



## **Significance of Religion in Social Justice: A Comparative Study of Social Justice Theories of Thomas Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun.**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

Social justice refers to fair and equitable division of resources, opportunities and privileges in the society. Social justice is the contradictory of discrimination based on race, gender, economy or religion at social level<sup>1</sup>. Although the term is widely used nowadays in secular circles but it has been mainly a religious conception. The term social justice has been widely used by theologians in their works as a significant measure of the religion.

Social justice originated in religious circles, evolved with a conceptual development of its larger part and implemented officially by the authorities of religious organisations. Modern philosophy identifies it late, officially after the publication of John Rawls's 'A theory of Justice'<sup>2</sup> in 1971 and attained a wide attention after its publication. But the conception of idea developed throughout history with multiple permutations over the time. John Rawls defines Justice as fairness or social good which was already prevalent in theological circles of Middle Ages.

Religion always has a significant role in shaping the idea of social justice as it is considered as a moral imperative in many faiths. The historic and future patterns of interactions in world's major religions are significant enough to understand the issues of social justice in a globalized world. Social justice is the concern of which religious traditions have incorporated a deep yearning as biblical traditions signify the idea of creation of man in the image of God while as in Islamic traditions man is referred to as vicegerent to God. Huntington in his major work 'Clash of Civilizations'<sup>3</sup> refers that civilizations are enclosed entities based more or less on specific values as western civilization is based on Christian values whereas Islamic civilization signifies Islamic values.

Saint Thomas Aquinas was an Italian priest, known to the world as an influential philosopher, theologian and jurist in the tradition of scholasticism. He had mastery in scholastic tradition and has been titled as the Doctor Angelicus, the Doctor Communis, and the Doctor Universalis. *Summa Theologica*<sup>4</sup> penned down by Thomas Aquinas functions as a basic text for the study of justice in the western tradition.<sup>5</sup> Aquinas reflects that theology is a higher method of science than philosophy. The *Summa Theologica* is essentially a treatise on human action whereby the rational creature, man, seeks return to the creator, God. It is through the human action that the rational creature is able to provide a potential return to the creator. The Thomist concept of Justice is known worldwide as Thomas Aquinas discusses the concept of justice in detail. Related areas, including right, commutative justice, and distributive justice, have been thoroughly investigated by him in his treatise.

Likewise, Abu Zayd 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn-Khaldun, a Muslim Arab sociologist, philosopher, and historian is known to the world as one of its greatest social scientist. Ibn-Khaldun's concept of social justice is much appealing with valid applicability even in the contemporary world. Ibn-Khaldun believes social justice to mean securing the general interest, and considers it to be the basis for provision of construction and security. In his major work, *al-Muqaddimah*<sup>6</sup>, he propounds that the social function of justice is to ensure a stable social order, which is necessary for sedentary civilisations to grow.

### **Statement of the problem:**

In this research, the opinions of Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun about the concept of justice are examined in a comparative method. The concept of justice is one of the most basic concepts of political thought and clearly it can be said that the difference of opinions of many thinkers is due to the difference of their understanding of this fundamental concept. Therefore, if this difference in perception of the idea of social justice can be explained clearly the

<sup>1</sup> Tyler, T.R., Boeckmann, R.J., Smith, H.J., & Huo, Y.J. (1997). *Social Justice in a Diverse Society* (1st ed.). Routledge.

<sup>2</sup> Rawls, John (2001). *A Theory of Justice [TJ]*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Revised edition, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. (1997). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York :Touchstone.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, Aquinas, Saint, 1225?-1274. (192042). *The "Summa theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas ...* London :Burns, Oates & Washburne, Ltd.

<sup>5</sup> McInerney, Ralph and John O'Callaghan, "Saint Thomas Aquinas", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/aquinas/>>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Khaldun, The *Muqaddimah*. { Translated By Franz Rosenthal, Edited By N.J. Dawood, 1967 } London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

differences of the thinkers will also be largely smoothed out. Pertinently, this research with reference to the works of these two Semitic religion thinkers seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of justice and basic concepts of Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun in the context of religion?
2. What are the main differences and similarities of these two Semitic thinkers about the concept of justice?
3. Have these two Semitic religion thinkers presented a practical solution to realize justice and fight against oppression?

