

**STUDIES IN ISLAM
SERIES**

**IBN
KHALDOUN**

by

**ABUL FOTOUH
MUHAMMAD AL TAWANSY**

MINISTRY OF WAQFS
ISLAMIC COUNCIL
ISLAMIC AFFAIRS
CAIRO, U.A.R.

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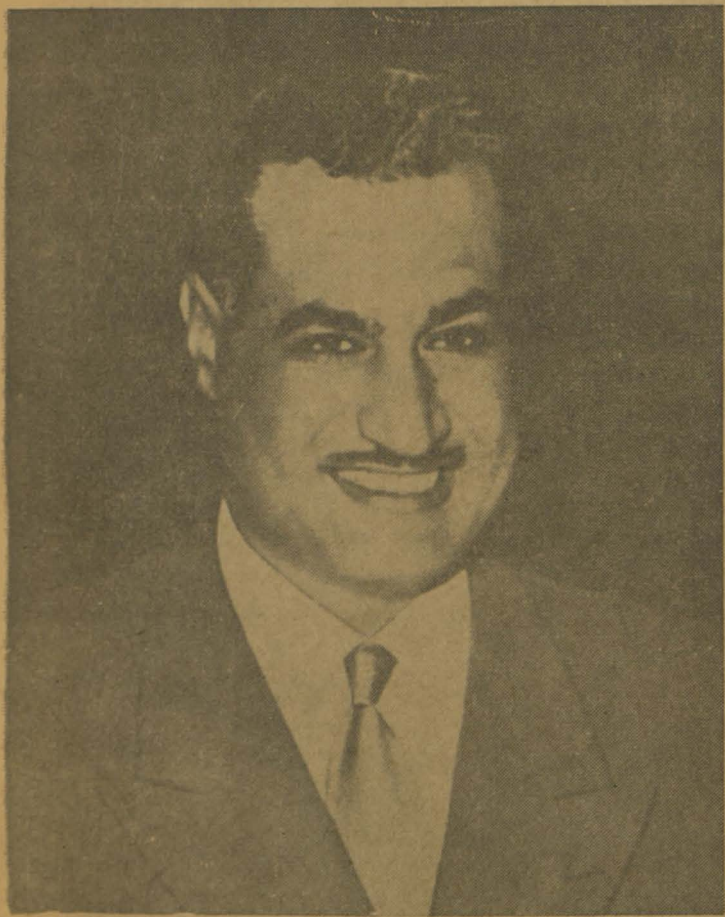
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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Ibn Khaldoun, the fourteenth century father of modern historiography and sociology, is a great name in the history of human culture. Muslims and non-Muslims alike have paid homage to the great heritage left by him. Of his famous Prolegomena (Muqaddima) Professor Arnold Toynbee in his : A study of History, 111, P. 322. (London : Oxford University Press, 1935) says : "It is the greatest work of its kind that has yet been created by any mind in any time or place."

A remarkable man such as Ibn Khaldoun deserves more of our attention than has already been given to him. The present account of his life and work can only serve as a reminder that Ibn Khaldoun should be thoroughly studied by Muslim scholars all over the world.

As a philosopher, historian, educationist, writer, diplomat, and politician he commands respect and honour, judged even by modern standards.

Dr. SHAWKY SUKKARY.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Waqfs is keen to create a scientific Islamic movement aiming at rejuvenating Islam and nourishing our new revival in the Revolution Era with the essence of Islamic civilization. This civilization has deep roots and has pervaded the whole world for several centuries and provided life in those days with all the elements of progress and development in all spheres. It was the source of our modern civilization. The scientific Islamic movement should go side by side with the nationalist movement and that of Arab unity, to support and reinforce them.

Among the chief goals of this movement, no doubt, is the strengthening of the faith of our youth in their religion so that they may rectify their behaviour and live up to their new message. One of the means by which these aims may be realized is the introduction of Islamic studies of eminent Muslim personalities who have carried high the banner of learning. In addition, these studies aim at correcting some mistaken notions which have become fixed into people's minds — that the modern European civilization, from which we have borrowed natural science, and democratic principles, was the creation of the West alone. But the indubitable truth, which our youth in the United Arab Republic and in every Arab country should believe in, is that the western civilization has taken over from the Muslims at a time of deterioration and internal dissension

which made them neglect the process of development and improvement. Thereupon, the West seized this golden opportunity, for no sooner had it communicated with the Muslims and the Arabs than it borrowed from them the origins of Muslim culture, to which it was introduced during the Crusades in Syria. The West also came under the influence of Muslim culture in Sicily and the Mediterranean islands, which had been occupied by the Muslims; also in Egypt and Andalusia. Western civilization is greatly indebted to Islamic civilization through its clashes with Muslims in the wars of Egypt and Syria. The West has also learnt a great deal from the Muslims in Andalusia.

Therefore, I present this modest study of one of the illustrious figures in Islam in the hope that our sons in all their Arab and Muslim countries will realize that what Westerners profess, with regard to their claim that modern culture and modern scientific civilization are exclusively of their own making, is sheer lying, presumption and distortion. For the science of the West which has discovered the secrets of the atom and invented artificial planets and space-ships is a natural result of the cultural development, the bases of which had been laid down by Muslims. No doubt, these facts will become plain in the study of prominent Muslim personalities, who contributed to Muslim civilization. Among these is the outstanding personality of Ibn Khaldoun, which we present in this pamphlet. He is one of those who contributed a great deal to the setting-up of certain sides of human thought. He also contributed many ideas in the field of education, which have raised the status of Muslim education, Muslim thought, and Muslim culture.

The Author.

A PORTRAIT OF THE AGE OF IBN KHALDOUN

Ibn Khaldoun lived in the last period of the Mameluk era; an age which in literary history extends from the fall of Baghdad at the hands of the Mongol Tatars in 656 H. to 923 H. when the Ottomans conquered Egypt. During this long period Cairo replaced Baghdad as the centre of Muslim civilization. This was only natural after the Tatars had made it impossible for it to flourish in Iraq and Syria. Egypt was then ruled by the Mameluk Sultans who hardly knew enough Arabic to appreciate Arabic literature and language, but who were genuinely interested in science and learning. They knew rather instinctively that on their shoulders fell the responsibility of protecting the world of Islam and upholding the Islamic Caliphate. The Mameluki state became a fortress of Islam, and the Mameluks themselves were the patrons of 'ulama' who were the guardians of Islam. This patronage, the Mameluks realized, endeared them to their subjects. This attitude was reflected in various forms. Their immediate associates were chosen from among the 'ulama,' whom they encouraged to write books and lavishly rewarded for doing so. No wonder the libraries were well stocked with valuable books, including encyclopaedias and elaborate studies in science, art, and literature.

The Mameluki interest in science and religion appeared in other forms such as the building of mosques and schools.

They built forty-five schools, and the Ayoubids alone built twenty-five. These schools swarmed with students coming from the various Islamic countries. Yet this ever increasing number of 'ulama' and students had no effect on the pattern of social life. Nor did it create any new Islamic awareness. The reason for this is that the immigration of these 'ulama' and students into Cairo was motivated by the desire to make a living through learning. Hence there was no originality or daring in thinking of the kind that would effect social and political developments. Perhaps the richness of Egypt and the smugness of its people then were to blame. That age, however, was remarkable for its military achievements. The Mameluks stood in the face of the Crusaders, then in the face of the Tatars. Their heroic stand against the latter and the way they forced them to flee after their defeat gave the Arabs a new consciousness of their power and enabled them to achieve further victories. The history of national struggle reserves a place of honour for this glorious victory of the Mameluks. It is deplorable, however, that the Muslim empire then began to disintegrate. In the Islamic zone of influence in Andalusia, Muslim kings who were supported by the rulers of the Berber States, the Moravids and the Muahids, came under heavy pressure from the Christian rulers of Spain. Later, even then Berber States showed signs of weakness, and they disintegrated with the only exception of Banu Nasr in Granada. This Muslim state remained for two centuries the centre of science, art and literature. But in the area of the Berbers — North Africa —, the glorious states of the Moravids and the Muahids disintegrated and Bani Merin in Fes were superseded by Bani Hafse in Tunis and Bani Abdel Wad in Tlemcen. Finally the Berber states were divided into emirates and

small towns. Each town was governed by a prince, who fought against his neighbour in the hope of annexing his principedom or town. Ibn Khaldoun's family lived at first in Seville at the time of Bani Abbad. It was then a large city with the river Wadi El-Kabir running through it. It was the fourth in importance among the cities of Andalusia. In it was built the first Islamic astronomical observatory, the first in the whole of Europe as well. With the weakening of the Muahids in Andalusia, the Spaniards' desire to occupy it was revived. Ibn Khaldoun's family who was living there had to move to Sebta and finally settled down in Tunis. There, and in such a turbulent atmosphere, Ibn Khaldoun was born. From the start he distinguished himself as a fine thinker, one of the most notable in the history of the Arabs. Although he spent his early life in an unsettled society, yet he availed himself of all the opportunities to learn both religious and mundane subjects in the Andalusian way.

No sooner had he reached the age of twenty than he began to move between Morocco and Andalusia, now serving Bani Merin and now working with the Prince of Bigaya or the Prince of Granada, Abi Abdullah Ben Al-Ahmar. All these variegated elements combined to mould Ibn Khaldoun's character and form his creative and resourceful mind. He was unique among the thinkers of his age. His famous *Prolegomena* was written at a time when he retired temporarily from public life. The *Prolegomena* contains numerous views which were far ahead of his time. It is a pity that these views were not responded to in his lifetime. Only recently were they discovered and reassessed. They were effective in bringing about our modern awakening.

