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*Flashes of Illumination on Praiseworthy Ethics,*

or, *The Jalalian Ethics*

The Fourth Flash

On the Politics of Kingship and the Manners of Kings

Translated from Persian by Carl W. Ernst<sup>1</sup>

First, let it be said by way of preface that the rank of the sultanate is one of the glories of the divine bounty from the limitless treasury of graces, of which certain great individual servants of God become worthy. What rank reaches this level? For here the divine King of Kings, having placed one of His chosen servants on the throne of elect vicegerency, shines a spark from the lights of real majesty on his condition and makes the specification of the ranks and rights of all humanity subject to his decree, so that all, according to their different ranks, turn the face of need in the direction of the heaven-like court. And it has come down in a saying of the Prophet, that the emperor is the shadow of God on earth, for everyone oppressed by the calamity of the raging events of time goes to him for refuge. Gratitude for this supreme bounty and great gift is what regulates justice among both the noble and the common folk. Just so the noble meaning, "David, we have made you a vicegerent on the earth, so judge between the people with truth" (Qur. 38:26), can refer to that.

Now that the preface to this introduction is complete, just as the city is divided in conformity with prior fate into the virtuous and the non-virtuous, the politics of kingship is also divided into two types. The first is the virtuous government, which is called imamate, and that is the ordering of the occupations of the servants in worldly and other-worldly affairs, so that each attains the perfection that is appropriate to him, and real happiness can undoubtedly become

his perquisite. The ruler of this government is the vicegerent of God in reality, and is the shadow of God. In the perfection of government, the one who imitates the master of the religious law [i.e., Muhammad] necessarily will attain the prosperous influences and luminous rays of that unique servant of all the lands. As the poem says,

Take what you can see, and leave what you've only heard;

the rising sun will brighten you more than Saturn.

An example of this type that is more splendid than the world-illuminating sun is the reign of the master of the age, who holds the station of Solomon [i.e., Uzun Hasan]. The great masters of unveiling and realization have mostly have expressed the good news, in this time of happy influence, that the truthful day, "the day when consciences will be examined" (Qur. 86:9), is the appearance of the manifestation of all things in existence. In just a little while, the joy and splendor of the kingdom and the faith will have increased to perfection, and the groups of people will be protected from the calamities of time in the enclosure of security, the wolf and the sheep will drink from the same place, and the falcon and the partridge will sleep in the same nest. May God most high keep the sun of his justice, which casts sparks of beneficence to the east and west of the world, in the day-increasing degrees of ascension, and keep him safe and preserved from the evil eye, downfall, disgrace, fall, and fault!

The second is the defective government, which is called tyrannical, and the goal of its masters is the suborning of the servants of God and the destruction of the lands of God. They do not endure long; in a little while, they are afflicted with worldly calamity joined with eternal misery. A tyrannical emperor is like a lofty structure placed on snow; necessarily, when its foundation melts in the sunshine of divine justice, the structure is destroyed. The wise know that one cannot preserve the treasure of Chosroes with a bread crust seized from a tired old woman, nor set the table of

Solomon with a locust's leg stolen from the hand of a poor ant. Playing a lute made from wood taken from the property of the poor and unfortunate yields no result but groaning lament, and the wine filled from the heart's blood of the helpless produces only the gurgle of bloody weeping, and it gives birth only to the hangover of pains and illnesses. One cannot make the armor of David with a plundered beggar's garment, nor produce the pillow for a royal throne from an old quilt pillaged from the needy. A shield woven from the property of poor orphans will not ward off the arrow of fate, nor will the mail made from the substance of naked beggars repel the arrow of suffering.

Rather, the master of good fortune finds security from the arrows of time's calamities, for he entrusts his heart to the perfect minds of pure dervishes, and he succeeds in attaining the goal of the intentions and desire of those with high concentration. For at the time of commencing journeys and undertaking dangers and risks, having requested a portable shield from the thought of the residents of mosques and dwellers in Sufi hospices, the crown of empire sits on the head of the man who seeks direction from the thought of the crown-bestowing headless and footless ones. The throne of vicegerency is the residence of the emperor who begs for grace from the thought of the beggars of the heart.

At tavern's door sit rogues and rascals

Who give and take away the crown of empire.

When a brick is your pillow, you find the seven stars over your head--

Behold the hand of power and the rank of nobility.

The riders of the lead-horse of eternal happiness, in place of the proud-stepping bay horse and the fleet-footed dark horse, have joined the dun horse of dawn and the black horse of night to the stable of the emperor, for the departure of the swift steed of his intention is toward the security and contentment of those whose state is shattered.

