

The Role of the Effectiveness Obligation in History Making According to MalekBennabi

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Abstract:

In today's pivotal juncture, the Islamic world stands at a critical and decisive crossroads across multiple fronts. Given this exigency, there emerges a pressing demand for innovative reformative initiatives that the Islamic nation perennially seeks. Among these is the intellectual reform project spearheaded by the Algerian thinker, MalekBennabi, dedicated to the revival of Muslim society and its emancipation from the prevailing degradation. Bennabi, a philosopher of civilization, advocates for a shift from consumption to effectiveness and from theoretical to practical logic. His vision aims to cultivate a proactive society that is equipped to forge its own civilization and history, rooted firmly in its identity and creed.

Keywords: History, Effectiveness, Movement, MalekBennabi.

Introduction

In the exploration of history and civilization, a perennial question emerges: Why do some peoples achieve civilization while others remain backward? What underlies the state of backwardness, and what catalyzes civilization? While these queries might seem straightforward, they are, in fact, fraught with persistent misconceptions, as demonstrated by the diverse and often conflicting theories that have proliferated throughout the annals of civilization's philosophy.

Central to this discourse is not merely the characteristics of civilization and backwardness but more critically, the dynamics and methodologies by which societies transition from decline to advancement. This question has captivated Algerian thinker MalekBennabi, prompting an inquiry into whether a society such as the Islamic world can supplant its unique cultural and creedal framework with the constructs of scientific and technological progress, thereby achieving a civilizational and technical renaissance. Essentially, Bennabi challenges the feasibility of transplanting an external civilization into a fundamentally different cultural soil.

These considerations form the crux of Bennabi's seminal explorations into the quandaries of civilization, wherein he proposes the concept of "effectiveness" as a means to transcend the paradigms offered by Western philosophers in the realms of history and civilization.

First: The Obligation of Effectiveness

1. Effectiveness in Language and Terminology:

- **Linguistically:**

Linguistically: According to the Contemporary Arabic Language Dictionary, effectiveness is a derivative noun from "active," which means the ability of something to have an impact; effectiveness of a method, medicine, or solution.

Similarly, Al-Ra'id Dictionary states that effectiveness implies capacity, influence, or brain activity (in psychology) referring to the physiological activity of the brain including mental processes like thinking.¹

The term effectiveness is used interchangeably with "active," or activity, as in the phrase: the effectiveness of a training program in an educational institution, as indicated in the example above.²

Dictionaries and glossaries converge on the concept of the ability to impact or to effect change (in medicine) the ability of a medical procedure, or a drug to produce a desired effect.³

The root of "effectiveness" comes from "action," as stated by Al-Firuzabadi: action is the movement of a human or a metaphor for every extensive deed. In Al-Waseet Dictionary, the base of effectiveness is "active," describing everything that is proactive. Thus, in simplicity, effectiveness means doing the right thing.⁴

- **Terminologically:**

Scholars exhibit a range of opinions on defining effectiveness, delineating its parameters as it is contingent upon the temporal context of the study. This complexity arises because effectiveness straddles various domains, philosophical, ideological, psychological, and social, rendering its definition a reflection of its era.

Consider, for example, a historical vignette: "Umar" (may God be pleased with him), convened a meeting with his companions and posed a question about their desires. One companion expressed a wish for the room to be filled with gold to spend or donate for the sake of God. Another longed for pearls and jewels for similar philanthropic purposes. Upon a further query, they confessed, "We do not know, O Commander of the Faithful." Umar then articulated his own wish: "I wish this room was filled with men like Abu Ubaida bin Al-Jarrah, Muadh bin Jabal, and Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hudhaifa, to help me uplift the word of God."⁵

In that epoch, amidst a society ardently opposing ignorance and committed to upholding the word of God and truth, the value placed on effective individuals far surpassed that of material wealth. The sentiment was that capable men were invaluable and perpetually needed to bridge the myriad gaps within the community.

Effectiveness, in its myriad connotations, invariably suggests a positive orientation towards bearing responsibilities and embracing concerns, endowing its bearer with a genuine commitment to lawful endeavors that emanate from an intrinsic motivation.⁶

¹Al-Ma'ani, Al-Jame', article "Activeness", available at: <https://almaany.com/ar/d>.

²Article "Activeness" in Wikipedia, available at: <https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/فاعلية>.

³Said ben Mohammed Thabit, The Duty of Activeness, Al-Uloka, 2015, p. 5; Al-Qamoos Al-Muheet, p. 1043.

⁴Al-Mu'jam Al-Waseet, p. 695, available at: <https://almaany.com/ar/d>.

⁵Al-Tabaqat (vol. 3, p. 413), Al-Mustadrak (vol. 3, p. 252), cited in: Said ben Mohammed Thabit, The Duty of Activeness, Al-Uloka, 2015, p. 2.

⁶Said ben Mohammed Thabit, The Duty of Activeness, op.cit p. 5.

This disposition spares no effort in diligent endeavor. Such was the awareness of "Umar ibn al-Khattab," whose acute perception of the issues and challenges facing the nation, alongside the depth of his foresight, was remarkable. His preference for a world enriched by capable men over one adorned with material possessions is a testament to this vision.

This perspective was further echoed by "Ibn Taymiyyah" in his work "Majmoo' al-Fatawa," where he expounded: "Effectiveness is like a force emanating from men who understand what is required of a certain man in terms of what he is capable of, if others do not undertake it. This pertains to commanding good and forbidding evil, conveying what the Prophet brought, and striving in the way of God, teaching faith and the Qur'an (...) for the caller is a seeker, a summoner, a necessitator for what he calls to, and that is the command, as the command seeks the act to be done, and calls for it (...) and believing him in what he informs, and obeying him in what he commands."⁷

In this vein, MalekBennabi, deeply invested in the welfare of his nation and diligent in crafting solutions that could guide the Islamic nation from darkness into enlightenment, champions effectiveness as a transformative impact that a Muslim imparts upon reality, and throughout the course of his history, ensuring an effective presence of the Islamic nation.

What is the concept of effectiveness according to MalekBennabi, and what are its conditions and reasons for necessity?

2. Effectiveness from the Perspective of MalekBennabi

MalekBennabi perceives effectiveness as a hallmark of Western thought, a trait that permeates its historical achievements. Tracing back to René Descartes' declaration, "I think, therefore I am," this axiom heralded the onset of systematic, methodical planning characterized by coherent thought processes.

This paradigm shift transformed the Western individual into a catalyst for societal change and a driver of historical dynamics. It enabled Western man to define his objectives with precision, thereby mastering the control and direction of his existential trajectory according to his aspirations, requirements, and necessities. Effectiveness, as posited by Bennabi, is not an innate attribute but an acquired one, suggesting that it does not inherently reside within the nature of Western individuals.

