

صف العربية ٤١٠

كلية مدلبوري

١٨/٣/٢٠١٥

موجز القراءات من «المقدمة» لابن خلدون

Reading #2:

Humans are social creatures. Man must eat food to live. Humans are insufficiently powerful to obtain food by themselves. Even the absolute minimum - a little wheat, for instance - requires multiple stages of preparation that rely on various specialized crafts.

Humans need each other for defense as well. All other animals are fashioned by God to defend themselves; humans are defenseless in comparison. Since aggression is innate in all living beings, the ability to think and manual dexterity are the “weapons” of man.

Without cooperation for food and defense, the human species would perish. Social organization is necessary to fulfill God’s will for mankind. This is the meaning of civilization.

Reading #3:

Prestige lasts for four generations in one lineage. Corruption overtakes everything: substances, ideas, minerals, etc. The prestige of a single lineage is no exception (except for that of the Prophet). Nobility arises from outside of nobility, and then dies in a single lineage after four generations. The first generation is energetic and hardworking, fourth generation least so. The representative of a fourth generation of rulers is spoiled, entitled, and scorns his subjects. His subjects will switch allegiance to a new lineage, and the old one will collapse. New lineages (or “houses”) appear and disappear even in urban settings. There may be up to 5-6 generations in a royal lineage, but never less [than 4].

Reading #4:

“Arabs” [bedouin] can only gain control over flat territory. They fight for plunder and always minimize risk to themselves. They avoid fortresses and mountains. They will raid unprotected, exposed, and accessible areas.

The bedouin are savage and enjoy their freedom from authority. They are the antithesis of civilization since their lives are built around movement. Whatever building materials they need, they remove from previously standing structures. They plunder whatever they can get their hands on and whatever they fancy.

The bedouin force craftsmen to do their work, and thus do not value (and compensate) their labor. Without profit, labor ceases and civilization decays. The bedouin is not interested in laws; having come for plunder, they have no further interest in the people they plunder from. Anarchy exists under the bedouin; royal authority - which is the only guarantor of civilization - is thus impossible.

Every bedouin wishes to be the leader. Example of al-Ḥajjāj. Wherever bedouin take over, civilization collapses. Examples: Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Tunis, Morocco.

Bedouin obtain royal authority only through religion. Religion is the only factor that can restrain their anarchic nature and suppress their negative impulses. When united by religion, the bedouin obtain superiority and authority. They are quick to adopt religion because they are uncontaminated [by urban decadence]. Their savagery has some positive qualities since it is a primal, unsullied condition.