

صف العربية ٤١٠

كلية مدلبوري

١٦/٣/٢٠١٥

موجز القراءات من «المقدمة» لابن خلدون

Reading #1:

The nature of history, which is actually an account of human civilization and all that it experiences, its various forms of government, and all human crafts, trades, and institutions.

Untruth afflicts historical information. The reasons for “untruth” in historical accounts. Prejudice, partisanship. Also, reliance on transmitters and the ignorance and assumptions that transmitters bring to their narratives. Tendency to praise and flatter rulers influences historical accounts.

Most important reason for untruth in the historical record is ignorance as to the conditions, requirements, and circumstances of any particular event. Critical evaluation of historical accounts requires knowledge of the “requirements” [laws] of existence (i.e., what is scientific and can be deduced through reason).

People often accept and transmit absurd information on the basis of the transmitter’s authority. Thus people believe the story reported by al-Mas’udi about the “diving bell” built by Alexander the Great to confront and confound the sea monsters that plagued his construction of the port of Alexandria.

This story is nonsensical since no ruler would ever expose himself to such danger. The monsters as described do not exist. But most absurd is the fact that anyone who enclosed himself in such a box would suffocate [discussion as to how people and animals die when enclosed in tight spaces].