Chapter 2
Traditional Philosophy and Politics in Islam
CHAPTER II

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2.0 THE TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHERS OF ISLAM MAY BE DIVIDED TO TWO GROUPS:

1. Early Islamic Philosophers in the East, who are super headed by Al-Kindi (185/801 – 252/866) the besides of several other are generally have been included in first Muslim generation of Philosophers such as Al-Farabi (257/870 – 339/950), Muhammad Ibn Zakariyya’ al-Razi (250/864 – 313/925 or 320/932), Al-Amiri (d 381/992), Brethren of Purity (Ikhwan al-Safa’), Ibn Sina (370/980 – 428/1037), Ibn Miskawayh (d 421/1030) and Al-Ghazzali (450/1058 -505/1111). They in fact laid the foundation of Islamic philosophy in the East on which the great edifice was built by other philosophers.

2. Islamic Philosophers in the western lands of Islam are Ibn Masarrah who born in Cordova (Cordaba) in 269/883, and Ibn Bajjah (d. 533/1139) and Ibn Tufayal (d 581/1185-6) and Ibn Rushd (b. 520/1126) and Ibn Sab'in (b.614/1217) and Ibn Khaldun who was born in Tunis in (732/1332) and died in Cairo in (808/1406).*

2.1 Alfarabi (257/870 – 339/950):

Abu Nasr Muhammad Ibn Tarkhan ibn Uzlugh Farabi, who was known among later Islamic Philosophers as the Second Teacher (al-mu‘allim al-thani) and the philosopher of Muslims (Faylasuf al-Muslimin), not only is the founder of logic in Islamic Philosophy but also is considered by many to be the founder of Islamic Philosophy itself. Little is known of his life and even his ethnic background has been disputed among traditional authorities. Ibn Nadim in his al-Fihrist, which is the first work to mention Farabi, considers him to be of Persian
origin\(^1\). In contrast, Ibn Khallikan in his *Wafayat al-A‘yan* considers him to be of Turkish descent\(^2\). In any case, he was born in Farab in the Khurasan of that day around 257/870 in a climate of Persianate culture. As an already mature scholar, he came to Baghdad, where he studied logic with the Christian scholar Yuhanna ibn Haylan and with Ibn Bishr Matta, who was a translator of Aristotle into Arabic. Some time before 330/942, Farabi left Baghdad for Syria, where he traveled to Aleppo and possibly also went to Egypt, eventually settled in Damascus, where he died in 339/950 and buried there.

He was a truly encyclopedic figure, at once master of many languages, logic, political philosophy, ethics, and metaphysics, as well as music. Some hundred works have been mentioned in divers’ sources as having been composed by him. Many of these treatises are now lost, but a number of important ones have been discovered recently so that our view of his philosophy has been modified in recent years. His work includes several commentaries upon the logical works of Aristotle, as well as his own logical writings, which together from a major part of his intellectual output. They also include a number of foundational texts on political philosophy and ethics, chief among them *Mabadi Ara-I Ahl al-Madinat al-Fadliha* (Principles of the Opinion of the People of the Virtuous city), perhaps his greatest work, and *al-Siyasat al-Madaniyyah* (Politics of the city) and *Tahsil al-Sa’adah*\(^3\).

The fact that Al-Farabi’s popular and political works have been accessible long before the present work should not be allowed to obscure the fact that it is here that he gives an account of the Theoretical foundation on the basis of which those other works should be
understood, and of the philosophic principles that are applied in the other works. Although not wholly erroneous, the generally accepted view of Al-Farabi’s thought and of the philosophic tradition he founded must be seen in the new perspective provided by the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle⁴.

(a) **Farabi’s Political Philosophy:**

We come now to Farabi’s practical philosophy. In his Ethics and politics we are brought into a somewhat closer relation to the life and belief of the Muslims. One or two general points of view may be brought forward.

Just as logic has to give an account of the principles of knowledge. So Ethics have to deal with the fundamental rules of conduct, although in the latter, somewhat more value is attached to practice and experience than in the theory of knowledge. In the treatment of this subject Farabi agrees sometimes with Plato, and sometimes with Aristotle; but occasionally, in a mystic and ascetic fashion, he goes further than either of them. Even in the Ethics little regard is give to actual moral conditions; but in his politics Farabi withdraws still farther from real life. In his oriental way of looking at things, the ideal republic of plato merges into ‘The philosopher as ruler’. Men having been brought together by a natural want, submit themselves to the will of a single Person, in whom the state, be it good or bad, is so to speak, embodied. A state therefore is bad, if the head of it is, as regards the principles of the Good, either ignorant or in error, or quite depraved⁵. On the other hand the good or excellent state has only one type, that namely, in which the philosopher is ruler. And Farabi endows
his ‘prince’ with all the virtues of humanity and philosophy: he is plato in the mental of the Prophet Muhammad.

