IBN KHALDŪN AND THE JEWS:
ON THE IDEA OF RELIGIOUS EMANCIPATION

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Abstract
The present article is an exploration on Ibn Khaldun’s notion of religious emancipation, notably in the case of Jews in his age. The exploration is based on the examination upon his magnum opus, Muqaddima. Byproduct, it describes as well the dynamic of the notion of religious emancipation and tolerance in history among the Christians and Muslims in the pre-modern era, through which the interreligious relationship is also a concern. Ibn Khaldun was an important figure in this endeavor through his sociological analysis of the world history, as his unique overview upon Jews as a marginal religious group. In the present article Ibn Khaldun is situated within his contemporary and considered him as a prominent Islamic thinker in liminality, a condition that allows him to envision new thing but at the same time embedded in the context.

Keywords: Ibn Khaldun, the Jews, Religious Emancipation

INTRODUCTION
The present engagement will “evaluate” a prominent Muslim scholar in the Late Medieval North Africa, Ibn Khaldūn (‘Abd al-Raḥmān Abū Zayd ibn Muḥammad ibnMuḥammad ibn Khaldūn al-Hadramī, 1332-1406) in his attitude toward the Jews.¹ The study of Ibn Khaldūn in general is already come to its maturity and produced multitude literatures. He was among the most praised classical Muslim scholar in the Western academia. His major work, the seven volumes of Kitāb al-‘Ibar (Book of Lesson) is considered the best socio-historical work in the Medieval Islām. This work consisted of three major parts: Muqaddima (Introduction - al-Muqaddima fi faḍl ‘ilm al-ta’rikh, “the introduction to the merit of the science of recording”), History of the Bedouins, the Arabs, the Persians & the Romans, and his autobiography.

However, Muqaddimamore than the other sections in Kitāb al-‘Ibarenjoyed exceptional popularity in the Western world and was published as a separate entity. The book is a long Introduction, following the Aristotelian model of “Premise,” of his theories, methodologies, critical assessments, and his philosophy of

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history. It is a *praeparatio historia* to a more detail application and analysis in the subsequent volumes. Yet, since the Introduction itself is a self-contained product and discusses broad of issues, it is more accessible and more “useful” for many Western readers then the rest of *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, which concern to specific and restricted historical themes. His methodology laid in *Muqaddima* scrutinizing social and historical issues considered utmost original and advance in his own time. This fact once struck modern scholars who, to a degree held a cultural bias that Islāmic world, let alone North African in the fourteenth century could ever produce such remarkable, “modern,” and advanced social historian.

In the Western context, Ibn Khaldūn either was “invented” or “discovered” by, firstly the nineteenth century European Orientalists. At one time, part of his voluminous work, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar* became a bible of the history of North Africa, notably among Frenchmen who at the time controlled Algiers and Morocco.

From his autobiography, we may get a sketch of his life and careers. He was a complex personality, talented and was attending different occupations simultaneously. He was a decorated statesman, jurist, judge, philosopher, historian, and, what modern scholars like him the most, “sociologist.” His scope of mobility spanned from Southern Spain (Andalusia), Northwest Africa (*Maghrib*), Egypt, Western Arabia, and Levant. He was so great for a Muslim scholar in the Western standard so that the Western scholars tended to “secularize” him, as charged by Khalid Chaouch.

In the present article, I will not delve too deep on the biography and his general idea manifested in his most influential work, the *Muqaddima*. Such assessments are multitude. I am concentrating only on one issue in connection with the Jews.

Walter Fischel, a Jewish historian specialized on the Arab and Indian Jewish history, once wrote:

“In thus explaining the degradation of the Jewish people in a *socio-psychological* way, his statement expresses a view which only in the eighteenth century was expounded by those who pleaded for the emancipation of the Jews and for their liberation from political and social discrimination.”

In this passage, Fischel contrasted Ibn Khaldūn against his milieu. That in explaining the Jews degradation, Ibn Khaldūn stood at the same rank with the European Enlightenment philosopher who advocated emancipation of Jews against centuries-old religious prejudice. Rather, employed the religious narrative or religious-implicated language, Ibn Khaldūn provided sociological explanation as an alternative.

This article will problematize the link between Ibn Khaldūn and the eighteenth century Emancipation upon the issue of the Jews: whether he truly had a virtual kinship with Western Enlightenment ideal. What I will look upon, and/or the basic premise of this engagement is to recognize a historical convergence at work. The seemingly comparable end result of a social process should not immediately be seen as emulation or “influence” of the two cultures. Or else, in the case of “inventing” Ibn Khaldūn, by making a direct link to the present concern and transcend the milieu difference. Social process may the result of different impulse, rhythm, aspiration, worldview and ideal, but share similar feature and probably a respond to the same aspect of social life, without made apparent connection.

To a degree, the article seeks to impose the dissimilarity context of the two. That is to reclaim him to its historical context. But, at

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3 Some sources said he reached Samarqand in Central Asia (see Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane*, p. 3).


the same time, it attempts to put Ibn Khaldun in a “networked” of time and place, and aware of interconnectivity (and disconnectivity) he engaged. Therefore, it seeks not only what Ibn Khaldūn says about the Jews based on his historical context and representation, but also to seek what is “absent” in his speech. This article in large part is an experiment and may not sufficiently offer new perspective.

Two remarkable works precedes this article, i.e. Walter Fischel who wrote a monograph, entitled Ibn Khaldūn: On the Bible, Judaism and the Jews (1956), and the more recent article of Kalman Bland, An Islāmic Theory of Jewish History: The Case of Ibn Khaldūn. There is also an article by Moshen Hamli Demystifying Ibn Khaldūn’s Version of Al-Kahena, which dealt with specific issue of the Jews. The first two works practically have been elucidated all possible connections between Ibn Khaldūn and the Jews. While Fischel traced and identified any possible Jewish discourse within Ibn Khaldūn’s works, Bland grappled with the same problem as this article, that is the problem of the extent of Ibn Khaldūn compliance to the European Emancipation ideal. Without all the time paraphrasing these works, certainly this article owes to them and to some point they reflected in the body of arguments. I owe as well to the work of Mark Cohen that helps me to map the interconnection.

