wherever it has been handed down.

[SIGNS]

Appearances of rays that concern the nativities
of rulers and their children.

The knowledge of rays cast is difficult.

The side of their bows shows itself in a belt [?].

But on a pilgrimage, there is the place where our imam stands.

He appears when the latitude of the stars is straightened out.

There are positions whose longitude is made clear,

And (also their) latitude. By reaching that, he becomes a junction [?].

Places where there is a quartile with its sign in the dejection,

Their sextile has the trine of the sign of the one that follows.

One adds to the quartile. That is its analogy

In certainty, and its root [?]. With the 'ayn, it is made to work.

From the relationship of the two quarters combine your rays

With a s and double it. Its quartile will thus show itself.

[SIGNS]

This operation here concerns rulers. The operation of

the rule is consistent. Nothing more remarkable has ever been seen.

The position of rulers:

First position
Second position
Third position
Fourth position } , [zimzam NUMERALS FOR EACH POSITION]
Fifth position The line of junction and separation:
Sixth position [SIGNS]
Seventh position The line of junction:
[SIGNS]

The line of separation:

[SIGNS]

The *zir* for every(thing) and the complete follower of the root [?]:

[SIGNS]

Junction and separation:

[SIGNS]

The complete necessary (line) in junctions:

[SIGNS]

The establishments of lights:

[SIGNS]

The answering root [?] in the operation:

[SIGNS]

The establishment of questions concerning rulers:

[SIGNS]

The position of children: The position of light:

[SIGNS]

The position of splendor:

[SIGNS]

(On) being spiritually influenced and divinely guided:

O student of the secret of praising (the oneness) of God,
With the beautiful names of God [859](#) you will hit upon a (possible) way.
The Rabbis of mankind will obey you with their heart(s),
As well as [860](#) their chief. It is operated in the sun [??].
You will see all mankind tied to you

.....

.....
.....
If you wish, you will live in (the world of) existence together with the fear of

God

And solid religion, or you will be firmly rooted [861](#)

Like Dhu n-Nun [862](#) and al-Junayd [863](#) together with the secret of an art.

I see you clothed in the secret of Bistam. [864](#)

You will come into being created in the world on high,
As the Indians have said, and the Sufi crowd.

The path of the Messenger of God sparkles with the truth.

No work of a quality similar to (that of) Gabriel has yet been invented.

Your courage is saying, "There is no God but God,"
and your bow is the (East where the sun) rises [?].

Thursday is the beginning. Sunday appears.

On a Friday, too, the same (will be done [?]) with the names,
And on Monday, you will perfect the beautiful names of God.

In its *t*, there is a secret, as well as in its *h*

.....
.....
.....
At the end of the Resurrection, it is followed by a prayer
And sincere devotion, with the seven *mathani* [865](#) being chanted.

The junction of the lights of the stars:

[SIGNS]

In your right hand, there is an iron (ring) and a seal ... but not in prayer.

Make (your) heart the tablet (to write on) the verse of Resurrection.

Recite and chant (it) when people are asleep.

It is the secret contained in the created beings; there is nothing but it.

It is the greatest verse. Therefore, make (it) accurate and get (it).

Through it, you will become a "pole" if you serve well.

You will perceive secrets from the world on high.

Sari communicated them and, after him, Ma`ruf [866](#)

Al-Hallaj [867](#) divulged them and was killed.

Ash-Shibli [868](#) always worked on them,

Until he went up higher than the (ordinary) Sufis and was exalted.

Therefore, clean your heart eagerly from impurities.

Practice *dhikr* exercises constantly. Fast. Do supererogatory devotions.

The secret of the people (the mystics) has been attained only by thorough
(devotees)

Who knew the secret of the sciences and were competent.

[SIGNS]

The position of love, of the inclination of the souls, of
exertion, obedience, worship, love, infatuation,
annihilation of annihilation (nonbeing), devotion,
observance, and friendship [869](#) with permanent
physical passivity.

Birjis [870](#) has the magic square for love.
The mixture has been prepared with tin or copper which were caused to work,

Or with silver. Correct I have seen it:

Your making its lucky position an ascendant is not improper. [871](#)
Try to get through it an increase of light for the moon.

Your making its sun ready to accept [872](#) is something firmly grounded.
Put it to sleep with the incense being aloe wood belonging to their India,
And fix an hour. Its prayer is a benefit [?].

Its prayer is for a purpose. Thus, it is caused to work.

Its prayer from Taysaman, which is ornamented,
Is used, or a prayer for whose composition letters
Or problems are prepared with hot air.

You shall engrave letters with *d* and its *l*.

That is a magic square which consists of sixteen fields.

If their indication [?] does not please you,

.....
Make good its *b*, and bring them away to [873](#)

That which pleases you. The small remainder of them is summarized.

Engrave certain shapes from some of them.

Whatever you add, make it proportionate, equal to your action
And the key of Maryam. For the actions of both of them are alike.

A call went out, and a Bistami recited her (Maryam's) *surah*.

Let your acting (be) with support. Search for

The proofs of a savage person who was set up for his text.

Turn over its [874](#) houses with a thousand and more.

Inside it, there is a secret. In the search for it, it has become apparent.

On the stations for the end.

You have the supernatural, a picture from the world on high.

You make it find a house. Its clothing is jewelry.

Beautiful like Joseph-this one, similar to him,

Was sent down with . . . and a chant of reality. [875](#)

He is powerful and speaks about the supernatural.

He resembles a lute that competes with a nightingale.

Buhlul [876](#) went crazy from love of her beauty.

When she appeared to Bistam, he was forsaken

And died. . . . The love of her was instilled into

Junayd and Basri. [877](#) They (he) neglected (their, his) body.

The ultimate in praise (of the oneness) of God is sought. Whoever has
God's beautiful names for himself without any relationship,

And whoever possesses them, succeeds with wisdom

And attains nearness to the neighbors of (the world) on high.

You will be informed about the supernatural. [878](#) if you render good service,
Which will show you remarkable things, to Him who is a refuge.

This is true success. (It is) goodness that attains it.

From (those things), there result additions for their interpretation which
follows [?].

Testament, final statement, faith, Islam, prohibition, and suitability.

This is our poem. Ninety is its number
And the additional (verses) for introduction, end, and table.
I am surprised by verses, whose number is ninety,
Which produce (more) verses whose complete number is not apparent.
Whosoever understands the secret, let him understand himself,
And let him understand an ambiguous commentary which is difficult,
Forbidden and lawful, in order to show our secret
To people, even if they are a select group and have the suitable qualification.
If you want people suitable for it, place them under a strong oath.

Maltreat them [879](#) with manliness and extended religiosity.
Perhaps you will be saved, as well as the one who hears their secret,
From deciding to divulge (it), and you will become a chief on high.
A son of 'Abbas keeps his secret hidden.
Thus, he obtained much happiness, and high rank followed him.
The Messenger of God rose among the people as preacher,

.....
The spirits have boarded bodies to manifest themselves [?],
And have applied themselves, in order to kill them, by prolonged knocking
At the high world. Our nonexistence becomes nonexistent,
And we put on the garment of existence in succession.
Our rhyming is completed. Pray, our God,
For the seal of the messengers a prayer that will effect exaltation.
Pray, O God of the throne, Glorious and Exalted,
For a lord who ruled and perfected mankind,
Muhammad, the guide, the intercessor, our leader,
And (pray for) the men around him, the noble, exalted people.

A rank that results from friendship.

[SIGNS]

The correct determination of sun and moon
and the stars for every desired date:

[SIGNS]

The *za'irajah* is completed.

The procedure of finding answers from questions
through the *Za'irajah of the World* with the
help of the might of God. [880](#)

A question may have three hundred and sixty answers, according to the degrees (of the firmament). The answers to one question under a given ascendant differ in accordance with different questions (forming part of the question asked), which are referred to the letters of the chords of the *za'irajah* and (in accordance with) the operation applied to finding out the letters from the verse of the poem. [881](#)

Note: The letters of the chords and the table are composed of three basic types. (1) Arabic letters, which are taken at their face value (as numerals). (2)

Ghubar letters.⁸⁸² They are treated differently. Some are taken at their face value, when there are no more than four cycles. ⁸⁸³ If there are more than four, they are used as tens as well as hundreds, as required by the operation, as we shall explain. (3) *Zimam* letters. They are treated in the same way (as *ghubar* letters). However, the *zimam* letters offer another possibility. One may be used as one thousand and ten (as ten thousand), and they (may be used) in the proportion of five (to one) in relation to the Arabic letters [?]. One may place in (each) field of the table three letters of this type and two of the (other) type. Empty fields may be left in the table. If there are more than four basic cycles, (the empty fields) are counted in vertically. If there are no more than four, only the filled fields are counted.

The operation with the question requires seven principles. (1) The number of the letters of the chords. (2) The retention of their cycles after division by twelve. There are always eight cycles in the complete one, and six in the incomplete one. (3) The knowledge of the degree of the ascendant. (4) The ruler of the sign (of the zodiac). (5) The greatest principal cycle, which is always one. (6) The result of adding the ascendant to the principal cycle. And (7) the result of multiplying ascendant plus cycle by the ruler of the sign (of the zodiac), and (8) ⁸⁸⁴ of the ruler of the sign (of the zodiac) added to the ascendant.

The whole operation takes place in three cycles multiplied by four, thus making twelve cycles. The relationship of these three cycles, which are [. . .] ⁸⁸⁵ each growth having a beginning. Then, they are multiplied as quadruple cycles as well as triple cycles [?]. Then, they may be the result of six multiplied by two, and thus have a(nother) growth. This is something apparent in the operation.

These cycles are followed by "results." They are in [?] the cycles. There may be one result, or more than one, up to six.

Now, to begin with, let us assume that someone asks, "Is the *za'irajah* a modern or an ancient science?" ⁸⁸⁶ The ascendant is in the first degree of Sagittarius. ⁸⁸⁷ Thus, we place the letters of the chord of the beginning of Sagittarius and the corresponding chord of the beginning of Gemini and, in the third place, the chord of the beginning of Aquarius up to the limit of the center. We add to it the letters of the questions.

We look at the number of (the letters). The smallest number there can be is eighty-eight, ⁸⁸⁸ and the largest ninetysix. This is the total of a complete cycle. Our question consists of ninety-three letters. ⁸⁸⁹ If the question contained more than ninety-six letters, it would be shortened by ⁸⁹⁰ dropping all twelve cycles. One keeps what comes out from them and what remains. ⁸⁹¹ In our question, there are seven cycles. The remainder is nine. ⁸⁹² They are set down among the letters, as long as the ascendant has not reached twelve degrees. If it has reached twelve degrees, no number or cycle is set down for them. But their numbers are again set down, when the ascendant has reached more than twenty-four degrees in the third decan. ⁸⁹³

The ascendant is then set down as one, the ruler of the ascendant (the sign of the zodiac) as four, and the greatest cycle as one. The total of ascendant and cycle is added up, and, in this question, makes two. This total is multiplied by the ruler of the sign. This is eight. The ruler is added to the ascendant. This is five. These are (the) seven principles.

The result of multiplying the ascendant and the greatest cycle by the ruler of Sagittarius, when it is less than twelve, is entered at the "side of eight" from the

bottom of the table upward. When it is more than twelve, it is divided in cycles. The remainder is entered at the side of eight. A mark is put upon the end of the number. The five that is the result of the addition of ruler and ascendant is what is entered [894](#) on the side of the uppermost large surface of the table. One counts, consecutively, groups of five cycles and keeps them until the number stops opposite the fields of the table that are filled. If it stops opposite one of the empty fields of the table, one should not pay any attention and go on with the cycles, until one reaches one of four letters, namely, *alif*, *b*, *j*, or *z*. In our operation, the number falls upon *alif* and leaves three cycles behind. Thus, we multiply three by three, which gives nine. That is the number of the first cycle. This must be set down. The total between the vertical and long sides must be added up. Then it will be in the field of eight.

The number in the first cycle, which is nine, must be entered in the front (recto) of the table adjacent to the field in which the two are brought together, going towards the left, which is (the field of) eight. It thus falls upon the letter *lam-alif*, but no composite letter ever comes out of it. It thus is just the letter *t* - four hundred in *zimam* letters [895](#) A mark is put on it, after removing it, (indicating that it belongs) to the verse of the poem. [896](#)

Then, one adds up the numbers of the cycle of the ruler. one gets thirteen, which is entered among the letters of the chords. One sets down (the letter) upon which the number falls and puts a mark upon it, (indicating that it belongs to) the verse of the poem.

This rule shows how much the letters circulate according to the natural order. This is as follows. One adds the letter of the first cycle, which is nine, to the ruler of the sign (of the zodiac), which is four. Thus, one gets thirteen. This is doubled. Thus, one gets twenty-six. From this, one subtracts the degree of the ascendant, which, in this particular question, is one. Thus, there remains twenty-five. Accordingly, the first order of the letter <is twenty-five>, then twenty-three twice, then twenty-two twice, according to that subtraction, until the (procedure) reaches one at the end of the rhymed verse. [897](#) One does not stop at twenty-four, because the one (which would make twenty-four out of twentyfive) had originally been subtracted.

Then, one takes the second cycle and adds the letters of the first cycle to the eight resulting from the multiplication of ascendant and cycle by the ruler. This gives seventeen. The remainder is five. Thus, one goes up five on the side of eight from where one had stopped in the first cycle. One puts a mark on (that place). One enters seventeen on the front (recto) of the table, and then five. One does not count empty fields. The cycle is that of tens. We find the letter *th* - five hundred, but it (counts the same as) *n*, because our cycle represents the tens. Thus, five hundred is (counted as) fifty, because its cycle is seventeen. If it had been twentyseven, it would have been in the hundreds. Thus, one sets down an *n*.

Then, one enters five, also from the beginning, and notes what (number of) the surface it confronts. It is found to be one. One reverses the number one. It falls upon five. One adds the one of the surface to five, and gets six. One sets down a *w* and marks it with four [?] (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. One adds them to the eight which was the result of the multiplication of ascendant and cycle by the ruler. Thus, one gets twelve. The remainder of the second cycle, namely five, is added to twelve. Thus, one gets seventeen. That is something that belongs to the second cycle. Thus, we enter seventeen among the letters of the chords. The number falls upon one. Thus, one sets down **alif** and puts a mark upon it (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. Of the letters of the chords, one drops three, the number of

the result of the second cycle.

Then, one makes the third cycle. One adds five to eight and gets thirteen. The remainder is one. One moves the cycle at the side of eight by one. One enters thirteen into the verse of the poem. One takes the (letter) upon which the number falls. It is *q*. A mark is put upon it. Thirteen is entered among the letters of the chords. One sets down what comes out. It is *s*. A mark is put upon it (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. Then, the one which is the remainder of the cycle of thirteen is entered next to the resulting *s*. One takes the chord next to the letters. It is *b*. It is set down, and a mark (indicating that it belongs) to the verse of the poem is put upon it. This is called the "leaning cycle." Its scale is correct. This is as follows. One doubles thirteen and adds to it the one which remains of the cycle. Thus, one gets twenty-seven. This is the letter *b*, which is derived from the chords (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. Thirteen is entered at the front part of the table. One notes what (part of) the surface confronts it. One doubles it and adds to it the one which is the remainder of thirteen. This is the letter *j*. The total, thus, is seven. This is the letter *z*. We set it down and put a mark upon it (indicating that it belongs) to the verse of the poem. The scale of it is that one doubles seven and adds to it the one which is the remainder of thirteen. Thus, one gets fifteen. It is the fifteenth of the verse of the poem. This is the end of the triple cycles.

Then, one makes the fourth cycle. It has the number nine, (obtained) by adding the remainder of the previous cycle. One then multiplies ascendant and cycle by the ruler. This cycle ends the operation in the first field of the quadruple (cycles).

Then, one picks two letters from the chords, goes up nine on the side of eight, and enters nine from the cycle of the letter which was taken last from the verse of the poem. The ninth is the letter *r*. It is set down, and a mark is put upon it. Then, nine is entered on the front (recto) of the table, and one notes what (letter of) the surface faces it. It is *j*. One reverses the number one. That is *alif*. This is the second after [?] the letter *r* (belonging) to the verse of the poem.

It is set down, and a mark is put upon it. One counts nine, starting next to the second. It again is an *alif*. It is set down, and a mark is put upon it. Then, one picks a letter from the chords and doubles nine. This gives eighteen. One enters it among the letters of the chords and comes to a stop at the letter *r*. It is set down and marked with eight and four, (indicating that it belongs) to the verse of the poem. Then, one enters eighteen among the letters of the chords and comes to a stop at the letter *s*. It is put down and marked with two. One adds two to nine, which is eleven, and enters eleven on the front (recto) of the table. It is confronted by an *alif* from the surface. It is set down and marked with six.

Then, one makes the fifth cycle. Its number is seventeen. The remainder is five. One goes up five on the side of eight. One picks two letters from the chords. One doubles five and adds the result to seventeen, the number of its cycle. The total is twenty-seven. It is entered among the letters of the chords. It falls upon *t*. It is set down and marked with thirtytwo. One subtracts the two which is at the base of thirtytwo,⁸⁹⁸ from seventeen. The remainder is fifteen. One enters it among the letters of the chords and comes to a stop at *q*. It is set down and marked with twenty-six. On the front part of the table one enters twenty-six. One comes to a stop at two in *ghubar* letters. That is the letter *b*. It is entered and marked with fifty-four.

Then, one picks two letters from the chords and makes the sixth cycle. Its number is thirteen. The remainder is one. Thus, it becomes clear that the cycle of order (rhyming [?]) belongs to twenty-five. The cycles are ninety [?]-five, seventeen, five, thirteen, and one. One multiplies five by five which gives twenty-five. This is the cycle in the order of the verse. One removes the cycle on the side of eight by one. But, as we have mentioned before, thirteen is not entered in the verse

of the poem, because it is a second cycle of a second compositional growth. But we add to one the four that belongs to the fifty-four which led to *b* (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. This gives five. One adds five to the thirteen that belongs to the cycle, and gets eighteen. One enters it on the front (recto) of the table and takes (the letter of) the surface that confronts it. It is **alif**. It is set down and marked with twelve, (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. One picks two letters from the chords.

At this point, one looks at the letters of the question. The (letters) that have come out (in the preceding operation) are paired with the verse of the poem, beginning at the end. One marks them with the letters of the question, so that it enters numerically into the verse of the poem. The same is done with every letter that comes out hereafter, in correspondence with the letters of the question. All the letters coming out are paired with the verse of the poem, beginning at the end, and a mark is put on them.

Then, one adds to eighteen the units with which one has marked the letter *alif*. They come to two. Thus, one gets a total of twenty. One enters it among the letters of the chords and comes to a stop at the letter *r*. It is set down and marked with ninety-six, (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. This is the end of the cycle with regard to chord letters.

Then, one picks two letters from the chords and makes the seventh cycle. It is the beginning of the second of the two "inventions." This cycle contains the number nine. One adds one to it. Thus, one gets ten [899](#) for the second growth.

This one is added later on to twelve cycles, if it belongs to that proportion, or it is taken away from the principal (cycle). Thus, one gets a total of ten. One goes up on the side of ninety-eight, enters ten on the front (recto) of the table, and gets thus to stop at five hundred. It is, however, (counted) only as fifty, *n*. It is to be doubled. Thus, it is *q*. It is set down and marked with fifty-two (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. Two is dropped from fifty-two, and the nine which belongs to the cycle is dropped. The remainder is forty-one. One enters it among the letters of the chords and thus comes to a stop at one, which is set down. One also enters (forty-one) in the verse of the poem and thus finds one. This is the scale of the second growth.

It is marked with two signs (as belonging) to the verse of the poem, one (which is put) upon the last **alif** of the scale, and another upon the first *alif*. The second is twenty-four. Then, one picks two letters from the chords and makes the eighth cycle. Its number is seventeen. The remainder is five. One enters (it) on the side of fifty-eight, enters five in the verse of the poem, and thus comes to a stop at '*ayn*', seventy. It is set down, and a mark is put upon it. Five is entered in the table. One takes the (number) of the surface confronting it. It is one. It is set down and marked with forty-eight, (as belonging) to [?] [899a](#) the verse. One drops one from forty-eight for the second base and adds to it the five of the cycle. The total is fifty-two. That is entered on the front (recto) of the table. One thus comes to a stop at the *ghubar* letter two. It is in the order of hundreds, because it should be a larger number. Thus, it is (counted as) two hundred, which is the letter *r*. [900](#) It is set down and marked with twenty-four; (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. Having reached ninetysix, the whole thing starts from the beginning, which is twenty-four. One adds the five of the cycle to twenty-four and drops one. The total is twenty-eight. One enters half of it in the verse of the poem and thus comes to a stop at eight. Thus, *h* is set down, and a mark is put upon it.

One makes the ninth cycle. Its number is thirteen. The remainder is one. One goes up one on the side of eight. Here the operation does not follow the same procedure as in the sixth cycle, because the number should be many times larger.

Also, the (cycle) belongs to the second growth and is the beginning of the third third of the quadruple (arrangement) of the signs of the zodiac and the end of the third fourth of the triple (arrangement).

Thus, one multiplies the thirteen of the cycle by the four that is (the number of) the preceding triple (arrangement) of the signs of the zodiac. The total is fifty-two. One enters it on the front (recto) of the table and thus comes to a stop at the *ghubar* letter two. However, it is in the hundreds, having gone beyond the units and tens. Therefore, it is set down as two hundred, *r*, and marked with forty-eight, (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. One adds the one of the base to the thirteen of the cycle, enters fourteen in the verse of the poem, and thus comes to a stop at *h*. It is marked with twenty-eight. Seven is subtracted from fourteen. There remains seven.

Then, one picks two letters from the chords. One enters seven and thus comes to a stop at the letter *l*. It is set down, and a mark (indicating that it belongs) to the verse is put on it.

Then, one makes the tenth cycle. Its number is nine. It is the beginning of the fourth triple (arrangement). One goes up nine on the side of eight. There is an empty (field). One goes up another nine and gets into the seventh (field) from the beginning. One multiplies nine by four, because we have gone up twice nine, so that (nine) was only multiplied by two. One enters thirty-six in the table and thus comes to a stop at the *zimam* letter four. It should be in the tens, but we take it as a unit, because there are too few cycles. Thus, the letter *d* is set down. If one adds the one of the base to thirty-six, its limit [?] belongs to the verse of the poem. A mark is put upon it. If one had entered on the front (recto) of the table nine and nothing else, without multiplication, one would have come to a stop at eight. Thus, one divides forty-eight (by twelve).⁹⁰¹ The remainder is four. This is what one wants. If one had entered eighteen, which is nine multiplied by two, on the front (recto) of the table, one would have come to a stop at the *zimam* letter one, which belongs to the tens. One subtracts two, which was used to double the nine. The remainder is eight, half of which is (four). Again, this is what one looks for. If, by multiplying (nine) by three, one were to enter twenty-seven on the front (recto) of the table, one would come to a stop at the *zimam* letter ten. The operation is the same.

Then, nine is entered into the verse of the poem. (The letter) which comes out is set down. It is **alif**. Then, one multiplies nine with the three which is the component of the previous nine, drops one, and enters twenty-six in the front (recto) of the table. The number that comes out - two hundred - is set down with the letter *r*. It is marked with ninetysix, (as belonging) to the verse of the poem.

Then, one picks two letters from the chords and makes the eleventh cycle. It has (the number) seventeen. The remainder is five. One goes up five on the side of eight, corresponding to what had been undertaken in the first cycle. One enters four⁹⁰² on the front (recto) of the table and comes to a stop at an empty (field). One takes (the number of) the surface which confronts it. It is one. Thus, one enters one into the verse of the poem. This is *r-s*⁹⁰³ It is set down and marked with four. If we had come to a stop at a filled field of the table, we would have set down the one as three. One doubles seventeen, drops the one, and adds four. Thus, one gets thirty-seven. One enters it in the chords and comes to a stop at *h*⁹⁰⁴ It is entered and marked with five. One doubles five, enters (ten) into the verse, and thus comes to a stop at *l*. It is set down and marked with twenty.

Then, one picks two letters from the chords and makes the twelfth cycle. It has (the number) thirteen. The remainder is one. One goes up one on the side of eight. This cycle is the last cycle, the end of the two inventions, the end of the three

quadruple (arrangements), and the end of the four triple (arrangements).

The one on the front (recto) of the table falls upon the *zimam* letter eight, which is just eight units. The only (number) we have in the cycles is one. Were there more than a four in the quadruple (arrangement) of the twelve, or more than a three in the triple (arrangement) of the twelve, there would be *h* (eight). But it is just *d* (four). Therefore, it is set down and marked with seventy-four, (as belonging) to the verse of the poem. Then, one notes which (number) from the surface corresponds to it. It is five. The five which belongs to the base, is added to it. Thus, one gets ten. A *y* is set down, and a mark is put upon it. One notes in which rank it occurs. We find it in the seventh.⁹⁰⁵ Thus, we enter seven among the letters of the chords. This entry is called the "letter birth." There is an *f*. One sets it down and adds the one of the cycle to seven. The total is eight. One enters it among the chords and gets to *s*. It is set down and marked with eight. One multiplies eight by the three that is in excess of the ten of the cycle - because it is the end of three quadruple (arrangements) of the cycles - and gets twenty-four. It is entered into the verse of the poem, and a mark is put upon (the number) which comes out from it. It is two hundred (r). Its sign is ninety-six, which is the end of the second ⁹⁰⁶ cycle of the letter cycles.

One picks two letters from the chords and writes down the first result. It has a nine. This number always corresponds to the remainder of the letters of the chords, after they have been divided into (twelve) cycles. It is nine.⁹⁰⁷

Then, one multiplies nine with the three which is in excess of the ninety letters of the chords, and adds to it the one which is the remainder in the twelfth cycle. Thus, one gets twenty-eight. One enters it among the letters of the chords and gets to an **alif**. It is set down and marked with ninety-six. If the seven ⁹⁰⁸ - which is the cycles of the ninety letters is multiplied by four - which is the three that is in excess of ninety plus the one that is the remainder in the twelfth cycle - the result is the same.

One goes up nine on the side of eight and enters nine in the table. Thus, one gets to the *zimam* letter two. One multiplies nine with the (number) of the surface corresponding to it, namely, three. Seven, the number of the chords with letters, is added to it, and the one which is the remainder in the twelfth cycle is subtracted. Thus, one gets thirty-three. One enters it into the verse and gets to five. One puts it down ⁹⁰⁹ (as *h*), doubles nine, and enters eighteen on the front (recto) of the table. One takes (the number) which is on the surface. It is one. One enters it among the letters of the chords and gets to an *m*. It is set down, and a mark is put upon it.

Then, one picks two letters from the chords and writes down the second result. It has (the number) seventeen. The remainder is five. One goes up on the side of fifty-eight ⁹¹⁰ Five is multiplied by the three which is in excess of ninety. Thus, one gets fifteen. One adds to it the one which is the remainder in the twelfth cycle. This is nine. ⁹¹¹ One enters sixteen into the verse and gets to a *t*. It is set down and marked with sixty-four. One adds to five the three which is in excess of ninety, and one adds the one which is the remainder in the twelfth cycle. This is thirty-nine. ⁹¹² One enters it on the front (recto) of the table and gets to the *zimam* letter thirty. One notes what (number) is on the surface. It is found to be one. It is set down (as **alif**), and a mark (indicating that it belongs) to the verse of the poem is put upon it. It also is the ninth from the verse. One enters nine on the front (recto) of the table and comes to a stop at a three in the tens. Therefore, an *l* (thirty) is set down, and a mark is put upon it.

Then, one writes down the third result. Its number is thirteen. The remainder is one. One moves one on the side of eight. The three which is in excess of ninety,

and the one which is the remainder in the twelfth cycle are added to thirteen. Thus, one gets seventeen, plus the one of the result, which gives eighteen. It is entered among the letters of the chords. It is an *l*, which is set down.

This is the end of the operation.

The example in the preceding question was this. We wanted to know whether the *za'irajah* was a modern or an ancient science.[913](#) The ascendant was in the first degree of Sagittarius. We set down:

The letters of the chords.

The letters of the question.

The principles, which are:

- (1) The number of the letters - ninety-three.
- (2) The cycles of (the letters) - seven, with the remainder of nine.
- (3) The ascendant - one.
- (4) The ruler of Sagittarius - four.
- (5) The greatest cycle - one.
- (6) The degrees of the ascendant plus the cycle - two.
- (7) Ascendant plus cycle multiplied by the ruler eight.
- (8) The ruler added to the ascendant-five.

The verse of the poem: [914](#)

A weighty question you have got. Keep, then, to yourself
Remarkable doubts which have been raised and which can be straightened
out with diligence.

The letters of the chords:

s, t, d, 915 t, h, n, th, k, h, m, d, s, w, n, th, h, s, alif, b, l, m, n, s, 'ayn, f, d, q, r, s, y, k, l, m, n, s, 'ayn, f, q, r, s, t, th, kh, dh, z, gh, sh, t, k, n, 'ayn, h, s, z, w, h, l, s, k, l, m, n, s, alif, b, j, d, h, w, z, h, t, y.

The letters of the question:

alif, l, z, 915a y, r, j, t; 'ayn, l, m; m, h, d, th, alif, m; q, d, y, m.

561225	358	First Cycle:	9.
<i>s</i>	876		
<i>w</i>	1	Second Cycle:	17, remainder 5,
<i>alif</i>	2		
<i>l</i>	3	Third Cycle:	13, remainder 1,
<i>ayn</i>	4		
	5	Fourth Cycle:	9.

