

The journeys of Ibn Khaldoun II

# Adventures of Lost Time

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Translated by:

Sami Hassan Arar





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# Adventures of Lost Time





The horse of Abdul-Rahman was so energetic and whole-hearted as if he would like to travel far-off. He was extremely actuated and barely calmed in one place. He was loudly neighing and powerfully beating the ground with his hooves raising dust. Abdul-Rahman rarely fell off his horseback.

Paolo, the journey companion, was laughing, trying to irritate him:

- “Horses need a fearless knight, Abdul Rahman?”
- “Do you see me less than a knight, Paolo?”
- “True knights are usually overloaded with armors and keen at maneuvering and the tactics of hit-and-run.”

He, chuckling, added: “Knights do not need books and pens, as I see in your filled bag.”

Abdul-Rahman checked out Paolo’s horse, his journey companion. It was a powerful red-haired horse, had an Arab and Christian bloodline, plump, sober, and walks steadily.

Smiling, he kidded his friend:

- “Is that why you suggested the piebald horse? Indeed, we will not fight on their backs; however, I prefer quick horses. Who knows?”



Paulo giggled louder, saying, the poet was right when he once said:

“I have never ever witnessed battles before, but, in case of defeat, I run away faster than a deer!”<sup>1</sup>



The Tunisian army was under the command of Minister Ibn Tavrakkin. He was on his way to defend against the Prince al-Hafsy, Abu Zeid, who was determined to retrieve the capital that was a base of his ancestors' reign. He warned the tyrannical minister, Ibn Tavrakkin, to make an apology, give rights back to those that are entitled to, and to stop his blatant tricks.

Abu Zeid, the Prince of Constantine, is not short of determination, money or men. What made him more determined to do so was the Hafsid delegations that had come from the capital seeking help. The delegations told him that they can no longer put up with the minister's transgressions. He beleaguered the princes and assassinated every one he doubted his loyalty or even his gumption.

Everyone knows how he plotted against the Prince "al-Fadl." He lured the mob into killing him, so the

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1- The translator note: (A sarcastic Arabic verse).



incident looked like out of the desire of the wise minister. However, the truth was revealed later on. He selected a boy from the Hafsid family to be the ruler and gave him the title of "al-Mustansir." He then appointed a custodian for him. He, Ibn Tavrakkin, became the dominant ruler behind a prince who is still eager to play with the kids, eats candies, listens to fairy tales, and even fears to sleep alone in his dark room.

With these challenges, the Hafsid elders appealed Abu Zeid to set them free from the minister's injustice and restore the prestigious status of the deep-rooted family...

Abu Zeid has always been waiting for such a chance. He would discipline the traitors, satisfy the princes of his family, regain the ancestral capital, earn legitimacy, and expand westward and southward to re-join the dissident Territories...

Since Abu Zeid was aware of the intentions of the minister, he was exceedingly aware of the rhetorical communications, polite phrases, which Ibn Tavrakkin was very brilliant at as his own style of maneuvering. He warned him and set him a deadline to let the state to its original landowners as the capital of Beni Hafs.



Consequently, he led his army to control the cradle of the state and expel the "renegades and traitors" as he used to describe his political enemies.

Ibn Tavrakkin consulted the decision-makers and the commanders of the army. All of them settled that the battle must be far away from the capital to avoid treason and temptations. They felt afraid that a number of the mean-spirited folks, or accomplices, may open the doors of the city forcibly or secretly, welcoming the invaders.

Therefore, the army of Ibn Tavrakkin marched with his allies of the tribes who joined the minister, sons of dignitaries, and a few men from the city and even from the Christian districts.

The army was a group of knights, pedestrians, and cameleers. Abdul-Rahman ibn Khaldoun and his friend Paolo were the Diwan scribes. One of them specialized in Arabic, while the other was a translator for the non-Arabs. They rode two thoroughbred horses. They marched at the rear of the army, with a team of carpenters, blacksmiths, cooks, workers, and maids. The camels also were burdened with tents, food, and weapons, ...etc.

Paolo was approaching the women's carriage,



watching their movements, and at the same time, eye winking his friend. He was sure that they were watching him through the veils. He every so often heard some of their chats, signs, and comments about him and his friend Abdul Rahman. He even sometimes pretended that his horse got pretty close to one the carriages and stuck to it. However, the woman inside the carriage unveils and looks at him with a shining face and a charming smile. She cynically said:

- "You, brave Knight. Your horse looks braver than you do! He may kill you before the battle even begins."

Laughter arises by the rest of the women from inside the carriage. Paolo retreats. Abdul-Rahman warns him with a reprimanding look. He whispered to him:

- "This is a war where treacherous stabs are guaranteed."

Abdul-Rahman did not know whether the woman within the carriage understood his intention or not. However, he glimpsed her waving to him with a hand tainted in henna and burdened with gold bracelets.



It was a dusty, windy day. The weapons were lifted high in the hands of the Knights, looking like a palm jungle. Neighing mingled with brays, bleating, and the loud shouts of men who were regaining their memories of the battles they had won before.

The minister was riding his white horse, wearing shields over a silky suit with a white spiral turban over his head. The leaders, the resource people, and the Notables surrounded him.

Their sole talk was about the failings of the invader Abu Zeid and his noted indiscretion, pride, and cowardice.

They felt free and pleased to gossip about him. He is a stubborn and thoughtless man. He never listened to others, except his wife. Besides, he was poorly educated. His mother was a Roman Muslim-hater. Once, she was caught in the act with one of her Roman servants. At this point, they laughed loudly and ironically. As they were going further, the talk was decreasing, and fatigue increased as well, with a reasonable amount of fear. The news concerning the invading army was being reported through spies and observation missions. The leaders drew speculations about the troops' numbers, their slow motion and the pace of deployment.



The minister used to send a witted loud-voice person telling the news of reassurances to comfort speculating reports. The caller was deliberately creating verbal mistakes, then correcting them with alternative errors, raising a wave of laughter and satire that relieves the stress of lies and rumors. However, the caller shortly after talks seriously, urging them to steer, promising that victory is imminent, and loot is ahead waiting for them.



On the second afternoon day, they arrived at the lands of Huwara (between Waslat Mountain and the Castle of Sinan). All eyes were chasing the minister. As soon as he stopped, everything was quiet. All of them got down off their horses once he did.

They exchanged signs once they saw him lifting a fist of soil, checking it, and looking northwards and westwards. He then whispered to "Amer" the Commander to give the signal to the terrain experts and brigade commanders. They set off into the four directions as if they were racing individually or in pairs. Some were seeking water, whereas others were checking valleys, hills, and plains.

One hour later, they gathered before the minister



and his close entourage, telling what everyone has found out.

Half a mile to the north, there was a fresh well, a few feet deep.

In the west, there were bushes. They can use the hills for observation, control, and even for shooting.

In the south, there were marshes and swamps that cannot resist the hooves of horses.

The minister listened to the leaders' discussions, adding:

"Mermajenna (a town) could be suitable as a battlefield."

Soon the place was filled with all kinds of sounds. They were searching for a place to settle in. Cries mingled with neighing, braying, and wedging. The fire was set on, and tents were set up. You can hear Quran reciting, prayers, verses, sayings of jihad, and the victory of truth, the merit of martyrdom, a paradise with its rivers, wine, and disciples...etc.

The soldiers were asking for the blacksmiths. Their bodies were lined with iron shields and different weapons in their hands. Their voices mingled with the blacksmiths':



- "I want a sturdy, sharp bayonet that could cut rock." one soldier said.

- "You sharpen the blade of the sword so as it could cut hair." another one shouted.

Abdul-Rahman, with his companion, sat down south the camp. They were studying the situation and possibilities while setting up a small tent, aided by some soldiers.

One assistant said proudly:

"All reasons for victory are there: determination, soldiers, and weapons."

Abdul-Rahman said, "outnumbering is not enough to ensure victory."

Paolo asked, "Is there anybody who can tell us about soldiers' spirit and the commanders' actions?"

As shortly as he settled in the tent and the night was darkening, he told Abdul- Rahman;

- "As for the tribesmen allied with the minister, they will only give their lives if they guarantee the ease of victory and winning the loot. They will fight cautiously, with their eyes upon the



minister's men."

- "We fully know the army of the state. They must remember how Ibn Tavrakkin betrayed the young Sultan and throned a boy who knows what a king look like. They will claim the defeat was a punishment of Allah, just in case it takes place," Abdul-Rahman whispered.

The caller toured the camp and asked people to set on more fire. Soon they were clamoring. Flames went up in the air, and food and barbecue smelled everywhere. While they were setting fire on, a young man wearing a loose robe with a long shoe approached them. His sword dangled from the leather belt. He smelled aromatic as well. When he greeted them, his voice sounded dissonant amongst the cheers of the soldiers.

He took out an elegant basket and threw it between Abdul-Rahman and Paolo. Without asking, he dropped the front curtain of the tent. When seated, the face of a bright white and reddish woman was revealed. With her fake mustache, she looked even more beautiful. Astonished, the two men looked at each other!

She smiled, saying, "I am Rihanna, the minister's



maid."

Surprisingly, she headed to the basket smiling and took out the rolls of bread chips stuffed with meat and spices.

- "Glad you are here," said Paolo hesitantly.

Abdul-Rahman was following the woman's movements who set dinner napkins and food for them.

- "It was me that manipulated you in the carriage. I believe, you scribes, deserve to be honored."

Her skin was white and bright to the extent they could almost see the blood in her veins. Her reddish-white face and hand looked very pure as if her skin was painted by molten silver. The camouflaged dress was a blue silk tunic. The tent was then filled with her fragrance that was spontaneously telling everything as if she knew them before. She recounted that she repeatedly saw them wandering around in the city. She watched them through windows and curtains. She admired the jokes of Paolo and the sayings and poems of Abdul-Rahman as well.

They both warned her of the consequences in case of someone knew her. However, she smiled confidently.



- "His Highness, the Minister, is now meeting with the commanders to make the required arrangements. The governess is my best friend. I fight by sword as keen as I am at playing music." Said, Rihanna. She laughed, adding:

- "The Minister believes that the battle will initiate from the north. Therefore, we camped here in the south. Suddenly, they heard the caller shouting, "You all put out the fire, sleep in full clothes, do not take off shoes and share guardianship".

- "I heard Abu Zeid wrote to several commanders promising them gains and formal positions if they retreated at the beginning of the battle." whispered Rihanna.

They felt upset about her presence. They responded with a few words, looking ahead for her to leave. She promised to pay them another visit since she thought the war would last for so long. That night, she stayed up late with them. She was very keen on memorizing poems, melodies and news. She then left, refusing to be accompanied to the door, promising them another visit.

Abdul-Rahman never slept that night. He kept rolling over his bed, thinking of the result of this



adventure. He felt worried. He compared Rihanna to Thuraya. The intelligence of the maid(Rihanna) and her style of narrating novels and news infatuated him. He couldn't sleep; fears are endless. He remembered his brother's advice. He then squatted with his sword beside him. The sky was dark, gloomy and cloudy. Rain fell leisurely. Snores and whistles of Paolo could be heard. He listened to the night shift sounds that were sequential and mixed with whispers. However, the silence made them look one word. They all detested war. Nobody likes war; all disasters are a definite outcome of battles. Consider AL-Maghreb competitor states. Consider the helpless people under the control of rulers who solely think of expansion and provoking adversaries. Think of pandemic famine, drought, and injustice. He then recalled what happened to their ancestors, who were the heads of Andalusia. Their houses are still there occupied by the Christians. They all erred against their nations and their countries. Therefore, they were divided into kingdoms and parties fighting each other until they became vulnerable to the foreigners who occupied their emirates one after another.

He felt so painful that Arabs could not take the



lesson from recent history. They are blinded by self-ambitions of not seeing the real enemies. He trembled once he imagined that those who occupied most of Andalusia would never stop there. They may invade AL-Maghreb with its competing states. He unconsciously slept while still crouching, with his hand on the sword handle.



They could hear early at dawn the movement and the voices of the worshippers and their prayers. He also listened to the caller shouting for complete attentiveness as the vanguard of the enemies reached. The commanders and soldiers rushed out to their weapons and brigades.

Early at sunrise, the soldiers felt anxious once they saw Abu Zeid's army surrounding them on all sides. Because of the minister's and his commanders' hesitation, the attackers initiated the battle. Ibn Tavrakkin and his commanders' views differed. He felt that the real attack would come from the north and that the rest of the parties were merely a maneuver to mislead them. Several commanders disagreed. Therefore, they divided the army into brigades sending the factions to different destinations. The minister's expectations were correct. Abu Zeid



swept them back from the north, and he was himself leading the attackers. Killing, panic, and screaming were all over the place.

Abu Zaid was shouting, “You, IbnTavrakkin, stop the bloodshed, fight me, stop the loss of human lives, you sneaky coward.

The faithful soldiers surrounded their minister. He was steadfast, fought fiercely, and at the same time gave his commanders the signal of retreat towards the opposite side of the attack. The losses were significant. Without the audacity of the minister and his wisdom, so many men could have been captured or killed. The rumor has been that "Amer", the army commander, is dead.