In the description of rulers’ representative of the ideal prince—for they may be more than one existing together and prince and minister may divide governing virtue and wisdom between them, we come nearer the Muslim political theory of that day. But the expressions are wrapped in obscurity: The lineage, for example, which is proper for a prince, and his duty of taking the lead in the holy war, - are not clearly specifically signified. All indeed is left floating in philosophic mist⁶. Morality reaches perfection only in a state which at the same time forms a religious community. Not only does the condition of the state determine the temporal lot of its citizens, but also their future destiny. The souls of citizens in an “ignorant” State are devoid of reason, and return to the elements as sensible forms, in order to be united anew with other beings, - men or lower animals. In states which are “in error”, and in those which are “depraved”, the leader alone is responsible, and punishment awaits him in the world beyond; but the souls which have been led into error share the fate of the ignorant. On the other hand, if the good and ‘knowing’ souls only maintain their ground, they enter the world of pure Spirit: and the higher the stage of knowledge to which they have attained in this life, the higher will their position be after death in the order of the all, and the more intense their blessed delight⁷.

(b) **The types of regimes in Farabi’s thought:**

Farabi divides them into three broad types:
(1) The regimes whose citizens have had no occasion to acquire any knowledge at all about divine and natural beings or about perfection and happiness. These are the "ignorant" regimes at (Madina al-jahilah).

(2) The regimes whose citizens possess the knowledge of these things but do not act according to their requirements. These are the "wicked" or "immoral" regimes. Their citizens have the same views as these of the virtuous regimes, yet their desires do not serve the rational part in them but turn them away to pursue the lower ends pursued in ignorant regimes.

(3) The regimes whose citizens have acquired certain opinions about these things, but false or corrupt opinions, that is, opinions that claim to be about divine and natural beings and about true happiness, while in fact they are not. The similitudes presented to such citizens are consequently, false and corrupt, and so also are the activities prescribed for them. These are the regimes that have been led astray or the erring regimes. The citizens of such regimes do not possess true knowledge or correct similitudes and they, too, pursue the lower ends of the ignorant regimes. The regimes in error may have been founded as such. This is the case with the regimes "whose supreme rule was one who was under an illusion that he was receiving revelations without having done so, and with regard to which he had employed misrepresentation, deceptions, and delusions. But they may also have been originally virtuous regimes that had been changed. Through the introduction of false or corrupt views and practices.
All these types of regimes are opposed to the virtuous regimes because they lack its guiding principle, which is true knowledge and virtue or the formation or character leading to activities conducive to true happiness. Instead, the character of citizens is formed with a view to attaining one or more of the lower ends, these ends are given by Farabi as Six, and each of the general types mentioned above can be subdivided according to the end that dominates in it:

(1) The regime of necessity in which the aim of the citizens is confined to the bare necessities of life;

(2) The vile regime (oligarchy) in which the ultimate aim of the citizens is wealth and prosperity for their own sakes;

(3) The base regime is the purpose of whose citizens is the enjoyment of the sensory or imaginary pleasures;

(4) The regime of honor (timocracy) whose citizens aim at being honored, Praised, and glorified by others;

(5) The regime of domination (tyranny) whose citizens aim at overpowering and subjecting others;

(6) The regime of corporate association (democracy) the main purpose of whose citizens is being free to do what they wish.

The political thought of Farabi was not helpful and to the point for the religious beliefs. It was considered as a political idea and nothing else. It was neither useful to any Califs nor the base of any Khalifate.
2.1.1 **IBN SINA (370/980 – 428/1037):**

The most famous and influential of Persian philosophers and scientists, Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn 'Abdallah ibn sina (Avicenna), known by the later Islamic philosophers as al-Shaykh al-Ra‘is and Hujjat al-Haqq, and in circles involved with his philosophy as simply Shaykh, was born in 370/980 in Afshanah, a village outside Bukhara. In 387/997, The Samanid ruler of Bukhara gave him access to the royal library, which enabled him to further his mastery of the various sciences, especially philosophy and medicine. In 391/1001, at the age of twenty-one, he composed the first book of which we have any knowledge. He began a life of wandering from one Persian court to another, usually acting as court physician to the various Buyahid rulers of the central regions of Persia. He journeyed from Jurjan (Gurgan) to Rayy and then to Hamedan, where he remained several years as court Physician and Wazir. Inevitably, Avicenna became also Sams-al-dawla’s Wazir and acted in this capacity (with an occasional conflict with amir’ troops) until the latter’s death in 412/1021. The new amir, sama’ al-dawla, asked Avicenna to stay on as wazir, but “Avicenna saw fit not to remain in the same state nor to resume the same duties, and trusted that the prudent thing to do, would be to hide in anticipation of an opportunity to leave that region”. He secretly corresponded with the kakuyid ‘Ala’ al-dawla in Isfahan about this matter. The Buyid court in Hamadan, and especially Taj-al-Mulk, the Kurdish wazir, suspected Avicenna of treachery because of these moves, and they arrested and imprisoned him in a castle outside of Hamadan called Fardajan. Avicenna remained in prison for four months until ‘Ala-al-dawlah
marched toward Hamadan and ended Sama-al-dawla’s rule there. Released from Prison in the wake of these developments, Avicenna was again offered an administrative position in Hamadan, but he declined. Some time later he decided to move to Isfahan and he left Hamadan with his brother; Juzjani, and two slaves, dressed like Sufis. And finally settled in Isfahan. He accompanied his master in most of his campaigns and trips, and indeed it was during one such trip to Hamadan that he died, in 428/1037, and he was buried in Hamadan\textsuperscript{10}.