<i>z</i>	6			
<i>y</i>	7			
<i>m</i>	8	Fifth Cycle:	17, remainder 5,	
<i>alif</i>	9			
<i>l</i>	10	Sixth Cycle:	13, remainder 1,	
<i>kh</i>	11			
<i>l</i>	12	Seventh Cycle:	9.	
<i>q</i>	13			
<i>h</i>	14	Eighth Cycle:	17, remainder 5,	
<i>z</i>	15			
<i>t</i>	16	Ninth Cycle:	13, remainder 1,	
<i>f</i>	17			
<i>s</i>	18	Tenth Cycle:	9.	
<i>n</i>	19			
<i>alif</i>	20	Eleventh Cycle:	17, remainder 5,	2652
<i>dh</i>	21			
<i>n</i>	22	Twelfth Cycle:	13, remainder 1,	28
<i>gh</i>	23			3265
<i>r</i>	24			
<i>alif</i>	25	First Result:	9	
<i>y</i>	26			
<i>b</i>	27	Second Result:	17, remainder 5,	6355896
<i>sh</i>	28			
<i>k</i>	29	Third Result:	13, remainder 1.	58
<i>d</i>	30			65
<i>b</i>	31			
<i>t</i>	32			
<i>h</i>	33			
<i>alif</i>	34			
<i>l</i>	35			
<i>j</i>	36			
<i>d</i>	37			
	38			
		<i>m th l alif</i>		
		<i>l 50</i>		
		<i>alif 41</i> 916		

t, w, n, alif, q, s, b, x, r, alif, alif, r, s, alif, t, q, b, alif, r, q, alif, 'ayn, alif, r, [m [917](#)*], h, r, h,* [918](#) *l, d, alif, r, s, h, [alif* [919](#)*], l, d, y, f, s, r, alif, h, m, t, alif, l, l.*

Their period is according to twenty-five, then twentythree twice, then twenty-one twice, until one gets to the one at the end of the verse [?]. [920](#) All the letters are moved. And

God knows better.

*t, r, w, h, n; r, w, h; alif, l, q, d, s; atif, b, r, z; s, r, h, alif;
l, alif, d, r, y, s; f, alif, s, t, r, q, atif; b, h, alif; m, r, t,
q, atif; alf, l, 'ayn, l, alif.* [921](#)

End of the discussion of how to find answers in rhymed form from the *Za'irajah of the World*.

People have methods other than the *zd'irajah* for finding out answers from questions. (However,) those answers are not rhymed.

I think [922](#) that the secret of obtaining a rhymed answer from the *za'irajah* lies in the fact that a verse, namely, that of Malik b. Wuhayb -"A weighty question, etc."- enters (into the operation). Thus, one gets an answer which rhymes on the rhyme letter of Malik's verse. In other methods, there is no rhymed answer. [923](#)

We are going to report this much about other methods of finding answers. A competent (practitioner of letter magic) said:

On learning hidden secrets from letter connections [924](#)

Let it be known to you - God guide us and you [925](#) - that the following letters are the basis for answers to any problem. They produce the answers through total division. [926](#) There are forty-three letters, as one can see:

*alif, w, l, alif, 'ayn, z, s, atif, l, m, kh, y, d, l, z, q, t, alif,
f, dh, s, r, n, gh, sh, r, alif, k, k, y, b, m, d, b, j, t, l, h,
h, d, th, l, th, alif.*

Some excellent man has worked these letters into the form of a verse in which every double consonant stands for two letters. He called the (verse) the "pole." It runs:

A weighty question you have got. Keep, then, to yourself
Remarkable doubts which have been raised and which can be straightened
out with diligence. [927](#)

If one wants to produce the (answer from the) question, one must eliminate the letters of the question that are repeated and set down those that remain. Then, one eliminates one letter that is similar to (a letter of the question) from the basic (verse), the "pole," for each remaining letter of the question. One sets down what remains. Then, one mixes the two remainders together in one line. One begins by taking as the first (letter), one from the remainder from the basic (verse), and as the second, one from the remainder from the question, and so forth, until the two remainders are finished, or until one of them is finished before the other. (In the latter case,) one leaves the rest as it is. If the number of the letters that come out after the mixing agrees with the number of the letters in the basic (verse), before elimination, the operation is correct. Then, one adds to them five *n*'s, in order to have the musical scales balanced and to have a complete complement of forty-eight letters. With those letters, one fills a table of squares. The end of the first line is the beginning of the second, and the rest is moved as it is, and so forth, until the table is filled and the first line reoccurs. The letters in the "region" follow each other in

proportion to the motion. Then, one finds out the chord of each letter through square division by the smallest aliquot part found in it, [927a](#) and one puts (each) chord opposite its letter. Then, one finds out the elemental relations for the letters of the table and indicates their natural power, their spiritual power, their spiritual scales, their psychic dispositions, and their principal bases from the table which has been composed for the purpose and which looks as follows: [928](#)

Bases	Dispositions			Scales			Powers			
300	60	80 7 1000			900	[?]	1	500	10	4b
100	3	800	70	9	400		30	7	200	20
900	80	6	200	80	400	40		2700	[?]	90
										5d
	40	5	20 7		10 9		90 4h			
500		4	100	10	2					w
		20	5	90 8						z
1000	100	10	1 w Dispositions		Results					
200	20	2	Scales t							
		30	3 Principal Base k Powers							
300	40	4								
400	50	5								
500	60	6								
		70	7							
600	80	8								
700	90	9								
800										
900										

Then, [929](#) one takes the chord of each letter after multiplying it by the bases of the four cardines of the (celestial) spheres. One should avoid what is adjacent to the cardines and also the *sawaqit*, [930](#) because their relationship is confused. The result here is the first degree of diffusion. [931](#) Then, one takes the total of the elements and subtracts from it [?] the bases of the generated things. There remain the bases of the world of creation, after it has been exposed to the moments [?] of creation. Then, there are transferred to it some abstractions from matter - the elements that constitute matter. The result is the middle horizon of the soul. The first degree of diffusion is subtracted from the total of the elements. There remains [932](#) the world of mediation. It has to do with the world of simple beings, and not with (those of) composite ones.

The world of mediation is then multiplied by the middle horizon of the soul. The result is the most high horizon. To it, the first degree of diffusion is transferred. Then, the first of the elements basically constituting matter is subtracted from the fourth (degree of diffusion [?]). There remains the third degree of diffusion. The total of the particulars of the elements is always multiplied by the fourth degree of diffusion. The result is the first world of particularization. The result of the multiplication of the second (element) with the second (degree of diffusion) is the second world of particularization; that of the third with the third is the third; and that of the fourth with the fourth is the fourth world of particularization. The worlds of particularization are added up and subtracted from the world of totality. There remain the worlds of abstraction. They are divided by the most high horizon. The result is the first particular. The remainder is divided by the middle horizon. The result is the second particular. The remainder is the third. The fourth here is fixed for

the fourth (division [?]). If one wants more than four (divisions [?]), one must increase the number of the worlds of particularization, that of the degrees of diffusion, and that of the magic squares containing letters in their numerical value. God guide us and you.

Likewise, if the world of abstraction is divided by the first degree of diffusion, the result is the first particular of the world of composition, and so forth to the end of the last degree of the world of existence.

This should be understood and contemplated. God is guide and helper. .

Another method to find the answer is this. A competent (practitioner of letter magic) said:

Let it be known to you - God strengthen us and you with a spirit coming from Him - that the science of letters is an important science. The scholar who knows it comes to know things that he would not be able to know with the help of any other science in the world. The practice of the science of (letter magic) requires certain conditions. With its help, the scholar may discover the secrets of creation and the inner workings of nature. Thus, he learns the two results of philosophy, which are letter magic and its sister (alchemy). The veil of the unknown is lifted for him. He thus learns the contents of the secret recesses of the heart. A number of people in the Maghrib have been observed [933](#) to have a knowledge of the science (of letter magic). They have produced remarkable and extraordinary things and have been active in the world of existence with the help of God. It should be known that every virtue depends on exertion. A good habit, together with patience, is the key to everything good, just as a lack of skill and haste are the beginning of all failure.

I say: If one wants to know the power of each letter of the *alphabetos* [934](#) - the alphabet - to the last number - and this is the beginning of the science of letters - one must look for the number that belongs to each letter. This degree, which means harmony for the letters [?], constitutes the power that a (particular letter) possesses with regard to the *corporealia*. The number is then multiplied by itself. The result is the power that a (particular letter) possesses with regard to the *spiritualia*. It is the "chord" (of the particular letter). This cannot be done with letters that have diacritical points. It can be done only with those that have no diacritical points, because the letters with diacritical points have degrees of meaning which will be explained later on. [935](#)

It should be known that the form of every letter has a (corresponding) form in the world on high, the (divine) throne. These (forms) may be moving or stationary, high or low, as is indicated in the proper places on the tables written down in (connection with) the *za'irajahs*.

It should be known that the powers of the letters fall into three categories. The first (category) is the least (important one). It is a power that becomes manifest after (the letters) have been written down. Such (a letter) is thus written down for a spiritual world which belongs to that particular letter. Whenever the letter produces a psychic power and concentration of mind, the powers of letters exercise an influence upon the world of the bodies.

The second (category) is the power of (the letters) in the realm of thought. It is the result of the activation of the *spiritualia* for (the letters). It is a power among the *spiritualia* on high, and a formal power in the world of *corporealia*.

The third (category) is what causes the inward - the psychic power - to concentrate upon bringing (the letter) into being. Before (a letter) is pronounced, it is a form in the soul. After it is pronounced, it is a form among the letters and a power

in speech.

The natures of (the letters) are the same as those attributed to (all) created things, namely, heat-and-dryness, heat-and-cold, cold-and-humidity, and cold-and-dryness. This is the secret of the ogdoad. Heat combines air and fire. The two are (represented by the letters) [936](#) *alif, h, t, m, f, sh, dh, j, z, k, s, q, th, and z*. Cold combines earth and water: *d, h, l, 'ayn, r, kh, gh, b, w, y, n, s, t, and d*. Humidity combines air and water: *j, z, k, s, q, th, z, d, h, l, 'ayn, r, kh, and gh*. Dryness combines fire and earth: *alif, h, t, m, f, sh, dh, b, w, y, n, s, t, and d*. This is the relationship and mutual interpenetration of the letters representing the natures and the interpenetration of the particulars of the world within (the letters) on high and here below, through the agency of the primary mothers, that is, the four individual natures (elements).

If one wants to find out the unknown from a given question, one must ascertain the ascendant of the questioner, or the ascendant of his question. Then, the letters of the four cardines of (the horoscope) - one, five, [937](#) seven, and ten must be "spelled" (*istintaq*) [938](#) equally and according to order, and the numbers of the powers and the chords must be found out, as we shall explain. One adds up, establishes proportions, and tries to open up [?] the answer. Thus, one will find what one is looking for, either clearly expressed or implied.

The same is the case with any question one may happen to have to explain. If one wants to discover the powers of the letters of the ascendant, together with the name of the questioner and the object, one must add up the numerical values of (the letters) according to the "great calculation." [939](#) The ascendant, (let us assume,) is Aries, (and) the fourth (sign after Aries) [940](#) is Cancer, the seventh Libra, and the tenth Capricornus, which is. the strongest of the cardines. The article that goes with the name of each sign is omitted. One notes which rational numbers placed in their circle belong to each house (of the zodiac). Then, all the parts of multiples [?] in the proportions resulting from *istintaq* are eliminated. Under each letter, (the number [?] []) which belongs to it in this connection is written down. Then, one follows the same procedure with regard to the numerical values of the letters of the four elements and (the number [?]) that belongs to them. All these (numbers) are written as letters. The cardines, powers, and dispositions [941](#) are arranged in a mixed line. One spells the letters out and multiplies whatever must be multiplied, in order to find out the (various) scales. One sums up and tries to open up [?] the answer. Thus, the hidden thought and its answer will be found.

For instance, let us assume that the ascendant is Aries (*al-hamal*), as mentioned before. It is written down (in unconnected letters) *h-m-l*. The numerical value of *h* is eight, which can be divided by two, four, and eight. (It thus yields) *d* (four), *b* (two), and *alif* (one). The numerical value of *m* is forty, which can be divided by two, four, eight, ten, and twenty. (It thus yields,) to be precise, [*m* (forty),] *k* (twenty), *y* (ten), *h* (five), *d* (four), and *b* (two). The numerical value of *l* is thirty, which can be divided by two, two-thirds, three, five, six, and ten. (It thus yields) *k* (twenty), *y* (ten), *w* (six), *h* (five), and *j* (three). The same is done with all the letters of the question and the name in each word which happens to occur (in connection with the problem). The chords are found by dividing the square of each letter by its smallest aliquot part. [942](#) For instance, the numerical value of *d* is four, the square of four is sixteen. This (number) is to be divided by its smallest aliquot part, namely, two. Thus, the chord of *d* is eight. Each chord, then, is placed opposite its letter. Then, the elemental relationships are found out, as has been mentioned before in connection with the explanation of the spelling (method of the great

calculation). They have a foundation useful for finding them out from the nature of the letter and the nature of the field of the table in which the (letter) occurs, as was mentioned by the *shaykh* for (the benefit of) those who know the technical terminology.

Deductions that can be drawn with the help
of letter systems as to deeply hidden thoughts.

This goes as follows: If someone asks what is the sickness of the patient, the cause of whose disease is not known, and what medicine will be appropriate for its cure, one orders the person who asks the question to name something that can be applied to the name of the unknown sickness, so that the word he names can be made the foundation of (the operation). The word is "spelled out" (*istintaq*) together with the name of the ascendant, the elements, the questioner, the day, and the hour, if one wants to go thoroughly into the question. If not, one restricts oneself to the word that the questioner says, and uses it, as we shall explain.

For instance, the questioner says "horse" (*faras*). The numerical value of the three letters (*f-r-s*) with their rational aliquot parts is set down. The numerical value off is eighty, [943](#) which has the aliquot parts *m* (forty), *k* (twenty), *y* (ten), *h* (eight), and *d* (four). The numerical value of *r* is two hundred, which has the aliquot parts *q* (one hundred), *n* (fifty), *k-h* (twenty-five), *k* (twenty), and *y* (ten). The numerical value of *s* is sixty, [944](#) which has the aliquot parts *m* (forty), *l* (thirty), *k* (twenty), *y* (ten), *w* (six), and *j* (three). *W* is a perfect number, having (the aliquot parts) four, three, and two, and so is *s*, having (the aliquot parts) forty, thirty, twenty, and ten. [945](#) If one simplifies [946](#) the letters of the words and then finds two elements equal, one assumes that the one that has more letters has superiority over the other. Then, one adds up the number of the letters of the elements in the name of the desired object, together with its letters, without simplification. One does the same with the name of the questioner. One assumes that the greater and stronger (number) has superiority.

Description of how to find out the powers of the elements.

FIRE	EARTH	AIR	WATER
	<i>w</i>	<i>j</i>	
<i>hh</i>	yyyy	kkkk	<i>h</i>
<i>mm</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>l</i>

The superiority here goes to the earth. Its nature, coldand-dryness, is the nature of the black bile. Thus, one assumes that the sick person suffers from the black bile. After one has composed an appropriate statement from the letters resulting from the breakdown into aliquot parts, it turns out that the throat is the place where the pain is located. The appropriate medicine is a clyster, and the appropriate liquid lemon juice. This results from the powers of the numbers of the letters of the word "horse." The (preceding discussion) is a brief, appropriate example.

In order to find out the powers of the elements from proper names, one proceeds in the following way. For instance, one takes "Muhammad" and writes it with unconnected letters (*m-h-m-d*). Then, one writes down the names of the four

elements according to the composition of the (celestial) sphere. The result will be the letters and number of each element. For instance:

FIRE	EARTH	AIR	WATER
Three kinds	Three kinds	Six kinds	Six kinds
"	<i>bbb</i>	<i>jj</i>	<i>ddd</i>
<i>hh</i>	<i>www</i>	<i>zz</i>	<i>hh</i>
		<i>kkk</i>	<i>lll</i>
<i>mm</i>	<i>nn</i>	<i>ss</i>	"
		<i>qq</i>	<i>rr</i>
		<i>nn</i>	<i>hh</i>

One will find that the strongest of the elements of the name mentioned is the element of water, because the number of its letters is twenty. Therefore, one gives it superiority over the other elements of the name mentioned. One proceeds in the same way with all names. They are then added to their chords, or to the chord attributed to the ascendant in the *za'irajah*, or to the chord of the verse ascribed to Malik b. Wuhayb which he made the basis for the mixture of questions and which runs:

A weighty question you have got. Keep, then, to yourself
Remarkable doubts which have been raised and which can be straightened
out with diligence. [947](#)

This is a famous chord for finding out unknown things. It served as the basis for Ibn ar-Raqqam [948](#) and his colleagues. It is a complete, self-sufficient operation (that works) in (all) arbitrary instances.

The operation with this mentioned chord is as follows [949](#) One writes it down with its letters unconnected and mixed with the word of the question according to the technique of "breaking down." [950](#) The number of the letters of this chord - that is, the verse - is forty-three, because every doubled letter counts as two. Then, the letters (of the questions), which are repeated in the mixing, are eliminated, and one letter which is similar to the letter of the question is eliminated from the basic (verse) for each remaining letter of the question. The two remainders are set down on one line, so mixed that the first letter is taken from the remainder of the "pole," and the second from the remainder of the question, (and so forth), until the two remainders are used up. This yields forty-three (letters). Five *n*'s are then added, so that there are forty-eight letters, and the musical scales are balanced through them. Then, one writes down the remainder in order. If the number of the letters that come out after the mixing, agrees with the original number before elimination, the operation is correct. Then, a table of squares is filled with the (letters) that have been mixed. The end of the first line is the beginning of the second, and so on, until the first line reoccurs. The letters in the "region" follow each other in proportion to the motion. Then, the chord of each letter is brought out, as was mentioned before. It is put opposite its letters. Then, the elemental relations of the letters of the table are found out, in order to indicate their natural power, their spiritual scales, their psychic dispositions, and their principal bases from the table that has been composed for that purpose.

The way to find out the elementary relations is to note what the nature of the first letter of the table is, and what the nature of the field in which it resides is. If the two agree, it is good. If not, a relation between the two letters must be found out. This rule extends to all the letters of the table. Those who know the rules as they

have been established in the musical circle can easily prove the correctness of this (procedure).

Then, [951](#) one takes the chord of each letter after multiplying it by the bases of the four cardines of the (celestial) sphere, as was mentioned before. One should avoid what is adjacent to the cardines, and also the *sawaqit*, because their relationship is confused. The result here is the first degree of diffusion. Then, one takes the total of the elements and subtracts from it [?] the bases of the generated things. There remains the base of the world of creation after it has been exposed to the moments [?] of creation. Then, there are transferred to it some abstractions from matter - the elements that constitute matter. The result is the middle horizon of the soul. The first degree of diffusion is subtracted from the total of the elements. There remains the world of mediation. It has to do with the worlds of simple beings and not with (those of) composite ones.

The world of mediation is then multiplied by the middle horizon of the soul. The result is the most high horizon. To it, the first degree of diffusion is transferred. Then, the first of the elements basically constituting matter is subtracted from the fourth (degree of diffusion [?]). There remains the third degree of diffusion. The total of the particulars of the elements is always multiplied by the fourth degree of diffusion. The result is the first world of particularization. The result of the multiplication of the second (element) with the second (degree of diffusion) is the second world of particularization. The same is the case with the third and fourth. The worlds of particularization are added up and subtracted from the world of totality. There remain the worlds of abstraction. They are divided by the most high horizon. The result is the first particular.

From here, the operation is continued until its completion. There are preliminary remarks to it in the books of Ibn Wahshiyah, al-B:uni, and others. The procedure follows a natural and definite [951a](#) norm that applies to this and other metaphysical disciplines. The construction of letter *za'irajahs*, as well as the divine art and philosophical magic center around it.

It [952](#) should be known that all these operations lead only to getting an answer that corresponds to the idea of the question. They do not give information on anything supernatural. They are a sort of witty (game), as we mentioned at the beginning of the book. [953](#) Likewise, they do not belong to the science of letter magic (*simiya'*), as we have explained it.

God gives inspiration. He is asked for help. He is trusted. He suffices us. He is a good protector.

29. *The science of alchemy.*⁹⁵⁴

This is a science that studies the substance through which the generation of gold and silver may be artificially accomplished, and comments on the operation leading to it. The (alchemists) acquire knowledge of the tempers and powers of all created things and investigate them critically. They hope that they may thus come upon the substance that is prepared to (produce gold and silver). They even investigate the waste matter of animals, such as bones, feathers, hair,⁹⁵⁵ eggs, and excrements, not to mention minerals.⁹⁵⁶

Alchemy, then, comments on the operations through which such a substance may be transformed from potentiality into actuality, as, for instance, by the dissolution of bodies (substances) into their natural components through sublimation and distillation,⁹⁵⁷ by the solidification of meltable (substances) through calcification, by the pulverization of solid materials with the help of pestles and mullers and similar things. The (alchemists) assume that all these techniques lead to the production of a natural substance which they call "the elixir."⁹⁵⁸ When some mineral substance, such as lead, tin, or copper, which is prepared, in a manner (and degree) that closely approaches (preparedness) in actuality, for receiving the form of gold or silver, is heated in the fire and some (quantity) of the elixir is added⁹⁵⁹ to it, that substance turns into pure gold. In the technical terminology that the (alchemists) use for purposes of mystification, they give the cover name of "spirit" to the elixir and that of "body" to the substance to which the elixir is added.

The science that comments on this technical terminology and on the form of the technical operation by which predisposed substances are turned into the form of gold and silver, is the science of alchemy. In both ancient and modern times, people have written works on alchemy. Discussions of alchemy are occasionally ascribed to people who were not alchemists.

The chief systematic writer on alchemy, according to the alchemists, is Jabir b. Hayyan. Alchemists even consider alchemy Jabir's special preserve and call it "the science of Jabir." He wrote seventy treatises on alchemy.⁹⁶⁰ All of them read like puzzles. It is thought⁹⁶¹ that only those who know all that is in (Jabir's treatises) can unlock the secrets of alChemey.⁹⁶²

At-Tughra'i,⁹⁶³ a recent Eastern philosopher, wrote systematic works on alchemy and disputations with alchemists and other philosophers.

Maslamah al-Majriti, a Spanish philosopher, wrote on alchemy the *Rutbat al-hakim*. He wrote the *Rutbah* as a counterpart to his work on sorcery and talismans entitled *Ghayat al-hakim*. He thought that the two arts (alchemy and sorcery) were both results and fruits of philosophy and science, and that those who were not acquainted with them would miss the fruit of scholarship and philosophy altogether.⁹⁶⁴

Maslamah's discussion in the *Rutbah* and the discussions of all the (alchemists) in their respective works employ puzzling means of expression which are difficult for those who have not familiarized themselves with the technical

terminology of (alchemists), to understand. We shall mention the reason why the alchemists had recourse to these cover names and puzzling means of expression.[965](#)

Ibn al-Mughayribi,[966](#) a leading alchemist, has (written alchemical) maxims in verses the rhyme letter of which is each letter of the alphabet, taken up in turn. The verses belong among the most original poetry there is. All of them employ a puzzling manner of expression, (and they are) like elusive riddles. They can hardly be understood.

Works on alchemy are attributed to al-Ghazzali,[967](#) but this attribution is not correct, because al-Ghazzali's lofty perceptions would not have permitted him to study, or, eventually, to adopt the errors of alchemical theories.

Some alchemical theories and opinions are occasionally attributed to Khalid b. Yazid b. Mu'awiyah,[968](#) a stepson of Marwan b. al-Hakam. However, it is very well known that Khalid was an Arab by race and close to the Bedouin attitude. Thus, he was not familiar with the sciences and crafts in general. How, then, could he have known an unusual craft based upon knowledge of the natures and tempers of composite things, when the physical and medical works of scholars who did research on those subjects had not yet appeared and had not yet been translated? The only possibility is that there existed another Khalid b. Yazid among persons versed in the various crafts, and that the mix-up was caused by identical names.

I shall pass on here an epistle on alchemy written by Abu Bakr b. Bishrun [969](#) to Ibn as-Samh. Both were pupils of Maslamah. If considered as carefully as it deserves to be, the discussion of (Ibn Bishr(n) will show my [970](#) attitude toward alchemy. After some introductory (remarks) in the epistle, which have nothing to do with the subject, Ibn Bishrun said: "The premises of this noble craft were mentioned by the ancients. All of them were reported by the philosophers. Such premises are knowledge of the generation of minerals, of the creation of rocks and precious stones, and of the different natures of regions and localities. As they are well known, we shall not mention them. But I shall explain to you what one needs to know of this craft. Thus, let us start with that knowledge.

"It has been said: The students of this science must first know three things: (1) whether it exists, (2) what brings it into being, and (3) how it comes into being. If the student of alchemy knows these three things well, he achieves his object and knows as much as can be known about this science.

"As to the problem of the existence of alchemy and the proofs for the (forces) that bring alchemy into existence, the elixir that we have sent to you is a satisfying answer.

"The question of what brings alchemy into being implies, according to alchemists, search for the stone that makes the (alchemical) operation possible. Potentially, the operation may be performed with any (conceivable) thing, because the (potentially to perform the operation) comes from the four natures (elements). It originated from their composition at the beginning and will revert to them at the end. However, there are things that might be used for the operation (only) potentially, not actually. This comes about as follows. There are some things that can be decomposed. There are others that cannot be decomposed. Those that can be decomposed can be processed and treated. They are the things that can be transformed from potentiality into actuality. On the other hand, the things that cannot be decomposed cannot be processed and treated, because they have nothing but potentiality in them. They cannot be decomposed, in order to give some of the elements they contain an advantage over the others and to have the power of the bigger (elements) predominate over the lesser ones.

"You - may God give you success - must therefore know the most suitable of the decomposable stones that can be used for the operation. You must know its genus, power, action, and which kind of dissolution or solidification, purification, calcification, absorption, or transformation it may be able to effect. People who do not know these basic principles of alchemy will never be successful or achieve any good results. You must know whether (the stone) can be aided by something else or is sufficient by itself, and whether it is one (thing by itself) at the beginning or is associated with something else and becomes one (thing by itself) during the treatment, and is therefore called 'stone.' You must also know how it works; how much its components must weigh and what times (are suitable) for it; how the spirit is inserted and the soul made to enter into it; whether fire can separate (the soul) from (the stone) after it has been inserted (in it); if not, why (not), and what makes it necessary that it be that way. This is what one wants (to know).

"It should be understood and realized that all philosophers have praised the soul and thought that it is the soul that governs, sustains, and defends the body and is active in it. For, when the soul leaves the body, the body dies and gets cold. It cannot move or defend itself, because there is no life in it and no light. I have mentioned the body and the soul only because this craft (alchemy) is similar to the body of man, which is built up by regular meals [971](#) and which persists and is perfected by the living, luminous soul, which enables the body to do the great and mutually contradictory things that only the living power of the soul can do. Man *suffers* from the disharmony of his component elements. If his elements were in complete harmony and (thus) not affected by accidents and (inner) contradictions, the soul would not be able to leave his body. Man would then live eternally. Praised be He who governs all things, He is exalted.

"It should be known that the natures (elements) producing the (alchemical) operation constitute a quality that pushes (forward) at the beginning, and a process of emanation requiring an end. When they have reached this limit, they cannot be transformed (back) into the (state) that (formed the starting point of) their composition, as we stated at the outset with regard to man [972](#) The natures of the substance had been separate, but now they adhere to each other and have become one thing, similar to the soul in power and activity, and similar to the body in having composition and pulse. [973](#) There is a strange thing about the actions of the elements. It is the weak (element) that is powerful, since it has power over the decomposition, composition, and completion of things. It is in this sense that I use (the words) 'powerful' and 'weak.' Change and nonbeing in the first composition occur only as the result of disharmony (among the component elements). They do not occur in the second composition, because there then is harmony (among the component elements).

"An early (philosopher-alchemist) has said: 'Decomposition and division mean life and duration, as far as the alchemical operation is concerned, while composition means death and nonbeing.' This statement has 'a subtle meaning. The philosopher meant by 'life and duration' its [974](#) transformation from nonexistence into existence. As long as it remains in (the state of) its first composition, it is, no doubt, nonbeing. But when the second composition takes place, nonbeing no longer exists. Now, the second composition comes about only after decomposition and division. Thus, decomposition and division are peculiar to the (alchemical) operation. If it [975](#) is applied to the soluble body (substance), it spreads in it, because it has no form, since it has come to take in the body the place of the soul which has no form. This is because it has no weight as far as (the substance) is concerned. You will see this, if God - He is exalted - wills.

"You must realize that mixing a fine thing with another fine thing is easier than mixing a coarse thing with another coarse thing. I have in mind here the similarity in form among spirits (on the one hand) and bodies (substances, on the other), for it is the form of things that causes their union. I mention this to you, so that you may know that the (alchemical) operation is more agreeable and simpler if it is undertaken with fine spiritual elements than if it is undertaken with coarse corporeal (substances).

"It is logical that stones are stronger in their resistance to fire than spirits. Likewise, gold, iron, and copper are observed to offer more resistance to fire than sulphur, mercury, and other spirits. Therefore, I say: The substances were spirits at the beginning. When the heat of the natural process (*kiyan*) affects them, they are transformed by it into coarse, coherent substances. Fire is not able to consume them, because they are exceedingly coarse and coherent. When an exceedingly great amount of fire is applied to them, it turns them again into spirits, as they had been when they were first created. If fire (then again) affects the fine spirits, they flee and are not able to endure it. Thus, you must know what brought the substances to their particular condition and (what) brought the spirits to theirs. That is the most important knowledge you can have.

