THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF IBN KHALDŪN

Zaid Ahmad

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This is an analytical examination of Ibn Khaldūn's epistemology, centred on Chapter Six of the *Muqaddima*. In this chapter, entitled "The Book of Knowledge" (*Kitāb al-'Ilm*), Ibn Khaldūn sketched his general ideas about knowledge and science and its relationship with human social organisation and the establishment of civilisation.

Zaid Ahmad investigates the philosophical foundation of Ibn Khaldūn's concept of knowledge, the hierarchical order of science and the sociological context in which knowledge and science can be transformed into the force that determines the prosperity of a civilisation.

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Zaid Ahmad

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To my wife Zuhira and my children Albiy,
Hanan, Tareq and Farouq

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FOREWORD

Ibn Khaldūn is a thinker it is very difficult to classify. He is chiefly known today as a social thinker, and there is no doubt about the perspicacity of his writings on politics and the sorts of rules which we should employ when analysing the state. What we notice when we examine his political thought is his capacity to balance his theoretical constructions with his practical observations on everyday life, and throughout the *Muqaddima* we see that sort of balance being established. Here we find Ibn Khaldūn in his role as the critic of philosophy, yet using philosophical methods to attack the pretensions of what he sees as an overambitious reliance on reason. In other places, he represents a form of Sufism which eschews the sort of subjectivity and esoteric extravagance of which he so much disapproved. For him Sufism was only respectable if it was practised firmly within the context of orthodox Islam, in line with the normal rules and institutions of the *sunni* world. In fact, the very name of this text, the *Muqaddima*, implies the attempt to lay out a prolegomenon to something more axiomatic in structure, a volume of principles, based solidly on historical fact, which was in fact a text produced in due course by Ibn Khaldūn.

On the other hand, we should not get too enmeshed in the title of the work which came to be called the *Muqaddima*, since this is obviously supposed to be more than just a preparatory text. In his historical work Ibn Khaldūn produces a careful balance between descriptions of fact and his explanations of the wider principles which those facts exemplify. and in his *Muqaddima* he explains how that balance is to be constituted. In a well-known expression, he suggests that human reason, which is appropriate to weigh gold, is often used to weigh mountains. A suspicion of theory runs throughout Ibn Khaldūn's work, a suspicion which is based on the idea that we often allow our enthusiasm for a particular form of thought to run away with us. The *Muqaddima* is intent to put everything in its place, and we see this outlined in the analysis which is presented here of Chapter 6 by Dr Ahmad. It is to be hoped that similar studies will in time be produced of other parts of this key work. Only through

the systematic investigation of each aspect of Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima* will we be able to appreciate the depth of his intellectual work as a whole.

Oliver Leaman

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Zaid Ahmad
April 2002

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ABBREVIATIONS

BDTCST	*The Blackwell Dictionary of Twentieth Century Social Thought*
BFACU	*Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts*, Cairo University
Br.	*Tārīkh al-ʿAllāma Ibn Khaldūn*, Ibn Khaldūn (Beirut edition)
Concordance	*Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, A.J. Wensinck (8 vols)
EI1	*The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (first edition)
EI2	*The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new edition)
EP	*The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (8 vols)
ER	*The Encyclopedia of Religion*
ERE	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (12 vols)
GAS	*Geschichte des Arabischen Schriftums*
IC	*Islamic Culture*
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
IQ	*Islamic Quarterly*
JAAS	*Journal of Asian and African Studies*
JAL	*Journal of Arabic Literature*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
Mahrajān	*Aʿmāl Mahrajān Ibn Khaldūn*
MR	*The Maghrib Review*
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
MSEP	*The Macmillan Student Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*
MW	*The Muslim World*
OEMIW	*The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World* (4 vols)
OH	*Orientalia Hispanica*
Q	*Muqaddima Ibn Khaldūn* (Arabic text), ed. E.M.Quatremère (3 vols)
Qr.	Quran

R	*The Muqaddimah* (English translation), tr. F. Rosenthal (3 vols)
RDSO	*Rivista degli Studi Orientali*
REP	*Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (8 vols)
SUFI	Journal *Sufi*

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

It was about ten years ago, when I first started my academic career as lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences (now Department of Social Development Studies) at the University of Agriculture, Malaysia (now Universiti Putra of Malaysia), that my interest in inquiring into Ibn Khaldūn's philosophical ideas began to arise. One of my duties was to give lectures in subjects related to civilisation, culture, philosophy and Islamic thought. I was frequently also invited as guest lecturer by the neighbouring National University of Malaysia to present lectures in Islamic thought, philosophy and history. It was during that time that I had the opportunity to become involved myself quite actively in research activities along with intellectual discussions and academic encounters with both colleagues and my own students. During that time I also had the opportunity to carry out some philosophical investigations into Ibn Khaldūn's thought, particularly in connection with his theory of civilisation. From there, I soon realised that Ibn Khaldūn was an extraordinary scholar, perhaps one of the most read and written-about Muslim intellectuals. His revolutionary views on several issues that appear especially in his magnum opus, the *Muqaddima*, had attracted the attentions of Muslim scholars and many Western thinkers from various academic fields and backgrounds. The excitement of his intellectual outlook and the freshness of his philosophical thought had a sort of gravitational pull that attracted the interest of modern academic communities, an interest manifested in various forms: lectures, seminars, conferences and discourses together with a long list of titles and abundant pages of written materials.[1]

Seeking knowledge is indeed an endless activity. The deeper we go into the subject the more we are curious to know. I admit that it is this curiosity that has inspired and led me to undertake the present study. Notwithstanding the availability of abundant written materials dedicated to this great personality, I find that there are still many areas which are not quite satisfactorily dealt with, especially the area that will be explored in the present work. Certainly there is a lot more to be learnt from the intellectual legacy of the eighth/fourteenth-century genius of Islam, particularly his theoretical

frameworks, which in most cases are still very relevant to our age. I take this opportunity to make this offering with the hope that it will provide further insight towards a greater understanding of Ibn Khaldūn's theoretical framework, which lays the foundation of his philosophical ideas. This research is text-based: throughout the whole process, the researcher will be fully occupied with and closely attached to the text, trying to understand, evaluate and, finally, to determine and reconstruct, and perhaps be able to draw a comprehensive picture of the foundation of theoretical framework that lies behind the text. It is also hoped that the findings of this study will stimulate further research of this nature.

Aim and justification of study

This study is primarily aimed at understanding Ibn Khaldūn's theory of knowledge. The objective is to describe, identify, re-evaluate and, finally, to reconstruct the theoretical foundation of Ibn Khaldūn's thought: the epistemology, the sociology of knowledge and the classification of sciences and its place in the general scheme of his theory of civilisation. In short, this study seeks to describe and investigate the author's thought and his para-digmatic of reference as well as the theoretical scheme that lies behind Chapter[2] 6 of the *Muqaddima*.

Why this chapter? Our preliminary study shows that of the six chapters of the *Muqaddima*, Chapter 6 is the most significant. This is based on several assumptions. It is the last chapter and the biggest: it occupies roughly one third of the whole work. Being the last, Chapter 6 can also be considered as the concluding chapter of the whole *Muqaddima* in which the author sum-marises and recapitulates his thought. It is important to note that we assume hypothetically that this chapter must have been written based upon a certain theoretical framework. On the basis of this hypothesis, the present study seeks to find out the theoretical framework that made up the mind of the author when he drafted this chapter. It is for these reasons that Chapter 6 has been chosen as the subject of this study.

Some notes on methodology and approach

Research of this nature may be carried out in various ways. It depends very much upon the purpose, aim and goal of the inquiry. Methodologically speaking, there are several approaches or strategies that are conventionally adopted in the process of understanding text: descriptive, exploratory or formulative, analytical by theme, diagnostic, comparative and intertextual.[3] I do not pretend that the present study will adopt a single approach to textual studies; rather, my strategy is to maintain a more liberal manner of utilising several methodological devices that will help us to understand the text.

Notwithstanding this liberal approach, however, I admit that in carrying out this inquiry I am also very much influenced by the basic hermeneutic theory of textual interpretation, i.e. to give more emphasis to understanding (*verstehen*) than to explanation (*erklären*).[4] While associating myself with such an interpretative theory, I should say that I am aware of some points of dispute between the traditional hermeneutic approach set forth by Schleiermacher (d. 1834) and Dilthey (d. 1911), and the "contemporary" approach advanced by Heidegger (d. 1976) and Gadamer.[5] I view this dispute as creative rather than destructive. I am also aware of certain ethical questions within the theory itself. Most importantly, I am of the belief that the interpreter has a moral duty to understand his subject in such a manner that the interpretation be as close as possible to the original meaning of the text. I adopt the basic hermeneutic principle that, in carrying out this sort of enterprise, one cannot escape from the problem of the hermeneutic circle that in order to understand the part, it is necessary to know the whole, while understanding the whole depends on understanding of every part.[6] All in all, the methodological system of the present research can be summarised as follows:

- Thematic textual description and analysis
- Philosophical and hermeneutical approach in textual interpretation
- Comparative and intertextual analysis (where appropriate).

The main textual source of the present study is the Arabic text of the *Muqaddima li-kitāb al-ʿibar* of Ibn Khaldūn. For this purpose, the Quatremère edition that was published in Paris in three volumes in 1858 and reprinted in Beirut in 1970, will be the principal textual reference. However, other editions will be consulted occasionally whenever necessary. The translation guide used throughout this study will be the complete English translation by F. Rosenthal, published in 1958. It should be noted that to date this is the only complete English translation ever to have been attempted and published. In the course of the study other secondary materials including both Arabic and English sources of various kinds will be consulted exhaustively insofar as they help us to sound judgement and appropriate assessment.

1

INTRODUCTORY MATERIALS TO THE STUDY OF CHAPTER 6 OF THE *MUQADDIMA*

Introduction

The real subject matter of Chapter 6 of the *Muqaddima* begins with the section entitled "Teaching is a craft" (*fī-an al-taʿlīm al-ʿilm min jumla al-ṣanāʾiʿ*). Prior to this there are some introductory remarks by the author. Intertextual comparison shows that there are two distinct versions of the introduction to Chapter 6. One of these is a single short passage entitled "Knowledge and teaching are natural in human culture" (*fī-an al-ʿilm wa-ʾl-taʿlīm ṭabīʿī fī-ʾl-ʿumrān al-basharī*). The other consists of an introduction followed by six sections in which the author speaks about various general and particular issues of epistemology. Rosenthal notes the occurrence of these two versions in the introduction of his translation of the *Muqaddima*.[1] The specific contents of each of the two versions will be discussed below (pp. 6–18). In this section, I shall review briefly Rosenthal's discussion of the manuscripts and the editions of the *Muqaddima*.

Manuscripts

In his notes on the textual history of the *Muqaddima*, Rosenthal has provided some valuable information about the manuscripts he has consulted in preparing his translation. For the purpose of the present research, this information is important, because textual variations do occur between the manuscripts. These textual variants and differences, if not properly understood and explained, will in one way or another affect the standard and reliability of the text. By the same token, a proper understanding of this matter will help us to understand the actual content of the text. Thanks to Rosenthal, who has taken the trouble to undertake such a thorough background study of the texts and manuscripts of the *Muqaddima*, we are now able to make use of his notes to understand the situation.

Rosenthal informs us at the outset that the text of the *Muqaddima* is very well documented. This means that the original manuscripts of the book have

been well preserved. The manuscripts are numerous. In Turkey alone, four manuscripts that were written during Ibn Khaldūn's lifetime were available. Another two undated manuscripts are believed to have been written shortly after the author's death. According to Rosenthal, all the manuscripts are very high in quality. He describes the three copies known as MSS A, B and C, as having the same high standard textual values. Although Rosenthal does not deny the possibility of occasional mistakes, he is confident that a carefully written manuscript is almost comparable to a printed text. Thus, manuscripts of this kind can properly be considered as authentic copies of the text. Therefore any factual mistakes or miswriting may well be considered for these purposes as the author's own work.[2]

Now, the question is, if the manuscripts are evidently well preserved and have undergone a careful process of copying which in some cases was done under a close personal supervision of the author himself, why do there exist a great number of considerable variations between the texts? In the case of the *Muqaddima*, the variant readings are variant not merely in the ordinary sense. They involve a considerably extended version of the text, as in the case of the introductory remarks to Chapter 6. Giving his view on this particular issue, Rosenthal writes:

> They are editions and corrections made by Ibn Khaldūn at different period of his life. The existence of such extensive emendations demonstrates in a fascinating manner that the medieval author worked much as his modern colleague does.[3]

From this, we may come to the simple logical conclusion that the textual variations in this case are no doubt the work of the author himself. It is understandable that the author would make amendments, corrections and additions where he might think necessary as he goes through the text several times.

Editions

The publication of small portions of the *Muqaddima* started as early as before 1857–8, and was associated with Hammer-Purgstall and Silvestre de Sacy.[4] It was during the years of 1857 and 1858 that the two basic and complete editions of the *Muqaddima* came into reality. The Egyptian edition, also known as the Būlāq edition, edited by Abū Naṣr al-Ḥūrīnī (d. 1874), printed in Būlāq, was published in 1857, while the first complete scholarly European edition of the *Muqaddima* was published by Etienne Marc Quatremère in Paris in 1858. For the modern scholarly study of the *Muqaddima*, these two texts are considered by many as the most authentic and considerably reliable.

The Ḥūrīnī text was in fact intended as the first volume of the complete edition of the *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*. While preparing this edition, Ḥūrīnī apparently

used two manuscripts which he called the Fez and the Tunis manuscripts. The Tunis manuscript was Ibn Khaldūn's original dedication to the Hafsid ruler. The Fez manuscript was Ibn Khaldūn's donation copy. While editing the text, Ḥūrīnī often made corrections according to his own judgement. This text has some importance of its own by virtue of the fact that it provides the earliest text of the *Muqaddima* presently available in printed form.[5]

Quatremère's edition of the *Muqaddima* was published in Paris in 1858, a year after the appearance of the Būlāq edition, by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. It was printed by Firmin Didot Frères and presently available in three volumes. Unfortunately this edition was published without an introduction, and thus without official information from the hand of the editor about the manuscripts he used. Based on W.M. de Slane, the French translator of the *Muqaddima*, Quatremère based his edition on four manuscripts, MSS A, B, C and D. MS A, dated 1146, is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, while MS B is in Munich. MS C is a copy made in 1835/6 of the Damad Ibrahim's MS and is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale. MS D, the oldest among the four used by Quatremère, is also among the Arabic manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale.[6]

Other than the above two editions, there are editions which were published in Beirut and Egypt. However, as al-Azmeh notes, most of those editions are pirated versions of the Ḥūrīnī text and therefore carry no superiority in terms of textual value.[7]

For the purpose of the present study, my main textual reference will be the Quatremère edition, while Rosenthal's translation, the only complete English translation available so far, will be extensively consulted. For textual comparison, the Beirut edition (which reproduces the Ḥūrīnī) will be referred to occasionally when necessary.

Sources and influences

As an introduction, the *Muqaddima* plays an important role in providing conceptual and paradigmatic frameworks as well as an epistemological foundation of the study of human society and civilisation. It is on the basis of these frameworks and foundation that the author establishes his new science of *'umrān*, the study of the history, culture and civilisation of human society.

Since the present study is mainly focused on this book, particularly its Chapter 6, which deals with epistemology, the sociology of knowledge and crafts and the classification of science, it would not be satisfactory to omit a preliminary discussion of the possible sources and influences that exerted an effect upon the mind of the author. We have been told elsewhere that Ibn Khaldūn's background education and training were a mixture of religious and philosophical science.

Orthodoxy versus philosophy

The tension between religious orthodoxy and philosophy is an age-old problem in Islamic intellectual circles. It began as early as the first penetration of the Greeks into the Arab Islamic world, through the process of translation,[8] and later became one of the most topical subjects of discussion. Although the tension had occurred earlier, with the arrival of Greek texts in translation, the actual literary battles between religious and philosophical scholars took place only after the publication of al-Ghazzālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. This is based on the assumption that *Tahāfut* was the first book written for the special purpose of refuting philosophy. Prior to this al-Ghazzālī had published *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, in which he explained philosophy in some detail.

In the *Muqaddima*, which was published some three centuries after the *Tahāfut*, the author seems to be still strongly occupied with this basic problem of Islamic thought, the conflict between religious orthodoxy and philosophy in the study of man and human society. Not only that, it seems that this tension also greatly influenced the author's stance and arguments.

Before going any further, it should be recalled that the difference between the two types of approach is in a way very fundamental. It is between revelation on the one hand and reason on the other. The orthodox believe that the ultimate truth about man and society has to be referred to the Quran, the prophetic tradition (ḥadīth) and of course religious law. The basic notion is the primacy of revelation over reason. On the other hand, from the point of view of philosophy, the order is the reverse, the primacy of rational inquiry over revelation in both the theoretical and the practical sciences.[9] This is the point of difference between orthodoxy and philosophy.

Coming back to the *Muqaddima*, what is the author's stance in facing this basic problem in Islamic thought? I feel quite strongly that Ibn Khaldūn's stance is to some extent more inclined towards orthodoxy. My judgement is basically based upon his attempt to refute philosophy in one of the passages in Chapter 6 of the *Muqaddima*. That passage, which is entitled "Refutation of Philosophy", consists of his arguments against philosophy. (This issue will be discussed later see pp. 90ff.) Not only that, he also seems to be inclined towards Sufism. This is explicitly expressed in his special discussion of Sufism.

On another occasion, he also attempts to reconcile orthodoxy and philosophy. This attempt can be seen in his discussion of the concept of prophecy. He explains prophecy in both philosophical and religious terms. Philosophical argument and religious dogma are mixed together in order to grasp the true nature of prophecy. In this sense, it would not be appropriate to consider Ibn Khaldūn as representing the ideas of pure orthodoxy in the strictest sense of the word.

The ṣūfī

I have indicated above that Sufism is an important element in Ibn Khaldūn's thought. To assess the strength of its influence is is not too difficult if one glances through the *Muqaddima*. In Chapter 6, Ibn Khaldūn allocates a long passage specifically to a discussion of the science of Sufism in all its aspects. Besides that passage, we also find a number of times and many occasions when the author expresses his ideas in mystical terms. At times, he praises Sufism and even calls the Muslim to practise it. One of the good examples is perhaps when he speaks about the concept and nature of happiness (*saʿāda*) in Islam. He believes that true happiness can only be achieved through *ṣūfī* practices and purification of the soul. Happiness in this sense is an inexpressible joy and pleasure which cannot be achieved through intellectual speculations. This is because this state can be obtained only by removal of the veil of sensual perceptions.[10] This concept of happiness and the way to attain it no doubt belonged to the *ṣūfīs*. Although he is not, as claimed by some modern writers, a practising *ṣūfī* in the strict sense, from his writing one would easily assume that the author is in fact very familiar with and perhaps possesses unusual knowledge of this particular science. It is also a matter of fact that Ibn Khaldūn wrote a special book on Sufism entitled *Shifāʾ al-sāʾil li-tahdhīb al-masāʾil*.[11]

In our study here, we are not interested in *Shifāʾ al-sāʾil*. Our concern here is merely to see the influence of Sufism in Ibn Khaldūn's thought, particularly in the *Muqaddima*. One of the earliest serious studies of this aspect of Ibn Khaldūn's thought was perhaps an article by Miya Syrier, published in *Islamic Culture* in 1947, entitled "Ibn Khaldūn and Islamic Mysticism". In her article, Syrier made several assumptions with regard to Ibn Khaldūn's attitude towards religion and religious knowledge, theological and philosophical knowledge and, more importantly, towards the spiritual and mystical side of human beings and human culture. One of the most interesting assumptions or rather conclusions made by Syrier, which is very relevant to our present study, is that

> …he (Ibn Khaldūn) believed that the true road towards improvement of man is the path of mystic, that the mystical experience can reveal and make certain what no metaphysics prove; and that when they try to prove it they lead astray.[12]

This is not a strange conclusion for Ibn Khaldūn to have drawn, since the element of mysticism in fact played a very significant role in Ibn Khaldūn's thought. He employs the argument of mysticism in his critique of *kalām*. One need only look at his definition of *tawḥīd* and *īmān* (faith), in which he uses terms such as *ḥāl* (state) and *maqām* (station) to describe the true sense of faith.[13]

For Ibn Khaldūn, so far as Islamic culture and civilisation is concerned, the role and function of Sufism is enormously significant. He sees and recognises Sufism as one of the most important manifestations of Islamic culture. It is not only a social phenomenon or an everyday attitude to life, as it was in the early days of Islam, but also a philosophical and intellectual force which later gives rise to its own unique and exclusive literary tradition.

The theory of prophecy

Prophecy is one of the most significant and important phenomena that catches the attention of most Muslim philosophers throughout the history of the Muslim intellectual tradition. Without denying that this phenomenon is universal in the sense that it exists in every religious tradition, conceived and interpreted in various ways, prophecy in Islam has a particular conception, role and function in the religion-based culture of Islam. A proper understanding of this phenomenon is vital if one wishes for a better understanding of Islamic culture and civilisation. A modern scholar who seems to recognise this situation is Muhsin Mahdi, who published an excellent philosophical study of Ibn Khaldūn. Mahdi writes:

> Since the Islamic community owed its origin, its law and its character to a revelation and a prophet, it is natural that the central problem of practical philosophy or political philosophy in Islam would be that of understanding the phenomenon of prophecy, i.e. the rational explanation of the nature and source of the prophet's knowledge, and the nature and the source of the powers through which he performs miracles, convinces the multitude and induces them to carry out his commands.[14]

Ibn Khaldūn recognises that the phenomenon of prophecy in Islam is of vital importance because "it was the source of important social values, institutions and attitudes".[15]

As far as *Muqaddima* is concerned, Ibn Khaldūn deals with the question of prophecy on at least two significant occasions. He first touches on the subject directly in the sixth introduction on the categories of those who possess spiritual knowledge (*aṣnāf al-mudrikīn li-'l-ghayb min al-bashar*).[16] Another occasion is of course in Chapter 6, where he devotes a special section to "knowledge of the prophet".[17] On these two occasions he also touches on several important related issues such as the nature of revelation (*waḥy*), theory of knowledge, the nature of soul, miracles, etc. In the course of the discussion, it becomes clear that the author is concerned not only with the practical nature of the prophetic phenomenon, i.e. as the source of important social values, but also

with its theoretical and philosophical aspects, i.e. its very nature and essence. Although my particular concern here is to see the impact and influence of prophetic phenomena on Ibn Khaldūn's scheme, it is perhaps of importance to give a brief summary of his theory of prophecy.

Basically, Ibn Khaldūn sees prophecy as "a human phenomenon: the prophet is a human being, his traits are human traits, his knowledge is human knowledge, his powers are human powers, his acts are human acts, and his purpose is human purpose".[18] Though prophecy is a human phenomenon, this does not mean that it is natural to every human being. Ibn Khaldūn is very sure on this point. Prophecy is not in the nature of man as such. Instead, prophets are individuals chosen (iṣṭafā) by God to whom God has given special knowledge of things divine as well as of prophesying things that will happen in future. The prophets are also individuals whom God sent to mankind to teach men about virtues and vices and to tell them about rewards and punishments on the day of judgement. In this sense the knowledge of the prophets is the highest form of knowledge possessed by special human beings, i.e. the prophets.

But there is something natural in the process of the attainment of this knowledge. This is because there are several other categories of knowledge of this kind that are obtained by human beings, i.e. the knowledge of soothsayers, of astrologers and the like. Ibn Khaldūn is very careful to distinguish prophetic knowledge from that of the soothsayers and astrologers. To him it is the prophet alone who is naturally capable of crossing the boundary of humanity. As for the soothsayers, for example, they cross this boundary by their own effort. They are not naturally inclined towards angelicalness, therefore they cannot perceive things perfectly, hence they express their knowledge oracularly, aided by Satan, and try to spur on their perception by the use of rhymes that distinguishes them as soothsayers, and so their knowledge is sometimes correct and sometimes not.[19]

Now we can turn back to consider the significance of prophecy in the context of the study of civilisation. Why is it necessary to include prophetic affairs in the prolegomenon of the author's newly established science of 'umrān? This question has been partly explained above where I touched on prophecy as an important source of law and social values. Other than this, as al-Azmeh puts it, it has a strong political intensity in it at that time, therefore its relevance to the science of civilisation appearss to be self-evident.[20] Based on this assumption, it is understandable that prophecy became the central issue in civilisation and therefore an understanding of the phenomenon of prophecy is necessary. It is also evident at this point that this notion has a strong impact on Ibn Khaldūn's scheme.

Textual variants: short and long versions of the introductory remarks

I shall begin my discussion here with some notes on the textual discrepancies at the beginning of Chapter 6. As noted earlier, there are two versions of the opening passage. In one version it is a single short passage speaking very briefly about knowledge and education. This passage is an explanation of the author's theory of knowledge and education as a natural phenomenon in the human community. On the basis of Rosenthal's notes, this short passage is considered as the earlier version; it appears only in MSS A and B,[21] while the other version, which consists of six passages, appears in MSS C and D and is considered to be the later version. These passages cover extensively various issues in connection with the human intellect and the categories of knowledge. Since the two versions serve the same purpose, i.e. as the opening for Chapter 6, it will be beneficial for us to examine both versions in our attempt to understand the author's ideas in the whole of Chapter 6. For this purpose I provide the full translation of the shorter version in the footnote,[22] while the longer/later version will be summarised below.

The long version consists of a short introduction and six sections. Again they are of the nature of a prefatory discussion. In general the six sections try to demonstrate the nature of human thought and the concept of knowledge.

In the introduction, Ibn Khaldūn sketches his understanding of human intellect. It distinguishes man from the rest of the animals. It enables man to obtain his livelihood, to co-operate with his fellow men and to study the Master whom he worships and the revelation that the messengers transmitted from Him. Through the intellect God gives man superiority over many of His creatures.[23]

He continues to clarify the nature of intellect and how the process of thinking takes place. Thinking comes from perception (*idrāk*). Perception is the consciousness of the perceiver (*shu'ūr al-mudrik*) in the essence of the perceptions that are outside his essence. This (kind of perception) is peculiar to living beings. Therefore, living beings (in this category) can perceive things outside their essence through external senses that God gives them, i.e. hearing, vision, smell, taste and touch.[24]

The human being has the advantage of being able to perceive things outside his essence through his thinking ability, which is beyond his senses. It is the result of power placed in the cavities of his brain. With these powers, man can obtain pictures of the *sensibilia* (*ṣuwar maḥsūsāt*) and apply his mind to them and abstract (from them) other pictures (*ṣuwaran ukhrā*).[25]

Thinking is the occupation with pictures beyond sense perception and mental wandering for analysis and synthesis. This is the meaning of "*af'ida*" (heart) in the Quranic verse "…*ja'ala la-kum al-sam'a wa-'l-abṣār wa-'l-af'ida*…".[26]

At this point, Ibn Khaldūn's idea corresponds very closely to the ideas of the philosophers. He believes that the human intellect has several levels or degrees as follows:

1. The discerning intellect (*al-ʿaql al-tamyīzī*). This is an intellectual understanding of the order of things that exist in the outside world in a natural or arbitrary order (*tartīban ṭabīʿiyyan aw-waḍʿiyyan*). It consists mostly of perceptions. The discerning intellect enables man to obtain things that are useful to him and to his livelihood and repels the things that are harmful to him.

2. The experimental intellect (*al-ʿaql al-tajrībī*). This provides man with the ideas and behaviour needed in dealing with his fellow men and in leading them. It mostly conveys apperception (*taṣdīqāt*), which is obtained through experience in a gradual way until it reaches a stage where it becomes "really useful".

3. The speculative intellect (*al-ʿaql al-naẓarī*). This provides knowledge or hypothetical knowledge of an object beyond sense perception (*warāʾ al-ḥiss*) without any "interference" of practical activity. It consists of both perception and apperception (*taṣawwur wa-taṣdīq*), which are arranged according to a special order following special conditions. It thus provides other knowledge of the same kind in the form of perception or apperception. Then it combines again with something else and provides other knowledge of the same kind.[27]

The end of the process is the perception of existence (*taṣawwur al-wujūd*) together with its various kinds, differences, reasons and causes. By completing this process, man achieves perfection and becomes pure intellect and perceptive soul (*nafs mudrika*). This is the meaning of human reality (*al-ḥaqīqa al-insāniyya*).[28]

Section 2 explains the world of things that come into being as a result of actions which materialise through thinking (*fī-ʿālam al-ḥawādith al-fiʿliyya inna-mā yatimmu bi-ʾl-fikr*). The world of existence comprises pure essences (*dhawāt maḥḍa*) such as the elements (*ʿanāṣīr*) and their influences. There are three things that come into being from the elements, namely minerals, plants and animals. All (of them) are connected with divine power. (In the case of) actions that come from animals which happen by intention, they are (all) connected with the power that God has given them (*al-qudra al-latī jaʿala Allāh la-hā ʿalay-hā*). Some are arranged in order; those are the actions of human beings (*al-afʿāl al-bashariyya*). Some are not arranged and not in order, and those are the actions of animals other than human (*al-afʿāl al-ḥayawānāt ghayr al-bashar*).[29]

Thinking perceives the order of things that come into being by nature or by arbitrary arrangement. When it intends to create something, for the sake of the order of the thing that comes into being, it must understand (first of all) the reason or cause or condition of that thing. This is in general the principle of (that particular thing) – because (the first) will not exist except (followed by the existence of) the second.[30]

It is not possible to put or arrange something that comes later to come earlier. This principle must have another principle to which its own existence is posterior (*wa-dhālika al-mabda' qad yakūnu la-hu mabda' ākhar min tilka al-mabādi' lā yūjad illā muta'akhkhiran*). This (regression) may ascend (from principle to principle) or it may come to an end.[31]

When man (in his thought) has reached the last principle on two, three or more levels and starts the actions that bring the (planned) thing into existence, he will start with the last principle (*al-mabda' al-akhīr*) that has been reached by his thought. That last principle will be the beginning of his action. He will follow things up to the last causes (*ākhir al-musabbabāt*) in the causal chain that had been the starting point of his thinking.[32]

For example, if a man thinks of a roof to shelter him, his mind will (naturally) think of the wall to support the roof as well as the foundation upon which the wall stands. Here his thinking will end and he will start the actions, i.e. working on the foundation, then the wall, then the roof with which his action will end. This is the meaning of "*the beginning of action is the end of thinking and the beginning of thinking is the end of action*".[33]

A man's action in the outside world will not materialise except by thinking about the order of things, since things are "interconnected" or based upon each other. Then he will start the action (of doing things). Thinking begins with the things that come last in the causal chain and is done last. A man's action begins with the first thing in the causal chain, which thinking perceives last. Because of this order, human actions are done in a well-arranged manner. On the other hand, the actions of animals (other than man) are not well arranged, because of the lack of thinking that made the agent know the order of things that governs their actions. This is because animals perceive senses only. Their perceptions are "disconnected" (*mutafarriqa*) and lack a connecting link because only thinking can create this link.[34]

From this we can conclude that actions (*af'āl*) are divided into two categories, actions that are arranged in an orderly manner and actions that are not arranged in an orderly manner. The first category is the actions of human beings while the second is the actions of animals other than man. The actions that dominate the world of existence are those of the orderly category. Those which are not orderly are secondary to them. Therefore the actions of animals, which are not orderly, are subordinate to the orderly actions of human beings. This quality qualifies the human being to be the viceregent of God on

earth. In this way, human actions control the world and everything becomes subservient to the human. This is the meaning of "*khalīfa*" (viceregent) in the Quranic verse "… I am appointing a viceregent on earth…".[35]

Thinking ability is special to human beings, distinguishing them from other living beings. The degree of ability to perceive things in an orderly causal chain will determine their degree of humanity (*insāniyya*). Some are able to achieve a causal nexus for two or three levels while some are not. Others may reach five or six, which indicates that the degree of their humanity is higher.[36]

Section 3 discusses experimental intellect (*al-'aql al-tajrībī*). The experimental intellect is the second category of intellect, coming after the discerning intellect. Among the three categories of intellect, Ibn Khaldūn seems to be more interested in the second, i.e. the experimental intellect. Though he does not state any particular reason, it is presumed that this category is the most important of the three. He devotes a large section to explaining how the experimental intellect comes into being.

He begins with a premise: "man is political by nature" (*al-insān madanī bi-'l-ṭab'i*). The philosophers cite this (statement) to establish (their doctrine of) prophecy (*nubuwwa*) and other things. The word "*madīna*" here refers to the town (the Greek *polis*), which is another word for the human community. This statement means that the human being (as a single individual) cannot live by himself. His existence cannot materialise except with the existence of his fellow men. He is not strong enough to fulfil all the needs of his life and is therefore by nature very much in need of the co-operation of others.[37] Co-operation requires a certain degree of skills in the form of negotiation (*mufāwaḍa*), association (*mushāraka*) and other skills that are needed for this purpose of dealing with one's fellow men.[38] With these skills, human beings are able to distinguish the good from the evil as well as to maintain their political life and law and order.

When there is oneness of purpose, it may lead to mutual affection and friendship (*ṣidāqa*), and when purposes differ, this may lead to strife and enmity (*'adāwa*). This leads to war and peace among nations and tribes. This does not happen among the (community of) negligent animals. This happens only in the community of human beings, in whom God has created (the ability to act) in an orderly manner by using their thinking ability. With their ability to think, human beings are able to arrange their political life and maintain law and order, which guides them into avoiding detrimental things and leads them from the evil to the good. This can be done after they recognise evil and its detrimental effects, based on sound experience (*tajrība ṣaḥīḥa*) and customs (*'awā'id*), and thus they are different from the (community of) negligent animals. This shows that through the power of thinking, the actions of human beings are arranged in an orderly manner and not likely to be detrimental.[39]

These concepts are not out of (the reach of) sensual perception (*ḥiss*) and therefore do not require a deep study. All can be obtained through experience,

and derived from it. This is because they are all connected with (the world of) *sensibilia*. Their truth and falsehood become apparent in the course of the event and the students of this concept can simply learn them. In fact everyone can learn these concepts as much as he is able. He can pick up knowledge from the experiences that occur in his dealings with his fellow men. Eventually he will be able to determine what is necessary and to be done and not to be done. By this way he will obtain the proper habit (*malaka*) in dealing with his fellow men.[40]

He who follows this procedure the whole of his life will become familiar with every single problem, but this requires a long period of time. God has made it easy for human beings to obtain this (social knowledge) in a shorter period through learning and following the experience of their fathers, teachers and elders and accepting their teachings. (In this way) they do not need to (spend a long time) to carefully study all those events. People who have no knowledge and are not willing to learn and to follow will need long and careful study to become educated in this matter. They are unfamiliar in this kind of knowledge. Their manners in dealing with others will be bad and defective.[41]

This is the meaning of the famous saying, "he who is not educated by his parents will be educated by time" (*man lam yu'addib-hu wālidu-hu addaba-hu al-zamān*).[42] That is, he who does not learn from his parents (including teachers and elders) has to learn with the help of nature from events that happen in the course of time. Time will teach and educate him because he needs that education, since by nature he needs the co-operation of the others.

In short, the experimental intellect, which is obtained after the discerning intellect, is the one that provides man with proper habits in dealing with his fellow men. After the experimental intellect, there is the higher degree of speculative intellect, but it is not the subject of discussion here.

Section 4 discusses knowledge of human beings and knowledge of the angels. Ibn Khaldūn draws the attention of the reader to the existence of three worlds: the world of sensual perception (*'ālam al-ḥiss*),[43] the world of intellect (*'ālam al-'aql*)[44] and the world of spirits and angels (*'ālam al-arwāḥ wa-'l-malā'ika*).[45] Man shares the first world with animals, while the second and the third are shared with the angels.

The higher spiritual world and its essences are often deduced by dreaming during sleep. Sleep contains visions of things that we are unaware of when awake, and (if) they are true and conform with actuality, we know that they come from the world of truth (*'ālam al-ḥaqq*). Confused dreams (*aḍghāth al-aḥlām*) are nothing but pictures of imagination stored by perception (*idrāk*) inside us (*fī-'l-bāṭin*) on the thinking ability, and this thinking ability operates after the pictures leave sense perception. Ibn Khaldūn notes that he has no clear proofs about this spiritual world. On this assumption, he concludes that human beings in this respect can obtain only general knowledge, not particular.[46]

Further, Ibn Khaldūn informs us that what is claimed by the metaphysicists or divine philosophers (*ḥukamā' al-ilāhiyyūn*) – that they know the details of this spiritual world, which they call intellects (*'uqūl*) – is also not certain. This is because the method of logical argumentation (*burhān al-naẓarī*) as established in logic cannot be applied here. One of the conditions of this method is that the propositions (*qaḍāyā*) must be primary and essential (*awwāliyya dhātiyya*), while these spiritual essences (*dhawāt rūḥāniyya*) are of an unknown essentiality (*majhūla dhātiyya*). Therefore the only means to perceive the details and particulars of these spiritual worlds is through *sharī'a* (religious teachings) that is elucidated by faith. Of these three worlds, the one that we can perceive best is of course the world of human beings (*'ālam al-bashar*), because it is existential (*wujdānī*).[47]

Human beings share the world of senses (*'ālam al-ḥiss*) with animals while the worlds of intellect and spirits are shared with the angels. They are the essences free from corporeality and matter and the pure intellect (*'aql ṣirf*) in which the intellect, the thinker and the subject unite as if in an essence, the reality of which is perception and intellect.[48]

The knowledge of the angels always conforms by its very nature with the known facts, and there can never be any defect in it. On the other hand, the knowledge of human beings is the attainment of pictures of the things that have not been attained. They are all acquired (*muktasab*).[49]

The essence, which contains the forms of things, namely the soul, is a material substance (*mādda hayūlāniyya*) that takes over the forms of existence with the help of the forms of the things, which are obtained gradually. Eventually it reaches perfection and death confirms its existence as regards both matter and form (*mādda wa-ṣūra*), while the objects (*maṭlūbāt*) are subject to constant vacillation between negation and assertion (*mutaraddida bayna al-nafy wa-'l-ithbāt*), seeking one of the two by means of the middle connector (*al-wasṭ al-rābiṭ*) between the two extremes (*ṭarafayn*).[50]

When that is achieved and the object has become known, it must be explained that there exists an agreement between knowledge and the things known. Such agreement may often be clarified by technical logical argumentation (*burhān*). But that is from behind the veil. It is not like the direct vision that is found in the case of the knowledge of the angels, whereby the veil will be removed and the agreement be effected through direct perceptive vision (*al-'iyān al-idrākī*).[51]

The third world, which contains spiritual essences (*dhawāt rūḥāniyya*), which is an unknown essence (*majhūla dhātiyya*), cannot be obtained through mere power of intellect. Ibn Khaldūn points out that the details and particulars of this world can only be obtained through religious teachings, which are elucidated by faith. Ibn Khaldūn also draws the attention of the readers to the existence of the *hijāb* (veil) that forms a sort of divide between man and the

third world. The removal of this veil can be achieved through remembrance of God (*dhikr*), prayers, *tanazzuh* (purification), fasting and devoting oneself to God. The element of Sufism can be seen quite clearly in this particular point.[52]

Section 5 discusses the knowledge of the prophets. The prophets are the class of human beings that are different from the ordinary human condition. This is because their power of "turning towards the divine" (*wijha al-rabbāniyya*) is stronger than their humanity as far as the powers of perception and desires (*nuzū'iyya*) (such as *shahwa*, *ghaḍab* and all other conditions of the body) are concerned. This means that the prophets are free from the influences of human conditions (*aḥwāl al-bashariyya*) except inasmuch as they are necessary for life. By virtue of having prophetic quality, they turn towards divine matters such as worship (*'ibāda*) and remembrance of God (*dhikr*) as required by their knowledge of Him, giving information from what has been revealed to them and (providing) guidance for the nation according to particular methods and in a manner known to be peculiar to them. It undergoes no change in them, as if there were a natural disposition which God has given them.[53]

Above the human world there is the spiritual world known to us by its influences by means of the powers of perception and volition. The essences of this spiritual world are pure perception and pure intellection. It is the world of the angels. Since revelation is a property of the spiritual world, the world of angelicality, it is a necessity for all the prophets to have this disposition to be able to "jump up" (*insilākh*) from humanity to angelicality in order to be able to receive the revelation.[54]

The prophets then come back to the world of humanity to convey the messages to their fellow human beings. This is the meaning of revelation (*waḥy*).[55] The knowledge of the prophets in this particular situation is a direct observation and vision (*'ilm shahāda wa-'iyān*), does not contain any mistakes or slips and is not affected by any errors or unfounded assumptions. At this point there will be an agreement (*muṭābāqa*) between knowledge and the things known, because the veil of the supernatural (*ḥijāb al-ghayb*) has been lifted and cleared and direct observation has been attained.[56]

The last section of the prefatory remarks is on the notion that human beings are essentially ignorant and become learned through acquiring knowledge. This section seems to serve the purpose of recapitulating the previous sections on human thought. In this section Ibn Khaldūn clarifies the three levels of human intellect.

The ability to think that God bestows on the human being enables him to arrange his actions in an orderly manner. This is called the discerning intellect. When it helps him to acquire knowledge of ideas and of things that are useful or detrimental, it is called the experimental intellect. When it helps him to be able to obtain perception of the existent, whether that is present or absent,

it is the speculative intellect. This level of intellection is obtained after a man reaches perfection in his humanity.

The ascending process of intellection begins with the first level, i.e. discernment (*tamyīz*). Before coming to this level, a man possesses no knowledge whatsoever and is considered as in the category of animal. His origin, the way in which he was created, is from a drop of sperm, a clot of blood and a lump of flesh, and subsequently he will be given sensual perception and the heart, that is the thinking ability, as the verse of the Quran says, "…and We gave you hearing vision and a heart…".[57]

In his first condition before discernment, man is simply matter (*hayūlā*), inasmuch as he is ignorant of all knowledge until he acquires it by means of his own organ, and thus his human essence reaches perfection of existence (*fa-kamala dhātu-hu al-insāniyya fī-wujūdi-hā*). The Quranic verse reads: "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 thought with the calamus, thought man what he did not know."[58] This means that God is the one who allowed the human being to acquire knowledge he did not yet possess, after he had been a clot of blood and a lump of flesh.[59] This very Quranic verse explains that the human being is by nature ignorant. However, he is equipped with a natural ability to be able to acquire knowledge according to the level of humanity he possesses, while the ultimate source of knowledge is God alone.

The growth of the text

The above exposition shows what great textual dissimilarities there are between the two texts. Though the focal point is the same – human thought – the considerable enlargement of the longer version must have a certain impact on the reader's understanding of the text. At the very least, the reader who consults the expanded version should possess a better elaboration than those who read the shorter one.

There is no clear explanation or any particular indication why this dissimilarity has occurred. Based on Rosenthal's study, it is believed that it came about as a result of Ibn Khaldūn's habit of correcting and expanding his own writings.[60] In understanding this situation, we have to bear in mind that Ibn Khaldūn was far from any large and systematic library. He had to rely entirely on his memory and notes. From time to time he keeps on expanding and changing the text on points that he might have thought did not express adequately or fully the ideas he had in mind. This considerable enlargement of the introductory remarks to Chapter 6 is perhaps a notable example of this.[61] Another possibility that we might suggest here is that the two versions of introductory remarks are purposely prepared by the author for different groups of reader, i.e. the general reader and the expert reader. This suggestion

is based on the assumption that the long version is indeed very technical and might not be easy for a general reader to understand.

Connection of the introductory materials with the contents of Chapter 6

The next question that concerns us is the significance of the extended introductory remarks in the context of the chapter. Again, on the basis of Rosenthal's study these introductory remarks are, in any case, a late addition in the composition and textual history of the *Muqaddima*. They recapitulate and amplify previous discussions of knowledge.[62] If one glances through the rest of the chapter, it is easy to come to an expected general conclusion that the central point or the basic issue is the various kinds of sciences and classification of knowledge, which to some extent has no direct relation to the introductory remarks.

Now, it is our duty to try to find out the possible connection between the introductory remarks and the rest of the chapter. According to my reading, the most likely place to propose this connection is to turn to the point of departure, i.e. to see it from the point of view of epistemology, which is a branch of philosophy. It is a matter of fact that the human ability to think is the centre of the theory of epistemology, without which no such theory can be built up. From here we should now be able to understand why these introductory remarks are significant and to a certain extent become the foundation of our understanding of the rest of the chapter. Viewed in this way, these introductory remarks can be seen as the framework and reference paradigm of Ibn Khaldūn's philosophy, his understanding of human beings and of course his concept of epistemology. Although the explanations of the human mental faculty here are of Greek origin, Ibn Khaldūn clearly tries to inject certain Islamic values in sketching his scheme. Perhaps a notable example is the concept of heart (*fu'ād*), which he refers to the Quranic notion of *af'ida*.[63]

Excursus

So far as Chapter 6 is concerned, the introductory remarks should be seen as the most important. This is because they provide the theoretical foundation and conceptual framework of the whole content of Chapter 6 and the body of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of civilisation. In these introductory remarks Ibn Khaldūn reveals, although implicitly, his thoughts on epistemology, the philosophy of man with all his abilities and potentialities as the agent of civilisation.

They also show the scheme that Ibn Khaldūn has in mind about the process and the product of civilisation. Man is the central element of this scheme. Although man shares with other animals the animal aspect of his life, he is

unique in his own class with his ability to think, i.e. his intellect. With this ability he is distinguished from the rest of the animals.

The ability to think enables man, first, to obtain his livelihood, second, to establish social organisation, third, to receive and accept divine revelations through the prophets, and, fourth, to produce sciences and crafts. It is with these factors Ibn Khaldūn builds up his theory of civilisation, which he termed " *'umrān al-basharī*". As far as Ibn Khaldūn's scheme is concerned the above factors are co-existent and associated with each other. Civilisation must be built upon the triumph of knowledge and sciences possessed and produced by members of society. Knowledge can be achieved through exercise of the mental faculty in man, learning and instruction and through the prophets of God.

Philosophically speaking, the role and function of the human mental faculty in obtaining and producing knowledge in the context of the development of a civilisation is nothing new. Discussions of the functions of the faculty of intellect and the rational power in man have in fact occupied some space in the history and development of the study of epistemology. This study was established as early as the time of the Greeks. Aristotle, for example, treated this subject of intellectual excellence in his *Nicomachean Ethic*. He listed five cognitive states. These are arts or crafts (*techne*), scientific knowledge (*episteme*), practical wisdom (*phronesis*), *sophia* and *nous*. Two of these, *techne* and *phronesis*, are in the category of practical science, while another two, *episteme* and *sophia*, are in the category of theoretical science. *Nous* is employed in both spheres.[64] Ibn Khaldūn's treatment is in some way like Aristotle's, although not exactly the same, and his attempt to explore this subject may well be considered as a continuation of what had been attempted by Aristotle, i.e. this nature of philosophical inquiry.

Science or knowledge has both functions: it is a tool to bring about civilisation and is itself the product of civilisation. In other words, civilisation is established as a result of man's achievement in all aspects of his life including in sciences and crafts, while new sciences and crafts are the excellent products of civilisation. Along the line there is another factor, which is of no less importance, that is the process of instruction (*ta'līm*). It is by way of instruction that knowledge and science can be transferred and developed. Members of one generation obtain the knowledge of their ancestors through the method of instruction, besides at the same time producing new knowledge through their own intellectual activities and creativity. This process is considered as natural to humans insofar as the civilisation process is concerned.

2

MAN AS THINKING ANIMAL

A philosophical introduction to human psychology and the establishment of social organisation

The following pages will be devoted to an analysis of Ibn Khaldūn's thought on the concept of man as thinking animal and how it is related to the two important concepts of co-operation (*ta'āwun*) and prophecy (*nubuwwa*), and, more importantly, how this concept may be regarded as the foundation of the establishment of human social and political organisation. My inquiry here will take into account both the short and the long versions of the introductory remarks.

The significance of *fikr*

In his introductory remarks, as earlier discussed, Ibn Khaldūn repeatedly uses the term *fikr* to describe the power that leads human beings to understanding and to be able to fulfil the needs of their lives. He reiterates that by means of the power of *fikr* a human being is inspired to obtain his livelihood and to establish co-operation, which brings about the establishment of a human community. Also, by means of the same power that human being is able to accept divine revelation which comes through the mediation of the prophets of God, to act according to that guidance as well as to prepare for salvation, for the life of the next world.[1]

Obviously, Ibn Khaldūn is attempting to establish his notion and concept of *fikr* and to demonstrate its significance in human life. In other words, what he is trying to establish is that the faculty of *fikr* is actually part of human existence, without which human beings would fall into a status equal to that of the other animals. As we understand, this psychological concept is very central to human life in the sense that it is the source of all other human activities. Theoretically, it is important for the author to take this concept as his point of departure before exploring other concepts related to epistemology and human social and political organisation.

However, as a point of argument, I should like to express my curiosity regarding the use of the technical term here. The term used by the author here is *fikr*. I find that, based on the author's discussion, this concept is quite

similar or at least corresponds very closely to the concept of *'aql* (*nous* or reason), which is widely used in theology and philosophy and perhaps religious law.[2] Why does the author not use *'aql*, which is more established, instead of *fikr*? We have yet to find an answer to this.

Ibn Khaldūn goes on to discuss the function of *fikr*. For this, he lists quite explicitly three major functions of *fikr*, namely to obtain a livelihood (*li-taḥṣīl ma'āshi-hi*), to establish co-operation (*al-ta'āwun 'alay-hi*) and to be able to accept divine revelation through the prophets of *God (qabūl mā jā'at bi-hi al-anbiyā' 'an Allāh ta'ālā).*[3] This means to say that without a sound *fikr*, the human being will not be able to live in a proper and organised manner as a human being and of course will not be able to understand the needs of his life to establish co-operation, let alone the message of the prophets. The human being therefore relies entirely on his thinking ability to fulfil the needs of his life. By this, Ibn Khaldūn has successfully demonstrated the very core function of the faculty of *fikr* in the process of formation of a society.

Up to this point, we have been able to understand theoretically the significance of the human mental faculty. Equally importantly, we have been able to grasp the major functions of *fikr* that have been proposed by the author. In a way, the establishment of this notion has laid the theoretical foundation that will serve as the point of departure for further discussion regarding human psychology and human social organisation.