2.1.2 Political Philosophy of Avicenna:

The concept of divine providence relates Avicenna’s metaphysics to his political philosophy. This political philosophy, essentially farabian, rests on the theory of Prophet hood and revelation. The law, revealed through prophets, is not only necessary for the existence of human society, but for the very survival of man. It consists of the truth of theoretical and practical philosophy, conveyed, however, in language which the vast, non-philosopher, majority of humanity can understand. This is the language of the particular example, instead of the abstract universal concept, of the image and the symbol. Without prophets and the law they reveal the good order will not be realized in the terrestrial world of men. The existence of the law-revealing prophet is the necessary consequence of Good’s knowledge of the good order, an expression of His providence.

The appearance of prophets on the historical scene, however, is very infrequent. This has practical implications regarding the setting down of institutions and traditions to ensure the continuance of the good order once the prophet is gone. But the infrequency of the appearance of
prophets has a metaphysical side, a metaphysical explanation involving Avicenna’s doctrine of the human soul. This soul, individual and immaterial emanates from the celestial intelligences. It is created with the body, but not imprinted in it. Its association with the body is conditioned by the material compositions that receive it. These compositions vary and their variance determines the quality of the souls that are created with them. The bodily composition that induces. The reception of a prophetic soul, which is the highest quality of human souls, occurs very infrequently, Avicenna tells us. This soul is endowed with exceptional cognitive powers. Some prophetic souls receive symbolic knowledge directly from the celestial souls. Other (of a still higher rank) receives from the Active Intellect all or most of the intelligible instantaneously. These intelligible are then conveyed in the language of imagery, example, and symbol understood by all.

In the hierarchy of existents, the prophet stands highest in the world of generation and corruption. In Avicenna’s cosmology he is, in effect, link between the celestial and terrestrial worlds. It is perhaps no accident that Avicenna concludes the Metaphysics, which is the last part of the encyclopedic Sefa (Shefa)- with the following words: “If one combines with justice speculative wisdom, he is the happy man. Whoever, in addition to this wins the prophetic qualities becomes almost a human god”.  

2.1.3 Al-Ghazzali (450/1058 – 505/1111):

Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Ghazzali was born at Tus, a city in Khurasan in Persia.
If we wish to place al-Ghazzali within a history of Islamic Philosophy we must make some preliminary remarks. The most obvious starting point is that al-Ghazzali did not consider himself a philosopher, nor liked to be considered as such—yet it is interesting that the Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages, reading his book *Magasid al-Falasifah* ("The Aims of Philosophers"), a reasoned and objective exposition of the main philosophical topics of his time looked on him as a Faylasuf like Ibn Sina or Ibn Rushd. It not only means that al-Ghazzali studied and assimilated philosophy deeply, being aware of its theoretical glamour and its structural strength, but also it leads us to believe that philosophy must have had at least an indirect influence on even on his mystical thought. Although, al-Ghazzali, who was essentially a theologian, a mystic and a jurist, sharply criticized philosophy, trying to demonstrate its contradictions, it would be misleading not to recognize that his mysticism and theology are not simply practical and religious doctrines but have a noticeable theoretical depth.

2.1.4 Al-Ghazzali’s Political Attitude:

In 478/1085 al-Ghazzali joined the court of Nizam al-Mulk, all powerful vazier of the Seljuq Sultan Malikshah, and became a close friend of the vazier. After a few years, al-Ghazzali was an intellectual of the court, if not a courtier. Occupying this position, he learnt about the corruption and immorality of power, the compromises of orthodox Fuqha’ and ‘ulama’ with depraved kings and amirs, and his political ideas matured.

Al-Ghazzali professed a sincere loyalty to the Caliphate, recognizing the legitimacy of ‘Abbasid rule. Anyway, he argued that
caliphs and sultans had to co-operate to bring peace and safety to the Muslim empire. The caliphs, who were given complete religious authority, had to receive the oath of allegiance from the Sultans, on whom Supreme political authority rested. The Sultan had not only the duty to defend the Caliphate but also to repress any possible revolutionary tendency. Above all, al Ghazzali’s political attitude was inspired by a sort of quietism, because he stigmatized any revolt, even against an oppressive and evil monarch. This attitude is induced by a particular meaning of the relation between the outward and inner world. In fact political quietism is functional to the renaissance of religious sciences. Nobody and surely not a scholar or a mystic can look after his or her conscience if the outside world is troubled by wars and injustice. The reform of the heart needs social peace and harmony, even though this silence has to be paid for with an autocratic power. The wise person may, however, close the windows of the world to open the door of soul