Caution should be put forward before commencing the “adventure,” in some places in this article we will encounter words “tolerance” and “intolerance.” These terms should be taken lightly as metaphor to describe mental state, attitudes, and certain actions directed, expressed to the Other. “Tolerance” then: (a) sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one’s own (b) the act of allowing something (Merriam Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus 2008). In addition “intolerance” is contrast to the first. It is important to aware of the notion of “tolerance” as a philosophical inquiry was not in circulation up until seventeenth century Europe. John Locke’s work, On Tolerance (1689) considered the first elaboration upon the matter. Voltaire, French philosopher detailed the tenet of tolerance in which he based it on the individual autonomy, relativity of truth, and social reform. As an individual, he expounded, we should do something to reform what goes wrong around us, nevertheless since we do not know the absolute truth we should not seek to impose our answer to our fellow humankind, who may not agree with us. The only viable way to do so is to tolerate the other. In this point, the idea of tolerance is standing vis-à-vis dogmatism. Obviously, if we apply this perception to the context of discussion this idea will immediately at odds. It is alien and anachronistic when imposed it to the Classical world context.

**SHIBBOLETH TO EMANCIPATION**

“Men are born and remain free and equal in rights,” was the most important pronouncement stated in the Article 1 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen). It was the progressive outcome of the French Revolution (1789-1799), which toppled the French Monarchy. The nineteenth century French historian, Jules Michelet recognized it as “a credo of a new age.”

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Unmistakably, the Declaration was a major achievement of the age of Enlightenment that in its very basic posture challenged the authoritarian state, religious authority, on the other hand, championed the natural rights of humankind, and promoted the state as a form of social contract. A “new historical consciousness” had been set out in dispense of the age-old respect toward the monarchy and the church.14

In relations with religious freedom, this consciousness epitomized in the speech of Count of Clermont-Tonnerre, once member of the noblemen aligned themselves with the commoners (the Third Estate) on June 1789.15Clermont-Tonnerre was the prime advocate of liberal policy that favored full civil and political rights for non-Catholics, i.e. the Jews and Protestants. As a noted orator, he described that

Every religion must prove but one thing – that it is moral. If there is, a religion that commands theft and arson, it is necessary not only to refuse eligibility to those who profess it, but further to outlaw them. This consideration cannot be applied to the Jews. The reproaches that one makes of them are many. The gravest are unjust, the others are merely wrong. Usury, one says, is permitted them. This assertion is founded on nothing but a false interpretation of a principle of charity and brotherhood which forbids them to lend at interest among themselves. ... Men who possess nothing but money cannot live but by making that money valuable, and you have always prevented them from possessing anything else. ... This

peopleis insatiable, one says. This insatiability is [however] not certain.”16

In mobilizing his defense to secure the French Jews’ rights to be included in the new constitution, the Count should, first of all explained to the audience the reason why the Jews justifiable to have one. He “deconstructed” the European centuries old prejudice toward the Jews by depicting the underneath motive of Jews why they gone “wrong.” He found that it was not their religious delusion that drove them “bad” but social pressure upon them. This interpretation was unlikely an original one. Earlier to this, the spiritual guru of French Revolution, a Genevan philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), said regarding the Jews:

We cannot know what people might do or not do or say if they are enslaved ... Not until they (Jews) have ‘a free state of their own, with schools and universities, where they can speak and debate without risk,’ shall we be able to know what they have to say or wish to bring about.17

This “proto-Zionism” account started with explanation of the Jews’ condition, that they were “enslaved” by European society and implied that people like this could not or would not be heard what their aspirations are. This situation, for Rousseau, was against his theory of natural man that all men are equal in its pristine and original nature. The Jews were the victim of society that stripped their natural rights.

Even much earlier, the medieval French scholastic philosopher gave almost a similar explanation of the condition of the Jews. Peter Abelard (Petrus Abelardus, 1079-1142) in his work, A Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew, and a Christian (published in 1136-39) remarked: “Consider the kind of people among whom

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15Paul R. Hanson, Historical Dictionary of the French Revolution (Lanham, Md., Toronto, Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 71. Then, the French monarchy divided the political realms into three estates: the First Estate belonged to the clergy and religious authority, in this case the Catholic Church; the Second Estate belonged to the nobility and aristocrats; and the Third Estate belonged to the commoners and ordinary people.
we [i.e. the Jews] wander in exile and in whose patronage we must have confidence! Consequently, the principal gain that is left for us is that we sustain our miserable lives here by lending money at interest to strangers."

He elaborated the misery fell upon the Jews that "forced" them to be confined in usuary business. Abelard's and Rousseau's "sociological" explanation of the Jewish condition found a way to the Count's speech.

The "liberal" view proposed by the Count was not gone on unchallenged. The French Jews never enjoyed religious tolerance in the days of Old Regime, nor throughout Europe, except in the United Provinces (Dutch Republic, 1581-1795). Anne-Lois Henry de la Fare (1752-1829), bishop of Nancy, the nemesis of Count of Clermont-Tonnerre, barred the possibility of the Jews to get the rights of citizenship. He contended that the Jews "worthless" to obtain one because in their heart they hold dual loyalty, loyalty to the land they lived and loyalty to their religious ideal as a tribe seeking to return to their homeland (Israel). Nonetheless, he, like the Count, certainly in the same page in explaining the social condition of the Jews and directed his refusal to the Jewish rights, away from customarily theological-religious elucidation – though he was a bishop. His assertion above, at least rhetorically, that mentioned "...the Jews are men and are unhappy" resounded to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights of humankind and the utmost priority of reason over supernatural explanation. While for the Count the Jews were the beneficiary of Enlightenment, the bishop on contrary, did not believe that the Jews could integrate into democratic society was by standing as free individual at the expense of severing their communal bound.

The above examples are presented just to point the significant shift of the European perception toward the Jews. The (legal) emancipation initiated by the France was an important departure from earlier position of the European in general, notably, the European Christianity. The immediate precedence of French Emancipation was seventeenth century Enlightenment (Aufklärung), which by consensus started by Descartes’s Discourse on the Method (1637) that bore forth the idea that reason championed over unreason. Unreason or irrationality, which in many instances connoted to Church’s teaching and theology subsumed as subhuman nature.

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19Detail discussion of this problem among others see Adam Sutcliffe, Judaism and Enlightenment (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2005).


Other immediate context was the Wars of Religion (1562-1598), i.e. the civil wars between French Catholics and Protestants (Huguenots). It was concluded with Edict of Nantes that granted significant toleration to the Protestants. After the war, the notion of tolerance toward the Other, notably other religious traditions slowly taking shape. This episode might be rooted from and overlapped with the Protestant Reformation that started by Martin Luther when he challenged the authority of Roman Catholics Church in 1517.

