

## ALFARABI

## The Book of Religion

Translated by Charles E. Butterworth

*The Book of Religion* parallels Chapter 5 of *The Enumeration of the Sciences* to a striking degree. Indeed, the casual reader might fail to detect any differences. Although the differences are subtle, they are ultimately more striking than the similarities. The *Enumeration* proceeded in the following order: political science 1, political science 2, jurisprudence, and dialectical theology. In contrast, *The Book of Religion* proceeds in the following order: an account of virtuous religion and its relation to philosophy (1–5), dialectic (6; cf. dialectical theology in *Enumeration*), jurisprudence (7–10), political science 1 (11–15.1), political science 2 (15.2–18), and what Charles Butterworth, citing Mahdi, has called “a practical or political divine science or theology that keeps an eye on the theoretical sciences and another eye on human ends” (19–27).<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Religion* not only reverses the order in which Alfarabi treats political science and the religious sciences, jurisprudence and dialectical theology in the *Enumeration*, but it also reverses the usual order in which Alfarabi treats politics and metaphysics or divine science (compare *Political Regime* and the *Principles of the*

*Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City*). The most obvious question that such a reversal of order raises is, What should we think of as the ground of what? Is metaphysics the ground of politics, as the *Virtuous City* would lead us to believe? In *The Book of Religion*, jurisprudence and dialectical theology are tethered to or shaped by the virtuous religion that Alfarabi derives from philosophy. In contrast, in the *Enumeration*, Alfarabi presented jurisprudence and dialectical theology as they came down to him, as autonomous religious sciences likely at odds with either or both political sciences presented therein. As Muhsin Mahdi and Charles Butterworth have argued, *The Book of Religion* solves problems or questions that the *Enumeration* is intended to pose.

The following is a translation of the critical Arabic edition by Muhsin Mahdi in *Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, Kitāb al-Milla wa Nuṣūṣ Ukhrā* (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1968), 41–66. The bracketed numbers refer to the page numbers in that edition.

[43] 1. Religion is opinions and actions, determined and restricted with stipulations and

1. Muhsin S. Mahdi, “Science, Philosophy, and Religion,” in *Alfarabi and the Foundation of Islamic Political Philosophy* (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 2001), 96; qtd. in Butterworth’s translation of *The Book of Religion*, 108 n. 22.

prescribed for a community by their first ruler,<sup>2</sup> who seeks to obtain through their practicing it a specific purpose with respect to them or by means of them.

The community may be a tribe, a city or district, a great nation, or many nations.

If the first ruler is virtuous and his rulership truly virtuous, then in what he prescribes he seeks only to obtain, for himself and for everyone under his rulership the ultimate happiness that is truly happiness; and that religion will be virtuous religion. If his rulership is ignorant,<sup>3</sup> then in what he prescribes he seeks only to obtain, for himself by means of them, one of the ignorant goods—either necessary good, that is, health and bodily well-being; or wealth; or pleasure; or honor and glory; or conquest—to win that good, be happy with it to the exclusion of them, and make those under his rulership tools he uses to arrive at his purpose and to retain in his possession. Or he seeks to obtain this good for them to the exclusion of himself, or both for himself and them; these two are the most virtuous of the ignorant rulers. If that rulership of his is errant, in that he presumes himself to have virtue and wisdom and those under his rulership presume and believe that of him without him being like that [in fact], then he seeks that [44] he and those under his rulership obtain something presumed to be ultimate happiness without it being truly so. If his rulership is deceptive, in that he purposely strives for that<sup>4</sup> without those under his rulership noticing it, then the people under his rulership believe and presume that he has virtue and wisdom; on the surface he seeks in what he prescribes that he and they obtain ultimate happiness, whereas<sup>5</sup> underneath it is that he obtain one of the ignorant goods by means of them.

Now the craft of the virtuous first ruler is kingly and joined with revelation (*al-wahy*) from God. Indeed, he determines the actions and opinions in the virtuous religion by means of revelation. This occurs in one or both of two ways: one is that they are all revealed to him as determined; the second is that he determines them by means of the faculty he acquires from revelation and from the Revealer,

may He be exalted, so that the stipulations with which he determines the virtuous opinions and actions are disclosed to him by means of it. Or some come about in the first way and some in the second way. It has already been explained in theoretical science how the revelation of God, may He be exalted, to the human being receiving the revelation comes about and how the faculty acquired from revelation and from the Revealer occurs in a human being.

2. Some of the opinions in virtuous religion are about theoretical things and some about voluntary things.

Among the theoretical are those that describe God, may He be exalted. Then there are some that describe the spiritual beings, their ranks in themselves, their stations in relation to God, may He be exalted, and what each one of them does. Then there are some about the coming into being of the world, as well as some that describe the world, its parts, and the ranks of its parts; how [45] the primary bodies were generated and that some of the primary bodies are the sources of all the other bodies that are gradually generated and pass away; how all the other bodies are generated from the ones that are the sources of bodies and the ranks of these; how the things the world encompasses are linked together and organized and that whatever occurs with respect to them is just and has no injustice; and how each one of them is related to God, may He be exalted, and to the spiritual beings. Then there are some about the coming into being of the human being and soul occurring in him, as well as about the intellect, its rank in the world, and its station in relation to God and the spiritual beings.<sup>6</sup> Then there are some that describe what prophecy is and what revelation is like and how it comes into being. Then there are some that describe death and the afterlife and, with respect to the afterlife, the happiness to which the most virtuous and the righteous proceed and the misery to which the most depraved and the profigate proceed.