HIS LIFE AND EDUCATION

Ibn Khaldoun was brought up in a family which belonged to the honourable and the ruling élite. Many of its members were notable in the world of learning and politics. Ibn Khaldoun comes from Arab origin. He is a descendant of Waël Ben Hager from Fenda, one of the Yemenite tribes, which occupied Hadramaut, and to which belonged some of the Yemeni chieftains. In their search for power they attached themselves to kings and princes. When the Arabs conquered Andalusia and established their glorious Islamic empire, Ibn Khaldoun's family moved there with those Yemeni tribes who emigrated there, seeking wealth, prestige, authority and honour in the third century of the Hejira. Khaldoun Ben Osman Ben Al Khattab was the first chief of this family in Andalusia. At first, they lived in Karmouna, then they left it for Seville. There Khaldoun's sons grew up. They possessed plantations in various districts and enjoyed security. But life did not continue to be pleasant for them in that city, for the state of the Muahids began to weaken, and the Spaniards gained power. Thus life became troubled there and the family of Ibn Khaldoun had to move to Granada. But in their last days the kings of Bani Al Ahmar were unable to defend their paradise of a kingdom. The family of Ibn Khaldoun decided then to depart as they found life too dangerous, and so they left for Sebta in Morocco. Abou Zakaria Al Hafsy — the chief of

this family — soon sent for Abou Al-Hassan Muhammad Ibn Khaldoun to be in his service. Abou Al-Hassan moved to Bona, where he set up a new home for his family in the seventh century of the Hejira. There, life smiled upon that family and they recaptured the glory of their previous days, when they enjoyed power and prestige in Seville. They remained in the service of Bani Hafse and lived in their protection until our famous Muslim philosopher was born in the city of Tunis which, at the time, was full of crowds of learned men who came to it from Andalusia. His father taught him his first lessons. He learned the Qurân by heart and studied many of the principles of linguistics, literature and grammar. He mastered Jurisprudence according to the Malik tradition; then he read the Hadith and Qurânic Commentary. He was devoted to philosophic studies and logic. He adopted the Ashâri method of Muslim theology. He learnt much from the learned men who took refuge in Tunis. No sooner did he reach the age of twenty than he showed signs of genius. He joined the court of Bani Hafse and was appointed secretary to Sultan Abi Isaac, the ruler of Tunis. But he soon left this post when dissensions grew in the cpital of the Hafsian state. He left it to Tlemcen, then Begaya and afterwards Andalusia, where he settled with Abou Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Al Ahmar, the king of Granada, who appointed him to his court. He sent him as his ambassador to Pedro, the king of Qashtala. He was successful in his mission and proved a good diplomat who knew the ways of kings. Pedro admired him greatly and offered him permanent residence in his kingdom, but he refused and returned to Granada. Yet he found life there still unpleasant because his friend Lisan Al Din Ibn Al khateeb — who was a minister under the king of Granada

— bore a personal grudge against him and was able to change the feelings of the king towards him. And so Ibn Khaldoun again went back to Bigaya where he was well-received by its Emir. But incidents and intrigues followed him everywhere, and he soon escaped to Fes and remained there honoured and respected during the reign of its Sultan. Ibn Khaldoun, however, could not settle down. He ended up in prison but was released afterwards. By that time he had had enough of politics and its troubles and was yearning for rest. He devoted himself to study and, in 776 H., he stayed as a guest with some of his friends in Bani Areef at Kalät Salama in Morocco, which was to the west of Tunis. There, he totally abandoned politics and took to learning. He read voraciously and ruminated over past events looking for the causes of instability in the Muslim world. He remained a guest at Bani Areef's till 780 H. During this relatively quiet period of his life, he completed his famous *Prolegomena*. Yet, the ambitious Ibn Khaldoun, the man who spent most of his active life in politics, could not remain quiet. He set out once again in search for glory, but, again, he met with enemies who plotted against him. So, he escaped to Egypt pretending he was on his way to Mekka to perform the pilgrimage. Some of his supporters gave him a rousing send-off before he sailed for Cairo in 784 H. This was in the reign of Sultan Barquq, who welcomed and honoured him. Egypt was then the centre of Islamic learning and the refuge of 'ulama' from all the Arab and Muslim countries. No sooner had he settled in Cairo than he started to teach at Al Azhar. He was soon surrounded by a big circle of followers and admirers, who were all among the great 'ulama' in Egypt. They included Ben Heger Al-Askalani and Zakī Al-Din Al-Maqreezi. In

the course of time his relation with Sultan Barquq became stronger and he appointed him as Malki Chief Judge and entrusted him with teachings in some schools. His appointment as Malki Chief Judge and his dismissal from it were repeated six times during which he performed the pilgrimage in 789 H. In Egypt Ibn Khaldoun was not without new envious people, who plotted against him till they spoilt the relations between him and the authorities. This coincided with a serious disaster which befell him and his family. When Ibn Khaldoun had settled in Egypt and found comfort and luxury there, he sent to his family in Morocco to come to Egypt. They got ready and sailed, but misfortune accompanied them, for winds and storms blew strongly in the Mediterranean Sea and mercilessly destroyed their ship, drowning them all. Thus, he had to face the manoeuvres of his enemies as well as the loss of his family. He was overcome with grief and resigned from his post. He himself depicts his misfortune in these words: "This coincided with the disaster that befell my family; they came from Morocco on a boat which was drowned by a strong wind and everything and everyone were lost. I found the calamity too great. Asceticism overwhelmed me and I decided to give up my post".

But he continued to teach and to write, and when the news reached Cairo that the Tatars attacked Syria, occupying Aleppo and committing some atrocities, King El-Nasser, Abou Al-Saadat Farag Ben Barquq, hastened to meet Tamerlane, taking with him Ibn Khaldoun among the judges and jurists who accompanied him. Clashes began between the Egyptians and the Tatars outside Damascus, but Sultan Farag hurriedly departed for Cairo, owing to a division among his supporters leaving the city of Damascus, where

Ibn Khaldoun was, to its fate. Ibn Khaldoun feared that the city would fall in the hands of the Tatars who would set it on fire and loot it. So, he convinced his colleagues who were present in the city, of the need to contact Tamerlane and negotiate with him the city's surrender. Ibn Khaldoun hastened to Tamerlane. He describes his meeting with him: "I entered his tent and found him leaning on his elbow, with dishes of food before him. When I entered I bowed and greeted him, and nodded submissively. He raised his head and offered me his hand, which I kissed; he made a sign for me to sit, so I sat where I was. He then called one of his retinue, jurist Abdul Gabbar Ben Noman — one of the Hanafi jurists of Khowarazm — to act as translator between us". In this historic meeting, the great leader spoke to Ibn Khaldoun. He asked him about his affairs and the news of Morocco and the Sultans there, and the reasons for his coming to Egypt. It is said that he requested him to write a description of Morocco. Ibn Khaldoun spoke to Tamerlane, explaining to him some of his views and social theories, thereby winning his whole-hearted admiration. But, Al-Maqreezi tells a different story from Ibn Khaldoun's, and gives another account of the surrender of Damascus. He says that it was Judge Zakī Al-Din Ben Mofleh Al-Hanbali who acted as political emissary in the negotiations concerning the city's surrender, but a difference took place afterwards and so the Tatars burned it. Then Tamerlane gathered a number of its 'ulama' and craftsmen and took them back to Samarkand. Ibn Khaldoun, it is said, got Tamerlane's permission to go back to Cairo, where he continued to serve learning till he died in 808 H.; may God have mercy on him.

HIS CHARACTER

Lisan Al-Din Al-Khateeb says : “ Ibn Khaldoun was a virtuous man, good-natured, shy, with a characteristic dress, opposed to oppression, difficult to handle, well-informed in intellectual and traditional sciences, wise of judgement, knowing a lot of things by heart. His handwriting was excellent. He was a very entertaining companion and yet was always honoured. ”

No doubt, Ibn Al-Khateeb has done justice to his old friend, drawing an exact picture reflecting his character. If we reviewed Ibn Khaldoun's opinions and traced his influence in the various spheres in which he excelled, we should find enough support for Lisan Al-Din's view of his friend. It should not be forgotten that this minister was jealous of Ibn Khaldoun, and that it was he who turned Bani Al Ahmar's Prince of Granada against him. And so this testimony of his is of great value, because it is that of a jealous enemy. It provides the strongest proof of Ibn Khaldoun's merit, modesty, good-conduct and good grasp of both intellectual and traditional subjects. But some of our modern research workers view Ibn Khaldoun from another angle, which is not devoid of exaggeration : that he grew up in an environment affected by individualism in the palaces of the dissolute royalty and in the homes of the scattered tribes of North Africa. Besides, he was descended from a

noble family, in whose veins ran the blood of princedom, chieftainship and authoritativeness.

For this reason the religious impulse was not strong with him. Nor did he have any powerful nationalistic feeling. He therefore entertained personal ambitions. These he tried to realize by the various means available to him, regardless of morals, adopting the Machiavellian principle: "The end justifies the means". He did not hesitate to commit treachery or to deviate from virtue whenever he found in this a realization of his ambitions. Ibn Khaldoun had no country of his own to love and serve faithfully. Nor was he very much attached to his family, for it was said that when he heard the news of his wife's and children's drowning he was not deeply grieved.

And we note that the most important of these accusations concern his religion and nationalist sentiments. It is clear from Ibn Al-Khateeb's testimony that Ibn Khaldoun was a man of good morals; he described him as a good and virtuous man. He performed the pilgrimage and spent a large part of his life teaching in mosques. If there had been a deficiency in his character from the religious point of view, Ibn Al-Khateeb — a man of great eminence in his day, between whom and Ibn Khaldoun there was serious rivalry — would have been the first to call into question his moral stand.

