

Ibn Khaldun's Views on Society and Culture: A Study of his *Muqaddimah*

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Abstract

Ibn Khaldun, the prominent medieval Muslim social thinker, is primarily acclaimed as a historiographer by the scholars of the East and the West. His magnum opus 'Muqaddimah' is distinguished, not only for introducing a unique science of 'Ilm al-'Umran or Science of society and culture, but also for brilliance of its style, simplicity of presentation and forceful expression. This paper explores the contribution of Ibn Khaldun in the development of sociology, and his 'positive' observation of society and culture. It will analyze the views of Ibn Khaldun on society and culture, process of socialization, social control, rise and fall of civilizations, significance of religion and moral values, and most importantly, the concept of 'Asabiyyah or group solidarity, as most of his writings evolve around it. This study would primarily focus on his Muqaddimah as a primary reference and also other secondary references written on his life and work and on Muqaddimah to get a clear view of the issues. It is in his Muqaddimah to the 'Universal History' that he outlined the sciences of sociology, economics, anthropology, political science etc.. It is to him that the modern sociologists owe the systematic elaboration of a full-fledged theory of sociological determinism. Hence, an honourable place would be reserved for him in the history of positive sociology.

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Ibn Khaldun: Life and Works

Born in Tunis in May 27, 1332 C.E. (Ramadan 1, 732A.H.), Abu Zaid Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, hails from a prominent Andalusian religious family, *Banu Khaldun*. In his autobiography, Ibn Khaldun linked his lineage to the time of the Prophet (S.W.A.) through *Hadhramaut*, an Yemenite tribe. He claims: "And our ancestry is from Hadhramaut, from the Arabs of Yemen, via Wa'il ibn Hajar, from the best of the Arabs, well-know and respected."¹

He received a traditional quality education that was typical of his family's rank and status. He learned first at the hands of his father who was a scholarly person. He memorized the Qur'an by heart, learned grammar, Jurisprudence, Hadith, rhetoric, philology, and poetry. In his early age, he was introduced to the philosophy of Avicenna, Averroes, Razi and Tusi. At the age of 17, he lost both his parents to an epidemic of Plague that hit Tunis.²

In his early age, Ibn Khaldun held all kind of jobs from menial to highly dignified posts, and switched from one ruler/sultan to the other if he found the later more favourable. He held the position of *Katib al-'alamah* in his'20s to write the introductory notes to the official documents. Later he went to Fez, a city in the northern Morocco, and got the support of the ruler Abu Enan, who installed him as the 'Writer' of royal proclamation. But Ibn Khaldun, dissatisfied with the post, schemed against Abu Enan, which resulted in the imprisonment of Ibn Khaldun (25 years old) for 22 months.³

He supported Abu Salem and plotted against Abu Enan's successor. Abu Salem, when came to power, rewarded Ibn Khaldun for his strong support, and offered him a ministerial post, a job that he cherished for long.⁴

But he could not continue for long, as Abu Salem was overthrown by *Wazir Omar*, resulting in the removal of Ibn

Khaldun from prestigious ministerial post. Ibn Khaldun quickly declared his support and loyalty for the victor Omar, and was reinstated in the same position. Ibn Khaldun claimed for the post of Treasurer, which he was not granted.⁵

Disappointed as he was, Ibn Khaldun returned to Granada, hoping to get a favourable welcome and a prestigious job from Sultan of Granada, Muhammad V, one-time friend of Ibn Khaldun.⁶ He in fact received a warm welcome from the Sultan, but again could not stay longer as he came to a rivalry against Sultan's Wazir Ibn al-Khatib, who could not tolerate Ibn Khaldun's close relation with the Sultan. Ibn Khaldun left for North Africa.⁷

Back in Africa, Hafsids Sultan Abu Abdallah received him with high cordiality and appointed him in the most prestigious post as the Prime Minister. He made an adventurous and challenging mission to collect taxes from the Berber tribes, which no one could ever think of; but Ibn Khaldun, with his great skill and talent, became close to Berber tribes, and the Berbers happily paid taxes to him.⁸