From this analytical and diagnostic vantage point on Western civilization, Bennabi anchors all his cognitive theses on civilization and history in the concept of effectiveness, the role of humans as agents of constructive movement through the corridors of history.

In Bennabi's words: "It is the source and foundation of all civilizational problems, and any contemplation of its problem is fundamentally an examination of the problem of civilization itself⁸."

This underscores his belief that effectiveness, molded by specific cultural compositions within historical contexts, varies across societies. Each society's unique effectiveness, which may

⁷IbnTaymiyyah, Majmoo' Al-Fatawa, vol. 15, pp. 165-166, cited in Said ben Mohammed Thabit, The Duty of Activeness, op.cit, p. 4.

⁸MalekBennabi: The Problem of Culture, 4th edition, revised and augmented, trans. Abdel Sabour Shaheen, Dar Al-Fikr, Algeria in cooperation with Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, Syria, 1984, p. 100.

contribute to the psychological rejuvenation of its movements regardless of their nature, is a response to specific circumstances. These exceptional circumstances emerge spontaneously from the collective actions of a society throughout history.⁹

Bennabi exemplifies this with the tribal society in Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance) during the period when Muhammad, peace be upon him, was in the cave of Hira. The transformative impact of Muhammad's actions during this period is vividly illustrated by the response of his companions to the Quranic verses prohibiting alcohol. They promptly adhered, declaring, "*We have desisted, O Messenger of God, following the revelation, "O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful."*¹⁰

This interaction between Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his community was pivotal, fostering the emergence of a nation whose history would richly cultivate science and religion for centuries. This was made possible by the society's response to the extraordinary circumstances that led to the divine revelations of the chapter Al-'Alaq, which begins with "Read in the name of your Lord." This narrative underlines the critical role of societal effectiveness in responding to transformative historical events, shaping the trajectory of civilizations.

But what are the conditions of effectiveness that help it grow and develop within a group?

A. Conditions for Effectiveness

Effectiveness thrives under three pivotal conditions:

- **Energy**, represented by the religious seed
- **Environment**, which either fosters or hinders growth
- **Instinct**, in contrast to ideology and politics

— Energy Condition (The Religious Seed)

Malek Bennabi identifies the religious seed as the fundamental catalyst for effectiveness, describing it as "the law inherent in the human soul, as well as a unique law of thought that orbits from the unity of Islam to the lowest of primitive idolatries¹¹." He articulates the conditions for resurgence through the lens of energy (religious idea): "Religion as a concept transcends merely a system of transcendent ideas; it is a directive law that governs human thought, extends his vision towards a broader horizon, tames the vital energy of humans, and channels it towards civilization."¹²

In Bennabi's perspective, the religious seed is an idea that presents a deity and a promise, acting as a source of dynamic energy. It serves as the genesis of civilizations and history, functioning like an engine that propels the historical society with the vigor needed to ascend the ranks of

⁹Lakhdar Charit, The Problem of History in Malek Bennabi's Thought, Master's thesis, supervised by Dr. Abdel Razzak Guessoum, University of Algiers, Institute of Philosophy, Academic Year 1988-1989, p. 68.

¹⁰Malek Bennabi, Birth of a Society, Social Relations Network, trans. Abdel Sabour Shaheen, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, 1986, p. 132.

¹¹Malek Bennabi, The Quranic Phenomenon, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, 1984, pp. 30-31.

¹²Malek Bennabi, Conditions of Renaissance, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, 2000, op.cit, p. 110.

civilizational advancement and attain sophisticated life, instructing it on the principles of civilization.

Bennabi extends this principle across all human civilizations, both pagan and monotheistic, urging the study of the history of ancient and contemporary peoples. He emphasizes that "civilization is revitalized through religious belief, and it is imperative to delve into the religious origins that catalyzed each civilization."¹³

Reflecting on the assertion that "the religious idea is a law," it is pertinent to note that one of the law's quintessential attributes is its comprehensive applicability. It spares no entity that exhibits the characteristics to be governed by it and encounters no obstacles in its path to fulfillment. This law perpetually flows through the individual and the society immersed in it, undeterred by challenges or the diminishment of support, for its momentum is propelled by an intrinsic desire for achievement and fulfillment.

For example, the story of "Joseph" (peace be upon him) exemplifies that the call to effectiveness knows no bounds, nor does it depend on conventional means or tools beyond its essential necessities. Joseph demonstrated this while he was a foreigner languishing in the dark confines of a prison, wronged and grieving. This poses the question: what excuse do the free and healthy have?¹⁴

The effectiveness rooted in the religious seed is a perpetual endowment and a mark of distinction acknowledged by its bearer, as God Almighty declares, "*And that man can have nothing but what he strives for, and that his effort is going to be seen.*"¹⁵ This scriptural affirmation reinforces the notion that effectiveness, driven by spiritual energy, is both visible and impactful, shaping the course of human history and civilization.

Thus, O human, you have nothing but your actions, whether they benefit individually or collectively, and all that matters is your impact and influence on creation. The wise one who strives to revive his virtues after his death, so that his deeds do not perish with the demise of his body.

- **Condition of the Environment:**

The religious idea not only instills high moral values in the spirit of its adherents but also nurtures the spiritual life within society, facilitating individuals in fulfilling the instinctual needs which meet the natural demands of their community. This spiritual fortitude drives individuals to seek mechanisms for social integration, propelling them to find tools for communication within their intellectual, social, linguistic, and cultural spheres.

Through these interactions, the nucleus of an advanced and sophisticated society forms. Malek Bennabi emphasizes that there is no alternative to achieving this except through what he terms 'cultural effectiveness.' He poignantly notes, "A society like the one that arose after the age of decline could not have awakened from its sleep even if it were in a situation like that of the Cave of Hira."¹⁶

¹³Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁴ Said ben Mohammed Thabit, The Duty of Activeness, op.cit, p. 50.

¹⁵ Surah An-Najm, verses 39-40.

¹⁶ Malek Bennabi, Birth of a Society, op.cit, p. 136.

- Condition of Instinct:

According to Bennabi, a society that is grounded in instinct rather than politics responds more robustly to the principles of effectiveness. He states, "*Effectiveness is stronger in an environment that produces the strongest motives, most active movements, and proper directions.*"¹⁷

This distinction is crucial when comparing the colonial European to the colonizable Muslim; each exists within their distinct historical phases, facing unique challenges, thus the environmental conditions differ markedly.

It is vital to understand that these conditions operate synergistically; energy necessitates an environment conducive to growth, and instinct is integral as the relationships are intertwined and comprehensive.

