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## Exploring Ibn Khaldun's Views On The Religious Roles Towards Happiness: A Study Of *Religionswissenschaft* In The Muqaddimah<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*Religionswissenschaft* or the study of religion is an attempt to understand various aspects of religion, especially through the use of other intellectual disciplines. The Muqaddimah is principally meant to be an introduction to the voluminous text of history, namely Kitab al-<sup>U</sup>Ibar. Yet, the creation of Muqaddimah includes information on the study of human, which simultaneously includes information and views on religions. There are many views on religion highlighted by Ibn Khaldun in his Muqaddimah. These views on religion mostly describe the roles of religion in human life as found through his sociohistorical approach of <sup>U</sup>Umrān science. Through the use of qualitative content analysis on Muqaddimah text, this study found that there is a focus made by Ibn Khaldun in his views on religion, namely religion and happiness. This article explores Ibn Khaldun's views on religion and its roles for human happiness. Many modern scholars of religious study have shared their views on religious roles towards happiness. These modern views came from scholars of many religious backgrounds such as the atheists, seculars and religionists. In the Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun pronounces his understanding of happiness, which are not divorced from the religious teachings and practices. This article purports to highlight Ibn Khaldun's views on religious roles towards happiness, which focusing on Ibn Khaldun's justifications and rationalizations for such religious roles. From findings on Ibn Khaldun's views on religious roles towards happiness, this article suggests that Ibn Khaldun's rationalizations for such religious roles determine his thought style that is integrative (naqlī-<sup>U</sup>aqlī) or in tawhidic manner. This article proposes that Muqaddimah is supposed to be taken as a representative of Islamic thought in the midst of many references for religious study, especially in encountering various present views on religious roles in human's life.

**Keywords:** *Ibn Khaldun, Religionswissenschaft, Muqaddimah, modern happiness.*

### Introduction

In the experience of German scholars, 'religious studies' is called *Religionswissenschaft* (literally, science of religions), in contrast to *Naturwissenschaft* (natural science) and *Geisteswissenschaft* (human science). Until today, the German term *Wissenschaft* (science, study or learning) includes humanities and social studies that are

regarded as science. Whereas the English usage tends to refer 'science' to only the natural scientific model, which simultaneously disregards the disciplines in the humanities and social studies. Thus, the German term *Wissenschaft* (science) is much wider in its concept and scope than the English term (Olson 2003:5).

*Religionswissenschaft* or the study of religion is an attempt to understand various aspects of religion, especially through the use of other intellectual disciplines. Among various aspects of religion are faith, religious practices and spirituality or ethics. In the Islamic teachings, these three aspects are known as *‘aḳīdah*, *sharī‘ah* and *akhlāq* or *taṣawwuf*, which are the three fundamental branches of Islamic teachings as taught in the hadith Jibrīl A.S. (al-Nawawīyy 1929 1:160 and al-‘Asqalāniyy 1421AH 1:152). Among various aspects of religion is its role in the human life, which is also discussed in the study of religion. Religious role here refers to the functions of religion in human life such as in leadership, community development, economics, civilization building and also happiness.

### **Ibn Khaldun's *Religionswissenschaft***

Ibn Khaldun's full name is al-‘Allāmah Waliyy al-Dīn Abū Zayd ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn (Mohammad Abdullah Enan 1997:3). He was born in Tunis on 1 Ramaḍān 732AH / 27 May 1332AD (Schmidt 1978:34). He was a “medieval scholar famed for his philosophy of history and insights into the rise and fall of civilizations” (Campo 2009:334). One of the important factors that influenced the creation of his *‘umrān* science and his writings was his intellectual journeys to many regions of African, Arabic and European countries such as Morocco, Spain, Egypt, Palestine, Mecca and Medina (Fuad Baali n.d.).

From his many travels and journeys to places, Ibn Khaldun managed to experience many important and high ranked positions in various governments. In Walter Joseph Fischel's (1902-1973) analysis of Ibn Khaldun's autobiography, Ibn Khaldun was appointed to positions such as political advisor, government secretary, chief justice and political ambassador. Ibn Khaldun was also involved in diplomatic missions; in meeting with Pedro at Granada and in meeting with Tamerlane (*Tīmūrlang*) at Damascus. He was also appointed as a vizier to Sulṭān ‘Abdullāh for the Hafsid government at Bougie (Bijāyah) of present Algeria and tax collector to villages in the Algerian mountain areas. After his relocation to Egypt, he spent most of his

In general, there are many modern scholarly views on religious role towards happiness. These modern views came from scholars of many religious backgrounds such as the atheists, seculars and religionists. This article highlights Ibn Khaldun's views on religious role towards happiness, which focuses on Ibn Khaldun's justifications and rationalizations for such religious role. Before presenting Ibn Khaldun's views on religious role towards happiness, this article deliberates introductory discussions on Ibn Khaldun's *Religionswissenschaft* and Modern Scholarly Discussions on Happiness. These both introductory discussions are provided to outline some significant information and relevant scholarly findings to the discourse of this article.

time in education as a religious teacher to a few religious learning institutions, including the renowned al-Azhar University. At the peak of his career, he received appointment as chief justice (*Qāḍī*) for the Mālikī school of Islamic law (*al-Madhhab al-Mālikī*) in Egypt until his demise on the 26 Ramaḍān 808AH / 16 March 1406AD (Fischel 1967:xlvi-iv).