As to the nationalistic side, to Ibn Khaldoun the word 'country' had a broad meaning unrestricted within narrow limits; in his view, all Muslim countries formed one nation, and it was his duty to serve every part of this great nation. This is shown by his great concern for the city of Damascus after the return of Sultan Farag to Cairo, and his endeavour

to reach an agreement with Tamerlane for the peaceful surrender of the city lest it should be exposed to destruction. Ibn Khaldoun did this when the city lost the army which could defend it. As regards his family, his grief for its members was enormous, and the proof of this is that he resigned his post as Chief Judge, and kept away from people for a while, though he still kept his job as teacher at Al-Azhar.

Nor is it religious in the least for a person to grieve over something he knows that God has destined, and Ibn Khaldoun did not deviate from this logic in the matter of his family's drowning. We do not wish to take Ibn Khaldoun's side and defend him against all that has been attributed to him. The man has indeed lived in royal courts and was an ingenious diplomat, and, no doubt, work in the service of kings required cunning and wisdom. Yet, this cannot be regarded as a blemish in Ibn Khaldoun's character, for, as it is said, inconsistency and lying are not in all cases prerequisites of diplomacy.

HIS KNOWLEDGE AND LITERARY POWERS

Ibn Khaldoun lived in an age full of events, dissensions and political troubles, which led to the obstruction of the sources of culture and knowledge and the sterility of literature. It is surprising that there should be such an excellent learned man in an age like that.

Ibn Khaldoun was indeed a glittering star amidst an overwhelming darkness. What he wrote in his famous *Prolegomena* shows that he was a wise historian and a great economist and sociologist, though some of his practical ideas are objectionable to us nowadays. But, undoubtedly, he was a brilliant man, highly intellectual and remarkably intelligent. He was indeed a very far-sighted person. He viewed the events that took place in his age with a penetrating eye. His judgement on them was always logical, and reality proved him right. He applied himself to traditional subjects, assimilated them, and then created something new which reflected the soundness of his views, and his analytical and creative faculties.

His practical mentality, his life as a diplomat, his accurate knowledge of the affairs of Muslims, his travels in the Muslim world from Morocco and Andalusia to Egypt, Syria, the Lebanon and Hijaz, his long and intimate familiarity with plots and political intrigues, his extensive study of the history of Muslims in all countries, and his thorough

acquaintance with all the philosophical theories known to Muslims — all these factors and circumstances have enabled Ibn Khaldoun to formulate his new social and historical philosophy.

Apart from his outstanding contribution to social science and philosophy, Ibn Khaldoun's style is highly literary and reveals many artistic qualities. He revolted against the current literary tradition initiated by Al-Qadi Al-Fadil and devised a new and direct method of writing.

In a book which he wrote when he was appointed as a secretary to Sultan Aby Salem Al-Meriny of Fes, Ibn Khaldoun says: "I wrote it mostly in a straightforward language in which I was joined by no writer who adopted a rhymed style — a style which is very weak and obscure to most people. At that time I was the only writer to use this simple style which was unusual to writers then. Then I composed poetry; I produced an enormous number of poems which varied between excellence and weakness". These words show his revolt against the literary attitude prevailing in contemporary artistic writing and represented by the degenerated *Fadeleya* method. He liked to write in a straightforward fashion, and judged his poetry as neither good nor bad. His famous *Prolegomena* is a model of artistic yet straightforward writing on the whole, with the exception of a few strange expressions and some linguistic and grammatical mistakes, some of which may be due to the copyists' misrepresentation. Moreover we should not forget that Ibn Khaldoun was a Moor, affected by Moorish culture and the Moor's way of expressing themselves at that age. Some modern scholars have unjustly attacked Ibn Khaldoun's style and described it as weak and faulty. In

their opinion, Ibn Khaldoun's style does not match his power of thinking. However, the style of the *Prolegomena* is a model which has been copied by our writers at the beginning of our renaissance. But, the truth is that all that has been attributed to the style of the *Prolegomena*, that it is obscure and complicated, is probably due to miscopying. It is also due to its poor editions which were full of printing mistakes. Some of the pages were even missing. The learned George Zeedan says that he has come across disgraceful mistakes which cause wonder. As a matter of fact, the *Prolegomena* should be edited properly by some specialists who can do justice to that great work.

HIS WORKS

Ibn Khaldoun has various works. He has written on logic. He has summarized the philosophy of Ibn Roshd. He has written on Jurisprudence, Mathematics, Literature and Arithmetic. But, from all these, only his famous work '*Kitâb al-'ibar*' has reached us. This book follows the scientific method in studying history, which is based on two things : First, keeping away from the chronological order of relating incidents, and dividing history into parts every one of which is about a given country or family. Secondly, the accuracy of information about the Berbers without affecting the wealth of details.

This book has three parts : The first part is a preface to the study of history and an introduction to the science of civilization. The second part is about the history of the Arabs and other nations. It starts from the beginning of the world until the eighth century of Hejira. The third part is about the history of the Berbers. This work ends with a separate book in which Ibn Khaldoun wrote the story of his life and which he called : "The Journey of Ibn Khaldoun in the West and the East".

The first part of this great book is known as the *Prolegomena*. It is the part with which Ibn Khaldoun made his reputation which reached both East and West. Ibn Khaldoun divided his famous *Prolegomena* into a preface

about the merits of the science of history and into six large chapters. The first chapter dealt with human civilization in general, and the dwelling of man on earth. In the second, he dealt with nomadic civilization and mentioned the savage tribes and nations. In the third, he wrote about states, caliphate and royalty, and the Sultanic ranks. In the fourth, he tackled urban civilizations, countries and cities. In the fifth, he described the occupations, livelihood, earning and possessions; and he also dealt with classes and ranks.

— Ibn Khaldoun's accurate presentation and his excellent system are quite clear from this division. For he presented the themes of the *Prolegomena* very logically. His intellectual grasp and his power of research, reasoning and deduction are reflected in the strong cohesion between the various subjects he dealt with.

If we attempted to translate these six parts into their equivalents in modern scientific terms, we would find that the first deals with evolution, the second with sociology, the third with practical politics, the fourth with military engineering, the fifth with political economy and the sixth with the history of Arabic literature, the development of sciences, the aims of Islamic education and the methods of instruction.

A NEW METHOD IN WRITING HISTORY

Ibn Khaldoun has devised rules for writing history which had never been applied before. In his introduction to the merits of history, he disclosed the principles of his new system and clearly showed the value and methods of history. He argued with historians about their views and shortcomings. He thought that the reasons for these were partiality, fanaticism, prejudice and the desire to please the authorities. He says : " If the historian is a Shīte, he tries as much as he can to hurt the Omayyads and fill their history with terrible atrocities. And, if he wants to ingratiate himself with kings, he overlooks their misdeeds and exaggerates their good points and maybe invents incidents to raise their estimation. Moreover, the historians may take so many things for granted and do not investigate or criticise. So, if historians resorted to proper investigation and verification used by scholars who study Hadith, they would render a great service to history. They may be ignorant of the ways of civilization. Thus, the historian who does not know about the affairs and habits of society cannot judge events and happenings properly.

Ibn Khaldoun advises the historian not to follow the rule of investigation and verification except after he is sure whether the event agrees or does not agree with the nature of civilization. He attacks the historians for the mistakes they make in the events and happenings. They rely on hearsay and do not compare what they take in with their

origins and their parallels. Again, they do not judge events and happenings wisely or in accordance with natural logic. So, they make mistakes and get lost in a wilderness of errors, especially in reckoning the sums of money and number of soldiers.

We should note that although Muslim historians, like Ibn Hisham, Al-Waquidy, and Al-Masoudy, have exaggerated in their narration of some of the causes of events and their reckoning of numbers and have fallen into many false thoughts and misconceptions, European historians were in absolute ignorance about the actualities which affect the course of the events of history, and they relied upon witchcraft and fortune-telling.

Ibn Khaldoun has strongly denied that superstitions could have any connection with the true interpretation of history. He also proved that events are governed by the laws of nature and sociology. He attacks the erroneousness of historians in a scientific style: "Historians have allowed themselves to go wrong when they treated the ancient kings of the Yemen and Arabia. These are supposed to have invaded Africa and Berber Morocco from their villages. Ibn Kais Ibn Saifi — one of their greatest kings who was a contemporary of Moses — is said to have invaded Africa and killed the Berbers. It was he who called them by that name; when he heard their jargon, he said: "What is this barbarity?" And they have been called Berbers ever since. When he left that place, he left some tribes from Himyar who lived there and mixed with its people among whom were Sanhaga and Kotama. Accordingly, Al-Tabari, Al-Gorgani, Al-Masoudi and Ibn Al-Kalby presumed that Sanhaga and Kotama belong to Himyar, but the Berber

dynasty would not allow it and this is the truth. Al-Masoudi also mentioned that 'al-Azär' was one of their kings; he was a contemporary of Solomon — peace be upon him. He fought against Morocco and devastated it. The same was said about his son Yaser after him, who is said to have reached Wadi Al-Raml in Morocco, but, not finding a way due to the abundance of sand, went back. It is also said about 'Tobbaas the Second' alias 'Assad Abu Karb', who was a contemporary of 'Yostasif', one of the Kayania Persian Kings, that he was the king of Mousel and Azerbaijan and that he confronted the Turks and defeated them and that he attacked them a second time and a third. After this, he sent three of his sons to fight in Persia, in Saghd — one of the Turkish dependencies beyond the River — and in the country of the Romans. The first seized the country to Samarkand and crossed the desert to China where he found that his second brother, who fought till he reached Samarkand, had arrived before him there. So they both fought the Chinese and went back home loaded with spoils, leaving behind them in China tribes from Himyar who have settled there to this age. The third reached Constantinople and studied it; he fought fiercely against the Romans before he returned home."