It is worth mentioning that in this review, the thoughts of these two thinkers are compared and weighed, but it should be noted that their concord and conflict has been considered in general and briefly. In other words, there is not any specific rule set regarding the similarities or differences, matching their works or tracing their equality in opinions but the study is a general comparative study, which signifies that the opinions of these two Semitic thinkers may be similar to each other in one point of view, they may differ in other ways. Therefore, in the analytical and comparative study of complex social affairs, it is necessary to pay attention to the relativity of things and pay attention to all factors and their effects on each other. Finally, the conception of Social Justice of Thomas Aquinas is compared with the conception of Ibn-Khaldun. The aforementioned principles are applied to the underlying question of whether the conception of social justice ideas of the two aforesaid thinkers may conflict or concord in a just and orderly society.

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### Literature review:

It is worth to mention that the Comparative study of concept of Social Justice of Thomas Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun has not been done, but the study of concept of Social Justice of Thomas Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun separately has been done or their thoughts have been compared with other thinkers. In *Summa Theologica* written by Saint Thomas Aquinas in 1265-1273CE, he discusses Various Cardinal and Theological Virtues. This work being the principal work of Thomas Aquinas, he divided the book into three parts and designed it to instruct both beginners and experts in all matters of Christian Truth. The topics discussed in the book includes Christian morality, justice, ethics, law, and the life of Christ, providing philosophical and theological solutions to commonly asked question regarding Christian faith. In this work, Thomas Aquinas details the concept of justice and its all paradigms. He connects the justice to religion and answers the entire question regarding the concept in this invincible work. In 1377 CE, Ibn-Khaldun completed his masterpiece entitled as *Al-Muqaddimah*. This book often translated as "Introduction" or "Prolegomenon," is the most important Islamic history of the premodern world. Ibn-Khaldun in this monumental work established the foundations of several fields of knowledge, including the philosophy of history, sociology, ethnography, and economics. He also discusses justice and its need to cultivate the essential ground for the sustenance of a civilization. In his autobiography *Al-ta'rif bi Ibn Khaldūn* by Ibn-Khaldun, Ibn-Khaldun discusses an episode of his meeting with Tamerlane and their discussion regarding the importance of Justice in the cultivation of social solidarity which inturn leads to rise of civilizations. Ibn-Khaldun; while explaining to Tamerlane the significance of justice, enlists some examples from history where great men exhibited justice and by the virtue of which their civilization reached to epitome. An article titled as "Justice in the teaching of St. Thomas" by Matthew Rigney in 1964, the theme is to see with St Thomas some aspects of the moral movement of man towards his creator, those aspects namely that have to do with his fellow travellers on the way to God, Man's positive contribution to human social living. And this human social life, being human, should be rational; yet, as St Francis of Sales observes in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*, seldom do we meet rational animals who are reasonable. There is so much injustice in the world, in spite of reason's dictating to us that the good things of this world. In another paper, "Justice from the perspective of Al-Farabi and Ibn-Khaldun" by Ghulam Raza Jamshidia in 1995, the concept of social justice of Ibn-Khaldun is compared with Al-Farabi. This paper presents that justice is a fundamental concept in Islam. This paper also discusses how the two prominent thinkers of Islam have reflected upon it. It is worth noting that Al-Farabi and Ibn-Khaldun belong to different historical periods, and have different views of society, culture, and geography. Brandon L. Wanless in his Paper in 2017 entitled as "St. Thomas Aquinas on Original Justice and the Justice of Christ" discusses the theme of "personal justice" in the *Summa Theologica*, a concept inherited from the Nicomachean Ethics wherein Aristotle says that a man is just toward himself only metaphorically, in so far as the parts of man are appropriately ordered with the higher ruling the lower and the body subjugated to the soul. This paper demonstrates how Aquinas extensively utilizes this concept of metaphorical justice across the tripartite division of the *Summa* in his accounts of original justice in the *prima pars*, the humanity of Christ in the *tertia pars*, and justification of the sinner in the *secunda pars*. As it is evident from the above literature; although the thoughts regarding justice of these two medieval thinkers have been separately studied but the thoughts of Thomas Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun regarding social justice have not been analysed in a comparative study. While taking all the previous works into consideration, the present article aims to study the meaning of justice from the perspective of Ibn-Khaldun and Thomas Aquinas by a qualitative content analysis-based literature review, and in the end, assess their strategies of confronting injustice. The goal of comparing their viewpoints is briefly focusing on their general similarities and differences

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### Conceptual framework:

Throughout the whole history, the concept of justice has undergone many changes due to interchanging various aspects of social relations. In this regard, as usual, justice has been conceived by the people according to the cultural, historical, social and socio-economic circumstances. Every era in history has a preference according to their situations and that preference determined the concept and definition of Justice. In some historical period, justice means punishment while as in other periods it means having the resources of society. In a political school, justice is less important than freedom and in the other school, freedom is sacrificed for justice. In a discourse, justice means implementation of divine laws and in another discourse it means the implementation

of the will and customary laws of the masses. In general, Justice does not have a clear and definite meaning that everyone accepts. In terms of political philosophy, Justice is an attribute of social institutions, not a human attribute or his deeds.

