

# FIRST PREFATORY DISCUSSION

HUMAN<sup>1</sup>-SOCIAL ORGANIZATION is something necessary. The philosophers expressed this fact by saying: "Man is `political' by nature."<sup>2</sup> That is, he cannot do without the social organization for which the philosophers use the technical term "town" (*polis*).

This is what civilization means. (The necessary character of human social organization or civilization) is explained by the fact that God created and fashioned man in a form that can live and subsist only with the help of food. He guided man to a natural desire for food and instilled in him the power that enables him to obtain it. However, the power of the individual human being is not sufficient for him to obtain (the food) he needs, and does not provide him with as much food as he requires to live. Even if we assume an absolute minimum of food-that is, food enough for one day, (a little) wheat, for instance-that amount of food could be obtained only after much preparation such as grinding, kneading, and baking. Each of these three operations requires utensils and tools that can be provided only with the help of several crafts, such as the crafts of the blacksmith, the carpenter, and the potter.

Assuming that a man could eat unprepared grain, an even greater number of operations would be necessary in order to obtain the grain: sowing and reaping, and threshing to separate it from the husks of the ear. Each of these operations requires a number of tools and many more crafts than those just mentioned. It is beyond the power of one man alone to do all that, or (even) part of it, by himself. Thus, he cannot do without a combination of many powers from among his fellow beings, if he is to obtain food for himself and for them. Through cooperation, the needs of a number of persons, many times greater than their own (number), can be satisfied.

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

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

The power of one individual human being cannot withstand the power of any one dumb animal, especially not the power of the predatory animals. Man is generally unable to defend himself against them by himself. Nor is his (unaided) power sufficient to make use of the existing instruments of defense, because there are so many of them and they require so many crafts and (additional) things. It is absolutely

necessary for man to have the co-operation of his fellow men. As long as there is no such co-operation, he cannot obtain any food or nourishment, and life cannot materialize for him, because God fashioned him so that he must have food if he is to live. Nor, lacking weapons, can he defend himself. Thus, he falls prey to animals and dies much before his time. Under such circumstances, the human species would vanish. When, however, mutual co-operation exists, man obtains food for his nourishment and weapons for his defense. God's wise plan that man(kind) should subsist and the human species be preserved will be fulfilled.

Consequently, social organization is necessary to the human species. Without it, the existence of human beings would be incomplete. God's desire to settle the world with human beings and to leave them as His representatives on earth<sup>4</sup> would not materialize. This is the meaning of civilization, the object of the science under discussion.

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

God, in His grace, gives success.

When<sup>6</sup> mankind has achieved social organization, as we have stated, and when civilization in the world has thus become a fact, people need someone to exercise a restraining influence and keep them apart, for aggressiveness and injustice are in the animal nature of man. The weapons made for the defense of human beings against the aggressiveness of dumb animals do not suffice against the aggressiveness of man to man, because all of them possess those weapons. Thus, something else is needed for defense against the aggressiveness of human beings toward each other. It could not come from outside, because all the other animals fall short of human perceptions and inspiration. The person who exercises a restraining influence, therefore, must be one of themselves. He must dominate them and have power and authority over them, so that no one of them will be able to attack another. This is the meaning of royal authority.

It has thus become clear that royal authority is a natural quality of man which is absolutely necessary to mankind. The philosophers mention that it also exists among certain dumb animals, such as the bees and the locusts<sup>7</sup>. One discerns among them the existence of authority and obedience to a leader. They follow the one of them who is distinguished as their leader by his natural characteristics and body.

However, outside of human beings, these things exist as the result of natural disposition and divine guidance, and not as the result of an ability to think or to administrate. "He gave everything its natural characteristics, and then guided it."<sup>8</sup>

The philosophers go further. They attempt to give logical proof of the existence of prophecy and to show that prophecy is a natural quality of man. In this connection, they carry the argument to its ultimate consequences and say that human beings absolutely require some authority to exercise a restraining influence. They go on to say that such restraining influence exists through the religious law (that has been) ordained by God and revealed to mankind by a human being. (This human being) is distinguished from the rest of mankind by special qualities of divine

guidance that God gave him, in order that he might find the others submissive to him and ready to accept what he says. Eventually, the existence of a (restraining) authority among them and over them becomes a fact that is accepted without the slightest disapproval or dissent.

This proposition of the philosophers is not logical, as one can see. Existence and human life can materialize without (the existence of prophecy) through injunctions a person in authority may devise on his own or with the help of a group feeling that enables him to force the others to follow him wherever he wants to go. People who have a (divinely revealed) book and who follow the prophets are few in number in comparison with (all) the Magians<sup>9</sup>—who have no (divinely revealed) book. The latter constitute the majority of the world's inhabitants. Still, they (too) have possessed dynasties and monuments, not to mention life itself. They still possess these things at this time in the intemperate zones to the north and the south. This is in contrast<sup>10</sup>—with human life in the state of anarchy, with no one to exercise a restraining influence. That would be impossible.

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

God gives success and guidance.