Unending grace, instead of the fleet-footed red horse and the world-striding cream horse, has led the piebald horse of the sun and the silvery horse of the moon with the halter of subjugation and the reins of proof of the world ruler. On the field of justice and compassion he has stolen the prize from worthy rulers, he has imitated the states of emperors, and he has become the just witness contemplating the daily increasing fortune of the revered master of time, the divine shadow.

In the experience of this claimant and the verification of his claim, if someone opens the eyes of significance and polishes the verdigris of heedlessness from the mirror of insight, and the master of virtuous government holds fast to the just law, he holds the people in the position of children and friends. Greed and love of wealth is abhorred by the intellectual faculty, but the master of defective government is attached to the principles of tyranny; he holds the people, in relation to himself, in the position of slaves, rather, he thinks of them as beasts of burden, while he himself is the slave of greed and desire. According to the saying, "People in their time resemble most their parents, and people in religion follow their kings," men imitate the character of the rulers of the age. When the bridle of time comes into the hand of a just emperor, everyone seeks justice and acquires excellence. If the situation is the opposite of this, men are inclined to lying, greed, and all other vile things. It is for this reason that it has come down in the sayings of the Prophet, that if a sultan is just, he has a portion of every good deed done by his subjects; if he is a tyrant, he shares in every evil deed done by them.

The philosophers have said that the emperor should have seven qualities: first, high concentration, which is attained by purifying one's morals; second, correct knowledge and thought, which is obtained by natural quickness and

much experience; third, powerful resolve, which is attained by correct opinion and the power of firmness--this is called the resolution of kings, and the resolution of men, and this very thing is basic for acquiring every benefit and excellence;

The story is told that the caliph Ma'mun had a desire to eat roses, and on this account a great corruption affected his constitution. As much as the skilled physicians attempted to eliminate that by prescribing medical remedies, they did not attain success until a day when all the physicians were gathered to examine their books. While they conferred on this subject, one of the private boon-companions came in. When he observed what was going on, he said, "Commander of the Faithful! Where is the resolution of kings?" Ma'mun told the physicians, "There is no need for any remedy, after this, I shall not be eager for this again."

fourth, patience in enduring afflictions, for patience is the key to the doors of purpose and security--it is said in a saying of the Prophet, "He who knocks on a door and persists gains entry";<sup>2</sup> fifth, prosperity, so that he is not disturbed by covetousness for men's wealth; sixth, obedient soldiers; seventh, rank, which will necessarily cause the attraction of hearts, awe, and authority--this quality is not essential, but is preferred. Military prosperity can be attained by means of those four qualities, i.e., high concentration, knowledge, patience, and resolve, so these four are very important. Praise be to God that the revered emperor, the protector of religion (i.e., Uzun Hasan), has attained all these four qualities, and his noble essence has reached the limit of the ascensions of magnificence and majesty.

Since the preceding introduction discovered that the emperor is the physician of the world, and the physician cannot do without the knowledge of sickness, the causes of pain, and the nature of the cure, thus in any case it is necessary for the sultan that he know the disease of the kingdom and the way to cure it. Since civilization is an expression for a common society among various groups, as long as each of these groups stays at its level and engages in

the occupation that is its task and attains the portion that is appropriate to it of riches and favors, that is, pomp and glory, then the temperament of the city will always be on the path of balance and its affairs characterized by the way of order. But if it turns away from this rule, then it will always be the cause of dissension, which is the source of the loosening of the bond of affection and the cause of corruption and confusion. For it is decreed that the origin of every state is the agreement of the opinions of society, which are related in mutual aid as the limbs of a single body. This being the case, it will also be true that a person has come into existence in the world who has the power of all these individuals, and none of these individuals can resist it. Even many people, if they are divided in their opinions, all cannot overcome it, except in the case that mutual affection is attained among them in the same fashion, so that they are related as a single person, for its power will be greater than the power of this society.

