

 [Human rights discussion](#) by Louise S. [2012, Dec 25]

Dear All,

Thanks to professor Hans Bakker, who is sharing his chapter in a new edited book on human rights, see attached.

Enjoy,

Louise  [Human Rights Chapter Bakker](#)  [Handbook Human Rights Flyer 2012](#)

 [Comment by Kiran Kumar Salagame](#) by Louise S. [2012, Dec 25]

Thanks to Prof Hans Bakker

 [Comment by Wael MOHAMED](#) by Louise S. [2012, Dec 25]

My Dear Colleagues

Thanks Dr Bakker for sharing this valuable piece of information

I have some concerns about your statement:

(Nevertheless, Islamic caliphates and both Sunni and Shiite Islamic theologians did not emphasize human rights)

Generally speaking there are other Islamic scholars other than Ibn Khaldon who addressed the human rights and of course needless to say Prophet Muhammed and Jesus stressed upon this important value with lot of historical incidents that clarifying this. Therefore I expected to see in this chapter some mentions to the three prophets (Moses, Jesus and Mohamed) and their saying, acts in this endeavor.....

Thanks again for listening to my thoughts and sharing this

in spirit
wael

 [Comment by Hans Bakker](#) by Louise S. [2012, Dec 25]

Dear Wael Mohamed,

Thank you very much for taking the time to notice my chapter and to comment on it. I would love it if others on this list were to comment in the intelligent manner you have done.

First, let me say I am not a theologian but a sociologist by "training" (education).

Furthermore, I did not mean any disrespect to Mohammed or, for that matter, to Moses or Jesus of Nazareth.

But I myself am not a "true believer" of any of the three faiths: Islam, Judaism or

Christianity. I am also not an atheist. I believe in a Higher Spiritual Meaning. I believe in "God," "YHWH," or "Allah" (al-Lah), but perhaps not in the way many Christians, Jews and/or Muslims believe in that idea and that reality.

I belong to the Unitarian-Universalist Church, which originated in a form of liberal Christianity in the nineteenth century, but has now become very ecumenical.

Many Fundamentalist Evangelical Christians do not think Unitarian-Universalists are Christian at all. Indeed, the center piece of Christianity for most Christians has been the Trinity. Unitarians deny the Trinity. In the 21st century that usually is taken to mean that Jesus was not the Messiah, the Christ. (Many Reform Jews are therefore very comfortable with Unitarian-Universalism, or U-U.) So U-U is my frame of reference and my "bias." I may very well be wrong in my beliefs.

Perhaps we could have a dialogue concerning whether or not the founders of the three great Abrahamic religions really did propose a theology of the human rights of all individual human beings as legal persons. One aspect we can discuss is when "citizenship" became a right for ordinary persons.

I believe what I wrote in my chapter is technically accurate, but it could be misread. (I know that the various contributors to the edited book have somewhat different views on exactly what "human rights" really refers to. We had a very lively discussion at the special "authors meet critics" session at the American Sociological Association [ASA] in Denver last August, 2012, on that question, and others.)

One area where the human rights of individual human beings as legal persons has often been overlooked in Abrahamic theologies is the rights of individual women. (Note I am not talking about women as a category, or a few elite women, but all women as individuals, or "legal persons", with precisely the same rights as all adult men.)

Many people in North America find it surprising, for example, that women are not allowed to drive cars in some Islamic countries.

Today's New York Times carries an article about women being prohibited from praying according to Ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox Jewish customs and beliefs.

Jesus, of course, was a Jew and would most likely have had Jewish ideas about women as individuals. (Some Christian theologians, starting in the nineteenth century, have attempted to make Jesus into a proto-Feminist but that is a stretch, to say the least!)

Many scholars argue that the whole idea of the human rights of all individuals as legal persons did not get widely accepted in even limited circles until late in the nineteenth century. For example, it was only recently that women got the right to

vote. It is also only recently that many jurisdictions have allowed for women to inherit property and obtain immigration rights on their own (separate from their husbands). Surprisingly, several cantons in Switzerland were very late with that. Women cannot become priests, bishops, archbishops or cardinals in the Roman Catholic Church, much less Pope! (Even Anglicans are having trouble accepting women as Bishops.)

What I have written here about individual women is also true for persons who are not full citizens of a nation-state (e.g. Kurds). For example, as a Canadian citizen my rights in the U.S. are very severely limited. Many "foreigners" in the U.S. have been treated in a manner that some human rights advocates feel tends to negate lofty pronouncements about human rights made by the federal government. Think of the way so-called "non-legal immigrants" are treated in the U.S. The idea is controversial, of course. (By the way, the same holds for U.S. citizens in Canada or the Netherlands, etc.)

I would love to learn about Islamic scholars who really do defend the human rights of all persons as legal persons. No doubt there may be some. I am ignorant of many things. Indeed, the older I get (I am 65 now) the more I realize how little I really know. I have been a student and Professor all my life. So I know that my ignorance is due in part to the fact that no one can know everything it is important to know!

Sincerely,

ahimsa,

Hans

J. I. Bakker, Ph.D.