Abdul-Rahman and his friend were watching the battle remotely. They were reassured they were under the high guardianship of the women's tents. Once they were in the middle of the hustle, they were ready to defend themselves. While Abdul-Rahman was busy with the maneuvers, he lost Paolo. Paolo was lost amid the hustle and chaos. Abdul-Rahman then headed to the books' bag and food, riding his horse and following the path of the fugitive southwards. He wanted to catch up with Paolo, believing he would hurry to break the



impasse.

He passed through the women's tents. They were, bareheaded, crying and slapping their faces. But he did not see "Rihanna" among them.

While the horse was running amid the meadows and the bushes, Abdul-Rahman remembered his father's advice:

- "Be careful of the illusions of politics. It has a deceiving luster. Knowledge is a crown at the head of those who possess it. It cannot be removed until death. Your grandfather advised me to refrain from the temptations of life, so I followed his advice. I did not lose my life. That is why I am an expert in Arabic literature. I read books and studied the biography of knowledgeable people. I will stay proud of myself to the last breath in my life."

Abdul-Rahman flashed back, remembering his father struggling with the plague, while the scholars were around counseling him.

His father passed away proud and honored as he exactly predicted. A hot wind blew from the south as if it came out from an oven. He felt its heat; so he veiled his face and left only his eyes uncovered in the storm's eye. He looked for his purse, but he



failed to find it. He did not remember whether he left it in the tent or lost it on the road. He believed Paolo might have taken it inadvertently. Anyway, "money is the soul of business" and dropping it at this time and circumstances would have a profound effect on the rest of the adventure.



In "Dahmani" town, Abdul-Rahman al-Wishati, one of Almoravids Sheikhs, hosted Abdul-Rahman ibn Khaldoun. The guest entered a room furnished with carpets and pillows. In the corners, there have been stuffed birds and animals such as deer, hawks, weapons, swords, daggers and bayonets were all hanged on walls.

Abdul-Rahman al-Wishati sat with ibn Khaldoun and listened to his broad knowledge that impressed him although he was still young. He then asked him to stay to teach others. Ibn Khaldoun liked the idea, but he soon thought: "How do I teach students without sufficient knowledge?"

He felt that the city was less than his ambitions, and he did not find his way yet. However, he found the hospitality, the excellent reception that made him forget the horror of war and killing scenes.



He wondered how he was deceived, how he believed the grudges that he considers "a trade with people's lives." He continued to praise the Sheikh and his people as well.

He continued to keep up with the events remotely. He then knew the minister's fate, that he withdrew with his army to the city of Tunis. Abu Zeid was chasing him.

Sheikh al-Washtati speculated that the siege would be so long. However, he assured that Abu Zeid would ultimately prevail, and the smart minister will negotiate for better conditions for his family and his earnings. Sheikh al-Washtati believed Abu Zeid is unlikely to let his opponent escape because he was such a treacherous person. Abdul-Rahman said:

- "I will return home if the minister leaves the city."

The Almoravid Sheikh knew Ibn Tavrakkin well. He criticized him for everything. Furthermore, he recognized his ingenuity in maneuvering, his ability to win alliances, and that he is not a defeatist. He is such an arrogant, stubborn man who sacrifices everything to achieve his goals. Abdul-Rahman did not acknowledge all these qualities. However, he



kept silent as a compliment to the noble Sheikh.

- "Ibn Tavrakkin is a fierce warrior. If he dies normally (not in a battle), that would be strange".

They laughed together. The Sheikh was such a funny, wise and clever narrator. He spared no advice to this smart young man. He knew his father "Muhammad." He prayed for the entire Khaldouni Family. He narrated the contributions of the Khaldouni family in supporting the Hafsids even before their state emerged in Tunisia. Their relationship dates back to the ancestor of Bani Hafs, who was a ruler in Seville. He knew some elders from the Khaldouni family. Their relationship was tight since then.

Ibn Khaldoun did not announce his intentions concerning the minister, nor did he attack him. He only agreed with the Sheikh in his various opinions since he (the Sheikh) knew his people better than he did.

- "My parents feel worried about my fate, Sheikh. I need to reassure them."

- "You are here safe. It is just a few months and we will know the result of the war. Then, I will write to whoever wins the war. He laughed, adding, "Be



patient! The convoys to the city set off from here."

He received a letter from his brother, Muhammad. The news was not that sensible since the letter was written under siege. His brother told him to borrow whatever he needs from Sheikh al-Washtati. Abdul-Rahman understood that his brother did not find a confidential person to send him money. Abdul-Rahman felt shy to inform his brother's wishes to his host, although he desperately needed money. The roads were unsafe, especially for single travelers. The passengers were waiting for the convoys to pass. It often took them a long time and far distances depending on the interests and destinations of the convoy's people.

He needed money urgently. He cannot put up with that anymore. He stayed for a long time at the Sheikh's house. He felt bored all the time. One day, a convoy on its way to "Tébessa" arrived. In a few months, it will go back to Gafsa. Abdul-Rahman knew that Gafsa was close to his home and that he would be able to write to his family asking for help. He soon after asked permission from the Sheikh to leave.





Feryyana jungles were a perfect place for the bandits. The convoy was unsafe from attacks or some risks, but it finally arrived in Gafsa under the protection of the nomads who were always ready for such missions. It is not unusual for this profession to be their source of livelihood.

In the 8th century, Gafsa was a thriving city. As an ancient city, it was protected with walls and filled with souqs and schools. Besides, there was a ruler who looked after its affairs. He achieved security with the help of guards and soldiers.

The city seemed to Abdul-Rahman as a naval beacon, which looked dark because of the dense bushes. One of the convoy's men said: "The city is a vigilant guard from the Roman era who has volunteered to defend against the desert invaders."

The closer they got to the city, the more apparent its features were, especially the palm trees and the mosque's minaret. They saw modern stockyards and small forts that were known as palaces. Every tribe surrounded its palace by a modest wall, palms, fruits and vegetables. The guide of the caravan was pointing to some of them: "This palace is for Bani Slim, and that one is for Bani Mardas, and the other is for Bani Ahmed Artas. The buildings included



so many rooms on multiple floors. One could hear children's cries, whereas the women and the men were barefoot in the oasis with their hands and axes producing grunts and screams that mixed with the goats and donkeys' sounds.

When they passed those palaces, the urban landmarks and the buildings were more beautiful. The people were dressed like the city dwellers. Even the faces were whiter, and the passers-by voices were quieter. The city's "wall" was high, reliable, and surrounded by a deep but dry trench that was filled with water in case of people of the town felt helpless to defend it. Above the west door was engraved the following phrase: "This is a country of "Questioning and Checking".

Abdul-Rahman felt optimistic. He said goodbye to the caravan's men. The city's alleys were paved with polished stones. The souqs were roofed and clean. There were cloth shops, drugstores, glass shops, and the gilded pots and pottery. Within the grain yard, there were cereal varieties, dates, and spices. The Bedouin's voices rose as they bargained their wool, lint, leather, ghee, and clothing products with the grains of the north. Abdul-Rahman felt comfortable in the city where he resided in Bani Fehr's hotel.



Since he was in need to cover his expenses, he offered his shield for sale. He said to himself, “If my brother couldn’t send me money, I would have to get rid of the horse.” Then it dawned upon him to roam the souqs looking for small items to sell trying his luck in trade.

Abdul-Rahman discovered this prosperous city when he reached in the autumn of 754 H. He was then two years old. He needed recreation after nearly two years of traveling, war, and arduous journeys.

Gafsa, around 200 miles away to the south, was a gate of the desert and is located on the road to convoys from the south and west. Gafsa was a center of connection between Tozeur, Qairawan, and the coastal cities. Abdul-Rahman hoped to contact his relatives, as he desired to know their conditions. He never lost hope to visit them in case of Abu Zeid prevailed.

Although he did not provoke Ibn Tavrakkin, he felt reluctant to meet him again, notably he had left him in such circumstances. He was feeling worried about what the minister might think about the reasons for his long absence.

He was in constant movement, both inside and



outside the city, to make friendships with the elders of the tribes. They told him about the bloodlines, acts of vengeance, and tribal alliances. He learned from them, and they listened to his thoughts and opinions in religion and politics.

He said to himself, “If the situation calms down and Abu Zaid prevails, I will return to my city.” He then was busy by touring among the souqs of the city. People were a mixture of Arabs, Berbers, Africans, and some Roman. He felt a mongrel language that unified all races.

When he headed to the Zawiya “Corner” near the Great Mosque, he saw a collection of black and white strangers. The Zawiya was a refuge for the homeless who ate whatever was available, and slept in the open air. They usually waited for charitable people who gave them food, dress, and sometimes money and blankets.

As soon as Abdul-Rahman entered the yard, the eyes turned towards him. He heard the appeals and demands. The scenes were miserable; people were sleeping on the ground, the semi-naked, the sick, and the young beggars. Al-Zawiya’ Sheikh said when asked about the phrase “Questioning and Checking” written on the doors of the city:



- “If you see people quarreling, then water is the cause of conflict.”

He indeed found the wisdom very expressive when he headed towards the oasis and saw an exquisite network of brooks. He saw how water was distributed evenly. The ripe yields were on the palm heads and the trees’ branches as well. That all were proof of prosperity and safety.

He stopped many times at the flowers’ Souqs. He spoke to the sellers of jasmine, basil, narcissus and violet. They proved to him that these products are also profitable. He, looking at the narcissus, remembered the homeland of the Bani Hafs and longed to his birthplace. He after that looked at a swarm of birds flying in the air and imagined himself flying with them.

It was his lifestyle for a long time, touring the city and meeting with people, and sometimes writing whatever he sees. He was at the same time, waiting for the events to take place.



Suddenly, the whole atmosphere has changed. The news about the invader “Abu Zeid” was on the way. They thought he was still tightening the screws on



the city, so they felt confused and fearful about his sudden arrival. The rumors and lies circulated, and soon the governor equipped his army, met his advisors and investigated the city walls and defense machines. At the same time, he ordered the trenches to be filled with water. He also ordered those who lived outside the walls to go inside.

They received news about the movements of Sultan Abu Anan, an ambitious young leader, who was determined to retrieve what his father had earned from the Hafsid Emirates. Since Constantine was one of his goals, Abu Zeid had to return to defend his property.

Abdul-Rahman recalled the proverb, “What is a calamity for someone could be a benefit for another.” All the predictions referred to the imminent conquer of the city by Abu Zaid. Ibn Tavrakkin not only avoided a decisive defeat, but also defeated his enemy without fighting.

Abu Zeid camped away from the town, asking to provide the army with the necessary supplies. The governor fulfilled the prince’s requests. He opened the city’s stores to the military.

The army had a group of scholars, such as Sheikh



Muhammad bin Mansour. It was a coincidence he was one of the Sheiks who taught Abdul-Rahman in Al-Zaytouna Mosque. Ibn Mansour was not prominent in any of the disciplines, nor was he respected by his students. However, at this moment, he became essential to Abdul Rahman, so he hurried to meet him and flattered him with honeyed words.

- “An accidental meeting may be better than a date”. “I brought you a letter and money from your brother Sheikh Mohammed,” said Ibn Mansour, hugging his student.

Abdul-Rahman questioned the news of the city, the people’s conditions and the reasons for the siege failure.

- “Since Ibn Tavrakkin is safe now (kidding), his reign would last so long. He had survived by mere coincidence.”, said Ibn Mansour.

Although Abdul-Rahman does not count on coincidences, he truly believes that Ibn Tavrakkin is a lucky man, as many people think. He knows he is one of the most astute and thoughtful leaders of the Almoravids.





Sheikh Ibn Mansour narrated that the minister negotiated to surrender, providing that he returns to the exile where he was a refugee. He might have been packing his stuff until Abu Zeid heard his Emirate was in danger.

Ibn Mansour admitted that he was among the negotiating delegation until he felt that Abu Zeid was more likely to win, and he was preparing himself to enter the city. He confessed that he was deceived again, and consequently, feeling deep remorse.

Abdul-Rahman muted a cynical laugh towards the Sheikh who had bet on the invader and, as a result, lost his teaching position at al-Zaytouna mosque.

When Abdul-Rahman asked him about his destination, Ibn Mansour replied, "I am staying with my brother Yusuf, in Biskra, a base in the desert."

At this moment, conflicting thoughts dawned upon him. He talked to himself, "After the lucky minister won the war, he will get stronger and will stay on the throne for a longer period. Escape is the only hope for his enemies. Since Gafsa is no longer a safe sanctuary, there is a chance to accompany the Sheikh to Biskra. There, he will find a safe place and will ensure the help of the Sheikh, and will even



revise his information.”

As soon as he walked away from Ibn Mansour, he went to an isolated corner, opened his brother’s message, skipped the words expressing yearning and read, “We felt happy you are safe now since the news was conflicting about what happened to you. We thank Allah for that danger ended and security was restored. Everything has returned to what it was before. The city was and is still under the protection of Allah and the righteous people. We are still waiting for you; the words fall short of describing how much we miss you. No country resembles the capital of Bani Hafs. Never forget we are still waiting to have you married”.

Time was running out, and there was no room for hesitation; he has to return hometown and put an end to his ambitions, or to continue the journey with the army of Abu Zeid entering another adventure no one knows when it may end or can predict its prospects.

