

Values and Their Role in the Civilizational Cycle and Their Formations in the Thought of Malik Bennabi

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Abstract:

In this research paper, we address the topic of the concept of civilization according to Malik Bennabi, considering it in reality as the sum of the material and moral factors that enable a society to provide each of its members with all the necessary social guarantees for their progress. Moreover, the realization of civilization is contingent upon a set of basic conditions, the most prominent of which are activating the role of humans, guiding them with a value-driven idea, developing effectiveness and productivity, along with balancing matter and spirit .

In a broader context, it is linked to the stages of the civilizational cycle (spirit, intellect, instinct), explaining how civilization is formed through these stages, and how values play a decisive role in its rise and continuity or decline.

Keywords: Civilization, renaissance, Malik bin Nabi, the civilizational cycle, values.

Introduction: Contextualizing the Problem of Civilization

The issue of civilization remains one of the most pivotal concerns that has occupied the minds of numerous thinkers and researchers, given its profound correlation with the progress or decline of societies throughout history. Civilization is not merely confined to material manifestations, such as urban development and technology; rather, it is fundamentally grounded in a system of values and ideas that guide human behavior and regulate the individual's relationship with their environment. Within this context, the Algerian thinker Malek Bennabi emerged as one of the most prominent intellectuals who dedicated their efforts to studying the problematic of civilization in the Muslim world. He sought to analyze the causes of its historical rise and the reasons for its modern decline, providing an integrated civilizational vision based on the role of man and values in the making of history.

Malek Bennabi's conceptualization introduced what he termed the "civilizational cycle," illustrating that civilization passes through several successive stages: the stage of the spirit, the stage of the intellect, and the stage of the instinct. In each stage, a specific set of values prevails, reflecting the nature of society and its level of civilizational development. Furthermore, he emphasized that the establishment of civilization is contingent upon the availability of a set of fundamental conditions and elements that contribute to directing society toward construction and creativity; namely: man, soil, and time, in addition to a system of values that stimulates action and advancement.

The Problematic

Based on the aforementioned, the following problematic arises: How did Malek Bennabi's interpret the civilizational cycle and its value-based formations? And what is the role of values, the conditions for building civilization, and the factors of civilisational advancement in achieving the "Renaissance" (Nahdah)?

This problematic branches into several sub-questions:

- What is the concept of civilization according to Malek Bennabi's?
- What are the conditions for its construction and its essential elements?
- What is meant by the civilizational cycle, and what are its three stages?
- What values characterize each of these stages?

Accordingly, this research seeks to highlight the concept of the "civilisational cycle" and its value-based formations in Malek Bennabi's thought, while addressing the conditions and elements of constructing civilisation, the factors of civilisational advancement, and the three stages of the civilisational cycle.

2. Conditions for Building Civilisation and Its Stages in Malek Bennabi's Thought:

Before delving into the subject of civilisation in Malek Bennabi's perspective, it is necessary to shed light on "Renaissance" (*Nahdah*) and "Culture." Renaissance is viewed as the "soul" that permeates the body of the nation, while civilisation is the "trace" or "legacy" that this body leaves in history. Without a profound intellectual renaissance, any material progress remains a fragile external shell prone to disappearance. As for culture, "the more cultured a people are, the more their models are present on the stage of history and civilisation."¹

2.1 The Concept of Renaissance: Linguistic and Idiomatic Definitions

Linguistically: The concept of Renaissance (*Nahdah*) is a relatively modern term in Arabic thought. According to Arabic lexicons, *Nahdah* is derived from the trilateral verb *nahada* (to rise), including its derivatives which imply rousing or commanding someone to rise for a specific matter ²

Idiomatically: The concept of Renaissance is used as an equivalent to the European term "Renaissance," which historically carries connotations dating from the mid-14th century (14th C) to the late 17th century (17th C) in Italy. It signifies transformations across all fields or the "reappearance" of a figure. Subsequently, it became known as the "Revival," manifested in the restoration of philosophy through the "New Aristotelian Method."³

¹ Bouarfa, Abd El kader. (2006) *Civilisation and the Cunning of History: Reflections on Bennabi's Thought*, 1st ed., Publications of the Laboratory of Value Dimensions of Intellectual and Political

² Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, Dar al-Ma'arif, Cairo, entry (n-h-d), Vol. 6, p. 4560

³ Adapted from: Omran, A. A. (2007-2008) *The Scientific Trend in Arab Thought*, Master's Thesis in Contemporary Arab Thought, Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy, Omar Al-Mukhtar University, Libya, p. 60.

* The World of Ideas: Refers to mental perceptions, the apprehension of the external world, and the set of principles governing "Right and Wrong," as well as emotional responses and sensations.

* Some scholars classify the World of Feelings and Emotions as a distinct "fourth world" in its own right, rather than subsuming it under the World of Ideas.

