

Society and Social Relations in the Thought of Malek Bennabi: A Psychosocial Reading of His Work “Birth of a Society”

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Received: 02/09/2024

Accepted: 13/12/2024

Published: 30/12/2024

Abstract:

This research paper explores Malek Bennabi’s views on society and social relations, focusing on his work “Birth of a society” within his intellectual project, “The Question of Civilization” relying on the qualitative analytical approach. Bennabi addresses challenges in Islamic societies, advocating for dynamic transformation to combat stagnation.

Bennabi examines the roles of religion, economics, psychology, education, and culture in societal change and critiques colonialism’s impact on social relations. The paper at hand aims to clarify Bennabi’s foundational principles for societal construction, highlighting the importance of social relation.

Keywords: Malek Bennabi; Birth of a Society; Social Relations; Society; Psychosocial Analysis.

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1- Introduction

"The wealth of a society is not measured by the amount of things it possesses, but by the amount of ideas it contains."
Malek Bennabi

Malek Bennabi's ideas collectively are under the dome of a collective work titled "issue of civilization." He constructed his intellectual project between two pillar thoughts, determining the factors contributing to the backwardness of the Islamic world which he experienced during the period of his migration on the one hand, -in which he produced a set of books under the title "Problems of Civilization,"- and possible solutions for the renaissance of the Islamic world through his most prominent book in this regard, entitled "Conditions of Renaissance" on the other hand. Malek Bennabi presented a comprehensive intellectual project at a time when the Islamic world was fighting the remnants of colonialism, or living with its remnants that shackled the society's movement. He did not waste an opportunity to present his thesis on civilization and the means of renaissance, and his abundant intellectual heritage bears witness to that. In a period of nearly forty years of writing, he brought to light several books, publications, studies, articles, lectures, and memoirs, His work spanned multiple scientific fields, the most important of which are the philosophy of history, cultural politics, economics, Islamic thought, and social psychology, within the framework of which came the book "Birth of a Society", in this paper, we will dive into the concept of society and social relations and their significance in Malek Bennabi's thought, which is the central issue we aim to explore. Our analysis will be guided by the following questions in an attempt to analyze and answer them:

Q1- What is Malek Bennabi's understanding of society and social relations?

Q2- According to Bennabi, what are the conditions necessary for "Birth of a Society", and what do social relations play in this process?

Q3- Who does Bennabi Identify as the enemies of societies, and what solutions does he propose to confront them?

2- Significance and Importance of the Topic:

"The thought of Malek Bennabi" constitutes the importance of this research paper, he built a solid and integrated intellectual system, whether in its theoretical problematic aspects or in how to address them, A system characterized by a comprehensive rather than partial view of issues and problems. He formulates new terms that reflect social reality. This research paper addresses society and social relations in the thought of Malek Bennabi through an in-depth reading of what was stated in this regard in his book "Birth of a Society", which included the influence of religion, and economics, psychology, education and culture in changing it, a definition of society and what colonialism does to tear apart social networks and disperse vital energies until chaos prevails in society, until it tightens its control over it. Bennabi attached great importance to society and its network of social relations in building and producing civilization, hence the importance of the topic addressed in this research paper.

3- Topic Objectives and Aims:

This research paper aims to explore Malek Bennabi's concept of society and what he believed the role of social relations played in the birth of societies, as well as the conditions necessary for such process. It also aims to identify Bennabi's perceived

threats to society and the solutions he put forward to prevent these threats, with a particular emphasis on social education.

4- Malek Bennabi:

In order to thoroughly explore the ideas of Malek Bennabi, it is of great importance to first give a small introduction to his personal background (especially during childhood), intellectual biography, and the broader framework of his scholarly contributions, and by doing this, we – and the reader- are better equipped to understand his work on “*Birth of a Society*” in a more coherent framework.

Malek Bennabi is an Algerian thinker and author. November 1st (1905) was the date He was born in Constantine, Algeria, into a family marked by severe poverty, a condition that was pervasive among Algerian families due to the aftermath of colonial occupation. As the only son of economically disadvantaged parents, alongside three other sisters, Bennabi’s early life was shaped by significant hardship. In response to these challenges, his family was compelled to relocate from Constantine to Tebessa, seeking respite from the widespread poverty and destruction inflicted by colonialism. His father was unemployed, and his paternal grandfather had been forced to sell all remaining assets (Ibn Ibrahim, 2002). Initially, Bennabi was cared for by his paternal uncle, who was relatively better off, but this support was short-lived due to the uncle’s untimely death. Consequently, the young Malek returned to Tebessa with his uncle’s widow, rejoining his parents at approximately six years old.