All these wars ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 which decisive in terms that it ushered to the further notion of the nation-states. The entire constellation of Emancipation idea also contributed by much earlier cultural movements named Renaissance of Italy, which roughly started in thirteenth century Florence and spread throughout Europe afterward. The new interests toward Greek liberal arts, philosophy, and Arabic sciences conducted to the immensely cultural shift and to a new understanding of humanity. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 in the hand of Ottoman Turks that forced many Greek scientists and philosophers to Italy further reinforced the movement.

Slipping underneath the slider of European history, for a very long time, the Europeans, informed by Christian traditions, adopted the politics of separation on the legal position of the Jews. As the subject of Christian dominions, the Jews allowed to organize themselves, to maintain their distinct cultures, ritual, marriage, religious, and judicial bodies. However, the autonomy was not derived from the idea of the respect toward other cultures and religions, but mainly based on the understanding of the religious outcast.

The Jews were portrayed as a religious rival and enemy because among others, Christian deemed to replace Judaism as a new verus Israel (“true Israel”), whilst on the other hand Judaism resisted Christian interpretation of the Hebrew Scripture/Old Testament. Part of the explanation was the intimate dependency of Christianity on Judaism that made the Jews presence within Christian society constantly challenging the legitimacy of Christianity.24 The resentment (and toleration) toward the Jews, before the Emancipation era revolved in the theological-religious-driven prejudices; that the Jews was a reprobate, being the Christ-killer, antichrist, conducting blood libel, desecrator of host, poisoning well, and the force behind fourteenth century Black Death.

The negative attitude toward the Jews, which in history often reflected by the violent action, such as pogroms, expulsions,quisitions, and so forth, in some ways induced by the church attitude after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.25 Out of seventy decrees produced in this council, among others were decrees on condemnation of all heresies and a summons to the secular power to assist in their repression, a ban on the founding of new religious orders, barred the Jews and the Saracens (Muslims) from imperial and public services, and distinguishing them from the Christians by their dressing code. It also issued a new summon for the preparation of Crusade under the decree “To Free the Holy Land,” after the failure of the Third and Fourth Crusade.26 The “puritanical” climate it produced, brought about intolerance posture toward other religious expressions other than permitted by the church, and notably, a new impetus of anti-Jewish sentiment, in which the radical demand of the exclusion and expulsion of the Jews from Christian society insinuated.27

23Part of

27Jeremy Cohen in Stroumsa, ‘From Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism’.
Anselmus of Canterbury (1033-1109) remarked that might summarize the formative role of polemics/apologetics beyond simply a negative aspect of interaction. *Pagani defendunt legem suam, Iudaei defendunt legem suam. Ergo et nos Christiani debemus defendere fidem nostram*, “The pagans [i.e. Muslims] defend their Law, the Jews defend their Law, therefore we Christians must defend our faith.”

Fourth Lateran Council, in fact was a response toward earlier formal policy of the church toward the Jews that shaped by Pope Gregory the Great (seated 590-604). The Pope was known as a moderate and tolerant figure.

Regardless of ambiguity attitude of Roman Empire to her Jewish subjects – the Jews had been revolted against Caesarsthree times (66-73, 115-117, and 132-135) – the legal position of them were clear before the law. Based on its polytheistic policy, the Jews were tolerated in expressing and administering their religious affairs, as to other religions within the Imperial bound. An edict of Augustus Caesar in 1 BCE states that, “Jews shall use their own customs in accordance with their ancestral law, just as they used to use them in the time of Hyrcanus, the high priest of their highest god.”

At the time, it was Christian, as a new religion was time, it was Christian, as a new religion was derived from the Roman law, there were many statutes that tolerated the Jews considerably. “It is sufficiently established that the sect of the Jews is forbidden by no law,” said the Title 8 of the law, and further, “All insults of persons attacking the Jews shall be averted (and their synagogues shall remain in their accustomed quietude).”

It was based on this statute, that the Jews of Palermo plead the Pope Gregory upon their synagogue pillaging. Concerning the bishop of Palermo move to seize the synagogue and consecrated it a church in aforementioned account, we may observe one last example of Theodosian Code and aware of the importance of the immediate decision by the Pope to invalidate it. “We prohibit any synagogue to

Great, the first Byzantine Emperor, released Edict of Milan in 313 that proclaimed religious tolerance across his domain, which effectively ended the persecution of Christianity. The following stage was the acceptance of Christianity as a state religion, which gradually faded out other religious traditions, including Judaism and “paganism.”

A century later, between 429 and 438, Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II ordered the compilation of a new law known as Theodosian Code, which incorporated former “pagan” Roman legislation;this was the “law” Pope Gregory mentioned above. Emperor Theodosius took Christianity very seriously and he lived in the circumstance that placedhim to have close proximity to Christians’ “ideal.” During the “fragile” interrelationship between “pagans” and Christians, the Code prohibited any step to individual apostatizing from Christianity.

On the Jewish matters, the tenor of this corpus was a mixture of Roman tolerance and Christianity intolerance. The Jews, after all was positioned along with paganism and heretics, and dubbed as “a pestilence and a contagion if it should spring forth and spread abroad more widely.” But, at the same time, derived from the Roman law, there were many statutes that tolerated the Jews considerably. “It is sufficiently established that the sect of the Jews is forbidden by no law,” said the Title 8 of the law, and further, “All insults of persons attacking the Jews shall be averted (and... their synagogues shall remain in their accustomed quietude).”

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29 *Cohen, Under Crescent and Cross.,* p. 36.

30 Quoted in *Cohen, Under Crescent and Cross.,* p. 31.
arise as a new building, but license is granted to strengthen the ancient synagogues which threaten immediately to fall in [into] ruin.”

BEYOND BOSPORUS

In the traditionally accepted of seventh century document, we read a statement, “We shall not build in our cities or in their vicinity any new monasteries, churches, hermitages, or monk’s cells. We shall not restore, by night or by day, any of them that have fallen into ruin or which are located in the Muslims’ quarters.” (“We” here was a declaration of the subject to avow the law implied to them). Strikingly enough, this statement resonated to the aforementioned Code. The difference is only that the implicated subject was Christians. The statement was the first part of a long list terms of capitulation that according to Islāmic tradition, extended by the second caliph ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (ruled 634-644) to the patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronios.