Renaissance can be perceived as a subsequent state that emerges when the "World of Ideas"* is organized and the "World of Feelings"* is awakened. In this state, the human being moves forward, liberated from the shackles of fear, to exercise an active role (the awakening) across all domains. During the Renaissance phase, the light of inquiry and contemplation prevails, igniting the creative sparks that establish the "World of Things" which, in turn, provides "Truth" with "Power" so they may advance together.

2.2 The Concept of Culture: Linguistic and Idiomatic Definitions

Linguistically: The root *thaqafa* (to culture) implies that an individual has become skillful and astute. A "cultured man" (*muthaqqaf*) is one possessing a sharp understanding, while a "cultured youth" (*thaqif*) is characterized by acumen and intelligence.⁴

Idiomatically: Culture, in its general sense, refers to the refined taste, critical sense, and sound judgment characterized by an educated individual. Alternatively, it is the upbringing and education that led to the acquisition of these attributes. A fundamental condition of culture, in this context, is that it facilitates harmony between man and nature, between the individual and society, and between man and spiritual values.⁵

For Malek Bennabi's, culture holds paramount importance in the historical life of civilization. He considers it the "environment" in which the individual shapes their character and personality, describing it as the "primary capital" within the milieu where one is born, and likening it to the "air" one breathes. Consequently, culture is the comprehensive synthesis of four constituent elements: Ethics, Aesthetics, Practical Logic, and Technique (Industry).⁶

From a pedagogical perspective, he considers culture a project that bridges the ideas of the common people with the artistic and technical visions of their leaders, forming the generative power of civilization. Thus, every social reality or civilizational product is, in essence, an embodied culture. Since the four aforementioned elements are conditions for culture, they inherently serve as the fundamental conditions for civilization as well.⁷

This is precisely what we aim to address here by establishing a close link between culture and civilization. In light of this connection, culture becomes a theory of conduct rather than merely a theory of knowledge. Consequently, this allows for the measurement of the essential distinction between "culture" and "education."⁸

2. The Concept of Civilization: Linguistic and Idiomatic Definitions

⁴ See: Al-Fayruzabadi, M. (2005) *Al-Qamus al-Muhit*, Edited by M. N. Al-Arqasusi, 8th ed., Mu'assasat al-Risalah, Lebanon, p. 795.

⁵ See: Saliba, Jamil. (1982) *Al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi* (The Philosophical Lexicon), Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, Beirut, Vol. 1, p. 378.

⁶ Adapted from: Malek Bennabi, (2000) *Shurut al-Nahdah* (Conditions of the Renaissance), Trans. Abd al-Sabur Shahin, Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, 2nd ed., p. 74, p. 89; Bennabi, M. *Al-Qadaya al-Kubra* (The Major Issues), p. 80; Bennabi, M. *Mushkilat al-Thaqafa* (The Problem of Culture), p. 68.

⁷ Bin Zaqoutah, Houda. (2009-2010) *The Civilisational Role of Contemporary Asian Societies in Malek Bennabi's Thought (Japan as a Model)*, Master's Thesis in Philosophy, Mentouri University, Constantine, Algeria, p. 14.

⁸ See: Al-Sahmarani, Assad. (2006/1427 AH) *Malek Bennabi, Man, and the Course of Civilization, Thaqafatuna, Issue 13, p. 152.*

Linguistically: According to *Lisan al-Arab*, the term is found under the root *h-d-r*. It denotes "residing in the city" (*al-hadar*), which is the antithesis of "bedouinism" or nomadic life (*al-badawah*)⁹

The term was first employed in a sense closely resembling its contemporary meaning by Ibn Khaldun.¹⁰

Idiomatically: The term denotes a sublime stage of human evolution, the goals of which vary according to time and space. Yet, such variation does not preclude these civilizations from sharing common elements, such as rationality, social organization, and an inclination toward spiritual values and moral virtues. Furthermore, the development of these ideals signifies a tendency toward participating in similar, shared constituents.¹¹

The issue of civilization is considered the paramount issue of this era, and indeed of every era; it is the space from which various national and humanitarian issues emerge and within which they are organized.¹²

It is also a state of constructing the desired model within reality, manifested in an advanced intellectual model, an advanced world of social relations and conduct, and an advanced world of material, industrial, architectural, and artistic production.¹³

From this perspective, we observe through Malek Bennabi's writings that he examines the concept of civilization from various angles. In terms of its structure, it is the construction of a social "synthesis" comprising three essential elements: Man, Soil, and Time. No civilizational product can emerge unless this "Civilization Complex" as Bennabi terms it, is present, or the "Religious Idea" that consistently accompanies the synthesis of civilization throughout history (The Equation of Civilization)¹⁴

It can be argued that civilization is a universal human phenomenon; man is the only creature that progresses and strives to improve his conditions, thanks to the intellect bestowed upon him by God, which enables him to think, store information, connect ideas, and benefit from them. Thus, all human races are civilized, and every people possesses a level of civilization; the difference lies only in the degrees. Even primitive groups still living at the foot of the mountain have their own civilization.