Bennabi later on reflects on this period of time as one of the profound difficulty, describing his family’s financial condition as “excessively impoverished”. In Tebessa, he assimilated into a community similarly afflicted by poverty. His mother, confronted with their desperate situation, took on sewing and additional work during weekends to prevent her family from succumbing to hunger and to provide the basic necessities for her children (Bennabi, 1969).

Malek Bennabi’s intellectual endeavor is part of a broader series of works that can be analyzed both procedurally and structurally. These writings primarily serve as a critical examination of the Islamic world during his era, focusing on his observations and critiques of the pervasive effects of colonialism. Bennabi’s analysis of colonialism, which is considered to have all kinds of human rights, including (Bahri, 2011) political, civil and social rights, is thorough, evident across his various works, where he dissects its complex impact on Muslim society. Alongside this, he critiques the “civilizational and cultural decline within the Islamic world, particularly addressing the problematic behaviors and practices of Muslims within their social contexts (Lekhl, 2020).

5- “Birth of a Society”

5.1- Foundational Insights into the Book

“*Birth of a Society*”, written by Malek Bennabi, is a well-founded research which was written in (1962) in Cairo (Beghdad Bey, 2016). The book in hand is the third edition printed in Algeria with permission from Dar Al Fikr Damascus in cooperation with Al Malakia for Media, Publishing and Distribution in (1986). It is a relatively short book consisting of (128) pages, and despite its small size, it is very profound. Malek Bennabi’s style appears clearly through the book, which is considered his best work and it is a part of the series called “*Problems of Civilization*”.

Anyone who reads “Birth of a Society” might easily mistake its author is a sociologist rather than what his real educational background is, an electrical engineer who pursued his studies at the Wireless School in Algiers. Despite his technical background, Bennabi consistently emphasized the notion that “building the human being in his homeland is more important than building the machine”, this statement reflects his social view on humans, and the arising need to intellectual and moral development of individuals as the cornerstone of societal progress.

In his book, Bennabi enumerates different and interesting titles, wonderful ideas and different philosophies, and it is enough that most of these titles fall under the concept of "network of social relations", as Bennabi believes that society carries within it intrinsic qualities that guarantee its continuity, and that the fixed element in that process is the social entity, which is determined by the its social relations. The book includes an introduction and priorities and (15) other chapters and finally the glossaries.

Bennabi presented a summary of his theory on the emergence of societies after being affected by the unjust French colonization which befell Algerian society. His reaction was not emotional, nor represented by lamentations, poems, and wailing, but rather he began to think about the issue of society and colonialism, and later on, he thought about the susceptibility of any society to colonialism. His thought and pen set out to research and study “society,” its nature and composition, the types of societies, what drives them, and how to build a renaissance and create civilization (El Hadrami, 2017). Bennabi began by defining society through two contexts, namely the theoretical context and the applied historical context. He sets two classifications for primitive and historical societies, and places Islamic society among historical societies that accept change and are not stagnant, as they are constantly in motion and understand their purpose that in which they are self-improving. Bennabi also presents in this book a study on society and the diseases that may affect it, especially at the level of social relations network and its connection to religion, geography, psychology, and colonialism. Then he finally moves on to propose the solution represented by social education and its conditions. Through this research paper, we attempt to explain every element mentioned in this book as indicated by the author, Malek Bennabi.

5.2- Milestones in “Birth of a Society”

Sociology literature is full of multiple definitions and concepts of society which converge in some aspects and diverge in others. It is the fabric of social relations that exist between individuals and in which they aim to meet their needs and achieve their ambitions and goals, on both short and long terms. In order to be able to determine the concept of society according to Malek Bennabi, we must thoroughly contemplate the chapters of “Birth of a Society”. Through the following sections we will highlight the most important things that came in this regard in order to ultimately reach an approach to society and social relations in Bennabi’s thought.

