

Sari Nusseibeh

Keynote lecture presented at the Conference of Islamic and Jewish Medieval Philosophy Conference. University of Illinois, Chicago, November 14-15, 2022.

The Pursuit of Happiness: Ibn Khaldun Revisited

In trying to work out the main difference in approach to human associations between early political theorists -Greek and Muslim- and Ibn Khaldun the place one should perhaps look at is how they viewed human nature, or more precisely, those natural instincts and inclinations or dispositions human beings are said to have. Looking at the full array of these instincts and dispositions and speaking generally I want to suggest they could either be viewed as being laid out in separate slots as in a color palette from which to extrapolate a best resolution or mixture that will produce a painting that depicts what a best human association looks like; or one could see them already as an inseparable part of a given painting, where little can be done except for trying to understand how each contributes to the general picture laid out before one. By the time of Ibn Khaldun, of course, the painting he was looking at also included religions and religious associations, but he saw these as add-ons, or not as constituent colors of the painting itself, as I shall explain.

Few political theorists -past and present- of course would claim that perfect communities- or perfect paintings- exist. Many of whom Ibn Khaldun was well-aware however -beginning with Plato- would argue that such communities or close approximations to them can and will exist. For Plato the matter was how, looking at the different natures as in a color palette that different groups of people have, these can be so brought together and ordered as to complement each other and to produce a best arrangement for the relations between them, an

arrangement that would provide for a state of well-being for the human association. Aristotle looked at the matter from the opposite angle: looking at the different and conflicting natural instincts all individuals have and are all sourced in or can be reduced to the desire to achieve happiness, or to flourish by expressing themselves, he believed a best community can come about if its members can manage in themselves to achieve this happiness by living virtuously. In one view, the right order makes for a perfect community. In the other, the virtuous individual makes for the right order. In both views human association in any form is existentially necessary for the individual but only one form of it is a natural best, and political theory's function is to tell us what that is. Politics, in other words, is viewed in this perspective as having an end – a good one! - and the theorist's function is rationally to discover and formulate it for us.

Religions introduce another dimension into the picture, or draw this in a new way, making out the afterlife to be the real end of human existence, thereby rendering the political end secondary to that one and measurable by it. Both earthly political perfection and happiness may lose out here, the latter perhaps more, because while the former can now be proposed as what identifies what a best political form is as informed by the laws of a religion, happiness cannot be similarly or as easily pinned down, it being a subjective state, and harder to claim as what characterizes the quotidian psychological state of the people living under those laws. Indeed, earthly perfection and happiness part company in this light. Aristotle's *virtues* can come to be regarded not as he saw them, or just as he saw them, namely, as what should be lived up to for their own sake and would make the virtuous happy: now they can come to be viewed as what should be adhered to in view of their rewards in the afterlife, or as compensation for hardships in this life. Happiness, in other words, becomes split, between the transient and imaginary and the permanent and real - a distinction we find made by many philosophers who have religion in mind, from Alfarabi in the Muslim

milieu right up to John Locke in England, who was a possible inspiration for Thomas Jefferson and the inclusion of the pursuit of happiness as a fundamental principle in the American Declaration of Independence.

But as Ibn Khaldun saw it, religions as political forms share with political theory that attraction to how things ought to be, whether in this life or the next. He did not frontally berate or criticize their fields of inquiry, except to argue that neither has anything to do with politics properly so called, or with political life as it is lived. Also, in presenting his own account of politics he clearly showed that those presenting religions in political forms, whether these are religious intellectuals in his own milieu or philosophers, had politics totally misconceived. A typical such philosopher was Alfarabi, who thought that theorist and religious political forms are commensurable.

Alfarabi shared with political theorists preceding him the idea that there is a best political order and that it is somehow integrated with the afterlife. He constitutes for us an important landmark of Greek thought in the Muslim milieu, allowing us to appreciate the generic leap in political thought later introduced by Ibn Khaldun. Although like Ibn Khaldun he does not envision a block passage of the religious community to the afterlife where it will find a shared happiness and fulfillment - thereby presenting the afterlife as a kind of extension of its political form in this life- unlike him he considers the religious community to be a natural form or a paradigm of a political association, and believes a perfect state for such an association is attainable and is a best guarantee for the passage of *individuals* to that afterlife. With an eye on his Greek forerunners Alfarabi sees, or portrays, a theoretic lifeline for the human association. It is a historical eye but, unlike Ibn Khaldun's, it is a projection rather than a description. He does not see it as a lifeless frieze but as a historic process that began with an early philosophical law-making phase that changed into a religious law-making phase, finally reaching his specific milieu as a Muslim political order. If Plato and

