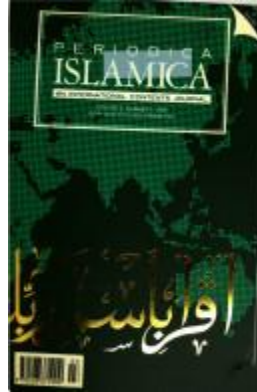


IBN KHALDUN:
THE STRENGTHENING AND WEAKENING OF ASABIYA

Periodica Islamica (Vol. 6, No. 3, 1996), 3–11.



A dynasty can be founded and established only with the help of asabiya [group feeling]...Royal authority and the foundation of dynasties are the goal of asabiya. A dynasty goes through different stages and encounters new conditions. The first stage is that of **success**, the overthrow of all opposition and the appropriation of royal authority from the preceding dynasty. The second stage is the one in which the ruler gains complete control over his people, claims royal authority all for himself...and prevents them from trying to have a share in it. The third stage is one of leisure and tranquility in which the fruits of royal authority are enjoyed..the acquisition of property, creation of lasting monuments, and fame. The fourth stage is one of contentment and peacefulness. He adopts the tradition of his predecessors and follows closely in their footsteps. The fifth stage is one of waste and squandering..the ruler wastes on pleasures and amusements...acquires...low class followers. In this stage, the dynasty is seized by senility and the chronic disease from which it can hardly ever rid itself, for which it can find no cure, and, eventually, it is destroyed. ...Provincial governors...gain control over remote regions when (the dynasty) loses its influence there. Each one of them [attempts to found] a new dynasty ...to gain royal authority.

Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah¹



INTRODUCTION

Writing at a time of the disunity and the decline of the Islamic empire, the horrors of the plague and the conquests of the Mongol Tamerlane, Ibn Khaldun (732-802 AH or 1332-1406 AD) sought to

understand the rise and fall of civilizations. His history is not merely descriptive; it is not genealogical, nor is it in defence of a particular civilization--it does not seek solely to glorify Islam--rather Khaldun searches for the causes behind historical actions and movement. His is an attempt at a science of history. Khaldun distances himself from contemporary and historical thinkers of the time by rejecting the theory that history is a degeneration from a previous era of perfection. He also rejects the cyclical regression view of the ancients in which prophecy leads to caliphate, then to unjust kingship, then finally a return to prophecy. Rather Khaldun searches for structure. Most history is simply about how "people settled the earth until they heard the call and their time was up."² His aim is to discover "[t]he inner meaning of history, [which] involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth."³ Specifically, it involves the "subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events."⁴

The pattern of his own life is critical in understanding his theory of change and his predictions for the future. Indeed, his own life is isomorphic to his historiography. Khaldun moves from political escapades, intrigues and efforts to maximize power to his own person, to efforts to play the role of learned advisor to kings and potential princes, and then finally to a distanced academic wherein he is not concerned with personality, nor with particular tribes and religions, but rather with the consistent forms or variables that stand behind them.

Khaldun also does not develop a history of Being thus distancing himself from the prevalent theological discourses of the time. His is not the project of finding how Allah influences the course of history. God to him is a figure that stands in the background, providing inspiration and individual purpose, used in his text most often to begin a passage--May God take care of us and of you...in the same way He takes care of those whom, as He knows in His prescience, He will make happy and guide a right"⁵--or as an after the fact explanation. It was Allah's will. God remains in the absolute. For Khaldun what is significant about God is that through religion, the sign of God, human can increase their unity or asabiya and thus provide the basis for their rise in power.

PERSONAL HISTORY: THE RISE AND FALL OF FAMILIES

Wali Al-Din Abd-ar-Rahman Abu Zayd ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Khaldun was

born in Tunis on May 27, 1332. He was tutored in the Quran, the Hadith, jurisprudence and Arabic poetry and grammar. His family history was that of scholars and statesman. The Ibn Khaldun family played an important part in the civil wars in Seville in the 9th century. In the next four centuries, they successively held "high administrative posts under the Umayyad, Almoravid, and Almohad dynasties; several were killed in the battle of az-Zallaqah in 1086, which temporarily halted the Christian conquest of Spain."⁶ In 1248 just before the fall of Seville and Cordoba, they moved to the northern coast of Morocco. Ibn Khaldun's father was an administrator and soldier eventually devoted himself to theology, law and letters." In 1349 the Black Death struck Tunis and took away both his father and his mother. This event was not lost on Khaldun. In his The Muqaddimah he incorporated this dramatic event, writing of the relationship between plagues and cities, arguing that urbanization spread such diseases, and that a decentralized system of civilization was needed. But he did not allow this unprecedented plague to become an all encompassing external variable, rather he choose an endogenous one--that of solidarity--with which external variables can and do interact.