After the death of Abu Abdallah, he changed his side again to the ruler of Tlemcen Abu al-'Abbas. His great skill of communicating with the Berber tribes earned him reputation, friendship with the Sultans and high position in the regime. In 1375 C.E., he was sent to Berber tribes by the Sultan, but tired of political activities, he decided to take refuge in Awlad 'Arif tribe in the city of Salamah, the central part of Algeria. He secluded for writing Universal history of the world and completed the most famous *Muqaddimah* or Prolegomena. He lived there for over three years.⁹

Faced with lack of resources for writing Universal History in Banu 'Arif tribe, he returned to Tunis, which was then ruled by Abul 'Abbas. The ruler welcomed Ibn Khaldun and wanted him to serve the regime again; but the later devoted to his studies and

research activities. Ibn Khaldun completed his History under the patronage of the ruler and gifted a copy of it to him, but with no introductory remark of praise and gratitude to Abul 'Abbas, which made the latter doubt about Ibn Khaldun's loyalty to him.¹⁰

Ibn Khaldun decided to perform Hajj, but changed his direction to Egypt before proceeding to Hajj. In 1384 C.E. Egyptian Mamluk ruler Barquq made him Professor at Cairo University and Judge. Khaldun was full of praise for Mamluk rulers, as he said, "While others are engaged in border wars and inner strife, Egypt was experiencing economic prosperity and high culture."¹¹ Within a year, he had to resign from the Judgeship. The main factor to this was that the ship carrying his wife and children from Tunis was sank off the coast of Alexandria. Ibn Khaldun then decided to complete his Hajj which he withheld for a while. He returned in 1388 C.E. and got engaged in purely academic activities in some universities and colleges in Cairo, and completed his Universal History and some other works.¹²

In 1401 C.E. Khaldun had to accompany Sultan Faraj, son of Sultan Barquq, to an expedition against Mongolian conqueror Timur (Tamerlane), who besieged Damascus. He spent for 7 weeks in Damascus holding important meetings with Timur, who asked him to provide detailed report about Maghreb. Khaldun wrote a detailed report for him. On his return to Egypt, he also wrote another report on the Tatars and the character of Timur to the Merinid rulers in Fez. He lived for five more years in Egypt and completed his autobiography and the universal history of the world.¹³

His main focus was to write the universal history, or *Kitab al-'Ibar*, and he wished to be recognized as a historian of the world. He laid special emphasis on completing the task while living in Egypt. *Kitab al-'Ibar* comprises seven books: the first being the most famous *Muqaddimah*, whose significance overshadowed the importance of *Kitab al-'Ibar*. In the second to

fifth books, he mentioned the history of mankind until the time of Ibn Khaldun. In the sixth and seven books, he furnished the first-hand experiences with the Berbers and Maghrebs, their lifestyle, historical background and rise and fall of nations etc. This is regarded to be the most valuable part of *Kitab al-'Ibar*.

In *Kitab al-'Ibar*, he analysed in detail the sources of error in historical writings, in particular partisanship, overconfidence in sources, failure to understand what is intended, a mistaken belief in the truth, the inability to place an event in its real context, the desire to gain the favour of those in high rank, exaggeration, and, what he regarded as the most important of all, ignorance of the laws governing the transformation of human society.¹⁴

Besides, he also wrote some other books, namely, '*Lubab al-Muhassal Fi Usul al-Din*' and '*Al-Ta'rif bi-Ibn Khaldun*'. He died in Egypt on March 17, 1406 C.E. (Ramadan 25, 808A.H.). He was buried in the sufi cemetery outside *Bab an-Nasr*, Cairo at the age of seventy-four.¹⁵

The Muqaddimah

Ibn Khaldun's sociological thought is based on his famous *Muqaddimah*. It was the first chapter of his 'Universal History'. He declared that he had created a new discipline, '*Ilm al-'Umran*, and that no one had done so before and demarcated it from other disciplines. Ibn Khaldun himself asserted that "the *Muqaddimah*: a work which was entirely original in its plan and which I made out of the cream of an enormous mass of research".¹⁶

Scholars acclaimed the work of Ibn Khaldun as the greatest work of its kind. British historian Arnold Toynbee lauded Ibn Khaldun's work as:

In his chosen field of intellectual activity he appears to have been inspired by no predecessors, the Prolegomena... is undoubtedly

the greatest work of its kind that has ever yet been created by any mind in any time or place.¹⁷