Although Social Justice has been always remained as a essentially contested concept but to understand its conception well we need to categorize it historically into four essential eras. The first one is classical understanding in which the pioneers of the concept were Plato and Aristotle. The second one is medieval or religious understanding in which the best Social Justice theories were given by Thomas Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun. The third era defined the modern concepts as given by Jean Jack Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. The fourth era of the conception of idea of Social Justice is contemporary culture where John Rawls and B.R. Ambedkar have further developed the concept.

For Plato Justice is, at once a part of human virtue and the bond, which joins man together in society. It is the identical quality that makes good and social Plato defines Social Justice in Republic as, "Justice is the will to fulfil the duties of one's station and not meddle with that of another station".<sup>7</sup> He divides Justice into Individual Justice and Social justice. Individually, justice is a human virtue. Socially, justice is political consciousnesses which makes state internally harmonious and unite. Aristotle, in Nicomachean Ethics defines justice as a virtue of character that is exhibited by human beings in their relations with others so that these interactions promote a good life and lead to happiness for the members of the political community as a whole.<sup>8</sup>

Jean Jack Rousseau states that, "It is to law alone that men owe justice and liberty." Rousseau thinks justice is primarily about moral freedom, while Kant thinks that it is primarily about liberty. For Rousseau, liberty is a requirement of justice, for Kant, justice is the requirements of liberty. For Rousseau justice is about promoting the human good; for Kant justice is not about the human good.<sup>9</sup>

John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness describes a society of free citizens holding equal basic rights and cooperating within an egalitarian economic system. Rawls's most discussed work is his theory of a just liberal society, called justice as fairness<sup>10</sup>. Rawls first set out justice as fairness in systematic detail in his 1971 book, *A Theory of Justice*. This book is a ground zero understanding of contemporary debates and discussions on Justice. Rawls continued to rework justice as fairness throughout his life, restating the theory in *Political Liberalism* (1993), *The Law of Peoples* (1999), and *Justice as Fairness* (2001). His proposes the idea to neglect veil of ignorance which arises due to bias or prejudice and provide Justice with two main principles, EOP (Equal opportunity Principle) and DP (Distributive principle).

Ambedkar's concept of social justice stands for the liberty, equality and fraternity of all human beings. He stood for a social system that is based on right relations between man and man in all spheres of his life. Ambedkar was very concerned about the overall development of the vulnerable sections of the Indian society and provide Social Justice to those vulnerable sections.<sup>11</sup>

Biblical interpretation of the word "Justice" mean "to make right." Justice is, first and foremost, a relational term where people living in right relationship with God, one another, and the natural creation. Bible says, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you."<sup>12</sup> From a scriptural point of view, justice means loving our neighbour as we love ourselves and is rooted in the character and nature of God. As God is just and loving, so we are called to do justice and live in love.

Islam considers 'Justice' as a supreme virtue. Allah Almighty said in Quran: "God commands justice and fair dealing..."<sup>13</sup> From this verse, we can conclude that Allah commanded us to do justice and fair dealings throughout the life pertaining to all dealings. In another verse of Quran related to Justice, Allah Almighty says: "O you, who believe, be upright for God, and (be) bearers of witness with justice!"<sup>14</sup> In another verse of Holy Quran Allah says: "... Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly."<sup>15</sup> The above verses we can conclude that Quran highlights the distinction between good and bad through vivid commandants regarding justice.

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## Research Methodology:

This Research Methodology employs document review method based on qualitative content analysis of the various dimensions of justice in the works of two mentioned Semitic thinkers. The ideas related to justice in their works have been extracted and analyzed in the following ways:

- a) Examining concepts and propositions directly related to the Social Justice;
- b) Studying the religious concepts associated to the issue of Justice;
- c) Comparison of the thoughts of these two Thinkers under the title of the research.

<sup>7</sup> Plato. (1943). *Plato's The Republic*. New York :Books, Inc.,

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle., Ross, W. D. 1., & Brown, L. (2009). *The Nicomachean ethics*. Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press.