B. Reasons for the Need for Effectiveness:

Malek Bennabi argues that while the West might rely on institutions, the Islamic world requires the cultivation of capable individuals. He asserts, "*From the man springs the entire Islamic problem, particularly in Algeria, where the issue is that we must first create men who can navigate history using the soil, time, and talents to construct their grand objectives.*"¹⁸

But why does Malek Bennabi emphasize the reconstruction of the Muslim individual anew?

- Susceptibility to Colonialism:

The Muslim community has been afflicted with the disease of civilizational backwardness, a condition that not only facilitates but also incentivizes the domination of invaders, making susceptibility to colonialism not merely a consequence but a root cause. Bennabi explains, "The souls afflicted with this disease must adhere to their original methods in confronting this perilous psychological affliction, which renders the society unable to resist colonization and eases the colonizer's task."¹⁹

This concept is a cornerstone in Bennabi's theory of colonialism and represents one of its most dangerous implications, imposing a 'colonial coefficient' on an individual's life at every stage, impacting them from childhood. In a society that fails to fortify the physical and mental capacities of its youth, does not provide adequate education or guidance, and where the fortunate ones with nurturing environments are exceptions, many are relegated to menial tasks, shedding dignity and pride by compromising self-respect. Even for those who miraculously find educational opportunities, numerous obstacles obstruct their path, including biased examiners.²⁰

This reveals that the Muslim individual often lacks the resources necessary to develop his personality and realize his talents. Trapped within the confines prescribed by colonial powers, he operates as if guided by an invisible yet occasionally perceptible force that disrupts the landmarks

¹⁷Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁸Malek Bennabi, *Conditions of Renaissance*, op.cit, p. 82.

¹⁹Malek Bennabi, *The Direction of the Islamic Year*, Dar Al-Fikr, Algiers, 5th edition, 1986, p. 96.

²⁰Malek Bennabi, *Memoirs of a Witness of the Century*, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Mu'asir, Damascus, 2nd edition, 2004, p. 216.

of his path and continually obliterates the markers that define his goals, preventing him from ever reaching them.²¹

This depiction of backwardness mirrors colonization itself, which not only obstructs the individual's access to available resources but also systematically stifles his personal growth. Yet, perhaps the most perilous aspect of colonialism is the individual's failure to utilize his time productively; instead, he capitulates, especially at moments of impoverishment and neglect, thereby ensuring the success of the colonial strategy and perpetuating his own susceptibility to colonization.²²

This scenario, which Malek Bennabi profoundly fears and warns against, necessitates thorough scientific examination. "We need to delve deeply into the annals of history and expand our scope of research..." he argues, because susceptibility to colonialism stifles dynamism, action, and thus, effectiveness. His thoughts remain unrealized in tangible form because his society has not furnished the realities from which he could launch transformative changes, reducing him to merely echoing the voices of others.²³

Echoing this sentiment, Al-Ghazali observes, "A man among us may achieve the highest degrees in medicine or law and may secure the most prestigious positions in Europe and America.

Yet, his connection to his religion is nonexistent, and his ties to his race are severed, whereas his Jewish colleague is like a tempest, fervently serving Zionism, and his Christian counterpart is swift as lightning in aiding colonialism. Does this emotionally detached Muslim, or the one whose heart has strayed, not fail his nation entirely? He resembles a mercenary, wielding his skills indiscriminately, serving any cause that satisfies his immediate needs."²⁴

Susceptibility to colonialism thus forms a psychological and mental framework that renders society stagnant, indolent, and neglectful, squandering its potential and time. As one reformer aptly stated, "Expel the colonizer from yourselves, and he will depart from your lands."

Consequently, Malek Bennabi asserts, "Today, the Islamic world has yet to attain the level of activity or technical prowess necessary to carve out a definitive place in the modern world, where the principle of effectiveness holds significant value. This principle is among the most pressing issues for us." The rise and fall of civilizations hinge on human effectiveness, which is the outcome of mental, spiritual, psychological, and social well-being.²⁵

Thus, the challenges facing Muslims originate internally rather than externally, as highlighted by the notion of susceptibility to colonialism.

3. Effectiveness and History:

Malek Bennabi introduces a revolutionary approach to contemplating the historiography of the Islamic world, emphasizing history as a confluence of social circumstances and conditions that

²¹ Mohammed Al-Shafi, *The Philosophy of Man and Civilization in Malek Bennabi's Thought*, Islamic Sciences and Civilization, Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2019, p. 21.

²² Malek Bennabi, *The Direction of the Islamic Year*, Dar Al-Fikr, Algiers, 5th edition, 1986, pp. 95-96.

²³ Malek Bennabi, *Conditions of Renaissance*, op.cit, p. 148.

²⁴ Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Problems on the Path of Islamic Life*, Renaissance Company, Egypt for Printing and Publishing, 7th edition, 2005, p. 47.

²⁵ Malek Bennabi, *The Direction of the Islamic World*, op.cit, p. 166.

shape historical action. According to Bennabi, history is not merely a sequence of causes and effects but rather the product of human actions and ideas, a dynamic flow of endeavors and thoughts.

This perspective safeguards against the reification of history, which often misconstrues the structure of history, its stages, and its forces as having an unyielding character. Instead, Bennabi perceives history as a domain of possibility, where transcendence and the realization of human will can actively direct events and circumstances.

This alternative approach, which he terms 'effectiveness,' embodies the essence of freedom and change, contrasting sharply with deterministic views and the susceptibility to colonize and regurgitate foreign cultures.

In constructing history, this intertwined series of human actions, guided by alternative conceptions, poses several critical questions and inquiries about the historical process. How accurately do our language and thinking about history as a series of causes align with the historical context? What if viewing history as a conglomerate of actions and mental activities leads us to deeper and more intriguing insights than the traditional view of history as a series of causes and effects?

1. The Effectiveness Equation in History-Making:

Malek Bennabi's innovative perspective on history and civilization marks a pivotal focus of his scholarship and a vital element in addressing the crises facing the Islamic world. Bennabi contends that history, from his viewpoint, is not governed by an inevitable progression where identical causes produce identical outcomes. Instead, the effectiveness of society initiates with the effectiveness of the individual. Thus, he asserts, "When the individual moves, society moves, and so does history. Conversely, when the individual is static, so are society and history."²⁶

It is essential to recognize that the "human" in Bennabi's framework is a crucial component of the Quranic phenomenon, an objective of divine revelation. God supports and inspires this human, driving Bennabi's aspiration to cultivate a history of human civilization imbued with the spirit of Islam. Consequently, the nature of effectiveness in history-making, according to Bennabi, diverges fundamentally from Western interpretations.