Abdul-Rahman told his Sheikh about his intentions who responded positively and encouraged him. The Sheikh promised to help him through his brother, the governor. Because Abdul-Rahman was eager for adventures and attracted by journeys, he intended



to go on another experience, not knowing yet when or where to go. However, he is still attracted to the temptations and the glamour of politics, not cutting off from sciences, and often combined the two desires and saw himself worthy of both.



He went on comparing whether to return to his hometown or move forward. He felt between a rock and a hard place. Time was running out, so he kept on repeating an Arabic verse of al-Mutanabi:

Living alone, like a ship in a port,

Extremely ambitious, but without any support.

This is how he left Gafsa heading to the west, to the land of al- Zaab, the Gate of the Sahara. He said to his Sheikh:

- “The sight from there might be clearer.”

He started comparing the cities of Tebessa and Constantine. He did not hesitate to prefer Constantine. It is closer to be urban. However, he did not find someone who might introduce him to Abu Zeid. Besides, the prince was busy with the dangers surrounding his Emirate. Because there was another war about to take place in the city of



Constantine, he has intended not to pay it a visit and has preferred to stay away from danger.

Once again, he is accompanying an army that is fully prepared to fight, but this time he is not responsible for anything; he is just a follower seeking safety from the dangers of the road. He did not feel alienated from the scholar Sheikh. The talk between them was ongoing about life and religion.

In this journey, he found ample time to express his opinions about the turmoil that has afflicted upon the whole land of al-Maghreb; how it was torn and separated into tiny states. Two decades ago, the state of the Marinid tried to eliminate its enemies of Bani Abdel Waad in Telmessan and Bani Hafs in Tunisia. The Sheikh said:

- “The young Abu Anan will destroy his enemies; al-Maghreb will reunite again in one stable state.” he said that proudly. “No one disagrees with the fact that a divided Maghreb will abound in wars and distressed people.”

Ibn Khaldoun believed that Bani Hafs was closer to his inclinations, because he was born in their state. In addition, his family supporting them in dominating the city. However, he regretted the weakness the



Hafsid princes and felt astonished of the rampant hostility among them so that Ibn Tavrakkin seized their city imposing guardianship on one of their minors.

All the indicators suggest that their state is collapsing as long as they lack a strong man who can unite them by sword and restore prestige to their shattered state.

In the middle of winter, after a long journey, he reached the city of Biskra in the far south of Constantine. He found himself in a town like a desert village. Water and palms are the only reason for people to dwell there. Because it was very isolated and remote from the momentum of modern cities, the rabbles and the escapees from the three Maghreb countries fled to it. The Governor, as a kind of honoring, gave him a suitable house. When he asked his brother about this young man, Sheikh Ibn Mansour replied:

- "I have not seen a student smarter than Abdul Rahman, and if he continues faithful to gaining knowledge, he will be a pretty prominent person. Then he added, "His scientific career was reversed at the very beginning, but who knows what he will find out in his expatriation and traveling?"



In Biskra, the Governor "Yusuf" treated him carefully as he became a friend of his son Ahmed who was as old as Abdul-Rahman. They lived in the same room. Ahmed was fond of hunting and breeding dogs and falcons, and the guest had to match his host. On the other side, the Sheikh regarded him hilariously. They started talking about various issues of thought, religion and poetry. The Sheikh often showed his admiration of Abdul-Rahman while talking to his brother Yusuf saying, "The boy is so smart at this early age. How can he be a when he gets older?"

The Governor said, "Abdul-Rahman and my son Ahmad are two different issues."



In the middle of winter, Suleiman Hakim visited Biskra. He was a dignified elder person who lived an austere and ascetic kind of life. The family of the leader Hakim, was one of the earliest families that dwelled in Constantine and remained close to Bani Hafs. Suleiman served at the beginning of his life as the commander of the city's guards. He later resigned, seeing the devastating conflicts between the princes. He saw how the strong state got weak and divided into rival territories where every prince claimed perfection and considered himself the right



Governor. They even fought each other, driven by arrogance. Henceforth, Suleiman turned into commerce, gained more fame and flourished in a few years increasing his finances. Ibn Khaldoun found that his family and the family of Suleiman are almost similar. He enjoyed the tales of the Sheikh about his experiences which reminded him of his father's ones. However, what he liked most in Suleiman that he still hoped for a new rebirth of the Hafsid state. He sees them as the salvation for the troubles of the Great Maghreb.

Abdul-Rahman asked him, "In your opinion, how can the state restore its glorious past?"

Suleiman with a mysterious smile on his face, replied:

- "When Bani Hafs feel the dangers threatening their lives and their entities, a strong wise man would emerge then."

Abdul-Rahman laughed politely nodding his head:

- "We read about similar wishes in history books, which are the dreams of the people of Utopia. "

- "Wait. I forgot to add another wish," said Suleiman.

- "Everything depends on the weakness of the



Marinid state."

- "We're betting on time; that's the helpless' excuse of all times."

They discussed the troubles Bani Hafs face, comparing the qualifications of Abu Zeid, the ruler of Constantine to Abu Abdullah, the ruler of Bejaia, who are both Hafsid princes. They argued about who is most worthy of restoring the glory of the state. However, they agreed that the danger of Abu Annan is threatening both. They regretted the hostile rivalry between the two men descending from two ancient families.

Suleiman remembered his youth days through Abdul Rahman, while Abdul-Rahman found in Suleiman the personality of his father. They both trusted and admired each other. The Sheikh took full advantage of the opportunity to meet the young man praising his knowledge and morals. It was the beginning of a relationship that would have extra dimensions in the lives of the two men.

Suleiman said, "This country is isolated. It might be suitable as a refuge to the bandits and escapees. However, you, Abdul Rahman, cannot bury your ambitions and aspirations in this cemetery-like



town.”.

- “What city do you recommend, sir?”

- “Constantine.”

- “But it might fall down soon.”

- “Cities are immortal, while rulers are mortal. I invite you to accompany me.”

The new journey attracted Abdul-Rahman. Once again, he guarantees protection and peace of mind through the journey. He found in Suleiman’s advice a good drive for tranquility and optimism. They were riding two horses, walking behind the camel convoy loaded with baggage. While in front of the convoy to the left were a group of armed guards. The desert roads are not safe, and danger is expected anywhere and anytime.

Along the road from Biskra to Constantine, they were discussing the conditions of the Great Maghreb feeling angry at the destructive rivalry among the three states.

Hakim believes that the strong Marinid state will sweep over its enemies. According to his own experience, he favors and yearns for this endeavor. When Abdul-Rahman asked him about the reason



behind his choice, he replied:

- “Because of my military experience, I believe one state for this Great Maghreb will be most beneficial to its people. In the worst cases, it will end sedition and impose security. Besides, I have felt upset by the Christians of “Genoa.” I am afraid they do with our children as the Castilian did to the Andalusians.”

This leader praised the ambitions of the new Marinid Sultan. He said, “Abu Anan” is a young knight worthy of praise and glorification. For personal purposes, he took his father off the throne and reigned himself over. A few moments later, he added:

- “I am not with those who condemned Abu Annan when he took off his father. The great Sultan no longer fulfilled the ambitions of the youth.”

Then suddenly it dawned to Ibn Khaldoun:

- “Shall I be lucky and meet Abu Anan?”. He kept his wishes secret, hiding them from the leader Hakim. He said to himself:

- “I will wait for the right moment.”

He accepted the offer of the leader Hakim by staying with him until the end of winter.



- “Constantine is not a Biskra. It is a great city where everything calls for delight.”

- “What about Prince Abu Zeid?”

- “He is asking mercy from Abu Anan, “Laughing together.”

Constantine reminded him of Tunis, albeit less spacious. The climate is similar, and the lifestyle is not very different.

However, this city is located on a steep rocky hill. It ends up in a ravine, so Constantine, unlike Tunis, is like a fortified fortress, making it impervious to military intrusion.



The palace of the leader Hakim was at the city's heart. It was surrounded by trees as a thriving orchard, with several men and women dedicated to serving him.

The sons of the leader were prominent both in trade and military. They widened their influence and got famous for integrity and financial power among people. Thus, they adopted Abdul-Rahman as if he was one of them. The father spared no word to praise Abdul-Rahman and his knowledge.



The family welcomed his presence with great hospitality, and for the first time since he left his family, he did not feel alienated with the new family.

He always preferred to sit away under the trees, among watercourses and birds' tweets. He loved solitude. He was foreseeing the way of the future. He was anxious and eager to travel. He sometimes wrote his thoughts and often engaged in reading a book to the extent he did not feel time passing by. It is a pleasure of reading he has been addicted to since he was a child. However, he found comfort and tranquility with the company of Hakim's sons. He devoted his time to his thoughts and lived with the scholars.

On the other hand, Suleiman continued to take care of the young man providing him whatever he needed. He listened to him talking about what was going on in the city behind the scenes giving him advice and guidance. Here, Abdul-Rahman felt the true compassionate paternity of his master, but he was still searching for a way to get out to get ready for the next journey.

People of the city were circulating rumors about Abu Anan and his intentions to invade the rest of the Hafsid Emirates. However, they were not relying



on their own country's immunity or the Prince's resistance.

One evening he was sitting under the giant Platanaceae tree where a choir of Sparrows flew from. Although he was busy with what was in his hands, he heard a lovely voice:

- "Good evening, Abdul Rahman."

The surprise impressed him, as he saw before him a tall white girl, moderately strong and with a beautiful charisma. She smiled:

- "I am Fatima, the daughter of the leader Hakim."

He felt as if an angel raised him high to sky wondering:

- "Does the Sheikh have such a splendid girl?"

She took the book out of his hand, turning its pages and reading the title:

- "Ibn Rushd's Commentaries to Aristotle's Philosophy."

She looked at him, smiling and trying to provoke him. He never thought a beautiful girl to a wealthy father cares about the Philosopher of Mind?

- "If you were a fan of Ibn Rushd, remember what



his fate was?"

She sat next to him like a marble statue.

He overlooked his caution and went on conversing with her. She was confident to speak smoothly, laugh cautiously and focus attentively. When he noticed another girl standing away and watching the routes, he then realized that this meeting was not spontaneous.

She was afraid that someone could see her in this secret meeting. When she was about to leave, she looked at him and never stopped talking and smiling joyfully. She said:

- "Since you first sat under this tree, I was watching you from my window, pointing to a high window."

Abdul-Rahman remembered that he often saw the window open, but he did not check who might be behind. She said apologizing:

- "I always wanted to speak to you."

Smiling, he said to himself, "I have lost a precious opportunity."

- "When do you plan to travel?"

- "Not tomorrow."



My dad said you were a travelling fan. All these Maghreb kingdoms are similar in terms of the harsh climate, the oppressive rulers and even the people's mindset.

Laughing, she walked away proudly and bashfully. He recalled her voice while she was walking, folded the book, and then meditated their meeting, comparing her to his fiancée Thuraya. He, closing his eyes, recalled the two images and continued absent-minded more than ever before. She reminded him of his fiancée and the maid of Ibn Tavrakkin's.

On the second day, he prepared himself for another kind of talk, but she did not come. A woman in a violet dress with textured edges passed by. She looked exquisite though she was moderately old. She stopped to greet him, telling him she was Fatima's mother. She saw them talking together before. Abdul-Rahman felt ashamed and then reassured he would soon leave the city. She replied that she had no doubts about his morality or the nobility of his family and that the head of the family with her children admire him. She concluded her statement, "We would be happy if you live with us."

He considered her words as a clever invitation to what the souls hide of expectations. He imagined an



open door before him where he had to choose the life of stability or the life of permanent travel.



That night he spoke to Hakim and his sons. They talked about the people and what troubles was the country expecting. They agreed that the Hafsid cities from Tunisia to Bejaia would not be standing in front of a strong army led by a young Sultan seduced by weak kingdoms. Commander Hakim expressed his pleasure for uniting the states of al-Maghreb saying that the dominant state relieves people from seditions and directs their efforts towards productive work.

The next day they received news saying that the state of Bani Abd al-Wadi fell into Abu Anan's hands, and its ruler "Osman" was killed in the battle. People all over al-Maghreb are prepared to receive the new conqueror, and the Hafsid princes panicked out of fear and rivalry.

Suleiman said, "I have always thought the Hafsid princes would unite if they were to be threatened. Having lost the last chance, they will never have a state again. Farewell to the Hafsid state, and welcome to the Marinid's."



Abdul-Rahman was not enthusiastic about this prophecy, since deep inside, he was inclined to the Hafsids.

When Suleiman saw his guest was worried, he reassured him, saying, "Your future will be in the shadow of this powerful state, it is the destiny of us all."

He was not puzzled. Sitting in the shadow of the Platanaceae tree, he reconsidered his journey and what he was seeking.

- "Specifically, what do I want?"

Continuous traveling in addition to what he feels of internal upheaval has not led him to comfort. He has to rearrange his choices according to the volatile reality. He does not know how his friend Ibrahim al-Malqi and his Sheikh Alaabli occurred to his mind. He wished to meet them. He also remembered his clerics, who returned to Fez. He felt the need for their knowledge, and it is wrong to go back home precisely as he left it. He thought Suleiman's suggestion was close to his hopes. Will his actual future be under the state of Marinid? How and when?