Sorokin considered Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* as "the earliest systematic treatise both in sociology and in rural-urban sociology".¹⁸

Ibn Khaldun named his sociological concept as '*Ilm al-'Umran*', or '*Ilm al-Ijtima` al-Bashariy*' which could be translated as science of social organization or civilization¹⁹ or the science of human association or the science of culture²⁰. He considered history as a science worthy of study – not as narrative merely recorded. He wished to write history in the light of a new method of explanation and reasoning, and his reflection and study led him to establish a kind of social philosophy.²¹ According to the subject matter of the book, Ibn Khaldun divided it into six chapters, which are as follows:²²

- I. Human society in general, its various divisions, and the parts of the earth where civilization is found, the influence of climate upon human character and colour of body.
- II. Bedouin or Nomadic civilization, with an account of the wild tribes and their lifestyles.
- III. Dynasties, the Caliphate, kingship, and the government ranks.
- IV. The sedentary or settled civilization of countries and cities.
- V. The various means of livelihood, crafts, and problems connected to it.
- VI. The various kinds of sciences and their acquisition, and on thinking and knowledge.

Thus, each chapter is especially designed to form a volume of introduction to sociology.

According to contemporary Arab scholar Sati' al-Husri, the *Muqaddimah* can be arranged in accordance with modern sociological term. Chapter I deals with general sociology or social ecology; Chapter II with rural sociology; Chapter III with political sociology; Chapter IV with urban sociology; Chapter V to an

extent, with economic sociology; and Chapter VI with sociology of knowledge.²³

Ibn Khaldun's study of the nature of society and social change led him to evolve what he clearly observed as the new "science of culture", and which he defined thus:

This science... has its own subject, viz., human society, and its own problems, viz., the social transformations that succeed each other in the nature of society.²⁴

He further elaborates *'Ilm al-'Umran* as;

...an independent science. This science has its own peculiar object – that is, human civilization and social organization. ... The discussion of this topic is something new, extraordinary, and highly useful. Penetrating research has shown the way to it.²⁵

The unique feature of it, in the word of Ibn Khaldun, is:

By looking into human society, which is sociology, and to distinguish the condition pertaining to it, and are different in its nature from those which are only occasional, and others which cannot arise. By doing this we apply a science which distinguishes truth from falsehood in records and in a method supported by proof.²⁶

The science of *Al-'Umran* is different from other sciences. It is an entirely original science,²⁷ as Ibn Khaldun believed that he was inspired by God, who led him "to a science", which he arranged "in an orderly way".²⁸ His *Muqaddimah* is unique for its emphasis on verifiable information and precise knowledge about laws of society and social change. However, these laws are not so concrete as those of natural sciences; though "are sufficiently constant to cause social events to follow regular, well-defined patterns and sequences, and cannot be significantly influenced by isolated individual cases".²⁹

Fuad Baali asserts that Ibn Khaldun used empirical method in his study to avoid speculation using the following methods:³⁰

- a) **Observation:** According to Ibn Khaldun, part of his data “is direct information based upon personal observation”.³¹ His broad experience as a diplomat, traveller, and writer, his personal observation of the nomadic life, and his firsthand knowledge of urban and rural life prove the significance of direct observation.
- b) **Comparison:** Ibn Khaldun used the comparative method in many ways, such as, *i.* to compare dynasties before and during his time; *ii.* to compare a dynasty’s lifespan with that of an individual’s; *iii.* to compare primitive Bedouin society with civilized urban society; and *iv.* to compare his own data with those of other writers.³²
- c) **Historical method:** Ibn Khaldun collected data linked to the origin, development, growth of dynasties, and the impact of such dynasties upon social relationships. He insisted that historical data must be carefully examined. He analyzed the nature of historical information, and distinguished “religious information” from that which deals with “actual events”.

