IBN KHALDUN'S ASABIYAH
Past and Present

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore Ibn Khaldun's concept of *asabiyah* and its validity for the betterment of a society. It discusses the concept with respect to its presence in the Muslim world of Ibn Khaldun and, while investigating the causes of the rise and fall of civilizations in the context of *asabiyah*, it tries to find out its traces in the present day Muslim world, in general, and Arab world, in particular and in the end tries to answer the question that if *asabiyah* is reintroduced, with its modern interpretation, will it work for the betterment of the Muslim world of today.

Introduction

Abu Zayed Abdur Rahman bin Muhammad bin Khaldun or more commonly Ibn Khaldun was the remarkable fourteenth century Muslim philosopher who stands tall among his contemporaries for his modernism, innovation, diversity and excellence. He was and is still considered a thinker much ahead of his time. He was at once a scholar, philosopher, historian, politician, sociologist, theologian and jurist – a true erudite and a master of all. He practiced Islamic law, but his innovation, even here, developed his identity as that of a 'secular thinker',[1] an apt title for him by the translator of his work, Franz Rosenthal.

Ibn Khaldun's life was spent in turmoil. Twice in his life he suffered personal loss. The resulting solitude was evident in his personality and hence formed the foundation of all his ideologies. In addition to that, his experiences at work too became the driving force in the development of his philosophy.

Of Ibn Khaldun's many contributions, one of the greatest was his philosophical interpretation of the rise and fall of the dynasties where he provided specific reasons for the establishment of the great civilizations.

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[1]   S.M.A. Imam, *Some Aspects of Ibn Khaldun's Socio-Political Analysis of History* (Karachi: Khurasan Islamic Research Centre, 1978), p.1.

In this context, he made use of an exceptionally new context of *asabiyah*, a term coined by him.

Asabiyah has been an area of interest to scholars for many centuries. It has been interpreted and re-interpreted by each one of them in a variety of ways. It is such a complex concept that it is still open to newer definitions. This paper in no way promises to explore *asabiyah* in its totality. It is a small effort to explore only a limited aspect of *asabiyah.* Even that is open to criticism by readers due to the greatness of the original work itself. For what makes any work beneficial is that it is true in all times and which can keep posing new questions in inquisitive minds.

Asabiyah

The term *Asabiyah* is derived from an Arabic word, *asab* which means to bind, i.e., to bind the individuals into groups (*asabtun* or *isabatun*). One scholar believes that '*Asabiyah* is also a form derived from *asaba*, which designates the concept that is etymologically abstracted from the concrete form'.[2] The term 'has been variously translated as *espirit de corps*, group solidarity, nationalism, patriotism, communal spirit, ethos',[3] blood relationship, tribal spirit, group feeling, feeling of solidarity, and social solidarity. De Slane's French translation, *espirit de corps*, and the English translation, social solidarity, seem to be closest to the original term.[4] The exact translation of the word is still a matter of discussion. Ibn Khaldun himself did not describe the word in his *Muqaddimah*, it is possible that he considered it to be easily understandable. This is the reason most of the researchers use it as it is, as if this term has its own separate identity.

Many thinkers have used the concept in the origination their own concepts. Like Emile Durkheim, (1858- 1917) who is considered as one of the founders of modern social sciences, gave a concept of 'collective conscience' and 'organic solidarity', which is identical to Ibn Khaldun's *asabiyah.*[5]

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[2] Fuad Baali, *Society State and Urbanism; Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), p.43.

[3] Cedric Dover, 'The Racial Philosophy of Ibn Khaldun', *Phylon*, 13:2 (1952), p.108, available from Jstor, http://www.jstor.org/pss/271543 (accessed January 12, 2011)

[4] Fuad Baali, *op.cit.,* pp.43,44.

[5] Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp.86-8.

