



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

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

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By
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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.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
Sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**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.

Sehubungan dengan tuntutan persoalan kajian, metod kualitatif telah digunakan. Kajian ini melibatkan penyelidikan tentang pemikiran Malik Bennabi yang daripada tiga sumber: hasil kerja Malik Bennabi, perbandingan kajian-kajian yang dibuat ke atas pemikiran Malik Bennabi dan temubual. Temubual yang dilakukan memberikan maklumat tambahan terutamanya daripada individu-individu yang berdampingan dan menghayati pemikiran Malik Bennabi.

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 permasalahan tamadun dan faktor manusia sebagai faktor utama di dalam permasalahan tamadun dalam dunia Islam.

Metod pendekatan yang diamati oleh Malik Bennabi bagi mengkaji permasalahan tamadun mempunyai impak yang eksplisit bagi mendefinisikan konsep pendidikan. Pendidikan adalah proses mentamadunkan manusia dan memperjelaskan kewujudannya dalam signifikan sejarah yang membolehkan manusia untuk mencapai misi pensejarahannya. Banyak konsep telah diteliti di dalam pemikiran Malik Bennabi. Walau bagaimanapun, selaras dengan tuntutan konsep pendidikan, konsep-konsep tersebut boleh dijalinkan bagi membentuk elemen-elemen penting yang menjadi asas kepada kewujudan konsep pendidikan itu sendiri. Malik Bennabi telah menghuraikan empat landasan falsafah pendidikan iaitu, natur manusia, natur masyarakat, natur ilmu dan matlamat pendidikan. Malik Bennabi telah menyumbang kepada pendidikan Islamik dengan pendekatan baru untuk memahami permasalahan pendidikan dan pendidikan sebagai projek bagi mempromosikan budaya baru dan meningkatkan tamadun. Malik Bennabi tidak mempersembahkan idea-idea dan pandangan-pandangan terhadap pendidikan

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.

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Wal Hamdulillah Rabbil Alami

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT	I
ABSTRAK	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
APPROVAL	VIII
DECLARATION	IX
NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION	XVII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	XVIII
LIST OF FIGURES	XX

CHAPTER

I	INTRODUCTION	1
	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'ân and Sunnah	69
	Nature of man	74
	Nature of society	87
	Nature of knowledge	92
	Nature of the aims of education	96
	Preservation <i>Fitrah</i>	99
	Development of the innate faculties of man	101
	Achievement of the aims of human existence	105
	Worship of Allah	105
	Vicegerency	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

Abdulhamid ibnu Badis and the educational perspective	193
Hassan al-Banna and the comprehensiveness of Islam	194
Formulation of the alternative	196
Civilization conceptualized	198
Elements of civilization	201
Man	203
Soil	204
Time	205
Religious idea	207
The phenomenon of the civilizational cycle	211
The spiritual stage	212
Principal feature of the spiritual stage	214
The rational stage	215
First signs of a new stage	216
The instinctual stage	217
Theory of civilization and the historical evolution of the Muslim world	220
Pre-civilized Arabs	221
The golden age of the Muslims' civilization	222
The cultural expansion	223
The instinctual revival (emergence of: post civilized man)	226
Synthesis	228
The methodological requirements	230
Islam as the principal frame of reference	230
The nature of the Muslim world's civilizational cycle	232
The position of the Muslim world in history	233
Elements of the alternative	234
Refining the cultural world	236
The starting point of refining the cultural world	237
Reconsidering the function of religion in social life	243
Restructuring the social relations' network	247
Education as a basis to reconstruct the web	248
Dependence of ideas on the web of social relations	250
Social investment	253
Educational problem, conceptualized	256
Summary	260

V THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION IN BENNABI'S THOUGHT

Introduction	261
Islam as the principal frame of reference	263
Nature of man	265
Innate religiosity of man	265

Biological dimension	267
The need for a balanced fulfillment	268
Role and effect of the idee force	270
Psycho-spiritual dimension	273
Psychological background of the human specie	274
Role of religion in the construction of the self	275
Educational dimension	276
Need for education	277
Man as the main unit of society	278
Civilizational stage and the required education	279
Tendency towards easiness	281
Historical experience as a reference	282
Civilizational dimension	284
Role of education in civilizing the human being	285
Social dimension	285
 Nature of society	 287
Two types of society	289
Natural society	290
Historical society	289
Defining society	293
Conceptualizing the nature of society	294
A spiritual origin	295
Society between quality and quantity	297
Social relations network, a crucial element	298
Making up the society	300
Preserving society from destruction	303
 Nature of knowledge	 304
Epistemological perspective	306
Civilizational perspective	307
Role of akhlaq	309
The closing of the gate of Ijtihâd	311
Educational perspective	313
Finality	313
Practicality	314
Practical logic	315
Ethics	317
Nature of the aims of education	318
Educational problem a primary basis to formulate the aims of education	319
Aims versus objectives	320
Civilizing the Muslim man	321
Refining the Muslim personality	323
Regenerating the social function of religion	326
Purification of the Muslim conscience from colonizability	328