The capitulation then known as Pact or Covenant of ‘Umar (‘ahd ‘Umar). Christians has been the main subject of this capitulation, obviously it reflected the dominant population of the area taken by Muslim army, but undoubtedly applicable to other subjects, including the Jews. It was a writ a protection (dhimma) and the subject of protection was called ahl al-dhimma (people under protection). After the emergence of Islām as a politico-religious power around 620s in Ḥijaz, Arabia, it immediately growing large and swept to the south, east and northern Arabian Peninsula. Subsequent to Prophet Muḥammad died in 632, the successors, i.e. the Four Companions (al-ṣaḥāba, i.e. al-Khulaṣā’ al-Rāshidūn) conquest even larger area, overthrown Sasanids Empire and taken a large chunk of Byzantine shores in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. Within the area implied, living any sorts of Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and “pagans.”

Controlling such a vast area with such diverse populations, which its number exceeding the Muslims, required legal basis to determine the nature of relationship between the ruling group and non-Muslims subjects. For practical reason, Islāmic conquest did not destroy administrative infra-structure of Byzantine and Sasanids, and certainly, in its earlier phases, the most skillful administrator were former Byzantine officials, which mainly Christians. The formula of the Pact apparently based on the pre-Islāmic tribal custom but as the above example demonstrated, it also absorbed Byzantine statute, with necessary modifications. Other resemblance can be seen, for instance in the following article: “We shall not seek to proselytize anyone. We shall not prevent any of our kin from embracing Islām if they so desire.”

It could be deduced that Theodosian Code might render some influence in the above article, through its capitulation such as, “Jews shall not be permitted to disturb any man who has been converted from Judaism to Christianity to assail him with any outrage.” Indeed, the context was different. In the Code, Christian Byzantine ruler attempted to prevent new Christians to return to their earlier faith, while in Pact of ‘Umar, the subject might not prevent her/his co-religionist to convert to Islām. On the other hand, the article on garb which stated that the Christian shall not “attempt to resemble the Muslims in any way with regard to their dress” similar to the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council inscribed five centuries later. Whether, there

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34Cohen, Under Crescent and Cross., p. 34.
37Cohen, Under Crescent and Cross., p. 55.
38Cf. Cohen, Under Crescent and Cross., p. 34.
39Cohen, Under Crescent and Cross., p. 64.
40Kenneth R. Stow, Popes, Church, and Jews in the Middle Ages: Confrontation and Response (Aldershot, Great Britain; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), p. 52n41.
was interconnectivity in this point is only a probability of history, though it seems that the force of reciprocity was at work.

Since day one of its emergence, Islam immediately entered into inter-religious situation. In Makkah, Prophet Muhammad encountered hunafā‘ (pre-Islamic monotheists) and mushrikūn (polytheists), in Mādīna with Jewish groups. After facing harsh refusal in Makkah, he migrated (hijra) to Mādīna with his followers that later called muḥājirūn (emigrants) and welcomed by the native that significant number of them accepted Islam (called anṣār, “helper”). However, other hesitated to accept Islam (munāṣīqūn, “hypocrites”), while the Jews, as the largest group refused Muhammad prophethood outright, probably informed by their tradition that, “no prophet outside the Land (of Israel)”.

Intrigues and conflicts mounted, Prophet Muhammad then made an agreement among all parties for the purpose of keeping from the undesirable fraction within the newly emerged Muslim groups and other non-Muslims, whereas at the same time secure his mission. The agreement or constitution was called the Constitution of Mādīna.

The general tone of the sixty-three articles of the constitution was positive and based on the principle of “reciprocity” and “win-win solution,” besides at the same time boosted Muhammad leadership and authority. Furthermore, the article twenty five of the Constitution described the Jews as umma mu’mīnūn (“community of believers”), the label that was highly problematic for later commentators.

Ideal it may sound, the constitution proved an ephemeral agreement. Short afterward, large conflict erupted, which according to Muslim tradition, initiated by the Jews, which violated the agreement. The fate of them was a tragedy, among three largest Jewish groups, banū Qaynuqā‘, al-Naṣrīr and Qurayza, the Muslims deposed the first two and killed the third. In one occasion, in the battle of Uḥud in 625, the Prophet himself was recorded even labeled the Jews as ahl al-shirk (people of polytheism). Nevertheless, both aspects on Mādīna episode deeply embedded within Muslim collective memory; the first on the treachery of the Jews toward the Prophet and umma, the second on the “democratic and tolerance” posture of the Constitution. Many modern Muslims took the second aspect as part of the promotion of tolerance according to Islam.

Pact of ‘Umar and Constitution of Mādīna were two models available for us to understand the relationship between Muslim dominant group and its subjects. Regardless of the positive inclination in treating other non-Muslims, Constitution of Mādīna was ineffective immediately after the incident of the Jews and after the rest of Muslim opponents admitted the power of Islam. After Islam at the apex of its power in the Middle East and North Africa, a more plausible model of relationship was required. Pact of ‘Umar was the basis for the law of non-Muslims under Muslim dominion. Besides, the technical and practical aspects of the Pact, the constellation of ahl al-dhimmi extensively discussed in Qur’ān and hadith commentaries and jurisprudence elaborations.

Furthermore, the way Islam treated its non-Muslims subject was partly determined by its self-image, which a combination of historical force and its vigor to attain its religious ideal. Christianity considered itself as the replacement of Judaism, while Islam developed the abrogation theory toward Judaism and Christianity. It positioned as the final revelatory religion, abrogated the validity

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of earlier religions. The Prophet Muhammad is the seal of the long prophetic tradition within Judaism and Christianity (Khātim al-Nabīyyīn). In this respect, the difference between Islam and Christianity attitude toward Judaism is that, while Christianity attached deeper to Judaism, either by sharing the Scripture (Hebrew Scripture/Old Testament) or by theological construction, Islam maintained limited continuity toward the other two. This self-image reflected the way it treated other non-Muslims.

In the Islamic theory, non-Muslims falls into several categories, i.e. infidels (kuffār, sing. kāfir), scripturaries, people of the Book (ahl al-kitāb), people under protection (ahl al-dhimmā/dhimmi), and people living in the area of infidels (ahl al-harb). In larger category, there is people “who have an agreement” with Muslims (ahl al-āhd), people of the armistice (ahl al-hudna), and people “who receive guarantee of safety” (ahl al-amān). Among those categories, ahl al-dhimmā, ahl al-āhd and ahl al-harb are concepts within Islamic law determined the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim. In practical area, we can just expect those categories are overlapped. For example, ahl al-kitābis at the same time kuffār and dhimmī but outside Islamic domain, they are kuffār but not dhimmī. Zoroastrians are not ahl al-kitāb but they certainly part of ahl al-dhimmī, and so forth.45

Qur’an sūrah9:29 says,”Fight those of the People of the Book (ahl al-kitāb) who do not [truly] believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, who do not obey the rule of justice, until they pay the tax (jizya) ‘an yadin wa-hum sāghirūn [and agree to submit].”46 As a divine sanction, the conquered people should pay the poll-tax (jizya) and further, land tax (kharāj) as a gesture of submission to the Islamic power.

