

Chapter XXXV

AL-FĀRĀBĪ

A

SOCIETY AND ITS GOAL

An account of the life and philosophical thought of abu Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Ṭarḫān al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) has been already given in a previous chapter. The reader must have noted that, while recasting the philosophical views of Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek thinkers, al-Fārābī always keeps in view the Islamic tenets which have formed the inner links of his writings. In his political philosophy, he has followed the same line. Under the influence of Plato and Aristotle he evolves his own system which markedly differs from the system of the Greeks, the Iranians as well as the Indians. This will be shown in these pages which have been prepared in the light of his (1) *Kitāb Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnat al-Fāḍilah* (Book on the Views of the People of the Excellent State), (2) *Kitāb al-Siyāsāt al-Madaniyyah* (Book on the Civic Administration), (3) *Kitāb Taḥṣīl al-Sa'ādah* (Book on the Achievement of Happiness), (4) *Kitāb al-Tanbīh 'ala Sabil al-Sa'ādah* (Book on Caution on the Path of Happiness), and (5) the Bodleian manuscript of his *Fuṣūl al-Madīni* (Chapters on the Civilian).

The City-State.—According to al-Fārābī, the City-State (*madīnah*) and the family State (*manzil*) are places that contain inhabitants, no matter whether their dwellings are constructed of wood, mud, wool or hair.¹

The house or family is limited to only four relationships: husband and wife, master and slave, father and son, and property and proprietor. He who makes them unite in co-operation and aims at providing for them an abode with best facilities and maintenance, is called the master of the family. He is in the house what the administrator of the city is in the city.²

Necessity of Society.—Men are naturally so constituted that they need many things for their best achievements. Hence, they need mutual help and co-operation—everyone doing his best for obtaining a particular kind of object. Thus, by uniting their individual efforts for different objects they organize different societies.³

The greater the society, the better are the facilities it achieves for its individuals. The grouping of men is not confined to a house. It extends to lanes, localities, villages, towns, and cities. Men work for the welfare of society and in the long run serve the State. The people living in a State are called a

nation (*ummah*). One nation can be distinguished from another by natural character, temperament, habits, and language.⁴

Human societies are either perfect or imperfect. The perfect society may be great, middling, or small. The great human society is the one consisting of several nations uniting themselves in one unit and helping one another. The middling one is the society of one nation in a part of the world, and the small is the society of the people of a city.⁵

The imperfect society is that of the people of a village, a locality, a lane, or a house, the last being the smallest.

Now, the highest good and perfection are primarily achieved through volition and will. Similarly, evil finds its scope by volition and will. The City-State can, therefore, develop by mutual help and efforts to attain some evil purpose or to attain happiness. The city in which the members of the society co-operate to attain happiness is in reality the ideal City-State (*al-madīnat al-fāḍilah*), the society, the ideal society, and the nation, the ideal nation.⁶ In this State the citizens help one another to achieve qualities of the greatest excellence through which they live in the best manner, and enjoy the best life perpetually.⁷ But if they help one another to obtain the bare necessities of life and its preservation, this City-State is evidently the necessary State.⁸

How to Achieve Happiness.—Al-Fārābī speaks of happiness both of this world and the hereafter. He explains that when human factors or the four excellences—speculative virtues (*al-faḍā'il al-naẓariyyah*), theoretical virtues (*faḍā'il al-fikriyyah*), the moral virtues (*faḍā'il al-khuluqīyyah*), and the practical arts (*al-ṣanā'at al-'amalīyyah*)—form the qualities of a nation or of the people of a city, their worldly happiness in this life and the lasting happiness in the next are insured.

Speculative virtues (*al-faḍā'il al-naẓariyyah*) represent those sciences which aim at the highest object, knowledge of existing things including all their requirements. These sciences are either innate in man, or they are achieved by effort and learning.⁹

Now, the principal factors of existing bodies and accidents, as explained by al-Fārābī, are of six kinds with six grades—the first cause in the first grade, the secondary causes in the second grade, active intellect in the third grade, soul in the fourth grade, form in the fifth grade, and matter in the sixth grade. The first grade is confined to one individual only; it cannot have more than one. But other grades can have more than one occupant. Out of these six, three, viz., the first cause, the secondary cause, and the active intellect,

⁴ *Kitāb al-Siyāsāt al-Madaniyyah*, p. 39.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁶ *Kitāb Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnat al-Fāḍilah*, p. 61.