The importance of co-operation *(ta'āwun)*

The ability to think enables the human being to find ways of making a living and to establish co-operation. This is the beginning of the process of establishing a society (*ijtimā'*).[4] In this, Ibn Khaldūn has proposed quite convincingly a very basic social concept which corresponds very closely to modern social theory of the division of labour.[5] A more detailed explanation of this concept is found in Chapter 1 of the *Muqaddima*, where Ibn Khaldūn deals with the subject at some length.[6]

In this passage the author explains how the concept of co-operation operates and at the same time rationalises and relates how the thinking factor could be linked to the social process of *'umrān*. The main outcomes of thinking ability are to find ways of making a living and to establish "co-operation", and the result of co-operation is the establishment of a society.[7] In this sentence, the logical sequence of the process can be understood quite clearly; however, the relationship of co-operation and the establishment of a society need to be explained further. As indicated earlier, the term "co-operation" cannot simply be taken literally to mean helping each other. Co-operation at this juncture has to be understood as representing an important social concept and of course an important social process. The logic of this concept is quite straightforward. Man cannot live without food. In order to produce food, he needs to undergo

a certain process and carry out a series of efforts. However, the effort of a single individual for this matter is not sufficient to obtain food. For example, we assume a minimum of food that is enough for one day. A little bread, for instance, can be obtained only after much preparation including grinding, kneading and baking. Each of these processes requires tools that can be provided with the help of several crafts such as the blacksmith, the carpenter and the potter. Assuming that man could eat unprepared grain, an even greater number of operations would be necessary in order to obtain the grain, including sowing, reaping and threshing. Each of these requires a number of tools and many more crafts. It is beyond the capability of one individual to carry out all those jobs or even a part of them by himself. Thus, they must be carried out by a combination of abilities, crafts and efforts from among his fellow members of society, if he is to obtain food for himself and for them. This can be done only through co-operation.[8]

By nature, the human being is constantly thinking of how to fulfil all his needs in life. For this he has to exercise his mental ability in order to find ways and means to survive and continue his life. As a consequence, this process gives birth to new sciences and crafts. According to Ibn Khaldūn, knowledge or science and crafts can be obtained through several methods. They can be obtained through merely mental exercise, developing new science and crafts, or from those who developed them earlier, or from the teachings of the prophets of God. It is from these sources that knowledge can be developed into a more systematic and specific set of science.[9]

The process of knowledge

As mentioned, the human being is busy thinking about all the things that he needs in life by exercising his thinking faculty. In this way, knowledge and crafts develop. When the thinking faculty performs its function, by nature the process of knowledge takes place and subsequently knowledge and crafts develop. This process is natural in accordance with the logical order of the law of causality. Moreover, Ibn Khaldūn explains, it is also in the nature of the thinking faculty to have a kind of desire or excitement in itself to obtain perceptions that it does not yet possess.[10] This means that it is a requirement of nature that the thinking faculty in man performs its role to seek and obtain knowledge, as well as to produce crafts.

Ibn Khaldūn proceeds to demonstrate how the process of obtaining perceptions develops. In order to obtain these perceptions (idrākāt), man has recourse to those who preceded him or those who had more knowledge than him, or he takes them from the earlier prophets (fa-yarji‘u ilā man sabaqa-hu bi-‘ilm aw-zāda ‘alay-hi bi-ma‘rifatin aw-idrākin aw-akhadha-hu min-man taqaddamu-hu min al-anbiyā’).[11]

The human being has to exercise his thinking ability in order to find ways and means to survive and continue his life. This process results in the birth of new sciences and crafts. Sciences and crafts develop through several methods. They can be obtained from an earlier generation who developed certain science and crafts, or from the teaching of the prophets of God, or they could be obtained as a result of perception, understanding and observation of particular realities (*ḥaqā'iq*). This understanding of particular realities will be transformed into particular systematic sets of knowledge. These systematic and specific sets of knowledge are then transferred to the next generation by way of instruction and education, which is one of the methods of the development of science and crafts. Ibn Khaldūn concludes his argument by saying that the continuity of this process and its interconnection show clearly that knowledge and education is something natural in human life.[12]

The need for prophecy

We understand that one of the special functions of human intellectual faculty is to prepare for the acceptance of prophetic message (*…qabūl mā-jā'at bi-hi al-anbiyā'*). In fact this notion has been constituted in the author's earlier statement that the highest and most important source of knowledge is the knowledge that comes from the prophets who transmitted it to those whom they met.[13]

In establishing this notion, it is obvious that Ibn Khaldūn has in fact placed the prophetic factor as one of the very important elements in his epistemological scheme. Based on his remark, it is certain that prophecy, or revelation in the broader sense of the term, plays a significant role as the highest source of knowledge and the ultimate guidance that leads human beings towards prosperity in this life as well as salvation in the next.

In Islamic theology, we learn that prophetic knowledge or the prophetic phenomenon is divine in nature and belongs to the divine world. In the same vein, we also understand that something divine could not be comprehended by merely human mental exercise. Revelation is of this nature. Therefore, its nature, too, is unable to be grasped by human mental ability. This means that revelation can only be communicated to the human community through an agent or intermediary, in this case the prophets of God. Based on this reasoning, we could say that the existence of the prophets of God (whose function is to bring divine messages) in the human community, is something of a necessity. Prophecy has to operate within the human community and revelation has to be communicated in human language. It is only by this method that the prophets can carry out their functions, i.e. to provide guidance to human beings amongst whom they operate.

It is also interesting to see how Ibn Khaldūn relates the prophetic office,

which is divine in nature, with the social and historical process, which is merely human. How does he reconcile the normal course of human affairs with the transcendental nature of religious belief? As a Muslim, Ibn Khaldūn from the very outset stands very firmly on the basic notion that is to admit the fact of divine interference in human affairs. At the same time, he also recognises the law of nature that human affairs have to follow in orderly fashion. In relation to this he makes an attempt to explain the rationale of prophetic office in human terms. For this matter, he recognises the existence of the perfection of a chosen human being to become the transmitter of the divine messages at a particular point in time. This happens at the time when the soul of the prophet, which has been prepared to "jump out" into the angelic world to be able to accept the divine messages, receives divine revelation, i.e. when the spiritual essence of the soul has become perfect *in actu*. The methods of the revelatory process, Ibn Khaldūn explains, are either that the prophet hears a kind of inarticulate internal sound or he visibly perceives the angel.[14] In both cases, the message having been received, the prophet then "returns" to the human world and the message is transformed in terms understandable by human beings, i.e. in human language, so that humanity at large may be able to understand it.[15]

At this point, we can make an assessment that the author has successfully explained his scheme, i.e. reconciling the relationship between the divine nature of the prophetic office and the human nature of the social and historical process, as well as justifying the need for prophecy. We now understand why Ibn Khaldūn considers the prophetic office as the most important and the highest form of knowledge. And of course, as Rahman rightly suggests, nothing is in the mind of Ibn Khaldūn when he builds up the scheme except to declare that the Quran is the ultimate actual recorded revelation which is certainly the human form of the purely divine *logos*.[16]

We can now see quite clearly Ibn Khaldūn's notion of prophecy and how this concept is explained in the practical world of human reality. In a religion-based society, religion plays an important role as source of law and guidance of moral conduct. In the case of Islam, which is probably referred to here by Ibn Khaldūn, certainly revelation, the Quran and the teaching of the Prophet is the ultimate and highest form knowledge.

The nature of crafts and scientific instruction

In Sections 7 and 8, Ibn Khaldūn discusses a number of issues regarding scientific instruction (*ta'līm al-'ilm*) as a craft (*ṣanī'a*). For the purpose of this study we will divide the contents of these sections into five major parts. The first part deals with the concept and the importance of habit (*malaka*), the second portrays the contemporary situation regarding the tradition of teaching

and learning, the third highlights some of the methods of acquiring scientific habits, the fourth deliberates on urban (sedentary, i.e. non-nomadic) civilisation and the improvement of the soul, and the fifth, which is Section 8, illustrates the proliferation and decay of science and crafts in relation to urban civilisation.

The importance of habit (malaka)

Teaching is considered categorically as one of the crafts (ṣanā'i'). Craft is identical with habit (malaka), while habit provides the skill by means of which knowledge and science are practised.[17] The nature of craft has been discussed by Ibn Khaldūn previously in Chapter 5, Sections 15–21.[18] For this matter, it is not out of place to cross-refer to Chapter 5, as this will help us better to understand the concept. Regarding the concept of craft, Ibn Khaldūn writes:

> It should be known that a craft is the habit of something concerned with action and thought. Inasmuch as it is concerned with action, it is something corporeal and perceptible to the senses. Things that are corporeal and perceptible to 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. 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 of 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 the student acquires in a craft, and the habit he attains, correspond to the quality of instruction and the habit of the teacher.[19]

Ibn Khaldūn then summarises his theory that skill and mastery in science and knowledge are the result of a habit (malaka). Habit enables the person who possesses it to understand the basic principle, the methods and the procedures, and the problems, as well as to deduce (istinbāṭ) details of that particular science. Without skill and mastery, such a habit will not be obtained.[20] In the same context, the author reminds us that habit is not synonymous with understanding and appreciation (al-fahm wa-'l-wa'y). Habit is the exclusive property of a certain category of people, i.e. the class of scholar and person who are well versed in a certain scientific discipline. On the other hand, understanding and knowing by memory, especially in matters pertaining

to a single problem in a certain scientific discipline, are equally shared by someone who is well versed in the discipline and the beginner or common man who has no background in that subject.[21]

The author continues to explain that all habits are corporeal (*jismāniyya*) in nature. Habit can be of the body or of the brain (*dimāgh*) as the outcome of thinking, such as arithmetic. All corporeal things belong to the category of *sensibilia* (*maḥsūsāt*). As we recognised earlier, habit constitutes an element of craft. As a craft, habit can be transmitted through the process of teaching or instruction. Therefore, the transmission of habit depends very much upon the process of teaching (*taʿlīm*) and of course the continuity of teaching (*al-sanad fī-ʾl-taʿlīm*). Ibn Khaldūn lays the foundation of his argument on the evidence that all kinds of knowledge and crafts practised by the famous scholars and authorities have their own tradition in the craft of teaching.[22]

Another argument that teaching belongs to the category of craft can be seen from differences in technical terms used by different scholars and authorities in their teaching tradition. Ibn Khaldūn points out here the importance of technical terminology (*isṭilāḥāt*) in the teaching tradition.[23] Every scholar or authority has his own technical terms for teaching a particular scientific discipline. Again, this is another proof that teaching is not part of the science itself. Ibn Khaldūn argues further that if these technical terms are part of the science, they would have to be the same with all scholars, but the reality is not so. He cites speculative theology as one of the examples of how much the technical terms differ particularly between ancient and modern teaching of the subject, whereas the science as such is one and the same.[24]

The contemporary situation

Ibn Khaldūn goes on, turning his attention to the contemporary situation in his own time in the Maghrib. Presented in the form of a historical narrative, he portrays the state of *ʿumrān* particularly in the field of scientific instruction. Here he establishes the notion that the flourishing of scientific instruction depends very much upon political stability and continuity of the teaching tradition (*al-sanad fī-ʾl-taʿlīm*).

The fall of the civilisation of the Maghrib and the disintegration of its dynasties results in the deterioration of scientific instruction and the disappearance of the crafts. Ibn Khaldūn picks up the examples of two cities, Qayrawān and Qurṭūba or Cordoba.[25] Qayrawān and Cordoba were once two centres of urban culture in the Maghrib and Spain (Andalusia) respectively. The civilisations were highly developed while scientific tradition and crafts flourished. The tradition of scientific instruction was firmly rooted. But when the two cities fell into ruin, the tradition of the crafts and sciences deteriorated. The continuity of scientific tradition ceased among the inhabitants of these

two cities. Only limited continuation was found in Murrākush, or Marrakesh, during the reign of the al-Muwaḥḥid (Almohad) dynasty. However, urban culture in Marrakesh was not fully developed either. Ibn Khaldūn sees two main reasons for this, namely (1) the original Bedouin attitude of the al-Muwaḥḥids and (2) the shortness of the duration between its beginning and its fall. It is for that reason that urban culture enjoyed only very limited continuity here.[26]

The destruction of the dynasty in Marrakesh in the middle of the seventh (thirteenth) century marked the end of urban culture and the scientific culture in the West (Maghrib). When such a situation occurs, the continuity of scientific tradition depends entirely upon the effort of individual scholars of the time. In connection with this, Ibn Khaldūn highlights the role of Ibn Zaytūn (Abū al-Qāsim b. Abū Bakr) (d. 691/1292), who travelled from Ifrīqiyya (Africa) to the East.[27] The East at that time was acknowledged to be the centre of urban culture and scientific tradition. There, Ibn Zaytūn came into contact with the pupils of the well-known scholar Ibn al-Khāṭib (Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī) (d. 606/1209). From them Ibn Zaytūn obtained skills in intellectual and traditional matters. Another scholar who followed in the footsteps of Ibn Zaytūn was Abū 'Abd Allāh b. Shu'aib al-Dukkālī (d. 664/1261). Ibn Shu'aib also took the opportunity to study with Egyptian professors. Both Ibn Zaytūn and Ibn Shu'aib then returned to Tunis and established their tradition of scientific instruction. Their tradition was inherited by their pupils, generation after generation.[28]

The tradition eventually reached Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Salām (d. 749/1348) and Ibn al-Imām (d. 743/1342). Through Ibn al-Imām the tradition was transplanted to Tilmisān. Therefore, at this time, the pupils of Ibn 'Abd al-Salām and Ibn al-Imām can be found in Tunis and Tilmisān respectively. However, because the number of pupils was very small, the tradition was not strong enough to ensure its continuity.[29]

Towards the end of the seventh (thirteenth) century, another person followed the same process. He was Abū 'Alī Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Mashaddālī (d. 731/1330). Again he travelled to the East, studied with the pupils of Abū 'Amr al-Ḥājib (d. 646/1249) together with another person, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 648/1285). Al-Mashaddālī then returned to the West and settled in Bijāya (Boogie). His scientific tradition was continued by his pupils in Bijāya. One of his pupils, 'Imrān al-Mashaddālī, went to Tilmisān and settled there. However, the tradition in Tilmisān and Bijāya did not flourish. At the same time, in Fez and other cities in the West, there had been no continuation of the scientific tradition since the fall of al-Qayrawān and Cordoba.[30]

What can we draw from this story? It is worth making the point here that the central theme of this section is continuity of teaching (al-sanad fī-'l-ta'līm). Ibn Khaldūn, as I indicate above, holds the notion that the flourishing of scientific instruction (ta'līm al-'ilm), which is the most fundamental prerequisite

of the establishment of the *'umrān*, depends very much upon political stability and continuity of the teaching tradition. When a city falls into ruin, because of the collapse of the dynasty or for another reason, urban culture and scientific tradition in that city will collapse also. All related institutions will cease to function. When this situation arises, as Ibn Khaldūn sees it, the continuity of scientific tradition will depend entirely upon individuals. These individuals have to travel out of the city to other places where urban culture is established and scientific tradition is cultivated.[31] They have then to return to their original place to propagate and establish scientific tradition in the ruined city.

In relation to this, Ibn Khaldūn tries to show that urban culture and scientific tradition in the West came to an end after the fall of Qayrawān and Cordoba. Although there was a little continuation in Marrakesh during the reign of al-Muwaḥḥid, it was not strong enough to establish a new scientific tradition and urban culture there. After the fall of Marrakesh, scientific tradition in the West remained as the heritage of Ibn Zaytūn, al-Dukkālī, al-Mashaddālī and al-Qarāfī, who travelled "in search of knowledge" to the East. However, their heritage was not firm enough to guarantee the new urban culture and scientific tradition in the West.

Urban culture and the improvement of the soul

Towards the end of Section 7, Ibn Khaldūn focuses his attention on urban culture and the improvement of the soul. Before this there is a discussion in regard to some of the methods of acquiring the scientific habit and the situation of scientific tradition in the East and the West.

The easiest method to acquire the scientific habit, in the eyes of Ibn Khaldūn, is by acquiring the ability to express ideas in intellectual and scientific discourse. This includes the ability to discuss and dispute scientific problems.[32] Such an ability cannot be obtained through merely attending scholarly sessions. There are cases where some students spend most of their lives attending academic classes, but are unable to talk and discuss matters. Some are concerned with memorising more than is necessary. Thus, they do not obtain much of a habit in the practice of science, although in some cases their memorised knowledge may be more extensive than that of other scholars. Again, Ibn Khaldūn emphasises that the scientific habit is not identical with memorised knowledge.[33]

In relation to the continuity of scientific tradition and the education system, Ibn Khaldūn compares the development in the East and in the West. The West, by which he means Morocco, Tunis and Spain, is considered "backward" in the scientific tradition and education system as compared to the East, the term he uses to refer to Khurasan, Transoxania and Cairo. In Morocco, for example, the period specified for the residence of students in college is sixteen

years as a result of poor quality in the education system, which makes it difficult for students to acquire the requisite habits, while in Spain the scientific tradition has disappeared. The only scholarly discipline remaining there is Arabic philology and literature.[34]

In the East, education is very much in demand and the scientific tradition is greatly cultivated. Against the ruins of old cities like Baghdad, Kūfa and Basra, history witnessed the emergence of Khurasān, Transoxania and Cairo as centres of knowledge and scientific tradition.[35]

In regard to urban culture and its relationship with the improvement of the soul, Ibn Khaldūn holds the view that urban culture can improve the nature of the soul. He believes that the difference in cleverness between the people of the East and those of the West is in fact the result of urban culture. Similarly, it is quite a remarkable fact that people of the East are now (he says) more firmly rooted in science and crafts. In the same vein, he rejects the views of those who believe that the intellect of the people of the East in general is more perfect than that of the people of the West. Instead, he insists there is no difference in kind between the souls of the people of the East and those of the West. The superiority of the people of the East rests in the additional intelligence that accrues to the soul from the influence of urban culture.[36]

The last part of Section 7 is devoted to his comments on the intellect, aptitude, skills and habits of sedentary, urban people. Sedentary people, he writes,

> observe a particular code of manners (*ādāb*) in everything they undertake. They 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 the rest of their activities.[37]

This code of manners constitutes and forms a kind of order that cannot be transgressed. It comes together with certain kinds of crafts, which will be inherited by later generations.

In relation to this, Ibn Khaldūn again stresses that all crafts have their own degree (*murattaba*) and influences on the soul. They cause the soul to acquire additional intelligence, which prepares the soul to accept other crafts. Good habits in teaching and crafts and other customary activities in this context give additional powers to the intellect and thinking abilities of man. It is the influence of scientific activities that results in a cleverer people of the East.[38]

The Bedouin and sedentary people differ in their level of cleverness. Ibn Khaldūn agrees with this point of view, but he does not agree with the opinion that they differ in the reality of their humanity and intelligence. To him all

men are on an equal level but sedentary, urban people possess numerous crafts, as well as the habits that go with them and good methods of teaching which the Bedouin do not have. There are cases where the Bedouin are of the highest rank in understanding, intellectual perfection and natural qualification.[39]

Urban culture and political stability improve the advancement of science

In Section 8, Ibn Khaldūn presents a general theory of the development of science and crafts. Science and crafts are considered as the products of sedentary or urban culture. In relation to this Ibn Khaldūn says: "The quality and number of crafts depend on the greater or lesser extent of civilisation in the cities and on the sedentary culture and luxury they enjoy."[40] Highly developed crafts can be considered as something additional to just making a living. Science and crafts cannot be developed or cultivated in villages and among the inhabitants of the deserts. To develop them, people must travel to seek knowledge in cities where the tradition of scientific instruction is strongly established and civilisation is highly cultivated.

The advancement of science depends very much upon political stability. Ibn Khaldūn quotes examples of cities, namely Baghdad, Cordoba, Qayrawān, Basra and Kūfa. Those cities were once centres of civilisation and urban culture. People were widely versed in various technical terminologies in education and in different kinds of sciences as well as in inventing new disciplines. This achievement in civilisation is portrayed by Ibn Khaldūn as greater than anything that came before or after: "They exceeded (all) who had come before them and surpassed (all) who came after them."[41] However, the picture was completely reversed when they practically suffered catastrophic diminution and loss of civilisation. Science and educational tradition then disappeared in those cities and were transplanted to others.

Cairo at that time remained as centre of urban culture and civilisation. Of course, Cairo has been well established for thousands of years. Crafts are firmly established there in many varieties. One of them is the educational tradition. Cairo became the centre of education for people from Iraq and the Maghrib. The history of educational tradition in Egypt goes back to the days of Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī (d. 589/1193) onwards, i.e. the last two hundred years under Turkish rule.[42] The Turkish amirs built a great many colleges, hermitages and monasteries (*al-madāris wa-'l-zawāyā wa-'l-rubṭ*) and endowed them with mortmain endowments (*awqāf*), which regarded as likely to be educational foundations.[43] The increase of mortmain endowments resulted in an increase in colleges and teachers and ultimately in the establishment of the educational tradition. These are the products of urban culture.[44]

Excursus

To recapitulate, I will now refresh our minds as to what has been touched in this chapter. Basically, the issue that has been covered in this chapter can be divided into two parts: the first is an introduction to human psychology, while the second relates to the foundation of the establishment of a civilisation.

In the first part we are concerned quite extensively with human psychology, which is centred upon the faculty of *fikr*. Theoretically speaking, the human faculty of *fikr* is the centre of human existence, from which all human activities are generated. It is this faculty that enables the human being to organise his life and to establish co-operation with his fellows. Co-operation, as shown above, is the basis upon which society is established. More importantly, the faculty of *fikr* prepares the human being to be able to accept divine revelation through the intermediation of a prophet. In this regard, religion is another element that forms the foundation of a society. Ibn Khaldūn stresses that in religion-based society, revelation is the source of knowledge par excellence. It is the sole source of law and moral conduct.

In the second part, we learn about the nature of craft and habit and the establishment of scientific instruction. We have learnt that the formation of a society rests upon the ability of its members to establish co-operation. By establishing co-operation, a simple social structure will eventually move and progress towards a more complex and sophisticated one. When this state is achieved, this society is identified as sedentary. Sedentary or urban culture is identical with civilisation. A civilisation is characterised by achievements in crafts and scientific habit. Upon establishment of a civilisation, Ibn Khaldūn reminds us of the next task of the members of the society, which is to maintain that state of civilisation. Here he proposes his theory that the achievement and state of a civilisation can be maintained by a strong and established teaching tradition.

3

THE DIVISION OF THE SCIENCES

The basic division of the sciences

In Section 9 the author gives special attention to the important issue of the division of the sciences (*aṣnāf al-ʿulūm*). From the title, we understand that the author means to tell us of the various kinds of science that exist in his time. Undoubtedly, such restriction would limit the coverage of the discussion to within a certain timeframe. From here we might safely suggest that this discussion represents only the eighth (fourteenth)-century view of the classification of the sciences, i.e. that which obtained in the author's time. What we expect is that at the end of this study we will be able to understand and draw a clear picture of how sciences were viewed and classified for this purpose at that particular time.

Coming back to the text, Ibn Khaldūn tells us that the sciences fall into two categories, namely, the philosophical sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ḥikmiyya al-falsafiyya*) and the traditional conventional sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-naqliyya al-waḍʿiyya*). He writes:

> the sciences with which people concerned themselves in cities, and 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.[1]

On the basis of this statement, it seems that there were no other categories of science, except these two available at that time. Although this statement can be argued, we are not in the position at this stage to make any judgement nor draw any conclusion. We will have the opportunity later to see whether this claim can be justified, when we study the whole text, and it is then we will be able to propose a judgement.

The first category of science is philosophical or intellectual science. Based on Ibn Khaldūn's description, sciences that fall in this category are sciences "with which man can become acquainted through the very nature of his ability

to think…".[2] This means that these sciences are, or can be acquired, through human mental exercise. Through mental exercise, Ibn Khaldūn adds, human beings can become acquainted with the objects (*mawḍūʿāt*), problems (*masāʾil*), arguments and evidence (*barāhīn*), as well as their methods of instruction.[3] This can be achieved through what he describes as human perceptions. In relation to this he mentions another important point, namely speculation (*naẓar*) and research (*baḥth*). These are the two methods through which human perceptions can reach their objective. The ultimate objective in this matter is to be able to differentiate between the right and the wrong. Through this process, a man will be able to distinguish between what is correct and what is incorrect. Plainly speaking, this category of science is no other than the product of human mental ability. Since the description of this category of science as given by the author here is indeed very limited, we will not be able to provide an extensive discussion at this stage. We would expect a more detailed discussion in the future sections that deal directly with this particular subject.

The second kind of science is seen as the traditional, conventional sciences (*alʿulūm al-naqliyya al-waḍʿiyya*). All sciences in this category are founded or based on the revealed authority of the given religious law.[4] Conventionally, this category of sciences is also seen as the religious or revealed sciences, made known to human beings through the mediation of the prophets of God.

As far as the traditional sciences are concerned, Ibn Khaldūn stresses that there is no space for the human intellect to operate in them (*wa-lā majāl fī-hā li-ʾl-ʿaqlī*). However, there is an exception: that the human intellect may be used to derive particulars or to relate problems of detail to basic principles (*illa fī-ilḥāq al-furūʿ min masāʾili-ha bi-ʾl-uṣūl*).[5]

This category of science, unlike the philosophical one, is not the product of the human intellect. There is no human interference in regard to the subject. However, human intellect may be used in connection with these sciences, as in relating problems of detail to basic principles, etc. Since the nature of the traditional sciences is to provide only general principles, particulars and details, which continuously occur in human life from time to time, are not always covered in them. It is therefore the duty of believers to interpret and extrapolate the meaning of the scriptural texts. This may be done by way of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*). The method of analogical reasoning must be derived from the tradition or the text and not vice versa. This is because the tradition itself, by its nature, requires practical interpretations based on the principles set forth in the tradition. Therefore, *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) as a method of interpreting tradition plays a crucial role in man's ability to understand the meaning of the religious principles set forth in the tradition. In short, analogical reasoning here means that man, with the power of his thinking ability, can use his life experience and events with some sort of similarity to interpret the tradition. It is through this process that the traditional sciences are produced and developed.

In the subsequent text, Ibn Khaldūn, as expected, states very clearly that the basis of all traditional sciences is the legal material of the Quran and the *sunna* or *ḥadīth*, the law that is given by God.[6] Since the Quran and the *sunna*, which are both originally in Arabic, constitute the basis of all the traditional sciences, naturally those who want to understand its meaning have to know Arabic. For this matter, Ibn Khaldūn makes another point in regard to the importance of the Arabic language.[7] By virtue of its status as the language of Islam and the Quran, knowledge of the Arabic language is considered as instrumental or auxiliary to the other Islamic sciences.

The author then continues to discuss the numerous kinds of traditional science. Following the hierarchical order, the first is the science of Quranic interpretation (*tafsīr*), then the science of Quranic reading/recitation (*qirā'a*), then the science of tradition (*ḥadīth*), then the principle of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), followed by jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and speculative theology (*kalām*).[8] As indicated above, in order to be able to understand the Quran and the *ḥadīth*, knowledge of the philological sciences (*al-'ulūm al-lisāniyya*) is required. These include various kinds of Arabic philology such as lexicography, grammar, syntax, styles and literature.[9]

Towards the end of this section, Ibn Khaldūn reminds us of another important point: that the traditional sciences he has just described are restricted to Islam and Muslim religious tradition.[10] Although he does not deny the existence of sciences of this sort in other traditions, he admits he is not so interested in discussing them here. His argument is that these sciences have all been discarded (*nāsikha*) and therefore it is pointless to discuss them.[11]

Finally, Ibn Khaldūn describes the development of the traditional sciences in his time as "reaching the farthest possible limit". However, he also expresses upset at the "standstill" situation in the Maghrib. This situation, in his opinion, is caused by the decrease of civilisation and the breaking off of the scientific tradition.

Excursus

The author opens this section with an explicit statement that the sciences existing in this civilisation are of two kinds, one based upon revelation, the other developed and acquired through speculation and research. Both sciences are transferred from generation to generation through instruction.[12] As far as this section is concerned, there are no other kinds of sciences except these two. Since this stage of our study is merely to understand what is going on in the text, we have no intention of trying to question this theory. However, as a point of thought, it is perhaps not out of place to bring here the arguments made by A. Lakhsassi. In his argument against Ibn Khaldūn's epistemology, Lakhsassi has in fact challenged the validity of this theory of the two-fold division of science. He argues that this theory does not conform with Ibn

Khaldūn's own theory of knowledge. Lakhsassi's argument is based upon Ibn Khaldūn's theory of soul. In his theory of soul Ibn Khaldūn pronounces the existence of three types of soul: (1) primary, (2) spiritual and (3) angelical. Lakhsassi believes that this is the foundation of Ibn Khaldūn's epistemology, and therefore the division of science has to be three-fold rather than two-fold. This argument is strengthened by the fact that there are sciences which do not seem to fit into either of the two divisions, i.e. they are neither traditional nor philosophical. This category of sciences includes dream interpretation, Sufism, and the divinatory and magical sciences. These fall outside the scope of the two-fold division explicitly stated in the *Muqaddima*. In view of this inconsistency, Lakhsassi suggests another division, a third category of sciences which he calls the spiritual sciences.[13]

On the part of Ibn Khaldūn, however, there is no clear evidence that he overlooks the fact of the existence of spiritual science. But, quite strangely, he shows less interest in it. He gives the reason for this. He argues that our knowledge in this particular category of science is only at a general level and not particular. He writes:

> 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 proposition of the argument must be primary and essential, but the spiritual essences are of unknown essentiality. Thus, logical argument cannot be applied to them. Our only means of perceiving something of the details of these worlds is what we may glean from matters of religious law, as explained and established by religious faith.[14]

As far as our reading is concerned, by dividing the sciences into two categories, Ibn Khaldūn has drawn a clear and distinctive line between the purely rational sciences and the religious ones.

For this matter, the first category, intellectual science, generally refers to all societies regardless of religious beliefs, while the second one, traditional science, refers specially to Islam alone. The author states this explicitly, and it becomes clearer when he tells us that the basis of all the traditional sciences is the legal material of the Quran and the *sunna*, which is the law given to us by God and His Messenger.[15] The traditional sciences derived from the Quran and the *sunna* are numerous. First in the list is the science of Quranic interpretation. This is followed in order by the science of Quranic reading/

recitation, the science of tradition, the principle of jurisprudence and speculative theology.

Since all these sciences are in Arabic, one will not be able to master them without first mastering the Arabic language. Thus, the study of the Quran and the *ḥadīth* must be preceded by mastery of the Arabic philological sciences including lexicography, grammar, syntax and styles and literature. These sciences are considered as instrumental or auxiliary to the traditional sciences, for without their help one is unable to understand, let alone to interpret, the meaning of the Quran and the *ḥadīth*.

Both the philosophical and the traditional sciences are acquired and passed on through instruction. Here, I should like to make a point that the issue of the division of the sciences is discussed here as a part of the discussion of a wider scope of *'umrān*. Therefore it should not be treated as an independent subject by itself. It has to be understood within the context of the wider macrocosmic view of *'umrān*, or civilisation.

In the preceding discussion, Ibn Khaldūn has made it clear that *'umrān*, or civilisation, can only survive if there is an establishment and continuity of a strong teaching tradition. This will ensure the flourishing of civilisation. A teaching tradition can only be established when there is a strong tradition in the sciences, both traditional and philosophical. In regard to this, it is important to bear in mind that the teaching tradition and the science are two different entities. The teaching is the process while the science is the subject. The relationship between these two entities is like that between drinking and water. The act of drinking cannot be performed without water, while water cannot be drunk except by the act of drinking. In the context of civilisation, a strong tradition in both traditional and philosophical sciences and the establishment of a teaching tradition and continuity have to be seen as the foundation of the establishment of any great civilisation, without which no civilisation will survive.

In conclusion, I feel very strongly, at least at this point, that in this section Ibn Khaldūn has successfully presented to his reader what he means by "sciences" in the earlier section. He has made a significant contribution here to understanding the kinds and the division of sciences especially in the context of the Islamic sciences. Sciences, like crafts, are the product of sedentary, urban culture. They develop together with the development of the soul of a sedentary people. And for Muslims, there is no doubt, the central sources of the sciences are the Quran and the *sunna*.

The traditional sciences

Of the two kinds of sciences, Ibn Khaldūn seems to be more interested in the traditional than in the philosophical one. This can be seen from the discussion

in Section 9. Explanations of traditional sciences occupy more than half of the section, while the philosophical sciences are discussed in a relatively short single paragraph.

Before going any further, it may be important to highlight the concept and implication of the terminology. The term used by Ibn Khaldūn to describe this category of sciences is *naqlī* or *al-naqliyya al-waḍʿiyya*, which means traditional, revealed or conventional; on certain occasions it may mean prophetic sciences. These sciences are not, as stated earlier, the product of human mental ability, but are learnt from the One Who invented or conferred it (*yu'khadhu-hu ʿan man waḍaʿa-hu*). All of these sciences are derived from information based upon the authority of the given religious law. The implication here is that there is no room for human intellect except in the form of hermeneutic interpretation of the given principles. Therefore, development of this category of science depends entirely upon the level of understanding of the principles and to some extent on the ability to relate the particular problems that occur in human life to the basic principles in the text.

Having understood this concept, the traditional sciences presented by Ibn Khaldūn here can be divided into four categories: the Quran and the *sunna*, the law, the *kalām*, and Sufism and dream interpretation.

The sciences of the Quran and the *sunna*

This division includes the science of Quran interpretation (*ʿulum al-tafsīr*), the science of Quran reading (*qirā'āt*) and the sciences of *ḥadīth*. In Section 10, Ibn Khaldūn writes about the sciences of Quran interpretation and Quran reading.

The Quran is the sacred and the holy book of Islam. It was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and written in the form of *muṣḥaf*. The Quran has been transmitted from generation to generation continuously. Although there is only one source of the Quran, the Prophet, because of the different backgrounds of the companions (*ṣaḥāba*) or men around the Prophet, the transmission of the words of the Quran tends to vary. This affects certain words and the way the letters were pronounced. This is the origin of the official and established seven ways or techniques of reading the Quran.[16]

The Quran reciters or readers (*qurrā'*)[17] then circulate and transmit these techniques of reading until this becomes a science and craft in itself. This is put down in writing together with other religious sciences and handed from generation to generation. The transmission and development of the science of Quranic reading follows the same process of continuity as that of other sciences. In the context of the tradition in the East and in Spain, Ibn Khaldūn brings into light some of the great personalities such as Mujāhid (d. 436/1044), who later become the ruler of eastern Spain. Mujāhid was once a slave of the

Amirids ('Āmīriyyīn). He acquired a good knowledge of Quranic discipline from his master al-Manṣūr b. Abī 'Āmir. When Mujāhid became the ruler of Denia (*Dāniah*) and the eastern peninsula, he continued to encourage the cultivation of all sciences, particularly the science of Quranic reading. As a result, the science of Quranic reading became established there.[18]

The cultivation of the science of Quranic reading reached its highest peak with the appearance of Abū 'Amrū al-Dānī (d. 444/1053). He produced numerous works on this subject; among them was *Kitāb al-taysīr*, which later became a general reference work. The efforts of al-Dānī were continued by Abū al-Qāsim ibn Firra (d. 590/1194) of Shāṭiba, who set out to correct and abridge the work of al-Dānī.[19]

Another discipline that developed together with the science of Quranic reading was Quranic orthography (*fann al-rasm*). Quranic orthography is a science dealing with the usage of Quranic letters (*awḍā' ḥurūf al-Qur'ān*) and its calligraphic styles (*rusūmu-hu al-khaṭṭiyya*). This discipline developed hand in hand with the development of Arabic calligraphy. This subject is discussed in some detail in Chapter 5, Section 29, where Ibn Khaldūn speaks about calligraphy as one of the human crafts.[20] He also gives the reason why this subject is important in relation to Quranic reading. There is some sort of divergence in the usage and norm of writing (*mukhālafatu li-awḍā' al-khaṭṭ wa-qānūni-hi*). Again, al-Dānī's contribution is significant. He wrote a number of works on this subject. Among the most important was *Kitāb al-muqni'*, which was then versified by al-Shāṭibī.[21]

The science of Quranic interpretation (tafsīr)

The Quran was revealed in the language of the Arabs. Supposedly all Arabs understand and know the meaning of the words and verses. It was revealed gradually verse by verse and word by word to explain basically the principle of *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God) and religious duties (*al-furūḍ al-diniyya*), including articles of faith (*'aqā'id al-īmāniyya*) and the duties of the limbs of the body (*aḥkām al-jawārih*). Certain passages come earlier than others, and some later passages abrogate (*nāsikh*) the earlier ones.[22]

During the time of the Prophet, the Prophet himself was the primary source of reference (*mubayyin*) to explain the meaning of the Quran. He explained the *mujmāl* (unclear statements) of the Quran, the *nāsikh* and the *mansūkh* (abrogating and abrogated statements) to his companions. He also explained the circumstances of the revelation (*sabab nuzūl al-āyāt*). The explanations made by the Prophet were transmitted through the authority of the companions and those of the second generation (*tābi'īn*). The process continued among the early Muslim scholars until it came to a stage when it became an organised and systematic scholarly discipline.[23] This stage is marked by the appearance

of a number of scholarly works in this subject. Most of the scholars at this time were committed to writing. This tradition had come down to the later generations until it reached the prominent scholars in this subject, such as al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), al-Wāqidī (d 207/823),[24] al-Thaʿālibī (d. 427/1053) and others.[25]

Another field that developed together with *tafsīr* was the linguistic sciences, which then became technical discussions of the lexicographical meaning of the words (*mawḍūʿāt al-lugha*), the rules of vowel endings (*aḥkām al-iʿrāb*), styles (*balāgha*) and so on. Although these subjects were formerly part of the habit of the Arabs, i.e. part of their culture, as time passed they had gradually been forgotten. People only learned them through the books of the philologists. At the same time, people had to master these subjects, because they are necessary in order to be able to understand and interpret the Quran. They must be considered as prerequisite, because the Quran is in Arabic and follows the stylistic techniques of Arabic.[26]

In regard to *tafsīr*, Ibn Khaldūn recognises that there are two types. The first type of *tafsīr* is *naqlī* (traditional). The second type is concerned with linguistic knowledge, such as *balāgha* (stylistic form). This is particularly useful in order to understand the appropriate meaning and method (*al-maqāṣid wa-'l-asālīb*) of Quranic verses.

The first category, *naqlī*, is traditional.[27] This *tafsīr* is based upon information received from the early Muslims (*salaf*).[28] It includes knowledge of the abrogating and abrogated verses (*al-nāsikh wa-'l-mansūkh*), the reasons why they were revealed (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) as well as the purpose of individual verses.

Although some works had been compiled on this subject by earlier scholars, the information they transmit contains certain unimportant and rejected statements.[29] Again, Ibn Khaldūn puts the blame on the lack of scholarship tradition among the Arabs. This is because they rely too much on the information from people of the book (*ahl al-kitāb*) (the Jews and the Christians) who had embraced Islam. Despite the fact that they were Muslims, like any other Muslims at that time these people were still very much influenced by their previous knowledge of certain things, such as the story of the beginning of the world (*badʾ al-khalīqa*), etc. Among them were the Himyarites, such as Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, Wahb b. Munabbih, ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām and the like. *Tafsīr* tradition was then full of information transmitted on their authority.[30]

Later scholars then came to verify and investigate critically the transmitted information. One of them was Abū Muhammad b. Aṭiyya (d. 481/1088), the Maghribi. He carried out the task to abridge all the commentaries and select the most likely interpretations. He wrote a good book on this subject which was then circulated in the Maghrib and Spain. His footstep was followed by al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273), who also produced work that was well known in the East.[31]

The second kind of *tafsīr* is concerned with linguistic knowledge and stylistic form (*ma'rifa al-lugha wa-'l-balāgha*). However, this kind of *tafsīr* only appears after language and philological science have become crafts. Although secondary to the first, it has become preponderant (*ghālib*) as far as certain Quran commentaries are concerned.[32] Among the books of this kind is Zamakhsharī's *Kitāb al-kashshāf*.[33] He is known to be Mu'tazilite in his dogmatic views. He is found using various rhetorical methods in favour of the Mu'tazilite doctrines.[34] Because of the Mu'tazilite tendency, the work of Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) has been rejected by orthodox scholars (*al-muhaqqiqīn min ahl al-sunna*). However, they still praise this work in terms of linguistic information. The work of Zamakhsharī was later studied and abridged by Sharf al-Dīn al-Ṭībī (d. 743/1343) of Iraq. Al-Ṭībī gave his own commentary but opposed Mu'tazilite dogmas and arguments.[35]

Excursus

This section presents, albeit briefly, a quite comprehensive coverage of the evolution of the Quranic sciences. In this context, the author identifies two "genres" of Quranic science: the science of Quranic reading/recitation (*qirā'a*) and the science of Quranic interpretation/exegesis (*tafsīr*).

The *qirā'a* gradually developed as a result of the expansion of Islam itself. Of course this process is natural. Those who converted to Islam came from various cultural backgrounds and languages. The Quran was in Arabic whereas their mother tongue was not. Even if they learned how to read the Quran, their way of reading and pronunciation might vary, affected by their own language. Ibn Khaldūn sees this factor as the origin of the then established seven ways of Quranic reading (*al-qirā'āt al-sab'*).[36] As usual he provides some historical account by highlighting some important figures such as Mujāhid and al-Dānī, whose works were regarded as important contributions to the discipline. The development of the science of Quranic reading also had a certain impact on the development of orthography and Arabic calligraphy.

Like the science of *qirā'a*, the science of *tafsīr* developed as a result of expansion. However, in the case of *tafsīr*, Ibn Khaldūn notices that it was not only the non-Arabs who were unable to understand Arabic, but also the Arabs themselves had lost their linguistic skills through the evolutionary process of time. This is added to by the fact that, in order to understand the Quran, one needs also to understand the abrogating and abrogated statements (*nāsikh* and *mansūkh*), as well as the causes of revelation (*sabab nuzūl al-āyāt*). Being a messenger of God, the Prophet was the one who explained the meaning of the verses. Dogmatically, the explanation and interpretation by the Prophet are the most authentic. These explanations were then transmitted to the next generation. Ibn Khaldūn sees this process as the beginning of the *tafsīr* tradition in Islam that was then to become a systematic scholarly discipline on its own.

On the typology of *tafsīr*, Ibn Khaldūn makes a generalisation that there are two types, namely, the traditional (*naqlī*), based upon transmitted information from the early Muslims (*salaf*), and another one more concerned with language, lexicography and stylistic form.[37] In the course of his exposition, Ibn Khaldūn also takes the opportunity to express his worry about the content of the *tafsīr* works which, he finds, contain some rejected statements which are mostly derived from the people of the book (*ahl al-kitāb*). He blames the Arabs who, he claims, rely too much on information from *ahl al-kitāb*. In *tafsīr* tradition this problem is known as *isrā'īliyyāt*.[38] Among important figures in the development of *tafsīr* tradition highlighted by Ibn Khaldūn were Ibn 'Aṭiyya, al-Qurṭubī, Zamakhsharī and al-Ṭībī.

The science of prophetic tradition

In Section 11, Ibn Khaldūn deals at some length with the sciences of prophetic tradition. At the very outset he admits that these sciences are numerous and varied. The important ones among them are knowledge of the abrogating and abrogated traditions (*ma'rifatu al-nāsikh wa-'l-mansūkh*) and knowledge of the chain of transmitters (*ma'rifat al-asānīd wa-'l-ruwāt*).[39]

Knowledge of the abrogating and abrogated traditions is important in order to know its effect on the *sharī'a* and public interest (*maṣāliḥ*). Whenever there are two mutually exclusive traditions (*ta'āruḍ al-khabarāni bi-'l-nafy wa-'l-ithbāt*) and they may be difficult to reconcile by mere interpretation (*ta'wīl*), knowledge of the *nāsikh* and the *mansūkh* can help to determine which one is most likely to be acceptable. It is based on the principle that the later abrogates the earlier.[40]

The ḥadīth transmission

This is the knowledge of the norms (*qawānīn*) that are set by leading *ḥadīth* scholars (*a'imma al-muḥaddithīn*). It includes knowledge of the chain of transmitters (*asānīd*), the transmitters (*ruwāt*) and their names, the way that transmission takes place, their grades or ranks (*ṭabaqāt*) and their technical terminology (*iṣṭilāḥāt*).[41]

This knowledge is important in determining whether information is true or not. It can be done by scrutinising (*naẓar*) the transmitters of the *ḥadīth* in terms of probity, accuracy, thoroughness and lack of carelessness (*al-'adāla wa-'l-ḍabṭ wa-'l-itqān wa-'l-barā'a wa-'l-ghafla*). What is described here is actually a traditional science known as *al-jarḥ wa-'l-ta'dīl* (disparaging and authenticating).[42]

The *ḥadīth* scholars use this science to criticise the transmitters of each *ḥadīth* in terms of the reliability of what they transmit. This will determine the level of soundness and acceptability of the *ḥadīth*. It will also determine the grade of the transmitted material, whether it falls into the category of

ṣaḥīḥ (sound), *ḥasan* (good) or *ḍa'īf* (weak). The status of the *ḥadīth* is also identified with other terms such as *mursal* (skip the first transmitter on the Prophet's authority), *munqaṭi'* (omit one link), *mu'ḍal* (omit two links), *mu'allal* (affected by some infirmity), *shādhdh* (singular), *gharīb* (unusual) and *munkār* (singular and suspect).[43] Apart from critiques of the transmitters, the *ḥadīth* scholars also discuss the texts (*mutūn*) of the tradition in terms of their being *gharīb* (unusual), *mushkīl* (ambiguous), *taṣḥīf* (affected by some misreading), *muftariq* (homonymous) or *mukhtalif* (homographous).[44]

All these grades and terms (*al-marātib wa-'l-alqāb*) are used as tools to protect the transmission from any defect (*salāma al-ṭurūq 'an-dukhūl al-naqṣ*). The *ḥadīth* scholars have laid down the canon to explain all those terms. Ibn Khaldūn names Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim (d. 405/1014) as the first to lay down such a canon. The same step was taken by other scholars including Abu 'Amr b. al-Ṣalāḥ (Ibn Ṣalāḥ) (d. 643/1245) and Muḥyiddīn al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277).[45]

Excursus

This section presents a general coverage of the development of the science of *ḥadīth*. It includes studies of the transmitters, the transmission and the history of its development. Through this section, Ibn Khaldūn has successfully detailed what is meant by the science of *ḥadīth*.

What is the significance of this section in the context of the overall discussion of Chapter 6? As is dogmatically accepted, there are two prime sources in Islam, the Quran and the *sunna/ḥadīth*. From these two sources, other Islamic religious sciences were developed, including *fiqh*, *kalām* and Sufism. It is always meaningful to be acquainted with the root and source of these latter sciences before trying to understand them as individual disciplines.

The law

In the previous discussion, we presented the first category of knowledge within the framework of the traditional sciences, i.e. the sciences of the Quran and the *sunna*. Here we will explore another category, namely the law. Ibn Khaldūn presents this subject in three distinct sections, identifed as jurisprudence (*fiqh*), inheritance law (*farā'iḍ*) and the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). There are also two sub-sections under the principles of jurisprudence, namely the *khilāfiyyāt* and the *jadl* (controversial questions and dialectics). For the purposes of this discussion, each section will be looked at separately.

Jurisprudence (fiqh)

Ibn Khaldūn presents the historical development of *fiqh* in several phases. It can be divided into at least five different phases. These are: (1) the phase of

ikhtilāf, (2) the pre-scientific phase, (3) the phase of the three *madhhab*s, (4) the emergence of the four *madhhab*s and the outgrowth of *taqlīd*, and (5) the geography and achievement of each of the four *madhhab*s.

He begins with an attempt to suggest a definition of this science. Jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is defined as knowledge of the classification of the law of God, which concerns the actions of all responsible Muslims: obligatory (*wujūb*), forbidden (*ḥaẓr*), recommendable (*nadb*), disliked (*karāha*) or permissible (*ibāha*). This knowledge is derived from the *kitāb* and the *sunna* (text and tradition) as well as the evidence the Lawgiver (the Prophet) has established for knowledge of the laws. The laws (*aḥkām*) that evolved from the evidence (*adilla*) are called *fiqh*.[46]

After introducing the section with a brief definition, Ibn Khaldūn proceeds to elaborate the historical development of *fiqh*. Apparently, when he talks about this subject, the first thing that comes to his mind is the phenomenon of *ikhtilāf* (differences in opinion). This phenomenon seems to be the most central that characterised the first phase of the development of *fiqh*. Of course we understand that the fundamental duty of *fiqh* is to determine the legal status of the actions of responsible Muslims (*mukallaf*). In order to decide the legal status of actions in the context of God's law or *sharī'a*, certain juristic judgements are required. These juristic judgements are derived mainly from the prime sources of the Quran and the *sunna*; however, in certain cases analogical methods are used to determine them. Here Ibn Khaldūn employs the term *mushābaha* (instead of *qiyās*) to indicate cases that fall into this category.[47] Since the evidence, Ibn Khaldūn says, is mainly derived from the texts (*nuṣūṣ*), which are in Arabic, it requires interpretation. Interpretation, although from the same source, will naturally vary due to differences in the background and level of understanding of the interpreter. Hence, differences in opinion (*ikhtilāf*) among scholars are considered as something natural (*ḍarūra*). Ibn Khaldūn gives at least four principal reasons that lead to the state of *ikhtilāf* among scholars. They are: (1) the implicit and multiple meanings of certain words of the text, (2) differences in ways of transmitting the *sunna* which requires *tarjīḥ* (interpretation), (3) evidence that does not come from the texts and (4) new realities and cases (*al-waqā'i' al-mutajaddida*) that are not covered by the text.[48] Moreover, Ibn Khaldūn adds, in the early days of Islam not all the companions of the Prophet were well qualified to give legal decisions. The legal decision, he says, can only be made exclusively by those who are acquainted with the text, especially in relation to the abrogating and abrogated verses (*nāsikh wa-mansūkh*) as well as the ambiguous and unambiguous (*mutashābih wa-muḥkām*) meaning of the words.[49] At that time people of this category were known as "readers" (*qurrā'*).[50] "Readers" are those who read and understand the meaning of the Quran. Of course, people who were able to read were then regarded as remarkable and extraordinary, because the people of those days were mostly illiterate.[51]

Here Ibn Khaldūn touches the movement of the development from the readers (*qurrā'*) to jurists (*fuqahā'*) and religious scholars (*'ulamā'*). In the early days, *fiqh* did not constitute a special science or a structured body of knowledge. Only when illiteracy among the Arabs gradually disappeared did the remarkable development of jurisprudence take place. Islamic jurisprudence emerged as a new craft and science by itself. Following this "transition" period, the readers were acquiring a new image and perhaps a new role as jurists (*fuqahā'*) and religious scholars (*'ulamā'*). They developed different methods and approaches to the study of jurisprudence.[52] This phase may be considered as the pre-scientific phase of the development of jurisprudence.

An important consequence of this development was the emergence of several schools of thought (*madhhab*). This phase, as far as the *Muqaddima* is concerned, is referred to as the three-*madhhab* phase, because three important schools dominated the development of jurisprudence at that time. They are the Iraqi school, the Hijazi school and the school of Ẓāhirī. The Iraqis were those who gave more attention to the use of opinion and analogy (*ahl al-ra'y wa-'l-qiyās*), while the Hijazis restricted themselves to the use of tradition (*ahl al-ḥadīth*). The third group, the Ẓāhirīs, founded by Dawūd b. 'Alī (d. 270/ 884),[53] restricted the sources of law to the text and general consensus and referred obvious analogy (*al-qiyās al-jalī*) to the text. According to Ibn Khaldūn, these were the three most popular schools of thought that were followed by the majority of the Muslim *umma* at that time.

The next phase was the phase of the emergence of the four *madhhab*s and the spread and outgrowth of *taqlīd* among the Muslims. Ibn Khaldūn's discussion of this phase is entirely based on the two remaining dominant schools of the Iraq and the Ḥijaz. The four recognised schools are Hanafite, Shafiite, Malikite and Hanbalite. These are the four schools that are traditionally and conventionally recognised and accepted in the Muslim cities. The Muslims of that time followed one of these four schools.