Among the second type of opinions are those that describe the prophets, the most virtuous

2. A "first ruler" (*ra'is awwal*) may or may not be first in time but is always first in rank. That is, he may be the supreme ruler who founds the religion, or the one who succeeds the founder but has full powers as a lawgiver; see below, secs. 7–9, 14b, and 18.

3. See the discussion of the different kinds of ignorant cities below in Alfarabi's *Political Regime* 93–119.

4. As becomes clear at the end of this sentence, this refers to the deceptive ruler striving to "obtain one of the ignorant goods."

5. Reading *ammā* for *immā*, "either."

6. If the pronoun refers to "human being" rather than "intellect," the sentence would read: "Then there are some about the coming into being of the human being and soul and intellect occurring in him, his rank in the world, and his station in relation to God and the spiritual beings."

kings, the righteous rulers, and the leaders of the right way and of truth who succeeded one another in former times; and those that relate what they had in common, what good actions were characteristic of each one, and where their souls and the souls of those who followed and emulated them in cities and nations ended up in the afterlife. There are those that describe the most depraved kings, the profligate rulers exercising authority over the inhabitants of ignorant communities, and the leaders of the errant way who existed in former times; and those that relate what they had in common, what evil actions were characteristic of each one, and where their souls and the souls of those who followed and emulated them in cities and nations ended up in the afterlife. There are those that describe the most virtuous kings, righteous men, and leaders of truth in the present time; and those that mention what they have in common with those who went before and what good actions are characteristic of them. There are those that describe the profligate rulers, the leaders of the errant way, and the inhabitants of ignorant communities in the present time; and those that relate what they have in common with those who went before, what evil actions are characteristic of them, and where their souls will end up in the afterlife.

The descriptions of the things comprised by the opinions of religion ought to be such as to bring the citizens to imagine everything in the city—kings, rulers, and servants; their ranks, the way they are linked together, and the way some yield to others; and everything prescribed to them—so that what is described will be likenesses the citizens will follow in their ranks and actions.

These, then, are the opinions that are in religion. [46]

3. As for actions, they are, first of all, the actions and speeches by which God is praised and extolled. Then there are those that praise the spiritual beings and the angels. Then there are those

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that praise the prophets, the most virtuous kings, the righteous rulers, and the leaders of the right way who have gone before. Then there are those that blame the most depraved kings, the profligate<sup>7</sup> rulers, and the leaders of the errant way who went before and that censure their activities. Then there are those that praise the most virtuous kings, the righteous rulers, and the leaders of the right way in this time and that blame those of this time who are their opposites.

Then, after all this, are determining the actions by which the mutual dealings of the inhabitants of the cities are regulated—either regarding what a human being ought to do with respect to himself<sup>8</sup> or regarding how he ought to deal with others—and bringing about cognizance<sup>9</sup> of what justice is with respect to each particular instance of these actions.

This, then, is the sum of what virtuous religion comprises.

4. “Religion” (*milla*) and “creed” (*dīn*) are almost synonymous, as are “law” (*sharī‘a*)<sup>10</sup> and “tradition” (*sunna*). Most often, the latter two signify and apply to the determined actions in the two parts of religion. It may be possible, as well, for the determined opinions to be called “law,” so that “law,” “religion,” and “creed” would be synonymous, given that religion consists of two parts: specifying opinions and determining actions.

The first type of opinions specified in religion is twofold: an opinion designated by its proper name, which customarily signifies it itself; or an opinion designated by the name of what is similar to it.<sup>11</sup> Thus the determined opinions in the virtuous religion are either the truth or a likeness of the truth. In general, truth is what a human being ascertains, either by himself<sup>12</sup> by means of primary knowledge, or by demonstration. Now any religion in which the first type of opinions does not comprise what a human being can ascertain either from himself<sup>13</sup> or by demonstration and in which there is no likeness of anything he can

7. Reading *al-fajār* with Dunlop, instead of *al-fujjār* with Mahdi.

8. Or, alternatively, “by himself” (*bi-nafsih*).

9. “Cognizance” derives from the second form of *‘arafa*. Alfarabi’s point here concerns making the inhabitants of the city aware of, or acquainting them with, something, rather than providing them with knowledge or science about it.

10. Throughout this translation, *sharī‘a* is rendered as “law,” the verb *sharra‘a* as “legislate,” and the phrase *wāḍi‘ al-sharī‘a* as “lawgiver.” The term *nāmūs* does not occur in this work. For *dīn*, see sec. 7 of the *Philosophy of Plato in Alfarabi: The Political Writings; The Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. Muhsin Mahdi

(New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962; rev. ed., Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969, 2002). The term *sunna* usually refers to the practices that have come to be traditionally accepted within the religion, because they can be traced back to something the Prophet said or did.