Since the situation of any multitude that lacks unity will not become a harmonious order, and that unity is justice, as was just mentioned, as long as the sultan follows the rule of justice and keeps each class of men in its own place, and prevents them from aggression, transgression, and seeking excess, the kingdom is always in order. If it is to the contrary of this, every group is overcome by the demand for its own benefit, and it rises up to harm others, and by way of excess and negligence the bond of affection is loosened. It is known from experience that every society increases, as long as there is concord among its members, and they follow the path of justice. But when injustice and enmity is predominant among them, it heads toward destruction, since in consequence of the preceding arguments, the people of the day are on the path of the sultans. Thus, when the emperor and his following strive for injustice, the demand of injustice that is concealed in human nature is activated in everyone and inclines toward aggression. As it is said, unity never joins with

aggression, for then it always becomes the cause of the corruption of the world's temperament. Therefore it is said, "Government can endure with unbelief, but it does not endure with injustice."<sup>3</sup>

The philosophers have said that one can protect a regime with two things. One is affection and unity among those who are in accord, and the other is contention and discord between enemies, for whenever enemies are busy with each other, they are unable to attain other aims. For this reason, when Alexander conquered the kingdom of Darius, the Persian army was vast in numbers. He considered that if he neglected them, and (God forbid) they joined in alliance, it would be hard to prevent them, and if he eliminated them, it would be far from the basis of religion and virtue. He consulted with the philosopher Aristotle, and the philosopher said, "Separate them, and return to them government and rule of a district, so that they may be occupied with each other, and you may be safe from their wickedness." Alexander made them rulers of provinces, and from that time to the age of Ardashir Babak, the alliance by reason of which they could become dominant was no longer easy to attain.

The classes of people should be equal with one another, so that civil justice is attained. Just as the moderation of temperament is attained by marriage of the four elements and equality among them, moderation of the civil temperament is also conceived by equality of the four classes. (1) The first class is the scholars, such as religious scholars, jurists, judges, scribes, clerks, engineers, astronomers, physicians, and poets, for the maintenance of religion and this world is bound to and dependent on the efforts of their bold pens and elegant proclamations. They are in the position of water among the elements, and even so, the relationship that is between knowledge and water, according to insightful assayers, can be clearer than water, or rather more luminous than the sun. (2) The second class is the soldiers, such as bold men, warriors, and governors of forts and frontiers, for the organized welfare of humanity does not take

form without constant care for the sword of the onslaught of their avenging standard, and the matters of the corruption of rebels are not unbound and destroyed without the fire of their thunderous wrath. They are in the position of fire, and the aspect of their relationship with that is more obvious than the requirement of proof--seeking fire by lamplight is not the task of "those who have vision." (3) The third class is business people, such as traders, merchants, and masters of trades and crafts. Through them the sources of trade goods and other occupations are arranged, and distant regions enjoy and delight in each other's special commodities and provisions. Their relationship is with air, which is the supplier of growth to plants and the provider of spirit to animals. By its mediation, oscillation, and motion, every kind of gift and rarity arrives by the path of hearing to the realm of vicegerency, the human clarifier [i.e., the intelligence] and it becomes extremely clear. (4) The fourth class is the farmers, such as ploughmen, landlords, and cultivators, who care for plants and prepare foods. Without the means of their efforts, the survival of humanity would be in the realm of impossibility. In reality, they are the producers of that which does not exist, for other groups do not add to the existence of anything, they rather convey an existing thing from one person to another, or from one place to another, or from one form to another. Their proximity to the earth, which is the place of adoration of the planets, the locus of rays of the lights of the world of purity, the manifestation of the rarities of creation, and the origin of hidden wonders, is extremely clear.

Just as in compounds, excess of one of the elements beyond the necessary share causes immoderation, corruption, and dissolution, in civil society also the predominance of one of these classes over the other three classes makes the order of unity vain and confused. After instituting equality between the four classes, one needs to observe the conditions of every individual and assign the rank of each according to what they deserve.

From another point of view, the divisions of humanity are five.

(1) The first is those people who are of a good nature, who convey their goodness to others, such as scholars of the religious law, masters of the spiritual path, and knowers of the divine reality. This group is the goal of existence and the elite of worshipers of God. They are the descent of eternal grace and the vision of unending fortune. In reality, the other divisions have entered into the inn of existence on their coattails.

Come, for at the table of grace of the lord of the world  
you are the guest, and the world is uninvited.

The philosophers have said that the emperor should hold this group closer to himself than any other and place them in authority over the other divisions. It is said that whenever the masters of learning and sagacity are the resort of his majesty the emperor, this is a sign of the advance of fortune and the increase of dignity.

