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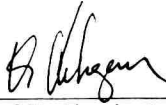
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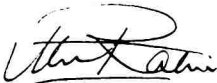
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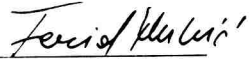
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THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC  
THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)

CAUSALITY IN HISTORY:  
IBN KHALDUN'S AND HEGEL'S  
TRANSFORMATION OF ARISTOTELIAN CAUSES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
ISLAMIC THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR  
THE DEGREE OF THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## ABSTRACT

There have been several attempts to identify the 'four causes' of history in Ibn Khaldun and Hegel. These attempts have been inspired by the presupposition that both Ibn Khaldun and Hegel are basically Aristotelian in their outlook, and that Aristotle's four causes, which, for him, pertained to physics and metaphysics, were simply extended to the domain of history by Ibn Khaldun and Hegel.

However, it is the main thesis of this study that Ibn Khaldun's and Hegel's approaches to causality cannot be reduced to a mechanical application of Aristotelian doctrine and that in developing their philosophies of history, both Ibn Khaldun and Hegel transformed the Aristotelian doctrine of the four basic causes. Their transformations of this doctrine were so profound that it is an oversimplification and a distortion to simply impose the Aristotelian scheme on their systems.

In fact, Aristotle never applied his doctrine of the four causes in the domain of history, whereas Ibn Khaldun and Hegel profoundly apply their conception of causality to the domain of history. Besides, unlike Ibn Khaldun and Hegel, Aristotle did not have a theological commitment to a personal willing God, and this has serious implications. The doctrine of four causes when applied to history, and when presupposing a personal effective God, will necessarily undergo important modifications and transformations. Thus, it will be shown in this study how the theological commitments of these two thinkers and the very fact that they were applying the doctrine of causes to the flux of history led them to develop a kind of flexible, dynamic, dialectical, context-related notions that are quite distant from the Aristotelian original scheme.

The difficulties faced by Aristotelizing commentators in their facile reductionist approaches will be shown to stem from the fact that in applying the doctrine of the four causes to history, both Ibn Khaldun and Hegel made substantial alterations of the very nature of the four causes. Their modifications can be said to be influenced by their respective theologies as well. In Ibn Khaldun, his commitment to the sovereign will of God and the caution regarding independent causes led to definite modifications of the Aristotelian doctrine. In Hegel, the Christian deification of man and humanization of God led to interesting modifications as well. Thus in transferring the purely physical and metaphysical doctrine of the four causes of Aristotle into the domain of a theologically conceived history substantial transformations occurred.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As Ibn Khaldun says, "the capital of knowledge that an individual scholar has to offer is small. Admission (of one's shortcomings) saves from censure". Though not a scholar yet, I have tried to do my best. While all shortcomings in this work are completely my own responsibility, the following people have greatly contributed to the accomplishment of this difficult task. I therefore take the pleasure in mentioning their names.

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## INTRODUCTION

Philosophy of history has recently been divided into two: speculative (or metaphysical) and critical (or analytical).<sup>1</sup> The central question of speculative philosophy of history is whether history as a whole has any meaning, whereas the chief task of critical philosophy of history is to clarify and analyze the idea of history, and as such it raises questions about historical inquiry rather than about the historical process. As a critique of historical knowledge, it deals with problems posed by fundamental concepts which make up the structure of the inquiries historians pursue, such as understanding, objectivity, causal connection, and narrative. Critical philosophy of history is a critical inquiry into the character of historical thinking, an analysis of the procedures of the historian and a comparison of them with those followed in other disciplines, particularly in natural sciences. Thus critical philosophers of history are essentially logicians, methodologists, or epistemologists.

Speculative philosophy of history, on the other hand, attempts to arrive at a metaphysics, or metaphysical interpretation of history. The great system builders have been engaged in metaphysics in the sense that their goal was to set forth the meaning of history as one aspect of the whole nature of things. Thus speculative philosophers of history have sought to discover the meaning and the purpose of the whole historical process, to go beyond actual happenings to the plan which lay behind them, to reveal the underlying plot of history and to write such an account of the detailed course of historical events that its 'true' significance and 'essential' rationality are brought out.

