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# The Islamic Framework In The Thought Of Malik Ibn Nabi

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## Abstract:

The article discusses the Islamic background framework upon which the thinker Malik Bennabi based in his civilizational project and its importance. In his view, it is considered one of the fundamental prerequisites for any transformative work, and without it, such work would be futile. For this reason, Ibn Nabi adhered to it, sought to understand and apply it in accordance with the realities of the era and modern knowledge. He developed a renewing vision that aligns with its foundations and responds to the realities of contemporary science.

As an example, in the field of exegesis, Professor Malik Bennabi proposed a new approach to interpreting the Quran and the necessity of reforming the old methodology. According to him, this task has its reasons, with one of the most important being the tremendous influence of European specialists on Muslim youth, particularly in matters related to spiritual life. In addition, the changing circumstances and developments in Islamic history were significant factors that called for renewal in the methodologies of interpretation. When we examine Ibn Nabi's legacy, we observe an attempt to renew and engage in a different reading of the texts. In our view, the motivating factors behind this are his focus on two aspects: the psychological aspect and the temporal factor, both of which are derived from Islamic principles.

At the same time, he studied the religious phenomenon in a manner contrary to the approach of Orientalist skeptics towards revelation, refuting their doubts in a scientific manner. Simultaneously, he did not overlook the ethical and aesthetic aspects, unlike European civilization, which he described as utilitarian.

**Keywords:** Malik Bennabi, renewal, the science of interpretation, psychological aspect, Orientalists.

## Introduction:

Scientifically and based on established facts, it is recognized that every civilization has its intellectual foundations and references. It is upon these foundations that concepts are defined, social rules are established, and ethical and moral values are built. Within this framework, scientific theories emerge, particularly in the fields of social and human sciences, which are often influenced by ideological research.

Due to our affiliation with Islam, it is incumbent upon us to submit and adhere to a set of principles prescribed by the wise legislator through the angel Gabriel and clarified by the Prophet Muhammad, whether through his words, actions, or directives. These principles serve as the reference for all thought and claims, and they serve as the ultimate arbitrator in times of disagreement. They are the refuge and sanctuary during economic and social crises...

However, Arab thought, since the first shock and the subsequent factors of decline and regression until the advent of modern Western civilization, lacks unity in its construction and coherence and harmony between its premises and reality. This means that it stems from intellectual references and historical backgrounds that do not contain its true intellectual scope nor accommodate its social reality. It is devoid of the cognitive framework that unifies and organizes various sciences, arts, and knowledge, allowing them to interact with its reality and align with its principles.

If we firmly acknowledge that the Islamic perspective and the values of revelation are another source of knowledge, knowing that the separation between creed and Sharia, that is, between the general principles of Islam and the specific applied rulings, is a methodological error and a dismantling of the structure of Islamic thought.

This matter has stirred the resentment of some Muslim thinkers who grasped the reality of Islam well and earnestly attempted to restore unity and coherence between results and premises. They embarked on their transformative project based on the principles of revelation, diverging from the Cartesian methodology, and provided logical scientific evidence to substantiate matters of the unseen (revelation). They also endeavored to connect events with their historical, psychological, and temporal circumstances, analyzing them accordingly. In addition, they put forth their innovative opinions in understanding the Quranic text and subjected it to logical scientific analysis regarding the reasons for the Islamic world's backwardness.

### **Problematic:**

The research problem can be formulated as follows: What are the most important principles and premises adopted by Malek Bennabi in his innovative project, which he derived from Islam and deviated from the Cartesian methodology? This central question gives rise to the following sub-questions:

1. Where does the importance lie in relying on and referring back to principles and coordinating between results and premises in transformative projects, and what are the consequences of neglecting this aspect?
2. What is the nature of the Islamic principles that Ibn Nabi intends? Are they rigidly based on textual sources without considering purposes and outcomes, or do they originate from Islam as a principle but lack examination and analysis?

### **Definition of Islamic Framework**

The Islamic Framework refers to Ibn Nabi's reliance on the Quran, Sunnah, and Islamic traditions in his writings, analyses, and attempts to outline a plan for the revival of the Islamic world. It does not solely pertain to purely religious matters, such as discussing jurisprudential and doctrinal issues. Rather, it signifies his adherence to an Islamic framework, diverging from Western perspectives and differing from non-Islamic theories.

### **The importance of the Islamic Framework:**

Ibn Nabi believes that taking into account the adherence to sources and foundations is a necessary condition for societal development, and without it, any transformative work would be futile. As we belong to Islam, it is essential to return to its sources (the Quran) and the Sunnah, purifying our heritage from all outdated ideas and solutions that contradict our references. He referred to this as negative and positive dualism, where the negative aspect separates us from the past, meaning values that do not align with the new civilization, while the positive aspect connects us to the future, encompassing the distinguishing aspects of the new civilization in its social, economic, and political dimensions. In this regard, he states, "It is imperative, first and foremost, to purify our customs, traditions, and moral and social framework from elements that hinder progress and reconstruction, which serve no purpose, in order to create a conducive environment for dynamic factors that promote life."

And this purification can only be achieved through a new ideology that breaks away from the inherited state resulting from a period of societal decline, where the society is seeking a new state, which is the state of revival. Thus, we conclude the necessity of determining the conditions through two approaches:

- The first approach is a negative one that separates us from the remnants of the past.
- The second approach is a positive one that connects us with the requirements of the future.

Perhaps the impact of this theory was observed in Western culture during our revival era. Thomas Aquinas, albeit unintentionally, denied it, yet it became the intellectual foundation of Western civilization. Its revolution against Ibn Rushd and Saint Augustine was merely an expression of negative renewal, enabling their culture to distance itself from what they perceived as an Islamic idea or a fragmented legacy of the Byzantine Church. Descartes subsequently introduced positive renewal, which shaped Western culture with its objective approach built upon the experimental method.

Ibn Nabi believes that this negative legacy is the cause of our backwardness. As long as our society remains incapable of purging this negative inheritance that has plagued us for six centuries, and as long as it fails to renew the essence of human existence in accordance with true Islamic teachings and modern scientific methodologies, its pursuit of a new balance for its life and a new structure for its history will be in vain and futile<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *The Aim of the Islamic World*, translated by Abdul Sabour Shahin, Dar al-Fikr Damascus, 1st edition, 1423 AH - 2002 CE, p. 37.

This is indeed evident when the Islamic world lost control over its affairs and neglected to address its core problems, turning its gaze towards the Western world to import ideas that do not align with its own foundations. Consequently, it found itself in a state of confusion, unable to fully comprehend the Western civilization in its progressive momentum, nor did it grasp the reasons behind its own revival, which lie in returning to its origins and spiritual direction.