3. Features of the Formation of Civilizational Elements in Malek Bennabi's Writings

In light of the aforementioned considerations, it becomes necessary to transform the question implicitly raised by the Islamic world's stance over the past century: from "How do we produce the products of civilization?" to an explicit question: "How do we create civilization itself, and how is it formed?"

To deconstruct and analyze this problem, it is essential to follow the methods employed in analytical laboratories. Such analysis is not achieved by transporting the entirety of civilization into the lab, but

⁹ Ibn Manzur, Abu al-Fadl Jamal el-Din Muhammad ibn Mukram. (1993) *Tahdhib Lisan al-Arab*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., Vol. 4, p. 197.

¹⁰ Tshiko, Amna. (n.d.) *The Concept of Civilization in Malek Bennabi's and Arnold Toynbee's Thought*, Entreprise Nationale du Livre (ENAL), Algeria, p. 18.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 18

¹² Al-Khatib, Selimane. *The Civilisational Issue between Malek Bennabi and Sayyid Qutb*, op. cit., p. 63.

¹³ Sultan, Jasem. (2010) *Al-Nahdah: Min al-Sahwah ila al-Yaqazah* (The Renaissance: From Awakening to Alertness), Um al-Qura Foundation for Translation and Distribution, Leader's Tools Series, (The Renaissance Project), 4th ed., pp. 38-39.

¹⁴. See: Bennabi, M. *Shurut al-Nahdah* (Conditions of the Renaissance), p. 50

rather by taking "samples" of it. The samples of any civilization are its social products in all their forms. If such a sample were analyzed from a sociological perspective, its core substance would lead us to three determinants or elements: Soil, Time, and Man.

Malek Bennabi's formulated these features, which contribute to the formation of civilization, into the following equation:¹⁵

Civilizational Product = Man + Soil + Time

However, this equation only bears fruit through a "catalyst" or a "synthesis" that merges these elements and provides them with a purpose. This catalyst is religion, or what he termed the "Religious Idea" or the "Moral Element". This applies whether the religion is a true divine revelation like Islam, or a doctrine or principle that attains the status of religion for its adherents.

From this standpoint, Malek Bennabi's establishes the "Civilization Complex." There must be a synthesizing factor that influences the blending and fruition; this is the Religious Idea the - religious complex-that has accompanied the synthesis of all civilizations throughout history. The societies that continue to project the reflections of their civilizations onto the geographical map namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and Islam were born from this spiritual impetus. It was this impetus that erected the structures of Brahma and Buddha, Buddhist temples, Gothic cathedrals, and Islamic mosques. All these contemporary civilizations formed their harmonious synthesis within the cradle of a religious idea.¹⁶

Such a model is systemically diverse, tailored to the requirements of a society that places a higher premium on specialization and the division of labor than others.

1. Man:

Malek Bennabi considers man to be the fundamental prerequisite for civilization; when man moves, history moves, and when man becomes stagnant, history stagnates. Consequently, he positions man as a primary element in the dynamics of history and the source and foundation of the entire civilizational problem. Any reflection on the problem of man is, at its core, a reflection on the problem of civilization¹⁷ Malek Bennabi acknowledges the efficacy of man in the making of history; he is the decisive factor. Thus, the inevitability of history becomes subject to man's agency and oversight. This is the historical role that Malek Bennabi assigned to man (the Muslim).¹⁸

a role derived from the verse: "It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion" Surat At-Tawbah: Verse 33). This necessitates that the Muslim individual acts as a witness whose will interacts¹⁹.in alignment with the verse in which Allah Almighty says: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (Surat Ar-Ra'd: Verse 11).

Man is the axis and the tool of change. It is essential to build the new man strong in the knowledge of self and others, conscious of his role, and faithful to the importance of his mission. This can only be achieved by focusing on renewal and transformation within the psychological dimension of the post-Almohad Man. The miracle of change resides within the individual's psyche, not in the

¹⁵ Mounis, Hocine (1978) *Al-Hadarah: Dirasah fi Usul wa Awamil Qiyamiha wa Tatawwuriha* (Civilization: A Study of the Origins and Factors of its Rise and Development), Alam al-Ma'rifah, National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Kuwait, p. 44.

¹⁶ Malek Bennabi. (2000) *Al-Qadaya al-Kubra* (The Major Issues), Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, Syria, 1st ed., pp. 54-55.