Ibn Khaldun's personal life followed the pattern set by his family. Khaldun spent time in government but by 1357 the Sultan Abu Inan suspected his loyalties and threw him in prison. Once the Abu Inan died, the wazir Al-Hassan ibn Umar reinstated him. This event too was not lost on Khaldun; later he would write later of the transference of power from kings to ministers, once unity and identification in the dynasty weakened.

"The next eight or nine years, which saw much strife between the Merini and Hasfid dynasties in North-West Africa, were the most precarious in Ibn Khaldun's restless career. On the fall of Abu Abdallah, Ibn Khaldun raised a large force among the desert Arabs and entered the service of the Sultan of Tlemcen. A few years later he was taken prisoner..."⁷ Khaldun next entered a monastic establishment where he wrote the Muqaddimah finishing in 1377 "'with words and ideas pouring into my head like cream into a churn' and without the use of a library."⁸ He moved to Egypt where he served as judge and applied the idea of asabiya to Egyptian history. But the ups and downs of life did not end for next his family died in a shipwreck in 1384. Among the most interesting episodes, judged from the present, is his meeting with Tamerlane. In 1400 Tamerlane's Tartar armies invaded Syria and while in Damascus, Tamerlane asked to

meet Khaldun. "The latter was thereupon lowered over the city wall by ropes and spent seven weeks in the Tartar camp."⁹ Like a good scholar, he proceeded to give a series of lectures on his theory of history to Tamerlane. But as a diplomat, he did not give Tamerlane the information he needed; namely knowledge that could be used to conquer Egypt and the Islamic West.¹⁰

It is not surprising then that he chose to write about the rise and fall of dynasties, their actual causes, and concludes that history is cyclical. Making this similar point, Mushsin Mahdi has concluded that "[t]he picture of the Islamic world during the fourteenth century as depicted by Ibn Khaldun, and for the most part substantiated by other sources, was one of general decline and disintegration....Western North Africa, where Ibn Khaldun grew up and spent fifty years of his life before going to Egypt, was the worst part of the Islamic world in this respect. It presented him with a spectacle of chaos and desolation."¹¹

THE PRIMITIVE-CIVILIZATION-PRIMITIVE CYCLE

Khaldun begins his historiography with the state of nature. He finds two types of culture: that of the primitive and that of the civilized; the rural and city. They are near opposites of each other, with bravery, morality, unity, strong kinship ties, respect for parental authority describing the rural and cowardice, fragmentation, economic and social ties, individuality describing the city. But they are not unrelated; groups start as nomads and as they rise in wealth they construct or conquer cities, but in cities with increased economic activity and size new relationships emerge. This leads to a concentration on leisure and sensual pleasures which then leads to the breakdown of the city. Thus nomads are not genetically more pious, rather it is culture that emerges in a given environment which create the context for the different meanings and behaviours of city and nomadic life.

Asabiya begins with the ideal person in nature, the Bedouin nomad. "Man seeks first the bare necessities. Only after he has obtained [them] does he get to comforts and luxuries. The toughness of nomadic life precedes the softness of sedentary life."¹² The Bedouins are more courageous because they have to be. Living in the desert requires such behaviour, while those in city resort to governmental laws and regulations and thus destroy their "fortitude and power of resistance."¹³ Through environmental adversities, desert people develop increased solidarity. With compassion and the desire to protect those of

the family, group feelings--asabiya--continues to grow and consolidate. However, inter-tribe conflict leads to numerous wars and anarchy. "Once a superior solidarity emerges within a group, it tends to subdue lesser solidarities and bring them under its control. The result is a greater solidarity that unites the conflicting factions and directs their efforts to fight and subdue other groups. This process of expansion and unification continues until a point is reached when the newly formed solidarity is able to conquer the dominions of a civilized state or to establish new and cities and the institutions characteristic of a civilized culture." ¹⁴ The group with the strongest unity rules other groups. From kinship, kingship emerges. Kingship leads to the desire for more power and the tribe expands its population and size, accumulating power, riches and leisure. Kingship or Royal authority is considered a necessity so as to avoid groups fighting, to give social cohesion. Thus, kings provide a super-ordinate authority. According to Khaldun, "he [the king] must dominate them and have power and authority over them, so that none of them will be able to attack another. This is the meaning of royal authority."¹⁵ Besides kinship, religion provides asabiya. It creates new loyalties and a new solidarity. Indeed, religion mixed with blood loyalty in the context of just royal authority creates a formidable unity of mind and purpose, the ideal civilization.