"I say: The spirits flee and are burned, because of their combustibility and fineness. They became combustible because of their great share of humidity. When fire notices humidity, it attaches itself to it, because (humidity) is airy [975a](#) and (thus) similar to fire. (The fire) does not stop eating it, until (the humidity) is consumed.

The same applies to substances when, (noticing) the approach of fire, they flee, [976](#) because they have little coherence and are coarse. (But) they are not combustible, because they are composed of earth and water which offers resistance to fire, in that the fine (components of water) unite with its coarse (components) through a long (process of) cooking which softens and mixes things. For, anything that is annihilated through fire [977](#) is annihilated only because its fine (components) separate (under the influence of fire) from its coarse (components), and its parts merge with each other without dissolution and adaptation. Thus, the resulting combination and interpenetration is (mere) aggregation, not (real) mixture. Therefore, (the fine and the coarse elements) are as easily separated (under the influence of fire) as water and oil (are), or similar things. I describe this merely so that you may learn from it (the facts) about composition and opposition with regard to the elements. If you have a sufficient knowledge of this, you know as much about the (elements) as can be known by you.

"You must (further) know that the mixtures, which are the elements of alchemy, agree with one another. They are derived from one substance. One order and one treatment unite them all. Nothing strange enters into either a (single) part or into the whole of it. [978](#) In this sense, the philosopher has said: 'If you have a good knowledge of the treatment and composition of the elements, and if you do not permit anything strange to enter into them, you [979](#) have a good knowledge of what you want to know well and definitely, since the (alchemical) element is one (element) and contains nothing that is strange to it. He who brings something strange into it falsifies it and commits an error.'

"It should be known that if a cognate substance is properly dissolved for this (alchemical) element, so that it becomes similar to it in respect of fineness and subtleness, the (alchemical) element expands in it and follows it wherever it goes. As long as substances remain coarse and rough, they cannot expand or be paired, and they can dissolve only with the help of spirits.

"You - may God guide you - should understand this statement in that sense.

You - may God guide you - should know that such dissolution in the animal substance is the truth, which neither perishes nor decreases. It is the thing that transforms the elements, holds them, and produces for them marvelous colors and blossoms. Not every substance dissolves in this way, [980](#) which is (the way of) complete dissolution, because it is contrary to life. It dissolves only in so far as (the process of dissolution) is agreeable to it and serves to defend it against the burning action of fire, until it is no longer coarse and the elements are transformed to the degree of fineness or coarseness possible for them. When the substances have reached their limit of dissolution and refinement, they then obtain a power that holds, immerses, [981](#) transforms, and pervades. An (alchemical) operation, the test of whose truthfulness does not appear at the beginning, is no good.

"It should be known that the cold nature dries things out and ties down their humidity, while heat causes the humidity of things to appear and ties down their dryness. I have singled out heat and cold because they are active, and humidity and dryness (because they) are passive. The passivity of (the two opposites) toward each other creates and generates the substances. Heat, however, does so more actively than cold, because the cold cannot transport and move things, while heat is the cause of motion. When the heat that causes generation is weak, it never achieves anything. Correspondingly, if the heat affecting a thing is excessive, and there is no cold there, it burns the thing and destroys it. For this reason, some cold is needed in (alchemical) operations, so that the power of opposites may be balanced and there may be protection against the heat of fire.

"There is nothing the philosophers have warned against more insistently than burning fires. They have commanded (alchemists) to cleanse the elements and the breaths, to remove their dirt and humidity, and to keep away their harmful (actions) and uncleanliness from (fires). That is the sound basis of their doctrine and treatment. The (alchemical) operation begins with fire and ends with fire. Therefore, the philosophers have said, 'Beware of burning fires!' By that they meant that one should keep away the harmful (actions) that go with (fire). (Otherwise,) two kinds of harmful (actions) would combine against the substance and speed its destruction.

Also, anything may suffer annihilation and corruption through itself, [982](#) because its elements are opposed to each other and there is disharmony in it. It thus stands in the middle between two things [983](#) and does not find anything to strengthen and aid it, but the harmful (actions) overpower and destroy it.

"It should be known that the sages have mentioned that spirits return repeatedly to bodies (substances), so that they may have greater coherence with them and greater strength to fight the fire, since they (the spirits) come into contact with (the fire) at the moment of union - I mean here elemental fire. This should be realized.

"We are now going to speak about the stone that makes the (alchemical) operation possible, as mentioned by the philosophers. They have held different opinions about it. Some have thought that it is (to be found) in animals; some have thought, in plants; some have thought, in minerals; and, according to some, in everything. We do not have to examine these claims and enter into a dispute concerning them with the people who make them, because that would be a very long discussion. I have already stated [984](#) that the (alchemical) operation might potentially, be performed with anything, because the elements exist in every thing. This is so.

"We want to know what produces the (alchemical) operation (both) potentially and actually. Therefore, we turn to the statement of al-Harrani [985](#) that [986](#)

all dyeing consists of two kinds. One may use a substance such as saffron, which is used to dye a white garment. The (saffron) eventually changes in it, vanishing and being decomposed. The second kind of dyeing is transformation of the substance of one thing into the substance and color of something else. Thus trees, for instance, transform the soil into themselves, and animals the plants, so that eventually the soil becomes plants, and the plants animals. This can come about only with the help of the living spirit and the active nature (*kiyan*) which has the ability to generate substances and change essences.

"If this be so, I say that the (alchemical) operation must be either in animals or in plants. Proof of this is that both animals and plants need food by their very nature, in order to subsist and to materialize.

"Plants do not have the same fineness and power that animals have. Therefore, the sages rarely turned to them. Animals are the last and final stage of the three permutations. Minerals turn into plants, and plants into animals, but animals cannot turn into anything finer than themselves. They may, however, revert back to (greater) coarseness. Furthermore, animals are the only things in the world to which the living spirit attaches itself. Now, the spirit is the finest thing there is in the world. It attaches itself to animals only because it is similar to them. The spirit existing in plants is insignificant. It is coarse and thick. In addition, it is submerged and hidden in plants, because it is coarse itself and because the substance of plants is coarse. (Plants,) thus, cannot move, because they themselves are coarse and because their spirit is coarse. The mobile spirit is much finer than the hidden one.

The former accepts food. It can be moved, and it can breathe. The latter can only accept food. As compared with the living spirit, it occupies no better position than that of earth as compared to water. This is how plants compare with animals. Therefore, it is much more advanced and much simpler to use animals for the (alchemical) operation. The intelligent person who knows this must try the (method) that is easy. He must not do what he fears might be difficult.

"It should be known that the sages have divided living beings into 'mothers' - the elements - and 'young ones' - the generated beings. That is well known and easy to understand. The sages thus divided the elements and the generated beings into living ones and dead ones. They assumed that anything that moves is active and living and that anything that is stationary is passive and dead. They made this division for all things, for the melt able substances and the mineral drugs. Anything that is melt able in fire and volatile and combustible, they called 'living.' Anything of the opposite qualities, they called 'dead.' The animals and plants that can be decomposed into the four elements, they called living. Those that cannot, they called dead.

"Then, they searched all the living groups. Among the things that can be decomposed into four components obvious to the eye, they did not find anything suitable for alchemy. The only (suitable) thing they found was 'the stone' which is in animals. They studied its genus. Eventually, they came to know it. They took it and treated it. As a result, they obtained the desired qualities from it.

"Similar qualities may be obtained in minerals and plants, after (various mineral or vegetable) drugs are combined, mixed, and then separated again. There are plants, such as saltwort, [987](#) that can be decomposed into certain of the (four) components. Minerals contain substances, spirits, and breaths which, when they are mixed and treated, produce something that may exercise an influence. We have tried all that out.

"Animals are much more advanced. Their treatment is much simpler. Thus, one must know what is the stone that exists in animals, and how it can be found.

"We have made it clear that animals are the highest of generated things. In the same sense, whatever is composed from them (animals) is finer than (plants),⁹⁸⁸ just as plants are finer than earth. Plants are finer than earth, because they are created from its ⁹⁸⁹ pure essence and fine substance. Therefore, they are necessarily fine and subtle. The animal stone is in the same position (among animals) as plants are in the soil. In general, there is nothing in living beings that can be decomposed into four elements except (that stone). This statement must be understood. It can hardly remain concealed from anyone except an obviously stupid person who has no intelligence.

"I have thus informed you about the quiddity and genus of the stone. Now I am going to explain to you the different kinds of treatment. Thus, we shall give you your fair share (of information), as we have taken it upon ourselves to do, if God - praised be He - wills.

"With God's blessing, here is the treatment: Take the noble stone. Deposit it in the cucurbit and alembic. Separate its four elements, which are water, air, earth, and fire. They are substance, spirit, soul, ⁹⁹⁰ and dyeing. When you have separated the water from the earth and the air from the fire, keep each one apart in its own vessel. Take the dregs - the sediment - at the bottom of the vessel. Wash it with hot fire, until the fire has removed its blackness, and its coarseness and toughness have disappeared. Blanch it carefully and evaporate the superfluities of the humidities concealed ⁹⁹¹ in it. It will thus become white water, which contains no darkness, dirt, or disharmony. Then, turn to those primary elements that are distilled from it. Cleanse them, too, of blackness and disharmony. Wash them repeatedly and sublimate them, until they become fine, subtle, and pure. When you have done this, God has given you success.

"Then, start with the composition around which the operation centers. This is as follows. Composition comes about only through pairing (marriage) and putrefaction. Pairing (marriage) is the mixture of the fine with the coarse.

Putrefaction is purgation ⁹⁹² and pulverization undertaken so that the various parts may mix, as water does, with each other and form one thing containing no confusion ⁹⁹³ or deficiency in itself. In this condition, the coarse (components) have the strength to hold the fine ones back; the spirit has the strength to oppose the fire and can tolerate it; and the soul has the strength to immerse itself and slip into the substances.

"This (situation) exists only after composition. When the soluble substance is paired with the spirit, it mingles with it in all its parts, and the parts interpenetrate, because they are similar to each, other. Thus, (the resulting mixture) becomes one thing. The fact that (the spirit) is mixed (with the body) makes it necessary for the spirit to be affected by well-being, corruption, duration [?], ⁹⁹⁴ and persistence, like the body. Likewise, when the soul mixes with (substance and spirit) and penetrates them through the services of the (alchemical) treatment, all the parts of the (soul) ⁹⁹⁵ mingle with all the parts of the two other (things), that is, spirit and substance. Thus, the (soul) and the two become one thing that contains no disagreement and is in the position of the universal particular whose elements are intact and whose parts are in harmony with each other.

"When this compound meets the soluble substance, and fire is constantly applied to it, and the humidity in it is brought to the surface, it melts in the soluble substance. Humidity implies combustion and an attachment of the fire to itself. But when the fire wants to attach itself to it, its admixture of water prevents it from union with the soul, for fire does not unite with oil, until it is pure. Likewise, water

implies aversion to fire. Thus, when fire is constantly applied to it and wants to evaporate it, the dry substance which is mixed with (the water) keeps it back inside and prevents it from evaporation. Thus, the substance is the cause of holding the water; the water is the cause of the duration of the oil; the oil is the cause of the persistence of the dyeing; and the dyeing is the cause of the appearance of color and the indication of oiliness in dark things that have no light and no life. This is the right substance. The (alchemical) operation comes about in this way.

"The 'egg' [996](#) about which you have inquired (is the thing) the sages call 'egg.' It is what they have in mind (when they speak about the 'egg'), and not the egg of the chicken. It should be known that the sages did not choose an inappropriate name by calling it 'egg.' They called it 'egg,' because it can be compared to an egg. I asked Maslamah about it one day when I was alone with him. I said to him, 'O excellent sage, tell me, why did the sages call the animal compound "egg"? Was that something arbitrary on their part, or was there some reason that caused them to do so?' He replied, 'Indeed, there is deep meaning in it.' I said, 'O sage, what advantage (did they see) and what indication of a connection with alchemy did they find in comparing it with an egg and calling it "egg"?' He said, 'Because the egg is similar to and related to the compound. Think it over, and the meaning of it will appear to you.' I remained with him, thinking it over, but I could not get at the meaning of it. When he saw that I was deep in thought and my soul immersed in it, he grasped my arm, nudged me slightly, and said to me, 'O Abu Bakr, it is because of the relationship that exists between the two with regard to the quantity of colors at the time of the mixture and composition of the elements.' When he said that, the darkness (that had enveloped my mind) left me. A light lit up my heart and gave my intellect the power to understand it. I stood up and went home, thanking God - He is exalted - for it. I constructed a geometrical figure to illustrate it. It proves the correctness of Maslamah's statement. I am writing it down for you in this book (epistle).

"For instance: when the compound is complete and perfect, the element of air in it is, to the element of air in the egg, in the same proportion as the element of fire in the former is to the element of fire in the latter. The same applies to the two other elements, earth and water. Now, I say: two things that in this manner are proportionate to each other are similar to each other. For example, assume that the plane of the egg is *HZWH*. [997](#) If we want that, we take the smallest element [998](#) of the compound, that of dryness, and add to it the same (amount) of the element of humidity. We treat the two, until the element of dryness absorbs the element of humidity and takes over its power. This discussion contains a certain secret hint which, however, will not remain concealed from you. Then we add to the two the same (amount as theirs) of the spirit, that is, water. Thus, the whole consists of six equal (parts). Then we treat the whole and add to it the same (amount) of the element of air, which is the soul. That is three parts. Thus, the whole consists of nine parts equal in power to dryness. Under each of two sides of this compound whose nature (element) encloses the plane of the compound, we then put two elements. The first two sides that enclose the plane of the compound are assumed to be those of the elements of water and air. They are the two sides *AJD*. [999](#) The plane is *ABJD*. Correspondingly, the two sides that enclose the plane of the 'egg' (and) which represent water and air are two sides of the (plane) *HZWH*. Now, I say: the plane *ABJD* is similar to the plane *HZWH* <...> the element of air which is called 'soul.' [1000](#) The same applies to (the side) *BJ* of the plane of the compound. The sages never called anything by the name of something (else), except when the first thing could be compared to the other.

"Words for an explanation of which you have asked (me) are 'holy land'

[1001](#) it means the combination of the higher and the lower elements; 'copper,' which is the (substance) the blackness of which has been removed and which was cut in pieces until it became an atom, and was then colored red with copperas, until it came to be copper. [1002](#) 'Maghnisiya' [1003](#) is the stone of the (alchemists) in which the spirits are frozen and which is brought forth by the higher nature in which the spirits are imprisoned, in order to fight the fire (and protect) them against it. 'Furfurah' (purple) is a perishable red color that is produced by nature (*kiyan*). 'Lead' is a stone that has three powers of different individualities which, however, are similar to each other in form and genus. One of them is spiritual, luminous, and clear. It is the active power. The second is psychic. It moves and has sensual perception. However, it is coarser than the first power. Its center is below that of the first (power). The third power is an earthy power. It is solid and astringent. It turns back toward the center of the earth because of its gravity. It is the power that holds the spiritual and psychic powers together and encloses them.

"All the remaining (words) are innovations created in order to confuse the ignorant. He who knows the (basic) premises can dispense with everything else.

"That is all you have asked me about. I have explained it to you in this epistle. We hope with God's help that you will achieve your wish. Farewell."

Here ends the discussion by Ibn Bishrun, one of the great pupils of Maslamah al-Majriti, the Spanish authority on alchemy, letter magic, and sorcery, for the third [ninth] century and later (times).

One can see how all the expressions used by (alchemists) tend to be secret hints and puzzles, [1004](#) scarcely to be explained or understood. This is proof of the fact that alchemy is not a natural craft.

The truth with regard to alchemy, which is to be believed and which is supported by actual fact, is that alchemy is one of the ways in which the spiritual souls exercise an influence and are active in the world of nature. (It may) belong among the (miraculous) acts of divine grace, if the souls are good. Or it may be a kind of sorcery, if the souls are bad and wicked. [1005](#) It is obvious that (alchemy may materialize) as a (miraculous) act of divine grace. It may be sorcery, because the sorcerer, as has been established in the proper place, may change the identity of matter by means of his magic power. [1006](#) (People) think that a (sorcerer) must use some substance (in order) for his magical activity to take place. Thus, certain animals may be created from the substance of earth, of hair, or of plants, or, in general, from substances other than their own. That, for instance, happened to the sorcerers of Pharaoh with their ropes and sticks. [1007](#) It also is reported, for instance, of the Negro and Indian sorcerers in the far south and of the Turks in the far north, that by sorcery they force the air to produce rain, and other things. [1008](#)

Now, since alchemy is the creation of gold in a substance other than that of (gold), it is a kind of sorcery. The famous sages who discussed the subject, men such as Jabir, Maslamah, and their non-Muslim predecessors, followed this line.

Therefore, they used puzzling expressions. They wanted to protect alchemy from the disapproval that religious laws express for the various kinds of sorcery. It was not because they were reluctant to communicate it (to others), as was thought by people who did not investigate the matter thoroughly.

One may compare the fact that Maslamah called his book on alchemy *Rutbat al-hakim*, while he called his book on sorcery and talismans *Ghayat al-hakim*. He wanted to intimate that the subject of the *Ghayah* is a general one, whereas the subject of the *Rutbah* is a restricted one, for *ghayah* "final goal" is a higher (stage in

research) than *rutbah* "degree, rank." The problems of the *Rutbah* are in a way part of the problems of the *Ghayah*, or deal with the same subjects. (Maslamah's) discussion of the two disciplines clarifies what we have said.

Later on, we shall explain that those who assume that the achievements of alchemy are the result of a natural craft are wrong.[1009](#)

God is "wise and knowing." [1010](#)

30. A refutation of philosophy. The corruption of the students of philosophy.

This and the following (two) sections are important. The sciences (of philosophy, astrology, and alchemy) occur in civilization. They are much cultivated in the cities. The harm they (can) do to religion is great. Therefore, it is necessary that we make it clear what they are about and that we reveal what the right attitude concerning them (should be).

There are (certain) intelligent representatives of the human species who think that the essences and conditions of the whole of existence, both the part of it perceptible by the senses and that beyond sensual perception, as well as the reasons and causes of (those essences and conditions), can be perceived by mental speculation and intellectual reasoning. They also think that the articles of faith are established as correct through (intellectual) speculation and not through tradition, because they belong among the intellectual perceptions. Such people are called "philosophers" *falasifah*, plural of *faylasuf* - which is Greek and means "lover of wisdom".¹⁰¹¹

They did research on the (problem of perception). With great energy, they tried to find the purpose of it. They laid down a norm enabling intellectual speculation to distinguish between true and false. They called (that norm) "logic."¹⁰¹² The quintessence of it is that the mental speculation which makes it possible to distinguish between true and false, concentrates on ideas abstracted from the individual *existentia*. From these (individual *existentia*), one first abstracts pictures that conform to all the individual (manifestations of the *existentia*), just as a seal conforms to all the impressions it makes in clay or wax. The abstractions derived from the *sensibilia* are called "primary *intelligibilia*." These universal ideas may be associated with other ideas, from which, however, they are distinguished in the mind. Then, other ideas, namely those that are associated (and have ideas in common) with (the primary *intelligibilia*), are abstracted from them. Then, if still other ideas are associated with them, a second and third abstraction is made, until the process of abstraction reaches the simple universal ideas, which conform to all ideas and individual (manifestations of the *existentia*). No further abstraction is possible. They are the highest genera. All abstract (ideas) that are not derived from the *sensibilia* serve, if combined with each other, to produce the sciences. They are called "secondary *intelligibilia*."

(Man through his) ability to think studies these abstract *intelligibilia* and seeks through them to perceive existence as it is. For this purpose, the mind must combine some of them with others or keep them apart with the help of unequivocal rational argumentation. This should give (the mind) a correct and conformable perception of existence, if the (process) takes place according to a sound norm, as mentioned before.

The combination of (abstract *intelligibilia*) and the judgment (concerning them) is apperception (*tasdiq*).¹⁰¹³ At the end, philosophers give apperception precedence over perception (*tasawwur*), but at the beginning and during the process of instruction, they give perception precedence over apperception, because they think that perfected perception is the goal of the search for understanding and that

apperception is merely a means for (undertaking that search). In the books of the logicians, one finds a statement to the effect that perception has precedence and that apperception depends upon it. This statement must be understood in the sense of (arriving at) consciousness and not in the sense of (achieving) complete knowledge. This is the opinion of the greatest of them, Aristotle.

Then, philosophers think that happiness consists in arriving at perception of all existing things, both the *sensibilia* and the (things) beyond sensual perception, with the help of (rational) speculation and argumentation. The sum total of their perceptions of existence, the result to which (their perceptions) lead, that is, the detailed conclusions of their speculative propositions, is the following. First, they conclude from observation and sensual perception that there is a lower substance. Then, their perception progresses a little. (The existence of) motion and sensual perception in animals makes them conscious of the existence of the soul. The powers of the soul, then, make them aware of the dominant position of the intellect. Here, their perception stops. They draw their conclusions with regard to the most high celestial body in the same way they drew their conclusions with regard to the human essence. They (thus) consider it necessary that the (celestial) sphere must have a soul and an intellect, like human beings. Then, they take as a limit for the (whole system), the number of units, which is ten. Nine are derived in essence and pluralistic. One, the tenth, is primary and singular. [1014](#)

They assume that happiness consists in the perception of existence with the help of such conclusions (if, at the same time, such perception is) combined with the improvement of the soul and the soul's acceptance of a virtuous character. [1015](#) Even if no religious law had been revealed (to help man to distinguish between virtue and vice), they think the (acquisition of virtue) possible by man because he is able to distinguish between vice and virtue in (his) actions by means of his intellect, his (ability to) speculate, and his natural inclination toward praiseworthy actions, his natural disinclination for blameworthy actions. They assume that when the soul becomes (virtuous), it attains joy and pleasure, and that ignorance of (moral qualities) means eternal pain. This, in their opinion, is the meaning of bliss or punishment in the other world. They go further in this manner, and by the words they use, they display their well-known obtuseness as far as details are concerned.

The leading representative of these doctrines, who presented the problems connected with them, wrote books on them as (the subject of) a systematic science, and penned the arguments in favor of them, as far as we presently know, was Aristotle the Macedonian, from Macedonia in Byzantine territory, a pupil of Plato and the teacher of Alexander. He is called "the First Teacher," [1016](#) with no further qualification. It means "teacher of logic," because logic did not exist in an improved form before Aristotle. He was the first to systematize the norms of logic and to deal with all its problems and to give a good and extensive treatment of it. He would, in fact, have done very well with his norm of logic if (only) it had absolved him of responsibility for the philosophical tendencies that concern metaphysics. [1017](#)

Later, in Islam, there were men who adopted these doctrines and followed (Aristotle's) opinion with respect to them very closely [1018](#) except on a few points. This came about as follows. [1019](#) The 'Abbasid caliphs had the works of the ancient (philosophers) translated from Greek into Arabic. Many Muslims investigated them critically. Scholars whom God led astray adopted their doctrines and defended them in disputations. They held different opinions on some points of detail. The most famous of these (Muslim philosophers) were Abu Nasr al-Farabi in the fourth [tenth] century, at the time of Sayf-ad-dawlah, and Abu 'Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna) in the fifth [eleventh] century, at the time of the Buyids [1020](#) in Isfahan, and others.

It should be known that the (opinion) the (philosophers) hold is wrong in all its aspects. They refer all *existentia* to the first intellect and are satisfied with (the theory of the first intellect) in their progress toward the Necessary One (the Deity). This means that they disregard all the degrees of divine creation beyond the (first intellect). Existence, however, is too wide to (be explained by so narrow a view).

"And He creates what you do not know." [1021](#) The philosophers, who restrict themselves to affirming the intellect and neglect everything beyond it, are in a way comparable, to physicists who restrict themselves to affirming the body and who disregard (both) soul and intellect in the belief that there is nothing beyond the body in (God's) wise plan concerning (the world of) existence.

The arguments that (the philosophers) parade for their claims regarding the *existentia* and that they offer to the test of the norms of logic, are insufficient for the purpose.

The arguments concerning the corporeal *existentia* constitute what they call the science of physics. The insufficiency lies in the fact [1022](#) that conformity between the results of thinking - which, as they assume, are produced by rational norms and reasoning - and the outside world, is not unequivocal. All the judgments of the mind are general ones, [1023](#) whereas the *existentia* of the outside world are individual in their substances. Perhaps, there is something in those substances that prevents conformity between the universal (judgments) of the mind and the individual (substances) of the outside world. At any rate, however, whatever (conformity) is attested by sensual perception has its proof in the fact that it is observable. (It does not have its proof) in (logical) arguments. Where, then, is the unequivocal character they find in (their arguments)?

The mind is also often applied to the primary *intelligibilia*, which conform to the individual (*existentia*), with the help of pictures of the imagination, but not to the secondary *intelligibilia*, [1024](#) which are abstractions of the second degree. In this case, judgment becomes unequivocal, comparable to (judgment in the case of) *sensibilia*, since the primary *intelligibilia* are more likely to agree with the outside world, because they conform perfectly (by definition, to the individual manifestations of the *existentia*). Therefore, in this case, one must concede (the philosophers') claims in this respect. However, we must refrain from studying these things, since such (restraint) falls under (the duty of) the Muslim not to do what does not concern him. [1025](#) The problems of physics are of no importance for us in our religious affairs or our livelihoods. Therefore, we must leave them alone.

The arguments concerning the *existentia* beyond sensual perception - the *spiritualia* - constitute what the (philosophers) call "the divine science" or science of metaphysics. The essences of (the *spiritualia*) are completely unknown. One cannot get at them, nor can they be proven by logical arguments, because an abstraction of *intelligibilia* from the individual *existentia* of the outside world is possible only in the case of things we can perceive [1026](#) by the senses, from which the universals are thus derived. We cannot perceive the spiritual essences and abstract, further quiddities from them, because the senses constitute a veil between us and them. We have, thus, no (logical) arguments for them, and we have no way whatever of affirming their existence. There are only available to us (in this connection) the situations in which perceptions of the human soul take place, and especially the dream visions which are within the intuitive experience of all. [1027](#) But beyond that, the reality and attributes of the (*spiritualia*) are an obscure matter, and there is no way to learn about them. Competent (philosophers) have clearly said so. They have expressed the opinion that whatever is immaterial cannot be proven by (logical) arguments, because it is a condition of (logical) arguments that their premises must

be essential ones. [1028](#) The great philosopher Plato said that no certainty can be achieved with regard to the Divine, and one can state about the Divine only what is most suitable and proper [1029](#) that is, conjectures. If, after all the toil and trouble, we find only conjectures, the (conjectures) that we had at the beginning may as well suffice us. What use, then, do these sciences and the pursuit of them have? We want certainty about the *existentialia* that are beyond sensual perception, [1030](#) while, in their (philosophy), (those conjectures) are the limit that human thinking can reach.

The (philosophers) say that happiness consists in coming to perceive existence as it is, by means of (logical) arguments. This is a fraudulent statement that must be rejected. The matter is as follows. Man [1031](#) is composed of two parts. One is corporeal. The other is spiritual, and mixed with the former. Each one of these parts has its own perceptions, though the (part) that perceives is the same in both cases, namely, the spiritual part. At times, it perceives spiritual perceptions. At other times, it perceives corporeal perceptions. However, it perceives the spiritual perceptions through its own essence without any intermediary, while it perceives the corporeal perceptions through the intermediary of organs of the body, such as the brain and the senses.

Now, anybody who has perceptions greatly enjoys whatever he perceives. For example, a child having its first corporeal perceptions, which (like all corporeal perceptions) come through an intermediary, greatly enjoys the light it sees and the sounds it hears. Thus, there can be no doubt that the soul finds even greater joy and pleasure in perceptions that come from its own essence without an intermediary. When the spiritual soul becomes conscious of the perception coming to it from its own essence without an intermediary, it derives from it inexpressible joy and pleasure. Such perception cannot be achieved by (intellectual) speculation and science. It is achieved by the removal of the veil of sensual perception and by forgetting all corporeal perceptions. The Sufis are very much concerned with achieving this great joy through having the soul achieve that kind of perception. They attempt to kill the bodily powers and perceptions through exercise, and even the thinking power of the brain. In this way, the soul is to achieve the perception that comes to it from its own essence, when all the disturbances and hindrances caused by the body are removed. (The Sufis,) thus, achieve inexpressible joy and pleasure. [1032](#) This, (the philosophers) imply, is a correct assumption, and must be conceded them; yet it does not account for (the idea) they had in mind. [1033](#)

(At any rate,) their statement that logical arguments and proofs produce this kind of perception and the resulting great joy is false, as one can see. The arguments and proofs belong in the category of corporeal perceptions, because they are produced by the powers of the brain, which are imagination, thinking, and memory. The first thing we are concerned with when we want to attain this kind of perception is to kill all these powers of the brain, because they object to such (perception) and work against it. One finds able (philosophers) poring over the *Kitab ash-Shifa'*, the *Isharat*, the *Najah* (of Avicenna), and over Averroes' abridgements of the "Text" (*Organon*) [1034](#) and other works by Aristotle. They wear out the pages of these works. They firmly ground themselves in the arguments they contain, and they desire to find in them that portion of happiness (they believe they contain). They do not realize that in this way they (only) add to the obstacles on (the road to happiness). They base themselves on statements reported on the authority of Aristotle, al-Farabi, and Avicenna, to the effect that those who have attained perception of the active intellect and are united with it in their life in this world [1035](#) have attained their share of happiness. To them, the active intellect means the first (highest) of the degrees of the *spiritualia* from which (the veil of) sensual

perception is removed. They assume union with the active intellect to be (the result of) scientific perception. One has seen that this is wrong. When Aristotle and his colleagues speak about union and perception in this way, they mean the perception of the soul that comes to it from its own essence and without an intermediary, but such (perception) is attained only by the removal of the veil of sensual perception.