Obviously, it can be argued that this quietism was justified by fear and dislike of ‘Isma‘ili Shi‘ism which, at the end of the fifth/eleventh century, seemed still very strong in Fatimid Cairo and indeed was vigorously spreading throughout the Middle East after Hassan Sabbah founded at Alamut a Batini state of warrior monks improperly known as “Assassins”. The great Nizam al-Mulk was finally killed by an assassin in 485/1092. It is true that al-Ghazzali viewed Isma‘ilism as a real danger for orthodox Islam, both politically and dogmatically. So he devoted many works to the confections of Isma‘ilism and dedicated to the new Caliph al-Mustazhir.
2.2 **Islamic Philosophers in the Western Lands of Islam:**

**Ibn Bajjah (500/1099 – 533/1139):**

Abu-Bakr Muhammad ibn yahya Ibn al-Sayigh, an Islamic Philosopher, known to the medieval scholastics as Avempas. During his brief life he endured the tribulations occasioned by the Christian "reconquest" of Andalusia. It is known that he wrote several commentaries on Aristotle's treatises and that he was very learned in Medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. Ibn Bajjah opposed his own hypotheses to Ptolemy's system.

Ibn Bajjah's philosophical works have remained incomplete, notably the treatise that gained him his reputation, *Tadbir al-mutawahhid* ("The rule of the solitary"). For a considerable length of time this treatise was known only through a detailed analysis of it in Hebrew by Moses of Narbonne in this commentary on the *Hayy ibn yaqzan* of Ibn Tufayl, the pupil of Ibn Bajjah.  

Ibn Bajjah exercised upon Islamic philosophy in Spain a completely different orientation than did Ghazzali.

2.2.1 **The Governance of the Solitary of Ibn Bajjah:**

Ibn Bajjah was a close reader of Plato's Republic, of Aristotle's Nicoachaean Ethics and of al-Farabi's Syntheses of the metaphysics of Neo-Platonism with an Islamicized version of Platonic Politics and Aristotelian ethics. He knows that the human being is a social, indeed a civil being by nature and that happiness is the life in accordance with the virtues. He also knows that the virtues are socially and civilly instilled,
and that the mediation of imagination is crucial in the implementation of social policies by which moral virtues are inculcated and intellectual virtues rotered. Yet, like Plato and Aristotle, Ibn Bajjah is rather alienated from the society in which he lives. He is hardly prepared to be its apologist. Like al-Farabi, Ibn Bajjah knows that a state might not always be fortunate enough to find and adequately empower its true philosophical ruler. There is an irony here, of course, like that of the stoic Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who also felt powerless. For Ibn Bajjah was a vazier, as Aristotle was the tutor of Alexander and closest friend of Antipater, Alexander’s regent; and Plato was born into the highest ruling circles of Athens. Yet it is characteristic of Politics, in Machiavelli’s and not in Plato’s ideal Sense, that even those who are placed structurally in the seats of authority may lack authority to alter the structures in which they sit. Clearly Ibn Bajjah was in no position to implement the rule of philosophy, which he, like Plato, saw as the ideal. And while al-Farabi could rationalize the myths and rituals, laws and institutions of the prophet and his followers as symbols mediating the way to realities best known by the philosophers, it would take a special gift of insensitivity for a philosopher at the seat of power to identify a regime like that of the Almoravids, or their Almohad successors, among whom Ibn Tufayl served as a faithful expression of the platonic ideal rather than an unhappy recurrence of all that was ugliest in, say, Plato’s Syracusan disaster. Ibn Bajja Pours his doubts into a reflective meditation, the regime of the solitary.

We can say the political philosophy of Ibn Bajjah in brief, as following:
(i) He accepted al-Farabi’s division of the state into perfect and imperfect.

(ii) He agreed with al-Farabi that different individuals of a nation possessed different dispositions. Some of them will rule and some others will be ruled.

(iii) The penetrative philosopher should keep aloof from the people in certain circumstances even though avoidance of People is undesirable.

(iv) The penetrative philosopher should migrate to those countries where he finds knowledge.

(v) There are two alternative functions of the state:

(a) It should estimate the deeds of the subjects in order to guide them to reach their intended goals and not any other ends. It is for a sovereign ruler in the ideal state.

(b) It should devise means for the achievement of particular ends just as a rider as a preliminary exercise acquires control over the bridle in order to become expert in riding. It is for the administrator of the state which is not ideal.

2.2.2 Ibn Tufayl (d.580/1185):

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, is another Islamic Philosopher, known to medieval scholastic as Abubacer. Born in the first decade of the sixth/twelfth century at Wadi Ash (Cadiz), north-east of Granada. He moved in court circles and became secretary to the governor of Granada and then to the governor of Ceuta and Tangier, a
son of ‘Abd al-Mu’min, the military lieutenant and successor of the charismatic Ibn Tumart, who founded the Almohad dynasty in Spain and north Africa. Ibn Tufayl served as Court physician to the Almohad Caliph Abu Ya’qub Yusuf (ruled 558/1163 – 580/1184) and possibly as a qadi in his regime. He is even named in one source, improbably, as a vazier. The ruler genuinely enjoyed his company, spending hours, sometimes days, in conversation with him.