11. Alfarabi is referring to the first kind of opinions set forth in sec. 2, those about theoretical things. When speaking of the way humans are brought into being, it is possible to use the proper name for what occurs. When speaking about God or the spiritual beings, similes are used.

12. Or, alternatively, “directly” (*bi-nafsih*).

13. Or, alternatively, “immediately” (*min dhātih*).

ascertain in one of these two ways is an errant religion.

5. Thus, virtuous religion is similar to philosophy. Just as philosophy is partly theoretical and partly practical, so it is with religion: the calculative theoretical part is what a human being is not able to do when he knows it, [47] whereas the practical part is what a human being is able to do when he knows it. The practical things in religion are those whose universals are in practical philosophy. That is because the practical things in religion are those universals made determinate by stipulations restricting them, and what is restricted by stipulations is more particular than what is pronounced unqualifiedly without stipulations: for instance, our saying "the human being who is writing" is more particular than our saying "the human being." Therefore, all virtuous laws are subordinate to the universals of practical philosophy. The theoretical opinions that are in religion have their demonstrative proofs in theoretical philosophy and are taken in religion without demonstrative proofs.

Therefore, the two parts of which religion consists are subordinate to philosophy. For something is said to be a part of a science or to be subordinate to a science in one of two ways: Either the demonstrative proofs of what is assumed in it without demonstrative proofs occur in that science, or the science comprising the universals is the one that gives the reasons for the particulars subordinate to it. The practical part of philosophy is, therefore, the one that gives the reasons for the stipulations by which actions are made determinate: that for the sake of which they were stipulated and the purpose intended to be obtained by means of those stipulations. Further, if to know something is to know it demonstratively, then this part of philosophy is the one that gives the demonstrative proof for the determined actions that are in virtuous religion. And since it is the theoretical part of philosophy that gives demonstrative proofs for the theoretical part of religion, it is philosophy, then, that gives the demonstrative proofs of what virtuous religion encompasses. Therefore, the kingly craft responsible for what the virtuous religion consists of is subordinate to philosophy.

6. Dialectic yields strong presumption about all or most of what demonstrative proofs yield certainty about, and rhetoric persuades about most of what is not such as to be proven by demonstration or looked into by dialectic. Moreover, virtuous religion is not only for philosophers or only for

someone of such a station as to understand what is spoken about only in a philosophic manner. Rather, most people who are taught the opinions of religion and instructed in them and brought to accept its actions are not of such a station—and that is [48] either due to nature or because they are occupied with other things. Yet they are not people who fail to understand generally accepted or persuasive things. For that reason, both dialectic and rhetoric are of major value for verifying the opinions of religion for the citizens and for defending, supporting, and establishing those opinions in their souls, as well as for defending those opinions when someone appears who desires to deceive the followers of the religion by means of argument, lead them into error, and contend against the religion.

7. It may happen accidentally that the first ruler does not determine all of the actions and give an exhaustive account of them, but determines most of them; and with some of those he does determine, it may happen that he does not give an exhaustive account of all their stipulations. On the contrary, for diverse reasons that occur, many actions such as to be determined may remain without determination: death may overtake him and carry him away before he has covered all of them; necessary occupations, such as wars, (*hurūb*) and other things, may keep him from it; or it may be that he only determines actions for each incident and each occurrence he observes or is asked about, at which time he determines, legislates, and establishes a tradition regarding what ought to be done for that kind of incident. Since not everything that can occur does occur in his time or in his country, many things remain that could occur in another time or in another country, each needing a specifically determined action, [49] and he will have legislated nothing about them. Or else he devotes himself to those actions he presumes or knows to be fundamental, from which someone else can extrapolate the remaining ones: he legislates about the manner and amount of what ought to be done with these and leaves the rest, knowing that it will be possible for someone else to extrapolate them by adopting his intention and following in his footsteps. Or he decides to begin with legislating and determining the actions that are of the greatest efficacy, use, value, and benefit, so that the city will cohere and its affairs will be linked and organized: he legislates about those things alone and leaves the rest for a moment of leisure or so that someone else—a contemporary

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or a successor—can extrapolate them by following in his footsteps.

8. If, after his death, someone succeeds him who is like him in all respects, then the successor will be the one who determines what the first did not determine. And not only this, but it is also up to him to alter much of what the first had legislated and to determine it in another way, when he knows that this is best for his time—not because the first erred, but because the first made a determination according to what was best for his time and this one makes a determination according to what is best subsequent to the time of the first, this being the kind of thing the first would alter also, were he to observe it. It is the same if the second is followed by a third [50] who is like the second in all respects, and the third by a fourth: it is up to the one who comes after to determine, on his own, what he does not find determined and to alter what his predecessor determined; for, were his predecessor still here, he too would alter what the one who came after altered.

9. Now if one of those righteous leaders who are really kings should pass away and not be succeeded by one who is like him in all respects, it will be necessary—concerning everything done in the cities under the rulership of the predecessor—for the successor to follow in the footsteps of the predecessor with respect to what he determines; he should not do anything differently nor make any alteration, but should let everything the predecessor determined remain the way it was and look into anything that needs to be given a determination and was not declared by the predecessor, inferring and extrapolating it from the things the first determined by declaring them.