The story is told that Hasan Buyah in his own time was the ruler of the country of Rayy, and from his love of philosophers and scholars, he was chosen from the sultans of the age to take the drum of warfare against Rome. At the beginning of battle, victory fell to the army of Islam and they achieved complete domination over the infidels. Afterwards, the Romans underwent a general transformation, and having collected an army from all directions, they set off against the army of Iraq. The latter were defeated, and some fell into captivity. The Roman king sat and called the prisoners near to him. Among them was a man called Abu Nasr, a native of Rayy. When he made it known that he was from Rayy, the king said, "Shall I give you a message to convey to your emperor?" He replied, "Yes, I am at your service." The king said, "Tell Hasan Buyah the following: I have come from Constantinople with the intention of laying waste to Iraq, but now that I have investigated your character and condition, it is clear to me that the sun of your fortune is still aimed at the zenith of perfection and is on the ascendant in the degrees of felicity. The person for whom the sun

of fortune faces the nadir of decline and the twilight of sunset and extinction does not have royal associates who are great philosophers and famous scholars, such as Ibn `Amid, Abu Ja`far Khazin, `Ali ibn Qasim, and Abu `Ali Bitā`i. The gathering of this group in your forecourt is a proof of your continuing felicity and increasing pomp and glory. For this reason I am not going to interfere with your country."

(2) The second division is the people who are good by nature, but who do not convey their goodness to others. The rank of this division is lower than the first division, for the perfect beauty of the latter is adorned by the mole of guidance and perfecting, and they are honored by the robe of "taking on the divine qualities."<sup>4</sup> But this division, although they are graced by the ornament of perfection, yet they fall short of the degree of perfecting others. This group should to be revered, and their welfare and provisions should be supplied in sufficiency.

(3) The third division is the people who are neither good nor bad by nature. One should keep this division hidden in the shade of security and clip the wings of pity for them, so they remain protected from the corruption of their ability and are deserving of perfection as much as possible.

(4) The fourth division is the people who are bad, but who do not convey their evil to others. One should humble this crowd, treat them with contempt, and prevent them from crimes by prohibitions that preach and deter.

(5) The fifth division is those who from essential malice convey their evil to others. This group is the vilest of humanity, and the opposite of the first group. Those from this division for whom there is some hope of reform should be given corrective instruction. Those for whom there is no hope of reform, if their evil is not extensive, the emperor should treat kindly, in accordance with sound opinion. But if their evil is general in effect, its removal is necessary according to both religious law and reason, by the method that is soundest and most fitting.

One method of averting evil is imprisonment, and that prevents someone from mixing with the people of the city. A second method is bondage, which prevents someone from having political influence. A third method is banning, and that prevents someone from entering the city. If the person is not expelled by these measures, the philosophers are divided over the permissibility of killing him. Their clearest saying is that the limb which is the tool of evil be amputated, such as the hand, foot, or tongue, or else the elimination of one of the senses would suffice. The truth of the matter is that one should follow the true religious law, and the legal punishments (*hudud*) of amputation and execution should be preferred in applicable cases. Anything beyond that should be avoided, for God has said: "Whoso goes beyond the limits (*hudud*) of God has wronged his soul" (Qur. 65:1). And there should be no execution of madmen. If someone deserves it according to religious law, he should not be pitied, as God says: "And let pity for the two not hold you back from serving God" (Qur. 24:2). Just as a physician knows that it is permissible, or rather necessary, that he cut off a limb for the salvation of the remaining limbs, the emperor, who is the world's physician by the decree of the First Regulator (whose dignity is exalted), at times may execute an individual for the sake of the general welfare of humanity.

After establishing equality and specifying the ranks among the people according to justice, the emperor should apportion goods, favoring each one according to his deserts. Goods are of three kinds: health, wealth, and honors. Everyone is deserving of a portion of these affairs, and reducing it is oppression for that person, while increasing it is oppression for the citizens. If there is one person who lacks the food that he deserves, then to increase someone else's sufficiency is injustice for them. At times reduction may be oppression for the citizens. Whenever a deserving person is

made to halt at a station lower than that which is his right, it necessarily humiliates him. Others become worthy, and this is the cause of dissension in the order of society.

After distribution of goods to the people according to their deserts, he should protect that for them, not permitting that goods rightfully belonging to anyone should be lost. In case someone has a loss, he conveys to him compensation to the degree that is deserved, in such a manner that society is not injured. He should prevent oppression by punishments for those who commit it; for every oppression there is a punishment appropriate to it. If in recompense to a little oppression he gives much punishment, it is tyranny for the oppressor, and if in response to much oppression he gives little punishment, it is tyranny for the other citizens. Some of the philosophers hold that oppression for any one of the people is oppression for all the citizens. Therefore punishment is not annulled by the forgiveness of the oppressed person, and in spite of his forgiveness, it is permissible for the sultan, who is the universal ruler and regulator, to give punishment. Some others hold the contrary of this, but since this discussion refers to the judgment of the just arbitrator of the religious law, the leader of humanity [Muhammad] (blessings and peace be upon him and on his family), the decision is found in this manner: everything that is in the class of punishments of God, such as theft, adultery, and highway robbery, is not annulled by forgiveness, rather, it is necessary for the sultan to uphold the punishment.