¹⁷ See: Malek Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Thaqafah* (The Problem of Culture), p. 100

¹⁸ Lakhdar Cherit, *Usus al-Bina al-Hadari* (Foundations of Civilisational Construction), Dar Qurtubah, Algeria, 2009, p. 71.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 71

surrounding material means. Changing the individual's psyche means changing the nature of his relationship with the problems he faces, and liberating him from the psychoses of facility and impossibility.²⁰

2. Soil:

As for the element of Soil, Malek Bennabi does not view it in terms of its natural physical properties, but rather through its social characteristics and value. He clarified this by stating: "This social value of the soil is derived from the value of its owners. When a nation's value is high and its civilization is advanced, the soil becomes highly valuable; conversely, the soil mirrors the nation's degree of decline.²¹ In order for the Soil to effectively enter the synthesis of civilization, its full social prerequisites must be met. This entails its subordination to specific technical necessities, including its legal status, so that it can embody the civilizational project and bring it into a tangible realm, providing it with both its natural and economic foundation.²² Furthermore, he calls for the exertion of collective efforts to subdue and harness the soil in order to rebuild our civilization.²³

It is man who perceives the soil as a source of wealth and a means of resurgence, or views it as a source of threat. The extent to which man benefits from the soil depends entirely on the correctness of his perspective toward it.²⁴

Therefore, if the soil is not engaged by the human hand through an effective productive idea, and if it is not framed within a temporal system that accounts for the efficacy of labor, it remains a dormant matter that loses its value day by day.

3. Time:

Time is integrated within the scientific and technical progression that occurred between the discovery of the electrical phenomenon near the end of the 18th century and its application in the field of lighting around the mid-19th century. This is because time represents the foundation upon which this progression is built.²⁵

²⁰ Abdul Razzaq al-Jibran, *Falsafat al-Nushu' al-Hadari* (Philosophy of Civilisational Emergence), Al-Binaa Magazine, Issue 2, 14 Shawwal 1420 AH - January 2000, p. 33.

²¹ Malek Bennabi, *Shurut al-Nahdah* (Conditions of the Renaissance), p. 1

²² Malek Bennabi, *Al-Qadaya al-Kubra* (The Major Issues), *op. cit.*, p. 56

²³ Malek Bennabi, *Shurut al-Nahdah* (Conditions of the Renaissance), *op. cit.*, p. 140

²⁴ Amna Chico, *Mathum al-Hadarah* (The Concept of Civilization), p. 131

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

When time is not spent for the sake of enrichment or the pursuit of fleeting blessings that is, when it becomes essential for survival, achieving immortality, or overcoming dangers, people suddenly hear the sound of the fleeing hours. They realize their irreplaceable value; in these hours, people care not for wealth, happiness, or pain, but for the hours themselves. They speak then of "hours of work" the only absolute currency that never expires and cannot be recovered if lost. A gold coin can be lost and found again, but no power in the world can destroy a single minute, nor can any power retrieve it once it has passed.²⁶

Life and history, both subject to timing, have consistently left us behind. We are in urgent need of precise timing and expansive strides to rectify our backwardness. This is achieved by defining the "area" irrigated by specific hours out of the twenty-four that pass over our land daily.²⁷

Furthermore, Malek Bennabi considers all nations qualified to establish civilization because God has endowed them with the three essentials. Whenever these pillars exist, the raw materials for producing civilization are available; however, this matter requires a historical catalyst without which these elements remain raw, namely, the religious idea or religion.

4. Phases of Civilizational Construction and its Values according to Malek Bennabi:

The Algerian thinker Malek Bennabi believes that civilization does not proceed randomly; rather, it moves through a structured civilizational process embodied in three fundamental phases. These phases reflect the evolution of society from strength to weakness, with each stage linked to a specific system of values that influences individual behavior and directs the course of civilization.

According to Bennabi, every civilization undergoes three stages: Birth, Zenith, and finally, Decline and Extinction. This is a universal law and a cosmic sunnah applicable to all civilizations. The beginning of this historical movement is sparked by the influence of the "Spirit" or the "Religious Idea." It is the Spirit that grants man the strength and ability to enter history and compete with other nations. Accordingly, Bennabi divided the civilizational cycle specifically within Islamic civilization into three phases:

1.4 The Phase of the Spirit:

This is the phase in which man tends to prioritize the logic of the spirit and values over all other instincts and inclinations, restraining his animalistic tendencies. In this stage, moral values, sacrifice, and altruism become the primary goals of human life, and they are non-negotiable. "In this state, the individual is liberated from the law of nature inherent in his body, and his entire existence becomes subject to the spiritual requirements imprinted on his soul by the religious idea, such that he conducts his life in this new state according to the law of the Spirit."²⁸

By "Spirit," Bennabi means the religious idea, moral virtues, or higher principles that drive man toward action, leading him to sacrifice himself and his gains for the sake of achieving supreme ideals. Among the characteristics of the "Phase of the Spirit" is the victory over instincts and their

²⁶ Malek Bennabi, *Shurut al-Nahdah* (Conditions of the Renaissance), op. cit., pp. 132-139 (adapted).

²⁷ Malek Bennabi, *Al-Qadaya al-Kubra* (The Major Issues), op. cit., p. 55.