In Ibn Nabi's view, the difference lies in the uniqueness of the two civilizations. The Western world, with its Roman and pagan roots, inclined its vision towards the materialistic aspects of its surroundings. On the other hand, Islamic civilization, rooted in the belief in monotheism and connected to the messengers before it, directed its choice towards the metaphysical and the realm beyond nature, namely, ideas that transcend the material world<sup>2</sup>.

The Islamic civilization itself underwent this process of renewal, both in its negative and positive aspects. The Noble Quran rejected outdated and futile ideas, while outlining the path of the pure Islamic concept that plans for the future in a positive manner. This very work is necessary today for the Islamic revival<sup>3</sup>.

The positive clarification that Ibn Nabi refers to is one of the reasons that led Muslim scholars to abstain from Greek heritage and engage in combating it. With the exception of Islamic philosophers who accepted it as a complete intellectual unity and considered it the unshakable law of reason, attempting to reconcile non-Aristotelian elements with Aristotelian logic, finding few proponents. It was opposed by the proponents of orthodoxy, theologians, and the latecomers among them, both earlier and later scholars.

The early scholars not only rejected many elements of Aristotelian logic but also added their own specific research. As for the later scholars, they also fought against it and attempted to establish a completely new logic at its core<sup>4</sup>.

The scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah (Sunni tradition) and the Sufis also fought against and resisted it, holding a similar position to that of the conservatives and the latecomer theologians. Among them was Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH)<sup>5</sup>, who believed that logical boundaries entered the discussions of the principles of religion and Islamic jurisprudence in the late fifth century AH (11th century CE). Prior to that, logical boundaries did not exist, and all Muslim thinkers and theologians, whether Mu'tazilites, Ash'aris, Karamites, Shi'ites, or the

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<sup>2</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *The Problem of Ideas*, translated by Abdul Sabour Shahin, Omar Kamel Miskawi, Dar al-Fikr (Damascus), 1406 AH, p. 07.

<sup>3</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *Conditions for a Renaissance*, translated by Abdul Sabour Shahin, Omar Kamel Miskawi, Dar al-Fikr (Damascus), 1406 AH - 1986 CE, pp. 80-81.

<sup>4</sup> Ali Sami Al-Nashar, *Research Methods among Islamic Thinkers*, Dar al-Nahda al-Arabiya for Printing and Publishing (Beirut), 1404 AH - 1984 CE, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> The same reference, p. 31.

four imams, and others, did not give logical boundaries more significance than distinguishing the limited from the unlimited<sup>6</sup>.

The reason for Muslims' opposition to Greek logic is that the Islamic spirit derives its foundations from a different environment, centered around monotheism, and distances itself completely from considering the various Greek intellectual worlds that contradict Islamic principles.

### **Factors That influenced Ibn Nabi's Thoughts:**

It is not coincidental that Malik Bennabi follows this Islamic orientation without there being influences and reasons that corrected his course and guided his path, preventing him from being swept away by the currents of modernity and Westernization. He extensively discussed these reasons in his book "Witness of the Century," and among the most important factors are:

**- The Reformist Trend before the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars:** Many believe that the reform movement in Algeria is associated with the emergence of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars. However, in fairness, it is necessary to recognize the efforts of some reformists who paved the way for the later establishment of the association, such as Sheikh El-Mejouzi (d. 1914 CE) and El-Mouloud Ben Mohoub (d. 1939 CE). They attempted to enlighten and dispel the dust of the policy of ignorance pursued by the French colonization. Sheikh El-Mouloud Ben Mohoub stated: "...In general, our French teachers aimed to instill in us a Cartesian content that dissipates the fog in which the mythological mentality that sympathizes with emerging superstitions in Algeria has grown... This trend could have taken me further if it were not for the lessons of Sheikh Mouloud Ben Mohoub in monotheism and the Prophet's biography, as well as the lessons of Sheikh Ben El-Abed in jurisprudence. They served as strong reminders that guided my spirit back to the right path..."<sup>7</sup>

From this, we realize the magnitude of the impact that these two sheikhs had on the ideas of Malik Bennabi, as they shielded him from the Western principles that colonization aimed to instill in the youth. Were it not for that spirit, characterized by independence and return to the origin, Algeria would not have been able to reshape its history anew.

**- Pioneers of Reform in the Arab and Islamic World:** The efforts made by the pioneers of reform in the Islamic world played a significant role in shaping the intellectuality of Malik Bennabi. He praised the role played by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897 CE) in raising awareness among the Arab nation, stating, "In the deep slumber of the Islamic nation, a voice

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<sup>6</sup> Mustafa Tabatabai, *The Critique of Muslim Scholars of Aristotle's Logic*, Dar Ibn Hazm, 1st edition, 1410 AH - 1990 CE, p. 97.

<sup>7</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *Memories of a Century's Witness*, Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'asir Beirut (Lebanon), 2nd edition, 1404 AH - 1984 CE, pp. 66-67.

emerged from the land of Afghanistan, heralding a new dawn. This voice was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, awakening this nation to a new renaissance and a new day.<sup>8</sup>"

Regarding the following two books, "The Moral Bankruptcy of Western Politics in the East" by Ahmed Reda (d. 1956 CE) and "The Message of Tawhid" by Sheikh Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905 CE), he said the following: "These books corrected my temperament and provided me with another force of awakening in the intellectual realm. They prevented me from drifting into the romanticism that was prevalent among that generation of Algerian intellectuals. I would listen to their way of directing Quranic verses to offer a social interpretation of the current state of the Islamic world, and it had an impact on me."<sup>9</sup>"

Regarding the book "Umm al-Qura" by Al-Kawakibi, he says the following: "This book had a remarkable impact on us due to its fantastical characteristics. It introduced me to an Islam that was beginning to organize itself, to defend itself, and to initiate a new movement. It is a fictional book, but it is expressive, carrying a sentiment that was starting to emerge within at least some individuals in the Islamic world, like Al-Kawakibi.<sup>10</sup>"

The current of awareness that the Arab and Islamic world experienced, starting with Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, was one of the contributing factors in saturating Professor Malik Bennabi with authentic spiritual ideas and his opposition to materialistic ideologies that colonialism was diligently trying to implant in the minds of the youth.

**- His Childhood Experience:** Malik Bennabi experienced the conflict between materialism and spirituality during his childhood, as he moved between the cities of Tebessa and Constantine. In Tebessa, things were viewed from the perspective of nature and simplicity, while in Constantine, he began to see things from the angle of society and civilization, blending both Arab and European content into his words<sup>11</sup>.

As a result, his feelings in Tebessa differed from those in Constantine. In the former, it was a life of nature and warmth, where all these elements conversed with his soul. In Constantine, however, history, society, and its apparent tragedies raised questions within him, even though I often did not know the exact nature of these questions, yet I could feel them<sup>12</sup>.