⁷ *Fuṣūl al-Madīni*, Bodleian MS., Fol. 98b.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Kitāb Taḥṣīl al-Sa'ādah*, p. 2.

¹ Al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl al-Madīni*, Bodleian MS., Fol. 97a.

² *Ibid.*, Fol. 97b.

³ *Kitāb Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnat al-Fāḍilah*, p. 60.

are neither bodies, nor are they contained in bodies. The other three: soul, form, and matter are not bodies, but exist in bodies. As for bodies, they are of six types: the heavenly bodies, rational animals, irrational animals, plants, minerals, and the four elements. All these six bodies as a whole form the universe. The first to be believed in is God, the Almighty, who is the immediate cause of the existence of the secondary causes and the active intellect. The secondary causes are the causes of the existence of heavenly bodies and their substance. The secondary causes should be called the spirits, the angels, and so on.

The function of the active intellect is to attend to the rational animal, man, and to enable him to attain to the highest perfection he can reach. The highest perfection of man consists in his highest happiness which he achieves when he raises himself to the stage of the active intellect by abstracting himself from bodies, matter, and accidents, and continues to enjoy this perfection perpetually. In essence, the active intellect is one but in gradation it includes all that is purified from the rational animal and attains to happiness. The active intellect should be called the Holy Spirit (*al-Rūh al-Amin* or *al-Rūh al-Qudus*) or the like, and its grades be called the spiritual realm (*al-malakūt*) or the like.

Souls have three grades: souls of celestial bodies, souls of the rational animals, and souls of the irrational animals. The souls of the rational animals are the rational faculty, the appetitive faculty, the imaginative faculty, and the perceiving faculty. The rational faculty equips man with sciences and arts, and enables him to distinguish good from evil manners and actions. Through this faculty man inclines to do good and avoid evil and realizes the useful, the harmful, the pleasant, and the unpleasant.¹⁰

(i) The rational faculty is either speculative or practical; the first is that through which man obtains the knowledge of all that he is not at all supposed to know by his own effort, and the second is that through which he knows all that he can know if he wills it so. The second is again divided into that through which arts and crafts are obtained (*maḥaniyyah*), and that through which imagination and insight concerning doing or not doing a thing are achieved (*marwiyyah*).

(ii) The appetitive faculty manifests the human inclination of wanting something or running away from something, of desiring or not desiring something, of giving preference to something or avoiding something. All psychological feelings—hatred, affection, love, friendship, enmity, fear, anger, passion, mercy, etc.—are expressed by this faculty.

(iii) The faculty of imagination retains the impression of the sensible objects after they have disappeared from sense-perception, unites some of them with some others, or separates some of them from some others both in wakefulness

and sleep producing true or false propositions. This faculty also perceives the useful, harmful, pleasant, and unpleasant manners and actions.

(iv) The faculty of sense-perception obviously perceives the sensibles through the five sense-organs—the pleasant and the unpleasant, without discriminating between the harmful and the useful, and without distinguishing good from evil.

The three faculties other than the rational faculty are available to animals, imaginative faculty serving them as the rational faculty serves man. Some animals, however, possess only the sensible and the appetitive faculties.

The celestial souls are different from the animal souls in so far as the former are actual souls that understand the intelligibles, whereas the latter are at first potential and then become actual.¹¹

Having explained the gradation of cosmos and the relation that the different grades have with the First, al-Fārābī emphasizes the point that the whole cosmos depends for its existence on God, the First Necessary Being.

Man, however, understands and realizes happiness only through the speculative rational faculty. The imaginative and the sensitive faculties help the rational faculty in moving man towards those actions which lead to happiness. The good is characterized as "voluntary." But if the rational faculty feels happiness only by making an effort to perceive it, while other faculties do not perceive it, then sometimes man considers the pleasant and the useful to be the ultimate ends of life. Again, when one becomes indifferent or slow in accomplishing the sensitive rational part and does not feel happiness in doing so, one hastens to attain to it by exercising one's appetitive faculty in aiming at and making all effort to achieve things other than happiness; and in this effort one is assisted also by the faculties of imagination and sense-perception, and produces what may be rightly called voluntary evil.