In the first chapters, Bennabi defines society in terms of terminology and function. The complex nature of social concepts is what leads to discussions closer to literary discussions rather than the logic of the exact sciences. He provided an example of this regarding the terms civilization and urbanity in the Arab countries. He categorically rejects discussing the terms in a literary manner, as this method,

according to him, does not help clarify the subject, but rather makes it more difficult. He pointed out the need to establish a theoretical framework for the subject of “Birth of a Society” before targeting it from its historical perspective (Bennabi, 1986, p.9). Bennabi begins by defining social concepts by defining the types of societies. He defines the primitive (natural) society as a static one with fixed characteristics that have not changed since its inception, such a society lives in isolation from its surroundings with a fixed and repetitive system just like the societies found in ant and bee colonies or the African tribes in the pre-colonial era.

According to Bennabi, nature is responsible for creating the different species and history is responsible for creating society. This moment society begins to move towards achieving its goal is considered historically “Birth of a Society” or civilization (Boukrouh, 2016). A historical society can be created in two ways: either it is composed from new materials, that is, materials that have not been subjected to any previous historical change, or it may also be composed of elements used in a previous historical society -borrowed from other societies-, whose constituent elements have been transformed into elements prepared for use in a new society (Bennabi, 1986, p. 10).

From this angle, he mentions in more details the historical society, which is of two types according to Malek Bennabi, namely: the society that is born to an imposed choice by the natural circumstances of the environment which is what is called “the geographical model”, and the second type that is born in response to the call of an idea which he named the intellectual (ideological) society (his example: the Islamic society) (Bennabi, 1986, p.11). Bennabi pointed out the formative nature related to the construction of society, where he distinguished between societies whose construction is based on many floors, from other societies with one floor, and Malek Bennabi considered the Islamic society to be one from the one-floor model. To him, the Islamic society is a democratic society, a society without classes that retains democracy in its essence (Bennabi, 1986, p.13).

In conclusion, Bennabi believes that society is not just a group of individuals who share the same customs, are subject to the same laws, and have common interests. Society to Bennabi is defined in terms of time; every human group that forms a society seeks to achieve a goal, which is to bring about change in itself in an effort to build a civilization. Malek points out that the functional definition of society is more important than the terminological one, and its most important characteristic is "time." Individuals whose internal relationships are not modified by time do not change their activities. According to him, society is the group of people whose social characteristics are always changing by producing means of change. It is not just individuals, but rather a solid organization with a systematic nature that was established according to a specific system. According to him, society is not just elements or people who are called by the group instinct to gather within a specific framework only, rather, this instinct is a means to create society, not a reason for its creation. That is a society has constants and pillars that last, and in turn it imposes on individuals who belong to it their customs and constants, that is, the personal qualities that preserve its personality and entity throughout history. In the chapter on gender and society, Malek Bennabi takes us back to the literary meaning of it, in which he said that it is: “a group of individuals with united customs who live under the same laws and have common

interests among themselves” (Bennabi, 1986, p.15). He considered that this definition is external and descriptive and does not give the slightest explanation for the historical function of societies. He calls for defining society within the scope of time, so groups of individuals whose internal relationships are not modified by time, and whose forms of activity do not change over time, are not considered among the special societies that encompass the term “society.”

To come out with a definition of society as "the group that always changes its social characteristics" (Bennabi, 1986, p.17), Bennabi confirms that the human group acquires the characteristic of a society when it begins to change. We conclude that the moving characteristic of a society has three elements (continuous movement, permanent production of causes, goal), which are the factors to which a given human group owes its social characteristics which in turn make it a society. He concludes by saying, "Nature creates the species, but history creates society. The goal of nature is merely to preserve survival, while the goal of history is to move with the progress towards an advanced life, which we call civilization." (Bennabi, 1986, p.19).

After this, Bennabi takes us to the chapter "Different opinions in interpreting the historical movement", saying that any human environment contains a share of inactivity until it turns it into movement, and he presents the most important of these interpretations of movement: Hegel: He traces it back to the principle of opposition, and the principle of appropriate challenge, and if Marxist thought interprets it as the game of economic factors, Malek Bennabi believes that the movement of history goes back in its origin to a psychological process resulting from psychological pressure. Social mobility is the main engine of human history. The human environment is provided with a latency center, just like the material environment, When that medium begins to move, this means that there is an initial cause that has overcome the original potential by transforming all the potential data in the medium into kinetic values (Boukrouh, 2017). Malek adopts Toynbee’s opinion and applies it to the Islamic community, as he placed the Muslim’s conscience between two limits: promise and threat; that is, psychological factors that lead to spiritual powers and a state of challenge.