Thus, the art of jurisprudence would then be requisite. It enables a human being to make a sound determination of each thing the lawgiver did not declare specifically by extrapolating it or inferring it from the things he determined by declaring them and to verify that on the basis of the lawgiver's purpose in the religion he legislated with respect to the nation for which it was legislated. Now this verification is not possible unless his belief in the opinions of that religion is correct and he possesses the virtues that are virtues in that religion. Whoever is like that is a jurist.

10. Since a determination takes place with respect to two things—opinions and actions—the art of jurisprudence must have two parts: a part concerning opinions and a part concerning actions.

Thus, the jurist concerned with [51] actions must have exhaustive knowledge of all the actions the lawgiver has declared specifically. Declaration sometimes takes place through a statement and sometimes through an action of the lawgiver, his action taking the place of saying that a particular thing ought to be done in such and such a way. In addition, the jurist must be cognizant of the laws legislated by the first ruler for a certain moment and then replaced with others he retained so that in his own time the jurist follows in the traces of the latter ones, not the former. The jurist must further be cognizant of the language spoken by the first ruler; of the customary ways in which the people of his time used their language; and of what was used in it to signify something metaphorically, while in reality being the name of something else, so that he does not presume that when the name of one thing was used metaphorically for another thing, the first thing was meant, or presume this thing to have been the other thing. In addition, the jurist must be quite clever at recognizing the meaning intended by an equivocal name in the context in which it is used, as well as at recognizing equivocalness in speech. Also, he must be quite clever at recognizing when an expression is used in an unqualified sense, whereas the intention of the speaker is more restricted; at recognizing when an expression, taken literally, has a restricted meaning, whereas the intention of the speaker is more general; and at recognizing when an expression is used in a restricted, or general, or unqualified sense, whereas the intention of the speaker is what it means literally. He must be cognizant of what is generally accepted and what is customary. In addition, he must have a capacity for grasping similarities and differences in things, as well as a capacity for distinguishing what necessarily follows something from what does not. This comes about through a good natural disposition and through familiarity with the art. He must find out the lawgiver's utterances for everything he legislated in speech and his actions for whatever he legislated by doing it rather than by uttering it: by observing and listening to him, if he is [52] his contemporary and companion, or by having recourse to reports about him; and reports about him are either generally accepted or persuasive, each of these being either written or unwritten.

The jurist concerned with the opinions determined in religion ought already to know what the jurist concerned with practices knows.

Jurisprudence about the practical matters of religion therefore comprises only things that are particulars of the universals encompassed by political science; it is, therefore, a part of political science and subordinate to practical philosophy. And jurisprudence about the [theoretical or] scientific matters of religion comprises either particulars of the universals encompassed by theoretical philosophy or those that are likenesses of things subordinate to theoretical philosophy; it is, therefore, a part of theoretical philosophy and subordinate to it, whereas theoretical science is the source.

11. Political science investigates happiness first of all. It brings about cognizance that happiness is of two types: happiness presumed to be happiness without being such, and happiness that is truly happiness. The latter is the one sought for its own sake; at no time is it sought in order to obtain something else by it; indeed, all other things are sought in order to obtain this one, and when it is obtained, the search is given up; it does not come about in this life, but rather in the next life which is after this one; and it is called ultimate happiness. Examples of what is presumed to be happiness but is not such are affluence, pleasures,<sup>14</sup> honor and being glorified, or anything else sought and acquired in this life that the multitude calls goods. [53]

12. Then it investigates the voluntary actions, ways of life, moral habits, states of character, and dispositions until it gives an exhaustive account of all of them and covers them in detail.

13. Then it explains that these cannot all be found in one human being nor be done by one human being, but can be done and actually manifest themselves only by being distributed among an association of people.

It explains that when they are distributed among an association of people, the one charged with one kind cannot undertake or do it unless another person assists him by undertaking the kind the latter has been charged with; nor can the latter undertake what he has been charged with unless a third person assists him by undertaking the kind he has been charged with. Moreover, it is not impossible to find a person who cannot undertake the task he has been charged with unless assisted by an association of people, each one of whom undertakes the kind of thing he has been charged with: for example, someone charged with

undertaking agriculture cannot complete his task unless a carpenter assists him by preparing wood for the plow, a blacksmith by preparing steel for the plow, and a cowherd by preparing oxen for the yoke.

Thus it explains that it is not possible to reach the purpose of voluntary actions and dispositions, unless they<sup>15</sup> are distributed among a very large association of people—either each assigned to a single individual in the association or each assigned to a single group in the association—so that the groups in the association cooperate, through the actions and dispositions in each, to perfect the purpose of the whole association in the same way that the organs of a human being cooperate, through the capacities in each, to perfect the purpose of the whole body.