Allal al-Fassi characterizes Bennabi's perspective on the history-making human as "New Salafism."²⁷ This concept forms part of the broader awakening and liberation movement within revolutionary Islamic thought, which employs reason to emancipate humans from backwardness. In this framework, the individual is seen as both the means and the end, the origin and the destination, entitled to his opinions without external imposition and accountable only to God, underscoring the intrinsic value and autonomy of the individual in shaping history.

Bennabi critically assesses the reliance on Western thought about humans, expressing concern over its conceptual shortcomings. He identifies a pervasive chaos within Western societies, stemming from a lack of religious and ethical constraints in their conceptual frameworks, which

²⁶Malek Bennabi, *Reflections*, trans. Abdel Sabour Shaheen, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, 4th edition, 1979, p. 164.

²⁷Alal Fassi, *Self-Critique*, Scientific Printing Press, Cairo, 1st edition, date unspecified, p. 56.

are predominantly driven by mechanistic and materialistic orientations that dictate their understanding.

Bennabi argues, "Western philosophy of the human remains hostage to expressions and terminologies that do not allow the Western individual to conceive of involving peoples in the attribute of humanity, and striving for brotherhood and solidarity."²⁸ In the West, the ethical and moral bonds are overshadowed by a form of individualism that is closed off to material gains, indulging in consumption driven purely by the quest for pleasure.

In this vein, Bennabi emphasizes, "The issue is not about a machine that money can buy by various means, but about a human prepared to direct and use it, hence the problem of equipment is tied to the issue of the human and ideas, and the social yield from machines is linked to the effectiveness and behavior of the individual using them."²⁹

Regarding the plight of the Muslim individual, who exists on the fringes of history, Bennabi notes that their downfall is not due to a lack of action, but rather to incessant speaking and discussing, which leads to the squandering of resources such as money, time, and knowledge, resources that are utilized effectively by their Western counterparts. He identifies three essential components that constitute civilizations: the human, the soil, and time.

Bennabi asserts, "The subjects of history are human and time,"³⁰ and that clear and rational thinking should begin by addressing the root crises affecting the nation, namely the issues of the human, time, and soil.

The solutions to these problems are interconnected, where the religious idea plays a central and pivotal role: the human as a social being, the soil in its submission to certain technical necessities, and time in its integration into economic, industrial, and social processes.³¹

But why is the human a central element in the effectiveness equation of history?

Firstly, because humans are the origin and source of effectiveness. Secondly, because the remaining elements, soil and time, are passive, and only find voice and significance through human agency. Proper educational and cultural development of the human imbues conditional and historical civilizational value to both time and soil.³²

Bennabi insists that entering into history and forging a civilization is only achievable after defining the meaning of 'the human' within that society. If this sense is lost, civilization itself ends, as he declares, "Civilization ends when it loses its sense of the human."³³

²⁸Malek Bennabi, *Problems of Civilization, In the Throes of Battle*, trans. Abdel Sabour Shaheen, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, 4th edition, 1981, p. 162.

²⁹Malek Bennabi, *Algerian Perspectives*, trans. Al-Tayeb Al-Sharif, Al-Nahda Algerian Library, 4th edition, undated, p. 68.

³⁰Malek Bennabi, *Reflections*, trans. Abdel Sabour Shaheen, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, 4th edition, 1979, p. 164.

³¹ Muhammad Al-Shafi, *The Philosophy of Man and Civilization in Malek Bennabi Through Contemporary Studies - Foundations and Dimensions*, *Islamic Sciences and Civilization Journal*, Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco, Volume 4, Issue 01, 2019, p. 18.

³² Abdullah Edalkous, *The Effectiveness of Man in the Civilizational Construction According to Malek Bennabi*, Faith Without Borders, Studies and Research Foundation.

³³Malek Bennabi, *The Major Issues*, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, 1st edition, 1991, p. 164.

Humans have the capacity to effectively exploit the elements of soil and time, directing them in the historical process, "Our primary need is for the new human, the civilized human, the human who returns to the history from which our civilization emerged."³⁴

This narrative underscores the necessity of adhering to the principles and laws outlined in the Quran, empowering Muslims to avoid the pitfalls that have ensnared past civilizations.³⁵

Malek Bennabi offers a profound insight when he distinguishes between the Western conceptualization of the human and the portrayal of humanity in the Holy Quran, which diverges from post-monistic perspectives to accentuate the positive effectiveness emanating from a religious foundation.

Bennabi highlights a Quranic verse to underscore this point: *"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah"* (Quran 3:110).³⁶

In Bennabi's analysis, the essence of the human is metaphysical because human reality does not exhibit the orderly precision found in the universe's reality. The spiritual dimension of humans and the free will they possess introduce ambiguity into the factors and causes that generate phenomena and events, as well as specificity in interactions.

This renders human reality complex in its discipline and continuity, imbuing it with a character of ambiguity and variability, which makes it a challenging subject to grasp with the certainty typically associated with cosmic phenomena. This view aligns with the thoughts expressed by philosopher Alexis Carrel in his acclaimed work, "Man, The Unknown."³⁷

Yet, a critical question arises: How can an individual become effective in Malek Bennabi's framework of historical effectiveness and succeed in actively participating in history rather than merely existing on its periphery?

2. The Essence of Effectiveness in the Movement of History:

Effectiveness in history commences with a deep engagement with historical knowledge by the individual, and the capability to leave a positive imprint on the course of history through the development and dissemination of this knowledge.

A notable example of this is seen in the efforts of free scholars in Algeria who dedicated themselves to researching and documenting Algerian history, particularly in response to the severe distortion campaigns by French colonial policy aimed at erasing Algerian historical landmarks.

Among the key figures in this revival effort were Sheikh Muhammad bin Mubarak Al-Mili (1838-1908), Professor Ahmed Tawfiq Al-Madani (1889-1983), Sheikh Abdel Rahman Al-Jilali (1908-2010), and the scholar Muhammad bin Shenb (1869-1929), who diligently worked on uncovering, studying, and annotating the treasures of Algerian heritage. Additionally, Sheikh Al-

³⁴Malek Bennabi, Reflections, op.cit, p. 190.

³⁵Nu'man Abdul Razzaq Al-Samarrai, In the Islamic Interpretation of History, Dar Al-Shihab, Algeria, date unspecified, p. 34.

³⁶ Surah Al-Imran, verse 110.

³⁷ Mohammed Al-Shafi, The Philosophy of Man and Civilization in Malek Bennabi, Through Contemporary Studies, Foundations and Dimensions, op.cit, p. 68.