Malik Bennabi managed to reconcile the needs of the spirit with the temptations of materialism, thanks to the aforementioned factors.

**Bennabi and his Connection to the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars:** One important indication of Malik Bennabi's Islamic orientation is his substantial agreement with the Algerian Muslim Scholars Association, which emphasized the following trinity: "Islam is our religion, Arabic is our language, and Algeria is our homeland." Bennabi's thinking does not differ

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<sup>8</sup> The same reference, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Memories of a Century's Witness, p. 67.

<sup>10</sup> The same reference, pp. 87-88.

<sup>11</sup> The same reference, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Memories of a Century's Witness, p. 85.

from that of the association's members; they share the same objectives. The only point of contention Bennabi had with the Muslim Scholars Association was their occasional tendency towards unmethodical thinking when they participated in the 1936 Islamic Conference. Regarding this, he stated, "Regardless of the association's position regarding this deviation, and despite their occasional inclination towards unmethodical thinking, they still remain at the forefront of the true Algerian renaissance and among its strongest driving forces.<sup>13</sup>"

Bennabi emphasizes the role of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars by stating that "And it was not surprising that the Arab people went through that phase when they erected a shrine for the poles (Dervishes) who claimed to have control over the universe. It is among Allah's laws in His creation that when an idea declines, an idol emerges, and sometimes the opposite is true.<sup>14</sup>"

Similarly, the situation in Algeria was such that until the year 1925, it was steeped in paganism, with idols erected in the corners. It was there that corrupt souls sought blessings and acquired miraculous talismans and charms. However, as soon as the light of the reformist idea shone, that shrine was shattered, extinguishing the fires of discord, and the country was freed from the fever of the Dervishes. The masses rid themselves of it after dancing for five centuries to the beats of tambourines, swallowing scorpions and nails along with myths and illusions.

He openly expressed his inclination towards the methodology of the Muslim Scholars Association when he aligned himself with them among the movements that had emerged in Algeria at that time, stating: "Social theories, which were prevalent in the marketplace of ideas, emerged. These theories found their way into the minds of the youth who were aspiring for renewal. Some leaned towards the Kalamist doctrine, while others embraced the Wahhabi doctrine. Some gravitated towards Western civilization, and among them were those who descended into materialistic ideologies..."

The reform movement carried out by the Algerian scholars was the closest of these movements to the hearts and instilled it within people's hearts. Their methodology was based on the comprehensive principle stated in the verse: "Allah does not change what is in a nation unless they change what is in themselves." (Quran 13:11). This verse became the motto of anyone who embarked on the path of reform in Ibn Badis's school, and it served as the foundation for all their thoughts. Its effects were evident in every step and in every article. As a result, the people internalized the inclination for change, and their conversations began to adopt it as a law and a methodology<sup>15</sup>.

### **Malik Bennabi and Sufism:**

We previously discussed the relationship between Malik Bennabi and the Muslim Scholars Association of Algeria, both united by a common goal and a common enemy. The evidence lies

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<sup>13</sup> The same reference, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *Memories of a Century's Witness*, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> The same reference, p. 25.

in Malik Bennabi's stance on Sufism, which aligns with that of the Muslim Scholars Association. Sunni Sufism was one of the fundamental components of Algerian society. It started theoretically and gradually transformed into practical aspects, becoming known as the Sufism of zawiyyas (Sufi lodges) and Sufi methods. Numerous Sufi methods emerged in Algeria, such as the Rahmaniyya, Qadiriyya, and Tijaniyya...

Sufi methods had a significant impact on resisting colonization and destabilizing its stability. As a result, efforts were made to co-opt and redirect them in ways that contradicted their intended purposes<sup>16</sup>. This led to the spread of many innovations and practices that were inconsistent with Islamic law. Malik Bennabi, as a thinker, opposed these practices and supported the work of the Muslim Scholars Association. He expressed his views on this matter in several of his writings, including those mentioned in his memoirs. For example, he mentioned that during the economic crisis that hit Algeria in 1930, he managed to secure his children's livelihood by working for an Allied export company based in the city. Perhaps he sought further assurance for the fate of his family and became more attached to the blessings of his spiritual guide, Sidi Al-Tijani, more than before. During my stay in France, I became more inclined towards a completely different reformist idea that diverged from Sufi paths. I felt a certain coolness and detachment between us that would have an impact on our intellectual relationships, but our scientific relationships would remain as they are<sup>17</sup>.

Furthermore, Malik Bennabi criticized some Sufis who misunderstood the principles of Sufism as a complete detachment from the world. They believed that the goal of Sufism was to sever ties with worldly matters and solely focus on individual purification and the eradication of sins. In contrast, Bennabi believed that true reform aimed to ignite the internal drive for societal advancement<sup>18</sup>.

According to his viewpoint, understanding Sufism in this manner was a betrayal of society because it created a void by directing all creative abilities and moral virtues outside the realm of realities, thus disregarding the necessities of earthly life<sup>19</sup>.

However, spiritual education does not imply detachment from society or escaping from the affairs of people. In fact, the one who engages with people and endures their harm is better than the one who avoids interaction and does not endure any harm. Islam does not sacrifice the interests of people in this worldly life for the sake of attaining the Hereafter. It does not advocate discord between livelihood and salvation, nor between the spiritual and the physical. Such discord is fabricated and is the result of the limited understanding of religion by those

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<sup>16</sup> In this regard, refer to our article: "The Impact of Orientalist Studies on Sufi Methods in the Wadi Righ Region (1840-1957 AD)" in the Journal of the Annals of the University of Algiers, Volume 33, Number 03, 2019, p. 526.

<sup>17</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *Memories of a Century's Witness*, pp. 258-259.

<sup>18</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *The Aim of the Islamic World*, p. 55.

<sup>19</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *The Birth of a Society*, translated by Abdul Sabour Shahin, Dar al-Fikr (Algeria), 1991, pp. 97-98.

who are innocent of its true essence<sup>20</sup>. " Thus, the critique of the thinker Malik Bennabi is directed towards the flawed understanding of Sufism itself, not for its own sake. The evidence for this is that the only transformative movement that impressed him and its comprehensive project<sup>21</sup>—the Muslim Brotherhood—had a leader, Hassan al-Banna, who was a Sufi. It has been narrated that he said, 'If I had received from my affair what I could have turned away from, I would not have involved the Brotherhood in politics, and I would have returned them to the study of heritage<sup>22</sup>.'