These are the errors of historians which Ibn Khaldoun enumerates, and which he discusses scientifically in this style: "All these news are far from being correct, and are deeply rooted in fancy and error. They are more like fictitious stories. This is because the kingdom of the Tobbaas was in Arabia and their capital in Yemen's Sanäa. Arabia is surrounded by the sea from three sides: The Indian Ocean from the south, the Persian Gulf descending from it into Basra from the east, and the sea of Suez

descending from it into Suez in Egypt from the west, as you can see in maps. So, anybody who wants to go from Yemen to Morocco can only take the Suez way. As the road from Suez to the Mediterranean sea is more than a two day's journey, it is very unlikely that a great king with his numerous soldiers should go through it without conquering it. This is not usual. In those states were the Amalikas and the Kanäans in Syria and the Copts in Egypt. Afterwards, the Amalikas reigned over Egypt. We have never heard that the Tobbaas fought any of these nations or reigned over them. Again, the distance from the sea to Morocco is far, and the provisions, fodder and soldiers are numerous, so if they went through another country they needed to loot the crops and livestock, and to plunder the countries which they passed through".

Thus, Ibn Khaldoun disagrees with the historians in their assumption that the Tobba kings had invaded Morocco, China, Turkey and Rome. He proves that this is practically impossible and is utterly rejected by reason. However, in his arguments with the historians about other subjects, he is not without weakness, partiality and prejudice. Examples of this is his refutation of the story of Haroun Al-Rasheed's sister, Abbasa, with Gaafer Al-Barmaky, and his attempt to revoke the accusations levelled against the ancestry of the Abeedis (Fatimids). He defined the subject of history as the social life, and all that occurs in it of material and intellectual culture. Its object was to show people's work and the way they earn their living, the cause of their disputes, how they form groups and submit to one ruler, how they find in civilized life some leisure to engage in industries and sciences, and how civilization flourishes little by little until it finally dies.

Ibn Khaldoun believes that history in reality records the life of human society. That is why he started to study society, to discover the factors that give nations their being, characteristics and distinguishing traits. Among these factors are :

1. — *Natural environment moulds the National Character :*

Nations differ in colour, mental and physical capacities, character and size, according to the natural factors that have influence on them. Among these factors are their natural habitation — mountain, plain or desert, — the climate, and the fertility or barrenness of the soil. Ibn Khaldoun says : “ So, the sciences, occupations, buildings, clothes, speech, fruits, and even the animals and everything in the middle regions are moderate. Their human inhabitants are straight in bodies, fair in colour and moderate in religion. The regions which are far from being moderate are inhabited by people who are far from being moderate in every way. Their fruits are strangely shaped and tending to be peculiar in their forms”.

So, the natural factors, including the weather, the environment, the barrenness of the soil or its fertility, the temperateness of the air or its heat, all these have an effect on the qualities of the people, their psychological make-up and their progress or backwardness. Ibn Khaldoun states the effect of the climate on the character and nature of man and in the formation of civilizations in a way similar to that of the authorities on physical geography in our age. Again, he says : “ Food is an effective factor in the qualities of nations : the consumption of meat leaves remains in the body which make the colours dark and rather pale, and the figures ugly. For this reason, the people who live in luxury

are the people who cannot bear illnesses to the contrary of those who are used to the rough nomadic life". In this view, he may be influenced by the instructions of Suphism which, in his age, was widespread in Morocco and Andalusia. Among these instructions is that it is better for the body to go without food, and consequently better for both the mind and the soul.

2. — *Social Factors and the Rise of Nations :*

In as much as the afore-mentioned natural factors have an influence on the life of nations, their progress and decline, so we find that social factors are closely connected with the rise of nations. When people congregate in one place, they find it necessary to co-operate for the sake of living, and during their congregation they imitate one another. First of all man imitates somebody who is stronger than himself in body among his family, relatives or tribe or the inhabitants of the quarter in which he lives, as in learning he imitates his teachers and in wealth the kings and others. So, the aping instinct is one of the most powerful factors and the most effective in human society. He then proceeds to expose the defects of imitation and states that the imitator tries to imitate in the obvious matters, which deal with the style of dress, attire, food and drink. So, if a country falls under the domination of another, the conquered country imitates the conqueror in superficial matters and always neglects to imitate her in the matters that enabled her to win — its clannish power, tis civilization or knowledge.

If Ibn Khaldoun were resurrected anew in our age, he would have seen that, although the conquered is keen on imitating the conqueror, as he says, he does not imitate him

in external matters only, but also in the genuine and substantial ones. Egypt which used to lick the feet of the colonisers in the age of corrupt tyrants, is now a strong republic which stands up as an equal to the colonising nations, and assumes the power which in days past used to be the privilege of her conquerors. We can say, then, that Egypt has imitated conquerors in points of strength.

Ibn Khaldoun sees that close association generates a feeling of solidarity. Therefore, he formulated a new theory to explain the rise and fall of nations. This theory is called tribal solidarity. It is man's readiness to support whoever is related to him against any injustice or oppression. He made it the basis of the power of defence, co-operation and valour. And if tribal solidarity is one of the bases of power, it is also one of the motives of victory, and victory is the basis of leadership, and leadership is mainly for people who can stir a feeling of tribal solidarity. According to Ibn Khaldoun, it is also the basis of sovereignty, because people's affairs cannot be settled unless they have a ruler who renders justice to the oppressed, gives the people their rights and restrains them from one another. But this ruler cannot achieve this position without a strong tribal support. And just as tribal feeling is necessary for establishing sovereignty, it is also necessary for religion, for a religious movement cannot achieve its aim and get widespread support without the clannishness upon which the Prophet can rely, although he is supported by miracles and supernatural phenomena which are beyond human power. Ibn Khaldoun says: "God has not sent a prophet unless he was supported by tribal feeling". A religious movement helps in the consolidation of a state in addition to the power derived from clannishness. For religion by its nature

does away with egotism, rivalry and covetousness, and unites the efforts and directs them towards one aim. Thus the nation becomes stronger and stronger.

The essence of Ibn Khaldoun's view about the formation of human society is that it is established through the instinct of congregation which is innate in man. The family appears first, then the tribe. Then rivalry springs up among the tribes and when one tribe dominates the others we get the monarchy. It contributes to settled life and the process of civilization. Under monarchy nomadic life is changed and we have people settling down in cities and towns. When cities are established, luxury sets in as a result. It weakens the nation and breaks its strength until it surrenders to weakness and perishes. Thus, civilization in Ibn Khaldoun's opinion is the final stage in the development of civilized society.

IBN KHALDOUN'S IDEAS AHEAD OF THE WEST.

Ibn Khaldoun had some interesting views and theories which were not discovered by Western thinkers and philosophers until lately. He spoke at length of government and sovereignty, the impact of tyranny on people, the qualities of the ruler, the defence of the country, the soldiers' pay, the competition between the ruler and his subjects in trade and profit, the ruler's coveteousness of people's money, and its effect in stirring their hatred for him. He spoke about the permeation of disorder into the nation and the soldiers usurping of people's money — all this long before the appearance of the well-known Italian philosopher, Michiavelli, the author of *The Prince*. Ibn Khaldoun also dealt with the philosophy of history in his *Prolegomena*, indicating the interaction between character and society long before the French philosopher, Auguste Comte, the father of modern sociology.

And Ibn Khaldoun is the one who declared that environment and evolution have affected the lives of creatures in this world, long before the British scientist Charles Darwin, the author of the theory of evolution. Ibn Khaldoun also preferred nomads to city-dwellers. He thought nomads were better than the inhabitants of cities long before the philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, who called for the return of man to natural life. Again, it is Ibn Khaldoun who maintained that the difference in the state of generations is

due to the difference in their way of living, long before Karl Marx, the architect of socialism. He also forestalled Spencer in establishing two important principles: first, that clan-ness and co-operation in life are among the first causes of human congregation. Secondly, that the senility of a nation starts when it surrenders to a life of luxury and ease. Among his views in which he was ahead of his time is this: "The conquered are always keen to imitate the conqueror in their motto, clothing, creed and manners".

Durkheim, the founder of sociology in France, has borrowed many of Ibn Khaldoun's ideas: namely, that the life of society is a concrete fact, and that there is a correlation between the size of society and its wealth, and that, historically, social research covers all aspects of national life, and decides whether it is barbaric or civilized, united or divided, conqueror or conquered, and discusses the political status of the country and the way people earn their living.

WESTERN VIEWS OF IBN KHALDOUN'S INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE.

Robert Flint says : " Whoever reads the *Prolegomena* fairly and honestly has to admit that Ibn Khaldoun deserves to be called the founder of the science of history and its philosophy". He goes on to say : " Arabic literature is adorned with one of the most brilliant names. Neither the classical world in the old centuries nor the Christian world in the middle ages could present a name as bright as that of Ibn Khaldoun". Gemplowitch acknowledges the precedence of Ibn Khaldoun in many views and theories which have been mentioned in *The Prince*. Claudio has made a comparison between Ibn Khaldoun and Michiavelli: he says that "if Michiavelli has taught us the ways of governing people, he has done so as a far-sighted politician. But the erudite Tunisian, Ibn Khaldoun, has been able to penetrate into the social aspects as an economist and a well-established philosopher, which makes us see in his heritage a loftiness of outlook and a critical tendency which were quite unknown in his age". T. G. Depuis, a professor at the University of Amsterdam and the author of *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, says : "We did not inherit history from the old historians as a science which has a philosophical basis. For instance, they accounted for humanity not having reached a higher degree of civilization by earthquakes, floods and the like. On the other hand, Christian philosophy

considered history with its events the realization or the preparation for the kingdom of God on earth. Then came Ibn Khaldoun and tried to find links between human development and its immediate causes. He showed great research capacity and fine reasoning. He discussed the problems of sex, the conditions of the weather and their impact on body and mind in both individual and society”.

