

CHAPTER FOUR

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APPLICATION OF BENNABI'S METHOD ON THE STUDY OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

INTRODUCTION

The foregoing necessary study of the framework and tools of Bennabi's method should lead us to a fundamental question which concerns the possibility of applying his method in dealing with the movement of a civilization. As a matter of fact, no analysis can be of sound reputation if it does verify and test its premises, principles and steps in a practical field of study. Thus, if the second chapter of the present thesis has given us an account of the general framework of Bennabi's method and if in the course of the third chapter, an attempt is made to enlarge our understanding of the analytical tools, it is necessary in the context of the present chapter to add a few more bricks to the already mentioned ideas. In order for us to support the theoretical study with the applied example, I now attempt to study the evolution of Islamic civilization as such in order to verify the originality and effectiveness of his method in dealing with the problems of Islamic society.

In other words, it is important to examine Bennabi's utilization of his framework and his five tools of analysis in studying the evolution of Islamic civilization from the moment of its birth until the present era of its decadence and degeneration. However, we should note that it is difficult to attain an understanding of his combination of various aspects, disciplines and tools of analysis. It is truly hard to fathom his linkage and multi-dimensional method in approaching Islamic civilization in particular and any other civilization in general.

Indeed, combining the concept of the three positions of a society, the three realms, the three ages, social relations network and the concept of the cycle of civilization as well as their psycho-social implications places a heavy task on our side and makes our work more difficult. Despite this difficulty, this linkage method allows us to test many theories in the study of the most important and challenging phenomenon that faces the Muslim society in its present situation i.e., the problem of Islamic civilization.

I- BENNAB'S VIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

Obviously, Islamic civilization is on the one hand the sum total achievements of the Muslim society in various aspects of life and it is on the other hand the response of Muslims to the call of Islam and its world view. As a matter of fact, this civilization is situated in history and embodied in a given social and geographical context. In order for this civilization to emerge in history a very deep process of transformation and change occurred within the Muslim personality and society as well. It is a transforming process that synthesized man, soil and time in light of the new Islamic world view. According to Bennabi, this civilizing process has its framework, tools, methods, positions, phases and steps. To attain an understanding of the evolution of Islamic civilization, one should follow the diagram of its march in history. The latter, consists of three main phases; namely the spiritual, the rational and the instinctive phase.

A- THE SPIRITUAL PHASE AND THE BIRTH OF A SOCIETY

Let us begin with viewing the situation of the pre-Islamic society and follow the transforming process from the very beginning. Overall, the Arab society

was a simple and yet uncivilized society which lived under the sever conditions of the tribal system. All signs and elements of a Bedouin life were reflected in this context. Every activity and action of that society was revolving around the centers of the Arab belief and culture.¹

In Bennabi's view, this society was a clear example of a primitive or a pre-civilized society, its three realms that of ideas, persons and objects were not evolved in a civilizing project. The realm of ideas was very poor as well as its realm of persons, which was consisted of individuals who were unable to formulate a civilizing social relations system. Moreover, its realm of objects was simple and rudimentary. Furthermore, its social relations network did not undergo any kind of civilizational change. While its cycle of civilization was still situated in the pre-civilized position. At this juncture, this society can be described as static and motionless. Ibn Khaldun in his treatment of the Bedouin life and character introduced a revealing description of this type of human association. He stated:

*"Fully accustomed to savagery and the things that causes it. Savagery has become their character and nature. They enjoy it, because it means freedom from authority and no subservience to leadership. Such a natural disposition is the negation and antithesis of civilization."*²

¹Dension. J. H, *Emotion As The Basis of The Civilization*, (New York: 1928), pp. 265-266.

²Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimmah*, Op. cit., p. 303.

In accordance with the above description, Bennabi attested that there was no in the Arab peninsula, before the revelation of the Holy Qur'ān, except a Bedouin people living in a barren and bromidic desert¹ Their soil and time were not exploited in any form of organized social system that follows certain patterns and norms. In Ibn Khaldūn's words, they lived "as in a state of anarchy, without laws. Anarchy destroys mankind and ruins civilization."² Hence, their civilizing capacities were stagnant and wasted in marginal tribal activities, such as revenge and distraction. In a correct word, they lived without any historical function that could impel the society onto a historical movement.³ However, when the call of revelation commenced its communication with the Prophet (S.Ā.W.), this society started its civilizing process. It moved towards the civilized position caused by the driving force of the new social relations network starting from the moment in which the first verse was revealed in the Cave of Hīrāh and ended at the striking shock of the battle of Şifīn⁴ in which this society witnessed its first rapture and crisis. "During this period, the society's frame of mind and attitude towards life became mainly spiritual."⁵

¹ Ahmad S. Akbar, *Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Muslim History and Society*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 30-31.

² Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, Op. cit., p. 304.

³ For further details see, Akbar, *Discovering Islam*, Op. cit., p. 38.

⁴ Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, p. Op. cit., 116.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

Indeed, it is the spiritual phase of Islamic civilization with all its characteristics and conditions, it represented the crucial instance in which the entire activities of the new society were under the control of faith resulting from the new religion. It was during this phase where the Islamic ideal synthesized man, soil and time and molded them in the form of civilization. According to Bennabi, this phase was purely religious and reflected the total domination of Islam¹ and its orientation of the social life of people. Therefore, one should admit that the driving force of this faith was behind any accomplishments of this society during the above-mentioned era. It was "mainly spiritual"² in essence and function. Describing this phase in a historical point of view, Bennabi put us face to face with the beginning of a new civilization as marked in the H. calendar. Hence, one can follow the evolution of this civilization in terms of the three phases depending more on the psychosocial context, which influenced the individual and society as well. At the point of departure, it was only a small tribal society living in the Arabian Peninsula in a limited cultural universe in which the beliefs were centered on worshipping idols of the pre-Islamic Arab era.

Actually, as Bennabi argues, the pre-Islamic Arab context was an adequate example of a society in the age of objects. Therefore, all its activities were revolving around simple concepts dominated by thingness spirit. In the pre-

¹Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 52.

²Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, p. 117.

civilized era, the realm of objects of this society was very poor and simple consisting of the sword, the spear and stake, the quiver, the bow and arrows, the camel, the horse, the saddle without stirrup provided with a simple wood support, all of which are characteristic of the nomadic way of life ¹ On the other hand, the realm of persons of the Arab society was limited and confined within the boundaries of the tribal system. Furthermore, its realm of ideas was centered around certain simple concepts, such as the brilliant poems known as the al-Muḥallaqāt². In Bennabi's view such was the visage of the pre-Islamic society³ and such was the entire life of its people. It was unable to respond to the challenges of a civilizing movement which can generate actions of historical reputation comparing it with "the flow movements of the neighboring great nations, namely the Byzantine Empire, the Persian Empire and, in the South, that of Ethiopia."⁴

To put it in precise terms:

"The pre-Islamic Arab society provides us with an excellent picture of this process. At the origin, one has to deal with a type of society in which the vital energy is hardly conditioned by anything. Indeed, the cultural

¹Bennabi, *Milād*, Op. cit., p. 39.

²The seven long poems which represent one of the important legacies of the pre-Islamic Arab society.

³Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 78. The term "*Jāhiliyyah*" as discussed by Hitti, means "time of ignorance or barbarism, in reality means the period in which Arabia had no dispensation, no inspired prophet, no revealed book...." See Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, (London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 87.

⁴Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār*, Op. cit., p.39.

universe of the Jāhilyyian¹ environment was almost void of any principles of social constraint. Its postulates were confined to some rules of honor, to certain obligations towards the group (the tribal solidarity whose political significance in the formation of the North African dynasties was demonstrated by Ibn Khaldun under the name of al-Āsabiyyah, and to some beliefs commercialized by the Qurayshite Mekkah. Therefore, the vital energy was conditioned by almost nothing. It was almost at the natural state, incompatible with the particular conditions of a civilization."²

However, once this society started its civilization, all its organization and function was gradually transformed in order to cope with the demands of the new Islamic religious ideal. Bennabi argues that "it was the Islamic idea³ that subordinated the vital energy of the pre- Islamic society to the exigencies of a civilized society."⁴ At this juncture, in the life of that society, a civilizing process commenced with the first verse of the Holy Qur'ān⁵ A new message brought about a new worldview⁶ and way of life that integrated that society into the world

¹Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 79.

²Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār*, Op. cit., p. 51.

³Al-Jafa iri, *The Problems of Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 140.

⁴Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār*, Op. cit., pp. 51-52.

⁵Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagvīr*, Op. cit., p. 111.

⁶Shyaif, *The Civilizational Conflict*, Op. cit., p. 111.

civilization. Consequently, a brilliant chapter of mankind was to unfold itself...it gave a new civilization.¹

The new faith and system of belief started its psychosocial function; it commenced its first change² within the context of the previous realm of individuals, which was confined to the tribal boundaries. A short while after, a great realm of persons was founded and embodied in the new personalities of the companions of the Prophet (S.Ā.W.). Accordingly, its poor realm of objects started developing to face the new challenges of the Islamic call. Bennabi aptly noted that from the point of departure, as the integration process of the Islamic society commenced in history, its realm of persons was founded on a prototype manifested in the model of the companions community formulated in al-Madinah. This new human model "who shared a common awareness"³ of the new worldview was the social agent that transferred the teachings of Islam into a living social context.⁴ To express it in a slightly different way, one can say that every

¹George, Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961), p. 15.

²This new system of belief introduced a new standard for the human distinctions. "All distinctions between various classes of mankind, based on pride of race or language or privileges, wealth and power are devalued by Islam and in their place it brings in the bond of spirit, the tie of faith as a cement with which to weld mankind in an enduring oneness." Quoted in Rauf Abdur, *The Story of Islamic Culture*, (USA: Kazi Publications), p. 4.

³Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Op. cit., p. 81.

⁴Ibn Saʿd Abū Abd-Allāh Muḥammad (784-845AD). He was a historian and a *Muhaddith*. He was Born in Bassrah, and lived In Baghdad. His book *al-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā* represents a biographical encyclopedia of the Companions of the Prophet (S.Ā.W.).

step in the new society was towards the Islamic ideal as well as towards the age of ideas passing through the age of objects and that of persons.¹

The truth of the matter is that this age of ideas of the new society deeply reflected the function of the impressed ideas (derived from the Islamic ideal) in creating a new spiritual environment of progress. Within the context of this environment, a new culture and society was constructed to serve the demands of the new generations. This culture² was spiritual and social in nature; it enriched the Islamic personality with its spiritual purity as well as its social tendency. It wholly transformed a primitive environment, thus putting its vital energy and civilizing capacities within the new horizons of civilization and subjecting it to its rules and principles.

Bennabi described to us the function of the impressed ideas and their influence on the new Islamic civilization in different aspects. For instance, at the material level, many results were achieved, such as the new solidarity and cooperation among the realm of persons presented by al-Anṣār and al-Muhājirūn who were pooling together their resources in order to face the necessities of the new phase. They used all their simple and poor realm of objects to serve the needs of the civilizational movement in all its steps. Moreover, at the intellectual level

¹Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār*, Op. cit., pp. 39-40.

²Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 97.

the impressed ideas of Islam were able to create a new realm of ideas, which linked the activities of the entire society and oriented them to fulfill the mission of the new civilization. Accordingly, one can note the changes that occurred at the psychological and moral levels. Those changes brought about a new social education that oriented the vital energy and directed it towards achieving the objectives of the society. In this respect, Bennabi provided some important examples to underline the influence of the new modifications on the psychology of the individual and on the social context as well.¹ He argues that in one instance a man kissed a woman, this was but a moment in which the vital energy overran its limits. However, the driving force of the new faith reminded him of the new concepts and rules imposed by the impressed ideas. Consequently, the reminding force of his soul exploded the drama within his conscience, and he rushed immediately to the Prophet (S.Ā.W.) to confess his sin.

In another revealing situation, a woman came before the Prophet, (S.Ā.W.), to confess that she had committed the sin of adultery. Examining the reasons for this positive reaction would lead us to see closely the role of the impressed ideas in the daily activities of the Islamic society during its spiritual phase. Thousands of other cases and situations in which the new realm of persons, that of the companions, introduced similar behavior and attitude towards the new forms of sin and crimes of various types. The new spirit and faith influenced them

¹ Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., p. 111.

all.¹ Bennabi asserted that "in such a strained environment, the impressed ideas put their sacred notes in all the expressed ideas."² It is obvious from the above examples that there was a conditioning process³ that conditioned the personality of the individual and confined it to the new concepts and norms.

In fact, Bennabi disputed that at the origin of any civilization it is the same integration process of the vital energy that is repeated in such conditions that qualify it to fulfill its historical function. That is to say, in the first phase of the evolution of Islamic civilization an important process of integration had started. Due to its driving force the individual and society possessed the power and ability of integration⁴ which enabled them to face the new challenges. The conditioning process of the individual and society formulated a new personality that could address the problems and orient the development of the civilization in light of the original ideal. However, one should note that the integrating and conditioning process differs from one civilization to another. In certain civilizations, it appears destructive and revolutionary, while in some other civilizations it manifests itself ethically and constructively.

¹*Ibid.*, p. 115.

²Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkar*, Op. cit., pp. 72-73.

³Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., p. 114.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 114.

Moreover, some societies could respond positively and easily to the conditioning process, whereas, certain other societies face complications and difficulties in their integration. To attain an understanding of this process an example from the context of Islamic civilization is relevant. In a specific case of the conditioning process of the vital energy within a social context, we can refer to the process of the prohibition of alcohol in the Islamic society during its spiritual phase. Bennabi asserted that the Muslim society treated this issue by using the rules and steps derived from the Islamic legislation. The process of prohibition followed a systematic scheme that involved:

“three texts: a text introducing the problem into the Muslim conscience thus representing, in a way, the psychological stage of the solution, a text limiting the consumption of alcohol which, in short, corresponded to a phase of disintoxication and at last, a text of prohibition thus legally establishing¹ the solution.”²

It is clear from the above passage that the conditioning process took into consideration the psychosocial and the cultural surroundings as well as the phase of the development of people. This gradual approach and its educational orientation as well as the forces of faith were behind the success of the process and its effectiveness.