Fatima, who was accompanied by her mother,



exchanged greetings respectfully. Her mother pretended to check the garden while Fatima sat next to him, whispering, "I heard you feel worried, but we feel happy you are here with us."

- "The guest's stay must be limited regardless how long it is," he replied.

- "You are much more than a passerby. I feel like you are one of us. Men are free to set their goals. However, ambitions often deprive them of things near them," said Fatima laughing.

He was following her words eagerly, trying to encourage her to ask further, but she stopped. He looked at her hesitatingly while she smiled shyly, looking towards her mother, "I assume you understand what I mean; men are pursuing their goals willingly."

That night he chose his life partner. Suleiman warmly welcomed the idea as if he was planning such a marriage.

Abdul-Rahman said he was in a hurry to get married and settle down.

Suleiman understood what a young man's confusion means. It was about the loneliness and the heavy burdens the wedding requires. He reassured him:



- "The real contentment of the parents is in providing security for their children. Fatima is fortunate that I have chosen a real man for her. Money is only a minor thing."

The brothers, the father and the new husband-in-law started reading al- Fatiha(Holy Quran). Fatima and her mother were listening from behind the door. The bride trembled. Her mother embraced her and kissed her on the forehead, whispering, "You and your husband with your children will stay near me. It is every mother's hope."



Every day there was no news; the Sultan Abu Anan not only occupied Tlemcen killing its Governor "Osman.", he is also near "Bejaia," sending threats and temptations. Governor of Bejaia "Abu Abdullah" rushed to yield his city to his opponent, getting forgiveness yet losing power in turn.

That was an eloquent message to the rest of the disobedient.

Abdul-Rahman said, "If Abu Abdullah had handed over the city in the way we heard, it would mean that the invading army was invincible. The news spread everywhere in the city. Some people were surprised,



while others felt pleased to spite their Governors. In Constantine, the rumors circulated and people looked at Abu Zaid's soldiers sarcastically saying:

- "I saw a soldier offering his sword for sale."
- "Some people saw a few of them fleeing."

Those who are close to the Sultan and the ones whom he trusts have felt terribly confused, indescribably fearful and lost the power of influence they used to have. They were in between a rock and a hard place. If the invader intends to confiscate their property and kill some of them, the people of the country are stalking them to avenge their sufferings and grievances.

Suleiman did not feel surprised about the people's uproar after meeting his son-in-law.

- "As soon as the state is about to fall, its faults are revealed and the beneficiaries will flee."
- "Will Abu Zeid and his army stand for enough time? At least until the new conqueror arrives." said Abdul Rahman.

Suleiman's eldest son commented, "The army collapsed so that the wealthy would hire soldiers to defend their property."



Fatima came in terrified, "Killing and looting spread in the remote areas."

People started mumbling about some of the city elders who sneaked out of the town to welcome the new ruler to be under his service, correctly as they were doing with their ousted Sultan. Thus, they proved the old wisdom: "Followers of the victorious are collected by a drum and divided by a whip."

Suleiman started with the city's most sensible offers and met Abu Zeid. When they saw him powerless, they advised him to flee to save his savings and his faithful soldiers. They warned him to escape to the desert.

Suleiman said, "This solution is the lesser evil, or you will do what your cousin Abu Abdullah has done: Deliver the keys of the Emirate and ask for refuge."

- "It sounds like you don't see any point in confronting this invader?" said Abu Zeid mercilessly.

The elders looked at each other and then to Suleiman, saying, "If you believe in history lessons, courage is better than cowardice whatever the consequences are."

He kept silent for a short while then added, "We



appreciate your wisdom and kindness to the people, you glorious Sultan. It is better to spare the people of the country siege and war. What is the point of all of this if the results are known?"



Abdul-Rahman did not wait for the events to take place. He consulted his brother-in-law, told him the expectations and expressed his desire to travel to meet the invader. He was feeling embarrassed, and tried to ease what he was planning to do.

He said a group of al-Zaytouna Mosque's elders, accompanied by Abu Annan, did not achieve the hopes he was having. However, Suleiman understood what he aims to, so he encouraged him to go ahead resolutely and silently.

- "Do you think Abu Annan will take Tlemcen as a new base for his reign?" wondered Abdul-Rahman."

- "He might go further?" said Suleiman.

He added, "Those young Sultans, when feeling powerful, have no control over their ambitions and desires."

The two discussed the possibility of Tunisia as the next inviting target, thus renewing the ambitions



of Abu Anan's father. Besides, from the Hafsid historical base, he may aspire for Cairo, as did the Fatimid before.

- "Will Fatima accompany you?" said Suleiman testing his son-in-law.

Abdul-Rahman said, "I would feel more unrestricted without her, and I hope to come back soon."



The road to Tlemcen goes through the Castle of Staif. The passersby used to avoid the rugged terrifying mountains and caves taken by bandits as safe refuges. They attacked the travelers who become up for grabs because, at that bloody time, people of faultiness and corruption were the majority. However, the safest road was the squiggly trade road. So "Better safe than sorry, or a thousand steps better than a leap" became the popular motto.

It was on that trip Abdul-Rahman headed to Béjaïa on the sea-coast. He went westwards to traverse the mountain ranges in the territory of Zwawh, Katameh, and Sanhaja until he leaves Tunis for Tlemcen.

He heard about this road through narratives and skilled travelers who have also warned him against



predators. Since he was passing through that wilderness for the first time, he recorded whatever he saw of mountains, valleys, and moorlands, questioning and verifying everything. Concerning tribes, he dedicated several pages for them, never excluding remote branches or their lifestyles, habits, revenge, and tribal disputes. He cared most for alliances, celebrities, folklore, and even the Berber dialects.

Abdul-Rahman was a brilliant, witty speaker. He was scribing whatever he hears of folktales, proverbs, and poems. Whenever people listen to him, they admire his broad knowledge a lot. They respected him much though he was still a young man who lacked experience. That is why his companionship was so short despite the long distance. His family reputation gave him a unique glimmer. Who could ignore that family status at the heart of Hafsid dynasty's history?

"Ibn Amer," Béjaïa newly assigned governor, received him with warm hospitality. When he knew his purpose, he proposed to accompany him to Tlemcen to congratulate the Sultan Abu Annan. It was another chance fate granted him. He would enter the Sultan's assembly as a well-known personality.



He, therefore, will never be misjudged by those who do not know him.

Accompanying the governor sheds light on him. People whispered trying to figure him out. The governor spared no word complimenting him and praising his broad knowledge. The most highlighted feature was his eloquence in Arabic in the middle of a Barbarian community that only knew little Arabic.



Tlemcen was teeming with armored soldiers and visiting delegations. Senior commanders, masses of governors, famous scholars, and heads of tribes, rushed to the city to congratulate the new young king whose news and heroic deeds were circulating all over al-Maghreb, though he was still only twenty-five.

Thus, the alleys and squares were jam-packed with men, horses, and mules. People from all the towns attended, even from Christian kingdoms, who were dressed in narrow pants, red jackets, and long shoes. Roads had been occupied with people wearing different colors; turbans, colored clothing of wool and fur, and all kinds of clothes.

In addition to that, non-Muslims attended wearing



their famous blue and red turbans and their colorful sashes.

Abdul-Rahman found the opportunity to meet various figures whether bearded or beardless. Arab and Berber words were intermingled. Tents stood upright in yards, food smelled everywhere, and eaters gathered here and there in groups. Voices and laughter mingled with horse whinny, camels' grunting, donkeys' braying and bleating of the offerings. It was a highly great ceremony.

As soon as he heard about the scholars' tents, he hurried to them. He found them busy with passionate debaters. He listened to scholars who sounded highly knowledgeable and soon started asking and questioning, which paid him attention.

Sheikh al-Muqri, the community judge in Fez, was the first fan of Abdul Rahman. He seated him next to him and conversed together to find out that they are relatives. They are both disciples of Sheikh Ibrahim al-Abli, a well-known scholar. They both competed to acknowledge the Sheikh's prominent status all over al-Maghreb besides the knowledge and sciences he delivered to his students.

Sheikh al-Muqri said, "So you are from the



Khaldouni family! If you are actively aspiring to gain knowledge, Fez is your best destination. The Quaraouiyine mosque is not less popular than Al-Zaytouna Mosque".

Before the sunset of his first day, he encountered three scholars, not knowing they will be very prominent personalities later on.

If al-Maqri was the judge in Fez, al-Hasani was also one of the first Zaytouna students. He is not less capable than the al-Abli in philosophy and mind sciences. Al-Burji, on the other hand, was the favorite scribe for the Sultan Abu Anan.

This great outcome was because of the blessing of knowledge and the integrity of scholars. He remembered the adage: "Scholars are truly the heirs of prophets." He found himself attracted to them and surrounded by the most celebrated ones by the Sultan.

Nobody knows the reasons Abu Annan is delaying his invasion of Constantine. All signs show it is "a ripe fruit that has to be harvested." The numerous rumors say Abu Zeid has succumbed to all the conditions of the invader. He paid a lot of money to stay in his position for extra time. Secrecy still



dominates the scene.

However, it has been rumored again that Abu Anan headed to the base of his kingdom, Fez. The new journey with his three companions added to Abdul-Rahman's experience a lot. However, this time, it was more evident and more secure. The journey was not arduous since he was by the company of the Judge "Muhammad al-Maqri," the scribe Abu al-Qasim and one of the most respected scholars. They are all the Sultan's most celebrated and close comrades.

On his journey, he felt worried about his wife because he left directly after the wedding in a few months. She said goodbye, telling him she was pregnant, which made him miss her a lot. He looked at her compassionately, promising to return as soon as possible. He did not know that the Sultan would leave Tlemcen so quickly, nor did he know that these comrades would happily overwhelm him with their love. Besides, he did not like to lose this great opportunity.

Visiting Fez was one of his wishes. At Al-Quaraouiyin mosque, he will meet with his Sheiks, whom he did not see for so long. In Fez, he will seize the opportunity to continue learning. Who knows?



He may find a way to the Sultan's palace! The three Sheiks accompanying him promised to help him overcome the difficulties he might encounter in his endeavors.

As he follows their conversation, he felt disappointed, though he did not say that openly. They went unanimous on the many mistakes of the Sultan: making decisions hastily, which made his followers devalue him. Abdul-Rahman wondered bitterly:

- "Has my destination been mistaken by resorting to a state divided by conflicts and on turmoil?"

On the other hand, he felt deep inside that Abu al-Qasem al-Burji is the closest figure to him though this man is 20 years older. He did not think that the age gap may prevent the relationship from getting deeper. They both carry a considerable amount of appreciation. So that Abdul-Rahman was very much pleased with the coincidence that joined him together with a very noble, caring, generous, and humble person such as Abu al-Qasem. What Ibn Khaldoun knows but never says openly is that they both came from Andalusian origins and settled in al-Maghreb after migrating. The Andalusian migrants have always been proud of their country.



They lamented the glorious history, the martyred homeland, and the fate that inflicted that tragedy was neither fair nor merciful, so they described it as brute and blind. However, compassion among them reduced their disputes. It pushed them to show their affinity and solidarity in every country they reside in.

Spring was at its end, and the greenery was receding a little. The caravan was approaching the Marinid's capital. Fez came into sight with its silos, domes, and the white buildings amid the tall palm trees and willows. Besides, the waves of sparrows appeared turning in rows forming the arrow shape sometimes, and the crescent shape and half-circles other times to finally get absent in the shady oasis.

The travelers' faces looked very satisfied and optimistic as they exchanged congratulations for arriving safely by the end of the journey. Ibn Khaldoun was busy expecting what waits for him and what he hopes to achieve.



On Friday afternoon of 755 AD, the sky was cloudless except some clouds running in a hurry and barely touching the sky. Abdul-Rahman was in



the company of al-Burji as they ascended the green knoll chosen by Abu Anan to reside in and conduct his vast state.

While they were walking among a group of guards, al-Burji said:

- "The young Sultan is following his father's footsteps. He has not forgotten the scholars' favor on how they have added prestige to his state".

Ibn Khaldoun does not know how the Sultan knew he was with them; he requested meeting him. However, he felt grateful to the Sheikh "al-Burji," whom he appreciates his efforts in facilitating his stay in the city of Fez. Through him, he met with important men who kept praising him before the Sultan.

He saw the charming flower basins, the water shining in streams, all kinds of scents, and the swarms of bees and butterflies following each other in harmony. They both were crossing the paved corridors. The closer they got to the palace; Abdul Rahman's body tingled out of the high prestigious scenes.

Al-Burji, noticing his friend's confusion, said:

- "The Sultan's Knowledge Assembly is not only



an honor to who belongs to it, but also to whoever visits it, albeit once."

Abdul-Rahman was holding a vague image for the Sultan. The way he disposed of his father seemed to be a sort of disobedience and ingratitude.

- "He took off his father, sat in his place and never felt guilty? The worst was that he let him die alone in the mountains after the hypocrite disciples abandoned him."

Ibn Khaldoun thought deep: "The throne blinds his owners. Perhaps Abu Anan aspires for a different end of his father's."

- "The one who commits this act must be so cruel and ruthless."

Preoccupied with his thoughts, Abdul-Rahman did not notice the carpets under his shoes; however, he saw the candles in the candlesticks sending lights at high noon.