Ibn Tufayl acted as a kind of culture minister, seeking out and bringing to court many men of erudition and science, including the young Ibn Rushd (Averroes).

2.2.3 Political Philosophy of Ibn Tufayl:

Of the four Muslim Philosophers, along with Aristotle, al-Farabi receives the most deprecating polemic and harshest criticism from Ibn Tufayl. Ibn Tufal’s criticism of al-Farabi’s notion of happiness does not seem to be warranted. Al-Farabi did not contend that human happiness is only attainable in this world. From the virtuous city and other works one can clearly infer that the second Master irrevocably considered genuine and lasting happiness as of the afterlife. Hence, happiness in this life is partial and temporary, and leads necessarily to happiness in the next. Realization of complete and permanent happiness is only possible in the life after this. Likewise, those who are not ignorant but lead a corrupt life are unhappy not only in this world, but also in the other. Ibn Tufayl is equally unjustified in attacking al-Farabi’s view of prophecy, we are not even sure whether Ibn Tufal himself would have wanted to construe prophecy as a miracle incomprehensible by human categories. For one thing, with his Aristotelian background al-Farabi
would not and could not accept miracles; always tried to seek causal factors behind appearances

The key to the task of reconciliation was philosophical fable Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. The story of a self-taught philosopher of perfect intelligence, growing up on an equatorial island without parents, language or culture, who discovers for himself all phases of knowledge, from the technical and physical to the spiritual truths underlying scriptural religions.

Hayy ibn Yaqzan, like any fiction, is a thought experiment. It builds on the famous floating man thought experiment of Avicenna.

The social critique, which complements Ibn Tufayl’s irenic message, is not left implicit. It is spelled out in passages describing the encounters between the perfect Hayy Ibn Yaqzan and the members of a society governed under a prophetically revealed religion that is (in Ibn Tufayl’s Phrase) a “Thinly veiled” generic counterpart of Islam.

2.2.4 Ibn Tufayl and Ibn Bajjah:

No doubt, in several of his ideas Ibn Tufal shows clear debt to Ibn Bajjah. But it would be wrong to suppose that Hayy ibn Yaqzan is nothing but an enlarged edition of Ibn Bajjah’s work. They have points of agreement as well as points of difference, as we shall presently see:

Hayy ibn Yaqzan is in the form of a story, while Tadbir al motawahid (Hermit’s Guide) is an ordinary philosophical treatise.

The object of Ibn Bajjah is collective rather than individualistic. He wants to realize an ideal state or society within the society, and tells
us how the solitary individual or individuals, as citizens of that Ideal state should behave. Ibn Tufayl’s point of view is individualistic. He is concerned with the mystic Ideal- The programme for the Salvation of each individual.

But in spite of these fundamental differences Ibn Tufayl shows agreement with Ibn Sajjah in several points:

Both believe that the highest truths should be concealed from the masses. According to Ibn Bajjah, gnosis should be pursued as if it is something to be ashamed of.

Both of them recommend a kind of seclusion from the society and favour association with kindred soul’s only.

2.2.5 Ibn Khalidun (732/1332 – 808/1406):

Abu Zayd ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun al-Hadrami was born in Tunis in 732/1332 and died in Cairo in 808/1406 after having, five years earlier, met Timur (Tamerlane) outside the walls of Damascus. A contemporary of the Merinids in Morocco, the Banu ‘Abd al-Wadid in the central Maghreb (Algeria), the Hafsids in Ifriqiya (Tunisia), The Nasirids in Grandda and the Mamluks in Egypt, he was acquainted with all these regimes and lived in their respective courts. His different jobs within the sphere of these political powers gave him a valuable asset: They allowed him to experience the political game in the Muslim West and have direct contact with the tribal world in north-western Africa. From these two sets of experiences he drew theoretical consequences of tremendous importance broadly outline in his 

Mugaddimah ("Prolegomena"). Two predominant events affected his life during the
first period: The Black Death (748-9/1348-9) which had taken most of his teachers and particularly his own parents; and the assassination of his friend and competitor Lisan al-Din Ibn al-Khatib in 774/134727.

He began his political and public activities in Tunis before he even reached the age of twenty with his appointment to the office of seal-bearer and secretary by the Hafsid Sultan, Abu Ishaq of Tunis28.

(a) Political philosophy of Ibn Khaldun:

While Ibn Khaldun bases his analysis of human nature and human society on natural laws and on purely socio-economic and political factors, from time to time he has to revert to orthodox religious doctrines and dogmas and have recourse to rationalizations.

A very obvious example of such complexities is clearly discernible in the dilemma that emerges in the contradiction between his socio-political theory based upon the concepts of al-‘asabiyah (group feeling) and al-mulk (royal authority), and the idea of al-mustabid (despot), the autocrat capable of utilizing the former force for the later purpose, on the one hand, and on the other hand, his admission that “The lawgiver (Muhammad) censured group feeling and urged (us) to reject it and to leave it alone”. And that “God said: “Most noble among you in God’s (eyes) is he who fears God most”29.