²⁸ Malek Bennabi, *Wijhat al-Alam al-Islami* (The Direction of the Islamic World), Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, 1423 AH / 2002 AD, p. 67.

organization; instincts are subdued and harnessed within the rules of the religious idea, through which man can control his desires via self-motivation and will, sacrificing the self to realize ultimate values. By Spirit, Malek Bennabi refers to the religious idea, moral virtues, or supreme principles that propel man toward action, leading him to sacrifice his self and his gains to achieve ultimate ideals. A key characteristic of the Spirit phase is the triumph over and organization of instincts; these instincts are subdued and harnessed within the framework of the religious idea, through which man can control his impulses via an internal, voluntary motive, the sacrifice of the self for the sake of higher values. Absolute submission to the spiritual idea, avoiding debate or dispute regarding supreme principles and sublime virtues. A firm belief in the certainty and truth of the grand principles one holds. "It is this same law that governed Bilal when, under the whip of torture, he raised his index finger and never ceased repeating his words: 'One, One.' It is the dominance of the Spirit, which was liberated from the shackles of instincts after the creed had finally established total mastery over Bilal's inner self."²⁹

Adherence to the moral spirit consistent with the religious idea. This religious spirit speaks through the voice of the woman who approached the Prophet to confess her sin and request the application of the legal punishment for adultery³⁰.

The religious idea is what possesses the power to give birth to a civilization from the elements of man, soil, and time. This is because it grants the soul a principle of sentiment (*mabda' shu'ur*), according to Malek Bennabi's terminology. Neither grandiloquent speeches, futile philosophies, nor ideological trends borrowed from here and there are capable of awakening these elements from their dormancy. Religion, as a psychological sentiment, provides the soul with the principle of action, movement, and the capacity for change because "the power to synthesize the elements of civilization is immortal in the essence of religion."

This phase represents the genesis and inception of civilization, where spiritual and moral values reach their peak. During this stage, faith, sincerity, and the spirit of sacrifice prevail; the individual is prepared to transcend personal interests for the sake of the common good (referred to in Islamic jurisprudence as *Al-Maslahah al-Mursalah*).

This phase is considered the foundation of civilizational development because it creates an effective human being who carries a mission and strives to fulfil it. Among the values and principles that define this spiritual phase, inspired by the religious idea in Malek Bennabi's thought in general, and specifically by the teachings of Islam, which establishes civilization starting from the spiritual aspect as the pillar of human development, we mention, for example:

a. **Piety (*Taqwa*):**

Piety is a fundamental value in the Phase of the Spirit. It signifies the consciousness of God in both private and public life, which compels the individual to adhere to ethics. The fear of God Almighty is the greatest, most beneficial, and most sublime of all values; it is the key to a Muslim's happiness in this world and the hereafter. The Prophet (peace be upon him) linked it to good character in the Hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad on the authority of Abu Hurairah, that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

²⁹ Malek Bennabi, *Wijhat al-Alam al-Islami* (The Direction of the Islamic World), p. 67.

³⁰ Malek Bennabi, *Wijhat al-Alam al-Islami* (The Direction of the Islamic World), op. cit., p. 68.

"Do you know what most leads people to Paradise? It is the consciousness of Allah (*Taqwa*) and good character."³¹

b. Sincerity (Ikhlas):

Islam has sought to fortify work against forms of corruption such as ostentation (*Riya*) and hypocrisy by establishing intention as the foundation of all deeds, requiring them to be devoted sincerely to God Almighty. As stated in the Hadith: "Actions are but by intentions, and every man shall have only that which he intended." This compels the Muslim to summon a sincere intention for the sake of God and in pursuit of His pleasure. Consequently, he safeguards trust and the common interest of both the collective and society. His work thus remains free from corruption and deviation, achieving an internal psychological stability that reflects on his psyche moving from individualism toward the collective. This transition aligns with sound human nature (*Fitra*) and the religious idea crystallized in the teachings of Islam, which urges the Muslim to master his work and innovate, for such excellence invites the love and pleasure of God.

As the Almighty says: "Indeed, we have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them as to which of them is best in deed" [Surat Al-Kahf: 7]³²

Based on the aforementioned, it can be argued that these two values reinforce ethical attributes; honesty reflected in behavior, alongside piety and sincerity in work, curb the phenomenon of social corruption. They create a balance and cohesion between the individual and society, contributing relationally at this stage to the preservation of civilization. The presence of spiritual and moral values in this phase serves as the foundation and pillar of the spiritual stage, as no civilization can rise in the absence of principles and spiritual ethics in particular. Their role in civilization lies in motivating individuals to work for the common good rather than for fame or personal interest.

As for Sincerity, it is the spiritual energy that drives man to fulfill his civilizational duty. The Phase of the Spirit is led by spiritual values such as piety and sincerity, which establish the basis for rectifying individual and collective behavior and nurturing a righteous environment as a prerequisite for the rise of civilization, before society transitions into the Phase of Reason and material production.