According to Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Aḥmad (Ibn Khaldūn 1417AH:55-59), an expert-scholar on Ibn Khaldun studies from Umm al-Qurā University, there are eleven writings which are ascribed to Ibn Khaldun. These eleven writings are as follows: 1) *Lubāb al-Muḥaṣṣal Fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 2) Abridgement of Ibn Rushd's writings on philosophy, 3) *Taqyīd Fī al-Manṭiq*, 4) *Kitāb Fī al-Ḥisāb*, 5) *al-Ḥilal al-Marqūmah Fī al-Luma‘ al-Manzūmah*, 6) Commentary of al-Būṣīrī's *Qaṣīdah al-Burdah*, 7) *Shifā‘ al-Sā‘il Fī Tahdhīb al-Masā‘il* and 8) *Muzīl al-Malām ‘An Hukkām al-Anām*, a book on Islamic politics (*al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘iyyah*). Next three writings are, 9) *Waṣf Bilād al-Maghrib*, a special writing presented upon Tamerlane, 10) *Tadhkīr al-Sahwān*, a small tract describing a tradition (*ḥadīth*) of the Prophet S.A.W, and lastly is his *magnum opus* 11) *Diwān al-Mubtada‘ wa al-Khabar Fī Ayyām al-‘Arab wa al-‘Ajam wa al-Barbar wa Man ‘Āsarahum Min Dhawī al-Sulṭān al-Akbar*. This includes two important fractions

from the *Diwān*, namely *al-Taʿrīf Bi Ibn Khaldūn Wa Riḥlatuhu Gharban Wa Sharqan* and *al-Muqaddimah* (Ibn Khaldūn 1417AH, al-Ṭabbāʾ 1992:54-59 and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badwī 2006:33-77).

The *Muqaddimah* is principally meant to be an introduction to the voluminous text of *Maghrib* history, namely *Kitab al-ʿIbar*. Yet, the creation of *Muqaddimah* includes information on the study of human, which simultaneously includes information on *Religionswissenschaft*. Ibn Khaldun’s purpose for the creation of *Muqaddimah* is actually related to the purpose of writing his *Tārīkh*. This is due to the fact that *Muqaddimah* is the first volume of his *Tārīkh*, namely *Diwān al-Mubtada’ wa al-Khabar Fī Ayyām al-ʿArab wa al-ʿAjam wa al-Barbar wa Man ʿĀsarahum Min Dhawī al-Sultān al-Akbar* (n.d.). Ibn Khaldun elaborates lengthily on his purpose for the creation of *Muqaddimah* in the early pages of *Muqaddimah*’s foreword as follows:

*“When I had read the works of others and probed into the recesses of yesterday and today, I shook myself out of that drowsy complacency and sleepiness. Although not much of a writer, I exhibited my own literary ability as well as I could, and, thus, composed a book on history. In (this book) I lifted the veil from conditions as they arise in the various generations. I arranged it in an orderly way in chapters dealing with historical facts and reflections. In it I showed how and why dynasties and civilization originate. I based the work on the history of the two races that constitute the population of the Maghrib at this time and people its various regions and cities, and on that of their ruling houses, both long- and short-lived, including the rulers and allies they had in the past. These two races are the Arabs and the Berbers. They are the two races known to have resided in the Maghrib for such a long time that one can hardly imagine they ever lived elsewhere, for its inhabitants know no other human races”* (Ibn Khaldun 1967 1:10-11).

Though the *Muqaddimah* is principally meant to be a lengthy introduction to the voluminous text of history of the Maghrib Arabs and the Berbers, nevertheless the creation of the book also includes information on the study of

human, which is known today as anthropology. In one way or another, the study of human could never escape from touching the instrumental aspects of religions from being discussed, for human history is not only made from cultural, political, commercial and educational activities, but also religious. In Ibn Khaldun’s words, he remarks as follows:

*“Therefore, today, the scholar in this field needs to know the principles of politics, the (true) nature of existent things, and the differences among nations, places, and periods with regard to ways of life, character qualities, customs, sects, schools, and everything else...He must be aware of the differing origins and beginnings of (different) dynasties and religious groups, as well as of the reasons and incentives that brought them into being and the circumstances and history of the persons who supported them”* (Ibn Khaldun 1967 1:55-56).