Mahdi Al-Bouabdelli, known for his extensive research in Algerian history and his zeal for collecting documents and manuscripts, played a crucial role in combating the erasure and disappearance of heritage by preserving and compiling it.³⁸

However, Malek Bennabi's concept of effectiveness in history delves much deeper, transcending mere theorization to actualize change and transformation of reality through robust social institutions.

These institutions are instrumental in properly harnessing energies and capabilities, thus positioning Algerian society, and the Islamic world at large, as a competitive entity.³⁹ This transformation involves the activation of dormant energies and their strategic direction, by cultivating the correct mindset and methodologies to build an effective and influential individual capable of making history, driving change, and advancing towards construction and progress.

Malek Bennabi articulates a poignant critique regarding the current state of effectiveness within the Islamic world, noting its insufficiency in defining its stature in the modern realm where effectiveness is paramount. He describes effectiveness as the very spirit that propels the movement of history and the construction of civilizations.

It is a concept deeply rooted in the cultural and educational frameworks of the Muslim human, derived from the religious notions of promise and threat. This dynamic maintains a delicate balance, neither excessive nor deficient. Any deviation from this equilibrium could lead to destructive outcomes, where the human soul fails to perform its essential functions within the body and its activities.⁴⁰

This balance in the psychic life, positioned between promise and threat, serves as a spiritual seed that directs, nurtures, and sustains effectiveness, thereby imparting purpose and meaning to human life, steering clear of nihilism and absurdity. This is echoed in the Quranic verses, "*None feels secure from the Plan of Allah except the people who are losers*" (Quran 7:99)⁴¹ and "*Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people*" (Quran 12:87).⁴²

Through historical narratives, Bennabi illustrates the dynamics of promise and threat, showcasing examples of individuals who demonstrated unwavering resolve in the face of adversity. He recounts the perseverance of Bilal ibn Rabah, who during severe tribulations continued to chant "Ahad... Ahad..." (One... One...). Another example includes a woman guilty of adultery who, recognizing her sin, insisted that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, administer the prescribed Islamic punishment, affirming her acceptance of divine justice.⁴³

Additionally, the resilience of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, an Algerian reformer who survived an assassination attempt by French colonialists, exemplifies this dynamic. Bennabi queries the

³⁸ For more information, see Abou Al-Kassim Saadallah, *The Cultural History of Algeria (1830-1954)*, Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut, 1st edition, 1998.

³⁹ Malek Bennabi, *The Direction of the Islamic World*, op.cit, p. 166.

⁴⁰ Lakhdar Charit, *The Problem of History at Malek Bennabi*, op.cit, p. 57.

⁴¹ Surah Al-A'raf, verse 99.

⁴² Surah Yusuf, verse 87.

⁴³ Lakhdar Charit, *The Problem of History*, op.cit, p. 58.

source of Ibn Badis's strength, which he attributes not to physical capability but to a spiritual influence that deeply impacted his psychological life, enabling him to overcome the crisis.⁴⁴

Bennabi emphasizes that the proper psychological conditions are crucial for initiating a healthy and effective historical movement. He points out that the spirit of effectiveness, vital for the construction of history and civilization, must permeate social upbringing and spiritual education across generations and the entire nation.

This educational approach integrates the religious concepts of promise and threat with psychological and sociological insights, aiming not merely to uncover new facts about human sciences but to forge pathways towards achieving a defined goal. This goal is to energize the contemporary Islamic world, helping it overcome its challenges and advance with determination and effectiveness to reclaim a prominent position in the annals of history under specific, well-defined conditions.⁴⁵

In Bennabi's discourse, the relationship between the individual and society is portrayed as intrinsically spiritual, with the individual's internalization of this bond shaped by societal provisions that facilitate its expression. This dynamic interplay ensures that the historical movement within and through them, both the individual and society, is marked by a continuous production of causes, effectively realizing its goals and aspirations.⁴⁶

How are these Characteristics of Historical Movement Realized?

Bennabi initiates his exploration with a critical and analytical review of historical thought, referencing eminent thinkers such as Karl Marx, Hegel, and Arnold Toynbee. His focus intensifies on Toynbee's interpretation of historical dynamics. Toynbee asserted that every challenge presented by nature prompts a psychological response from humans, which then leads to either success or failure based on the response's nature.

Bennabi contends that Toynbee's analysis of historical movement is profoundly insightful, particularly because it centers on striking a balance between excess and deficiency. Bennabi proposes a rearticulation of this theory through the lens of the Holy Quran to offer a more lucid explanation of the origins and historical purposes of the Muslim community. This reinterpretation emphasizes the psychological factors that fuel the community's spiritual vitality across centuries.⁴⁷

Bennabi underscores that mere natural psychological conditions do not suffice to propel historical movements. How, then, can one account for the enduring and robust structure of the Islamic world, which resembles a well-constructed edifice that spans centuries, in contrast to the sluggish evolution of nomadic societies that fail to advance through time?

The answer lies in the role of response as a sentient psychological force, which only activates within a framework defined by the concepts of promise and threat. These elements critically

⁴⁴MalekBennabi, Reflections, op.cit, p. 35.

⁴⁵ Musa Al-Ahrash, Strategy for Resuming Civilizational Construction in the Islamic World in the Thought of MalekBennabi, Laboratory of Education, Deviance and Crime in Society, University Publications Office, Algeria, 1st edition, 2000, p. 145.

⁴⁶LakhdarCharit, The Problem of History at MalekBennabi, op.cit, p. 59.

⁴⁷MalekBennabi, Birth of a Society, op.cit, p. 21.

influence the behavior of individuals and societies.⁴⁸ The historical movement halts in the presence of either despair or resignation, existing in the gap between these extremes. What transformations occur to individuals during this process?

From this potent spiritual force emerges a transformative effect, converting individuals into significant figures who precipitate historical events.

What is the world of personages? and what impact does it have on the movement and construction of history?

A. The World of Personages

One of the cornerstone ideas from Algerian thinker Malek Bennabi is his conceptual framework of the three worlds: the world of objects, the world of personages, and the world of ideas. This progression illustrates how societies traverse through history: initiating in the concrete world of objects, advancing under the influence of the world of personages, and ultimately achieving maturity as they encapsulate an idea that holds intrinsic value, distinct from the tangible objects or influential personages.⁴⁹

Bennabi articulates that each civilization and every historical epoch is distinctly characterized by these three worlds: ideas, personages, and objects. Delving into Bennabi's notion of the world of personages, it's noted that he does not offer a direct lexical definition of "personage." However, by synthesizing his comprehensive works, it becomes apparent that for Bennabi, a "personage" refers to a complex entity that not only produces civilization but is also a product of it, indebted to the civilization for all its concepts and objects.