In his book, *Muslim Thinkers*, Defoe says: “The tendency to investigate everything ranging from evolution to progress puts Ibn Khaldoun, the fourteenth-century writer in the forefront among the most advanced intellects in contemporary Europe”. The American Professor Fard says in *Theoretical Sociology*: “They thought that Montesquieu or Vico were the first to maintain and preach fatalism in social, life, whereas Ibn Khaldoun had said that and discovered the laws of society long before them”. Professor Toynbee, of Oxford University, has stated in his book, *A Study of History*: “Ibn Khaldoun is a genius, and, in his *Prolegomena*, there is shining evidence of far-sightedness, profound research and powerful intellect”. He went on: “In his *Prolegomena*, which he wrote as an introduction to history, he has comprehended and imagined and created the philosophy of history; and this is undoubtedly the best of its kind which has been created by any intellect at any time anywhere”.

De Boër, the Dutch Orientalist, said: “Ibn Khaldoun attempted to establish a new philosophical system which had never occurred to Aristotle: to make a philosophical system of history. He told us that this system is the social life and the substance of society and its intellectual education. The function of history is to show how people work and

earn their living, why they fight one another, and how they congregate in large communities under the protection of leaders, how they are finally inspired, in urban life, to give importance to sciences and fine arts, and how civilization develops from the rough beginning to the easy life, flourishes and then fades away. Again, he is undoubtedly the first to attempt to explain fully the development and progress of society and to attribute this to certain causes. He is also first to expose the circumstances of the genus, country and means of production, etc., and their effect in forming the intellect and feelings of man and in forming society. He sees in the march of civilization an inner harmony". He ends by saying that Ibn Khaldoun wished that somebody would succeed him who would proceed with his research with the aim of confirming it. But, as he was without a predecessor, so he remained without a successor.

Mr. Quiller Young says: "We mention with admiration one of the great men of Islam — the Tunisian Ibn Khaldoun — whom we can consider the first scientific sociologist. He founded that science and put the basic laws of national advancement and degeneration. He also gave the natural factors their place beside the moral and spiritual factors, and his understanding of the importance of history is based on a comprehensive philosophical basis".

These are some of the statements of European authorities. We find in them some fairness and recognition of the heritage of this great philosopher, and of what his rare genius has invented. This undoubtedly puts him in the rank of the great Muslim thinkers who have greatly participated in laying the foundations of Islamic civilization.

And, as Ibn Khaldoun was ahead of a great number of scientists in studying the bases of the philosophy of history and discovering the principles of human civilization, he also comprehensively studied the methods of education in his age and in previous times, and was able to draw some new conclusions with which he outlined a new method for Islamic education. This method is built on proper educational principles, which agree to a large extent with the modern educationalist trends.

IBN KHALDOUN, THE PHILOSOPHICAL EDUCATIONALIST

With his views on Islamic education, Ibn Khaldoun represents an important stage in the history of Islamic education. To illustrate the relation between his views and those of the other leaders of Islamic education who preceded him, we have to resort to a detailed account of the principles of Islamic education throughout the ages.

THE AIMS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Islamic education has two aims: a religious aim, which stresses the other world and persuades people to perform their duty towards God, and a practical worldly aim, which in modern theory, is called learning for living. This latter aim, is also endorsed by pragmatists like John Dewey and William H. Kilpatrick, who follow a practical method in educating the child. Islamic education then is meant to achieve two purposes: the one religious, and the other worldly. It thus differs from the Roman way of education which aimed at excellence in military subjects and rhetoric, both considered then practical. It also differs from the Spartan education which prepared the young for military life only, and the Athenian education which stressed the intellectual and philosophical subjects. It is clear that all these objects are

purely worldly. Again, Muslim education differs from the Israeli education which was solely devoted to religious aims. The tendency of Muslim education to the religious and scientific objects seems to have been inspired by the wise policy delineated by the Qurân in the Qurânic verse : "*But seek, with the (wealth) which God has bestowed on thee, The Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this*". The Prophet said : "*Do for this life as if you were going to live forever, and do for the future one as if you were to die tomorrow*". Thus, Islamic education has combined the religious and worldly objects. In this it is contrary to the ancient education of the Greeks and Romans, which required that the youth should become virtuous and useful in practical life.

According to Ibn Khaldoun, Islamic education aims at preparing men who can lead a good and happy life. This is also the tendency of modern education in our age.

THE METHODS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

These methods differed according to different Muslim environments, but, in spite of this, Muslims regardless of their different environments, were agreed that the Qurân is the basis of Islam and the source of Islamic knowledge. Therefore, they made it one of the bases of education in every Arab country and the axis around which all the other studies revolved. Ibn Khaldoun says in explaining the reason for this: "The aim of this is to make the child reach a firm religious belief and to plant in him the foundations of good morals by way of religion, which came to purify souls, improve morals and help to propagate good".

Islamic education has two methods: one for the primary education, and the other for high education.

1. *The primary method* prevailed in all Muslim countries. The Qurân and Hadith were the two main subjects. In other subjects it differed according to the different Muslim countries and what suited each of them. It is obvious from the name 'primary' that it was meant for children. In North Africa, the Muslims considered it sufficient for the child to learn the Qurân by heart. For this reason, they wrote the Qurân down and memorized it better than any other Muslim nation. Andalusians combined the study of the Qurân with that of other subjects such as poetry and prose. The children were also taught linguistics and callig-

raphy. Thus, when the youngster became of age, he knew something of the Arabic language and its poetry as well as arithmetic and geography, and distinguished himself in calligraphy and writing. The inhabitants of the Eastern regions, such as Baghdad and the neighbouring Muslim countries, used the same method as the Andalusians — in addition to learning the Qurân by heart, children studied other subjects — but they differed from them in two things. First: they gave more care to the study of the Qurân. Secondly: they devoted special schools and teachers for calligraphy and made it completely separate from the school programme. Thus, the children in primary schools in the Eastern regions were not good at calligraphy. If any of them wanted to distinguish himself in it he went to experts or to private institutes.

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IBN KHALDOUN'S VIEW OF SCHOOL CURRICULA

According to Ibn Khaldoun, the fact that Moroccan and African children studied the Qurân only made it difficult for them to possess the creative faculty necessary for self-expression. Children were forced to learn the Qurân by heart without acquiring a degree of understanding the style of the Qurân which suited their mental faculties. This same method was adopted in the schools of the Egyptian villages; it was contrary to that of the people of North Africa, who combined with the teaching of the Qurân that of Arabic, poetry, prose and calligraphy. As a result, they acquired excellence in handwriting, literary ability, eloquence and an original creative talent.

Ibn Khaldoun then deals with the view of Qadi Abou Bakr Ibn Al-Araby, one of the leaders of Islamic education; he says: "He has a method which he has overstressed". The essence of his method is that poetry is the record of the Arabs and it ought to be put in the first place; also Arabic should be preferred to other objects of study. If the child acquired a reasonable amount of this, he moved on to Arithmetic, which he tried to master. Then he passed on to the Qurân. According to Ibn Al-Araby, this method helps the children to understand the Qurân. Ibn Khaldoun agrees with this system and supports it. But he realizes that the customs of the Moroccans do not approve of it. He says: "Upon my soul, it is a good system, but current

customs do not favour it, and they are the decisive factors. The reason why the Qurân is put on the top of the list of the subjects of study is that people seek God's blessings and recompense, and fear lest any diseases or mishaps should hinder the child from learning, or distract him from studying the Qurân. If the child exceeds the age of puberty and is released from suppression, he may be driven to unemployment by the passions of youth.

2. *Programme for Higher Studies*: Ibn Khaldoun divides the subjects which form this programme into two sections: First, definite basic subjects studied for their own sake including Jurisprudence, Qurânic commentary, Hadith, Muslim philosophy, physics, Theology and Philosophy. Second, subjects not intended in themselves but are conducive to proficiency in the previous ones, such as Arabic language, Arithmetic and Logic. Ibn Khaldoun thought it necessary to widen the scope of teaching the subjects of the first division, and to make a comprehensive classification of their problems and a thorough acquaintance with their details. On the other hand, he did not think it necessary to make an extensive study of the subjects of the second group except to the degree necessary for understanding their aims. He, therefore, vigorously attacked those who went deep into the study of the subject of Mechanics, and considered that a deviation from the purpose of learning and a waste of the student's time.

Ibn Khaldoun attacks the subject of grammar in a peculiar way. In his age it was more important than other subjects in school programmes. It was among the subjects which were used as instruments for others. He directs against it much of his scathing criticism, and expresses his

view in the following manner : " Scholars have made a big fuss of it and have provided for it so many ramifications and interpretations. Thus, it defeated its own purposes". After having put grammar in its place among other subjects, Ibn Khaldoun tries to draw the ideal way of teaching it. He states that grammar should not be theoretically taught, because the aim is to train children to express themselves properly and to read correctly and understand what they read. He believes that grammar and rhetoric should not be taught until the child reaches a suitable age. The views of Ibn Khaldoun about the method of teaching grammar, the aim of teaching it and the suitable age for learning grammar and rhetoric are not very much different from modern trends in education. Teaching grammar depends upon the child reaching the stage of being able to reason and deduce. This stage is reached at adolescence. Ibn Khaldoun says : " Grammar and rhetoric are two sides of the philosophy of the language, and we should not start teaching them to the child until he reaches a suitable age".