Much of Khaldun's Muqaddimah articulates general principles of the rise and fall of unity in groups. How does it stay in a family, how is it lost, how is it regained, for example? Sections of his chapter include the following illustrative headings: "Savage nations are better able to achieve superiority than others," "The goal to which group feeling leads is royal authority," "Group feelings results only from blood relationships or something corresponding to it," "Leadership over people who share in a given group feeling cannot be bested in those not of the same descent," "Obstacles on the way toward royal authority are luxury and the submergence of the tribe in a life of prosperity," "How lineages become confused," "Meekness and docility to outsiders that may come to be found in a tribe are obstacles on the way toward royal authority." Khaldun's textual style is one of general chapters on Bedouin life or on civilizations accompanied by specific propositions. These specifics all directly relate to the irreducible of his theory, the rise and fall of asabiya as seen in family class, city, dynasty and civilization.

UNITY OF DISCOURSE: THE FINITE AND INFINITE

Now the episteme that Khaldun thinks from has a unified discursive field. Thus what happens to the individual, happens to the group, happens to a city, and happens to a civilization. Individuals follow a birth, rise, adulthood and decline cycle as do dynasties, cities and civilizations. Only God stands above, but although everything is per his will, he does not privilege one group over another. Rather those groups that stay courageous, whose followers give leaders legitimacy, and who construct themselves as one people, last over time. Others find their fortunes decaying. When fortunes decay those who have strongest group feelings, the primitives, come back into control and power, thus continuing the cycle. In addition, Khaldun separates God and the world. Although individuals can attain various levels of spirituality, it is the tension embedded in choice that gives rise of the various alternative futures, not the will of the spirit.

Said poetically and philosophically by Lenn Goodman: "What answer then has Ibn Khaldun to the problem of values and of God in history?...the laws of human and social nature (if not those of human existence) bring men into conflict, cause them to overstep. In the dialectic of history each man in his society pursues what may seem goods (and partly be such) which lead both to virtue and to vice (in a partial sort of way) and bring in their train, or rather contain, their own retribution and their own reward. For societies, as for individuals, crime and punishment, virtue and reward are inextricable from one another. ...every empire or horde [must] live the life which is in its nature and die the death which of its nature."¹⁶

But this finiteness is unacceptable to man. Man seeks to expand through "group feelings," through identification, in family, clan, dynasty and empire. While this is similar to the classic search for the Infinite, it has a structural basis in Khaldun's theory for it covers all relations, it bonds. For Khaldun, "The true answer to the problem of evil (and of failure) in history was to be found in the tragic finitude of men and all that they create, a finitude at once noble and degrading, which God in His wisdom and grace bestowed upon men and nations, allowing them to live and causing them to die through a nature of their own."¹⁷

In the end it is God that is eternal. In Khaldun's words: "He is all powerful and nothing in heaven or on earth is impossible for Him or escapes Him. He raised us up from the Earth and gave us breath, let us

live on earth as nations and tribes, gave us our portion and sustenance from the earth. The wombs of our mothers and our houses were our shelters. Food keeps us alive. Time wears us out, and our fate, which has been fixed in the Book, comes. But He endures. He lives and does not die." ¹⁸

Again this is quite different than the choices, for example, Hegel constructs, epochs later. For Hegel, "world history exhibits the development of the consciousness of freedom on the part of the spirit, and of the consequent realization of that freedom." ¹⁹ History in Hegel's view works behind the back of individuals, that is, there is Providence and reason to all events, it is the spirit expressing itself in History. ²⁰ Moreover, this spirit expresses itself in world history through states. Thus history has a notion of progress, but it is a particular notion, one nested in the State. And every nation has a peculiar contribution which it is destined, in its turn, to make to the process of world history. Furthermore, this progress is facilitated by great individuals, the Napoleons. They are the chosen instruments of destiny. For Hegel, his Prussian State then was the will of the spirit, the finest expression of freedom.

Khaldun did not privilege a group because they were at the zenith of their civilization as the group chosen by God, although certainly he was partial to the earlier Islamic caliphate. And although he did not attempt to justify violence, unlike Hegel who according to historian Frederic Copleston believed that "war is the chief means by which a people's spirit acquires renewed vigor or a decayed political organism is swept aside and gives place to a more vigorous manifestation of the Spirit." ²¹ Khaldun did believe that war can be just, largely when fighting against separatism in the process of consolidating *asabiya*.