Aristotle saw the perfect order from a future-looking perspective, Alfarabi saw it both this way and backwards as a continuous trajectory. In his idealistic view, politics has been pursuing a slow but ascendant path, now awaiting the final touches for a happy completion. Seeing political history this way he sets out in his boldly titled *The Attainment of Happiness* to give us a comprehensive account of the different elements that constitute this order, now purified of instincts and wants altogether, and focused entirely on the theoretic and volitional virtues as he sees them, flagging this order as what will bring about perfection and happiness in this life and the next. Though ostensibly Aristotelian in being virtue-indexed, and claiming to be an order that provides supreme happiness to each individual in this life as is best suited to her, as well as the best passage for the individual to the afterlife, it is notable nonetheless that his model is a totalitarian Platonic order and that he says nothing to explain to us what this supposed supreme happiness under this order is or means. Indeed, if Aristotle had tried, perhaps with some difficulty, to bring together being virtuous or good with being happy, Alfarabi's 'being good' or 'being virtuous' does not bring in happiness into this part of his narrative at all. One gets the impression it is the order that mattered for him, but rather than elicit what kind it ought to be from people's natural instincts and wants he went full steam ahead to portray that order in terms ultimately of knowledge about the entire world and how things ought to be. Effectively, despite the title to his treatise, Alfarabi paid little or no attention to the vicissitudes of real political life, to people's desires or wants, and even less so to happiness as such, or to its opposite.

Not so did Ibn Khaldun, for whom the people's state of *unhappiness* in this world- if not their happiness- was a critical political index. As is well-known, Ibn Khaldun did not consider himself to be a political theorist in the sense described above, that is, as someone who tells us what a best social or political order would look like. Indeed, many would describe him nowadays as having been an early explorer of the new field of sociology.

Anyway, looking at society, or at human associations, he did not see what political theorists like Plato and Aristotle, or even Alfarabi in his own milieu, saw. As said at the outset of this talk, the baseline of these philosophers for formulating their theories was what they conceived to be the cauldron containing the diversified instincts of human nature. These can either be organized in separate departments in the political order or hewed separately by each individual on her own. Neither Plato nor Aristotle were oblivious of the important role such diverse instincts as fear, selfish interest or greed and power play in determining human action, as for example described by Thucydides, among others. But employing reason they looked beyond that to see how best to have these dealt with in a human association -whether the right order is required to organize them or if these can be harnessed in the right way by the individual herself. Alfarabi bypassed this preliminary investigation of desires and instincts altogether and went straight to formulating an order defined by pure reason that tells us what people should want or should be trying to achieve.

Ibn Khaldun saw human associations in a different light. Above all, he saw *them* rather than the individuals who make them up as his primary object of study. Having *them* in view, he therefore saw that aforementioned cauldron of natural human instincts as one where these are not in a primary and pre-active or dormant mode awaiting rational activation in different individuals; rather, he saw them as already assuming and playing their meaningful roles in associative contexts. This being the case, a human association as a collective body as he saw this was already characterized by its own collective set of instincts and by an intrinsic dynamic interconnecting these that sets its behavior. For Aristotle, we recall, in scrutinizing the different instincts in individuals he believed that he could identify a virtue-indexed disposition for happiness in each person as a best resolution for these such that, aggregated with those in other individuals, would then yield a general inclination for the community towards a political order in which public happiness abounds.

Plato saw them distributed among individual types in a way that allows for ordering them in an association in the right way. In both Plato and Aristotle, but also in Alfarabi, politics is conceived as having an end, which it is the function of a philosopher to outline. In contrast, Ibn Khaldun saw politics as a constantly interactive process of different interests and wants within and between associative formations. What he had in view were families, tribes, groups, nations and states, and he believed each of these is a natural and live organism in which individual and collective instincts are already interactively entangled with one another in a way that explains their constitution, their evolutionary path, and how as political entities their evolution follows a preset pattern or a trajectory that describes their rise and ultimate fall. There may be optimal points in their parabolic journeys, but it is neither the right order nor perfection or happiness that associations could be described as aggregately seeking, or ever attaining. He saw human associations as they were, not as they could be rationalized or imagined.