<sup>9</sup> Platz, Jeppe, (2011). *Freedom, Justice, and the Social Contract: A Study in the Moral and Political Philosophies of Rousseau and Kant*.

<sup>10</sup> Rawls, John (2001). *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement JF, E. Kelly (ed.)*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Ambedkar, B.R. (1936), *Annihilation of Caste*; reprinted in Government of Maharashtra (1979-98), volume I.

<sup>12</sup> English Standard Version Bible, (2001), Ex. 89:14

<sup>13</sup> The Qur'an 16:90 (Translated by Ali, Yusuf)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 5:08

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 60:08

## Concept of Social Justice by Saint Thomas Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun:

**Saint Thomas Aquinas's conception of Social Justice:** Thomas Aquinas was born on January 28, 1225 in Roccasecca, a part of the Kingdom of Sicily at the time. Thomas Aquinas started his formal education at the age of five and, as he grew older, he was introduced to the many classic philosophers of antiquity like Aristotle, Maimonides, and, Averroes. These philosophers influenced his beliefs about life and religion. Thomism was born as a school of thought from the theories of Aquinas. Thomism proposed that truth can be derived from any source. Aquinas was a realist and he in order to explore more he studied various religions. His philosophy was based on argumentative reasoning associated with Aristotle. Aquinas passed away on March 7, 1274. He was canonized as a saint on July 18, 1323.

*Summa Theologica* was the most important written work of Aquinas. The work was written from 1265 to 1274 and it centered on the main teaching of theology within the Catholic Church. The Treatise on Justice represents one of the largest sections of *Summa Theologica*. It contains sixty-six questions pertaining to Justice, by comparing it with the Treatise on Faith which only has sixteen questions and Treatise on Hope with only six questions. By comparison the Treatise on Justice the questions vary three times the length of the Treatise on Charity. The Treatise on Justice also remains one of the most read sections because it contains Aquinas's teachings on political and legal matters and it received quite a well. Never quite as his review of the many virtues associated with Justice it is important to note to cover Aquinas's treatment of Subject, Object and the Act of Justice. Also this study will cover Aquinas's review of many virtues associated with Justice.

For better Understanding of Aquinas's Justice we need to know his anthropology or his understanding of Human. For Aquinas Human is by nature a social and political animal. That is why Humans found themselves as a part of some society. Some societies are natural like family and political community while others are created by persons themselves for practical reasons like trade unions, political parties and academic societies. Still another is created by God, the Church. Every person is at every moment a member of some Society he is always a part of some greater whole. Thomas Aquinas recognizes that human life is inherently relational. It seems that there is no act done in public or secret does not affect someone either directly or at least in our relation to him because every act we commit is relational. That every act requires guidance and perfection by moral virtues: Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. He quotes "The virtues we have considered thus far concern our *own* state. The virtue of justice, however, governs our relationships with others.<sup>16</sup> Specifically, it denotes a sustained or constant willingness to extend to each person what he or she deserves.<sup>17</sup> Aquinas explains that fortitude and Temperance guide and perfect one's action in relation to oneself while Justice guides oneself and perfects one's actions in relation to others particularly to strangers. For Aquinas therefore Justice is the virtue we employ to establish ourselves in right relations with others. As a result Aquinas defines *Justitia* (Justice) as "The perpetual and constant will to render each one his due."<sup>18</sup> So, the concern of Justice is not with oneself but with the other. The just person concerned primarily is not seeking his own due but with providing the other his due. The path to establish right relations with others is securing Justice for them. The main point to be discussed here at the foremost is that "What is the Due (the *IUS/IUSTUM* as Aquinas calls it, that is owed to another)?" He simply responds to the question, The due is something to which someone has a legitimate right or claim. Claims are sometimes established by nature like the right to life, the right to bodily integrity, the right to marry and right to have a family. Other claims are established by law like the right to vote or right to a jury trial and the right to access public goods. The complex network of natural and positive rights that exists leads to there being a variety of expressions or species, as Aquinas calls them, of Justice. Beyond this, Aquinas's account of justice exhibits considerable explanation with the following types. (1) legal (or general) and particular justice, (2) distributive justice and, (3) commutative justice.