In this study we face primarily two problems:

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, W. H. Walsh, *An Introduction to Philosophy of History* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1992), Chapter I; and William H. Dray, *Philosophy of History* (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1993), 1-5.



1) One comes from critical philosophy of history and belongs to the field of epistemology, and thus poses a question before us: "is historical knowledge possible?"

2) The other is brought forth by speculative philosophy of history and belongs to the field of metaphysics, posing thus the question: "is history intelligible (or rational)?"

Since this distinction concerning a historical inquiry is only a recent development and has not yet been adequately dealt with, let alone the problem of justifying such a distinction,<sup>2</sup> this study will take the concept of philosophy of history in a wider sense to hold 'critical' and 'speculative' philosophies of history as an integral part of philosophy of history. Moreover, our study is an attempt to capture Ibn Khaldunian and Hegelian philosophies of history, and neither of them maintains an explicit distinction between the critical and speculative philosophies of history.

Having introduced briefly the concept of philosophy of history and pointed out its problem in general, we can now present the problem studied in this dissertation.

### 1. The Problem

There have been several important attempts to identify the 'four causes' of history in Ibn Khaldun and Hegel. These attempts have been inspired by the presupposition that both Ibn Khaldun and Hegel are basically Aristotelian in their basic outlook, and that Aristotle's four causes, which, for him, pertained to physics and metaphysics, were simply extended to the domain of history by Ibn Khaldun and Hegel.

However, it is the main thesis of this study that Ibn Khaldun's and Hegel's approaches to causality cannot be reduced to a mechanical application of Aristotelian

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<sup>2</sup> For some problems associated with this distinction, see, for instance, George Dennis O'Brien, "Does Hegel Have a Philosophy of History?", *Hegel*, ed. Michael Inwood (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 174-76.

doctrine and that in developing their philosophies of history, both Ibn Khaldun and Hegel transformed the Aristotelian doctrine of the four basic causes. Their transformations of this doctrine were so profound that it is an oversimplification and a distortion to simply impose the Aristotelian scheme on their systems. Moreover, the nature of, and relationship among, Aristotle's four causes are not devoid of difficulties, and reducing them to a simple scheme is already problematic. Of course, when such a problematic simple scheme gets imposed on Ibn Khaldun and Hegel, the problem is compounded.

In fact, as this study will show, it is possible to generate a variety of seemingly conflicting mappings of correspondences between Aristotle's causes and their alleged Khaldunian equivalents. Such variety is shown to be the direct result of trying to force Ibn Khaldun's rich and empirical approach into a simplified conceptual notation. Likewise, it is possible to generate a variety of seemingly conflicting mappings of correspondences between Aristotle's causes and their alleged Hegelian equivalents just as happens in the Khaldunian case. Again, as in the case of Ibn Khaldun, such variety is shown to be the direct result of trying to force Hegel's complex dialectical teachings into a simplified conceptual notation.

As a matter of fact, Aristotle never applied his doctrine of the four causes in the domain of history, whereas Ibn Khaldun and Hegel profoundly apply their conception of causality to the domain of history. Besides, unlike Ibn Khaldun and Hegel, Aristotle did not have a theological commitment to a personal willing God, and this has serious implications. The doctrine of four causes when applied to history, and when presupposing a personal effective God, will necessarily undergo important modifications and transformations. It is these changes that are not taken seriously by some commentators. It will be shown in this study how the theological commitments of these two thinkers and the very fact that they were applying the doctrine of causes

to the flux of history led them to develop a kind of flexible, dynamic, dialectical, context-related notions that are quite distant from the Aristotelian original scheme. It will be shown that it is precisely the difference between the static and dynamic conceptions of causes that has led the commentators who are keen on the strict mapping to waver between various options, and to settle matters at the clear cost of bending the texts and arguments before them.

The difficulties faced by Aristotelizing commentators in their facile reductionist approaches will be shown to stem from the fact that in applying the doctrine of the four causes to history, both Ibn Khaldun and Hegel made substantial alterations of the very nature of the four causes. Their modifications can be said to be influenced by their respective theologies as well. In Ibn Khaldun, his commitment to the sovereign will of God and the caution regarding independent causes led to definite modifications of the Aristotelian doctrine. In Hegel, the Christian deification of man and humanization of God led to interesting modifications as well. Thus in transferring the purely physical and metaphysical doctrine of the four causes of Aristotle into the domain of a theologically conceived history substantial transformations occurred.