Furthermore, (philosophers) state that the great joy originating in that kind of perception is identical with the promised [1036](#) happiness. This, too, is wrong. The things that have been established by the (philosophers) make it clear to us that, beyond sensual perception, there is something else perceived by the soul without an intermediary. This causes very great joy to the soul, but we do not think that this makes it definite that it is identical with the happiness of the other world, although it must be one of the pleasures that constitute that happiness. (At any rate,) their statement that happiness consists in coming to perceive the *existentia* as they are, is wrong. It is based upon the erroneous supposition, which we mentioned before in connection with the principle of divine oneness, [1037](#) that anybody who has perception comprises (the whole) of existence in his perceptions. We explained that this (assumption) is wrong, and that existence is too vast to be completely encompassed or perceived, either spiritually or corporeally.

. The sum total of all the (philosophical) doctrines we have set down (here) is that the spiritual part (of man), when it separates from the powers of the body, has an essential perception belonging to a special kind of perceptions, namely, the *existentia* that are encompassed by our knowledge. It does not have a general perception of all the *existentia*, since they cannot be encompassed in their totality. It greatly enjoys this kind of perception, exactly as a child is pleased with its sensual perceptions when it begins to grow up. Nobody, then, (should try to tell) us that it is possible to perceive all the *existentia* or to achieve the happiness the Lawgiver (Muhammad) promised us, if we do not work for it. "Away, away with what you are promised." [1038](#)

(Philosophers) further state that man is able, by himself, to refine and improve his soul by adopting praiseworthy character qualities and avoiding blameworthy ones. This is connected with the assumption that the great joy that the soul has through the perception coming to it from its own essence, is identical with the promised happiness. For the vices give the soul corporeal habits and the resulting coloring. Thus, they impede it in the realization of that perception.

Now, we have already explained that happiness and unhappiness are found beyond corporeal and spiritual perceptions. The improvement (of the soul that the philosophers) have come to know is useful only in that it (produces) great joy, originating from the spiritual perception that takes place according to rational and established norms. But the happiness beyond such (joy), which the Lawgiver (Muhammad) promised us if we would act and behave as he commanded us, is something that cannot be encompassed by anybody's perceptions.

The leading philosopher, Abu 'Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna), was aware of this. He expressed himself in the following sense in his *Kitab al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ad*: [1039](#) "The spiritual resurrection and its circumstances are something that we may come to know by means of rational arguments and reasoning, because it proceeds in a safely natural and uniform manner. Thus, we can use (logical) arguments for it. But the bodily resurrection and its circumstances cannot be perceived by means of (logical arguments), because it does not proceed in a uniform manner. It has been explained to us by the true Muhammadan religious law. The religious law should, therefore, be considered and consulted with regard to the circumstances of (the bodily resurrection)."

Thus, as one has seen, the science (of logic) is not adequate to achieve the avowed intentions (of the philosophers). In addition, it contains things that are contrary to the religious laws and their obvious meaning. As far as we know, this science has only a single fruit, namely, it sharpens the

mind in the orderly presentation of proofs and arguments, so that the habit of excellent and correct arguing is obtained. This is because the orderly process and the solid and exact method of reasoning are as the philosophers have prescribed them in their science of logic. They employ (logic) a good deal in the physical and mathematical sciences as well as in the science that comes after them (metaphysics). Since (logical) arguments are much employed in those sciences in the way they should be employed, the student of them is able to master the habit of exact and correct arguing and deducing. Even if (those sciences) are not adequate to achieve the intentions of the (philosophers), they constitute the soundest norm of (philosophical) speculation that we know of.

Such is the fruit of this craft (of logic). It also affords acquaintance with the doctrines and opinions of the people of the world.¹⁰⁴⁰ One knows what harm it ¹⁰⁴¹ can do. Therefore, the student of it should beware of its pernicious aspects as much as he can. Whoever studies it should do so (only) after he is saturated with the religious law and has studied the interpretation of the Qur'an and jurisprudence. No one who has no knowledge of the Muslim religious sciences should apply himself to it. Without that knowledge, he can hardly remain safe from its pernicious aspects.
¹⁰⁴²

God gives success and guidance to the truth. "We would not be persons who are guided aright, had God not guided us."¹⁰⁴³

31. *A refutation of astrology. The weakness of its achievements.*
The harmfulness of its goal.

Astrologers think that astrology, with the knowledge it gives of astral powers, individually or in combination, and of astral influences upon elemental creations, enables them to know the things that are going to be in the world of the elements, before they are created. The positions of the spheres and the stars (are) thus (taken to) indicate every single kind of future event, both universal and individual.

The ancient (astrologers) were of the opinion that the knowledge of astral powers and influence is acquired through experience. It (thus) is something that all (human) lives combined would not be able to achieve, because experience is obtained through numerous repetitions which make the obtainment of (empirical) knowledge or conjectures possible. Astral revolutions may be very long. Greatly extended periods of time are required for their repetition. Even (all) the lives [1044](#) in the world (combined) would be too short for (observing) them.

Some weak-minded (astrologers) take the attitude that the knowledge of astral powers and influences comes through revelation. This is a fallacy. They themselves have furnished us arguments sufficient to refute it. The clearest proof is that, as one knows, of all people, the prophets are least familiar with the crafts. [1045](#) They do not undertake to give information about the supernatural, unless (such information) comes (to them) from God. Why, then, should they claim to produce (supernatural information) through a craft (such as astrology) and make it the law for their followers to do so?

Ptolemy and his followers were of the opinion that the stars are able to indicate (the future) as the natural result of a temper they produce in the elemental existing things. He said: [1046](#) "(This must be so,) because the activity of sun and moon and their influence upon elemental things are so obvious that no one can deny them. For instance, the sun influences the changes and tempers of the seasons, the ripening of fruits and grains, and so on. The moon influences humidity, the water, the (process) of ripening (putrefaction) in putrescent substances and cucumbers, and so on." Ptolemy continued: "With regard to the stars that come after sun and moon, we have two approaches. One - which, however, is unsatisfactory - is to follow the tradition of the astrological authorities. The other is (to rely upon) conjecture and empirical knowledge gained through comparing each star to the sun, whose nature and influence is clearly known to us. We thus note whether a given star increases the power and temper of (the sun) at (its) conjunction (with it). If this is the case, we know that the nature of that particular star agrees with that of the sun. If, on the other hand, (the star) diminishes (the power and temper of the sun), we know that its nature is opposite to that of (the sun). [1047](#) Then, when we know the individual powers of the stars, we (can also) know them in combination. That happens when they look upon each other in the trine, the quartile, or other aspects. The knowledge here is derived from the natures of the signs (of the zodiac), which similarly (are known) through comparison with the sun."

"Thus, we get to know all the astral powers. They exercise an influence upon the air. This is obvious. The resulting temper of the air communicates itself to the

created things below the air, and shapes sperm and seeds. Thus, (this temper) comes to underlie the body created from (sperm or seed), the soul which attaches itself to the body, pours itself into the body, and acquires its perfection from the body, and all the conditions depending on soul and body. The qualities of sperm and seed are the qualities of the things that are created and produced from (sperm and seed)."

[1048](#)

(Ptolemy) continued: "Still, (astrology) remains conjectural and is not certain in any respect. It also forms no part of the divine decree - that is, predestination. It is just one of the natural causes common to all existing things, whereas the divine decree is prior to everything." This is the sum total of the discussion by Ptolemy and his colleagues. (This discussion) is found in the *Quadripartitum* and other works.

It makes the weakness of the achievements of astrology clear. Knowledge of, or conjectures about, things that come into being can only result from knowledge of all their causes, that is, agent, recipient, form, and end, as has been explained in the proper place. According to (the astrologers), the astral powers are merely agents. The elemental part is the recipient. Furthermore, the astral powers are not the sole agents. There are other powers that act together with (the astral powers) upon the material element (involved), such as the generative power of father and species contained in the sperm, the powers of the particular quality distinguishing each variety within the species, and other things. When the astral powers reach perfection and are known, they (still) are only one among many causes that go into the making of a thing that comes into being.

Furthermore, [1049](#) in addition to a knowledge of astral powers and influences, a great amount of conjecturing and guesswork is required. Only then is (the astrologer) able to guess that a thing might happen. Now, conjecturing and guesswork are powers in the mind of the student. They are not causes or reasons [1050](#) of the things that come into being; Without conjectures and guesswork, (astrology) steps down from conjecture to doubtfulness. [1050a](#)

Such is the situation (even) if one's knowledge of the astral powers is accurate and without defect. Now, that is difficult. The ability to calculate the courses of the stars is required in order to know their positions. Moreover, it is not proven that every star has its own particular power. The method Ptolemy used in establishing the powers of the five planets, that is, comparison with the sun, is a weak one, because the power of the sun is superior to all (other) astral powers and dominates them. Thus, one hardly ever becomes aware of an increase or decrease in the (powers of the sun) at its conjunction (with a given star) , [1051](#) as Ptolemy said. All this speaks against the assumption that it is possible to predict things that will happen in the world of the elements with the help of astrology.

Furthermore, it is wrong to assume that the stars exercise an influence on (the world) below them. It has been proven deductively in the chapter on the Oneness of God, as one has seen, [1052](#) that there is no agent but God. In this connection, speculative theologians use the self-evident argument that how causes are related to the things caused is not known, and suspicion attaches to the conclusions of the intellect regarding what appears superficially to be (due to some definite) influence. Perhaps, the relationship of (the causes to the things caused) is effected by some other than the ordinary form of influence. The divine power (would seem to) tie the two together, as it does with all created things, (both) high and low, especially since the religious law attributes all happenings to the power of God and does not want to have anything to do with anything else.

Prophecy also denies the importance and influence of the stars. A perusal of the legal material also attests this fact. For instance, (Muhammad) said: "No eclipse

of either sun or moon takes place to indicate the death or life of anybody." [1053](#) And (God) said: "Some of My servants believe in Me. Others do not. Those who say, 'We had rain through the kindness and mercy of God,' believe in Me and do not believe in the stars. Whereas those who say, 'We had rain through such and such a constellation,' do not believe in Me, but believe in the stars," (as) the sound tradition (goes). [1054](#) Thus, the worthlessness of astrology from the point of view of the religious law, as well as the weakness of its achievements from the rational point of view, are evident. In addition, astrology does harm to human civilization. It hurts the faith of the common people when an astrological judgment occasionally happens to come true in some unexplainable and unverifiable manner. Ignorant people are taken in by that and suppose that all the other (astrological) judgments must be true, which is not the case. Thus, they are led to attribute things to some (being) other than their Creator.

Further, astrology often produces the expectation that signs of crisis [1055](#) will appear in a dynasty. This encourages the enemies and rivals of the dynasty to attack (it) and revolt (against it). We have (personally) observed much of the sort. It is, therefore, necessary that astrology be forbidden to all civilized people, because it may cause harm to religion and dynasty. The fact that it exists as a natural part of human perceptions and knowledge does not speak against (the need to forbid it). God and evil exist side by side in the world and cannot be removed. Responsibility comes in connection with the things that cause good and evil. It is (our) duty to try to acquire goodness with the help of the things that cause it, and to avoid the causes of evil and harm. That is what those who realize the corruption and harmfulness of this science must do.

This (situation) should make one realize that even if astrology were in itself sound, no Muslim could acquire the knowledge and habit of it. He who studies it and thinks that he knows it fully, is most ignorant of the actual situation. Since the religious law forbids the study of astrology, civilized people no longer gather to study it and to form classes [1056](#) for the study of astrology. Those who are eager to learn it and they are very, very few - have to read the books and treatises on astrology in a secluded corner of their houses. They have to hide from the people and are under the watchful eye of the great mass. And then, astrology is a very complicated subject with many branches and subdivisions and is difficult to understand. How could people under such conditions acquire a mastery of it? Jurisprudence is of general usefulness in both religious and worldly affairs; its sources are easily available in the Qur'an and the accepted Sunnah, and it has been studied and taught by the great mass of Muslims. There have been classes and seminars (on jurisprudence). There has been much instruction (in it) and a great many lectures. Still, only an occasional individual in each age and generation (race) has been able to master it. How, then, can anyone learn a subject (such as astrology) that is discarded by the religious law, banned as forbidden and illegal, concealed from the great mass, its sources difficult of access, and that, after the study and acquisition of its basic principles and details, requires a great amount of support from conjecture and guesswork on the part of the student? [1057](#) How could anyone acquire and become skilled in such a subject in the face of all (these difficulties)? Anybody who claims (such astrological skill) is frustrated and has no witness to attest (to his claim), because the discipline (of astrology) is unusual in Islam and few people cultivate it. When all this is taken into consideration, the soundness of our opinion (with regard to astrology) will become clear. God "knows the supernatural (secrets), and He does not disclose to anyone His supernatural (secrets)." [1058](#)

Some of our contemporaries had an experience of the (futility of astrology)

[1059](#)

when the Arabs overpowered the army of Sultan Abul-Hasan. They laid siege to him in alQayrawan. There was much unrest among the two parties, both friends and foes. On that occasion, the Tunisian poet Abul-Qasim ar-Rahawi, said:

Constantly, I ask God for forgiveness. Gone is life and ease.
In Tunis, both in the morning and in the evening
And the morning belongs to God as does the evening -
There is fear and hunger and death, Stirred up by tumult and pestilence.
People are in rebellion and at war
Rarely does anything good come out of rebellion.
The partisans of Ahmad think that perdition And ruin have descended upon
'Ali.[1060](#)
And the others say: He ('Ali) will be brought (back) To you by a mild
zephyr.
God is above this one and that one.
He destines for His two servants whatever He wishes.
O you observer of the retreating, running [1061](#) (stars)! What did these
heaven(ly bodies) do?
You have been putting us off while you pretended (each day)
That today you would pay off. [1062](#)
One Thursday went by after the other. Saturday came, and Wednesday.
Half a month, and a second decade, And a third came to an end,
And we see nothing but false statements. Is this stupidity or contempt?
We belong to God. We know That destiny cannot be repulsed.
I am pleased to have Allah as my God.
You are satisfied with the moon or the sun.
Those roving stars are nothing but Slaves, male or female.
Their fate is destined. They do not destine (anybody's fate).
They have no power over mankind.
Intellects [1063](#) erred in considering primeval What is subject to death [1064](#) and
nonexistence.
They appointed as judge over (the world of) existence an element
Created from water and air,
Not considering sweet versus bitter,
Both being nourished by soil and water. [1064a](#)
God is my Lord. I do not know
What atom and vacuum are;
Nor what the hyle is which proclaims:
"I cannot be without form";
Nor what existence is or nonexistence,
Nor persistence and annihilation.
I do not know what acquisition [1065](#) is except
Something resulting from buying and selling. My dogma and religion are
What (dogma and religion) were when the people were saints,
Since there are no details, no basic principles,
No dispute, and no doubting,
As long as one follows early Islam and the remainder. [1066](#)
What a good thing it is to take (early Islam) as model! (The early Muslims)
were as one knows them to have been.
(In their time,) the babble (of the theologians) did not exist.
O you contemporary Ash'aris! I
Have been taught by summer and winter: [1067](#) I am requited for evil with

evil,
And good is the reward for good.
If I am obedient (to God), I shall be saved.
If I am disobedient, still, I have hope. I am under the control of a Creator

1068

Who is obeyed by the (divine) throne and the earth.1069

It 1070 is not in your writings, but
The (divine) judgment and fate have predestined it:
If al-Ash'ari were told who
The (present-day) followers of his opinions are,
He would say, "Tell them that I
Have nothing to do with what they say."

[32] *A denial of the effectiveness of alchemy. The impossibility of its existence. The harm that arises from practicing it.*[1071](#)

Many people who are unable to earn their living [1072](#) are led by greed to cultivate alchemy. They are of the opinion that it is a (proper) means and method of making a living and that the practitioners of (alchemy) find it easier and simpler (than other people) to acquire property. In fact, however, they have to pay for (their efforts) in the form of trouble, hardship, and difficulties, and in the form of persecution by the authorities and loss of property through expenditures. In addition, he [1073](#) loses standing and, eventually, when his secret [1074](#) is discovered, faces ruin.

They think that (in practicing alchemy) they know some gainful craft. However, they have been stimulated (to practice alchemy) solely by the thought that some minerals may be changed and transformed artificially into others, because of the matter common (to all minerals). Thus, they try to treat silver and transform it into gold; copper and tin (they try to transform) into silver. They think that it is possible in the realm of nature to do this.

There are different procedures followed by (the alchemists). These depend on the different opinions held concerning the character and form of the (alchemical) treatment and concerning the substance invented [1075](#) for the treatment and which they call "the Noble Stone." This may be excrements, or blood, or hair, or eggs, or anything else.[1076](#)

After the substance has been specified, it is treated by them along the following lines. The (substance) is pulverized with a pestle, on a solid and smooth stone. During the pulverization it is macerated in water, after drugs have been added, suitable for the purpose (the substance) is to achieve and able to effect its transformation into the desired mineral. After having been macerated, (the substance) is dried in the sun, or cooked in a fire, or sublimated, or calcified, in order to eliminate the water or earth it contains. If this process and treatment are completed to the satisfaction of the (alchemist) and in accordance with the requirements of the basic principles of alchemy, the result is an earthen or fluid (substance) which is called "the elixir." (Alchemists) think that if the elixir is added to silver which has been heated in a fire, the silver turns into gold. If added to copper which has been heated in a fire, the copper turns into silver, just as (the alchemists), by means of the (alchemical) operation, intend it to be.

Competent (alchemists) think that the elixir is a substance composed of the four elements.[1077](#) The special (alchemical) processing and treatment give the substance a certain temper and [1078](#) certain natural powers. These powers assimilate to themselves everything with which they come into contact, and transform it into their own form and temper. They transmit their own qualities and powers to it, just as yeast in bread assimilates the dough to its own essence and produces in the bread its own looseness and fluffiness, so that the bread will be easily digestible in the stomach and quickly transformed into nourishment.[1079](#) In the same way, the elixir of gold and silver assimilates the minerals with which it comes into contact to (gold

and silver) and transforms them into the forms of (gold and silver).

This, in general, is the sum total of the theory (of alchemists).

We find that the (alchemists) constantly experiment with the (alchemical) process and hope to find their sustenance and livelihood in it. They transmit to each other the rules and basic principles (of the treatment as derived) from the books of the leading earlier alchemists. They pass these books around among themselves and discuss the meaning and interpretation of the puzzling expressions and secrets in them. For the most part, they are like riddles. Such books are the *Seventy Treatises* of Jabir b. Hayyan, the *Rutbat al-hakim* of Maslamah al-Majriti, (the works) of at-Tughra'i, and the very well-composed poem of al-Mughayribi,¹⁰⁸⁰ and similar works. However, after all (these efforts), the (alchemists) do not get anywhere.

I once discussed something of the sort with our teacher, the leading Spanish scholar, Abul-Barakat al-Ballafagi.¹⁰⁸¹ I called his attention to a certain work on (alchemy). Reexamined it for a long time, then returned it to me and said: "I guarantee it to (the author) that he will come home a failure."

Certain (alchemists) restricted themselves to mere forgery. It may be of an obvious type, such as covering silver with gold, or copper with silver, or mixing the (two metals) in the ratio of one to two, or one to three. Or it may be a concealed type of forgery, such as treating a mineral to make it look like another similar one. Copper, for instance, may be blanched and softened with sublimate of mercury. Thus, it turns into a mineral that looks like silver to anyone but an expert assayer.¹⁰⁸²

Such forgers use their product to coin money with the official imprint, which they circulate among the people. Thus, they cheat the great mass with impunity. Theirs is the most contemptible and pernicious profession (there could be). The forgers conspire to steal the property of the people, for they give copper for silver, and silver for gold, so as to get exclusive possession of (other people's property). They are thieves, or worse than thieves.

Most of that sort of people here in the Maghrib are Berber "students"¹⁰⁸³ who choose for their territory remote regions and the homes of stupid people. They visit the mosques of the Bedouins and convince rich¹⁰⁸⁴ (Bedouins) that they know how to make gold and silver. People are very much in love with (gold and silver). They are eager to spend all (their money) to search for them. This (attitude) enables the (Berber students) to make a living. They must go about their activity fearfully and under the watchful eye (of the authorities). Eventually, (their) inability (to produce gold and silver) becomes evident and they are disgraced. Then, they flee to another place and start the whole business anew.¹⁰⁸⁵ They cause wealthy people to succumb to the desire of obtaining what they have to offer. In this way, they constantly work hard trying to make a living.

There is no point talking with that sort of people, because they have reached the limit in ignorance and viciousness and make a business out of thievery. The only way to cure them is for the government to take energetic measures against them, to seize them wherever they are, and to cut off their hands (as thieves) whenever their activities are discovered, for those activities mean deterioration of the currency, a matter of general concern. The currency (in circulation) is the very backbone of everyone's wealth. The ruler has the obligation to keep it intact, to watch over it, and to take energetic measures against those who corrupt it.

However, it is possible for us to talk with alchemists who do not like such forgeries, but avoid them and refrain from corrupting the currency and coinage of the Muslims. They merely seek to transform silver into gold, or lead and copper and

tin into silver, with the help of a particular alchemical process and the elixir which results from it. We can discuss with them and investigate their achievements in this respect. yet, we know of not one in the world who has attained the goal (of alchemy) or got any desirable result out of it. Alchemists spend their lives on the (alchemical) treatment, (using the) pestle and muller, subliming and calcifying, and running risks in collecting drugs and searching for them. They tell stories about other (alchemists) who attained the goal (of alchemy) or were successful. They are satisfied with listening to these stories and discussing them. They have no suspicions as to whether (or not) they can be considered true. They are like people who are infatuated with something and taken in by fanciful stories about the subject of their infatuation. When they are asked whether the (story) has been verified by actual observation, they do not know. They say, "We have heard (about it), but have not seen it." This has been the case with (alchemists) in every age and of every race (generation).

It should be known that the practice of this art is something very ancient in the world. Ancient and modern (scholars) have discussed it. We shall report their opinions in this connection and then state what seems to us the actual truth of the matter. God gives success to that which is correct.

We say: The philosophers base their discussion of alchemy on the condition of the seven malleable [1086](#) minerals: gold, silver, lead, tin, copper, iron, and *kharsini*. [1087](#) The question is whether these (seven metals) are different in their (specific) differences, [1088](#) each constituting a distinct species, or whether they differ in certain properties and constitute different kinds of one and the same species.

Abu Nasr al-Farabi and the Spanish philosophers who followed him held the opinion that all (the metals) are of one and the same species and that their difference is caused by qualities, such as humidity and dryness, softness and hardness, and colors, such as yellow, white, and black. All of them are different kinds of one and the same species.

On the other hand, Avicenna and the eastern philosophers who followed him were of the opinion that the (metals) differ in (specific) - difference and constitute different species of their own, each of which exists in its own right and has its own (specific) difference and genus, like all other species.

On the strength of his opinion that all (the metals) are of one and the same species, Abu Nasr al-Farabi assumed that it is possible for one metal to be transformed into another, because it is possible to transform accidents and treat them artificially. From this point of view, he considered alchemy possible and easy. [1089](#)

Avicenna, on the other hand, on the strength of his opinion that (all the metals) belong to different species, assumed that the existence of alchemy must be denied and is impossible. [1090](#) His assumption is based on the fact that (specific) differences cannot be influenced by artificial means. They are created by the Creator and Determiner of things, God Almighty. Their real character is utterly unknown and cannot be perceived (*tasawwur*). How, then, could one attempt to transform them by artificial means?

At-Tughra'i, one of the great alchemists, considered Avicenna's statement erroneous. He objected that (alchemical) treatment and processing does not mean a new creation of a (specific) difference, but merely the conditioning of a substance for the acceptance of a particular (specific difference). After (a given substance) is conditioned, it gets (its new specific) difference from its Creator and Originator. This might be compared to the way light pours upon bodies as the result of

polishing and giving (them) luster. We do not have to perceive (*tasawwur*) or know (how) this (comes about).

At-Tughra'i continued: "In fact, we know about the (spontaneous) generation of certain animals, even though we are ignorant of their (specific) differences. For instance,¹⁰⁹¹ scorpions are created from earth and straw. Snakes are created from hair. Agricultural scholars ¹⁰⁹² mention that bees, when they no longer exist, are created (again) from calves, and that reeds come out of the horns of cloven-hoofed animals and are transformed into sugar cane, when the horns are filled with honey while the soil is being prepared for them (to be planted). Why, then, should it be impossible for us to make similar observations in the case of ¹⁰⁹³ minerals? All that comes about by artificial means applied to a given substance. Treatment and processing conditions the substance for the acceptance of (specific) differences, no more."

(At-Tughra'i) continued: "We attempt something similar with regard to gold and silver. We take a certain matter possessing primary preparedness for the acceptance of the *form* of gold and silver. We treat it and then we attempt to process it until it possesses fully the preparedness to accept the (*specific*) *difference of* (gold and silver)."

This is the gist of at-Tughra'i's discussion. He is right in his refutation of Avicenna.

We, however, have another starting point for refuting the alchemists. It shows that the existence of alchemy is impossible and that the assumptions of all (who defend alchemy), not only those of at. Tughra'i and Avicenna, ¹⁰⁹⁴ are - wrong (Our argument) is as follows:

The (alchemical) process follows these lines: The (alchemists) take a substance possessing primary preparedness. They use it as the basis. In treating and processing it, they imitate the way nature processes substances in mines and, eventually, transforms them into gold or silver. They (try) hard to increase the active and passive powers (in the process), so that it will be completed in a shorter time (than required by nature). It has been explained in the proper place that an increase in the power of the agent shortens the time needed for his activity. (Now,) it is clear that the generation of gold in the mine is completed only after 1,080 years, which is the period of the great revolution of the sun.¹⁰⁹⁵ If the powers and qualities used in the process are greatly increased, the time needed for the generation of (gold) will necessarily be shorter than (1,080 years), as we have stated.

Or, through processing, the (alchemists) choose to give the (basic) substance a form of composition to make it like yeast, and thus capable of producing the desired transformation in the processed matter. That is "the elixir," mentioned before.

(Now,) it should be known that every generated elemental thing must contain a combination of the four elements in different proportions. If they were all alike in proportion, no mixture would take place. Therefore, there must always be a part that is superior to all the (others). Likewise, everything generated through mixture must contain some natural heat which is active in creating it and preserves its form. Furthermore, everything that is created in time must go through different stages and pass from one stage to another during the time of its creation, until it reaches its goal. For instance, man goes through the successive stages of semen, blood clot, and lump of flesh.¹⁰⁹⁶ Next, he receives his form, becomes an embryo, a (newborn) child, a suckling, and so on, until he reaches the end of his (development). The proportion of the parts varies in quantity and quality at every stage. Were that not

the case, the first stage would be identical with the last. The natural heat, too, is different at each stage.

One may now consider through how many stages and conditions gold (must have) passed in the mine over (a period of) 1,080 years. The alchemist has to follow the action of nature in the mine and imitate it in his treatment and processing, until it is completed. (Now,) it is a condition of (every) craft that (its practitioner) perceive (and know, *tasawwur*) the goals he intends to reach with the help of that particular craft. A current saying of the sages to this effect runs: "The beginning of action is the end of thinking, and the end of thinking is the beginning of action." [1097](#) Thus, (the alchemist) must perceive (and know) the different conditions of gold in the numerous stages of its (development), the different proportions (of its component elements) belonging to the different stages, the resulting differences in natural heat, how much time is spent at each stage, and how much of an increase in power (is needed) to substitute for and supplant (the natural development). All this should finally enable him to imitate the action of nature in the mine or to prepare for a certain substance a form of composition that would be what the form of yeast is for bread, active in the particular substance in proportion to its powers and quantity.

All this is known only to the all-comprehensive knowledge (of God). Human science is unable to achieve it. Those who claim to have made gold with the help of alchemy are like those who might claim the artificial creation of man from semen. If we (could) grant to someone an all - comprehensive knowledge of the parts of man, his proportions, the stages of his (development), the way he is created in the womb, if he could know all this in all its details, so that nothing escapes his knowledge, then we (would) grant him the (ability to) create a human being. But where does anyone possess such (knowledge) ?

Let us present here a short restatement of the argument, so that it can be easily understood. We say: The general lines followed in alchemy and the sum total of the claims (alchemists) make for the (alchemical) treatment are that it follows and imitates mineral nature by artificial action, until a particular mineral substance is generated, or until a substance is created that has certain powers, a (capacity to) act, and a form of composition acting upon a given substance as nature does, thus changing and transforming it into its own form. The technical action must be preceded by detailed, consecutive perceptions (*tasawwur*) of the various stages of the mineral nature one intends to follow and imitate, or in which one intends the powerful substance to be active. Now, there is an unlimited number of such stages. Human knowledge is not able to comprehend even a lesser number. It is comparable to wanting to create human beings or animals or plants.

This is the sum total of the argument. It is the most reliable argument I know of. It proves the impossibility (of alchemy), but neither from the point of view of the (specific) differences (of the metals), as above, [1098](#) nor from that of nature. It proves it from the point of view of the impossibility of complete comprehension and the inability of human beings to have (an all-comprehensive knowledge). Avicenna's remarks say nothing of the sort.