This interpretation suggests that the world of personages encompasses a network of relationships, systems, communications, and laws that organize and define the lives of individuals within society, thus linking the world of personages closely with its surrounding environment. Bennabi posits, "Nature creates the species, but history makes the society, and while the goal of nature is the preservation of existence, the aim of history is to advance towards a sophisticated form of life, what we call civilization."⁵⁰

Furthermore, Bennabi differentiates sharply between the individual and the personage. He views the personage as a level of consciousness, whereas the individual is merely a characteristic of the species, essentially a set of physical traits distinguishing one species from another. The personage, then, signifies a transformation within the cultural realm, a transformation that requires the individual to commit to the culture to ascend to the status of a personage.

The mere natural existence of an individual does not suffice for their elevation to a personage; it demands the utilization of their innate abilities towards achieving noble objectives and realizing a life of value. This transition into the world of personages hinges on specific conditions: the individual must first be illuminated by an idea that profoundly influences their life's trajectory. Furthermore, this idea must resonate with and be embraced by others.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 16.

⁵¹ Lakhdar Charit, *The Problem of History at Malek Bennabi*, op.cit, p. 71.

The journey from being an individual to becoming a personage involves a deep self-realization, an acute awareness of one's surroundings, an understanding of oneself and others, and an appreciation of the guiding idea that shapes both personal and objective realities. This highlights that the unity and harmony among personages and the strong connections between society and its personages, founded on a spiritual idea, are essential for this transformative process.

The capacity to effect change within the cultural domain and to enhance social cohesion is essential for transitioning from one state to another within a society. Malek Bennabi insightfully remarks, "The first historical action undertaken by a society at its birth is the establishment of a network of relationships."⁵² This assertion underscores the pivotal role of the cultural domain in constructing the world of personages, which in turn ensures the continuity of societies and their entry into successive cycles of civilization. This raises a pivotal question: how can we explain the stability of certain societies and the disappearance of others through history?⁵³

Reflecting on the history of Islamic civilization, Bennabi observes a stark cessation of progress post the fall of Granada in the 19th century, stating, "Since then, the Islamic world has not advanced a step in its history."⁵⁴

We no longer find influencers in history like Al-Farabi, Al-Razi, and Al-Khwarizmi, as if that period of history was non-existent in the history of Islamic society. It stopped at the last candle lit in its era after the Muwahhidun, represented by Ibn Khaldun, making cultural justifications impossible for the society to continue its historical journey." This reflection highlights the critical impact of cultural vitality on the historical trajectory of a civilization.⁵⁵

For Bennabi, the essence of culture, particularly one encompassing a religious idea, is transformative. He asserts, "Culture, encompassing a religious idea," is fundamental to the historical process. The absence of culture equates to the absence of history, as he poignantly notes, "We cannot conceive of history without culture; a people that lose their culture lose their history." Culture serves both as the path and the destination, it is the genesis and culmination of societal development.⁵⁶

An individual devoid of culture is likened to being lifeless, and a society without culture is essentially non-existent. Bennabi elaborates, "Because culture is not merely knowledge that one acquires; it is an environment that engulfs them, a framework within which they operate, nurturing civilization within its womb."⁵⁷

It is the milieu in which all traits of a civilized society are crafted, molding every aspect of it in accordance with the objectives set by the society, encompassing everyone from the blacksmith and the artist to the shepherd and the scholar, and even the imam." Thus, he encapsulates how history is constructed.⁵⁸

⁵²Malek Bennabi, *Birth of a Society*, op.cit, p. 26.

⁵³Malek Bennabi, *Conditions of Renaissance*, p. 129 citing Lakhdar Charit, *The Problem of History at Malek Bennabi*, op.cit, p. 71.

⁵⁴Malek Bennabi, *Conditions of Renaissance*, op.cit, p. 129.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 92.

⁵⁷Lakhdar Charit, *The Problem of History at Malek Bennabi*, op.cit, p. 71.

⁵⁸Malek Bennabi, *Birth of a Society*, p. 26.

One of the seminal contributions of Malek Bennabi is his conceptualization of the three worlds: the world of objects, the world of personages, and the world of ideas. Societies originate in the tangible world of objects and evolve to be predominated by the world of personages. Upon reaching maturity, they embody an idea that holds inherent value, independent of the tangible and personal influences.

Bennabi explicates that each civilization and every historical epoch is defined by its distinct worlds of ideas, personages, and objects. While he does not offer a dictionary definition of "world of personages," it can be discerned from his writings that the term "personage" signifies a complex entity pivotal to the production of civilization; this entity is, in itself, a product deeply indebted to its civilization for all its ideas and objects. This elucidates the profound role personages play in shaping and advancing the course of history.⁵⁹

B. The World of Ideas:

In the realm of history, a sequence of events and occurrences unfold. Yet, without the foundational concept of "the idea," these events would not materialize. What then is an idea, and what role does it play in the historical movement and the making of history? Furthermore, what kind of idea, in the view of Malek Bennabi, has the power to alter the course of history, particularly when history, in its progression, is fraught with twists and turns that signify societal, historical, and civilizational transformation?

Is an idea a definitive indication that the making of history is the result of human effectiveness that addresses the present and anticipates the future?

1. Concept of the Idea:

Malek Bennabi refers to the "World of Ideas" as a collection of beliefs, assumptions, concepts, principles, and models that reside in the minds of a society at a particular historical moment. This world also includes all modes of thought, values, emotions, and sentiments.

The World of Ideas is connected to abstract concepts and values, which are unaffected by objects or individuals as much as they influence them. This realm is expansive and broad in scope, which is essential for humans to engage with in order to elevate their civilizational and human levels.⁶⁰

2. The Making of History Through Ideas:

In Bennabi's perspective, civilizations are essentially the outcome of ideas. The pattern of collective activity in history is contingent on the World of Ideas; behavior follows these ideas, implemented through the "World of Objects," as we will explore later.

This notion resembles the stance of R. G. Collingwood in his discussions about historical knowledge in his book "The Idea of History," where he states, "All thinking occurs within a general milieu and a foundation of emotions and feelings, but the true historian's concern does not rest with this general milieu, for it cannot occupy the historian's mind, as there is no hope to

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 61.

⁶⁰Islamweb, World of Ideas and World of People, Media Center, History and Civilization, available at: www.islamweb.net.

relive it. Thus, only ideas in this narrow sense can be revived, and therefore, ideas alone are the subject of history."⁶¹

This means that ideas alone lay the foundation for the movement of history, and they alone can be revived by the historian.

