MALIK BENNABI'S IDEAS ON CIVILIZATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY: PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION

NAKIB AOMAR.

FPP 2004 24
MALIK BENNABI'S IDEAS ON CIVILIZATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY: PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION

By

NAKIB AOMAR

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2004
MALIK BENNABI'S IDEAS ON CIVILIZATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY: PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION

By

NAKIB AOMAR

Februrar 2004

Chairman: Professor Hj. Azimi Hj. Hamzah, Ph.D.

Faculty: Educational Studies

The study is concerned with Malik Bennabi’s ideas on civilization and the development of society in the Muslim world, with the focus on education. The purpose is to reveal the nature of his ideas and views on education in order to conceptualize them in the form of an integrated approach to the educational problem in the Muslim world.

Due to the nature of the research problem, qualitative methodology was employed in this study. This study involved an investigation into Malik Bennabi’s thoughts from three sources of evidence; Malik Bennabi’s works, the different studies carried out on his thoughts and interviews. The content analysis and interviews were employed to examine the data in addressing the research questions. Content analysis; as a
technique, dealt with documentary evidence. The interviews provided additional information gathered from personalities acquainted with Malik Bennabi's thoughts.

The findings of this study show that Malik Bennabi made a considerable contribution to the enrichment of the Islamic educational thought by suggesting a range of rich and enduring ideas that may contribute to the solution of the Muslim dilemma. Four parameters are crucial to grasp the nature of Malik Bennabi's approach to the educational problem in the Muslim world; religion as a cosmic phenomenon, Islam as the principal frame of reference, the Islamic problem as civilizational in nature and the human factor as the major factor of the Muslim world's civilizational problems.

The methodological approach to study the problems of civilization adopted by Malik Bennabi had an explicit impact on defining the concept of education. Man, the Muslim, is the central factor in the study of the problems of civilization in the Muslim world. Education is the process of civilizing the human being and imparting to his existence a historical significance in order to enable him to resume his historical mission. Many concepts have been treated in Malik Bennabi's works. However, due to their educational nature, the concepts form together the essential elements upon which the process of education is established. Malik Bennabi treated four philosophical foundations of education; the nature of man, society, knowledge and the aims of education. Malik Bennabi provided Islamic education with a new approach to conceptualize the educational problem and education as a project to promote a new culture and build up a civilization. This approach considers the Islamic problem as civilizational in nature but an educational matter. Malik Bennabi did not present his ideas and views on education in a systematic manner. However, these ideas may form
together an integrated approach to conceptualize the educational problem in the Muslim world as a problem of civilization. So, it is recommended that future studies should attempt to formulate this approach integrally based on the findings of this study.
IDEA MALIK BENNABI MENGENAI TAMADUN DAN KEMAJUAN MASYARAKAT: PERSPEKTIF TENTANG PENDIDIKAN

Oleh
NAKIB AOMAR
Mach 2004

Pengerusi: Professor Hj. Azimi Hj. Hamzah, Ph.D.
Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan

Kajian ini adalah mengenai pendekatan Malik Bennabi dalam menghadapi permasalahan pendidikan di kalangan dunia Muslim. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menyingkap ketulinan idea dan pandangan Malik Bennabi terhadap pendidikan bagi mewujudkan konsep pendekatan bersepadu untuk menangani permasalahan pendidikan dalam dunia Muslim.

Penemuan kajian ini menunjukkan Malik Bennabi telah memberi sumbangan yang ketara dalam memperkayakan pemikiran pendidikan yang bercirikan Islam dengan mencadangkan kepelbagaian idea yang bernas lagi mencabar dalam meleraikan dilema masyarakat Islam. Empat parameter yang penting digunakan bagi memahami bentuk pendekatan Malik Bennabi terhadap permasalahan pendidikan dunia Muslim: agama sebagai fenomena kosmik, Islam sebagai prinsip asas rujukan, permasalahan pendidikan sebagai permalahan tamadun dan faktor manusia sebagai faktor utama di dalam permasalahan tamadun dalam dunia Islam.

secara khusus dan sistematik. Walau bagaimanapun, idea-ideanya merupakan asas untuk membentuk pendekatan bersepadu bagi mengkonsepsikan permasalahan pendidikan dunia Muslim sebagai permasalahan tamadun. Oleh itu, adalah dicadangkan agar kajian akan datang memberi tumpuan menghasilkan pendekatan yang bersepadu berlandaskan penemuan-penemuan yang dihasilkan di dalam kajian ini.
Acknowledgments

Al Hamdulillah

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who gave me the guidance, motivation and encouragement to complete this thesis.