Let me take a minute here before continuing to make sure I have explained the distinction well enough between instincts as separate colors in a palette and their being ingrained in a painting: the claim is not that Plato or Aristotle saw fear or love or desire for example as instincts that are independent of their objects. Quite the contrary, they probably saw them in contexts as we all do, clearly and always associated with their objects -whom I love, or fear; or what I desire. Rather, the claim is that in their rational endeavor to formulate what would be a best mixture of these instincts and inclinations the philosophers abstracted them from their objects, with a view to reusing them for drawing a new picture. In contrast, Ibn Khaldun saw them as constituent and inseparable parts of the human association. Their social entanglement with each other in different ways and at different stages was as affixed to them as philosophers would claim that certain properties of the human being are essential to her. They cannot be abstracted from their contexts. The natural historical origin of this instinctual entanglement, as

Ibn Khaldun saw it, is found in the blood-relational ties in the family, the primary unit of a human association, or the associative context the individual naturally finds herself in. In this primary or pre-political phase of the association we can already detect the two major ingredients that will continue to characterize it as the association evolves. The first is its hierarchic order -a given family arrangement where the role of the head of the family is set apart from those of the rest of its members. Hierarchy at this point is informally recognized and respected but it has not yet begun to play the formal and critical role it has in later phases of the association's life. But the second ingredient we can detect is the clear display of object-specific instincts and wants that reflect that family's associative nature, and more specifically the bonding that ties its members together. We can by citing two telling examples of essential needs and instincts people have, namely sustenance and fear, immediately see Ibn Khaldun's distinct 'entanglement' perspective, in contrast with that of what I shall call the 'traditional' one. A traditional view asks us to imagine the pre-associative single individual needing others for ensuring sustenance for herself. Ibn Khaldun tells us that the individual's hunt or foray for sustenance presupposes the individuals' belonging to a group which seeks sustenance together as a unit. In seeking sustenance for myself I am already seeking it for others with whom I am associated or bonded. For Ibn Khaldun in other words the equation is reversed: acquisition of sustenance presupposes the existence of the bonded community, which naturally forays as a group for such sustenance. Also, a traditional view may tell us that fear of danger or an external threat to oneself is a primary cause for seeking help from others, or for seeking an association that guarantees one's protection from such threats. For Ibn Khaldun, the already existing bond between oneself and others portrays this fear as fear primarily for others. Indeed, the basic element sustaining this natural bond, as Ibn Khaldun explains it, is fear of threat or danger -not, for oneself or one's own life but for the life of another, typically a member of one's community, but this is rooted in the readiness to put one's own life on the line in defense

of a threat to one's child or close blood-relative. This instinct evolves to become a strong sense of identification -a reflexive belonging- with the larger community one is a member of -a prejudice or sense of belonging to it and of it belonging to oneself that makes the individual ready to fight for it in both attack and defense. But this strong sense of identification with and commitment for the group now adds another psychological component to the picture, as it becomes reflected in the feeling of shame or self-reproachment if one person in the group fails to lend a helping hand to any member of her group who needs it. So, what starts as the instinct to defend loved ones turns into the instinct to defend the whole bonded community, but it ends with the shame-instinct to defend each member individually. So, shame, fear, hunger, love and the like are already woven into specific relationships and acquire their meanings from those. The individual's instincts and self-perceived identity is nested right from the start in a common identity. Bonded communities are the natural settings of individuals.

Ibn Khaldun shows us in this way how active or contextualized instincts already provide us with the elements or factors that can explain to us how a community behaves as a single but hierarchical organism. The bonding or commonality of identity as explained will not last, or remain the same, especially as the nature of the hierarchy develops, becomes formal and transforms. But other interactive needs and instincts which come to replace it in the hierarchical structure as the association grows remain fundamental to understanding the association's life chart, as I shall explain.