Ibn Khaldun’s methodological approach demonstrates intellectual confidence. His ‘positive’ approach to the study of societies, cultures, and civilizations appears to present a great impression to many researchers and scholars of his tradition. He discussed in accordance with the division he made, and explained the nature of society, the necessity for it and how it varies according to climate – the effect of the changes of weather and atmosphere (i.e. hot, cold and temperate zone) on the character, colour and conditions of men.³³ Four hundred years before Auguste Comte’s “invention” of sociology, Ibn Khaldun unveiled his “science of culture”.³⁴

Ibn Khaldun's Views on Society

Ibn Khaldun highlighted human need for a social organization for their development. The chief concern of this monumental work was to identify psychological, economic, environmental and social facts that contribute to the advancement of human civilization. He asserted that societies are living organisms that experience cyclic birth, growth, maturity, decline, and ultimately death due to universal facts. Each phase of the cycle lasts for several generations. He also described the process through which peaceful or violent migrants blend with the native population to form a homogeneous society subject to the universal cycles. He identified the impact of climate and available resources on migrations and social changes. He also explained the impact of governmental policy and taxation on social change.

Ibn Khaldun endorsed the view of the earlier philosophers that man by nature is a social animal. "Man is a child of the customs and his habits, the things he has become used to,"³⁵ he affirmed. He explained the movement of human duality between animalistic and human traits. On one part the animalistic nature refers to such things which are similar to animal instincts, like food, shelter, sexuality, reproduction, movement, senses, and many other things. On the other, human being's capacity to think and reason is their most distinct human quality.³⁶ Ibn Khaldun also illustrated the reason behind human being's tendency towards animalistic instinct or evil doings, stating "evil is the quality that is closest to man when he fails to improve his customs, and when religion is not used to improve him".³⁷ He further elaborated his points asserting "when the strength of a man and then his character and religion are corrupted, his humanity is corrupted, and he becomes, in effect, transformed into an animal".³⁸

Society is the social matrix. "Social organization", Ibn Khaldun wrote, is necessary to the human species. Without it, the

existence of human beings would be incomplete, and God's desire to settle the world with human beings and to leave them as His representatives on earth would not materialize. This is the meaning of civilization, the object of the science under discussion."³⁹ For Ibn Khaldun, individuals cannot exist without social interaction. In order to obtain their livelihoods and other necessities, people "cannot exist except through social organization and cooperation".⁴⁰

According to Ibn Khaldun, certain elements are vital for the endurance of human society. Society as a whole is important for the continuation of human physical and psychological needs. Also each person requires the assistance of others for his/her protection. He rightly asserted that society is the largest group within a territory.⁴¹ Human society obliges a leader or ruler to govern its people. The activities essential for the wellbeing of human society are issued among qualified persons based on superiority, which is caused by group solidarity (*'Asabiyyah*). To Ibn Khaldun, society is not a haphazard entity. He observed the interdependence of the religious, political, economic, military, and cultural spheres of human society. They are inseparable and related to one another; and a change in one sphere or aspect affects others in one way or another.⁴²

Ibn Khaldun affirms that society develops culture, which is learned and shared by the members of human society. To him, culture is a way of life that may "change with a change of periods and the passing of the days... The condition of the world and of nations, their customs and sects, does not persist in the same form or in a consistent manner."⁴³ Ibn Khaldun also talked about the geographical factors which affect colour and character qualities of human beings. He offered a socio-cultural interpretation for the question of intelligence among groups of people.

Socialization is defined by Ibn Khaldun as a process by which "human beings obtain their knowledge and character

qualities and all their opinions and virtues" through study, imitation, personal contact, and travel.⁴⁴ He stressed on the fact that socialization process begins by birth. At birth individual "has no knowledge whatever".⁴⁵ A person reaches perfection through knowledge which he/she acquires through the organs. In the family, individual obtains the habits and other forms of behaviour from parents, and thus family is characterized by "mutual support and aid".⁴⁶ It is in the family that the individual acquires religious orientation. Teachers and elders are also important agents in the process of socialization. It is they, that the individuals learn "manners" from, which includes habits, customs, traditions, language, music, and religious interpretations.

Ibn Khaldun emphasized the necessity of the system of social control, which is important to bring justice in society as well as to prevent people from attacking others, so that peace and harmony can be maintained in the society. He attacked the classical idea that social control is always a result of religion, as he points out that in this world many people have no true religion. Ibn Khaldun assumed that human being are aggressive by nature, and apply force to dominate others, and this cause social conflict. For that reason, they require social control. Ibn Khaldun considered social conflict as a dysfunctional process in the society. In every group, we accept and require authority. Therefore, society must develop a system of social control to prevent deviation from the institutionalized norms.