Here we are confronted by the same age-old problem that all social thinkers have had to face throughout the history of human civilization. The civilizing religious or social reformation of human society resisted by the individuals or group’s desire to dominate other individuals and groups; The moral and spiritual imperative of an
altruistic conscience opposed by the driving force of egocentric impulses; the natural realization of the socio-biological need of the trend toward homonymy in direct conflict with realization retarding, self-centered trend toward increased autonomy, democracy denied by despotism; piety rejected by autocracy; human community fragmented by partisanship; society sundered by dissensions and discord of rival group feelings in short, a soul-searching issue; a soul-searching quest for an answer to the question of the stakes involved in the human situation of morality being in the balance against expediency. Are the former illusory and only the latter real? And, how much justification is there for expecting the former to effectively counter the latter?

Both by very definition and by nature, demonstrated and confirmed by historical experience, group feelings and royal authority, each one of these tends to make the group and the autocrat, respectively, a law unto oneself. Such tendencies, obviously, always run athwart every attempt at some form of comprehensive, universal legislation—moral, religious and divine or social, secular and human—that is based upon some comprehensive and universally applicable principles of equity, justice and good conscience, principles that direct both individuals and groups towards what present-day psychologists may describe as “Super-ordinate goals” and determine appropriate legislation. He says also: “The restraining influence among Bedouin tribes comes from their shaykhs or leaders— their defense and protection are successful only if they are a closely-knit group of common descent;
compassion and affection for one’s blood relations and relatives exist in human nature as something God put into the hearts of men.

The closing remarks of this section are significant in the sense that al-‘asabiyyah’ (group feeling) is proposed as the pivot of all forms of human activity and authority not only of al-mulk (royal authority) or autocracy, but of prophecy and apostleship as well:

“If this is true with regard to the place where one lives, which is in constant need of defence and military protection, it is equally true with regard to every other human activity, such as prophecy, the establishment of royal authority, or propaganda (for a cause). Nothing can be achieved in these matters without fighting for it. And for fighting one cannot do without group feeling. This should be taken as the guiding principle of our later exposition. “God gives success”.

Once united under the leadership of a group having an ‘asabiyyah with a religious message (da‘wah), they are able to assault the central government. Thus the death of the state is imminent and a new dynasty takes over.

Ibn Khaldun dismisses the Ideal City of al-farabi a a simple hypothesis not worth discussing. The rational government (Siyasah ‘aqliyyah) is based on a law consisting of a mixture of the divinely revealed prophetic law and the ordinances of the ruler.

To be sure, this firm opposition to the political philosophy of the Falasifah can be expected from such an empiricist who is more interested in political reality as it was and as it is than in what it ought to ideally or in the future, theoretically however, the religious government

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(Siyasah Shariyyah) is far more comprehensive than both rational politics and political utopianism (Siyasah madaniyyah) “because the lawgiver knows the ultimate interest of the people and is concerned with the salvation of man in the other world”. The fact that such regimes based on principles derived from the divinely revealed law were supposed to have gone with the prophet and his guided Caliphs means they were the last ideals which were as non-existent for him as the Virtuous city of the Philosophers. Thus Ibn Khaldun’s political philosophy is more concerned with what he calls the second type of rational politics (since the first type had gone with the pre-Islamic Persians) where public interest is secondary to the ruler’s concern and is practiced by both Muslims and non-Muslims, except that the Muslim regimes mix it with religious laws “as mush as they are able to”.

(b) The transformation of the Caliphate into royal authority:

He says in his Muqaddimah: “It should be known that royal authority is the natural goal of group feeling. It results from group feeling, not by choice but through necessity and the order of existence. All religious laws and practices and everything that the masses are expected to do requires group feeling. Only with help of group feeling can a claim be successfully pressed. Group feeling is necessary to the Muslim community. It existence enables (The community) to fulfil what God expects of it. It is said in the Sahih (al-Bukhari), “God sent no prophet who did not enjoy the protection of his people”. Still, we find that the lawgiver (Muhammad) censured group feeling and urged (us) to reject it and to leave it alone. We also find that (The Lawgiver Muhammad) censured royal authority and its representatives. He blamed
them because of their enjoyment of good fortune, their senseless waste, and their deviations from the path of God. He recommended friendship among all Muslims and warned against discord and dissension.

The contradictions that begin to unfold and emerge in these opening paragraphs of Ibn Khaldun’s discussion of “The transformation of the Caliphate into royal authority”, constitute, in the context of the moral and religious values that he mentions, a crucial stage in his thesis relating to the concepts of al-‘asabiyah (group feeling) and al-mulk (royal authority).

Anyway if the social group feeling will be on cause of God it will be very good, and that group feeling with a religious message (da’wah), they are able to assault the central government. And the royal authority whom that goes on the God’s path also would be recognized.