Malek Bennabi asserts that societies are distinguished not by material deficiencies, but by deficiencies in ideas, particularly in how effectively or ineffectively they use the material means available to them, coupled with their inability to create alternatives. This is especially evident in how societies address, or fail to address, their problems when they overlook any transient desire to study them.⁶²

This is exemplified by the emergence of Japanese society, which, despite its geographical scarcity of natural and material resources, has managed to catch up with the civilized world due to the intellectual development and thought growth of the Japanese individual, unlike Arab countries which have remained stagnant because their ideas have not developed.

Bennabi divides the history of Islamic civilization according to the development and growth of the idea, stating that this idea grows like a child in society (and divides history accordingly):

- The pre-civilizational society stage,
- The civilized society stage,
- The post-civilizational society stage.⁶³

Malek Bennabi defines each stage in the history of Islamic civilization as follows: The pre-civilizational stage, known as the Age of Ignorance, was characterized by a narcissistic world of ideas because the society did not possess a guiding idea, or rather, there was no idea owned by the individual.

"The tribal society which this individual experienced was not governed by any creed, and all that can be said is that this society was akin to a child who joyfully sings in the moonlight, as if he and the moon were one, representing a pre-social phase in the world of ideas."⁶⁴

The second stage, the civilized society stage, is marked by the beginning of the prophetic mission, catalyzed by the Quranic revelation, which marks a moment in history encouraging thought and reading, utilizing the noble trait with which the Creator has endowed us:⁶⁵

*"Read in the name of your Lord Who created. Created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught by the pen, Taught man that which he knew not."*⁶⁶

Thus, where an idea takes root, idols disappear, and the making of history begins. Following the revelation, the reservoir of ideas grew during the golden age of Islamic society, subsequently nourishing Christian civilization.

But what type of ideas open new paths and contribute to changing the course of history, and what are their conditions?

⁶¹ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, translated by Mohamed Bakir Khalil, Egypt, 1961, p. 444.

⁶² Malek Bennabi, *The Problem of Ideas in the Islamic World*, translated by Mohamed Abdel Azeem Ali, Cairo, 1970, p. 39.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Surah Al-Ala, verses 1-5.

3. Types of Ideas in Malek Bennabi's Concept:

In Malek Bennabi's interpretive framework, the principle of effectiveness profoundly shapes his understanding of civilization and history. According to Bennabi, not every idea has the capacity to influence history; only those that are genuinely effective can do so. This delineation introduces the concepts of "dead ideas" and "lethal ideas."

Bennabi, as a critical observer of the Islamic world's contemporary landscape and its historical trajectory, categorizes ideas based on their impact and origin. He defines a dead idea as one that is "cloned from history, inherited from our social legacy from an era post-civilization." Such ideas, he argues, have "betrayed their roots and deviated from their ideal models, no longer anchored in their original purpose."⁶⁷

Conversely, a lethal idea is characterized as an idea "imported from another culture, alien to the society's intellectual and ideological references, uprooted from its native environment."⁶⁸

Bennabi describes these ideas as lethal because they are akin to a drug prescribed for a specific ailment but misused to treat another condition, thereby becoming harmful rather than healing. These ideas, he posits, have "lost their cultural personality and value after losing their roots in their original cultural world."⁶⁹

Bennabi views the interaction between dead and lethal ideas as symbiotic, where "the dead idea calls and attracts the lethal idea into the society," both epitomizing the tragedy of colonization and the susceptibility to being colonized.⁷⁰

Interestingly, Bennabi considers the dead idea potentially more dangerous than the lethal idea because it works to freeze progress, whereas the lethal idea actively destroys progress, effectively sidelining the society from the historical narrative⁷¹. He reflects on the historical manifestations of ideas that have crippled post-civilizational societies and still burden the Islamic society's attempts at renaissance, which it seems unable to overcome.

Bennabi answers this question by defining a positively effective idea as one that "effectively and positively encourages and is theoretically sound." Such an idea aligns with knowledge and requires certain conditions to be met, akin to the nurturing environment necessary for the development of a fetus. He describes this process as, "a bud of life is nothing but a symbol placed by Divine care in its suitable ground."⁷²

This effective idea influences all three of Bennabi's conceptual worlds: the world of personages, the world of ideas, and the world of objects. It possesses strength and presents a challenge.

An effective idea is clear and simple, fertile, and must exist in an external environment that provides strong motivations, active movements, and correct directions. Bennabi underscores that

⁶⁷Malek Bennabi, *Problems of Ideas*, op.cit, p. 202.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 209.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 202.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 202-204.

⁷² Malek Ben Nabi: *Major Themes*, copyright, Omar Ben Aissa, Alger, 1976, p. 38.

"effectiveness is strongest in an environment that produces the strongest motivations, the most active movements, and the most correct directions."⁷³

Through this rich and nuanced examination, Bennabi emphasizes the pivotal role of ideas in shaping civilizations and their histories, highlighting the critical need for ideas that are both rooted in cultural authenticity and capable of fostering transformative progress.

H. The World of Objects:

In Malek Bennabi's theoretical landscape, the "**World of Objects**" encompasses all material and tangible entities that can be perceived through the five senses. This world includes both natural entities and those modified by human intervention, enveloping all material and cultural elements that surround humans.⁷⁴

Bennabi articulates that an object is "an entity that requires multiple uses across various facets of human life"⁷⁵. He elaborates that when discussing an object in its material sense, it is considered either as nature has created it or as it has been modified by humans, often through technological advancements.⁷⁶

Further expanding on the notion of "object," Bennabi incorporates the concept of cultural heritage, describing it as "a repository of ideas, compacted one upon another, which often precipitates a cultural crisis."⁷⁷

This perspective highlights the depth and complexity embedded in objects, viewing them not merely as physical items but as carriers of cultural significance and historical weight.

Bennabi divides the World of Objects into two main categories:

This refers to the economic environment that underpins the lives of individuals and communities. It encompasses the tangible assets and resources that support economic activities and daily living.

1. **The Cultural World of Objects:** This he terms "objectification," which he explains possesses dual meanings:
 - **Accumulation of Wealth:** Seen in the affluent Arab states, where there is significant financial capital stored in banks. These states possess substantial financial resources but often lack a fully developed economy that utilizes these resources effectively.
 - **Cultural Craftsmanship:** Bennabi critiques the superficial engagement with culture prevalent among individuals who fail to grasp or appreciate its deeper implications⁷⁸. He attributes this to the "man of scarcity," who has narrowed the idea of renaissance to merely fulfilling personal needs and desires. Such individuals view culture as merely a

⁷³Malek Bennabi, *Birth of a Society*, op.cit, p. 30.

⁷⁴Lakhdar Charit, *The Problem of History* at Malek Bennabi, op.cit, p. 99.