In the middle of the assembly hall, he saw a young brown man, passionately smiling. Unless the crown were on his head, he would have never realized he had been the majestic Sultan. Abu Anan was debating one of the scholars about the reasons for disagreements among the religious schools of



thought. However, as soon as he saw Ibn Khaldoun, he kindly welcomed him. Ibn Khaldoun hurried to kiss the Sultan's hand putting it on his head, saying:

- "Long live, my lord."

Abu Anan closely looked at him. Dressing Tunisian clothes, Abdul-Rahman was wearing a white-striped turban and a red hat, which made him look younger, vital, and even more beautiful.

- "These elders praised you while you were away.," said the Sultan looking at whoever is around in the assembly hall.

Abdul-Rahman, standing up and putting his right hand on his chest, responded:

- "My lord, I do thank you for gathering to this assembly the masters of thought and knowledge. I sincerely appreciate these notables. Their shining lights have guided me by at the time we were all dwelling in the capital of Tunisia and its thriving mosque, Al-Zaytouna. If I hold a credit for what I am now, my lord, it is only because of these dignitaries. May Allah preserve them under the glory of your great rule."





In that session, Abdul-Rahman received more than he dreamed of. The Sultan honored him by joining him to his assembly, and chose him to attend prayers and then assigned him as his scribe.

Some of those who attended the assembly said:

- "It is rare for a young man to gain such a status."

The people of the palace argued the high-status Abdul-Rahman has just gained. He was admired and envied simultaneously.

Abdul-Rahman was an attractive, fit young man. He was of a well-known family with a highly specialist speech style. Some of the wise elders did not attribute his early successes to chance, but these qualities. They expected a promising future for him.

However, Abu al-Qasem al-Burji celebrated him in his house, so he invited the two companions of the journey; Judge Muhammad al-Maqri and the Honorable philosopher al-Hassani.

It was a banquet full of various kinds of food and intellectual debates about what was happening in the vast sultanate of unrest and turbulence. Umm al-Khair (the host's wife) insisted on serving the guests by herself. She was in her 40s, who descended from an Andalusian family precisely as her husband was.



She complimented Abdul-Rahman saying:

- "I suggested to my husband that you stay with us until you fetch your wife?"

Abdul-Rahman thanked her. He headed to excuse, but the judge preceded him, saying:

- "You're lucky today in everything. You never say, "No."

Everyone laughed. Abu Anan was very decisive by praising the proposal of Um Al-Khair. Abdul-Rahman decided to fetch his wife as soon as possible. He felt so grateful for the hospitality of this family and again believed the Andalusian people value their native fellow countrymen. They feel proud of anyone privileged by the Sultans of al-Maghreb. They took the initiative by hosting him to support them against intrigues and conspiracies.

The moment he was alone, he remembered the conclusion of the conversations that took place at al-Burji house. He knew that the adventures he met in the road, impressed the Sultan, more than he admired his promising talents in the field of knowledge.

He remembered the advice of the judge. He, in turn, tended to continue learning, not much betting on the



service of the rulers. The philosopher, "al-Hassani," praised "friendship" as a high value. He believed that friends might compensate for the homeland:

- "No way to escape enemies, except by having so many friends."

That night, he knew that the Sultan believed in the words of the astrologers. He continually consulted them and listened to their pieces of advice. One of them intrigued him seven years ago telling him that he was threatened by his closest people.

He soon deposed his father and banished his elder brother "Abu Salem" to the Kingdom of Granada with the spies reporting everything about them.

Abdul-Rahman said to himself:

- "Since the Sultan believes in astrologers and astronomers, and listens to what they say, why not to learn this art?"

However, he was preoccupied with what was going on in his mind regarding al-Burji relationship with the former governor of Bejaia "Abu Abdullah al-Hafsy" , his scribe and secretary.

He went on questioning, "Is this relationship still secret? Does al-Burji still work for his first Prince



"Abu Abdullah"?"

Ibn Khaldoun preferred to keep it secret until the appropriate moment comes since Prince al-Hafsy was closely censored, and he saw it himself.

When he entered the Diwan for the first time, he saw a paved portico with alabaster and Cuerda Seca Berber carpets. The walls coated with the Kashani and the mosaic with its Punic drawings. On both sideways, flowers' vases and aromatic plants dangled. The top shelves were decorated with ceramic, crystalline and ivory exhibits, Elephant tusks, ostrich eggs, stuffed birds, and finally, stuffed snakes.

The first thing he came across was a spacious library, from which the scents of Musk and Amber came out. Volumes and publications were countless.

In the corner of the library sat a slim sheik wearing a huge turban. His voice was loud. He hardly stopped to narrate the wonders, the events that took place in remote countries, mountains that looked like clouds, rivers similar to seas, lifeless deserts , and people seemed to be coming out of the womb of legends and riddles.

The Sheikh was describing the marvels seriously.



Although the facts were unbelievable, he gave them a dignified and stable tone as if he were reading from a book. Al-Burji, who accompanied Ibn Khaldoun said:

- "This is Ibn Battuta storytelling his memories on the biographer "Ibn Louay "

Ibn Khaldoun had heard about this Sheikh, who toured the world from Andalusia to China, East Africa, Xorazm, Bukhara, and India.

He was said to have traveled a hundred thousand miles' journey that lasted almost thirty years. When he returned to Fez, Abu Anan admired his adventures, honored him, and commissioned one of the most brilliant biographers to document the journey. People were feeling hungry for such a book, looked for it and waited for publishing it. Abu Anan was following the accomplishment up and urging "Ibn Louay" to be precise and honest...

- "I spoke to some of those who knew this Sheikh; most of them doubt his integrity," said Ibn Khaldoun.

Al-Burji, looking at the two men respectfully, replied:

- "Whatever is said about Ibn Battuta, his wonderful



journeys will be immortalized. People will no longer look at what we disagree about."

Laughing, he added, "I also feel excited about this book."



It was a very hot Summer. Plants melted, dried, and soon they became a waste of wind. The desert was sending its hot waves, increasing resentment among people who resorted to their houses during the daytime, and climbed the surfaces at night.

Ibn Khaldoun and his wife lived next to al-Burji family. The neighboring women repeatedly visited the young wife, trying to get closer to her husband, who became a highly renowned statesman.

Abdul-Rahman used to leave his house in the morning and return in the evening. His job was in the Diwan divided between scribing for the Sultan and speaking to the Head Minister "al-Hasan bin Omar"

Being close to the strongest two men in the state created some difficulties to Abdul-Rahman. He was no longer able to distinguish between friends and enemies as long as everyone pretends to like him.



On Tuesday morning of 756 AD, he had just written a letter from Abu Anan to the Sultan of Granada in Andalusia who had a slack control over Abu Anan's exiled brother. Abu Anan heard that his brother began to contact men whose loyalty is doubted. In addition, his brother's passion for hunting would make him unnoticed by the spies.

Ibn Khaldoun thought, after finishing the message, that the Sultan "Abu Annan" no longer fears his enemies at home. He may have started to doubt the success of alliance with the governor of Granada" Ibn al-Ahmar."

Before midday, the Head Minister "al-Hasan bin Omar" summoned him. He met him with his usual affection and kindness. He also pointed out that his political future will not be far from the desire of the parental care of the Head Minister. Then, he told him about the rivalry and conspiracies going on in the Marinid Palace. Some elders believe that Abu Salem, who is living outside the country, must be the crown prince. The Sultan sees that "Al-Saeed," his son, is more deserving of it. He is waiting for his tenth birthday to announce him as his successor and to give him a pledge of allegiance publicly.

Abdul-Rahman investigated more into the troubles



of the state. He identified the interest groups, whether they are taking up tasks or just watching and lurking. He felt the heavy responsibility and the contradicting desires of the contestants. He felt highly upset and fearful. Besides, he discovered that neutrality in this conflict never works out. It is very dangerous to bias to this party or that. But he knows the pitfalls are so many. The only way to survive is by a coalition with the strongest party, so he has to determine the fortunes of each side.

Every night he returns home entirely exhausted. Fatima noticed how absent-minded he was. She sweet-talked trying to delight him; especially that she was in her last month of pregnancy.

One evening he came home back early. Fatima felt happy and gave him a message delivered by a merchant coming from the capital of Tunisia. It was from his family. He knows his elder brother writes the most important news at the end of the letter, so he directly read the last lines:

- "I visited this week the minister "Ibn Tavrakkin" who promised to promote you to a position worthy of you the time you come back. I tell you this, and I am sure you will never come back soon. So I recommend you to do your best to save your country



from the scourges of war."

He gave the message to his wife who was eager to hear about his family, while he thought about the promise of Ibn Tavrakkin and his brother's advice. He soon noticed that they were both issued by the minister himself. His fears of Abu Annan's ambitions increased after he felt safe from the ambitions of the Hafsid family. Fatima commented:

- "Returning to Tunisia is less dangerous than staying here within the Marinid state."

Although he genuinely believed that his ambitions need a state like the Marinid, but his expectations were less optimistic this time than ever.

When he met Abu al-Qasem al-Burji, he asked him about Omar bin Abdullah. Al-Burji hesitated for a while thinking about the answer, while Abdul-Rahman added:

- "For a month, this young man is following me and praising me. He offered me a host and introduced me to his mother, his wife and his sisters. He, today, surprised me he was connected to the Hafsid governor of Bejaia."

Al-Burji's kept silent, increasing the fears of Abdul-Rahman, who asked whether he would advise him



to be more cautious and alert.

Al-Burji said while they were walking in the garden:

- "You may not know that I was the special scribe of Abu Abdullah al-Hafsy, the deposed ruler of Bejaia."

Confidently, while Abdul-Rahman looking more perplexed, he smiled saying:

"I was the scribe of the Sultan of Bejaia and his top-secret assistant as I was by his father's scribe as well. I lived among them as if I were one of their family. Love was mutual. However, Abu Anan attacked their state, asking them to give up without war. Kindly Abdul Rahman, never suspect me if I tell I recommended Abu Abdullah to surrender and save his life and the life of his followers. I was confident that this surrender would be much more profitable for the Hafsid Prince than fighting Abu Annan."

- "Do you mean, Sir, the Sultan Abu Anan honored you for that service?"

Ibn Khaldoun bit his lip regretting he rushed to accuse a man who did him so many favors. However, al-Burji put his hand on the waist of Abdul-Rahman and patted on his shoulders tenderly saying:



- "Some people thought of me as you did. Nevertheless, Allah knows all I would care about at the time was to save a dear friend, a ruler who privileged me a lot. I was afraid he might have the same fate of Osman, the ruler of Tlemcen, whom Abu Anan killed, crucified at the gates of the city, exiled his family and occupied his land. Abu Anan was merciless except for those who comply with him and kneel before him."

- "However, I have not yet realized what is the relationship between Omar (Marinid) and the so cursed ruler."

- "Never reject the friendship of Omar. His father was one of the prominent Sheiks in the state of Abu Anan. I do not advise you to hurry to search for results. Let others reveal their intentions first."

After returning to the house, Abdul-Rahman was thinking of al-Burji's advice. This friend, whom he trusts his affection encourages him to be a friend of "Omar." In addition, he does not mind, although he did not say it openly, cooperating with the deposed Abu Abdullah al-Hafsy. Several questions occurred to his mind:

- "Does al-Burji have any kind of connection with



the Hafsid prince; especially he was his own scribe? Why did not al-Burji mention that relationship before? Is he discreetly scared? Everyone knows the Prince al-Hafsy is observed, and he may still hope to reclaim his Emirate (on Bejaia). He concluded that caution is necessary in such complex situations."

A surprise was waiting for him at his new friend's house, Omar. There, he met the deposed Sultan of Bejaia. He was not prepared for this situation so he could be more cautious. If he knew what was waiting for him, he would have apologized for the get-together. The deposed Sultan greeted Abdul-Rahman pressing on his hands, with close looks.

- "According to what I heard about you, I thought you might be older?"

Omar and the Sultan laughed, while Abdul-Rahman smiled languidly.

He knew this man was observed, his movements were limited and his contacts counted.

Abdul-Rahman was with a scrunched-up face and a shivering voice. He tried to control his feelings, but he couldn't.

Omar said,



- "You both are my friends. You both heard about each other and never met before. My house is safe, and my father is above suspicions."

Abdul-Rahman imagined himself standing before Abu Anan shouting and screaming, "You betrayed me, revealed my secrets and allied with my enemies." He felt, to some extent, disturbed, so he tried to control his feelings. He was following the conversation with no sense of enthusiasm.

The deposed Sultan was very good at choosing his words. He spoke passionately and echoed the adage, "Nothing lasts forever." He never forgets to praise Abu Anan, describing him as "the Sincere Boy." He narrated his predecessors' immortal deeds, defended their glories, and how they ruled over vast lands and seas to the extent Christians feared them and approached them with gifts and taxes. Then, he talked about the friendly relationship between the Khaldouni and the Hafsidi families who together engraved a glorified history.

The smiling Prince was highly majestic, wearing a soft furry garb and a white turban inlaid with gold and silver threads. He told Abdul Rahman:

- "For a long time, I was looking for a skillful scribe



to document the history of the Hafsid State."