In the chapter "History and Social Relations", Malek Bennabi refers to the psychological aspect of the mechanism of historical movement, which is traced back to a set of psychological factors that result from some spiritual forces which make the soul the core engine of human history. Bennabi believes history needs to be under the control of three social groups: the world of people, the world of ideas, and the world of things (Bennabi, 1986, p.27). However, these groups do not work separately, but rather work in harmony in order to achieve a common goal, which is creating civilization. These groups agree on a specific concept that stems from the world of (ideas) and is applied by the world of (things) for a purpose determined by the world of (people). This agreement is only achieved by the existence of a fourth world (social relations between individuals), which is necessary for the three groups to achieve their goal, which is –again- creating civilization. Malek Bennabi discussed what sociology went into in considering history as the basis of civilization, his research and studies mainly were in the field of either the individual himself, and everything that affects his life and changes his circumstances and all human characteristics, or the environment in which the individual lives, that is, everything that affects society and changes its

characteristics, which is what encompasses the psychological and social definition of society.

In the following two chapters, Bennabi discussed "the origin of social relations" and "the nature of relations". According to him there are "historical factors" which are elements responsible for controlling the movement of history, therefore building society constructing civilization. On the other side, the development of society, according to Bennabi, is linked to some necessary relations with other societies, considering that any given society is not isolated from the human environment (Bennabi, 1986, p.21).

Bennabi believes that social relations are the first historical element to emerge, it is the work that society does at the time of its birth, and Bennabi gives an example to embody this idea with the Islamic society: "The first action the Islamic society established, was building the concept of brotherhood, And the migration was the first pivotal turn in Islamic history, because it coincided with the first act that the Islamic society did. This is represented in the formation of its communication network before the formation of its social groups. The origin of the relations network allows society to carry out its coordinated work in history, this origin lies in the creation of its bio-historical structure (Boukrouh, 2016). that same network whose tearing will cause the decline of the star of Islamic civilization and the collapse of nations upon it because society will then become mere aimless gatherings like the scum of a torrent due to the absence of effective cohesion, and this is what Muslims are witnessing in our times after the complex susceptibility to colonialism has grown among them.

According to Boubaker (2010), the connection between civilization and history is clear to Malek Bennabi, considering that society is not the sum of its individuals, but rather the gathering of them on one position, and their participation in one direction to carry out a specific work with a specific goal. Therefore, the network of social relations is the result of the conditions that causes the movement of history itself, (Bennabi, 1986, p.42). and once it is established, the birth of that society is announced, and it is what determines the nature of social relations at the moment of their emergence. As long as this network is sound and effective, society will continue to exist.

Relationships are the spirit of society according to Bennabi and are everything that transforms a person from an isolated (individual) into an active (person) in society. In Malek's opinion, in order for an individual to become a person, his primitive characteristics must change into social tendencies that connect him to society (Bennabi, 1986, p.31). These relationships may be cultural relationships, aesthetic relationships, or economic relationships according to Marxism. However, Malek confirms that changes in social life are not attributed to social matter, i.e. the economy, but rather to relationships, i.e. the joint work that creates this history.

Malek Bennabi began the chapter on "Social Wealth" with the most important thing he was known for, which is that the wealth of a given society is not equivalent to the amount of things/objects it possesses, but by the amount of (ideas) it contains. Society is considered a world of ideas, not a world of things, that is, if society has deep-rooted and rich ideas that enable it to stand and rebuild if it is exposed to the destruction of the world of things. The Muslim society was able to confront

civilizations that are rooted in the depth of the world of ideas, while it was still a fetus in the process of development. After centuries, the Islamic world fell while its libraries were the richest of knowledge. The reason lies in the strength of its social relations in the first era and its disintegration in later ages.