Asabiyah is the force, which binds groups together, who share same culture, language and customs. It goes to varied levels from family, tribe, kingdom or nation as a whole. It reflects the developments in the society. 'With '*asabiyya* [*asabiyah*], society fulfills its primary purpose to function with integrity and transmits its values and ideas to the next generation'.[6]

With the help of *asabiyah* Ibn Khaldun gave an explanation and reasons for the rise and fall of societies. In *asabiyah* he found the basis for the progress of groups. For explanation, he formed the stages and division of societies, and gave the terms *umran badawi* and *umran hadari*. He gave the name *ilm al-umran* to his new science. This 'the historical cycle consists in a dynamic change from *badawa* into *hadara*'.[7] *Umran badawi* is the first stage of development and it became the basis for *umran hadari*.

The meaning of *badawa* is primitive, and the derivative meanings of the word are nomadic, rural or backward. The people in this group live a natural and simple life. They are hard worker and brave and are bound together by their close ancestral or tribal ties. '(They) are notable for their fierce, but essentially good characters, submissive only to tribal leaders of outstanding personality'.[8] *Asabiyah* serves as a link to unite them together.

Hadara is civilized or a sedentary way of life, it is related to urbanism. '(They) were distinguished by their decadence and lack of martial ardour, as a result of self-indulgent living'.[9]

Ibn Khaldun believes that *badawa* people possess greater qualities for change. They are more progressive. They live a life filled with hardships so they are not afraid of any outside interference. With their hardworking zeal they become successful and move to the next stage, *hadara*. However, once they reach *hadara* they become stagnant and indulge in luxuries of their urbanized life, because they believe to have achieved the epitome of advancement. But this sedentary way of life weakens *asabiyah*. When *badawa* people became urbanized, de-

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[6]   Akbar Ahmed, 'Ibn Khaldun's Understanding of Civilizations and the Delimmas of Islam and the West Today', *Middle East Journal,* 56:1 (2002), p.30.

[7]   Louis Baeck, *Ibn Khaldun's Political and Economic Realism*, available from https://perswww.kuleuven.be/~u0004464/teksten/IbnKhaldunsPolitical andEconomicRealism.doc+IBN+KHALDUN'S+POLITICAL+AND+ECO NOM IC+REALISM&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk (accessed 17 January 2011)

[8]   Cedric Dover, *op.cit.,* p.116.

[9]   *Ibid.*

tribalization begins and that also ceases *asabiyah* from making any progress. 'In ibn Khaldun's estimation, culture and luxury are the highest goals of *umran hadari*'.[10] But, as their goals are achieved there comes a stagnant phase of their civilizations. They indulge in luxuries and need army to protect them and their properties. This is so because 'the bodies of the urban population are found to be more delicate than those of the inhabitants of the deserts who live a hard life'.[11] It is not only their living pattern that makes the *hadara* population fragile as compared to *badawa*, but also their food which makes their bodies weak. '(They) live a life of abundance and have all the good things to eat, die more quickly than others when droughts of famine come upon them'.[12]

Under such circumstances they demanded public works from the state to make their lives comfortable. The public works like irrigation, flood control and famine eradication are the prerequisite of their demands. State in the course of development, in patronizing education, science, and arts, and in maintaining army, spend a tremendous amount and exhaust the royal treasury. When the cities become more developed and larger they need more finances to meet the requirements of growing administration and army. After this period of development, and expansion of economics resulting in creation of wealth, comes the period of overload over the fiscal conditions of the state. Already levied taxes to meet the expanses are raised to maximum level by the state. That make people overburdened and hostile towards state. They lose interest in the development process of the civilizations like in economic and social sectors. The absence of those activities finally lead to the decline of civilization. Another reason which Ibn Khaldun gives is that, the luxuries of life made town people corrupt and due to this civilizations decay. 'Moreover, 'luxury corrupts the character' and the religion of an urbanite',[13] which Ibn Khaldun believes is another cause of the decline of society. It leads to the disappearance of *asabiyah* and the *hadara* people start relying on strangers for their protection, which ultimately destroy their city. These outsiders are *badawa* people having strong *asabiyah*. 'Unlike most living things, however, '*umran hadari* 'die' not from natural causes. Rather, they are destroyed by people possessing

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[10]   Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers on History* (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2000), p.175.