Society is the source of authority or social control. It is of two types, one is 'formal', and the other is 'informal'. The formal social control is implemented by the legal system or authority, and is executed by the ruler (*hakim*) or by the state (*dawlah*). The informal social control is implemented by the conscience of morality, and is executed by religion and/or individuals' moral standards and values.⁴⁷

The chief concern of Ibn Khaldun was to identify psychological, economic, environmental and social facts that contribute to the progress of human civilization and the currents of history. In this context, he analyzed the dynamics of group relationships, group feeling, social cohesion or '*Asabiyyah*, and showed how group feelings give rise to the ascent of a new civilization and political power. He identified an almost rhythmic repetition of rise and fall in human civilization, and analysed factors contributing to it. He scientifically illustrated the complex psychological and socio-economic changes of those tribes and how these changes certainly lead to a declining of the group feeling and the restraint of the group.⁴⁸ Khaldun examined the environmental, sociological, psychological, and economic factors that affected the development and the rise and fall of civilizations.

For Ibn Khaldun, '*Asabiyyah* is the basis for political power and cultural hegemony, while uncontrolled individualism was one source of the downfall of groups. Societies, he believed, are held together by the power of social cohesiveness, which can be improved by the unifying force of religion. Social change and the rise and fall of societies follow laws that can be empirically discovered and that reflect climate and economic activity as well as other realities. For him the concept came to mean "that emotional attachment to a group which causes men to overcome their selfish aims to act in the collective interest"⁴⁹. He saw '*Asabiyyah* as the dynamics that gives cohesion and power to societies and argued that the absence of it is the reason of social disintegration. It is, for him, the prime Bedouin virtue because, without it man cannot survive in the desert.

Ibn Khaldun started from the early stage of any civilization whose integrity and prosperity be distinguished based on religious and tribal solidarity ('*Asabiyyah*) context. Ibn Khaldun associated the good cultural life with the interrelationship that must be established between God, the world, and the Hereafter.

Although this is observed to be the best path for human progress, Ibn Khaldun found that most regimes remain rationalist and not Godly.⁵⁰ It is held together by his central concept of '*Asabiyyah* or "social cohesion", which arises spontaneously in tribes and other small groups, which can be strengthened and solidified by a religious ideology. This provides the motivational force to bring the dominant groups to power. Its inevitable weakening, due to a complex combination of psychological, sociological, economic, and political factors, which Ibn Khaldun analyzed with perfect skill; and indicated the decline of a dynasty or empire to be replaced by a new dynasty or empire based on a stronger cohesive force. Each specific culture and specific phase of the rise and fall of the nations shows a corresponding social structure; therefore, a particular type of leadership can be seen as characterizing it.⁵¹

Ibn Khaldun emphasized discontinuities and repetitions in social processes. Berber tribes rise to might and power, raze cities, settle down, go through a transformation from a state of high internal cohesion and a strong sense of '*Asabiyyah* to a state of internal conflict and decadence, and finally are overthrown by a new and strong tribe. For Ibn Khaldun, this typical development can be disrupted by special events like wars with rival dynasties and it is also influenced by environmental conditions like climate. He correctly associated the maturity stage of any social system with affluence, luxury and reluctance to perform menial tasks or defend the society against external threats.

Ibn Khaldun associated rationalism with the decline of civilization and social corruption. He argued that a rationalist regime cannot lead to honesty and social integrity because it is motivated by personal gains and is based on knowledge inspired by other than God. Thus, Ibn Khaldun's science of culture focuses on the ethical and moral issues of the world in connection with God and the Hereafter. It is a common factor that when religion is used to gain political ends – which is different from searching for

guidance and inspiration from it in all matters, its moral civilizing features are bound to suffer.⁵²

Ibn Khaldun's dynamics of social change (based on his term '*Asabiyyah* or group feeling) are more closely related to sociological concepts (e.g. *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*).⁵³ It is time to turn for assistance to Ibn Khaldun's most widely known theory, that of '*Asabiyyah* or social cohesion, which is at the core of social organization. '*Asabiyyah* binds groups together through a common language, culture, and code of behaviour and when there is conscious evaluation of behaviour to an idea at different levels, family, clan, tribe, and kingdom or nation, society is intact. With '*Asabiyyah*, society fulfils its primary purpose to function with integrity and transmits its values and ideas to the next generation. Ibn Khaldun pointed out that certain civilized societies based in cities with developed social organization, arts and crafts, may take a long time to break apart.