Similarly, he produces only evil who attains to happiness which he does not recognize as his aim, does not desire it, or desires it with a faint desire, and adopts something other than happiness as his end, and exerts all his faculties to achieve that end.¹²

Since man has been created to achieve happiness which is the highest perfection that remains perpetually, it is possible to obtain it through the active intellect which gives primarily the first intelligibles or the first objects of knowledge. But men differ in their capacity to receive the primary intelligibles.

B

HUMAN NATURE

Human nature is not the same in all individuals; it varies in accordance with the physical qualities of individuals. Some can easily grasp the first

¹⁰ *Kitāb al-Siyāsah*, pp. 3, 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.

intelligibles or the first known things, some do not receive them directly. Again, some of them do not receive anything from the first intelligibles in a natural way at all, and some others receive them in a way different from theirs. There are still others who receive them in respect of their own selves. Human beings in this third group are free from defect, their nature being homogeneous, prepared to receive intelligibles which are common to them and through which they advance to the affairs and actions that are common to them. After this stage, they differ from one another, as some receive those intelligibles which are peculiar to them, and are not common to others. Those belonging to this group endeavour towards a particular genus without allowing anything else to share it. Similarly, human beings excel one another in the faculties through which they derive the objects of one genus, some having the ability of deriving all the individuals of a genus and others perceiving only a few individuals thereof. Again, sometimes it so happens that two individuals do not prove to be equal in their capacity of deriving the external objects, one being swift and the other slow, or one being swift in deriving all the individuals of a genus, and the other perceiving only a few individuals thereof. Again, sometimes it so happens that two individuals do not prove to be equal in their capacity of deriving the external objects, one being swift and the other slow, or one being swift in deriving the genus of the greatest excellence and the other in deriving the basest of the genus. It is also possible that both are equal in power, but one is able enough to teach what one has derived, and can offer guidance to others; but the other has no such power of teaching and guiding others. They also differ in performing corporeal deeds.

Natural dispositions do not oppose one another, nor do they insist on action; but they facilitate performance, and are not moved by anything external towards opposite actions. Even if they are moved in opposite directions they resist and offer hindrance.

All these natural dispositions require a suitable teacher. Hence, they are trained in matters that prepare them to be in their highest or nearly highest perfection. Some are trained in mean things which produce excellent actions from a mean genus.¹³

People have different calibres by nature, and they vary in ranks in accordance with the ranks in genus, arts, and sciences for which they have naturally been prepared. They also differ in the capacity of training and giving guidance. Some are stronger than others, and, hence, they differ in receiving training. For, some can be trained for the whole of the genus of the work, and some can be trained for a part of the genus only. Now, he who is an expert in imparting training and guidance is called the *chief*.¹⁴

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

C

EDUCATION

Man has been created to attain to the highest happiness (*sa'adah*). He should, therefore, know what happiness is and should make it the aim of his life. He, then, needs to know those factors and arts through which he can achieve happiness. He will have to exercise all those arts which will enable him to attain to it. But since it has been explained that human individuals differ in nature, it is not in the nature of every man to know happiness or those factors which enable him to reach it by himself. He, therefore, needs a teacher, a guide. Some people require less guidance and teaching, and some need more. It is also not necessary that one should learn all that one is taught, or receive all the guidance one is given. Hence, some people require constant teaching and guidance to urge them to do what they have been taught to do.¹⁵

Teaching (*ta'lim*) means creating speculative excellences in nations and cities, while upbringing (*tādīb*) is the method of creating and developing moral virtues and scientific arts in nations. Teaching is possible only by expression; *tādīb* or discipline is to make nations and citizens habituated to the deeds done through scientific habits. That is, their resolutions will move them to perform those actions, so much so that these resolutions will dominate their souls, and they will become devoted to those actions. To exert one's resolution to do something is possible either by expression or by performance. While al-Fārābī agrees with Plato in the system of education and in learning from childhood, he emphasizes that speculative sciences are learnt either by kings and leaders (*imāms*) or by those who preserve these sciences and teach kings and leaders in several ways. First of all, they should know the primary axioms, and the first known object in every genus of speculative sciences, then they should know the various forms of premises and their arrangement through which they can lead to conclusions. After they have completed their education, and have accustomed themselves to logical methods, they will be made kings in each of the partial States, and will be promoted little by little till the stage of the great State is achieved.