[It explains] that it is therefore necessary for the association of people to live close together in a single place. And it enumerates the sorts of associations of people that live close together in a single place: there is a civic association, a national association, and others. [54]

14. Then it distinguishes the ways of life, moral habits, and dispositions that, when practiced in cities or nations, make their dwellings prosper and their inhabitants obtain goods in this life here below, and ultimate happiness in the afterlife; and it sets them apart from those not like that. Only those voluntary actions, ways of life, moral habits, states of character, and dispositions by which ultimate happiness is attained are virtuous; only they are goods; and they are the ones that are truly noble. Any other actions and dispositions are presumed to be goods, virtues, or noble, but are not such—on the contrary, they are truly evils.

14a. It explains that the things such as to be distributed in a city, in cities, in a nation, or in nations so as to be practiced in common are only brought about by means of a rulership that establishes those actions and dispositions in the city or nation and strives to preserve them for the people so that they do not disappear or become extinct. The rulership by which those ways of life and dispositions are established in a city or nation and preserved for the people cannot come about except by a craft, art, disposition, or faculty that gives rise to the actions by which they are established and preserved. This craft is the craft of the king and the kingly craft, or whatever a human being wants to call it instead of

14. Reading *aw al-ladhdhāt* with Leiden MS Or. 1002, rather than *wa al-ladhdhāt* with Mahdi.

15. Literally, "their kinds" or "kinds of them" (*anwā'uhā*).

“kingly.” And the regime is the work of this craft; that is, it performs the actions by which those ways of life and those dispositions are established in a city or nation and preserved for the people. This craft consists of cognizance of all the actions with which one goes about establishing, first, and preserving afterwards.

The rulership that establishes in a city or nation and preserves for the people the ways of life and dispositions [55] by means of which ultimate happiness is obtained is virtuous rulership. The kingly craft by means of which this rulership comes about is the virtuous kingly craft. The regime that comes into being through this craft is the virtuous regime. The city or nation subject to this regime is the virtuous city and the virtuous nation. The human being who is a part of this city or nation is the virtuous human being.

The rulership, the kingly craft, and the regime that do not aim at obtaining the ultimate happiness that is truly happiness but rather aim at attaining one of the goods particularly characteristic of this world here below—that is, the ones the multitude presumes to be goods—are not virtuous; on the contrary, they are called ignorant rulership, ignorant regime, and ignorant craft: indeed, they are not called “kingly” because, according to the Ancients, kingship was what came about through virtuous kingly craft. The city or the nation subject to the actions and dispositions established in it by the ignorant rulership is called the ignorant city or nation. The human being who is part of this city is called an ignorant human being.<sup>16</sup> This rulership and these cities and nations are divided in several ways; each one of them is called by the name of the purpose it is intent upon among the things presumed to be good: either pleasures, honors, wealth, or something else.

Now it is not impossible for a human being who is part of the virtuous city to be living [56] in an ignorant city, voluntarily or involuntarily. That human being is a part foreign to that city, and he may be likened to an animal that happens to have the legs of an animal belonging to an inferior species. Similarly, when someone who is part of an ignorant city lives in a virtuous city, he may be likened to an animal that has the head of an animal belonging to a superior species.<sup>17</sup> For this reason,

the most virtuous persons, forced to dwell in ignorant cities due to the non-existence of the virtuous city, need to migrate to the virtuous city, if it happens to come into being at a certain moment.

14b. [Political science explains] that virtuous rulership is of two types: a first rulership and a rulership dependent on it. First rulership is the one that first establishes the virtuous ways of life and dispositions in the city or nation without their having existed among the people before that, and it converts them from the ignorant ways of life to the virtuous ways of life. The person undertaking this rulership is the first ruler.

The rulership dependent on the first is the one that follows in the steps of the first rulership with regard to its actions. The one who undertakes this rulership is called ruler of the tradition and king of the tradition. His rulership is based on an existing tradition.

The first virtuous kingly craft consists of cognizance of all the actions that facilitate establishing the virtuous ways of life and dispositions in cities and nations, preserving them for the people, and guarding and keeping them from the inroad of something from the ignorant ways of life—all of those being sicknesses that befall the virtuous cities. In this sense, it is like the medical craft; for the latter consists of cognizance of all the actions that establish health in a human being, preserve it for him, and guard it from any sickness that might occur. [57]

14c. It is clear that the physician ought to be cognizant that opposites ought to be combated by opposites, be cognizant also that fever is to be combated by chill, and be cognizant further that jaundice should be combated by barley-water or tamarind-water. Of these three, some are more general than others: the most general is that opposites ought to be combated by opposites; the most particular is that jaundice ought to be combated by barley-water; and our saying that “fever is to be combated by chill” is a mean between the more general and the more particular.