2.4 The Phase of Reason:

This represents the first deflection of the Spirit within Islamic civilisation. In the year 38 AH, the Rashidun Caliphate which upheld religious and moral values transitioned into a monarchical system under the Umayyads. This shift eventually leads to the phase of Reason; however, this "Reason" does not possess mastery over instincts. At this point, "instincts begin to liberate themselves from their constraints in the manner we witnessed during the Umayyad era, as the Spirit gradually began to lose its influence over instincts, and society ceased to exert its pressure on the individual"³³.

This stage witnesses a trend toward scientific output, intellectual and philosophical prosperity, and creativity across various sciences, philosophies, arts, and poetry. However, for Malek Bennabi, the influence of the spiritual aspect on guiding the behavior of the individual and society diminishes during this phase. The religious idea and moral virtues no longer retain that radiant impact they wielded in the first stage. Islamic civilization in the Phase of Reason drifted toward luxury, the art of poetry, and music, which led to the gradual release of instincts. In Bennabi's words: "We notice a

³¹ Rashid Abdel Hamid and Mahmoud Al-Hayari, *Akhlaqiyat al-Mihnah (Professional Ethics)*, Dar al-Fikr Publishing, Amman, 1984, p. 69.

³² Ibrahim Fahd Al-Ghafili, *Nahwa Manhaj al-Islam li-Dirasat al-Idarah (Toward an Islamic Approach to Management Studies)*, research presented at the Third Annual Scientific Conference, Cairo, 1983, p. 56.

³³ Malek Bennabi, *Shurut al-Nahdah (Conditions of the Renaissance)*, Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, 1406 AH / 1986 AD, p. 69.

decline in the level of social ethics and a decrease in the social efficacy of the religious idea"³⁴ Nevertheless, the Phase of Reason can be considered a balance between moral virtues, the products of the mind, and instincts.

This phase is regarded as the stage of civilizational prosperity and organization, where values transition from their spiritual dimension to their practical and organizational dimension. Consequently, values such as knowledge, justice, respect for order, and mastery of work emerge. During this phase, institutions are built, and a balance between values and reason is achieved, leading to social stability and sustained progress. Among the chosen values that reinforce this phase and contribute to civilizational construction and intellectual advancement, we highlight the following two:

1. Establishing Justice and Equality:

God Almighty created people as equals; there is no difference between an Arab and a non-Arab except through piety (*Taqwa*). Piety is the sole criterion for distinction; in all other respects, people are as equal as the teeth of a comb. God has commanded us to uphold justice and excellence in many verses, including: "*Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded*" [Surat An-Nahl: 90]. This entails treating people as they deserve without injustice or bias, which ensures social stability, protects rights, and fosters trust among individuals. Its relationship to this phase is clear, as it provides the capacity for judgment and discernment of what is correct and fair that is, organizing society in a just manner.

As for Equality, it refers to granting every individual their rights and opportunities without discrimination. Its role lies in preventing social chaos and enhancing social cooperation and solidarity. This relationship is intrinsically linked to justice; equality works to balance the scales among people and prioritizes the common good, ensuring that society does not live under the weight of oppression and exploitation³⁵. It can be said that rational values, such as justice and equality, enable a society to plan, organize, and make sound decisions, forming the bedrock of the Phase of Reason that leads to the advancement of civilization.

3.4 The Phase of Instinct:

At this stage, the religious idea ceases to influence the people, and the mind stops its scientific and intellectual production. The nation turns toward satisfying its instincts, and the individual of this era becomes a mere ruminator of what his ancestors produced due to the cessation of creative reasoning. Thus, "the social function of the religious idea ends, as it becomes completely incapable of performing its mission in a dissolved society that has definitively entered the night of history"³⁶. For Malek Bennabi, this does not mean that religion is entirely absent during the Instinct phase; rather, its role shrinks into a mere individual faith that does not inspire progress or social revival.

He clarifies this in his book *The Direction of the Islamic World*: "When faith becomes a static faith that is, an individualistic tendency its historical mission on earth ends, as it becomes incapable of driving and mobilizing civilization. It becomes the faith of monks who sever their ties with life and abandon their duties and responsibilities, like those who sought refuge in the hermitages of the Marabouts since the era of Ibn Khaldun"³⁷.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 69.

³⁵ Malek Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Thaqafah* (The Problem of Culture), Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1957, p. 45.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 70. [2]

³⁷ Malek Bennabi, *Wijhat al-Alam al-Islami* (The Direction of the Islamic World), 1986, p. 32.

This phase also represents the decline and decadence of civilization, where spiritual and rational values weaken, and individualistic and material tendencies prevail. Selfishness, pursuit of personal interest, and luxury emerge, while the sense of responsibility vanishes. In this stage, civilization loses its soul, and society becomes vulnerable to weakness, a condition Bennabi terms "Colonizability." The social function of the religious idea vanishes, intellectual creativity halts, and the nation focuses on satisfying its desires. Consequently, the individual merely repeats the past, as the society "definitively enters the night of history" ³⁸. Again, Bennabi emphasizes that religion becomes a "static" individualistic tendency, incapable of propelling civilization forward, resembling the detached monasticism seen in the late stages of history since Ibn Khaldun's time ³⁹.