The next issue is the phenomenon of *taqlīd* (literally, imitation). Ibn Khaldūn describes this phenomenon as the consequence of the "closing of the door of *khilāf* and its methods" (*wa-sadda al-nāsu bāb al-khilāf wa-ṭuruqa-hu*).[54] As the author sees it, the rapid development of the science of jurisprudence and the diversity of its technical terminology had become major obstacles that "prevented" scholars from attaining the level of *ijtihād* (independent judgement). Because of this, *taqlīd* had become widely accepted, up to the point that even scholars at that time came to admit their inability to make an independent judgement. All these school doctrines had become a special scholarly discipline among their followers. This went on to the extent that there was no room for *ijtihād* but reference had to be made to one of the existing schools or authorities.[55]

Excursus

In the earlier part of this study, I indicated quite explicitly what Ibn Khaldūn is trying to convey in this section. I consider it a specific theme of this section. The author presents a brief historical account of the origin and development of *fiqh* in the Muslim community. The origin and development of *fiqh* is characterised by its phases of development. Ibn Khaldūn identifies *ikhtilāf* (difference of opinion) as the point of departure of the development of this science. *Ikhtilāf* occurs when scholars have different opinions concerning the meaning and interpretation of texts. It is understood in *fiqh* tradition that scholars of independent judgement (*mujtahid*) are of the same status; hence their interpretations are equally authoritative.

Before *fiqh* became a scientific and structured body of knowledge and an independent science itself, juristic judgement and textual interpretations were made by a group of Muslims identified as *qurrā'* (readers). This phase is characterised as the pre-scientific period of *fiqh* development.

The next development, which I identify as the three-*madhhab* phase, took place when the *qurrā'* had eventually been changed into *fuqahā'* and *'ulamā'*. At this time *fiqh* had already taken shape as a systematic and structured body of knowledge. The three *madhhab*s, characterised as the Ḥijazi, the Iraqi and the Ẓāhirī, represented three distinct approaches and methods in *fiqh*. Their methods and approaches also influenced the later development of *madhhab*s.

The next phase, which I identify as the emergence of the four *madhhab*s and the outgrowth of *taqlīd*, took place after the science of *fiqh* had been established. The four *madhhab*s, called Hanafite, Shafiite, Malikite and Hanbalite after the names of their founders, dominated the development of *fiqh* throughout the Muslim countries. Then came the phenomenon of *taqlīd*. This phenomenon was in fact a consequence of the "closing of the door of *khilāf*". This was also the outcome of a general assumption that later scholars are inferior to earlier ones and have not achieved the necessary qualification to be *mujtahid*. Later scholars do not have sufficient knowledge and inter-pretative skills – not as good as those of their predecessors. It is interesting to note that Ibn Khaldūn uses the term "*khilāf*" to describe this phenomenon. This is quite uncommon in the history of *fiqh*. We are more familiar with the "closing of the door of *ijtihād*" rather than the "door of *khilāf*". Technically these two terms give two different connotations. In my view, what concerns Ibn Khaldūn here is not the intellectual activities of the scholars but rather the social response of the diversity of opinions regarding religious matters. We understand that the emergence of the *madhhab*s was a direct consequence of the *khilāf*. The closing of the door of *khilāf* means that Muslims have enough with the present *madhhab*s and will no longer allow the creation of a new *madhhab*.

The section ends with Ibn Khaldūn's assessment of the achievement of the four *madhhab*s. He also provides us with some information on the geography of each of the *madhhab*s throughout the Muslim world.

The science of inheritance law (farā'iḍ)

Although it is very brief, Ibn Khaldūn devotes a special sub-section to the science of inheritance law (*farā'iḍ*). The purpose of this chapter is to complement his earlier discussion of *fiqh*. *Farā'iḍ* is here introduced as a science that goes together with *fiqh*, against the opinion that considers it to be a separate and independent discipline itself.

Ibn Khaldūn defines this science as the knowledge of estate division (*furūḍ al-wāritha*) and the correct determination of proper shares (*taṣḥīḥ sihām al-farīḍa*) with regard to the relation of the individual shares to the basic divisions, including readjustment of shares (*munāsakha*).[56] It therefore requires calculation (*ḥisbān*). As far as Muslim jurists are concerned, this subject is considered a separate subject and a discipline in its own right. Although this subject is basically part of jurisprudence, it requires in addition, calculation as its predominant element.[57]

It is a noble subject (*fann sharīf*). Many scholars from all the four schools have written and produced books on this subject. Among them were Ibn Thābit (d. 447/1055–6), Abu al-Qāsim al-Ḥawfī (d. 588/1192) and Abu al-Ma'ālī (Imām al-Ḥaramayn).

However, Ibn Khaldūn criticises some of the scholars of this discipline who, he finds, tend to overstress (*ghuluw*) the importance of the mathematical side, such as *al-jabr wa-'l-muqābala* (algebra) and the use of roots (*taṣarruf*) and the like, whereas it is something not much used by the people.[58] He also criticises these scholars for misunderstanding the meaning of the Prophet's tradition, which says that *farā'iḍ* "constitutes one-third of scholarship, and it is the first to be forgotten" (*ann al-farā'iḍa thuluthu al-'ilm wa-anna-hā awwalu mā-yunsā*), and another saying says it is one-half of scholarship (*niṣf al-'ilm*).[59] To Ibn Khaldūn, taking the word *farā'iḍ* here to mean specifically inheritance law is not logical. In the early days of Islam the word *farā'iḍ* did not refer to a particular discipline. Instead, it refers to the general connotation of the word, which is derived from *farḍ* which refers to religious obligations (*al-furūḍ al-taklīfiyya*). The reference to inheritance laws as a branch of knowledge came later as part of the technical terminology created by the jurists and has no particular connection to the above tradition.[60]

The science of the principles of jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh)

In Section 13, Ibn Khaldūn speaks about the principles of jurisprudence. This branch of jurisprudence is concerned with the evidence for the religious law

from which the laws and legal obligations of Muslims are derived (*al-naẓar fī-'l-adilla al-shar'iyya min haythu tu'khadhu min-hā al-aḥkām wa-'l-takālīf*). The two prime sources of legal evidence are the Quran and the *sunna*.[61] During the time of the Prophet, transmission (*naql*), speculation (*naẓr*) and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) were not required. The Prophet explained the meaning of the text through his words and deeds. After the Prophet's death, direct explanation of the Quran was no longer possible. General consensus (*ijmā'*) then took a place after the Quran and the *sunna. Ijmā'* was justified by the fact that men around the Prophet had agreed to disapprove of those who held a different opinion (*ijma' al-ṣahāba 'alā-'l-nakīr 'alā-mukhtālafī-him*).[62] Another method practised by the *ṣahāba* and the *salaf* was to compare similar cases (*ashbah*) and draw conclusions by analogy. This method is called *qiyās*.[63] Hierarchically, it takes a position after *ijmā'* in religious law.[64]

The existence and authority of four basic sources of evidence for laws in Islam have been established: the Quran, the *sunna*, *ijmā'* and *qiyās*.[65] To master the principles of jurisprudence, mastery of several related disciplines is also required. Besides possessing an in-depth knowledge of the Quran and the *sunna*, one has to have mastery in elements of philology such as grammar (*naḥw*), inflection (*taṣrīf*) and syntax and styles (*bayān*).[66] The study of analogy is also a very important basis of this discipline. It determines the principles (*uṣūl*) and special aspects of laws (*furū'*) of matters that the methods of *qiyās* are to be applied to.

Based on Ibn Khaldūn's account, *uṣūl al-fiqh* is of recent origin in Islam. When the first period of Islam was over, all the sciences become technical, including the one we are concerned with here. Jurists and scholars of independent judgement (*mujtahidūn*) of later periods had to acquire the norms and basic rules (*al-qawānīn wa-'l-qawā'id*) in order to be able to derive the laws from the textual evidence. They wrote down this discipline and called it *uṣūl al-fiqh* (the principles of jurisprudence).[67]

The first scholar to write on this subject, according to Ibn Khaldūn, was al-Shāfi'ī in his celebrated work *Risāla*.[68] In *Risāla*, Shāfi'ī discussed commands and prohibitions (*al-awāmir wa-'l-nawāhī*), syntax and styles (*bayān*), tradition (*khabr*), abrogation (*naskh*) and the position of *ratio legis* (*al-'illa al-manṣūṣa*) in relation to analogy.[69]

Later, the Hanafite jurists were also involved in writing on this subject. One of their leading scholars was Abū Zayd al-Dabūsī (d. 430/1038 or 1039). A recent scholar, Sayf al-Islām al-Bazdawī (d. 482/1089), also produced excellent works in this discipline. He was followed by Ibn al-Sa'atī, who wrote a book called *Kitāb al-badī'*.[70]

This subject also attracted the interest of some speculative theologians. Among the best works produced by this group of scholars were *Kitāb al-Burhān* by Imām al-Ḥaramayn and *Muṣṭafā* by al-Ghazzālī. Both scholars were Asharite.

Other books of the same category were *Kitāb al-'umād* by 'Abd. al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) and *al-Mu'tamad* by Abū al-Hussayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044). The latter is a commentary on the former.[71]

Controversial questions and dialectics (al-khilāfiyyat wa-'l-jadl)

This is another sub-section in which Ibn Khaldūn discusses controversial questions and dialectics. He considers this subject as part of the principles of jurisprudence. Since jurisprudence itself is based upon religious evidence and texts and thus requires some degree of interpretative skills, differences of opinion among scholars of independent judgement (*mujtahidūn*) are unavoidable.

Controversial questions (*khilāfiyyāt*) occur when the opinions and interpretations of scholars differ in regard to religious texts and legal principles. The adherents of the four established schools became involved in disputations, trying to prove the correctness of their respective founders.[72] Among outstanding works in this category are *Kitāb al-ma'ākhidh* by al-Ghazzālī, *Kitāb al-talkhīṣ* by the Malikite Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī (d. 543/1148), *'Uyūn al-adilla* by Ibn al-Qassār (d. 398/1007 or 1008) and *al-Ta'līqa* by al-Dabūsī.[73]

Dialectics (*jadl*) is knowledge of the proper behaviour in disputation (*ādāb al-munāẓara*) among the adherents of legal schools. It is also said that this discipline is knowledge of the basic rules of proper behaviour in arguing (*qawā'id min al-ḥudūd wa-'l-ādāb fī-'l-istidlāl*) in order to maintain an opinion or demolish it, whether related to jurisprudence or any other subject.[74] Ibn Khaldūn mentions two methods practised in this subject, the method of Bazdawī and the method of 'Amīdī (d. 631/1233).[75] The Bazdawī method is limited to the religious laws, namely texts (*naṣṣ*), general consensus (*ijmā'*) and argumentation (*istidlāl*), while the 'Amīdī method applies quite generally to all arguments used, mostly argumentation (*istidlāl*), which is quite similar to sophistical reasoning (*sūfasṭā'ī*).[76]

'Amīdī claimed to be the first to write on this method in his brief book *al-Irshād*. He was followed by al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310)[77] and other scholars. Finally, Ibn Khaldūn gives his own assessment. He considers this discipline to be a luxury (*kamāliya*) and not in the category of necessary (*ḍarūriya*) as far as Islamic scholarship is concerned.

Excursus

Ibn Khaldūn's exposition, as far as this category of science is concerned, can be seen as an invitation to understand law in the context of Muslim society. Law is constituted by its main subject, *fiqh*, and other sciences that go with it (in this case *farā'iḍ* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*). It represents the main body of law that

binds the thinking and the action of all Muslims. What Ibn Khaldūn is trying to convey is that the law, besides its special function in the society, also develops as a special body of science and crafts. This science is the product of and belongs to a particular society (in this case, Muslim society). It becomes the property of the community, studied and inherited generation after generation. It becomes the foundation of the system on which the society is built. Hence, in the hierarchy of his classification of science, Ibn Khaldūn places law next after the science of the Quran and the *sunna*.

While recognising the basic notion that the *sharī'a* is based on revelation that has nothing to do with human intelligence, Ibn Khaldūn sees *fiqh*, and other sciences that develop as a result of human thought, as the product of human mental activity. These sciences develop as a result of human attempts to interpret God's law. This can be seen from the list of scholars and the literary tradition in this discipline that have been produced in the history of Muslim society.

In conclusion, this passage has demonstrated that law is part of the society in which it is established. In Islam, *sharī'a* is based on revelation. However, its application rests upon the interpretation of how it is to be implemented. Naturally, interpretation is subject to differences in opinion. It depends very much upon the level of understanding of the interpreter, as well as on other factors such as socio-cultural and political backgrounds. Ibn Khaldūn has successfully demonstrated the process whereby these sciences develop and finally emerge as structured and systematic sciences in Muslim society.

The science of speculative theology (*'ilm al-kalām*)

This section will deal with the third category of traditional science, the science of speculative theology or *'ilm al-kalām*. Ibn Khaldūn divides his discussion into two sub-sections: a sub-section on the science of *kalām*, followed by another sub-section on the questions of ambiguity in the Quran, which is another branch of *kalām*.

Ibn Khaldūn's exposition of *kalām*[78] touches several general and specific issues ranging from *tawhīd* to the historical development of this science. He introduces this section with a brief definition of *kalām*, followed by some indication of the general structure of the section. This section consists of three major components. Identifying *tawhīd* as the core (*sirr*) of the discipline, he says that he will give (1) an example (a *laṭīfa*, a subtle example) of intellectual demonstration related to *tawhīd*. Only then will he return to (2) analysis of the science itself and its subject matter and (3) its emergence and the reasons for its development in Islam. The definition of each of these components will be dealt with separately in the following four sections.

Definition of kalām

Ibn Khaldūn defines *kalām* as "a science which contains (1) proofs for the articles of faith based on rational arguments and (2) refutation of the innovators, those who have deviated in their beliefs from the paths of the early Muslims and Muslim orthodoxy" (*al-salaf wa-ahl al-sunna*).[79]

The definition presents *kalām* both as a defensive and as an offensive science. The articles of faith (*al-'aqā'id al-īmāniyya*), which are the subject of the defence, are not themselves the result of the science, but are prior to it. The principle of defensive argumentation is combined with offensive argumentation aimed at destroying the arguments of the innovators. In short, the science of *kalām* emerged for the purpose of defending religious beliefs against the challenge of the innovators, using rational arguments. The major role is to defend the articles of faith and to refute innovators, and, borrowing Anawati's remarks, this role "of defensive apologia and apologetics attributed to this science has remained standard in Islam".[80] It is practically instrumental and a tool of protection to protect the basic doctrine of faith in Islam.[81]

The essential elements of Ibn Khaldūn's definition had in fact been established long before, and were fully present in the work of al-Ghazzālī. He too stressed the defensive nature of the science, in his *al-Munqidh*. It was aimed at guarding and preserving the creed (*'aqda*) of the *ahl al-sunna* from the corruption of the innovators.[82] The origins of the faith lay in revelation; this had been given to the Prophet and was contained in the Quran and the *ḥadīth*. But the innovators had introduced ideas opposed to the *sunna* and so God had risen up the *mutakallimūn*, had moved them to defend the faith by ordered speech (*kalām murattab*). Al-Ghazzālī stressed that the true creed was received directly from the Prophet. The *mutakallimūn* were defending it. In that sense the science of *kalām* was not fully rational, since its fundamental elements were given and accepted through faith.

In regard to *al-Munqidh*, al-Ghazzālī also stressed that the arguments of *kalām* were of limited use to someone in the position he found himself – someone searching for truth based on first principles – for *kalām* does not analyse first principles. Indeed, al-Ghazzālī found that *kalām* was in this respect a low-level science, adequate to its own purposes but not to his. Even when the *mutakallimūn* tried to extend their investigations to uncover the true nature of things, they were unable to achieve this in a full and satisfactory manner (*lam yablugh kalāmu-hum fī-hi al-ghāya al-qaswa*).[83]

The sense of *kalām* as a deficient science, as a merely ancillary one, is implicit in Ibn Khaldūn's definition. The deficiencies of the science become clearer, as does his continued reliance on al-Ghazzālī, in his subsequent discussion.

Ibn Khaldūn's subtle example (laṭīfa) of intellectual argumentation

The nature of Ibn Khaldūn's *laṭīfa* is initially not quite clear. We begin with a conceit, in the form of intellectual argument (*laṭīfa fī-burhān ʿaqlī*), which will reveal the significance of *tawḥīd* in the most accessible ways and methods.[84]

The intellectual argument stretches from Q.III.27.6 to Q.III.35.6. Only then does Ibn Khaldūn indicate a new start: he turns at that point to the contents of the creed as given by the Prophet. The conceit then is fairly lengthy. It has two major components. In the first of these, Ibn Khaldūn argues that the intellect alone cannot achieve an understanding of God and the nature of creativity. (The focus of the argument is on causality.) Religious truths depend on a level of perception that is higher than the intellect and accessible fully perhaps only to a prophet. When this has been established, there is a transition to the second component, which distinguishes between faith as mere assent (*taṣdīq*) and faith as acquired attribute (*ṣifat*) or habit or disposition (*malaka*). The aim of this two-fold conceit is as follows (I analyse each of the parts of Ibn Khaldūn's conceit in the following, argument 1 and argument 2).

Argument 1

This first argument has the negative intention of establishing that the intellect cannot apprehend God through reflection on causality. It is probably to be understood as an argument against the philosophers, though it has other functions. For example, it establishes a reason for the emergence of innovation in the community.

Ibn Khaldūn first argues that all events in the world of creation, whether essences (*dhawāt*) or actions (*afʿāl*), and whether human or animal actions, depend upon prior causes, and each cause has a cause or causes, and so on in a sequence that ends only with the Cause of all causes: *musabbib al-asbāb wa-mūjidu-hā wa-khāliqu-hā*.[85] These causes multiply in such a manner as to leave the intellect confused (*yuḥār al-ʿaql fī-idrāki-hā*, etc.).[86] This is particularly true of human and animal actions which depend on intention and will. These are properties of the soul arising out of conceptualisations, which are linked to prior conceptualisations, etc. But these conceptualisations, which are properties of the soul, cannot be known to the intellect; they are unknowable in their origins. And the human intellect will not be able to perceive matters that take place in the soul. Therefore, any attempt to understand or speculate on matters that pertain to the soul will end up nowhere. Ibn Khaldūn supports his argument with a *ḥadīth* whereby the Prophet forbade us from getting engaged in such speculation for the very reason that it is "a field in which the mind would become lost and get nowhere, nor gain any real insight".[87]

By this, Ibn Khaldūn means to demonstrate that human intellect is limited.

With this limitation it does not have the ability to grasp or understand matters except the natural and obvious or matters that "present themselves to our perception in an orderly and well arranged manner" (*niẓām wa-tartīb*).[88] With regard to speculation about causes (which is unperceivable), Ibn Khaldūn argues, if we know it [beforehand], we can be on guard against it (*law 'alim-nā la-taḥarraz-nā min-hā*).[89] This limitation subsequently disqualifies the intellect from being used to weigh larger and more abstract matters such as the oneness of God, the other world, the truth of prophecy, the real character of divine attributes or anything else that lies beyond the level of the intellect.[90] This is the point where the human intellect has to stop.

The limitation of human intellect is characterised by Ibn Khaldūn with the term *ṭawr* (level or stage). He employs this term to signify the "perimeter" within which the human intellect can operate. It can only operate within that "perimeter" and is unable to reach things beyond its *ṭawr*. Based on the term he uses, again it may be presumed that Ibn Khaldūn at this point is very much influenced by his predecessor al-Ghazzālī. In *al-Munqidh*, al-Ghazzālī employed exactly the same terminology, *ṭawr*, in his attempt to explain the world of existence ('*ālam al-mawjūdāt*) in relation to the nature of prophecy. He stated, for example, "*wa-warā' al-'aqli ṭawran ākhar tanfatiḥu fī-hi 'ayn ukhrā…*" (and beyond the level of intellect there is another level at which other eyes were opened).[91] The term *ṭawr* here was used to indicate the level(s) that may be considered as the boundary beyond which the intellect cannot pass.

The above argumentation by Ibn Khaldūn implicitly puts the science of *kalām* in a "dilemma". As a rational science it operates on the basis of rational argument, while the subjects it deals with are matters pertaining to faith, i.e. outside the level of intellect. Ibn Khaldūn quite explicitly shows his pessimistic attitude towards this science. With that argument Ibn Khaldūn may be seen as indirectly questioning the credibility and capability of this science to explain the complications of the worlds beyond the curtain of the human intellect. Like al-Ghazzālī, he is sceptical about the *kalām*'s ability to reach the true notion of *tawḥīd*.

Certain things can be known to the intellect, namely those that are a part of external or manifest nature (*ṭabī'a ẓāhira*). Ibn Khaldūn is probably referring to natural sciences here. These things are encompassed by the soul and at a lower level than it (*li-anna al-ṭabī'a maḥṣūra li-'l-nafs wa-taḥta ṭawri-hā*).[92] In contrast, the conceptualisations (*taṣawwurāt*) that are the causes of human and animal actions belong to the realm of the intellect above the level (*ṭawr*) of the *nafs* (human desire). They cannot be fully grasped. Ibn Khaldūn finishes his argument by an appeal to the authority: he quotes a verse of the Quran. This fits his argument, which implies that for some things revealed authority and not reason is the only correct method of understanding. He glosses this

with an added remark that any effort to achieve an understanding of causality merely through the intellect will lead to error and perdition.[93]

The point of Ibn Khaldūn's argument is that the intellect cannot achieve an understanding of God (the Cause of all causes) through thinking of the world and its causes; in fact any effort in this direction will lead to error. In itself, this argument is not the argument of *kalām* nor is it the type of *kalām* argument. At this point in the argument, it is not clear why this conceit, in the form of intellectual argument, should be considered to be revealing about the nature of *tawḥīd*. It is, however, an indication of why *kalām* became necessary. Man, striving to understand God by rational means, over-reached himself and fell into error, thus introducing error into faith and making it necessary to defend the true faith and attack error and innovation.

Ibn Khaldūn continues, claiming that a concern with causality, once established, cannot be abandoned by choice, for it affects the soul – it is like a colour or a dye which becomes imprinted in the soul and cannot be eradicated. The only way to avoid this contamination is total abstention from concern with causality (*bi-qaṭ' al-naẓar 'an-hā jumlatan*).[94]

> We have been commanded to abstain from the [study of] causality, and to destroy it utterly. And [we have been commanded] to turn to the Cause of all causes, the Agent, the Creator, so that the attribute of *tawḥīd* may be implanted in the soul, as the Lawgiver taught us…[95]

This is the essential point of Ibn Khaldūn's cosmological argument: the study of causality is either futile or it leads to error. It is better to submit and follow revelation.[96] In the following passages Ibn Khaldūn provides Quranic and *ḥadīth* quotations to establish his point. He writes that the effort to understand causality is overweening. It is a realm of being, beyond the intellect, incomprehensible to the intellect, in the same way that sight is incomprehensible to the blind, or hearing to the dumb, or intellectual matters to the animals.

Again, Ibn Khaldūn's argument is reminiscent of al-Ghazzālī.[97] Religious truths are not the property of the faculty of intellect. It is the message of the Prophet that corresponds to this high faculty.

> So be suspicious of your understanding and your perceptions…, follow what the Lawgiver commanded, in respect of faith and actions, for He is more desirous of your happiness and more of your advantage. [His message] is from a level (*ṭawr*) beyond your perception, from a sphere broader than the sphere of your intellect.[98]

The intellect has its limits and cannot pass beyond its own level – *lā yata'addā ṭawru-hū*. Since this is the case, the effort by the intellect to

understand the chain of causation can only lead to error and confusion (*yaḍillu al-ʿaql fī-bayḍāʾ al-awhām* etc.).[99] At this point Ibn Khaldūn contains himself with a statement of faith in God (*shahādatayn*) and a quotation from a certain holy man: failure of perception is perception.[100] This means that if we acknowledge that we cannot perceive the truths of the prophetic world, the realm of the world which is beyond and superior to the realm of the intellect, we can also acknowledge that they are genuine truths that must be accepted. So, the failure of perception in acknowledging a realm of knowledge beyond the limits of the intellect is the beginning of perception, i.e. accepting the truths that lie beyond the range of the intellect.

Argument 2

Having established his stance on the limitations of the human intellect, Ibn Khaldūn turns to the second component of his argument, which relates to the contents of the creed as constituted by the Prophet. Since the human intellect is unable to grasp matters beyond its level, it has to stop speculating on matters pertaining to causes that are unperceivable. Such matters pertaining to faith must be referred to God (the Cause of all causes) in order to obtain a real understanding of *tawḥīd*, based on the teaching of the Lawgiver (*shāriʿ*) who knows better than us regarding religious matters and ways that bring us to happiness.[101] We are commanded and required to believe the absolute oneness of God (*al-tawḥīd al-muṭlaq*). The human intellect by its nature is unable to weigh matters such as *tawḥīd*, the day of judgement, the nature of prophecy, the attributes of God and all matters beyond the boundaries of its level because, says Ibn Khaldūn, this would mean to desire the impossible.[102] Based on this notion, we find that recognition of *tawḥīd* is therefore identical with "inability to perceive the causes and the ways in which they exercise their influence". Again the famous saying "inability to perceive is perception" (*al-ʿajz ʿan al-idrāk idrāk*)[103] becomes significant. Trying to swim in the ocean of speculation would lead to confusion, lost and cut off in the conjectures of intellectual wilderness.

Faith solely founded on "affirmation based on judgement" (*taṣdīq ḥukmī*) is not sufficient. It has to be the "talk of the soul" (*ḥadīth al-nafs*), while its perfection is obtained by the realisation of attribute (*wa-inna-mā al-kamāl fī-hi ḥuṣūl ṣifatin min-hu*).[104] In relation to this, Ibn Khaldūn distinguishes between state (*ḥāl*) and knowledge (*ʿilm*) in matters pertaining to religious dogmas (*ʿaqāʾid*). This is just like the difference between talking (about *tawḥīd*) and having. The perfection of faith can be achieved only when it becomes an attribute of the soul. Therefore, the only way to achieve this state is through the act of worship. Here Ibn Khaldūn significantly distinguishes between faith as mere assent (*taṣdīq*) and faith as acquired attribute. In dealing with this subject, Ibn Khaldūn's argument seems to be intermingled with his discussion

on Sufism. The element of Sufism can be seen quite obviously, especially in the use of terminology such as *ḥāl*, etc.[105]

Ibn Khaldūn asserts that the main objective of religious obligation is the acquisition of habit. Habit (*malaka*) is obtained as a result of attribute (*ittiṣāf*). An attribute will not be attained from knowledge alone, but is the result of repeated action. Action here refers to the act of worship. This is the only way one can acquire attribute and firmly rooted habit. The possession of attribute will result in a kind of knowledge [about *tawḥīd*]. According to Ibn Khaldūn, this knowledge results by necessity (*iḍṭirārī*). It is a more solidly based knowledge than knowledge attained prior to the possession of attribute, i.e. through the human intellect alone. Divine worship and the continuous practice thereof lead to this noble result.

Here Ibn Khaldūn also touches in his exposition on the degrees (*martaba*) of faith. Faith has several degrees. The first and the lowest is affirmation by heart of what the tongue says (*al-taṣdīq bi-'l-qalb al-muwāfiq li-'l-lisān*). The last and the highest level is the acquisition "from the belief of the heart and the resulting actions, of a quality that has complete control over the heart".[106] This is the highest degree of faith, whereby every activity and action of the limbs will be under its command.

Affirmation (*taṣdīq*), the first and lowest degree of faith, distinguishes between the believer and the unbeliever. Anything less than this, according to this notion, is insufficient.

The origin of kalām

Ibn Khaldūn continues, turning to the original issue of *kalām*. As mentioned earlier, *tawḥīd* is the core subject of *kalām*. It includes discussions of the articles of faith. Believing in God means believing in the Creator as the sole source of all actions. The Prophet informed us that this belief means our salvation. However, the Prophet did not inform us about the real being or the reality of the Creator because it is something too difficult for our perception and above our level. God cannot be described in any way as deficient. God is the most knowing and the most powerful. He has volition. He determines the fate of each created thing. Further, God sends His messengers to save us from the Day of Judgement.[107]

Ibn Khaldūn tells us that the *salaf* (the early Muslims) adopted these main articles of faith without question. Nonetheless, later on, differences occurred concerning details (*tafāṣīl*) of these articles. Most of the differences, says Ibn Khaldūn, concern ambiguous verses (*mutashābihāt*) of the Quran. In dealing with these ambiguous verses, scholars employed logical arguments in addition to the traditional materials. In this way, the science of *kalām* originated.[108]

Ibn Khaldūn believes that the issue of ambiguity in Quranic verses was the main factor that led to the dispute between scholars. Although God (*maʿbūd*)

is described in the Quran as being absolutely devoid of human attributes (*tanzīh al-muṭlaq*), there are a few verses which suggest anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) of either essence or attribute. The *salaf* give preference to the evidence for God's freedom from human attributes, while another group (including Muʿtazila, Mujassima and Mushabbiha) – Ibn Khaldūn describes them as innovators (*mubtadiʿa*) – occupied themselves with ambiguous verses which led to anthropomorphism (*tajsīm*).[109] (Further discussion on the issue of ambiguity will be made in the section below.)

Historical development of kalām

As far as Ibn Khaldūn is concerned, the science of *kalām* developed together with other sciences and crafts. Its development is marked by the emergence of speculative theologians who engaged themselves in debating and disputing theological issues such as the attributes of God, etc. One of the earliest and the most important groups was the Muʿtazila.[110] The Muʿtazila proposed several ideas and interpretations concerning several ambiguous Quranic verses. Among the important ideas of this group are the denial of the ideal attribute (*ṣifat al-maʿānī*) of God, the denial of God's hearing, vision and speech. And perhaps the most significant at this juncture was the idea of the createdness of the Quran (*Qurʾān makhlūq*).[111]

Ibn Khaldūn takes this opportunity to criticise severely the ideas of the Muʿtazila. Here he takes the opinion of a leading Muslim theologian Abū al-Hasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 260/873 or 874), whom he describes as the mediator between different approaches in the *kalām*. Ashʿari disavows anthropomorphism and recognises ideal attributes (*nafy al-tashbīh wa-athbata al-ṣifat al-maʿnawiyya*). Following the way of the *salaf*, he took a middle path in perfecting the dogmas concerning the rising of the dead, the Day of Judgement, paradise, hell, rewards and punishments. He also criticised and rejected the doctrine of the "imamate"[112] adopted by the Shiʿites. The idea of al-Ashʿarī then became an important school of thought in the later development of the *kalām*, marked by the emergence of figures such as al-Baqillānī (d. 403/1013) and Imām al-Ḥaramayn Abū al-Maʿālī (d. 478/1085).[113] Al-Baqillānī, for instance, took a further step attacking the imamate doctrine, and laid down logical premises such as arguments on the existence of the atom (*jawhar al-fard*) and of the vacuum (*khalāʾ*) and the theory of accident (*ʿaraḍ*).[114]

In the course of his discussion, Ibn Khaldūn also touches on the development of the science of logic (*ʿilm al-manṭiq*) in relation to development of *kalām*. Although, logic is now considered a branch of the philosophical sciences, people who studied it at that time made a distinction between it and the philosophical sciences. Logic to them was merely a yardstick for arguments and served to probe the arguments.[115] Nevertheless, logical arguments, which

were mostly derived from philosophical debates on physics and metaphysics, are not always especially applicable to theology. Of course, in the rule of logic, if the argument is wrong, the evidence proven by it will also be wrong. This approach was known as "the approach of recent scholars".[116] The aim of this school was to refute the opinions of the philosophers who were believed to have deviated from the true faith.

Later on, scholars tended to mix theological and philosophical approaches in their works. Ibn Khaldūn does not seem happy with this mixture. He explains that the two disciplines are different. Although the subject matter may be the same, the approaches and objectives of those two disciplines are obviously not so. He cites the examples of philosophical and theological studies of physical bodies and metaphysics. The philosophers studied bodies in the context of motion and/or motionlessness (*yataḥarrak wa-yaskun*), while the theologians studied them as an argument to prove the existent of the Creator. In the same manner, the philosophical study of metaphysics studied existence as such and what it requires for its essence, whereas theological study is concerned with *existentia* insofar as they serve as arguments for Him who causes existence (*al-wujūd min ḥaithu yadullu 'alā-'l-mawjūd*).[117]

In the hands of the later scholars, the two approaches, philosophy and theology, have been mixed up. The mixture can be seen for example in Bayḍāwī's work *al-Ṭawāli'*.[118] Reconciliation of the belief of the *salaf* with the science of *kalām* can be see in *Kitāb al-Irshād*. Ibn Khaldūn also suggests the works of al-Ghazzālī and Ibn al-Khaṭīb in particular to see the intellectual argumentation and refutation of the philosophers.

Towards the end of this section, Ibn Khaldūn gives his assessment on the status and the importance of the science of *kalām*. After considering several aspects he concludes that the science of *kalām* is not a discipline that is required by contemporary students. His argument is: if the main purpose of this science is to defend the articles of faith against heretics and innovators, it is in fact no longer serving the purpose. He does not see the significance of this science because in his day heretics and innovators have been destroyed. He cites the story of al-Junayd (d. 297/909)[119] to support his argument. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldūn acknowledges that for certain individuals and students *kalām* is still considerably useful, particularly its pattern of argumentation.

Ambiguity in the Quran and the *sunna* and the dogmatic schools of orthodox and innovators

Ibn Khaldūn presents this section as an extension of his previous discussion of *kalām*. Textually, this section appears only in the Quatremère edition; it is not found in the Beirut edition.[120] This additional section may have been inserted later by Ibn Khaldūn, possibly for the purpose of giving a clearer perspective

on this issue. As far as the science of *kalām* is concerned, this section has merit, since it relates directly to the development of *kalām* itself. In fact, the issue of ambiguity may be considered one of the major contributing factors to the later development of *kalām*.

Basically what Ibn Khaldūn is trying to show in this section is the occurrence of ambiguous verses and words in the Quran and the *sunna*. The exposition may be divided into three main parts. In the first, the author gives considerable space to providing a clearer picture of the issue in question. In the second part, he gives a brief account of the theological groups and their stance and opinions, together with his own commentary. In the third part, he attempts to explain and perhaps to justify his own stance based on his understanding of the psychological nature of human beings.

Ambiguity in the Quran and the sunna

It is a matter of fact that ambiguous verses do occur in the Quran and the *sunna*. Ibn Khaldūn cites several examples of words and verses of the Quran that are considered to carry ambiguous meanings. These examples include God's names and attributes (*al-asmā' wa-'l-ṣifāt*), spirit (*rūḥ*), revelation (*waḥy*), angels (*malā'ika*), Day of Judgement (*yawm al-ba'th*) and the individual letters (*ḥurūf muqaṭṭa'a*) at the beginning of certain *sūra*s. The existence of this kind of verse is recognised by the Quran itself (Qr.3:7):

> 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 towards deviation follow that which is ambiguous in the Quran, 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.

From this verse, it is understood that the Quran contains two types of verses, the unambiguous and the ambiguous. The unambiguous ones may not cause any problem but the ambiguous ones may. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the *salaf* from among the companions of the Prophet and the second generation (*tābi'īn*) understood the unambiguous verses as verses that are clear and definite, while the jurists defined them as clear in meaning.[121] The problem which Ibn Khaldūn is trying to deliberate here relates to the ambiguous ones. The above Quranic verse may be seen as an affirmation that there are verses which carry ambiguous meanings. Besides that, it may also be considered a warning to those who seek to interpret them. It is very clear that the Quran considers those who desire to interpret them as "deviators" and "those who desire

trouble".[122] A variant reading of this verse is also believed to be the root of the question, and it is also believed to be the turning point of the later development of Quranic exegetical tradition.[123]

The question then arises among scholars how to determine or distinguish this kind of verse. The Quran itself does not detail which verses fall into this category. It only indicates that it contains "unambiguous verses that are the mother of the Book, and other verses that are ambiguous". Based on this indication, of course, the conclusion may be drawn that the majority or larger number of the Quranic verses are unambiguous and constitute the "mother of the Book" (*umm al-kitāb*). The others are then considered ambiguous. Of course, they may be small in number, but to distinguish which ones are to be considered in this category is still the duty of the scholars. Apparently, some scholars, according to Ibn Khaldūn, avoid interpreting these verses. Ibn Abbās, for example, took a safer stance by saying that "one must believe in the ambiguous verses but need not to act in accordance with them" (*al-mutashābih yu'min bi-hi wa-lā yu'mal bi-hi*). Mujāhid and 'Ikrima believed that "everything except legal verses and narrative passages is ambiguous" (*kullu-mā siwā āyāt al-aḥkām wa-'l-qaṣaṣ mutashābih*), while al-Thawrī, al-Sha'bī and a group of the *Salaf* said "ambiguous is what cannot be known such as the condition of the doomsday (*sā'a*), the dates of the warning signs and the letters at the beginnings of certain *sūras*".[124]

The issue of ambiguity of Quranic verses obviously had a certain effect on the later development of *kalām*. There are disputes among scholars as to whether "those who are firmly rooted in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhūn fī-'l-'ilm*) are able to know the allegorical meaning of the ambiguous verses. And if they are able to know, what is then the status of their interpretation? Although the Quran itself describes those who seek to interpret the ambiguous verses as deviators, unbelievers, heretics and stupid innovators, a certain proportion of scholars give preference to interpreting these verses, such as the Mu'tazila and the Mujassima. These include matters such as the condition of resurrection, paradise, hell, the antichrist, the disturbance (preceding the last day) and the like questions.[125] This tendency, Ibn Khaldūn believes, has had a certain impact on the basic dogmatic beliefs of Islam. Therefore, in presenting this discussion, he explicitly declares that he wants to explain "and give preference to the sound ones (among them) as against the corrupt ones".[126]

Divine attributes and the emergence of theological schools

Another issue discussed in this section is divine attributes. Ibn Khaldūn considers this as one of the issues that split theologians. In various verses in the Quran, God describes Himself as the most knowing and powerful, having volition, living, hearing, etc. God has also in several instances in the Quran asserted that He has hands, eyes, face, etc. Of course there is no dispute in

regard to the attributes that imply perfection. However, in regard to attributes that might suggest deficiency on the part of God, such as sitting, hands, eyes, etc., which are also the attributes of created things, disputes among scholars are unavoidable.[127] In facing this situation, the attitude of the *salaf* and the second generation was clear: they left to God the attributes that might suggest deficiency and say nothing as to what the verses might mean. However, later scholars held divergent opinions regarding this matter. Ibn Khaldūn brings to light several important groups and individuals who emerged together with the development of *kalām*.

The human world

Towards the end of this section, Ibn Khaldūn discusses the human world (*'ālam al-basharī*), in connection with the question of ambiguity. He believes that a clear understanding of the world of human beings would be adequate to explain the nature of this question. He even assures his reader that upon understanding this concept there would be no more ambiguity, even if we might assume it to be ambiguous (*fa-lā tashābaha wa-'in qul-nā fī-hi bi-'l-tashābuh*).[128] Here, the nature of his religio-philosophical thinking is demonstrated quite obviously. He employs this religio-philosophical argumentation extensively to clarify the matter.

The human world is described by Ibn Khaldūn as "the most noble and exalted of the world of existent things".[129] It contains different levels (*aṭwār*), four altogether. The first level is constituted by the human world of the body including external sense perceptions, thinking, by which man is directed towards making a living, and all other activities granted to him by his present existence. The second level is constituted by the world of sleep (*'ālam al-nawm*), i.e. imaginative vision (*taṣawwur al-khayāl*), which involves perception by imagination. The third level is the level of prophecy (*ṭawr al-nubuwwa*), which is restricted to the noblest of mankind by virtue of the fact that God has distinguished them through the knowledge of Himself and His oneness. The fourth level is the level of death (*ṭawr al-mawt*), at which human beings leave their outward life for another existence before the Day of Judgement.[130]

The first and the second levels are shared by all human beings and are attested by concrete intuition. The third level, the prophetic, is attested by the prophetic miracle, i.e. the Quran and the condition peculiar to the prophets. The fourth level, the level of death, is attested only by divine revelation to the prophets.

Based on this argument, it is quite understandable that the ordinary human being, with the help of his intellect and imagination alone, can grasp only the first and second levels of this world, while the third and the fourth levels are considered as beyond the comprehension of human intellect and imagination. The only source of information that can explain these two worlds is revelation.

Ibn Khaldūn is almost saying that the question of ambiguity in the Quran is something within the realm of revelation and cannot be understood save through revelation. By this we can now understand why Ibn Khaldūn does not agree with those who attempt to interpret and give allegorical meanings of the ambiguous verses of the Quran. This explanation also answers why Ibn Khaldūn is more inclined to hold the opinions of the Ash'arites and the orthodox on this issue.

Excursus

In both sections Ibn Khaldūn has presented an overview of the science of *kalām* and its development in Muslim society. In the course of his exposition, Ibn Khaldūn has dealt with several important points and issues. First, he provides a relatively brief but clear definition of the science of *kalām* as understood in Islamic tradition. The core subject of *kalām* are matters pertaining to creed (especially *tawḥīd*). Although it concerns matters pertaining to faith, *kalām* may also be seen as a rational science because it employs logical proofs in its argumentation in defence of the articles of faith.

Ibn Khaldūn occupies quite a lengthy space discussing the theory of existence and the limitation of the human intellect. Based on a philosophical theory of causality, which he apparently borrows from his Greek predecessors, Ibn Khaldūn explains the existence of causes as well as the Cause of all causes – the Creator. The nature of these causes can be understood only by comprehensive knowledge. The human intellectual faculty does not possess that comprehensive knowledge, therefore it is inferior.

The inferior nature of the human intellect makes it impossible for it to grasp matters beyond its level. By adopting this idea, it is much easier for Ibn Khaldūn to convince his reader that matters pertaining to the soul, which is beyond the level of the intellect, have to be referred to revelation. Revelation is the only source of information about those matters. Faith therefore has to be based upon "the talk of the soul" and the state of attribute. This state can be achieved only through acts of worship.

The science of *kalām* originated as a result of intellectual attempts to understand the nature of things pertaining to faith which in some cases carry ambiguity. There are verses in the Quran that carry ambiguous meaning, such as verses which suggest anthropomorphism. Some *mutakallimūn* engaged themselves with these ambiguous verses. Ibn Khaldūn labels them as heretics and innovators. He criticises and rejects the ideas of Mu'tazila, Mujassima and the like. The appearance of Abū al-Hasan al-Ash'arī in the picture is described by Ibn Khaldūn as merely a reaction to counter the ideas of the heretics among *mutakallimūn*. The later development of *kalām* was coloured by the emergence of different ideas among theological schools as well as

individual scholars. They employed logical as well as philosophical argumentation in defence of their own theological stance.

Ibn Khaldūn's exposition of *kalām* is quite comprehensive but his assessment seems to be based entirely upon its temporary purpose and need. He argues that the science of *kalām* is no longer required by students of his day, because the threat of heretics and innovators no longer exists: they have been destroyed. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that this science is still useful and beneficial to certain individuals and students, because of its pattern and style of argumentation.

This is the third category of traditional conventional sciences. Although *kalām* is portrayed here in some ways as a rational science like any other rational sciences, the uniqueness of this science lies in its religious nature. Hence, it can be considered as rational plus religious. The argument is rational and philosophical while the nature of the subject is purely religious. Ibn Khaldūn presents this science as one of the products of Muslim intellectuals in defence of their religion. This is based on his remark at the beginning of the section that this science "involves arguing with logical proofs in defence of the articles of faith and refuting innovators". The target of this science is innovators (*mubtadi'a*). They are those who deviate from the true and standard dogma. What he means by standard religious dogma is the belief of the *salaf* and *ahl al-sunna*.

It is a matter of fact that some religious particulars are matters pertaining to the spiritual world. The terms referring to these matters are difficult to understand. Ambiguous verses in the Quran and the *sunna* are involved. Although the primary role and function of *kalām* is to defend religious articles, doctrines and dogmas, if it is not properly observed, it may also lead to deviation, as in the case of the Mu'tazila and the Mujassima. To the question of whether rational argumentation, as it is widely used in *kalām*, is sufficient to explain and clarify these matters, Ibn Khaldūn seems to be quite sceptical. I base this on his remark that "the intellect should not be used to weigh matters such as the oneness of God, the other world, the truth of prophecy, the real character of divine attributes or anything else that lies beyond the level of the intellect." Faith should not be based upon judgement alone but must be the "talk of the soul" and *ittiṣāf*. Besides recognising its usefulness, Ibn Khaldūn's attitude towards this science is quite negative. He does not recommend it to be studied by "contemporary students".

Based on the discussion of *kalām*, a general notion may be drawn that in a society, a science may be developed when there is a need for it. In the case of *kalām*, the science was developed for the noble purpose of defending the purity and status quo of the beliefs of a particular society, i.e. Muslim society, and as a reaction against the heretics and innovators. Its function was just to provide a kind of protection, not to strengthen religious belief. When the threats and challenges disappeared, the science was no longer needed.

Sufism and the spiritual sciences

Based on Ibn Khaldūn's order of exposition, this is the fourth and last in the category of the traditional conventional sciences. Under this category two sciences of a spiritual nature, namely Sufism and dream interpretation, will be dealt with. It is interesting that the two sciences are grouped together, perhaps for the simple reason that both concern spiritual behaviour, the unseen angelical realm, accessible only by direct apprehension of the soul. In an explicit statement Ibn Khaldūn considers these two sciences as a "branch" of religious law (*min-'ulūm al-shar'iyya*). Presumably, it is for this reason that both are discussed in an orderly fashion one after the other in the last part of his exposition of the religious sciences. Both sciences follow the same process of evolutionary development as do other religious sciences, and of course they have a certain degree of impact and domination in society. On this basis they also deserve special attention, especially in the context of the Muslim community, as well as in the history of Islamic science. This inquiry will be trying to assess the significance of this so-called branch of religious science within the context of Ibn Khaldūn's scheme and to determine the conceptual and theoretical bases that can be drawn from this section.

Before going any further, it might be appropriate to introduce the basic content of this section. It may be divided into at least four distinct parts as follows: (1) a brief introduction on the origin of Sufism, (2) *idrāk* (perception) and the nature of Sufism, (3) the significance of *kashf* and the process of Sufism, (4) a lengthy discussion and critiques on the "recent *ṣūfīs*" and (5) Ibn Khaldūn's personal assessment.

The origin of Sufism

Ibn Khaldūn proclaims the science of Sufism at the very beginning as a science belonging to the category of religious law that originated in Islam.[131] He does not give any clear definition, as he does for other religious sciences. Nevertheless, he explains that "it is based upon constant application to divine worship – complete devotion to God, aversion from the false splendour 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."[132] Although, while dealing with this subject, Ibn Khaldūn tends to confine himself exclusively to the milieu of Islam, it has to be noted here that a science of the same nature does exist in other religious traditions. This science is generally referred to as mysticism. Despite the fact that mysticism occurs in other religious traditions, Sufism (*ṣūfiyya* or *mutaṣawwifa*), an Arabic term, can certainly claim its origin in Islam. Ibn Khaldūn does not seem to agree in this point with al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1074), who believed that *ṣūfī* is merely a nickname (*laqab*) which has no etymology or analogy in the Arabic language.

Instead, Ibn Khaldūn inclines more to the opinion that the word comes from *ṣūf* (woollen garment). He shares this opinion with many other *ṣūfī* scholars.[133] This is characterised by the fact that the *ṣūfīs* wore woollen garments as opposed to gorgeous garments. The word "Sufism" later came to represent asceticism, retirement from the world and devotion to divine worship.[134] In the early days of Islam, Sufism was the common practice of the first- and second-generation Muslims (the *ṣaḥāba* and the *tābi'īn*). It was considered as "the path of truth and right guidance".[135] As far as Ibn Khaldūn is concerned, Sufism at that time was considered merely to represent asceticism, retirement and devotion to divine worship, not a science proper. It was not until the second/eighth century that it took shape as a proper structured science.[136]

Idrāk *(perception) and the nature of Sufism*

The next point touched on by Ibn Khaldūn is *idrāk* (perception) in Sufism.[137] He employs the philosophical theory of *idrāk* in his attempt to justify the existence of the "world" that is peculiar to Sufism. *Idrāk*, says Ibn Khaldūn, is of two kinds, the perception of science and knowledge (*al-'ulūm wa-'l-ma'ārif*) and the perception of "states" (*aḥwāl*). The first kind of *idrāk* concerns matters of knowledge including certainty (*yaqīn*), hypothetical doubt (*ẓann*) as well as imagery and doubt (*al-shakk wa-'l-wahm*). The second kind of perception concerns matters pertaining to states (*aḥwāl*) such as joy and grief, anxiety and relaxation, satisfaction, anger, patience, gratefulness and similar things.[138] The latter is peculiar to the world of Sufism.

The spiritual exertion and worship of the *ṣūfī* would necessarily lead him to achieve a "state" (*ḥāl*).[139] This is the result of his striving (*mujāhada*). According to Ibn Khaldūn the state may be a kind of divine worship (*naw' al-'ibāda*), then it goes up to become a station (*maqām*) or stage of gnosis for the *ṣūfī* novice, or it may not be a kind of divine worship but merely the attribute of the soul (*ṣifat ḥāṣila li-'l-nafs*). In this process the *ṣūfī* will experience progress from station to station until he reaches the ultimate station, i.e. the recognition of *tawḥīd* and *ma'rifa* (gnosis).[140]

Ibn Khaldūn explains that obedience and sincerity (*al-ṭā'a wa-'l-ikhlāṣ*) with the guidance of the faith (*imān*) become the essential requisite for the *ṣūfī* novice to succeed in the process of gnosis. Accordingly, the novice must also follow the right procedure. If there are any shortcomings or defects (*taqṣīr fi-'l-natījah*), the *ṣūfī* novice must follow the procedure of self-scrutiny of all his actions. In *ṣūfī* terms this procedure is called *muḥāsaba*.[141] Success in the *ṣūfī* path, according to Ibn Khaldūn, depends entirely upon *muḥāsaba*. The novice performs the *muḥāsaba* with the help of his "internal taste" (*dhawq*), which is also a kind of mystical and spiritual experience.[142]

Later on, Sufism becomes a peculiar form of behaviour and has a peculiar

kind of terminology. New terminology and technical terms are created and identified to facilitate the understanding of the ideas and the concepts. Gradually, it forms a special discipline in its own class – as another kind of religious law. It follows the same evolution as undergone by other kinds of religious law. Hence, religious law, as far as Ibn Khaldūn is concerned, is categorised into two kinds – one is special to jurists and *muftī*s and another one is peculiar to *ṣūfī*s.

The *ṣūfī*s, like the jurists, wrote down structured and systematic works on the subject. Ibn Khaldūn cites examples of the works of Muhāsibī (d. 243/857), Qushayrī and Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234–5), who published among others *Kitāb al-Riʿāya*, *Kitāb al-Risāla* and *ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif* respectively. Another example which combined the two kinds of religious science was *Kitāb al-Iḥyā'* by al-Ghazzālī.[143]

Kashf (unveiling) and its significance in the process of Sufism

The next point dealt with by Ibn Khaldūn is *kashf*[144] (unveiling or the removal of the veil). What makes this concept important in Sufism? Based on Ibn Khaldūn's remark, *kashf* is experienced by the *ṣūfī*s as a result of their mystical exertion or striving (*mujāhada*), isolation or retirement (*khulwa*) and remembrance (*dhikr*).[145] By achieving this state of *kashf*, the *ṣūfī* now beholds the divine world which the ordinary person (*ṣāḥib al-ḥiss*) cannot perceive.