Thomas Aquinas defines Legal Justice defines as "An individual's rendering what is owed to the political community". For Aquinas this is Justice and it is most proper sense as the parts rendering what's due to the whole. Aquinas notes that there are "different kinds of due," and this fact necessitates the current distinction.<sup>19</sup> He puts forward the other kind of Justice as Distributive Justice as according to him which is "The Political Community's rendering what it owes to the individual". It owes to the Individual or the whole rendering what is due to the part. For distributive justice, what a person receives is not a matter of equal quantity but "due proportion".<sup>20</sup> And the third one he defines as Commutative Justice which according to him is "An individual's rendering what is owed to another individual." This type of Justice owes to other individuals as occurs, for example in commercial exchanges. Commutative justice concerns the "mutual dealings" between individual citizens.<sup>21</sup> In this context "what is due" is a kind of equality whereby "one person should pay back to the other just so much as he has become richer out of that which belonged to the other".<sup>22</sup> It involves a part's rendering what is due to another part within the overall good of the whole. In cases of Commutative justice, the Political society must intervene in order to punish the malefactor. It must do so in the name of common good to satisfy the injury suffered by the political community where one of its members unjustly injures the other member. Aquinas concludes his examination of justice by reviewing the gift of the Holy Spirit that elevates and perfects its work in a Christian. This gift is Piety, which is a Spirit-taught reverence for God, The Father. This reverence inclines the Christian to offer easily and joyfully the worship and obedience due to the Father. Aquinas observes that this Piety perfects the whole justice, for the one to incline towards God and Piety, and then orients himself to the lesser authorities and all others in view of their relation to God. Aquinas concludes by observing that justice piety manifests itself in the meekness spoken by Christ in the beatitudes. The last word of Aquinas in the *Summa* is "The Spirit perfected by renders a man meek by removing from him all possible

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2nd, rev. ed., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1920; New Advent, 2008): II, Q.57, Art.1.) <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2001.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 58:1

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 58:1

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2nd, rev. ed., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1920; New Advent, 2008): II, Q.61, Art.1-2.) <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2001.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 61:2

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 61:1

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 61:2

obstacles to justice and putty, the meek one ever remains ready to act in the pursuit of justice. Meekness is the mark of the man who has been justified by God”.

Throughout *Secunda Secundae* (Second part of the Second part) of *Summa Theologica*, Saint Thomas attempts to consider the different parts of each virtue. Aquinas uses the term in a different way for what he calls Potential parts and here we have a promising avenue of enquiry. Aquinas says that the Potential parts of a Virtue are the virtues connected with or in subordination to the Principal Virtue. The potential parts are directed to certain secondary acts or matters and they lack the whole power of principal virtue. Justice is a virtue whereby one gives his due, by a constant and perpetual will. Thus, the potential parts of Justice are going to be those virtues which share somehow in this dynamic, but lacking its whole power. In ordinary course Justice works to establish a certain definite equality between persons alike in dignity, but we know that such an arrangement is sometimes impossible. At times, we incur debts that simply cannot be repaid, often to persons of greater dignity. Aquinas lists three virtues that perfect relationships of this sort. We refer them as virtues of veneration. They are Religion, Piety and Observance.

Religion renders God His Due. It resembles the movement of Justice but it cannot affect a strict equality. Thus he insists that religion is a virtue that falls under justice, since it involves offering God his due honor.<sup>23</sup> The same applies for piety and observance, since they seek to render to God service and deference, respectively. Piety renders parents and country their due. Observance renders our superiors their due.

Apart from the virtues of veneration there are also virtues of civility. These virtues apply when considerations of strict justice are less well established. The virtues that fall in this type include Gratitude, Vindication, Truth, Affability, and Liberality. We witnessed that with the virtues of veneration only one cannot always establish a just relation with persons. So we need virtues of civility. In Gratitude one owes thank to his benefactor. In Vindication, one owes retribution for a harm inflicted on one or his friend. In truth, one owes an adequate reflection of his mind to his peers or elders. Finally, Aquinas includes both Liberality and Affability as parts of justice. The former is a virtue whereby we benefit others by giving or sharing with them the goods we possess.<sup>24</sup> The latter involves treating those who live among us well.<sup>25</sup>

With these virtues we see how justice is present practically in every dimension of social order with a huge impact of religion in it. By extending the reign of justice into different aspects of human life, the potential parts of justice bring about an order, in which genuine respect and equitable exchange obtain among dignified persons, each free as he ought to be, and delighted in so being.