Speculative sciences must be taught through convincing methods. Men very often understand these sciences by a process of thinking, because they understand them after realizing many known principles which are not corporeal. The common people can understand their images by the method of convincing only. The teacher should also distinguish what should be imparted to a particular nation and how to make it common to all nations or to all the people of every city. He should also know what should be taught to the entire nation, or city, and what only to a particular group in the city. All these distinctions can be made by the imaginative virtue which enables one to achieve the speculative virtues.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

As for practical virtues and practical arts, people must habituate themselves to practising them by two methods. First, the teacher should train them by convincing and effective expressions to engender the values of these actions and habits perfectly in their hearts so that their convictions may move them to perform them submissively. Secondly, he should use the method of force which is employed for the disobedient and revolutionary citizens, and those who do not move to righteousness meekly on their own accord or by persuasion.¹⁶

The virtuous teachers and artists can be divided into two groups in respect of the above-mentioned two methods—one group teaching and training those who are obedient, the other group teaching the disobedient. In both respects the king is the teacher of nations whom he trains to achieve virtues, and the master of the house is the teacher of the people of the house. Similar is the case with one who is in charge of children or the youth.¹⁷

The Imaginative Virtue.—The imaginative virtue enables a man to think of an exceedingly useful purpose which is common to the comity of nations, to a nation, or to a city. This virtue is called the civil imaginative virtue. But if this virtue is common to a group of citizens or to the members of a house only, then it is ascribed to that particular group and is called family imaginative virtue, or State imaginative virtue. Sometimes this virtue is further divided. Since it is derived from what is most useful and beautiful in respect of a particular art or profession for a limited time, it is divided into the various kinds of arts and professions. The most accomplished one in this virtue is the strongest one who succeeds in creating a great State.

The imaginative virtue confined to different aspects of the State—defence, finance, and so on—is followed by moral virtue which is related to the imaginative virtue as the imaginative virtue is related to different arts, professions, or families. This virtue is first of all needed for organizing and maintaining the army. The moral virtue alone impels the warriors to display their bravery, and the best kind of valour. It also urges citizens to earn the wealth of the State with honesty and legal means. In fact, it plays a major role in all departments of the State.¹⁸

D

THE CHIEF

It is evident that every man cannot be the chief. People differ in their intellectual capacity, in physical strength, in the exercise of virtuous deeds, and in the acquisition of excellent habits of thinking, feeling, willing, and doing. In every department of life and arts the strongest person, of excellent manners, who also knows, acts, and directs, is the chief of that department, the rest

being the subjects. The chief is either one of the first rank who is not subservient to anyone, or he is of the second rank, dominating some, and being dominated by some others. Such ranks develop in relation to the forms of art, e.g., cultivation, trade, medical profession, or in respect of all kinds of human beings.¹⁹

The first chief in general is he who needs no help from anyone. Sciences and arts are his property in actuality, and he needs no guidance from any person in any respect.²⁰

The first chief of the excellent (ideal) city is one who is chief in all respects. His profession must excel all the rest in attaining to perfection, and in intending by all actions of the ideal State to achieve the highest happiness. This man is not subservient to any other. He is a man accomplished in all virtues, and, therefore, he is intellect and intelligible in actuality, having his imaginative faculty naturally so perfected as to be able to receive particulars from the active intellect either in themselves, or as images in sleep, or in wakeful state. His passive intellect receives the intelligibles in complete perfection, so that nothing which has become an intellect in actuality is denied to him. Whosoever invests his passive intellect with intelligibles becomes intellect and intelligible in actuality. His understanding of himself is more perfect, more separable from matter, nearer to the active intellect, and is called the derived intellect. This derived intellect has a rank between the passive and the active intellect. The passive intellect is, therefore, like matter and substratum for the derived intellect which is like matter and substratum for the active intellect.²¹