[11]   Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah; An Introduction to History*, N.J. Dawood (ed.), trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p.66.

[12]   *Ibid.,* p.67.

[13]   Fuad Baali, *op.cit.,* p.87.

characteristics of '*umran badawi*'.[14] This decline in urbanized society with its ruling dynasty generally works for the advantage of another *badawa* group which possesses strong feeling of *asabiyah*.

Asabiyah is the uniting force, which has the ability to protect and defend the people. People with strong *asabiyah* are braver and mostly they do not fear the aggression or suppression. 'This group spirit or unity, *asabiyah*, makes the individual devote himself to his group and view the world through its eyes'.[15] Here enters the central point of this cycle of rise and fall that is *asabiyah*. Because *hadara* people, who supersede *badawa*, have strong *asabiyah* they are more progressive and eventually lead to *umran hadari*. Having tendencies of *hadara* they face decline in the natural cycle of rise and fall.

It is not so that there is no remedy to the dying factor which brings the decline of dynasties in *asabiyah.* 'In such conditions, the time comes when power can only be maintained by the emergence of a paramount chief, who must largely unify the lesser *asabiyah* to consolidate himself'.[16] Therefore, there comes the concept of royal authority with the help of which *asabiyah* makes its position strong.

Royal authority and *asabiyah*

Ibn Khaldun based his socio-political theory on royal authority or *al-mulk* and *asabiyah*. Both of the concepts are in close association with each other in many aspects. 'Group feeling and royal authority, each one of these tends to make the group and the autocrat, respectively, a law unto oneself'.[17] But dynasties with weaker royal authority start to crumble; yet they remain intact until the centre remains untouched.

> (But) the centre remains intact until God permits the destruction of the whole dynasty. Then the centre is destroyed. But when a dynasty is overrun from the centre, it is of no avail to it that the outlying areas remain intact. It dissolves all at once. The centre is like the heart from which the (vital) spirit spreads. Were the heart to be overrun and captured, all the extremities would be routed.[18]

Here Ibn Khaldun gave the example of Persain dynasty whose centre was at al-Madain. When it was captured by Muslims, the whole empire collapsed.

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[14]   Ibn Khaldun, *op.cit.,* p.175.
[15]   Fuad Baali, *op.cit.,* p.45.
[16]   Cedric Dover, *op.cit.,* p.117.
[17]   S.M.A.Imam, *op.cit.,* p.4.
[18]   Ibn Khaldun, *op.cit.,* p.129.

A ruler with a good leadership quality has an eminent place in the sense of *asabiyah*. Ibn Khaldun was of the opinion that the highest group should possess good leadership. With respect to the system of state Ibn Khaldun favors the autocratic rule. As he writes, 'politics requires that only one person exercise control'.[19] However, with the diminishing goal of *asabiyah*, the respect that people show to the leader or ruler also starts to disappear. At such an event the leader too forsakes his subjects. In this regard it is clear that Ibn Khaldun's autocratic ruler is the one who looks after the needs of the subjects too.

The weak *asabiyah* also leads to the downfall of the ruling authority. It happened in the case when the size of dominion increased. With the bigger state comes larger population, with its own resources, that puts an ultimate limit to ruling capacity. 'For the difficulties of rule increase according to the size of the area… the *asabiya* is weakened as it is stretched'.[20] With the larger empires of extended population come people having different feeling of *asabiya* of their own. It brings the clash of interest between the royal authority and new subjects which result in revolts and internal strives which, after same time, becomes difficult for royal authority to control.

The weak *asabiyah* is not the only reason towards the downfall of royal authority. There are other reasons too, like the indulgence of ruler in luxuries, and the deviation from the right path. For Ibn Khaldun nepotism also serves as a cause to bring its fall.