***Ibn-Khaldun's conception of Social Justice:*** Walī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn Khaldūn was born in May 27, 1332 CE in Tunisia and died in March 19, 1406 CE. He was an Arab Muslim historiographer and historian, regarded to be among the founding fathers of modern historiography, sociology and economics. He is best known for his book “The Muqaddimah”. He was the world's first true historian and an unparalleled sociologist. He thought of history is worth studying. His simple narrating views on human nature led him to some remarkable conclusions on politics and the state. “Assabiyyah” (social solidarity) and he defined how, according to him, it lay at the heart of the question why nations rise and fall.

At his age the Islamic world was facing a decline as under the threat of Christian and Mongols. Muslim world also witnessed plague at that time. He received a classical Muslim education in Tunisia. He spent most of his life in serving government throughout the Western Mediterranean. His most celebrated work is *al-Muqaddimah* (Prolegomena), which is only the first part of his *Kitab al-Ibar* (The Book of Lessons), the extensive history of the known world at that time. He is considered as a first true historian as he believed in studying the history and not only narrating it. His concept of “Assabiyyah” (Social cohesion or social solidarity) is the bond of fellowship that binds the community together. This forms the basis of government. The government primarily a vicegerency has two functions: one as to sustain the peace and second as to impose the justice. This fosters the civilization from tribe to city and nation. As tribes turn into the nation “Assabiyyah” slowly gets eroded away. When a leader is challenged he turns on his own kin. The leadership is also corrupted by luxury. Fighting and extorting the people in his reign, the leader is now imposing Injustice. The dynasty falls and is either replaced or fragmented into smaller units. The circle repeats again and again. Ibn-Khaldun quoted the following Quranic verse in addressing the human needs to be fulfilled by group cohesion and cooperation especially in the crop production, supply of foods and defense in external threats. “And Allah has extracted you from the wombs of your mothers not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing and vision and intellect (heart) that perhaps you would be grateful.”<sup>26</sup>

Ibn-Khaldun in his classic work “*al-Muqaddimah*” related a narrative that resonates effortlessly within an African context. It went something like this, “In the days of King Bahram, a scholar among the Persians, expressed to the King his disapproval of the King's injustice and its consequences. He did this through a parable, which he placed in the mouth of an owl. The King, hearing the cry of an owl, asked the scholar if he understood what it was saying. The scholar replied: A male owl wanted to marry. The female owl as a condition to consent, asked the male for the gift of twenty villages ruined in the days of King Bahram that she might occupy them. The male owl replied, “If the King continues to rule, I shall give you a thousand ruined villages”. The King was stirred and asked the scholar what it meant. The scholar replied: O King, the might of royal authority materializes through religious law, obedience toward God, and compliance with His commands. The religious law persists through royal authority. Royal authority is achieved through men and men persist with the help of property. The way to property is through cultivation. The way to cultivation is through justice and justice is a balance set up among mankind. God set it up and selected an overseer of it, and that is the ruler. This story teaches us that injustice ruins civilization. When an

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2nd, rev. ed., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1920; New Advent, 2008): II, Q.61, Art.81-1, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2001.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 117:1,2,5

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 114:2

<sup>26</sup> The Qur'an 16:78 (Translated by Ali, Yusuf)

empire is large, the loss from injustice is initially hidden, because it occurs gradually. Also injustice should not be understood to imply only the confiscation of money or property without compensation and without cause. A leader who collects unjustified taxes also commits an injustice. Those who deny people their human rights commit an injustice. It is the kingdom that suffers from these acts, in as much as the civilization, which is the substance of the dynasty, is ruined when people have lost all incentive.

Ibn-Khaldun condemns unjust government and introduces the idea of Circle of Justice. According to him, the nature of laws enacted by the state governs the status of justice, which in turn determines development.<sup>27</sup> He said the unjust government is a threat to civilization and survival of humanity. He met Timur (Tamerlane, a Turco-Mongol conqueror who founded the Timurid Empire), after the (partial) surrender of Damascus<sup>28</sup>. His report on their meetings is clearly self-serving as follows, "Sovereignty exists only because of group solidarity (Assabiyyah), and the greater the number in the group, the greater is the extent of sovereignty. Scholars, in the past and the present, have agreed that the most populous groups among human beings are the Arabs and the Turks. Surely you know how the sovereignty of the Arabs was established when they became united in their religion in following their prophet [Muhammad]. As for the Turks, their rivalry with the kings of Persia and the seizure of Khurasan from the latter by their king, Afrāsiyāb, is evidence of their royal origin. None from among the kings of the earth—not Khusraw, nor Caesar nor Alexander nor Nebuchadnezzar—is comparable to them with regard to the extent of their group solidarity (Assabiyyah). As for Khusraw, he was the leader of the Persians and their king, but the Persians fall utterly short of the Turks! As for Caesar and Alexander, they were kings of the Greeks [al-rūm], but again the Greeks cannot be compared [in terms of their greatness] with the Turks! As for Nebuchadnezzar, he was the chieftain of the Babylonians and the Nabateans, but what a difference between these nations and the Turks! This constitutes a clear proof of what I have maintained concerning this king Timur".<sup>29</sup>