Nevertheless, we should note that though we reject the labeling and imposition of the Aristotelian tag on our thinkers, Ibn Khaldun and Hegel, I do not think that it is wise to substitute other tags. For example, it would not help matters any more if we just impose the Ash'arite tag on Ibn Khaldun, because, as we will see in our study, that too leads to unfortunate distortions. The best that we can do with great thinkers like Ibn Khaldun and Hegel is to respect them as independent philosophers on their own right, and to see that they were great synthesizers of a variety of strands. Their own visions are not just the summation of the parts, but rather to rise to the level of original thought. Thus our study shall conclude with an emphasis on the lesson learned: it is not appropriate to impose pre-conceived schemes, even if they come

from great philosophers such as Aristotle, on such thinkers as Ibn Khaldun and Hegel. A more fruitful approach consists in appreciating their work for their own originality to deal with the puzzles of what causality in history is, and what it means to us.

## 2. The Analysis of the Problem

Our approach to the problem has already been delineated above. We shall try in this study to treat each philosopher as original thinkers who apply their conception of causality to the field of historical inquiry. In this way we shall attempt to analyze their ideas as developed into a philosophy of history.

In this study we will begin with an explication of Ibn Khaldun's rather complex account of the nature of history and of causality in history. As this will be taken up in Chapter I, we shall try to do this by studying his conception of history and then his historical methodology.

Similarly, Chapter II discusses Hegel's rather complex account of the nature of history and of causality in history. As done in the case of Ibn Khaldun, it elucidates Hegel's conception of history, followed by a discussion of his historical methodology.

Chapter III deals with Ibn Khaldun's and Hegel's transformations of the Aristotelian causes in history. The first part of the chapter is devoted to explicating Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes and some of the difficulties associate with it, since, in order to properly evaluate the issue of Aristotle's four causes and their imposition upon Ibn Khaldun's and Hegel's philosophies of history, we have to give a clear, albeit brief, account of Aristotle's views on the four causes.

The second part of the chapter examines the transformation of the Aristotelian causes in Ibn Khaldun's history and demonstrates how Ibn Khaldun completely transforms and goes beyond the Aristotelian scheme.

Finally, the third part does the same with Hegel and demonstrates that, like Ibn Khaldun, Hegel completely transforms and goes beyond the Aristotelian scheme.

The last chapter of the dissertation consists of a comparative analysis and a conclusion. The latter brings the dissertation to an end by developing several possible mappings of relationships between Aristotelian four causes and Ibn Khaldun's and Hegel's historical causes, and thus showing the two thinkers' context and time dependency.

### 3. A Note on the Translation of the Basic Terminology

As Ibn Khaldun wrote in Arabic and Hegel in German, the translations of some of their basic and key concepts into English varied a great deal and even sometimes became a matter of controversy. Hence the need now for a clarification of our translation of those terms.

Ibn Khaldun's renowned *'aṣabiyyah* will be the only term left untranslated, for it is really impossible to render it fairly in a comprehensive term,<sup>3</sup> since - as will be seen in this work - it is a dialectical term changing its character and meaning in various stages in the course of Ibn Khaldun's civilization.

*'Umrān* is usually rendered by scholars as either 'civilization' or 'culture'. Although Mahdi<sup>4</sup> has an etymological justification for 'culture', with F. Rosenthal and al-Azmeh, I render it as 'civilization'. Al-Azmeh translates it as 'civilization' "to recover one meaning that 'civilization' has: as the totality of manifestations attendant upon a system of organized habitation",<sup>5</sup> although he finds 'culture' acceptable on the basis of etymology and semantics, if one considers culture in the bacteriological sense of abstract, self-nurturing habitation. Thus, *'ilm al-'umrān* is 'the science of

<sup>3</sup> For a similar view, see, for instance, Richard Walzer, "Aspects of Islamic Political Thought: Al-Fārābī and Ibn Khaldūn", *Oriens* 16 (1963), 58. Also for a detailed study on the translation of the term *'aṣabiyyah* into major Western languages, see T. Khemir, "Der 'Aṣabiya-Begriff in der Muqaddima des Ibn Khaldūn", *Der Islam* 23 (1936), 173ff.