Then Ibn Khaldun mentions about the historical trend of transformation of the Caliphate into royal authority and says: “when ‘Umar b. al-Khattab went to Syria and was met by Mu’awiyah in full royal splendor as exhibited both in the number (of Mu’awiah’s retinue) and his equipment, he disapproved of it and said: “Are these royal Persian manners (Kisrawiyah), O, Muawiyah?” Mu’awiyah replied: “O commander of the faithful, I am in a border region facing the enemy. It is necessary for us to vie with (The enemy) in military equipment”. Umar was silent and did not consider Mu’awiyah to be wrong. Then came the later Umayyads. As far as their worldly purposes and intentions were concerned, they acted as the nature of royal authority required. They forgot the deliberate planning and the reliance upon the truth that had guided the activities of their predecessors. This caused the
people to censure their actions and to accept the Abbasid propaganda in the place of (The Umayyads’). Thus, the Abbasids took over the government. The probity of the Abbasids was outstanding. They used their royal authority to further, as far as possible, the different aspects and ways of the truth; they remained Caliphs in name, because the Arab group feeling continued to exist. In these two stages Caliphate and royal authority existed side by side. Then, with the disappearance of Arab group feeling and the annihilation of the (Arab) race and complete destruction of (Arabism), The Caliphate lost its identity. The form of government remained royal authority, pure and simple. This was the case, for instance, with non-Arab rulers in the East. They showed obedience to the Caliph in order to enjoy the blessings (involved in that), but the royal authority belong to them with all its titles and attributes. The Caliph had no share in it. The same was done by the Zanatah rulers in the Maghrib. The Sinhajah, for instance, had such a relationship with the ‘Ubaydīd (-Fatimids), and the Maghrawah and also the Banu Yafran (Ifren) with Umayyad Caliphs in Spain and the ‘Ubaydīd(-Fatimids) in al-Qayrawan

It is thus clear that the Caliphate at first existed without royal authority. Then, the characteristic traits of the Caliphate became mixed up and confused. Finally, when its group feeling had separated from the group feeling of the Caliphate, royal authority came to exist alone.

Ibn Khaldun also gives more explanation about the Wazirate, Hijabah (The office of doorkeeper as political concepts and many other executive branches of the Administration.
The Saying on Political Wisdom from the *Secretum Secretorum*

From MS. Rûb el-kâtûb (Ajr I), 1002. Cf. 17:81 c (n. 29 end), above.
2.3 Later Islamic Philosophers:

2.3.1 Khwajah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (597/1201 – 672/1274):

Nasir al-Din Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Hasan al-Tusi, the renowned Persian astronomer, Philosopher and Theologian, often referred to in general Shi’I literature as Muhaqqiq-I Tusi (The great scholar Tusi) and in the Ismaili circles of his time as Sultan al du’at (King of the Preachers), was born in Tus, which is now a small town in the suburbs of Mashhad, Khurasan, on 11 Jamada I 597/17 February 1201, and died in Baghdad on 18 Dhu’l Hijja 672/25 June 1274. He is often considered at far with Avicenna and al-Farabi.

Central to Khwajah Nasir’s ethics is his discussion of politics. He divides his section on “politics” in Akhlaq-i-Nasiri into two parts: The first segment addresses domestic issues, or a communal order on a small scale, dar tadbir-I manazil (“on how to run a Household”) and the second segment covers “national” issues, or a communal order on a larger scale, dar siasat-i- mudun (“on the politics of cities”).

Akhlaq-i-Nasiri which was written at the request of Nasir al-Din Muhtashim. Tusi composed and translated a number of books. Tusi’s most important works on ethics, the Akhlaq-i-Nasiri and Akhlaq-i-Muhtashami, are dedicated to Nasir al-Din.
(a) **His Politics:**

The section on “the politics of Cities” of Akhlq-I Nasiri is divided into eight chapters. In the first chapter, Khawjah Nasir provides an argument as to why human society is in need of civilization (tamaddun). Human beings need mutual co-operation in order to safeguard their individual and collective survival. In the second chapter, he discusses the centrality of mahabbat, or “group Sentiments”, as the crucial factor in bringing a human collectivity together. The third chapter is devoted to a discussion of the two kinds of human society; Utopia (madinah-I fadilah and the anti-utopia (Madina-i ghyr-e-fadilah). The fourth chapter of this section has full discussion of the question of political power which is properly titled as “The administration of kingdom and the royal manners”. There are two dimensions to supreme political authority: a “Politics of virtue” (Siasat-i fadilah) and a “politico of imperfection” (Siasat-i naqisah). The politics of virtue is necessary to guide the followers to bliss and salvation; The politics of imperfection is required to Punish and curtail human fallacies and short comings. The fifth chapter enumerates the principles and guidelines to be observed by those who are associated with kings. The sixth chapter is devoted to friendship. His purpose here is to emphasize the social and political significance of having a limited but closely knit circle of friends and acquaintances. The seventh chapter is a full treatise on the principles that should govern one’s relations with members of various social classes and groups. The eight and last chapter, which is also the conclusion of the book, consists of a series of short aphorisms that khwajah Nasir attributes to plato “Do not test the learned in the
abundance of their learning, but judge them by how they avoid evil and corruption”.