Ikhwan Al-Safa — a famous Muslim sect — pay attention to the addition of philosophical sciences to the programme of high studies in Muslim schools. They had a well-known view which agrees to a great extent with the principles of modern education. They advocated the theory of beginning with the concrete before the abstract and took the concrete as a means of studying intellectual subjects and theology. They were able by this method, which was original in their age, to present the Muslim faith in an accurate and scientific way. The main idea of their method calls for the reconciliation of religion and reason. When Ibn Khaldoun examined the views of Ikhwan Al-Safa in planning the programmes of study, he approved of their

attitude. He always had the aim of working for the development of Muslim programmes. For instance, he declares that it is necessary, in choosing the subjects of the programmes, to consider these bases :

a) The consideration of the children's abilities.

b) Preference of physical experiences as a basis for attaining the abstract. We may notice that the high programme in Muslim Education was not unified in all countries. Each country had its own programme in high education. Moreover, even in a single country, the high programme did not restrict the student to the study of particular subjects. Again, the teacher was not confined to a particular programme which he had to teach. But there were some common subjects in all these programmes, such as linguistics and religious teaching. The high programmes can be grouped into two divisions: 1) Literary-religious programmes. 2) Literary-scientific programmes. The literary-religious programmes aimed at teaching purely religious subjects beside some literary subjects which were closely related to Islam, such as linguistics and history. The literary-religious programme was then suited to the contemporary Muslim environment. It appeared in the first stage of the history of Arab Muslim nations, during which the attention of the Arabs and Muslims was drawn to the teaching and understanding of religion, to the discovery of its commands and to the defence of religion when the two schools of Koufa and Basra started their scientific and linguistic activity. These were opposed to each other in thought and method of research. Both, however, were occupied with the problem of theorizing Arabic grammar, due to the fact that many grammatical mistakes occurred in the Arabic language, as a result of the mingling of the Arabs with the

people of the conquered nations. Therefore, the grammatical and etymological rules were formulated in order to prevent the decline of the Arabic language, and to serve as an instrument for understanding the Qurân and the Sunna, and as a necessary means for whoever wanted to treat and acquire religious knowledge, especially when he was a non-Arab. Ibn Khaldoun says: "Whoever wants to study Sharia has got to study the various sciences of the Arabic language, namely, linguistics, grammar, elocution and literature".

The same degree of importance was given not only to the teaching of grammar, but also to the compilation of poetry. Ancient poetry served as a means of understanding the Qurân and interpreting its verses and deducing rules from them. We notice that historical research depended on the religious factor. The first books that were written by the Arab historians were books about the life of the Prophet. Historical research then developed and the books of the Arabic Muslim conquests were written. The relation between religious subjects and literary and human subjects remained during the first and second centuries.

Religious subjects were taught in a fully academic way. Thus we can see that the religious stamp prevailed in the programmes of high education till the third century of the Hejira. In his book, *Keys of Learning*, Al-Khowarazmi names the subjects of this programme as: Jurisprudence, grammar, Muslim philosophy, prosody, history and arithmetic. The importance of arithmetic in the programme is due to its use for the study of inheritance and that of the Calendar.

As to the second programme, the scientific-literary one, it was adopted since the development of Arabic Muslim

thought in the Abbasid age and the Arabs' contact with foreign cultures, such as the Persian, Greek and Indian. In that era, Arabic-Muslim thought was released from its dogmatism, and an active scientific-philosophical movement took place. Academies were set up in Baghdad and Cairo. The Arabs were keen on translating the sciences which helped in the construction of the nation. After having understood and digested the translations they reached the stage of invention, and they contributed much to the scientific heritage in medicine, surgery, pharmacology, physiology, chemistry and physics.

In the history of Arabic culture, there are some bright names, like Ibn Al-Haitham, Ibn Sina, Abou Al-Rihan Al-Bairouny — the famous surgeon —, Abou Al-Kassem Al-Zahrawi, Gaber Ibn Hayan, and the great geographical traveller Yakout Al-Hamawy, and many other famous learned men. Nicholson says: "The discoveries of today do not count for much compared to what we are indebted with to the Arab pioneers. They were a radiant torch in the obscure middle ages, especially in Europe". Defoe says: "The legacy which was left by the Greeks was not well-utilized by the Romans. But the Arabs perfected it and endeavoured to improve and complete it until they delivered it to modern ages". Sidio goes so far as to say that "the Arabs are the actual professors of Europe in all branches of knowlege". There is no doubt that these statements contain a fair estimation of Arabic-Muslim civilization which helped to advance the scientific movement in most Islamic states. As a result of this movement, the programme for high studies expanded in the golden age in the life of the Arab Nation until it contained physics, which included medicine and all its branches, anatomy, diagnosis,

pharmacology, medical treatment, diet, metallurgy, mining, botany, zoology, and alchemy. Mathematics contained arithmetic, algebra, geometry, astronomy, music, mechanics, engineering and logic. We can infer from what has been said that the programme for higher studies in Muslim education has certain characteristics which can be summarized as follows :

- 1) The tendency to give priority to religious subjects. This stimulated interest in those sciences which help in the understanding of religion and its rules. Religion then was a common factor in all programmes. Muslim Educators have gone so far as to say that human perfection can only be attained through the reconciliation between religion and science, or between the commands of Islam and Greek philosophy.
- 2) The literary studies occupied second place after the religious subjects. These studies were not pursued for their own sake, but were a means for understanding religion.
- 3) The attention of the Arabs began to turn to scientific studies, and the programmes included physics, astronomy and mathematics, when the Arabs realized their importance in the development of thought and civilization.
- 4) Specialization was not yet known. The student used to penetrate deeply into many subjects; the student of medicine, for example, used to learn logic, mathematics, physics and Islamic subjects such as grammar and Arabic poetry. Sciences then were not as developed as they are now.

- 5) Generally, the programmes for higher studies were extensive and diversified, but they were not very profound. They were not purely intellectual but rather touched with sentimentality. Arabic Islamic education preserved in its programmes the principles of integrating all elements in an Arabic-Islamic entity. The insistence on keeping a balance between the intellectual and the spiritual is the best guarantee of unity. It prevents any serious clashes in society. Perhaps the disintegration and turbulence of the world today and its division into belligerent blocs is due primarily to the dominance of the intellectual over the spiritual, and the prevalence of materialism which resulted in the deterioration of the spiritual powers. Thus, Arabic-Islamic education stressed a lofty human principle, which guaranteed security for all and consolidated the idea of peace throughout the world.
- 6) All these programmes have been inspired by the circumstances of Muslim society, because they developed with it in response to its needs. This is sought after in modern education.

IBN KHALDOUN'S VIEWS ON GENERAL INSTRUCTION

- 1) *Acquaintance with the art of teaching is a necessity imposed by the educational act :*

It is not enough for the teacher to acquire knowledge, but he should master the way of presenting his material. This can be achieved only by studying the psychology of children and knowing the extent of their abilities and their learning potentialities, so that he may address them on their own intellectual level. Thus, he maintains contact with them. Ibn Khaldoun says : " The proof that teaching is an art is the divergence of methods adopted. Every one of the famous Imams has a method in teaching peculiar to himself, the same as in all other arts. This shows that the method is not the same as the matter". He declares that the method of teaching is not a substantial part of the subject. The proof of this is the difference in method between one teacher and another. Modern psychology emphasizes that the method is a means for teaching the subject or the prescribed programme, not the programme itself. The single programme can be taught by more than one method.

Ibn Khaldoun attacks formalism in education. He warns against memorizing without understanding the material. In his view, this hinders the ability to form an opinion. He advocates a method similar to the scientific way of argument : " The easiest way to acquire this faculty — the

faculty of understanding — is to practise debating and arguing in scientific matters, as this process helps this faculty to flourish”.

He blames teachers who exact memorization and recitation because they are futile and leave no trace in the minds of children. He gives as proof the fact that in spite of sixteen years of education, Moroccan children did not master the necessary faculty, owing to their preoccupation with memorization. The opposite tendency is found in Tunisia where schooling lasted for only five years, and yet children's talents were highly developed, because of the attention given by teachers to debate and research. He impresses on teachers the necessity of studying the mental development of youngsters because, in his view, the child at the beginning of his life, is not fully developed: “ We have seen many teachers in this age who are ignorant of the methods of teaching. They face the pupil at the beginning of his education with obscure problems of learning and ask him to solve them, and they think that this is the right training. The acquisition of learning takes place gradually. At the beginning, the learner is unable to grasp general matters, except by way of simplification and generalization by means of concrete examples. His readiness for learning improves little by little by the variety and repetition of the problems of this art. He passes the stage of simplification to that of assimilation. Thus, he acquires the necessary preparation and training”.