'*Asabiyyah* withers in the Muslim world because of the following reasons: massive urbanization, dramatic demographic changes, a population explosion, large-scale migrations to the West, the gap between rich and poor which is growing threateningly wide, the widespread corruption and mismanagement of rulers, the widespread materialism coupled with the low premium on scholarship, the crisis of identity and, perhaps most significantly, new and often alien ideas and images, at once seductive and repulsive, instantly communicated from the West which challenge traditional values and customs.⁵⁴ This process of breakdown takes place when a large percentage of the population in the Muslim world is young, severely illiterate, mostly jobless and therefore easily mobilized for radical change.

Ibn Khaldun's social system was based upon the fact that there are two types of social life, the nomadic and sedentary. He observed the advancement of history as a cycle of growth and decline, and identified the progress as a change from a nomadic

(*badawah*) to an urban state (*hadarah*) or from primitive to civilized society.

For Ibn Khaldun, history is a constantly changing cycle, with essentially two groups of people, nomads and townspeople, with peasants in between. He characterizes each group as:

Nomads are rough, savage and uncultured, and their presence is always inimical to civilization; however, they are hardy, frugal, un-corrupt in morals, freedom-loving and self-reliant, and so make excellent fighters. In addition, they have a strong sense of '*asabiyyah*, which can be translated as 'group cohesion' or 'social solidarity'. This greatly enhances their military potential. Towns, by contrast, are the seats of the crafts, the sciences, the arts and culture. Yet luxury corrupts them, and as a result they become a liability to the state, like women and children who need to be protected. Solidarity is completely relaxed and the arts of defending oneself and of attacking the enemy are forgotten, so they are no match for conquering nomads.⁵⁵

With regard to the political and social cycle, Ibn Khaldun suggests the following sequence of events:

Nomads conquer territories and their leaders establish a new dynasty. At first the new rulers retain their tribal virtues and solidarity, but soon they seek to concentrate all authority in their own hands. Increasingly they rule through a bureaucracy of clients - often foreigners. As their former supporters lose their military virtues there is an increasing use of mercenaries, and soldiers come to be more important than civilians. Luxury corrupts ethical life, and the population decreases. Rising expenditure demands higher taxes, which discourage production and eventually result in lower revenues. The ruler and his clients become isolated from the groups that originally brought them to power. Such a process of decline is taken to last three generations, or about one hundred and twenty years. Religion can influence the nature of such a model; when '*asabiyyah* is reinforced by religion its strength is multiplied, and great empires can be founded. Religion can also reinforce the cohesion of an established state. Yet the endless cycle

of flowering and decay shows no evolution or progress except for that from the primitive to civilized society.⁵⁶

Ibn Khaldun tried to establish that the physical and moral superiority of the nomadic people goes above the city-dwellers, claiming "Bedouins are closer to being good than sedentary people".⁵⁷

According to the author of *Muqaddimah*, human being is first of all a thinking being. In all the activities "man always uses his thinking and hardly could he cease to think".⁵⁸ In fact, human behaviour is based on thinking, while animal behaviour is based on instinct. Human being thinks when his/her animality reaches to the perfection. Only human being has the faculty of intellect (*Quwwah natiqah*), by which he/she reflects (*Fikr*) into nature, and deliberates over, and finally takes action through transmitting thinking into action. That is why it has been said that "the beginning of action is the end of thinking, and the beginning of thinking is the end of action".⁵⁹ Thinking helps to develop causal relationship in the nature of things, and to understand the variables that affect them. The product of thinking leads to new innovative discovery.

Ibn Khaldun categorises intellect into three types:

- a) The Discerning Intellect (*Aql Tamyizī*): The discerning intellect gives an understanding of the outside world in a natural or arbitrary order as arranged by man's power. This type of thinking consists, in most cases, of perceptions (*al-idrak*). With the help of the discerning intellect, man obtains the useful things for him and his livelihood and keeps away the harmful things.
- b) The Experimental Intellect (*'Aql Tajribī*): The experimental intellect conveys apperceptions (*tasdiqat*) which are obtained one by one through experience, which provides ideas needed in dealing with other people. One has also to experience and discover the adaptability of one's social

intelligence to different situations. Apperceptions are gained through interaction with other human beings.