¹See, the Holy Qur'ān: 16:67; 2:219; 4:43 and 5: 90-91.

²Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār*, Op. cit., pp. 53-54.

However, in another instance, Bennabi attempted to introduce an example where the conditioning process was totally destructive. Parallel to the previous scheme, Bennabi demonstrated another case of treating the problem of alcohol in our contemporary situation. He stated:

"Such was the anti-alcoholic legislation (the prohibition law) scheme of the U.S.A after World War I. It almost consisted of the same phases like the first one, that is:

- In 1918, the American press introduced the problem to the public opinion.

- In 1919, it was incorporated into the American constitution under the name of (the 18th Amendment).

*- In the same year, the prohibition Act came into force under the name of the Volstead Act."*¹

According to Bennabi, there was a difference in the conditioning capacity of both legislations. Nevertheless, the Islamic conditioning was fourteen centuries ago and used simple objects; it was effective and realistic. The act of prohibition during that era did not create any negative shock or destructive wave. On the contrary, in the American society contemporary to the Volstead Act, the shock was destructive and violent. Indeed, the American experiment was outrageous and bloody.

¹Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkar*, Op. cit., p. 54.

"It broke all the dykes, turned all the roadblocks upside down and generated all kinds of morbid reaction: unlawful commerce, gang formation, and mass intoxication by adulterated alcohol. Consequently, the Act of prohibition was repealed by the 12th amendment ratified in December 1933. The idea of prohibition is definitely extirpated from the cultural world of the American society for it has no roots in that culture."¹

In a nutshell, in order for a conditioning process to integrate and orient the vital energy, it must respond positively to the demands of a religious ideal. Such was the case in the spiritual phase of the Islamic society. During this era the vital energy of the individual and society was under the full control of faith and soul. Thus, the will of the individual and the power of the society were both functioning in accordance with the rules and principles set out by the Islamic ideal.

Bennabi provides an additional perspective of the spiritual phase of Islamic civilization. As a matter of fact, if one peers deep into the nature of the Muslim responses to the new rules and principles of the Islamic faith, one would note that every activity of the individual is stemmed from a will and a power. Both this will and this power are resulted from the influence of a religious ideal in the social environment. Therefore, when an ideal generates a civilizing movement, the members of the society commence the process of acquiring the quality of persons

¹Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār*, pp.51-52,53-54.

who could carry out a social mission. In this regard, one should recall the previous discussion on the function of the social relations network. In fact, the role of the network of relations is to provide this will and power for every individual.

Thus, one should link between the conditioning process as well as the will and power of the individual. Bennabi debates that this conditioning process is the result of the function of the religious idea. Thus, once this idea starts its work in history, it creates the will of the person as well as the power¹ of the society. In other words, this idea will create a new atmosphere in which the will of the individual and the power of the society fall under the control of the new principles and rules. Hence, any activity carried out by the individuals must be supported by the society and vice versa. This is why Bennabi focused on the crucial role of the social relations network. The latter, constitute the milestone of the entire movement of civilization as it was discussed earlier.

In Bennabi's opinion, the individual achieves "self-fulfillment and serves his/her needs only through a will and a power which are neither his \ hers, nor can they come into being from him \ her. Rather, they stem from the society of which he is/she a member. For instance, a man who abandons his society and depends only on his own will and power, he will lose his social function as well as he will

¹Talbi, *The Implications of Bennabi's View*, Op. cit., p. 9.

become similar to a weak straw in the windward.”¹ This is the crucial role of a society, it provides for its members the will and the power by which they can carry out their civilizational mission.

Before one proceeds further it is convenient to quote a very pertinent passage from *the Muqaddimmah* indicating the importance and role of the society in the human organization. Ibn Khaldūn stated:

*“This is what civilization means. (The necessary character of human social organization) is explained by the fact that God created and fashioned man in a form that can live and subsist only with the help of food. He guided man to a natural desire for food and instilled in him the power that enables him to obtain it. However, the power of the individual human being is not sufficient for him to obtain the food he needs, and does not provide much food he requires to live...It is beyond the power of one man alone to do all that, or even part of it, by himself. Thus he cannot do without a combination of many powers from his fellow beings...Through cooperation, the need of a number of persons, many times greater than their own number, can be satisfied... It is absolutely necessary for man to have co-operation of his fellow man....Consequently, social organization is necessary to the human species...This is the meaning of civilization, the object of science under discussion.”*²

¹Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār*, Op. cit., pp. 42-43.

²Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimmah*, Op. cit., pp. 89-90, 91.

From this passage, one can understand the importance of the social relations network (society), in the civilized human association. This meaning stated by Ibn Khaldūn formulated the basis of Bennabi's view of social relations and its significance in the construction of a civilization. It is this cooperation or social relations network that constitutes the social spirit and the communal awareness of the group. Accordingly, from this awareness and spirit, the will and power of the individual is derived. Bennabi, in his analysis of the evolution of Islamic civilization was concerned with the development of this will and power, as an indicator for its development or decline. Using the diagram of the evolution of Islamic civilization, we can underline the changes which occurred upon the will and power of the individual with reference to the social relations network or society.

According to him, this will and power vary according to the phases of the evolution of a civilization. In fact, the civilizational will of the individual, which orients his moral and intellectual capacities, is born at point zero of the diagram. Obviously, this will is at its highest level in the spiritual phase. In this phase, every activity of the individual is controlled by the will stemmed from faith and soul. That is to say, "it is a phase characterized by the most beautiful forms of austerity for which the beloved Prophet set the highest example in his personal as well as in his family life. It is also characterized by the most generous deeds of the companions who mobilized their wealth for the service of Islam and the Islamic

community.”¹ Concerning the civilizational power of the individual, it was clear that all the material capacities of the new Islamic society were utilized to achieve its objectives. For instance, in the war of apostasy², which aimed at abolishing charity³ or the right of the poor, we encountered the assemblage of the Islamic society facing one of the serious challenges in its existence as a civilization. Nevertheless, the realm of objects was simple; the Muslims were able to defeat their enemies. In Bennabi’s view, the Muslims were able to face that heresy only because “it had preserved the (will) intact, that is, the inner tension generated in it by the Qur’ānic inspiration and prophetic teaching.”⁴

To sum up, one can assert that in the spiritual phase all the instincts of man are subdued and integrated in a specific order that pulls on its reins and restrains its drive. It is faith that governs the entire life of people; it manifests itself through the words and activities of the individual and society as well. In summary, the spiritual phase of Islamic civilization recorded the most profound understanding of the Islamic teachings and the pivotal assimilation of the revelation as well as the

¹Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār*, Op. cit., p. 44.

²The wars which occurred in the early history of Islam and immediately after the death of the Prophet (S.Ā.W.). During that time the Muslim community faced a group of insurgent who refused to pay *zakāt* to the authorities of the first Khalifah Abu Bakar al-Siddiq.

³Generally means purity; it is a term used to delineate a tax of fixed part of income and capital payable annually under certain conditions for charitable purpose. It is also considered as one of the pillars of Islam.

⁴Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār*, Op. cit., pp. 44-45.

social function of religion¹ in the orientation of a civilization. A very profound passage in *the Muqaddimmah* can serve as an evidence for the above discussion.

Ibn Khaldūn stated that:

*“Religious coloring dose away with mutual jealousy and envy among people who share in a group feeling, and causes concentration upon the truth. When the people (who have a religious coloring come to have the (right) insight into their affairs, nothing can withstand them, because their outlook is one and their object is one of common accord. They are willing to die for (their objectives).”*²

Furthermore, after this theorization and conceptualization, Ibn Khaldun provided evidences from the history of Islamic civilization in its spiritual phase. He debates that this is “happened to the Arabs at the beginning of Islam during the Muslim conquests....Their religious organization doubled the strength of their group feeling through their feeling of having the (right religious) insight and (their) willingness to die.”³

¹Religion in the Islamic world view is a “necessity for human existence. Without it man lives below himself and he is only accidentally human. It is only by having faith in a religion, by accepting the original covenant made between man and Allah, that man can be fully himself”. See, Nasr Sayyid Husayn, *A Young Muslim's Guide to The Modern World*, Kuala Lumpur: Mekar Publishers, Petaling Jaya, 1994), pp. 10-11.

²Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimmah*, Op. cit., p. 320.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 320-321.

B- THE RATIONAL PHASE AND EXPENSION OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

It is clear thus far; that all activities of the Islamic society in the spiritual phase were revolving around the new concepts of the Islamic world view which brought about some rules and principles for the orientation of the individual and society as well. More importantly, however, from the point of view of Bennabi, while the Islamic civilization carried out its development under the driving force of faith and soul which created a firm relations network "and as its web of relations approaches perfection, new material problems and new exigencies arise."¹ In order for the Islamic society to cope with the arising problems as well as with the emerging new situations, it followed a new inflection that coincided with the advent of the ^Umayyiah dynasty² and breakdown of the righteous caliphate, it is the phase of reason. In fact, Islamic civilization in its deep composition and structure faced a new state of affair that overturned the whole system of values and relations. Ibn Khaldun described this situation in the following paragraph:

"When the religious coloring changes and is destroyed. The power of the ruling dynasty is then wiped out. Superiority exists then merely in proportion to the existing group

¹Bennabi, *Milād*, Op. cit., p. 103.

²Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 117.

*feeling, without the additional power of religion."*¹

Indeed, it was faith² that began losing its function as a social catalyst which drove the will and power of the society towards the realization of its goals. Bennabi asserted that "the moment faith becomes centripetal and without radiation, that is to say, individualistic, its historical mission on earth comes to an end, where it is no longer fit to promote a civilization"³ Therefore, the civilization marches to its new phase; that of reason.⁴

In this respect, Bennabi endeavored to draw a picture of the evolution of Islamic civilization and its inflection to the rational phase. By his account, it is important to examine the remote causes that lead to the decline of this civilization and its shift from the spiritual phase to the rational one. In fact, the Muslim society encountered its first schism at the battle of Siffin, in the year 37 of the H⁵; this incident was not a mere event, rather it reflected a deep change in the Muslim personality as well as in the social relations network.

¹Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, Op. cit., p. 321.

²Gibb writes "....Faith is the substance of things hope for, the evidences of things not seen...." See, A. R. Hamilton Gibb, *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 177.

³Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 11.

⁴Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 117.

⁵Emigration of Muhammad from Mecca to al-Madinah in 622 CE, the base of the Muslim calendar.

Therefore, it hid in its deep inner a serious contradiction between the Jahili spirit and the Qur'ānic spirit, between the individual and the person and between faith and human grips.¹ Bennabi debates that this contradiction was the edifice that broke the balanced synthesis of man, soil and time in the Islamic history. Indeed, "it was moreover, Mu awiyah² who broke a synthesis-in principle established for a long time, perhaps for evermore, thanks to the equilibrium between the spiritual and the temporal. From this first rapture to which we would revert again, even if the Muslim could live fundamentally attached to a spiritual order contained within his believing soul, the Muslim society did, nevertheless, lose its first equilibrium"³ A slightly different version of the same conclusion is found in Ibn Khaldūn's analysis of the same situation. He argues that "from Mu awiyah on word, the group feeling (of the Arabs) approached its final goal, royal authority. The restraining influence of religion had weakened."⁴ It is clear thus far, that this first rupture was a deviating inflection⁵ from the real path of Islamic civilization and from the atmosphere constructed in the spiritual phase. However, Bennabi held the view that we are indebted⁶ to this deviated civilization that flourished in Damascus under the Umaiyyah:

¹Talbi, *The Implication of Bennabi's View*, Op. cit., p. 12.

²Sec, Akbar, *Discovering Islam*, Op. cit., pp. 38-39.

³Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 9.

⁴Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, Op. cit., p. 433.

⁵Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., p. 112.

⁶Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 117.

*"The discovery of the decimal system, application of the experimental method, notably in medicine and the introduction of the mathematical notion of time which form the first land marks of technical thought...However, from a bio-historical point of view that concerns us, all this brilliant civilization was but a denaturalization of the original synthesis realized by the Qur'ān and founded on the equilibrium of spirit and reason, on the two-fold moral and material base, necessary for all durable social edifice. In reality, the Muslim world could only survive this first crisis in its history of what remained in it of the impulsion and living force of the Qur'ān."*¹

Such a split in the Muslim personality between faith and reason as well as between the spiritual and the temporal does not mean that Islamic civilization loses its sight and direction. Rather, it is an indication that the inflection was very dangerous and fatal. Whatever, the nature and quality of the accomplishments of this civilization, Bennabi argues that the deviation has started at that first rift² To justify the continuity of Islamic civilization in history, even its inflection to the rational phase, Bennabi asserted that great men like ʿUqbah, ʿUmar Ibn Abd al-Aziz, and Malik Ibn Anas, preserved this civilization from its firsthand decline. Those great personages who kept the values and morals of Islam in their hearts and behaviors. In other words, "because they incarnated under different titles, the

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 9.

²Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 101.

simple and great virtues of Islam.”¹In this regard, the researcher deems it significant to mention how Ali Ibn Abi Talib was aware of this change in the Islamic personality. In one of his sayings he reflected his intelligence in determining the real cause for the remote causes of the decline of Islamic civilization. In one of the revealing section of *the Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldūn quoted an important passage that can serve as an original explanation of the crucial reason to the decline. He said:

*“Some one asked Ali: Why do the people disagree concerning you, and why did they not disagree concerning Abu Bakr and Umar?” Ali replied: “ Because Abu Bakr and Umar were in charge of men like me, and I am today in charge of men like you.”*²

In the above passage, it is clear that the inflection of Islamic civilization to the rational phase was in its major part due to the fact that the Muslim personality³ started changing and developing under the pressure of the material and rational problems. In those kind of problems faith commenced losing its full control over the vital energy and the civilizing capacities of the individual and society as well. In substantive terms Bennabi appeared to be very conscious of that change. He said:

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., pp. 9-10.

²Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, Op. cit., p. 433.

³Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 105

*"History commences with the integral man, constantly adapting his effort to his ideal and needs, and accomplishing in society his double mission of actor and witness. But history ends with the disintegrated man; the corpuscle deprived of the center of gravitation, the individual living in a dissolved society that no longer furnishes his existence with either moral or material base."*¹

In further explanation, Bennabi argues that all these changes are related to the human soul, which is alone, allows humanity to soar. Once the soul loses its ascending force, could not but descends, pulled down by an irresistible force.² According to him, no force in the earth can replace³ the dynamic source of energy and power. In other words, "no temporal substitute, in the course of history, could replace this unique source of human energy, that is, faith. Neither the Timurid renaissance, that flourished in the fourteenth⁴ century around the mausoleums of Samarqand, nor the Othman Empire would give a movement to the Muslim society that no longer possessed its resource within itself."⁵

In spite of the attempts of reform that emerged in the Islamic world ever since the battle of Şiffin, no one of them could regain the civilizational function of

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 11.

²*Ibid.*, p. 10.

³Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 109.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

⁵Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 10-

the Islamic society. Rather, those attempts were more partial and incomprehensive. However, the Muslim society carried through its evolution under the control of reason on the one hand, and the weakening of faith on the other hand. When this situation reached certain limits of development and while the Muslim society expanded and enlarged in various aspects, the civilizing capacities of the civilization were unable to carry on the message of generating new ideas and developing new systems for dealing with the political, social and economic problems. This situation was manifested in the division of the Islamic society into various parts as well as in the social degeneration of the social relations network. In order for a civilization to continue its evolution, it must inflect to a new phase i.e., the instinctive phase. Bennabi explained this state in the following passage:

*"Inasmuch as the power of the (soul) weakens as was the situation during the Umaïyyah period when the society ceased to exert its pressure over the individual. It is only natural then that the instincts reach full emancipation as a culmination of the gradual weakening of the powers of the soul. As history carries on its movement, the process of evolution of civilization manifests its effects on the psychology of the individual as well as on the moral edifice of the society, which ceases, at a given stage, adjusting the behavior of the individual. The more the instinctive energies become emancipated, the less the individual's action becomes subjected to the moral considerations."*¹

¹Bennabi, *Milād*, Op. cit., p. 103.

It is clear in the body of the above passage that the instinctive phase commenced its destructive role in the individual and society's life of Islamic civilization.

C- THE INSTINCTIVE PHASE AND THE DECLINE OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

Historically speaking, this phase started from the post al-Muwahhid era. During this period, the last attempts of the civilizational reformation had ended their function and influence. Thus, the Muslim civilization entered the instinctive phase around 1396. Bennabi argues that "one is compelled to underline this date because it forms the point of departure of a (historical process) to which are traceable all the particularities of the Muslim world now, if one were to depict the process of this sequence by a curve, one would find the point of inflexion- that marked the reversion of Muslim values into non values- somewhere towards the epoch of Ibn Khaldūn ¹" Additionally this reversion² was not, however, instantaneous; it marked "the distance culmination of the Siffin rupture that had substituted dynastic power for democratic system, thus causing the breach between the State and the popular consciousness. This rift is in itself contained the

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 13.

²Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 101.

potential for all the future separation and political antitheses in the bosom of Islam.”¹

It is clear so far that the third phase of the evolution of Islamic civilization came to light as an event in a long historical sequence which traced back its roots to the battle of Şiffin. According to Bennabi, one cannot understand any problem within the context of the Islamic society unless he finds out the relation between the cause and its effect as well as the remote and adjacent reasons for the decline. By his account, one of the dangerous problems of the Muslim mind during the instinctive phase is the atomistic² mentality which inclines to separate causes from effects as well as fragments the problems as they are not interrelated. From the post al-Muwahhid era onward “the internal contradictions were going to reach their culminating point in their inevitable end: the dislocation of a world and the advent of a new society endowed with new characteristics and new tendencies. It was then, the phase of decadence: man, soil and time were no longer the factors of civilization, but inert objects without creative intercourse with one another.”³

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, p. 13.

²A western scholar has mentioned the dangerous effect of this mentality in the course of the development of civilization. He used the term “reductionism” to explain the effect of this tendency. He said: “reductionism is the interpretation of a phenomenon by breaking it down into simplistic elements which cannot account for the very special elan or integrity which gives the phenomenon its uniqueness.” Keith, *Beyond Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 3.

³Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 11.

During this phase, faith lost its civilizing capacities¹, it is no longer controlling the rational and the instinctive forces and energies of the individual and society as well. According to Bennabi, once the instincts are completely emancipated, the destiny of man becomes more at their mercy and, consequently, a new phase of civilization, i.e., the third phase, begins. Accordingly, the religious idea then stops functioning as a social agent that can generate a civilization. Consequently, the society finally plunges into the state of decline thus denoting the end of a cycle of civilization.² Accordingly, the will and power of the society was no longer able to orient the vital energy. The person had changed into an individual and the latter developed the spirit of selfishness. The social relations network carried on its dissolution and the entire life of people started revolving around the objects anew.

An observer mentioned that "in the third phase of the civilization cycle, instincts disunite and start working without harmony and agreement and tend to fulfill the interest of the individuals. This will bring out imbalance in the system of the vital energy and egocentrism will dominate and the network of social relations will degenerate. This occurred in what is called in the Islamic history the age of

¹ Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., p. 113.

² Bennabi, *Milad*, Op. cit., pp. 103-104.

degeneration where instincts got out of the control of the spirit and the intellect, the age of the tribal kings.”¹

As a matter of clarification, it is noteworthy that Bennabi did not belittle the role of faith and its significant position in the Muslim society. Rather, he argues that “it would be proper here to dispel an ambiguity: one could note that faith never lost its sway in the Muslim world even in this period of decadence and this remark would become essential if it had concerned an eschatological appraisal of spiritual values. But, if one wishes to consider the problem from a historical and sociological point of view, it would be convenient not to confound the salvation of the individual’s soul with the evolution of societies.”² That is to say, faith in the Islamic view has a civilizing function that transforms the entire society in its persons, objects and ideas. It is not only meant to solve certain individual problems. Rather, it is a matter of social function that changes man from a mere biological man into a sociological entity that could play a historical role in developing the society.

Furthermore, it transforms the simple chronological time to a conceptual time that enters in the process of production and progress. In addition to its function in transforming the meaning of soil by making it a ground for a

¹Talbi, *The Implications of Bennabi's View*, Op. cit., pp. 12-13.

²Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 11.

civilizational movement and for the sustenance of the entire society. In other words faith¹ is the catalyst of a civilization and not a mere individual desire. This is the social and civilizational meaning of faith that was lost in the era of decline of Islamic civilization. Bennabi asserted that "the moment faith becomes centripetal and without radiation, that is to say, individualistic, its historical mission on earth comes to an end, where it is no longer fit to promote a civilization"² Thus, once this meaning was abolished from the cultural universe of the Muslim society³, the force of instincts took over the role of orienting the entire movement of that civilization.

Viewing the third phase of its evolution from a psychological angle, we may argue that the instincts are liberated, the original conditioning process comes to an end and the cultural world is confined more to the conditions of the realm of objects. At this juncture, the vital energy of the individual is no longer oriented. Hence, the liberated instincts may destroy the society by degenerating the network of its social relations and breaking its concerted action into thousands of contradictory activities undertaken either individually or in small groups....as for the Muslim society, this is then post al-Muwahhid era that commences.⁴

¹ Al-Jafa iri, *The Problems of Civilization*, Op. cit., pp. 144-145.

² Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 11.

³ Al-Jafa iri, *The Problems of Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 145.

⁴ Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkar*, Op. cit., pp. 56-57.

Bennabi argues that this juncture presented a dangerous moment of inflexion in the historical evolution of Islamic civilization. Therefore, it is no longer the question of transforming the political framework: it is the man himself, the civilized man, who degenerated. In fact, this man lost his civilizing elan: and is thus unable to assimilate and create. Accordingly, we should analyze the human factors: these are the men themselves who no longer know how to apply their genius to their soil and time. Indeed, it is the basic synthesis itself that was disintegrated and thus the social life had declined and civilization had deviated.¹

Historically speaking, the Muslim society faced this moment starting from the fall of the al-Muwahhid² dynasty. It was truly a fall of a civilization and a long process of disintegration. Hence, we should underline the fact that the era of decadence of Islamic civilization commenced with the post al-Muwahhid man who disfigured the right picture of the Islamic personality and culture as well. Bennabi described this situation in historical terms; he stated that even in the days of "Tbn Khaldūn, al-Qayrawan that had known the splendorous of the Aghlabid³ kingdom and had been the metropolis of a million inhabitants, was no more than an insignificant township; on the other extremity of the Muslim world Baghdad and Samarqand had suffered the same fate. Everywhere, the same symptoms of a

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 13.

²Al-Muwahhidun ruled over North Africa and Spain from C.E 1130 to 1269.

³The Aghlabid rule in Tunisia (C.E.800-900) marked the greatest ascendancy of the Arabs in the Mediterranean.

general collapse marked the point of inflexion of the curve.”¹ It is clear so far that the central reason behind the decline of Islamic civilization was in its large part due the new quality of man² who came into existence in the post al-Muwahhid era. From a sociological point of view, Bennabi asserted that, “the symptoms that could be discerned in urban or political affairs were but the expression of a nearly pathological state of a new man -the post al-Muwahhid man who had succeeded the man of Muslim civilization, and who carried in himself the germs whence would sprout, in succession and sporadically, all the problems since then faced by the Muslim world.”³

According to Bennabi, the present degeneration and lacuna of the movement of the renaissance is indebted to this man. He is unable to assimilate and represent the Islamic ideal in its comprehensive and original model. All our moral, social, political and economic problems are spread by this new personality. Bennabi, argues that “he is also thereof the co-actor; he has not merely transmitted his psychology born of a moral, social, philosophical and political bankruptcy: he has transmitted himself.”⁴

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., pp. 13-14.

²Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, Op. cit., pp. 104-105.

³Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., p. 115.

⁴Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 14.

To put in a slightly different way, Bennabi emphasized the disintegration which occurred within the human mind, soul, personality and behavior. This man is attributed by his thingness mentality and selfishness. He lives in the age of objects with a dissolved social relations network. He is not confident in the civilizational function of the realm of ideas and does not conceive ideas as effective tools for the social and political activity; rather it is a mere decoration of thought and a complementary luxury.

In fact, it is such personality that led to the decline of the Islamic civilization. Therefore, one should underline that the world of post al-Muwahhid era represents a world with two aspects: the object and the person. It is the world that loses the dimension of idea. The communication between us is not made through ideas¹ Sociologically speaking, the Muslim society is now passing through a phase of social degeneration, which implies the loss of the real essence of man, himself. Bennabi asserted that it is worth remarking that Islamic civilization had ended ever since the era in which it lost the value of man in its essence.² There is no exaggeration to say in general "civilization ends when it loses in its consciousness the deep meaning of man."³

¹Bennabi, Qadāyā', Op. cit., p. 125.

²Shayif, *The Civilizational Conflict*, Op. cit., pp. 117-118.

³Bennabi, Qadāyā', Op. cit., p. 164.

II- BENNABI'S VIEW OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

The foregoing analysis shows that the present Islamic civilization is situated anew in the pre-civilized stage after being civilized and reached the third phase of its evolution, i.e., the instinctive phase. Therefore, the fundamental question would be:

What are the measures and solutions that could be taken to revive the Islamic civilization at its present decline?. As we have discussed previously, any construction or reconstruction of a civilization should depart from the civilizational equation. That is to say, it should tackle the question of synthesizing man, soil and time in a given human context. Thus, as Bennabi asserted, it is the matter of removing the Islamic civilization from the state of bankruptcy and decline. To achieve this goal one should "renovate the man conforming to the true Islamic tradition and the methods of the new sciences."¹ The reason behind this is that Bennabi "extrapolating from his general observation about post-civilized man, he felt that the Muslim of his time were simply incapable of producing another civilization. They had already lost the intellectual, moral and psychological

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 14.

elements that would have entitled them to respond actively to history.”¹ Accordingly, any solution that will not transform man himself will not be fundamental and basic. Bennabi strongly argues that “we should change anew the personal equation of the individual.”² In other words, reconstructing Muslim personality should be the first task of the civilizing process in the Muslim world. Indeed, the Muslims faced the great dilemma of backwardness; they “no longer know how to apply their genius to their soil and time.”³ It is clear evidence from the preceding quotations that the Islamic civilizational reconstruction must commence from transforming man himself. Bennabi, “insisted that this situation would remain unless a total and profound change occurred in the Muslim spirit.”⁴ In line with this, he suggested that any transformation of man should focus on three important elements: his thought, his labor and his wealth.

By his account, the appropriate way to utilize these human capacities in a civilizing process is through orientation (*tawjīh*). He stressed that a theory and method for orienting these elements in a social project is required. Accordingly, the concept of orientation⁵ has various definitions, for instance orientation of

¹Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 128.

²Bennabi, *Ta'ammulāt*, Op. cit., p. 56.

³Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 13.

⁴Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 128.

⁵Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 97.

human things means initially, “to define and clarify them¹ as well as avoiding the wastage of energy and time.”² Additionally, orientation denotes “the harmony in the movement of a civilization, unity in the objectives and avoidance of the conflict³ between efforts stemming from the same sources and aiming at similar objectives”⁴ Taking into consideration those definitions, one may see the importance of planning as the essential component of orientation. Bennabi aptly stressed the idea of planning as a driving-force in the process of transforming man. According to him, our problem is not in the means or things, “rather it is in planning and organizing our capacities.”⁵ Therefore, planning as the heart of orientation would impact the psycho-social and cultural situation of both man and society throughout “the pre-definition of objectives and determining of the practical methods and programs to achieve them.”⁶ However, it is obvious that Bennabi gave precedence to the orientation of the intellectual and psychological dimension of man. In other words, “such a change, which would focus mainly on the realm of Ideas, was the only way to restore the individual’s ability to create civilization.”⁷

¹Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 79.

²Bennabi, *Shurūt*, p. 78.

³Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 169.

⁴Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 78.

⁵Bennabi, *Bāynā*, Op. cit., p. 81.

⁶Bennabi, *Ḥadīth*, Op. cit., p. 110.

⁷Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., pp.128-129.

Attributing such an importance to the intellectual and psychological aspects of man, Bennabi asserted that any attempt to reformulate the Muslim mind and personality demands a cultural project.