**Manifestations of the Islamic Framework in the Thought of Malik Bennabi:** There are several indications, evidence, and characteristics that indicate that the foundations of Islam are the main driving force and authentic reference in Bennabi's thought. Among the most important of these, we mention:

**A. The Noble Quran:** The Noble Quran is considered a central foundation in Malik Bennabi's civilizational thought. He views the formation of civilization as a social phenomenon that occurs under the same conditions and circumstances in which the first civilization was born. This belief is inspired by and derived from the Quran<sup>23</sup>.

Bennabi referred to his provisions from the Quran at the beginning of his journey, saying, "Our provisions at the beginning of our journey were nothing more than eloquent words and some verses from the Quran. Thus, I started, following this revival, the first schools, like those early schools that were the foundations of Western civilization.<sup>24</sup>"

Malik Bennabi also considered the Quranic verse, " Allah does not change what is in a nation unless they change what is in themselves." (Surah Ar-Ra'd, 13:11), as the initial text for the developmental history of any civilization cycle<sup>25</sup>.

By "changing what is in themselves," Bennabi refers to the transformation of individuals' religious beliefs (creed)<sup>26</sup>. Civilization does not appear in a nation except in the form of a revelation descending from the heavens, providing people with a law and a methodology that establishes the foundations for guiding them towards an unseen deity.

Bennabi then speaks about the transformation brought about by the Quran among the Arabs, saying, "It is well-known that the Arabian Peninsula, for example, had nothing before the descent of the Quran except a Bedouin population living in barren deserts, wasting their time in vain without benefiting from it. Thus, the three factors of humans, soil, and time were

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<sup>20</sup> Mohammed Al-Ghazali, This is Our Religion, Dar al-Kutub (Algeria), 1988, p. 48.

<sup>21</sup> Refer to Ali Boudrbel, Methodology of Social Change in Islamic Thought, Dar Qurtuba for Publishing and Distribution (Algeria), 1st edition, 1426 AH - 2005 CE, p. 45.

<sup>22</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood and Covert Action and Violence, by Abdul Azim al-Daib, Dar al-Wafa, 1st edition, 1426 AH - 2006 CE, p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Conditions of Renaissance, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> The same reference, p. 33.

<sup>25</sup> The same reference, p. 49.

<sup>26</sup> The same reference, p. 50.

stagnant and dormant, or more accurately, accumulated without playing a significant role in history. But when the spirit manifested itself in the cave of Hira—as it had previously manifested in the sacred valley—or through the waters of the Jordan, a new civilization emerged from among these three accumulated elements. It was as if the word 'Iqra' (Read) gave birth to it, astonishing the illiterate Prophet and arousing with him and through him the world. From that moment, the Arab tribes were firmly established on the stage of history, carrying a new civilization for centuries, leading the world towards progress and advancement.<sup>27</sup>"

The primary stage of the Islamic civilization was predominantly religious, where the spiritual essence of the believer remained the fundamental psychological factor from the night of Hira until it reached the spiritual pinnacle of Islamic civilization<sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, the factors that lead to ascent are the same factors that lead to decline—the psychological factors—meaning that when the spirit weakens and instincts prevail<sup>29</sup>, the decline occurs. From this perspective, we perceive the alignment of history with the Quranic reality<sup>30</sup>.

According to Bennabi, it is also possible to apply the Quranic principle now. The cohesive power of the elements of civilization—human beings, soil, and time—remains eternal in the essence of religion and is not limited to a specific time, as it is valid in every era and place<sup>31</sup>.

From this perspective, we understand the secret behind the Quran's call to believers to contemplate the past history of nations, in order for them to comprehend how the enriched mass is composed of human beings, soil, and time<sup>32</sup>.

### **Characteristics of Quran:**

Malik Bennabi highlighted some characteristics of the Quran and the purpose and objective behind them, demonstrating its miraculous and distinctive nature compared to all previous divine books. It is revealed by a Wise and All-Knowing deity. The important characteristics include:

**1. Preservation from distortion:** According to Bennabi, the historical problem of distortion has been uniquely resolved in Islam. It is the only religion among all others that has preserved its sources since the beginning, at least concerning the Quran. The Quran has a unique feature of being transmitted for fourteen centuries without the slightest distortion or doubt<sup>33</sup>.

**2. Relevance:** Bennabi emphasized the importance of the Quran's relevance, which lies in the following aspects:

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<sup>27</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Conditions for Renaissance, p. 51.

<sup>28</sup> The same reference, p. 52.

<sup>29</sup> The same reference, p. 53.

<sup>30</sup> The same reference, p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> The same reference, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Conditions for Renaissance, p. 52.

<sup>33</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, The Quran as a Phenomenon, p. 103.

- The Quran fulfills its role regarding the nature of humanity as it shapes it in that particular era, such as the events of Hunayn, Badr, and others.
- Keeping pace with events and realities: The Quran came with immediate solace for every pain, renewed hope for every defeat, lessons to be learned from every victory, guidance on how to maintain modesty in every challenging situation, and the necessary encouragement to face every obstacle and danger<sup>34</sup>.

**3. Quantitative unity:** Among the indications of the Quran's miraculous nature is its unique quantitative unity. This unity is not fixed, as it does not resemble what precedes or follows it. This unity necessarily conveys a single idea or sometimes a set of organized thoughts in a logical style that we can observe in the verses of the Quran. Studying this thought in itself and its relationship to the rest of the chain of verses reveals the Creator's ability and organization, which cannot be encompassed by the Muhammadan self in those specific psychological conditions of receiving revelation, even in its natural circumstances<sup>35</sup>.

**3. The legislative unity:** Malik Bennabi presents a model of legislative unity through the verse: "Forbidden to you are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your paternal aunts, your maternal aunts, your brother's daughters, your sister's daughters, your foster mothers who have nursed you, your foster sisters, the mothers of your wives, your stepdaughters under your guardianship—born of your wives to whom you have gone in. But if you have not gone in unto them, there is no blame upon you. And [also forbidden are] the wives of your sons who are from your own loins, and that you take [in marriage] two sisters simultaneously, except for what has already occurred. Indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful" (Quran 4:23).

This fundamental text legislates the institution of marriage in its entirety, including its legal requirements and necessary conditions, in a concise revelation. It categorizes and regulates the prohibited women, outlining a clear classification that necessitates psychological and temporal intricacies that are incompatible with the characteristics of revelation<sup>36</sup>. In such circumstances, it would be impossible for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to organize the prohibited relationships in the manner prescribed.

After discussing these characteristics, Ibn Nabi arrives at the conclusion that the Quran surpasses the limitations of time and place. It transcends human genius, which is inherently bound to earthly limitations, and the Muhammadan self serves only as a means to access the absolute unseen world<sup>37</sup>.