- c) The Theoretical Intellect (*'Aql Nazri*): This intellect provides knowledge of an object beyond sense perception. It consists of both perceptions and apperceptions. When perceptions and apperceptions are arranged according to a special order and following special conditions, they provide us with theoretical knowledge. This can again be combined with other knowledge and the end of the process is to provide us with the perception of the existence as it is. Through thinking man achieves perfection in his reality and becomes pure intellect, says Ibn Khaldun.

Conclusion

Ibn Khaldun contributed significantly to the understanding of human culture and civilization. His *Muqaddimah* is distinguished for a new subject, brilliance of style, simplicity, forceful argument and harmonious expression. Ibn Khaldun began to put his lifetime experiences, observations and reflections into the book in his virtual exile. For him, it was a time of remarkable excitement with "words and ideas pouring into my head like milk into a churn...".⁶⁰

Ibn Khaldun's *'Ilm al-Umran'* is a unique analysis of the human society, social structure, social organization, social institutions, the organic nature of the society, and the like. His research on human society was based on direct observation of the people and the place, and its comparison with the writings of contemporary scholars. He talked about the importance of society, the tendency of human being to live in society, the process of socialization, culture, social control etc. His primary concern was on *'Asabiyyah* or group unity and solidarity that binds people

together; and it plays key roles in gaining political power. He also focused on the dynamic process of rise and fall of civilization in a cyclic pattern. He dealt with different kinds of nomadic society, and spoke at great length of Bedouin society and its characteristics, while comparing it with urban society.

Although he was the first to discover *'Ilm al-'Umran* or science of society and culture, the reason for the lack of appreciation of Ibn Khaldun was that he had no successor to carry on his thought for long, and that he was analysing a society which seemed to the most Western historians irrelevant to the modern context. However, his *Muqaddimah* was marked for its brilliance and originality. It gives a profound and detailed analysis of human society and cultural components. In it, he outlined the sciences of sociology, economics, anthropology, political science etc.. It is to him that the modern sociologists owe the systematic elaboration of a full-fledged theory of sociological determinism. A French scholar M. Maunier correctly asserted: "He (Ibn Khaldun) proves to be endowed with true scientific spirit, and that a place must be reserved for him in the history of positive sociology".⁶¹

References and End Notes

- ¹ Ibn Khaldun's autobiography, *Tarikh Ibn Khaldun*, Vol. 7, p. 532 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabiyy, 1981); also see "Ibn Khaldun" in Wikipedia, at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Khaldun.
- ² Mohammad A. Enan, *Ibn Khaldun: His life and Work* New Delhi, Kitab Bhavan, 1979, p. 8.
- ³ Ibid., pp. 19-20.
- ⁴ Ibid., p. 24.
- ⁵ Ibid., pp. 25-27.
- ⁶ Ibid., pp. 28-32. Sultan Muhammad remained in Fez for some time and developed quite a close relationship with Ibn Khaldun. When Sultan Muhammad attempted to regain his throne, he left Ibn Khaldun in charge of the Sultan's family in Fez.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 35.
- ⁸ See "Ibn Khaldun" in Wikipedia.
- ⁹ Enan: p.40.
- ¹⁰ Enan, pp. 51-57.
- ¹¹ "Ibn Khaldun" , *Wikipedia*.
- ¹² Enan, pp. 72-75.
- ¹³ Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun in Egypt, op.cit.*, p. 42.
- ¹⁴ Charles Issawi and Oliver Leaman, "Ibn Khaldun, 'Abd al-Rahman (1332-1406)," in Routledge's *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Vol. 4., London, Routledge, pp. 623-627.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 67-68.
- ¹⁶ Fuad Baali, and Ali Wardi, *Ibn Khaldun and Islamic Thought-Styles: A Social Perspective*, Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1981, p. 3 .
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- ¹⁸ P. A. Sorokin, *Society, Culture, and Personality*, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1962, p. 20
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