The above theory, sanctioned with Qur’anic passage, and coincided with historical interaction surrounded the emergence of Pact of ‘Umar, produced the relatively “firm” precedence of relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. The non-Muslims were second class but tolerated, living under protection to ensure their security, safety, prosperity, and autonomy in the matter of religion and cultural; this precedence however, has to be attested many times and in different places throughout the course of Islamic history.

This a very general and broad rule of ahl al-dhimmī that secure the position of non-Muslims but at the same time constantly reminding of their lower status against the Muslim counterpart through various imposing and relaxing rules. However, as pointed by Cohen, none of these huge literature collections had a special slot for discussing ahl al-dhimmī, as comparable to Christian law. Statutes on them were discussed along with the subjects, such as law of intermarriage, law of inheritance, et cetera.47 Not until tenth and eleventh centuries that the dynamic and the awareness of pluralistic nature of Islamic and non-Islamic society expanded. In the tenth century Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064) one of the Muslim great theologian and polemicist in Muslim Spain wrote Kitāb al-Fiṣal fi al-milal wa al-ahwā’ wa al-nihal (Book of the Separators Concerning Religions, Heresies, and Sects). And later on, al-Shahrastānī (1086–1153) wrote Kitāb al-Milal wa al-nihal (Book of Sects and Creed). Kitāb al-Fiṣal was among the first comparative religion work ever written by the Muslims. These two works became the model for the later discourse of history and comparative studies of religion, as indirectly manifested in ibn Khaldūn’s work.

TOUCHING DOWN: THE “HARBINGER” OF EMANCIPATION?

Thereafter, there were dissensions among the Christians with regard to their religion and to Christology. They split into groups and sects,... We do not think that we should blacken
the pages of this book with discussion of their dogmas of unbelief. In general, they are well known. All of them are unbelief. This is clearly stated in the noble Qur’an. (To) discuss or argue those things with them are not up to us. It is (for them to choose between) conversion to Islam, payment of the poll tax, or death.46

The Christians were plural, so Ibn Khaldūn tells us. They fought against each other over Christian dogma. Christians were belonging to once respected ahl al-Kitāb who some of its religious narratives shared by the Muslims. Yet, Muslims were not advocated to pay attention to this debate, because they were ahl al-dhimmi after all. Their dogma was dogma of the unbelievers.

The above passage was within a discussion of leadership of the Israelite and Christianity after he discussed about Islām. He described how leadership important for religious groups to ensure either their missions or sustainability. He made example, brief presentation of Islāmic leadership in history up to Almohads, how Islām maintain its mission and showed the importance of unity to attain it. “In the Muslim community, the holy war is a religious duty, because of the universalism of Muslim mission ... Therefore, caliphate and royal authority are united in (Islām).”47

After discussing, firstly Israelite history, that according to him the religious leadership (Moses and Joshua) only concerned on religious matter, not royal authority, then Diaspora Jews, where the leadership rest in the hand of Kohen, he moved to early formation of Christianity that ended with the quarrel upon the doctrine of Christology. In this point, he seemed a bit impatient in discussing how Christianity branched off so many different groups upon doctrinal issue. For him, as a Muslim it was not his concern to know the nuances of each group, because before the God, according to Imām Mālik, the founder of Maliki school of jurisprudence where Ibn Khaldūn belonged, “The term ‘infidelity’ is used for all of them [ahl al-dhimmi] and no distinction should be made of any of their laws ...” (supra). Here, we see different level of communication, knowledge, and even self. In one level, Ibn Khaldūn aware of pluralistic nature of different cultures, religions, social organizations that is deemed important to construct his argument on the social process a group undergoes to attain sedentary civility (infra). On the other hand, the plurality of Christianity (and presumably other religious group) simply too much, out of focus of his concern, to the effect that he receded it to his legal predisposition.

As Maliki faqīḥ (and qādi), he obliged to turn his judgment upon religious matter to the early authority within chain of transmission (insād) of jurisprudence. Though within Maliki school there were many inclinations (ṭuruq) general stance of the school against other Sunnī schools was its tendency to keep public order. It would take any measure necessary to prevent any disturbances instigated by “dissenters,” and harsher in dealing with “apostates.”

Moreover, in North Africa (Maghrib), Maliki jurists were strong defender of the tradition. It was one of Malikī qādis, Abu ‘Umar Ibn Yūsuf who order the execution of the quirkṣūfi al-Ḥallāj in 922, for his “blasphemous” expressions, the famous one “ana al-ḥaqq” (I am the Truth [God]).50 So, we can see the importance of the Christians being recognized as plural in order to elucidate his point upon leadership, but at the same time keeping in its unity before the law. No contradiction, except it might be strange for modern reader, to confuse social data with religious conviction. Here, we may say that different amplitude of Othering at work.


The relationship between the two amplitudes above, i.e. keen analysis (“socio-historical” explanation) molded with religious conviction based on different science development (fiqh), that all important for our further elaboration upon Jewish subject. We may suspect both amplitudes were based on Ibn Khaldūn critical approach.

The status of ahl al-dhimmi remains impose though there were many variations of its detail of implementation. Much cheer can be say for the periods of tolerance for them in Muslim lands. However, there were historical periods where the situation for them deteriorated, especially after the raising of “puritanism” in North Africa and Spain under Almoravids and Almohads, and later of Mamluks.

Ibn Khaldūn lived in the time where the process of decentralization growing after the fall of Abbasids. The strongest Islāmic power in Middle East remained Mamluks in Egypt and Timurids in Persia, Syria and Central Asia. Ottoman rose into prominence and the Seljuk declined. North Africa and Spain was unstable and never had strong dynasties after the fall of Almohads. In tenth century, the competition between Fatimids (dominantly Shi’ah) and Abbasids (Sunni) was harsh. When one of the North Africa Fatimids viceroy, Zirids turn its loyalty to Abbasids in Baghdad in 1050, Fatimids sent two Arab-Bedouins tribes, Banu-Hilal and Banu-Sulaim to destroy the lands. The devastation was so great that it never recovered ever since. The destruction has been the panorama depicted by Ibn Khaldun in his writing when he described the power of Bedouin devastating the sedentary civilization. Whole section of the Chapter two of his Muqadimma entitled “Places that succumb to the Bedouins are quickly ruined” gave a vivid picture of this gloomy past.