There is another aspect to alchemy proving its impossibility. It concerns the result of alchemy. This is as follows. It was God's wise plan that gold and silver, being rare, should be the standard of value by which the profits and capital accumulation of human beings are measured. (Now,) if it were possible to obtain (gold and silver) artificially, God's wise plan in this respect would be foiled. Gold and silver would exist in such large quantities that it would be no use to acquire them. [1099](#)

There is still another aspect (to alchemy) proving its impossibility. Nature

always takes the shortest way in what it does. It does not take the longest and most complicated one. (Now) if, as (the alchemists) suppose, the artificial method were sound, shorter, and took less time than that which nature follows in the mine, nature would not have abandoned it in favor of the method it has chosen for the generation and creation of gold and silver.

At-Tughra'i's comparison of the (alchemical) process with individual similar instances noticed in nature, such as the (spontaneous) generation of scorpions, bees, and snakes, is sound, in as much as those things, as he assumes, have been (actually) observed (and thus proven). But nowhere in the world is there a report stating that anybody ever observed (the soundness of) alchemy and its method. The practitioners of (alchemy) have constantly been groping in the dark. They have found nothing but lying stories. Had any (alchemist) found a correct method, his children, his pupils, or his colleagues would have preserved it. It would have been handed down among friends. Its correctness would have been guaranteed by its later successful application. (Knowledge of) it would eventually have spread. Ourselves or others would have learned about it.

The (alchemists also) state that the elixir is similar to yeast [1100](#) and that it is a compound for transmuting and transforming everything with which it comes in contact into its own essence. However, it should be realized that yeast transforms the dough and conditions it for digestion. This is (a process of) corruption, and material destruction is an easy process which may be produced by the slightest of actions and of elemental (influences). However, the purpose of the elixir is to transform one mineral into a nobler and higher one. That is something creative and constructive. Creation is more difficult than destruction. [1101](#) Thus, the elixir cannot be compared with yeast.

The truth of the matter is that if it is correct that alchemy exists, as the philosophers who discuss alchemy, such as Jabir b. Hayyan, Maslamah b. Ahmad al-Majriti, and others, think, it does not (at any rate) fall under the category of natural crafts, and it does not come about by any technical process. The discussion of alchemy by (alchemists) is not like that of physics (by physicists). It is like the discussion of magical and other extraordinary matters or the wonders performed by al-Hallaj [1102](#) and others. Maslamah mentioned something of the sort in the *Kitab al-Ghayah*. His discussion of alchemy in the *Kitab Rutbat al-hakim* points in the same direction. Jabir's discussion in his treatises is also of the same type. This tendency of (alchemical) discussion is well known. We do not have to comment on it.

In general, (alchemy) as they understand it, has to do with universal creations [1103](#) which are outside the (sphere of) effectiveness of the crafts. Wood and animals cannot be developed from their (respective matters) in a day or a month, if such is not the (ordinary) course of their creation. In the same way, gold cannot be developed from its matter in a day or a month. Its customary course (of development) can be changed only with the help of something beyond the world of nature and the activity of the crafts. Thus, those who try to practice alchemy as a craft lose their money and labor. The alchemical treatment is, therefore, called a "sterile treatment." In so far as it is sound, it is the result of (powers) beyond those of nature and the crafts. It is comparable to walking upon water, riding in the air, passing through solid substances, [1104](#) and similar acts of divine grace that are performed by saints and break through the customary course of nature. Or, it may be compared to the creation of birds and similar miracles of the prophets. God says: "And when you created something like the form of a bird from clay with my permission, and you blew into it, and the form thus became a bird with the

permission of God." [1105](#)

The way in which (miracles of an alchemical nature) are performed depends on the condition of the person to whom (such miracles) are granted. They may be granted to a pious person who passes them on to someone else. They are in this case loaned to the other person, (but he, at any rate, is able to perform them). Or, they may be granted to a worthless person who cannot pass them on. In this case, they cannot be performed by someone else. It is in this sense that the performance (of alchemical miracles) is magical.

Thus, it is clear that (alchemical miracles) are the result of psychic influences and extraordinary wonders, either as miracles or acts of divine grace, or as sorcery. Therefore, all the sages who have discussed (alchemy) use puzzling expressions whose real meaning is known only to those who have delved deeply into sorcery and are acquainted with the (magic) activities of the soul in the world of nature. (But) matters breaking through the ordinary course (of nature) are unlimited, and no one could get to know them (all). God "comprehends all you do." [1106](#)

The most common cause of the desire to practice alchemy is, as we have stated; a person's inability to make his living in a natural way and the wish to make a living in some way that, unlike agriculture, commerce, and (handi)craft, is not natural. [1107](#) A person without ability finds it difficult to make his living in such (legitimate occupations). He wants to get rich all at once through some (occupation) that is not natural, such as alchemy and other things. Alchemy is cultivated mostly by the poor among civilized people. (The fact that economic status is decisive for the recognition or nonrecognition of alchemy) applies even to the philosophers who discuss the possibility [1108](#) or impossibility of (alchemy). Avicenna, who states that alchemy is impossible, was a great wazir and a very wealthy person, while al-Faribi, who states that it is possible, was one of those poor persons who have not the slightest success in making a living by any means. This is an obvious suspicion as to the attitude of people who are eager to try (alchemy) out and practice it. [1109](#)

God "gives sustenance. He is strong and solid." [1110](#)

33. *The purposes that must be kept in mind in literary composition and that alone are to be considered valid.*¹¹¹¹

It should be known that the storehouse of human science is the soul of man. In it, God has implanted perception (*idrak*) enabling it to think and, thus, to acquire (scientific knowledge). (The process) starts with perception (*tasawwur*) of the realities and is then continued by affirmation or negation of the essential attributes of the (realities), either directly or through an intermediary.

(Man's) ability to think thus eventually produces a problematic situation which it tries to solve affirmatively or negatively. When scientific picture has been established in the mind (of one person) through these (efforts), it must, of necessity, be communicated to someone else, either through instruction or through discussion, in order to polish the mind by trying to show its soundness.

Such communication takes place through "verbal expression," ¹¹¹² that is, speech composed of spoken words which God created in a limb (of the human body), the tongue, as combinations of "letters (sounds)" - that is, the various qualities of sound as broken by uvula and tongue - so that the thoughts of people can be communicated in speech. This is the first step in the communication of thoughts. As its most important and noble part, it includes the sciences. However, it comprises every statement or wish (command) that in general enters the mind.

After this first step in communication, there is a second. It is the communication of one's thoughts to persons who are out of sight or bodily far away, or to persons who live later and whom one has not met, since they are not contemporaries.

This kind of communication is written communication. Writing is figures made by the hand, whose shapes and forms, by convention, indicate the individual letters (sounds) and words of speech. Thus, they communicate thought through the medium of speech. Writing, therefore, constitutes the second step of communication and is one of its two parts. It gives information about the noblest part of thinking, namely, science and knowledge. Scholars take care to deposit all their scientific thoughts in books by means of writing, so that all those who are absent and live at a later time may have the benefit of them. People who do that are authors. Everywhere in the world, written works are numerous. They are handed down among all races and in all ages. They differ as the result of differences in religious laws and organizations and in the information available about nations and dynasties. The philosophical sciences do not show (such) differences. They have developed uniformly, as required by the very nature of thinking, which is concerned with the perception (*tasawwur*) of existing things as they are, whether corporeal, spiritual, celestial, elemental, abstract, or material. These sciences show no differences. Differences occur in the religious sciences because of differences among the various religions, and in the historical sciences because of differences in the outward character of historical information.

Writing differs in that human beings have come to use different forms and shapes of it. (These differences) are called "pen" and script.¹¹¹³ There is the Himyarite script, which is called *musnad*. It is the script of the Himyar and the

ancient inhabitants of the Yemen. It differs from the writing of the later Mudar Arabs, exactly as the (language written in the Himyarite script) is different from the language of (the Mudar Arabs), though all of them are Arabs. However, the habit of linguistic expression among (the Himyar) differed from that of (the Mudar Arabs). Both have their own general norms, which are evolved inductively from their (ways of linguistic) expression, and are different from the norms of the other (group). Those who do not know the habits of (linguistic) expression often are mistaken (about the relationship between the language of the Himyar and that of the other Arabs).

Another script is the Syrian script. This is the writing of the Nabataeans and Chaldeans. Ignorant people often think that because the (Nabataeans and Chaldeans) were the most powerful [1114](#) nations (in antiquity), and the (Syrian script) is of great antiquity, it is the natural script (whereas all other scripts are conventional ones). This is a fanciful, vulgar idea. No action resulting from choice is a natural one. The fact is simply that (the Syrian script [1115](#) is) so old and was used for so long that it became a firmly rooted habit, thought by the observer to be a natural one. Many simpletons have the same idea [1116](#) about the Arabic language. They say that the Arabs express themselves in good Arabic and speak (it) by nature. This is a fanciful (idea). [1117](#)

Another script is the Hebrew script. It is the writing of the children of Eber, the son of Shelah, who are Israelites, and of other (people).

Another script is the Latin script, the script of the Latin Byzantines (Romans). They also have their own language.

Each nation has its own particular form of writing, which is attributed to it in particular. (This applies,) for instance, to the Turks, the European Christians, the Indians, and others. (However,) only three scripts are of interest. First, Syrian, because of its antiquity, as we have mentioned. Then, there are Arabic <and Hebrew>, [1118](#) since the Qur'an and the Torah were revealed in the Arabic and Hebrew scripts and languages, respectively. These two scripts came to be (the medium of) communication for the texts (written in them, that is, the Qur'an and the Torah). [1119](#) There arose very early an interest in works composed in them, and norms for expressing oneself in that language [1120](#) according to its particular method (uslub) [1121](#) were set forth, so that the obligations of the religious law might be properly deduced from the divine speech of (the Qur'an).

Then, (thirdly) there is Latin, the language of the Byzantine (Romans). When they adopted Christianity, which, as mentioned at the beginning of this book, [1122](#) is entirely based upon the Torah, they translated the Torah and the books of the Israelite prophets into their language, in order to be able to derive the law from (Scripture) as easily as possible. Thus, they came to be more interested in their own language and writing than (in) any other.

The other scripts are of no interest. Every people employs its own particular kind of script.

Now, the purposes that must be kept in mind in literary composition and that alone are to be considered valid were restricted to seven. [1123](#)

(1) The invention of a science with its subject, its division into chapters and sections, and the discussion of its problems. Or the invention of problems and topics of research which occur to a competent scholar and which he wants to communicate

to someone else, so that they may become generally known and useful. This, then, is deposited in a written volume, so that a later (generation) may have the benefit of it. This is what happened, for instance, with the principles of jurisprudence. Ash-Shafi'i was the first to discuss, and briefly to describe, the legal arguments based on the wording (of the traditions). Then, the Hanafites appeared and invented the problems of analogical reasoning and presented them fully. This (material) has been used by subsequent generations down to the present time.

(2) (A scholar) may find the discussion and works of ancient (scholars) difficult to understand. God may open understanding of them to him. He will then wish to communicate his (knowledge) to someone else who may perhaps have difficulties with (the same problems), so that all those who are worthy may have the benefit of (his knowledge). This is the interpretational approach to books on the intellectual and traditional (sciences). It is a noble chapter.

(3) Some later (scholar) may come across an error or mistake in discussions by ancient (scholars) of renowned merit and famous authority as teachers. He may have clear proof for it, admitting of no doubt. He will then wish to communicate this (discovery) to those after him, since it is impossible to eradicate a mistake (in the work in question) in view of its wide dissemination in space and time, the fame of (its) author, and the reliance people place in his learning. Therefore, he deposits this (discovery of the mistake) in writing, so that (future) students may learn the explanation of it.

(4) A particular discipline may be incomplete, certain problems or details indicated by the division of the subject of the discipline requiring treatment. The (scholar) who becomes aware of the fact will want to supply these lacking problems, in order to perfect the discipline by having all its problems and details treated and leaving no room for deficiency in it.

(5) The problems of a particular science may have been treated without (the proper) arrangement into chapters and without order. The (scholar) who becomes aware of that (situation) will arrange and improve on the problems and put every problem in the chapter where it belongs. This happened to the *Mudawwanah*, as transmitted by Sahnun on the authority of Ibn al-Qasim, and to the *'Utbiyah*, as transmitted by al-'Utb'i on the authority of the companions of Malik. In these works, many problems of jurisprudence were not mentioned in the proper chapters. Therefore, Ibn Abi Zayd improved upon the *Mudawwanah*, while the *'Utbiyah* remained unimproved. Thus, in every chapter (of the *'Utbiyah*), we find problems that belong in another, and (scholars) restricted themselves to the *Mudawwanah* and the (improvements) made on it by Ibn Abi Zayd and, after him, by al-Baradhi'i.¹¹²⁴

(6) The problems of a certain science might (only) exist scattered among the proper chapters of other sciences. Some excellent (scholar) will then become aware of the subject of that particular discipline (as a subject in its own right) and of (the need of) collecting ¹¹²⁵ its problems. He will do that, and a (new) discipline will make its appearance. He will give it its place among the sciences that mankind, with its ability to think, cultivates. This happened with the science of literary criticism (*bayan*).¹¹²⁶ 'Abd-al-Qahir al-Jurjani ¹¹²⁷ and Abu (Ya'qub) Yusuf as-Sakkaki ¹¹²⁸ found its problems mentioned more or less correctly ¹¹²⁹ in the books on grammar. In his *Kitab al-Bayan wa-t-tabyin*,¹¹³⁰ al-Jahiz had already brought together many of the problems of this science. In (dealing with) them, people became aware ¹¹³¹ of the subject of (this science) and the fact that it constitutes a science in its own right. (Later,) the famous works (by the literary critics mentioned) were written on the subject. They became the basic works of the discipline of literary criticism. Later (scholars) studied (those works) and exceeded all their predecessors in (improving

upon) them.

(7) Something in the main scholarly works may be too long and prolix. One will then try to compose a brief and succinct abridgment, omitting all repetitions. However, one has to be careful not to eliminate anything essential, so that the purpose of the first author will not be vitiated.

These are the purposes that must be kept in mind and not lost sight of in literary composition. All else is unnecessary, a mistake (or deviation) from the road that (all) intelligent (scholars) think must be followed. For, instance, (someone may try) to ascribe the work of an earlier author to himself with the aid of certain tricks, such as changing the wording and the arrangement of the contents. Or, someone may eliminate material essential to a particular discipline, or mention unnecessary material, or replace correct (statements) with wrong ones, or mention useless material. All this shows ignorance and impudence.

Aristotle, when he enumerated the purposes (by which an author must be guided) and had come to the last one, therefore said: "Everything else is either superfluousness or greed," by which he meant ignorance and insolence.

We take refuge in God from doing what an intelligent person ought not to do. God "guides to the things that are most correct." [1132](#)

34. *The great number of scholarly works (available) is an obstacle on the path to attaining scholarship.*

It should be known that among the things that are harmful to the human quest for knowledge and to the attainment of a thorough scholarship are the great number of works (available), the large variety in technical terminology (needed for purposes) of instruction, and the numerous (different) methods (used in those works).¹¹³³ The student is required to have a ready knowledge of (all) that. Only then is he considered an accomplished scholar.

. Thus, the student must know all the (works), or most of them, and observe the methods used in them.¹¹³⁴ His whole lifetime would not suffice to know all the literature that exists in a single discipline, (even) if he were to devote himself entirely to it. Thus, he must of necessity fall short of attaining scholarship.

For the Malikite school of jurisprudence, this (situation) may be exemplified, for instance, by the *Mudawwanah*, its legal commentaries, such as the books of Ibn Yunus, alLakhmi, and Ibn Bashir, and the notes and introductions (to it)¹¹³⁵ Or (one may take) the sister work of the *Mudawwanah*, the 'Utblyah and the work written on it (by Ibn Rushd under the title of) *al-Bayan wa-t-tahsil*;¹¹³⁶ or the book of Ibn al-Hajib and the works written on it. Furthermore, the student must be able to distinguish between the Qayrawani method (of the Malikite school) and the methods of Cordovan, Baghdadi, and Egyptian (Malikites) and those of their more recent successors. He must know all that. Only then is a person considered able to give juridical decisions.

All of (these things) are variations of one and the same subject. The student is required to have a ready knowledge of all of them and to be able to distinguish between them. (Yet,) a whole lifetime could be spent on (but) one of them. If teachers and students were to restrict themselves to the school problems, (the task) would be much easier and (scholarly) instruction would be simple and easily accessible. However, this is an evil that cannot be cured, because it has become firmly ingrained through custom. In a way, it has become something natural, which cannot be moved or transformed.

Another example is Arabic philology.¹¹³⁷ There is the *Book of Sibawayh* and all the literature on it; (there are) the methods of the Basrians, the Kufians, the Baghdadis, and, later on, the Spaniards; and (there are) the methods of the ancient and modern philologists, such as Ibn al-Hajib and Ibn Malik, and all the literature on that. This (wealth of material) requires a great deal from the student. He could spend his (whole) life on less (material). No one would aspire to complete knowledge of it, though there are a few, rare exceptions (of men who have a complete knowledge of philology). For instance, we modern Maghribis have received the works of an Egyptian philologist whose name is Ibn Hisham. The contents show that Ibn Hisham has completely mastered the habit of philology as it had not been mastered (before) save by Sibawayh, Ibn Jinni, and people of their class, so greatly developed is his philological habit and so comprehensive is his knowledge and experience as regards the principles and details of philology. This proves that excellence (in scholarship) is not restricted to the ancients,¹¹³⁸

especially if (one considers) our remarks about the many obstacles (on the path to mastery of a science in modern times), which the great number of schools, methods, and works presents. No! "His excellence God bestows upon whomever He wants to." ¹¹³⁹ (Ibn Hisham) is one of the rare wonders of the world. Otherwise, it is obvious that were the student to spend his entire lifetime on all these things, it would not be long enough for him to acquire, for instance, (a complete knowledge of) Arabic philology, which is (but) an instrument and means (for further studies). How, then, is it with the intended fruit (of study, the acquisition of thorough and comprehensive scholarship)? But "God guides whomever He wants to guide." ¹¹⁴⁰

35. *The great number of brief handbooks (available on scholarly subjects is detrimental to (the process of) instruction.*

Many [1141](#) recent scholars have turned to brief presentations of the methods and contents of the sciences. They want to know (the methods and contents), and they present them systematically in the form of brief programs for each science. (These) brief handbooks express all the problems of a given discipline and the evidence for them in a few brief words that are full of meaning. This (procedure) is detrimental to good style and makes difficulties for the understanding.

(Scholars) often approach the main scholarly works on the various disciplines, which are very lengthy, intending to interpret [1142](#) and explain (them). They abridge them, in order to make it easier (for students) to acquire expert knowledge of them. Such, for instance, was done by Ibn al-Hajib in jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence, [1143](#) by Ibn Malik in Arabic philology, [1144](#) by al-Khunaji in logic, [1145](#) and so on. This (procedure) has a corrupting influence upon the process of instruction and is detrimental to the attainment of scholarship. For it confuses the beginner by presenting the final results of a discipline to him before he is prepared for them. This is a bad method of instruction, as will be mentioned. [1146](#)

(The procedure) also involves a great deal of work for the student. He must study carefully the words of the abridgment, which are complicated to understand because they are crowded with ideas, and [1147](#) try to find out from them what the problems of (the given discipline) are. Thus, the texts of such brief handbooks are found to be difficult and complicated (to understand). A good deal of time must be spent on (the attempt to) understand them.

Moreover, after all these (difficulties), the (scholarly) habit that results from receiving instruction from brief handbooks, (even) when (such instruction) is at its best and is not accompanied by any flaw, is inferior to the habits resulting from (the study of) more extensive and lengthy works. The latter contain a great amount of repetition and lengthiness, but both are useful for the acquisition of a perfect habit. When there is little repetition, an inferior habit is the result. This is the case with the abridgments. The intention was to make it easy for students to acquire expert knowledge (of scholarly subjects), but the result is that it has become (more) difficult for them, because they are prevented from acquiring useful and firmly established habits.

Those whom God guides, no one can lead astray, and "those whom God leads astray have no one to guide them." [1148](#)

56. *The right attitude in scientific instruction and toward the method of giving such instruction.* [1149](#)

It [1150](#) should be known that the teaching of scientific subjects to students is effective only when it proceeds gradually and little by little. At first, (the teacher) presents (the student) with the principal problems within each chapter of a given discipline. He acquaints him with them by commenting on them in a summary fashion. In the course of doing so, he observes the student's intellectual potential and his preparedness for understanding the material that will come his way until the end of the discipline under consideration (is reached). In the process, (the student) acquires the habit of the science (he studies). However, that habit will be an approximate [1151](#) and weak one. The most it can do is to enable the student to understand the discipline (he studies) and to know its problems.

(The teacher,) then, leads (the student) back over the discipline a second time. He gives him instruction in it on a higher level. He no longer gives a summary but full commentaries and explanations. He mentions to him the existing differences of opinion and the form these differences take all the way through to the end of the discipline under consideration. Thus, the student's (scholarly) habit is improved. Then, (the teacher) leads (the student) back again, now that he is solidly grounded. He leaves nothing (that is) complicated, vague, or obscure, unexplained. He bares all the secrets (of the discipline) to him. As a result, the student, when he finishes with the discipline, has acquired the habit of it.

This is the effective method of instruction. As one can see, it requires a threefold repetition. Some students can get through it with less than that, depending on their natural dispositions and qualifications.

We have observed that many teachers [1152](#) of the time in which we are living are ignorant of this effective method of instruction. They begin their instruction by confronting the student with obscure scientific problems. They require him to concentrate on solving them. They think that that is experienced and correct teaching, and they make it the task of the student to comprehend and know such things. In actual fact, they (merely) confuse him by exposing him to the final results of a discipline at the beginning (of his studies) and before he is prepared to understand them. Preparedness for and receptivity to scientific knowledge and understanding grow gradually. At the beginning, the student is completely unable to understand any but a very few (points). (His understanding is) only approximate and general and (can be achieved only) with the help of pictures (*muthul*) derived from sensual perception. His preparedness, then, keeps growing gradually and little by little when he faces the problems of the discipline under consideration and has them repeated (to him) and advances from approximate understanding of them to a complete, higher knowledge. Thus the habit of preparedness and, eventually, that of attainment materialize in the student, until he has a comprehensive knowledge of the problems of the discipline (he studies). But if a student is exposed to the final results at the beginning, while he is still unable to understand and comprehend (anything) and is still far from being prepared to (understand), his mind is not acute enough to (grasp them). He gets the impression that scholarship is difficult and becomes loath to occupy himself with it. He constantly dodges and avoids it. That is the result of

poor instruction, and nothing else.

The teacher should not ask more from a student than that he understand the book he is engaged in studying, in accordance with his class (age group) [1153](#) and his receptivity to instruction, whether he is at the start or at the end (of his studies). (The teacher) should not bring in problems other than those found in that particular book, until the student knows the whole (book) from beginning to end, is acquainted with its purpose, and has gained a habit from it, which he then can apply to other (books). When the student has acquired (the scholarly) habit in one discipline, he is prepared for learning all the others. He also has become interested in looking for more and in advancing to higher (learning). Thus, he eventually acquires a complete mastery of scholarship. But if one confuses a student, he will be unable to understand (anything). He becomes indolent. He stops thinking. He despairs of becoming a scholar and avoids scholarship and instruction.

"God guides whomever He wants to guide." [1154](#)

It is also necessary (for the teacher) to avoid prolonging the period of instruction in a single discipline or book, by breaks in the sessions and long intervals between them. This causes (the student) to forget and disrupts the nexus between the different problems (of the discipline being studied). The result of such interruptions is that attainment of the (scholarly) habit becomes difficult. If the first and last things of a discipline are present in the mind and prevent the effects of forgetfulness, the (scholarly) habit is more easily acquired, more firmly established, and closer to becoming a (true) coloring. For habits are acquired by continuous and repeated activity. When one forgets to act, one forgets the habit that results from that particular action.

God "taught you what you did not know." [1155](#)

A good and necessary method and approach in instruction is not to expose the student to two disciplines at the same time. [1156](#) Otherwise, he will rarely master one of them, since he has to divide his attention and is diverted from each of them by his attempt to understand the other. Thus, he will consider both of them obscure and difficult, and be unsuccessful in both. But if the (student's) mind is free to study the subject that he is out (to study) and can restrict himself to it, that (fact) often makes it simpler (for the student) to learn (the subject in question).

God gives success to that which is correct.

You, [1157](#) student, should realize that I am here giving you useful (hints) for your study. If you accept them and follow them assiduously, you will find a great and noble treasure. As an introduction that will help you to understand these (hints), I shall tell you the following:

Man's ability to think is a special natural gift which God created exactly as He created all His other creations. It is an action and motion [1158](#) in the soul by means of a power (located) in the middle cavity of the brain. [1159](#) At times, (thinking) means the beginning of orderly and well-arranged human actions. At other times, it means the beginning of the knowledge of something that had not been available (before). The (ability to think) is directed toward some objective whose two extremes [1160](#) it has perceived (*tasawwur*), and (now) it desires to affirm or deny it. In almost no time, it recognizes the middle term which combines the two (extremes), if (the objective) is uniform. Or, it goes on to obtain another middle term, if (the objective) is manifold. It thus finds its objective. It is in this way that the ability to think, by which man is distinguished from all the other animals, works.

Now, the craft of logic is (knowledge of the) way in which the natural ability

to think and speculate operates. Logic describes it, so that correct operation can be distinguished from erroneous. To be right, though, is in the essence of the ability to think. However, in very rare cases, it is affected by error. This comes from perceiving (*tasawwur*) the two extremes in forms other than are properly theirs, as the result of confusion in the order and arrangement of the propositions from which the conclusion is drawn. Logic helps to avoid such traps. Thus,¹¹⁶¹ it is a technical procedure which parallels (man's) natural ability to think and conforms to the way in which it functions. Since it is a technical procedure, it can be dispensed with in most cases. Therefore, one finds that many of the world's most excellent thinkers have achieved scholarly results without employing the craft of logic, especially when their intention was sincere and they entrusted themselves to the mercy of God, which is the greatest help (anyone may hope to find). They proceeded with the aid of the natural ability to think at its best, and this (ability), as it was created by God, permitted them by (its very) nature to find the middle term and knowledge of their objective.

Besides the technical procedure called logic, the (process of) study involves another introductory (discipline), namely, the knowledge of words and the way in which they indicate ideas in the mind by deriving them from what the forms (of the letters) say, in the case of writing, and from what the tongue - speech - says in the case of spoken utterances.¹¹⁶² You, the student, must pass through all these veils, in order to reach (the state where you can) think about your objective.

First, there is the way in which writing indicates spoken words.¹¹⁶³ This is the easiest part of it. Then, there is the way in which the spoken words indicate the ideas one is seeking. Further, there are the rules for arranging the ideas in their proper molds, as they are known from the craft of logic, in order to (be able to) make deductions. Then, there are those ideas in the mind that are abstract and (used) as nets with which one goes hunting for the (desired) objective with the help of one's natural ability to think (and) entrusting oneself to the mercy and generosity of God.¹¹⁶⁴

Not everyone is able to pass through all these stages quickly and to cut through all these veils easily during the (process of) instruction.¹¹⁶⁵ Disputes often cause the mind to stop at the veils of words. Disturbing quarrels and doubts cause it to fall into the nets of argument, so that the mind is prevented from attaining its objective. Rarely do more than a few (individuals), who are guided by God, succeed in extricating themselves from this abyss.

If you are afflicted by such (difficulties) and hampered in your understanding (of the problems) by misgivings or disturbing doubts in your mind, cast them off! Discard the veils of words and the obstacles of doubt! Leave all the technical procedures and take refuge in the realm of the natural ability to think given to you by nature! Let your speculation roam in it and let your mind freely delve in it, according to whatever you desire (to obtain) from it! Set foot in the places where the greatest thinkers before you did! Entrust yourself to God's aid, as in His mercy He aided them and taught them what they did not know!¹¹⁶⁶ If you do that, God's helpful light will shine upon you and show you your objective. Inspiration will indicate (to you) the middle term which God made a natural requirement of the (process of) thinking, as we have stated.¹¹⁶⁷ At that particular moment, return with (the middle term) to the molds and forms (to be used) for the arguments, dip it into them, and give it its due of the technical norm (of logic)! Then, clothe it with the forms of words and bring it forth into the world of spoken utterances, firmly girt and soundly constructed!

Verbal disputes and doubts concerning the distinction between right and wrong logical evidence are all technical and conventional matters. Their numerous aspects are all alike or similar, because of their conventional and technical character.

If they stop you, (you [1168](#) will not be able) to distinguish the truth in them, for the truth becomes distinguishable only if it exists by nature. All the doubts and uncertainties will remain. The veils will cover the objective sought and prevent the thinker from attaining it. That has been the case with most recent thinkers, especially with those who formerly spoke a language other than Arabic, which was a mental handicap, [1169](#) or those who were enamored with logic and partial to it. [1170](#) They believe that logic is a natural means for the perception of the truth. They become confused when doubts and misgivings arise concerning the evidence, and they are scarcely able to free themselves from (such doubts).

As a matter of fact, the natural means for the perception of the truth is, as we have stated, (man's natural ability to think, when it is free from all imaginings and when the thinker entrusts himself to the mercy of God. Logic merely describes the process of thinking and mostly parallels it. Take that into consideration and ask for God's mercy when you have difficulty in understanding problems! Then, the divine light will shine upon you and give you the right inspiration.

God guides in His mercy. Knowledge comes only from God.