This is Malik Bennabi's perspective on the Noble Quran, characterized by the following:

<sup>34</sup> The same reference, p. 181.

<sup>35</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quran as a Phenomenon, pp. 182-183.

<sup>36</sup> The same reference, p. 184.

<sup>37</sup> The same reference, p. 196.

- The distinct Islamic spiritual inclination in Malik Bennabi's perspective on the characteristics of the Noble Quran, attributed to the aforementioned factors. He did not adopt the approach of Orientalists or their followers among modernists.
- The Noble Quran is the catalyst for the transformation and qualitative leap that the Arabs experienced, transitioning from a nomadic life to a civilized one.
- The necessity of renewal in the field of Quranic interpretation and understanding, according to the requirements of the time, based on his conviction in the Quran's relevance for all eras.

### **Bennabi's New Approach to Exegesis:**

Malik Bennabi proposed a new approach to studying the Quranic phenomenon and emphasized the necessity of reforming the old methodology. According to him, there are reasons behind this task.

One of the historical reasons he mentions is the immense influence of European specialists on Muslim youth, especially in matters related to spiritual life<sup>38</sup>. For example, the impact of Marçais' work (d. 1940) on pre-Islamic poetry became an unquestionable reality for Dr. Taha Hussein. This undermines or undermines the old interpretive methodology, which relied on comparative stylistic analysis based on pre-Islamic poetry as an indisputable truth<sup>39</sup>.

The changing circumstances and developments in Islamic history were important reasons for the renewal of interpretive methodologies. Each nation has its own inclinations and talents that they devote to according to their genius and temperament. For example, the Pharaohs had an interest in the arts of architecture and mathematics, while the Greeks were enamored with the beauty of forms. As for the Arabs in the pre-Islamic era, their passion lay in their language.

The psychological conditions in which the Quran was revealed aligned with the inclinations of the people at that time. Its miraculous nature penetrated the souls in general during the time of revelation. However, as time passed and inefficiency in classical Arabic became prevalent among the Arabs, it became difficult to derive the rhetorical miracles by comparing Quranic verses with balanced or measured literary paragraphs, resulting in fair or wise conclusions that would help comprehend the rhetorical miracle. Consequently, the comprehension of the miraculous aspects of the Quran shifted from a natural taste to a more scientific approach<sup>40</sup>.

The previous methodology of interpretation relied on stylistic balance, which was based on pre-Islamic poetry as an indisputable truth. This method contradicts the Cartesian rationality adopted by Orientalists like Marçais, who aimed to undermine all old interpretive methodologies<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quran as a Phenomenon, p. 54.

<sup>39</sup> The same reference, p. 56.

<sup>40</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quranic as a Phenomenon, pp. 60-61.

<sup>41</sup> The same reference, p. 57.

Malik Bennabi believes that some scholars attempted to renew the methodologies of interpretation, but their efforts were not without flaws, according to his opinion. The extensive interpretation authored by Sheikh Tantawi Jawhari, for instance, is a scientific production resembling a circle of knowledge, yet it lacks the slightest interest in renewing the methodology. Similarly, Sheikh Rida's interpretation, following in the footsteps of his Imam, Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, did not adopt this approach. His concern was to eliminate any new intellectual aspect from the new methodology<sup>42</sup>.

### **The Reasons for Renewal According to Malik Bennabi:**

When we examine the heritage of Malik Bennabi, we notice an attempt to renew and interpret the texts from a different perspective. In our view, the reasons behind this can be attributed to his focus on two aspects: A) The psychological aspect, and B) The temporal framework.

**A) The psychological aspect:** Malik Bennabi attaches utmost importance to the psychological aspect in his studies and analyses, based on his interpretation of the Quranic verse: "Allah does not change what is in a nation unless they change what is in themselves." (Surah Ar-Ra'd, 13:11) Therefore, when studying religious phenomena, our analysis should not be truncated or isolated from other psychological conditions. It should not merely be a study of moral behavior, resembling the practices of Indian ascetics or Islamic Sufis, but rather an exploration that establishes a connection between one's essence and the hidden reality that the intellect contemplates. This connection should be in harmony with other psychological conditions<sup>43</sup>.

The profound interest of Professor Malik Bennabi in the psychological aspects is among the facilitating factors in affirming the Qur'an's return to its divine source, proving its divine origin, and its divergence from human statements. Moreover, it has formed a distinction between him and the studies of certain Orientalists and their followers. One example that Malik Bennabi used to argue for the effectiveness of the psychological aspect is:

#### **A- Motivation:**

He created new centers of attraction for vital energy, and we have witnessed around these centers' moments of unparalleled greatness, such as when the Muslims, upon Salman's advice, dug the trench that defended the city's walls against the last wave of ignorance. The scarcity of resources in the material world allowed only the use of primitive tools in the face of difficult and extremely challenging work.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, was aware of their struggles and supported them, repeatedly chanting a balanced wish and promise: "O Allah, the real life is the life of the Hereafter, so forgive the Ansar and the Muhajirun." They responded to him, saying:

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<sup>42</sup> The same reference, p. 58.

<sup>43</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quran as a Phenomenon, p. 122.

"We are the ones who pledged allegiance to Muhammad, we will engage in jihad as long as we live<sup>44</sup>."

The centers of attraction for vital energy were focused around new concepts, new ideas, and ideal models for a new cultural world. They were concentrated to the point of explosion, and they would explode in tragic situations of a new kind<sup>45</sup>.

### B- Changing Habits Through Quran:

The Qur'an focused on preparing individuals before issuing judgments, which led to the eradication of certain deeply rooted negative habits in the Arab society before Islam. Malik Bennabi resorted to comparing Islam's approach to addressing the issue of alcohol with a secular law. The Islamic society presented the problem of alcohol and included three texts in its legislative structure:

1. A text that raises awareness of the problem within the Islamic society, representing to some extent the psychological stage of the solution.
2. A text that limits the circulation of alcohol, corresponding to the stage of freeing the individual from addiction.
3. A prohibition text that solidifies the solution from a legal perspective.

Then, from the beginning and in light of history, he compares the difference in the ability of legislation to adapt. For fourteen centuries, the prohibition of alcohol did not cause any shock in the emerging Islamic society. However, this wave in the American society, which witnessed the implementation of the Volstead Act, resulted in violent effects, breaking down all barriers, overturning all obstacles and resulting in negative reactions such as prohibited trade, the formation of smuggling gangs, and the poisoning of the public with adulterated alcohol. This led to the repeal of the prohibition law under the Twenty-First Amendment, ratified in December 1933. Consequently, the idea of prohibition was completely eradicated from the cultural world in American society because it lacked roots in that society. On the other hand, we observe some retreat regarding the issue of alcohol in Islamic society. It has not expelled the idea of prohibition from its cultural world, and even if this idea does not have the power of the law, it still plays a role in social obligation. It serves as a criterion for selecting a spouse and also influences judgments on a person's righteousness and success, among other aspects<sup>46</sup>.