Integrating the Muslim into society	329
Qualifying the Muslim mind for methodological thinking	331
Summary	334

VI THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION IN BENNABI'S THOUGHT

Introduction	337
Conceptualizing education	338
Education as psychological assimilation of culture	338
Education as process of conditioning and adaptation	344
Education as process of integration	346
Education as process of civilizing the human being	348
Education and civilization	351
The key educational concepts	353
Religious idea	354
The process of civilizing	357
Social relations network	358
Idea of social investment	361
Social education	363
Individual versus person	365
Raw individual	366
Natural man	367
<i>Insâmul fitrah</i>	368
Person (conditioned individual)	369
Integrated man	371
Colonizability	372
Vital energy	375
Conditioning and adaptation	377
Integration	379
Orientation	384
Equilibrium	385
Efficacy and tension	387
Will and power	390
Duty and right	392
Transfer of foreign experience	394
The process of education	397
Innate need for education as a basis	398
Focus of the process of education	400
Multidimensional personality and holistic education	401
Realism	402
Need to determine the desired model of man	403
Ethical basis	403
Some articulate elements of the process of education	406
Summary	409

VII SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction	411
Summary of the study	411
Discussions	422
Conclusions	451
Implications	454
Recommendations	459
Concluding remarks	462
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

Consonants

ء (hamzah)	.	ض (dād)	d
ب (bā')	b	ط (tā')	t
ت (tā')	t	ظ (zā')	z
ث (thā')	th	ع ('ayn)	'
ج (jīm)	j	غ (ghayn)	gh
ح (hā')	h	ف (fā')	f
خ (khā')	kh	ق (qāf)	q
د (dāl)	d	ك (kāf)	k
ذ (dhāl)	dh	ل (lām)	l
ر (rā')	r	م (mīm)	m
ز (zay)	z	ن (nūn)	n
س (sīn)	s	ه (hā')	h
ش (shīn)	sh	و (wāw)	w
ص (sād)	s	ي (yā')	y

Vowels

— fathah)	a	long <i>fathah</i>	ā
— (kasrah)	i.	long <i>kasrah</i>	ī
— (dammah)	u	long <i>dammah</i>	ū

Tanwin َ ِ ُ is represented by *an*, *in* *un* respectively.

Transliteration will involve only Arabic words. Others will be written in *italics*/

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- (ĀDj): *Ā fāq Djzāiriyyah.*
- (DhQ): *Adh-Dhāhirah al-Qur'āniyyah*
- (DwrMR): *Dawrul Muslim wa Rissālatuhu fī ath-Thuluthil Akhīr min Hādhal Qarn*
- (FCD): *Fikrat Comonwealth Islami*
- (FIA): *Al-Fikratul Ifrikiyyatul Assyāwiyyah*
- (IHS): *Islam in History and Society.* English translation of the French version *Wijhatul Ālamil Islami* entitled *Vocation de l'Islam* by Asma Rachid. Islamic Research Institute. International Islamic University. Islamabad, Pakistan.
- (IntMsh): *Intāj al-Mustashrikīn.*
- (KaKu): *al-Kādhāyāl Kubrā*
- (MAI): *Al-Muslim fī Ālamil Iktisād*
- (Maf): *Mushkilatul Afkār fil Ā'lamil Islami*
- (MhM): *Fī Mahabbil Ma'arakah*
- (MM): *Milād Mujtama'*
- (MTgh): *Min Ajlit Taghyīr*
- (MShQ): *Mudhakkirātu Shāhidin lil Qarn*
- (MTh): *Mushkilatuth Thakāfah*
- (OHS): *On the Origins of Human Society.* English translation of the French version of *Milād Mujtama'* by Mohammad Tahir al-Messawi. The Open Press Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- (PI): *The Problem of Ideas in the Muslim World.* English translation of the French version of *Mushkilatul Afkār fil Ālamil Islami* entitled *Le Probleme des Idees dans le Monde Musulman* by Mohammad Tahir al-Missawi. *Budaya Ilmu.* Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia.
- (QP): *Quranic Phenomenon.* Translation of the French version of *Le Phenomene Coranic* by Abu Bilal Kirkari. Islamic Book Trust. Taman Tun Dr. Ismail. 60000, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- (RT): *Baynar Rachādi wat-Tīh*

- (SF): *As-Sirā' al-Fikri fīl 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 to draw 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 world¹.

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 *taqlīd* (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 awareness². 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.

² See: Malik Bennabi's "Islam in Historyd Society", pp, 20-29.

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 problems³ as well as many contemporary Islamic movements of revivalism⁴. 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.