It may be helpful at this stage just briefly to highlight some of the major observations Ibn Khaldun tells us about the association's life chart. Looking at human associations almost as single organisms the way Ibn Khaldun did -through the lens of what he called 'the science of culture'- what impressed him above all as their primary collective instinct -what the filially bonded community or association primarily desires or wants-

was neither a Platonic order nor, strictly speaking, an Aristotelian happiness, but Power! *Ghulba*, as he describes this, may be understood as some kind of a communal act of both self-assertion and self-enforcement -the power the community collectively wants and seeks for defending itself as well as for asserting its hegemony and dominion over territory and others. In his layout of the political map, power remains the be-all, end-all of human associations. However, it has its own trajectory. In time, power collectively sought is consensually turned over to the head of the clan, now become leader, leaving the subjects content to be free to pursue their lives and livelihoods under his protection. This turns out to be what the people eventually want or look for -simply to be free to pursue their lives and livelihoods! With power now in the leader's possession, however, hierarchy begins to take a different form. The power accorded him grows in tandem with the growth of dominion, first becoming an enforcement method for maintaining the community's cohesion, making him become a ruler, and signaling the transformation from a pre-political to political stage of the community's growth, or to what Ibn Khaldun calls a kingship. During this stage there is concordance between ruler and ruled in the enlarged dominion, power in the hands of authority ensuring protection for the people's pursuit of their free lives. We may consider this world to be one defined by negative liberties, or laissez-faire. While the association expands, its dominion and prosperity increase to the gratification of both ruler and ruled. With an expanded domain identity bonding is not as it was in the beginning. Much of it at the peripheries becomes virtual, or nominal. But the concordance of the association is kept together by the power of an authority still supported by its bonded constituency on the one hand and its protection of people's free pursuit of their lives and livelihoods on the other.

As said a human association is constitutionally hierarchic. This is to say hierarchy is not an add-on to existing associations but is an essential part of what an association is. The binary dynamic in the association reflects

an intricate but complex relationship between the association's two major sides, ruler and ruled, and how each relates to the other, and what each side wants. This dynamic begins to change as the association first moves from its pre-political to its political phase, when rule by deference to a leader becomes one that is enforced, and as the commonality of wants between the two sides at inception first changes into a concordance of these between them. However, this inevitably ends in discord. If at its inception the association collectively sought power, this collective want begins to divide up at a later stage into a continued pursuit of power by the side in charge, now ruler properly so-called, and the pursuit of a free life by those under that side's charge, or those ruled.

Meantime, the ruler-ruled equation has now transformed: on the ruler side there is an entire upper social stratum that includes his salaried administrative and military functionaries and their dependents; on the other side there is the supply-producing sector of the economy, the economic engine of the association. These are the professionals and the artisans and the merchants and their dependent. They are the people running the economy. Taxes levied on their profits feed the incomes and salaries of the upper strata and are circulated back into the market as consumption spending. As the economy prospers luxurious lifestyles become reflected in more refined goods and services offered by the market. At optimum levels of its concordant development the association's economic prosperity is reflected in its cultural production - architecture, urban planning, intellectual activity, and so on - what Ibn Khaldun calls the association's 'external' features or 'accidental properties'.

The market meantime remains the internal engine of the economy, and the provider through its taxed profits of the upper strata's increasingly more luxurious spending. In time and over generations, however, major attrition comes to afflict the upper stratum. First, with his increasing power and wealth the ruler himself becomes self-engrossed, coming to

see himself as self-sufficient, and losing all sense of the value of social bonding that was the original source of the power and wealth that is now in his hands. He withdraws unto himself, cutting off his ties with his constituents and from the people at large. Close associates begin to be viewed as dangerous potential contestants and are replaced by external help, while the people at large begin to fade from view except as a coffer from which to sponge off more wealth for himself. This is done partly by increased taxation but also by direct interventions in the free market, where the ruling stratum now enters the market as a competitor rather than just as a consumer, thereby cutting off people's trade profits. Now isolated from his people and self-engrossed the ruler becomes a weakling who is captive in the thralls of his advisors and mercenaries, all of whom becoming part of the care-free infringements on the people's livelihoods and their freedoms. In sum, it is the ruler's loss of the right understanding and use of power that sets the motion for the dissolution of the association.