But that which pertains to the class of rights of the people, if it is the law of retaliation or the punishment of false accusation of adultery, is annulled by merited forgiveness. If it is discretionary punishment, even in the form of beating, inconvenience, or contempt, most of the leading experts of the teaching of Shafi`i (God have mercy on him) agree that in spite of merited forgiveness, discretionary punishment is incumbent on the sultan in terms of correction. In the same way, there is wisdom in these decrees, for some evils are of that type that is the cause of injury against the

people of the region, such as adultery, theft, and the like. Lenience for such as that causes dissension in the public order, so necessarily forgiveness can have no influence on that. Some evils are restricted to a single person and from him will not infect another, such as false accusation of adultery, so punishment always depends on the desire and forgiveness of that person. Those evils for which suspicion of infection of society and the lack thereof are both supported can be dependent on the view and opinion of the sultan, so that he commands implementation of what he thinks is preferable and soundest, in accordance with correct opinion. Therefore if a victim of murder has no private inheritance, but inherits from the public treasury, the decision in that case is dependent on the judgment of the sultan. If he wishes, he can demand retaliation, and if he wishes, he can forgive.

The regulation of temporal justice is so ordered that the sultan himself diligently looks into the affairs of his subjects and helps each one attain their rightful resources and honors. This is demonstrated by the fact that subjects and oppressed people seek the way to the sultan in time of need. If this is not convenient all the time, they hold audience on a specific day for petitioners, so that they may present their needs and describe their circumstances to his majesty the sultan without intermediary. The kings of Persia had a specific time when a public audience was held for the different groups of people. The revered Messenger (God bless him and his family and grant them peace) said, "Everyone whom God most high has entrusted with authority over the affairs of Muslims, and who closes his door in the face of the needy and oppressed, God most high will close the door of mercy to him in time of need and poverty, and will exclude him from the divine grace and favor."<sup>5</sup> The commander of the faithful `Umar ibn al-Khattab (God be pleased with him) said, "When you have entrusted someone with authority, you have advised him that he is not to be secluded from the needy nor to close the door in their faces." The revered chief of the Messengers (the most excellent prayers of the

Muslims upon him), prayed, "God! Whoever has authority over my community in any thing and is kind to them, be kind to him. And whoever has authority over my community in any thing and oppresses them, oppress him."<sup>6</sup>

Tradition has it that Pharaoh, with all his rebellion and ingratitude, had two excellent qualities. One was that he was easy of access, and the needy could imagine meeting him without difficulty. The other was that he was adorned with liberality and generosity, and he extended good fortune to the different groups of humanity from the tables of general beneficence. His extreme generosity was to such an extent, that it is related that an Israelite woman became pregnant, but the foods appropriate to this condition were not available in the kitchen. When he discovered this, the fire of his wrath blazed up, and he overwhelmed the cooks with the oven of his fiery intention's anger. After that, he ordered that every day, the most pleasing kinds of food that are suitable for the different classes of people should be prepared, and that everyone should be supplied with that which is appropriate.

When the hurricane winds of divine majesty began to blow from the vents of unlimited wrath, and the commanding eternal will became concerned with his ruin and humiliation, then according to the verse, "God does not change the situation of a people until they change that which is within them" (Qur. 13:11), both those two qualities were changed into their opposites. His inaccessibility reached such an extent that on a clear day when the dark night remained concealed in a veil, and when the western phoenix was in the occident of hiding and concealment, rather, when the unlucky bat took refuge in the storehouse of calamity and destruction, and no one but Satan and his armies had permission to speak with him--even so, when the revered Moses (peace be upon him) was given the honor of having speech with him, on that very night, by divine command he came to the door of the castle and stayed at that gateway for one year. But he did not obtain the opportunity of an interview until one day, when one of the boon-companions of