The psychological factor is one of the means that colonization embraced and utilized to establish its influence in Algeria. Malik Bennabi referred to it as "colonizability," which means

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<sup>44</sup> Narrated by Muslim, in the Book of Jihad and Military Expeditions, under the chapter "The Battle of the Trench" (Hadith number: 1804, p. 498).

<sup>45</sup> Refer to Sahih Muslim, with an introduction by Wahba al-Zuhaili, Al-Maktabah Al-Asriyyah, Saida Beirut, 2011 CE - 1432 AH, Volumes 11-12.

<sup>46</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, The Problem of Ideas, translated by Abdul Sabour Shahin, Omar Kamel Miskawi, Dar al-Fikr (Damascus), 1406 AH, pp. 71-72.

conforming to the boundaries drawn for us and adhering to the limitations imposed on our movements, ideas, and lives<sup>47</sup>.

The colonizer wants us to be unemployed, creating a cheap workforce of ignorant individuals whom he can exploit as he pleases, leading to a moral decline that spreads immorality among us<sup>48</sup>.

Accepting the colonial reality comes from within ourselves, meaning that we willingly submit to it. The thinker Malik Bennabi warned of the consequences of this situation and highlighted its danger when he linked the issue of liberation from colonization to freeing ourselves from the readiness to serve the occupier that exists within us. As long as the occupier has hidden authority over directing our social energy, there is no hope for independence or freedom<sup>49</sup>.

### **B) The Time Framework:**

Ibn Nabi believes that time holds great value in shaping civilizations, based on the saying of Al-Hasan Al-Basri, "I am a new day, and your actions bear witness to me. So, make the most of me, for I will never return." Working hours are among the factors of progress or backwardness, as it is the only absolute currency that cannot be invalidated or retrieved once lost. The Islamic world (Muslims) does not recognize the value of time, which is closely connected to history, even though the Arab-Muslim astronomer Abu Al-Hasan Al-Marrakushi (d. 1262 CE) is considered the first to grasp this concept, which is closely related to the advancement of material science in our era<sup>50</sup>. Ibn Nabi points out the importance of utilizing time to compensate for the Islamic world's delay, stating, "Life and history, both subject to timing, have passed us by. We are in urgent need of precise timing and broad strides to make up for our delay.<sup>51</sup>"

In this paragraph, Ibn Nabi emphasizes the importance of time as a significant factor in the formation of civilization, which the Islamic world has not effectively utilized. Therefore, it needs two things to compensate for its delay:

**1. Precise timing:** Ibn Nabi refers to the readiness of individuals, meaning being imbued with the necessary spiritual values to fulfill their duty in the construction of civilization. This is because the remaining factors, namely the material (earth) and time, are constant.

**2. Broad Strides:** Ibn Nabi refers here to the factor of effectiveness. There are efforts and attempts for revival in the Islamic world, but they lack effectiveness compared to the experiences of some countries such as China and Japan, for example. He indicates this by stating, "The Islamic world here takes an anti-ignorance pill and there, it takes a colonialism pill, and in

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<sup>47</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Conditions of Renaissance, p. 152.

<sup>48</sup> The same reference, p. 153.

<sup>49</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Conditions for Renaissance, p. 154.

<sup>50</sup> The same reference, p. 140.

<sup>51</sup> The same reference, p. 140.

a certain place, it consumes a medicine to cure poverty... Yet, when we closely examine its condition, we do not catch a glimpse of the specter of innocence, meaning we do not find civilization. Nevertheless, there are commendable efforts through which we can observe the relative negativity of the efforts of the Islamic world when compared to the efforts of Japan, for example, over the past fifty years or the efforts of China over the past ten years. There is something strange about the situation we examine, which pushes us to understand its mechanism and process. For this reason, we must know the general gauge of the civilizational process to shed light on the relative negativity and lack of effectiveness in the efforts of the Islamic society.<sup>52"</sup>

Malik Ibn Nabi always refers back to Islamic principles when seeking to instill effectiveness in the actions of Muslims through optimal utilization of time. For example, the companion Salman al-Farsi would perform work that was several times more than that of his fellow companions when digging the trench around the city during the Battle of the Confederates, or the work done by Ammar Ibn Yasir when he carried two stones on his shoulders while constructing the mosque in Medina, while others would carry only one stone. In both cases, we find that faith paved the way for civilization<sup>53</sup>. On the other hand, we often find many Muslims referring to the example set by Stakhanov in the Soviet Union, during the implementation of the First Five-Year Plan, when he doubled the daily production in coal mines for the working class, without being able to fathom the true meaning of the example.

**B - Prophetic Tradition:** Among the issues that Malik Ibn Nabi focused on, which indicate his Islamic orientation, is his refutation of all doubts related to revelation by Orientalists and their followers among modernists. He also elucidated the nature of the religious phenomenon and the fallacies that occurred in the Cartesian approach. The following are his criticisms of the Cartesian proposition:

**The Nature of Prophethood:** The nature of prophethood differs between the Cartesian approach and the Islamic proposition. In the Western approach, which adopts the Cartesian method that connects causes to their effects and reduces everything to earthly standards, the concept of prophethood has been challenged. Professor Malik Ibn Nabi refuted this claim, and his criticisms of this approach include:

- The nature of the religious phenomenon, which is characterized by complexity, diversity, and multiplicity. Various theories have been proposed regarding the nature and history of this phenomenon in different human environments, rendering concise studies like the Cartesian interpretation ineffective<sup>54</sup>. Therefore, it necessitates the necessity of assuming the premise of accepting the existence of God and His Oneness, which He has presented to us through His

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<sup>52</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Conditions for a Renaissance, p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Conditions for a Renaissance, p. 54.

<sup>54</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quran as a Phenomenon, p. 85.

greatest evidence articulated by the tongues of the prophets. Thus, it becomes the essential foundation of the entire religious phenomenon<sup>55</sup>.

- The excessive generalization of Cartesian doubt, which often leads to an arbitrary interpretation of psychological facts that form the basis of the subject matter<sup>56</sup>. The confusion between two distinct personalities, the seer (al-'Arraf) and the prophet, manifested in generalizations that may mix the specific qualities of the prophet into a continuous model of the seer, after making prophethood a self-contained domain of the prophet. This approach neglects the testimony of the prophet himself, who emphatically affirms that he sees and hears matters beyond his personal realm<sup>57</sup>.
- The materialistic doctrine carries a kind of deviation and contradictory mysterious interpretations, which make metaphysical determinism a solution and refuge that provides us with a convincing and clear explanation of phenomena. Thus, a complete, consistent, and homogeneous doctrine emerges from them, devoid of deficiencies or contradictions<sup>58</sup>.