Against this historical backdrop, Ibn Khaldūn theorized social organization that contrasted the savagery and civilization. He fashioned social organization into two categories, i.e. al-'umrān al-badawī (nomadic civilization) and al-'umrān al-haḍāri (sedentary civilization). About this, Franz Rosenthal, the translator and commentator of Muqaddimah writes,

As soon as several human beings, with their God-given power of thinking, begin to cooperate with each other and to form some kind of social organization, ‘umrān results. ‘Umran (translated here as “civilization”) is one of the key terms in Ibn Khaldun’s system. It is derived from a root which means “to build up, to cultivate,” and is used to designate any settlement above the level of individual savagery. In Ibn Khaldun’s time and place, ruins left by many great and prosperous cities attested to the prior existence of high civilization; it could be seen that large agglomerations of human beings had been stopped in their growth and expansion by geographical factors.

The agglomeration process, as stated above would only successful through a mobilizing force. It is ‘aṣābīyya (“group feeling,” occurred 500 times in Muqaddimah) which is the potential force of any social organization and development, and also the force for its expansion. Only a society with strong group feeling can overcome other group that less or lack of. He argued that the Bedouins having a strong group feeling, therefore by their excessive energy they could defeat many urban areas in North Africa and a constant problem for them. Ibn Khaldūn quoted one tradition said that in early Islāmic presence in North African, Bedouins defected from Islām twelve times in seventy years and made three hundred and seventy five battles with the Arabs.

Group feeling is also the basic material of the institutionalization of al-dawla (dynasty), either as mulk (royal authority) or khilāfah (political leadership of the Muslim community;}

the caliphate). Therefore, though the Bedouins championed group feeling, within the heart of this social soul, it holds the desire to mobilize them to sedentary condition. “Royal authority is the natural goal of group feeling.”56 When they come to this point, as Ibn Khaldun observed, the group feeling tie severed gradually and they become more vulnerable. And then the cycle comes to a close, that is when their established condition under the attack by the other stronger group feeling group. In the subsequent volumes of Kitāb al-‘Ibar, these part is known as in short name Tārikh (History), the scheme he laid in Muqaddima exemplified with “real” history of Bedouins, Arabs, Persians, and Romans.

While clapped and cheered mostly goes to Muqaddimma, in fact the rest of Kitāb al-‘Ibar is deemed important to recognize the dynamic of his theory and brought it into context. In it he demonstrated how power acquired and lost, how group feeling operated in specific case, and “disease” and “corruption” afflicted Islāmic dynasties, and lastly encouraged his reader to appropriate any “report” (khabar) to its proper context – basically to teach them how to sense history.57 In a quick look – probably in this point it explained why nineteenth century European scholar attracted to his Muqaddima – the most striking way Ibn Khaldūn presented his history and social processing was its novel outlining of history, compares to the topos of Islāmic historiography at the time. The usual presentation of history is a linear movement from the pre-Islāmic chaotic situation toward the glory of Islām. It followed the model of from abad to ‘adāb; a kind of Heilsgeschichte genre in Christian tradition, that is a progressive movement from chaos toward order under the supervision of God as a divine entity beyond human history.

However, the cycle, the rise-and-fall model was not a close cycle. We can imagine that the historical course is like a wheel that rolling but it is not rolling at the same spot, it rolls forward. Furthermore, Ibn Khaldūn was standing in the end of sīyāṣa-oriented (political-oriented) historiography tradition and combined it with sharī‘a. Sīyāṣa historical genre emerged in eleventh century. It most important contribution was historiography no more an interpretation of the momentous past.58 It put the contemporary standing at the same terrain with the (sacred) past. The political aspirations deemed important to determine historical course. Sharī‘a-oriented historiography on the other hand, concerned with moral aspects of historical course and believes that only through sharī‘a the troubles of dynasty and power can be remedied. The combination with sharī‘a allowed Ibn Khaldūn to see the concern of his time, i.e. connection between power and virtue. Therefore, the “ideal” combination of group feeling and royal authority would produce high moral quality and religious nobleness.59

**JEWISH HISTORY AS A LESSON**

In the second volume of his Kitāb al-‘Ibar, Ibn Khaldūnmade heavily use of Biblical sources in presenting the continuity between Islāmic history and the earlier revelations.60 However, other Muslim historians would never make a step as far as his when he employed the Jewish Second Temple history. Biblical history for Jews, Christians, and Muslims regarded a sacred history, where the relationship between, God, prophets, saints, and humankind in the stage of highly intimacy, while Second Temple history was so “humane” and so “Jewish.” The usage of this material probably was a sign that he sought the most “realistic” and contemporary of Jewish account. He relied in entirety to the work of Josippon (Yūsuf ibn Kuryūn), which he falsely identified to Josephus, a first century Jewish historian.61

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58Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, p. 182.
Sefer Josippon was a tenth century Jewish historical work regarding Second Temple Period that loosely based on Josephus’ work. It was published in the southern Italy and most of the material emulated Josephus’ works, notably The Jewish War. The importance of Josippon history should be understood within the Rabbinical Jewish tradition. Between the destruction of the Second Temple in the first century and the sixteenth century, Rabbinical Judaism having less appreciation to the historiography work; unlike the Christians and Muslims counterpart. The general attitude toward historiography marked at best by Maimonides contention toward it. Reading the profane history he considered as a “waste of time.”

The absence of Jewish historiography in the Medieval in significant part was contributed by the self-understanding of being in the state of exile (galut). That of the major themes of available chronicles was persecution and suffering. In this context, the work of Josippon deemed important to objectify Jewish experience. In this respect, it seemed that Ibn Khalidūn shared mutual perspective of Jewish history with the Jewish community. The state of Jewish exile connected to its loss of group feeling, rather than ensuring its survival, so that legitimize its condition under Islamic power and of its degradation. Unlike other Muslim authors, who tended to use Biblical account in defense of the truthfulness of Islam, Ibn Khalidūn approached this as a historian, limited himself from prejudice and polemical spirit.