By his account, any thinking in the problem of man is a thinking in the problem of civilization. Expressing this idea in another word and taking into consideration the close liaison between civilization and culture, one may say that: any thinking in the problem of civilization, in its essence is a thinking in the problem of culture. The relation¹ between culture and civilization is established by some contemporary scholars. For instance, Wittfogel defines civilization as "the totality of cultural conditions, ideas and beliefs of a given country."²In another precise limitation of the relation between culture and civilization, Redfield said "I think of civilization as one of the limited numbers of great peaks of culture or of human achievement."³

¹For further details see, Bell, Clive, *Civilization and Old Friends*, (London & Chicago University Press, 1973), p. 119. & Burnus, Edward Mc Nall, *Western Civilizations: Their History and their Culture*, 6th. Ed., (New York: W.W. Norton & Company INC., 1963), p. 23-24.

²Wittfogel, Karl A., *Ideas and the Power Structure in Approaching to Asian Civilization*, (New York: Colombia University Press, 1966), p. 86.

³Redfield, Robert, *Thinking about a Civilization, An Introduction to the Civilization of India: Changing Dimension of Indian Society and Culture*, (Illinois: 1952), pp. 2-3.

Toynbee also has noted that he conceives the concept of civilization as the "kind of culture found in cities."¹ Having said this, it seems that Bennabi's analysis of this relation is not only of theoretical nature but also of practical implication. His analysis of this relation helped him to note that civilization is the sum total of the achieved cultural values. He argues "accordingly, the destination and final goal of man is pledged all along with his culture."² Explaining the importance³ and role of culture in Bennabi's view, an observer has aptly remarked that "Bennabi holds that it is through culture that the three factors of man: intellect, labor and wealth can be directed. Culture is the primary factor that influences man as a social personality, and society as a collective body. Both man and society were products of culture"⁴ Hence one should treat the problem of culture in the Muslim world because "within the Muslim society, it is culture that caused its predicament and any given solutions should focus on culture."⁵

It is clear in the body of the above quotation that culture is a very important factor of any reformation in the Muslim personality and life. It is a crucial channel for transforming man with reference to the Islamic world view and

¹Toynbee, J. Arnold, *A Study of History*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p 43.

²Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., pp. 101-102.

³Safi, *The Challenge of Modernity*, pp. Op. cit., 166-167.

⁴Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, p. 169.

⁵Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, p. 102.

the human experience. Hence, it is worth analyzing the concept of culture and its constructive project.

A- GENERAL EXPOSE ON THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

In a simple Arabic dictionary, the term "Thaqāfah" or culture¹ means: "skillful, education and development of mental as well as personality in an ongoing way."² In other words, it is an educating process that transforms human personality as well as qualifies it to acquire certain skills. Consequently, a man becomes more "skilled, or skillful; and light, active, quick, or sharp; and intelligent, or sagacious."³ In *al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ*, the term "thaqifa" means: "educate or instruct."⁴ While in the *Dā'irat ma'arif al-Qarn al-Ishrīn*, "thaqifa" "yathqufu", "thaqāfatun", denotes that someone "becomes clever and quickly learned."⁵ It is

¹Culture could be defined a "policy, tacitly and gradually concocted by groups of people for the furtherance of their interest, and contract, establish by practices, between and among individuals to organize their strivings into mutually facilitating equivalence structure." See, Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Culture and Personality*, p. 24.

²See, Fuad Ifram, Al-Bustani, *Munjid al-Ṭalib*, (Lubnan: Machreq Sarl Publishers, 1987), p. 64.

³See, Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, The Islamic Texts Society, Vol.1 (Cambridge: England, 1863), p. 342.

⁴Majma' al-Lughat al-Arabiyyah, *al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ*, Vol. 1 (Cairo: 1972), p. 98.

⁵Muhammad Farid, Wajdi, "thaqifa", *Dā'irat Ma'arif al-Qarn al-Ishrīn*, Vol. 2, 3d Ed. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma rifah, 1971), p. 757.

also important to note that the term “thaqāfah”¹ was mentioned in *the Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldūn, but it did not refer to any social or epistemological concept. Rather, it was used in a simple literary context. Moreover, Bennabi remarked that the term “thaqāfah” was not neither found in the era of the Umayyad dynasty nor in the Abbasid dynasty. In his view, there is no official reference to this term ² in the official language of the State³ At the technical level, there are also many⁴ attempts and views about the concept of culture ⁵ For instance, the most comprehensive classical definition of culture, which was followed by most of the sociological definitions, was provided by Edward B. Taylor in the following passage: “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”⁶

¹For further details see: Hussain Mu nis, *The Civilization*, (Kuwait: dhat al-Salasil, 1994), pp. 385-386 and Nasr Muhammad, Arif, *Civilization, Culture and Urbanism*, 2d. ed. (Riyad: al-Dār al-Alamiyyah, li al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1995), pp. 27-31.

²Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Taghīr*, Op. cit., p. 165.

³Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 9.

⁴As the matter of fact in 1952 Alfered I. Kroeber and Clyde Kuckhon published a work about culture named: *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. They mentioned that there are 164 definitions of culture.

⁵See, Leslie A. White with Dillingham, Beth, *The Concept of Culture*, First. Ed. (U.S.A: Burgess publishing company, 1973), pp. 9-10.

⁶E. B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. 1, (New York: Brentano's, 1924), p. 1.

*"After surveying current definitions of culture, Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn concluded that the consensus of most of social scientists is that 'culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values of culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions,)' Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. XLVII, No. 1, 1952.)."*¹

It is clear so far that the above paragraph underlines two important elements in the concept of culture; firstly, the patterns that govern the movement of culture. That is to say, culture² should follow in its function and march certain norms, which implies the possibility of viewing it as a system and a process as well. Secondly, the definition underscores the significance of behavior in culture. In other words, culture has to do with human activity and behavior, which means it, has a function and role in the life of a group and society as well. Arnold Mathew added another aspect to the definition of culture by stating that "it is a study of perfection."³ Concerning this aspect of culture we find Bennabi very aware of its

¹See, Scott, *Dictionary of Sociology*, Op. cit., p. 95.

²Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Taghīr*, Op. cit., p. 166.

³Arnold, Mathew, *Culture and Anarchy*, 2d. Ed. (England: Theomrus Press, 1994), p.

importance. The concern which led him to study perfection and aesthetic sense as one of the very crucial element of culture as we shall see.

In many other definitions, one can note the concentration on the components and channels of culture, rather than its function and operational patterns. For example, in sociology culture could be defined as "the languages, norms, values, beliefs, knowledge and symbols that make up a way of life, also it is the understanding of how to act that people share with one another in any stable and self reproducing group."¹ Furthermore, according to some Anthropologists, culture is "the way of life of people or as what and individual needed to know to survive in a society or as what could be learned by individual and passed down in a society."² Educationally speaking, culture can be defined as "the embodiment in the mind and life of people then, of all it has achieved in thought, character and manners enriched by the association of a common land."³ On the other hand, there are some definitions provided by Muslim thinkers, the researcher deems it important to mention few of them. For instance, Ali Shari ati in his definition emphasized the importance of the world view and ideology, he stated that it is

¹ Calhoun, Craig, Donald Light and Suzanne Keller, *Sociology*, (New York: Mc Graw-Hill Inc, 1990), p. 7.

² Hall, John R. and Mary Jo Neitz, *Culture: Sociological Perspectives*, (Prentice: Hall, 1993), p. 17.

³ Foster, Watson, *The Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Education*, (Delhi: Akasdeep Publishing House, 1989), p. 414.

worth to return to the self-produced or the bottom of culture means to return to the Islamic culture and ideology.¹

Another author defined culture as "the sum total values and concepts that govern individual and society's behavior"² Furthermore, another writer emphasized the theoretical and historical dimensions of culture. He stated that culture is "a development in the theoretical thoughts...the important historical events and also development in the conduct and behavior."³ Taking into consideration, the above-mentioned definitions, one can conclude that culture is a human living context that reflects a way of life and carries out the function of educating the members of society as well as transforming the human behavior and attitude in light of certain norms and patterns.

B- BENNABI'S VIEW OF CULTURE: THE LINK BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

In a mature attempt, one might, first of all, have set about the task of revising the earlier works regarding the concept of culture. With this spirit and

¹ Ali, Shari ati, *Al-ʿAwda ilā al-Dhāt*, Trans. Ibrahim al-Dusuqi Shitta, 1st ed. (al-Qahirah: al-Zahra' li al-Ilam al-Arabi, 1986), p. 36.

² Yussif Nur, Awad, *al-Mukawinat al-Islamiyah li al-Thaqāfah al-ʿArabiyyah*, (Bayrut: Dar al-Qalam), p. 5.

³ Ahmad, Shalabi, *al-Mujtamaʿ al-Islāmī*, Vol. 6, 5th ed. (al-Qahirah: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyyah, 1980), pp. 333-334.

sense of research, Bennabi endeavored to construct his own view¹ of culture with reference to his general framework and tools of analysis. After all, he classified the Western views regarding the concept of culture into two different philosophical stances; that of the liberal western societies² and that of the communist western communities³ According to the former stance, culture is related more to the problems of man. In other words, man is the center of any conceptual analysis of culture; it revolves around the philosophy of man as a central being whose activities constitute the core of culture. Whereas in the latter stance, culture appertains more to the issues and problems of the society, its central theme is society⁴. In other words, it has a functional relation with the life and movement of a society⁵ The first remark given by Bennabi regarding these two stances is that both of them did not provide for us any content of culture that can be taught and transmitted among the members of the society. When we view culture as a philosophy of man, on the one hand and as a philosophy of society on the other hand⁶, we cannot explain the way in which this culture influences the behavior of the individual and the style of life of the society. That is to say, at one side we have the view which focuses on man and on the opposite side we have the

¹Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 98.

²Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., p. 166.

³Shayif, *The Civilizational Conflict*, Op. cit., p. 53.

⁴Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., p. 167.

⁵See, Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 82.

⁶Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 151.

view that centralizes the society. Thus, one may create an antipodal and contradictory tendency that leads in certain cases to the conflict and clash between the cultures and within the same culture. It is so far clear that Bennabi underscored the importance of the educational dimension of culture.¹In other words, he conceived culture as a human agent that provides an educational training for the betterment and refinement of the individual and society as well. In this respect, he differentiated ² between learning (al-Tā'lim) and culture. According to him, culture is more general and it is concerned with the human personality and behavior as well as with the style of life of a society. While, learning is related more to knowledge and schooling. Culture is a theory in social education³ that orients⁴ both the individual and society. Whereas, knowledge or al-Talim is a theory for learning which touches only certain categories of people in the society. Expressing his view of the difference between culture and knowledge, Bennabi asserted that:

"Herein lies the difference between culture and science (knowledge) in that culture is nothing but to learn to be civilized, that is to use all our psycho-mental capacities in the realm of persons according to the dictates of our conscience, whereas, knowledge is only a product of civilization, i.e., it is the efforts

¹Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, p. 96.

²Shayif, *The Civilizational Conflict*, pp. 57-58.

³For further elaboration on the concept of education see, Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib, *The Concept of Education In Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur, ISTAC, 1991), pp. 23-29.

⁴Al-Jafari, *The Problems of Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 177.

*energies and comprehensively integrates us in its order, whilst the latter does so only partially. Consequently, culture formulates our relations with the human order while knowledge establishes our links with the order of objects."*¹

In further clarifying the difference ² between culture and knowledge, he differentiated between them based on the function and position of each one of them in the social life of people. According to him, culture is wider in its scope and influence than knowledge, because it covers an important area of the human relations and activities; including our personality, behavior, relations with others and our style of life in a society. While, knowledge covers a narrow range of our activities, it is a product of human mind as well as it creates our relations only with the realm of objects, in other words, it is more practical. This is how Bennabi perceived the concept of culture as a living creative environment, which is related to human behavior, and way of life within a social context. Hence, he defined culture as:

*"The total sum of ethical characteristics and social values attained by the individual since his birth, as a primary resource within the environment where he was born. Thus, culture is the living environment and milieu in which man acquires and formulates his habits and personality."*³

¹Bennabi, *Milād*, Op. cit., p. 90.

²Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., pp. 169-170.

³Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 83.

This living reality contains "external elements, such as measures, tunes, motions and internal elements, such as; tastes, customs and traditions."¹ Indeed, culture is the product of the environment....living environment, including the psychological, social, natural and religious environment. The latter, is considered as a womb for the cultural values.²

Thus, one can, in the first general attempt, consider culture as an environment consisting of colors, sounds, forms, styles, motions, amiable things, pictures, and the ideas spreading every where. It is a living environment that exercises its influences on the shepherd and on the scholar similarly³ It is the milieu in which man is being formulated and fashioned to play a civilizing mission.

Eventually, this concentration on this environmental approach leads us to the fact that the cultural values are of general influence and benefit for the whole categories of the society. Every member is involved in a social conversation with the system of the cultural values. In fact, we are not learning culture but we are breathing it⁴, as values from our broad environment. Therefore, Bennabi debates that "culture is not a phenomenon stemming from school. Rather, it is a

¹Bennabi, *Bāynā*, Op. cit., p. 71.

²Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyūr*, Op. cit., p. 172.

³Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, p. 154.

⁴Bennabi, *Qadāyā*, Op. cit., p. 80.

phenomenon gotten from the environment”¹ This socio-environmental approach in defining culture reflects the social dynamic function of culture. It is apparent from the above passage that Bennabi in his notion of culture emphasized the social factors more than the learning factors² By his account, school cannot create a civilization; rather it plays a partial role in this regard.

Comparing its role to that of the environment, Bennabi debates that the latter is more powerful and effective in generating a civilizing movement. By his account one should be aware of the real role of school³ in solving the problem of culture. It should be clear that it has only a partial role in this regard. “It will be a dangerous mistake if we think that school alone can solve the problem of culture”⁴ In the above discussion, a main focus is given to the ethical characteristics related to the human personality as well as to the social values appertained to the society and its way of life. Furthermore, he underlined the importance of environment in the cultural process. Thus, culture can be considered as the living social environment itself. Obviously, Bennabi’s definition combines both the considerations of the individual and the considerations of the entire society. This integration makes the concept of culture more dynamic and effective in serving the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

² Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, Op. cit., p. 154.

³ Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., pp. 170-171.

⁴ Bennabi, *Qadāyā*, Op. cit., p. 81.

needs of the individual and society as well. This definition of culture reflects its comprehensiveness and its global concern on the entire life of people.

In fact, culture concerns the whole society, including the learners and the children who do not reach yet the school age. It contains the entire society.¹ Moreover, culture plays a crucial role in solving the problems of its members. It “interferes in the affairs of the individuals and in the construction of the society. It deals² with the problems of both the leaders and the masses.”³ If one looks deeper into the above definition of culture, one can see his strong emphasis on the notion of social education. His focus on culture as a living social environment, which involves all categories of the society, implies the notion of social education. According to him, if culture is of this communal nature and civilizational function, then it has to manifest itself in the form of social education that creates the atmosphere for every member to play his role in the development of his society⁴ This definition of culture aspires towards providing social education that teaches every individual the way of living with his co-brothers, that is how to be a civilized man. In fact, social education is nothing but culture as such.⁵ Providing more explanation to the notion of social education, Bennabi, debates that:

¹Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 85.

²Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 99.

³Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 86.

⁴Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, pp. 153-154.

⁵Bennabi, *Milād*, p. 93.

*Accordingly social education (culture) is by no means a set of rules and theoretical concepts which have no authority on real life, that is on the realm of persons ideas and objects. It is not also the product of the self-styled intellectuals and encyclopedic scholars who may know all the vocabulary of dictionaries, without being aware of what it would mean in the realm of reality and facts.*¹

That is to say, social education or culture should be able to modify the human reality and to construct civilizing relations among people, because education could be defined as the “general process by which a social group whether an entire society or just a family transmits attitudes, beliefs behavior and skills to its members.”² A Muslim thinker has underscored the aim of education in the Islamic world view. He stated that “the end of education in Islam is to produce a good man.”³ However, one should emphasize the conceptual and practical dimension of education. In other words, education should be conceived within the present universal framework. In this respect education should aim at “integration of professional skills and character development, the development of well-rounded

¹*Ibid.*, p. 93.

²Borgatta. F Eclgar & Borgatta C. Marie, *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, “*Educational Organization*”, Vol. 2, (New York: Macmillian publishing company, 1992), p. 535.

³Sayed Muhammed Naquib, Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education In Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1991), p. 23.

personality, the need to master science and technology education, the need to master more than one language.”¹

Indeed, this is the crucial meaning and role to which Bennabi points his analysis of the social education. By his account, any education that excludes from its projects and methods the issue of man himself as the central object would not generate a civilizing process. In a broad sense, Bennabi provided a wide meaning to the concept of social education by relating it to the three realms of society. He stated that:

Likewise every verity which does not affect the social trinity of persons, ideas and objects is a dead verity. Similarly, every word, which does not contain an embryo of a specific activity, is but a void, indeed, dead word buried in a cemetery called 'dictionary'. Even the notion of social education shares in such a universal destiny if it is not converted in the realm of reality into efficient methods for changing man and teaching him how to live with his co-brothers, how to generate with them the means and forces that would improve the conditions of human existence and how to build together with them the network of relations that would enable the society to carry out its concerted action in history. ²

¹Kamal Hassan, *Towards*, Op. cit., p. 279.

²Bennabi, *Milād*, Op. cit., p. 93.

In a nutshell, culture is an important social and educational channel that contributes in the civilizing process of the human personality and the social reality. It allows us to reform our civilization through "its transforming function" which allows every member of the society to change himself with reference to the way of life of his society. Additionally, one should view the concept of culture as a social project to construct relations between leaders and masses as well as to formulate link between the realm of ideas and that of objects in order to achieve the goals of the realm of persons.

II- THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT OF CULTURE: ORIENTATION AND METHOD

Having established such significant and diverse views of culture, it is only pertinent to ask about its educational project. In other words, one should ask: in which way does culture contribute to the formation of the human personality and the style of life in a society? In fact, Bennabi in his notion of the cultural project or the social education of culture directed our attention to the fact that we should preserve the cultural identity and cultural singularity while we attempt to reform Islamic civilization. According to him, every human culture has its own characteristics that distinguish it from other cultures. This cultural uniqueness is very crucial in any transformation. Indeed, it would prove to be of dangerous consequences if one were to borrow an American or a Markssian solution in order to implement it in the Muslim world. Bennabi asserted "because here we face societies which differs in their ages, stages and objectives"¹ This difference² implies the existence of what one may call the "cultural equation" of every society. In fact, it is this equation that formulates the substance and uniqueness of these cultures. "For this reason, a society cannot import its culture from another one. Each society must create its culture and modify it according to its time, place and

¹Bennabi, *Milad*, Op. cit., p. 37.

²Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., p. 167.

historical peculiarity”¹ In Bennabi’s view, one should, in the cultural plans, take into consideration the age and stage of the evolution of the society and its civilization. For instance, the age and phase of development of the present Muslim society is totally different from the age and phase of the development of the Western society or any other European society. In the Western world, people are living in the civilized stage, which characterizes their life with certain values and features. Therefore, their definition and orientation of culture would be related to their own context. For them, civilized culture is something that exists in reality, they breathe it in their daily activities and it constitutes a part of their life and development. In other words, the civilized culture is a real fact that exists in the social context of Western man. On the contrary, the concept of civilized culture in the Muslim world is very different from that of the West. For the Muslim society, it is a question of creating a social reality, which does not exist yet. It is a matter of planning to construct a civilized culture that is still at the theoretical level. Bennabi argues, therefore, one should imagine a definition of culture not only from a theoretical point of view but also one should add to it a practical educational point of view² According to him, culture should provide a social education to the different categories of the Muslim society. Therefore, we should imagine it as an educational project, which consist of four basic elements; ethical constitution to reconstruct the social relations, aesthetic sense to formulate the

¹Quoted in Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 171.

²Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 40.

social awareness, practical reasoning to determine all sorts of social action and technical art suitable for every category of the society or Technique in its broad sense.¹ It is clear so far that reviving the Muslim civilization and reconstructing the Muslim society requires a cultural project that can educate people and provide the necessary social training for them. As one has analyzed earlier that the aim of this project is to extricate the Muslim civilization from the pre-civilized stage as well as from the age of objects and degeneration of its social relations network. According to Bennabi, this task demands the four mentioned elements of culture.

A- THE ETHICAL CONSTITUTION

First of all, any cultural reformation needs an ethical constitution. By his account, morals and virtues represent the central theme of the cultural project.² However, his analysis of morals is not of philosophical or epistemological nature, rather, he focused on their social function and historical mission.³ Ethics should be able to introduce to the society a complete system of social values that could consolidate and unite the different categories of people under a general constitution.⁴

¹See, Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 87 & *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 67.

²Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyīr*, Op. cit., p. 190.

³Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 88.

⁴Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 99.

The matter of the truth is that the role of the ethical system is to "incorporate and activate the material elements once they are integrated in a given time and space"¹ That is to say, ethics are meant to guide the relations and activities within the realm of persons, "without which the two realms of ideas and objects could not work systematically"² One should also note the driving force of morals, particularly when they are derived from a sacred source. According to Bennabi, these ethics and morals³ represent principles and rules of divine nature. In this regard, he debates that these morals are given by Allah (S.W.T.) to his servant at the moment when a civilization commences its spiritual phase. This why the Prophet (peace be upon him) has mentioned:

I have been sent as prophet of God to take moral virtues to the height of their perfection. ⁴

To put it in a slightly different way, ethics are the bestow of God to his servant, they descended with the call of revelation when the civilization commences its function in history. Indeed, their function in the society is to link the individuals and create a solidarity among them.

¹Bennabi, *Ḥadīth*, Op. cit., p. 71.

²*Ibid.*, p. 72.

³Al-Jafa iri, *The Problems of Civilization*, Op. cit., pp. 186-187.

⁴Ibn Anas, Al-Imam Abdallah bin Malik, *Al-Muwatta'* "Bāb Husn al-Khulq", 2d. 2d. (Al-Magrib: Dār al-Abaq al-Jadīd, 1993), p. 789.

The Holy Qur'ān mentioned about the social importance of morals in the following verse:

{.....[For] if thou hadst expended all that is on earth, thou couldst not have brought their hearts together (by thyself): but God did bring them together. Verily, He is almighty, wise.}(8:63).¹

It is obvious in the body of the above verse that ethics are related to the movement of a society and its civilization. It has a transforming function in the course of social evolution. In other words, it interferes in the concerted action of the society.² Bennabi argues that “a society can never carry out its concerted action without the existence of a relations network³ that would lay down the basis for the integration of its various psycho-temporal elements. Every social relationship is in its essence a cultural value embodied in the ethical rules as well as in the order peculiar to that society.”⁴

Moreover, these ethical rules play⁵ a crucial role in orienting the vital energy of the individual and in organizing his activities in such a way that responds positively to his supreme ideal.

¹Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 88.

²Bennabi, *Milād*, Op. cit., p. 45.

³Shayif, *The Civilizational Conflict*, Op. cit., p. 114.

⁴Bennabi, *Milād*, Op. cit., p. 45.

⁵Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., pp. 192-193.

In the spiritual phase of a civilization, all activities of the society are governed by these ethical principles which allow "the concerted action carried out by the society in history."¹ Additionally, one should be aware of the role of these rules in the construction of the realm of persons that formulates the social relations network of the civilization. "Thus, ethics² or the philosophy of ethics³ is the first pillar for the educational plan of any culture."⁴

B- THE AESTHETIC SENSE

In the same breath, Bennabi pressed on and further argues that if the ethical constitution is a crucial element in the educational project of culture, we should be aware that it is not the only element. Rather, another important element is needed to formulate another strong support to the project. That is the aesthetic sense. He debates that the aesthetic existing⁵ in our environment which consist of colors, sounds, smells, motions, and pictures reveals to man his ideas and mould them in a special shape of aesthetic sense or ugly sense. He emphasized "ideas are meaningful images, built by aesthetic interplay of colors, voices, smells and forms."⁶

¹Bennabi, *Milād*, Op. cit., p. 68.

²Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 100.

³Al-Khatib, *Philosophy of Civilization*, Op. cit., pp. 154-155.

⁴Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 62.

⁵Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyir*, Op. cit., p. 196.

⁶Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 91.

The aesthetic sense, in which the ideas of the individual are moulded, directs the human soul to practice the values of benediction and charity in all his works, attitudes and habits.¹ It is perhaps necessary to point out the way in which Bennabi used the concept of aesthetic in his method. It is clear from the above passage that aesthetic sense involves in all activities of the human being; all his ideas and all sorts of his reaction and response to the internal and external world which surrounds him is subject to the influence of the aesthetic sense. The latter, affects our behavior as well as our way of approaching things within our society or within our entire universe. In fact, Al-Ghazali provides a wide meaning of the concept. He mentioned that beauty can be found in things which are not perceived by the senses, like fine character, fine knowledge, fine conduct and fine qualities.²

Indeed, aesthetic sense as Bennabi conceives it involves in all our movements and actions, in a very simple act or in the most complicated works, we are touched by this sense. Bennabi suggested a revealing example to show the importance³ of the aesthetic sense in our life. He argues that the sense of a young pauper who wear levels of dirty tatters to evoke people's sympathy. His condition does not so much prove poverty as it does indicate negligence and chaos in the

¹Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 91.

²Al-Ghazālī, Abi Ḥamid Moḥammad bin Moḥammad, *Ihyāʾ Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 4., (Beyrūt: Al-Makṭāb al-Maʿrifah, 1971), p. 299.

³Abi Rayhan reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: 'God is beautiful (jamil) and He loves beauty (jamal)'. See, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal*, Ḥadith Abi Rayḥāna, vol. 4, (Bayrūt: Al-Makṭāb al-Islāmī, 1983), p. 133.

Muslim World¹ Bennabi explains that “the hires in the child grab represent the vacuities in Islamic culture, as do the blaring horns in the street.”² It is obvious from this example that aesthetic sense interferes in our judgments and attitudes toward our environment, our relations and our activities.

In all our actions and activities, we should have justifications and motivations that could reflect to us the significance of our work.³ These justifications are related to the realm of ideas and this realm appertains to the aesthetic sense. That is to say, aesthetic sense has an important social significance if one consider it “as a source for our ideas and through those ideas the entire activities of the individual are stemmed in the society”⁴ In our consciousness we act because we feel that ideas are beneficial to us. Therefore, “it is not possible for an ugly picture to reveal a beautiful imagination or a great value in our soul. It leaves in our soul a bad impression. Accordingly, the society which contain this ugly picture must reflect this picture in its ideas, works and activities.”⁵

Apparently, when we link the aesthetic sense to the ideas on the one hand and relate it to the social context and our judgment on the other hand, we can

¹Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 83.

²Bennabi, *Algerian Perspectives*, Op. cit., p. 111.

³Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyūr*, Op. cit., p. 197.

⁴Bennabi, *Shurūṭ*, Op. cit., p. 92.

⁵Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 81.

realize the crucial function of this sense in our entire life. Townsend has aptly relate the aesthetic experience to the human judgment. He stated that "aesthetic judgment and aesthetic appreciation cannot be described independently, for the analysis of judgment is itself based on the analysis of what is involved in aesthetic experience."¹ In other words, if our ideas are derived from the tangible pictures existing in our social environment, then, they are reflected in the soul of people who live in it. Hence, these tangible pictures become moral pictures from which our ideas are derived. Thus, "aesthetic sense found in our social environment, which contains; colors, sounds, smells, movement, forms, reveals to man his ideas."²

According to Bennabi, it is obvious that our entire civilizational environment³ with all its content is linked with the aesthetic sense. Furthermore, aesthetic is the frame in which any civilization is formulated. Therefore, we should feel the beauty in our soul as well as we should introduce it everywhere.⁴ An additional perspective is suggesting itself in this respect. It should be clear that the aesthetic sense is related to the general world view of the society.

¹Townsend, Dabney, *Aesthetics, Classic Readings*, (England: Jones & Bartlett publisher, 1996), p. 269.

²Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 82.

³Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 100.

⁴Bennabi, *Mushkilat Al-Thaqāfah*, Op. cit., p. 85.

Therefore, any form of aesthetics that contradicts the principles¹ of the ethical constitution will not be accepted and tolerated within the world view. Hence, when we find in our environment such ugly pictures, this is an indicator that we are facing a cultural crisis. The reason behind this is that the “moral principles direct the society to its goals and create the social relations network, while the aesthetic sense gives to all our ideas and activities their content which is related to our world view.”² Therefore, we should reformulate our ethical system and aesthetic sense according to our original ideal i.e., Islam.

C- THE PRACTICAL REASONING

It is clear thus far, that the ethical constitution and the aesthetic sense are crucial elements in the cultural project, however, one should note that there are other elements needed in this project. As a matter of fact, the above mentioned elements cannot function systematically unless we use them correctly. Therefore, a practical human mind that could reason logically and function orderly is demanded. That is what Bennabi called “the practical reasoning” which means the capacity of linking between an action and its channels as well as its references³ It is the ability to “control ourselves, to revise the results of our action and to formulate logical

¹ Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyīr*, Op. cit., p. 198.

² Bennabi, *Ḥadīth*, Op. cit., p. 74.

³ Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 95.

relations between our activities and their means on the one hand and their results on the other hand.”¹

Actually, it is this practical human reasoning that assists in using our will and our active attention properly. It gives the capacity that helps in discovering the relation between action and its objectives, policy and its instruments, culture and its archetypes, idea and its achievements.² The practical reasoning creates the practical mind, which acts according to the patterns and rules of the “logic of implementation and action.”³ Bennabi, in this respect, developed another important concept to analyze the function of the practical reasoning in the cultural project. He used to explain the concept of efficacy⁴. According to him, a practical mind is an efficacious mind that grasps the essence of the human action and directs its will and intention “towards life and one’s own problems that involve creativity, initiation and social qualification”⁵ In fact, with this vital meaning of efficacy “the Muslim may regain his ability to change the conditions in which he lives and to create and move history.”⁶ Additionally, practical reasoning is the ability to

¹Bennabi, *Fikrāt Kumānīlith*, Op. cit., p. 59.

²Bennabi, *Shurūt*, Op. cit., p. 96.

³*Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁴Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit. p. 101.

⁵Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 175.

⁶Kamal Hassan, *Reflections*, Op. cit., p. 24.

formulate an "empirical mind which could, through applied thinking, acquire skills and abilities needed for development."¹

Bennabi debates that if one looks at the present situation of the Muslim mind, one can see the lack of the practical reasoning² in many of our activities. In other words. "The Muslim world has still not arrived at technical action which alone could accord to it a place in the modern world where a sense of efficacy stands first in the scale of values."³This efficacy or practical logic is another missing element in our culture. Therefore, any cultural project should teach people how to be more practical and efficacious.

D- THE TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS

It is still difficult to confirm that the cultural project contains all the elements required to its structure and function. In Bennabi's view, in order to draw a comprehensive picture of the complete cultural project we should add another fourth element, that is the techniques⁴ and skills that help in implementing our project in reality.

¹Bennabi, *Shurūṭ*, Op. cit., p. 95.

²Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyīr*, Op. cit., p. 200.

³Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., p. 97.

⁴Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyīr*, Op. cit., pp. 202-203.

This element has to do with the realm of objects in its broad sense that includes all sorts of techniques that a society could acquire and utilize. Techniques in his view contain "all kind of arts, skills, abilities and the application of all sciences."¹ In line with this, Bennabi "emphasized the importance of technical training² and vocational education for Muslims. To the individual, this training is a mean for making a living, and for the society it is a way to preserve itself and develop continuously."³ In this regard, however, one finds Bariun arguing that Bennabi "addressed his project to Muslims during the first half of this century, a period when many countries had recently obtained their independence. He had no need, therefore to expand his concept of technique to a more sophisticated one. It was rather a plan for basic technical training that he believed his audience most needed at that time"⁴ On the contrary, when we examine Bennabi's view on this point we can realize that he was not only aware of the simple techniques of training, but he included all kinds of sophisticated instruments that humanity could acquire and utilize. According to him, a breakthrough had occurred in the realm of objects and particularly in the technique and technology, which implies the geographical unity of humanity and the notion of the universal civilization that spreads the new techniques everywhere on the earth.

¹Bennabi, *Shurūṭ*, Op. cit., p. 97.

²Al-Qurayshi, *Al-Tagyīr*, Op. cit., p. 204.

³Bennabi, *Shurūṭ*, Op. cit., p. 97.

⁴Bariun, *Malik Bennabi*, pp. 176-177.

He debates that “it is most of all the technical factor that has accelerated this movement. Technique has abolished space.”¹ Consequently, the Muslim society is called to deal with its problems and issues taking into consideration the latest discoveries in every field of science and every aspect of life.² “This implies the acquisition by Muslims of professional and technical competence in all relevant fields.”³

Indeed, these four elements of the cultural project are demanded in any transforming process of the Muslim personality and social context as well. It is not possible for the Muslim society to regain its civilization and to construct its dynamic culture unless it reformulates its existing reality and life based on the teachings of Islam and the facts of the new human sciences. Bennabi put it clearly that it is a matter of cultural orientation and civilizational construction that could change totally the spirit of backwardness and free the individual from the inertial elements and factors.

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, p. 99.

²Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, p. 202.

³Kamal Hassan, *Reflections*, Op. cit., p. 25.

IV- OBSERVATIONS ON BENNABI'S APPLICATION OF THE METHOD

Having analyzed Bennabi's application of the method on the study of Islamic civilization, one can see at what extent he was able to grasp the essence of this Islamic reality and context. In his attempt to underline the important phases of the evolution of Islamic civilization, Bennabi notified three phases, the spiritual the rational and the instinctive phase. According to him, every human civilization should follow this diagram of evolution. In this respect Islamic civilization is no exception. The latter, underwent in its evolution the three phases of development, in its first period which lasts till the battle of Şifīn, Islamic civilization was in the spiritual phase. Accordingly, starting from the post Şifīn period till the pre al-Muwahḥhid era this civilization was in its rational phase and from post al-Muwahḥhid society till our present decadence it is in its instinctive stage. During this period Islamic civilization accomplished its cycle of civilization which represented its achievements and shortcomings in all aspects.

If this is the diagram of the march of this civilization, one may ask about its abilities in explaining the entire changes which occurred in the dogmatic, political, economic, psychological, social, cultural, educational, civilizational and military life of the Muslim society during the above mentioned era. Additionally, at what

extent is this diagram able to explain the movement of the spread of Islam and its civilizational values in many other parts of the world even after its mentioned period of decline?

It seems that this diagram cannot explain properly certain periods and events of great importance in the development of Islamic civilization. For instance, it cannot provide reasonable answers about the expansion of Islam and the achievements of Islamic civilization in some other parts of the Islamic world after the fall of al-Muwahhid society, such as the contribution of the Ottoman empire in the continuity of Islamic civilization as well as the contribution of other Muslim societies to the process of decolonization and protection of its values. If one considers post al-Muwahhid era as the point of starting of the decline of Islamic civilization, one may undermine several contributions of this civilization in other parts of the Muslim world. It is evident that "this new society spread over widely diverse climes, throughout most of the Old World. It came closer than any had ever come to uniting all mankind under its ideals."¹ Therefore, we should note the phenomenon of continuity of this civilization in the course of history. As a matter of fact, "Islam disintegrating in one place, reviving in another, fading here, growing there; but Islam always a factor, a force providing the dynamics to the society. As well known, random examples, Delhi was taken for the first time by Muslims in 1192, after Muhammad Ghori defeated Prithvi Raj at the battle of

¹Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Op. cit., p. 73.

Thanesar, Baghdad was lost to the Mongols shortly afterwards. In another century, Islam, driven out of Iberian Peninsula in Europe, was, across two continents, establishing itself successfully in the Deccan in south India, after finally vanquishing the powerful Hindu kingdom of Vijayangar on the fields of Talikota. Muslims finally took Constantinople in 1453 and re-named it 'Istanbul'- the city of Islam- and finally, in 1492, lost Granada, which became a Christian city."¹

This, in fact, a process which reflects the continuity of Islamic civilization in history and society. Certainly, we should be aware of the fact that all those attempts were unable to regain the function of Islamic civilization in its universal sense, but we should not undermine the vitality and continuity which attributes the march of this civilization. In fact, "several characteristics of the Muslim faith and civilization continued in operation even after the huge Islamic social structure had started to disintegrate."²

Additionally, we should note that these three terms used by Bennabi to describe the evolution of Islamic civilization are unable to picture the real and deep transformation of the civilization in its psychological and social context. Rather, these terms are close to the individual context.

¹ Ahmed S. Akbar, *Discovering Islam*, Op. cit., pp. 31-32.

² Abul Hasan Ali Nadawi, *Islam and The World*, Translated from Urdu by Dr. Mohammad Asif Kidwai, (India: Lucknow Publishing House, 1982), p. 89.

Spirit, reason and instinct are three terms that explain the three faculties of an individual. In fact, they do not explain the evolution of the social systems and the cultural phenomena that represent the movement of a civilization in a social context.

Therefore, we should attempt to analyze not only the spiritual, rational and instinctive faculties of the individual but also the social dimension of faith, the social dimension of reason and the social dimension of instinct. Indeed, it is a matter of developing comprehensive concepts that can explain the entire movement of a civilization. Therefore, the present Islamic society stands in need for new sophisticated human sciences that can treat its crises. Furthermore, describing a phase of development of a civilization as an instinctive phase may lead to a fatal misjudgment of the contribution and liveliness of the society in that era. Certainly, there will be symptoms of decline and degeneration but we should not undermine the forces of integration and progress in the same phase. Therefore, one should always have an integrative approach which can view the forces of decline related to the forces of progress in order to see the real picture of the evolution of a civilization in a given moment. For instance, in the spiritual phase of the development of Islamic civilization one cannot undermine the existence of the problems and practices of rational and instinctive nature. Accordingly, one should note the dialectic nature of the process of interaction among those forces. On the other hand, Bennabi used the term "regression" to describe the state of domination

of one force over the other two in the course of the individual and social evolution of civilization. However, it seems that the term "regression" has certain negative connotations that are related to the psychoanalysis system of the individual developed by some Western scholars. Therefore, the term "regulate" or "orient" may serve as a suitable expression to describe this phase because of the fact that any of the three phases represent a process and not a mere spontaneous act, rather it is a systematic act which requires human will and consciousness. For instance, the spiritual phase of Islamic civilization represented a systematic process of regulation and orientation of the activities and behaviours of the people. This process reflected the will and capacity of that generation of Islamic civilization in understanding, committing and implementing the Islamic teachings in the individual and social context. They used all their spiritual, rational and instinctive faculties and forces to respond to the call of Islam as well as to the demands of their reality. Furthermore, we can note that it is difficult to implement this theory of the three stages to study the structure and function of the Muslim society and other societies as well. For instance, it is difficult to determine the phase of the evolution of the present Islamic civilization. If one supposes that it is in the instinctive phase, one can see the influence of faith and reason in many parts of the Islamic world and in many aspects of life. Similarly, if one thinks that the Islamic civilization is in the rational phase, one would observe the influence of faith and instincts. Therefore, it is worth noting the new changes occurring within the real context of the present human society in general and in the Islamic society in

particular. In the present situation humanity passes through a deep transformation, which leads to the emergence of the concept of the universal civilization. The latter, leads to certain types of human unity which requires co-existence and common contribution to the common problems of humanity. Therefore, it becomes evident that the three forces influence the process of developing human civilization. In other words, Faith, reason and instincts become forces under the disposal of man at any moment or any place. The breakthrough in sciences, technology and human communication made man able to utilize the above mentioned forces in a constructive or destructive way. Hence, one should observe these new changes which influence even our view of civilization, culture, life and society.

To sum up, we doubt the possibility of implementing Bennabi's view of the three phases in studying the development of Islamic civilization, particularly with the new circumstance which surround the present evolution of human civilization. In fact, what we can benefit from this theory is to observe the role and function of faith, reason and instinct in the transforming process of man and society. What interest us are the methods and techniques which help in using those forces to develop our society and civilization. On the other hand, Bennabi has introduced his view of the reconstruction of the Muslim personality and society as well. As we have discussed, reconstruction of culture is one of the crucial channels of social change. According to Bennabi, any deep and effective transformation of

Islamic civilization should start from changing culture. In line with this, he differentiated between culture and learning. In his view, the institutions of learning cannot solve the entire problems of culture.