Ultimately, Khaldun's questions are not a moral ones; nor does he try to construct a vision of an ideal tomorrow. He is a diplomat historian. Closer perhaps to Chinese grand historian Ssu-Ma Chien ²² who wrote too of the rise and fall of dynasties. For Ssu-Ma Chien, it was virtue that lead to the rise of a dynasty and tyranny which lead to its fall. Instead of *asabiya* embedded in a clan, it was the sage king who started a dynasty which then over time fell apart. The natural cycle ending with the tyrant only to be re-established by another sage-king. In between the good and the evil are but a mere list of the names of rulers. This is again different from historical positions that place God in history. As Copleston argues, "once the transcendent God has been transformed into the ... Absolute and judgement has been made purely immanent in history itself, no escape is left from the world-historical point of view, all the events and

actions which form movements in the self-manifestation of the Absolute are justifying...moral questions are then irrelevant."²³

RISE AND FALL: UNIFICATION AND FRAGMENTATION

Khaldun's focus are the fundamental laws of history. Again, the central concept is group feeling, unity. The word literally means the fibre or sinew by which a group is held together. It is that which binds people into effective groups. Once this concept is understood, then we can understand history for the laws of group identity are the laws of history.

From a contemporary perspective, Joseph Campbell has similarly written in his The Masks of God:²⁴ "The rise and fall of civilizations in the long, broad course of history can be seen to have been largely a function of the integrity and cogency of their supporting canons of myth, for not authority but aspiration is the motivator, builder and transformer of civilization. A mythological canon is an organization of symbols, ineffable in import, by which the energies of aspiration are evoked and gathered toward a focus."

Instead of aspiration, the term is solidarity at the horizontal level, legitimacy as given by the people to the king, and protection and the meeting of basic needs as provided by the king/clan. When asabiya is strong, there is legitimacy, when it is weak, then dynasties fall, empires are conquered, and a new group with a stronger asabiya rises.

In his section on the disintegration of dynasties, Khaldun describes how dynasties lose their asabiya. With fights in the inner group, the ruler eliminates and humiliates the contenders--legitimacy is destroyed. What results is a new but much weaker group feeling. This continues the further decline. Eventually, people who do not share in the group feeling of the elite take charge, but their commitment is not that strong and the dynasty is split and can be easily overthrown. In addition, with expansion more funds must be paid out to the masses and with luxury, group feeling decreases. Thus, to deal with crises, rulers pay out more money, which hastens the decline. This is in sharp contrast to the beginning of the dynasty, when it had a desert attitude--with no extravagant expenditures, a sense of royal authority and with regular fasting and other spiritual practices by the leaders.

"The cycle of economic progress and decline runs parallel to the rise and fall of military potential. Military domination stimulates economic expansion but the luxurious urban culture causes increased spending. The government revenue can no longer pay for them, and especially cannot cope with the rising salaries of the army that the civilian government nervously endeavours to appease...At this stage the soldiers have already grown bold against their dynasty, because it has become weak and senile...Within the army too there is a struggle for power...[they] 'are caught up in the effeminacy of sedentary culture' and lose their desert toughness, they seek power through assiduous competition for leadership." ²⁵

But luxury is not always the downfall. Khaldun is far more sophisticated than that. For example, in the beginning of a dynasty luxury actually leads to increased group feeling and royal authority as it brings on more children. The population of the leaderships expands. It is only in subsequent generations that the non-productive elite become problematic and bring on their own decline.

Dynasties, cities and civilizations have clear stages. "Through the conditions that are peculiar to a particular state, the supporters of the dynasty acquire in that stage traits of character such as do not exist in any other stage. Traits of character are the natural result of the peculiar situations in which they are found."