**Ibn Nabi's approach in arguing for prophethood:** After proving the futility of the Cartesian method in studying religious phenomena, Ibn Nabi sought to avoid the shortcomings of modern criticism of the scriptures, which, in his view, seemed to have misunderstood the nature of the subject. Ibn Nabi argued for prophethood using psychological-historical evidence. The sent prophet and the contents of the message are the two factors through which one can argue for prophethood and the message. Ibn Nabi emphasized that the sending of a prophet is not a rare or occasional event, but rather a continuous phenomenon that regularly recurs between two poles in history, from Ibrahim (Abraham) to Muhammad, peace be upon him. The continuous recurrence of this phenomenon in the same manner serves as a scientific testimony that can be utilized to establish the principle of its existence<sup>59</sup>.

After arguing for prophethood based on scientific psychological evidence that demonstrates the value and impact of the Prophet's testimony about himself, Ibn Nabi emphasizes that this testimony is the only means by which we can judge the phenomenon of revelation. He states, "Therefore, it is necessary, in the first place, to resort to this testimony in order to establish the historical value of the events that we subject to our critique. Then, it remains for us to analyze the entirety of these events in the light of reason liberated from the bondage of absolute doubt that has no purpose."<sup>60</sup>"

Ibn Nabi concludes by highlighting the distinctive qualities that characterize the Prophet as follows:

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<sup>55</sup> The same reference, p. 86.

<sup>56</sup> The same reference, p. 88.

<sup>57</sup> The same reference, p. 91.

<sup>58</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quran as a Phenomenon, p. 79.

<sup>59</sup> The same reference, p. 87.

<sup>60</sup> The same reference, p. 88.

1. The quality of psychological compulsion (al-qahr al-nafsi), which excludes all other factors of selfhood by compelling the Prophet ultimately to adopt a specific and constant behavior.
2. Profound knowledge of future events (hikm fad), dictated by a form of compulsion (al-qahr) that lacks any logical basis.
3. The continuation of prophetic behaviors and their apparent and hidden resemblance among all prophets.

These unique qualities cannot be simply explained through a psychological interpretation based on the events experienced by the Prophet's self. Instead, they seem to manifest as a delicate translation of a continuous phenomenon that obliges the Prophet to adhere to its laws, just as it compelled the selves of all prophets<sup>61</sup>.

### **Orientalists Critique to Revelation and Ibn Nabi's response:**

The doubts raised by orientalists regarding the phenomenon of revelation and Ibn Nabi's response to them:

The interest of Professor Malik ibn Nabi in the psychological aspect constituted a significant difference between him and the studies of some orientalists concerning the Qur'an. They approached it for various purposes and with divergent motivations<sup>62</sup>. He perceives that the biased orientalists who openly manifest their intense animosity towards the Qur'an and Muhammad cause less harm than those who conceal themselves under the guise of knowledge<sup>63</sup>. Therefore, he refuted their claims and exposed their fallacies using scientific evidence, relying on the findings of modern psychology.

Among the most significant claims made by orientalists regarding the phenomenon of revelation, we mention the following:

- The description of revelation as "the unconscious": This term refers to mysterious psychological phenomena that do not submit to the authority of consciousness, such as dreams, for example. Ibn Nabi believes that the human self contains specific realms where these mysterious psychological phenomena, which do not submit to the authority of consciousness, arise. This realm has a clear connection to emotional states, meaning all processes that occur in the unconscious are centered around an idea or a reality experienced in the unconscious. The unconscious absorbs these emotional elements and deposits them in the imagination to transform them into symbols—dreams, for instance—a psychological discourse.

In other words, these symbols retain the characteristics of the idea from which they originated. The unconscious functions as the future's electrical generator in relation to the generator itself,

<sup>61</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quran as a Phenomenon, p. 99.

<sup>62</sup> The same reference, p. 96.

<sup>63</sup> The same reference, p. 64.

which is consciousness. Therefore, in this latter realm, we must seek the source of the psychological processes described as the unconscious<sup>64</sup>.

When it becomes evident that a certain idea does not fall under the jurisdiction of the conscious self, it is possible to understand, by necessity, its foreignness to this self and that it has no place in the unconscious.

- Mental confusion and hallucination: This type of mental confusion occurs only during the margins of sleep. Clinical psychology has determined that this condition does not affect mentally healthy individuals, as is the case with the Prophet, due to the presence of a sensory stimulus, which is the recitation of audible voices. The sensory stimulus is repeated three times in the mentioned dialogue. Therefore, if we assume that the mental confusion or hallucination persisted due to the influence of the first part of the dialogue, it cannot remain after the initial auditory shock, that is, during the last two repetitions, the interpretations of which remain suspended. Hence, this condition cannot be explained by mental confusion<sup>65</sup>.

- Al-Mukashafa (Unveiling): Some scholars of Islamic studies argue that the term "revelation" used by the Qur'an to describe this phenomenon can be understood as "mukashafa" or "psychic revelation." However, the latter term does not have any specific psychological connotation, although it is used loosely to shift the meaning of revelation into the field of psychology. On the contrary, the first term has a meaning, but it does not correspond to the observable conditions experienced by the Prophet. On the other hand, we understand psychic revelation or mukashafa from a psychological perspective as "direct knowledge of a subject that is open to thinking or has been thought about." However, revelation must be understood as spontaneous and absolute knowledge of a subject that does not occupy conscious thought and is also beyond conscious thought. Mukashafa is not accompanied by any visual, auditory, or neurological psychological phenomenon such as muscle contraction observed in the case of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). From a rational perspective, mukashafa does not generate complete certainty in its recipient, unlike revelation<sup>66</sup>.

- Spasm: Ibn Nabi responds to this claim by discussing the psychological reality accompanying the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The same psychological symptoms are not specific to the condition of spasm, which causes paralysis and tremors in an individual temporarily deprived of their mental and physical faculties. If we look at the state of the Prophet, we find that it is only his face that becomes congested, while the man retains a normal state and mental freedom from a psychological perspective, utilizing his full memory during the crisis, which the patient with spasm does not possess<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quran as a Phenomenon, pp. 174-175.

<sup>65</sup> The same reference, pp. 161-162.

<sup>66</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quran as a Phenomenon, pp. 143-144.

<sup>67</sup> The same reference, pp. 144-145.