At the dining table, food was arranged and spices smelt strong. There were many cooked lambs, grilled chicken marinated with musk and saffron and roasted partridge and quail. Even bread was categorized: the soft white bread and the bread of Andalusia that is stuffed with cheese and honey.

Abdul-Rahman was so concerned that he couldn't flavor anything. He had no appetite to eat. While the Prince was overeating and over speaking as well. He commented:

- "Four nations were said to have used to eat four kinds of meat, thus getting four attributes:

"Arabs ate camel's meat, so they inherited hatred. Sudanese ate the meat of monkeys, which made them good at dancing. Franks ate pigs that made them lack jealousy. Turks ate horses that made them cruel.



Abdul-Rahman left the gathering secretly trying not to be seen, looking right and moved stealthily and never knowing if he was trapped or not. He felt great remorse for these sudden incidents.



He understood the purpose of that gathering with the deposed Prince, who told him at the meeting:

"You are from the well-known Khaldouni family. You know my circumstances. Neither am I a desperate prisoner, nor a free person to go where I want. If you happen to explain my case to our Prince; kindly say something about me, and I will never forget that for you as long as I am living."



On the way to his house while speeding up, he remembered what the host "Omar" said:

- "I heard that Abu Hammou is aspiring to the reign of Tlemcen and is gathering his supporters to regain the rule of his forefathers. If Abu Anan just knows how honest our friend is, "i.e., Abu Abdullah.", he would empower him the rule of his former Emirate. He will also support him against the state of Bani Abd al-Wad. After that, he glanced at Ibn Khaldoun with an encouraging look, smiling: "Our astute lord certainly distinguishes those who acquiesced to his rule and those who work to eliminate it."

Abdul-Rahman thought of what the two men asked him to do, i.e., to seek the release of this deposed Prince. So, he could return to the reign of his



Emirate. He will be one of Abu Anan's assistants in suppressing revolutions and standing against the disobedient.

Abdul-Rahman told his wife what has just happened to him. She comforted him since the gathering took place in the home of one of the top princes of the ruling family. However, one thing Abdul-Rahman could not comprehend: "What was the use of "Omar bin Abdullah" to mediate for one of their state opponents?" Abdul-Rahman remained anxious about what had happened that night. Since he trusts al-Sharif al-Hassani, he told him the entire story.

Al-Hassani kept silent for a while then said:

- "They had you engaged in their problems without you knowing."

He explained the unseen conflicts among the different parties of the ruling family. He said that most of the Marinid elders were feeling unsatisfied with the reign of Abu Anan. They used to describe him as unstable and fluctuated since he had deposed his father. While others saw him as a threat to them. They called him the reckless and the foolish as well. They were whispering about how he had deposed his father and exiled his brother. They called him



"The man of double vices."

Abdul-Rahman wondered in concern:

- "What do you advise me, Sir?"

- "You never talk about what you came across, never retreat from what they had you engaged in, and do not forget that good and evil are in an eternal conflict till doomsday."

Therefore, he found himself surrounded by disguised enemies. Soon, he remembered the old wisdom, "He who trusts the Sultan is comparable to who bets to tame the lion."

His first newborn child was called "Zeid." Soon, his nickname among his friends became "Abu Zeid". The invitations of his friend Omar increased. His main aim was to mediate for the deposed Prince. Abdul-Rahman met again with that Prince who promised him, in case of regaining to the Emirate, to appoint him as the second powerful man in the Emirate!!

Such a promise to a young man was the most significant incentive to take risks. He imagined himself as a minister who is still only twenty-five. He had an inner conflict, so his old friends advised him to go back to the al-Quaraouiyine mosque and



continue his education.

Al-Hassani was teaching logic, mental sciences, and the philosophy of Ibn Rushd. The judge al-Maqri taught literature and rhetoric. When feeling active, he goes back to read and study at night. He also attended classes during the day encouraged by the minister himself. Once he joked:

- "If it hadn't been a heavy load, I would have roamed among the elders' groups."

Once again, the news of Abu Hammou's movements in the desert circulated. He was combining his forces to recover Tlemcen. Abu Anan went crazy, assembled his soldiers, and told them what concerns him. One leader proposed to arm a military campaign and chase the rebels everywhere and never returns until it finishes him along with his followers.

Abu Anan paused for a while, thinking about this tempting thought. He reconsidered the person who proposed it since he was among those whom he doubted their loyalty. He did not find a confidential person to do the task. He wished he himself had time to lead the army. Nevertheless, his state is swamped with conspiracies. He cannot be away from it for a long time.



One advisor said: "The problem is that Abu Hammou is not negotiable, as is the matter with Prince al-Hafsy."

- "I will kill him as I did with his uncle Osman," said Abu Anan. But he wondered:

- "Do you know a trustworthy man in Tlemcen who can be relied upon? A man who likes to work with me to sow the seeds of discord between Abu Hammou and his followers?"

- "Al-Sharif Al-Hassani is your best option!"

The Sultan rejoiced over this opinion, as he knew al-Hassani in his scientific assembly as a wise and prolific scholar. Some people called him the philosopher. However, it did not happen that he saw him laughing or even pretending to smile.

He looked at one of the opponents who said:

- "Pardon me, my lord. If you aspire to be one of the students of al-Sharif al-Hassani, he is an encyclopedic man. However, he is fond of his city, Tlemcen. He does not hide his yearning about our city, Fez."

Abu Anan did not believe that one of the people he chose for his assembly hated staying beside the



Sultan. He commented:

- "With us, he is well revered with a decent salary."

Another one said, "Pardon, your Majesty. There are those who claim Sheikh al-Hassani has relations with Osman, the doomed king of Tlemcen."

Abu Anan's lost his temper. He felt deceived, and all those around him were conspiring against him. His voice shivered; he went speechless and left the assembly feeling angry.

They looked at each other expecting unpleasant consequences. Within just one hour, the guards came in with Sheikh al-Hassani handcuffed, barefoot, and an uncovered bald head. He looked directly into Abu Anan's eyes, feeling broken and asking about the mistake he had made. The Sultan met him with a stern and fierce facial expression:

- "Damn you, Hassani."

- "I was always at your service, my lord."

"You are an enemy wearing a friend's mask. You, sly, hate being close to me. How dare you announce your loyalty openly to my enemies of Bani Zian.?"

"It must be a snitch, my lord. I neither betrayed you nor forgot how you overwhelmed me with your



kindness."

If you were as honest as you claim, what was your relationship with the ill-fated Osman? Have you secured his money before I finish him? How do you explain your treachery? Don't you know that whoever opposes me, I do not just kill him, but take his money as well.!"

Al-Hasani soon realized the dilemma he is in and the intrigue he is passing through. Knowing it is inevitable to confess, he did not wait so long to seek excuse and clemency.

- "May my lord allow me to tell the truth. Prince Osman was my dear friend. He overwhelmed me with his generosity and his kindness."



- "Be careful, Hassani. Your secrecy and rhetoric will never save your life."

- "My lord, I trusted you and chose your neighborhood?"

Ibn Khaldoun rushed to Sheikh al-Burji and al-Maqri. He found them arguing the ordeal of al-Hassani. The Sultan does not accept the mediation of the one who sees him as a danger to his rule.



Therefore, their conversation was going on in a vicious circle. Soon the conversation turned into a bitter lament for the fate of al-Hassani and the humiliation he is submitted to. Besides, his money and properties were confiscated in Fez and Tlemcen, respectively. Therefore, his family was left with no sufficient cash that could meet their needs.

In the Divan's lobby, whispers were about the torture, intimidation, and isolation subjected to the prisoner without any consideration to his age or knowledge. Some people condemned the behavior of the Sheik; others described him with nasty words, whether secretly or openly. A third part considered him the victim of honesty and loyalty, describing him as highly courageous and loyal.

Al-Burji said, "No one will be able to save al-Hassani except the city's judge."

Ibn Khaldoun and Al-Burji both looked at the "Maqri" who kept silent shook his head doubting. He looked at Al-Burji saying:

- "Do you think he will accept my mediation?"
- "Of course. Because you did him a favor, did you not write a Fatwa under which his father was taken off, and you read it yourself in the Mosque of



Tlemcen?."

- "I was forced to do so."

- "Most people don't know the details. They don't even care."

- "Sheikh al-Hassani was accused of being from Tlemcen. I am also from Tlemcen. However, I am loyal to our rightful rulers."

- "Sheikh al-Hassani was entrusted with the sons of Osman and his money. Abu Anan sees this as high treason. You are the supreme judge, so the Sultan may listen to you and set our friend free?"



When the judge visited the Sultan in his palace, he welcomed him and complained about the treason and the baseness of al-Hassani.

- "I am here, my lord, conveying the students' wishes. No one navigates in their mentalities like the imprisoned Sheikh (al-Hassani)."

Abu Annan gazed in the judge's face, who was about to add something, but he refrained.

- "Did you come here to deliver the students' wishes? As long as you are willing to release him, shall you



give him a piece of advice?"

Al-Maqri did not understand what the Sultan meant. He put his hand on his chest. The Sultan added:

- "You should know that your dear friend is running a dangerous network of my enemies. Osman has distributed his money to a group of Tlemcen dignitaries - asking them to give it to Sheikh al-Hassani upon request. The Sheikh still keeps these names secret."

Abu Anan smiled in a grimace that looked closer to warning and menacing:

- "If you are willing to do him and me a favor, let him tell us the names of all enemies and those entrusted on the money of Osman. You know this money will go to the rebellious Abu Hammou, who will use it in fighting us."

However, the judge left the palace burdened with a difficult task. He wondered: - "How can I help the Sultan uncover the secrets kept by Sheikh al-Hassani?"

Al-Maqri pretended to be sick, so he remained in his house. Afterward, the Sultan deposed him and assigned guards to keep an eye on his house. Al-Burji and Ibn Khaldoun, therefore, felt disturbed.



They believed the deposition of al-Maqeri would be a prelude to imprison him. Al-Burji felt guilty and frustrated. What should he do after they trapped his friend in a predicament? As for Ibn Khaldoun, whenever he felt upset, he rushed to his house, where he found solace with his wife. This woman he knew by chance was his prettiest companion who never had a frown on her face in his presence, and never complained about being alienated. Whenever she remembers her family, she repeats:

- "The husband is the wife's motherland, and feeling happy with him compensates her parents' love."

Her voice sounds pleasing and comfortable. The more he looked at her, the more he believed her tenderness and smile were the secrets behind Fatima's attraction. He remembered the words of al-Sharif al-Hassani."

"The mind of a woman lies in her beauty, and the beauty of the man lies in his mind." He believed that this saying, if not true for all women, is at least true for him and Fatima.



Ten months passed since the philosopher was imprisoned and the judge was deposed.



The higher the expectations of mitigation, the more disappointed these expectations were.

Ibn Khaldoun continued his lessons and never stopped attending the Sultan's assembly hoping that one elder would risk-seeking pardon for his two friends, but none of this occurred.

He tried to convince the Moroccan elders. They expressed sympathy for the prisoners and showed feelings of bitterness, but they remained hesitant.

Once again, he was called by his friend Omar bin Abdullah to visit him. He told him it is a special occasion with no further explanation. He felt happy for this invitation and did not forget that this young man is close to the elders. On the way, he thought the occasion might be a circumcision or a wedding ceremony. However, the moment he got closer to the hill in front of the house, he saw an unusual movement. Horses are being fed, and servants are serving everybody. He wanted to go back. Soon he heard Omar summoning on him:

- "It is a banquet hosted by my father to the elders of Bani Marrin."

The courtyard was spacious, lit with lamps, and furnished with carpets. The guests sat in groups.



Their voices sounded loud, and their chuckling filled the air.

Abdul-Rahman was skipping the groups, apologizing with hand, and greeting with voice. Omar was leading him to the quiet elders' assembly. Abdul-Rahman identified the assembly by the large turbans. Omar said:

- "This is Abdul-Rahman ibn Khaldoun."

They were waiting for him. Their cheers repeatedly sounded and hands stretched out to greet him. Afterward, he sat in the middle.

In the beginning, he felt confused. He, them, talked to them answering their questions about Tunis, Minister Ben Tavrakkin, and the reasons that weakened the Hafsid state, which was the oldest and the most well-off in Al-Maghreb.

Ibn Marzouk, one of the well-known dignitaries who were feeling anxious about Ibn Khaldoun, said:

- "I am pretty amazed at how more than a century had passed since the beginning of the first emigration of the Andalusian people to the Moroccan countries. Yet, they continue to feel connected to their native lands, even though most of the places were robbed of them, and the only



remaining state is Bani-al-Ahmar's in Granada?"

Ibn Khaldoun felt that the question is not innocent, and it is a concealed provocation. The Moroccans have always repeated these allegations in different ways. He imagined himself in a test. He tried to lessen the rumors about the conflict taking place among the Andalusian community and the people of the country to which they were displaced. He clarified that dissonance was due to the feeling of alienation and pride at the same time. Immigrants could have settled in their own homes if they had acquiesced to the occupier, but they found in the country to which they immigrated an ovation that compensated them for what they had in their homelands.

They also heard some critical views that accused them of selling their own country to the Christians, and that the benefits blinded them from realizing the dangers. It was an incredible accusation that could only be true for politicians and influential people.

Ibn Marzouk interrupted, "The Andalusians feel superior, and they describe the Berbers as barbarians."