However, when the physician cures, he cures the bodies of individuals and of single beings—Zayd’s body, for instance, or Amr’s body. In curing Zayd’s jaundice, he is not content with what he is cognizant of concerning opposites being

16. Or, perhaps, “a human being in a state of ignorance” (*insān jāhili*).

17. Literally, “another, more venerable species” (*naw’ ākhar ashraf minh*). Similarly, a literal translation of the contrasting

phrase, “inferior species,” would be “another species subordinate to it” (*naw’ ākhar dūnah*).

combated by opposites, nor about jaundice needing to be combated by barley-water unless, with respect to the fever of this Zayd, he has, in addition, cognizance that is more particular than those things he is cognizant of through [the study of] his art. So he investigates whether this jaundice of his ought to be combated by barley-water because his body is cold and moist, or whether barley-water will heal the bodily humor, but not let him perspire, and similar things. If barley-water ought to be drunk, he is not content to be unqualifiedly cognizant of this unless he is cognizant, in addition, of what amount of it ought to be drunk, what consistency what is to be drunk ought to have, at what moment of the day it ought to be drunk, and in which one of Zayd's feverish states it ought to be drunk. So he will have determined that with regard to quantity, quality, and time. Nor is it possible for him to make that determination without observing the sick person, so that his determination accords with what he observes about the state of this sick person, namely, Zayd.

Clearly, he could not have acquired this determination from the books of medicine he studied and was trained on, nor from his ability to be cognizant of the universals and general things set down in medical books, but through another faculty developing from his pursuit of medical practices with respect to the body of one individual after another, from his lengthy observation of the states of sick persons, [58] from the experience acquired by being occupied with curing over a long period of time, and from ministering to each individual. Therefore, the craft of the perfect physician becomes complete, to the point of performing with ease the actions proceeding from that craft, by means of two faculties: one is the ability for unqualified and exhaustive cognizance of the universals that are parts of his art so that nothing escapes him; then there is the faculty that develops in him through the lengthy practice of his art with regard to each individual.

14d. And the first kingly craft is like that. First of all, it comprises universal things. In performing those actions particular to it, the ruler is not content to have comprehensive cognizance of universal things, or the ability to grasp them, unless he has another faculty as well, one acquired through lengthy experience and observation that enables

him to determine actions with regard to their quantity, quality, times, and the rest of what actions may be determined by and stipulations placed on them—either with respect to each city, nation, or person, or with respect to an event that occurs or something that happens at particular times. For the actions of the kingly craft are only concerned with particular cities: I mean, this city and that city, this nation and that nation, or this human being and that human being.

Now the faculty by means of which a human being is able to infer the stipulations with which to determine actions with respect to what he observes in each community, each city, each nation,<sup>18</sup> each group, or each person, and with respect to each occurrence in a city, a nation, [59] or a person, is what the Ancients call "prudence." This faculty is not acquired through cognizance of the universals of the art or through exhausting all of them, but through lengthy experience with individual instances.

15. Political science that is a part of philosophy is limited—in what it investigates of the voluntary actions, ways of life, and dispositions, and in the rest of what it investigates—to universals and to giving their patterns. It also brings about cognizance of the patterns for determining particulars: how, by what, and to what extent they ought to be determined. It leaves them undetermined in actuality, because determining in actuality belongs to a faculty other than philosophy and perhaps because the circumstances and occurrences with respect to which determination takes place are infinite and without limitation.

This science has two parts. One part comprises bringing about cognizance of what happiness is—that is, what happiness truly is and what is presumed to be happiness—and enumerating the universal voluntary actions, ways of life, moral habits, states of character, and dispositions that are such as to come about in cities and nations; and it distinguishes the virtuous ones from the non-virtuous. Another part comprises bringing about cognizance of the actions by which virtuous actions and dispositions are established and ordered among the inhabitants of the cities, as well as of the actions by which what has been established among them is preserved for them.

16. Then it<sup>19</sup> enumerates how many sorts of non-virtuous kingly crafts there are. It also gives

18. Adding *aw umma umma* with Leiden MS Or. 1002 and Dunlop.

19. The subject of all the enumerations, explanations, and so forth in what follows is the "political science that is a part of philosophy" of sec. 15.

the patterns of the actions performed by each one of the kingly crafts in order to obtain its purpose from the inhabitants of the cities under its rulership. It explains that those actions, ways of life, and dispositions that are not virtuous are the sicknesses of virtuous cities and that their ways of life and regimes are the sicknesses of the virtuous kingly craft. The actions, ways of life, and dispositions that are in the non-virtuous cities are the sicknesses of virtuous cities.

17. Then it enumerates how many reasons and tendencies there are because of which the virtuous rulerships and the ways of life of virtuous cities are frequently in danger of being transformed into [60] non-virtuous ways of life and dispositions and how they are transformed into the non-virtuous. It enumerates and brings about cognizance of (a) the actions by which virtuous cities and regimes are restrained so that they not be corrupted and not be transformed into non-virtuous ones and (b) the things by which it is possible to turn them back to health, if they are transformed and become sick.

18. Then it explains that the actions of the first virtuous kingly craft cannot come about completely except through cognizance of the universals of this art; that is, by theoretical philosophy being joined to it and prudence being added to it. Prudence is the faculty acquired through experience arising from long involvement in the actions of the art with respect to single cities and nations and with respect to each single community: it is the ability for excellently inferring the stipulations by which the actions, ways of life, and dispositions are determined with respect to each community, each city, or each nation, either with respect to a short period of time, with respect to a long but limited period of time, or—if possible—with respect to particular times,<sup>20</sup> and for determining them as well with respect to each state that may emerge and each occurrence that may happen in a city, nation, or community. This is what the first virtuous kingly craft consists of. The one dependent on it, whose rulership is based on tradition, does not by nature need philosophy.