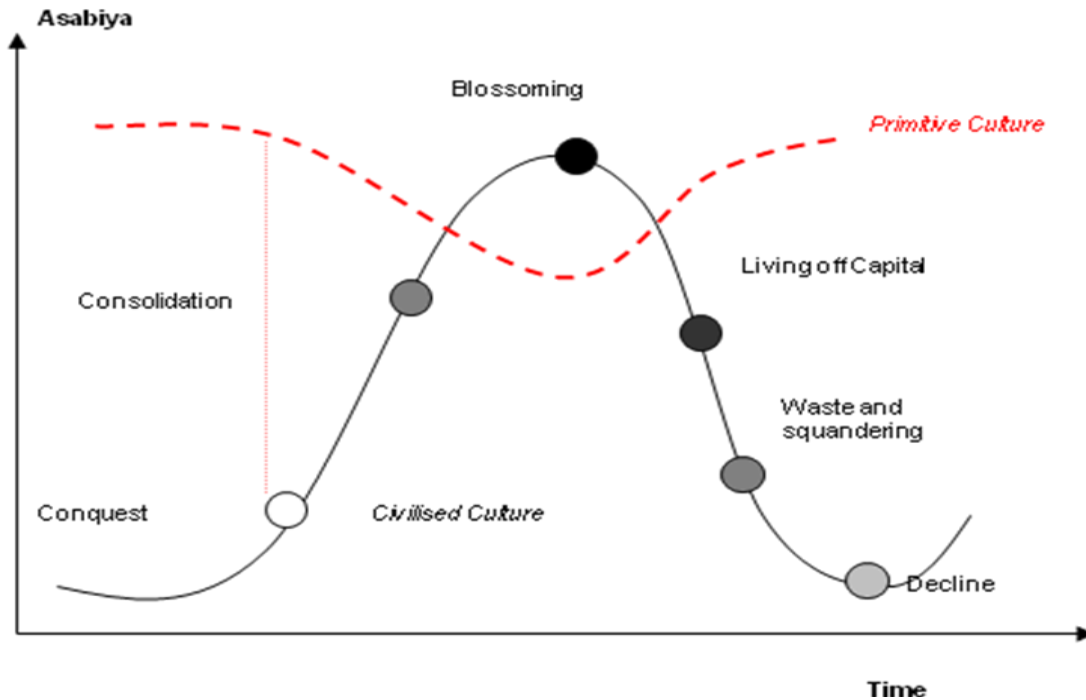
²⁶

"The first stage is that of success, the overthrow of all opposition, and the appropriation of royal authority from the preceding dynasty."²⁷ Thus the new group does not have to start all over, it has learned from the previous. In this stage, the ruler is benevolent and does not claim all authority for himself. In the second stage the ruler consolidates power and makes himself the sole executive, so as to exclude others from their various claims of royal authority. At this stage, "[there is] kindness to subjects, planned moderation in expenditure, and respect for other people's property. Nothing at this time calls for extravagant expenditures, Therefore the dynasty does need much money. Later comes domination and expansion (luxury) caus[ing] increased spending. It calls for the increases in soldiers allowances and in the salaries of the people of the dynasty. Extravagant expenditures mount."²⁸ But before the decline there is the third stage wherein, " the fruits of royal authority are enjoyed: the things that human nature desires such as acquisition of property, creation of lasting monuments, and fame."²⁹ It is in this middle stage where the kingdom is prosperous, unity is high, expenditures medium, the army loyal, the ruler just. In the fourth

stage, the ruler imitates the previous ruler and becomes conservative, not departing from tradition and thus making the mistakes of the previous cycle. Then, in the fifth and final stage, there is waste and squandering. He loses legitimacy. This is the stage of senility and the dynasty is destroyed. "...at the end of the dynasty..crippling taxes weigh heavily upon the people and crush their incentives...when they compare their costs of the production and the taxes they must pay with their income and see what little profit there is in trade and business they lose all hope.³⁰" A general apathy and hopelessness," argues Khaldun," steal over people when they lose control of their own destinies and become dependent on others. Such a dependent people will be conquered by the first fighting tribe they encounter."³¹ Also at this time the elites--government official and private individuals--leave the city with the wealth they have amassed.

Thus dynasties rise, consolidate power, expand, grow old, become senile and then die. This rise and fall is the rise and fall of unity, identity and legitimacy, or in one word--asabiya. New dynasties emerge at the periphery among provincial governors or among rebels with a stronger group feeling. However, the new dynasty comes to power not through sudden action, but through perseverance. Battle after battle, until eventually the senility not to mention the pestilences and famines of urban centers bring it down. And of course, then, the new dynasty will take the cycle of the previous one; it will rise and fall.