2) *Methods of Teaching :*

a) *Gradualness and repetition :*

In Ibn Khaldoun's opinion, the education of youngsters should be based on the generalization of knowledge at the

beginning; specification should come later by degrees. The youngster should at first be given problems in every aspect of the art. Then the teacher brings it nearer to his mind by explanation and illustration, taking into account the degree of his pupil's mental development and their readiness to receive what they are taught until they reach the highest degree in the art. The teacher should then go back once more to this art and by perfect explanation and clarification move from generalization to specification, until the pupils reach the end of the art. Then he should go back a third time to this same art and look into it thoroughly, leaving no problem, question, subtlety or ambiguity without explanation and clarification. These repetitions, in Ibn Khaldoun's view, help to fix knowledge into the minds of children and to give them the necessary talent in the various arts. Talent here means the skill in the art or science, or the power to use it in practical life. Ibn Khaldoun justifies these three repetitions by the fact that the youngsters' readiness to grasp knowledge comes gradually. This is in accordance with the most up-to-date methods of education. Gradual learning suits the psychological traits which appear in the various stages of development. Repetition makes for accuracy which is important in the process of learning. No doubt repetition helps to improve and facilitate the ordering and fixing of information in the pupil's minds. Repetition, as advocated by Ibn Khaldoun, is not very different from what modern educationalists prescribe in this respect. Experiences thus should be based on alternation and succession. This means that the experience is presented in a different way every time there is a repetition over the various stages of development.

b) *Means of Illustration :*

Ibn Khaldoun advocates concrete illustrations because, at the outset, the youngster's power of understanding is weak. The concrete example helps children to understand what they are taught. Thus, Ibn Khaldoun strongly urges learners to travel for the sake of knowledge. The voyage puts at their disposal many sources of knowledge and experience, and gives them the opportunity to see for themselves and make sure of what they learn. Modern education supports Ibn Khaldoun's use of travels as a very important means of acquiring knowledge in a direct way.

Today, trips are recognized among the most important ways of studying and the acquisition of direct experience. Ibn Khaldoun points out that travel facilitates the meeting of specialists and great scientists: " Travelling to acquire knowledge and to meet the learned authorities, specialists and great men of science and education, helps to perfect one's learning. The reason for this is that human beings obtain their knowledge, manners, creeds and virtues, sometimes through science, study or recitation, and sometimes through direct imitation or prompting. Yet, the talent acquired through experience and prompting is more firmly established and strongly fixed, especially in the case of the numerousness and variety of the teachers". But the journey which Ibn Khaldoun advocates is the journey made to meet teachers and great men of learning. The acquisition of knowledge in that age was done in two ways: First, teachers read a number of books and communicated what they discovered therein of scientific problems to their students. Secondly, by travelling to the great learned men who wrote these books, and listening directly to them. Ibn Khaldoun

prefers the second method for acquiring knowledge. Thus, the journey does not differ from that undertaken for recording and observation. The purpose of both is to acquire knowledge.

c) *Do not Put the Cart Before the Horse :*

This means we should not give the youngster definitions and general rules at the start of his schooling. We should start by giving him enough examples to prepare him for understanding the rules, laws and definitions, because, to face him with general rules and to give him problems at once without being prepared to understand what he is being taught may exhaust his mind and render it sluggish, and may also reduce his thinking power and lead him to what we call today academic paralysis. It will make him hate learning. The blame should lie with the bad method which does not take into consideration the inclinations and capabilities of the youngsters.

When Ibn Khaldoun opposes and denounces these methods, he is in agreement with modern psychology which advocates the necessity of taking into account the previous knowledge of the child before proceeding further.

d) *The Necessity of Continuity :*

This, as Ibn Khaldoun sees it, means that the teacher should be keen to give the youngster all the lessons on the same subject continuously, because interruption leads to forgetfulness. This confirms what he previously said about the necessity of teaching through three uninterrupted repetitions, because the interruption leads to forgetfulness and

hinders the formation of the faculty of learning. He does not mean, however, the interruption which is intended for rest and renewing the energy, but the long interruption which causes one to forget previously-gained knowledge.

e) *One Subject at a Time :*

Ibn Khaldoun believes that the youngster should not be taught two subjects at the same time, as it is doubtful that he will be able to learn even one of them because of his divided attention and his abandoning each of them to understand the problems of the other. Thus, he fails in both of them. But, if he gave all his time to study one subject he should be able to acquire it and solve all its problems. We can take Ibn Khaldoun's statement to mean that he favours specialization. It is impossible to fully comprehend one of the subjects and know its details except through devoting one's time to it. We can also understand from his words that the youngster cannot be taught the problems of two different subjects simultaneously.

If Ibn Khaldoun means that we should teach the youngster one subject only until he knows its problems fully and then we can teach him another subject, and so on, modern education does not agree with him, because it advocates the necessity of diversifying the subjects of study, as the child does not acquire knowledge in portions — i.e. to teach him one subject, and if he perfects it he moves on to another. Modern psychology has proved that at the same educational stage, a person can be taught different things. There is no doubt that the diversification of the subjects of study renews the energy of the students and increases their appetite for learning.

f) *The Qurân Should Not Be Taught Until The Child Has Acquired A Certain Degree Of Intelligence :*

Ibn Khaldoun blames the teachers of his time for the widespread habit which imposed teaching the Qurân on the child at the start of his education, in the hope that learning the Qurân might give the child excellent training in elocution and good writing. It was thought that the Qurân protects from misfortunes. Those teachers claimed at the same time that to learn the Qurân in childhood helps in learning the language. In reply to these teachers, Ibn Khaldoun says: "The Qurân is the word of God, but it has no influence on the language as the child does not understand its meanings or relish its styles. The Qurân will have its linguistic and moral effect only when the child reaches a certain degree of intellectual maturity which enables him to understand its meaning". In the eighteenth century, Rousseau was affected by the views of Ibn Khaldoun, and he clamoured for the necessity of delaying the religious education until the fifth year. But, Ibn Khaldoun did not hold the same opinion as Rousseau. All that the Muslim philosopher held was that the child should not be taught something that he does not understand, and that the effect of the Qurân in learning the language is not clear if the child does not understand its meanings. The young child is naturally unable to grasp accurately the aims of the Qurân and the meanings of its verses. For this reason, Ibn Khaldoun delays the teaching of the Qurân until a suitable age. As for the other religious subjects, he did not think it necessary to delay them, and here we find the difference between the views of Ibn Khaldoun and those of Rousseau later on.

Ibn Khaldoun also holds an opinion which has a great importance in our age. Some of our thinkers

today claim that it is possible to translate the Qurân into foreign languages, extolling the possible advantages resulting from this to the non-Arab Muslim nations. They also think that this would help to spread Islam and to widen the range of the Islamic environment in the different countries of the universe. But Ibn Khaldoun frankly states : "The Qurân and the Sunna are Arabic and are untranslatable, especially the Qurân". And the non-Arab Muslim nations did not try to translate it, in obedience to the Qurânic verse: "*We have sent it down as an Arabic Qurân*". Ibn Khaldoun's views, the keenness of the Muslim nations in the different ages not to translate the Qurân, and the will of God Almighty to protect His Book from the misrepresentation of the conspirators — "*We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)*" — all these factors helped to preserve this Holy Book exactly as it was revealed by God. But for this earnestness of the Muslim nation, which Ibn Khaldoun supported by his view, the translation of the Qurân might have aroused suspicions and the Muslims might have got mixed up over their Book. Ibn Khaldoun's view that the Qurân should not be translated is the view held by the majority of devout Muslims.

Some thinkers take a middle course : they approve of translating the meanings of the Qurân, with the aim of propagating the instructions of Islam among all nations. One of the shortcomings of this view is the possibility that some evil-intentioned party might exploit this and claim that the translation of the meanings is the Qurân itself. We should not forget the attempts of Israel, who published some distorted editions of the Holy Qurân. Therefore, the duty of all Muslims is not to enable the enemies of Islam to use any

weapon to distort the Qurân and Islam, by strongly adhering to the views of our predecessors who held that the Holy Qurân should not be translated.

g) *Avoiding Summaries in Education :*

Summarization of texts, according to Ibn Khaldoun, blocks the way of proper understanding. He indicates that the 'ulama' of later generations had become very fond of this, and so the number of summaries and texts increased. Ibn Khaldoun mentions among these teachers Ibn Al-Hagib in Jurisprudence and its bases, and Ibn Malik in grammar. He attacks summaries thus : " In this way the education is spoilt, the acquisition of knowledge is disturbed, and the time of the student is wasted in pursuing obscure terms. This, he points out, stands in the way of acquiring the necessary talent resulting from education. What has led later generations to accept summaries is that they found it a means to make the act of memorization easy for students. Thus they landed them into difficulties, which prevented their developing useful talents". It is said that the 'ulama' in later ages wrote texts of knowledge to bring themselves in favour with the Turkish rulers, and to enable their sons to learn things by heart. No doubt the exaggerated attention given to summaries and the encouragement of children to learn the texts by heart were among the factors which led to the inflexibility of culture in those ages.

Educationalists in our age are strongly against summaries. They forbid their use in schools. But this is not a new tendency. It is as old as Ibn Khaldoun's age. For, according to him, summaries exhaust the mind and muddle it up, and waste the child's time. It is for this reason that modern educationalists like Ibn Khaldoun, have forbidden it.