In addition, there are also previous researches and academic articles by modern scholars of religious study and historiography that also highlight the same discussions on the study of religions in the *Muqaddimah*. These scholars discuss on multiple topics related to Ibn Khaldun’s study of religions such as his study of Judaism, Christianity, Jesus, Bible and views on religion. For instance, Walter J. Fischel (1902-1973), Solomon Pines (1908-1990), Kalman Bland (b. 1942), Steven M. Wasserstrom (b. 1953), Muhammad Azizan Sabjan and Martin Whittingham focus on the specific topics, such as Ibn Khaldun’s usage of Jewish sources and his knowledge of the Bible, the Judaism and the Jew, on Jesus and Christianity (Fischel 1958:147-171; Pines 1970:265-274; Bland 1983:189-197; Wasserstrom 1999:164; Muhammad Azizan Sabjan 2010; Whittingham 2011:209-222). Whilst scholars such as Charles Issawi (1916-2000), Antony Black (b. 1936), Bryan S. Turner (b. 1945) and Syed Omar Syed Agil discuss on Ibn Khaldun’s views on the role that religion plays in society, politics, culture and economics. They also highlight Ibn Khaldun’s views on human nature and *asabiyyah* (group feeling) in the sociological study of religion. (Turner 1971:32-48; Issawi 1963:131 – 139; Black 2005:165-182; Syed Omar Syed Agil 2008:301–307).

In praising Ibn Khaldun's study of other religions, Walter J. Fischel, a scholar of Oriental Jewry and Islamic studies of the University of California, says:

*"Ibn Khaldun's detailed knowledge of early church history shows how and to what degree he, the orthodox Muslim, could detach himself from the fetters of his own faith and penetrate into the theological and doctrinal differences of another religion. Indeed among the Arab-Muslim scholars who attempted such a study, it was Ibn Khaldun, the great Muslim thinker of the fourteenth century, who achieved astounding scholarly objectivity in regards to the various non-Islamic religions"* (Fischel 1967:137).

In brief, through the use of qualitative content analysis on *Muqaddimah* text, this study found that Ibn Khaldun's study of other religions here refers to his expositions and clarifications of themes in the religions of Judaism, Christianity, Magianism, Sabeanism and polytheism. This

### Modern Scholarly Discussions On Happiness

Literally, happiness is "the state of being happy," as "feeling pleasure and enjoyment because of life, situation, etc." (Merriam-Webster 2000). In *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition*, happy is defined as: 1. *Characterized by good luck; fortunate.* 2. *Enjoying, showing, or marked by pleasure, satisfaction, or joy.* 3. *Being especially well-adapted; felicitous: a happy turn of phrase.* 4. *Cheerful; willing: happy to help.* 5. *a. Characterized by a spontaneous or obsessive inclination to use something. Often used in combination: trigger-happy. b. Enthusiastic about or involved with to a disproportionate degree* (Soukhanov 1992:3313).

In the Arabic Language, and also in Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, happiness is known as *al-Sa'adah*. According to the prominent Arabic lexicologists, namely Ibn Manzūr (630-711AH) and al-Zabīdiyy (1145-1205AH), both define *al-Sa'adah* as: "خِلافُ الشَّقَاوَةِ," which simply means that happiness is an antonym for unhappiness. To paraphrase this meaning of happiness, one must look at what does it mean by *al-Shaqāwah* then by these prominent Arabic lexicologists. From al-Zabīdiyy's expert

view, *al-Shaqāwah* is *al-Shiddah* wa *al-ʿUshr*, which is hardship and adversity. Therefore, in the Arabic Language, happiness is an antonym for hardship and adversity (Ibn Manzūr 1300AH; al-Zabīdī 1965).

Throughout human history, many thinkers, especially philosophers, had delved into this issue on happiness. These thinkers discussed on its nature and also of ways to achieve happiness. In Jonathan Haidt's (b. 1963) observation, a Professor of Ethical Leadership and Social Psychologist at New York University, the classical wisdoms on happiness could be found in numerous references. These references include the *Qur'ān*, *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, sayings of the Buddha (c. 6-4 century BC), *Analects*, *Tao Te Ching*, Plato's (472-347 BC) *Republic*, Aristotle's (384-322 BC) *Ethics*, writings of Mencius (372-289 BC), Old and New Testaments, Saint Augustine's (354-430 AD) *Confessions*, Yahyā Ibn ʿAdiyy's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (893-974 AD) and Ibn Miskawayh's (932-1030 AD) *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, and Saint Thomas Aquinas' (1225-1274 AD) *Summa Theologica* (Mohd Nasir Omar 2003; Haidt 2006).

These discussions on happiness are later continued by modern thinkers, including religionists and academicians such as philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists in their researches and writings. For instance, Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), a notorious British atheist, Philosopher and Nobel Laureate, wrote *The Conquest of Happiness* (1932) in propounding his general and basic ideas to being happy. In Russell's view, to bring about happiness, one must know the causes of unhappiness and ways to eradicate these causes. These causes of unhappiness could come in many ways such as boredom, fatigue, envy and the sense of sin (Russell 1932). As expected, in his conquest of happiness, Russell continues to degrading religion, which in his view regarded as an infantile folly and against reason. In his objection to the sense of sin, which is taught in religions, he remarks: "*whenever you begin to feel remorse for an act which your reason tells you is not wicked, examine the causes of your feeling of remorse, and convince yourself in detail of their absurdity. Let your conscious beliefs be so vivid and emphatic that they make an impression upon your unconscious strong enough to cope with the impressions made by your nurse or your mother when you were an infant*" (Russell 1932:103). Therefore, "*the happy man is the man who lives objectively, who has free affections and wide interests, who secures his happiness through these interests and affections and through the fact that they, in turn, make him an object of interest and affection to many others*" (Russell 1932:244).