The author also provides some explanation of the nature and process of *kashf*. This experience happens, he says,

> 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 realises its essential existence. This is identical with perception. The spirit now is ready for holy gifts, for the science of divine presence and for the outpouring of Deity (*al-fatḥ al-Ilāhī*). Its essence realises 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 does.[146]

This passage explains quite sufficiently how the process of *kashf* takes place. In his explanation Ibn Khaldūn makes quite extensive use of *ṣūfī* technical terms, which of course have to be understood within their own context. Terms

such as "*al-mawāhib al-rabbāniyya*" (divine gifts), "*al-ʿulūm al-ladunniya*" (esoteric knowledge or knowledge direct from God) and "*al-fatḥ al-Ilāhī*" (the outpouring of Deity) are among the examples.

Kashf as a concept certainly has a particular importance in Sufism. Ibn Khaldūn relates this mystical experience to the ability to prophesy future events. The *ṣūfī* who has achieved this level will be able to perceive or to see events in advance. This experience, says Ibn Khaldūn, was achieved by the Prophet's companions and the great *ṣūfīs*. However, they did not pay much attention to it. They kept these experiences to themselves without telling others. They even considered these experiences as "tribulation" (*miḥna*) and therefore tried to escape whenever afflicted by them.[147]

Regarding the question of the soundness of the *kashf*, Ibn Khaldūn's stance is quite clear: that it cannot be considered sound or truthful unless it originates in straightforwardness (*kāna nāshiʾan ʿan al-istiqāma*). This means that the experience of *kashf* can only be considered sound if it fulfils a certain set of criteria. Perhaps this argument can be considered as Ibn Khaldūn's attempt to differentiate between real actual Islamic mystical experience and other kinds of ascetic experience. As far as this notion is concerned, *istiqāma* is the prerequisite for attaining the true and complete (*ṣaḥīḥan kāmilan*) experience of the *kashf*. However, Ibn Khaldūn acknowledges that the experience and explanation of *kashf* by the *ṣūfīs* cannot be appreciated rationally (either by *burhān* or *dalīl*) because anyone "who did not share their approach will not be able to understand their mystical and ecstatic experiences". Argument by proof is of no use since it belongs solely to intuitive experience.[148] Even the *muftīs* have no decisive judgement in this regard. They partly disapprove and partly accept these experiences.

What is then the significance of *kashf* in the whole affair of Sufism? As indicated earlier, the early *ṣūfīs* among the *ṣahāba* and the *tābiʿīn* had not shown their interest in *kashf*. They had no desire to obtain *kashf* nor had they any concern with propagating their mystical or *kashf* experiences. Only recent *ṣūfīs* seemed to have become more preoccupied with *kashf*. Although Ibn Khaldūn does not explicitly mention why this concept is significant, as a matter of analysis we may suggest some reasons. First, of course, it is exclusively experienced by those who had undergone the *ṣūfī* mystical path of *mujāhada*, followed the right procedure and attained the *maqām*. These experiences are peculiar to the *ṣūfīs*, and those who do not follow the *ṣūfī* path will not be able to obtain them. Second, this exclusive experience was considered a source of knowledge and had been utilised to maintain the elitism, exclusiveness, status quo and authenticity of the later development of Sufism. And, last but not least, it constituted one of the most important topics in the development of a *ṣūfī* literary tradition.

Critiques of Sufism

Before entering into a lengthy critique of and commentary on the activities of certain groups in Sufism, Ibn Khaldūn provides some explanation of the concept of God's transcendence. Presumably with this explanation he wants to provide his reader with background knowledge about issues that he is going to touch on afterwards. It has something to do with the beliefs of certain later *ṣūfīs* who had promoted what he considers strange ideas, such as *tajallī* (emanation), *ḥulūl* (incarnation) and ideas of a similar nature.

The concept of God's transcendence is coined by Ibn Khaldūn in the word *al-mubāyana* (separateness). For him, separateness has two meanings. The first meaning implies God's location and direction, while the second meaning relates to being distinct and different.[149] Again it should be noted that this particular passage on the concept of God's transcendence does not appear in the Beirut edition of the *Muqaddima*.[150] For Ibn Khaldūn, a proper understanding of this concept is essential since it has to do with the doctrine of *tawḥīd*. Ibn Khaldūn obviously put forth this point to counter the theory of absolute oneness (*al-waḥda al-muṭlaqa*) proposed by groups of later *ṣūfīs*. They understood and explained this concept in their own way based on the theory established by *ahl al-maẓāhir*, people who propose the theory of manifestation. In dealing with this subject, Ibn Khaldūn gathers information particularly from the writings of al-Farghānī, Ibn Dihāq, al-Harāwī, Ibn Sīnā and others.

First he takes the example of the writings of al-Farghānī,[151] who happened to be the commentator of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poems. Ibn Khaldūn considers the works of al-Farghānī as representing the school of *ahl al-tajallī wa-'l-maẓāhir wa-'l-ḥaḍrat* (the people of emanation, manifestation and presence).[152] Basically, al-Farghānī's idea is based upon his understanding of the order of the world of existence from the Creator (*ṣudūr al-wujūd 'an al-fā'il wa-tartībi-hi*). All existence, according to al-Farghānī, comes forth from the attribute of uniqueness (*waḥdāniyya*), which is the manifestation of unity (*aḥadiyya*). Both *waḥdāniyya* and *aḥadiyya* come from *al-dhāt al-karīma* (the noble essence), which is identical with oneness (*'ayn al-waḥda*). This process is called *tajallī* (emanation). The first degree is *tajallī al-dhāt* (emanation of the essence). This idea is based on a tradition transmitted by the *ṣūfīs*: "I was a concealed treasure. I wanted to be known. Therefore I created the creatures so that they might know Me."[153] Presumably, it is based on this tradition that this school built up its cosmological idea, explaining how the process of creation takes place. This idea is characterised by the theory of emanation (*ifāḍa*). From perfection (*kamāl*) emanates the order of existence and particularisation of reality. This reality is identified as the world of ideas (*'ālam al-ma'ānī*) and the perfect presence (*al-ḥaḍrat al-kamāliyya*) and the Muhammadan reality (*ḥaqīqa Muḥammadiyya*). This "world" contains realities of attributes, the *lūḥ*, the *qalam* as well as prophets and messengers. All these are the particularisation of

Muhammadan reality. From these, other realities come forth in the atomic presence (*al-ḥaḍra al-habā'iyya*), which is in the level of ideas (*martaba al-mithāl*). From there then come forth, in succession, the throne (*'arash*), the seat (*kursī*), the spheres (*aflāk*), then the world of elements (*'anāṣir*), then the world of composition (*'alam al-tarkīb*). All these worlds are in the world of mending (*ratq*); when they manifest or emanate, they are in the world of rending (*fatq*).[154]

Another group is identified by Ibn Khaldūn as those who believe in the absolute oneness (*al-waḥda al-muṭlaqa*). He sees the idea of this group as even stranger than that of the first. Basically, this theory holds that all things in existence possess powers in themselves that bring the realities, forms and matters of the existing things into being.[155] The combined universal power (*al-quwwa al-jāmi'a li-'l-kull*) without any particularisation is divine power. This power is 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. This is identical with divine essence (*fa-kullu wāḥid wa-huwa nafs al-dhāt al-Ilāhiyya*). Clarifying this idea, Ibn Khaldūn utilises the analogy made by Ibn Diḥāq,[156] who compares this idea with the philosophers' idea of the existence of colours. The existence of colours is predicated upon light. It is in the same way that the existence of all existing *sensibilia* are predicated upon the existence of the faculty of perception (*al-mudrak al-'aqlī*).[157]

The third group is identified by Ibn Khaldūn as the school of incarnation and oneness (*al-hulūl wa-'l-waḥda*). This idea was propagated by, among others, al-Harāwī in his *Kitāb al-Maqāmāt*. He was followed by Ibn 'Arabī, Ibn Sab'īn (d. 669/1271) and their pupils as well as Ibn al-Farīd and Najm al-Dīn al-Isrā'īlī (d. 677/1280).[158] Of this group Ibn Khaldūn uncompromisingly alleges that they were strongly influenced by the extremist neo-Ismaili Shi'a idea of incarnation and the divinity of the *imām*. Also their idea of *quṭb* (pole)[159] corresponds quite closely to the Shi'as' idea about their chiefs (*nuqabā'*). Many jurists and *muftī*s reject this idea.

It should also be noted here that Ibn Khaldūn, in giving a clearer picture of divine oneness, has inserted a quotation from Abu Mahdi 'Īsā b. al-Zayyāt.[160] This quotation includes some passages of al-Harawī's *Maqāmāt*, particularly on the theory of oneness.

Sufism assessed

Ibn Khaldūn recapitulates that the entire discussion of Sufism can be summarised in four main topics. The first topic covers *mujāhadāt* (striving), *adhwāq* (the tastes) and *muhāsaba al-nafs* (self-scrutiny or self-examination) in order to obtain the mystical experience. The second topic is *kashf* (unveiling) and the perceivable spiritual realities (*al-ḥaqīqa al-mudraka min 'ālam al-ghayb*)

such as the divine attributes, the throne and so on. The third topic is the activities in the various worlds and among the various created things (al-'awālim wa-'l-akwān), including the kinds of karāmāt (divine grace). The fourth topic is shaṭaḥāt (ecstatic utterances),[161] the expression that are suspect in their plain meaning (alfāẓ mūhama al-ẓāhir).

Towards the end of this passage, Ibn Khaldūn draws the attention of his reader the right and true ṣūfī practice, as he himself believes. Again, he reminds his reader to observe the practice and the attitude of the early ṣūfīs (salaf al-mutaṣawwifa) as an ideal model. Those early ṣūfīs had no desire to remove the veil, or to have such supernatural perception. Their main concern was to follow their models. They always turned away and paid no attention to supernatural perception. They always gave priority to religious law (sharī'a), which is more certain than any mystical experience. They even forbade discussion of those things. And, Ibn Khaldūn advises, this should be the attitude and practice of all ṣūfī novices (murīd).[162]

The science of dream interpretation

This short passage on dream interpretation is the last part of the section on the traditional conventional sciences. Like Sufism, quite strangely Ibn Khaldūn considers dream interpretation as a science within Islamic law. However, unlike Sufism, this science was cultivated in ancient generations as well as among those that came later. Pre-Islamic religious groups and nations had this science but, according to Ibn Khaldūn, their tradition has not reached us[163] for the simple reason that "we have been satisfied with the words of Muslim dream interpreters."[164] In short, the phenomena of dream visions are common in the life of human beings and, whether we like it or not, need to be interpreted. Probably, this is the main reason why Ibn Khaldūn presents us with this passage.

Supporting his claim that dream interpretation is part of the religious sciences in Islam, Ibn Khaldūn apparently refers to the Quranic story of the Prophet Yūsuf. He also refers to two prophetic traditions. One is from the authority of the Prophet and Abū Bakr: "dream vision is a kind of supernatural perception" (wa-'l-ru'ya mudrakun min madārik al-ghayb). Another tradition is "a good dream vision is the forty-sixth part of prophecy."[165]

Reality and the process of dream vision

To understand Ibn Khaldūn's perception of dream vision, it is perhaps necessary to cross-refer to his earlier discussion on dreams. That particular discussion can be found in his sixth passage of prefatory remarks to the first chapter of the Muqaddima. There, Ibn Khaldūn gives a clearer picture of the reality of dreaming. Dream, he says, is "an awareness on the part of the rational soul in

its spiritual essence of glimpse(s) of the forms of events" (*muṭāla'at al-nafs al-nāṭiqa fī-dhāti-hā al-rūḥāniyya lamḥatun min ṣuwar al-wāqi'āt*).[166]

Here in the present passage, Ibn Khaldūn also explains how dreaming takes place. He begins with sleep. Sleep takes place when the spirit of the heart (*al-rūḥ al-qalbi*)[167] plays its part. When the surface of the body is covered by the chill of night, the spirit withdraws from all the other regions of the body to its centre, the heart. It rests, in order to be able to resume its activity, and all the external senses are now unemployed.[168]

As commonly known, dreaming occurs only during sleep. The faculties through which the body perceives knowledge are all connected with the brain. However, during sleep the most active of them is the imagination. Imagination, says Ibn Khaldūn,

> 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 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 these 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.[169]

This quotation quite sufficiently explains how dreaming operates during sleep. It is of course the common experience of all human beings but it also, like other sciences, has a particular importance as one of the formally developed and structured sciences.

Types and characteristics of dream vision

Before going any further, it should be noted that Ibn Khaldūn reminds his reader about the occurrence of two types of dream vision, true dream visions and false ones. There are certain characteristics that may be used to identify whether the dream is true (*al-ru'ya al-ṣāliḥa*) or false (*aḍghāth al-aḥlām al-kādhiba*). If the pictures come down from the rational spirit of the perceiver (*mudrik*) they are considered true dream visions. But if they are derived from pictures preserved in the power of memory where the imagination deposits them when the individual is awake, they are considered confused dreams (*aḍghāth al-aḥlām*).[170]

It should also be noted that Ibn Khaldūn provides more explanation on this particular point in an extended passage that appears in the Quatremère edition. For the purpose of this study, perhaps it would be beneficial to summarise that passage. According to Ibn Khaldūn, certain signs indicate soundness and truthfulness of a dream vision. At least two important signs may be used for this purpose. The first is that the dreamer wakes up quickly as soon as he has perceived it, as if he is in a hurry to get back to being awake and having sensual perceptions. The second sign is that the dream vision stays and remains impressed with all its details in the memory of the dreamer. It is present in the mind without the need for thought or memory. The vision remains pictured in the dreamer's mind while he is awake. It is unlike confused dreaming, which takes place in time; this dreaming may require thinking and application to remember after the dreamer is awake, and sometime many of the details are forgotten. These signs of true dreaming particularly belong to prophetic revelation.[171]

Some rules and examples of dream interpretation

Ibn Khaldūn also provides some information on the rules and examples of dream interpretation. As a matter of fact dreaming has something to do with imagination. In most cases dreams require interpretation. It is at this point that the dream interpreter plays his part.

The dream interpreter normally uses certain rules and methods to interpret dreams. The most popular method, as far as Ibn Khaldūn is concerned, is the method of comparison (*tashbīh*). For example, an ocean probably 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.[172]

According to Ibn Khaldūn, the interpretation of dreams implies knowledge of general norms upon which to base the interpretation and explanation. These general norms will be applied in such a way as to fit a particular dream vision best. A particular symbol does not always represent a particular meaning.[173] However, there are dream visions which do no require interpretation, because they are clear and distinct or because the idea perceived in them may be very similar to the pictures that represent it.

Explaining the kinds of dream vision, Ibn Khaldūn quotes a tradition that indicates three kinds of dream vision: dream visions from God, dream visions from angels and dream visions from Satan. The dream visions from God do not require interpretation; the dream visions from angels are true dreams that require interpretation, while dream visions from Satan are the confused ones.[174]

Historical development

Ibn Khaldūn's account of the history of the science of dream interpretation is quite short. It is less informative than one could expect. However, for the purpose of this inquiry, the information provided, although rather inadequate, will be fully utilised in order to gain at least a general picture of the historical development of this science.

As usual, Ibn Khaldūn gathers his historical information from the authors and publications available and accessible to him. Here he names five authors altogether, two of whom are his contemporaries, namely al-Sālimī[175] who published *Kitāb al-ishārāt*, which Ibn Khaldūn considers one of "the most useful and briefest books in the subject",[176] and Ibn Rashīd,[177] who published *al-Marqaba al-'ulya*.

Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Qayrawānī was mentioned as one of the Maghribi scholars who wrote *al-Mumti'* and other books. Unfortunately, as Rosenthal notes, no further information on this author is available except what is given in the *Muqaddima*.[178] Another two names mentioned are Muhammad b. Sīrīn[179] (d. 110/728) and al-Kirmānī.[180] Ibn Sīrīn was described as one of the most famous experts in dream interpretation, but none of his work is mentioned in this passage. The same is the case for al-Kirmānī: no further information is given except for a short statement that "he wrote on the subject after Ibn Sīrīn".[181]

Excursus

In this passage Ibn Khaldūn basically deals with two sciences of a spiritual nature, the sciences of Sufism and of dream interpretation. These sciences are categorically considered as part of religious law (*sharī'a*). As a historian and phenomenologist, Ibn Khaldūn has in this particular passage presented the inner dimension of society, which is the subject of his study. Although from the macrocosmic point of view this phenomenon is general and even common in almost every religion-based society, Ibn Khaldūn does not seem to be interested in the variants elsewhere. Instead, he confines himself to the milieu of Muslim society, of which he is part.

It is historically evident that Sufism has formed an integral part of Muslim society. Therefore, it has had a certain historical, social as well as moral and spiritual significance and impact on society. Although in the early days of Islam Sufism did not take shape as a formal structured science, it was undeniably a general practice among some members of society, the *ṣaḥāba* and the *tābi'in*. Ibn Khaldūn may see the development of Sufism in the same perspective as he sees the development and evolution process of other sciences and crafts, i.e. in the framework of his theory of *'umrān*. This is based on the assumption that the development of Sufism as a formal and structured science occurred only with the advent of sedentary culture and the cultivation of sciences and

crafts. For Ibn Khaldūn, Sufism developed as a form of religious and social reaction to the new tendency in the society of second-century Islam, the tendency towards worldly things (*wa-janaḥa al-nās mukhālaṭa al-dunya*). It developed to fulfil spiritual, psychological and social needs of society.

Also of interest here may be to see the theoretical basis of Ibn Khaldūn's understanding of Sufism. On the basis of this passage alone it is not difficult to see that the theoretical foundation of his conception of Sufism is his epistemology and his concept of man and the human soul. In the previous discussion he provided us with full information about the thinking ability of man. Man differs from his fellow animals by his ability to perceive not only knowledge but also "states" (*aḥwāl*). Ibn Khaldūn coins the power of perceiving knowledge in the term *idrāk* (perception). *Idrāk* is of two kinds. The first concerns matters of knowledge by means of the intellect, while the second one concerns matters of states (*aḥwāl*). The latter is peculiar to Sufism. *Aḥwāl* is a mystical experience that can be achieved only through serious devotion to divine worship and spiritual struggle (*'ibāda* and *mujāhada*). The achievement of the highest state can bring about the realisation of *tawḥīd*, which, as discussed earlier, will not be achieved through *kalām*.

Ibn Khaldūn may not be a practised *ṣūfī*, at least in the specific and strict sense of the word. He never claims to speak on the basis of his actual personal mystical experience. He speaks merely as a social observer. However, he has obviously shown his interest, sympathy and even appreciation of Sufism, recognising its moral and spiritual, as well as its social significance. His treatment of it shows his deep understanding in the subject. He even admits that the supernatural experience of the *ṣūfī*s is an "irrefutable truth". As an orthodox Muslim, he gives no room to ideas that are not in agreement with the attitude and beliefs of the early Muslims. He finds it necessary to safeguard and ensure the purity of his religion, and again he never fails to remind his reader of the dangers of the deviationists. He gives considerable space to revealing the "pseudo-*ṣūfī*" teachings of the "heretics and innovators". They should not be allowed to develop.

In the case of dream interpretation, Ibn Khaldūn considers it to be of the same nature as Sufism, i.e. perceived through the power of *idrāk*. However, it differs in process, since dreaming is experienced during sleep while mystical states are experienced during the moment of ecstasy. Ibn Khaldūn basically divides dreams into two, those that are true (*ru'ya ṣāliḥa*) and those that are confused(*aḍghāth aḥlām al-kādhiba*). Regarding its order of reliability, Ibn Khaldūn categorically divides dream visions into three levels: dream visions from God (special to the prophets only), dream visions from the angels and dream visions from Satan. As far as Ibn Khaldūn is concerned, the science of dream interpretation was developed because there were religious, psychological and social needs for it. It also became necessary since the phenomenon of dreaming is experienced by and common to all human beings.

In conclusion, by placing these spiritual sciences among the traditional sciences in his classification, Ibn Khaldūn recognises and at the same time appreciates the importance of the inner dimension of society. These sciences developed because society, or at least part of it, needed them. The domination and influence of these sciences in the context of Muslim society should not be ignored. It is evident that Sufism has played a significant role in many aspects of Muslim society. Nonetheless, Ibn Khaldūn's claim that these sciences are in the category of religious science or religious law and originated from religious teaching is not quite firmly based. Theoretically these sciences, unlike other traditional sciences, are universal in nature, i.e. they do not exclusively belong to the Muslim community. Although it may be argued that Sufism in its strict sense originated in Islam, mysticism and dream interpretation in the wider sense did not. Also, to claim that they belong entirely to traditional science is not quite reasonable. In fact they consist of some elements of the philosophical sciences. At this point I am more inclined towards Lakhsassi's suggestion that these sciences should be in another category, namely the category of spiritual science.[182] This point will be taken into account in our attempt to sketch the theoretical foundation of Ibn Khaldūn's epistemology later in this study.

4

THE INTELLECTUAL SCIENCES

(*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya*)

Introduction

The intellectual or rational sciences are the second category, in contra-distinction to the previously discussed traditional conventional sciences. Ibn Khaldūn discusses these sciences under fourteen major topics (Rosenthal's translation), with various headings and sub-headings. Out of the fourteen, eleven topics deal directly with various individual sciences, while the remaining three focus on refutation and criticism of philosophy, astronomy and alchemy respectively.

In general, Ibn Khaldūn's exposition of the intellectual sciences may be divided into two parts. In the first part, Sections 19–29, he outlines each of these individual sciences following his usual method, i.e. (1) an introduction to the subject matter and the structure of the sciences followed by (2) a short account of their historical development and literature. In the second part, Sections 30–2, Ibn Khaldūn goes into attack and criticism and provides arguments why these sciences should be rejected.

At this particular point of my study, I have no intention of discussing each of the individual sciences separately. This is to avoid redundancy and an unnecessary extension of the present work. Instead, they will be touched upon where necessary while trying to see the linkages of Ibn Khaldūn's argument. However, certain individual sciences will be focused on, for they have a particular paradigmatic importance and direct significance as far as this study is concerned. More importantly, this study is trying to see the value of these sciences in the context of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of epistemology and human civilisation.

Prior to this section is another entitled "*fī-'l-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya wa-aṣnāfi-hā*" (On various kinds of intellectual sciences). This section may be considered as introductory to his discussion of the intellectual sciences. In this section Ibn Khaldūn sets out his paradigm, sketching his thought and understanding regarding the division as well as the hierarchical order of the sciences. He also in this section provides some historical information about the origin and

development of the intellectual sciences, as far as human civilisation is concerned.

For Ibn Khaldūn, the intellectual sciences are natural to man (*ṭabī'iyya li-'l-insān*) as a result of his ability to think. They are not restricted or peculiar to any particular religious groups, thus they are universal by nature. They begin together with the beginning of human history. Ibn Khaldūn classifies them as the sciences of philosophy and wisdom (*'ulūm al-falsafa wa-'l-ḥikma*). The philosophical sciences are basically divided into four major categories, namely logic (*'ilm al-manṭiq*), physics (*'ilm al-ṭabī'ī*), metaphysics (*'ilm al-ilāhī*) and the study of quantities, which are called mathematical sciences (*ta'ālīm*). The mathematical sciences are four: geometry (*'ilm al-handasa*), arithmetic (*'ilm al-artamāṭīqī*), music (*'ilm al-mūsīqā*) and astronomy (*'ilm al-hay'a*). According to Ibn Khaldūn, these seven basic sciences form the principles of the philosophical sciences (*uṣūl al-'ulūm al-falsafiyya*).[1]

Another important point in this introductory passage is that in it Ibn Khaldūn states explicitly the hierarchical order of the philosophical sciences. Logic is the first in the list, followed by the mathematical sciences, of which arithmetic is the first, followed by geometry, then astronomy, and then music. These are then followed by physics and, finally, metaphysics.[2]

The hierarchical order of the seven philosophical sciences is as follows:

1   Logic
    (Mathematical sciences)
2   Arithmetic
3   Geometry
4   Astronomy
5   Music
6   Physics
7   Metaphysics

The second part of the introductory section is devoted to a historical account of the origin and development of the philosophical sciences. Before the advent of Islam, the cultivation of the intellectual sciences was dominated by the two great nations of the Persians and the Romans. Ibn Khaldūn refers to these two great nations because they possessed an abundant civilisation at that time. On the other hand, the Chaldeans, the Syrians and the Copts were much concerned with sorcery, astrology and talismans. In relation to this Ibn Khaldūn recalls the Quranic story of Hārūt and Mārūt.[3] When Islam came, these sciences were declared forbidden because they are against the religious teaching and are to be avoided.

The Persians' legacy was destroyed following a directive letter from 'Umar (the second Caliph) to Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ during the Muslim occupation of

Persia. It was said that 'Umar had directed Sa'd to "throw them into the water or burn them in the fire" when asked about what to do with the large number of Persian books. The reason for destroying them was that 'Umar did not want Persian tradition to "corrupt" the Muslim mind. It was said, "If they contain right guidance, God has given us better guidance. If it is error, God has protected us against it."[4]

It was also said, according to one opinion, that the Persian sciences were transmitted to the Greeks through Alexander. The Greeks, according to Ibn Khaldūn, claimed that their tradition goes back to Luqmān the sage. From Luqmān's pupils the tradition reached Socrates, then Plato, Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius and others. Aristotle was the teacher of Alexander, the ruler of the Greeks who defeated the Persians and deprived them of their realm.[5]

When the Romans seized power over the Greeks, they adopted Christianity and abandoned rational sciences. The tradition was then taken over by the Arabs and highly cultivated in the hands of thinkers such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, al-Ṣā'igh (d. 533/1139) and others, while mathematics and its astrological and magical cognates were still practised by figures such as Majrīṭī (d. 398/1007) and Jābir b. Hayyān (d. 200/815).

Towards the end of this passage, Ibn Khaldūn tells us the situation in the Maghrib. Like the traditional sciences, the situation of the intellectual sciences in the Maghrib at that time was poor because of the diminution of civilisation. In contrast, these sciences flourished in Eastern Iraq, Persia and Western Europe.

This introductory passage by Ibn Khaldūn has given us some thoughts about two important issues: (1) the division and hierarchical order of the intellectual sciences and (2) the origin and some historical account of their development. Of the two issues, the first – the divisions and the hierarchical order of the intellectual sciences – is identified as being of particular importance as far as this study is concerned. This is in view of the main focus of the following passages, which deal directly with each individual science. It is particularly important to see the point of departure as well as the frame of reference within which Ibn Khaldūn lays his foundation when he builds up his theory of scientific tradition in the context of human civilisation. To fulfil this task, I will first deal with logic, because it is the first in the hierarchical order of the intellectual sciences. Second, I will deal with metaphysics, which is the last of the order of the intellectual sciences. I miss out the other sciences between the two extremes of logic and metaphysics since they have no direct significance or paradigmatic importance, at least at this particular point. Third, I will focus on sorcery and talismans and the sciences of that nature. Ibn Khaldūn discusses these sciences in Sections 27 and 28. However, this is quite strange on the part of Ibn Khaldūn, for he never placed sorcery and talismans

in any part of his divisions, much less in the hierarchical order of the intellectual sciences. Nonetheless, he recognises that this kind of science has a particular importance as one of the crafts inherited and practised throughout the history of human civilisation.

The science of logic ('ilm al-manṭiq)

There is a clear statement by Ibn Khaldūn, repeated on a number of occasions, that the science of logic is in the first rank among the intellectual sciences. Logic, according to his definition, is a science that gives protection to the mind from error (khaṭa'), and its purpose is to distinguish the true from the false.[6]

Although in his expository order Ibn Khaldūn deals with logic after he discusses the science of numbers, this does not in any way indicate that logic is inferior to the latter. This can be seen from his own statement that logic comes first, followed in sequence by the science of numbers. In the same context, al-Fārābī, one of Ibn Khaldūn's predecessors, called manṭiq the mistress (rā'isa) of sciences on account of its efficacy in the practice of them. However, al-Fārābī's view is slightly different from that of Ibn Sīnā, another of Ibn Khaldūn's predecessors. Ibn Sīnā called logic the servant of the sciences because it is not a science in its own right but a means (waṣīla) of acquiring science.[7]

The importance of logic, according to Ibn Khaldūn, lies in the fact that it runs parallel to the nature of the mind.[8] In his earlier statement, Ibn Khaldūn established the notion that what draws the line between human and animal is the mind, i.e. the ability to think. And it is the nature of the mind to reason out every single case in human life based on the principles of logic. In this context, the significance of logic can be seen quite clearly.

Although from a traditional point of view, logic has been divided into the studies of deduction and induction, throughout its long history the principles of logic have played a central role in theology and they have influenced each other in significant ways.[9]

As far as the Muqaddima is concerned, Ibn Khaldūn's description of logic is entirely based on Aristotle's eighth book of Organon. He recognises Aristotle in the same manner as did his Muslim predecessors such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, as the first teacher (al-mu'allim al-awwal) – the famous nickname of Aristotle. Ibn Khaldūn admits that in the hands of Aristotle, the problems and details of logic had been systematised and improved.[10]

Aristotle's Organon comprises eight books, three on the forms of analogical reasoning (ṣūrat al-qiyās) and five on the subject matter (mādda) to which qiyās is applied. Quatremère's edition reads "four" on the ṣūra and "five" on the mādda, while the Beirut edition reads "four" and "four".[11] Rosenthal comments that this was an error on the part of Ibn Khaldūn, who was thinking

of the *Eisagoge* and including it in his count.[12] Perhaps it would be beneficial to summarise here each of the eight books.

1 *Kitāb al-maqūlāt* (Categories) deals with the highest genera (*al-ajnās al-ʿāliya*), the highest level above which there are no more universal genera.
2 *Kitāb al-ʿibāra* (Hermeneutics) deals with various kinds of apperceptive proposition (*al-qaḍāya al-taṣdīqiyya*).
3 *Kitāb al-qiyās* (Analytics) deals with analogical reasoning and the form in which it is produced. (This is the last book as far as logical study from the point of view of its form is concerned.)
4 *Kitāb al-burhān* (Apodeictica) deals with the kinds of analogical reasoning that lead to certain knowledge (*al-qiyās al-muntij li-'l-yaqīn*).
5 *Kitāb al-jadl* (Topics) deals with the kinds of analogical reasoning and the way to cut off a troublesome adversary and silence one's opponent.
6 *Kitāb al-safsaṭa* (Sophistici Elenchi) deals with sophistic kind of analogical reasoning that teaches the opposite of truth and enables a disputant to confuse his opponent.
7 *Kitāb al-khiṭāba* (Rhetoric) deals with the kind of analogical reasoning that teaches how to influence the great masses (*targhīb al-jumhūr*) and to get them to do what one wants.
8 *Kitāb al-shiʿr* (Poetics) deals with the kind of analogical reasoning that teaches the invention of parables and similes.[13]

It was in the hands of the Muslim philosophers – Ibn Khaldūn particularly mentions al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd – that these works of logic were thoroughly studied, commented on and abridged. Further transformation of logic in the Muslim world may be seen, says Ibn Khaldūn, in the works of Imām Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 606/1209) and al-Khunājī (d. 646/1248).[14]

It should be noted here that there is an extended passage in Quatremère's edition, which is not found in the Beirut, where Ibn Khaldūn discusses the attitudes of the early Muslim thinkers and theologians towards logic. In this extended passage Ibn Khaldūn provides a clearer picture of the relationship between logic and speculative theology. The following paragraphs are a summary of this passage.

The science of speculative theology was originally invented for the purpose of supporting the articles of faith. The approach was to use some particular evidence, such as the creation of the world, etc., to prove the existence of God. (For specific methods of argument in speculative theology reference may be made to our previous discussion on *kalām*, see pp. 50ff.). Some prominent early theologians put this method of argument, which relies entirely on logical proofs, under severe theological criticism; Ibn Khaldūn particularly mentions al-Ashʿarī, al-Baqillānī and al-Asfirāyīnī. Their rejection was based on the

reverse argument presumption: "if the argument is wrong, the thing proven by it will also be wrong."[15] This is a great danger for the element of dogma. Al-Ash'arī, for example, came to the point of writing a treatise entitled "Against the people of logic".[16]

Another point raised by Ibn Khaldūn is the rejection of universals and categories, particularly the five universals (*al-kulliyāt al-khamsa*), which is one of the important pillars of logic, i.e. the genus (*jins*), the species (*naw'*), the difference (*faṣl*), the property (*khāssa*) and general accident (*al-'arḍ al-'āmm*).[17] The early theologians, according to Ibn Khaldūn, rejected these five universals on the basis that the universals (*kullī*) and essentials (*dhātī*) are merely a mental concept (*i'tibār dhihnī*) and do not have a correspondence outside the mind.[18]

Later theologians – Ibn Khaldūn refers to the opinions of Ibn al-Khāṭib and al-Ghazzālī – took a more accommodative attitude towards logic.[19] They considered correct the opinions of the logicians concerning intellectual combination (*al-tarkīb al-'aqlī*) and the outside existence of natural quiddities and their universals.[20] They held the opinion that speculation and analogical reasoning are not against the orthodox articles of faith.

To recapitulate, I shall now highlight the two main components of Ibn Khaldūn's exposition of logic. The first component is the overview, giving a general understanding of what logic is all about and, more importantly, its relation to the basic concept of man as a thinking animal. The second component, which I think is not less important, is the exposition of the eight books of Aristotle's *Organon* and logic as a scientific tradition and its relationship with the Islamic tradition of speculative theology. I shall discuss these two components in the excursus below.

Excursus

Ibn Khaldūn introduces logic as a science that enables a person to distinguish between right and wrong. Logical argument requires logical proof and must conform with the law of logic (*qānūn al-manṭiq*). Knowledge or cognition is classified into two kinds, *taṣawwur* (perception, which does not require judgement) and *taṣdīq* (apperception, which requires judgement).

The purpose of logic, to distinguish right from wrong, rests solely upon its reliance on the human intellect. This is the point where logic as an intellectual science could be related to the basic premise that man is a thinking animal (*al-hayawān al-nāṭiq*). And in fact the word *manṭiq* has its roots from *n-ṭ-q*, which implies thinking.

The superiority and usefulness of logic, compared with other intellectual sciences, must be seen from the point of view of its purpose in providing canons by which we can distinguish the true from the false, the certain from the uncertain. Logic provides all the rules whose sole business is to set the intellect

straight and to direct man towards what is correct and what is true. Regarding the nature of the science of logic, Ibn Khaldūn mentions on more than two occasions the relationship between this science and the human thinking ability.

The second component of the exposition is the eight books of Aristotle's *Organon*. Ibn Khaldūn here seems to rely for his conception and understanding of logic entirely on Aristotle's *Organon* as well as Aristotle's Muslim followers al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd. He seems to accept without reservation the logical treatises of Aristotle (with the addition of Porphyry's *Eisagoge*) together with the commentaries of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd.[21]

Based on Ibn Khaldūn's description, the *Organon* is the basis of the logical tradition. In the context of the Muslim world, the Aristotelian tradition was very much admired by the Muslim philosophers, particularly al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd and others. Al-Fārābī for instance, was recognised in the Muslim world as the "second teacher" (after Aristotle). Later on, logic was studied as a discipline in its own right by the Muslims Ibn al-Khaṭīb and al-Khunājī.

Aristotelian logic, despite being much admired by the Muslim philosophers, was also the target of theological criticism by the early Muslims and theologians, particularly al-Ash'arī, al-Baqillānī and al-Asfirāyīnī. However, later scholars, al-Ghazzālī and Ibn al-Khaṭīb took a different stance, somewhat more accommodative towards logic. They decided that logic is not in contradiction with the articles of faith.

Nonetheless, as far as Islamic theology is concerned, the contribution of logic must not be ignored. It was on the basis of logic that speculative theology built its argumentation. It is a matter of fact that theological argumentation was based on speculation and analogical reasoning. On the other hand, although Ibn Khaldūn only relates logic to speculative theology, it should also be understood that logic as a discipline has also been adopted in other Islamic disciplines, such as *uṣūl al-fiqh*, etc.

The tradition of logic in the Muslim world may also be seen as a continuity of the Aristotelian tradition, despite going through a series of modifications by the Muslim philosophers perhaps to accommodate the basic values of Islam. However, it is still relevant to speak of the influence of the Greeks in Muslim civilisation.

Metaphysics (*'ulūm al-ilāhiyyāt*)

Metaphysics[22] is the last in Ibn Khaldūn's hierarchical order of intellectual sciences. Although it has particular importance in the context of his scheme, he deals with this subject in a relatively short passage. He presents metaphysics as a science within the realm of philosophy, whose area of operation is beyond the world of physics. Many consider this subject as one of the most complex

but important aspects of philosophy.[23] Based on his own account, metaphysics as a science, a branch of philosophy which embodies the study of existence as such, covers overall at least four major areas. First, it studies general matters that affect corporeal and spiritual things, such as the quiddities (*māhiyyāt*), oneness (*waḥda*), plurality (*kathra*), necessity (*wujūb*), possibility (*imkān*) and so on. Second, it studies the principles of existing things (*mabādi' al-mawjūdāt*), which are spiritual (*rūḥāniyyat*) in nature. Third, it studies the method by which existing things come into being out of spiritual things and their hierarchies. Fourth, it studies the conditions of the soul after its separation from the body and its return to its beginning.[24] These are the four areas constituting the whole science of metaphysics as Ibn Khaldūn understands it.

As can be seen here, Ibn Khaldūn's reliance on Aristotle in this particular area is obvious, and of course to some extent he is also heavily indebted to Aristotle's Muslim followers, particularly Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd. Both scholars, he tells us, abridged the writings of the First Teacher, which were available at that time. This fact can be seen particularly in Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-shifā'* and *al-Najāt*. In relation to this it is strongly presumed that Ibn Khaldūn's understanding of Aristotle's metaphysics is in most parts based on the Muslim commentators, notably Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd. It is a matter of fact that, in the history of Muslim philosophy, the Muslim philosophers, despite all their variations and trends, were heavily influenced by certain major figures among the Greeks, particularly Aristotle, and in fact the logic and metaphysics of the Muslim philosophers were based on one or more of these Greek traditions. The interest of these scholars in Greek philosophy, particularly Aristotle's metaphysics – which is an important, fascinating, but very difficult philosophical treatise – may be seen for example in Ibn Sīnā, who tells us that he repeatedly read this work, up to forty times, without grasping its meaning.[25] However, it should be noted that, since these scholars were living in a society whose laws and beliefs were based on revealed scripture, they had to develop a means or method by which to reconcile their philosophical ideas with revelation.

Metaphysicians claim that metaphysics is a noble discipline (*fann sharīf*), for it gives them a knowledge of existence as such (*ma'rifat al-wujūd 'alā mā-huwa 'alay-hi*) and, more importantly, it is identical with happiness (*'ayn al-sa'āda*). Ibn Khaldūn does not seem to agree with this claim. In fact, he rejects it. He promises here to refute these ideas in the following discussion.[26] As far as the Islamic intellectual tradition is concerned, he is not alone in this. Prior to him, al-Ghazzālī had also taken up the cause of refuting many of the ideas of the metaphysicians and philosophers, particularly in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* and *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, labelling them as *ilāhiyyūn* and *dahriyyūn*.

Another issue raised by the author of the *Muqaddima* in relation to metaphysics is the merger between philosophy and theology (*kalām*). He

describes this situation as "*khalaṭa*" and "*mukhtaliṭa*" which literally means "mix" (*wa-ṣāra 'ilm al-kalām mukhtaliṭan bi-masā'il al-ḥikma*). As far as he is concerned, such a mixture is not acceptable; in fact, it is wrong (*ṣawāb*). He argues that the two sciences are different despite having a common subject matter. Both employ the human intellect, but for different purposes. The former uses the intellect for the purpose of supporting traditionally established truth and to refute innovators, while the latter utilises it for the purpose of investigating truth by means of rational evidence. A good example given by Ibn Khaldūn to represent this kind of literature (i.e. the mixture of theology and philosophy) is Ibn al-Khaṭīb's *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*.[27]

To get a clearer picture of the state of affairs between theology and philosophy, perhaps it would be beneficial to look more closely at Ibn Khaldūn's argumentation regarding this matter. As he points out clearly, the main difference between these two sciences is that theology, unlike philosophy, deals with the articles of faith, which are derived from religious law. These articles of faith have no reference to the human intellect whatsoever and do not depend on it, whereas philosophy (in this case, "philosophy" means specifically "metaphysics"), on the other hand, relies entirely on the human intellect in investigating the truth. It seems that the major difference is the main purpose of using the human intellect. Ibn Khaldūn makes it pretty clear that in speculative theology (*kalām*), unlike in philosophy, rational argumentation is employed merely to support the articles of faith and does not involve investigating truth.[28]

Ibn Khaldūn continues to argue that it is part of religious belief that the articles of faith can stand without support from rational evidence. All Muslims have to accept the truth transmitted through the Prophet as a religious obligation, and there is no need to seek proof of its correctness by rational means, even if it sometimes contradicts rational intelligence.

What was the root of this confusion? According to Ibn Khaldūn, it lies in the common subject matter of both theology and philosophy. Their subject matter is the same. Theological argumentation was misunderstood and regarded as though it were inaugurating a search for faith through rational evidence. This is for Ibn Khaldūn a clear misinterpretation. It has to be made clear that speculative theology was invented not to investigate the truth, but merely to support it and refute innovators.

Another discipline that also contributes towards this confusion is Sufism. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the recent extremist *ṣūfīs* who speak about ecstatic experiences have confused the problem of metaphysics and speculative theology with their own discipline regarding the questions of prophecy, union, incarnation, oneness and other things.

The fact is that, according to Ibn Khaldūn, the three disciplines are distinct and different from each other. The *ṣūfīs*' perceptions are the ones that are

least scientific. They claim intuitive experiences in connection with their perceptions and shun rational evidence. But intuitive experience is far removed from scientific perception and ways and the things that go with them.[29]

Excursus

As I indicate above, Ibn Khaldūn's passage on metaphysics is relatively short. Not much information but a series of argumentation is put forward, defending his own stance as well as clarifying certain controversial issues. That is the central message of this passage. As far as I can see, the passage has three main components. First, the author tries to demonstrate his understanding, perception and conception of metaphysics as it is traditionally understood. For this first component he appears to be very much reliant on Aristotle and his Muslim followers.

The second component is defending his own stance. It seems that Ibn Khaldūn in this passage tries to convey his message that the meaning of metaphysics has to be correctly understood in order to avoid misconceptions. This is because it may be misunderstood as being the same as speculative theology in Islam, whereas the two disciplines are very different. Ibn Khaldūn tries to convince his reader that what he understands is the correct understanding of these disciplines.

The third component is his argumentation in clarifying certain controversial issues. The most important issue perhaps is the mixture or rather confusion between philosophy (in this case, metaphysics), speculative theology and Sufism. The three disciplines have been confused by some of their proponents. For Ibn Khaldūn the root of the problem is that these three disciplines address a common subject matter. Speculative theologians for example talk about existence in relation to the articles of faith. The difference between them for Ibn Khaldūn lies in the cause and the purpose of investigation. Metaphysics as a branch of philosophy employs rational argumentation in a search for the answers of existence beyond the physical world. In other words, it employs rational argumentation in search for truth. Unlike speculative theology, rational argumentation and evidence are used solely for the purpose of defending the articles of faith and refuting innovators. They do not in any way affect the truthfulness of the articles of faith, for these are derived from the Lawgiver and the tradition. Their function is merely to bolster the articles of faith and the opinions of the early Muslims concerning them.

As regards the *sūfī*s who claim intuitive experience in connection with their perceptions and shun rational evidence, Ibn Khaldūn does not seem to pay much attention to them. He sees intuitive experience in this context as far removed from scientific perception.

The significance of the intellectual sciences
(al-'ulūm al-'aqliyya)

This section aims at identifying the theory as well as the importance and significance of the intellectual sciences within Ibn Khaldūn's theory of human civilisation. To help achieve this aim, I will at a certain point recall some of the important premises that have been previously established, especially those related to the basic division of the sciences. This is necessary in order to see the foundation of Ibn Khaldūn's thought and the major premises upon which his ideas are based.

He has already established his basic notion regarding the two types of sciences, traditional conventional sciences and philosophical intellectual sciences. We have dealt with the former in our previous discussion. We are now dealing with the latter which, like the former, constitute a major component of civilisation.

The intellectual sciences are natural as far as the human being's thinking ability is concerned. Unlike the traditional sciences, they have nothing to do with religion in the sense that they are not affiliated to any particular religion. They belong to everyone, every society and every religion at all times. In this respect Ibn Khaldūn's idea is nothing more than the repetition of Aristotelian tradition.

The philosophical intellectual sciences cover all the kinds of sciences that may be generated and reached by human mental faculty. Their area extends from logic to metaphysics. This is based upon understanding that these two sciences – logic and metaphysics – represent two extremes within the intellectual sciences, the former dealing with the purely physical and rational while the latter deals with something beyond the physical world.

Up to this point, Ibn Khaldūn's theory of philosophical intellectual sciences may be seen quite clearly. He believes in the naturalness of these sciences as a result of the human ability to think. They have nothing to do with religion. In this sense they are neutral by nature.[30]

The significance of the intellectual sciences in Ibn Khaldūn's scheme may be seen from the point of view of their function as the foundation of civilisation, without which no civilisation could be achieved. The achievement of the intellectual sciences therefore is the primary indicator that determines the achievement of a civilisation. Scientific traditions and scientific culture must be firmly established in order to reach the status of civilisation. This concept has been clearly and successfully demonstrated by Ibn Khaldūn in the *Muqaddima*, particularly in his discussion of the scientific and teaching tradition in human history.

In relation to Muslim civilisation, he places the intellectual sciences next to the traditional sciences. The history of Muslim civilisation as narrated by Ibn Khaldūn has witnessed achievement in both the traditional and the

intellectual sciences. This can be seen from Ibn Khaldūn's account of who is who in Muslim intellectual tradition.

The sciences of sorcery and the use of talismans

It is a matter of fact that the practices of sorcery and the use of talismans occur in almost every human society. Although they may not be included or listed in terms of formal scientific crafts, the fact remains that no sane person will deny that in reality they exist and sometimes form a significant sub-culture in the society. Ibn Khaldūn is convinced that no intelligent person doubts the existence of sorcery because of the influence afore-mentioned which sorcery exercises. The only thing is that they (sorcery and the use of talismans) have never been "officially" accepted as part of the high culture of the people. On the whole, Ibn Khaldūn considers these sciences as non-Islamic in nature. Their origin was non-Islamic. The Copts, the Babylonians, the Chaldeans and the Indians are all examples of nations who widely practised sorcery and the use of talismans. In Islam these sciences, despite their non-Islamic nature, did occur and were practised in society. Among those involved in writing on these subjects were Jabīr b. Ḥayyān and al-Majrīṭī.

Regarding magical practices, Ibn Khaldūn records his own firsthand experience with the practice of a magician. He tells us, "we have also observed how people who practice sorcery point at a garment or a piece of leather (*kasā' aw jild*) and speak (magical words) over it, and the object is cut and torn into shreds…".[31] He also informs us about the current situation regarding magical practices in India, Jordan and among the Turks.

Before going any further, it would be best to understand the nature of sorcery and the use of talismans as the author understands it. Ibn Khaldūn throughout this passage not only records the historical fact of magic and sorcery, but also provides ample explanations of the nature of this social phenomenon together with examples. First he relates this phenomenon to the nature of human souls. Human souls, Ibn Khaldūn says, although one in terms of species, differ as to their particular qualities. Explaining this concept, again he recalls his theory of prophecy, with which we have previously dealt. In his theory of prophecy, he recognises that the Prophets' souls possess a particular quality that enables them to receive divine knowledge. This particular quality provides the prophets with the ability to "jump up" (*insilākh*) from the realm of human souls (*al-rūḥāniyyāt al-bashāriyya*) to the realm of angelic souls (*al-rūḥāniyya al-malakiyya*) and become "angelical" at that particular moment (*ḥattā yaṣīra malakan fī-tilka al-lamḥa*). This is the meaning of revelation.[32]

The souls of sorcerers for this matter also have a certain quality or ability. This quality enables them to exercise influence upon created things (*al-ta'thīr fī-'l-akwān*). The only difference between the souls of the prophets and the

souls of the sorcerers is that the souls of the prophets exercise their influence with the help of God and divine quality (*khāṣṣiyya rabbāniyya*) whereas the souls of the sorcerers or soothsayers observe supernatural things by means of satanic powers (*quwwa shaiṭāniyya*).[33]

Ibn Khaldūn assigns souls that have magical ability (*al-nufūs al-sāḥira*) among three categories as follows:

1 Sorcery (*siḥr*)
2 The use of talismans (*ṭalmisāt*)
3 Prestidigitation (*sha'wadha* or *sha'badha*).[34]

The first category, sorcery, exercises influence through mental power alone, without any instrument or aid (*al-mu'āthira bi-'l-himma fa-qaṭ min-ghayri ālat wa-lā mu'īn*). The second, the use of talismans, exercises influence with the aid of the temper of the spheres and the elements or with the aid of the properties of numbers (*bi-mu'īn min-mizāj al-aflāk aw-al-'anāṣir aw-khawāṣṣ al-a'dād*). This category of soul is weaker than the first one. The third category exercises its influence upon the powers of imagination (*ta'thīrun fī-'l-quwwa al-mutakhayyila*).[35]

It should be mentioned here that Ibn Khaldūn also discusses another science of a similar nature, the science of the secrets of letters, known as *sīmiyā'*. This particular passage appears only in Quatremère's edition. It is a long passage where Ibn Khaldūn provides extensive information together with examples on how this science operates. This science, as Ibn Khaldūn tells us, has a close relationship with *ṣūfī* tradition especially the extremists. These *ṣūfīs* claim that the secrets of the letters cannot be obtained by way of logical reasoning; instead, they are obtained with the help of visions and divine aids (*al-mushāhada wa-'l-tawfīq al-ilāhī*).[36]

From the point of view of the *sharī'a*, there is no difference between sorcery, the use of talismans and prestidigitation. They are all in one basket since all have the same effect. They are grouped in one class of forbidden things. Ibn Khaldūn also distinguishes between the different characteristics of sorcery and miracles. In this case, he refers to the opinions of the theologians and philosophers. The theologians believe that the difference between miracles and sorcery lies in the "advance challenge" (*taḥaddī*), while the philosophers believe that the fundamental difference is the difference between the two extremes of good and evil.[37]

Excursus

In his expository order, Ibn Khaldūn discusses the sciences of sorcery and the use of talismans after he deals with metaphysics. Although his expository order does not always represent or indicate the superiority or priority of a science in

terms of hierarchical order, as in the case of logic, the exposition of the sciences of sorcery and the use of talismans here seems to have some connections with the previous section on metaphysics. At the very least, the connection between metaphysics and the sciences of sorcery and the use of talismans may be considered as their having a common nature, i.e. both deal with something beyond the physical world – the spiritual world. However, the place and status of sorcery and talismans in Ibn Khaldūn's order of sciences, particularly his intellectual sciences, is not quite certain. Of course, metaphysics as a branch of philosophy can be well fitted into Ibn Khaldūn's epistemology as the fourth category of intellectual sciences. The sciences of sorcery and the use of talismans, on the other hand, cannot be placed in any of the four categories of intellectual sciences.