Abdul-Rahman smiled and looked gently at Ibn



Marzouq saying, "It is clear that the conflict was due to the close relationship of the elders of Andalusia with the rulers, in addition to the dependence of the Moroccan Sultans on the experience of those immigrants who carried with them the latest expertise in all fields of science in those stricken countries such as farming, crafts. Therefore, the Andalusian and the Moroccans were destined to live in one place because their fate is common. Both sides must be very cautious about machinations."

Massoud Ben-Rahou, looking at Ibn Khaldoun with respect and appreciation, smiled saying:

- "You were fair with both sides. The truth that should not be hidden is that the emigration of Andalusian people contributed to the advancement of Moroccan countries. For example, the emigration of Bani Hilal contributed in Arabizing this country from Cyrenaica(Barca) eastward to Gibraltar Westward."

As such, his relations with the elders of the Bani Marrin reinforced so much.



Fatima watches her husband feeling his suffering so she attempts to relieve him. She asked, "I see



happiness in your eyes like a passing flash. You're killing yourself for volatile goals?"

She was willing to get him out of this situation. She advised him to go back to Constantine, where her family lives, or to Tunisia where his family is. She said that fame was an adventure those times, and that money does not bring happiness.

Every time he answered her that he could never let his dreams down.

"But you do not know where it is leading you to. You do not feel satisfied with anything." She was feeling pity for his high ambitions and scared of what was waiting for him. However, a year after their marriage, she knew that his life from the very beginning was a series of anxiety.

He once told her:

- "The more I felt I was on track, the more I found myself off it. Whenever I thought I am back, I found myself at another turn. I live among people who say something and do something else. They are determined to kill their victims, but at the same time, they embrace them warmly!!!"

He also added:



- "Sometimes I talk to myself, "If I had stayed at home, I would have known everything. Even this wish I have no trust in because I will regret all that I did, whether here or there."

He giggled to avoid her bewildered looks, and then added:

- "Some people describe me as a fickler. Do these conditions encourage stability?"

The next day he met his friend Omar. He confided to him that the senior elders of Bani Marrin were dissatisfied with the actions of the Sultan.

He asked him:

- "Do they have any substitute?"

He kept silent for a while. He looked like he was hiding things he didn't want to reveal. Then he joked:

- "Fresh well is usually getting crowded around."

As such, he realized that the elders agreed to overthrow Abu Annan. Yet, they are still disputing about whom his successors will be. This, in his opinion, is the most critical chapter of the story.

At their long session, Omar told Abdul-Rahman that



the Sultan was arrogant and never valued competent people. Thus, he (Abdul-Rahman) will not be able to rank higher than the Sultan specified him.

Abdul-Rahman felt disappointed and aggrieved. He was merely a scribe who writes the letters of the Sultan, without any other consideration. For he knew what his role was, he felt that something was going on in Omar's mind. Was he luring him for a specific mission? Omar said:

- "A while ago, I met the Hafsids Prince "Abu Abdullah." I lamented the circumstances he was going through. He is sincere in his love of our state, willing to help us; but he is a prisoner in Fez, so he has no right to leave the palace where the Sultan has imprisoned him in."

Ibn Khaldoun was waiting for what he was looking for in this area. He was considering the different expectations. He added, "Abu Anan feels so suspicious about everything. He doubts everyone around him. However, this state is shaking from inside and outside. Some elders of Bani Marrin fear the Hafsids revolution and expect an attack on Tlemcen from Beni Zian. Abu Hammou has taken refuge in the desert, where he was gathering his followers and preparing his army. Soon he would



sneak into Tlemcen and return it to the rule of his family.

The more Omar talked about the expectations and risks, the more Ibn Khaldoun felt eager to know his role and the proposal this friend is maneuvering about. Omar said:

- "If we ventured and prepared a good plan to save Abu Abdullah from his house arrest, he could regain his rule on Bejaia, and be our ally?"

Abdul-Rahman hesitated and thought genuinely about this proposal. He did not find out what Omar would benefit from this adventure? However, he never forgot that Omar's father is now the ruler of Bejaia. He ruled out the money deal as Omar does not need it. He disagreed on a big task his friend is planning to. It may prepare the settings to take off Abu Anan. If the plot fails, he will find a friend to resort to in Bejaia?

- "Did the father and his son settled on delivering Bejaia to its real owner?" Abdul-Rahman wondered.

Abdul-Rahman was preoccupied with these thoughts about what he intended to say about the prisoners.

He never mentioned the case of his friends, al-Hassani, and al-Maqri. He knew their fate was in



the hands of the Sultan. No one ever dared to talk about them when he was angry.

On his way home, he popped into al-Burji house to discover that he was even feeling more despondent. He told him he became a target for rumors, especially after Abu Anan began feeling suspicious of all those surrounding him. Moreover, the Sultan was hiding in his palace with astrologers, whom he trusts and never does anything without consulting them.

- "I heard the chief astrologer was covertly telling the Sultan the instructions of some elders of Bani Marrin. This astrologer became more trustworthy to the Sultan than most of the state's dignitaries."

It was odd for him to get involved in such an unexpected adventure. So, he hesitantly awaited the opportunity. He thought of all the possibilities. The offer he received from his friend Omar was profitable if it succeeded. Abdul-Rahman had so far two opportunities of two conflicting parties. The Hafsid Prince promised him a high position, i.e., "Prime Minister." On the other hand, Omar and his father have united with a group of influential princes to get rid of the Sultan... Abdul-Rahman felt that Abdullah, his friend's father, was aspiring to reign.



He mind-wandered a lot. He became sure that Abu Annan would not be able to do anything necessary to him. Staying in his service means putting an end to the ambitions he has always had, thus living in a vicious circle of anticipation and surprises. Besides, what does he hope of a little-experienced Sultan, hated in his tribe and driven by the tyranny's mightiness and youth to commit follies everywhere?

Once, the Sultan asked him about what were the Marinid elders talking about?

Abdu Rahman was reserved a little bit, and then referred to the people's fear of the ambitions of "Abu Hammou" who was seeking to regain his family's reign on Tlemcen. Abu Annan questioned what the elders were proposing.

Abdul-Rahman said, "Some elders believe that the alliance with Prince Mohammed al-Hafsi achieves more than one goal; at least, it unites the Hafsid princes to stand against the ambitions of Abu Hammou."

Abu Hammou was a sturdy man. He felt hostile to the Marinid state. He was preparing his supporters deep in the desert, expecting the opportunity to reclaim his family's throne, on Tlemcen, or what



was known as the Middle Maghreb.

Ibn Khaldoun believed that Abu Annan was aware of these dangers. He understood the use of some of the Hafsid princes to stand against the ambitions of Abu Hammou.

However, the Sultan felt dissatisfied:

- "Do they mean we should ask help from another enemy against that lunatic man?"

He blamed his state's elders, calling them the spiteful conspirators who still spread fabrications among his peoples.

Suddenly he stopped talking, looked at Abdul-Rahman saying:

- "Do you still trust your Sheikh Muhammad al-Maqri?"

Abdul-Rahman felt confused for a moment, but he firmly said:

- "What I know is that the Sheikh is faithful. He is not a traitor by nature. He, my lord, is unaware of what is going on in people's minds, so he rushes to reveal what was considered a secret without reservation. That is his weakness."



Abdul-Rahman noticed that the Sultan was not convinced. The servant "Mutee" entered, interrupting them. He brought a plate of dates and milk; the times were stuffed with butter and all sorts of sweets. Ibn Khaldoun refused to eat, claiming that he was fasting. In fact, He was not. He feared the food of palaces. He doubted every mouthful in there. He has done so on the advice of al-Sharif al-Hassani.

When he told al-Burji about the conversation with the Sultan, al-Burji felt optimistic. He considered the Sultan's talk as a good sign. However, he was not enthusiastic about what Abdul-Rahman said about Prince al-Hafsy.

- "Perhaps you do not know that Bejaia ruler "Abdullah" does not consult the Sultan in many issues."

Abdul-Rahman felt astonished at this. He thought that appointing Abdullah a ruler on Bejaia, is an honor and appreciation for his contributions.

Right now, for the first time, he connects the dots. He remembered the endeavors of his friend Omar to return "Mohamed al-Hafsy" to his Emirate.

He said to himself, "Omar wanted his father to let



the rule of Béjaia go as they consider it as an exile."

Once again, the conflict over the Marinid throne is the reason behind all the problems and conspiracies.

In a few days, Abu Anan summoned Judge Muhammad al-Maqri to be his envoy to Mohammed bin al-Ahmar, King of Granada.

The elders of the state were amazed at this shift. They went on various speculations. While Abdul-Rahman and al-Burji were inspired by this breakthrough. Al-Burji considered Ibn Khaldoun's endeavors had succeeded. Therefore, he urged him to give a second try to rid the "al-Sharif al-Hassani". You, Abdul Rahman, can say the right words at the right time and place.

However, Abdul-Rahman felt suspicious again. He considered releasing the Judge as a new episode of the struggle for the throne. Al-Burji was amazed by what he has just heard. Abdul-Rahman said:

- "The elders of Bani Marrin have been preparing to get rid of Abu Anan. In order not to disagree upon who will govern next, they agreed upon Abu Salem. For at least, he did not dispose of or dislocate his father, as Abu Anan has done. Besides, the exile legitimized him and made him the qualified



substitute to his tyrannical brother."

Al-Burji shouted, beating his forehead with his hands:

- "So Abu Anan is trying to get rid of his brother? Will the ruler of Granada be participating in this conspiracy?"

- "If these assumptions were true, it is an introduction to the overthrow of so many people." said Abdul-Rahman.



Rumors circulated the city. There were conflicting reports. Some of which claimed the elders Bani Marrin are writing to each other though they live in one city. They avoided getting together for fear that they are arrested and tortured. Rumors confirm that the Sultan does not sleep at night in one place. He wanders among his palaces wearing servant's outfit. These doubts have caused the death of so many servants, vagabonds, and even nomads wandering at night.

Fear spread among people, and people's movement calmed down from sunset to sunrise. Some people said, "It is a trick by the Sultan to set the motion at night" or to uncover the plans of his enemies.



Abdul-Rahman was watching what was going on fearfully. He was waiting for the situation to explode. This calmness was a bad sign. One evening he heard a person shouting in the throne room:

- "Help, Help, I am innocent."

The clerks came out of their chambers. They stood motionless feeling frightened and exchanging looks and bewildered questions until they saw the Sultan coming out bareheaded with strayed eyes and the sword in his hand dripping blood as he shouted:

- "Traitors. Damn you all."

The clerks rushed back to their chambers. Some of them fell on the ground, fearing that his turn would be next. Abu Anan shouted:

- "Where are you, damned servants and guards?"

A while later, people saw a corpse wrapped in a blanket that was dripping blood. The whispers denoted that the victim was the servant "Mutee."

People doubted Mutee's betrayal and remembered how loyal to the Sultan he was. They wondered, "Why does he betray the Sultan right now? Has he served him for twenty years? People began doubting Abu Anan's mental abilities. Everyone



around him waited for his death. Every day, they were congratulating each other for that they are still alive.

The chief physician and the chief astrologer showed up. They argued what the Sultan was suffering from. They gave him a jar of milk and a bottle of vintage wine. They were observing the Sultan suffering and releasing liquids.

Whispers spread out all over the place:

- "Yes. Abu Salem did it from his exile; he is a great man."

- "It is the justice of heaven. The disobedient son will die in the worst way."

- "He asked the king of Granada to rid him of his brother, "Abu Salem," What a felon he is."

Minister Abu al-Hasan met with senior dignitaries and the state elders trying to calm rumors and spread reassurances. However, he received a series of questions. He was very conservative in his answers.

Ibn Marzouk said:

- "We ask Allah in every prayer to keep the Sultan safe and to save the country from the devilish seditions. At the same time, we ask you, Sir, to



appoint your son "Al-Saeed" as the Crown Prince to silence those aspiring for reign. The head minister will supervise the little Crown Prince until he becomes mature.

Some elders suppressed their smiles. They do know how Ibn Marzouk sympathizes with Abu Salem.

Massoud bin Rahou whispered to Omar bin Abdullah:

- "Damn him. He tries to discharge himself."
- "You think he did it?"
- "Most of us yearn to get rid of who killed his father (Abu Anan)."

Abu Anan has been complaining of severe pain and is often heard agonizing in the palace's lobbies. Some opponents claim that the Sultan is pretending to be ill, to illusion the people that he is in the last breath. It was a trick that the Kings often resorted to if they were at risk, either to expose their enemies or to gain time. However, reality confirms that Abu Annan has changed the day he killed his servant. He lost his temperament, and so many doctors are visiting him.

Each time a delegation of the most famous doctors



shows up. They examine him and exchange advice in closed sessions. Later, they leave.



From Granada, the Jewish physician "Ibrahim bin Zarzour" showed up pretending to deliver a message to Abu Anan. However, this maneuver did not deceive the people who mocked it saying:

- "The most famous physician of Granada delivers a special message to the sick Sultan?!"

In contrast to the rest of the physicians, Ibn Zarzour stayed long in Fez. He was fond of literature and history, so he found what he looks for at Ibn Khaldoun.