But before the end, there is a rise again. "Group feeling has often disappeared (when the dynasty has grown senile) and pomp has taken the place it occupied in the souls of men. Now, when in addition to the weakening of group feeling, pomp, too, is discontinued, the subjects grow audacious vis a vis the dynasty.. At the end of a dynasty, there often also appears some (show of) power that gives the impression that the senility of the dynasty has been made to disappear. It lights up brilliantly just before it is extinguished, like a burning wick the flame of which leaps up brilliantly a moment before it goes out, giving the impression it is just starting to burn, when in fact it is going out. (emphasis added)³²



THE TIME OF DISINTEGRATION

Now Khaldun also gives us indicators in generational time. Khaldun hypothesis is that dynasties last four generations. At the level of the family, nobility and prestige follows the same pattern. "It reaches its end in a single family within four successive generations....The builder of the family's glory knows what it costs him to do the work, and he keeps the qualities that created his glory and made it last. The son who comes after him had person contact with his father and thus learned those things from him. However, he is inferior to him in this respect, inasmuch as a person who learns things through study is inferior to a person who knows them from practical applications. The third generation must be content with imitation, and, in particular, reliance upon tradition. This member is inferior to him of the second generation, inasmuch as a person who relies up tradition is inferior to a person who exercises independent judgement. The fourth generation, then, is inferior to the preceding ones in every respect....He imagines that the edifice was not built through application and effort. He thinks that it as something due his people from the very beginning by virtue of the mere fact of their descent, and not something that resulted form group effort and individual qualities."³³ The family thus revolts and finds a new leader. The new leader then grows, while the man of the fourth generation continues to decline. Now Khaldun gives an interesting example of this. The

children of Israel were told by God to go forth and conquer. But they did not. Thus they wandered forty years until a generation had passed away, and a new one that had not witnessed the humiliation by Egypt could take over. Moreover, this new generation was strengthened by adverse desert conditions, developed *asabiya* and thus could accomplish the destined mission ahead.

Dynasties follow the same pattern lasting on the average three generations or 120 years (three times forty, the age of maturity). The first generation "retains the desert qualities, desert toughness and desert savagery."³⁴ They live on basic needs, their unity and their desire for more goods keep them active and vital. "Under the influence of royal authority and a life of ease, the second generation changes from the desert attitude to sedentary culture, from privation to luxury and plenty, from a state in which everybody shared in the glory to one in which one man claims all the glory for himself while the others are too lazy to strive for glory....The third generation, then, has completely forgotten the period of desert life and toughness, as if it had never existed. They have lost the taste for the sweetness of fame and for group feelings, because they are dominated by force....They become dependent on the dynasty and are like...children who need to be defended."³⁵ But this last generation continues the show of courage by having contests and shows, but their courage, for the most part is gone. In the final generation, they are overcome by a group with more solidarity.

In this way, the causes of historical change are endogenous. What causes the rise, leads to the fall. External factors are important but not essential. The cycle remains: primitivism, civilization, kingship and absolute power, leisure and functional economic relations, disintegration, and primitivism again.

Can one then predict the future of dynasties? Here Khaldun resorts to astrology. Central are Jupiter and Saturn conjunctions. There are three types of conjunctions, the first indicates great events such as transferences of royal authority, the second the appearance of persons in search of royal authority, and the third the appearance of propagandists. He also comments of Al-Kindi which predicted the future of Islam, but in characteristic Khaldun, we are told that we have not found any information concerning it, "Perhaps it was lost with those books which Hulagu, the rulers of the Tatars, threw into the Tigris, when the Tatars took possession of Baghdad and killed the last caliph, al Musta'sim." ³⁶

TOYNBEE, SARKAR, MARX, AND OTHERS³⁷

Toynbee who was deeply influenced by Khaldun, takes an external approach to his history. At center stage is his theory of challenge and response. The civilization's creative minority often rises to meet the challenge. Once the creative minority becomes exploitive it perishes or is taken over. For Khaldun, the creative response is dependent on the particular stage of the family, dynasty, city or civilization. If it is in an earlier stage then it can be successful. In the later stages, then there is too much luxury, warriors fight for salary, not out of religion, thus the response would not matter. But the royal authority for Khaldun, eventually translates into the universal state of Toynbee. This is unified centralized kingdom where discipline is high and power is centralized.

Indian macrohistorian P.R. Sarkar's approach is again similar to Khaldun's. Khaldun begins with the necessary physical and natural environment that gives rise to civilization, and then moves to *asabiya*; Sarkar too begins with the natural environment. This is developed in his discourse titled, "The Future of Civilization," in The Supreme Expression.³⁸ For him, both individual and society are dependent on three factors, existence, development and Bliss. According to Sarkar, for the development of a group of people, the following factors are needed: spiritual ideology, spiritual practices socio-economic theory, fraternal social outlook, sacred texts and finally, a founder. Khaldun would agree with his factors but assert that they are but individual components of *asabiya*. However, for Sarkar the identifications that Khaldun uses for his theory, from family to clan to dynasty are relocated in an ethical theory. They are part of the problem, what is needed is a theory that is not grounded in geographical, social, religious, or ethnic identities, rather the self must be freed from all limited identities. On a different note, Marx too stands at a vast distance from Khaldun. For Marx the question would have been how to reconstruct the distribution of power and wealth within the family, clan, dynasty or civilization. How to give more power to the workers, instead of just to the warriors and the developing merchants. Now, Khaldun, given the lack of development of a bourgeois class did not give a great deal of attention to this issue. His history was mainly a history of the nobles and aristocrats. Khaldun would find agreement from Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto in that both arguing that society was always ruled by a ruling class.³⁹ For Pareto there were innovators and consolidators. For Khaldun, a dynasty begins with innovations, then consolidation, and finally