Pharaoh's assembly jestingly remarked, "A strange figure has appeared; someone of such-and-such a character is standing at the door, saying, 'I am the messenger of God, and I have messages.'" Pharaoh said, "Let him be summoned, so we may laugh and mock him." When they summoned him, after the dispute and discussion that the truth-revealing scripture relates, as much as Moses applied the polish of evident miracles with the white hand, the verdigris of polytheism was not removed from Pharaoh's iron heart. Despite the "manifest serpent" (Qur. 7:107) that he used to indicate the treasure of faith, Pharaoh did not follow their path, rather, every time that a snake put its head out of a hole in order to lead him to an unwholesome punishment, he came to an evil end. His avarice reached such a degree that no one but the recording angels knew about his food, and no one but flies came to sit at the head of his table. The situation was such that trustworthy companions have recorded on the tablet of traditions that the day when Moses (peace be upon him) departed from Egypt with the Israelites by divine command, Pharaoh charged close behind them. In all his kitchens nothing had been slaughtered but a single mangy goat, and having breakfasted on its liver, he had its meat prepared for a banquet, so that after returning he could feast with his intimates. But the very king of hell had prepared infernal food, the devilish tree, and juice of corpses for the entertainment of him and his soldiers.

The philosophers have said that it is necessary for the emperor to take care of three things. The first is preservation of the treasury and the dominions. The second is tenderness and mercy toward subjects. The third is that he not entrust great matters to incompetent men. One of the Sasanians was asked what was the cause of the downfall of his family's four-thousand-year-old empire. He said, "It is that we turned over great matters worthy of the wise and discerning to base little men." It is said that the foundation of the edifice of justice rests on ten pillars:

First, that in every case the emperor assumes that he is the subject, and the emperor is another, so that whatever he thinks improper for himself he does not permit for his subject.

Second, that he does not permit the needy to wait, and that he beware of the danger of that. Aristotle said to Alexander, "If you desire the assistance of God most high, hasten to rescue petitioners."

Third, that he does not spend his time absorbed in physical desires and pleasures, for this is the most powerful cause of the corruption of the realm. Rather, during his hours of rest and leisure he should do something for the expense of the kingdom and the welfare of the subjects. A philosopher advised an emperor, saying, "Do not sleep in heedlessness, lest the destroyers of your kingdom arise, and they take their complaint of you to the court of God. Do not sleep so long that you destroy your life, for empire and life are like sunlight, which in the morning is on one wall, but in the evening is on another wall. Act so that you consume the world and the world does not consume you."

Fourth, that he makes the basis of his actions to be kindness and courtesy, not violence and anger.

Fifth, that in pleasing the people he seeks to please God.

Sixth, that in seeking to please the people he does not oppose God.

Seventh, that when he is asked for a judgment, he gives justice, and when he is asked for mercy, he forgives, for mercy to the people is the cause of the mercy of God most high. It is even so in the correct hadith: "Those who are merciful receive the mercy of the Merciful; be merciful to those on earth, and you will receive mercy from the one who is in heaven."<sup>7</sup>

Eighth, that he inclines to the company of men of God, and that he does shrink from their preaching and advice.

Ninth, that he treats everyone as being deserving.

Tenth, that he is unsatisfied with merely avoiding oppression himself, but he orders the government of the kingdom in such a way that the bureaucrats, soldiers, and peasants give each other no opportunity for oppression. As the saying goes, "You are all shepherds, and all of you are responsible for a flock." On the day of the Resurrection, he will be questioned about whatever happens in the kingdom by reason of which his government becomes defective. It is recorded in tradition that the commander of the faithful `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz, who possessed perfect justice and extraordinary piety and purity, so that he was called "the fifth of the Caliphs," was seen in a dream after his death. When asked about his condition, he replied, "For a year I was veiled on a precipice. The reason was that a hole had developed in a bridge, and a goat got his foot stuck in that hole and was injured. They reproached me, saying, `Why should this be? For the welfare of creatures was entrusted to your care, and you are neglecting the preservation and control of these affairs.'"

So one should look after the people by following the decrees of justice and the acquisition of excellence. For just as the body depends on nature, nature depends on the soul, and the soul depends on the intellect, so the city depends on the kingdom, the kingdom depends on government, and government depends on wisdom, which is the essence of the religious law. To keep the affairs of the state on the path of the religious law, social order can be attained, but when one turns away from that firm path, it robs the kingdom of joy and splendor. Plato said, "Preserve the law (*namus*), and it will preserve you." That is, watch over the religious law (*shari`at*) so that the religious law watches over you.

When one has finished with establishing welfare and justice, one pulls the reins of concentration toward excellence and beneficence, for no quality is nobler than excellence and beneficence, as has been clearly set forth. In

beneficence, one ought to claim also considerable responsibility, so that beneficence is on a par with awe and magnificence. If awe declines, beneficence is the cause of cheering the defeated, and it increases their hope. It is as in the case of land tax; if all kingdoms were given to one person [as his responsibility], he would still not be satisfied. Aristotle gave this testament to Alexander: "The oppressed should not have too much awe of you, lest they be unable to state their needs. Soldiers and wanderers should have considerable awe, lest they enter into tyranny and injustice."