I want to thank the thesis supervisory committee chairman, my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Hj. Azimi Hj. Hamzah as well as the committee members, Prof. Dr. Abdul Rahman Md. Aroff and Prof. Datin Dr. Sharifah Md. Nor for their guidance, encouragement and help to finalize this work.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Dr. Achoui Mustapha and Prof. Dr. Mokdad Mohammed, both former lecturers in the International Islamic University Malaysia for their guidance and orientation in the formative stages of this thesis. I also appreciate the encouragement and help of my friends and colleagues, particularly Dr. Soualhi Bachir from the International Islamic University Malaysia.

Finally, I would like to record my very special thanks to my beloved wife Samia Fouial and our children Amin, Ihsan and Himo whose patience, love, encouragement and Du‘ā’ gave me the strength I needed to complete this thesis.

Wal Hamdulillah Rabbil Alami
I certify that an Examination Committee met on 9th February 2004 to conduct the final examination of Nakib Aomar on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Malik Bennabi’s Ideas on Civilization and the Development of the Society: Perspectives on Education” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

**Aminah Ahmad, Ph.D.**
Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

**Saidin Teh, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

**Amini Amir Abdullah, Ph.D.**
Professor
Faculty of Human Ecology
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

**Sidek Baba, Ph.D.**
Professor
Faculty of Education
International Islamic University Malaysia
(Member)

**MAD NASIR SHAMSUDIN, Ph.D.**
Professor/Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: **21 APR 2004**
This thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee are as follows:

**Hj Azimi Hj Hamzah, Ph.D.**
Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

**Abdul Rahman Md. Aroff, Ph.D.**
Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

**Sharifah Md. Nor, Ph.D.**
Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

![Signature]

**AINI IDRIS, Ph.D.**
Professor/Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 17 MAY 2004
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my own original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

NAKIB AOMAR

Date: February 2003
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT
ABSTRAK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
APPROVAL
DECLARATION
NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS
LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I  INTRODUCTION  

Background of the study  4
Statement of the problem  11
Objectives of the study  13
Significance of the study  14
Limitations of the study  15
Definition of the terms  16

II REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE  

Introduction  20

Philosophy of education  21
  Nature and definition of philosophy of education  23
  Philosophical foundations of education  29
    Nature of man  31
    Nature of society  35
    Nature of knowledge  37
    Nature of the aims of education  41

Review of the related studies  46
  Development of the studies on Bennabi’s thought  48
  Analysis of the related studies  53
    Civilization and history  53
Sociology and social change 59
Economic development and political thought 61
Biography 64
Education 64

Philosophical foundations of education in the Qur'an and Sunnah 69
  Nature of man 74
  Nature of society 87
  Nature of knowledge 92
  Nature of the aims of education 96
    Preservation *Fitrah* 99
    Development of the innate faculties of man 101
    Achievement of the aims of human existence 105
      Worship of Allah 105
      Vicegerency 1 108
      Preparation of man for eternal life 111

The educational problem in the revivalist movements literature 115
  The reformist movement 119
  The modernist movement 125
Summary 138
The theoretical framework 142

III METHODOLOGY

Introduction 141
Research design 146
Subject of the study 147
Data generating techniques 149
  Content analysis 149
  Interview 155
Validity 150
Data analysis 161

IV POSITION EDUCATION IN MALIK BENNABI'S APPROACH IN STUDYING THE PROBLEMS OF CIVILIZATION IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