Differently from Russell's atheistic notions towards happiness, Sonja Lyubomirsky uses psychological scientific instruments and modern scientific data to assist her in her approaches towards happiness. Sonja Lyubomirsky, a Russian-born Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Riverside, published her psychological scientific approaches to happiness through her two writings, namely: *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want* (2008) and *The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy, but Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy, but Does* (2013). Interestingly, in both Lyubomirsky's books, she also calls for religious or spiritual activities in achieving happiness. Some of the

main approaches in achieving happiness presented in both Lyubomirsky's books are practicing gratitude, positive thinking, having social connections, managing stress, hardship and trauma; committing to life goals and taking care of both: body and soul.

If previous modern researches on happiness were of individual discoveries and findings; present modern discussions of happiness have advanced through many institutional researches and studies. There are now many questionnaires, psychological inventories and indices made for measuring and determining the level of happiness. In addition, these questionnaires, psychological inventories and indices are not only used for particular individual subject of study, but could also be utilised for larger scale of individuals such as specific community, state and even a country. Findings from these recent tools for measuring and determining happiness are even discussed at global platforms such as in the United Nations (UN) meetings, World Economic Forum (WEF) and many international academic conferences.

For instance, there is *The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire*, developed by Peter Hills and Michael Argyle, which is based on The Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI). *The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire* is constructed in twenty-nine (29) six-point Likert scale questions as a measure of personal happiness, which covers diverse range of issues related to happiness. These issues are such as Extraversion, Neuroticism, Psychoticism, Satisfaction with life, Self-esteem, Life orientation test, Life regard index and Depression–Happiness (DH) Scale (Hills and Argyle 2002).

Next, there is also *The Happy Planet Index*, produced by The New Economics Foundation (NEF, [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)). "*The Happy Planet Index (HPI) is a measure of sustainable wellbeing. It compares how efficiently residents of different countries are using natural resources to achieve long, high wellbeing lives.*" The equation used for this index is in Equation 1 below. (The New Economics Foundation 2016)

<p>Equation 1: Happy Planet Index (approximate)</p> $\text{Happy Planet Index} \approx \frac{(\text{Life expectancy} \times \text{Experienced wellbeing}) \times \text{Inequality of outcomes}}{\text{Ecological Footprint}}$
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Then, there is also *The World Happiness Report*. This international report is released by The Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a scientific research office that “was commissioned by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2012 to mobilize scientific and technical expertise from academia, civil society, and the private sector to support practical problem solving for sustainable development at local, national, and global scales.” This report is published annually from measuring many complex international indices such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), levels of poverty, levels of education, levels of national health and perceptions of good government (Sustainable Development Solutions Network 2016). In sum, these newly modern discussions of happiness, which are developed as questionnaires, psychological inventories and indices do not directly concern with the relationship between religion and happiness. Religious factors are probably not even considered by these newly developed questionnaires, inventories and indices, due to the nature and purposes of these newly ‘tools’, which are to be accommodated for global measurements and cross-cultural populations.

Returning back to Lyubomirsky's aforementioned main approaches in achieving happiness, some of her main approaches are actually amongst the religious teachings of many great religions of the world (Lyubomirsky 2008 & 2013). To paraphrase, many world great religions, such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism, teach their believers and practitioners these same main ingredients to happiness, namely: being thankful, practicing positive thought, enjoying positive social relationships and

### Ibn Khaldun's View On Religious Roles Towards Happiness

Through qualitative content analysis on Ibn Khaldun's notions and remarks on religion (*dīn* and *millah*) in the *Muqaddimah*, this study found that one of his religious view stresses on the relationship between religion and happiness. Here, Ibn Khaldun asserts that among many religious roles in human life is

owning a healthy heart (*qalb*), body (*jism*), mind (*‘aql*) and soul (*rūh*). For instance, The Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler's *The Art of Happiness: A Handbook of Living* (1998) is a proof of this claim. The happiness is supposed to be taken as a purpose of life; while being compassionate, kind-hearted and loving are taken as the main approach to happiness (Dalai Lama and Cutler 1998). As this book represents a Buddhist approach to happiness, it could be seen that it upholds the basic Buddhist teachings. These basic Buddhist teachings are such as the Four Noble Truths<sup>ii</sup> to convey the message that happiness as the purpose of life and The Noble Eightfold Path<sup>iii</sup> as the embodiment of being compassionate.