<sup>4</sup> Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957), 184-86, henceforth cited as *Ibn Khaldun*.

<sup>5</sup> Aziz al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn: An Essay in Reinterpretation* (London: Frank Cass, 1982), 135n1, henceforth cited as *Essay*.

civilization'. Then, *ḥadārah* is 'sedentary culture', while *badāwah* is 'nomadic culture'.

Although it sometimes carries the meaning of 'political authority', *mulk* is translated as 'royal authority', as in the translation of F. Rosenthal's *The Muqaddimah. Dawlah*, depending on the context, is translated either as dynasty or the state. *Maṣlahah* is 'common good', or 'public interest'.

*Ghāyah* is translated as goal. Al-Azmeh translates it as *telos* and objects to the translations of it into several Western languages as 'goal', 'but', 'objectif' and 'Ziel', for, he holds, all translations render teleology "in such a way as to either imply a process of volition or else to render it in terms so general as to be practically deprived of all meaning".<sup>6</sup> However, Carter states that the Greek *telos* is as ambiguous as the English 'end', as it can mean simply a quite fortuitous boundary, for instance, 'the end of the road' or 'terminus' in a more formal sense of a goal reached or intended. Thus the Greek tradition includes a non-teleological aspect as well: the materialist mechanism of the atomists, in which *telos* is simply the chance product that emerges from the clashing of blind forces. "Thus 'becoming' in this other Greek tradition is a random, undirected process".<sup>7</sup>

The translation of Hegel's basic terminology seems today to be less problematical, for in recent decades Hegelian scholarship has come more or less to an implicit agreement on this issue. Thus, Hegel's renowned *Geist* is translated as 'spirit' rather than the old 'mind' and *Begriff* is 'concept' rather than 'notion'. Two terms which caused much hardship to early translators, namely *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit* are rendered as 'morality' and 'ethical life' respectively. *Verstand* is translated as 'understanding' (not intellect) in the Hegelian sense as distinct from *Vernunft*

<sup>6</sup> Aziz al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn in Modern Scholarship: A Study in Orientalism* (London: Third World Center for Research and Publishing, 1981), 38n103, henceforth cited as *Ibn Khaldun*.

<sup>7</sup> Curtis L. Carter, "Comment", *History and System: Hegel's Philosophy of History*, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Albany: State University of New York, 1984), 189.

(reason). *Verfassung* is rendered as 'constitution' rather than 'form of government', as the latter translation leads us to see constitution as *the* form of the state, and moreover Hegel's notion of constitution is much wider than the modern notion of 'form of government'.<sup>8</sup> Another peculiarly Hegelian term *aufheben* is translated as, depending on the context, "to sublimate, preserve, supersede, transcend etc." *Wirklich* is translated as 'actual' rather than 'real'. *End*, *Zweck* and *Ziel* are end, purpose and goal (or aim) respectively, while *Endzweck* is final purpose.

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<sup>8</sup> See Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, trans. Leo Rauch (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1988), 48, henceforth cited as *Introduction*.

## CHAPTER I

### THE CONCEPT OF HISTORY IN IBN KHALDUN

In this chapter we will deal with Ibn Khaldun's concept of history. The first part of the chapter will study his basic idea and conception of history, and briefly present his theory of history together with an analysis of the major factors in the course of history. The second part of the chapter will discuss Ibn Khaldun's historical methodology by examining his notion of historicity, historical change, the relationship between natural and social laws, and the relation of his celebrated science of civilization to history, followed by God's role in history.