Introduction 176

Historical background of Bennabi's theory of civilization 178

The theory of civilization of Malik Bennabi 182
  A critical analysis of the revivalist attempts 184
    Djamaluddin al-Afghani and the political perspective 185
    Muhammad Abduh and theology 187
Biological dimension
- The need for a balanced fulfillment
- Role and effect of the idee force

Psycho-spiritual dimension
- Psychological background of the human specie
- Role of religion in the construction of the self

Educational dimension
- Need for education
- Man as the main unit of society
- Civilizational stage and the required education
- Tendency towards easiness
- Historical experience as a reference

Civilizational dimension
- Role of education in civilizing the human being

Social dimension
- Nature of society
- Two types of society
- Natural society
- Historical society
- Defining society
- Conceptualizing the nature of society
- A spiritual origin
- Society between quality and quantity
- Social relations network, a crucial element
- Making up the society
- Preserving society from destruction

Nature of knowledge
- Epistemological perspective
- Civilizational perspective
- Role of akhlaq
- The closing of the gate of Ijtihad
- Educational perspective
- Finality
- Practicality
- Practical logic
- Ethics

Nature of the aims of education
- Educational problem a primary basis to formulate the aims of education
- Aims versus objectives
- Civilizing the Muslim man
- Refining the Muslim personality
- Regenerating the social function of religion
- Purification of the Muslim conscience from colonizability

XIV
Integrating the Muslim into society
Qualifying the Muslim mind for methodological thinking
Summary

VI THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION IN BENNABI'S THOUGHT

Introduction
Conceptualizing education
  Education as psychological assimilation of culture
  Education as process of conditioning and adaptation
  Education as process of integration
  Education as process of civilizing the human being
  Education and civilization
The key educational concepts
  Religious idea
  The process of civilizing
  Social relations network
  Idea of social investment
  Social education
  Individual versus person
    Raw individual
    Natural man
    Insánul fitrah
    Person (conditioned individual)
    Integrated man
  Colonizability
  Vital energy
  Conditioning and adaptation
  Integration
  Orientation
  Equilibrium
  Efficacy and tension
  Will and power
  Duty and right
  Transfer of foreign experience
The process of education
  Innate need for education as a basis
  Focus of the process of education
  Multidimensional personality and holistic education
  Realism
  Need to determine the desired model of man
  Ethical basis
  Some articulate elements of the process of education
Summary
VII SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the study</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding remarks</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES 463

APPENDICES 476

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR 525
NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

This work adopts the rules of transliteration used by *Encyclopedia of Islam*, with slight variation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonants</th>
<th>Vowels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ء (hamzah)</td>
<td>ق (fathah)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ب (bā’)    | ق (kasrah)  | i.
| ت (tā’)    | ك (dammah)  | u |
| ث (thā’)   | م (mīm)     | n |
| ج (jīm)    | ي (yā’)     | y |
| ح (hā’)    | ف (fā’)   | f |
| خ (khā’)   | ق (qāf)   | q |
| د (dāl)    | ك (kāf)   | k |
| ذ (dhāl)   | ل (lām)   | l |
| ر (rā’)    | م (mīm)  | m |
| ز (zay)    | ن (nūn)  | n |
| س (sīn)    | ه (hā’) | h |
| ش (shīm)   | و (wāw) | w |
| ص (sād)    | (yā’)  | y |

Transliteration will involve only Arabic words. Others will be written in *italics*.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(ÂDj): Afq Djza'riyyah.
(DhQ): Adh-Dhâhirah al-Qur'âniyyah
(DwrMR): Dawrul Muslim wa Rissâlatuhu fi ath-Thuluthil Akhîr min Hâdhal Qarn
(FCl): Fikrat Comnonwealth Islami
(FIA): Al-Fikratul Ifrikiyyatul Assyawiyyah
(KaKu): al-Kâdhâyâl Kubrâ
(MAl): Al-Muslim fi Alamîl Iktisâd
(Maj): Mushkilatul Afkâr fil Âlamîl Islami
(MHM): Fi Mahabbil Ma'arakâh
(MM): Milâd Mujtama'
(MTgh): Min Ajlit Taghyîr
(MShQ): Mudhakkirâtuh Shâhidîn lil Qarn
(MTh): Mushkilatath Thakâfah
(RT): Baynar Rachâdi wat-Tîh