Throughout Islamic history, many Muslim scholars contributed their views and scholarly analyses on this issue. These include renowned Muslim philosophers, theologians and jurists such as al-Fārābiyy (260-339AH) through his *Tahṣīl al-Sa‘ādah*, Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421AH) in his *al-Fawz al-Aṣghar*, al-Ghazāliyy (450-505AH) through his *Kimiyā’ al-Sa‘ādah*, Ibn al-Jawziyy (510-597AH) in his *Ṣayd al-Khāṭir*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāziyy (544-606AH) and Ibn Qayyim through his *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa‘ādah* (691-751AH) (al-Sulamiyy 2009:18-26). This article explores Ibn Khaldun's view on religious roles towards happiness as enshrined in his *Muqaddimah*. Before delving deeper in this discussion, it has to be humbly confessed that Ibn Khaldun's view on religious roles in happiness is not as comprehensive as any today's full-fledged psychological discussions. Yet, his view on this particular issue is still relevant and significant for modern contemplation. Many modern men still believe and practice religion for their pursuit of happiness. Or in other words, religion is still taken as an important factor for one's life.

providing happiness. Comparatively from the aforementioned modern authorships of Haidt, Russell and Lyubomirsky; Ibn Khaldun only stresses on the fundamental principle of achieving happiness through religion and does not list any detailed tips and guidelines in achieving happiness. This religious view of Ibn

Khaldun read as follows: *Innamā huwa dīnuhum al-Muḥḍī ilā al-Sa'ādah*, which means: it is religion (Islam) that brings happiness to human life (Ibn Khaldūn 2014). Ibn Khaldun rejects any notions, especially from the materialist and naturalist philosophers, that discredit and disrepute religion as an important factor for happiness in human life. This discussion on Ibn Khaldun's view on religious roles towards happiness consists of two main points in this article, namely first, Refuting the Naturalist and Materialist Philosophy of Happiness and second, Religion as a Fundamental Principle for Worldly and Hereafter Happiness.

#### *Refuting the Naturalist and Materialist Philosophy of Happiness*

In four different places of the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun highlights his counter arguments on the wrong belief by the material and natural philosophers in achieving happiness. These counter arguments are provided in a subchapter entitled *fi ibtāl al-Falsafah wa fasād muntaḥiliha* (A refutation of philosophy and the corruption of the students of philosophy) in Chapter Six as follows:

ثم يزعمون أن السعادة في إدراك الموجودات كلها ما في الحس وما وراء الحس بهذا النظر وتلك البراهين (Ibn Khaldūn 2014).

Which means: "Then, philosophers think that happiness consists in arriving at perception of all existing things, both the sensibilia and the (things) beyond sensual perception, with the help of (rational) speculation and argumentation" (Ibn Khaldun 1967).

ويزعمون أن السعادة في إدراك الوجود على هذا النحو من القضاء مع تهذيب النفس وتخليقها بالفضائل وأن ذلك ممكن للإنسان ولو لم يرد شرع لتمييزه بين الفضيلة والرذيلة من الأفعال بمقتضى عقله ونظره وميله إلى المحمود منها واجتنابه للمذموم بفطرته (Ibn Khaldūn 2014).

Which means: "They (the material and natural philosophers) assume that happiness consists in the perception of existence with the help of such conclusions (if, at the same time, such perception is) combined with the improvement of the soul and the soul's acceptance of a virtuous character. Even if no religious law had been revealed (to help man to distinguish between virtue and vice), they think the (acquisition of virtue) possible by man because

he is able to distinguish between vice and virtue in (his) actions by means of his intellect, his (ability to) speculate, and his natural inclination toward praiseworthy actions, his natural disinclination for blameworthy actions" (Ibn Khaldun 1967).

وأما قولهم إن السعادة في إدراك الموجودات على ما هي عليه بتلك البراهين فقول مزيف مردود (Ibn Khaldūn 2014). Which means: "The (philosophers) say that happiness consists in coming to perceive existence as it is, by means of (logical) arguments. This is a fraudulent statement that must be rejected" (Ibn Khaldun 1967).

ومن لنا بعد ذلك بإدراك جميع الموجودات أو بحصول السعادة التي وعدنا بها الشارع إن لم نعمل لها، هيئات هيئات لما توعدون. وأما قولهم إن الإنسان مستقل بتهديب نفسه وإصلاحها بملازمة المحمود من الخلق ومجانبة المذموم فأمر مبني على أن ابتهاج للنفس بإدراكها الذي لها من ذاتها هو عين السعادة الموعود بها لأن الرذائل عاتقة للنفس عن تمام إدراكها ذلك بما يحصل لها من الملكات الجسمانية وألوانها (Ibn Khaldūn 2014).

Which means: "Nobody, then, (should try to tell) us that it is possible to perceive all the existents or to achieve the happiness the Lawgiver (Muhammad) promised us, if we do not work for it. "Away, away with what you are promised." (Philosophers) further state that man is able, by himself, to refine and improve his soul by adopting praiseworthy character qualities and avoiding blameworthy ones. This is connected with the assumption that the great joy that the soul has through the perception coming to it from its own essence, is identical with the promised happiness. For the vices give the soul corporeal habits and the resulting coloring. Thus, they impede it in the realization of that perception" (Ibn Khaldun 1967).