The significance of Ibn Khaldūn's passage on sorcery and talismans may be viewed from two aspects. One is to see it in relation to his epistemology, the other is to see it in relation to his theory of civilisation.

From the point of view of Ibn Khaldūn's epistemology, the sciences of sorcery and the use of talismans, as I indicated above, cannot be easily fitted into either the traditional or the intellectual sciences, both of which, as Ibn Khaldūn is concerned, are well defined and well framed. They cannot belong to the traditional sciences because they do not have a religious or revelational origin. On the other hand, they cannot be listed among the intellectual sciences for the simple reason that they do not come from the human intellect. Lakhsassi also dealt with this problem extensively. In his thesis, he describes this situation as the problem of spiritual science. The basis of Lakhsassi's argument is that sorcery and the use of talismans are sciences which could not be classified in either of the two categories of sciences because from an epistemological point of view they are neither religious nor rational. He found a possible way to solve this Khaldūnic epistemological problem is to suggest another category, which could be considered a third category of knowledge. This third source of knowledge is called spiritual science. Lakhsassi also takes this opportunity to criticise Ibn Khaldūn for his "hesitancy in enumerating each of the kinds of sciences". He even describes Ibn Khaldūn as being "not clear about this issue".[38] This is perhaps a fair judgement on the part of Lakhsassi. Nonetheless, since the main focus of my analysis here is to see Ibn Khaldūn's explanation of this particular phenomenon, I will not take this debate further. Instead, my interest is to acknowledge the fact that Ibn Khaldūn has provided us in this passage with a valuable historical record of the history and practice of sorcery and the use of talismans in relation to human civilisation. It is a category of science that has long been practised and appears in every human society throughout history. It has never been recognised as a craft of high culture, and therefore remains a craft of the sub-culture.

Throughout this passage, Ibn Khaldūn has tried, and tried successfully, to give scientific and philosophical explanations of the phenomena of magic,

sorcery and talismans. As far as philosophy is concerned, it is not common to give scientific and logical explanations of this kind of strange and unexplained phenomena.

Refutation of philosophy (*ibṭal al-falsafa*)

Section 30 is devoted specifically to criticising and attacking philosophy. The very title of the passage reveals its message clearly and can be plainly translated as "The refutation of philosophy and deviation of its students" (*Fī-ibṭāl al-falsafa wa-fasād muntaḥili-hā*). The message is expressed in two strong words – *ibṭāl* and *fasād*. The whole passage consists of a considerably long series of arguments and assessments, where Ibn Khaldūn makes clear his stance and attitude against philosophy – whatever it might mean. The order of the argument is arranged nicely, beginning with a general introduction to the subject, followed by a short demonstration of the Aristotelian process of abstraction, which constitutes the basic notion of the philosophical process of knowledge. This is followed by a short explanation of ethics as a part of philosophy in relation to the attainment of happiness and some highlights on Aristotle as the first teacher and his Muslim followers. Ibn Khaldūn then enters the main body of this passage, i.e. the refutation of philosophy, focusing his arguments on the role of the human intellect in relation to the questions of physics and metaphysics. This is followed by an explanation of the dual nature of man in the context of happiness and critiques against the attitude of Muslim philosophers.

The section ends with some remarks on the benefits of philosophy (particularly logic) as an academic subject together with a passage setting out prerequisites for those who intend to study this subject. The central focus of my study here is to see the foundation of Ibn Khaldūn's notion as well as to see the context in which he proposes this idea. In performing this task, I will also recall his previous discourse and relevant statements in order to help us understand and get a clearer picture of this situation.

The philosopher and the nature of philosophy

The author begins with a brief explanation of the philosopher and philosophy. Prior to this, in a relatively plain statement, he tries to explain and justify his move in bringing up this subject. As a discipline much cultivated in the cities, the ideas of philosophy are of course influential. However, Ibn Khaldūn is particularly concerned about their harmful effect on religion. This is the main reason why it is necessary to bring up this subject. The main objective is to make it clear what philosophy is about and to suggest the right attitude in dealing with it.

Who are the philosophers? Based on Ibn Khaldūn's account, the philosophers to whom he refers here are those who believe that the essences and the conditions of the whole of existence, including those beyond sensual perception, their reasons and causes can be perceived by human mental speculation and intellectual reasoning.[39] They even put the articles of faith under mental judgement and claim that they belong among the intellectual perceptions. True and false are distinguished based entirely on research (*naẓar*). The method that enables the philosophers to reach this mental judgement is called logic (*manṭiq*). These people are known as *falāsifa* meaning "lovers of wisdom".[40]

Ibn Khaldūn explains the mental process through which mental speculation can reach the state that makes it possible to distinguish between true and false. This process goes as follows:

> The quintessence of it is that 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 impressions that the *existentia* would make 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 are common to all ideas and individual (manifestations of the *existentia*). No further abstraction is possible. They are the highest genera. All abstracts (ideas) that are not derived from the *sensibilia* serve, if combined with each other, to produce the sciences. They are called secondary *intelligibilia*.[41]

The above demonstrates what Ibn Khaldūn has in mind about the philosophical process of knowledge. The explanation is based entirely on Aristotle. The process begins with the abstraction of primary *intelligibilia* (*al-maʿqūlāt al-awāʾil*) and ends up at the highest genera (*al-ajnās al-ʿāliya*), at which stage no further abstraction is possible, while all the abstractions not derived from *sensibilia* that serve to produce sciences are called secondary *intelligibilia* (*al-maʿqūlāt al-thawānī*). Through those abstract *intelligibilia*, man's thinking ability will now function in perceiving the nature of existence. This must be done by way of "combining one with another as well as keeping one apart from another based on sound rational evidence".[42] This method is known as "*taṣdīq*" (apperception) in logic.[43]

Ibn Khaldūn cites the opinions of the philosophers based on "the books of the logicians" regarding the status of *taṣawwur* and *taṣdīq* (perception and apperception). Philosophers, he says, give *taṣdīq* precedence over *taṣawwur* at the end whereas at the beginning or during the process of instruction they give *taṣawwur* precedence over *taṣdīq*. He claims this opinion as that of Aristotle.

The author of the *Muqaddima* then moves on to discuss the concept of happiness (*sa'āda*) as seen with the eyes of the philosophers. Happiness to them "consists in arriving at a perception of all existing things, both the *sensibilia* and the (things) beyond sensual perception, with the help of (rational) speculation and argumentation".[44] The process begins with a conclusion based on observation and sensual perception that there is a lower substance (*al-jism al-suflā*). This perception then progresses to the next stage, perceiving the existence of motion and sensual perception of animals. This makes them (the philosophers) conscious of the existence of the soul, while the powers of the soul make them aware of the dominant position of the intellect. Their perception stops here while they draw their conclusions with regard to the highest celestial body in the same way they drew their conclusions with regard to the human essence.[45] They claim that happiness can be attained in this way if it is combined at the same time with improvement of the soul (*tahdhīb al-nafs*) and acceptance of virtuous character (*wa-takhalluqu-hā bi-'l-faḍā'il*).[46]

The philosophers believe, according to Ibn Khaldūn, that with the help of his intellect a human being is able to distinguish between virtues and vices even if there is no revealed religious law. They also believe that a human being has a natural inclination towards performing praiseworthy actions and not vice versa. Actual happiness in the eyes of the philosophers is attained when the soul becomes virtuous, at which point it attains joy and pleasure, while eternal pain (*al-shaqā' al-sarmad*) is in their view the result of ignorance of moral qualities. To them this is the meaning of bliss and punishment in the other world.[47]

In relation to this, Ibn Khaldūn also gives some facts and figures regarding philosophical tradition. He brings into the picture Aristotle, known as the first teacher (*al-mu'allim al-awwal*) as well as the teacher of logic. He was the first to systematise the norms of logic and deal with all its problems. In Islam the most famous followers of Aristotle were al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. It was during the Abbasid period that the works of ancient philosophers were translated from Greek into Arabic.

Up to this point, Ibn Khaldūn has provided us with a wide range of information about philosophers and their philosophical ideas. It seems, to a certain extent, that that information is provided for the purpose of preparing a more solid ground and justification for his later refutation. This is apparent from the issues raised, which include, among others, the philosophical process

of knowledge, the use of logical norms and procedures, ethics as part of philosophy and the concept of happiness. For our purpose, this information is particularly important in order to allow us to determine the group against which this attack is directed. We now understand that Ibn Khaldūn here is not speaking about philosophy in general, but he is concerned about a specific set of philosophical ideas propagated by a specific group of philosophers. In preparing the ground for his criticism, he is selective, giving the criteria of the philosophical ideas on trial. These criteria tell us obviously that he is referring to neo-Platonism, as Lakhsassi rightly spots:

> Ibn Khaldūn selects the neo-Platonic thesis according to which there is a hierarchy of being, from the sensible (particulars) to the suprasensible culmination (God) and the idea that the human mind is capable of arriving at knowledge without the aid of revelation. Moreover, to the knower, knowledge produces happiness.[48]

Ibn Khaldūn's refutation of philosophy

It must be remembered that the main objective of this passage is to refute philosophy. Ibn Khaldūn now enters into a series of attacks, beginning with the strong statement that the opinions of the philosophers are wrong in every respect.[49] This strong statement invites several questions, the most important of which is perhaps the basis upon which this statement is made: on what grounds must all aspects of the philosophers' opinions be invalidated? To obtain a better picture of the questions at stake, we shall here examine closely the arguments and points raised by Ibn Khaldūn in his refutation.

First, he turns to the philosopher's theory of the first intellect (al-'aql al-awwal). The philosophers refer all the existentia to the first intellect and are satisfied with this theory in their progress towards the necessary One (al-Wājib).[50] This belief implies that they neglect everything beyond it. There are two categories of existentia: corporeal existentia and the existentia beyond sensual perception (al-mawjūdāt al-latī warā' al-ḥiss). The science of the first category of existentia is known as the science of physics while the science of the second category is known as the science of metaphysics.

The philosophers' attitude towards these categories of existentia is quite clearly described by the author. As regards the science of physics, the philosophers use logical norms in making their judgement. As for the science of metaphysics, whose essences are completely unknown, the philosophers admit that they "cannot perceive the spiritual essences and abstract further quiddities from them, because the senses constitute a veil between us and them". They also admit that they have "no logical arguments for them" and have "no way whatever of affirming their existence".[51] Ibn Khaldūn supports

his argument here with a statement by the great philosopher Plato, who says, "no certainty can be achieved with regard to the divine, and one can state about the divine only what is most suitable and proper."[52]

Another point is happiness. The philosophers believe that happiness can be attained by means of logical arguments, i.e. when a human being comes to perceive the nature of existence as it is. Ibn Khaldūn rejects this notion at the very outset. He gives a considerable space to explaining the concept of happiness based on the principle of the dual nature of man – corporeal and spiritual. He admits that anyone who has perceptions will greatly enjoy whatever he perceives, be it corporeal or spiritual. He gives an example of a child having his first corporeal perception, although through an intermediary, e.g. the eyes, and greatly enjoying the light he sees. Based on this analogy Ibn Khaldūn argues that no doubt the soul will find even greater joy and pleasure in perceptions that come from its own essence without an intermediary.[53] This perception by the soul cannot be achieved by intellectual speculation and science. It can be achieved only by the removal of the veil of sensual perception and forgetting all that is corporeal.[54] He refers in this connection to the ṣūfīs, who are very much concerned with achieving this great joy through having the soul achieve that kind of perception.

Here Ibn Khaldūn directs his criticism at the Muslim philosophers. He expresses disagreement with the philosophers' belief that logical arguments and proofs which can bring about perceptions will result in great joy. This is because arguments and proofs belong to the category of corporeal perception. They are produced by the power of the brain, which consists of imagination, thinking and memory. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the first thing we want to attain this kind of perception, is to kill all the powers of the brain. In this respect the powers of the brain are considered as obstacles, whereas the philosophers believe that those who have attained the perception of the active intellect and are united with it in their life in this world have attained their share of happiness. The active intellect (*al-'aql al-fa''āl*) to them is the first 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, and believe that the joy which is the result of this perception is identical with the actual promised happiness (*'ayn al-sa'āda al-maw'ūd*).[55]

Another point of dispute is that the philosophers believe that man is able, by himself, to refine and improve his soul by adopting what is praiseworthy and avoiding what is blameworthy. This is based on the premise, as mentioned above, that man is naturally inclined towards the good. This is apparently against the basic teaching of Islam that such matters must be referred to religious law.

Towards the end of this passage, Ibn Khaldūn gives his general assessment of the science of logic or philosophy. Despite attacking it on many points, Ibn Khaldūn admits that 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".[56] However, he reminds us that those who intend to study this science should be aware of its danger. Such students must first be well equipped with acknowledge of religious law (*sharʿiyyāt*), *tafsīr* and *fiqh*.

Having described the content of this passage, we may now be able to draw some conclusions in relation to the foundation and the context in which the author of the *Muqaddima* proposes his ideas of refutation. From the very outset, we can see that he is very concerned about the essences and the condition of existence. The main issue here is whether the nature of existence both corporeal and spiritual can be perceived or grasped merely by the power of mental speculation and intellectual reasoning. The philosophers believe so. Mental speculation and intellectual reasoning have the ability to grasp the nature of existence. This includes the articles of faith. The method they use in this operation is the procedure of logic. Based on this major premise, the philosophers go on to assume that happiness can also be achieved through the same method. A human being through his power of intellect is able to distinguish virtue and vice and is by nature inclined towards what is praiseworthy and away from what is blameworthy, even without religious guidance.

It is on these issues that Ibn Khaldūn launches his rebuttal. In this context he perhaps sees the larger implication of these philosophical ideas for the establishment of religion. The danger is clear. These notions will invalidate the role and function of religion, therefore they are fundamentally against basic religious teaching. Here he is probably referring to Islam. As a counterattack, he urges that these matters must be referred to religious law. Ibn Khaldūn's criticism may also be considered partly as an attempt to protect the establishment and the status quo of religion as the true and ultimate guidance for mankind.

Excursus

This passage on the refutation of philosophy is in fact the first of Ibn Khaldūn's three orders of refutation: those of philosophy, astrology and alchemy. Since philosophy is one of the main concerns of the present research, I shall examine this passage thoroughly and in order to see Ibn Khaldūn's actual standpoint if possible. This is in order to determine (1) whether his rejection of philosophy is total or in part, (2) the basis of his rejection and (3) the reason for putting philosophy on trial. I will skip over his refutation of astrology and alchemy

because the discussion is of the same nature and has been well represented in this passage.

Philosophy as a product of the human thinking ability has been recognised in the history of the Muslim intellectual tradition. In the Islamic intellectual milieu, philosophy, particularly logic, has become one of the subjects of interest and has been adopted in several religious subjects such as *kalām* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*. History has witnessed figures such as al-Kindī, al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā (to name a few) among its great proponents. Although the publication of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* by al-Ghazzālī in the late fifth/eleventh century created a certain degree of awareness among Muslims towards philosophy, it did not at all stop the development of a Muslim philosophical tradition. In the same vein, this particular passage by Ibn Khaldūn, published in the eighth/fourteenth century as part of his larger *Muqaddima*, may also be considered as a continuation of al-Ghazzālī's project in *Tahāfut*.[57] As a part of the *Muqaddima*, this passage may also well be considered as representing the official stance of the work. If it represents the official stance of the *Muqaddima*, I feel that there is inconsistency on the part of Ibn Khaldūn in dealing with this subject.[58] How can he reject philosophy when he admits elsewhere that philosophy (in the broadest sense of the word) is a part of human civilisation without which no civilisation will exist? I will give my argument in the following paragraphs.

On the basis of this passage, we have been made to understand that Ibn Khaldūn totally rejects philosophy and all its products. He states, "it should be known that the opinion held by the philosophers is wrong in all aspects" (*bāṭil bi-jamī' wujūhi-hi*).[59] The question is, what does such a strong statement imply? Does it mean that all products of philosophical inquiries are wrong? If it does, that will deny all the products of human mental ability, according to the author's earlier account that all intellectual sciences are categorised under philosophy *al-'ulūm al-falsafiyya wa-'l-hikma* (sciences of philosophy and wisdom).[60] This is impossible for the simple reason that intellectual science constitutes a part and parcel of civilisation. To assume that the author has unintentionally contradicted himself is also impossible because he has shown consistency in his stance throughout his work, both in judgement and in argumentation.

Now, the most likely option to solve this problem, I would suggest, is to go back to recall Ibn Khaldūn's general notion of the sciences of philosophy and wisdom. Only then will we be able to see whether the rejection of philosophy here implies total or partial rejection.

In his earlier discourse, we have been made to understand that the sciences of philosophy and wisdom cover all the intellectual sciences that are the products of man's ability to think. These sciences are natural to man. They include logic, metaphysics, physics and the four divisions of mathematical sciences. They are neutral by nature in the sense that they are not restricted

to any particular religious group. They have existed since civilisation had its beginning in the world.[61] Based on this notion, it is simply understood that all kinds of sciences other than traditional conventional sciences should be considered as in the category of philosophy and wisdom. And in this context, it would not be possible for Ibn Khaldūn to reject all these sciences in the name of the rejection of philosophy. Furthermore, the major implication of total rejection, if that is what it is, is the destruction of the whole theory of civilisation that has been established by the author and constitutes the main theme of the *Muqaddima*.

Now, we come back to the present passage. As far as I can see, the refutation of philosophy here is based on several assumptions centred primarily on the issue of the essences and the condition of existence. It should be emphasised at the very outset that Ibn Khaldūn's rejection is entirely focused on the philosophers' basic premise that the whole of existence, its essences and conditions, including those beyond sensual perception, as well as their reasons and causes can be perceived by mental speculation and intellectual reasoning, which he regards as potentially harmful to religion.[62] The philosophers have also transgressed the limit of human mental ability by assuming that the very articles of faith belong to intellectual perception. They go even further, assuming that happiness (*sa'āda*) can also be achieved by way of rational speculation and argumentation. They believe that virtue and vice can be distinguished by means of intellect and speculation even if there is no religious law. This is because a human being is naturally inclined towards praiseworthy actions and shuns blameworthy ones.[63] In this sense, philosophy has violated the nature of mind because it claims to transcend it. It also posits an impossible project – knowledge of the beyond – and seeks to achieve it by impossible means: abstraction and discursive reason.[64]

Based on this passage, the essential fault of philosophy, as pointed out by Ibn Khaldūn, is that it attempts to perceive the whole of existence, including that of the beyond, by way of discursive reason. Up to this point, we can be sure that what worries Ibn Khaldūn throughout the passage is the violation of the nature of the mind by philosophy. This is the main issue. His message is clear – philosophy must operate within its limits. It must not go beyond its boundaries. If it does, it has not only trespassed beyond its limits but is also harmful to religion.

Following the above argumentation, I may be able now to conclude that Ibn Khaldūn's rejection of philosophy in this particular passage should not be taken to mean that he rejects philosophy in total. It is important to understand and to differentiate between philosophy as a principle of science and philosophy as a craft practised in the history of civilisation. The philosophy that is under attack here is philosophy as a principle of science, its epistemology, and not philosophy as a craft practised at all times. In all his criticism, Ibn Khaldūn

never touches upon the crafts and the products of the sciences. Instead, his discussion is centred on the "perceptions" or "principles" regarding *existentia* and *intelligibilia*. It is in this area that philosophy has violated the nature of the human intellect and therefore violated basic religious dogma.

5

SCHOLARSHIP AS A SCIENCE AND PEDAGOGICAL METHOD

Introduction

It is a generally accepted notion that education, in all its inclusive meanings, is one of the basic necessities of human society. Throughout the ages, this aspect of human necessities has caught the imagination of scholars and intellectuals alike. It has been made a great deal of in their discourse. Ibn Khaldūn is no exception. Education has become an integral part of his social philosophy. In Chapter 6 of the *Muqaddima*, from Section 33 to Section 43, Ibn Khaldūn engages at a considerable length with this issue. In these ten sections he touches on various general and particular aspects and facets of education. As a matter of fact, education in all its aspects has never been peripheral in Ibn Khaldūn's scheme. These ten sections of the *Muqaddima* will be the focus of this present chapter of mine.

The importance of education has been noted earlier, namely in Section 7, right after his six preliminary remarks, when he says "scientific instruction is a craft" (*fī-anna taʿlīm al-ʿilm min jumlat al-ṣanāʾiʿ*). From that section it may be learned that he develops his philosophy of education based upon the first principle – education is a social phenomenon and teaching and instruction are social crafts; man is a social animal and his prosecution of learning is conditioned by the nature of the material, intellectual and spiritual forces of the civilisation in which he lives.[1] The concept of man is based upon his ability to think. Ability to think distinguishes man from the rest of animals.[2] This special ability enables man to think of how to maintain his life, how to act and behave as a member of social order and how to receive and obey what has been revealed by God through His prophets in order to achieve success in this world as well as in the next world. This is basically the main idea of Section 7. In the light of the present discussion, this particular section could be viewed as a preliminary section in which Ibn Khaldūn tries to outline the general framework of his philosophy. In it, he sets out the paradigm upon which his philosophy of learning and education is based. The central factor is surely the human ability to think. Thinking is the origin of all kinds of learning,

without which no transmission of knowledge is possible, while methods and ways of transmission or acquisition of learning become a craft (*ṣinā'a*) of society. It should be noted that knowledge and craft are two different entities. Knowledge of science is something that results from understanding (*fahm*). Understanding a single fact in a certain discipline is always equal regardless of whether the person concerned is well versed or just a beginner. On the other hand, craft is a result of habit (*malaka*) and belongs solely and exclusively to the person who is well versed in a scientific discipline.[3] Therefore the difference between the two concepts is the difference between the concept of *fahm* and the concept of *malaka*. It is natural that crafts should vary depending upon the style of the actors or teachers or transmitters, even though knowledge or science itself is one and the same entity.[4]

In these ten sections, Ibn Khaldūn outlines his ideas on education covering scholarship as a tradition and science and the pedagogical method of education. The aim and purpose of literary composition (which forms an integral and essential part of education) is the first issue discussed by the author, followed by some considerations on the problems that occurred in the educational system in his time. After criticising the system, he gives his own views and some suggestions on what he claims to be a better and more effective pedagogical method. This is followed by a discussion of the character of the auxiliary sciences (*al-'ulūm al-āliya*) and their purposes. Elementary education or child education is discussed here in two consecutive sections. The remaining four sections are devoted to discussing the scholarly tradition in the author's time. Among the issues touched upon are the concept of perfection in knowledge, scholars and politics as well as the tradition of Islamic scholarship among Arabs and non-Arabs alike.

Aims and purposes

In Section 33, Ibn Khaldūn gives special attention to the purpose of literary composition (*ta'līf*). This particular passage does not appear in the Beirut edition of the *Muqaddima*. Rosenthal notes that this section is a later insertion by the author.[5] Basically, the central theme of this passage is to outline the aims and purposes of literary composition as part of the process of education in the wider sense of the term.

Here Ibn Khaldūn has systematically and successfully built up his theory of communication based on first principles, i.e. the basic process of communication. Literary composition is nothing but the product of human thought. The process of communication begins with the power of *idrāk* (perception) in man, which brings about perception of realities (*taṣawwur al-ḥaqā'iq*). This process is followed by a judgement, either positive (*ithbāt*) or negative (*nafy*), either directly or through an intermediary (*wasṭ*). The process eventually goes far in solving a problematic situation, either negatively or

affirmatively, until a certain scientific picture is established (in the mind of a person) (*ṣūra 'ilmiyya fī-'l-ḍamīr*). When this state is achieved (i.e a scientific picture in the mind), it is necessary that this scientific picture be communicated to others. This can be done either through instruction (*ta'līm*) or through discussion. This is carried out, according to Ibn Khaldūn, in order to polish the mind by trying to show its soundness.[6] This is the beginning of the process of communication.

Ibn Khaldūn divides the process of communication into two levels. The first level is through sound or verbal expression or speech. Through the process of speech, one person's thoughts can be communicated to others. This level of communication takes place if two persons can meet each other physically or personally. The second level is written communication. This level takes place if the two persons are out of sight of each other, bodily far apart or not contemporary. In this situation, a person's thoughts can be communicated only through written works. In this way, also, the thoughts of an earlier generation can be understood and studied by a later generation. It is through the same process that science and knowledge are communicated to later generations.

Scholars throughout the ages record their thoughts and findings in the form of written works. They author numerous works and their works are handed down to all races of all ages. As regards written works, Ibn Khaldūn categorises them into two, religious and philosophical. The reason for this categorisation, he explains, is that these two types of literature are quite distinct in nature. Literature in the religious sciences naturally differs among them as a result of differences in religious laws and organisation, as well as differences in the information available about nations and dynasties. This is not the case in the philosophical sciences. The philosophical sciences have developed uniformly as is required by the very nature of human thought, which is based on perception (*taṣawwur*) of existing things regardless of whether they are corporeal, spiritual, celestial, elemental, abstract or material. Therefore the literatures of these sciences show no differences in this respect.[7]

Some background history of writing

Ibn Khaldūn takes up considerable space describing the existence and development of pen and script (*qalam wa-khaṭṭ*) among several nations. This includes the scripts of the Himyarites and the ancient inhabitants of Yemen, known as *musnad*. The *musnad* is different from the later script of the Muḍar, though all of them are Arabs, while the Syriac script is the writing of the Nabateans and Chaldeans. As usual, Ibn Khaldūn takes this opportunity to criticise what he describes as the wrong view of the ignorant, who believe that the Syriac script is the natural script (*al-khaṭṭ al-ṭabī'i*) of the Nabateans and the Chaldeans for the simple reason that these two nations were the most

powerful nations in antiquity, and the Syriac script is of great antiquity. To Ibn Khaldūn, this view is wrong. Instead, he argues that this situation occurs as a result of choice (*ikhtiyār*) and is not natural (*ṭabī'i*): the result of a choice cannot be considered natural. The actual fact is that the Syriac script was so old and had been used for so long that it became a firmly rooted habit. That was the reason why the ignorant believe it to be natural. Similarly, some believe that the Arabs express themselves in good Arabic by nature, which is also not true.

Other scripts mentioned by Ibn Khaldūn are Hebrew and Roman. Hebrew is the writing of the Israelites, while Roman is the script of the Romans. In general each nation has its own particular form of writing and language. However, there are only three scripts that have particular significance for Ibn Khaldūn:

1 The Syriac script, because of its antiquity.
2 Arabic and Hebrew, because the Quran and Torah were revealed in these languages respectively.
3 Roman, the script of the Romans. The Torah was translated into Latin.

The seven purposes of literary composition

Now Ibn Khaldūn turns to the main issue of this passage, the purposes of literary composition. As far as he is concerned, there are only seven types, or purposes, or perhaps more appropriately "genres" in the modern sense, of literary composition which are academically recognised and valid. I summarise each of those as follows:

1 New invention: the invention of a science with its subject, its division into chapters and sections and the discussions of its problems.
2 Interpretational: the interpretational approach to books or written works already published in the intellectual and traditional sciences.
3 Correction: worked out when a scholar finds errors and mistakes in the works of earlier scholars.
4 Elaboration: a genre carried out when a scholar finds some problems which have not been adequately treated or lack explanation.
5 Rearrangement or improvement: published when a scholar finds that earlier works were not properly arranged or were without proper order, for instance, the *Mudawwana* of Saḥnūn, which was transmitted on the authority of Ibn al-Qāsim.
6 Literary criticism: a type of literature which brings about a new discipline out of earlier texts. It addresses certain scientific problems that may have been scattered in other sciences.

7   Abridgement: some important scholarly works may be too long and prolix. They need to be abridged and summarised.[8]

These are the only seven literary genres recognised by Ibn Khaldūn in his time. Others are not considered valid and lie outside his interest. In a few lines towards the end of the passage, Ibn Khaldūn takes the opportunity to criticise what he describes as "unwanted" and "mistaken" in literary composition. He gives the example of certain types of plagiarism, committed by an author who tries 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.[9]

Excursus

In this passage, Ibn Khaldūn apparently shows his interest in communication and literary theory as part of his writing on education. It is interesting to see how he builds up his theory of communication, then tries to link it with his theory of literary composition as well as its educational implications. As I indicated in the introduction, this chapter as a whole concerns scholarly tradition and education. It is also clear that these elements have a particular significance in the theory of culture and civilisation. The achievements of a civilisation in this context should not be measured by merely an upgrade in the standard of living or physical development in the cities or urban areas, but more importantly by scholarly tradition and science as well as in education.[10] Perhaps it is for this reason that Ibn Khaldūn regards education as an integral part of his philosophy.

Communication is an essential part of human life upon which human society is established. Ibn Khaldūn begins his theory of communication by going back to the very nature of the human, i.e his soul. It is in the soul of man that God has implanted the ability of *idrāk* to enable him to perceive and to think of his own self and outside his own self. It begins with *taṣawwur* and eventually engages with problematic situations and ends up with some kind of scientific picture.[11]

This scientific picture of necessity needs to be communicated to someone else. How does this communication take place? Ibn Khaldūn tells us that this process takes place in two ways or at two levels: verbal expression and written works. At this point we must note that knowledge of language plays a part, for without it no communication will take place. Therefore knowledge of language is essential in this process. The issue of language will be treated later in a special section. Parallel to the process of communication, the process of education or knowledge transmission takes place. This is in fact the process of communicating scientific pictures to others. It takes place either directly or

through an intermediary. In relation to this, it seems fairly clear that Ibn Khaldūn recognises the superiority of written works over verbal expression. The answer is quite simple. In the process of transmitting or spreading information, written work naturally has a larger audience than does verbal expression. It is not limited in time and space, whereas verbal expression is limited to face-to-face communication. Rosenthal in his book on *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship* has made some important notes regarding the tradition of written works. He asserts that Muslim civilisation, as much as any higher civilisation, was a civilisation of the written word.[12]

The process of education will bring about a scholarly tradition. It is through communication and the process of education and knowledge transmission that scholars can learn, exchange views and study from each other. Scholars who equip themselves with a certain discipline will record their thoughts and opinions as well as their new findings in the form of scholarly works. They produce written works of several kinds and genres. These written works are then studied by their contemporaries and bequeathed and transmitted to the next generation. In the history of Muslim scholarship, the important role played by written texts is enormous. The immense numbers of manuscripts that survive testify to the significant role of written texts in knowledge transmission by medieval Muslims.[13]

For Ibn Khaldūn scholarship and/or authorship itself has its own discipline. In relation to this, he establishes his theory of literary composition, generalising and classifying all kinds of literary genres available in his time. He concludes that there are only seven literary genres that should be considered as representing scholarly works at that time. Having engaged in this literary theory, Ibn Khaldūn has already gone beyond the basic issue of education and communication. He has now entered into a more specific discussion of the theory of literary composition. Of course, it is his investigation of the process of communication and education that has inevitably led him to engage in formulating such a theory. I have indicated above that literary composition is the product of intellectual creativity and the mental activity of a member of a society. In the same way, literary composition should also be considered a reflection of the intellectual achievement and scholarship of that society. In the context of Muslim society before and during the time of Ibn Khaldūn, scholarship and authorship became a specific culture among scholars and intellectuals which certainly made a significant contribution towards the later development of Muslim civilisation. Scholarship and authorship became one of the most important benchmarks in Muslim intellectual history. The flood of all kinds of literature, religious and non-religious alike, made the Muslim regions at that time an important centre of learning and education. Literary production among scholars became a characteristic feature of medieval Islam. This historical fact needs no specific reference since it has been recorded in most historical works.[14] The richness of literature on various subjects has

certainly widened the scope and perspective in knowledge and science as well as new fields of study.

It is in this context that we can see the significance of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of literary production. We can imagine the difficulties of students at that time in studying and mastering a certain subject when there were various kinds of literature written on it. For this reason, the formulation of such a theory was very much needed. Such a theory certainly enables a student to identify the type and nature of a work of literature and, more importantly, its academic merit. This could of course help the student to choose the literature which was right and best for him.

From my point of view, the author's theory of literary genre is doubtless an excellent contribution to the development of Islamic scholarship. The nature of this theory is interesting. It is quite distinct from the formal discipline-based theory proposed by his predecessors. As we know, the discipline-based theory of literary production is more concerned with the subject matter than with the typology of literary works. As a result, literary productions are recognised on the basis of the subjects they contain, such as *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *kalām*, etc. On the other hand, Ibn Khaldūn's theory here is not based on disciplines but across disciplines. He is more concerned with the typology or "genus" of a work of literature than with the subject it discusses. On this ground, this theory is applicable to all disciplines. Moreover, on the basis of its universalistic nature, this theory might be regarded as not only relevant to his time but also to modern scholarship, especially on the subject of Arabic and Islamic civilisation.

Another point that captures my interest is the issue of plagiarism. Ibn Khaldūn uses the term *intiḥāl* to describe those who try to ascribe the works of others to themselves. At this point, Ibn Khaldūn implicitly underlines his concept of scholarship. To him scholarship is a noble profession. As a noble profession, it has to be bound by certain ethical principles. Plagiarism is one of the most unethical deeds in academic circles. Modern scholarship considers this action as a serious academic crime. Ibn Khaldūn makes it clear that those who involve themselves in plagiarism are ignorant pseudo-scholars. He describes the plagiarists as ignorant and impudent.

Problems and obstacles

In Section 34, Ibn Khaldūn speaks of the problems or obstacles to attaining scholarship. He identifies the greatest obstacle to attaining scholarship is the abundance of scholarly works. To become an accomplished scholar, a student is required to master or have ready knowledge of every discipline. He must know all works or most of them and observe all the methods used in them. This process will certainly take a long time; perhaps the whole lifetime of a person will not be sufficient for him to know all works that exist in a single

discipline. To support his argument, Ibn Khaldūn gives an example of how difficult it is to master a single sub-discipline when a student has to go through a long process of study. For example, if one seeks to master only the Malikite school of jurisprudence based on the *Mudawwana*, one has to look at its legal commentaries such as the book of Ibn Yūnus, al-Lakhmī and Ibn Bashīr as well as the notes and introduction to it. In addition, one may have to look at the sister work of the *Mudawwana*, the *'Utbiyya*, and the book written on it by Ibn Rushd entitled *al-Bayān wa-'l-taḥṣīl* or the book of Ibn al-Ḥājib as well as the work written on it. Besides that the student must be able to distinguish between the Qayrawānī method and the Cordoban, the Baghdadi and the Egyptian. These are the variations within just one and the same subject.[15]

Another example is Arabic philology. In Arabic philology, there is the book of Sībawayh and all the works on it. There are methods of the Basrans, the Kufans, the Baghdādīs, as well as the Andalusians. Besides, there are also the methods of the ancients and the moderns. Because of the wealth of the materials on this subject, no one can aspire to complete knowledge of it. It would take a long time, whereas the lifespan of a person is very short. For Ibn Khaldūn, this certainly proves that the great number of scholarly works has become a major obstacle to the mastery of a science in modern times.[16]

Excursus

In the light of the *Muqaddima*, this view is apparently paradoxical. This is because Ibn Khaldūn on the one hand acknowledges the abundant number of scholarly works as the sign of scholarly achievement that has led him to formulate his literary theory, while at the same time he views this phenomenon negatively as an obstacle to the attainment of scholarship. To study this passage, I feel it is necessary to find out what lies behind this "positive" versus "negative" view of the author. Is there any particular reason why he should leave such a paradox in the mind of the reader of the *Muqaddima*?

Having examined this passage, I admit that I can see no particular cue that might help me to suggest what lies behind this paradox. Anwar Chejne suggests that Ibn Khaldūn is very much influenced by the existence of an abundant and overwhelming literature in the Arabic language, most of which comprises compendia, commentaries and commentaries on commentaries.[17] The search for knowledge knows no boundaries. However, my possible suggestion in relation to what I have indicated above is that Ibn Khaldūn here is very strongly influenced by the concept of "the encyclopedic scholar". I create this term to describe a kind of versatile scholar whose knowledge, talent and power of memory are extraordinary. Ibn Khaldūn seems to be very attached to this old notion of the encyclopedic scholar who claims to be a master of all kinds of disciplines at one time. This can be seen from his appreciation of Sībawayh, a

master of Arabic philology. However, as science and knowledge develop so rapidly, the notion of an encyclopedic scholar has certainly become more and more irrelevant. Our modern system of education has gone so far as to divide knowledge into disciplines and sub-disciplines. Today's scholarship has become vast, complicated and over-specialised. No one would be able to be an encyclopedic scholar or claim to master or know all the literature in a single discipline, let alone in different disciplines. It is therefore not realistic to speak of or uphold this concept in modern time. Perhaps we could consider Ibn Khaldūn's time as a period of transition from the traditional notion of scholarship to the modern one. To reconcile this paradox, I would presume that if he had realised that to produce an encyclopedic scholar is impossible in the rapid development of science and knowledge, he would not have worried too much about the increasing number of scholarly materials. On this basis, perhaps it is not out of context to assume that Ibn Khaldūn here presents the old notion of scholarship rather than the modern one. Besides this practically irrelevant notion, Ibn Khaldūn's passage here certainly has a significance in the context of the history of the scholarly tradition, especially the phases of its development from traditional to modern.

The value of the short summary (*ikhtiṣār*) and good pedagogical method

In Sections 35 and 36, Ibn Khaldūn discusses a number of issues regarding an *ikhtiṣār* in a scholarly subject and good pedagogical method. He begins by dealing with the problems of the brief summary of the methods and contents of the sciences.

Some of the scholarly works in various disciplines are very lengthy. They need to be interpreted and explained. Some scholars make an effort to abridge them in order to make it easier for the student to acquire an expert knowledge of them. Based on several instances, such as the work of Ibn al-Ḥājib in jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence, Ibn Mālik in Arabic philology and al-Khūnājī in logic, Ibn Khaldūn argues that this method (i.e using short summaries) did not help students very much. On the contrary, this method is considered to have a corrupting influence on the process of instruction and it is detrimental to the attainment of scholarship. Ibn Khaldūn believes that it is a bad method because it confuses the beginner. The reason is that it only presents the final results of a discipline to the student, but he is not prepared for them and does not have enough background in the discipline.

Ibn Khaldūn's point of argument also lies on the inferiority of this method to the complete work. Among its deficiencies is that this kind of work requires laborious study. Naturally such works are complicated because they are crowded with ideas in trying to find out the problems of the discipline.[18] Ibn Khaldūn

believes that the scholarly habit (*malaka*) that results from this method is far inferior to the habit resulting from the study of more extensive and lengthy works.

In Section 36, Ibn Khaldūn speaks of the theory of instruction in general and good pedagogical method. This section, which is relatively long, may be divided into three parts. This could facilitate our understanding and give us a clearer picture of the author's ideas of education, particularly teaching or instruction. An understanding of this section is essential for it is directly connected with his basic idea of education, which is paramount and central to his theory of culture and civilisation.

In the first part Ibn Khaldūn lays out his general theory of education and method as well as the roles and functions of teachers. In the second he tells us about the roles and functions of teachers. In the third, in which he addresses students, he gives some general advice about how to develop good habits and the process of knowledge, as well as the right attitude of students towards science and knowledge.

The author begins this section by giving some general ideas about method and the process of education. The first basic principle of effective education is that it should be in gradual stages (*tadrīj*). Ibn Khaldūn explains what he means by gradual. There are three stages of instruction. First, the teacher presents to the student the basic principle of the given discipline. At this stage the teacher will give a commentary in a summary fashion. At the same time the teacher will observe the intellectual potential and preparedness of the student. The student at this stage can only acquire a habit that is ineffective, approximate and weak. The objective of this stage is only to enable the student to understand the discipline and to know its problems.[19]

Then comes the second stage. At this stage the teacher goes back over the discipline a second time. The teacher will no longer give a summary, but full commentaries and explanation, explaining the existing differences of opinion (*khilāf*). The result of this stage is that the student's scholarly habit is improved.

In the third stage the teacher leads the student back again for a third time. The student is now solidly grounded. The teacher at this stage will leave nothing that is complicated, vague or obscure unexplained. He bares all the secrets of the discipline. As a result the student is now able to master and acquire the habit of the discipline.

This is the effective method of instruction according to Ibn Khaldūn. We can now understand that a gradual process (*tadrīj*) here means repetition (*tikrār*). Although it requires two repetitions, it might be less in some cases depending on the student's natural ability, disposition and qualification.

In the second part of this passage, Ibn Khaldūn focuses his discussion on the role of the teacher. He criticises some of the teachers of his time for being ignorant of the effective method of instruction. Those ignorant teachers do

not follow the right procedure in instruction. Some confront the student with obscure scientific problems; some expose them to the final result of the given discipline (*ghāyat al-funūn*) at the beginning of the lesson. This is not the right way to effective instruction. Ibn Khaldūn reminds his reader again that preparing oneself for scientific knowledge and understanding grows gradually, and therefore the process of instruction should follow the same procedure. He is worried about the backlash of the wrong approach in instruction. For example, if the students are exposed to the final result when they are still unable to understand the basic principle of the disipline, they are far from prepared and their minds are not acute enough to grasp such understanding they may get the impression that scholarship is too difficult and try to avoid it. This happens because of poor instruction.

Ibn Khaldūn lists some important points regarding good pedagogical method. Among those points are:

- Teaching should be based upon and according to age group.
- Instruction should be continuous, repeated and avoid prolonging the period of instruction or any long interval.
- Students should not be exposed to two disciplines at one time.[20]

The third part of the passage, in which he addresses the student, gives some general advice to the student who is in the process of learning. Ibn Khaldūn declares at the beginning that he is going to give some useful advice to the student. He begins by recalling his theory of man and the process of thinking, and follows this with a discussion of the roles and functions of logic. Logic helps man to distinguish correctness from error. He describes logic as a technical procedure (*amr ṣinā'ī*) that parallels man's natural ability to think. Since it is only a technical procedure, scholarly results do not always depend on it. In fact, many of the world's best thinkers achieve scholarly results without employing the craft of logic. This happens to thinkers whose intention is sincere with the help of the mercy of God (*ma'a ṣadaqat al-niyya wa-'l-ta'arruḍ li-raḥmat Allah ta'ālā*). In the case of these thinkers they can proceed, with the aid of their natural ability to think, to find the middle term and knowledge of their objective.[21]

Besides logic, there is another introductory discipline which it is necessary for students to know, namely knowledge of words and the way in which they indicate ideas in the mind.[22] Knowledge of words is divided into the written and the spoken. Ibn Khaldūn describes this knowledge as a veil (*ḥijāb*). Those who want to reach a scholarly objective must pass through this veil. The first stage of the veil is writing which indicates spoken words, followed by spoken words, which indicate ideas. Further, the student should also be able to master the rules for arranging the ideas in their proper mould by using the craft of

logic. Those ideas that are abstract (*mujarrada*) in the mind are used to achieve the desired objective with the help of one's natural ability to think and of course by the mercy and generosity of God.

The author reminds us that not everyone can easily pass through these veils in the process of instruction. In some cases dispute can cause the mind to stop at the veil of words (*ḥijāb al-alfāẓ*). Only certain individuals who are guided by God succeed in overcoming and passing these veils.

Towards the end of this passage, Ibn Khaldūn advises the student who is afflicted by such difficulties or who has doubt in his mind to entrust himself to God's aid. By doing this, says Ibn Khaldūn, God's helpful light will shine upon him and show him His objective. In this way, inspiration (*ilhām al-wasṭ*), which is granted by God, will indicate the middle term. This inspiration is a natural requirement of the process of thinking.[23]

Excursus

In Section 35, which is relatively short, Ibn Khaldūn presents a picture of scholarship in his time in relation to education and the tradition of scholarship. When writing becomes common and forms a new culture among intellectual circles, it is natural for it to result in a plethora of books and literature. In this situation there are also natural tendencies among scholars to work towards a brief presentation of the method and content of a particular science. Some of them are presented systematically in the form of a brief summary. Ibn Khaldūn does not deny the good intention of the authors of such literature, but his main concern is basically the perfection of intellectual habit (*al-malaka al-tāmma*). Perfection is necessary for an excellent scholar. For this he allows no room for compromise. He severely criticises and condemns this abbreviated kind of scholarly works which he believes, instead of making it easier for the student to acquire knowledge, make it more difficult, complicated and confused.

Leaving Ibn Khaldūn's criticism aside for a moment, my assessment is that his idea of rejecting the tradition of *ikhtiṣār* in the context of Muslim intellectual tradition needs to be clarified. Does he mean to invalidate the significance of this type of literary genre in Muslim scholarship tradition? If so, what is its implication for his theory of education and scholarship? On the surface it seems that this idea is a little strange. The tradition of *ikhtiṣār* or *mukhtaṣar* in Muslim literary history has been phenomenal, established long before and continuing after the time of Ibn Khaldūn. Therefore, I feel that the significance of this tradition should not be bluntly denied or simply rejected. Since Ibn Khaldūn has given his justification for why he is not in favour of this tradition, my task here is of course to evaluate the relevance and context of his argument. The question before us is whether this rejection implies total invalidation of

this kind of literature or whether it applies only in a certain context – possibly teaching or instruction in the formal and limited sense of the word.

In relation to this, my inclination is of course to look at the latter, i.e. the possibility of a limited context of this rejection. I believe that this rejection applies in the context of instruction (*ta'līm*) in the specific sense of the word. By specific sense of *ta'līm* I mean a kind of formal method of instruction as practised at that time. I have every reason to believe that Ibn Khaldūn is not rejecting the tradition of *ikhtiṣār* as part of the scholarly tradition. This is obvious in the previous section, where he mentions *ikhtiṣār* as one of the categories of recognised and valid literary genre. Although, looking at the sequential order (if this is considered as showing priority), this genre is placed in the last category, it should be understood as less important, rather than not important at all.

Taking the above argument into consideration, I am now able to suggest that Ibn Khaldūn's criticism here has more to do with the curriculum in the formal method of instruction (*ta'līm*) rather than with total invalidation. Of course we would agree that abridged works cannot be used as textbooks. These kinds of work have many deficiencies compared to the complete detailed works. Perhaps I can now explain why Ibn Khaldūn is so worried that the student may become confused because he is not fully prepared with the general background of the discipline.

In Section 36 Ibn Khaldūn continues with the theory of instruction and pedagogical method. It is not my intention here to see the relevance of this theory in the context of modern times. It is the task of modern educationists to make use of whatever is relevant and useful in Ibn Khaldūn's theory in relation to today's educational problems. Instead, my primary concern here is to see how Ibn Khaldūn builds up his theory, its context and rationale, its interconnection with other concepts and theories, and, more importantly, how it can be fitted into his general theory of civilisation and culture.

I have indicated above that education, which includes instruction, has never been peripheral in Ibn Khaldūn's scheme. Here in this passage he gives special focus to instruction and good pedagogical method. The argument is presented in three parts, beginning with basic theory and the principle of instruction, followed by some advice to the teacher and then some guidelines for the student.

It is interesting to highlight here the basic principle of effective instruction proposed by Ibn Khaldūn, i.e. the principle of *tadrīj* (gradual). Instruction should be carried out little by little. In other words, instruction has to be graduated. As we indicated above, gradual means repetition (*tikrār*). Good and effective instruction means that a subject should be repeated twice, beginning with a preliminary exposure and ending with extensive detailed and comprehensive discussion including all matters of obscurity and

controversy in the discipline. At this stage, it can be said that the student has become acquainted with and mastered the discipline. This is the meaning of gradual and this is the right and effective educational method according to Ibn Khaldūn.[24]

If my understanding of Ibn Khaldūn's line of educational thought is correct, I am now able to suggest that in the process of education, besides the knowledge and skill of the teacher and the preparedness of the student, the most important element is the methodology, i.e. having a good pedagogical method. This is clear when the author frequently reminds us about the dangers of poor instruction. The result of poor instruction is not only a confused and ignorant student, but, worse, it results in the false impression that scholarship is too complicated and difficult. The student will then have no desire to pursue his study further.

The character of instrumental/auxiliary sciences (*al-'ulūm al-āliyya*)

In a relatively short Section 37, Ibn Khaldūn invites the reader to share his view on the instrumental or auxiliary sciences (*al-'ulūm al-āliyya*). What are the auxiliary sciences? To give a clearer picture, Ibn Khaldūn first groups sciences customarily known among civilised people into two basic divisions. The first are the sciences that are wanted *per se* (*'ulūm maqṣūda bi-'l-dhāt*). This category of sciences is defined as the sciences that are studied independently for their own sake, i.e. not as prerequisite or auxiliary to other sciences. The sciences included in this category, according to Ibn Khaldūn, are religious sciences (*shar'iyyāt*) such as Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*), prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), speculative theology (*kalām*) and the physical and metaphysical sciences of philosophy.[25] The second category of sciences is identified as the instrumental or auxiliary sciences (*al-'ulūm al-āliyya*). Among the sciences included in this category are Arabic philology, arithmetic and other sciences which are auxiliary to religious sciences, and logic, which is auxiliary to philosophy, in some cases to speculative theology and the principles of jurisprudence (*usūl al-fiqh*).[26]

For the sciences that fall into the first category, Ibn Khaldūn pronounces that there is no harm in studying them in great detail. In fact, this is strongly encouraged, for it will give the student a firmer habit in the respective sciences. For the sciences that are auxiliary in nature, Ibn Khaldūn is of the opinion that it is not required to study them in great detail except insofar as they are needed as aids to the other sciences.[27] In this particular case Ibn Khaldūn gives the example of Arabic philology and logic. Neither of these sciences need be studied in great detail since to do so would divert the attention of the students and lead them away from the actual purpose of those sciences. It is

for this reason that the study of such sciences should be confined within the scope of their need and purpose, i.e. to facilitate the student's understanding of the sciences to which they are auxiliary. Any attempt to divert from this purpose is considered as abandoning the purpose. Such attempts are considered as an idle pastime (*laghw*), i.e. away from the actual purpose.[28]

Ibn Khaldūn continues to argue that these auxiliary sciences are actually difficult to master. They are large subjects with many details. These difficulties often become obstacles to acquiring the sciences of the first category. It takes a long time to master them. Therefore, it is a waste of one's lifetime to study them since our life is too short to acquire a thorough knowledge of everything.

As usual Ibn Khaldūn takes the opportunity to criticise the group whom he addresses as the recent scholars for being too much occupied with grammar (*naḥw*) and logic (*manṭiq*) and even with the principles of jurisprudence. They are not only occupied with these sciences by transmitting more materials and adding to these materials through deductive reasoning, but are also increasing the number of details and problems. This attempt has made the instrumental sciences no longer instrumental in nature – they have become independent disciplines. For Ibn Khaldūn, this situation has diverged from what is supposed to be the original function of the auxiliary sciences. This situation will cause outright harm to the students.[29] Ibn Khaldūn again emphasises that it is the task of the teachers to tell the students where to stop dealing with these instrumental sciences. However, towards the end of the chapter, as we should expect, he gives some room to those who feel that they are capable of going deeper in the instrumental sciences, that they may choose to do so by themselves.

Excursus

This section presents Ibn Khaldūn's view on the instrumental or auxiliary sciences. He generally divides sciences that prevail and are customarily known to the civilised peoples into two categories, the sciences that are wanted *per se* and the sciences that are instrumental and auxiliary in nature. So far as scholarship is concerned, there is no question about the importance and need to study the sciences that are wanted *per se* as deeply and in as much detail as possible. For the purposes of scholarship, those especially who have the energy and capability should be encouraged to acquire these sciences as much as they can.