#### A. Ibn Khaldun's Conception of History

For Ibn Khaldun "history, in matter of fact, is information [or narrative] (*khabar*) about human social organization, which itself is identical with world civilization (*'umrān*)".<sup>1</sup> It deals with various conditions which have an effect on the nature of civilization such as savagery, sociability, various forms of social solidarity and of political domination as well as royal authority and dynasties. Besides, it also deals with different sorts of gainful occupations and ways of making a living, with sciences and crafts and with "all the other institutions that originate in civilization through its very nature."<sup>2</sup>

Since history has a dual aspect, both the learned and the uneducated are able to understand something about history. The external aspect in which the ordinary people are usually interested is no more than the simple narration of events. Thus it deals mainly with political events, rise and fall of dynasties and the effect of changing conditions on human affairs. This external aspect of the history is generally presented

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn*, ed. Khalil Shahādah (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 46, henceforth cited as *Muqaddimah*. [*The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), I: 71.] Hereafter the first references are to the Arabic original, while the following references in square brackets are to the Rosenthal translation.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* [*ibid.*]



in an elegant style and entertains large, crowded gatherings other than bringing them an understanding of human affairs.<sup>3</sup>

However there is also an internal and philosophic aspect in history:

The inner meaning of history, on the other hand, involves speculation (*naẓar*) and an attempt to get at the truth (*tahqiq*), subtle explanation of the causes (*ta'liḥ*) and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why (*asbāb*) of events. (History,) therefore, is firmly rooted (*aṣīl*) in philosophy (*ḥikmah*). It deserves to be accounted a branch of (philosophy).<sup>4</sup>

Thus here we notice a transition from the art of history (the external aspect) to the science of history (the internal aspect), i.e. from the popular understanding of history to the scientific one. One should keep in mind this distinction when one deals with Ibn Khaldun's definition of history as information about human social organization. According to Lacoste<sup>5</sup> this definition marks a qualitative transformation in historical thought; because now history ceases being literature and becomes a science, as Ibn Khaldun makes a clear distinction between the two conceptions.

There are certain concepts in Ibn Khaldun's philosophy of history without which it is not possible to understand his general approach to history. As a clarification of these concepts will help us understand his approach better, I shall try to analyze and evaluate these concepts in order to see how history is interpreted by Ibn Khaldun. We will therefore first study the course of history under these basic concepts.

## 1. Basic Concepts in Ibn Khaldun's Course of History

### a) 'Aṣabiyyah

The restraining influence among Bedouin tribes comes from their tribal leaders. It results from the great respect they enjoy among the people. The hamlets of

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 6 [1: 6].

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. [ibid].

<sup>5</sup> Yves Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldun: The Birth of History and the Past of the Third World*, trans. David Macey, (London: Verso, 1984), 149, henceforth cited as *Ibn Khaldun*.

the Bedouins are defended against 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 of common descent. This strengthens their stamina and makes them feared, since everybody's affection for his family and his group is important. Compassion and affection for one's blood relations and relatives exist in human nature as something which is God-given.<sup>6</sup> It brings out mutual support and aid, and increases the fear felt by enemy.

The origin of this affection for one's relatives is the feeling of disgrace and shame. One's pride is hurt when one's relatives are treated unjustly or attacked, and one wishes to intervene between them and whatever destruction or peril threatens them. The same goes for clients and allies as well. The affection everybody has for his clients and allies arises from the feeling of disgrace and shame that comes to a person, when one of his neighbors or relatives is humiliated. This is because a client-master relationship leads to close contact as does common descent.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the consequences of common descent, though natural, still are something imaginary. The feeling of close contact arises only through social intercourse, friendly association, long familiarity, the companionship that results from growing up together and sharing the other circumstances of death and life. If close contact is established in this manner, then the result will be affection and cooperation.<sup>8</sup>

*'Asabiyyah* is necessary not only for defense and military protection, but also 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

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<sup>6</sup> *Muqaddimah*, 159-60 [1: 262-63]. Elsewhere (ibid., 160 [1: 264]), instead of God-given, he describes it as "a natural urge in man".