Blood ties and the tribal value

Ibn Khaldun gave special connection to *asabiyah* and blood ties. For him blood ties are natural among mankind. Blood relationship sticks together in a form of bondage, 'people who share same blood protect each other in the times of need. This is so because they have strong *asabiyah*. 'Blood ties, for him, are natural force'.[21] So the feeling of solidarity comes along naturally.

> The ties of blood possess a force which all men recognize through a natural feeling. Their influence leads us to concern ourselves with the state of our relatives and neighbours, especially when they suffer an injustice or their life is in danger…when two people lend each other mutual aid. And they are sufficiently related to be united by heart and

[19]   Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957), p.263.

[20]   Ibn Khaldun, *op.cit.,* p.129.

[21]   Cedric Dover, *op.cit.,* p.118.

> sentiments, it is influence of blood kinship which orders their conducts.[22]

The concept of the connection between the blood ties and *asabiyah* is not confined to a small group, it is found in big tribes too. It is also between neighbours and allies.

> This affection everybody has for his clients and allies results from the feeling of shame that comes to a person when one is humiliated. The reason for it is that a client (-master) relationship leads to close contact exactly, or approximately in the same way, as does common descent.[23]

However, according to Ibn Khaldun blood ties are not always a source behind the creation of *asabiyah*. He considers that it is natural for most of the men to help their relatives regardless of the fact whether their relatives are right or not. So in broader perspective it will not serve the interest of *asabiyah.* Therefore, while giving important place to blood ties in the formation of state, Ibn Khaldun states that the state is the natural goal of *asabiyah,* the importance and strength of *asabiyah* may result from close and direct blood relationships, but the state is more than just blood relationships and more than just leadership; it means superiority and the power to rule by force.[24]

So the authority has all powers that are required to rule. Here blood relationship is not the only binding force, other powers are present that to work for the interest of power or leader. Max Weber (German Sociologist and Political Economist, 1864-1920) gave a theory that, 'although a nation is apt to include notions of common descent and homogeneity, e.g., common-cultural values that provide a unifying national bond, 'national affiliation need not be based upon common blood'.[25] This concept reflects Ibn Khaldun's idea that state is more than just a blood relationship.

Asabiyah and religion

Ibn Khaldun in his concept of *asabiyah* gives importance to religion. According to him, 'all religions, worthy of the name, have taught humanity the value of justice, sympathy and love, in some form or another'.[26] Religion serves as force to create great civilization and empire. It also enhances the *asabiyah* of the followers. Religion in

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[22]   *Ibid.,* p.110.

[23]   *Ibid.,* pp.110,111.

[24]   Ibn Khaldun, *op.cit.,* p.98.

[25]   Fuad Baali, *op.cit.,* p.53.

[26]   *Ibid.,* p.65.

creating a great empire needs *asabiyah* in due course of the process. Groups with strong *asabiyah*, propagate their religion by fighting for it. Religion which becomes an effective force, 'creates a new loyalty: absolute belief in, and obedience to, the demands of the law and the religious leader'.[27] He believes that the *asabiyah*, which is created by the force of religion, is stronger than the *asabiyah* which is created by natural kinship and worldly desires. These selfless instincts make it free from the vices and immoral practices. The practitioners of religion are the followers of divine law and they obey their rulers as well. All such things make them stronger as compared to the other civilizations. Religion not just acts as a force to form the great empire and civilization but has a tendency to preserve its existence as well.

While referring to religions Ibn Khaldun was talking about his own religion Islam and here he mentions the relationship of Islam and Arabs 'that Islam is an Arab religion, and its founder was an Arab'.[28] After the advent of Islam Arab dynasties 'cemented their leadership with the religious law and its ordinances, which, explicitly and implicitly, are concerned with what is good for civilization'.[29]

Through the system of caliphate of the Arabs, he believes, the royal authority and government became stronger. Islam marks the rise of the Arabs and the caliphates that follow the tenets of Islam also established and maintained their empires firmly.