disintegration, but the deeper point is that there is an elite and a non-elite. Khaldun's main point of difference is that he would advocate dynastic rule as opposed to any present notion of democratic rule; dynastic rule in a time of unity would lead to benefits to all the family; real earned benefits due to merit, not due to lineage. Once benefits are derived from lineage or from a process outside of royal authority (democracy) the civilization would eventually be taken over.

But returning to Sarkar and Khaldun we find more agreement. Civilizations die because they are missing particular factors. Other civilization colonize civilizations but in the process lose their own vibrancy--thus the Islamic wave became weakened after it had overtaken Egyptian civilization and thus was unable to overtake Europe. And Sarkar argues that Roman civilization was lacking in social outlook (slavery), lack of "proper socio-economic theory had generated a kind of a fascist mentality. Those rolling in luxury from free labor became indolent. Naturally, they were defeated by a stronger and more strenuous force." ⁴⁰ This appears very similar to group feeling, especially when defined as unity, identity and legitimacy.

Now for Sarkar, Khaldun is speaking directly to the warrior era. Sarkar's history as four epochs with four mentalities and ruling elites: the workers, the warriors, the intellectuals, the capitalists and then a revolution or evolution to the next worker era. In the warrior era, unity is the key, it is an era of gallantry and heroism, of the protection of the weak and the poor, as well as the butchery of other nations and tribes. It is this era, that Khaldun, from the Sarkarian perspective, wrote mostly about. Thus, his emphasis on group identification. But Khaldun also points to the usurpation of power by intellectuals in the decline of dynasties: "when royal authority is firmly established in on particular family and branch of the tribe supporting the dynasty, and when that family claims all royal authority for itself and keeps the rest of the tribe away from it, and when the children of (that family) succeed to the royal authority in turn, by appointment, then it often happens that their wazirs and entourage gain power over the throne. This occurs most often when a little child or a weak member of the family is appointed successor by his father or made ruler by his creatures and servants...Eventually, it becomes clear that he exercises the control, and he uses the fact as a tool to achieve royal authority...All actual executive power are believed (by the child ruler) to belong to the wazir. He defers to him all these things. Eventually the wazir definitely adopts the colouring

of the leader, of the man in control...Once a dynasty has fallen into the hands of the Wazirs and clients, it remains in that situation. Rarely is it able to escape from it, because (such control by others) is mostly the result of living in luxury and the fact that the royal princes have grown up immersed in prosperity. They have forgotten the ways of manliness [the desert ways] and have become accustomed to the character traits of wet nurses, and they have grown up that way. They do not desire leadership."⁴¹ The wazir (intellectual) then "even though he exercises full control...He disguises his control under the form of a ruler's representative." ⁴²

Khaldun did not write a great deal of the capitalist class, except that the state in the form of royal authority uses money to keep allegiance and that individual merchants should be protected, but again that was not his focus.

CONCLUSION

Khaldun, like his personal history of rise and fall and rise, presents us with a history of the rise and fall of civilizations. History is cyclically; moved by endogenous forces. The key to history is social unity and solidarity. It is this and the search for basic needs that lead to royal authority and the development of the state. State power is held as long the elite are innovative, fair and unified. But with size and civilization, lethargy, cruelty, impiety, sensuality develop. Instead of kinship, functional relationships become paramount. Instead of unity, there is fragmentation. Eventually the group feeling breaks apart and those with a stronger group feeling rise and take state power. They too then follow the same pattern. While God does not work in history, the notion of God provides unity to the people who have faith. It is this faith that leads to strength and victory.