37. *Study of the auxiliary sciences should not be prolonged, and their problems should not be treated in detail.*¹¹⁷¹

It ¹¹⁷² should be known that the sciences customarily known among civilized people are of two kinds. There are the sciences that are wanted *per se*, such as the religious sciences of Qur'an interpretation, Prophetic traditions, jurisprudence, and speculative theology, and the physical and metaphysical sciences of philosophy. In addition, there are sciences that are instrumental and auxiliary to the sciences mentioned. Among such auxiliary sciences are Arabic philology, arithmetic, and others, which are auxiliary to the religious sciences, and logic which is auxiliary to philosophy and often also to speculative theology and the science of the principles of jurisprudence (when treated) according to the method of recent scholars.¹¹⁷³

In the case of the sciences that are wanted (*per se*), it does no harm to extend their discussion, to treat their problems in detail, and to present all the evidence and (all the different) views (which exist concerning them). It gives the student of them a firmer habit and clarifies the ideas they contain which one wants to know. But the sciences that are auxiliary to other sciences, such as Arabic philology, logic, and the like, should be studied only in so far as they are aids to the other (sciences). Discussion of them should not be prolonged, and the problems should not be treated in detail, as this would lead away from their purpose, and their purpose is (to facilitate understanding of) the sciences to which they are auxiliary, nothing else. Whenever the (auxiliary sciences) cease to be (auxiliary to other sciences), they abandon their purpose, and occupation with them becomes an idle pastime.

Moreover, ¹¹⁷⁴ it is (also) difficult to acquire the habit of them, because they are large subjects with many details. Their (difficulty) is often an obstacle to acquiring the sciences wanted *per se*, because it takes so long to get to them. However, they are more important, and life is too short to acquire a knowledge of everything in this (thorough) form. Thus, occupation with the auxiliary sciences constitutes a waste of one's life, occupation with something that is of no concern.
¹¹⁷⁵

Recent scholars have done this with grammar and logic and even with the principles of jurisprudence. They have prolonged the discussion of these disciplines both ¹¹⁷⁶ by transmitting (more material) and (by adding to the material) through deductive reasoning. They have increased the number of details and problems, ¹¹⁷⁷ causing them to be no longer auxiliary sciences, but disciplines that are wanted *per se*. In consequence, (the auxiliary sciences) often deal with views and problems for which there is no need in the disciplines that are wanted *per se* (and are the sole *raison d'être* of the auxiliary sciences). Thus, they are a sort of idle pastime and also do outright harm to students, because the sciences that are wanted (*per se*) are more important for them than the auxiliary and instrumental sciences. (Now,) if they spend all their lives on the auxiliary (sciences), when will they get around to (the sciences) that are wanted (*per se*)? Therefore, teachers of the auxiliary sciences ought not to delve too deeply in them ¹¹⁷⁸ and increase the number of their problems. They must advise the student concerning their purpose and have him stop there. Those who have the mind to go more deeply (into them) and consider

themselves capable and able to do so, may choose (such a course) for themselves. Everyone is successful at the things for which he was created.[1179](#)

38. *The instruction of children and the different methods employed in the Muslim cities.*

It should be known that instructing children in the Qur'an is a symbol of Islam. Muslims have, and practice, such instruction in all their cities, because it imbues hearts with a firm belief (in Islam) and its articles of faith, which are (derived) from the verses of the Qur'an and certain Prophetic traditions. The Qur'an has become the basis of instruction, the foundation for all habits that may be acquired later on. The reason for this is that the things one is taught in one's youth take root more deeply (than anything else). They are the basis of all later (knowledge). The first impression the heart receives is, in a way, the foundation of (all scholarly) habits. The character of the foundation determines the condition of the building. The methods of instructing children in the Qur'an differ according to differences of opinion as to the habits that are to result from that instruction.

The Maghribi method is to restrict the education of children to instruction in the Qur'an and to practice, during the course (of instruction), in Qur'an orthography and its problems and the differences among Qur'an experts on this score. The (Maghribis) do not bring up any other subjects in their classes, such as traditions, jurisprudence, poetry, or Arabic philology, until the pupil is skilled in (the Qur'an), or drops out before becoming skilled in it. In the latter case, it means, as a rule, that he will not learn anything. This is the method the urban population in the Maghrib and the native Berber Qur'an teachers who follow their (urban compatriots), use in educating their children up to the age of manhood. They use it also with old people who study the Qur'an after part of their life has passed. Consequently, (Maghribis) know the orthography of the Qur'an, and know it by heart, better than any other (Muslim group).

The Spanish method is instruction in reading and writing as such. That is what they pay attention to in the instruction (of children). However, since the Qur'an is the basis and foundation of (all) that and the source of Islam and (all) the sciences, they make it the basis of instruction, but they do not restrict their instruction of children exclusively to (the Qur'an). They also bring in (other subjects), mainly poetry and composition, and they give the children an expert knowledge of Arabic and teach them a good handwriting. They do not stress teaching of the Qur'an more than the other subjects. In fact, they are more concerned with teaching handwriting than any other subject, until the child reaches manhood. He then has some experience and knowledge of the Arabic language and poetry. He has an excellent knowledge of handwriting, and he would have a thorough acquaintance with scholarship in general, if the tradition of scholarly instruction (still) existed in (Spain), but he does not, because the tradition no longer exists there.¹¹⁸⁰ Thus, (presentday Spanish children) obtain no further (knowledge) than what their primary instruction provides. It is enough for those whom God guides. It prepares (them for further studies), in the event that a teacher (of them) can be found.

The people of Ifriqiyah combine the instruction of children in the Qur'an, usually, with the teaching of traditions. They also teach basic scientific norms and certain scientific problems. However, they stress giving their children a good knowledge of the Qur'an and acquainting them with its various recensions and

readings more than anything else. Next they stress handwriting. In general, their method of instruction in the Qur'an is closer to the Spanish method (than to Maghribi or Eastern methods), because their (educational tradition) derives from the Spanish *shaykhs* who crossed over when the Christians conquered Spain, and asked for hospitality in Tunis.¹¹⁸¹ From that time on, they were the teachers of (Tunisian) children.

The people of the East, as far as we know, likewise have a mixed curriculum. I do not know what (subjects) they stress (primarily). We have been told that they are concerned with teaching the Qur'an and the works and basic norms of (religious) scholarship once (the children) are grown up. They do not combine (instruction in the Qur'an) with instruction in handwriting. They have (special) rule(s) for teaching it, and there are special teachers for it,¹¹⁸² just like any other craft which is taught (separately) and not included in the school curriculum for children. The children's slates (on which they practice) exhibit an inferior form of handwriting. Those who want to learn a (good) handwriting may do so later on (in their lives) from professional (calligraphers), to the extent of their interest in it and desire.

The fact that the people of Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib restrict themselves to the Qur'an makes them altogether incapable of mastering the linguistic habit. For as a rule, no (scholarly) habit can originate from the (study of the) Qur'an, because no human being can produce anything like it. Thus, human beings are unable to employ or imitate its ways (*uslub*), and they also can form no habit in any other respect. Consequently, a person who knows (the Qur'an) does not acquire the habit of the Arabic language. It will be his lot to be awkward in expression and to have little fluency in speaking. This situation is not quite so pronounced among the people of Ifriqiyah as among the Maghribis, because, as we have stated, the former combine instruction in the Qur'an with instruction in the terminology of Scientific terms. Thus, they get some practice and have some examples to imitate. However, their habit in this respect does not amount to a good style (eloquence), because their knowledge mostly consists of scholarly terminology which falls short of good style, as will be mentioned in the proper section.¹¹⁸³

As for the Spaniards, their varied curriculum with its great amount of instruction in poetry, composition, and Arabic philology gave them, from their early years on, a habit providing for a better acquaintance with the Arabic language. They were less proficient in all the other (religious) sciences, because they were little familiar with study of the Qur'an and the traditions that are the basis and foundation of the (religious) sciences. Thus, they were people who knew how to write and who had a literary education that was either excellent or deficient, depending on the secondary education they received after their childhood education.

In his *Rihlah*, Judge Abu Bakr b. al-'Arabi¹¹⁸⁴ made a remarkable statement about instruction, which retains (the best of) the old, and presents (some good) new features.¹¹⁸⁵ He placed instruction in Arabic and poetry ahead of all the other sciences, as in the Spanish method, since, he said, "poetry is the archive of the Arabs."¹¹⁸⁶ Poetry and Arabic philology should be taught first because of the (existing) corruption of the language.¹¹⁸⁷ From there, the (student) should go on to arithmetic and study it assiduously, until he knows its basic norms. He should then go on to the study of the Qur'an, because with his (previous) preparation, it will be easy for him." (Ibn al-'Arabi) continued: "How thoughtless are our compatriots in that they teach children the Qur'an when they are first starting out. They read things they do not understand and work hard at something that is not as important for them as other matters." He concluded: "The student should study successively the

principles of Islam, the principles of jurisprudence, disputation, and then the Prophetic traditions and the sciences connected with them." He also forbade teaching two disciplines at the same time, save to the student with a good mind and sufficient energy. [1188](#)

This is Judge Abu Bakr's advice. It is a good method indeed. However, accepted custom is not favorable to it, and custom has greater power over conditions (than anything else). Accepted custom gives preference to the teaching of the Qur'an. The reason is the desire for the blessing and reward (in the other world resulting from knowledge of the Qur'an) and a fear of the things that might affect children in "the folly of youth" [1189](#) and harm them and keep them from acquiring knowledge. They might miss the chance to learn the Qur'an. As long as they remain at home, they are amenable to authority. When they have grown up and shaken off the yoke of authority, the tempests of young manhood often cast them upon the shores of wrongdoing. Therefore, while the children are still at home and under the yoke of authority, one seizes the opportunity to teach them the Qur'an, so that they will not remain without knowledge of it. If one could be certain that a child would continue to study and accept instruction (when he has grown up), the method mentioned by the Judge would be the most suitable one ever devised in East or West.

"God decides, and no one can change His decision." [1190](#)

39. Severity to students does them harm.

This comes about as follows. Severe punishment in the course of instruction does harm to the student, especially to little children, because it belongs among (the things that make for a) bad habit. Students,¹¹⁹¹ slaves, and servants who are brought up with injustice and (tyrannical) force are overcome by it. It makes them feel oppressed and causes them to lose their energy. It makes them lazy and induces them to lie and be insincere. That is, their outward behavior differs from what they are thinking, because they are afraid that they will have to suffer tyrannical treatment (if they tell the truth). Thus, they are taught deceit and trickery. This becomes their custom and character. They lose the quality that goes with social and political organization and makes people human, namely, (the desire to) protect and defend themselves and their homes, and they become dependent on others.¹¹⁹² Indeed, their souls become too indolent to (attempt to) acquire the virtues and good character qualities. Thus, they fall short of their potentialities and do not reach the limit of their humanity. As a result, they revert to the stage of "the lowest of the low."¹¹⁹³

That ¹¹⁹⁴ is what happened to every nation that fell under the yoke of tyranny and learned through it the meaning of injustice. One may check this by (observing) any person who is not in control of his own affairs and has no authority on his side to guarantee his (safety). One will thus be able to infer (from the observable facts) that things are (as I have stated). One may look at the Jews and the bad character they have acquired,¹¹⁹⁵ such that they are described in every region and period as having the quality of *khurj*,¹¹⁹⁶ which, according to well-known technical terminology, means "insincerity and trickery." The reason is what we have (just) said.

Thus, a teacher must not be too severe toward his pupil, nor a father toward his son, in educating them. In the book that Abu Muhammad b. Abi Zayd wrote on the laws governing teachers and pupils, he said: "If children must be beaten, their educator must not strike them more than three times."¹¹⁹⁷ 'Umar said: "Those who are not educated (disciplined) by the religious law are not educated (disciplined) by God."¹¹⁹⁸ He spoke out of a desire to preserve the souls from the humiliation of disciplinary punishment and in the knowledge that the amount (of disciplinary punishment) that the religious law has stipulated is fully adequate to keep (a person) under control, because the (religious law) knows best what is good for him.

One of the best methods of education was suggested by ar-Rashid to Khalaf b. Ahmar, the teacher of his son Muhammad al-Amin. Khalaf b. Ahmar ¹¹⁹⁹ said: "Ar-Rashid told me to come and educate his son Muhammad al-Amin, and he said to me: 'O Ahmar, the Commander of the Faithful is entrusting (his son) to you, the life of his soul and the fruit of his heart. Take firm hold of him and make him obey you. Occupy in relation to him the place that the Commander of the Faithful has given you. Teach him to read the Qur'an. Instruct him in history. Let him transmit poems and teach him the Sunnah of the Prophet. Give him insight into the proper occasions for speech and how to begin a (speech). Forbid him to laugh, save at times when it is proper. Accustom him to honor the Hashimite dignitaries ¹²⁰⁰ when

they come to him, and to give the military leaders places of honor when they come to his salon. Let no hour pass in which you not seize the opportunity to teach him something useful. But do so without vexing him, which would kill his mind. Do not always be too lenient with him, or he will get to like leisure and become used to it. As much as possible, correct him kindly and gently. If he does not want it that way, you must then use severity and harshness.' "

40. *A scholar's education is greatly improved by traveling in quest of knowledge and meeting the authoritative teachers (of his time).*

The [1201](#) reason for this is that human beings obtain their knowledge and character qualities and all their opinions and virtues either through study, instruction, and lectures, or through imitation of a teacher and personal contact with him. The only difference here is that habits acquired through personal contact with a teacher are more strongly and firmly rooted. Thus, the greater the number of authoritative teachers (*shaykhs*), the more deeply rooted is the habit one acquires.

Furthermore, the technical terminologies used in scientific instruction are confusing to the student. Many students even suppose them to be part of a given science. The only way to deliver them from that (wrong notion) is by personal contact with teachers, for different teachers employ different terminologies. Thus, meeting scholars and having many authoritative teachers (*shaykhs*) enables the student to notice the difference in the terminologies used by different teachers and to distinguish among them. He will thus be able to recognize the science itself behind the (technical terminology it uses). He will realize that (terminologies) are (merely) means and methods for imparting (knowledge). His powers will work toward acquiring strongly and firmly rooted habits. He will improve the knowledge he has and be able to distinguish it from other (knowledge). In addition, his habits will be strengthened through his intensive personal contact with teachers, when they are many and of various types. This is for those for whom God facilitated the ways of scholarship and right guidance. Thus, traveling in quest of knowledge is absolutely necessary for the acquisition of useful knowledge and perfection through meeting authoritative teachers (*shaykhs*) and having contact with (scholarly) personalities.

God "guides whomever He wants to guide to a straight path." [1202](#)

41. *Scholars are, of all people, those least familiar with the ways of politics.*

The [1203](#) reason for this is that (scholars) are used to mental speculation and to a searching study of ideas which they abstract from the *sensibilia* and conceive in their minds as general universals, so that they may be applicable to some matter in general but not to any particular matter, individual, race, nation, or group of people. (Scholars,) then, make such universal ideas conform (in their minds) to facts of the outside world. They also compare things with others that are similar to or like them, with the help of analogical reasoning as used in jurisprudence, which is something familiar to them. All their conclusions and views continue to be something in the mind. They come to conform (to the facts of the outside world) only after research and speculation has come to an end, or they may never come to conform (to them). The facts of the outside world are merely special cases of the (ideas) that are in the mind. For instance, the religious laws are special cases derived from the well-known (texts) of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In their case, one expects the facts of the outside world to conform to them, in contrast with the intellectual sciences, where, in order to (prove) the soundness of views, one expects those views to conform to the facts of the outside world.

Thus, in all their intellectual activity, scholars are accustomed to dealing with matters of the mind and with thoughts. They do not know anything else. Politicians, on the other hand, must pay attention to the facts of the outside world and the conditions attaching to and depending on (politics). (These facts and conditions) are obscure. They may contain some (element) making it impossible to refer them to something like and similar, or contradicting the universal (idea) to which one would like them to conform. The conditions existing in civilization cannot (always) be compared with each other. They may be alike in one respect, but they may differ in other respects.

(Now,) scholars are accustomed to generalizations and analogical conclusions. When they look at politics, they press (their observations) into the mold of their views and their way of making deductions. Thus, they commit many errors, or (at least) they cannot be trusted (not to commit errors). The intelligent and alert (segment) of civilized people falls into the same category as (scholars). Their penetrating minds drive them toward a searching occupation with ideas, analogy, and comparison, as is the case with jurists. Thus, they (too) commit errors.

The average person of a healthy disposition and a mediocre intelligence has not got the mind for (such speculation) and does not think of it. Therefore, he restricts himself to considering every matter as it is, and to judging every kind of situation and every type of individual by its particular (circumstances). His judgment is not infected with analogy and generalization. Most of his speculation stops at matters perceptible by the senses, and he does not go beyond them in his mind, like a swimmer who stays in the water near the shore, as the poet says:

Do not go out too deep when swimming. Safety lies near the shore.

Such a man, therefore, can be trusted when he reflects upon his political activities. He has the right outlook in dealing with his fellow men. Thus, he makes a good living and suffers no damage or harm in the (process of making a living),

because he has the right outlook.

"And He knows more than any scholar." [1204](#)

This (situation) makes one realize that logic cannot be trusted to prevent the commission of errors, because it is too abstract and remote from the *sensibilia*. (Logic) considers the secondary *intelligibilia*. It is possible that material things contain something that does not admit of (logical) conclusions and contradicts them, when one looks for unequivocal conformity (between them and the facts of the outside world). It is different with speculation about the primary *intelligibilia*, which are less abstract. They are matters of the imagination and pictures of the *sensibilia*. They retain (certain features of the *sensibilia*) and permit verification of the conformity of (the *sensibilia* to the primary *intelligibilia*). [1205](#)

42. *Most of the scholars in Islam have been nonArabs (Persians).* [1206](#)

It [1207](#) is a remarkable fact that, with few exceptions, most Muslim scholars both in the religious and in the intellectual sciences have been non-Arabs. When a scholar is of Arab origin, he is non-Arab in language and upbringing and has non-Arab teachers. This is so in spite of the fact that Islam is an Arabic religion, and its founder was an Arab.

The reason for it is that at the beginning Islam had no sciences or crafts. That was due to the simple conditions (that prevailed) and the desert attitude. The religious laws, which are the commands and prohibitions of God, were in the breasts of the authorities. They knew their sources, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, from information they had received directly from the Lawgiver (Muhammad) himself and from the men around him. The people at that time were Arabs. They did not know anything about scientific instruction or the writing of books and systematic works. There was no incentive or need for that. This was the situation during the time of the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation. The persons who were concerned with knowing and transmitting the (religious laws) were called "Qur'an readers," that is, people who were able to read the Qur'an and were not illiterate. Illiteracy was general at that time among the men around Muhammad, since they were (Arab) Bedouins. [1208](#) People who knew the Qur'an were at that time called "Qur'an readers" with reference to the fact (that they were literate). They read the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which were transmitted from God, (in order to know the religious laws,) because the religious laws were known only from the (Qur'an) and from the traditions which are mostly explanations of and commentaries upon, the (Qur'an). Muhammad said: "I left among you two things. You will not go astray as long as you hold on to them: the Qur'an and my Sunnah." [1209](#)

By the time of the reign of ar-Rashid, (oral) tradition had become far removed (from its starting point). It was thus necessary to write commentaries on the Qur'an and to fix the traditions in writing, because it was feared that they might be lost. [1210](#) It was also necessary to know the chains of transmitters and to assess their reliability, in order to be able to distinguish sound chains of transmitters from inferior ones. [1211](#) Then, more and more laws concerning actual cases were derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Moreover, the (Arabic) language became corrupt, [1212](#) and it was necessary to lay down grammatical rules.

All the religious sciences had (thus) become habits connected with producing and deriving (laws and norms) and with comparison and analogical reasoning. Other, auxiliary sciences became necessary, such as knowledge of the rules of the Arabic language, (knowledge of) the rules that govern the derivation (of laws) and analogical reasoning, and defense of the articles of faith by means of arguments, because a great number of innovations and heresies (had come into existence). All these things developed into sciences with their own habits, requiring instruction (for their acquisition). Thus, they came to fall under the category of crafts.

We have mentioned before that the crafts are cultivated by sedentary people and that of all peoples the Arab (Bedouins) are least familiar with the crafts. [1213](#)

Thus, the sciences came to belong to sedentary culture, and the Arabs were not familiar with them or with their cultivation. Now, the (only) sedentary people at that time were non-Arabs and, what amounts to the same thing, the clients and sedentary people who followed the non-Arabs at that time in all matters of sedentary culture, including the crafts and professions. They were most versed in those things, because sedentary culture had been firmly rooted among them from the time of the Persian Empire.

Thus, the founders of grammar were Sibawayh and, after him, al-Farisi and az-Zajjaj. [1214](#) All of them were of non-Arab (Persian) descent. They were brought up in the Arabic language and acquired the knowledge of it through their upbringing and through contact with Arabs. They invented the rules of (grammar) and made (grammar) into a discipline (in its own right) for later (generations to use).

Most of the *hadith* scholars who preserved traditions for the Muslims also were non-Arabs (Persians), or Persian in language and upbringing, because [1215](#) the discipline was widely cultivated in the 'Iraq and the regions beyond. (Furthermore,) all the scholars who worked in the science of the principles of jurisprudence were non-Arabs (Persians), as is well known. The same applies to speculative theologians and to most Qur'an commentators. Only the non-Arabs (Persians) engaged in the task of preserving knowledge and writing systematic scholarly works. Thus, the truth of the following statement by the Prophet becomes apparent: "If scholarship hung suspended at the highest parts of heaven, the Persians [1216](#) would (reach it and take it.)"

The Arabs who came into contact with that flourishing sedentary culture and exchanged their Bedouin attitude for it, were diverted from occupying themselves with scholarship and study by their leading position in the 'Abbasid dynasty and the tasks that confronted them in government. They were the men of the dynasty, at once its protectors and the executors of its policy. In addition, at that time, they considered it a contemptible thing to be a scholar, because scholarship is a craft, and political leaders are always contemptuous of the crafts and professions and everything that leads to them. [1217](#) Thus, they left such things to non-Arabs and persons of mixed Arab and non-Arab parentage (*muwallad*). The latter cultivated them, and (the Arabs) always considered it their right to cultivate them, as they were their custom (*din*) and their sciences, and never felt complete contempt for the men learned in them. The final result, (law ever,) was that when the Arabs lost power and the non-Arabs took over, the religious sciences had no place with the men in power, because the latter had no relations with (scholarship). Scholars were viewed with contempt, [1218](#) because the (men in power) saw that (scholars) had no contact with them and were occupying themselves with things that were of no interest to the (men in power) in governmental and political matters, as we mentioned in connection with the religious ranks. [1219](#) The fact established here is the reason why (all) scholars in the religious sciences, or most of them, are non-Arabs.

The intellectual sciences, as well, made their appearance in Islam only after scholars and authors had become a distinct group of people and all scholarship had become a craft. (The intellectual sciences) were then the special preserve of non-Arabs, left alone by the Arabs, who did not cultivate them. They were cultivated only by Arabicized non-Arabs (Persians) [1220](#) as was the case with all the crafts, as we stated at the beginning.

This situation continued in the cities as long as the Persians and the Persian countries, the 'Iraq, Khurasan, and Transoxania, retained their sedentary culture. But when those cities fell into ruins, sedentary culture, which God has devised for the attainment of sciences and crafts, disappeared from them. Along with it, scholarship

altogether disappeared from among the non-Arabs (Persians), who were (now) engulfed by the desert attitude. Scholarship was restricted to cities with an abundant sedentary culture. Today, no (city) has a more abundant sedentary culture than Cairo (Egypt). It is the mother of the world, the great center (*Iwan*) of Islam, and the mainspring of the sciences and the crafts.[1221](#)

Some sedentary culture has also survived in Transoxania, because the dynasty there provides some sedentary culture. Therefore, they have there a certain number of the sciences and the crafts, which cannot be denied. Our attention was called to this fact by the contents of the writings of a (Transoxanian) scholar, which have reached us in this country. He is Sa'd-ad-din at-Taftazani.[1222](#) As far as the other non-Arabs (Persians) are concerned, we have not seen, since [1223](#) the imam Ibn al-Khatib and Nasir-ad-din at-Tusi, any discussions that could be referred to as indicating their ultimate excellence.

When one considers and ponders this fact, one will observe (in it) one of the wondrous circumstances of this world. "God creates whatever He wishes." "There is no God but Him." [1224](#)

43. *A person whose first language was not Arabic finds it harder than the (native) speaker of Arabic to acquire the sciences.* [1225](#)

This is explained by the fact that all scientific research deals with ideas of the mind and the imagination. This applies to the religious sciences in which research is mostly concerned with words and the substance of which is the laws derived from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the language used in (both the Qur'an and the Sunnah) that leads to (the formulation of) these (laws). These are all matters of the imagination. The same fact also applies to the intellectual sciences, which are matters of the mind.

Linguistic expression is merely the interpreter of ideas that are in the mind. One (person) conveys them to another in oral discussion, instruction, and constant scientific research. His purpose is to obtain the (various) habits of (all these things [1255a](#)) through constant application. Words and expressions are media and veils between the ideas. They constitute the bonds between them and give them their final imprint. The student of ideas must extract them from the words that express them. For this he needs a knowledge of their linguistic meaning and a good (linguistic) habit. Otherwise, it is difficult for him to get (the ideas), apart from the (usual) difficulties inherent in mental investigation of them. When he has a firmly rooted habit as far as semantics is concerned, so that the (correct) ideas present themselves to his mind when he (hears) certain words used, spontaneously and naturally, the veil between the ideas and the understanding is either totally removed, or becomes less heavy, and the only task that remains is to investigate the problems inherent in the ideas.

All this applies to instruction by personal contact in the form of oral address and explanation. But when the student has to rely upon the study of books and written material and must understand scientific problems from the forms of written letters in books, [1226](#) he is confronted with another veil, (namely, the veil) that separates handwriting and the form of letters (found) in writing from the spoken words (found) in the imagination. The written letters have their own way of indicating the spoken words. As long as that way is not known, it is impossible to know what they express. If it is known imperfectly, (the meaning) expressed (by the letters) is known imperfectly. Thus, the student is confronted with another veil standing between him and his objective of attaining scientific habits, one that is more difficult to cope with than the first one. (Now,) if his habit, as far as the meaning of words and writing goes, is firmly established, the veils between him and the ideas are lifted. He has merely to occupy himself with understanding the problems inherent in the (ideas). The same relationship of ideas with words and writing exists in every language. The habits of students who learn these things while they are young, are more firmly established (than those of other people).

Furthermore, the Muslim realm was far-flung and included many nations. The sciences of the ancients were wiped out through the prophecy of (Islam) and its (holy) book. Illiteracy was the proper thing and symbol (of Islam). Islam then gained royal authority and power. (Foreign) nations served the (Muslims) with their sedentary culture and refinement. The religious sciences, which had been traditional, were turned by the (Muslims) into crafts. Thus, (scholarly) habits originated among

them. Many systematic works and books were written. (The Muslims) desired to learn the sciences of the (foreign) nations. They made them their own through translations. They pressed them into the mold of their own views. They took them over into their own language from the non-Arab languages and surpassed the achievements of (the non-Arabs) in them. The manuscripts in the non-Arabic language were forgotten, abandoned, and scattered.¹²²⁷ All the sciences came to exist in Arabic. The systematic works on them were written in (Arabic) writing. Thus, students of the sciences needed a knowledge of the meaning of (Arabic) words and (Arabic) writing. They could dispense with all other languages, because they had been wiped out and there was no longer any interest in them.

We have mentioned before that language is a habit of the tongue.¹²²⁸

Likewise, handwriting is a craft, the habit of which is located in the hand.¹²²⁹ The tongue which had at first the habit of speaking another language than Arabic, becomes deficient in (its mastery of) Arabic, because, as we have mentioned before,¹²³⁰ the person whose habit has advanced to a certain point in a particular craft is rarely able to master another one. This is obvious. (Now,) if (a person) is deficient in (his mastery of) Arabic, in (his knowledge of) the meaning of its words and its writing, it is difficult for him to derive the ideas from (Arabic words and Arabic writing), as has been mentioned before. Only if the early habit of speaking a non-Arab language is not yet firmly established in a person when he makes the transition from it to Arabic, as is the case with small non-Arab children who grow up with Arabs before their (habit) of speaking a non-Arab language is firmly established, only then does the Arabic language come to be like a first (native) language, and his ability to derive the ideas from (the words of) the Arabic language is not deficient.¹²³¹ The same applies to persons who learned non-Arabic writing before Arabic writing.

This is why we find that most non-Arab scholars in their research and classes do not copy comments (directly) from books but read them aloud. In this way they are less disturbed by the veils (between words and ideas), so that they can get more easily at the ideas. When a person possesses the perfect habit as far as verbal and written expression is concerned, he does not have to (read aloud). For him, it has become like a firmly ingrained natural disposition to derive an understanding of words from writing and of ideas from words. The veils between him and the ideas are lifted.

Intensive study and constant practice of the language and of writing may lead a person to a firmly rooted habit, as we find in most non-Arab scholars. However, this occurs rarely. When one compares such a person with an Arabic scholar of equal merit, the latter is the more efficient, and his habit the stronger. The non-Arab has trouble because his early use of a non-Arab language necessarily makes him inferior.

This is not in contradiction with the afore-mentioned fact¹²³² that most Muslim scholars are non-Arabs. In that connection, "non-Arab" meant non-Arab by descent. Such non-Arabs had a long (history of) sedentary culture which, as we have established, causes cultivation of the crafts and habits, including the sciences. Being non-Arab in language is something quite different, and this is what is meant here.