Asabiyah in Islamic perspective

Religion is important in Ibn Khuldun's concept of *asabiyah*. He praises the role of Islam in creation of the strong governments, but here it is necessary to evaluate the practice and presence of *asabiyah* in Islamic teachings and its implication in Islamic society.

'In Islam, there was no place for bigotry, *at-taassub*, or even for group feeling'. A*l-asabiyah* is, therefore, likely to set off the atavistic trends of the Arabs way of life'.[30] The only group feeling which exists in Quran is of human fellowship and social grouping based on firm resolution to defend the mission of Islam against the oppressors and infidels. There is not a single reference found in the Quran that supports religious intolerance.

In Ibn Khaldun's *asabiyah* there is pride among the people for their blood ties and kindred. But this is not the case in Islam. The

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27   S.M.A.Imam, *op.cit.,* p.4.

28   Muhsin Mahdi, *op.cit.,* p.201.

29   Ibn Khaldun, *op.cit.,* p.428.

30   *Ibid.,* p.121.

following saying of Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W.W) negates the essence of *asabiyah*: 'God removed from you the arrogance of the pre-Islamic times and its pride in ancestors. You are the children of Adam, and Adam was made of dust'.[31] Foundation of *asabiyah*'s growth is based on the presence of blood ties and tribe, but Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W.W) and his companions were suppressed by their own tribesmen while they received support from the inhabitants of Madina who were strangers to them. Nomadic life with stronger *asabiyah* was highly praised by Ibn Khaldun, Prophet (S.A.W.W.), however, condemns the nomadic feelings and *asabiyah* of the pre-Islamic era.

As far as the connection between *asabiyah* and royal authority (*al-mulk*) is concerned, Islam has its own parameters. 'In the Islamic ideology… it is *at-taqwa*, piety (or conscientiousness), which deserves and acquires *al-mulk*, sovereignty, and not, as Ibn Khaldun states, *al-asabiyah*, group feeling, that derives compulsively towards *al-mulk* royal authority'.[32]

Asabiyah can also be rejected by the teaching of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) on the grounds of suppression of other groups or tribes. It is natural for every group to possess group feeling, but in order to consolidate and maintain their civilization they even go to the limits of suppressing others. The rise of one dynasty is caused mostly by the deadly decline of the previous one.

Despite Ibn Khaldun's efforts to create a relationship between Islam and *asabiyah*, there is no denying the fact that Islamic principles are not compatible with the core elements of *asabiyah*. Although in support of these notions the thinkers, who supported this concept of Ibn Khaldun, mention those interpretations of Quranic verses which Ibn Khaldun did for justifying his own concept of *asabiyah*.

Asabiyah in today's Muslim world

As mentioned above royal authority and *asabiyah* are linked together. They form strong society and with the help of *asabiyah* society functions well with integrity and in the long run transmit its experiences and traditions to the next generation. 'Ibn Khaldun's science of culture ultimately functions to illuminate the science of good governance. In our times, one of the major crises that face Muslim society is that of leadership'.[33]

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[31]   S.M.A.Imam, *op.cit.,* p.13.
[32]   *Ibid.,* p.11.
[33]   *Ibid.,* p.19.

Today the concept of leadership is varied in Muslim societies. It is believed that the weak leadership or even the collapse of leadership is causing breakdown of society. In the case of Arab world they are also loosing *asabiyah* where Ibn Khaldun thought it was most prevalent. There is a problem of disunity among Arabs themselves. Arab governments are suspicious of each others' due to the mistrust and even deception. These differences are not peripheral, 'they are becoming more potent and more conspicuous as disintegrative factors'.[34] The problem with the Arab world today is their narrow *asabiyah.* This is visible through the lack of tribal loyalty, faithlessness to a religious group.