They were both impressed by each other. What impressed Ibn Khaldoun more was that this physician found out sufficient time to spend in getting into books and establishing his reason with all sorts of knowledge?

Ibn Zarzour was more impressed with this young man. He continued to wonder,

- "How does a young man in such an early age can master all sorts of sciences, art, and literature? He also has good intuition and public knowledge and



eloquence."

The physician kept repeating:

- "How similar you are to Lissan al-Deen Ibn al-Khatib!

Lissan al-Deen was the most eloquent person in Andalusia at that time. He was also the minister of Ibn al-Ahmar. He was highly trusted, so Abdul-Rahman objected to this comparison and considered it as a compliment from Ibn Zarzour. However, the physician continued to repeat the same phrase and comparison. He was confident and insisted on mentioning this young man. When their relationship strengthened, Abdul-Rahman asked:

- "Have you discovered what the Sultan's disease was?"

Ibn Zarzour turned around and whispered secretly, "It is a slow-effect poison."

- "Is there a cure for him?"

The physician nodded, pursed his lips, and breathed deeply changing the conversation's topic. Abdul-Rahman realized Abu Anan is inevitably dead, but he never insisted on his new friend to say it clearly. He sought to know the time of passing-away of the



ill Sultan.

He said goodbye to the physician. They both showed regret for this farewell.

Ibn Zarzour, hugging Abdul Rahman, said:

- "Would you please pay us a visit to Granada? We will be pledged to have you there. The head minister, Lissan al-Deen ibn Al-Khatib would feel so happy to have you among us."

Ibn Khaldoun replied, shaking hands with the physician,: "If I were to visit Granada, I would surely feel happy to be with you, but memories will agonize me... Is not Andalusia the home of their ancestors?"



Omar insisted on his friend Abdul Rahman to tell him about the results of Ibn Zarzour's evaluation of the Sultan's physical condition.

- "I'm not so curious, but the physical condition of the sultan is important for my father in the first place?"

Ibn Khaldoun stated the physician feels hopeless regarding the Sultan's health. Here, Omar got energetic and urged his friend to help him smuggle



Prince al-Hafsy.

Abdul-Rahman felt stigmatized pretending not to hear anything, but Omar went on maneuvering and tempting:

- "As long as the Sultan is dead, my father will be the worthiest of the rule. However, staying in "Bejaia" will deprive him of the opportunity to come and take his share of the legacy."

Omar was highly prepared.

- "If we helped Prince al-Hafsy escape, my father would find an excuse. When he comes back, he will say the people of Bejaia revolted against him, and he failed to subdue them. Besides, the Prince al-Hafsy vowed to be in service of Bani Marrin as a faithful ally."

Abdul-Rahman was listening fearfully. He felt suspicious and wondered what fate he was waiting for in case of the Sultan perished. Omar detected his friend worries, he reassured him:

- "My father is the worthiest of the rule, and if we make it easy for him, we will be together among the dignitaries of this state. Just imagine the result of this simple adventure. Its outcome will be our destiny to the end of life."



When the attempts of Prince Al-Hafsy to escape his house arrest failed, he began thinking of alternative ways. It was an unexpected opportunity since Abu Anan was feeling sick.

He thought he was moving with careful moves. He was very confident in his aides. After midnight, he wore a Bedouin dress, with a short sword and a poisoned dagger, and then chatted with his followers, so everyone moved cautiously. He recommended everyone what they should do in case of an emergency.

He Sultan summoned to the palace's governess, but he felt resentful when he saw the maid "Budoor." He doubted her intentions a short time ago, but he did not find enough time to make sure of what he doubted. He did not kill her because she was the prettiest among his maids. He said to himself –with a smile and waving to her:

- "She might be fond of me? But if something wrnog happens to me, she will be the mastermind."



In one of the old ruins, Ibn Khaldoun and Omar gathered exchanged signs and walked to the east door of the city wall. The plan was to meet their



supporters outside the city walls, then heading to Bejaia, where "Abdullah" will pretend to be failing to resist Prince al-Hafsy. They, later on, will return to "Fez" to assume power once Abu Anan is disposed of.

The three comrades walked side by side with the Prince in between. Each one was preoccupied with his expectations. The plan, being simple, will make them the profit. Omar's father will be the Sultan of Bani Marrin; the Prince al-Hafsy will assume the reign of "Bejaia," and Ibn Khaldoun will be the second figure in that Emirate?

That night, it was very cold and dark. All houses sounded lifeless; streets deserted, just a few cats and dogs, and no one was seen in this chilly weather, even the guards were not there. Three ghosts were walking near the walls, and the footsteps were barely heard. They have replaced words with hand signals.

- "Everything is promising well. The door is my responsibility." Omar Whispered.

The policemen were watching as if they knew every detail of the plan. Their chief shouted, "Pikes are behind you, swords in front of you, and snipers are



with their arrows above the roofs."



They released Omar. Ibn Khaldoun did not understand Omar when he looked at him. Was he saying goodbye or reassuring him? Or he may apologize to him? Al-Hafsy accused his maid "Budoor" and swore to kill her if he was destined, by Allah's mercy, to survive.



In prison, Ibn Khaldoun woke up. He hoped that his friend Omar would come to rescue him. He also hoped that the Sultan will not doubt him, and will order his release. If not the Sultan, it might be the head minister. He still thinks that everyone in the Diwan is seeing him above suspicions.

The first day passed with no one coming to save him or even ask him. He felt worried. He never felt a night longer than his first night in the tight confines. He sat on the bottom of the room, with no clothes on or a mattress to sleep on. He felt the chill penetrates his bones. He was tightly handcuffed to the back, which made him feel very agonizing. He felt the handcuff penetrating his flesh. It was so dark. A horde of insects was walking on his naked body.



He stood up, frightfully with his back to the wall. He was barefoot since they took off his slippers. He began hearing the agonies of prisoners, the whips' sounds, and the executioners' insults and obscene words.

He never knew whether it was day or night. Even the aperture at the top of the room was blocked and no longer sent a glimmer of light. Thus, night and day equaled. He felt hungry. He knocked on the door with his feet. Soon he got a warning reply:

- "If you disturb us, we will weigh your legs with iron cuffs."

He said to himself, "If they did, I would be a delicious meal for insects and mice." He no longer heard anything but the non-stopping prisoners' torment and the curses of the executioners. Urine and wastes strongly smelt. Al-Burji will be the saddest person for his absence. He may now be exerting his efforts to set him free. But, what about Omar? Will he deny their friendship?

He thought Prince al-Hafsy might be close to him. May it be a wall separating them? May he be one of the next victims? He also was wondering when his turn would be? So his flesh began tingling



while imagining the whips and indecency of the executioners. He remembered his wife and what she will suffer in his absence.

He remembered his father's will. His grandfather sacrificed his life for the Hafsid state. Despite his father's warnings, he walked along the same path.

He trembled as he remembered the fate of his grandfather. He, Abdul Rahman, was still at an early age. He is only twenty-six. His ambitions are great. Will he end in this prison? He was overwhelmed by the supplications of the torturers and their pleas. Some swore they were innocent while others wished to die for what they have been suffering from. His strength collapsed, and his spirit faded. He lost confidence in his friends. He feebly started appealing, and his voice mingled with the sounds of others. He was thrown on the bottom of the cold room and no longer smelled anything.



When he woke up, he found himself free of cuffs. However, he was surrounded by two men: one is too short but fat, the other was tall and skinny. The short man smiled, saying, "No use of denying, Abdul Rahman. If you confess everything, you will save



your life from so many dangers that are still at the very beginning?"

He re-examined their contradictory faces and muttered, "I am innocent. My friend Omar bin Abdullah knows that very well."

The tall skinny shouted:

- "Never mention Prince Omar's name; nobody betrays those who did him a favor. What will he benefit from the help of al-Hafsy to escape?"

He wished to reveal so many things he saw in other places, which are necessary to get the country out of the impasse of disintegration and fragmentation. However, he feared what might happen to his friend Omar and his father Abdullah and preferred just to claim innocence.

The session took a long time. The questions and threats were repeated. For three consecutive days, he kept repeating what he had said on the first day. He even denied the charges of Prince al-Hafsy. He explained that the Prince would be more useful to the government when free than a prisoner, as he was a trusted ally and would stand against his enemies and the enemies of Bani Marrin.

After two months of questioning in prison, they



moved him to a spacious hall with a group of prisoners who greeted him warmly. Then, suddenly, Prince al-Hafsy was thrown down that Hall. Ibn Khaldoun rose to hug his friend, but the Prince met him indifferently. He did not realize the reason for this change and doubted the Prince. However, Prince dispelled Abdul Rahman's suspicions with an eye wink. Abdul-Rahman understood that the room was full of so many spies.

He changed the conversation and talked about the history of the Moroccan State's conditions: epidemics, famines, adversities, tribalism, riots, and the attacks of the Christian fleets. He soon got the attention of others, telling them stories from past and present as well. He supported his views with pieces of evidence from history. He entertained them and made them forget the situation they were in.

They were amazed at this young man's broad knowledge at his very early age. One of the prisoners hurried to say that the Sultan was mistaken and unjust to put Ibn Khaldoun in prison. The Prince strongly opposed him refuting these accusations. He said, "He is our custodian. Allah, the Almighty, has entrusted him with us. It is our legitimate duty to ask guidance for, conciliation, and longevity for



him."

As time passed, the Prince was right concerning the rest of the prisoners. They were all agents who pretended to complain, deliberately talk about grievances, and at the same time pick up the prisoners' news. What assured these facts is that some of the prisoners who were being taken out to the gallows did not look fearing death. They seemed fearless. Ibn Khaldoun started asking others some questions. He knew so many things about what was going on outside the prison, especially about the Sultan? Despite his illness, he is still leading the army to subdue some of the rebellious cities.

Ibn Khaldoun felt more anxious when Prince al-Hafsy was set free. Not knowing the reasons, he even felt melancholic. He thought about writing a poem to the Sultan and other elders asking mercy.

He was sending poems continually. He was feeling encouraged by the others' sympathy for his circumstances. However, when he stayed so long inside the prison, suspicions started occurring to him.

He was overcoming despair by writing poems in praise of the Sultan, apologizing to him, and



showing great remorse.

Since Prince al-Hafsy went out of prison, he began thinking that he would be left in detention forever. Who would remember him in such volatile situations? However, he was feeling more hopeful by the reassuring words of the chief guards who was encouraging him to write more poems:

- "Our Sultan praises your poems, rereads them, and memorizes them."

This repeated sentence suggested blackmail and hope at the same time. This situation lasted for two whole years. He did not see the sun nor experienced freedom. He did not get outside this horrible building. He lived with murderers, criminals, scholars, and victims of politics. He listened to hundreds of stories, grievances, and complaints of the innocent and oppressed. Some of them were honest. He admired their noble attitudes, great souls, and their patience and fortitude. On his first day, he never expected to stay in prison for such a long time, nor did he expect Abu Anan to stay alive for two years. However, during these two years, he found enough time to focus on his thoughts to hold himself to account, to get down to his inner self, to write poetry, to read a lot of books that were



smuggled into the prison and to benefit from the experiences of others whatever their source was.

He was swiped away by despair. He promised himself, "If I go out alive, I will disconnect with the illusions of politics."

That night, he stayed up writing his last poem. The lamp they gave him was languishing. He hardly heard light rain showers. Then, he heard a noise that continued to speed up with the sound of the main door keys clearly heard. It was followed by a strong rush of people where the voice of his friend Omar suggested he was with the first arrivals. He felt stunned to hear:

- "The ordeal is finished."

He stumbled while trying to give his friend a hug. There were so many voices and hands of congratulations. The confusion had made him feel paralyzed. Al- Burji was very impressed and hugged him, saying a few words were suggesting optimism. Abdul Rahman, for a moment, thought that poetry is behind releasing him. However, on the way out, he knew that the Sultan had passed away. He felt delighted, for Allah treated both fairly.

- "Minister al-Hassani is now the strongest statesman."



He did not understand what Omar had said. Soon he realized that the game of the "ruling boy" with the custody of the minister has just begun in the state of Bani Marrin. He remembered what Ibn Tavrakkin did a few years ago, and imagined the conflict that would be tougher this time. He said to himself:

- "The countries of Morocco have been destined to repeat each other. They have similar defects, and perhaps they will be up for grabs to the Christians, exactly as it happened to Andalusia".

For the first time, he had the idea of returning to his hometown.

- "A state that is ruled by a boy surrounded by greedy people!! What could be worse?"



Minister al-Hassani shouted, "Ibn Khaldoun, here you are free."

- "Thanks to you, dear Minister. May Allah keep you."

Whenever our king, May Allah have mercy upon him, wanted to set you free, he felt sick.

"I am not blaming him. I am grateful to those who set me free."



Celebrated by the minister, Ibn Khaldoun had his salary doubled and returned to his job, but the minister refused to allow him to go back to Tunisia.

- "This country needs you... We promise you the best. All the people here appreciate you. You are beloved more than you imagine."

- "However, after two years in prison, I need to get my family reassured."

The minister turned deaf for Ibn Khaldoun's attempts and excuses.

- "I will protect you myself from the intrigues and conspirators. My word now is the strongest. I rely on sincere men, and you are one of them."