Khaldun's works form the basis of much of present sociological thought. One can find his thinking in Comte (the creation of a science of society) in Weber (the routinization of charisma and the politics of bureaucracy) in Spengler (the culture/civilization dichotomy and the biological life cycle applied to society), and to Marx (the town and country distinction), among many others. Indeed, if anyone can claim to be the founder of modern sociological thought it is Ibn Khaldun. His works continue in the language of today, even in popular culture. For example, Maurizio Gucci of the Gucci corporation speaks of the rise

and fall of family businesses. "Obviously the founder is an incredible person, otherwise the company would never have been successful in the first place. In the second generation, the blood connection pulls everyone together. Then comes the third generation, and each one has his own mind about how the company should be run."⁴³ What follows then is not attack by Bedouins, but raiders of a different type--corporate raiders.

Equally fascinating would be applying Khaldun's theory to the rise and fall of Rome and or to that of the United States, among other nations, or to world system theory and the future of the world capitalist system and it shifting core areas. Moreover, do Khaldun's insights apply for liberal democratic politics, for present bureaucracies? What changes need to be made in his theory to respond to the present centrality of economic power? But these are questions for another day. In the meantime we are thankful that The Muqaddimah did not disappear in a sand dune or in a city fire, and thus instead of being our meal, was the cause of a camel's indigestion or fuel for the sacking of a civilization.

Notes

1. Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah, ed. N.J. Dawood, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New Jersey, Princeton, 1967), p. 141-142, 246, 252.
2. *ibid.* p. 5.
3. *ibid.* p. 5.
4. *ibid.* p. 5.
5. *ibid.* p. 206.
6. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica--Micropaedia, 15th edition, 1988, s.v. "Ibn Khaldun," p. 222.
7. Khaldun, p. viii.
8. Lenn Goodman, "Ibn Khaldun and Thucydides," Journal of American Oriental Society (Vol. 92, Number 2, 1972), p. 251.
9. Britannica, p. 223.
10. For Khaldun's encounter with Tamerlane, see Walter Fischel, Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane (Berkeley, 1952).
11. Muhsin Mahdi, Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1957).
12. Khaldun, p. 93.
13. *ibid.* p. 95.
14. Madhi, p. 199.
15. Khaldun, p. 47.
16. Goodman, p. 269-270
17. *ibid.* p. 270.
18. *ibid.* p. 270.
19. Georg Wilhelm Frederick Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of History in W. H. Walsh, Philosophy of History (New York, Harper and Row, 1960), p. 143.
20. Peter Manicus, A History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences. (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 86-96.
21. Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy Vol. VII (London, Burns and Oates, 1963), p.218.
22. Burton Watson, Ssu-Ma Chien: Grand Historian of China (New York, Columbia University Press, 1958).
23. Copleston, p. 224.

24. Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God Vol. IV (New York, Penguin, 1968), p. 5. Although he is unaware of Khaldun's works, Benedict Anderson speaking of the modern nation state comes to similar conclusion in his aptly titled book Imagined Communities (London, Verso, 1983). Anderson argues for some important distinctions in how identification was put forth in discourse in previous eras (sacred texts, language, and kinship, for example) in comparison to the present (inherently limited and sovereign). But the modern too has sacred texts although for the classic the word participates in the real while for the modern the word unproblematically represents the real. Still asabiya works equally well in aiding the understanding of the classic as well as the modern. Clearly, Anderson's work could profit from Khaldun's.
25. Irene Brown, "Ibn Khaldun and African Reintegration," Paper presented to the 1971 Universities Social Sciences Council Conference, Makerere, December 14-17, p. 32.
26. Khaldun, p. 141.
27. *ibid.* p. 141.
28. Ibn Khaldun quoted in Brown, p. 27.
29. Khaldun, p. 142.
30. Brown, p. 32.
31. *ibid.* p. 28.
32. Khaldun, p. 246.
33. *ibid.* p. 105-106.
34. *ibid.* p. 137.
35. *ibid.* p. 177.
36. *ibid.* p. 261.
37. For extensive comparisons between the thought of Ibn Khaldun and Comte, Marx, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, and Pareto, see Saleh Faghizadeh, Sociology of Sociology: In Search of...Ibn Khaldun's Sociology (Tehran, Soroush Press, 1982).
38. P.R. Sarkar, The Supreme Expression Vol. II (Netherlands, Nirvikalpa Press, 1978), p. 95-103.
39. See Vilfredo Pareto, The Rise and Fall of the Elites (New Jersey, The Bedminster Press, 1968) and Gaetano Mosca The Ruling Class (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1939).
40. Sarkar, p. 99.
41. Khaldun in Ravi Batra, Muslim Civilization and the Crisis in Iran (Dallas, Venus Books, 1980), p. 114-115.
42. *ibid.* p. 116.
43. Christopher Dickey, "The Feuding Families of Fine Goods," Newsweek (7 August 1989), p. 42.