After a civilization is established upon spiritual values that purify the soul, and is subsequently organized by rational values that regulate social behavior, another phase emerges that is no less significant: The Phase of Instinct. This phase represents the natural side of man, where innate tendencies and inclinations manifest. These can serve as a constructive force if guided, or a destructive one if left unchecked. Thus, studying this stage is vital, as it serves as an arena of conflict between organizing values and unrestrained impulses, making it intrinsically linked to the fate of a civilization whether it ascends or declines.

Among the instinctive tendencies that may dominate human behavior in this stage are the following of whims and aggressive behavior, where the individual tends to respond to desires and emotions without regard for moral or rational constraints. This negatively impacts social cohesion and obstructs the process of civilizational construction.

A. Following Whims (*Ittiba' al-Hawa*):

Linguistic Definition of Hawa: Derived from the root *hawiya*, meaning to love or desire something. Originally, *hawa* refers to passion, whether for good or evil, and signifies what the soul desires. Its plural is *ahwa'*. It fundamentally describes a person's love for something that takes over their heart, as mentioned by God Almighty: "*And restrained the soul from [unlawful] inclination (hawa)*" [Surat Al-Nazi'at: 40]. The phrase "the devils misled him (*istahwath*)" means they took away his reason and passion, as stated by the Almighty: "*Like one whom the devils have enticed (istahwath)*" [Surat Al-An'am: 71], meaning the devils made his whims seem fair to him ⁴⁰

Technical Definition in Sharia: It is the inclination of the soul toward its desires when it exceeds the limits of Divine Law and moderation ⁴¹

One of its manifestations at the social level is the abandonment of bearing witness to the truth and the practice of injustice in judgment. Allah has warned against following one's whims (*Hawa*), as it leads to false testimony and biased rulings. Its opposite is justice, the avoidance of inclination toward falsehood or the distortion of truth. Islam has mandated the establishment of justice and forbade the forgery of testimony or false speech, as stated by the Almighty: "'O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice, witnesses for Allah, even if against yourselves, or your parents, or your relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah takes care of both. So do not follow your desires, lest you swerve. If you deviate or turn away-Allah is Aware of what you do." [Surat An-Nisa: 135].

³⁸ Malek Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Thaqafah* (The Problem of Culture), op. cit., p. 70.

³⁹ Malek Bennabi, op. cit., 1986, p. 32.

⁴⁰ Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, entry (h-w-a), Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1300 AH / 1882 AD, Vol. 15, pp. 373-374.

⁴¹ - Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, Edited by Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Qasim, King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran, Medina, Saudi Arabia, 1416 AH / 1995 AD, Vol. 28, p. 132.

In this context, Ibn al-Qayyim stated: "The Almighty mentioned the two reasons that lead to the concealment of truth, warning against them and threatening punishment for them: the first is distortion (*Al-Layy*), and the other is avoidance (*Al-I'rad*). If the truth becomes evident with clear proof and one who wishes to repel it finds no way to do so, they avoid it and refrain from mentioning it, thus becoming a silent devil. At other times, they twist and distort it; thus, twisting is an example of distortion. Since the witness is required to provide testimony as it is without concealing or changing it, avoidance is the equivalent of concealment, and twisting is the equivalent of alteration and dissipation" ⁴²

Furthermore, following one's whims is considered one of the most prominent manifestations of instinctive tendencies, where an individual yields to personal desires and inclinations without referring to the constraints of reason or moral values. This appears in multiple forms, most notably through injustice and the concealment of testimony. Injustice reflects a deviation from equity due to the prioritization of self-interest, leading to the spread of oppression and the imbalance of rights within society. As for the concealment of testimony, it represents the hiding of truth motivated by personal gain or fear, which contributes to the loss of justice and the disruption of the values upon which civilisational structures are built. Thus, following one's whims transforms into a factor of destruction that undermines the foundations of social stability and cohesion.

2. Violence and Deviation :

Deviation is the act of straying from the agreed-upon social norms within a society; an act met with punishment. It is a social phenomenon that demands attention due to its underlying causes and resulting consequences. Atif Ghaith defines it as "a pattern of action that completely departs from the set of norms established for individuals in their social positions" ⁴³ From a legal perspective, "Tappan" defines deviation as "the sum of committed, publicized, prosecuted, and punished violations; an individual is not considered a delinquent or criminal unless recognized as such by a court. Crime is a voluntary act that violates the law without excuse and is punishable by it" ⁴⁴.

In this context, "Merton" provided an example using American society, which favors wealth and money through legitimate means. However, there is a segment of the lower class that cannot reach these goals except through illegitimate methods; thus, they bypass ethically and legally sanctioned paths.