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 161 [1: 264]. That is why Ibn Khaldun has a rather pragmatic approach towards pedigrees which he considers as something imaginary and devoid of reality. To him, the usefulness of a pedigree "consists only in the resulting connection and the close contact", which is a consequence of blood ties and leads to mutual help and affection (ibid., 161 [1: 265]).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 230 [1: 374].

fighting for it, as man has the natural urge to offer resistance. And for fighting one cannot do without *'aṣabiyyah*.<sup>9</sup>

Ibn Khaldun believes that there is a divine aspect of *'aṣabiyyah*. He considers *'aṣabiyyah* as the secret divine factor that restrains people from splitting up and abandoning each other. It is the source of unity and agreement, and even the guarantor of the intentions of law [*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*]. He believes that when this is properly understood, then God's wise plans with regard to His creation and His creatures will become clear.<sup>10</sup>

"The goal to which *'aṣabiyyah* leads is royal authority."<sup>11</sup> This is because *'aṣabiyyah* gives protection and makes possible mutual defense, the pressing of claims and every other kind of social activity. Human beings by nature need someone to act as a restraining influence and mediator in every social organization so that the members are kept from fighting with each other. That person must, by necessity, have superiority over the others in the matter of *'aṣabiyyah*. Otherwise his power to exercise a restraining influence could not materialize. Such superiority is royal authority. Royal authority is more than leadership, as the latter means being a chieftain, and the leader is obeyed, yet he has no power to force others to accept his rulings. He is merely the first among equals, whereas royal authority means superiority and the power to rule by force.

When a person sharing in the *'aṣabiyyah* 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, for it is something desirable. He cannot completely achieve his goal except with the help of *'aṣabiyyah*, which causes the others to obey him. Thus royal authority is a goal to which *'aṣabiyyah* leads.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 160 [1: 263].

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 266 [1: 438].

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 174 [1: 284].

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. [ibid].

Even if an individual tribe has many diverse *'aşabiyyahs*, still, there must exist an *'aşabiyyah* that is stronger than all the other *'aşabiyyahs* combined. The former is superior to them all and makes them subservient, and thus all the diverse *'aşabiyyahs* coalesce to form one greater *'aşabiyyah*. Otherwise splits would arise and lead to dissention and strife.

Once *'aşabiyyah* has established superiority over the people who share in that particular feeling, it will, by its nature, seek superiority over people of other *'aşabiyyahs* unrelated to the first. If it overpowers another *'aşabiyyah* and makes it subservient to itself, the two enter into close contact, and the defeated *'aşabiyyah* gives added power to the victorious one, 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 *'aşabiyyah* equals the power of the ruling dynasty. If the ruling dynasty grows senile and no defender arises from among its friends who share in its *'aşabiyyah*, the new *'aşabiyyah* takes over and deprives the ruling dynasty of its power, and thus obtains complete royal authority.<sup>13</sup>

It is thus evident that royal authority is the goal of *'aşabiyyah*. When *'aşabiyyah* attains that goal, the tribe representing that particular *'aşabiyyah* 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 *'aşabiyyah* encounters obstacles on its way to the goal, it stops where it is "until God decides what is going to happen to it".<sup>14</sup>

Ibn Khaldun believes that the life of anything that comes into being depends upon the strength of its temper. The temper of dynasties is based upon *'aşabiyyah*. If

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 174-75 [1: 285].

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 175 [1: 286].

the *'aṣabiyyah* is strong, the dynasty's temper likewise is strong, and its life of long duration. *'Aṣabiyyah*, in turn, depends on numerical strength.<sup>15</sup>

However, when a dynasty is firmly established, it can dispense with *'aṣabiyyah*. 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, members of that family are clearly marked as leaders. It becomes a firmly established article of faith that one must obey and be 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 *'aṣabiyyah* to maintain their power. It is as if obedience to the government were a divinely revealed book that cannot be changed or opposed.<sup>16</sup>

Besides, it is easy to establish a dynasty in lands that are free from *'aṣabiyyahs*. Governance there will be a tranquil affair, as there will be few seditions and rebellions. Thus the dynasty there does not need much *'aṣabiyyah*.<sup>17</sup>

As we have seen, royal (or political) authority (*mulk*) is the goal of *'aṣabiyyah*. Moreover, royal authority and governmental power (*al-dawlah al-'āmmah*) are attained only through a group and *'aṣabiyyah*.<sup>18</sup> This eventual appearance of a political authority in the strict sense as a necessary consequence of *'aṣabiyyah* brings us to another key concept in Ibn Khaldun's course of history, namely the state, which is the topic of the following subsection.

#### b) The State (*Dawlah*)

Royal or political authority is the natural goal of *'aṣabiyyah*, and "it results from *'aṣabiyyah*, not by choice but through (inherent) necessity and the order of

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 205 [1: 331].