The group of sciences in question here, however, is the category of instrumental or auxiliary. Ibn Khaldūn sees this category of sciences as merely instrumental and they should not be studied over and beyond the restricted purpose that they are required for. The reason he gives is that, if these sciences are over-studied, it will divert the attention of the student, whose main task is

to study the sciences that are wanted *per se*. This argument is reinforced by the fact that human life is too short to be able to master all things.

Up to this point Ibn Khaldūn does not seem to be giving convincing answers to the basic questions of the nature of the auxiliary sciences. Among the basic questions to be posed are the following: can we take this explanation as clear enough to formulate the typology of the so-called instrumental/auxiliary sciences? Is this clarification lucid enough to enable us to draw the demarcation line between the category of sciences that are studied *per se* and the sciences that are auxiliary in nature? I pose these questions because Ibn Khaldūn has not clarified this matter. He only gives us some indications of the character of the sciences and some examples, namely Arabic and logic. Based on the indication and example alone, it is not quite possible to draw a general formulation of the typology of these sciences, let alone to itemise them.

To deal analytically with these questions, let us examine the order of argument in this section. This is particularly important in order to acquire a clearer picture of what this author seeks to convey. First, the grouping of sciences into two categories. As far as our understanding goes, Ibn Khaldūn's attempt at grouping the sciences in this fashion is rather obscure. I have reason to be curious. This type of grouping has not been attempted by anyone before him. I cannot find it in any of the prominent works by Muslim scholars who also dealt with this subject, neither, for example, in *Iḥṣā' al-ʿulūm* of al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) nor in *Marātib al-ʿulūm* of Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064).[30] Another work worth mentioning which treats the same subject is *Mafātiḥ al-ʿulūm* by al-Khwārizmī, who lived during the second half of the fourth/tenth century. In *Mafātiḥ*, which was considered the oldest Islamic encyclopedia,[31] the grouping of sciences into two was made, but in a different context. The two major groups of sciences, namely religious sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-sharīʿa*) and foreign sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿajam*), were made purely in the context of scholarly tradition.[32]

However, Ibn Khaldūn's explanation of his instrumental sciences seems to have some common points with Ibn Sīnā's explanation in his *Kitāb al-najāt*. Although Ibn Sīnā's explanation is also in a different context, on the basis of its common points I think it is still worth comparing it with that of Ibn Khaldūn. In *al-Najāt*, Ibn Sīnā explains that sciences are either different (*mubāyina*) from one another, or related (*mutanāsiba*) to one another.[33] As I indicated earlier, this explanation or rather grouping by Ibn Sīnā is made in a different context. His clarification here is actually part of his discussion of the concept of evidence (*burhān*), which is an important element of logic (*manṭiq*). The sciences that are different from one another (*mutabāyina*) are those whose subjects or objects are not interdependent and have nothing to do with each other in respect of their essence (*dhāt*) or their genus (*jins*).[34] They are considered as separate independent disciplines. This concept seems to correspond somewhat to Ibn Khaldūn's concept of sciences that are wanted

per se (*'ulūm maqṣūda bi-'l-dhāt*). The sciences that are related to one another are either of equal rank (*al-mutasāwiya fi-'l-murattaba*) or some are contained in others (*ba'ḍu-hā fī-ba'ḍ*) or some are subordinate to others.[35] This second group of sciences described by Ibn Sīnā is in some way different from that of Ibn Khaldūn. Ibn Sīnā neither uses the term *āliya* (auxiliary or instrumental) nor any other term to that effect. What Ibn Sīnā was trying to explain was purely the relationships between each of the sciences in terms of subjets and objects as well as in terms of essence and genus, nothing to do with the relationship of one being instrumental and auxiliary to the other. Although Ibn Sīnā does mention a group of sciences that are subordinate to the others, it is still in the context of genus. "Subordinate" in Ibn Sīnā's sense does not carry the meaning of instrumental or auxiliary in Ibn Khaldūn's sense or anything to that effect.

Coming back to Ibn Khaldūn, what is the purpose of this grouping? So far as I can see, the purpose is nothing but to prepare the ground for his theory that auxiliary sciences are not required to be studied in detail. Based on this assumption, sciences that fall into this category will be less studied or at least studied in a restricted manner. Restriction means that sciences in this group will not have the same opportunity to be studied as other sciences. This in one way or another narrows the perspective on these sciences and prevents them from further development. Arabic, for instance, is considered as one of the sciences in this category. According to this theory, Arabic, like logic for philosophy, is studied and mastered as an aid or instrument for those who seek to master Islamic disciplines. My point here is, why should Arabic be viewed from such a narrow perspective? It is true that Arabic has its role as an aid for those who seek to understand the Quran, for example, but beyond that Arabic has also emerged as an independent intellectual discipline *par excellence*. I am convinced that Ibn Khaldūn is more than aware of the fact that Arabic as a discipline has become a significant part of Islamic civilisation. This can be seen from his referring to Sībawayh as an excellent grammarian in history. Another point is that Ibn Khaldūn's view of language here, at least on the surface, is inconsistent with his original stance that language should become the habit and craft of civilised people; it is needless to mention the position of these sciences in his educational scheme.[36]

Second is the character of the instrumental sciences. Since the categorisation of the sciences for this matter, as mentioned above, is obscure, the typology of the auxiliary sciences is also unclear. Ibn Khaldūn mentions quite explicitly the character and function of the auxiliary sciences, i.e. as aids and instruments to facilitate the study of other sciences. If we were to accept this character as a general rule, I would say that all sciences needed for the purpose of understanding other disciplines should be considered as auxiliary, in which case all kinds of sciences should be included. This is based on the assumption that, as far as human knowledge is concerned, no single discipline

or science can be declared completely independent and free from any connection with other disciplines. *Tafsīr*, for example, could be auxiliary to *fiqh* in the sense that it facilitates and provides the ground for understanding the Quran in order to formulate religious law. The same applies to other sciences which in one way or another are interdependent. On these grounds we would conclude that Ibn Khaldūn's typology of the instrumental or auxiliary sciences is theoretically unjustifiable. If this theory is to be made valid, some amendment has to be made so that certain sciences can be placed in both the first and the second categories at the same time according to the needs and purposes of the study.

Leaving this paradox for a moment, what we would expect from Ibn Khaldūn is clarification of the context in which this idea applies, which he has not done throughout this section. While he does not explicitly tell us, we may still come to a conclusion based on understanding and assumption. In this case, I would presume that to make this theory workable – and it should of course be made workable and justifiable – it should be understood in the limited context of the educational curriculum and pedagogical method rather than scholarship in general. On the basis of the principle of this theory, it is the specific educational curriculum that determines the typology of the sciences, i.e. which are to be considered as auxiliary in its curriculum hierarchy. We would still agree with the idea that those who seek to master a certain discipline should not be allowed to engage too much in instrumental/auxiliary sciences that may lead them away from the original purpose of their study. It is basically the task of the teacher and curriculum designer to determine the limit to which auxiliary sciences should be studied and at what level they should be dropped.

Instruction – elementary education (*ta'līm al-wildān*)

In Sections 38 and 39, Ibn Khaldūn speaks quite extensively about elementary education. As a whole, these two sections seek to provide a closer look at the concept, principles and methodology of elementary learning and instruction. As far as the process of education is concerned, elementary or child education is of primary importance because it is the beginning of the long educational journey of the individual. Therefore education at this early stage must be properly carried out, for it will provide the ground and foundation for further progress as the child grows up. It is perhaps for this reason that Ibn Khaldūn gives special treatment to this particular component in his educational scheme. For the purpose of this analysis I shall divide my discussion here into two parts, according to the author's division into two sections.

Instructing children in the Quran is one of the symbols (*sha'ā'ir*) of Islam. Ibn Khaldūn begins by reiterating the importance of a Quranic education. It is of primary importance that the children be instructed in the Quran at an

early age. The Quran should constitute the basis of instruction and the source and foundation of all habits that may be acquired later on. This premise shows quite explicitly the Islamic paradigm of Ibn Khaldūn's educational scheme. Of course he derives this idea from the Quran itself as well as from the teaching of the Prophet. The theory is clear: that knowledge obtained in one's early life is the most effective. It constitutes the foundation of all scholarly habit that may be obtained later in life.[37] Although there is no dispute concerning the basic concept that the Quran must be the first element in the process of education, the method of instruction varies according to the varieties of opinion as to the habit that is to result from this instruction. On this issue, Ibn Khaldūn gives us some important historical information regarding the methods of instruction practised in different areas at the time. He mentions particularly the methods of the Maghribi, the Andalusians, and the people of Ifriqiya (modern Libya, Tunisia and Algeria) as well as the people of the East.

In part two of his discussion, i.e. Section 39, Ibn Khaldūn speaks particularly about approach and the way in which the elementary education should be carried out. The title of the section gives the impression that severity or harshness in the process of educating the young can result in undesired harm to them. Severe punishment in the course of instruction harms the students, especially the little ones, because it belongs among the things that may result in bad habit.[38] This statement also seems to show that Ibn Khaldūn is well aware of the psychological impact of severity on the mental development of children. He explains that students or slaves or servants who are brought up with harshness and severity will always feel oppressed, will lose their energy, will become lazy and insincere and will be induced to lie. These will become their habits. These students will lose the very quality that is supposed to be properly developed through education, and the worst part is that they will fall to the level of lowest of the low.[39] In supporting this idea, Ibn Khaldūn invites the reader to observe what happened to every nation that fell under the yoke of tyranny and learned through the means of injustice. It is on this account that he suggests that a teacher must not be too severe towards his pupil nor a father towards his son in the process of educating him. Here Ibn Khaldūn cites some important quotations from Abū Muḥammad b. Abī Zayd (d. 386/ 996), his predecessor who wrote on the laws governing teachers and pupils: "if the children must be beaten, the educator must not strike them more than three times."[40]

Towards the end of this section, Ibn Khaldūn introduces what he describes as one of the best methods of education. This method was suggested by Caliph al-Rashīd to Khalaf b. Aḥmar, the teacher of his son Muhammad al-Amīn. Among the important points made by al-Rashīd were to teach his son to read the Quran, to instruct him in history, to transmit poems and to teach the *sunna* of the Prophet and to teach his son the art of speaking. Other points were to forbid him from trivial laughing (*ḍaḥk*) except at appropriate times,

and to accustom him to honour Hashimite dignitaries and military leaders. "Do not waste time without teaching him something useful. Do not sadden (*tuḥzin*) him, thus killing the student's mind. Do not be too lenient, the student will get to like leisure and become used to it. Do correct him kindly and gently (*al-qurb wa-'l-mulāyana*), and only if he disobeys use severity and harshness."[41]

Excursus

As indicated above, Ibn Khaldūn speaks about child education in two parts. In part one (Section 38) he touches on various preliminary issues, from the basic concept of child education to historical records of the practices of various nations. It is a common belief that instructing children in the Quran is the symbol of Islam. It is for this reason that the Quran must be the first in the curriculum of child education. Children should be exposed to the Quran before they come into other subjects.[42] In this sense, this might well be considered as representing an Islamic concept of preliminary education. The foundation of the concept is obvious. The Quran is the most important part of the life of the Muslim. It is the primary source of knowledge and guidance. Furthermore, it is the foundation and the origin of the culture. Therefore, it must be the first thing in the process of education, especially for children. That was the basic idea of the Muslims at that time as regards preliminary education.

However, unanimity in basic concept does not always ensure uniformity in method and approach. Muslims have in common a belief that the Quran should be the central part of education. Nevertheless, the approaches and methods adopted by different people in different places certainly show some variety. Naturally, some of the methods practised are inferior to others, while others have certain elements of weakness. As Ibn Khaldūn sees it, the method of instructing children strictly in the Quran without exposing them to other subjects, as practised by the majority of Muslims, has its weakness. He agrees with the point made by Ibn al-'Arabī that Arabic and poetry should be taught first in order to familiarise the children with their basic norms. Only then should the children go on to study the Quran. This background knowledge is an important preparation for them to understand the content and teaching of the Quran. Ibn al-'Arabī's point, however, was not acceptable to the majority of the people. Customary practice at that time did not favour this idea. It is natural, of course: no matter how good the idea, if it does not agree with the customary practice of the people, it will not prevail. As a matter of fact, we can see that these two views, the customary practice of the people on the one hand and the point made by Ibn al-'Arabī on the other, are somehow contradictory. We have yet to find the answer to this contradiction.

As far as we can understand, the central point of variation lies in the difference in the aim and purpose of Quranic instruction, irrespective of the spiritual value of the Quran itself. It does not involve the basic concept that

the Quran is the central element of education. Customary practice, which gives preference to the teaching and learning of the Quran, is well understood: the Quran is the primary source of knowledge and guidance, it is the Holy Book. People desire it for blessing and reward. After all, reading or reciting the Quran, even if without understanding its meaning, is considered an act of worship and it will be rewarded.

Ibn al-'Arabī on the other hand is concerned very much with the value of understanding. Of course he has strong reasons for this. Since the Quran, from an Islamic point of view, is the source of knowledge *par excellence*, it should be read and understood. Without an understanding of its meaning, how can it be the source of knowledge and guidance? For this reason, it is essential that students be well equipped with the necessary background knowledge, so that when they read the Quran they have no difficulty in understanding its meaning.

In part two of his discussion (Section 39) Ibn Khaldūn speaks more specifically on how instruction should be carried out. In this section, which we may describe as a general guide to child education, we find Ibn Khaldūn concerned about severity and harshness towards students. Here we find that the basic element of educational psychology is dominant in his thought. At a time when psychology had not yet been constituted as a separate academic discipline, let alone educational psychology, it is interesting that he should come up with the theory that "severity to students does them harm". Severe punishment of children, especially little ones, will bring about bad habits as a consequence. Obviously, students who are brought up with severity and harshness will always feel oppressed and, worse, will become lazy and insincere. This is the undesirable result of education. Thus, child education has to be carried out in a proper systematic way. Certain rules must be followed in order to achieve the best result. In his quest for the best and most practical method of child education, Ibn Khaldūn shares the view of Caliph al-Rashīd, derived from al-Rashīd's advice to Khalaf b. Aḥmar, his son's tutor. In his advice, the Caliph told Khalaf the right way or approach to teach a little child, what should be taught, how to adopt good behaviour and, more importantly, how, where and when to use severity and harshness.

My concluding remark on this point is that Ibn Khaldūn significantly highlights the importance of the psychological aspect of the process of education. He draws the attention of the reader to the paramount importance of child psychology and the worst result of neglecting this aspect of the human being. Thus, it is perhaps not an exaggeration to consider him as the forerunner of the modern educational psychologist.

Perfection in knowledge and the role of language

Education is a lifelong process while knowledge is limitless. No one can claim perfection in knowledge, no matter how intelligent he is, how many teachers he meets and how long his life. Nonetheless, education in the specific sense of structured teaching and the learning process certainly has a beginning and an end. The achievement of a person can appropriately be measured by certain criteria.[43] Education has aims and objectives, which are specifically set up to meet desired goals. As mentioned earlier, the general aim of education is to obtain mastery or habit (*malaka*). Hence, the best education is indicated by a student obtaining the best habit.

In the four remaining sections on education, namely Sections 40 to 43, Ibn Khaldūn speaks on various issues, particularly of perfection in knowledge and the role of language. Perhaps it would be beneficial, before going into detail, to glance at what these sections contain. In Section 40, he speaks of how scholarly habit can be improved or perfected in the educational process. In Section 41, he speaks about the nature of the relationship between scholarship and politics. In Section 42 he presents his sociological observations in regard to the role of non-Arabs in Islamic scholarship. In Section 43 he focuses particularly on the role of language in scholarship. Since the sections are quite diverse in focus, except for Sections 42 and 43, which are quite closely related to each other, I shall deal with each of them separately. Sections 42 and 43 will be dealt with together.

Travel in the quest of knowledge

In this section Ibn Khaldūn speaks about how scholarly habit can be improved and perfected by travelling and meeting authoritative teachers. Inasmuch as the basic process of education involves study, receiving instruction or lectures or imitating a teacher, there are differences in the quality and grade of knowledge obtained by a student depending very much on which method is used and how the knowledge is obtained. In relation to this, Ibn Khaldūn explicitly indicates that habit or mastery of knowledge obtained by way of personal contact is of better quality than knowledge obtained without personally meeting the person or teacher.[44] The heading of this section reads very clearly "travelling in the quest of knowledge and meeting the authoritative teachers will improve perfection in education". The best quality of education and knowledge is what is obtained through personal contact (*talqīnan bi-'l-mubāshara*). Ibn Khaldūn reiterates that habit obtained through this method is of higher quality than habit obtained through other methods. Naturally, the greater number of teachers (*shaykh*) met by a student, the better and firmer the habit he acquires. Thus, in order to acquire better and firmer habit, it is

important for a student to meet and study under as many authoritative teachers as possible.

In the same context Ibn Khaldūn also observes on some of the weaknesses of knowledge obtained without personally meeting the teacher. He finds that the level of understanding is clearly lower. It is quite obvious that those who have the opportunity to meet the teacher personally will obtain deeper understanding and better and firmer habit. The reason is simple: the student has direct access to the teacher. Those who do not have the opportunity to meet the teacher in person will find it difficult to understand. As an extreme case, Ibn Khaldūn cites the example of students possessing a wrong conception of the technical terminology used in scientific instruction. They are unable to differentiate between the terminology of scientific instruction and the subject or body of the science itself. Some of them are confused and mix them up together, whereas in fact the technical terminology used in scientific instruction and the science itself are two different components. This happened because different teachers use different terminology. For Ibn Khaldūn, the best way to avoid and overcome this problem is to meet the teacher in person. Thus, meeting scholars and having many authoritative teachers will enable students to note the differences in the terminology used by different teachers and to distinguish among them.[45] Other than this, the benefit of personal contact with the teacher will strengthen the habit of the student, improve the knowledge he obtains and, more importantly, enable him to distinguish the differences between technical terminologies as well as between the sciences. For this matter, Ibn Khaldūn suggests, in order to obtain perfection in knowledge, it is absolutely necessary to travel and meet as many authoritative teachers as possible.[46]

Excursus

Travelling in search of knowledge is an educational concept that has long been established in Islam. The origin of the idea may well be traced to the Quran itself as well as to the Prophetic injunctions. Several authors before Ibn Khaldūn have touched on this concept. Al-Ghazzālī, for example, devotes considerable space to this matter in his *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*. He quotes the Quranic verse which clearly encourages a portion (*tā'ifa*) of the Muslim community to devote themselves to the activity of seeking knowledge.[47] From the injunctions of the Prophet, we find several traditions which directly urge Muslims to journey for the sake of knowledge. For instance, there is a tradition, which says "Whoever goes out seeking knowledge will be walking in the path of God until his return, and whoever dies while travelling for learning will be regarded as martyr."[48] Another tradition says, "Seek knowledge, even as far as China."[49] This tradition about travelling to China has been among the famous

injunctions of the Prophet encouraging Muslims, both men and women, to journey for the sake of knowledge. Whether or not this tradition is genuine,[50] as Berkey comments, it accurately reflects the principle generally held in the Muslim world, which forms a common theme of medieval literature, namely, that the pursuit of knowledge is an activity always worthy of approbation and encouragement.[51]

Based on the above argument, we may say that in this particular section Ibn Khaldūn is not producing any new ideas. It is almost an extension of al-Ghazzālī's earlier discussion in *Iḥyā'*, although presented in a different form. Nonetheless, this does not mean that Ibn Khaldūn's discussion here is at all insignificant. The significance of this section has to be seen from the point of view of Ibn Khaldūn's educational scheme as a whole. We should not forget that he is here discussing education as a social phenomenon, which involves social mobility and social interaction. Education should not be seen as a merely local enterprise, and knowledge should not be seen within the confines of a single socio-cultural perimeter. Hence, the activity of seeking knowledge should pass socio-cultural and geographical borders. The best method of education is through personal contact with authoritative scholars. Scholars emerge from various geographical backgrounds and different socio-cultural environments. Taking all these factors into consideration, Ibn Khaldūn formulates that the perfection or the best outcome for students can only be achieved by travelling and meeting scholars in different places. It is from this point of view that we can see the importance and value of journeying in quest of knowledge and meeting authoritative teachers. We can now understand the reason why Ibn Khaldūn intentionally includes this principle in his educational scheme.

Scholars and politics

The heading of this section gives the impression that scholars are those who are least familiar with the ways of politics. We understand that scholars on the one hand and politicians on the other constitute among the most dominant groups in society. It is interesting to see why Ibn Khaldūn chooses to highlight these two groups in this manner as part of his discussion on scholarship. More importantly, as we know, Ibn Khaldūn himself, by career and profession, was both a scholar and a politician.[52] It is evident that Ibn Khaldūn, apart from being a scholar, also performed public duties as a politician. With this background, he is in a good position to give his opinion on this matter. Of course, we would expect that he would provide us with a right perspective and a fair view concerning the nature of the relationship between these two dominant groups in society.

Ibn Khaldūn reminds us that there are great differences between the two professions of scholar and politician. Scholars, he says, are those who exercise their mental speculation in study and research. They deal with ideas that

they abstract from *sensibilia* (*maḥsūsāt*) and conceive in their mind general universals. These universal ideas, which are still in the minds of the scholars, are made to conform to facts in the outside world. They also compare these phenomena with others by way of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*). The facts of the outside world are merely particular cases of the ideas or conclusions in the mind. Thus it can be safely concluded that all intellectual activities of scholars deal with matters of the mind and thoughts.[53] Politicians on the other hand, deal with the facts of the outside world. They must pay attention to situations (*aḥwāl*) that are determined by and dependent upon political circumstances. These phenomena in reality are obscure (*khafiyya*) in the sense that they may contain some elements which it may not be possible to refer to something similar. They may contradict the universal idea to which one would like to conform.[54]

Now we can see that the subject on which Ibn Khaldūn is focusing here is the situations of the outside world (*al-aḥwāl al-khārijiyyāt*). It is in this respect that Ibn Khaldūn sees that scholars and intelligent people cannot be trusted (*lā yu'min 'alay-him*). His reason is that these people, i.e. scholars and the intelligentsia, when they look at politics, always press their observation into the mould of their own views and their own ways of making deductions.[55] Thus they are apt to commit errors (*ghalaṭ*).

Ordinary people, who have a healthy disposition and mediocre intelligence, on the other hand, can be trusted and are more sensible when they reflect upon their political activities. These people, according to Ibn Khaldūn, have the right outlook in dealing with their fellow men. This is because they have no mind for speculation, as scholars do. Therefore they restrict themselves to considering every matter as it is. Their judgement is not infected by analogy and generalisation.

Excursus

Again it is quite clear Ibn Khaldūn is trying to establish his theory on the basis of generalisation and possibly his own observation. In the case of scholars and politics, it seems that Ibn Khaldūn is trying to make a conclusion based upon the paradox between the ideal and reality, or between theory and practice. Scholars are described as those who possess a higher level of intelligence and are always dealing with abstracts and theoretical matters. Those who are engaged in politics are described as those who possess lower and mediocre intelligence and this enables them to make more sensible, objective and practical judgements in particular situations.

Theoretically speaking, Ibn Khaldūn's view here is still obscure. It is important to note that theory must be built upon generalisation. Of course Ibn Khaldūn has rightly followed this procedure. However, such generalisation must be carefully done in order to avoid a certain element of obscurity and,

more importantly, to avoid elements that might weaken or invalidate the theory. In this case, Ibn Khaldūn seems to be caught in making an arbitrary judgement in his generalisation. It is quite improper for him in this situation to put scholars in one basket and politicians in another, as if these two professions cannot be combined. Such a blanket generalisation may not be theoretically acceptable. As Ibn Khaldūn himself teaches us, scholars are those who possess the best quality of intellect. Even if they possess the best quality of intellect, they are not at the same level or in the same category. They may differ in level or kind, as these differences are natural in the context of human beings. One may also ask why Ibn Khaldūn in this particular case gives preference to politicians rather than scholars, in the sense that scholars' views cannot be trusted, whereas elsewhere he unreservedly agrees that the ideal ruler (i.e. politician) must be a scholar who possesses wide knowledge, excellent penmanship and sharpness of intellect.[56] On the basis of this notion, it is not unusual that scholar and politician may be combined in one person.[57] The nearest example is Ibn Khaldūn himself. If this argument can be accepted, we can no longer see the significance of his project here to draw a distinct line between scholarship and politics.

However, if we are to accept this assumption as it is, we have no option but to impose a certain limitation on the context in which it might be applicable. By imposing this limitation, we are assuming that the author may have something in mind which he does not explicitly tell us. His assumption that scholars are those who are least familiar with the ways of politics should be understood in a more specific context. The nearest context possible here is that he is addressing a group of scholars who are engaged only in theoretical and abstract matters. They are the category of philosophers who spend their life dealing with abstract, theoretical and universal matters. It is historically evident that most of the time this group of philosophers do not bother about what happens in society. We have discussed Ibn Khaldūn's attitude towards this category of philosophers in a special section above.

Islamic scholarship: the non-Arab and the role of language

Sections 42 and 43 raise two major issues concerning Islamic scholarship, namely the role of the non-Arab (*'ajam*) and the difficulties of the non-Arab native in attaining scholarship. In Section 42, Ibn Khaldūn discusses the phenomenon that most of the scholars in Islam are non-Arabs. He describes this phenomenon as a "strange reality".[58] Again this is based on his historical data and sociological observation. He recognises the reality that most of the carriers of knowledge have been non-Arabs, with few exceptions. This includes those who are Arab by origin but non-Arab by language and study under non-Arab teachers.[59]

Since the reality is so, the task of Ibn Khaldūn here is to try to explain the phenomenon and possibly to find answers, reasons and factors that led to this situation. We can now turn to the rest of Section 42 to find out what Ibn Khaldūn has to say about this phenomenon. On the whole, his explanations are confined to two major approaches, historical and sociological.

Historically speaking, no sciences or crafts occur in the period of the beginning of Islam.[60] Society was simple and Bedouin. People at that time were Arabs who did not know anything about scientific instruction or the writing of books and systematic works.[61] Being in a simple society with the Prophet and authorities around, people did not see the need for such activities. Religious laws regarding commands and prohibitions could be obtained directly from the Prophet and those around him. This was the situation during the first and second generation of Islam. The only "institution" of that nature was the Quran readers (qurrā').[62] They were the people who were literate and knew the Quran. Illiteracy was common at that time.

It was during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Rashīd that the oral tradition of the qurrā' became more and more obsolete. The tradition was out of date in the sense that it was no longer a practical and effective method of knowledge transmission. This was due to the rapid development of knowledge and sciences as well as the expansion of Muslim lands. It was thus necessary to write commentaries on the Quran and to establish the tradition in writing, because it was feared that it might be lost.[63] People found it necessary to protect religious knowledge from corruption, thus inventing methods of knowing and assessing chains of transmitters. They found it necessary to refer an increasing number of actual cases to the Quran and the sunna, hence the need to master the Arabic language. Moreover, Arabic itself was also subject to corruption, hence the need for grammatical rules. This scenario shows clearly the historical process and how the need for these activities developed.

For sociological observation, we can now turn back to Ibn Khaldūn's theory that crafts (in the widest sense of the word) are the property of sedentary or urban culture. It is only sedentary people who cultivate crafts. Since the people of the Arabs are Bedouin, they are the least familiar with crafts. The only sedentary people at that time were non-Arabs, mainly Persians. The founding Arabic grammarians were, for instance, Sībawayh, followed by al-Fārisī and al-Zajjāj, all of Persian descent. It was the same situation for Quran commentators, ḥadīth scholars and those involved in other religious sciences.

Another point emphasised by Ibn Khaldūn is that there was a group of Arabs who liberated themselves from the Bedouin culture. Unfortunately, this group were also not so keen on scholarship and study.[64] They were mostly the Abbasid politicians, who held leading positions within the dynasty. They were busy with their political activities. Moreover, they considered it a contemptible thing to be a scholar because scholarship is a "craft".[65] Political leaders are always contemptuous of the crafts and professions and everything that leads

to them. Thus, they allowed the crafts to be developed in the hands of non-Arabs or mixed Arabs of partly non-Arab parentage (*muwallad*). At the same time, the Arabs still considered it their right to cultivate them for the very reason that it was their religion (*dīn*) and their science. The same situation obtained in the intellectual sciences, which were mostly cultivated by arabised non-Arabs (*al-mu'arrabūn min al-'ajam*).[66]

To sum up this discussion, what Ibn Khaldūn has achieved here is to show the historical and sociological process of how the non-Arabs emerged to predominance as the carriers of knowledge in Islam. Being an Arab himself, though by remote descent,[67] he notes without bias the fact (and the phenomenon) reluctantly accepted by the Arabs themselves. Ibn Khaldūn is well aware of this reluctance when he writes "...they [the Arabs] always considered it their right to cultivate them, as they were their customs and their sciences, and never felt complete contempt for the men learned in them."[68] In dealing with this matter, Ibn Khaldūn has again successfully matched his theory of craft and urban culture. It explicitly gives the answer to why the non-Arabs mostly dominated as carriers of knowledge in Islam: the Bedouin culture of the Arabs does not allow them to cultivate crafts. Crafts are the property of urban, sedentary culture.

In Section 43, Ibn Khaldūn explains the difficulties of the non-Arabs whose native language was not Arabic to acquire the Islamic sciences. This is because the sciences, which were developed and cultivated in Islam, were in the medium of Arabic, the language of the Quran and the *sunna*. Although this discussion is presented within the scope of Arabic as the medium of Islam, theoretically it can also be applied to other languages. Ibn Khaldūn is in fact here speaking about the role of language in scholarship in general.

He is almost recalling his theory of communication, previously discussed in Section 33. However, he is more concerned here about language as a means to attaining scholarship. Linguistic expression is the interpretation of the ideas that are in the mind. The idea of one person can be transferred or transmitted to another by way of oral discussion, instruction and constant scientific research (*bi-'l-mushāfaha fī-'l-munāẓara wa-'l-ta'līm wa-mumārisat al-baḥth fī-'l-'ulūm*).[69] The purpose is ultimately to obtain mastery or habit. Words and expressions are considered as media and a veil between ideas and their expression. Ideas are expressed by means of language. It is therefore necessary for the student of ideas to be firmly rooted in linguistic meaning. He has to have a good linguistic habit, without which he will find it difficult to understand the ideas, let alone to investigate their problems.[70] This is the first stage of knowledge transmission, i.e. instruction by personal contact.

The second stage is when the student has to rely on books or written materials. He will then face another veil that separates the handwriting from the spoken words found in the imagination. In this situation, it is also necessary

to know the ways of written letters indicating the spoken words. Imperfect knowledge of written expression will result in imperfect knowledge of what is expressed. When the student has firmly established this habit, the veil between him and the ideas is lifted. His only remaining problem is to understand the problems inherent in that idea.[71]

Having explained this linguistic theory, Ibn Khaldūn continues with some sociological observation about the situation at that time. The spread of Islam was not limited to one nation. Islam gained royal authority and power. Religious sciences, which had been traditional, were turned into a craft (ṣinā‘a). Many systematic works were written. Foreign sciences were translated into Arabic. The original language of those sciences was gradually forgotten. That was why, in order to acquire scholarship, it was necessary for the student to have a firmly rooted habit in the Arabic language.[72]

At this point, Ibn Khaldūn establishes his theory that a non-Arab will find it difficult to acquire scholarship. The reason was obvious: all scientific materials and sciences were written in Arabic. It is difficult for those who are deficient in Arabic to derive ideas from Arabic words and Arabic writings. Ibn Khaldūn believes that only native Arabs or non-Arab children who grow up with Arabs will have a good habit in Arabic. They can master the knowledge without much constraint. However, intensive study and constant practice of the language and of writing may also develop a good habit. This is the case of most non-Arab scholars who can achieve this state, but it occurs quite rarely.[73]

At this point, one may pose a question: is this view contradictory to the idea that most of the Islamic scholars are non-Arabs? Ibn Khaldūn clarifies here that there is a significant difference between the two connotations of "non-Arab". In the previous section "non-Arab" meant non-Arab by descent (‘ajam al-nasab), while what he means here in this section is non-Arab by native tongue (‘ajam al-lugha).[74]

Excursus

As mentioned, the two sections we have just analysed deal with two different issues within Islamic scholarship. The first is the role of the non-Arabs as carriers of knowledge in Islam. Ibn Khaldūn provides historical as well as sociological data to prove that most scholars are non-Arabs. However, as he clarifies at the end of the discussion, the term ‘ajam here has a contextual meaning. It should not be taken to mean non-Arab by native tongue. These people are non-Arab by descent but mostly use Arabic as their first language. Only non-Arabs whose first language was not Arabic will find it difficult to attain scholarship through the medium of Arabic.

The second issue is the difficulties of the non-Arab in acquiring scholarship. The reason is obvious: all literature is in Arabic. Those who are not firmly

rooted in this language will find it difficult to master the sciences. This refers to the non-Arab whose first language is not Arabic. Since language is the only medium in the process of the transmission of ideas and knowledge, it is necessary for those who wish to study and understand knowledge and the sciences to master first of all the language in which these sciences were written.

6

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Introduction

The last part of Chapter 6 of the *Muqaddima* deals quite extensively with various aspects of language and literature, particularly Arabic. Before going any further, perhaps it is important to recall that language in Ibn Khaldūn's educational scheme, as we discussed earlier, is placed among the auxiliary sciences *vis-à-vis* the sciences that are wanted *per se*. Since the author is here referring to Arabic as a case study in the specific context of the culture and civilisation of Islam, it is proper for us to restrict our view of language accordingly, i.e. to the limited perspective of a language within the scope of culture and civilisation of Islam. And we must not ignore the fact that Arabic and Islam are in many ways almost identical. Arabic plays a very significant role in the physical and spiritual life of the Muslims. On this basis we would presume that Ibn Khaldūn must have a strong reason that leads him to take up this issue as the final part of his *Muqaddima*.

From Section 44 onwards, Ibn Khaldūn takes us exploring deep into the "vast world" of the Arabic language. He touches almost every important aspect of the language, from the simple definition to the complicated abstract concept, and from the basic spoken language to the luxury crafts of literary production of poetry and prose. More important, however, are the theoretical and social aspects of the language that we may derive from his discussion.

My study here will be generally divided into five parts, following Ibn Khaldūn's order of presentation. The first part will deal with the science of the Arabic language, which includes grammar, lexicography, syntax and styles and literature. The second part will focus on the nature and development of language, particularly Arabic. The third part will deal with the development of linguistic taste (*dhawq*). The fourth will discuss the literary composition of poetry and prose, while in the fifth, the last part, I will give my assessment and commentary of Ibn Khaldūn's view of language.

The author begins by telling us that the Arabic language consists of four pillars (*arkān*). Those pillars are lexicography (*lugha*), grammar (*naḥw*), syntax

and style (*bayān*) and literature (*adāb*).[1] As the language of Islam in which the Quran was revealed, Arabic plays a vital role and is of paramount importance in the life of the Muslim. We know that the Quran and the *sunna* are two major sources of religious laws. Both are transmitted and written in Arabic. The transmitters from among the Prophet's companions and followers (the second generation) are Arabs or Arabic-speaking non-Arabs. It seems that this reality (the importance of Arabic) is self-explanatory and justifies the claim above that those who desire to become religious scholars need to master the Arabic language.

The science of the Arabic language (*'ulūm lisān al-'Arab*)

The science of grammar (*'ilm al-naḥw*)

Of all the pillars, Ibn Khaldūn recognises that grammar is the most important part of the Arabic language,[2] or perhaps of all languages. Ibn Khaldūn opens his discussion on grammar with an introduction to the theoretical aspect of language. Language in his view is the expression of the intention of a speaker (*mutakallim*). It involves the act of the tongue, which interprets the intention to convey the meaning of speech. From this point of view, language is an established habit in the part of the body that produces it, namely the tongue (*lisān*).[3] This is the basic theory of language. Though this opening statement is very brief, it is significant, because it gives a clear point of departure from which Ibn Khaldūn sets the frame of his thought. We may presume that Ibn Khaldūn at this juncture may not be interested in engaging much in the debate about the theory of language expression. What he means to do is to show a clear frame of reference for the physical, psychological and sociological aspects of language.[4]

The next point that catches the author's attention is the specialness or rather superiority of the Arabic language over other languages. Every nation has its own peculiar language. The formation of language takes place according to the nation's own terminology. For Ibn Khaldūn, of all the languages Arabic is the best. The very reason is the unique character of Arabic itself. He claims that Arabic most clearly expresses intended meaning. He gives the example in which Arabic needs only one letter (*ḥarf*) to indicate the intended meaning in a definite manner whereas other languages need a word. So also with the vowels of inflection (*ḥarakāt*) and positions (*al-awḍā' aw al-hay'āt*).[5] These special features are peculiar to Arabic only. In this respect, Arabic is more comprehensive and shorter [in speech and words] than other languages. This argument, as Ibn Khaldūn states it, is in agreement with a prophetic tradition which says "I was given the most comprehensive words, and speech was made short for me."[6]

Ibn Khaldūn moves to another issue, the process of corruption in the Arabic language. He sees political and intercultural factors as the prime cause leading to this situation. His argument is that, in the course of time, Islam expanded beyond the geographical and cultural boundaries of the Arabs, in search of royal authority.[7] The process gave the Arabs the opportunity to come into contact and interact with other, non-Arab nations. This process gradually resulted in a change of linguistic habit. The Arabic language began to be corrupted. This phenomenon is detrimental. It made cultured people worry that linguistic habit among the Arabs would become entirely corrupted and the Quran and the tradition would no longer be understood in their original form. It is for this reason they felt that norms and rules of the Arabic language needed to be formulated. As a result, they came up with certain general and basic principles such as the subject with the *u*-ending (*al-fā'il marfū'*) and object with *a*-ending (*al-maf'ūl manṣūb*) and the subject in a nominal sentence with the *u*-ending (*al-mubtadā' marfū'*).[8] The meaning of the words changes in accordance with the vowel change. The technical term for these rules is *i'rāb*. Things that necessitate a change of meaning are called *'āmil* (agent) and so on and so forth. This has been set down in writing and has become a particular craft which is known as *naḥw* (grammar).[9]

In the last part of this passage, Ibn Khaldūn gives a brief account of the historical development of Arabic grammar. The first to write on this subject was Abū Aswad al-Du'alī (d. 69/688)[10] of Banū Kināna. Other great contributors towards the establishment of Arabic grammar were al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 175/791),[11] Sībawayh, Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987) and Abū al-Qāsim al-Zajjāj (d. 337/949). Grammatical discussion became gradually more and more divergent. Differences of opinion occurred between the grammarians, such as between the Kufans and the Basrans.[12] The subject became lengthy. The next generation of grammarians occupied themselves in formulating a brief method of studying grammar. Ibn Khaldūn mentions Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274), who wrote *Kitāb al-tashīl*, al-Zamakhsharī (d. 539/1144), who wrote *al-Mufaṣṣal*, and Ibn Ḥājib (d. 647/1249)[13] who wrote *al-Muqaddima*.[14] Finally, Ibn Khaldūn concludes that all grammatical works are numerous and indeed innumerable. They cannot all be known. The methods vary among the Kufans and the Basrans, the Baghdadis and the Spaniards. Ibn Khaldūn praises the work of Jamāl al-Dīn b. Hishām (d. 761/1360), who wrote *al-Mughnī fī-'l-i'rāb*. He describes this work as an outstanding and remarkable work that shows the author's powerful linguistic skill and ability and his acquaintance with the subject.[15]

The science of lexicography ('ilm al-lugha)

Like the science of grammar, the science of lexicography has also developed as a reaction to the corruption of the Arabic language. Ibn Khaldūn defines

this science as the one concerned with explaining the meaning of the words of language.[16] The process of corruption of the Arabic language continues as a result of intercultural contact between Arabs and non-Arabs which eventually affects the meaning of the words. This situation has resulted in many of the Arabic words being no longer used in their original and proper meaning.[17]

In response to this situation, many leading philologists have taken up the task of writing systematic works in the subject. Based on Ibn Khaldūn's account, the leading figure in this area was al-Khalīl b. Aḥmād al-Farāhīdī, who wrote *Kitāb al-ʿayn*. In this book al-Khalīl deals with all possible combinations of letters of the alphabet from the words of two, three, four and five consonants.[18] The arrangement follows the sequence of the positions in throat and mouth (*tartīb al-makhārij*), beginning with the laryngeals (*hurūf al-ḥalq*), which are followed in sequence by velars (*ḥunuk*), dentals (*aḍrās*) and labials (*shaffa*). Among the laryngeals, al-Khalīl started with the letter *ʿayn* because its sound is farthest back in the throat. The name of the book is taken from this letter. Ibn Khaldūn praises the work of al-Khalīl and credits it with being well composed and exhaustive in content.

The science of syntax and styles (*ʿilm al-bayān*)

The science of syntax and styles (*ʿilm al-bayān*) is also considered among the philological sciences. It is concerned with words and ideas that are to be conveyed and indicated.[19] Ibn Khaldūn reminds us of the uniqueness of the Arabic style of expression. The Arabic language is vast (*wāsiʿ*), and the Arabs have a particular type of expression for a particular situation in addition to the perfect use of vowel endings and clarity. He cites the example of two different expressions, which are of two different types and give two different impressions. "Zayd came to me" (*zayd jāʾanī*) does not carry the same impression as "There came to me Zayd" (*jāʾanī zayd*). Zayd in the first example has greater importance in the mind of the speaker, while in the second example the speaker is more concerned with the coming than with the person who comes.[20] The same principle applies to another example where three sentences carry different meanings although they are alike in terms of vowel ending (*ṭarīq al-iʿrāb*). These examples are (1) Zayd is standing (*zaydun qāʾimun*), (2) behold, Zayd is standing (*inna zaydan qāʾimun*) and (3) behold, Zayd is indeed standing (*inna zaydan la-qāʾimun*). All these sentences carry different meanings and of course different purposes (*dilāla*). The first sentence (without the emphatic particle) informs a person who has no previous knowledge (*yufīdu al-khālī al-dhihn*). The second sentence informs a person who hesitates (*yufīdu al-mutaraddid*). The third sentence informs a person who denies (*yufīdu al-munkir*).[21]

Certain types of expression should not be understood literally. The meaning has to be understood implicitly. In a sentence such as "Zayd is a lion" (*zaydun asadun*) does not mean that Zayd is an actual lion. The word "lion" here

represents bravery. The same principle applies to the sentence "Zayd has a lot of ash in his pot" (*zaydun kathīru ramādi al-qudūr*), which is intended to indicate the implied quality of generosity and hospitality.[22] This figure of speech is called a metaphor (*istiʿāra*).

Ibn Khaldūn explains that Arabic syntax and style consists of three sub-sciences, namely the science of rhetoric (*ʿilm al-balāgha*), the science of style (*ʿilm al-bayān*) and the science of rhetorical figures (*ʿilm al-badīʿ*).[23] The science of rhetoric deals with the investigation of forms and conditions of speech in various situations. The science of style deals with metaphor and metonymy (*al-istiʿāra wa-'l-kināya*), i.e. what a word implies or is implied by, while the science of rhetorical figures deals with the artistic embellishment of speech.[24]

The author also presents some historical facts concerning the development of the discipline. He highlights several important figures who have made significant contributions such as al-Jāḥiẓ ('Amr b. Baḥr, d. 256/869) and Qudāma (d. 347/958).[25] He also mentions the significance of the work of al-Zamakhsharī, the Quran commentary. This commentary is based on the principle of *bayān*. Unfortunately, this work by al-Zamakhsharī cannot gain the recognition and is therefore not recommended by orthodox Muslims. The reason is that this work is very much influenced by the ideas of the Muʿtazilites.[26]

Finally, Ibn Khaldūn reiterates that the fruit of this discipline is the inimitability of the Quran (*iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*). The inimitability of the Quran, as far as the Arabic language is concerned, cannot be challenged. This is the highest stage of speech. It may only be understood by those who possess the taste (*dhawq*), and therefore this is the discipline needed most by Quran commentators.

The science of literature *(ʿilm al-adab)*

Ibn Khaldūn explains that this subject is a vague one. It is vague in the sense that it has no particular subject (*hādhā al-ʿilm lā mawḍūʿ la-hu yunẓaru fī-ithbāt ʿawāriḍi-hi aw nafy-hā*).[27] So far as philologists are concerned, the fruit of this science is identical with its purpose. Its fruit is the acquisition of a good ability to handle prose and poetry according to the methods and ways of the Arabs (*asālīb al-ʿArab*). This state can be achieved by way of collecting and memorising documents of Arabic speech (*kalām al-ʿArab*) in order to acquire skill. It includes high-class poetry, good prose and the like. From these documents, a student will be able to derive the rules of Arabic.[28]

In order to understand poetry and prose, one must first understand the historical and cultural background of these literary productions. Therefore it is important for example to have some knowledge of the ancient battles (*ayyām al-ʿArab*), so as to know something about the famous pedigrees (*al-ansāb al-shahīra*). In other words, one needs to have general historical information

about important events in order to understand these literary productions.[29] Linguistic habit in this sense cannot be achieved by merely memorising, without first understanding the background of poetry and prose.

Therefore, based on the philologists' definition, as Ibn Khaldūn says, the science of literature is "…expert knowledge of the poetry and history of the Arabs, as well as the possession of some knowledge of every science".[30] What is meant by "every science" here is the linguistic sciences, as well as religious and other sciences.

Ibn Khaldūn suggests four works which he considers constitute the basic principles and pillars of this discipline, namely *Adab al-kātib* by Ibn Qutayba (d. *c.* 271/884), *Kitāb al-kāmil* by al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), *Kitāb al-bayān wa-'l-tabyīn* by al-Jāḥiẓ and *Kitāb al-nawādir* by Abū ʿAlī al-Qālī al-Baghdādī (d. 356/967). Works other than these four books, though numerous, are regarded as secondary because they are based on these four.[31]

At the beginning of Islam, singing and music also belonged to this discipline, because singing and poetry were dependent on each other. The early Hijazi Muslims in Medina cultivated them. Ibn Khaldūn mentions a book which he considers the most important work in this genre, *Kitāb al-aghānī* by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967). To him this work constitutes the archive (*dīwān*) of the Arabs. It deals with the whole of the history, poetry, genealogy, battle-days and the ruling dynasties of the Arabs.[32]

Excursus

This section gives us a wide range of the important aspects of the Arabic language. It is like a general introduction by the author to the history and development of the Arabic language as an academic subject with all its contents and varieties. Before continuing with our commentary, perhaps it is important to note here the important aspect of this passage, which is the author's view and attitude towards Arabic language. An understanding of this important aspect is particularly necessary for a better grasp of his argumentation and its implications. It is equally important for our ability finally to see the relationship as well as the importance of language within the framework of culture and civilisation, which is the main concern of the present research.

First, Ibn Khaldūn believes that Arabic is a great language and in many aspects superior to other languages.[33] It is unique in the sense that it is more comprehensive and capable of expressing ideas clearly with a minimum of words. The author being an Arab Muslim, this attitude regarding superiority of Arabic is well understandable, for this view is in line with the Islamic, or rather Quranic, view of Arabic itself. Arabic is the language of the Quran and the official language of Islam. Ibn Khaldūn justifies his attitude by reiterating that Arabic is the one "…most clearly expressing the intended meaning, since many ideas are indicated in it by something other than words".[34] However,

the objectivity of his view that Arabic is comprehensive and unique, as far as linguistic expression is concerned, may be seen in his attempt to explain aspects, contents and varieties of the Arabic language including the four important pillars of the language itself. Perhaps Ibn Khaldūn would like us to bear in mind the general notion that language is the medium for knowledge transmission *par excellence*, while at the same time knowledge is the prerequisite for the advancement of civilisation and the formation of urban culture. In this respect, Arabic as an established language may be seen as one of the prime factors of the advance of Islamic civilisation.

On the whole, this section may be seen as general introductory remarks by the author about the science of the Arabic language. It presents almost all aspects of the language, including the four major pillars: lexicography, grammar, syntax and style and literature. Of the four pillars, Ibn Khaldūn sees grammar as the most important, followed in order by lexicography, syntax and styles and literature. Mastering this language is necessary for religious scholars since all the religious sources are in this language.

Perhaps Ibn Khaldūn is not a linguist, nor is he a grammarian. But his interest in the study of human culture and civilisation leads him to recognise above all the important role of language in society. The phenomenon of language is a part of civilisation itself. It starts from the basic function as a tool of communication. When society advances and reaches the height of civilisation, language plays its role in providing the literary embellishment of poetry and prose. The artistic embellishment of language as a form of luxury exists only when civilisation reaches its height.

We find Ibn Khaldūn's summarised presentation here to be full of insights that show his extraordinary mastery of this vast and complicated subject. More important, however, is the theoretical assumption that can be derived from this passage. Perhaps the most important theoretical aspect of the passage is the establishment of the phenomenon of language as an important element in human society. Language is part of human society and human civilisation. In a simple society it functions as a basic tool for communication amongst its members. Language advances together with the advance of the society. From a mere tool for communication, language in urban society becomes a medium of knowledge transmission. At the height of civilisation, language emerges as a social luxury, providing literary embellishment of prose and poetry. Although Ibn Khaldūn takes the Arabic language as the model for his case study, its theoretical assumption can be extended beyond the limited scope of Arabic and Islamic civilisation.

The nature and development of language

This is the second part, as far as our study is concerned, of Ibn Khaldūn's treatment of language and literature. In this part, Sections 45 to 49, he speaks

about various aspects of the nature and development of the Arabic language. Before taking a closer look, perhaps it is beneficial to glance at and highlight some of the contents or major themes of these sections. Section 45 speaks of the theory and nature of language as a technical skill and the process of acquiring it. Sections 46 and 47 give us information on the situation of the Arabic language, contemporary Bedouin and urban Arabic respectively. In Section 48, Ibn Khaldūn discusses the method of studying Arabic, while in Section 49 he clarifies the difference between theory and practice in language, i.e. linguistic skill and philology.

Linguistic skill/habit

Language, according to Ibn Khaldūn, is in the category of skills similar to crafts. It is located in the tongue and serves the purpose of expressing ideas. The value of such expression depends on the perfection or efficiency of the skill. Thus, the concept of eloquence (*balāgha*) is understood as the ability to combine individual words in the process of expressing ideas.[35] A skill/habit is acquired as a result of repeated actions. It begins with action (*fiʿl*). From action it becomes an attribute to the essence. By repetition, it then becomes a condition (*ḥāl*), which is an attribute, but it is not firmly established. With more repetition it will become a habit that is a firmly rooted and established attribute.[36]

In the case of the Arabic language, Ibn Khaldūn observes that the process of acquiring the habit takes place in a quite natural way. "Natural" here means that the Arabs did not learn it in any formal way. It was acquired naturally as a result of hearing and practising the language until it finally became a habit and a firmly established attribute.[37]

In the course of his exposition, Ibn Khaldūn again discusses the phenomenon of corruption (*fasād*) in the Arabic language. He finds this symptom occurs particularly in the language of the Muḍar, which has been corrupted as a result of contact and interaction with the non-Arab nations. The new generation hear how both the Arabs and the non-Arabs express themselves. This situation has naturally made them confused. They adopt the language and way of expression from both sides, which results in a new habit which is of course inferior to the original Muḍar.[38] Of all Arabic dialects, Ibn Khaldūn still believes that the purest is the dialect of Quraysh because it is far removed from the lands of the non-Arabs.