Though, Ibn Khaldun cites his refutation on philosophy in his *Muqaddimah*, it does not mean that philosophy is absolutely prohibited in Islam, or even in his personal view. In other words, Ibn Khaldun's refutation of philosophy does not mean to say that Islam is against reasoning or logic, but rather stressing for balance and justice in thought and reasoning. This is learned from the conclusion of this subchapter, where Ibn Khaldun remarks:

"Such is the fruit of this craft (of logic). It also affords acquaintance with the doctrines and opinions of the people of the world. One knows

what harm it can do. Therefore, the student of it should beware of its pernicious aspects as much as he can. Whoever studies it should do so (only) after he is saturated with the religious law and has studied the interpretation of the Qur'an and jurisprudence. No one who has no knowledge of the Muslim religious sciences should apply himself to it. Without that knowledge, he can hardly remain safe from its pernicious aspects" (Ibn Khaldun 1967, vol.3, 257-258). This same position could also be learned from al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* (1962), who also does not absolutely prohibit philosophy to the Muslims.

In Ibn Khaldun's counter arguments for philosophers' view of happiness, he highlights that philosophers' view of happiness consists of perception of all existing things, both the sensible and the insensible (with the assistance of rational speculation and logic). Whereas, from the Islamic point of view, Allah's creations and existences are limitless, including not only the sensible (*maḥsūs*) and the insensible (*ghayr maḥsūs*), but also the thinkable (*ma'qūl*) and the unthinkable (*ghayr ma'qūl*). Therefore, happiness is not only from perceiving the thinkable (*ma'qūl*) existences as claimed by the material and natural philosophers, but it also includes the unthinkable (*ghayr ma'qūl*) such as Allah's essence (*dhāt*),<sup>iv</sup> the reality of heaven's beauty or *al-Kawthar* river, which is attributed in the Prophetic tradition as: *mā lā 'ayn ra'at, wa lā udhun sami'at, wa lā khaṭara 'alā qalb bashar*.<sup>v</sup> This same notion is also addressed in the Sūrah al-Sajdah 32:17, which means: "so no soul knows what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes; a reward for what they did."

Next, according to Ibn Khaldun, happiness and unhappiness are found beyond bodily and spiritual perceptions. The improvement of the soul (*tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*) as a way to happiness, such as enjoined by the philosophers, is only based on the bodily and spiritual perceptions which sourced only to the rational and established human norms. Nevertheless, happiness as prescribed by religion is beyond such as enjoined by the philosophers. It derives from religious teachings and instructions. In brief, al-Attas clarifies the Islamic perspective of happiness as follows: "Happiness according

to the perspective of Islam is expressed by the term *sa'ādah*, and it relates to two dimensions of existence: to the hereafter (*ukhrawiyyah*) and to the present world (*dunyawiyyah*)...With respect to the hereafter *sa'ādah* refers to the ultimate happiness, which is everlasting felicity and bliss, the highest being the Vision of God, promised to those who in worldly life have lived in willing submission and conscious and knowing of God's commands and prohibitions" (al-Attas 1995:91)

*Religion as a Fundamental Principle for Worldly and Hereafter Happiness*

In Ibn Khaldun's religious view on happiness, he stresses that *Innamā huwa dīnuhum al-Muḥdī ilā al-Sa'ādah*, which means: it is religion that brings happiness to human life. In supporting this religious view on happiness, Ibn Khaldun highlights the purpose of life, by narrating verse 115 from sūrah al-Mu'minūn, chapter 23, which means: "What! did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?" This verse indirectly presents a purpose of human life, namely to understand that all creations will be returned to Allah S.W.T for reckoning (*al-Hisāb*), reward (*al-Jazā'*) and punishment (*al-Adhāb*) (Ibn Khaldūn 2014). This view is upheld by Ibn Khaldun for his creed and understanding that this worldly life is not without a purpose or a mission. The purpose and mission of this worldly life is enunciated in the religious teachings and laws. "Therefore, religious laws have as their purpose to cause (human beings) to follow such a course in all their dealings with God and their fellow men. This (situation) also applies to royal authority, which is natural in human social organization. (The religious laws) guide it along the path of religion, so that everything will be under the supervision of the religious law" (Ibn Khaldun 1967).

In this view on relating religion to happiness, religion is taken as a source and reason for human happiness. Ibn Khaldun clearly asserts this as he says: "the Lawgiver knows better than the mass itself what is good for them so far as the affairs of the other world, which are concealed from the mass itself" (Ibn Khaldun 1967). Evidently, there is no other way in preparing for the pleasure in the hereafter,



except from obeying the religious commands and religious prohibitions in one's worldly life. In due case, the concept of happiness in this world is supposed to be bound with the purpose of achieving happiness in the hereafter realm.