h) *Punishment As An Incentive To Learning Is The Last Resort For The Teacher :*

Ibn Khaldoun advocates mercy towards children and warns against the overtaxing of their energies, because straining in education is harmful to the students' body and especially in the case of children. If a child is harshly and oppressively treated, he becomes distressed and loses his energy, and tends to become lazy and cunning. He may even lie and lose his sense of humanity. It is interesting that Ibn Khaldoun refers to the humiliating influence which oppressing and harshness have on the spirit in this way : " Look at the Jews and the bad character they have acquired. So notorious have they become that everywhere and in every age they are known for their wickedness and deceit". This judgement by Ibn Khaldoun shows his subtlety and profound thought. Now, we are only too well aware of the truthfulness of his statement. We need only look at the so-called state of Israel. Its conduct and behaviour prove Ibn Khaldoun's opinion about the Jews, and especially the Zionist Jews who are mostly dishonest and treacherous. Ibn Khaldoun advises teachers and parents not to be oppressive in teaching and punishment. He says : " Among the best methods of education is what Haroun Al-Rasheed has drawn in his advice to Abou Al-Hassan Aly Ibn Hamza Al-Kessai, the tutor of his son, Al-Amin. This advice is founded on two educational bases : The first basis is the scholastic programme which Al-Rasheed has set for the education of Al-Amin. The second basis recommends actions and practical steps to put this programme into effect. This advice, which is considered a very important educational document, has approved of punishment in principle, but made it the teacher's last resort, to be used only after exhausting all

other means. This advice is considered among the documents of Islamic education, and we quote it here : " O, Ahmar ! The Prince of the faithful has given you the very soul of his soul and has given you authority over him. Therefore, his obedience is due to you. Try to be worthy of the high place which has been accorded to you by the Prince of the faithful. Teach him the history of the Arabs, let him read poetry and teach it to him. Let him learn the proper style and forbid him to laugh except at the appropriate times. Make him extol the sheiks of Bani Hashim when he happens to be in their presence, and also the leaders of the army. Let no hour pass without taking the chance of making him profit from it, but do not make him sad and destroy his intellect. Do not be too lenient either to the extent that he may relish and get accustomed to leisure. Try to reform him by means of kindness and sympathy. But, if he does not respond, then you should resort to severity and harshness". This document gives us a clear picture of the scholastic programme which was known in Al-Rasheed's age. This programme included teaching the Holy Qurân and history, reciting and learning poetry, and literary criticism which helps the student to relish and compose good speech. The programme also stressed the ethical side of education. We notice that, for the realization of these aims, practical means had to be devised. This document foreshadows what we nowadays call extracurricular activities. The pupils can practise outside the schoolroom, under the supervision of teachers, whatever they wish, as indicated by Al-Rasheed : " Let no time pass without taking the chance of making him profit from it", which means that the teacher should exploit the time after the end of the lessons in giving the pupils some new experiences. The advice stipulates that the in-

formation given to the child should be easy and suitable to its age and ability, for it should not find too much difficulty in understanding it. When the pupil feels he also to tackle difficult subjects, he becomes sad and his mind is dulled. We notice that the advice has approved of the use of friendliness and indulgence in treating the children. But, at the same time, it approved of using severity, if necessary, in treating children, otherwise they will neglect the process of learning. It also allows punishment in principle as necessary for learning sometimes, but it makes it the last thing that the teacher should resort to after exhausting all other means. The document we have considered only too sketchily contains much more than that. This is only a brief outline.

i) *The Importance of Moral Education :*

Modern education stipulates the importance of having a living example to live up to. This serves best the aims of moral education and helps to impress virtues in the hearts. In Ibn Khaldoun's view, children should be made to imitate since it is more effective than mere instruction and admonition. This view is derived from what Amr Ibn Ataba wrote to a teacher: "To improve my sons you should begin by improving yourself, for their eyes are bound to yours. To them, what you do is fine, and what you avoid is abominable. Teach them God's Book, but don't let them get bored with it, or they will hate it; nor should you leave the matter up to them or they will abandon it. Let them read the most creditable Hadiths and the purest poetry, and do not make them move from one subject to another before they master it, for cramming their minds with information makes it difficult for them to digest it. Teach them the precepts

of the wise and make them avoid speaking to women. And don't think I shall accept any excuse from you, for I have relied upon your efficiency". It is evident from an analysis of this advice that it acknowledges the principle of the good example in moral education. There is also an elaborate planning of a school programme which does not go beyond that prescribed in Al-Rasheed's afore-mentioned document. It has also restated some of Ibn Khaldoun's views which assert that youngsters should not shift from one art to another before mastering the rudiments of the first. We have already mentioned that this view differs from the new trends in modern education. A thing which this document states and which Al-Rasheed's does not, is forbidding children to speak to women, because, if they become accustomed to do so, this will weaken in them the spirit of bravery and magnanimity and will make them grow soft and lose the prerequisites of manhood.

Good example in school environment is a factor intended to provide the right atmosphere for virtues. Children will then absorb the good qualities which correct the behaviour and develop the right moral tendencies. The good example recommended by Ibn Khaldoun necessitates that the behaviour of teachers and parents should be in accordance with religious teachings in belief and action, faith and good conduct. It is noticeable that an environment where religious preaching surpasses the actual practice of religion helps to create the seeds of doubt in the minds of children, and weakens their faith. In order that teachers may be good examples they should try to establish good human relationships between them and their pupils, based on affection, sympathy, good treatment and mutual understanding.

They should be personifications of virtues and good conduct inside and outside the school.

j) *Learning is a Social Process :*

Ibn Khaldoun says : “ Since learning and teaching are social acts peculiar to mankind, they have been more abundant in urban than in nomadic life, for both of them are more badly needed as civilization grows”. At first glance, Ibn Khaldoun’s statement seems easy and simple; but, if we examine it somewhat more deeply, we shall find that it embodies one of the profound thoughts advocated by modern education — namely, that learning is a social process. For, when people congregate and settle down in a place, they are obviously in great need of education, but the nomadic person who does not settle down is in no need of education. Social progress in urban life is most strongly connected with education, which stresses the importance of defining the objectives and aims. Education is essential for civilized life because it enables individuals to become masters of their environment.

Ibn Khaldoun believes that imitation and personal contact with the learned are among the most important methods of learning. These methods are more profitable than reading books or attending classes. He advocates an idea which has often been stressed in modern education — viz., that theories have no value unless they are applied in real life. By the imitation to which he referred is meant the application of theories in real life. Ibn Khaldoun urges the importance of personal contact which takes place outside circles of study and classrooms. Here, we have a fairly new principle of education — that of practising democracy in the process of teaching.

k) *Teaching the Subject in the Mother Tongue :*

A great idea which our late philosopher has reached long before us is that teaching should be in the mother tongue. By this he meant the Arabic language; for learning in a foreign language is only half learning. This is supported by the fact that many of the leaders of Arabic and Islamic culture, such as Al-Ghazali and Al-Kindi and others, have excelled and left behind a great cultural, religious and intellectual heritage, and they are not known to have consulted foreign references.

In the United Arab Republic we have adopted Arabic as the medium of instruction in most, if not all, the faculties — especially in the Faculty of Medicine. This, no doubt, shows a genuine national Arab awareness, for the Arabic language which, in the past, was wide enough to absorb foreign cultures such as the Greek, Persian and Indian, is capable of covering all the sources of modern culture, because it is quite flexible. It is fertile in derivation and structural potentialities, and this helps translators to find the right equivalents to foreign names. In Lebanon, there is a growing realization of the necessity of teaching the various subjects in Arabic, even in the higher schools and universities. No obstacle should stand in the way of this process.

Some of those who still oppose the adoption of Arabic as the means of instruction in colleges and universities, tend to blame Arabic for lowering the educational standard and encouraging the neglect of foreign languages. This is not so, for the advanced Arab nations teach the high cultures and specialized subjects in their mother tongue, and nobody has said that the educational standard in these countries is low. The call for Arabization of learning in institutes and colleges

does not mean abandoning foreign languages, for the process of Arabization itself requires mastery over foreign languages. No doubt certain foreign references should always be consulted if necessary.

As we in the United Arab Republic have now defined our aims and adopted Arab Nationalism as our national policy, it is our duty to translate as much as we can into Arabic. Here, we are in full agreement with the call of Ibn Khaldoun. Among the pretexts used by those who stand in the way of using Arabic in the universities, is that the Arabic language is incapable of providing many necessary terms. The answer has been supplied by Muhammad Ali, years ago, when he established the School of Medicine. Medicine was taught there in Arabic, and famous doctors graduated in that same school. Medical technical terms were devised and provided by people like the late Omar Al-Tunisi.

Our ancient 'ulama' have always stipulated that the secrets of knowledge cannot be uncovered by seroius students unless they study in their mother tongue, which they have learnt and understood from their early childhood. It was for this reason that many Arab scholars excelled in the glorious Islamic ages. Thus Ibn Khaldoun was not unfair to foreign languages when he said : " Learning in a foreign language is half learning ".

1) *The Transfer of Training :*

Ibn Khaldoun says : " The perfection of arts and crafts not only makes a person skilled in them, but his skill extends also to others which are similar to them. For instance, if a person excels in calligraphy, the skill is transferred if he

learns painting on walls. Whoever excels in arithmetic finds it easy to perfect algebra and geometry". It is strange that Ibn Khaldoun has reached this conclusion long before the modern philosophers of education in Europe who continued to support the traditional theory of the faculties and formal training. Only recently did the modern experimental psychologists declare the wrongness of these theories and the correctness of Ibn Khaldoun's.

m) *How the Student Excels in Learning the Language :*

Ibn Khaldoun recommends a sound view concerning the learning of languages which is confirmed by modern education. He holds that the method which enables the youngster to master the language and to make good use of it in life is that which gives importance to memorizing much of what has been said by men of letters and good rhetoric. He says: "After memorizing, the youngster should forget what he has learnt by heart". By forgetting, Ibn Khaldoun means forgetting the letters while retaining the effect. This attitude conforms with the most up-to-date developments in the field of education. The essence of learning is that which remains with the person after he has forgotten everything else. This may be taken to mean that the memorized facts are not intended for their own sake, but for the formation of a certain discipline, certain habits and attitudes.

This is a rapid survey of Ibn Khaldoun's views on education. As we have noted, they undoubtedly form a coherent system. The time is ripe for leaders in the field of education to unearth such treasures long neglected in the past as those of Ibn Khaldoun. We are now aware of the necessity

of reviving the past in order to invigorate the feeling of Arab Nationalism. We should make use of the constructive elements involved in this creed.

Arabic and Islamic education has truly fertile elements which still have life and vigour. It embodies the seeds of true progress and advancement, and secures for future Arab and Muslim generations both greatness and happiness. Surely Ibn Khaldoun is one of our best educationalists, and we earnestly pray God to have mercy on his soul.



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