In the context of Scriptural religious traditions, Muslims in many ways challenged Jews (and Christians) for their corrupted the Bible and for the practice of tampering (tabdil) and distorting (tahrij) it. Qur’ān self-evidently never accused them for doing so. As Ibn Khalidūn aware of, Qur’ān retorted that Jews and Christians altering the truth of the Bible, but not distorting it. On the other hand, he also critical toward biblical account for inaccuracies, which earlier historian, such as al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 956/7) took for granted. Another critic was biblical narrative did not include some of Muslims prophets.

Ibn Khalidūn obviously did not know Hebrew, though he preserved many Hebrew terminologies in his work regarding Jewish history. His employment of Hebrew terminologies was to rectify the errors made by earlier historians and polemicists regarding Hebrew names and terms. This was another credit that distinct him from other Muslim scholars.

In Chapter two of his Muqaddima, there is a section entitled “Prestige lasts at best four generations in one lineage.” The four-generation cycle was something he learnt from Hebrew Bible, perhaps from the translation of Vulgate. He writes, “In the Torah (tawrāt), there is the following passage: ‘God, your Lord, is powerful and jealous, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and the fourth generations.’ This shows that four generations in one lineage are the limit in extent of ancestral prestige.” This was the passage from the Book of Exodus 20:5, which substantiates the Pentateuch historical theoreythat clearly conformed to Ibn Khalidūn cyclical-progressive historical scheme. How-


64 Fischel, Ibn Khalidūn, p. 155.

ever, it seemed that Jewish history, its rise and fall betrayed the cyclical model of Ibn Khaldūn,because he assured it was no way for the Jews to rekindle their group feeling and resume to its glorious day. “All that remains of the once glorious Jewish civilization are vestigial remnants, certain crafts that have their origin in sedentary city life,” concludes Bland.71

At this point, he shared with general Muslim perception to the Jews. It seems that the Khaldunian Jews was a different version of Wandering Jew in Medieval Europe narrative that walked in the course of Islamic history to bear witness its failure in maintaining his group feeling. “[T]heir group feeling has disappeared and that for many long years they have been exposed to humiliation.”72 This notion recalled a classical Christian “Maghrībi” figure, St. Augustine of Hippo about a millennium earlier, who asserted, “God allowed the Jews to survive and live among Christians because they played the multifaceted role of ‘witness’.”73 Nonetheless, this notion could also mean that the Jews were not an exception of deficiency of group feeling, as many other sedentary populaces.74 It was like a “ruins” of the lost glory of the past that forever lost.

Beyond Josippon work, Ibn Khaldūn seemed had little knowledge on Diaspora Jews, even within Islamic lands. He mentioned briefly about Jewish exile in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, some accounts of Jews involvement in Persian-Byzantine wars, account of Jewish conflict with the Prophet in Mādina, account of Arab Jewish King of Ḥimyar, Dhu Nuwās, and the legendary Bedouin queen Kāhīna.75

In another presentation, Ibn Khaldun mentioned about the Jews special ability on “prediction” (he called it “malhama”), on tax collecting, and on financial administration.76 He also recorded a story of the fate of court Jews family, Waqqāṣa in the palace of Fez, in which after their short glory for their close connection with the Sultan, the entire family wiped out for cheating on the royal family.77

During twenty years of his resident in Egypt under Mamlūk, Ibn Khaldūn was silent about the Jewish community that among the oldest, the most vibrant and vital Jewish community in the Islāmic world. On the other hand, he mentioned some important names such as Sa‘īd bin Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī (Saadia Gaon), tenth century Egyptian Jewish philosopher, Sa‘ād al-Dawla, Jewish vizier of Ilkhānī in thirteenth century, and lastly Khallūf al-Maghīlī, a Rabbi of Fez, whom one of Ibn Khaldūn teachers once sought refuge.78 The only Jewish friend he mentioned in his work was Ibrāhīm ibn Zarzar (Zarzal),79 physician and astronomer who once served as a doctor for Merenids Sultan in Fez, to whom he paid high respect.80

It was a big surprise that such personality, a well-connected person, a statesman, a faqīh, a diplomat, a philosopher, and a historian who presented his history based on his observation to human condition, he championed the Biblical and Second Temple history, while abandoned his contemporary Jews. The only evaluation of the Jews that seemingly an appropriation of contemporary Jewish situation was his evaluation on various sciences in Chapter Six of his Muqaddima, then he came to the discussion of methods of instruction of those sciences. The subsequent section is entitled “Severity to students does them harm.”

That is what happened to every nation that fell under the yoke of tyranny and learned through it the meaning of injustice. One may check this by [observing] any person who is not in control of his own affairs and has no authority on his side to guarantee his [safety]. One may look at the Jews and the bad

71Bland, ‘An Islamic Theory of Jewish History.’
74Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah.
75Fischel, Ibn Khaldun, pp. 163–64.
76Fischel, Ibn Khaldun, p. 165.
80Fischel, Ibn Khaldun, pp. 166–70.
character they have acquired, such that they are described in every region and period as having the quality of khurj, which, according to well-known technical terminology, means ‘insincerity and trickery’. The reason is what we have said.81

This passage remarkably has a close affinity with the earlier Rousseau, Count of Clermont-Tonnerre, and Bishop de la Fare's account. Without being premeditated as a “pestilence” or “ahl al-sirkh,” Ibn Khaldūn described the Jews, along with students, slaves, servants, that were all prey of social/external pressure. In the earlier part, he says that a harsh punishment put the pulpit, especially little children (sic!) at danger of fall into “bad habits,” “feeling oppressed,” “become lazy,” “insincere,” “learning deceit and trickery,” so that “they fall short of their potentialities and do not reach the limit of their humanity.” To illustrate the condition would be, the Jews were picked as the living example - or practically as a “lesson.” The Jews equated with those “non-accomplished” people that fall short of moral because living under oppression. Otherwise, the correspondence to those people may suggest that the Jews condition was not unique. It applied to other human conditions.82

What Ibn Khaldūn offered in his analysis of Jewish degradation amounts to a direct interpretation of his Scripture, Qur’ān 2:61 and 3:111 repeat the historic judgment that ‘humiliation’ (dhillah) and ‘impoverishment’ (maskanah) shall afflict the Jew. Ibn Khaldūn interpreted the verse by providing it with a causal explanation that places the Jews on a par with all other groups who have suffered injustice at the hands of a tyrannical, unjust, and – as we shall soon argue – unwise power.83

At this juncture, Bland argued that Ibn Khaldūn passage linked to his Qur‘ānic interpretation on the Jews. The two sūrah, plus sūrah 5:22 are account of the Jewish wandering for forty years in the wilderness. The reason for this “punishment”, according to the scripture, was the wickedness of the Jews. The Jews was commanded to enter the city (sedentary civilization), but they refused, which was explained because of their “meekness” and “docility.” In the other words, they lost their group feeling. By wandering the new generation with strong, refresh group feeling could be expected to emerge in the expense of the old, “wicked” generation.