The revered chief of the Messengers (upon whom be prayers and peace), by reason of being the locus for the manifestation of the majestic and beautiful lights, and the revealer of the effects of divine greatness and unlimited glory, possessed awe to such a degree that Abu Sufyan, in the time when he was still a non-Muslim, came near the Prophet to make a treaty. When he returned, he said, "By God! I have seen many kings and leaders, and none of them inspired this fear and awe in my heart." His grace and friendliness were to such an extent that one day a woman came before the Prophet, wishing to present a request. Indeed, because of the sparks of holy lights from the windows of the holy soul of the revered Prophet, he was reflected on the four walls of that purified house. As her obvious astonishment became ever more complete, when the Prophet became aware of this, he said, "Do not fear; I am the son of an Arab woman who used to eat dried meat."<sup>8</sup> The intention of the Prophet was to pacify the fear and awe from the heart of that woman, so that she could make her request known. Showing pride to the proud and humility to the poor and oppressed is part of the ethics of generosity.

It is one of the usages of kings that they keep their secrets concealed, so that they may have the ability fully to consider and examine them and remain safe from the plotting of enemies. The revered Prophet (God pray for him and his family and grant them peace), when setting out on a raid, would give men the impression that they were going to a

different place. Although the sacred courtyard of the Prophet was free of the dust of suspicion of lying, still he traveled in this fashion: if, for instance, he was interested in going in a certain direction, he asked men about the way-stations in a different direction, and made inquiries about the conditions there, so that men fell into doubts, thinking that perhaps he intended to go there.

The philosophers have said that the way to keep secrets that require counsel is to take counsel with those who are intelligent and discerning, but to keep them hidden from those of weak intellect. After determining on a course of action, one mixes it with actions that are not externally opposed to it, or rather with actions that are conducive to that very aim. One appoints an official to inquire into the affairs of others, and by their external conditions one discovers their internal conditions. In learning their intentions, questioning followers who are known for being scatter-brained is a sound principle. The best way to engage anyone in conversation is to be friendly with them, in order to get to know them. One reveals one's own secrets, and inevitably during conversation one can learn the hidden thoughts of everyone. If someone is reluctant to understand, in order to make it easier one tries flattery to remove suspicion, so that it may not end in opposition and resistance.

If it does not become easier by flattery, one should not be eager for war, so that one can overcome by skill and trickery. To overcome enemies, trickery and writing letters full of lies is not reprehensible, but to speak with lies and excuses is not permissible in every circumstance. If there is need of war, there are only two possibilities: one is either the attacker in war or the defender. If one is the attacker, his goal should be wholly good, that is, for religion or seeking retaliation or a right that forces them to war. It should not be for conquest or to attain supremacy, for the conqueror attacks the conquered; one makes war for religion or to seek a right. As long as the army is not in verbal agreement, it

will not go to war, for to go in between two enemies is very dangerous. In order to make it easy, it is not appropriate for the the emperor to make war in person, for if he is defeated, the situation is incurable. If he is victorious, he cannot avoid appearing frivolous, and this is not appropriate to the awe and gravity of imperial office. If war occurs, and he has the power to resist, he should struggle and attack the enemy by way of ambush or night assault, for most emperors who are at war on their own territories are conquered. If he does not have the power to resist, he should watch with great care over the organization of forts and trenches, but not rely upon them. The philosophers have said, "Those who are in a fortress can be seized." Rather, to knock on the door of peace, one should employ liberal gifts and the use of tricks.

To govern the affairs of the army, one should choose a person who has three qualities. First, conspicuous bravery; second, excellent administration and discernment; third, experience in letters and management. The most important of the conditions for war is alertness and awareness of the condition of the enemy through expert spies, and maintaining morale and sparing no expense on it. Without oversight of external resources, armies and supplies have no benefit of rational evaluation at the time of destruction and ruin. The philosophers have said that one should not rely upon forts and trenches except when one is forced into a siege. The like of this is conducive to weakness and encourages boldness on the part of the enemy. When someone is distinguished for bravery in war, he should be rewarded, honored, and praised. His high degree of compensation should consist of splendid gifts and great honors. One should not ridicule a humbled enemy. "How many a small group has conquered a large group by God's permission." After victory, one should not give up administration [of the army].