The above quoted passage, in which Ibn-Khaldun offers a glimpse of his own political science. He puts forward that it is only "Assabiyyah" that supports Timur to build such an empire. Also religion is the main factor to sustain that "Assabiyyah" in spreading such an empire. He quotes Prophet Muhammad as a skilful person to shape that "Assabiyyah" while as functional analysis of religion determines that Islam served as a source for the Arabs to be united. He also claimed that "Assabiyyah" and "Good leadership" are interdependent as it is not only "Assabiyyah" that can make a people receptive to the Leader, but also that good leadership can generate "Assabiyyah".

He further states that since injustice is in man's animal nature, so people need vicegerency to sustain the "Assabiyyah" and enforce justice. Vicegerency is a state of nature and if men escape it then they need government or royal authority. Religion can help facilitate Royal authority to impart justice. In vicegerency, the subordination shall be willing subordination to the authority to sustain "Assabiyyah". Lack of "Assabiyyah", on the other hand, seems to have had a part in inhibiting the operation of institutions of good administration, thus blocking the legitimacy granted by a reputation for justice.<sup>30</sup>

Apparently, Ibn-Khaldun says that the Man has been made vicegerent on earth by God. Leaders are the inheritors of Prophets, it is their duty to be devoted and fulfill the obligations towards God and govern the people well.<sup>31</sup> So, a leader must be able to employ kindness, al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy an al-munkar and to respect the religious clerics. Ibn-Khaldun also stressed that a leader must be obeyed in full when he has a sense of respect for the scholars, the righteous, blessed people of the Prophet's family, the grade, the traders and foreigners, and he must be able to practice justice.<sup>32</sup> Ibn-Khaldun wrote: "Therefore, today, the scholar in this field needs to know the principles of politics, the (true) nature of existent things, and the differences among nations, places, and periods with regard to ways of life, character qualities, customs, sects, schools, and everything else...He must be aware of the differing origins and beginnings of (different) dynasties and religious groups, as well as of the reasons and incentives that brought them into being and the circumstances and history of the persons who supported them"<sup>33</sup>

Among his three models of government, he emphasizes on Siyasa Diniyyah (government based on religion) where laws are derived from religious teachings.<sup>34</sup> In this form of government a leader with strong faith will be stimulated by the great reward from God more than the worldly or other materialistic goal. And government based on religion implies a Just society as Quran mentions "Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition."<sup>35</sup>

**Social Justice of Thomas Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun: A Comparative Analysis:** These two Semitic philosophers have tried to unveil the concept of justice in their time, society and worldview. Thomas Aquinas has defined Justice as the 'Due' one owes to God, society or other individual. He also considered Justice as a cardinal virtue which is interrelated with the theological virtues. He considers that Justice along with Temperance, Prudence and Fortitude are Moral Virtues which are incomplete without Theological Virtues as Faith, Hope and Charity. He also implies that the authority must act to impose Justice. Ibn-Khaldun, on the other hand has defined Justice is the only way to 'Cultivate'. He says that Justice is an essential element for securing the general interest, and considers it to be the basic provision for the growth of a society, community or a civilization and for the same social solidarity is a must essential. He puts forward the concept of Circle of Justice and Assabiyyah (Social solidarity) and considers that the only way to cultivate is Justice. Justice is a balanced setup among mankind by God as He appoints the Royal authority which fosters Justice. For authority Justice is to protect

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*. { Translated By Franz Rosenthal, Edited By N.J. Dawood, 1967 } London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Rihlah Ibn Khaldūn* (2019). Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, , ed. Muhammad al-Tanji, pp. 286–299.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*. { Translated By Franz Rosenthal, Edited By N.J. Dawood, 1967 } London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

<sup>30</sup> Darling, T. Linda (2007) "Social Cohesion ('Asabiyya) and Justice in the Late Medieval Middle East", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 49(2).