The rational faculty²² which is the natural form, supplies material substratum for the passive intellect and makes it the actual intellect. The actual intellect is the first stage at which man is called man and being human becomes common to all human beings. When the passive intellect and the natural form become one in the same way as the composite of matter and form becomes one and the same thing, and man receives the human form, the actual intellect is achieved; and when the natural form becomes the matter of the passive intellect which has thus become the actual intellect, it becomes the matter of the derived intellect, which in its turn becomes the matter of the active intellect, and all of these become like one thing, then man enjoys the presence of the active intellect in himself. If the active intellect is present in both parts of the rational faculty—the speculative and the practical—then man receives revelation in his imaginative faculty. Allah the exalted and sublime sends revelation to him through the active intellect. If the active intellect extends what it receives from Allah to his passive intellect through his derived intellect and then to his imaginative faculty, then man, through

¹⁹ *Kitāb al-Siyāsah*, p. 48.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

²¹ *Kitāb Arā' Ahl al-Madīnat al-Fāḍilah*, pp. 64–65.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 66.

¹⁶ *Kitāb Taḥṣīl al-Sa'ādah*, pp. 29–31.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 24–26.

what descends upon his passive intellect, becomes a wise philosopher and possessor of perfect understanding, and through what descends upon his imaginative faculty, a prophet, a warner against what is going to take place, and an informer of what particulars exist, as he understands them from God. This man is in the most perfect stage of humanity and in the highest place of blessing, his soul being perfect, united with the active intellect in the manner described. This is the man who is aware of every action that would enable one to achieve grace and is the chief, the leader, who cannot be led by anybody else.

E

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHIEF OF THE IDEAL STATE

The Imām or the chief of the ideal State is the chief of the ideal nation, and for the matter of that, of the whole inhabited part of the earth. This position is only attained by a man who naturally possesses the following twelve characteristics as his second nature:

- (1) Sound health, and perfect organs, performing their functions with ease and facility and in harmony with all faculties.
- (2) Intelligence and sagacity, so as to be able to grasp the intention of a speaker in his particular situations and circumstances.
- (3) Good memory, so as to retain in his mind all that he understands, sees, hears, and perceives.
- (4) Prudence and talent, to understand a problem from the perspective in which it has been presented to him.
- (5) Eloquence, so that his tongue may assist him in expressing in a perfect manner all that is in his mind.
- (6) Devotion to education and learning, and submission to receive knowledge with ease without feeling any annoyance.
- (7) No greed for food, drink, and sex; avoidance of play; and dislike of pleasures caused by these.
- (8) Friendliness towards truth and truthful persons and condemnation of falsehood and those who are inclined to falsehood.
- (9) Bigness of heart, loving nobility, and natural magnanimity without any trace of meanness.
- (10) Indifference to *dirham* and *dīnār* and other forms of wealth.
- (11) Devotion by nature to justice and just people, abhorrence of injustice and oppression and unjust and oppressive people; offering half of one's possessions and those of one's family to help the oppressed, and urging others to do the same; helping everything good and beautiful; and being easy to bend to justice but difficult to oppression and evil.
- (12) Strong resolution, courage, and promptitude without any sign of fear or psychological weakness.

If a person possessed of these qualities happens to live in an ideal State he is the chief.

It is, however, impossible to have all these qualities in one man. People are scarcely equipped with all of them. If no one having these qualities is found in the State, the laws promulgated by a former chief or his successors should be kept in force.

The second chief who succeeds the first should fulfil at least the following six requirements. (1) He should be wise and philosophical; and (2) learned and abreast with the laws, customs, rites, and rituals adopted by his predecessor to discharge the function of the ideal State with all perfection. (3) He should be an expert in deriving principles in case he does not find any law, and (4) far-sighted, possessing an insight to frame rules and regulations in accordance with the conditions and circumstances he finds himself in, and capable of keeping up the reforms he introduces. (5) He should also be well experienced and eloquent in giving directions to urge the people to follow him in accordance with the *Shari'ah*. (6) In addition he should be skilful in physical display of exercises needed in warfare, and in the use of arms, ammunition, and other equipments. In other words, this ruler must have insight to derive inferences from the possessed records of the customs, rites, and rituals, and accurate opinion in understanding the events that take place and may increase the prosperity of the State. He must have the power to convince others and struggle hard. This sovereign is called the king of the tradition, and the State is called *al-mulk al-sunnah*, the country of traditions and customs.