It is at this juncture that *unhappiness* -the discontent of the people or the subjects in the association and the discord between them and the ruler- proves to be a critical index in the association's life. It is a discord brought about by *injustice* as the ruler begins to chip away at the traders' freedoms and profits -the main engine of the economy- both causing discontent in the market and pushing the economy into a slump. People's lives and livelihoods are *worsened*, driving them to abandon their allegiance to their rulers -their sense of belonging to the association, or the belonging of the association to them! This worsening of conditions brings about the dissolution of the political community -the kingship or state- they have become part of. By 'dissolution' Ibn Khaldun simply but critically meant a breaking up of the concordance between ruler and ruled, the latter now ready to accept another leadership or simply to migrate to greener pastures.

Significantly, Ibn Khaldun does not envisage this break-up by the people to mean a desire to assume authority for themselves. People don't look to be politicians. The discord between ruler and ruled simply sets the stage for the rise of another Authority -either one that is already a strong component of the existing association -for example another tribal or ethnic component in the association- or a rulership of a neighboring region and a different association that seizes the opportunity to extend its rule over the first one. It is indifferent whether the new rulership belongs to the same or to a different kingship or state. The main point is that the original association, constituted of a particular binary stratum of ruler and ruled, dissolves. Backstage conspiracies may be involved to prepare for a takeover, but when it does it is usually by some measure of force or violence. In the extended world of Islam where Ibn Khaldun lived authorities, boundaries and loyalties were in constant flux, as one can tell, for instance, from the beginning chapters on his life by Muhsin Mahdi's seminal work on him. But such change is never brought about in Ibn Khaldun's narrative by the ruled people rising against their Authority. Typically, it is the allegiances of the people that change, providing the necessary condition for making the usurpation of Authority by another party possible either conspiratorially or through straightforward conquest.

I mentioned in passing at the outset that religions for Ibn Khaldun were 'add-ons', not constituents of human associations. Perhaps it is already obvious why, but a few words of explanation may here be in order. As we already saw a political association for him has a clearly outlined life chart defined by natural human instincts and wants. It lasts several generations and has a beginning and an end. Were there to be a religious form of the political association this would still be subject to the law defining human associations as he saw it, that is, to a pre-defined path and an eventual end or dismantlement. This is not to say he did not

believe that abiding by those virtues expounded by religion could not make an association better than it could otherwise be. But to say that does not mean that a religious political form can escape from being subject to the vicissitudes of political life as he saw it. A Caliphate rule would still be bound by the rules of a political association. Nonetheless he argued that religion can in fact reinforce the common identity of an association, or its bonding, regimenting what may otherwise be or has become a discordant plurality of orientations among people- a condition he says is characteristic of Arabs; and it can thus lend more communal power to the association.

Along the same lines of viewing religions as add-ons Ibn Khaldun tells us that the community is prior to religion, and it is the community that hosts a religion or its political form in the first place, either keeping it for itself as in the case of Jews, or giving it or losing it to others, as in the case of Christians and Muslims. Importantly, as he tells us, whether in the case of Jews or Arabs, religions and their political forms would not have taken off had they not been hosted in a community in the first place. In the case of Jews, he tells us, the community persevered even as its state or political form perished. In the case of Arabs, the Islamic political community they established also broke apart or effectively perished as it grew in number and size, becoming lost to and replaced by other Islamic political communities -that is, successively different Caliphates and states with different populations or ethnic and national constituents, nesting within them and having under their rule different smaller regional kingships or local political communities. In effect, as he saw this, there did not exist one perfect form of the Islamic religious political community or state, but many different imperfect forms, some larger, some smaller, some nested within others, but all having their trajectories governed by his political law, rendering the idea of an encompassing and perfect Islamic State simply that, a misconceived idea rather than a reality. Nowhere does Ibn Khaldun suggest that an encompassing and ideal Muslim state or political form can instantiate itself or be

instantiated as a political community, and indeed by his own definition of the present life of a political community such a state would neither be perfect nor endure. Indeed, one might even say that in Ibn Khaldun's lights a perfect Islamic political order or system is an oxymoron. Religious rule is simply a mismatch for political life, leaving us to see religion's value to be a moral rather than a political modality, and to view the domain of happiness properly so-called to be the afterlife rather than this one. The claim here is not that he believed the political community is better than the Islamic political form: only that the latter is in practice reducible to a political community and subject therefore to its political law.