<sup>31</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*. { Translated By Franz Rosenthal, Edited By N.J. Dawood, 1967 } London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 56-57.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> The Qur'an 16:78 (Translated by Ali, Yusuf)

Assabiyyah. Injustice leads to cessation of Assabiyyah with the consequence of destruction of mankind and civilization. Royal authority follows religion and law which helps its people to cultivate the Justice. Thomas Aquinas defines legal justice as individual's relation to the common good, i.e., to the whole community including church. Thomas Aquinas gives God his due too and he says that religion plays an important role in the manifestation of justice. Although he endorses Aristotle's claim about justice that justice leads to happiness but at the same time he believes that in this world one cannot have absolute happiness but everyone will enjoy absolute happiness hereafter. He also explains that justice is a virtue even though just acts are the fulfillment of commands and hence of obligations. He also says that we are ultimately commanded to love one another as Christ has loved us. So he connects justice with the religion and claims that religion determines justice. On the other hand Ibn-Khaldun says that the royal authority which is bound to impose justice has been appointed by God. Royal authority must enforce religion and law in order to cultivate by justice. That will help in the rise of a civilization. Thomas Aquinas considers justice as a cardinal virtue and he claims that this cardinal virtue always tend to be perfected by theological virtues like faith, hope and charity. Ibn-Khaldun also considers justice as a virtue which helps to cultivate. He claims that justice leads to social cohesion and social cohesion leads to cultivation and finally to the rise of a civilization. While discussing injustice, Thomas Aquinas claims that vices of any kind promote injustice and lead to all sorts of sins. He further states that one becomes unjust by choosing to do what is unjust. He may do this unjustly out of passion or ignorance. He says the political administration or Church must intervene to eradicate the injustice. Ibn-Khaldun claims that injustice ruins civilization. He further says state is a natural need of humans to stop injustice but if the state enforces power that naturally loosens the spirit of social cohesion and leads to injustice. A leader who collects unjustified taxes also commits an injustice. Those who deny people their human rights commit an injustice. Finally the state falls due to the corruption and injustice and what is left behind a new state forms from its remnants and that state survives until it manifests justice. Thomas Aquinas discusses the justice of rulers as where goods available in a state that are common to everyone are distributed by the ruler according to different standards (virtue, wealth, power, expertise, need, etc.). He also claims that in a state, individuals need not be treated in exactly the same way, and those with greater virtue, expertise, need, etc., might receive unique privileges that ultimately contribute to the well-being of the whole. Ibn-Khaldun believes that State is the authority and must enforce social by securing the general interest of its subjects, and he considers it to be the basis for provision of construction and security.

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### Conclusion:

Justice always lacks a universal definition and its understanding is influenced by time, culture, society and worldview of the philosopher defining it. Historically, the concept of Justice has undergone significant changes and different aspects of human social relations it has paid off. At one time, the meaning of justice was to provide security with punishment. Criminals were understood, but later the concept of justice was more for social justice and providing public welfare. In general, the views of the philosophers are broadly perceived into two categories. First ones are the western thinkers who are completely materialistic and restricted to this world. The next ones are religious thinkers who explain justice by considering the happiness in life hereafter along with the life of this world, but both categories of Thinkers believe in natural justice based on merits. This means that each member of the society should be placed at their own place based on their abilities and pertinently members of society must cooperate with each other. All the philosophers agree that human beings are not equal to each other and they are in a difference with each other in terms of abilities and talents. Injustice prevails when all the members of society are not provided equal access to resources or even equal opportunities to have access to these resources. These two Semitic religion philosophers, Thomas Aquinas and Ibn-Khaldun have tried to unveil the concept of justice in their time, society and worldview. Thomas Aquinas in his treatise has addressed all the possible aspects of justice. He defines justice as the 'Due' one owes to God, society or other individual. He traces a close relationship of justice with the theme of truth and relationship with God. He considers that Justice along with Temperance, Prudence and Fortitude are Moral Virtues which are incomplete without Theological Virtues as Faith, Hope and Charity. His treatise although written in medieval times but it continues to find its relevance in contemporary times by its ability to consider such diverse but essential aspects for a correct understanding of this virtue, in particular the justification of human rights. Also Ibn-Khaldun's concept of vicegerency and its role in the manifestation of social solidarity which finally leads to 'cultivate' has a grand role in the rise and sustenance of a civilization. Justice is a balanced setup among mankind by God as He appoints the royal authority which fosters justice. For authority, justice is to protect Assabiyyah. Injustice leads to cessation of Assabiyyah with the consequence of destruction of mankind and civilization. Royal authority follows religion and law which helps its people to cultivate the justice.

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