Interestingly, this study also found that Ibn Khaldun includes discussions on religion and happiness in many other subchapters. For example, in stressing the importance of the belief in Allah (*‘aqīdah*) and services to Allah (*‘ibādah*) for achieving happiness, he includes such discussion in the subchapters: on *‘ilm al-Kalām* (speculative theology). Ibn Khaldun says: “ وهو العقيدة الإيمانية و هو الذي تحصل به ” السعادة” which means: It is in the Islamic faith where happiness is attained (Ibn Khaldūn 2014 and Ibn Khaldun 1967). Whilst, in the subchapter on *al-Masājid wa al-Buyūt al-‘Azīmah fī al-‘Ālam* (The mosques and venerated buildings of the world),<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khaldun says:

إعلم أن الله سبحانه و تعالى فضل من الأرض بقاعاً اختصها بتشريفه و جعلها مواطن لعبادته يضاعف فيها الثواب و ينمو بها الأجور و أخبرنا بذلك على ألسن رسله و أنبيائه لطفاً بعباده و تسهيلاً لطرق السعادة لهم (Ibn Khaldūn 2014).

Which means: It should be known that God singled out some places of the earth for special honor. He made them the homes of His worship. (People who worship in them) receive a much greater reward and recompense (than people who worship elsewhere). God informed us about this situation through the tongues of His messengers and prophets, as an act of kindness to His servants and for the purpose of facilitating their ways to happiness (Ibn Khaldun 1967).

All in all, happiness in Ibn Khaldun's view is the purpose of life and achieving happiness is related to one's compliance to the religious commands and prohibitions through belief in Allah (*‘aqīdah*) and services to Allah (*‘ibādah*). This is also in line with Ibn Miskawayh's notion of happiness, where he mentions as follows: We have explained happiness in detail, but the truth is that we cannot in any way know perfectly the nature of that happiness, only being able to indicate it remotely and

understand or explain by symbols. For the conditions of that (other) world are infinitely different from the conditions and customary usages of this. God himself in His holy word has said about those conditions and delights, “No soul knows what is reserved for them of cheerfulness for the eyes” (*Sūra xxxii*, 17), and the Messenger of Allah said, “There will be blessing which neither the eyes have seen nor the ears heard, neither has the thought entered into the heart of man (Mohd. Nasir Omar 2003:150-151).

From Ibn Khaldun's brief discussion on the religious roles in happiness, it is evident that Islam stresses religious roles for Muslims' happiness. To paraphrase, happiness is not just supposed to be measured through worldly indices and tools, but to be complemented with the vision for hereafter life. In such way, efforts to publicize and mainstreaming this view and other Muslim scholarly views on happiness must be realized and supported in the *ummah*. Especially, in facing various today's threats and traps from the secular and atheist fronts. It is also possible to infer here that many today's secular and atheist thoughts are actually reliving thoughts of the previous natural and material philosophers, which were refuted by the previous prominent Muslim scholars such as al-Ghazālī and Ibn Khaldun.

From analyzing Ibn Khaldun's view on religious roles towards happiness, this article opines that his view is not merely an understanding in his *religionswissenschaft*. Nevertheless, this view is also amongst proofs of Ibn Khaldun's epistemology, altogether of his understanding of knowledge and religion, as integrative or in *tawhidic* manner. Integrative or *tawhidic* manner here means that Ibn Khaldun's epistemology, which regards both *naqlī* (revealed) and *‘aqlī* (rational) knowledge are complementing each other. It is possible to conclude that due to this integrative or *tawhidic* understanding that Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* has been recognized as amongst world's great literatures and referred by many international scholars until today.

## Conclusion

To conclude, Ibn Khaldun is one of many Muslim scholars in the study of history and

civilization. This genius Muslim figure is popularly known for his unique *magnum*

opus, namely *Muqaddimah*. The *Muqaddimah* is principally meant to be an introduction to the voluminous text of *Maghrib* history, namely *Kitab al-ʿIbar*. Yet, the creation of *Muqaddimah* includes information on the study of human, which simultaneously includes information on *Religionswissenschaft* or the 'Study of Religion.'

Through the use of qualitative content analysis on *Muqaddimah* text, this study found that Ibn Khaldun's study of other religions here refers to his expositions and clarifications of themes in the religions of Judaism, Christianity, Magianism, Sabeanism and polytheism. This also includes Ibn Khaldun's views on religion, such as his views on the interrelationship between *ʿasabiyyah* and religion, on *al-nas ʿala dīn mulūkihim* (the common people follow the religion of their rulers), *al-insan ibn ma'lūfihi wa ʿawāʿidihi la tabīʿatihi wa mizājīhi* (human is a child of his customs and not of his natural disposition), *al-Imāmah Wa al-Dīn* (leadership and religion), and *Ghāyah al-Ḥayāh yaʿnī al-Saʿādah Fī al-Dīn* (the purpose of life, which is happiness is in religion) (Ibn Khaldun 1967 and Ibn Khaldūn 2014). This article explores Ibn Khaldun's views on religion and its roles for human happiness.

Throughout human history, many thinkers, especially philosophers, had delved into this issue on happiness. The classical wisdoms on happiness could be found in numerous references. These references include the *Qurʾān*, *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, sayings of the Buddha (c. 6-4 century BC), *Analects*, *Tao Te Ching*, Plato's (472-347 BC) *Republic*, Aristotle's (384-322 BC) *Ethics*, writings of Mencius (372-289 BC), Old and New Testaments, Saint Augustine's (354-430 AD) *Confessions*, Yahyā Ibn ʿAdiyy's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (893-974 AD) and Ibn Miskawayh's (932-1030 AD) *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, and Saint Thomas Aquinas' (1225-1274 AD) *Summa Theologica* (Mohd Nasir Omar 2003 and Haidt 2006).