In sum, Ibn Khaldun basically trashes all that has been said before him by political and religious theorists: envisaging a philosophical end for politics -one where different human or individual natures can all be brought into perfect harmony with one another- meant for him not understanding the nature of politics. Envisaging a religious order as a political end (like Alfarabi among others believed) likewise confused what politics is about. Simply, neither politics nor political communities have a grandiose end -be this an objectively perfect associative order or a subjective attainment of a state of happiness. Politics is an account of continuous human concords and discords, reflecting an ongoing interaction between ruler and ruled. As if to disparage the talk about happiness -especially that mulled by the men of letters- he addresses them in a short passage at one point telling them that such happiness as they think they seek is nothing in fact but a vanity pursuit of status and wealth -desires they can easily fulfill just by learning to be sycophants to their rulers!

Did Ibn Khaldun berate all kinds of pursuits of happiness? I do not think one would be entitled to attribute this to him. He probably assumed different people pursued different kinds of happiness, some trivial but

some also worthy. However, he could not have viewed such pursuits as in any way defining of an association's life chart -unless, of course, one understood his *ghulba* simply as happiness, or as a sufficient condition for it bringing it about -whether that which is collectively sought at the inception of the community or that which is later pursued by the ruler. But as one philosopher observed, happiness is so general and can mean so many different things to different people that it ceases to be meaningfully true of anything! In any case, a Khaldunian public self-assertion by the individual or the group has more to do as we saw with force than with Aristotelian virtue. But what clearly stands out in his account is the role happiness's opposite plays in the association's life chart: it is the common state of their unhappiness that will push people to change their political association lives. This may be a far more important political index than many others for assessing possible political ruptures.

However, is Ibn Khaldun's account of how or when this unhappiness comes about correct or complete? As he describes it, it comes about as a result of the *worsening* of the people's lives -when their freedom to pursue their lives and livelihoods, once under the protection of power, now comes to be its unjust victim. This has two major aspects, an economic one where the ruler's intervention in the free market causes reduced profits leading to a slump in the economy; and a social one where the enforcement of such interventions causes a rupture in the people's sense of allegiance to the association, or their sense that the system they are part of serves them. However, while one might still observe this phenomenon in authoritarian regimes today, such as what we witnessed at the outbreak of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and other places, his outlook leaves unaccounted for the role of a variety of other factors, not least being interventionist policies in capitalist systems for example that on the one hand ensure that the worst off in societies will always have their poor conditions improved whatever the profits accumulated by the better off; and partly through offsetting reduced

negative liberties in people's lives by the introduction of positive liberties that people can benefit from.

In other words, worsening in the sense he means can surely be stemmed, at least up to a point. But besides all that, the question remains whether it is only a worsening of the people's lives that can explain people's unhappiness and their sense of alienation from the political system. What about political participation, for example?

Although Ibn Khaldun attributes the source of power now in the hands of the ruler to the people at large, at no point does he argue -unlike many others do- that its misuse should or will prompt the people to try and repossess it. For the people, it is a means and not an end. Rule is not what they finally want. What they want is to pursue a free life that is protected by that rule. That is why their unhappiness pushes them to change allegiances but not to take on the rule themselves. A modern khaldunian would even argue that this would also be true in democracies, where what people look for is minimum rather than maximum participation in rule. Once again, Ibn Khaldun's analysis here may be argued to be off the mark, especially in light of real-life political experiences showing that people can neither guarantee their freedoms or their economic welfare by adopting a minimalist approach to governance, even in democracies.

Finally, one might ask if Ibn Khaldun's idea of an intrinsic fault in political associations, even if true, in any way undermines the original political theories -Aristotelian or Platonic- that tell us about an underlying and deeper tidal flow in human history, where the pursuit of perfection and happiness remains the paradigm even as its tokens or instantiations in different and succeeding political associations do not reach or maintain those perfect targets, or even consciously seek them. Is the pursuit of earthly happiness and perfections merely a mirage, intrinsic faults in the different systems constantly being defined by the power conflicts in and between associations? Or does Ibn Khaldun simply fail to see that

general form of the human association surging like a tidal flow which, as each wave breaks on the rocks, inches closer to perfection?

Ibn Khaldun raises many serious issues in political life that were not raised by theorists before him, but he still leaves us with many unanswered questions. Above all, the perhaps unintended message that we can learn from him is that politics should focus on illnesses and diseases and learn how to fix them rather than on health as a condition to be pursued, this anyway being a natural 'given' or a default setting that we simply need to preserve for as long as we can in the course of our lives.