(b) **Philosopher/Vizier:**

Perhaps the most compelling image of Khwajah Nasir that shines through all his writings and activities is that of a philosopher/vizier, a distinctly Persian phenomenon that combined avid theoretical learning with a relentless penchant for practical politics.

As a philosopher vizier, Khwajah Nasir is prototypical of a breed apart, the closest approximation to the platonic (and pre-Islamic Persian) ideal of the Philosopher/King. In (full) control of the center of political power, he was also the most erudite philosopher of his time. The combination of these two forces – power and knowledge – results in a unique “political philosophy” which is both a politically based philosophy and a philosophically anchored politics. The implications of this discourse go beyond the immediate confinement of both political establishment and philosophical engagement. The philosophical discourse of the Philosopher/vizier assumes a unique ethical grounding that exacts obedience from both the political and the religious figures of authority. The philosopher/vizier speaks from the commanding position of a Muslim (interpreter of the sacred) Philosopher (The possessor of reason, an astronomer, a physician). The philosopher/vizier, with khwajah Nasir as its archetypal example, thus occupies a central position of command and obedience in the Islamic and Persian political culture, instrumental in creating the material conditions for the growth and development of philosophy. The instrumentality of reason in pre-modern intellectual history.
2.3.2 **Nizam al-Mulk (408/1018 – 485/1092):**

Nizam Al-Mulk, Abu 'Ali Al-Hassan B. 'Ali B. Ishaq Al-Tusi, the celebrated minister of the Saljuqid Sultans Alp Arslan and Malik Shah. According to most authorities, he was born on Friday 21 Dhu’l-Qa’dah 408/10 April 1018, though the 6th/12th Century, and was assassinated on 10. Ramadan 485/14 October 1092.

He wrote a book *Siasat Namah* (Treatise on the Art of Government) in his old age which won high appreciation from his royal master. Nizam al-Mulk, in his boyhood was at a School at Nishapur with Omar Khayyam and Hassan bin Sabbah. The three boys swore eternal friendship, agreeing that whoever of them succeeded in life should help the other two. Nizam al-Mulk fulfilled his obligation in the case of Omar Khayyam who refused the governorship of Nishapur but asked for a Pension which was granted. He also managed a suitable post for Hassan bin Sabbah, but the latter intrigued to supplant his benefactor, failing which he became a bitter enemy of Nizam al-Mulk.

2.3.3 **Syasat Namah:**

We have already mentioned Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, as a stateman and administer. It was also stated that he was the author of the book 'Siyasat Namah or 'Treatise in the art of politics: This great work comprises fifty chapters, concerning royal duties, royal prerogatives and administration. It is written in simple language and embodies the views of the great administrators.

The *Siyasat Nameh*, which is the exposition of his theory of kingship, was originally written to serve as a “Monarch’s Premier”. It is
said that in 484/1091 Sultan Maiikshah instructed some of his dignitaries to think over the state of affairs in his realm and write down the principles of conduct that were followed by monarchs in the past, and were required to be observed by himself. The treatise of Nizam al-Mulk among the works presented to the Sultan was the only one which he approved of and adopted as a guide (Imam). But it must not be treated as a mere handbook of day-to-day administration. Nor must it be regarded as containing simply practical suggestions for the improvement of an administrative system. It is more than that, it is, in fact, the expression of realistic political theory which emerges out of an actual political situation, and therefore, helps us to understand the stage in the development of Muslim polity reached in the fifth/eleventh century.

As it was inconsistent with his political ends to recognize the Caliph as the Supreme authority, so an explicit refutation of his claims in this respect would have made Nizam al-Mulk unnecessarily provoke a controversy about the powers of the two offices. To this dilemma he finds a solution in what may be called in modern language the theory of divine right – the theory that the king enjoys the right to rule over his subjects by virtue of divine appointment. This becomes obvious from the study of the first chapters in the Siyasat Nameh, which mainly explain the divine nature of this institution, and its functions ordained by God. He puts, in every clear words when he says: "In every age God selects one from amongst mankind and adorns him with princely skills, and entrusts him with the affairs of the world and the comfort of the subjects. This is the remarkably simplified hypothesis of his theory of Kingship he does not argue to prove it, but simply states it as a self-evident truth. This proposition, as advanced by Nizam al-Mulk, suffers
the logical weakness common to all the expositions of the divine-right-theory which set out this hypothesis as a fait accompli, to be simply accepted rather than to be argued. It is indeed a dogmatic belief rather than a rational proposition. It is, however, important for our purpose, because it serves to explain how Nizam al-Mulk comes (in Siyasat Nameh) to expound a political theory which is out and out a vindication of autocracy, and how he is led from the outset to reject the democratic principles enunciated by the advocates of the Caliphate. He also discusses in the Siyasat Nameh about the purposes of kingship in a political community and says: "The essential function which the king has to fulfill in human society is to bring order out of chaos, and to maintain peace and justice. Thus those noted above are the main structures of the Siyasat Nameh.
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