The coming of modernization brought several changes but at the beginning, 'societies are traditional, religious, and pre-modern; but at the same time they are also 'active' societies with functioning neighbourhood structures, and very clear perceptions of what are 'good' and 'evil', and a high respect of the law'.[35] But as this process proceeds, these values of societies begin to decline and as a result it causes the collapse of *asabiyah* as well.

In today's world the people are more inclined to live in the cities because the cities with the developed settings provide them with employment and all the necessities of life. Under such circumstances it is natural that *asabiyah* is narrower here. The following reasons were given for the breakup of *asabiyah* in Muslim world:

> massive urbanization, dramatic demographic changes, a population explosion, large-scale migration to the West, the gap between rich and poor which is growing ominously wide, the widespread corruption and mismanagement of rulers, the rampant materialism coupled with the low premium on scholarship, the crises of identity and , perhaps most significantly, new and often alien ideas and images.[36]

Furthermore it has been emphasised that this breakdown of *asabiyah* is formed in the majority of the population of the Muslim world, which is mostly 'young, dangerously illiterate, mostly jobless and easily mobilized for radical change'.[37]

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[34]   Akbar Ahmed, *op.cit.,* p.29.
[35]   Fuad Baali*, Arab Unity and Disunity: Past and Present* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2004), p.40.
[36]   Arno Tausch, Almas Heshmati, *Asabiyya: Re-interpreting Value Change in Globalized Societies,* Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), 4459 (September, 2009), p.9.
[37]   Akbar Ahmed, *op.cit.,* p.31.

The breakup of *asabiyah* actually started in mid-twentieth century onwards, when a larger portion of the Muslim world got independence from the European colonial powers. The period that followed led to disappointment and decline in the feeling of *asabiyah.*

Globalization has now become a major reason of the breakdown of *asabiyah i*n the present Muslim world. The concept of nationalism is changing. Businessmen, experts and students are going beyond borders in pursuing their desires. With such migrations, ethnicity and nationalism are weakening day by day. Even religion is no more confined to the borders. Islam as Ibn Khaldun said was the religion of Arabs has now found its followers in the Western world too. They are in considerable number and increasing day by day. But it is not that only the Muslim world is facing these downward trends of civilization, they are equally prevalent in other nations as well, but our concern here is to explore it in Muslim world.

Prospects for the future

Ali al-Wardi renowned Iraqi thinker amended Ibn Khaldun's theory in 1951, to form his own hypothesis for the Arabic society. He opined that the entire history of the Arab world is a witness of the conflict between the *badawa* and *hadara* and with the help of which he characterized the Arab countries into three categories. First category consist of those countries where *hadara* and *badawa* exist side by side; second where *badawa* is more dominant (such as in the Arabian Peninsula), third category where *hadara* is more dominant (Egypt).[38]

Al-Wardi wished to see a united Arabic society and he wanted to achieve it through his hypothesis. 'In his hypothesis he agreed that not all the aspects of nomadism are applicable to the contemporary Arab world. He centered his findings on certain customs and norms like *asabiyah,* pride, and the application of power to make things in order and correct. These urbanites learnt from nomads, but they neglect them to the great extent. If Arab states achieved the strong nomadic *asabiyah* instead of their narrow one, through that they can attain their goal…'.[39]

By giving the example of his country, Iraq, he tries to convince that the agricultural system of Iraq was tribal, not feudal. He supports his argument with the help of Ibn Khaldun's concept of sociology.[40]

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[38] Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2008), p.50.

[39] Fuad Baali, *Arab, Unity, and Disunity, op.cit.,* p.42.

[40] Mohammed Jaber Al-Ansari, trans. by Riyad Y. Hamzah, *Encounter of History and Modernity: Khaldunism for a New Arab Culture* (Bloomington: Author House, 2010), p.52.