It is also not in contradiction with the fact that the Greeks were highly accomplished scholars. They learned their sciences in their own first (native) language and in their own writing, such as was customarily used among them. The non-Arab Muslim who studies to become a scholar learns his subject in a language other than his first (native) one and from a writing other than the one whose habit he has mastered. This, then, becomes a veil for him, as we have stated.

This applies quite generally to all kinds of speakers of non-Arab languages, such as the Persians, the Turks, the Berbers, the European Christians, and all others whose language is not Arabic.[1233](#)

"Here are signs for people who understand signs."[1234](#)

44. *The sciences concerned with the Arabic language.*

The pillars of the Arabic language are four: lexicography, grammar, syntax and style (*bayan*), and literature. Knowledge of them all is necessary for religious scholars, since the source of all religious laws is the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which are in Arabic. Their transmitters, the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation, were Arabs. Their difficulties are to be explained from the language they used. Thus, those who want to be religious scholars must know the sciences connected with the Arabic language.

These sciences differ in emphasis (as to their importance) according to the different degrees (of usefulness) they possess for conveying the intended meaning of speech, as will become clear when they are discussed one by one. The conclusion will be that the first and most important of them is grammar, since it gives a clear indication of the basic principles (used in expressing) the various intended meanings. Thus, one can distinguish between subject and object, as well as between the subject of a nominal sentence and its predicate. Without grammar, one would not know on what to base giving information (about anything)

Lexicography would deserve to be first, were not most of its data constant (and restricted) to their (conventional) meanings, incapable of changing, in contrast to the case endings (in grammar) which indicate dependence, the (person or thing) that is dependent, and the (person or thing) on which (something else) depends. [1235](#) They always change completely and leave no trace. Thus, grammar is more important than lexicography, since ignorance of (grammar) is very harmful to mutual understanding. This is not the case with lexicography.

And God knows better.

Grammar

It should be known that language, as the term is customarily used, is the expression by a speaker of his intention. Such expression is an act of the tongue which originates in an intention to convey the meaning of speech. [1236](#) Therefore, (language) must become an established habit (located) in the part of the body that produces it, namely, the tongue. [1237](#)

In every nation, the (formation of language takes place) according to their own terminology. The linguistic habit that the Arabs obtained in that way is the best there is. It is the one most clearly expressing the intended meaning, since many ideas are indicated in it by something else than words. There are, for instance, vowels to distinguish the subject from object and *i*-case - that is, the genitive - and (there are) letters to transform actions (verbs) - that is, motions - into essences, [1238](#) without need of other words. These (features) are found in no other language but Arabic. All other languages need special words to indicate a particular idea or situation. Therefore; we find non-Arabs lengthier in their speech than we would consider necessary in Arabic. This is what was meant in the following remark by Muhammad: "I was given the most comprehensive words, and speech was made

short for me."

The consonants, vowels, and positions (of letters [sounds]), that is, the forms of the Arabic language, came to indicate the intended meaning in a definite manner. The (Arabs) did not need a craft to teach them their meaning. It was a habit in their tongues that one generation learned from the other, as our children nowadays learn our languages.

Then Islam came. The Arabs left the Hijaz to seek the royal authority that was in the hands of (foreign) nations and dynasties. They came into contact with non-Arabs. As a result, their linguistic habit changed under the influence of the solecisms they heard non-Arab speakers of Arabic make, and it is hearing that begets the linguistic habit. Thus, the (Arab linguistic habit began to) incline toward adopting forms of speech at variance with it, because (the Arabs) became used to hearing them spoken, and (their linguistic habit) became corrupted. [1240](#)

Cultured people feared that the (Arab linguistic) habit would become entirely corrupted and that, if the (process of corruption) went on for a long time, the Qur'an and the traditions would no longer be understood. Therefore, they derived certain norms for the (Arab linguistic) habit from their way of speaking. (These norms are) of general applicability, like universals and basic principles. They checked all the other parts of speech with them and combined like with like. (Among such norms,) for instance, are these:

The agent has the *u*-ending.

The object has the *a*-ending.

The subject of a nominal sentence has the *u*-ending.

Then, they considered (the fact) that the meaning changes with the change of vowel (endings). For this (phenomenon), they used the technical term of *i'rab*. For the thing that necessitates the change (in meaning), they used the technical term "agent," ('amil), and so on. All these things came to be technical terms peculiar to the (grammarians) who set them down in writing and made a particular [1241](#) craft of them. The technical term they used for that (craft) is "grammar" (*nahw*).

The first to write on (grammar) was Abul-Aswad ad-Du'ali, of the Banu Kinanah. [1242](#) It is said that he did so upon the advice of 'Ali, who noticed that the (linguistic) habit was changing. Therefore he advised (ad-Du'ali) to protect it, and (ad-Du'ali) anxiously went about the task of fixing it accurately by means of comprehensive, inductively evolved rules.

Later on, scholars wrote books on (grammar). Eventually, in the time of al-Khalil b. Ahmad al-Farahidi, [1243](#) in the days of ar-Rashid, people were more in need of (grammatical rules than ever before), because the (linguistic) habit was disappearing from among the Arabs. (Al-Khalil) improved the craft (of grammar) and perfected its various chapters. Sibawayh [1244](#) learned (grammar) from him. He perfected its details and increased the number of proofs and examples used in connection with it. He wrote on it his famous *Book* which became the model for everything subsequently written on (grammar). [1245](#) Short books for students were later written by Abu-'Ali al-Farisi [1246](#) and Abul-Qasim az-Zajjaji. [1247](#) In them, they followed the model of (Sibawayh's) *Book*.

Then, there was much grammatical discussion. Divergent opinions originated among the grammarians of al-Kufah and al-Basrah, the two old cities of the Arabs. They used an increasing number of proofs and arguments. The methods of (grammatical) instruction also became different. There was much difference of opinion with regard to vowel endings in many verses of the Qur'an, since the

grammarians held different opinions as to the basic rules of (grammar). This became a lengthy subject for students (to study). Then recent scholars came, with their method of being brief. They cut short a good deal of the long discussion, though they included everything that had been transmitted. That, for instance, was what Ibn Malik [1248](#) did in the *Kitab at-Tashil*, and others. Or, they restricted themselves to elementary rules for (beginning) students. That, for instance, was what az-Zamakhshari did in the *Mufassal* and Ibn al-Hajib in the *Muqaddimah*. [1249](#) They also frequently versified the subject. That was done, for instance, by Ibn Malik in two *rajaz* poems, the large and the small one, and by Ibn Mu'ti [1250](#) in a *rajaz* poem of a thousand verses (*ay'zah*).

In general, the works on this subject are innumerable and cannot all be known, and the methods of (grammatical) instruction are varied. The method of the ancients is different from that of recent (grammarians). The methods of the Kufians, the Basrians, the Baghdadis, and the Spaniards also, are all different.

Grammar has come to the point of being allowed to disappear, along with the decrease in the other sciences and crafts which we have noted and which is the result of a decrease in civilization. At the present time, there has reached us in the Maghrib a systematic work (*diwan*) from Egypt attributed to the Egyptian scholar, Jamal-ad-din b. Hisham. [1251](#) He treats in it all the rules governing vowel endings, both in general and in detail. He discusses the letters (sounds) and the individual words and sentences. He omits the repetitions found in most chapters of grammar. He called his work *al-Mughni fi l-i'rab*. [1252](#) He indicates all the fine points of the vowel endings in the Qur'an and sets them down accurately in chapters and sections and according to basic norms all of which are very orderly. We have found in (the work) much information attesting to (the author's) great ability and abundant knowledge of grammar. In a way, his approach follows the method of the Mosul grammarians who followed in the footsteps of Ibn Jinni and adopted his technical terminology for (grammatical) instruction. In this way, he has produced a remarkable work that shows his powerful (linguistic) habit and his acquaintance with the subject.

God "gives in addition to the creatures whatever He wishes to give to them."
[1253](#)

The science of lexicography

This science is concerned with explaining the (conventional) meanings of the (words of the) language. This comes about as follows. The habit of the Arabic language, as far as the vowels called *i'rab* by the grammarians are concerned, became corrupted. [1254](#) Rules for protecting the (vowel endings) were developed, as we have stated. However, the (process of) corruption continued on account of the close contact (of the Muslims) with non-Arabs. Eventually, it affected the (conventional) meanings of words. Many Arabic words were no (longer) used in their proper meaning. This was the result of indulgence shown to the incorrect language used by non-Arab speakers of Arabic in their terminologies, in contradiction to the pure Arabic language. It was, therefore, necessary to protect the (conventional) meanings of the (words of the) language with the help of writing and systematic works, because it was to be feared that (otherwise) they might be wiped out and that ignorance of the Qur'an and the traditions would result. [1255](#)

Many leading philologists set out eagerly on this task and dictated systematic works on the subject. The champion in this respect was al-Khalil b. Ahmad al-

Farahidi. [1256](#) He wrote the *Kitab al-'Ayn* on lexicography. In it, he dealt with all (possible) combinations of the letters of the alphabet, that is, with words of two, three, four, and five consonants. (Fiveconsonant words) are the longest letter combinations found in Arabic.

It was possible for al-Khalil to calculate arithmetically the total number of such combinations. This goes as follows. The total number of two-consonant words is the sum of the arithmetical progression from one to twenty-seven. Twentyseven is one letter less than the number of letters in the alphabet. For the first consonant (of the alphabet) is combined with the remaining twenty-seven letters. This results in twenty-seven two-consonant words. Then, the second letter is combined with the remaining twenty-six consonants, then the third and the fourth, and so on, to the twentyseventh consonant, which is combined (only) with the twentyeighth consonant. This results in one two-consonant word. Thus, the number of two-consonant words is the arithmetical progression from one to twenty-seven. The total can be figured out with the help of a well-known arithmetical operation - that is, [1257](#) one adds up the first and last (numbers of the progression) and multiplies the total by one-half of the number (of numbers in the progression). The resulting number is then doubled, because the position of the consonants can be inverted. The position of consonants must be taken into consideration in combining them. The result is the total number of two-consonant words. [1258](#)

The number of three-consonant words is the result of multiplying the number of two-consonant words by the sum of the arithmetical progression from one to twenty-six. For every two-consonant word becomes a three-consonant word through the addition of one consonant. Thus, the twoconsonant words may take the place of one consonant to be combined with each of the remaining consonants of the alphabet, which number twenty-six. Thus, the sum of the arithmetical progression from one to twenty-six is calculated and multiplied by the number of two-consonant words. The result, then, is multiplied by six, which is the possible number of combinations of three consonants. The result is the total number (of words of three consonants that can be made) from the consonants of the alphabet. [1259](#) The same is done with four-consonant and five-consonant words. In this way, the total number of (possible) letter combinations was calculated (by al-Khalil). [1260](#)

Al-Khalil did <not?> arrange the chapters of the book according to the customary sequence of the letters of the alphabet. (Instead,) he used the sequence of the positions (in throat and mouth) in which the various sounds are produced. Thus, he started with the laryngeals. They were followed, successively, by velars, dentals, and labials. Al-Khalil put the weak consonants, which are the (so-called) airy consonants (*alif, w, y*), in the last place. Among the laryngeals, he started with '*ayn*', because it is the (sound produced) farthest (back in the throat). Therefore, his book was called *Kitab al-'Ayn*. The ancient (scholars) did such things when they selected titles for their works. They called them after the first words or phrases that occurred in them.

(Al-Khalil) then made a distinction between (letter combinations) that are not used and those that are. The largest number of (letter combinations) that are not used are among words of four or five consonants. The Arabs rarely use them because of their heaviness. Next come the two-consonant words. They have little circulation. The three-consonant words are the ones used most. Thus, they possess the greatest number of (conventional) meanings, because they are (so much) in circulation.

All this was included by (al-Khalil) in the *Kitab al-'Ayn* and treated very well and exhaustively.

Abu Bakr az-Zubaydi, [1261](#) the writing teacher of Hisham al-Mu'ayyad in Spain in the fourth [tenth] century, abridged the (*Kitab al-'Ayn*) but preserved its complete character. He omitted all the words that are not used. He also omitted many of the examples clarifying words in use. Thus, he produced a very good abridgment for memorizing.

Among eastern scholars, al-Jawhari [1262](#) composed the *Kitab as-Sihah*, which follows the ordinary alphabetical sequence. He started with *hamzah* (*alif*). He arranged the words according to their last letter, since people have mostly to do with the last consonants of words. He made a special chapter (of each last letter), and within each chapter he also proceeded alphabetically by the first (letters) of the words and listed all of them as separate entries to the end. [1263](#) He gave a comprehensive presentation of the (lexicographical facts of the Arabic) language in imitation of the work of al-Khalil.

Among Spanish scholars, Ibn Sidah, of Denia, [1264](#) wrote the *Kitab al-Muhkam*, a similarly comprehensive work following the arrangement of the *Kitab al-'Ayn*. He wrote during the reign of 'Ali b. Mujahid. Ibn Sidah's own contribution was an attempt to give the etymologies and grammatical forms of the words. Thus, his work turned out to be one of the best systematic works (on lexicography). An abridgment of it was written by Muhammad b. Abil-Husayn, [1265](#) a companion of the Hafsid ruler al-Mustansir in Tunis. He changed the (alphabetical) sequence to that of the *Kitab as-Sihah*, in that he considered the last consonants of the words and arranged the entries according to them. The two (works) [1266](#) are thus like real twins. Kura', [1267](#) a leading philologist, wrote the *Kitab al-Munajjad*, Ibn Durayd [1268](#) the *Kitab al-Jamharah*, and Ibn al-Anbari [1269](#) the *Kitab az-Zahir*.

These are the principal works on lexicography, as far as we know. There are other brief works restricted to particular kinds of words. They contain some chapters, or they may contain all of them, but, still, they are obviously not comprehensive, while comprehensiveness is an obvious feature in the works (mentioned), dealing with all (the possible letter) combinations, as one has seen. Another work on lexicography is the one by az-Zamakhshari on metaphoric usage, entitled *Asas al-balaghah*. [1270](#) Az-Zamakhshari explains in it all the words used metaphorically by the Arabs, (and he explains) what meanings are used metaphorically by them. It is a highly useful work.

Furthermore, the Arabs may use a general term for one (particular) meaning, but (for the expression of the same idea) in connection with particular objects, they may employ other words that can be used (in this particular meaning) only with those particular objects. Thus, we have a distinction between (conventional) meaning and usage. This (situation) requires a lexicographical "jurisprudence." It is something difficult to develop. For instance, "white" [1271](#) is used for anything that contains whiteness. However, the whiteness of horses is indicated by the special word *ashhab*, that of men by the word *azhar*, and that of sheep by the word *amlah*. Eventually, the use of the ordinary word for "white" in all these cases came to be (considered) a solecism and deviation from the Arabic language. Ath-Tha'alibi, [1272](#) in particular, wrote in this sense. He composed a monograph on the subject entitled *Fiqh al-lughah* "Jurisprudence of Lexicography." It is the best control a philologist has, in order to keep himself from deviating from (proper) Arabic usage. A knowledge of the primary (conventional) meaning is not enough for (the use of proper) word combinations. It must be attested by (actual) Arabic usage. This (knowledge) is needed most by poets and prose writers, in order to avoid committing frequent solecisms in connection with the (conventional) meanings of words,

whether they are used in individual words or in combinations. (Improper use in this respect) is worse than solecisms in (use of the) vowel endings. Likewise, a recent scholar wrote on homonyms and undertook to give a comprehensive presentation of them. However, he did not fully succeed, though his work contains most of the (material).

There are many brief works on the subject. They are particularly concerned with widespread and much used lexicographical materials. Their purpose is to make it easy for the student to memorize them. For instance, there are the *Alfaz* of Ibn as-Sikkit, [1273](#) the *Fasih* of Tha'lab, [1274](#) and others. Some contain less lexicographical material than others, depending on the different views of their authors as to what is most important for the student to know.

God is "the Creator, the Knowing One." [1275](#)

It [1276](#) should be known that the tradition through which (any particular) lexicographical (usage) is confirmed is a tradition indicating that the Arabs used certain words in certain meanings. It does not indicate that they invented their (conventional meanings). This is impossible and improbable. It is not known (for certain) that any one of them ever did that.

Likewise, the meanings of words cannot be established by analogy, [1277](#) if their usage is not known, although, [1277a](#) for jurists, their usage may be known by virtue of (the existence of) an inclusive (concept) that attests to the applicability of (a wider meaning) to the first (word). [1278](#) (The use of the word) *khamr* "grape wine" for *nabidh* "date wine" is established by its use for "juice of grapes" and by application of the inclusive (concept) of "causing intoxication." (This is so) only because the use of analogy (in this case) is attested by the religious law, which deduces the soundness of (the application of) analogy (in this case) from the (general norms) on which it is based. We do not have anything like it in lexicography. There, only the intellect can be used, which means (relying on) judgment. This is the opinion of most authorities, even though the Judge (al-Baqillani) [1279](#) and Ibn Surayj [1280](#) and others are inclined to (use) analogy in connection with (the meaning of words). However, it is preferable to deny its (applicability). It should not be thought that the establishment of word meanings falls under the category of word definitions. A definition indicates (the meaning of) a given idea by showing that the meaning of an unknown and obscure word is identical with the meaning of a clear and well-known word. Lexicography, on the other hand, affirms that such-and-such a word is used to express such-and-such an idea. The difference here is very clear.

The science of syntax and style and literary criticism [1281](#)

This is a 'science which originated in Islam after Arabic philology and lexicography. It belongs among the philological sciences, because it is concerned with words and the ideas they convey and are intended to indicate. This is as follows:

The thing that the speaker intends to convey to the listener through speech may be a perception (*tasawwur*) regarding individual words which are dependent and on which (something else) depends [1282](#) and of which one leads to the other. These (concepts) are indicated by individual nouns, verbs, and particles. Or, (what the speaker intends to convey) may be the distinction between the things that are dependent and those that depend on them and (the distinction between) tenses. These

(concepts) are indicated by the change of vowel endings and the forms of the words. All this belongs to grammar.

Among the things that are part of the facts and need to be indicated, there still remain the conditions of speakers and agents and the requirements of the situation under which the action takes place.¹²⁸³ This needs to be indicated, because it completes (the information) to be conveyed. If the speaker is able to bring out these (facts), his speech conveys everything that it can possibly convey. If his speech does not have anything of that, it is not real Arabic speech. The Arabic language is vast. The Arabs have a particular expression for each situation, in addition to a perfect use of vowel endings and clarity.

It is known that "Zayd came to me" does not mean the same as "There came to me Zayd." Something mentioned in the first place (such as "Zayd" in the first example) has greater importance in the mind of the speaker. The person who says: "There came to me Zayd," indicates that ¹²⁸⁴ he is more concerned with the coming than with the person who comes. (On the other hand,) the person who says: "Zayd came to me," indicates that he is more concerned with the person than with his coming, which (grammatically) depends on (the person who comes).

The same applies to the indication of the parts of a sentence by relative pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, or determinations appropriate to the situation. It also applies to "emphatic" ¹²⁸⁵ connection in general. For instance, (the three sentences): "Zayd is standing," "Behold, Zayd is standing," and "Behold, Zayd is indeed standing," all mean something different, even if they are alike as far as vowel endings are concerned. The first (sentence), without the emphatic particle, informs a person who has no previous knowledge as to (whether Zayd is standing or not). The second (sentence), with the emphatic particle "behold," informs a person who hesitates (whether he should acknowledge the fact of Zayd's standing or not). And the third (sentence) informs a person who (persists in) denying (the fact of Zayd's standing). Thus, they are all different.¹²⁸⁶

The same applies to a statement such as: "There came to me the man," which is then replaced by the statement: "There came to me *a* man." The use of the form without the article may be intended as an honor (for the man in question) and as an indication that he is a man who has no equal.

Furthermore, a sentence may have the structure of a statement and thus be a sentence that conforms, originally (at least), to something in the outside world. Or, it may have the structure of a command ¹²⁸⁷ and thus be a sentence that has no correspondence in the outside world, as, for example, requests and the different ways they (can be expressed).

Furthermore, the copula between two (parts of a) sentence must be omitted, if the second (part) has an integral place in the sentence structure.¹²⁸⁸ In this way, the (second part) takes the place of an individual apposition and is either attribute, or emphasis,¹²⁸⁹ or substitute ¹²⁹⁰ (attached to the part of the sentence to which it belongs), without copula. Or, if the second (part of the) sentence has no such integral place in the sentence structure, the copula must be used.

Also, the given situation may require either lengthiness or brevity. (The speaker) will express himself accordingly.

Then, an expression may be used other than in its literal meaning. It may be intended to indicate some implication of it. This may apply to an individual word. For instance, in the statement: "Zayd is a lion," no actual lion, but the bravery implicit in lions, is meant and referred to Zayd. This is called metaphorical usage. It

also may be a combination of words intended to express some implication that results from it. The statement: "Zayd has a great deal of ash on his pots," [1291](#) is intended to indicate the implied (qualities) of generosity and hospitality, because a great deal of ash is the result (of generosity and hospitality). Thus, it indicates those (qualities). All these things are meanings in addition to the (original) meaning of the individual word or combination of words. They are forms and conditions that the facts may take and that can be expressed by conditions and forms of speech that have been invented for that purpose, as required by the particular situation in each case.

The discipline called syntax and style (*bayan*) expresses the meaning that the forms and conditions of speech have in various situations. It has been divided into three subdivisions.

The first subdivision has as its subject the investigation of forms and conditions of speech, in order to achieve conformity with all the requirements of a given situation. This is called "the science of rhetoric" (*balaghah*). [1292](#)

The second subdivision has as its subject the investigation of what a word implies or is implied by it—that is, metaphor and metonymy, [1293](#) as we have just stated. This is called "the science of style" (*bayan*).

(Scholars) have added a (third) subdivision, the study of the artistic embellishment of speech. [1294](#) Such embellishment may be achieved through the ornamental use of rhymed prose (*saj'*), which divides (speech) into sections; or through the use of paronomasia (*tajnis*), [1295](#) which establishes a similarity among the words used; or through the use of internal rhyme (*tarsi'*), which cuts down the units of rhythmic speech (into smaller units); or through the use of allusion (*tawriyah*) to the intended meaning by suggesting an even more cryptic idea which is expressed by the same words; [1296](#) or through the use of antithesis (*tibaq*), [1297](#) and similar things. They called this "the science of rhetorical figures" ('ilm al-badi').

Recent scholars have used the name of the second subdivision, *bayan* (syntax and style), for all three subdivisions [1298](#) because the ancient scholars had discussed it first.

The problems of the discipline, then, made their appearance one after the other. Insufficient works on the subject were dictated by Ja'far b. Yahya, [1299](#) al-Jahiz, [1300](#) Qudamah, [1301](#) and others. The problems continued to be perfected one by one. Eventually, as-Sakkaki [1302](#) sifted out the best part of the discipline, refined its problems, and arranged its chapters in the manner mentioned by us at the start. He composed the book entitled *al-Miftah fi n-nahw wa-t-tasrif wa-l-bayan* "On Grammar, Inflection, and Syntax and Style." He made the discipline of *bayan* one of the parts (of the book). Later scholars took the subject over from (as-Sakkaki's) work. They abridged it in authoritative works which are in circulation at this time. That was done, for instance, by as-Sakkaki (himself) in the *Kitab at-Tibyan*, by Ibn Malik [1303](#) in the *Kitab al-Misbah*, and by Jalal-ad-din al-Qazwini [1304](#) in the *Kitab al-Idah* and the *Kitab at-Talkhis*, which is shorter than the *Idah*. Contemporary Easterners are more concerned with commenting on and teaching (the *Miftah*) than any other (work).

In general, the people of the East cultivate this discipline more than the Maghribis. The reason is perhaps that it is a luxury, [1305](#) as far as the linguistic sciences are concerned, and luxury crafts exist (only) where civilization is abundant, and civilization is (today) more abundant in the East than in the West, as we have

mentioned.¹³⁰⁶ Or, we might say (the reason is that) the non-Arabs (Persians) who constitute the majority of the population of the East occupy themselves with the Qur'an commentary of az-Zamakhshari, which is wholly based upon this discipline.¹³⁰⁷

The people of the West chose as their own field the (third) subdivision of this discipline, the science of rhetorical figures ('ilm al-badi'). They made it a part of poetical literature. They invented a detailed (nomenclature of rhetorical) figures ¹³⁰⁸ for it and divided it into many chapters and subdivisions. They thought that they could consider all that part of the Arabic language. However, the reason (why they cultivated the subject) was that they liked to express themselves artistically. (Furthermore,) the science of rhetorical figures is easy to learn, while it was difficult for them to learn rhetoric and style, ¹³⁰⁹ because the theories and ideas of (rhetoric and style) are subtle and intricate. Therefore, they kept away from those two subjects. One of the authors in Ifriqiyah who wrote on rhetorical figures was Ibn Rashiq. ¹³¹⁰ His *Kitab al-'Umdah* is famous. Many of the people of Ifriqiyah and Spain wrote along the lines of (the 'Umdah).

It should be known that the fruit of this discipline is understanding of the inimitability of the Qur'an. ¹³¹¹ The inimitability of (the Qur'an) consists in the fact that the (language of the Qur'an) indicates all the requirements of the situations (referred to), whether they are stated or understood. This is the highest stage of speech. In addition, (the Qur'an) is perfect ¹³¹² in choice of words and excellence of arrangement and combination. This is (its) inimitability, (a quality) that surpasses comprehension. Something of it may be understood by those who have a taste ¹³¹³ for it as the result of their contact with the (Arabic) language and their possession of the habit of it. They may thus understand as much of the inimitability of the Qur'an as their taste permits. Therefore, the Arabs who heard the Qur'an directly from (the Prophet) who brought it (to them) had a better understanding of its (inimitability than later Muslims). They were the champions and arbiters of speech, and they possessed the greatest and best taste (for the language) that anyone could possibly have.

This discipline is needed most by Qur'an commentators. Most ancient commentators disregarded it, until Jar-Allah az-Zamakhshari appeared. ¹³¹⁴ When he wrote his Qur'an commentary, he investigated each verse of the Qur'an according to the rules of this discipline. This brings out, in part, its inimitability. It gives his commentary greater distinction than is possessed by any other commentary. However, he tried to confirm the articles of faith of the (Mu'tazilah) innovators by deriving them from the Qur'an by means of different aspects of rhetoric (*balaghah*). Therefore, many orthodox Muslims have been on their guard against his (commentary), despite his abundant knowledge of rhetoric (*balaghah*). However, there are people who have a good knowledge of the orthodox articles of faith and who have some experience in this discipline. They are able to refute him with his own weapons, or (at least) they know that (his work) contains innovations. They can avoid them, so that no harm is done to their religious beliefs. Such persons do not risk being affected by the innovations and sectarian beliefs. They should study (az-Zamakhshari's commentary), in order to find out about certain (aspects of) the inimitability of the Qur'an.

God guides whomever He wants to guide to "an even road."¹³¹⁵

This science has no object the accidents of which may be studied and thus be affirmed or denied. Philologists consider its purpose identical with its fruit, which is (the acquisition of) a good ability to handle prose and poetry according to the methods and ways of the Arabs. Therefore, they collect and memorize (documents) of Arabic speech that are likely to aid in acquiring the (proper linguistic) habit. (Such documents include) high-class poetry, rhymed prose of an even quality, and (certain) problems of lexicography and grammar, found scattered among (documents of Arabic poetry and prose) and from which the student is, as a rule, able to derive inductively most of the rules of Arabic. In addition, they mention certain of the battle-day narratives of the Arabs, which serve to explain the references to (battle days) occurring in the poems. Likewise, they mention famous pedigrees and general historical information of importance. The purpose of all this is not to leave the students investigating such things in the dark about any (of the documents of) Arabic speech, about any of the (literary) methods used, or about any of the methods of Arab eloquence. Merely memorizing them does not give (a student the proper linguistic) habit, unless he first understands them. Therefore, he must give preference to everything upon which understanding of (Arabic literature) depends.

(Philologists) who wanted to define this discipline said: "Literature is expert knowledge of the poetry and history of the Arabs as well as the possession of some knowledge regarding every science." They meant (knowledge) of the linguistic sciences and the religious sciences, but only the contents (of the latter) that is, the Qur'an and the traditions. No other science has anything to do with Arab speech, save in as much as recent scholars who have occupied themselves with the craft of rhetorical figures ('ilm al-badi') have come to use allusion (*tawriyah*) [1316](#) by means of (references to terms of) scientific terminologies, in their poetry and their straight prose (*tarsil*). [1317](#) Therefore, litterateurs need to know scientific terminologies, in order to be able to understand (such allusions).

We heard our *shaykhs* say in class that the basic principles and pillars of this discipline are four works: the *Adab al-katib* by Ibn Qutaybah, [1318](#) the *Kitab al-Kamil* by al-Mubarrad, [1319](#) the *Kitab al-Bayan wa-t-tabyin* by al-Jahiz [1320](#) and the *Kitab an-Nawadir* by Abu 'Ali al-Qali al-Baghdadi. [1321](#) All other books depend on these four and are derived from them. The works of recent writers on the subject are numerous.