If all the conditions described for the chief are not found in one man, and are available in two persons—one wise, and the other possessing other qualities—then both will be the chiefs of the State. If, however, these conditions are scattered in a group of people agreeable to work together, then these members will be the ideal chiefs. But if wisdom does not form a part of the State while other conditions are fulfilled entirely, the city will be best without a sovereign, but it will be exposed to destruction. The State without a philosopher to whom it may be entrusted will perish in no time.²³

F

THE IDEAL STATE

The sovereigns of an ideal State who succeed one another are all like one soul, as if there were one king who continued all the time. Similar is the case with a group of people who administer the State together at a time in one or more than one city. The whole group is just like one sovereign, their souls being like one soul. Uniformity is found in every stage and in every part of the State, and people flourishing at different times look as if they were one

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

soul working all the time in the same way. If there is continuity and harmony at a particular stage, even different groups of people, whether of one or more than one State, would appear as one soul.²⁴

The people of the ideal State have something common to all of them in their learning and acting. But different groups of people belonging to different ranks and stages have some sciences and deeds peculiar to them. Through both of these, people achieve happiness, and by displaying these they obtain an ideal psychical form. This form grows stronger and stronger and better and better by constant performance of those deeds. For example, the art of writing has some prerequisite performances. The more they are executed by the expert, the greater is the excellence of his art. Not only that. The scribe enjoys his art by repeating his exercises, and grows in love for it. The same is the case with happiness which increases with the constant practice of deeds that lead to it. The soul grows in happiness to such a degree that it becomes free from matter. It does not perish with matter, for it is no longer required for its existence. At this stage, being separated from matter, the soul frees itself from all corporeal qualities so much so that even movement and rest cannot be ascribed to it. As this state is very unusual, it is very difficult to form an idea of it.

G

ARTS AND BLESSINGS

As arts have three grades, happiness or bliss is also divided into three grades in respect of species, quality, and quantity. There are such species of art as weaving, cloth-trading, perfumery, and sweeping; or as dancing, jurisprudence, philosophy, and rhetoric. Thus, arts excel one another in different species. He artists of the same art excel one another in skill and efficiency. Two scribes, for example, differ in their skill, because besides a good hand, their art requires some knowledge of lexicon, rhetoric, and arithmetic. Now, one may be an expert in good hand and rhetoric, another in good hand, lexicon, and rhetoric, and yet another in all the four arts. Again, two scribes may differ in the quality of their art, for one of them may be better than the other.

Similarly, happiness excels in species, quantity, and quality.

The people of an imperfect State have but little virtue. They have evil psychical forms and their actions are not good. The greater their activity, the more does their profession display defect and imperfection. In consequence they become ill inasmuch as they do not enjoy edibles, and become annoyed with beautiful and excellent things. Some of them even regard themselves as healthy and perfect, though they are actually not so, and do not pay any heed to the advice of the physician or the well-wisher.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

H

INHABITANTS OF THE IDEAL STATE

The excellent or the ideal State consists of five kinds of people: the excellent, the linguists, the secluded, the struggling, and the steady. The excellent people are the philosophers, the intellectuals, and "the People of Opinion" in great affairs. As for linguists, they are the orators, speakers, poets, musicians, writers, and the like. The secluded people are the mathematicians, statisticians, physicians, astronomers, and the like. The struggling people are the fighters, the defenders, and all those who take their place. The steady are those who earn money in the city, for example cultivators, traders, and those engaged in other pursuits.²⁵

I

IMPERFECT STATES

The excellent State as explained above is the State administered by the best and most talented who aim at prosperity and happiness for all and sundry. If its constitution fails to provide the people with prosperity, and the rulers do not possess the qualities of ideal rulers, then the State ceases to be excellent and is called the evil-doing State (*al-madīnat al-fāsiqah*), the ignorant State (*al-madīnat al-jāhilah*) or the astray-going State (*al-madīnat al-ḡāllah*). People in the evil-doing State are like weeds in a field. They are no better than savages and can have no organization worthy of a State.²⁶

As for the people of the ignorant State, they possess their own constitution and culture. But their civic organizations vary. They look after the necessities of life in a necessary State, organize the society of the contemptible in the contemptible State, the society of the vile in the vile State, the society of the extravagant in the extravagant State, the society of the dominant in the dominant State, or the society of the free in the social State.