It is ‘ibar (lesson) but also tārīkh (recording) of various state of successive “generations.” Therefore, here, God providence is a kind of sociological mechanism.84 Reflected to the Ibn Khaldūn days, the diasporic experience that contemporary Jews undergone was like in the wilderness of the olden time. They lost their group feelings so that they fall prey to the tyrannical power. In fact, as mentioned above, Ibn Khaldūn shared the Jewish feeling, they mirrored each other. For both parties, Jewish history stopped at the point of exile – that was why Josippon account important. The rest was metahistory, chronicles of life that constantly at the check of the earlier events. The present condition was a bitter fruit of ancient sins, in Ibn Khaldūn’s wording, “lost of group feeling.” Within this mentality, every terrifying event is subsumed under familiar archetypes. The latest oppressor is “Haman”, the court Jew who attempts to save the Jews is “Mordechai,” the Christians are “Edom/Esau” the Muslims are “Ishmael.”85

In accordance with Bland, Ibn Khaldūn presentation was more to “neutralizing” effect of discrimination rather than an attempt to “emancipate.” The singularity of Ibn Khaldūn then, “by wedding his philosophy of history to the exegesis of the Qur’an was more than a revised perception of the Jews, a more neutral, less polemical view than was prevalent in his day.”86 Social injustice issue more to fore rather than emancipating the Jews, which against the spirit of Islām as rahmatan li al-

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85Yerushalmi, Zakhor: Jewish History., p. 36.
‘alamin. It was his Islāmic conviction, strongly endorsed by shari‘ah view of history of the moral force behind that underneath of the socio-psychological explanation. On contrary, eighteenth century French emancipators using its social explanation of the Jews based on natural rights, which to a point as a way to escape from (Christian) theological charm.

Since, obviously the function of the Jews in Ibn Khaldūn historical construction was to wield lessons for larger purpose of understanding the tension of badawī-hadārī civilization, thus the appropriation of his discursive Jews had little relevance with the factual Jewish presence. His attribution of the Jews to their moral and religious deficiency was the way to connect his discourse to the readers. Reflecting to the popular minds that would have been the reader of Ibn Khaldūn, ninth century essayist al-Jāhiz notes that Muslims perceived Christians as being “more sincere than the Jews, closer in affection, less treacherous, less unbelieving, and deserving of a lighter punishment [on Judgment Day].” According to his analysis the reasons for this popular preference was that the Jews had opposed the Prophet in Mādīna and generally belonged to a lower socio-economic stratum of society than either the Christians or Zoroastrians.87

To sum up, “Jewish history” then is “instructive because they confirm, as well as conform, to universal patterns abounds throughout the Muqaddima.”88 On the other hand, rather than simply stated that the Jews unfairly picked as an example of “the failure of history,” Ibn Khaldūn also implicitly shown the Jewish history was not free from the governing force of history; “what befalls the Jews, can and has befallen others.”89

During his career, he certainly met the Jews of all sorts, especially during his stay in Egypt. The range of possible sort of Jews included

Sephardic Jewish communities of Spain origin, Arab Jews, Karaites (Qaraim, al-Qa‘rajīyūn) and Samaritans (Shomronim, al-Sāmiriyūn). As a Grand qāḍī of Cairo probably he also once in a while dealt with or knew about the legal matters that implied to Jewish affairs. And he certainly witnessed the stronger imposing of Pact of ʿUmar by the newly Cherkess Mamlūks Sultan, Barqūq (reigned 1382-1399) toward aḥl al-dhimmī. With the story of Kāhina, he probably had some knowledge on the tiny Jewish Berbers in the Atlas Mountains. In his homeland, Jews of Ifrīqiya, was a Jewish community.

As a kāṭīb al-ʿalāmā (court secretary) at the court of Ibn Tafrakin, Ibn Khaldūn probably ever met one of the zeukan ha-Yehudim (elders of the Jews). In 1357, he followed his teacher to take refuge in the Merenids city of Fez, Morocco, he most probable aware of the city’s al-funduq al-Yahūdī (Jewish quarter). A year later he met for the first time Ibrāhīm ibn Zarzar, the court doctor. They befriended since and Ibn Khaldūn mentioned his name four times in his work.

CONCLUSION

In Ibn Khaldūn’s psycho-social description and explanation of the Jews seems that he plays in the borderline between standard topos of Muslim perception toward the Jews at the time and considering the Jews as social body as like any other groups, hence to a degree escaped him from simple stereotyping them. He cleverly reified his Qur’ānic interpretation of the Jews into sociological explanation.

As a statesman, politician, faqīh, it was peculiar to apply modern notion of emancipation in his perception toward the Jews or any of aḥl al-dhimmī groups. It was not because of no Enlightenment in Maghrib or Islāmic world in general, but long objectified process of history produced different propensity. The concern of his time on defending, upholding Islāmic aspiration, pursued distinct ideal. For him, the Jews were lost their group feeling, not because it was so happen, but because it understood within the dhimmī framework in Islām. That

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of being the member of “protected” group was a historical mark of lost the necessary force of group feeling to gain royal authority. Ibn Khaldūnindeed roaming around at the edge of cultural and religious bound that brought him to the idiosyncratic insight, but it does not automatically catapult him from Cairo to Paris.

After Ibn Khaldūn, the improvement of the Jewish condition was coming in the sixteenth century, when Ottoman hosted many Iberian Jews who escaped from persecution and expulsion by new Christian power in Iberian Peninsula. There were also exceptional event when Ottoman Sultan at least once interceded to save the Jews of Ancona from death penalty. The formal and legal emancipation to ahl al-dhimmī began in nineteenth century Ottoman in the period known as Tanẓimat (“reorganization,” Reformation).

Ibn Khaldūn stood prominently in modern history. He personally pursuit something larger than his life and tradition, yet he also deeply embedded to the context of his age. In his “betwixt and between” position he could see and imagine different “universal” history. Some say his accomplishment as a historian that in him “the empiric facts of history have finally come to rest within a mature and systematic body of theory.”

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