Presently, there are many questionnaires, psychological inventories and indices made for measuring and determining the level of happiness. These include *The Oxford*

*Happiness Questionnaire*, developed by Peter Hills and Michael Argyle; *The Happy Planet Index*, produced by The New Economics Foundation (NEF, www.neweconomics.org). And there is also *The World Happiness Report*, which is released by The Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a scientific research office that was commissioned by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2012. In sum, these examples of newly modern discussions of happiness, which are developed as questionnaires, psychological inventories and indices that do not directly concern with the relationship between religion and happiness.

Discussion on Ibn Khaldun's view on religious roles towards happiness consists of two main points, namely Refuting the Naturalist and Materialist Philosophy of Happiness and Religion as a Fundamental Principle for Worldly and Hereafter Happiness. In supporting this religious view on happiness, Ibn Khaldun highlights the purpose of life, by narrating verse 115 from sūrah al-Mu'minūn, chapter 23, which means: "What! did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?" This verse indirectly presents a purpose of human life, namely to understand that all creations will be returned to Allah S.W.T for reckoning (*al-Ḥisāb*), reward (*al-Jazāʿ*) and punishment (*al-ʿAdhāb*) (Ibn Khaldūn 2014). This worldly life is not without a purpose or a mission. The purpose and mission of this worldly life is enunciated in the religious teachings and laws.

Analysing Ibn Khaldun's view on religious roles towards happiness, this article opines that his view is not merely an understanding in his *religionswissenschaft*. Nevertheless, this view is also amongst proofs of Ibn Khaldun's epistemology, which is integrative or in *tawhidic* manner. Integrative or *tawhidic* here means that Ibn Khaldun's epistemology, which regards both *naqlī* (revealed) and *ʿaqlī* (reasoned) knowledge are complementing each other. It is possible to conclude that due to this integrative or *tawhidic* understanding that Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* has been recognized as amongst world's great literatures and referred by many international scholars until today.

This article then proposes that *Muqaddimah* is supposed to be taken as a representative of Islamic thought reading in the midst of many

references for religious study, especially in encountering various today's views on religious roles in human's life.

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**Notes:**

- <sup>i</sup> This article was originally presented at the *International Seminar on Religion and Development IX (2016)*, organized by Department of Theology and Philosophy, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), 4 October 2016. And published as proceeding paper in the *Prosiding Seminar Antarabangsa Agama & Pembangunan ke-IX: Agama dan Perdamaian*. ISBN 978-967-0913-32-2 Bangi: Jabatan Usuluddin Dan Falsafah, Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, pp. 174-187. The present article is a reviewed and edited version from the original published paper.

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- ii These Four Noble Truths are: (1) The Truth of Suffering, (2) The Truth of the Origin of Suffering, (3) The Truth of Cessation, and (4) The Truth of the Path. Commentary on these Four Noble Truths is best made on Dalai Lama. 1997. *The Four Noble Truths*. London: Thorsons.
- iii Whilst, The Noble Eightfold Path are (1) Right View. (2) Right Thought. (3) Right Speech. (4) Right Action. (5) Right Livelihood. (6) Right Effort (7) Right Mindfulness. (8) Right Concentration. Best commentary for The Noble Eightfold Path is Sangharakshita. 1999. *Vision and Transformation: An Introduction to the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path*. Birmingham: Windhorse Publications.
- iv This is based on a hadith, narrated by Ibn Abbas R.A. as follows: تفكروا في خلق الله ولا تفكروا في الله فإنكم لن تقدروا قدره, which means: Think of the creations of Allah and think not of Allah's essence for you are not capable of comprehending it (Allah's essence). This hadith is evaluated as weak by al-<sup>c</sup>Irāqī in al-Ghazali's *Ihyā' <sup>c</sup>Ulūm al-Dīn* (1982) with this note: أخرجه أبو نعيم في الحلية بالمرفوع منه بإسناد ضعيف ورواه الأصبهاني في الترغيب والترهيب من وجه آخر أصح منه ورواه الطبراني في الأوسط والبيهقي في الشعب من حديث ابن عمر وقال هذا إسناد فيه نظر قلت فيه الوازع بن نافع متروك.
- v This is based on a *qudsī* hadith, narrated by Abū Hurayrah R.A. as follows: - صلى الله عليه وسلم - قال: قال الله: أعددت لعبادي الصالحين ما لا عين رأت، ولا أذن سمعت، ولا خطر على قلب بشر (رواه البخاري) Rasulullah S.A.W. says: Allah S.W.T. says (in a *qudsī* hadis) I prepared for my loyal servants things, which the eyes have never seen, the ears have never heard and the hearts have never felt before (al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl. 1998. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Hadith no.3244, 623).