It explains that what is best and most virtuous in virtuous cities and nations is for their kings and rulers who succeed one another through time to possess the qualifications<sup>21</sup> of the first ruler. It brings about cognizance of (a) how it ought to

be worked out so that these kings who succeed one another possess the very same states of virtue and (b) which qualifications are to be sought for in the sons of the city's kings so that if they are found in one of them, it is to be hoped that he will become the same kind of king as the first ruler. In addition, it explains how he ought to be educated, how he is to be raised, and in what way he is to be instructed so that he might become a king completely.

It explains, moreover, that the kings whose rulerships are ignorant need neither the universals of this art nor philosophy. [61] Rather, each one of them can achieve his purpose with respect to the city by means of the experiential faculty he attains through the kind of actions with which he obtains what he is intent upon and arrives at the presumed good that is his purpose, providing he happens to possess a thoroughly deceitful genius capable of inferring what he needs for determining the actions he is to perform and for determining the actions in which he will employ the inhabitants of the city. The craft by which he is a king consists of (a) things attained through experience—either through his own experience or through the experience of some other king who shares in his intention, pursuing his experience or schooling himself in it, and combining that with what he himself has acquired through experience—and (b) matters that he, by the deceitfulness of his genius and cunning, has inferred from the principles he has acquired by experience.

19. Then, after that, it brings about cognizance of the ranks of the things in the world and of the ranks of the beings in general. It begins with the parts of the world that are most inferior, namely, the ones that have no rulership over anything at all and that give rise only to actions used for serving, not to actions used for ruling.

From these, it ascends to the things that rule them without an intermediary, namely, the things that rule them directly. It brings about cognizance of their ranks with respect to rulership: what ranks they have; what the extent of their rulership is; that they do not yet have complete rulership; and that their natural traits and faculties are not sufficient for them on that account to have rulership of themselves so that they can dispense with being ruled by others, but that there must necessarily be rulerships over them governing them. ¶

20. This might also mean "or with respect to all time—if possible." The phrase is quite elusive: *aw bi-ḥasab al-zamān in amkan*.

21. Literally, "stipulations" (*sharā'it*).

From these, it ascends to the things that rule them directly. It brings about cognizance of their ranks with respect to rulership: what ranks they have; what the extent of their rulership is; that they do not yet have complete rulership; and that their natural traits and faculties are not sufficient for them on that account to have rulership of themselves so that they can dispense [62] with being ruled by others, but that there must necessarily be rulerships over them governing them.

From these, it ascends to the things that rule them directly.<sup>22</sup> It brings about cognizance of their ranks with respect to rulership: what ranks they have; what the extent of their rulership is; and that they are not complete either, except that they are more complete than the rulerships below them. It also brings about cognizance that their natural faculties and traits are not yet sufficient for them to have rulership of themselves so that they have no ruler at all, but that there must necessarily be other rulerships over them governing them.

It ascends, as well, to the things that also rule these directly. With regard to them, it brings about the same cognizance it brought about concerning the former ones.

It does not cease ascending like this from things in lower ranks to things in higher ranks having more complete rulership than those below. In this way, it ascends from the more perfect to more and more perfect beings. It brings about cognizance that whenever it ascends to a higher rank and to a being more perfect in itself and of more perfect rulership, the number of beings in that rank must be fewer and each one of the beings in it must have greater unity in itself and less multiplicity. In addition, it explains the multiplicity and unity that are in a thing.

It does not cease ascending in the perfection of this order from one level of rulership to a more perfect level of rulership until it finally reaches a level at which it is impossible for there to be anything but one being—one in number and one in every aspect of oneness. It is impossible as well for there to be a rulership above it; on the contrary, the ruler at that level governs everything below him—it not being at all possible for another to govern him—and rules everything below him. It is not possible [63] for there to be any deficiency

in him, not in any way at all; nor is it possible for there to be any perfection more complete than his perfection, nor any existence more excellent than his existence—whereas everything below him has deficiency in some way—and the ranks directly next to him are the most perfect ranks below his level.

20. Then, as it descends, it does not cease [bringing about cognizance that] the beings in each level have more multiplicity and less perfection, until it finally reaches the last beings, namely, the ones that perform servile actions. There is nothing more inferior in existence than these, nor is it at all possible for them to perform ruling actions. The action of the first, the sempiternal one, to whom nothing can be prior, cannot be a servile action at all. And every one of the intermediate ones in the ranks below the first ruler performs ruling actions toward what is below itself by which it serves the first ruler.

In addition, it brings about cognizance of their harmony, of how they are linked together, how they are organized, how their actions are organized, and how they mutually support one another so that despite their multiplicity they might be like one thing. This comes about due to the power with which that one governs them, his governance extending in each of them commensurate with its rank and in accordance with the amount of natural worth a being<sup>23</sup> at that level of existence must have, as well as with the actions that must be entrusted to it for serving, ruling, or doing both.

21. Then it indicates what corresponds to these with respect to the faculties of the human soul.

22. Then it indicates what corresponds to these with respect to the organs of the human body.

23. Then, it also indicates what corresponds to these with respect to the virtuous city, placing the king and the first ruler in the same station as the deity who is the first governor of the beings and of the world and the classes [of beings] in it.