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 194 [1: 314]. Also see, *ibid.*, 365 [2: 122].

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 207 [1: 334].

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 193 [1: 313].

existence".<sup>19</sup> Therefore, not every *'aṣabiyyah* has royal authority. In fact, royal authority belongs only to those who dominate subjects, collect taxes, send out military expeditions, protect the frontier regions, and have no one over them who is stronger than they. "This is generally accepted as the real meaning of royal authority."<sup>20</sup>

When human beings have achieved social organization, and thus civilization in the world has 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. He must dominate them and have power and authority over them, so that they do not attack each other. This is the meaning of royal authority. Thus it has become clear that royal authority is a natural quality of man which is absolutely necessary to mankind. Yet, as some philosophers state, one comes across the existence of authority and obedience to a leader among some other creatures such as bees and locusts. But these, according to Ibn Khaldun, exist as the result of natural disposition and divine guidance, and not as the result of an ability to think or to administrate.<sup>21</sup>

Because of its social implications, royal authority is something natural to human beings. Due to his natural disposition and his power of logical reasoning, man is more inclined towards good qualities than bad ones, for the evil in him is the result of the animal powers in him, and inasmuch as he is a human being, he is more inclined toward goodness and good qualities. 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".<sup>22</sup> Royal authority is a noble and enjoyable position. It comprises all the good things of the world, the

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 253 [1: 414].

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 235 [1: 381].

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-56 [1: 91-92].

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 178 [1: 291].

pleasures of the body as well as the joys of the soul. Therefore, there is usually a great competition for it.<sup>23</sup>

According to Ibn Khaldun, any royal authority must be built upon two foundations: the first one is might and *'aṣabiyyah*, which finds its expression in soldiers. The second one is money, which provides the whole structure needed by royal authority and supports the army. Disintegration of the dynasty occurs at these two foundations.<sup>24</sup>

For Ibn Khaldun, political and royal authority are God's guarantee to mankind and serve as a representation of God among men with respect to His laws. He who thus obtained *'aṣabiyyah* 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 agent and guarantor among mankind. He has the qualifications for that.<sup>25</sup> For good qualities attest the potential existence of royal authority in a person who at the same time possesses *'aṣabiyyah*. Ibn Khaldun contends that observation shows that people who possess *'aṣabiyyah* and who have gained control over many lands and nations, have an eager desire for goodness and good qualities. These qualities of leadership are something good that God has given them, corresponding to their *'aṣabiyyah* and superiority. Conversely, 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 disappear until they will no longer exercise royal authority. Someone else will exercise it in their stead.

According to Ibn Khaldun, the religious law does not censure royal authority as such and does not forbid its exercise. What it censures is merely the evils resulting

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 193 [1: 313].

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 363 [2: 118-19].

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 179 [1: 291-92].

from it, such as tyranny, injustice and pleasure-seeking.<sup>26</sup> Ibn Khaldun likens the possession of royal authority to the amassing of property. For instance, some of the early Muslims amassed huge properties through trade and booties in a lawful manner. Yet they did not employ their property wastefully but in a moderate and responsible way. Since their expenditure followed a plan and served the truth, the amassing of so much property helped them along on the path of truth and served the purpose of attaining the bliss of the hereafter. Likewise, 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.<sup>27</sup> Again, as the Qur'ān informs us 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.<sup>28</sup>

Royal authority requires superiority and force, which express the wrathfulness and animality of human nature. The decisions of the ruler will therefore, as a rule, deviate from what is right. They will be harmful to the interests of the people under his control, for, usually, he forces them to execute his intentions and desires, which it may be beyond their ability to do. That is why it is difficult to be obedient to the ruler. Disobedience arises and leads to trouble and bloodshed. Hence the necessity to have reference to ordained political norms, which are accepted by the mass and to whose laws it submits. If a dynasty does not have a policy based on such norms, it cannot fully succeed in establishing the supremacy of its rule.<sup>29</sup> To conclude, for the

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 240 [1: 391].

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 256-57 [1: 420-21].

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 241 [1: 391-92].

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 237-38 [1: 385-86].