At the beginning of (Islam) singing (music) belonged to this discipline. (Singing) depends on poetry, because it is the setting of poetry to music. [1322](#) Secretaries and outstanding persons in the 'Abbasid dynasty occupied themselves with it, because they were desirous of becoming acquainted with the methods and (literary) disciplines of the Arabs. [1323](#) Its cultivation was no blemish on probity or manliness. The early Hijazi Muslims in Medina and elsewhere, who are models for everybody else to follow, cultivated it. [1324](#) Such a great (scholar) as Judge Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani [1325](#) wrote a book on songs, the *Kitab al-Aghani*. In it, he dealt with the whole of the history, poetry, genealogy, battle days, and ruling dynasties of the Arabs. The basis for the work were one hundred songs which the singers had selected for ar-Rashid. His work is the most complete and comprehensive one there is. Indeed, it constitutes an archive of the Arabs. [1326](#) It is a collection of the *disjecta membra* of all the good things in Arab poetry, history, song, and all the other conditions (of the Arabs). There exists no book comparable to it, as far as we know. It is the ultimate goal to which a litterateur can aspire and where he must stop - as

though he could ever get so far! [1327](#)

Let us now return to the verification of our remarks about the linguistic sciences in general (terms).

God is the guide to that which is correct.

45. *Language is a technical habit.*

It [1328](#) should be known that all languages are habits similar to crafts (techniques). They are habits (located) in the tongue and serve the purpose of expressing ideas. The good or inadequate (character of such expression) depends on the perfection or deficiency of the habit. This does not apply to individual words but to word combinations. A speaker who possesses a perfect (linguistic) habit and is thus able to combine individual words so as to express the ideas he wants to express, and who is able to observe the form of composition that makes his speech conform to the requirements of the situation, is as well qualified as is (humanly) possible to convey to the listener what he wants to convey. This is what is meant by eloquence.

Habits result only from repeated action. [1329](#) An action is done first (once). Thus, it contributes an attribute to the essence. With repetition it becomes a condition, which is an attribute that is not firmly established. After more repetition it becomes a habit, that is, a firmly established attribute.

As long as the habit of the Arabic language existed among the Arabs, an Arab speaker always heard the people of his generation (race) speak (Arabic). He hears their ways of address and how they express what they want to express. He is like a child hearing individual words employed in their proper meanings. [1330](#) He learns them first. [1331](#) Afterwards, he hears word combinations and learns them likewise. He hears something new each moment from every speaker, [1331a](#) and his own practice is constantly repeated, until (use of proper speech) becomes a habit and a firmly established attribute. Thus, (the child) becomes like one of (the Arabs). In this way, (Arab) languages and dialects have passed from generation to generation, and both non-Arabs and children have learned them. [1332](#)

This is (what is) meant by the common saying: "The Arabs have (their) language from nature." [1333](#) That is, they have it from (their own) original habit, and while (others) learned it from them, they themselves did not learn it from anyone else.

The (linguistic) habit of the Mudar became corrupt when they came into contact with non-Arabs. The reason for that corruption was that the generation growing up heard other ways of expressing the things they wanted to express than the Arab (ways). They used them to express what they wanted to express, because there were so many non-Arabs coming into contact with the Arabs. They also heard the ways in which the Arabs expressed themselves. As a result, matters became confused for them. They adopted (ways of expressing themselves) from both sides. Thus, there originated a new habit which was inferior to the first one. This is what is meant by "corruption of the Arabic language." [1334](#)

Therefore, the dialect of the Quraysh was the most correct and purest Arabic dialect, because the Quraysh were on all sides far removed from the lands of the non-Arabs. Next came (the tribes) around the Quraysh, the Thaqif, the Hudhayl, the Khuza'ah, the Banu Kinanah, the Ghatafan, the Banu Asad, and the Banu Tamim. The Rabi'ah, the Lakhm, the Judham, the Ghassan, the Iyad, the Quda'ah, and the

Arabs of the Yemen lived farther away from the Quraysh, and were (variously) neighbors of the Persians, the Byzantines, and the Abyssinians. Because they had contact with non-Arabs, their linguistic habit was not perfect. The Arabic dialects were used by Arab philologists as arguments for (linguistic) soundness or corruption according to the (degree of) remoteness of (the tribes speaking them) from the Quraysh.

And God knows better.

46. *Contemporary Arabic* [1335](#) *is an independent language different from the languages of the Mudar and the Himyar.*

This is as follows. We find that with regard to clear indication of what one wants to express and full expression of meaning, Arabic (as it is spoken today) follows the ways of the Mudar language. The only loss is that of the vowels indicating the distinction between subject and object. Instead, one uses position within the sentence and syntactic combinations (*qara'in*) [1336](#) to indicate certain special meanings one wants to express. However, the clarity and eloquence of the Mudar language are greater and more firmly rooted (than those of present-day Arabic). The words themselves indicate the ideas. What still requires indication are the requirements of a particular situation, called "the spread of the situation." [1337](#) Of necessity, every idea is surrounded by situations peculiar to it. Therefore, it is necessary to indicate those situations in conveying the meaning one wants to convey, because they belong to it as attributes. In all (other) languages, the situations are as a rule indicated by expressions restricted, by convention, to (those situations). But in the Arabic language, they are indicated by the conditions and possibilities of combining words (in a sentence), such as earlier or later position (of words in a sentence), ellipsis, or vowel endings. They are (also) indicated by letters that are not used independently. Hence, the classes of speech in the Arabic language differ according to the different ways of indicating the possibilities, as we have stated before. Therefore, Arabic speech is more concise and uses fewer words and expressions than any other language. This is what was meant in the following remark by Muhammad: "I was given the most comprehensive words, and speech was made short for me." [1338](#)

One may compare the story of Isa b. 'Umar. [1339](#) A grammarian said to him: "I find duplications in Arabic speech. The (three) sentences, 'Zayd is standing,' 'Behold, Zayd is standing,' and 'Behold, Zayd is indeed standing,' all mean the same." Isa replied: "(No! All three) mean something different. The first (sentence) gives information to a person who has no previous knowledge as to whether Zayd is standing (or not). The second (sentence) gives information to a person who has heard about it but denies it. And the third (sentence) gives information to a person who knows it but persists in denying it. Thus, the meaning differs according to the different situations (one wants to express)."

Such eloquence and stylistic (precision) has continued to this day to be a part of Arab custom and method. No attention should be paid to the nonsensical talk of certain professional grammarians who are not capable of understanding the situation correctly and who think that eloquence no longer exists and that the Arabic language is corrupt. They draw this conclusion from the corruption of the vowel endings, the rules for which are their (particular) subject of study. But such a statement is inspired by both partisan attitude and lack of ability. Actually, we find that most Arabic words are still used today in their original meanings. Arabic speech can still today express what one wants to express with different degrees of clarity. In their speeches (the Arabs) still employ the methods and the different branches [1340](#) of the (old language of) prose and poetry. There still exist eloquent speakers at (Arab)

parties and gatherings. There are poets who are gifted in all the ways of the Arabic language. (The existence of) a sound taste and healthy disposition (as far as linguistic matters are concerned) attests to the fact that (the Arabic language is still intact).¹³⁴¹ The only part of the codified language that no longer exists is the *i'rab*, the vowel endings that were used in the language of the Mudar in a uniform and definite manner and that form part of the laws of (the Arabic) language.

Concern ¹³⁴² for the Mudar language was only felt when that language became corrupt through the contact of (Arabs) with non-Arabs, at the time when (the Arabs) gained control of the provinces of the Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and the Maghrib. (At that time) the (Arabic linguistic) habit took on a form different from the one it had had originally. The (Mudar language) was thus transformed into another language. (Now,) the Qur'an was revealed in (the language of the Mudar), and the Prophetic traditions were transmitted in it, and both the Qur'an and the traditions are the basis of Islam. It was feared that, as a result of the disappearance of the language in which they were revealed, they themselves might be forgotten and no longer be understood. Therefore, a systematic treatment of its laws, a presentation of the analogical formations used in it, and the derivation of its rules were needed. (Knowledge of Arabic) thus became a science with subdivisions, chapters, premises, and problems. The scholars who cultivated that science called it grammar and Arabic philology. It became a discipline known by heart and fixed in writing, a ladder leading up to the understanding of the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Prophet.

Perhaps, if we were to concern ourselves with the presentday Arabic language and evolve its laws inductively, we would find other things and possibilities indicating what the vowel endings, which no longer exist, (used to) indicate, things that exist in the (present-day language) and that have their own peculiar rules.¹³⁴³ Perhaps, (certain rules) apply to the endings of (the words of the present-day Arabic language, only) in a manner different from that which existed originally in the language of the Mudar. Languages and (linguistic) habits are not matters of chance.

The relationship of the Mudar language to the Himyarite language was of the same type. Many of the meanings and inflections of the words of the Himyarite language were changed in Mudar usage. This fact is attested by the transmitted material available to us. It is contrary to the opinions of those whose deficient (knowledge) leads them to assume that the Mudar and Himyar languages are one and the same, and who want to interpret the Himyarite language according to the formations and rules of the Mudar language. For instance, certain of these persons assume that the Himyarite word *qayl* "leader" is derived from *qawl* "speaking,"¹³⁴⁴ and so on. This is not correct. The Himyarite language is another language and differs from the Mudar language in most of its (conventional) meanings, inflections, and vowels, (and has) the same relationship (to it) that the Mudar language has to present-day Arabic. The only difference is that the interest in the Mudar language which, we have stated, exists on account of (the connection of that language with) the religious law, caused ¹³⁴⁵ (scholars) to evolve and derive (its rules). There is nothing nowadays to move us to do the same (for presentday Arabic).

A characteristic feature of the language of present-day Arab (Bedouins), wherever they may live, is the pronunciation of *q*. They do not pronounce it as the urban population pronounces it and as it is indicated in works on Arabic philology, namely, where the hindmost part of the tongue meets the soft palate above it.

Neither ¹³⁴⁶ is it pronounced as *k* is pronounced, even though *k* is articulated in a place below that where *q* is articulated in the vicinity of the soft palate, as it is (when

properly articulated). It is pronounced somewhere between *k* [1347](#) and *q*. This is the case with all Arab Bedouins, wherever they are, in the West or the East. It has eventually become their distinguishing mark among the nations and races. It is a characteristic of theirs that no one else shares with them. This goes so far that those who want to Arabicize themselves and to affiliate themselves with the Arabs imitate the Arab pronunciation of (*q*). (Arabs) think that a pure Arab can be distinguished from Arabicized and sedentary people by this pronunciation of *q*. It is thus obvious that this is the (pronunciation of *q* found in) the Mudar language. The largest and leading group of Arab Bedouins who still live in the East and the West consists of descendants of Mansur b. 'Ikrimah b. Khasafah b. Qays b. 'Aylan [1348](#) through Sulaym b. Mansur and through the Banu 'Amir b. Sa'sa'ah b. Mu'awiyah b. Bakr b. Hawazin b. Mansur. Nowa-days, they constitute the most numerous and powerful nation of the inhabited part of the earth. They are descendants of the Mudar. [1349](#) They and all the other (Arab Bedouins) of the Banu Kahlan [1350](#) are the model for the pronunciation of *q* mentioned. It was not invented by these Arab Bedouins but inherited by them over the generations. This makes it obvious that it was the pronunciation of the ancient Mudar. Perhaps it is the very pronunciation that was used by the Prophet. 'Alid jurists made that claim. They thought that he who reads in the first *surah* the words "the straight path" (*as-sirata l-mustaqima*) [1351](#) without pronouncing the *q* (in *al-mustaqim*) as is done by (present-day) Arab Bedouins, commits an error, and his prayer is not valid.

I do not know how this (differentiation in the pronunciation of *q*) came about. The language of the urban population was not invented by the urban population itself, either. It was transmitted to them from their ancestors, most of whom belonged to the Mudar, when they settled in the cities at the time of the (Muslim) conquest and later. The Arab Bedouins did not invent (their pronunciation of *q*), either. However, they had less contact with the non-Arab urban population. Therefore, the linguistic features found in their (speech) can preferably be assumed to belong to the language of their ancestors. In addition, all Arab Bedouins in the East and the West agree upon that (pronunciation of *q*). It is the peculiar characteristic that distinguishes the Arabs from halfbreeds and sedentary people.

It [1352](#) is obvious that the pronunciation of *q* as practiced by (present-day) Arab Bedouins is the same as that of the ancient speakers (of Arabic). The place (where the sound) of *q* may be produced is wide, ranging from the soft palate to the place next to where *k* is articulated. The velar pronunciation is the urban one. The pronunciation close to *k* is that of (present-day) Arab Bedouins.

This fact refutes the statement of the 'Alids that failure to pronounce the *q* in the first *surah* (as it is pronounced by present-day Bedouins) invalidates one's prayer. All the jurists of the (great) cities hold the contrary opinion. It is improbable that all of them would have overlooked this (point). The matter is to be explained as we have stated it.

We do say (however) that the Arab Bedouins' pronunciation (of *q*) is preferable and more proper, because, as we have mentioned before, its continuity among them shows that it was the pronunciation of their early Arab-Bedouin ancestors and the pronunciation of the Prophet. The fact that they assimilate *q* to *k* (in pronunciation) because of the proximity of the places where the two sounds are articulated, also makes this (assumption) appear preferable. If it were pronounced far back, as a velar, as is done by the urban population, it would not be close to *k* in its place of articulation and would not be assimilated (to it).

Arab philologists have mentioned this *q* which is close to *k*, as pronounced by present-day Arab Bedouins. They consider it a sound intermediary between *q* and

k, and an independent sound (phoneme). This is improbable. It is obvious that it is a *q* pronounced at the end. of the wide range of articulation available for *q*, as we have stated. The (philologists) then openly denounced (that *q*) as an ugly, un-Arabic sound, as if they did not recognize that (the way in which it was pronounced) was the pronunciation of the early Arabs. As we have mentioned, it belonged to (Arab) linguistic tradition, because (the Arabs) inherited it from their ancestors, generation after generation, and it was their particular symbol. That is proof that (the way in which it is pronounced) was the pronunciation of the early Arabs and the pronunciation of the Prophet, as has all been mentioned before.

There is a theory that *q* as pronounced by the urban population does not belong to the (original) *q*-sound, but is the result of their contact with non-Arabs. They pronounce it as. they do, but it is not an Arabic sound. However, our afore-mentioned statement that it is (all) one sound with a wide (range of) articulation is more appropriate.

This should be understood. God is the clear guide.

47. *The language of the sedentary and urban population is an independent language different from the language of the Mudar.*

It should be known that the usual form of address used among the urban and sedentary population is not the old Mudar language nor the language of the (present-day) Arab Bedouins. It is another independent language, remote from the language of the Mudar and from the language of presentday Arab Bedouins. It is more remote from the former (than from the latter).

It is obvious that it is an independent language by itself. The fact is attested by the changes it shows, which grammatical scholarship [1353](#) considers solecisms. Moreover, it is different in the various cities depending on the differences in terminologies used by their (inhabitants). [1354](#) The language of the inhabitants of the East differs somewhat from that of the inhabitants of the West. The same applies to the relationship of the language of the Spaniards to either of them. All these people are able to express in their own language whatever they want to express, and to explain their ideas. That is what languages and dialects are for. Loss of the vowel endings does not disturb them, as we have stated in connection with the language of present-day Arab (Bedouins). [1355](#)

The fact that (the language spoken in present-day cities) is more remote from the ancient (Arabic) language than the language of present-day Arab Bedouins is conditioned by the fact that remoteness from the (ancient Arabic) language is due to contact with non-Arabs. More contact with non-Arabs means greater remoteness from the original language. For, as we have stated, a (linguistic) habit results only from instruction, and the (new) habit is a mixture of the ancient (linguistic) habit of the Arabs and the later (acquired linguistic) habit of the non-Arabs. [1356](#) The longer people listen to non-Arab (speech) and the longer they are brought up in such a condition, the more remote from the ancient habit do they become.

In this connection, one may compare the cities of Ifriqiyah, the Maghrib, Spain, and the East. In Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib, the Arabs had contact with the non-Arab Berbers who constitute the bulk of the population ('umran) of (those countries). Hardly any city or group was without (Berbers). Therefore, the non-Arab (element) there gained preponderance over the language of the Arabs. Thus, there originated another, mixed language in which the non-Arab (element) was preponderant, for the reasons mentioned. (The language spoken there) is more remote from the ancient language (than other dialects).

Likewise, in the East, the Arabs gained superiority over the Persian and Turkish nations there. They had contact with them. These languages circulated among them in (the speech of) farmers, peasants, and captives whom they used as servants, wet nurses, and foster mothers. Thus, their (linguistic) habit was corrupted. With that, their language (also was corrupted, and) eventually it came to be another language.

The same (happened to) the Spaniards in their relations with the non-Arab Galicians and European Christians. The entire urban population of those zones came to speak another language, one peculiar to them and different from the language of the Mudar. It also showed (dialectical) differences within itself, as we are going to

mention.[1357](#) In a way, it was another language (and no longer Arabic), in as much as the habit of it became firmly rooted among those people (in Spain).

"God creates whatever He wishes."[1358](#)

48. *Instruction in the Mudar language.*

It should be known that the habit of the Mudar language has disappeared and become corrupted at this time. All Arab Bedouins speak a language that differs from the Mudar language in which the Qur'an was revealed. It has become another language through the admixture of non-Arab elements, as we have stated before.

[1359](#)

However, since languages are habits, as mentioned before, [1360](#) it is possible to learn them like any other habit. The [1361](#) obvious method of instruction for those who desire to obtain the habit of the ancient (Mudar) language is to acquire expert [1362](#) knowledge of the linguistic documents (written) in it, such as the Qur'an, the traditions, the speeches in rhymed prose and verse of the ancients and of outstanding Arabs, as well as the statements of (early) men of mixed Arab and non-Arab parentage (*muwallad*) in all disciplines. Eventually, the student obtains expert knowledge of a great amount of such poetical and prose material. As a result, he is like a person who grew up among the (old speakers of Arabic) and learned from them how to express what he wants to express. [1363](#)

After that, he may try to express his own thoughts with the expressions and in the style they would have used and to follow their ways and word arrangement, of which he has, by now, an expert knowledge. His expert and practical use (of the material) gives him the habit of (the old language). With the increase in (his knowledge and practical use of the material, [1364](#) his habit) becomes more firmly rooted and stronger.

In addition, the student needs a healthy disposition and a good understanding of the aspirations and ways of the Arabs in (their) word combinations and in (their) efforts that those word combinations should conform to the requirements of the given situation. [1365](#) Taste attests to the fact that (these things are needed by the student), for it originates as the result of the (existence of the proper linguistic) [1366](#) habit and of a healthy disposition, as we shall mention later on. The more the student knows by heart and the more he uses (the material), the better will his utterances in prose and verse turn out to be. The (student) who has obtained these (linguistic) habits knows the Mudar language. He has a critical understanding of what constitutes good style (eloquence) in it.

This is how the (Mudar language) must be studied. God "guides whomever He wants to guide." [1367](#)

49. *The habit of the (Mudar) language is different from Arabic philology and can dispense with it in (the process of) instruction.*

The [1368](#) reason for this is that Arabic philology is merely a knowledge of the rules and forms of this habit. It is the knowledge of a quality, [1369](#) and not a quality itself. It is not the habit itself. Rather, it is comparable to a person who has a theoretical knowledge of a craft but does not know how to exercise it in practice. For instance, someone may know all about tailoring but not possess the habit of it. Such a person might explain some of the aspects of tailoring as follows: One introduces the thread into the eye of the needle; one inserts the needle into two pieces of material held together; one brings it out on the other side at such-and-such a distance; returns it to (the side) where he started; brings it out in front of the place where it first went in, so that there is some room between the first two holes. In this way, the person might go on and describe the whole operation and give a description of how to use bands, to quilt, and to cut openings, [1370](#) along with all the other aspects and operations of tailoring. But if he were challenged to do something like the (things he talks about) with his own hands, he would in no way be able to.

Likewise, a person who knows about carpentry might be asked about splitting wood. [1371](#) He would say: One places the saw on top of a piece of wood; one person holds one end of the saw, and another person opposite him the other; the two alternately push and pull, and the sharp teeth of the saw cut the part of the piece of wood over which they pass back and forth, until one gets through the bottom of the wood. If such a person were challenged actually to do it, or some part of it, he might not be able to.

The same applies to the relationship between knowledge of the rules governing the vowel endings and the (linguistic) habit itself. Knowledge of the rules is a knowledge of how to use them, but it is not the actual use of them. Therefore, we find that many outstanding grammarians and skilled Arab philologists who have a comprehensive knowledge of those rules make many mistakes and commit many solecisms when they are asked to write one or two lines to a colleague or friend, or to write a complaint concerning some injustice or anything else they might want to say. They cannot put (the words) together and express what they want to say in a way that corresponds to the ways of the Arabic language.

Likewise, we find many people who have a good (linguistic) habit and a good (ability to express themselves in) both prose and poetry, but cannot distinguish between the vowel endings of subject and object, or nominative and genitive, and know nothing about the rules of Arabic philology. This shows that the (linguistic) habit is different from Arabic philology and can completely dispense with it.

We find that some scholars who are skilled in the vowel endings have a good knowledge of how it is with the (linguistic) habit. This, however, is rare and a matter of chance. It happens mostly to those (students) who have close contact with the *Book of Sibawayh*. [1372](#) For Sibawayh did not restrict himself to the rules governing the vowel endings, but filled his work with Arab proverbs and evidential Arab verses [1373](#) and expressions. Thus, his work contains a good deal of (the

things that go with) teaching the (linguistic habit). Therefore, we find that the (students) who apply themselves diligently to (*Sibawayh's Book*) and come to know it, learn a good deal of Arab speech (from it). Where, and according to what arrangement, (Arab speech) is properly used becomes impressed in the (student's) memory and makes him aware of the importance of the (linguistic) habit, with the result that he is taught the habit in its entirety. Therefore, (*Sibawayh's Book*) is more instructive (than any other work).[1374](#) (However,) some of the (students) who have contact with the *Book of Sibawayh* fail to realize this. Thus, they learn philology as a craft but do not obtain a (linguistic) habit.

Students who have close contact with the books of recent scholars that have nothing of the sort but deal only with grammatical rules and contain no Arab poems or (documents of) Arab speech, for this very reason are rarely conscious of (linguistic) habit or aware of its importance. One finds that they think they have gotten somewhere in knowledge of the Arabic language. In fact, they are farther from it than anyone else.

The Arabic philologists and teachers of Arabic in Spain are closer to acquiring and teaching the (linguistic) habit than others. They use evidential Arab verses and proverbs in this connection and investigate a good deal of (Arabic) word combinations in the classroom. Thus, a good deal of (linguistic) habit comes to the beginners early in (their) instruction. (Their) souls are impressed by it and are prepared to obtain and accept it.

Other people, such as the inhabitants of the Maghrib and Ifriqiyah and others, treated Arabic philology like any other research discipline. They did not tolerate investigations of the word combinations of Arab speech. They merely provided an evidential verse with the ending vowels, or decided in favor of one rule (against another), in accordance with theoretical requirements, and not in accordance with the usage and word combinations of the (Arabic) language. With them, [1375](#) Arabic philology thus came to be, in a way, one of the intellectual norms of logic and dialectics and (thereby) remote from the ways and habit of language.

Arabic philologists in these cities and their adjacent regions [1376](#) thus became totally estranged from the (linguistic) habit, and it was as if they had not studied the Arabic language (at all). [1377](#) The only reason was their aversion to investigating the evidential verses and word combinations and to making a discerning study of the methods of the (Arabic) language, as well as their disregard for the (necessity of) constant practice of those things by the student. In fact, (to investigate these things) is the best way to teach the habit of the (Arabic) language. The (grammatical) rules are merely means for purposes of instruction. However, (scholars) employed them as they were not intended to be employed, and caused them to become a purely scholarly discipline.[1378](#) (Thus,) they were deprived of their (real) fruit.

Our remarks in this chapter show that the habit of the Arabic language can be obtained only through expert knowledge of the (documents of) Arab speech. Thereby, the imagination of (the student) will eventually have a picture of the loom on which the Arabs wove their word combinations, so that he can use it himself. Thus, he achieves the position of one who grew up with them and had close personal contact with the ways they expressed themselves in their speech and who, thus, eventually obtains the firm habit of expressing what he wants to express in the manner in which they would have said it.[1379](#)

God determines all affairs.

50. *The interpretation and real meaning of the word "taste" according to the technical terminology of literary critics. An explanation of why Arabicized non-Arabs as a rule do not have it.*

It should be known that the word "taste" is in current use among those who are concerned with the various branches of literary criticism (*bayan*). It means the tongue's possession of the habit of eloquence. What eloquence is [1380](#) was explained above. It is the conformity of speech to the meaning (intended), in every aspect, (and this is achieved) by means of certain qualities that give this (conformity) to the word combinations. An eloquent speaker of the Arabic language chooses the form (of expression) that affords such (conformity) according to the methods and ways of Arab address. He arranges (his) speech along such lines so far as he is able. When he does this constantly in his use of Arabic speech, he gets the habit of arranging (his) speech along those lines. (The use of proper) word combinations becomes a simple matter for him. In this respect he hardly ever swerves from the way of Arab eloquence. If he hears a word combination that is not along those lines, he spits it out, and his ear recoils from it upon the slightest reflection. Indeed, no reflection whatever (is needed, for his reaction is) the consequence of the (linguistic) habit he has obtained.

Habits [1381](#) that are firmly established and rooted in their proper places appear to be natural and innate in those places. Therefore, many ignorant people who are not acquainted with the importance of habits, think that the correct use of vowel endings and the proper eloquence of Arabs in their language are natural things. They say that "the Arabs speak (correct Arabic) by nature." [1382](#) This is not so. (Correct Arabic speech) is a linguistic habit of (proper) speech arrangement that has become firmly established and rooted (in speakers of Arabic), so that, superficially, it appears to be something natural and innate. However, as mentioned before, [1383](#) this habit results from the constant practice of Arabic speech and from repeated listening to it and from understanding the peculiar qualities of its word combinations. It is not obtained through knowledge of the scientific rules evolved by literary critics. [1384](#) Those rules merely afford a knowledge of the (Arabic) language. They do not give (a person) possession of the actual habit in its proper place. This was mentioned before.

(Now,) if this is established, (we may say that it is) the tongue's habit of eloquence that guides an eloquent person toward the various aspects of (word) arrangement and toward use of the correct combinations (of words) corresponding to the word combinations and arrangement used by Arabs when they speak Arabic. When a person who possesses the (Arabic linguistic) habit attempts to deviate from the specific ways and the word combinations peculiar (to Arabic speech), he is not able to do so. His tongue will not go along with him, because it is not used to (improper speech), and its firmly rooted habit will not let it use it. Should any (form of) speech that deviates from the method of the Arabs and the eloquence they use in arranging their speech occur to him, he would avoid it, spit it out, and know that it does not belong to the Arabic speech that he has assiduously practiced. He may

often be unable to support his attitude by arguments, as the people who know the grammatical and stylistic rules can do. But such is a matter of argumentation with the help of inductively derived rules, whereas (correct use of the language) is something intuitive,¹³⁸⁵ resulting from the constant practice of Arabic speech until such time as (the person who practices it) comes to be like one of (the Arabs).

For comparison, let us assume an Arab child who grows up and is reared among Arab Bedouins.¹³⁸⁶ He learns their language and has a good knowledge of the vowel endings and of eloquent (Arabic) expression. He masters (all) that completely, but he does not have any knowledge whatever of grammatical rules. His (correctness and eloquence of speech) is purely the result of the linguistic habit he has obtained. In the same way, the (linguistic) habit may be acquired by those who live after the time of the (ancient) Arab Bedouins, with the help of expert knowledge of, and constant occupation with, (the documents of) their speech, their poems, and addresses. This will eventually give them the (linguistic) habit and make them like persons who grew up and were reared among them. The (grammatical) rules cannot do that.

This habit, if firmly rooted and established, is metaphorically called "taste," a technical term of literary criticism. "Taste" is (conventionally) used for the sensation caused by food. But, since the (linguistic) habit is located in the tongue, which is the seat of speech as it is the seat of the sensation caused by food, the name of "taste" is metaphorically used for it. Furthermore, it is something intuitively observed by the tongue, just as food is something sensually perceived by it. Therefore, it is called "taste."

If this is clear, it will make one realize that non-Arabs, such as Persians, Byzantines, and Turks in the East, and Berbers in the West, who are strangers to the Arabic language and adopt it and are forced to speak it as the result of contact with the Arabs, do not possess such taste. They have too small a share in the (linguistic) habit the significance of which we have established. They formerly had another linguistic habit - their own language - and part of their lives had gone by (before they got to know Arabic). Now, the most they can do is to occupy themselves with the individual words and word combinations in current use in the conversation of the (Muslim) urban population in their midst and which they are forced to use.

The (ancient Arabic linguistic) habit is lost to the urban population, and they are strangers to it, as mentioned before.¹³⁸⁷ They have another linguistic habit, which is not the desired linguistic habit (of the Arabs). Those who know the (Arabic linguistic) habit (merely) from rules codified in books are in no way in the possession of (that) habit. They merely know the laws governing it, as one knows (now after our preceding discussion). The (linguistic) habit can be obtained only through constant practice, becoming accustomed to Arab speech, and repeatedly (using and listening to) it.

One may hear it said that Sibawayh, al-Farisi, az-Zamakhshari, and other authorities on Arab speech were non-Arabs and yet possessed the (Arab linguistic) habit.¹³⁸⁸ Then one should realize that these people one hears about were non-Arab only by descent. They grew up and were reared among Arabs who possessed the (Arabic linguistic) habit, or among people who had learned it from them. Thus, they were able to master (Arabic) speech to a degree that cannot be surpassed. In a way, in their early childhoods they were in the position of Arab children who grow up among Arab Bedouins and thus achieve a knowledge of all the finesse of the language and become speakers of (pure) Arabic.¹³⁸⁹ Although these (scholars) were non-Arab by descent, they were not non-Arabs as far as language and speech are concerned, because they lived in a time when Islam was in its prime and the Arabic