- Self as a newly emerging phenomenon: Some may argue that what occurred is evidence of a pure self-phenomenon, as the vision, which is the subject of the phenomenon, did not occur in Khadijah's presence. However, this departure from the norm is not difficult to understand from a sensory perspective. There are various light radiations that are not visible to our eyes, and there is no scientific evidence to suggest that this is not the case for all eyes. Some eyes may be more or less sensitive to such radiations<sup>68</sup>.

It is indeed difficult to interpret such a phenomenon, as it contains a puzzle that critics often try to solve by attributing everything to the ideas of Descartes. No matter how complex the explanation may be, it is quite astonishing to suggest that the Prophet was a dual person with two selves, where one self asks the other and is influenced by its revelations. However, they did not bother to specify the location of this second self: is it in the realm of consciousness, the unconscious, or both simultaneously?

At that point, it seems that there is no other possible explanation than to place the phenomenon outside the self and consider it independent from it. This viewpoint is supported by the testimony of the prophets themselves, as they placed that singular and direct testimony on the phenomenon outside their personal beings<sup>69</sup>.

**The Moral Aspect:** Ibn Nabi believes that it is necessary to acquire certain ethics and principles that individuals should embody towards their fellow human beings. He bases this on the Islamic civilization, which excelled in its humanity by striking a balance between knowledge and ethics, unlike European civilization, which was utilitarian in nature. Thus, we find Malik Ibn Nabi praising the great role and utmost importance of the humanities in society, despite his background in electricity (material sciences). According to him, it is essential for humans to first understand themselves, their fundamental priorities, and their most profound duties. By doing so, they can enter into civilization. In this regard, he states, "Today, the moral, social, and psychological sciences are more necessary than the material sciences. The latter pose a danger in a society where people still remain unaware of the truth about themselves. Knowing oneself and understanding human civilization and preparing for it is much more challenging than inventing an engine or training a monkey to wear a tie...<sup>70</sup>".

Humanities, in general, provide individuals with principles and ethics that guide their interactions with their fellow human beings. Deviating from these principles leads to the development of undesirable qualities, as was the case in Europe, which reached the pinnacle of art and industry but veered away from moral values. It no longer recognized anything beneficial for humanity beyond the boundaries of its materialistic worldview, which can only be

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<sup>68</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, Quran as a Phenomenon, pp. 150-151.

<sup>69</sup> The same reference, pp. 99-100.

<sup>70</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, The Aim of the Islamic World, translated by Abdul Sabour Shahin, Dar al-Fikr Damascus, 1st edition, 1423 AH - 2002 CE, p. 38.

understood through the language of materialism<sup>71</sup>. In contrast, the Islamic world, during its golden age, embraced schools of thought that assimilated humanistic thinking without any restrictions or conditions. Knowledge was accessible to both monks (e.g., Gerbert of Aurillac, d. 1003) and priests (e.g., Maimonides, d. 1205) alike. If we turn our gaze to modern European civilization, we find that it often associates knowledge with backward or underdeveloped countries, or rather, countries that it has deemed backward. We cannot forget the severe price paid by some of our Muslim intellectuals in terms of arduous labor and lifelong imprisonment<sup>72</sup>.

How can the Islamic world seek inspiration for its humanistic philosophy beyond its deep-rooted traditions? Our discussion of European humanism can only be understood as a gravitational tendency without radiation. In this case, we perceive it as "European humanism" internally and "colonial humanism" externally<sup>73</sup>. From this perspective, Malik Ibn Nabi sees the necessity for the Islamic civilization to transcend this situation and achieve a balance in its construction between science and ethics, between the natural and the metaphysical. It should strive to be a humanistic civilization that calls for the dignity of all individuals, regardless of their races, colors, or ethnicities, which is a principle derived from the Quran.

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Ibn Nabi also highlighted some essential factors in the formation of civilization, among which is the strength of cohesion among its members. The spirit of Islam is what brought together diverse elements such as the Muhajirun and the Ansar, forming the first Islamic society. This cohesion is crucial for the Muslim community: "And [moreover], He has caused affection between their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have produced that affection, but Allah has done it" (Quran, Al-Anfal 8:63). It refers to Islam as a dynamic force in our minds and behaviors and emanating as a form of social peace.

Ibn Nabi had practical stances when he authored a treatise on the Islamic commonwealth, seeking to reclaim the Islamic world's position on the contemporary global map. He derived his message from his creed, serving as a witness to humanity<sup>74</sup>, not from alien doctrines and principles that contradict its foundations.

Islam has emphasized the support of social bonds, which distinguishes it from other laws and consumer societies. An example of this is the Quranic verse: "And speak to them with good

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<sup>71</sup> The same reference, p. 168.

<sup>72</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *The Perspective of the Islamic World* (previous reference), p. 19

<sup>73</sup> The same reference, p. 20.

<sup>74</sup> Malik ibn Nabi, *Toward an Islamic Commonwealth*, Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'asir Beirut (Lebanon), 2nd edition, 1421 AH - 2000 CE, p. 09.

words" (Quran, An-Nisa 4:4), which encourages distributing wealth and adding kind words to express feelings and the concept of goodness<sup>75</sup>. When this transformation occurred in society, shifting from a primitive society to a civilized society, historians and sociologists could not observe any new event during this period that could explain this change. The only significant event that emerged was the cultural world that accompanied the Quranic idea. The causal relationship between the Quran and civilization is evident through their inseparable connection. The Islamic concept harnessed the vital energy of the ignorant society for the necessities of a civilized functioning<sup>76</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

In the conclusion of this research, we can highlight the following points:

The return to fundamentals and reliance upon them in the process of civilizational construction, coupled with engaging in negative and positive specifications as termed by Malik ibn Nabi, is an essential condition, a fundamental factor, and a primary reason for the success of the transformative process. Without it, there is no hope for success, and this is the reason that led to the inefficacy of Western and modernist ideologies in the Islamic world.

Malik ibn Nabi heavily emphasized the psychological factor, drawing inspiration from the Quranic verse, considering it an effective means to control instincts, elevate the spirit, and thereby achieve miracles, triumphs, and successful revolutions. It serves as the secret to overcoming trials and crises, making a difference when resources and equipment are scarce.

Ibn Nabi did not overlook the ethical dimension, as the Islamic civilization is not utilitarian, based solely on pragmatism, but rather on values and principles, in contrast to European civilization, which arose at the expense of the suffering of peoples. Even in the present time, it has not respected its laws calling for justice and equality, as racism continues to corrode the essence of many nations.

Malik ibn Nabi was keen on the unity of Muslims and their gathering, drawing inspiration from the Quranic verse. For this reason, he wrote in favor of an Islamic commonwealth to reclaim the Islamic world's position on the contemporary global map. It is a nation that bears witness to humanity, as stated in the Quran – a testimony that requires consciousness and awareness. A society lagging behind in civilization is never acknowledged as a credible witness.

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