⁷⁵ Mohammed Ikbāl, *Renewal of Religious Thought in Islam*, translated by Abay Mahmoud, 2nd edition, Publishing Committee - Cairo, 1960, p. 7.

⁷⁶Lakhdar Charit, *The Problem of History* at Malek Bennabi, op.cit, p. 102.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸Malek Bennabi, *The Problem of Culture*, op.cit, p. 75.

stepping stone to become notable or, at worst, as a means to earn a living or ascend politically.⁷⁹

Bennabi views the prevailing approach to education as emblematic of this flawed engagement, where education is seen as the path of least resistance, lacking true effectiveness⁸⁰. He describes it as "turning knowledge into a mere tool for living or a ladder to climb to political platforms."⁸¹

This critique extends to professionals, like engineers and doctors, who may exhibit behaviors that align with this superficiality, reminiscent of the post-Muwahhidun era, where even the world of objects is imported, and individuals pretend to be learned without genuine qualifications.

Bennabi posits that the world of objects alone does not automatically fulfill its social function nor shape the social process independently. Its influence is contingent upon the psychological drives and specific intellectual orientations that are integrated with it. Objectification, as described by Bennabi, freezes the movement of history and diminishes awareness of it, leading individuals to prioritize their rights over their duties, thereby detracting from their humanity and societal responsibilities.

However, Bennabi also notes that the spiritual idea remains a potent source of effectiveness even within the world of objects. Proper guidance and wise leadership in managing society's resources, both natural and man-made, and intellectual and vocational energies are critical in realizing the goals of a civilized society.

He concludes, "The world of objects does not stand alone; it relies on the motivations that move objects, the idea that integrates them into the social process, and when this process involves only objects, the result is more genuine than estimated."⁸² This statement underscores the interconnectedness of material entities with the overarching cultural and intellectual fabric of society, emphasizing the necessity of integrating these elements thoughtfully into the social process.

Bennabi also links the Muslim economy to two constants: consumption and production. "There is no production without consumption and no consumption without production; however, he finds that these constants are not achievable due to what is today termed 'underdevelopment'.⁸³

Malek Bennabi's analysis profoundly underscores the critical role of the **World of Objects** in historical fabrication and social transformation⁸⁴. He emphasizes the necessity of an integrated approach that interweaves the **World of Ideas, Personages, and Objects** to cultivate a dynamic, evolving society. This holistic perspective is essential for addressing the challenges faced by Muslim societies, which he identifies not just as a scarcity of resources but as a significant deficiency in management, policy, and planning.

Bennabi's interpretation, firmly rooted in the principles drawn from the **Quran and Sunnah**, posits that social, economic, and psychological cohesion cannot be achieved solely through

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Lakhdar Charit, *The Problem of History*, op.cit, p. 104.

⁸¹ Malek Bennabi, *The Problem of Culture*, op.cit, p. 75.

⁸² Lakhdar Charit, *The Problem of History at Malek Bennabi*, op.cit. p. 193.

⁸³ Malek Bennabi, *The Muslim in the World of Economics*, translated by Abdel Sabour Shaheen, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, Damascus, 1981, p. 82.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

necessity, utility, or material means. Instead, civilizations that overemphasize the material world, as discussed by French thinker Roger Garaudy in his work "Parole d'homme," tend to experience stagnation, a state described as "the shock of the West."⁸⁵

Bennabi perceives human history as a statistical account of movements and ideas, arguing that societies recording the highest number of purposeful movements and innovative ideas exhibit greater social productivity and hence demonstrate higher efficacy. He illustrates this by suggesting that a person taking ten intentional steps contributes more to societal progress than one who takes only a single step, highlighting the fundamental role of motion in all human activity.⁸⁶

This motion is influenced by ideological models derived from the **World of Ideas** and is implemented using resources from the **World of Objects**, all while being directed towards objectives established by the **World of Personages**.⁸⁷ These three worlds are not isolated; they are deeply interconnected and collectively maximize the use of available resources.

Effectiveness in Bennabi's framework serves as a balance between promise and peril. The most effective idea, according to him, is one that does not attribute more moral value than is warranted. Similarly, the **World of Objects** strikes a balance between the cultural framework, social bonds, and political systems. The emergence of the **World of Persons** can only transpire within a specifically defined cultural framework that enables it to generate its ideas and objects. Effectiveness, as a spiritual force, ensures the dynamic conditions necessary for these three worlds to function effectively.

Bennabi's concept of building history involves both a theoretical aspect, linked with enhancing global interpretative theories of change, and a practical reality, associated with precise planning and guidance that takes into account the cultural environment and historical heritage. Change in history, he argues, originates from local culture, which carries the potential for life and meaning.

This process moves from mere accumulation to constructive action, purifies the cultural climate from detrimental influences, and avoids the pitfalls of adopting Western concepts and terminologies, thereby defending local identity. This approach does not reject Western civilization but rather proposes a new methodological vision for change and the creation of history.

Conclusion:

The research paper compellingly asserts:

- The challenge of creating history fundamentally stems from human effectiveness. When an individual is empowered, the ripple effects energize both society and history. Therefore, the inception and culmination of history are intrinsically tied to individual agency.
- History, viewed as a craft, emerges from pragmatic efforts rather than abstract theories. Effectiveness is inherently linked to tangible actions rather than to leadership alone.

⁸⁵MalekBennabi, *The Role of the Muslim and His Mission in the Last Third of the Twentieth Century*, published by the MalekBennabi Symposium, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, Damascus, 1982, p. 25.

⁸⁶MalekBennabi, *Reflections*, Ibid, p. 146.

⁸⁷MalekBennabi, *Birth of a Society*, op.cit, p. 23.

- _ The evolution of history towards civilization is characterized not by a seamlessly organized network of relationships but by operating under tension. This tension is essential, as genuine change originates from the core cultural identity and the inherent spirit of the nation.
- _ While importation in the realms of industrial and technical sciences is acceptable, it is deemed inappropriate in the domains of politics, education, culture, and social relations. This distinction is crucial to maintaining the integrity of societal structures.
- _ Effectiveness acts as a stronghold against the vulnerabilities to colonial influence, especially as Bennabi views societal backwardness as a potential facilitator for colonization.
- _ Historical stagnation is not seen as an inevitable destiny but as a product of human intent. With sufficient determination and effectiveness, societies can transform potential stagnation into a dynamic force capable of leveraging their inherent capacities, time, and geographical resources.
- _ In Bennabi's perspective, the quest for underlying causes is deprioritized; instead, the focus is on effectiveness. History is thus redefined not as a mechanical or automatic sequence of events but as a dynamic, purpose-driven process.

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