24. Then, it does not cease going down through the ranks among them until it finally reaches groups within the divisions of the inhabitants of the city whose actions are such that it is not possible for them to rule by means of them, but only to serve, [64] and whose voluntary dispositions are such that it is not possible [for them] to rule

22. Dunlop suggests that the immediately preceding passage, from "It brings about cognizance..." to this sentence ending in "directly" be deleted, believing it to appear as the result of dittography.

23. Reading *mā* ("what," understood here as a "being") for sense, instead of *man* ("one" or "someone").

by means of them, but only to serve. The groups in the intermediate ranks have actions by means of which they rule what is below them and serve whomever is above them; as they move closer and closer to the level of the king, they are more perfect in traits and actions and, therefore, more perfect in rulership, until the level of the kingly craft is finally reached. It is clear that this is not at all a craft by which a human being can serve; no, it is a craft and a disposition only for ruling.

25. Then, after that, it begins to ascend from the first ranks [in the city], namely, the ranks of serving, to the ranks of rulership directly above them. It does not cease ascending in speech and description from a lower level to a higher level until it finally reaches the level of the king of the city who rules and does not serve.

26. Then it ascends from that level to the level of the spiritual being governing the king who is the first ruler of the virtuous city, namely, the one set down as the trustworthy spirit<sup>24</sup> and this is the one through which God, may He be exalted, communicates the revelation to the first ruler of the city. Thus it looks into what its level is and which one of the ranks of the spiritual beings it is.

27. Then it does not cease ascending like this in bringing about cognizance of things until it finally reaches the Deity, may His praise be magnified.

It explains how revelation descends from Him level by level until it reaches the first ruler who thus governs the city or the nation and nations with what revelation from God, may He be exalted, brings, so that the first ruler's governance also extends to every one of the divisions of the city in an orderly manner until it finally reaches the last divisions. It explains this in that God, may He be exalted, is also the governor of the virtuous city, just as He is the governor of the world, [65] and in that His, may He be exalted, governance of the world takes place in one way, whereas His governance of the virtuous city takes place in another way; there is, however, a relation between the two kinds of governing, and there is a relation between the parts of the world and the parts of the virtuous city or nation.

And [it explains that] there must also be harmony, linkage, organization, and mutual support in actions among the parts of the virtuous nation; something similar to the harmony, linkage, organization, and mutual support in actions that

exist in the parts of the world due to their natural traits must [also] exist in the divisions of the virtuous nation due to their voluntary traits and dispositions. The Governor of the world places natural traits in the parts of the world by means of which they are made harmonious, organized, linked together, and mutually supportive in actions in such a way that, despite their multiplicity and the multiplicity of their actions, they become like a single thing performing a single action for a single purpose. In the same manner, the governor of the nation must set down and prescribe voluntary traits and dispositions for the souls in the divisions of the nation and city that will bring them to that harmony, linkage of some to others, and mutual support in actions in such a way that, despite the multiplicity of their divisions, the diversity of their ranks, and the multiplicity of their actions, the nation and the nations become like a single thing performing a single action by which a single purpose is obtained. What corresponds to that becomes clear to anyone who contemplates the organs of the human body.

Along with the natural constitutions and instincts that He implanted in the world and its parts, the Governor of the world provided other things that make the existence of the world and its divisions persevere and continue in the way He constituted it for very long periods of time. The governor of the virtuous nation ought to do the very same thing; he ought not to limit himself to the virtuous traits and dispositions that he prescribes for their souls so that they will be made harmonious, linked together, and mutually supportive in actions unless he provides, in addition, other things through which he seeks their perseverance and continuation in the virtues and good things he implanted in them from the outset.

In general, he ought to follow God and pursue [66] the traces of the Governor of the world concerning His provision for the [different] sorts of beings and His governance of their affairs: the natural instincts, constitutions, and traits He set down and implanted in them so that the naturally good things are fully realized in each of the realms according to its level as well as in the totality of the beings. So, too, should he set down in the cities and nations the corresponding arts, and voluntary traits and dispositions, so that the voluntary good things might be fully realized in every single city

24. See Qur'an 26:193.

and nation to the extent that its rank and worth permit, in order that the associations of nations and cities might thereby arrive at happiness in this life and in the afterlife. For the sake of this, the first ruler of the virtuous city must already have thorough cognizance of theoretical philosophy; for he cannot understand anything pertaining to God's, may He be exalted, governance of the world so as to follow it except from that source.

It is clear, in addition, that all of this is impossible unless there is a common religion in the cities that brings together their opinions, beliefs, and actions; that renders their divisions harmonious, linked together, and well ordered; and at that point they will support one another in their actions and assist one another to reach the purpose that is sought after, namely, ultimate happiness.

paradise

paradise mā'lozēbro = a word of philosophy!  
 - ol'dca mā' nazobolnōst - Boka  
 modestoanī Boka  
 ter ffie mit pornamia Boka ⇒ ber ffie  
 nemōrōr dōr alunt - b'larēnōr -