On the whole, there are at least two major points the author is trying to convey through this passage. The first relates to the nature and process of language acquisition and the second to the influences that result in language corruption. On the nature and process of language acquisition, Ibn Khaldūn's assumption is entirely based on the case of Arabic. Arabic is acquired through a natural process of hearing and practising without needing to follow through

a formal process of learning and instruction. Nevertheless, as we can see from Ibn Khaldūn's observation, language acquisition through this natural process does not seem to be best. This is evident when he implicitly maintains that this natural process of acquisition is partly to blame for the later corruption of Arabic, as in the case of the Muḍar. He discusses this in the second part of the passage.

Contemporary Bedouin Arabic

In Section 46, Ibn Khaldūn speaks quite extensively about the situation of the contemporary Bedouin Arabic. Again, based on observation, he finds that the Arabic language at that time follows the way of Muḍar in their linguistic practices. The only aspect which is not maintained is the vowel system indicating the distinction between the subject and the object. Instead of vowels, the meaning is determined by position within the sentences (i.e. earlier and later position) and the indicators (*qarā'in*). Indeed, the words themselves indicate the ideas. However, ideas do not stand on their own. All ideas are necessarily surrounded by certain particular situations. Therefore in order to determine the meaning, one has to have knowledge of the situations that surround the ideas. Ibn Khaldūn calls this the "spread of situation" (*bisāt al-ḥāl*). It is important, before determining the meaning, to consider every aspect of the circumstantial situation, positions and vowel endings. Again this is one of the special and unique characters of Arabic as compared with other languages.[39]

The author continues to speak about the originality of the Arabic language. Despite the phenomenon of corruption, he finds that the originality of Arabic in terms of eloquence and stylistics is still maintained as part of Arab customs and methods. He disagrees with those who claim that eloquence no longer exists and that the Arabic language has been entirely corrupted. To him their opinion is based solely on one aspect, the corruption of vowel endings. He himself finds instead that most Arabic words are still used in their original meaning. The Arabs can still express ideas and they still employ old methods of prose and poetry. The only aspect which is no longer in existence is the vowel endings (*i'rab*).[40]

Ibn Khaldūn further notes that concern about maintaining the originality of the Arabic language was felt when the Muḍar language, which was regarded as the original Arabic in which the Quran was revealed, became corrupt. This came about as a result of expansion, with newly acquired provinces such as Iraq, Syria, Egypt and the Maghrib. It was found that the original Arabic has been "transformed" into another language. This situation would in one way or another affect the function and status of the Quran and the *ḥadīth* as the prime source of law and jurisprudence.[41] We understand that to derive law, it

is necessary to understand its sources in their original form. What will happen if the sources are no longer understood in their original meaning? From this point of view, maintaining the originality of the Arabic language should be seen as important not only to protect the language, but also to protect the status of religious sources. In this sense, it is understandable why Ibn Khaldūn also sees religious factors as among those that finally contribute to the development of various aspects of Arabic disciplines. Such religious needs have undoubtedly contributed to the development of the systematic sciences of the Arabic language with all its sub-divisions and branches. Scholars called this discipline grammar and Arabic philology.[42]

The relationship between the Muḍar and the Himyarite[43] language is another issue brought into the picture. It seems that this matter is discussed here as a matter of clarification in which the author tries to explain the differences between these two Semitic languages. He clarifies that language of the Muḍar and the Himyarite are not the same. Thus, the Himyarite language cannot be interpreted according to Muḍar's rules. He cites an example of the word *qayl* (leader) in Himyaritic, which some believe is derived from *qawl* (speaking).[44]

This passage ends with a lengthy technical discussion about the characteristic feature of contemporary Bedouin Arabic. Ibn Khaldūn observes that the distinguishing feature of contemporary Bedouin Arabic is the pronunciation of *qāf*. It is noticeable that there is difference in the pronunciation of *qāf* between the Bedouin and the urban Arabs. This concerns the place or part of the tongue that articulates the sound. As Ibn Khaldūn sees it, this difference occurs partly as the natural process of transformation. He is unable to suggest any particular cause of this change in pronunciation except the fact that the Bedouin have less contact with the non-Arab urban population.[45] He finds that the pronunciation of *qāf* by the contemporary Bedouin is the same as the pronunciation of the ancient speakers. In this sense it can be said that the way the Bedouin pronounce *qāf* is the original one.

To recapitulate, we find that this passage taken as a whole treats several important aspects of the Arabic language, i.e. its history, origin, development and transformation. Needless to say, all these aspects are important to gain the right picture about the Arabic language. However, since our present inquiry is focused mainly on another aspect, language as a socio-cultural phenomenon of a civilisation, we are interested in questioning neither the sensibility of Ibn Khaldūn's point of view nor the validity of his historical sources in matters of the Arabic language. What is more important for us is to draw a conclusion based on the author's observation of to what extent language as a social phenomenon plays a role in society and to what extent language determines the level and achievement of a civilisation.

Contemporary urban Arabic

This section continues the preceding discussion. The author observes the phenomenon of urban Arabic practised by the urban (sedentary) population. In a way, the language of the urban Arabs is different from that of the Muḍar and the Bedouin. According to Ibn Khaldūn it is another independent language by itself, remote from the language of the Muḍar and from the language of the Bedouin.[46]

With regard to the language practised by the urban population, Ibn Khaldūn admits that there are varieties of language in the various cities. The language of the inhabitants of the East differs from that of the inhabitants of the West. However, he finds that these people, despite corruption of their original language, can still express and explain their ideas.[47] In this sense, he is optimistic that the original purpose of the language is still functioning effectively.

The reason that leads to this situation of corruption is, as previously noted, cultural contact with non-Arabs. The situation is more noticeable in major cities such as in Ifriqiya, the Maghrib, Spain and the East. In Ifriqiya and the Maghrib, for example, cultural contact with the non-Arab Berbers occurs. Through cultural interaction, the non-Arab elements have gradually mixed with the language of the Arabs to eventually form another kind of language remote from the origin of the latter. The author considers this new form of language in some ways as "no longer Arabic" in its original sense, but a different language, remote from the language of the original Muḍar and the Bedouin.[48]

This passage, as mentioned earlier, is a continuation of the previous discussion. It is about the emergence of a new language as a result of intercultural contact with non-Arabs. Based on the author's description, we may now understand that this process of corruption is something that cannot be avoided. Perhaps this is the price of urbanisation, expansion and interaction. We can also sense the feeling of regret about this on the part of the author. However, he is still optimistic that, despite corruption, the urban population can still express their ideas rightly through the medium of the "newly" emerged language.

Method of studying classical Arabic

In the last two sections, Ibn Khaldūn has presented the scenario of the Arabic language. He notes regretfully that the original language of Muḍar has undergone a process of corruption. Its original form has faded away as a result of absorption of non-Arab elements. Although he partly puts the blame on socio-cultural and political factors, i.e. interaction, urbanisation and expansion, it seems that he implicitly admits that this process is something natural and

presumably unavoidable. Perhaps on this basis he offers the present passage as a partial solution to this situation.

Since language is in the category of habits, Ibn Khaldūn believes that it is possible to learn a language like any other habit.[49] In this case, the author refers to his previously established theory of instruction. In language education, it is necessary for those who wish to acquire expert knowledge to learn the language from its original source. In the case of Muḍar Arabic, he suggests that the best and most authentic sources are the linguistic documents revealed and written in that language, i.e. the Quran, the *ḥadīth*, speeches, and rhymed prose and poetic material of the ancients.[50] In this way one can obtain expert knowledge from authentic classical material in its original form of language expression. Obtaining this expertise, one can then try to express oneself, one's own thought, in that style. Practical use of these materials will give one the habit or skill of that language.[51]

This passage, though quite short, also has a particular theoretical importance. In it Ibn Khaldūn suggests a necessary solution to the phenomenon of language corruption. This solution is necessary not only to maintain the originality of the language but, more importantly, to understand the Holy Book and of course to derive law. In this respect, maintaining the originality of the Arabic language is also seen as part of religious duty. In the same vein, we can see there is an element of a religiously motivated solution to the problem of language corruption. The suggested solution is proper language education. This is of course within the scope of the theory of education which has previously been discussed.

Linguistic habit and Arabic philology

In Section 49, the author speaks in particular about the theory of language and language instruction. Unlike in the previous section, in which he focuses chiefly on the method and approach to language education, here he emphasises more the theoretical aspect of language education. For this purpose he devotes considerable space to clarifying and defining the distinction between linguistic philology and habit. This clarification is important particularly to allow determination of the right method to adopt in language education.

Philology, according to Ibn Khaldūn, is merely a knowledge of the rules and forms of the linguistic habit; it is not the habit itself. It is knowledge of the quality, not the quality itself. Ibn Khaldūn gives the analogy of someone who might have knowledge of tailoring but not possess the habit of it. That person might be able to explain every aspect of tailoring but he is not a tailor; if asked to do it himself, he might be unable.[52]

The same situation also applies in language. One has to be able to distinguish between linguistic habit and philology. A person who is a master of philology

might be able to explain the rules of vowel endings (*i'rāb*) and know when and how to use them, but this does not mean he has the ability to practise or to use them practically.[53] Some people might be good at theory (philology), but unable to practise (habit), while some might have a good habit but be unable to explain the rules of philology.[54]

As far as the Arabic language is concerned, Ibn Khaldūn finds very few who are masters of both theory and practice. He specifically mentions that those who are masters of both aspects are those who are familiar with the book of Sībawayh.[55] He recognises that Sībawayh's book is the best of its kind and most effective in language instruction.

In terms of an education system, Ibn Khaldūn finds the Spanish method better. His reason is that the Spanish use Arab verse examples (*shawāhid al-'Arab*) as their teaching materials. In this way the students are exposed to original material and acquire a good deal of linguistic habit. The inhabitants of the Maghrib and Ifriqiya, on the other hand, emphasise more the philological aspect of the language, so that Arabic philology has come to be an intellectual science like any other intellectual science, and thus they do not obtain the habit. Again Ibn Khaldūn maintains that the habit of the Arabic language can only be obtained through constant practice and expert knowledge of authoritative documents.[56]

In conclusion, we now understand that linguistic philology and linguistic habit are two different matters. Philology concerns theory and knowledge of rules and norms, while linguistic habit concerns its practical aspect. The latter is a firmly established attribute acquired through constant repetition. It is important to take into account this difference, especially to determine the most suitable method of language education.

Excursus

In this part, the author discusses various aspects of the nature and development of language. In general, he covers at least three major aspects: the theory and process of language acquisition, the situation that leads to corruption of the Arabic language and, last but not least, the possible methods of language education.

At the very outset, Ibn Khaldūn remarked that language is considered in the category of habit that is similar to craft. Being a habit, it is acquired as a result of repeated actions until it becomes a firmly established attribute. This habit can be acquired in two ways, through the natural process of hearing and practising and through proper formal instruction. In the case of classical Arabic, the habit is acquired through the natural process of hearing and practising. In this way the language and dialect of the Arabs have passed from generation to generation.

The problem occurs when the language of the Muḍar, the original Arabic, has been found to be corrupted. This is the result of intercultural contact with foreign nations. This process is unavoidable because of expansion and the process of urbanisation. Although Ibn Khaldūn is optimistic that the urban Arabs can still express their ideas in proper Arabic expression, he voices concern about the danger of corruption, especially in relation to understanding religious sources. It is this concern that leads to the formulation of norms and rules, so that later generations will be able to understand Arabic in its original form.

The possible solution to the problem of corruption, Ibn Khaldūn suggests, is to encourage proper learning in language. Like any other habit, language can be acquired through a proper learning process. However, this can only be done after the rules and norms have been formulated. The learning process must be based on classical authoritative materials such as the Quran, the *ḥadīth* (tradition), speeches, poetry and the like. It is equally important to take into account the difference between philology and habit, for this will determine the skills that are going to be achieved in language education.

Linguistic taste and the position of classical Arabic

This is the third part of the author's deliberations on language and literature. This part contains two sections, numbered 50 and 51. These two sections speak of various linguistic issues ranging from the concept, process and development of linguistic taste to the contemporary position of classical Arabic. For this study our discussion will be divided into two parts, following the author's order of presentation, in which important aspects of his argument will be examined closely.

Development of linguistic taste

In Section 50, Ibn Khaldūn gives special focus to the concept, process and development of linguistic taste (*dhawq*). Taste, in linguistic terms, is defined as "the tongue's possession of the habit of eloquence".[57] The concept of eloquence (*balāgha*) is the ability of the speaker to express his ideas with good combination of words and conformity of speech to the intended meaning in every respect.[58] This level is the highest and the most ideal state of eloquence, as far as linguistic habit is concerned.

Explaining the process of achieving this state of eloquence, Ibn Khaldūn again takes us back to his theory of habit. As clarified earlier, habit can be achieved through constant linguistic practice until it eventually reaches such a level that it becomes a firmly established attribute. In the case of the Arabic language, as previously noted, the habit is obtained by way of hearing and

practising. A person who has achieved this state of eloquence will be able to express his ideas and arrange his speech according to the right methods, styles and ways of the Arabs (*asālib al-'Arab*). For the person who has reached this state, combination of words becomes simple. Since linguistic taste has become his habit, this person will be able to sense spontaneously even the slightest mistake in speech without the need for formal thinking activity or mental reflection.[59]

Ibn Khaldūn then once again recalls his previous thesis that linguistic habit is not something that comes naturally to the Arabs.[60] It is the result of constant practice of speaking Arabic and repeated listening to it and of understanding the peculiar qualities of its word combinations. It is not obtained through knowledge of the scientific rules that have been developed by those who are masters of literary criticism.[61] It is important to note here that the purpose of scientific rules, according to Ibn Khaldūn, is not as an aid to acquiring habit, but merely as a tool for understanding the language.

Ibn Khaldūn then moves on to describe the characteristics of the person who has achieved the state of eloquence. The habit that he has achieved will naturally guide him to combine words correctly and arrange them in the right way when he speaks. No improper speech will come from his tongue. Surely, as a result of this, any form of deviation in speech will not be acceptable to him.[62] This eloquence, when it is firmly established in a person, is metaphorically called "taste" (*dhawq*). Ibn Khaldūn devotes some space to explaining the word *dhawq* in linguistic habit. It is in fact a technical term that has a special connotation in literary criticism. Although originally it referred to the sensation caused by food, since linguistic habit is also located in the tongue, the term is used metaphorically to describe something that is also sensually perceived by it.[63]

The rest of the section is devoted to sociological observation on the socio-historical aspects of Arabic linguistic habit. On the basis of observation, Ibn Khaldūn comes up with a general picture about the categorisation of people in matters pertaining to Arabic linguistic habit. It is a matter of fact that the non-Arabs, who include Persians, Byzantines, Turks and Berbers, were strangers to the Arabic language. However, they adopted Arabic and were forced to speak it because of social, cultural and political contacts with the Arabs. These people did not have such a taste for Arabic.[64] As mentioned above, taste is the highest state of eloquence. To achieve this state, one must undergo certain processes which require time and effort. Therefore it is not possible for people who use the language merely as their communication tool to achieve that highest state of eloquence. The same situation also pertains in urban areas where the original Arabic has been lost, as the author previously discussed. It is also the result of contacts with non-Arabs. According to this view, it seems that non-Arabs can never master Arabic. Moreover, contacts with non-Arabs have caused corruption of the original Arabic.

On the argument that refers to people such as Sībawayh, al-Fārisī (d. 377/ 987), al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) and the like, who were non-Arabs by origin and yet had an excellent habit in Arabic, Ibn Khaldūn has this to say: "…yes, these people were non-Arab by descent, but they grew up among the Arabs who possessed the habit of Arabic. Because of this, they were able to master Arabic so well that they cannot be surpassed."[65] The same argument also applies to the situation where non-Arab children grew among Arabs and obtained the habit of Arabic.

The position of classical Arabic

Section 51 is devoted mainly to portraying the position of classical Arabic. Ibn Khaldūn again reminds us of the loss of the original Arabic language among the urban population. He criticises the popular method of teaching children Arabic in his day through the learning of grammar. For him, this method will not help children to achieve the habit of Arabic. By contrast, he suggests that the habit of Arabic be obtained through direct contact with Arabic language and speech.[66] He specifically mentions the situation of Arabic in Ifriqiya and the Maghrib, in which their speech habit is far remote from the original language of the Muḍar. He finds neither famous poets nor good literary composition that could be considered as representing literary achievement in Ifriqiya, with the exception of Ibn Rashīq (d. 463/1071) and Ibn Sharaf (d. 460/1068).[67]

The author goes on to discuss the fluctuation of Arabic linguistic habit among the Spaniards (Andalusians). The Spaniards were greatly interested in poetry and prose. Among them emerged great figures such as the Cordoban Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 460/1070), Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (d. 327/940), al-Qasṭallī (Abū Darrāj, d. 420/1030) and others.[68] There also emerged among them the poets of *mulūk al-ṭawā'if* (*reyes de taifas*).[69] Language and literature flourished. This situation remained for hundreds of years until the dynasty was overthrown by the Christians. After that, civilisation decreased, and language and literature, like all other crafts, also diminished. This situation remained until the emergence of another generation of great *littérateurs* such as Ibn Shibrīn (d. 747/1346), Ibn Jābir (d. 780/1378), Ibn Jayāb (d. 749/1349) and others, when the habit came to exist and flourish again.[70]

In terms of literary achievement, the position of the people of the East at that time was not very much different from the situation in Spain. Excellent poets and writers existed in abundant numbers. Ibn Khaldūn here refers to the period during the rule of the Umayyads and the Abbasids. They reached their peak when poets and *littérateurs* were often superior to their pre-Islamic predecessors.[71]

However, when the Arabs eventually lost their royal authority or political power, the dynasty came to an end, and the original quality of their language

was also wiped out. Their speech began to be corrupted. The non-Arabs seized power and gained royal authority. People eventually became remote from the original Arabic. This situation happened under the dynasty of Daylam (late second/fifth to late eighth/eleventh century) and the Seljuqs (fifth/eleventh to sixth/twelfth century).[72]

Excursus

The primary concern of this passage is the concept of "taste" (*dhawq*) in the Arabic language. In Arabic tradition the term *dhawq* relates to several different contexts. To avoid the possibility of getting confused with this technical term, I shall discuss briefly the connotation which it commonly has. Although in the literal or perhaps general sense, "taste" in most cases refers to sensation caused by food, its technical or metaphorical meaning varies according to the situation or context in which it is used. Metaphorically, taste refers to at least three different contexts: philosophy, Sufism and aesthetics (particularly literature).[73] In the passage under consideration, the term refers particularly to a concept of literary aesthetics in which it is considered to represent the highest level of literary eloquence.

My analysis of this passage will centre upon three important points: the theory of literary taste, the concept of the native speaker and the socio-historical aspect of the Arabic language. As regards the concept of literary taste, Ibn Khaldūn seems to be of the opinion that it develops as part of the process of the development of the Arabic language itself. It follows the same process as habit and in fact is part of the habit. On the basis of this passage, the concept of literary taste and the concept of habit go together without clear distinction. Both seem to be the same concept. The only difference is perhaps that taste is the highest level of perfection of habit. Taste is a firmly rooted and established habit that enables the person who possesses it to compose his literary productions by instinct and natural aptitude, without needing deep or long mental reflection. Moreover, according to this view, the person who possesses taste has no background knowledge of grammatical rules but relies only on his taste and perception.[74] This person will have a power of aesthetic appreciation that enables him to distinguish spontaneously between proper and improper speech without needing mental reflection or speculation. This is of course the highest level of eloquence in Arabic. This person might not be able to support his literary stance by argument like the person who is master of grammatical and stylistic rules; his stance is justified only by his instinct. It is quite clear that the centre of this concept is naturalness and spontaneity. It is an instinct, an innate quality that needs no effort or formal mental reflection.[75]

The second point is the concept of the native speaker or the native language. Perhaps it would be proper to consider this concept as a sub-theory that supports

and strengthens the theory of linguistic taste. The development of this theory can be seen when the author speaks about the process of acquiring linguistic habit. Those who are strangers to a language cannot obtain that linguistic habit. Even if they were forced to speak that language as a result of cultural interaction, according to this view they would still be unable to acquire the linguistic habit, let alone linguistic taste. In modern times, we recognise this as the concept of the native speaker or native language, or perhaps the concept of the mother tongue. There is also the concept of first and second language, and/or in some cases the concept of foreign language, which refers to native and foreign speakers. To quote from Ibn Khaldūn:

> If this is clear, it will make one realise that non-Arabs such as Persians, Byzantine 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…[76]

On the basis of the above argument, it might not be possible for a person to possess perfection of habit in two or more languages at one time. However, one has to remember that the concept of native speaker here does not relate to nation or race or ethnic or blood group, or even descent, but merely to the process of acquiring habit. In other words, this concept refers to the social and cultural milieu in which a child happens to grow up. This is clear from the example given by Ibn Khaldūn in the case of Sībawayh, Zamakhsharī and the like, who were non-Arab by descent. Those who grew up among the Arabs, even though non-Arab by descent, may acquire habit.

The third point is the socio-historical aspect of the Arabic language. The development of the Arabic language was particularly coloured by its socio-historical background. As mentioned earlier, the Arab nation went through a long history of social and cultural as well as political transformations. All these changes in one way or another left a certain impact on the quality of the Arabic language. We can see this in Section 51, where Ibn Khaldūn describes the fluctuating situation of Arabic as a result of these transformations. He expresses his regret regarding the situation of Arabic among urban populations, which he describes as deficient and remote from the original Arabic. It is interesting that Ibn Khaldūn here places sole blame on cultural contacts and social interaction. Arabic was corrupted because of interaction with foreign nations. As a sociologist he sees this phenomenon as part of social process that is natural and unavoidable. This is part of civilisation itself.

From his description, we take it that mastery of language in the context of Arabic depends very much on achievement in civilisation, the existence of

great poets, writers, secretaries or *littérateurs* and a good system of education. The existence of an abundant number of great poets, men of letters and outstanding craftsmen will bring about a high standard of linguistic habit, as in the case of the Andalusians.[77] By contrast, linguistic habit will diminish with a decrease in civilisation and the absence of excellent poets and writers.

Poetry and prose

The division of speech into poetry and prose

Sections 52 and 53 are devoted to discussing the two divisions of Arabic speech, rhymed poetry and prose (*naẓm wa-nathr*). These are the basic divisions of Arabic speech.[78] That is, it is divided into metrical (*mawzūn*) and non-metrical (*ghayr mawzūn*) speech. This division is made because the former is characterised by metre (*wazn*) and rhyme (*qāfiya*) while the latter is not.[79]

Each of the two genres comprises various artistic styles, themes and ways of speech (*funūn wa-madhāhib*). Among popular themes of poetry are *madḥ* (the laudatory), *shajā‘a* (the heroic) and *rathā’* (the elegiac). Prose also has its divisions based on composition type. There is a type called rhymed prose (*musajja‘*), while another type is known as straight prose (*murassal*). Rhymed prose consists of cola ending (*qāfiya wāḥida*) on either the same rhyme throughout or on sentences rhymed in pairs. Straight prose is not divided into cola but is continuous without any division of rhyme or anything else.[80] Prose is mainly used for sermons, prayers and speeches to encourage or frighten the masses.

According to Ibn Khaldūn, the Quran is in a different category of prose. The Quran is unique in the sense that it does not belong to either of the categories of prose mentioned above. It is neither rhymed nor straight prose. It is divided into verses where only taste (*dhawq*) can tell where the speech stops. It is then repeated and resumed in the next verse. This characteristic is described in the Quran as *mathānī* (repeated verses).[81] Another characteristic of the Quran is the divider (*fawāṣil*). However, it is neither the same as rhymed prose nor rhymed like poetry. Quranic verses are not characterised by rhymes. It is for this reason, says Ibn Khaldūn, that the very first *sūra* is known as *al-sab‘ al-mathānī* (the seven repeated verses).[82]

Each of the branches of poetical speech has its own particular methods (*asālīb*) which have been established in Arabic literary tradition. A particular method is used for a particular genre. It cannot be fixed to other genres that are not peculiar to it. *Nasīb*,[83] for instance, was used in ancient Arabic poetry, while praise and prayer were used solely for sermons (*khuṭba*) and so on. However, in the course of time, these established methods and characteristics eventually underwent significant changes. In portraying this situation, Ibn Khaldūn blames recent authors and the writers or secretaries (*kuttāb*), in the

hands of whom different methods have been mixed up. Prose has become like poetry without metre. Secretaries use this method in their government correspondence. Others employ the method of prose-with-rhyme,[84] which is certainly a new method.

Ibn Khaldūn seems to be very unhappy with this kind of enterprise. He suggests that government correspondence be kept free from it. To him this method is not good for this purpose. His argument is that the method of poetry admits wittiness (*lūdhi'a*), the mixing of humour with seriousness (*khalaṭ al-jadd bi-'l-hazl*), long descriptions (*iṭnāb fī-'l-awṣāf*), frequent similes and metaphoric expressions (*kathrat al-tashbīhāt wa-'l-isti'ārāt*).[85] This method, for Ibn Khaldūn, is not suitable for the purpose of government correspondence, which requires firm, clear and straightforward speech. This method is also not very effective for the task of encouraging or frightening the masses. Another point is that a good speech is judged not only by its sound linguistic base, but also by the fact that it must properly conform to the requirements of a given situation. This is the main purpose of *balāgha*.

Section 53 is entitled "The ability to write both good poetry and good prose is only very rarely found together in one person." Unfortunately, this passage does not discuss the thesis announced in the heading at all. Instead it speaks of the theory of habit. According to this theory, habit is located in the tongue. The tongue in this respect is capable of developing only one habit to the level of perfection. Therefore it is difficult for a person if one habit has already occupied the place. If this happens, a subsequent habit will have not enough room to develop. Moreover, the previous habit, which has already occupied the tongue, prevents the new habit from being quickly accepted. In such a situation, it is quite impossible for the new habit to develop to perfection.[86]

The craft of poetry

Section 54 deals with various issues of Arabic poetry. Although Ibn Khaldūn believes that a similar craft exists in all other languages as well, he chooses to restrict his discussion to Arabic poetry alone, because "all languages have their own particular laws concerning eloquence."[87] Therefore every language has to be treated individually. This section covers at least four important aspects of Arabic poetry: its characteristics, its methods of learning, its definitions and its process of production.

Arabic poetry[88] has its own notable manners and characteristics. Ibn Khaldūn describes it as

> …speech that is divided into cola having the same metre and held together by the last letter of each colon; each of these cola is called a "verse". The last letter which all the verses of [a poem] have in

common is called the "rhyme letter". The whole complex is called a "poem" (*qaṣīda* or *kalīma*).[89]

On the basis of this description, we will now be able to identify and further analyse the important characteristic features of Arabic poetry. Among its important characteristics are colon (*qiṭ'a*), verse (*bayt*), metre (*wazn*) and rhyme letter (*qāfiya*). The function of the cola is to divide the verses. The verse must have the same metre (*mutasāwiya fī-'l-wazn*) and must be "united" by the last letter (*muttaḥida fī-'l-ḥarf al-akhīr*). These basic characteristics distinguish poetry from prose.

Another characteristic is the particular meaning of each verse. Every single verse can be considered as a statement by itself and can stand independently without direct connection to what precedes and what follows. In this sense, every single verse is a meaningful unit by itself. In composing poetry, the poets normally change over from one topic to another by preparing ideas in such a manner that they become related to the next topic while at the same time maintaining the similarity of the metre.

In ancient times, particularly before the coming of Islam, poetry was recognised as the highest form of speech among the Arabs. They made it the archive (*dīwān*) of their science and their history.[90] Poetry was not only a science by itself but also developed other, related disciplines such as the science of *qāfiya* (rhyme letter)[91] and the science of *'arūḍ* (prosody).[92]

The second aspect of poetry discussed in this section is *uslūb* (method). By this the author refers to the mental form (*ṣūra dhihniyya*) of metrical word combinations.[93] We understand that word combinations are essential in the craft of poetry; in fact, the beauty of poetry is not judged by the ideas it conveys, but rather by the beauty of its word combinations. Good expertise in word combination (*al-tarākīb al-muntaẓama*) will enable a poet to express correctly what he wants to say. Ibn Khaldūn cites several examples showing different form of addresses used by the poets to describe their subjects. One of the examples is quoted from Imrū al-Qays' *Mu'allaqa*.[94]

In fact there are many forms and ways of word combination in poetical speech. They may not be whole sentences; they may be commands or statements, nominal (*ismiyya*) or verbal (*fi'liyya*) sentences followed or not by opposition (*mutbi'a wa-ghayr mutbi'a*), separate or connected and so on.[95] This skill in combination can only be learned and acquired through constant practice in producing Arabic poetry. Limited knowledge of certain aspects of the Arabic language such as the rules of vowel endings or syntax and styles is inadequate in this respect. The poetical method that the author is trying to establish here is the attribute that is firmly rooted in the soul, as a result of the continuous practising of word combinations in Arabic poetry until the tongue gets used to them.

The third aspect of poetry discussed here is definition. The author has made an attempt to come up with a good definition of poetry, despite admitting that it is a difficult task which any other previous scholars have not attempted. Another reason that leads him to make this attempt is that he is not satisfied with the definition given by the prosodists (*'arūḍiyyūn*), who define poetry merely as metrical and rhymed speech (*al-kalām al-mawzūn al-muqaffī*).[96] For Ibn Khaldūn, this definition does not represent the real concept of poetry. Instead, he gives his own definition as follows:

> Poetry is eloquent speech built upon metaphoric usage and descriptions; divided into cola agreeing in metre and rhyme letter, each colon being independent in purpose and meaning from what comes before and after it; and using the method of the Arabs peculiar to it.[97]

He then elucidates by giving some detailed explanations of every aspect of his definition.

The fourth and the last aspect of poetry touched on in this section is the process of production. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the production of poetry is subject to a number of conditions (*shurūṭ*). He sets out at least five conditions that will help poets to compose good poetry. The first is to have expert knowledge of its genus (*jins*), i.e. the genus of Arabic poetry. Possession of expert knowledge of genus will eventually create a habit in the soul. This includes memorising selected good-quality material for this purpose. He recommends particularly *Kitāb al-aghānī*[98] by Abū al Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967) which he recognises as the best work and collection of Arabic poetic material.[99] The second condition is to practise making his own rhyme and to forget memorised material. This is important, because the external literal forms of the memorised material will prevent a poet from practising his real poetical habit. Therefore they have to be wiped out of the memory, so that the poet can work with his real poetical habit. However, this must be done after the poetic materials have conditioned the soul.

The third condition is that the poet needs solitude (*khulwa*), by being alone in a beautiful place with water and flowers. This situation will stimulate his imagination and talent to compose good poetry. The fourth condition is that the poet must be rested and energetic (*jimām wa-nashāṭ*). In relation to this it is also suggested that the best time for this sort of activity is in the morning after waking up, when the stomach is empty and the mind is energetic and in the atmosphere of the bath.[100] The fifth condition is that the poet must have the rhyme in mind (*binā' al-bayt 'alā-'l-qāfiya*).[101]

After a poem is finished, Ibn Khaldūn suggests, it must be revised very carefully and critically, using the most correct word combinations. Last but

not least, the poets must keep away from far-fetched and pretentious words (*al-hawshī min al-alfāẓ wa-'l-maq'ar*). They deprive poetry of the eloquence of speech. The poet should also keep away from ideas that have become hackneyed or meaningless because they are generally known (*al-ma'ānī al-mubtadhila bi-'l-shahra*), such as "the fire is hot", which does not give any significant meaning.[102] Finally, Ibn Khaldūn suggests those who wish to learn poetry should study *Kitāb al-'Umda* by Ibn Rashīq (d. 463/1071), which he believes is the best corpus of its kind.

Words versus ideas and the importance of memorising in poetry and prose

Sections 55 and 56 basically deal with two interrelated linguistic issues, namely the importance of words in literary composition and memorising as a method of acquiring a good-quality linguistic habit. As literary products, poetry and prose work mainly with words rather than ideas. In this sense ideas have become secondary to words, as far as literary composition is concerned.[103] This is because words and ideas are two different matters. Again, Ibn Khaldūn reminds us of his theory that language is a technical habit. The technical habit of language, as discussed earlier, is located in the tongue, while ideas are located in the mind. As the technical habit, the purpose of language is to express ideas. Everyone has ideas, or at least the capacity to grasp whatever ideas he likes. To grasp ideas does not need any particular techniques. However, when it comes to the expression or composition of speech, certain techniques are required in order to be able properly to express ideas in the mind. Ibn Khaldūn gives a good analogy to illustrate the situation. It is just like the vessel and the water. The vessel or container of water might be made of gold, silver, glass or clay, but the water is one and the same, i.e. drawn from the sea. It is obvious that judgement is made based on the vessel, not on the water. The quality of the vessel differs according to the material from which it is made and not from the water it contains. In the same vein, the quality of language composed to express the ideas differs according to the level of eloquence or command of language, and not the ideas, because the ideas are one and the same.[104]

The second issue is the importance of memorising in the process of acquiring good linguistic habit. Ibn Khaldūn establishes his thesis that those who desire to obtain good linguistic habit must memorise a lot of literary materials. Perhaps this is the only effective method to obtain eloquence and good linguistic habit. This is why one has to choose the finest materials in poetry and prose in order to be able to acquire a better habit and a higher order of eloquence.[105] Ibn Khaldūn mentions some recommended poetry and prose which he categorises as of higher quality, such as the poetry of Abū Tamām (d. 231/845), al-'Attābī (d. *c.* 220/835), Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 296/908), Ibn Hānī (Abū Nuwās, d. 362/

973),[106] etc., or prose works such as the *Rasā'il* of Ibn Muqaffa' (d. *c.* 138/786), Sahl b. Hārūn (d. 215/830), Ibn al-Zayyāt (d. *c.* 233/847), etc.

The rest of the section is devoted to an explanation of how the linguistic habit arises in connection with the memorising method. Poetical habit (*malaka al-shi'riyya*) originates with the memorising of poetry, while the skill or habit of penmanship (*malaka al-kitāba*) originates from the memorising of rhymed prose and prose correspondence.[107] The process takes place in the same way as with scientific habit from contact with the sciences and with various perceptions, research and speculation, or juridical habit, which takes place from contact with jurisprudence, comparing problems and deriving special cases from general principles, or the mystical habit, which develops from worship and *dhikr* exercise and the inactivation of the outward senses by means of solitude (*khulwa*).[108] In this respect we understand that the good or bad quality of a particular habit depends very much upon the condition under which the habit originated. Therefore, a high-class habit of eloquence results only from memorising high-class language material.

Natural and contrived speech

As the author discussed earlier, the main purpose of speech is to express ideas. This is the ultimate secret (*sirr*) and spirit (*rūḥ*) of speech. And the perfect way of conveying ideas is eloquence (*balāgha*). Section 57 deals mainly with natural (*maṭbū'*) and contrived (*maṣnū'*) speech. The author defines natural speech as the type of speech that "conveys the intended meaning and thus is perfect in its nature and genius".[109] This means that the speaker who uses natural speech wants to convey what is in his mind to the listeners in a complete and definite fashion. It is a kind of speech that contains perfect expression with word combination of genius and high-value artistic embellishment. It is a brilliance of perfect and correct speech with ornamental use of rhymed prose with successive cola (*muwāzana*) and allusion (*tawriyya*).[110] Ibn Khaldūn describes it as giving brilliance to speech and pleasure to the ear, and sweetness and beauty in addition to indicating the meaning. The ultimate example of such speech, as far as the Arabic language is concerned, is the speech of the Quran.[111]

Contrived speech does not have these characteristics because it is inferior. It is inferior to natural speech because it has little concern for what is basic to eloquence. However, it is not easy to determine what is natural and what contrived speech without a perfect linguistic habit. In fact, the difference between natural and contrived speech can only be sensed by one's taste (*dhawq*). As we learned earlier, literary taste is the attribute of those who possess the perfect or highest state of literary habit.

Appreciation of poetry

It was established earlier that poetry is the archive (*dīwān*) of the Arabs.[112] From poetry they learn their sciences, their history and their wisdom. The recitation of poetry became one of the major events held in the market place of 'Ukāẓ.[113] In Section 58, Ibn Khaldūn gives a very brief picture of the evolution of poetry and the appreciation of poetry throughout the history of the Arabs. He divides the period of the evolution of Arabic poetry into four major periods: the pre-Islamic period, the early Islam period, the period of the great dynasties and the period of non-Arab leaders (*'umarā' al-'ajam*).[114] It needs no saying that during the pre-Islamic period poetry became part of the Arabs' life and culture. The Arabs had among them great poets: Imrū al-Qays, al-Nābigha, Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā, and the others who were the authors of the seven *Mu'allaqāt*.[115]

The coming of Islam remarkably reduced the influence of poetry. The Arabs almost gave up this custom.[116] Ibn Khaldūn gives two main reasons for this. First, the coming of Islam preoccupied the Arabs and Muslims most of their time with the struggle and the affairs of Islam (*amr al-dīn*), prophecy (*nubuwwa*) and revelation (*waḥy*). Second, there was the new linguistic style, method and form of the Quran (*uslūb al-Qur'ān*), which puzzled them for some time. They were unable to produce a literary composition of equal standard.[117] However, the later part of the early Islamic period witnessed the revival of poetry appreciation among the Arabs. This is marked by the emergence of poets such as 'Umar b. Rabī'a.

In the third period, the period of the great dynasties, the Arabs came back to their old custom of poetry appreciation. They composed laudatory poems and presented them to the caliphs for rewards. These poems contain remarkable stories, history, lexicography and noble speech.[118] The Arabs encouraged children to memorise them. This situation remained during the days of the Umayyads and the early days of the Abbasids.

The fourth period was the period when the non-Arab leaders came to power. They had a deficient knowledge of Arabic. The poets composed laudatory poetry and presented it to these rulers not for the sake of literary appreciation, but to win favour. In this category of poets Ibn Khaldūn mentions for example Abū Tamām, al-Buḥturī, al-Mutanabbī, Abū Nuwās, etc. The purpose of literary composition at that time was no longer literature for its own sake, but begging and winning the favours of rulers.

Contemporary Arab poetry

Section 59 is the last and perhaps the longest section of the *Muqaddima*. It speaks basically of the situation of poetry among contemporary Arabs, Bedouin (nomadic) and urban (sedentary). It is a long section because it is occupied

mostly with a number of long poetical texts representing various themes and genres. In our analysis here, we cannot deal directly with these long poetical texts for two reasons. First, our main purpose is to gain a general picture of the situation in order then to be able to relate it to the general framework of this research. This does not require a deep detailed analysis of these poetical texts. Second, detailed analysis of these texts will prolong the present inquiry and deviate from the main theme. We will therefore omit the long poetical texts, although highlighting important aspects whenever necessary.

At the beginning of the section, the author repeats his earlier remark that poetry exists not only in Arabic but also in other languages. As has been argued, the original language of the Muḍar has been corrupted as a result of cultural contact with non-Arabs. However, the change in the original language does not necessarily affect the tradition of poetry. The status of poetry has never faded away as a result of those changes.[119] The Arabs still composed poetry and appreciated it in the same manner as their ancestors did. This included certain popular poetical themes such as *nasīb* (the erotic), *madḥ* (the laudatory), *rathā'* (the elegiac) and *hijā'* (the satirical), which were part of the ancient *qaṣīda*. Ibn Khaldūn then goes on to quote from several poetical texts by such poets as Ibn Hāshim, Abū Su'dā al-Yafranī, and others. This poetry was cultivated greatly among the contemporary Arab Bedouin.

Apart from the above situation, Ibn Khaldūn also gives us a picture of the situation in contemporary Spain. The Andalusians created another kind of poetry called *muwashshaḥ*.[120] This type of poetry is special because of its smoothness and its artistic language. The common people like them very much. Besides that, the Andalusians also invented another new form which they call *zajal*.[121] *Muwashshaḥ* and *zajal* become two important genres of poetry in Spain. The urban population of the Maghrib also cultivated the *muwashshaḥ* in several forms, such as *muzawwaj*, *kāzī*, *mal'aba* and *ghazal*.[122]

Besides this, Ibn Khaldūn also outlines the condition of popular poetry in the East. The people of Baghdad, for example, developed a poetical genre called *mawāliyā*. *Mawāliyā* has several sub-divisions such as *ḥawfī*, *mal'aba*, *kān-wa-kān* and *dhū baytayn*. Most of them were couplets of four branches that rhymed with each other. The Egyptians followed the Baghdadis in this respect.

Excursus

This part of my study covers Sections 52 to 59. Being the last part of Chapter 6, these seven sections in fact constitute the last part of the *Muqaddima*. In these sections the author has provided wide ranging coverage of matters pertaining to Arabic poetry and prose, touching on various aspects from its canon and the acquisition of skill to an exposition of poetry appreciation and

the contemporary situation. In the course of his discussion, Ibn Khaldūn inserts many quotations from long poetical texts which he brings forth as examples to back up his arguments. As I indicated earlier, this analysis will not deal with these long poetical texts, but will focus on aspects directly relevant to the present study, i.e. the social aspect of poetry as a phenomenon that reflects the achievement and status of a civilisation. For present purposes, the significance of these phenomena lies in how far they contribute towards a better understanding of human culture and civilisation.

Since this part covers seven sections, it will perhaps be best to sum up here the general contents of these sections so that we have a better picture of what they are all about. Ibn Khaldūn's discussion of poetry and prose begins with a passage explaining the two divisions of speech, poetry and prose. This is followed by a passage on the theory of poetical habit. In the next passage he discusses the craft of poetry, followed by a passage stressing the importance of word combination in literary production. This is followed by a discussion of the theory of habit and the importance of memorising, and a passage explaining the meaning of natural and contrived speech. The last two passages are the exposition of the contemporary situation regarding poetry appreciation and the evolution of poetry as well as the emergence of new poetical genres as a manifestation of social and cultural transformations.

As we established above, linguistic or literary embellishment is one of the most important indications of the achievement and status of a civilisation. In the case of Muslim civilisation, as well portrayed by the author, Arabic literature plays a pivotal role; it can be regarded as the manifestation of the intellectual, cultural and the civilisational achievement of the Muslim people. It is in this respect that we find Ibn Khaldūn's discourse of poetry and prose intimately relevant to this study. In relation to this, without doubt, the last two passages, in which he gives considerable coverage of the evolution of poetry appreciation and the contemporary situation of Arabic poetry, particularly serve this purpose. From these two passages, we understand that the achievement of literary embellishment (in this case poetry and prose) depends very closely upon the situation and status of civilisation. This is from the point of view of literary embellishment as a manifestation of human appreciation of aesthetic values, represented through the form of artistic productions and crafts. Poetry and prose emerge as a manifestation of the mental achievement of Muslim civilisation.[123] Indeed, theoretically there is no difference between poets and painters or craftsmen in terms of producing artistic crafts. Of course it may be argued that their materials differ, but their forms, their activities and their intention are certainly the same, i.e. manifestation of the embellishment of life.[124] This being the last part of the *Muqaddima*, the author's discussion here may be considered as the completion of the decoration of his civilisational structure.

7

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

Assessment of Ibn Khaldūn's theoretical foundation

As noted above, this study is particularly aimed at understanding and reconstructing Ibn Khaldūn's epistemology, his sociology of knowledge and classification of science as portrayed in Chapter 6 of the *Muqaddima*. In the preceding chapters, the whole content of the chapter has been studied – trying to understand, describe and at times critically analyse its content and structure. Our subsequent task is to assess and evaluate what has transpired from this study. We feel that we are now in the position to undertake this exercise. This assessment is important in order to be able finally to reconstruct Ibn Khaldūn's theoretical scheme.

From the very outset, in our statement of intent we made clear that the aim of this study is to find out the author's theoretical foundation of epistemology and sociology of knowledge within the framework of his theory of *'umrān*. This is based on the earlier hypothesis that Ibn Khaldūn, while preparing this work, must have been under the influence of a certain theoretical framework that made up his mind. It has been agreed by many that the *Muqaddima* in itself contains his general theory of *'umrān*.[1] For this matter our task now is to reconstruct his theory of epistemology and put it in place within the scope of *'umrān*. Since our study here is entirely based on the text, all aspects of the text including its content, structure, sequential order and organisation, as well as pattern of argument, will be taken into account.

Structurally, Chapter 6 begins with philosophical and psychological explanations of the nature of the human being. The author emphasises the importance of the faculty of *fikr* (thinking ability). Certainly the faculty of *fikr* is the exclusive characteristic that places the human being in a different class to the rest of all other animals. It is this faculty that plays the central part in the life of the human being, determining the patterns and modes of all actions. It is this faculty also that inspires the human being to form a social structure through the process of co-operation and the division of labour (*ta'āwun*). It is this faculty that leads the human being to be able to generate

and develop knowledge and the sciences. It is also this faculty that enables human beings to understand and accept revelation sent to him through the intermediary of the prophets of God. In short, it is this faculty that enables the human being to organise his life in all its aspects and facets – spiritual, intellectual, physical and social, as well as political.

The next process is the mastery of crafts (*ṣināʿa*) and habit or skill (*malaka*). This is the natural outcome of the faculty of *fikr*. This process takes place after the human being has established a social unit. It is from his experience in daily life and interaction that he learns how to improve his standard of living. It is on this understanding that Ibn Khaldūn sees the level of achievement in crafts and habit as representing the level of achievement in civilisation. He views it as another important indicator that determines the level of civilisation achieved. This process takes place simultaneously with the process of transformation from nomadic culture (*ʿumrān badawī*) to sedentary culture (*ʿumrān ḥaḍarī*).

Once sedentary, i.e. urban culture is established, it is the duty of each member of society to ensure and maintain its stability and improve achievements in knowledge, sciences and crafts. On the basis of Ibn Khaldūn's discussion some sort of symbiotic relationship is seen between the formation of sedentary culture and achievement in the sciences and crafts. Sedentary culture and political stability will ensure better achievement in the sciences and crafts.

Another point of theoretical importance here is the establishment of educational tradition (*taʿlīm*) and its continuity (*al-sanad fī-ʾl-taʿlīm*). The author devotes a special section to discussing this subject. He sees that the only way to maintain and improve the standard of an established urban culture is for the achievements of the earlier generation to be fully inherited by the next generation. For this, he sees that the only method is through the establishment of an educational tradition and continuity of the tradition. Ibn Khaldūn maintains that educational tradition and its continuity is another important aspect of his epistemological theory in particular and his theory of *ʿumrān* in general. Certainly, without a strong established educational tradition and the continuity of tradition, it would be very difficult for the next generation to maintain and reproduce the achievement of the past generation, let alone to improve it.

The next point of concern is the division of the sciences. Perhaps, for the purposes of the present study, it should be noted that this is the most essential part for it serves as a catalyst for better understanding of his epistemological scheme. He divides sciences into two major groups, the traditional and the philosophical or natural. Traditional sciences, as explained earlier, are the sciences which originate in revelation, while the philosophical or intellectual sciences are sciences achieved and developed through human thinking ability.

Both categories comprise sciences that exist in human civilisation at the time of Ibn Khaldūn. As a point to be taken into account, we must note here the theoretical discrepancy that occurs while he attempts to sketch and categorise the genera of knowledge and sciences that exist in his time. As we have argued above, there are certain genera of sciences he enumerates that are not quite compatible with the criteria he sets for either of the categories of sciences. In order to accommodate these sciences, another category has to be proposed. We mentioned earlier that Abdurrahmane Lakhsassi has suggested that this category be the spiritual sciences. Lakhsassi convinces us that, structurally, these sciences have quite a vague relationship with the two major groups established by Ibn Khaldūn. The genera of sciences that fall into this category include Sufism, magical sciences and the use of talismans. Also, we must not leave out that there are other categories identified as instrumental/auxiliary to all sciences, namely the sciences of languages and literature. As instrumental or auxiliary to all other sciences, they also play essential roles in this epistemological scheme.

The search for a general indicator that can be used to measure the achievement of a civilisation leads the author to enter into a series of discourses in connection with the concept and achievement of scholarship. As we have described in Chapter 5 above, his discussion of scholarship ranges from the basic concept of scholarship to its highest ethical aspect. His discussion includes problems, methods, obstacles, perfection and the importance of language. He even goes on to discuss the relationship between scholars and politics.

Finally he turns to a wide-ranging discussion of language and literature, encompassing discussions from the very basic knowledge of language as merely a means of communication to the highest level of linguistic taste. It also includes some lengthy discourses on the linguistic and literary embellishment of poetry and prose. From the discussion, we learn that achievements in the linguistic sciences can be used as another measure of the achievements of a civilisation. We know that language at its most basic is used as merely a means of communication. However, as civilisation grows, language is no longer used merely as a means of communication, but also for the highest level of scientific works and literary productions, as well as for the purpose of embellishment and entertainment. Language and literature emerge as the luxury crafts of society. This can be seen in the literary heritage in the form of poetry and prose. Based on this conception, it is theoretically acceptable that the achievement of a literary tradition may be taken as another indicator of the level of achievement of a civilisation.

Concluding remarks and findings

On the basis of the study we have undertaken, we can now recapitulate and suggest several conclusions.

First, it should be reiterated again that our earlier hypothesis assumes that this chapter of the *Muqaddima* is written very thoughtfully and scrupulously, based on a certain pattern and within a particular framework or theoretical foundation. We have proved this hypothesis in our assessment above. It can be seen from the structure and sequential order of the chapter, which shows quite clearly the reflection of his theory of civilisation. It begins with the psychological and philosophical description of the human being, the function of the faculty of *fikr* and the basic formation of human society. The formation of a simple society, the fulfilment of basic human needs, is in fact the beginning of civilisation. This stage is manifested in the concept of *'umrān badawī*. The movement of society into a more complex and sophisticated society is reflected by achievements in the sciences and crafts, the establishment of an educational tradition and of course the embellishment of life. This is manifested in the concept of *'umrān ḥaḍarī*. It is very clear that the organisation of Chapter 6 is a reflection of the movement of civilisation from *'umrān badawī* to *'umrān ḥaḍarī*. This is precisely sketched in Figure 7.1.

We can certainly claim that we will be able see the theoretical framework and possibly to sketch and reconstruct this theory at the end of this study. Our study also shows that the author, while presenting his discourse about the contemporary sciences, has never divorced himself from historical and social reality, i.e. the position of these sciences in human history. He remains
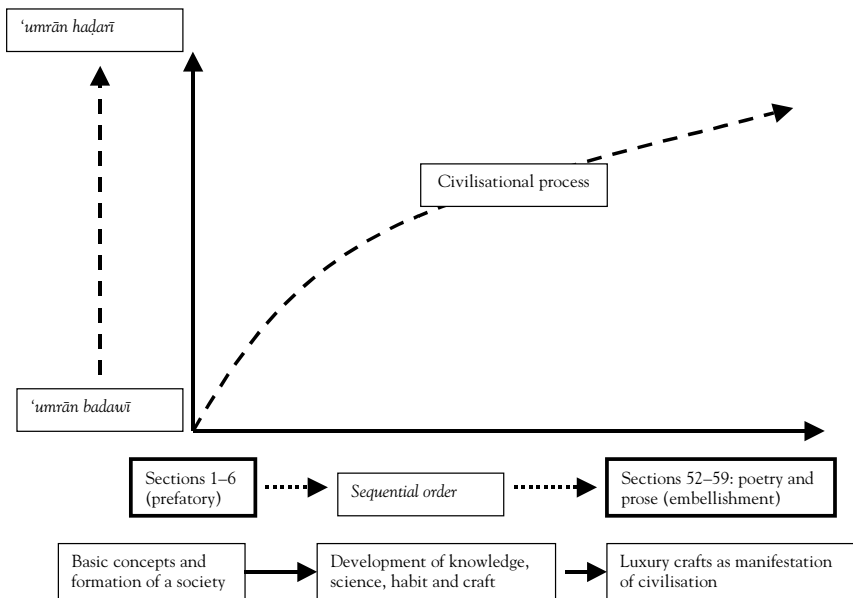
Figure 7.1 The sequential order of the text reflects Ibn Khaldūn's theory of civilisation

essentially an historian and sociologist with an observant empiricist outlook. This is very clearly seen in the pattern of presentation, in which we can always see the cast of historical characters manifest in his exposition. This is what is meant by the sociological element, which becomes the theatrical stage and the background of the theory.