It seems that Bennabi's view of learning and his tendency of belittling the role and function of knowledge in solving the problems of civilization and culture was influenced by the surroundings and situations of his own time. During his time most of the Muslim countries were under the control of the colonial authorities which dominated also the educational system. Accordingly, the methods and curriculums of the traditional Islamic institutions of learning were unable to cope with the changes of that situation of the Islamic societies. Furthermore, even in the post-colonial era many Islamic societies inherited a mixed or secular educational system that contradicted many of the original values of Islamic culture. In addition to the political and economic problems faced by Muslim societies during his time. All those factors led Bennabi to his opinion about the role and function of learning in the transformation of Islamic culture. It is evident in our present time that the agent of learning becomes more dynamic and influential in solving the problems of civilization and culture as well. In fact, through the results and achievements of the institution of learning, the educational, social, economic and political systems gain different sources of support and help. Hence, one should think of the social and practical dimension of learning. In other words, it is important to link between the institutions of learning and the real problems of the society. Indeed, what is

missing in the process of learning in the Islamic society is the separation between theory and practice. Thus, learning loses its abilities as a dynamic force that can orient and transform the entire cultural system. On the other hand, what Bennabi did not observe in the concept of learning is its Qur'ānic dimension. As a matter of fact, Bennabi's view of learning was based on the current situation and context of learning which did not reflect deeply and systematically the teachings and concepts of the Islamic world view. However, it was supposed that our thinker would propose certain measures to refine and reconstruct the system of learning in the Islamic society. Rather than, belittling the role of learning in the civilizing process. Through a proposed project for renewing the learning system one may emphasize the importance of faith and social values in the process of learning. Indeed, the Islamic view of education or learning "aimed at developing every faculty which God has endowed human beings so as to enrich and ennoble man's body, mind and soul. The conceptual base of his educational system was global, not parochial, because his Divine Mission, as God's Messenger, was for the benefit of the entire human race. Therefore, education in Islam, as initiated by the Prophet, covers every aspect of human activity and embraces the Humanities as well as Sciences. Its base is religion because without knowing the Word of God character- building is not possible, and God is the most dominant theme in the eternal Qur'ān."¹ When our institutions of education become more original and practical in their content and methods the learner and the society will benefit from their contributions. In

¹ Aziz Qutubuddin, *The Prophet and The Islamic State*, First Ed. (Pakistan: Islamic

other words, one should focus on the revealed dimension and social dimension of knowledge. These two dimensions can formulate the Muslim personality and context that will transform the entire system of culture. Additionally, learning should be a comprehensive and continuous process, its comprehensiveness can be achieved through providing it to all categories of the society and make it more social and communal and its continuity can be achieved through relating it to the social problems of culture and civilization. Hence, learning can play a crucial and dynamic role in solving the problems of culture. With this view of learning, education and knowledge the Muslim society will be able to "revive in the minds of our students a conviction of the sanctity knowledge....it will remove the duality of education inherited from the colonial era....it will create and popularize among the educated persons of our countries a deep and scientific understanding of the essentials of Islam, thus making the scientific knowledge of Islam the common property of all educated people....it will create in the Muslim youth a new enthusiasm for study of science and scientific inquiry by adding the motive of religion...it will enables our younger generation to have the feeling of our cultural and intellectual freedom...it will make us more and more aware our national purpose and our role in history inherent in our world view"¹ With this in mind our institutions of learning, knowledge and education would become the piece de resistance of our cultural and civilizational transformation.

Media Corporation, 1990), p. 78.

¹Kamal Hassan, *Towards*, Op. cit., p. 43.

SUMMARY¹ AND CONCLSUION

In the preceding chapters, we have nearly completed the task of formulating a comprehensive view about Bennabi's method of studying civilization. We have brought to light some major ideas in his method and attempted to link between the theoretical framework, the tools of analysis and the application of method in studying the evolution of Islamic civilization. Additionally, an attempt was made to provide certain observations and comments whenever it is relevant. In particular, we can claim that the comprehensive vision, systematic tools and practical foundations basically characterize his method.

Having introduced the three *piece de resistance* of Bennabi's method, the framework, the tools and the application, it is now the best moment to disentangle their nuclei advantages. Various points of merit can be pinpointed as the required aspects in any attempt to analyze the civilizational issues of Islamic civilization according to Bennabi's method. In this regard, one may underline six important characteristics of his method. That is to say, his method is comprehensive, original, realistic, critierial, multidimensional and creative in developing new terminologies and concepts.

¹The ideas of this summary are derived from the previous analysis; particularly the characteristics of Bennabi's method.

From the previous analysis, the reader can underscore the comprehensiveness of Bennabi's approach of studying Islamic civilization. Being comprehensive means having the capacity of addressing the problems from a civilizational point of view. The latter allows the researcher to examine the issues in their holistic and organic structure. It does not separate the concepts and issues from each other. Rather, it links the different factors that influence the phenomenon under review. It conceives the total picture of the issue through underlining the focal and the marginal points in the analysis. Moreover, it delineates the remote and adjacent causes as well as the particular and universal dimensions of the phenomenon.

According to Bennabi, any method that cannot approach the problems in their comprehensive structure and function, it would not assist in understanding their quintessence and impact on the human life. Furthermore, it should be understood that a comprehensive method reflects the ability of treating the deep reasons and the influential effects of the problems that obstruct the civilizing process. It also denotes the vision, strategy, means, external and internal causes as well as techniques demanded in the treatment of those problems. For instance, dealing with the problem of the renaissance of the Islamic world requires a comprehensive vision that can help in viewing it not only in its historical aspects but also in its social as well as psychological aspects. Next to this feature, one may underscore the originality of Bennabi's method as another significant

characteristic. Originality means the capacity of developing ideas, concepts and tools of analysis on the basis of the Islamic worldview and Islamic reality and heritage. According to Bennabi, the only method that can grasp the essence of Islamic civilization and reality is the one that is formulated within the Islamic context and its living culture. Any other frame designed or transmitted from other world views or heritage should be remoulded in order to cope with the cultural sphere of Islamic civilization. In this respect, Bennabi asserted that "the technical solutions must be adopted to both the psychology of the society and its stage of development."¹ In another noteworthy instance, Bennabi made it clear that "the Muslim world can no longer seek guidance in the present chaos from a Western world itself on the verge of apocalypse. For discovering its own sources of inspiration, it must look for new paths. But whatever new paths it might borrow, it could not isolate itself within a world driving towards unity. It is not question, for it, of breaking with a civilization that represents a great human experience, but of adjusting relations with it."² It is clear thus far, that originality must be the *sui generis* feature of the Islamic method of approaching civilization.

The third important characteristic of Bennabi's method is its realistic vision. Realistic on the one hand means the capacity of understanding problems in their social and psychological living context and on the other hand denotes the ability of

¹Bennabi, *Milād*, Op. cit., p. 42.

²Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, Op. cit., pp. 76-77.

treating those problems systematically throughout determining their causes, effects, instruments, tools, steps and plans. According to Bennabi, the method should be able to fathom, treat and apply the theories and ideas in the existing situation of people. In other words, any sort of overestimation of the situations will not achieve the objectives of the transforming process that can suggest convenient responses to the problems.

To express it in a slightly different way, the realistic vision requires the capacities that can disentangle the profound elements of reality as well as the existing abilities of the individual and society in a given moment of evolution. In a realistic method, one should treat the problems of the individuals and groups on the basis of their stage of development, psychological formulation and social situation. Indeed, it is a matter of understanding the diversity and function of the reality as well as its pivotal influence on human relation and life.

The fourth characteristic that distinguishes Bennabi's method is its criterial nature. Criterial in this respect means the capacity of formulating a moral and ethical foundation for the entire method of analysis. In other words, criterial method is constituted of certain standards and criteria derived from a religion or a moral principle. It considers ethics and morals as the *ad hoc* of any social analysis of the human phenomenon. As a matter of fact, we have seen the position and importance of religion in general and Islam in particular in Bennabi's method.

By his account "the religious notion directly enters in the method of retrospection as the very basis of the conscience in quest of itself. The social, linked to this religious conscience by the man himself, could not be separated from its own moral conscience. Thus, as a point of departure for all social transformation, a religious reform is necessary."¹ In other words, Bennabi was concerned with "laying a spiritual and metaphysical foundation for the construction of a human civilization."² In a strong sense, one may underline the fact that any thought or method which is produced on the basis of the Islamic culture should be criterial and moral. Thus, its framework, concepts, contexts and objectives should be derived from the Islamic world view. According to Bennabi, the revelational criterion should be the basic component of the method of analysis of the problems of Islamic civilization. It is true that religion "inscribes itself in the origin of all human transformation."³ Therefore, our efforts and activities in the domain of the renaissance and reconstruction should be criterial by origin. That is to say, morals and values are the essence of our method of approaching civilization. Another crucial characteristic of Bennabi's method is its multidimensional structure. The latter, means the capacity of integrating various disciplines and tools in order to formulate a multidimensional system of thought and analysis.

¹Bennabi, *Islam In History and Society*, p. 90.

²Osman Bakar, *Malik Bennabi's Philosophy of Sciences*, Op. cit., pp. 3-4.

³Bennabi, *Islam In History and society*, Op. cit., p. 89.

It is a matter of articulating a set of diverse concepts and approaches from different branches of knowledge in the form of a systematic synthesis which allows a process of analysis of any given social phenomenon, such as Islamic civilization. Indeed, the reader will not be surprised to learn that, Bennabi was able to develop a multidimensional system of analysis of the phenomenon of civilization. "Bennabi's primary interest in civilizational issues led him to emphasize more on the moral, social and psychological sciences."¹

It is obvious in the foregoing pages that our author seems to be a system builder, rather than, a mere writer or analyzer of the different problems of Islamic civilization. He is a system builder in the sense that he looked upon various disciplines and formulated a framework and tools of analysis that run through the vein of different human sciences, such as sociology, psychology anthropology, philosophy, history, culture, civilization, economics, education, comparative religion and sociology of knowledge. Moreover, he used to benefit from the measures of religion, metaphysics and also natural sciences, such as mathematics, ontology and cosmology. The present analysis leads us to the conclusion that Bennabi has developed a linkage method which function as a multidimensional system of analysis. Despite all this, however, one may remark that his starting point in formulating his system was founded upon the ideas and concepts, which are already in existence. However, one should mention the fact that he attempted

¹Osman Bakar, *Bennabi's Philosophy of Sciences*, Op. cit., p. 4.

to add his own concepts and terms. That is to say, his method was not a rapture in the Islamic thought. Rather, it was breathed and constructed within this context and for this reality. Another pivotal characteristic of Bennabi's method is its creativity in coining new terminologies and concepts. Creativity in this respect means the capacity of deriving new original terms and concepts for analyzing the problems within the Islamic context. In fact, these new terms play a crucial role in generating new ideas and opening new area of study. They help the researcher to observe the problems from diverse angles as well as to develop ideas. Attributing such an importance to the creative terminology¹ Bennabi added many new terms and concepts to the dictionary of analysis of Islamic civilization, such as colonisability, realm of ideas, persons and objects, religion as a catalyst, equation of civilization, social education, dialectics of the cultural universe, impressed ideas and expressed ideas, authenticity and efficacy of ideas, ideas and social dynamics, dead ideas and deadly ideas, nemesis and betrayed ideas and the thingness civilization.

Through these terms and concepts, at least in the realm of Islamic thought, Bennabi was able to analyze the issues of Islamic civilization and to introduce a pivotal and deep linkage method which aimed at discovering the causes of degeneration of the Muslim society and the new paths of regaining the self-awareness as well as achieving a new civilizational reconstruction. In line with

¹Zaki, *Malik Bennabi*, Op. cit., p. 130.

this, one should underline the fact that some of those terms can be found in other thinkers' writings. However, as it is shown in the analysis, Bennabi tended to change the borrowed terms and mould them with reference to his own theoretical framework and tools of analysis.

On the whole, one may argue that all these characteristics and others should be viewed from an educational-cultural perspective. According to Bennabi, if the method on the one hand is comprehensive, original, critical, realistic, multidimensional and creative it should be on the other hand, educative and culturally oriented. As we have discussed earlier, the educational and cultural dimension of the civilizing process should be emphasized in order to be able to transform the human personality and the social environment. Apart from these features of Bennabi's method, we can also underline its shortcomings that have been analyzed in the foregoing chapters. The most important point that needs more analysis and clarification in his method is its integrative nature. Indeed, what matters to us in his method is his attempt to construct a multidimensional system for the analysis of the civilizational phenomenon.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Upon the examination of Bennabi's method of studying civilization, few concluding remarks can be pinpointed as follow:

- 1- Bennabi was able to develop a linkage method that consists of the theoretical framework, tools of analysis and applications.
- 2- His theoretical framework contains certain consistent concepts which were used to discern the nature of the problem of the Islamic society, the pattern which govern its march in history as a civilization and a culture and the proposed solutions to overcome its crisis. According to Bennabi, the problem of Islamic civilization is related to the internal factors that allow the external forces to colonize its people. In the first instance, the internal factors refer to the problem of man himself, his personality, his culture, his way of thinking, his effectiveness in front of the problems and his methods of addressing the problems. According to him, the concept of colonisability hides all these psychological, cultural, social and methodological problems of the Muslim who is unable to play his role as an actor and a witness before other nations as the Qur'ān describes his mission and message in this life. In his theoretical framework, Bennabi provides a civilizational approach that attempts to combine between the particular and universal as well as between the comprehensive vision and the systematic approach.

Moreover, his frame of reference concentrates on the revealed values and human sciences. In addition to his attempt to discern the

norms and patterns which govern the march of civilizations. Indeed, his framework appeared in a world horizon where the Muslim civilization ended its first cycle of development and reached the post civilization phase of its evolution. Hopefully, the attempt of Bennabi traces to us the general guideline for new civilizational foundation and for a new civilizing process in the contemporary Islamic society.

- 3- Concerning his tools of analyzing the march of civilization in society and history, Bennabi has developed some consistent concepts that function as a system of analysis. This system is formulated of various tools taken from different sources including the moral values, human sciences and natural sciences. The five tools, which were already analyzed, reflect his ability in integrating the revealed knowledge with the human experience. Through the tool of the three positions of the human society, Bennabi used history and psychosocial analysis and through the tool of the three ages of the human society he used the sciences of culture and personality. Moreover, through his tool of the three realms of the society; the realm of objects, persons and ideas, he used epistemology. While through his tool of the social relations network he benefited from social sciences and particularly the Islamic history as well as the sociology of knowledge. Furthermore, through his tool of the cycle of civilization he benefited from history,

natural sciences, religion and metaphysics. It is really a consistent integrative system which combines and pieces together many separate tools from different sources to analyze one given phenomenon e.g., Islamic civilization. This attempt reflects his deep understanding of the linkage method, which integrates the revealed knowledge, human sciences and natural sciences.

- 4- Regarding his application of the method in studying Islamic civilization, Bennabi attempted to follow its march in history and society. Through applying his theoretical framework and tools of analysis he was able to determine its diagram of evolution. According to him, this civilization was born in a given historical moment as a cultural, psychological, moral and social entity and from then it started its development in the course of history. Its three phases of development, the spiritual, the rational and the instinctive phase had reflected the entire civilizing process in its individual, social and universal dimensions. This diagram of the development of Islamic civilization comprises all sorts of its cultural and civilizational expressions in history and society.

According to Bennabi, there are many factors, which contributed to the evolution of this civilization. The moral, psychological, cultural,

economic, political, historical, educational, social and military factors had influenced its march. His main attempt was to reclassify the vital role of these factors, according to their direct and indirect, positive and negative impact on the evolution of Islamic civilization and its relation with other human civilization.