XVIII
(SF): As-Sirā‘ al-Fikri fil Bilādil Musta’marah
(ShN): Shurūtun Nahdhah.
(Ta): Ta‘Ammulāt
(WAI): Wijhatul Ālamil Islami
List of Figures

Theoretical Framework 145
Research Process 175
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is a general agreement among Muslim scholars, thinkers and political leaders that the Muslim world is passing through an extremely difficult stage, namely the inability to extract itself from the present state of bewilderment. However, all those who are interested in this dilemma have called for a prompt change as an inevitable necessity (Abu Suleiman, 1981).

While change is a social phenomenon, a deep reflection on its nature, dimensions and aims will lead to the realization that education is its essence and vital component. So, any change in society depends on the type of required change needed through education. From this perspective, educational problems emerge as one of the important concerns of any attempt towards social change. “The planning and achievement of the educational project of the future may begin by analyzing society and categorizing its problems” (Morrish, 1972, p. 31; 1993, p. 78). So, “the principal contribution of the sociological approach to education is told raw attention to the importance of the social context” (Aboud, 1998, p. 49). Some researchers and thinkers have adopted the abovementioned sociological perspective. One of them is
Malik Bennabi who approached the problems of education from a sociological dimension within the context of the civilizational crisis in the Muslim world. Many attempts have been made throughout the history of the Muslim world to achieve the needed reform. Those attempts include the reform movements of al-Afghani and Abduh as well as es-Sennoussi (1786-1860) in Libya, al-Mahdi in Sudan, ibnu Abdelwahab in Saudi Arabia, Hassan al-Banna (-1949) in Egypt, ibnu Badis (1889-1939) in Algeria and al-Mawdudi (-1978) in Pakistan (Abbassi, 1989). The educational dimension of the problem has actually caught the attention of most, if not all, the reformists. Indeed, they have mentioned the importance of education in resolving the problems of the Muslim world. However, due to their lack of awareness of the importance and necessity of methodological thinking, their attempts lacked comprehensiveness and a conceptualization of the educational problem and its dimensions. They were not founded upon a theory with a determined set of aims and objectives and the means as well as the accurate planning of the different stages of achievement. They were not interested in developing a methodological approach to achieve the needed reform through for example, creative thinking, but were more inclined to re-produce the past experience through *taqlid* (imitation). Hence, if we are to analyze the efforts of the reformist, it is realized that those efforts were motivated by devotion rather than by methodological thinking (*RT*: 78) and, according to Malik Bennabi, this has contributed little to help the Muslim conscience regain its awareness. This fact can be witnessed in different parts of the Muslim world where a

---

1 See my interview via mail with Djidel in appendix: 5.
growing resurgence amongst Muslims is still in its formative stage. However, the different attempts of revivalism in the Muslim world should enable the Muslim to move from the state of backwardness to that of the civilized man. Such a move can be achieved through the qualification of the Muslim man to fulfill his mission in history as recommended by the teachings of al-Qur‘ān and the authentic Sunnah as an essential element of the educational process of civilizing the Muslim man.

Malik Bennabi’s methodological approach is directed toward the problem of change in the contemporary Muslim world. Such a methodological approach has influenced most of the subsequent research into such problems as well as many contemporary Islamic movements of revivalism. This influence is due to the comprehensiveness of Malik Bennabi’s methodological approach and the authenticity of his ideas and views on the different issues that he approached such as the relationship between civilization and the process of education.

The study examines the need for a new perspective on education required by the contemporary Muslim world through the thoughts of Malik Bennabi. Such a perspective treats education as being beyond the process of building the human personality. Rather, this perspective sees education as a project with the civilizational dimension as its main concern. The aim of such a project is to qualify the Muslim man to achieve his historical mission, which is different from any partial or coincidental attempts to deal with the historical existence of the Muslim world.

---

3 See my interview via mail with Djidel in appendix: 5.