Aggressive behavior represents one of the most prominent manifestations of instinctive conflicts. It manifests in a human tendency toward violence and straying from normal behavior due to the absence of value-based constraints. Violence expresses the use of force or harm in dealing with others, leading to the spread of conflict and the destabilization of society. Deviation, on the other hand, refers to the departure from moral values and standards, which results in the disintegration of social bonds and the spread of negative behaviors.

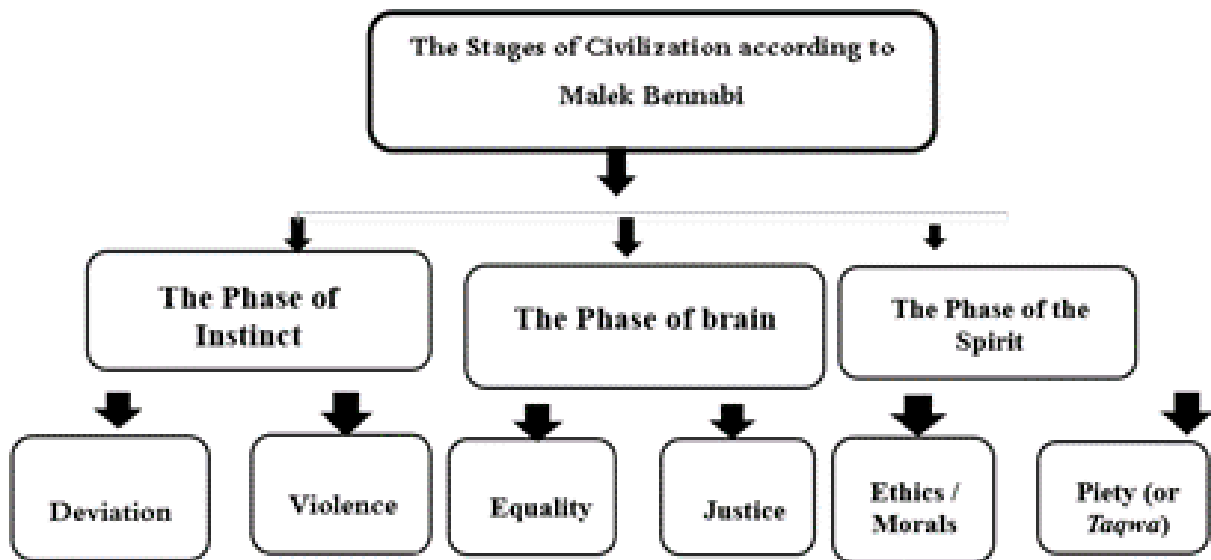
The prevalence of these phenomena leads to the weakening of the spirit of cooperation and solidarity among individuals. This, in turn, obstructs the process of civilizational construction and renders

⁴² Ibn al-Qayyim, *Tafsir al-Qayyim by Imam Ibn al-Qayyim*, edited by Muhammad Hamid al-Fiqi, Makkah al-Mukarramah, 1368 AH/1949 AD, p. 35.

⁴³ Belmouloud Joumana, *The Relationship Between the Family and Adolescent Deviation*, Master's Thesis, Institute of Psychology, University of Constantine - Algeria, 2005, p. 59.

⁴⁴ Belmouloud Joumana, *ibid*, p. 55.

society more vulnerable to fragmentation and weakness in the face of both internal and external challenges.



5. Conclusion:

In concluding this research, it is evident that the subject of the Civilizational Cycle and its value-based formations in the thought of Malek Bennabi represents a vital entry point for understanding the nature of how civilizations arise and evolve throughout history. Bennabi highlighted that civilization is not merely material or technical progress, but rather the result of an interaction between Man, Soil, and Time under the guidance of a directing idea and a system of values that regulate individual behavior and channel efforts toward construction and creativity.

Furthermore, he demonstrated that building a civilization requires a set of essential conditions, namely: the preparation of the righteous individual, the organization of society, and the proper orientation of material resources. These conditions are intrinsically linked to the elements of civilization that form the bedrock of any civilizational renaissance. Through his analysis of civilizational trajectories, he clarified that a civilization passes through three main phases the Phase of the Spirit, the Phase of Reason, and the Phase of Instinct where each phase manifests a value system reflecting the level of society's development and its civilizational strength.

It is also clear that the factors of civilizational resurgence are primarily tied to the revival of spiritual and rational values, and the building of an individual capable of effectively investing time and available resources.

Key Findings:

Values play a fundamental role in the construction and sustainability of civilization.

Civilization is based on the interaction of three essential elements: Man, Soil, and Time.

Civilization undergoes several phases that reflect the shifts of values within society.

Civilizational resurgence is achieved by building the individual and activating values that stimulate work and creativity.

Recommendations:

The necessity of focusing on educating the individual on spiritual and moral values, as they are the foundation of any civilizational renaissance, while simultaneously strengthening rational values. Encouraging intellectual studies focused on the thought of Malek Bennabi due to the civilizational insights he offers, which contribute to understanding the reality of contemporary societies. Drawing lessons from contemporary civilizational experiences that have successfully achieved development and progress.

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