As long as it is possible to take a prisoner alive, he should not be killed, for one can conceive of many uses for captives, such as enslavement, gift, or ransom, which can console the hearts of enemies. A Qur'anic text proclaims this,

and after victory, killing enemies is not permitted, except when security may not be attained without killing them. After achieving domination, one should not give expression to enmity and fanaticism, for in this situation enemies are property and subjects, and making war on one's own slaves and subjects is contrary to the principle of justice. It is recorded in the writings of the philosophers that when Alexander, after a victory, did not spare the inhabitants of a city from the sword, Aristotle hastily wrote him a letter to this effect, that if you are excused for killing your enemies before attaining victory, after victory what excuse do you have for killing those who are in your power?

Exercising forgiveness is one of the qualities of the great kings; it brings about a tightly knotted realm and solidifies the principles of pomp and magnificence. No matter how great power grows, extending forgiveness makes it more impressive and secure, for it is the means to ensure succession and the binding of glorious order. Someone said, "If criminals knew what pleasure I take in forgiving, they would present their crimes to me as gifts." In reality, human perfection lies in "taking on the qualities" of the divine attributes,<sup>9</sup> and by reason of the saying "therefore We created them" (Qur. 11:119), the primordial purpose for the creation of the world and humanity is the manifestation of the real existence. Divine mercy and forgiveness induce the splendor of manifestation in the loci of human weakness and defect. It is thus in the hadith, that if you do not commit sin, God most high will create another group that will commit sin, so that His spontaneous mercy can manifest in the mirror of forgiveness. Therefore divine manifestation in the ornament of forgiveness can be similar to the real Origin, which is the source of all good things.

Since the decisive and darkness-banishing opinion of his imperial majesty, the second builder of the foundation of world rule, the revered master of the fortunate conjunction, the architect of the principles of ruling the land, has attained the subtle methods of empire, the realities of the manners of kingdom and dominion, the secret mysteries of

wisdom, and the extraordinary commands of religion, by holy inspired instruction and grace of excellent gift, without intermediary of acquired learning or human efforts, thus his sacred soul has attained to the lofty rank of "And We taught him a knowledge from Us" (Qur. 18:65).

The discourse on this subject from this humble poor man without possessions, who can be the fool of the assembly of the eloquent and the reporter of the words of the masters of excellence, remains far from the canon of justice and the way of manners. While Solomon could teach the language of the birds, and Luqman could demonstrate the canon of wisdom, I request reproach from the intellectuals and rebuke from the intelligent. If, for example, to seek help one wishes to summon a subtlety, a glance at the noble life of his imperial majesty, the master of time, the second Alexander, is quite sufficient. So without any admixture of effort or digression, since fate has bound the book of being and existence, it is filling out the pages of the tablets of human nature with the writing of the perfections of the soul. That temperament, which with its combination of rare graces of divine favor, its manifestation of the wonders of unlimited assistance, and its essence of divine attributes and angelic qualities, can be counted among the mighty Chosroeses and famous Caesars, has not previously come into existence from the pen of creation and selection and the reed of existentiatio and origination. Since King Sun is seated on the four-pillowed fourth heaven, however much the travelers of the heavenly bodies have turned about the world with such a lamp, they have not seen world empire with such grandeur and awe, nor have they heard the fame of majesty and greatness of the master of the fortunate conjunction with this much glory and splendor. May God most high preserve from rise, fall, and precipitous decline the two lights of the heaven of succession and the Venus and Jupiter of the sphere of justice and mercy, which by his very overseeing care and the grace of his luminous wisdom have made time and space radiant and turned the world's expanse

into a garden, in the zenith of felicity and the nobility of magnificence. May God keep his messengers of happiness and armies of fortune, like the chain of the latter times, joined to the first times, and connected to "God by God and His words, and to the gnostics by His essence and His attributes."

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<sup>1</sup>Source: Jalal al-Din Davani, *Akblaq-i Jalali* (Lahore: Taj Book Depot, n.d.), pp. 259-88.

<sup>2</sup> Furuzanfarr, *Abadith-i mathnavi*, p. 29, no. 71.

<sup>3</sup> This saying is often attributed to `Ali ibn Abi Talib.

<sup>4</sup> For this Sufi saying, see William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, pp. 283-83.

<sup>5</sup> This hadith is quoted in Persian translation.

<sup>6</sup> Wensinck, *Concordance*, II, 283b.

<sup>7</sup> Wensinck, *Concordance*, II, 236a.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Persian; cf. Wensinck, *Concordance*, V, 307a.

<sup>9</sup> For this phrase, see above, p. 10.