Conclusion

Ibn Khaldun lived a prolific life of a scholar and political thinker. All that he learnt was direct or indirect result of his various experiences and encounters at work and knowledge gained through education and lessons in personal life. He contributed prominently to various fields such as politics, economics, philosophy of history and social geography. In most of which he rose to the status of great maestro for his ever new concepts and theories. He is even considered as the real founder of sociology. As historian he has left vivid accounts of the empires and the running of the governments of his time. He is considered as the pioneer of the new trends in the Muslim historiography. He perceives history as a cycle in which rough, nomadic peoples, with high degrees of *asabiyah,* internal bonding and little material culture to lose, invade and take resources from sedentary and essentially urban civilizations.

Asabiyah which according to Ibn Khaldun was a binding force of humanity to establish great empires and civilization is not to be found in the modern world of today. He suggested it as a ground for the rise of the Muslim dynasty and further elucidates that among the nomads and urbanized population, the former holds strong *asabiyah.* Explaining the cycle of rise and fall of dynasties he holds that the nomads are progressive and brave because they have strong *asabiyah.* In his opinion nomads have more features to bind them together like tribal association and ancestral and blood ties. These features along with the strong *asabiyah* stick them together and make them a force to suppress any oppression. They have tendency to upgrade to the next level of development and turn to the urbanization. On the other hand, the urban population having indulged in luxuries of life becomes weak and dull. They live a sedentary life and they become more demanding and create a burden over the state treasury.

The connection which he created between the royal authority and *asabiyah* is of prime importance in the existence of both. Because the strong *asabiyah* makes the royal authority stronger, likewise in the efficient royal authority, *asabiyah* has its strength. In the larger empires where *asabiyah* has somehow weakened it becomes difficult for the royal authority to cope up with the situation.

Ibn Khaldun also associated *asabiyah w*ith blood ties and the tribal values and he strongly asserts that such feelings are important in making *asabiyah* even stronger. However, such assertions have tinged his philosophy with a tone of racial bias, for he has laid a stress on the importance of Arab race. He, however, adds that various other aspects such as strong state, morality, religious beliefs are also there to serve as binding force. For Ibn Khaldun religion and *asabiyah* are in close

association with each other. With the presence of religion people are bound to act morally. Religion also plays an active role as a uniting force. This also develops a high *asabiyah* among the group.

As already mentioned these concepts are not to be found anywhere in Islam. Islam does not profess the pride over kindred or lineage. There is no place for bigotry (*ta'assub*) and no division on the basis of caste. Racial superiority is nowhere in the teachings of Islam. Here an important question arises, whether this idea is applicable in the present Muslim world or not?

Ibn Khaldun believed that nomads were more progressive than the urban population. If we look at the present scenario, it is evident that city dwellers are more advanced as compared to the nomads or village people. They excel at learning, arts, sciences, and technology. Because of such qualities they are well aware of the corruptions and vices of the governments and ruling class. They are not the blindfolded followers. If the revolution will come in the future it will start from the cities. Due to their education most of the city dwellers are humble and consider other as their equal. Whereas the nomads are warlike people and this is dangerous for the present world situation, where Muslims are held responsible for terrorist activities the world over.

It can now be said that *asabiyah* is disappearing from the present world. Muslims today lack devoted leaders who serve their interests. The condition of Muslims is also deplorable that makes it difficult for them to rise as a force. There also lack of unity and the concept of Muslim *ummah* is almost non-existent. Globalization too has played its role in the disintegration of *asabiyah* from the present Muslim world. As the world has now turned into a global village and the concepts of tribe and locality association have almost completely vanished. Under such conditions, whether the hypothesis like Wardi's can work as effective time will only tell. The problem here is also whether the Muslim world is willing to act as a force or not because in the current situation they are even unaware of their real issues and problems. In the absence of such knowledge it is only a matter of sheer luck that a solution could be found. The need here is to think critically and work for the betterment of the humanity.

This paper has explored the concept of *asabiyah* only in its limited capacity. This idea has multitude of definitions and interpretations.