Second comes the human ability to think as the centre of the theory. In any process of theory making, the most crucial part is to determine where to start, i.e. to decide the actual point of departure. To undertake this sort of enterprise is not a simple task. By taking the human mental faculty as his point of departure, the author of the *Muqaddima* is stepping off on the right foot to develop such a theory. Indeed, it is apparent that he is successful in this attempt. He has successfully developed his scheme, namely, his epistemology, sociology of human knowledge and classification of sciences, and located it within the wider scope of his theory of culture and civilisation. This is shown in Figure 7.2.

Third comes the division of the sciences into two categories. Analytically speaking, as we also indicated earlier, we find that this categorisation requires
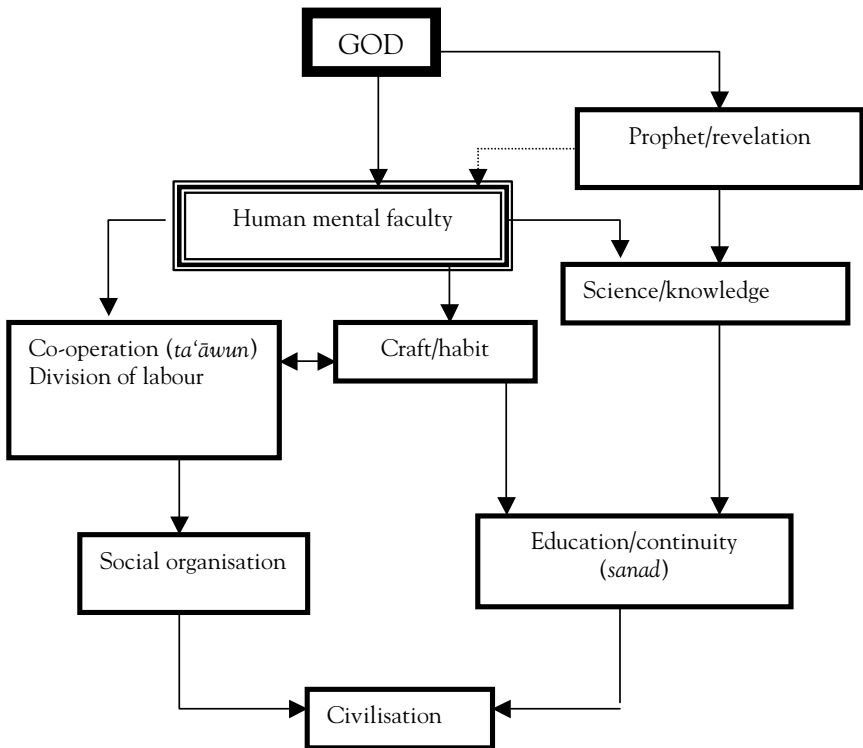
Figure 7.2 Human mental faculty (*fikr*) as the centre of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of civilisation

some modification. This is related to the problem of the spiritual sciences as raised by Lakhsassi. After considering many aspects of Ibn Khaldūn's arguments, we incline to agree with Lakhsassi's suggestion that another category needs to be added. The spiritual sciences do not fit comfortably into either of the other two categories. We admit that this is inconsistent with Ibn Khaldūn's own claim. However, we must stress that this does not in any way change the epistemological scheme that has been established. We take this point particularly into account in our attempt to sketch Ibn Khaldūn's theory as represented in Figure 7.3.

Fourth, we learn from this study that achievement in scholarship is an indicator of achievement in a civilisation. This has consistently been upheld throughout Chapter 6 and considered as one of the most accurate indicators for the purpose. In relation to his civilisation theory, Ibn Khaldūn strongly believes that the strength of a civilisation depends very much upon the establishment of a tradition of scholarship and the continuity (*sanad*) of this tradition. This includes achievement in knowledge and the sciences as well as in habits and crafts.
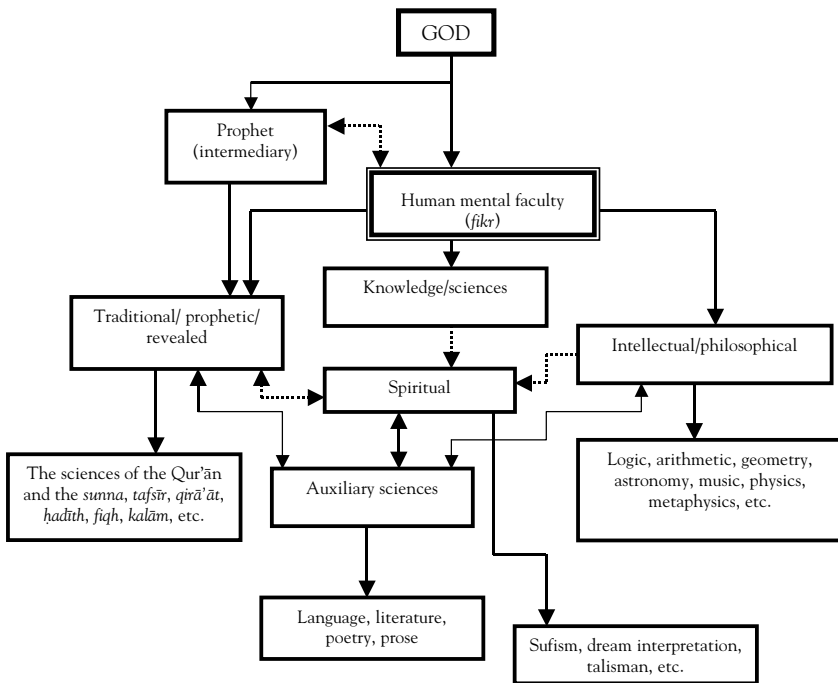
Figure 7.3 Ibn Khaldūn's theory of knowledge (epistemology) and classification of the sciences

Fifth, we also learn that Ibn Khaldūn uses the language factor as another indicator of achievement in civilisation. Achievement in literary composition is seen as another manifestation of achievement in civilisation. Development in language skill goes in parallel with the process of civilisation. As we have observed, language at the lowest level is basically employed as a means of communication, but at its highest level in speech and literary composition it is the manifestation of the embellishment of life. If in the case of knowledge and science the highest level of achievement is manifested in the number and quality of scholars and their scientific literary productions, in language and literature achievement is represented by the highest quality of literary compositions of all kinds, both poetry and prose. This is what transpires in the last part of this chapter.

NOTES

General introduction

1 Thanks to al-Azmeh who has prepared a quite comprehensive bibliographical list on studies related to Ibn Khaldūn in his *Ibn Khaldūn in Modern Scholarship*, 231–317. See also e.g. Ghazoul, "The Metaphors of Historiography", 48.
2 Though *kitāb* in conventional terms means "book", here I prefer the word "chapter". Throughout this study, Book 6 will be referred to as "Chapter 6".
3 See e.g. al-Buraey, *Administrative*, 21.
4 See Newton, *Twentieth Century*, 103.
5 It is beyond the scope of the present work to expand this discussion. For a better picture of this dispute, I suggest Palmer's *Hermeneutics*, in which he speaks particularly about the basic ideas of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer. See also Newton, *Twentieth Century*, 103–4, and Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 43–62.
6 See Newton, *Interpreting the Text*, 45.

1 Introductory materials to the study of Chapter 6 of the *Muqaddima*

1 R.1:cvi.
2 R.1:lxxxviii.
3 R.1:lxxxviii.
4 R.1:c.
5 R.1:cii–ciii.
6 R.1:ci.
7 See al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn: An Essay in Reinterpretation*, 166.
8 See for example Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, 6–8.
9 See for example Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy*, 36–7.
10 See R.3:253–4.
11 See Maḥmūd, "Ibn Khaldūn", in *BFACU*, 26, 96.
12 Syrier, "Ibn Khaldūn" in *IC*, 271.
13 See Q.III:31–3.
14 Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy*, 84–5.
15 Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy*, 85.

16 See Q.I:165ff.
17 See Q.II:372–4.
18 Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy*, 85.
19 See al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn: An Essay*, 67.
20 See al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn: An Essay,* 68.
21 R.2:411.
22 R.2:411–12.

Science and instruction is natural to human civilisation

This is because all animals share with man his animality, as far as sensual perception, motion, food, shelter, and other things are concerned. Man is distinguished from them by his ability to think. This enables him to obtain his livelihood, to co-operate to this end with his fellow men, to establish the social organisation that makes such co-operation possible, and to accept the divine revelations of the prophets, to act in accordance with them, and to prepare for his salvation in the other world. He thinks about all these things constantly, and does not stop thinking for even so long as it takes the eye to blink. In fact, the action of thinking is faster than the eye can see.

Man's ability to think produces the sciences and the afore-mentioned crafts. In connection with the ability to obtain the requirements of nature, which is engrained in man as well as, indeed, in animals, his ability to think desires to obtain perceptions that it does not yet possess. Man, therefore, has recourse to those who preceded him in a science, or had more knowledge or perception than he, or learned a particular science from earlier prophets who transmitted information about it to those whom he met. He takes over such things from them, and is eager to learn and know them.

His ability to think and to speculate, then, directs itself to one of the realities. He speculates about every one of the accidents that attach themselves to the essence of (that reality). He persists in doing so until it becomes a habit of his, always to combine all its accidents with a given reality. So, his knowledge of the accidents occurring in connection with a particular reality becomes a specialised knowledge. Therefore, they repair to the people who know about it. This is the origin of instruction. It has thus become clear that science and instruction are natural to human beings. And God knows better. R.2:411–12.

23 Cf. R.2:411.
24 See Q.II:364, R.2:411–12.
25 Q.II:364, R.2:412.
26 Q:16:78.
27 Q.II:364–5, R.2:412–13.
28 Q.II:365, R.2:412–3.
29 Q.II:365, R.2:414.
30 Q.II:366, R.2:414.
31 Q.II:366.6, R.2:414.
32 Q.II:366, R.2:414.
33 Q.II:366, R.2:414–15.
34 Q.II:367, R.2:416.
35 Qr:2:30; see Q.II:367, R.2:416.
36 Q.II:367, R.2:416.

37 Co-operation (*ta'āwun*), literally "helping each other", is in fact a social concept here which corresponds very closely to the modern social theory of division of labour. This concept will be discussed further in a later section (pp. 22ff.).
38 Q.II:368, R.2:417.
39 Q.II:368–9, R.2:417–18.
40 Q.II:369, R.2:418.
41 Q.II:369, R.2:418.
42 Q.II:369, R.2:419.
43 Q.II:370, R.3:419.
44 Q.II:370, R.2:419–20.
45 Q.II:370, R.2:420.
46 Q.II:371, R.2:420; cf. R.I:211.
47 Q.II:371, R.2:420.
48 Q.II:371, R.2:421.
49 Q.II:372, R.2:421.
50 Q.II:372, R.2:421.
51 Q.II:372, R.2:421–2.
52 Q.II:372, R.2:421–2.
53 Q.II:373, R.2:422.
54 Q.II:374, R.2:423.
55 The concept of revelation can be referred back to the earlier discussion on the perceivers of spiritual world (*al--mudrikīn li-'l-ghayb*).
56 Q.II:374, R.2:424.
57 Qr.16:78, see also, Q.II:375, R.2:425.
58 Q:96:1–5.
59 Q.II:375, R.2:425.
60 See R.1:cv.
61 See R.1:cv–cvi.
62 See R.2:411.
63 See Q.II:364–5.
64 See Taylor, "Aristotle's Epistemology", 117–18.

2 Man as thinking animal

1 See Q.II:364 and 407.
2 In general terminology, *'aql* and *fikr* carry slightly different connotations. *'Aql*, usually translated as "intellect" or "intelligent" is equivalent to the Greek *nous* (see *EI2*, 1, 341), while *fikr* is usually translated as "thought" or "reflection" (see *EI2*, 2, 891). Conceptually, however, both terms refer to the same subject, i.e. the intellectual faculty of man, except perhaps that the latter denotes the intellectual faculty in the act of thought or reflecting upon an object of intellection. (Cf., for example, Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, 50). In Islamic intellectual tradition, particularly in the science of *kalām*, *'aql* is used as the pair of *naql*. The former refers to mental exercise or speculation, the latter to revelation. Comparatively, the term *fikr* is used particularly in *sūfī* tradition as the pair of *dhikr*.
3 See Q.II:407.
4 See Q.II:407, R.2:411.

5 "Division of labour" is the term originally used by economists to denote the process by which people come to perform more and more specialised tasks in the life of their society. Under names such as "role differentiation", the process is familiar in many non-economic contexts, but more obvious in the growth of more and more complex occupational structures. Division of labour is one of several interconnected social processes (urbanisation, state formation, bureaucratisation, population growth and of course industrialisation) which led to the emergence of the large-scale industrial state societies of the modern world. *MSEP*,97; cf. *BDTCST*, 162–5. For a classic Western (European) discussion of the concept, see Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, first published in 1776, and Emile Durkheim's *Division of Labor in Society*, first published in 1893.

6 See Q.I:69–73, R.1:89–93.
7 Q.II:407.
8 See also Q.I:69, R.1:89.
9 Q.II:407–8.
10 Q.II:407.
11 Q.II:407.
12 Q.II:407.
13 Q.II:407–8.
14 Q.II:373–4, R.2:422–4.
15 See Rahman, *Prophecy*, 106–7.
16 See Rahman, *Prophecy*, 107 and R.2:424.
17 Q.II:376, R.2:426.
18 See Q.II:306–16, R.2:346–55.
19 Q.II:306, R.2:346.
20 Q.II:376, R.2:426.
21 Q.II:376, R.2:426.
22 Q.II:376–7, R.2:426–7.
23 Q.II:377, R.2:427.
24 Q.II:377, R.2:427.
25 Q.II:377, R.2:427.
26 Q.II:377, R.2:427.
27 Q.II:378, R.2:427–8.
28 Q.II:378, R.2:428.
29 Q.II:378, R.2:428.
30 Q.II:379, R.2:429.
31 Cf. Tritton, *Materials*, 69.
32 Q.II:379, R.2:429.
33 Q.II:379, R.2:429–30.
34 Q.II:380, R.2:430.
35 Q.II:380, R.2:431.
36 Q.II:381, R.2:432.
37 Q.II:381, R.2:432.
38 Q.II:381–2, R.2:432–3.
39 Q.II:382–3, R.2:433.
40 Q.II:383, R.2:434.
41 Q.II:384, R.2:434.
42 *EI2*, VIII, 910.

43 Cf. Nakosteen, *History of Islamic Origin*, 70; see also Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*, 42.
44 Q.II:384, R.2:435.

3 The division of the sciences

 1 Q.II:385, R.2:436.
 2 Q.II:385, R.2:436.
 3 Q.II:385, R.3:436.
 4 Q.II:385, R.2:436. The reading *al-waḍ' al-shar'ī* in the text seems inappropriate. Therefore, I would suggest the reading *al-wāḍi' al-shar'ī*, which carries the connotation of lawgiver. See Q.II:385.9–10.
 5 Q.II:385, R.2:436.
 6 Q.II:385, R.2:437.
 7 Q.II:385, R.2:437.
 8 Q.II:386, R.2:437.
 9 Q.II:386, R.2:438.
10 See Q.II:387, R.2:438.
11 See Q.II:387, R.2:438.
12 Q.II:385, R.2:436.
13 Lakhsassi, *Epistemological Foundation*, 29; also Lakhsassi, "Ibn Khaldun", 24.
14 Q.II:385, R.2:437.
15 Q.II:385, R.2:437.
16 Q.II:388, R.2:439–40; a fuller account may be obtained from *EI2*, V, 127–8, also Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sab'a*, 7 and Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, 49.
17 Cf. EI2, V, 499.
18 Q.II:389, R.2:441.
19 Q.II:389, R.2:441.
20 Q.II:338–349, R.2:377–91.
21 Q.II:390, R.2:442.
22 Q.II:391, R.2:443.
23 Q.II:391, R.2:443–4.
24 Sezgin, *GAS*, 1, 21; cf. Hitti, *History*, 388.
25 Q.II:392, R.2:444; cf. Young, *The Cambridge History*, 43.
26 Q.II:392, R.2:444.
27 Q.II:392, R.2:444.
28 "Early Muslims" (*salaf*) here refers to the authority of the *ṣaḥāba* (the Prophet's companions) and the *tābi'īn* (the second generation).
29 Q.II:392, R.2:445.
30 This tradition is commonly known as *isrā'īliyyāt*, in which sources of information were gathered from either converted Jews or, perhaps, Arabs who had had contacts with Jews or Christians before their conversion to Islam. *EI2*, IV, 211.
31 Q.II:394, R.2:446.
32 Q.II:394, R.2:446.
33 *Al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl wa-'uyūn al-aqāwīl fī-wujūh al-ta'wīl*, now available in three volumes.
34 Cf. Gatje, *The Quran*, 35.
35 Q.II:395, R.2:447.

36 Cf. Muḥaysin, *al-Qirā'āt*, 35; also Ibn Khalaf, *Kitāb al-'Unwān*, 16–17.
37 Cf. *EI2*, X (f), 83–5.
38 Cf. *EI2*, IV, 211–2; a further account is given by Calder, "Tafsir", 137.
39 Q.II:395, R.2:447.
40 Q.II:395, R.2:448; cf. Burton, *Sources*, esp. 39–41; also *EI2*, VII, 1009–12.
41 Q.II:396, R.2:448–9.
42 Q.II:397, R.2:449; cf. Nīsābūrī, *Ma'rifa*, 52–3.
43 Q.II:397, R.2:450.
44 Q.II:397, R.2:451.
45 Q.II:397–8, R.2:451.
46 Q.III:1, R.3:3; cf. *EI2*, II, 886; also Schacht, *Islamic Law*, 1.
47 Q.III:2, R.3:3. The term *mushābaha* (similarity) is actually not very common in *fiqh* terminology. *Qiyās* is the more commonly used term for this.
48 Q.III:2, R.3:3; cf. *EI2*, III, 1061–2, also al-Turkī, *Asbāb*, 10–12.
49 Q.III:2, R.3:3.
50 Cf. n. 17 above.
51 Q.III:2, R.3:4.
52 Q.III:2, R.3:4.
53 Cf. Schacht, *Islamic Law*, 63.
54 Q.III:6.7, R.3:8.
55 Q.III:6, R.3:9.
56 Q.III:14, R.3:20.
57 Q.III:15, R.3:20–1.
58 Q.III:16, R.3:22.
59 Q.III:16, R.3:22.
60 Q.III:16, R.3:22–3.
61 Q.III:17, R.3:23.
62 Q.III:17, R.3:23–4.
63 Cf. *EI2*, V, 238–40.
64 Q.III:18, R.3:24.
65 See Q.III:18–19, R.3:24–5.
66 Q.III:19, R.3:25–6.
67 Q.III:20–1, R.3:27–8.
68 Q.III:21, R.3:28.
69 Q.III:21, R.3:28.
70 Q.III:22–3, R.3:28–30.
71 Q.III:22, R.3:29.
72 Q.III:23–4, R.3:30–1.
73 Q.III:25, R.3:32.
74 Q.III:25–6, R.3:32–3.
75 Rosenthal's suggestion that the al-'Amīdī referred to here was Muhammad b. Muhammad who died in 615/1218 is quite inappropriate. The person who was more probably the one referred to here by Ibn Khaldūn was 'Alī b. Abī 'Alī b. Muhammad al-Taghlabī Sayf al-Dīn, who died in 631/1233. This is based on the assumption that he was the one known to be notably involved in this subject. See *EI2*, I, 434.
76 Q.III:26, R.3:33.

77 Again, Rosenthal's suggestion of 'Umar b. Muhammad, who died in 537/1142, earlier than 'Amīdī, is not logical. He is supposed to be the follower of 'Amīdī, not his predecessor. I would suggest Hafiẓ al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd, who died in 710/1310. See *EI2*, VII, 969.

78 A good general overview of this subject may be obtained from a recent article by Parves Morewedge in *OEMIW*, 4, 214–24.

79 See Q.III:27, R.3:34.

80 See *ER*, 8, 231.

81 Cf. 'Abduh, *Risāla*, 5.

82 See al-Ghazzālī, *al-Munqidh*, 35.

83 See al-Ghazzālī, *al-Munqidh*, 36.

84 Q.III:27, R.3:34.

85 See Q.III:27, R.3:34.

86 Q.III:27, R.3:34.

87 Q.III:28, R.3:35.

88 Q.III:28, R.3:35.

89 Q.III:29, R.3:36.

90 Q.III:30, R.3:38.

91 See al-Ghazzālī, *al-Munqidh*, 79.

92 Q.III:28, R.3:35.

93 Q.III:38, R.3:35.

94 Q.III:29, R.3:36.

95 Q.III:29, cf., R.3:36.

96 Cf. Shehadi, "Theism, Mysticism and Scientific History", 277.

97 See *al-Munqidh* on *ḥaqīqat al-nubuwwa*.

98 Q.III:30, R.3:37.

99 Q.III:31, R.3:38.

100 Q.III:31, R.3:39.

101 Q.III:29, R.3:36.

102 Q.III:30, R.3:38; cf. Schleifer, "Ibn Khaldūn", 94.

103 Q.III:31, R.3:39; cf. Syrier, "Ibn Khaldūn", 271.

104 Q.III:31, R.3:39.

105 Q.III:33, R.3:40; cf. also section on Sufism below, pp. 64ff.

106 Q.III:33, R.3:42.

107 See Q.III:36, R.3:44–5.

108 See Q.III:36, R.3:45.

109 Q.III:37, R.3:46–7.

110 A good overview of the history and the ideas of this theological group may be obtained from a recent article by D. Gimaret in *EI2*, VII, 783–93.

111 Q.III:39, R.3:49. Controversy over the pre-existence and the createdness of the Quran has been the focus of a number of studies, see e.g. Madelung, "The Origin", 504–25.

112 The point of rejection was that the Imāmī Shi'ī believed that the imamate was one of the articles of faith, while the *sunnī* believed the contrary. A general overview of this doctrine may be obtained from a recent article by Sachedina in *OEMIW*, 2, 183–5. A more detailed discussion has been an article by W. Madelung in *EI2*, III, 1163–9.

113 See Q.III:39, R.3:48–9.

114 *'Araḍ* (accident) has become a technical term of the *mutakallimūn*, referring to transient phenomena in connection with the atom. Al-Baqillānī's statement that "an accident cannot sustain another accident and cannot persist at two moments" (*al-'araḍ lā yaqūmu bi-'l-'araḍ wa-anna-hu la-yabqā zamanain*) should be understood in that context. Cf. Dhanani, *The Physical Theory*, 15–54.

115 Q.III:41, R.3:51.

116 This approach differs in technical terminology from the older one. It often includes refutation of the philosophers where their opinions are found to have deviated from the articles of faith. The philosophers are considered as enemies of the articles of faith because their opinions in most respects have a relationship with the opinions of the innovators. However, Ibn Khaldūn gives no clear example of this particular school. See Q.III:41, R.3:52.

117 Q.III:42, R.3:53.

118 Q.III:43, R.3:54.

119 Al-Junayd was once passing a group of theologians discussing the problem (of the freedom of God 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" (*nafy al-'aib haithu yustaḥīl al-'aib 'aibun*). Q.III:43, R.3:54.

120 Cf. Br.I:838.

121 Q.III:44, R.3:56.

122 The verse calls those persons "deviators" – that is people who turn away from 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. Q.III:45, R.3:57.

123 See for example al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 2, 2–13; see also al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabārī*, 6, 201–11. This concerns the verse that praises scholars for simply believing the ambiguous verses. It says: "Those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say …We believe in them. They are all from our Lord." The early Muslims considered this statement as the beginning of the 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…". See Q.III:45–6, R.3:57; also Wansborough, *Qur'ānic Studies*, 149.

124 Q.III:45, R.3:56.

125 Q.III:47, R.3:60.

126 Q.III:47, R.3:60.

127 Cf. e.g. Goldziher, *Introduction*, 96.

128 Q.III:54, R.3:69.

129 Q.III:54, R.3:69.

130 See Q.III:55, R.3:70; cf. *al-Munqidh*, 79.

131 Q.III:60, R.3:76.

132 Q.III:60, R.3:76.

133 E.g. al-Sarrāj. The derivation of the name *ṣūfī* has in fact long been a subject of dispute among scholars and researchers. A number of words have been suggested

as the possible origin of *sufī*, such as *ṣafāʾ* (purity), *ṣaff* (rank) and *ṣuffa* (bench). See for example *ERE*, XII, 10, for a more detailed account; see also Bisyūnī, *Nashʾat*, 9–11, cf. al-Qushayrī, *Risāla*, 8, and Ansari, *Sufism*, 31–2.

134 Q.III:60, R.3:77.
135 Q.III:60, R.3:76.
136 Cf. al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldun: An Essay*, 107.
137 Q.III:60.16, R.3:77. The concept of *idrāk* is set out by Ibn Khaldūn in his prefatory remarks to Chapter 6 of the *Muqaddima*, particularly in the first topic on man's ability to think. See Q.II:363 ff. R.2:411 ff. Cf. Casewit, "The mystical side", 173.
138 See Q.III:60–1, R.3:78.
139 Cf. Ansari, *Sufism*, 108–9.
140 Q.III:61, R.3:78.
141 See Q.III:62.6–7, R.3:79; cf. Baldwin, "*Mohasaba*", 32–6. Although the *ṣūfī* concept of *muhāsaba* may be traditionally associated with Hārith b. Asad al-Muhāsibī (d. 243/857) through his *al-Riʿāya*, the most detailed study of its concept and practice is by al-Ghazzālī in his famous *Ihyāʾ*. See Deladrière, *EI2*, VII, 465.
142 Q.III:61–2, R.3:78–9.
143 See Q.III:63, R.3:80.
144 This word has a special connotation in Sufism. Terminologically, it means, "to make appear in a complete and actual realisation the mysterious senses and the realities which are behind the veil". See *EI2*, IV, 696.
145 See Q.III:63, R.3:81.
146 Q.III:63–4, R.3:81.
147 Q.III: 64, R.3:81.
148 Q.III:65, R.3:83.
149 Q.III:66–7, R.3:83–5.
150 This additional extended passage covers from Q.III:65.19 to 68.18.
151 Saʿīd al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ahmad (d. 699/1300), the author of *Muntahā al-Mudārik* which is referred to here by Ibn Khaldūn. The full title of the work was *Muntahā al-Mudārik wa Muntahā Lubb kull Kāmil wa ʿĀrif wa Sālik*. Unfortunately this work has not yet been published; the manuscript is now available in microfilm form at Maktabat Ahmad al-Thālith Istanbul. See Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint*, 143.
152 See Q.III:69, R.3:87.
153 Q.III:69, R.3:87–8.
154 Q.III:69, R.3:88–9.
155 Q.III:70, R.3:89.
156 In the Beirut edition this reads "Ibn Dahqān".
157 Q.III:71, R.3:90.
158 Q.III:72, R.3:92, cf., R.2:188.
159 *Quṭb* is a *ṣūfī* concept (of pole or axis) referring to the chief gnostic (*raʾs al-ʿārifīn*). The *ṣūfīs* assumed that no one can reach this station in gnosis until God takes him unto Himself and then gives his station to another gnostic who will be his heir. However, this theory of successive poles is not confirmed by logical arguments or evidence from religious law. It is a sort of rhetorical figure of speech (*inna-mā huwa min anwāʿ al-khiṭāba*). Q.III:73, R.3:92–3.

160 This quotation only appears in Quatremère's edition. Based on Rosenthal's note, we have no further information about who Abū Mahdī was. Ibn Khaldūn tells us that Abū Mahdī was his *shaykh* and chief saint in Spain. See Q.III:74, R.3:94.

161 *Shaṭaḥāt* is a technical term in Sufism, meaning ecstatic or theopathic expression and commonly used for mystical sayings that are frequently outrageous in character; *EI2*, IX, 361. For a more comprehensive treatment of this matter, see Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy*, passim; cf. Schimmel, *Pain and Grace*, 106. For theopathic locution, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 41. This subject has been specially studied by Dr 'Abd al-Rahman Badawī in his *Shaṭaḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, 1, passim.

162 Q.III:80, R.3:102–3.

163 Rosenthal has questioned this statement. In his note, he argues that Greek works on dream interpretation such as Artemidorus were translated into Arabic. A fourteenth-century copy of his work, containing the first three books, is preserved in Istanbul University (Arabca Yazma 4726). Artemidorus is also quoted by al-Ḍāmirī, *Óayawān*. See R.3:103 n.554.

164 Q.III:80, R.3:103.

165 Q.III:81, R.3:103.

166 Q.1:185, R.1:207.

167 Ibn Khaldūn explains that the spirit of the heart is "the fine vapour coming from the cavity in the flesh of the heart". R.3:104.

168 Q.III:81, R.3:104.

169 Q.III:82, R.3:105.

170 Q.III:83, R.3:105.

171 See Q.III:83–4, R.3:106–7.

172 See Q.III:84–5, R.3:107–8.

173 See Q.III:85–6, R.3:108–9.

174 Q.III:85, R.3:108.

175 Abū 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Umar, lived around 800/1397. See Lakhsassi, *The Epistemological Foundation*, 190 n.

176 Q.III:86, R.3:110.

177 Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Qafsī, one of Ibn Khaldūn's *shaykh*s in Tunis, d. 736/1335. See Lakhsassi, *The Epistemological Foundation*, 190. This name is found in Quatremère's edition only.

178 R.3:110 n.572.

179 Abū Bakr Muhammad Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/728). He was the first renowned Muslim dream interpreter as well as a traditionalist and also well versed in jurisprudence. See Fahd, *EI2*, III, 947–8.

180 Al-Kirmānī lived under the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī (158–169/775–785). His work *al-Dustūr*, which is now lost, was known by Ibn al-Anbārī. See Lakhsassi, *The Epistemological Foundation*, 191 n. 1.

181 Q.III:86, R.3:110.

182 See Lakhsassi, *The Epistemological Foundation*, passim.

4 The intellectual sciences

1 Q.III:88, R.3:112.

2 Q.III:88, R.3:112.

3 Q.III:89, R.3:89, Qr.2:102.

4 Q.III:90, R.3:114.
5 Q.III:90, R.3:115.
6 Q.III:108, R.3:137.
7 See *EI2*, VI, 442.
8 See al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn: An Essay*, 109.
9 See *ER*, 9, 6.
10 See R.3:139.
11 Q.III:110, R.3:139, Br.1:910.
12 See R.3:139 n. 691a.
13 Q.III:110–12, R.3:140–1.
14 Q.III:113, R.3:142–3.
15 Q.III:114, R.3:144.
16 See Gyekye, *Arabic Logic*, 2.
17 Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt*, 1, 233–44.
18 Q.III:115, R.3:145.
19 Cf. Marmura, "Ghazali's attitude", in Hourani, *Essays*, 100ff.
20 Q.III:116, R.3:146.
21 See Mahdi, "Ibn Khaldūn", in Sharif, *History*, 2, 888ff.
22 The Greek phrase "*ta meta ta phusika*" means what comes after the physics.
23 See for example al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn: An Essay*, 111.
24 Q.III:121, R.3:152; cf. *EP*, 5, 291–2.
25 See Verbeke, "Aristotle's Metaphysics", in O'Meara, *Studies*, 107.
26 We shall see his argument of refutation when we come to study his passage on "the refutation of philosophy".
27 Q.III:122, R.3:153.
28 Q.III:122, R.3:154.
29 Q.III:123–4, R.3:155.
30 By this statement I do not mean to refer to scientific traditions that have developed within the milieu of a certain religion which resulted in inculcation of some religious values, or have been affiliated to a certain religion, such as Islamic and Christian sciences.
31 Q.III:129, R.3:161.
32 See Q.III:125, R.3:157.
33 Q.III:126, R.3:158.
34 Q.III:126, R.3:158–9.
35 See Q.III:126, R.3:158–9.
36 See Q.III:140, R.3:174.
37 See Q.III:136, R.3:170.
38 Lakhsassi, *The Epistemological Foundation*, 2.
39 Q.III:210, R.3:246–7.
40 Q.III:210, R.3:247; cf. Hodgson, *The Venture*, 1, 418.
41 Q.III:210, R.3:247.
42 Q.III:211.
43 For more explanation of the philosophers' theory of intellect, see also Davidson, *al-Fārābī,* especially 44–73.
44 Q.III:211.
45 Q.III:211–12, R.3:248.

46 For a clearer definition of the philosophers' concept of happiness, see e.g. al-Farābī, *Risāla*, 14–16; see also al-Farābī, *Kitāb ārā'*, 85–7.
47 Q.III:212, R.3:249.
48 Lakhsassi, "Ibn Khaldun" in Nasr and Leaman, *History*, 358.
49 Q.III:213; cf. Maḥmūd, *Mawqif*, 144–8.
50 Q.III:213, R.3:250.
51 R.3:252.
52 R.3:252.
53 R.3:253.
54 Q.III:216, R.3:253–4.
55 Q.III:218–19, R.3:255–6.
56 R.3, p.257.
57 Cf. e.g. Rosenthal, "Ibn Jaldun", 77, and Macdonald, *The Religious Attitude*, 131.
58 Cf. Mahmud, "Mawqif Ibn Khaldūn", 144–51.
59 Q.III:213, R.3:250.
60 Q.III:87, R.3:111.
61 R.3:111.
62 See R.3:246–7; cf. *REP*, 4, 626.
63 See R.3:249.
64 See al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn: An Essay*, 116; cf. al-Ṣaghīr, *al-Tafkīr*, 18–19.

5 Scholarship as a science and pedagogical method

1 See Tibawi, *Islamic Education*, 42.
2 On the categories of thinking see Q.II:364–5.
3 See R.2:426.
4 See Tibawi, *Islamic Education*, 195–6.
5 See R.3:281 n.
6 R.3:281.
7 See R.3:282.
8 See Q.III:245–7, R.3:284–7.
9 R.3:287.
10 For a general picture of the history of education before the time of Ibn Khaldūn, see for example Semaan, "Education in Islam", 188–98.
11 A comparative view of medieval Arabic theories of communication may be obtained from Haddad, Alfarabi's *Theory*, passim.
12 See Rosenthal, *The Technique*, 6.
13 See also Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge*, esp. 24–5.
14 See for example Sibai, *Mosque Libraries*, esp. 35ff.
15 Q.III:248, R.3:288–9.
16 Q.III:249, R.3:289.
17 See Chejne, *Muslim Spain*, 180.
18 Q.III:250, R.3:291.
19 Q.III:251–2, R.3:292–3.
20 Q.III:253–4, R.3:293–4.
21 Q.III:254–5, R.3:295–6.

22 Q.III:255, R.3:296.

23 Q.III:256–7, R.3:296–7.

24 Cf. Tritton, *Materials,* 68–9 and Fatḥiyya, "al-Ittijāhāt al-Tarbawiyya", 454–7.

25 Q.III:258, R.3:298–9.

26 Q.III:258, R.3:299.

27 Q.III:258, R.3:299.

28 Q.III:258, R.3:299.

29 Q.III:259, R.3:300.

30 See al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm,* passim, and Ibn Hazm, *Rasā'il,* 4, passim. A good survey and summary of the classification of sciences by medieval Muslim scholars may be found in Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage,* 52–63; cf. also Levy, *The Social Structure,* especially Chapter X on Islamic cosmology and other sciences.

31 *EI1*, IV, 913.

32 See al-Khwārizmī, *Mafātiḥ al-'ulūm,* passim; cf. *EI2*, IV, "al-Khwarazmi", 1068–9 and Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage,* 54.

33 Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-najāt,* 109.

34 Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-najāt,* 109.

35 Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-najāt,* 109.

36 Cf. Irving, "Language", in Kritzeck and Winder, *The World of Islam,* 185–92.

37 Q.III:260, R.3:301.

38 Q.III:264, R.3:305.

39 Q.III:265, R.3:305.

40 Q.III:265–6, R.3:306.

41 Q.III:266, R.3:307.

42 Cf. Dodge, *Muslim Education,* 2; also, Abdullah, *Educational Theory,* 42–3.

43 In a modern system of education the level and achievement of a student can simply be measured by his paper qualifications in the form of degrees and certificates. In medieval times, especially medieval Islam, the achievement of a student in education and knowledge could be recognised by a kind of authorisation to teach. The term used for this purpose was *ijāza. Ijāza* was a form of authorisation given to a person who in the opinion of his teacher had qualified and was capable of transmitting knowledge. Those who were qualified to give legal opinions were issued with *ijāza bi-'l-fatwā* (or *iftā'*), and those who have qualified both to teaching and to give legal opinions were issued with *ijāza bi-'l-tadrīs wa-'l-fatwā* (or *iftā'*). The best description so far of the process and development of this system may be obtained from Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges,* particularly 147–8.

44 Q.III:266–7, R.3:307–8.

45 Q.III:267, R.3:308.

46 Q.III:267, R.3:308.

47 Q.S.IX:122. See also al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā',* 15. Although this verse emphasises religious knowledge (*li-yatafaqqahū fī-'l-dīn*), Muslim scholars take it positively to mean every kind of knowledge. Muhammad Asad, a modern Quranic interpreter, suggests in his commentary that, although this injunction mentions specifically religious knowledge, it has a positive bearing on every kind of knowledge and this in view of the fact that the Quran does not draw any dividing line between spiritual and the worldly concerns of life but, rather, regards them as different aspects of one and the same reality. See Asad, *The Message,* 285.

48 This tradition is quoted by Shalaby in *Muslim Education*, 181.
49 See al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā'*, 15.
50 Al-Ghazzālī notes that the chain of transmitters of this tradition is weak (*ḍa'īf*). See *Iḥyā'*, 15.
51 Berkey, *Transmission*, 1.
52 See for example Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn in Egypt*, esp. 1–6.
53 See Q.III:268, R.3:308–9.
54 See Q.III:268–9, R.3:309.
55 Q.III:269, R.3:309.
56 See Issawi, *Arab Philosophy*, 128.
57 Perhaps the best conceptual discourse regarding the ideal ruler and the combination of scholar and politician is al-Fārābī's concept of philosopher-king. See al-Fārābī, *Kitāb ārā'*, passim.
58 Q.III:270, R.3:311.
59 Q.III:270, R.3:311.
60 Q.III:270, R.3:311.
61 Q.III:270, R.3:311.
62 Juynboll mentions two contradictory interpretations of *qurrā'*. The conservative meaning of the term refers to Quran reciters. A new interpretation suggested by Shaban is that the term *qurrā'* is not a derivation from *qāf-rā'-hamza*. Instead, it is derived from *qāf-rā'-ya* and means villagers, synonymous with *ahl al-qurā*. Unfortunately Juynboll's study does not make any reference to Ibn Khaldūn. On the other hand, the article in the Encyclopeadia of Islam (new edition) relates the term *qurrā'* to political organisation. We have no intention of becoming involved in this dispute. Since Ibn Khaldūn clearly explains what he means, we take it plainly to refer to those who can read (especially the Quran) and those who are not illiterate. See Juynboll, "The Qurrā'", 113–29; cf. *EI2*, V, 499–500; cf. also Shaban, *Islamic History*, 50 and Hinds, "Kufan Political Alignment", 346–67.
63 Q.III:271, R.3:312.
64 Ibn Khaldūn's statement that carriers of knowledge in Islam were mostly non-Arab was not shared by the early scholars in Islam. See Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, 153.
65 Q.III:273, R.3:314.
66 Q.III:273, R.3:314.
67 He was a Yemenite via a remote ancestor.
68 Q.III:273, R.3:314.
69 Q.III:275, R.3:316.
70 Q.III:275, R.3:316.
71 Q.III:276, R.3:317.
72 Q.III:276, R.3:318.
73 Q.III:277–8, R.3:319.
74 Q.III:278, R.3:319.

6 Language and literature

 1 Q.III:279, R.3:319.
 2 Q.III:279, R.3:320.

 3 Q.III:279, R.3:321.
 4 Cf. Rousseau and Herder, *On the Origin*, 5ff.; also, Beattie and Smith, *Theory of Language*, 1–7.
 5 Q.III:280, R.3:321.
 6 Q.III:280, R.3:321, cf. *Concordance*, 1, 365.
 7 See Q.III:280, R.3:321.
 8 Q.III:281, R.3:322.
 9 Q.III:281, R.3:322; cf. Goldziher, *On the History*, passim.
10 Goldziher, *On the History*, 3.
11 Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, also known as al-Baṣrī, was among the second generation, the teacher of Sībawayh, and wrote *Kitāb al-ʿayn* which was said to be the first Arabic dictionary of its kind and to have constituted the basis of all later development in dictionary making. See Versteegh, *Landmarks*, 7 and 23ff.; see also Bakalla, *Arabic Linguistics*, p. xxxiii.
12 Detailed treatment on the grammatical dispute between the Kufans and the Basrans may be obtained from al-Anbārī, *al-Inṣāf*, passim; see also Goldziher, *On the History*, 32–7 and Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar*, 9–16.
13 For a recent research on Ibn Ḥājib see al-Janābī, *Ibn al-Ḥājib al-Naḥwī*, passim.
14 Q.III:282, R.3:323–4.
15 Q.III:283, R.3:325.
16 Q.III:283, R.3:325.
17 Q.III:283, R.3:325; see also Owens, *The Foundation of Grammar*, 20.
18 Q.III:284, R.3:326.
19 Q.III:289, R.3:332.
20 Q.III:290, R.3:333.
21 Q.III:290, R.3:333–4.
22 Q.III:291, R.3:335.
23 This division is slightly different from for example that of al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/ 1338) whose divisions were *ʿIlm al-bayān*, *ʿIlm al-maʿānī* and *ʿIlm al-badīʿ*. See al-Qazwīnī, *al-Īḍāḥ fi-ʿulūm al-balāgha*, 12.
24 Q.III:291–2, R.3:335–6.
25 Versteegh, *Arabic Language*, 70.
26 Relevant information about Zamakhsharī's background, career and works may be obtained from a lengthy editorial note by M. Abū al-Futūḥ Sharīf in his edition of Zamakhsharī's *Nakt al-aʿrāb fī-gharīb al-iʿrāb*.
27 Q.III:294, R.3:339.
28 Q.III:295, R.3:339.
29 Q.III:295, R.3:340.
30 Q.III:295, R.3:340.
31 Q.III:296, R.3:340–1.
32 Q.III:296, R.3:341.
33 See Versteegh, *Landmarks*, 164.
34 Q.III:279, R.3:321.
35 Q.III:297, R.3:342.
36 Q.III:297, R.3:342.
37 Q.III:297, R.3:342–3.
38 Q.III:298, R.3:343; cf. Cooke, "Ibn Khaldūn and Language" , 182–3.
39 Q.III:299, R.3:344.

40 Q.III:300–1, R.3:345–6.
41 See Q.III:301, R.3:346.
42 Q.III:301, R.3:347; see also pp. 129ff. above.
43 Some valuable information on the Himyarite language may be obtained from Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, 38.
44 Q.III:302, R.3:347.
45 Q.III:303, R.3:349.
46 Q.III:306, R.3:351.
47 Q.III:306, R.3:351.
48 Q.III:307, R.3:352.
49 Q.III:308, R.3:353.
50 Q.III:308, R.3:353.
51 Q.III:308, R.3:353.
52 Q.III:309, R.3:354–5.
53 Q.III:310, R.3:355.
54 Q.III:310, R.3:355–6.
55 Q.III:310, R.3:356.
56 Q.III:312, R.3:357–8.
57 Q.III:313, R.3:358.
58 Cf. al-Rāzī, *Nihāya*, 40.
59 Q.III:313, R.3:358–9.
60 The concept of "naturalness" (*ṭab'*) in language has been dealt with previously at some length under the heading "The nature and development of language" (pp. 134ff.).
61 Q.III:313, R.3:359.
62 Q.III:314, R.3:360.
63 Q.III:315, R.3:360–1.
64 See Q.III:315, R.3:361.
65 Q.III:316, R.3:361.
66 Q.III:317–18, R.3:363.
67 See Q.III:319, R.3:364.
68 See Monroe, "Hispano-Arabic Poetry", 125–54.
69 *Mulūk al-ṭawā'if*, Hispanised as *reyes de taifas*, refers to the rulers of the states in al-Andalus between the fall of the Mansurid, who dominated the Umayyad caliph Hishām II of Cordoba in 399/1009, and the invasion of Almoravids at the end of the fifth/eleventh century. The *taifas* were known to be very active in literary production, especially poetry. In the hands of the *taifas* the new popular genres of poetry *muwashshaḥāt* and *zajal* emerged in which they broke new ground, introducing strophic structures and also non-classical Arabic linguistic forms, as well as romantic expressions, into the standard repertory of Arabic literary canons and tastes. *EI2*, VII, 552–3.
70 Q.III:320, R.3:365.
71 See Q.III:320–1, R.3:366–7.
72 Q.III:321, R.3:367; see Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*, 145 and 185.
73 See *EI2*, vol.2, "Dhawq", 221; cf. Maḥmūd, *Fi-'l-falsafa al-naqd*, 25–40.
74 See Adunis, *An Introduction*, 21.
75 See for example Adunis, *An Introduction*, 36.
76 Q.III:315, R.3:361.

77 See Q.III:319, R.3:364.

78 Ibn Rashīq in his *'Umda* divides Arabic speech (*kalām al-'arab*) into two *manẓūr* (joined) and *manthūr* (loose). See Ibn Rashīq, *'Umda*, 1, 19; see also Cantarino, *Arabic Poetics*, 141.

79 Q.III:322, R.3:368. In the same vein, Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī (d. 466/1074) a Syrian contemporary of Ibn Rashīq, defines poetry as rhymed metrical speech (*kalām mawzūn maqfī*) which indicates meaning (*yadullu 'ala-'l-ma'nā*). This means that besides rhyme and metre, the element of meaningfulness is a vital element that characterises poetry; see Zāyid, *Kitāb sirr al-faṣāḥa*, 159; see also, van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, 72.

80 Q.III:322, R.3:368.

81 See Quran 39:23.

82 See Q.III:322–3, R.3:368–9.

83 Amatory poetry of the Arabs in praise of a woman, the erotic part of the ancient Arabic *qaṣīda*. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, 1, 706 and Wehr, *A Dictionary*, 1126. A comprehensive view of the meaning and evolution of this term may be obtained from a recent article by Jacobi, *EI2*, VII, 978–983, see also Jacobi, "Time and Reality in *Nasīb* and *Ghazāl*", 1–17, and Kafrāwī, *Tārīkh*, 2, 54f. and Hamori, *On The Art*, 17ff.

84 Q.III:223–4, R.3:369–70.

85 Q.III:324, R.3:370.

86 Q.III:325–6, R.3:371–2.

87 Q.III:327, R.3:373.

88 For a full scale explanation of Arabic poetry (*shi'r*) see *EI2*, IX (f), 448–65.

89 Q.III:327, R.3:373; cf. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, 191.

90 Q.III:328, R.3:374.

91 See *EI2*, IV, 411–14.

92 See *EI2*, I, 667–77.

93 Q.III:330, R.3:376.

94 The *Mu'allaqa* of 'Imru al-Qays is one of the most famous among the seven golden odes. See e.g. Arberry, *The Seven Odes*, 31ff.

95 Q.III:332, R.3:378–9.

96 Q.III:334, R.3:381, cf. n. 2 above.

97 Q.III:335, R.3:381; see also n. 12 above; cf. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line*, 191.

98 *Kitāb al-aghānī* (Book of Songs) by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (or al-Iṣbahānī) is a huge corpus, presently available in 24 volumes (based on the 1963 edition published in Cairo). This great work is very much praised for its comprehensiveness. Apart from a collection of songs, the compiler provides rich information about the poets who were the authors of those songs, giving an account of their life and quoting many of their verses as well as writing about the composers of their melodies. Furthermore he gives many details about the ancient Arab tribes, their *ayyām*, their social life, the court life of the Umayyads, society at the time of the Abbasid caliphs, especially of Harūn al-Rashīd, and the milieu of musicians and singers. In a word, in the *Aghānī* we pass in review the whole of Arabic civilisation from the pre-Islamic era down to the end of the third/ninth century. *EI2*, 1, 118–19. Al-Iṣfahānī claimed that he spent fifty years in completing this work, which was then presented to Sayf al-Dawla b. Hamadān from whom he received 1,000 dinars as honorarium. See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī*, 1, 32.

99 Q.III:336, R.3:383.
100 Cf. Ibn Rashīq, *al-'Umda*, I, 185.
101 Q.III:336–7. R.3:383–5.
102 Q.III:339, R.3:386.
103 Q.III:344, R.3:391.
104 Q.III:345, R.3:392.
105 Q.III:346, R.3:392–3.
106 See Young *et al.*, *Religion, Learning and Science*, 239.
107 Q.III:347, R.3:394.
108 Q.III:347, R.3:394.
109 Q.III:353, R.3:401.
110 For a more detailed clarification of *tawriyya* see for example, al-Rāzī, *Rawḍa al-faṣāḥa*, 114.
111 Q.III:353, R.3:401–2.
112 See also, for example, Johnson, *The Seven Poems*, vii.
113 Q.III:357, R.3:410; see also Huart, *A History of Arabic Literature*, 27. An annual fair of twenty-one days which was held between Ṭā'if and Nakhla opened on the first day of the month of Dhu al-Qaʿada at the commencement of three sacred months. See Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 649.
114 Cf. Ibn Rashīq, *'Umda*, I, 113.
115 Cf. for example Farrūkh, *Tārīkh al-adab al-'arabī*, 74–5.
116 Q.III:358, R.3:410.
117 Cf. Montgomery, *The Vagaries of the Qaṣīda*, 219; also Kinany, *The Development of Ghazal*, 115ff. and al-Kafrāwī, *Tārīkh al-shiʿr al-'arabī*, 1, 1ff.
118 Q.III:358, R.3:411.
119 Q.III:360, R.3:412–3.
120 Q.III:390, R.3:440, see also van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, 125–6 and Monroe, "Hispano-Arabic Poetry", 131–3. For characteristic features of the *muwashshaḥ*, see Haykal, *al-Adāb al-Andalūsī*, 140ff.
121 Cf. van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, 126–7; see also 'Abbās, *Tā'rīkh al-adāb al-andalūsī*, 252ff.
122 Q.III:404, R.3:454.
123 Will Durant, one of the most prominent figures in modern civilisational studies, describes this artistic aspect as part of mental element of civilisation. See Durant, *The Story of Civilisation*, 1, 72.
124 See Arberry, "Fārābī's Canon of Poetry", 278.

7 Conclusions and findings

1 See for example Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 193ff.; also Rabīʿ, *The Political Theory*, 23–47.

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