Through applying his method, Bennabi concluded that any transforming process of the individual and society should be based on a cultural project. The latter, is meant to generate a social education among the members of the community. This social education should teach people how to be civilized and how to address the personal and social issues. Any social education should formulate a psychosocial environment which will consist of the ethical constitution (a social system of values), the aesthetic sense, the practical reasoning (the methodological orientation of the human activities) and the technological and professional training and awareness among the members of the society. Accordingly, this social cultural orientation will formulate an educational society, which will teach people the style of life, the way of behavior and the method of addressing the issues.

- This, in short, is an account of the summary and the conclusion I have reached thus far. It is worth noting that Bennabi's method of

analysis demands more studies and researches, particularly in its theoretical framework, tools of analysis and applications. Serious efforts should be made to understand, evaluate, implement and develop his method. More attempts are required to revise Bennabi's terminologies and concepts that he derived from several sources. Additionally, other attempts should be made to enlarge our understanding of the characteristics of his method. It is the cradle of such studies that can fathom, benefit and develop this method.

- 7 Another point of merit in this summary has to do with the possibility of implementing his method in the present educational system of the Islamic society. Particularly, in the study of its individual and social problems. In fact, we should confess that many ingredients and ideas of his method which we have now pieced together from scattered passages are more in his mind and not in the mind of other scholars or students of knowledge. This is one of the obstacle that makes the possibility of implementing his method more difficult. Therefore, there should be different studies and attempts in order to facilitate his method and to explain its major components. In addition, we have to stress only the dynamic and original aspects of his method as well as we have to remove the inertial and alien aspects that do not resemble to our status quo.

8- It will be very significant and beneficial if a center for civilizational thought studies is founded to deal with the methods of studying civilizations including Bennabi's method. The center should aim at facilitating, translating, explaining and reproducing Bennabi's method and thought in a simple and systematic way. Moreover, the center should aspire towards evaluating, criticizing and developing Bennabi's method and thought. Additionally, various researches should be carried out to develop a multidimensional method for approaching the problems of the Islamic society or what Bennabi's calls "sociology of the Islamic world". Furthermore, some attempts should be made to develop the world view, the social project and the techniques of the new civilizational reconstruction of the Islamic society. On the other hand, some studies should be directed toward discovering the patterns and norms, which govern the march of the human civilizations in history and society.

GLOSSARY¹

AL-AFKĀR AL-MATBŪʿĀH (IMPRESSED IDEAS)

A concept used to describe one of the components of the realm of ideas (see the above concept) as well as the nature and quality of the original principles and teachings of a sacred world view. It reflects the original archetypes and criteria put by a religion or a system of morals to its followers as a guideline and code for their civilizing movement and cultural originality and orientation. It is also used as an indicator for measuring the level of commitment and implementation of the sacred text by the followers.

AL-AFKĀR AL-MAWDŪʿĀH (EXPRESSED IDEAS)

A concept used to describe one of the components of the realm of ideas (see the realm of ideas) as well as the nature and quality of the human interpretations and contributions to the understanding and implementation of the sacred source and the impressed ideas. They represent all sorts of ideas, methods, knowledge and intellectual and civilizational contributions of the human mind in the course of the social progress.

¹This attempt is the first of its kind in the studies, which I came across on Bennabi's thought whether in Arabic, or in English. It is the result of a careful analysis of Bennabi's method and thought. The objectives of this glossary are: (a) to facilitate the smooth reading and understanding of Bennabi's method; (b) to assist the researchers to deal with Bennabi's thought easily and (c) to explain some indispensable concepts of importance in the study of the phenomenon of civilization in general and Islamic civilization in particular.

‘ĀLAM AL-ASHKHĀṢ (REALM OF PERSONS)

A concept used to describe one of the important components of the human historical activities in general and civilization in particular. It describes the systematic process of transforming individuals to persons who can carry out a civilizational mission according to their worldview and social project. It also describes a transformed quality of human individuals who are prepared to function as civilizational agent of change. It is the possible sum total of relations which can be constructed by a group of individuals.

‘ĀLAM AL-AFKĀR (REALM OF IDEAS)

A concept used to describe a system of foundational concepts, which reflect a world view and its sacred source as well as its human contributions, interpretations and achievements in terms of understanding and implementing these concepts. It is a system of ideas which links man to his world view and helps him to take root in an original cultural milieu that offers him his cultural originality and uniqueness in front of other cultures and civilization. The realm of ideas consists of three main elements: the sacred source of ideas, the impressed ideas and the expressed ideas.

‘ĀLAM AL-ASHYĀ’ (REALM OF OBJECTS)

A concept used to describe one of the components of the human activities in general and civilization in particular. It is also used to indicate the nature of objects needed by people in the

civilizing process and to determine the quality of psycho-social relations among the objects, persons and ideas as well as the impact of these relations on the human personality and culture during the march of civilization in history and society.

AL-DAWRAH AL-ḤADĀRIYYAH (CYCLICAL PHENOMENON OF CIVILIZATION)

A concept used to study the pattern, which govern the march of civilization in history and society taking into consideration the psychosocial and the religious-cultural living context of a civilization. Each cycle of civilization is defined by certain psychotemporal conditions proper to a social group: it is a civilization in these conditions. It also reflects the three phases of a civilization; the spiritual phase, the rational phase and the instinctive phase and the grand phenomenon of migration, shift and transfer of the values of civilization to another place in order to initiate a new qualitative cycle of civilization.

AL-DHAWQ AL-JAMĀLĪ (AESTHETIC SENSE)

A concept used to describe the psycho-cultural and environmental pictures, feelings, colors, smells, movements, forms, behaviors and ideas which reveal to us our sensitive awareness and beautiful imagination of the internal and external world which surround us and assist us in formulating our good or bad pictures of these things and behaviours which we encounter in our environment.

AL-DUSTŪR AL-AKHLĀQĪ (ETHICAL CONSTITUTION)

It is a body of interrelated and consistent morals and ethical rules of psychosocial and cultural implications. It is a value system, which links the individuals, and activates the material elements once they are integrated in a given time and space without out which the two realms of ideas and objects could not work systematically. It is the first pillar of the educational project of culture.

AL-ḤAḌARĀ AL-SHAḌ' IYYAH (THINGNESS CIVILIZATION)

A concept used to describe a civilization, which may be constructed upon the objects and things of other civilization regardless of one's self-efforts and original sources. It reflects the tendency of buying the things without thinking of generating them in one's mind and soil. It a psycho-cultural tendency which simplifies the systematic process of constructing a civilization that requires one's attention, abilities creativity and originality.

ḤĀLAH MĀ-QABLA AL-ḤAḌĀRA (PRE-CIVILIZED POSITION)

A concept used to determine the psycho- social state and characteristics of the human mind and culture in its pre- civilization phase. It describes one of the situations in the continuum of the sequential march of a human society.

ḤĀLAH AL-ḤAḌĀRA (CIVILIZATION POSITION)

A concept used to determine the peculiarities of human personality and culture in the course of their civilizational efficacy

and creativity. It describes the dynamic characteristics of the human personality in its stage of intellectual, moral, cultural and civilizational liveliness and development. It is the second state in which a human society is situated in its diagram of evolution.

ḤĀLAH MĀ-BĀʿDA AL-ḤADĀRA (POST-CIVILIZATION POSITION)

A concept used to determine the characteristics and state of human personality and culture in its post-civilized phase. It describes the psychology and sociology of the decline of man and his culture. It assists in following the course of the degeneration of a society and its civilization.

IKHTILĀL AL-TAWĀZŪN (DISEQUILIBRIUM)

A concept used to describe the disorder and bankruptcy in the march of a civilization. It reflects the nature of the internal relations among parameters of the cultural realm: the objects, the persons and the ideas whose interference in the society's activities are determined, at any instant, by an internal dialectics that corresponds to a specific relationship among the three realms integrated in the course of the human action. Disequilibrium characterizes this particular moment of the development of a society thus denoting an abnormal state in the dialectics of its cultural realm. Such an imbalance reflects some excess, and every excess is but a kind of despotism to the detriment of the social activities.

INSĀN MĀ BĀ'Ā AL-MUWAḤḤIDĪN (POST AL-MUWAHHID MAN)

A concept utilized to describe the psychosocial and cultural-intellectual state of a Muslim who lives in the post civilization stage after being civilized. He is a dispirited man who bears in himself the germs of decline and loses all kinds of creativity and intellectual ability. The era of the emergence of this man in the history of Islamic civilization commenced with post al-Muwahhid man who is an essential component of all problems of the Muslim world ever since the decline of its civilization.

MARḤALAT AL-RŪḤ (SPIRITUAL PHASE)

A concept utilized to analyze the first phase of the development of a civilization and the psychosocial values that characterize the personality and culture of its people. It describes the social and civilizational implications of faith and its capacities in deriving the entire society towards moral and material balance and advancement. It also examines the psychosocial function of religion in history and society. It describes civilization in its optimum and equilibrium with a compact social relations network and living cultural project.

MARḤALAT AL-GHARĪZAH (INSTINCTIVE PHASE)

A concept used to analyze the third phase of the evolution and development of a civilization. It reflects the psychosocial state of degeneration and stagnation of a human personality and culture,

which reflects the full control of instincts over human activities. It also represents the characteristics of civilization in the stage of the psychosocial degeneration of personality and culture.

MARḤALAT AL-ʿAQL (RATIONAL PHASE)

A concept used to analyze the second phase of the evolution and development of a civilization. It reflects the psychosocial context of a civilization in the state of domination of reason and the weakening of faith. It also examines the psychosocial function of reason in history and society. It describes civilization in its stage of material and intellectual expansion and spread.

AL-MANṬIḤ AL-ʿAMALĪ (PRACTICAL REASONING)

It is the ability to think and practice activities orderly and logically. It reflects the systematic function of the human mind in terms of putting things, ideas and activities in their right order, effective way and proper place. It is also the creativity, social qualification and efficacy in front of the obstacles and problems, which face people in their civilizational activities. It is also the empirical mind which could, through applied thinking acquire skills and abilities needed for human development.

AL-MUJTAMĀʿ AL-BIDĀʾĪ (PRIMITIVE SOCIETY)

A concept used to describe the nature and characteristics of the pre-civilized society taking into consideration the type of human

personality and the quality of culture. It reflects a human association that is characterized by lack of motion and of civilizational transformation. It is mainly static and unable to change its psychological and cultural conditions for the purpose of formulating a civilized association. It lacks the character of motion and collective relations network.

AL-MUJTAMĀ' AL-TĀRĪKHĪ (HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

A concept used to study the dynamic human association, which has been subject to the laws of change. It is a human association with the capacities of motion and collective relations. It is able to transform its psychological and cultural conditions with reference to time and space. All capacities and social being of this society is embodied in the social relations network which links the members of the society to one another and orients the aspects of the individuals' activities toward a general function, which is the very mission of this society.

MURAKKIB AL-ḤAḌĀRA (CATALYSEUR OF CIVILIZATION)

A psycho-religious concept used to explain the way in which religion transforms human personality and constructs man and culture for the purpose of synthesizing man, soil and time in the form of a civilization. It describes the transformational function of religion and its impact on the human soul and culture within a social context.

AL-NAHḌA (RENAISSANCE)

The intellectual, social, cultural, economic and political activities carried out by the Muslim consciousness to regain its retardation over the Qur'anic and modern scientific thought including the institutions, ideas, methods, techniques and theories of reform and reconstruction of the Islamic civilization.

AL-NAẒĤ AL-DHARRIYYAH (ATOMISTIC TENDENCY)

A concept used to describe the state of mind, which is unable to understand the phenomenon in its general and comprehensive form and function. It is the incapability of mind to generalize or to discern the laws that govern the phenomenon. It is the feature of a mind that loses the sense of law and inclines to the tendency of reductionism.

AL-QĀBILIYYAH LI AL-ISTĪMĀR (COLONISIBILITY)

A concept utilized to explain the nature of the crisis of the Islamic personality and culture. It reflects a state of susceptibility and readiness of the Muslim mind and soul to be colonized and dominated by others as well as to lose all sorts of creativity and efficacy in the face of related problems. It is a state of psychological and cultural weakness within the Muslim soul and culture and it is considered as a prior condition for colonization.

SHABAKAT AL-^ʿALĀQĀT AL-IJTIMĀ^ʿIYYAH(SOCIAL RELATIONS NETWORK)

A concept used to describe the essence of human association as well as the act of a birth of a civilization in history and society. It is a body of psycho-social and cultural relations which links together the ingredients of each of the three realms as well as the latter to one another so as to mould them into an integrated whole in order to perform a concerted action, such as civilization. It is also a tool, which can be used to measure the level of the integration or disintegration of civilization because all types of changes and evolution of the civilization are recorded qualitatively and quantitatively in the social relations network.

AL-^ʿSHNĀʾAH (TECHNICAL ARTS AND HUMAN SKILLS)

All kinds of arts, skills, techniques, professions, abilities and the applications of sciences acquired through experience, practice, technical training or learning.

AL-TAKDĪS (SPIRIT OF ACCUMULATION)

It is a psychosocial state resulting from the spirit of the thingness civilization. It reflects the spirit of accumulation that leads to the inflation of the objects and commodities, which surround the life of a person. This spirit limits the dynamic civilizational capacities of people at the boundaries of the realm of objects and hence they

lose all abilities of producing ideas and concepts that can generate a civilizing process.

AL-TARBIYYAT AL-IJTIMĀ'ĪYYAH (SOCIAL EDUCATION)

A concept used to describe the essential role and function of culture as a style of life and way of behavior. It is a process of training and cultivating the whole society and orienting all its capacities including its persons, ideas and objects. It is a set of rules, theoretical concepts and efficient methods which change man and teach him how to live with his co-brothers, how to generate with them the means and forces that would improve the conditions of human existence and how to construct with them the network of relations that would enable the society to carry out its civilizational mission.

AL-TAWJĪH (ORIENTATION)

A concept used to deal with the issue of reconstructing Islamic civilization through a cultural project. It is the ability of defining the problems, limiting their causes, planning for solving them and avoiding all types of instability and inconsistency in the march and function of civilization.