The necessary organization is the State which endeavours to earn what is evidently necessary for the constitution and the upkeep of the body.²⁷ The State of the contemptible is the one which tries to achieve wealth in abundance; and the money which they hoard due to the love of wealth and niggardliness is spent only for the needs of the body. The vile State broods over sensuous pleasures and achieves the best means for the sake of pleasure only. This State is the most coveted one. The extravagant State is the organization of the profusely generous in which the individuals help one another to reach nobility in expression and action. The people of this State are called generous either

²⁵ *Fuṣūl al-Madīni*, Bodleian MS., pp. 40-41; [*Proceedings of the Fourth*] *Pakistan Philosophical Congress*, p. 336.

²⁶ *Kutub al-Siyāsah*, p. 57.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

by themselves or by the people of other States.²⁸ This is the best State among all the States of the ignorant.

The State of the dominant people tries to overpower others in power and wealth; they shed blood, subjugate others, and indulge in all sorts of pleasures. The State of the dominant excels the State of the generous in showing power.²⁹ As for the social State, everybody is free in it to do whatever he likes, and believes that no man has any superiority over the others by any means. But independence often leads to extremes, and, therefore, there arise in this State different rites and rituals, customs and manners; and people are misled by evil propensities. Thus, this State splits into different groups and parties.

In all these States there is always unrest prevailing among the people, as everybody tries to become the chief and, by virtue of his wits, to lead the State to prosperity and happiness.

The evil-doing States differ from the States mentioned above in so far as the people of these States believe in the principles held and the forms of happiness conceived by the people of the excellent State, and also invite others to do the same, but they themselves do nothing to achieve their object, nor do they try by action to attain the happiness they believe in. On the contrary, they incline to their own whims and propensities, that is to say, they like to enjoy power, nobility, and domination, and direct their actions towards their achievement. In activities these States are like the States of the ignorant. In manners their peoples resemble the peoples of the said States. The peoples of these two sets of States differ only in belief. None of these States ever achieve happiness and prosperity.

The astray-going States are those whose people suffer from some delusion. They adopt such principles, actions, and deeds as appear to them to be those of the excellent State, but in fact are not. The same is true of their goal of happiness and prosperity which they conceive to be so but which actually is not so.

The offsprings of the societies which develop in these States are of various types and all of them aim at personal gain and victory and not at real happiness and true prosperity.³⁰

J

CONCLUSION

According to al-Fārābī, the chief of the State should be physically free from all defects, and should have a sharp intellect, memory, and wit. He should be devoted to sciences, truth-loving, and not easily upset by difficulties, contented, without greed for things to eat, and disinclined towards sensuous pleasures. He should abhor falsehood and liars, be ambitious with

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

lofty ideals, a lover of justice, without thought of wealth or worldly position, and should have strong resolution, boldness, and courage. Plato's philosopher-king has also been described as truth-loving, fond of the knowledge of existents, one who keeps away from vice, is free-thinking, intelligent, sagacious, witty, and ambitious. But the State of al-Fārābī is international in character. While the State of Plato is only a City-State, that of al-Fārābī can be as vast as a World-State. Plato wants to entrust the affairs of the State to a group of philosophers and names the organization "aristocracy." Al-Fārābī not only calls the Head of the State Imām but identifies him with a prophet. It is in the absence of the Imām or the second chief who has the necessary qualities to follow the tradition of the Imām that he entrusts the affairs of the State to a group of individuals who between themselves possess most of the qualities of the chief. It is, therefore, not true to say that al-Fārābī has based his theory entirely on the *Republic* of Plato, or that he is simply Aristotelian in his thought.

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Chapter XXXVI

AL-MĀWARDI

A

LIFE AND WORKS

Abu al-Ḥasan al-Māwardī was born in Baṣrah (c. 364/974) which was then one of the principal seats of learning and education in the Muslim world. He, therefore, got all his education there and rose in literary renown at an early age. He specially prepared himself for the judicial profession and obtained an