When the diseases of a society are studied from all economic, political and technical aspects, we are in fact studying the diseases of the (ego) in that society, which are diseases that take the form of a deficit in the social network. If we forget or neglect this psychological consideration, we are in a position of someone who issues his judgments on the appearance of things instead of their essence. An example of this is that we import economic and technical solutions from Europe, but they are sometimes ineffective solutions because they do not suit the information stored in the (ego) of the Islamic countries (Boukrouh, 2016). At this phase, the focus becomes on imaginary problems at the expense of real problems, which is unfortunately what is happening in our current era.

Bennabi confirms in the chapter on society and moral value that the latter has an essential element in joint activity. Malek wonders whether society automatically produces moral values which drive its change in the direction of its goal (Bennabi, 1986, p.48), and he presents examples, such as female burial in pre-Islamic times, and the phenomenon of marriage and its rituals, to ultimately return to the fact that moral values are not produced by society, but rather regulate its activity towards its goal, and every society follows a specific moral floor that it did not produce itself, and whenever there is a breach of the moral law in a society, its network of relationships is torn apart.

In the chapter “Religion and Social Relations,” Bennabi determines the basic unit in the birth of society, which is in his thought the conditioned individual and not the individual themselves, then the difference between these terms, is that the individual is what nature produced in its initial state, so all his instincts exist in the state that nature gave him, and he carries out the process of conditioning, organizing, and directing his instincts through (the exceptional circumstance) that occurs in the psyche of this individual. This exceptional circumstance that transfers the individual from his initial state to a conditioned individual is (the religious idea), which means that the relationship between “God” and humans is what gives birth to social relations that connect the individual to society, which generates its effect on the spirit of the individual according to what Malek sees after presenting several theories in interpreting the historical movement of Marx, Hegel, and Toynbee (Bennabi, 1986, p.54-55).

what Bennabi calls the “social vacuum” is a term to refer to the concept of The rupture in the social relations, which is the state that turns society into a group, unable to perform any joint activity, and the relationship is balanced between the existence of a social vacuum and the inability of society to perform its joint activity towards its goal. He shows that the relationship between the religious relationship and the social vacuum "which represents the number of lost or amputated relationships in a society" is an inverse relationship, and cites the hadith "The believer to the believer is like a building, some parts of which support each other" which is the optimal degree for all heavenly laws in which society reaches this ideal harmony between its members.

Malek Bennabi believes, In the chapter "The Network of Relations and Geography", that the influence of a certain religious idea is subject to some human geographical conditions, so if it is not found in its homeland, it migrates to find it in another place (Bennabi, 1986, p.59), and in this part he analyzes the connection of the religious idea to a certain place by presenting the connection of Europe to Christianity as an example.

In the chapter on "Social Relations and Psychology," Bennabi refers to the circumstances in which the individual integrates into social life, He means the conditioned individual, as nature brings the individual in a primitive state, and then society takes over shaping him to adapt him according to its own goals (Bennabi, 1986, p.65). This adaptation prepares the individual to take his place and play his role in society, which is what we find in our current era and is called the process of socialization, In this regard, Bennabi says that the relationship between the individual and society is a universal, historical relationship, as society creates the individual reflection, and the individual reflection leads its development (Bennabi, 1986, p.66). From a psychological point of view, this process is a process of building the self (ego), and it is a process of defining the elements of personality. Bennabi emphasizes the role of religion in this, as it directly intervenes in the adaptation process, which Bennabi defined as a process of filtering on the one hand, and a process of selection on the other (Bennabi, 1986, p.69).

The Chapter titled "The Idea of Social Education" in which Bennabi mentioned the words of the historian Guizot when he said "The problem of history can be conceived in two ways, either to solve it in the individual himself, looking at what changes his human self, or to solve it within the scope of what surrounds him, looking at what changes his social framework" (Bennabi, 1986, p.75). Then he followed up by saying that the general rules of social education should be drawn from the science of history, sociology and psychology, with his focus on the aspect of history as the greatest influence. He provides evidence for this with the hadith of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, when he said "The last of this nation will not be reformed except by what reformed its first" (Bennabi, 1986, p.76). He confirms that the religious idea changes even the individual's traits and appearances when it changes in himself, and thus the social education approach has an effect in beautifying the individual's features, i.e. a group of reflections leads to the creation of a new image, as if it is represented in a new face (Bennabi, 1986, p.80).

Malek Bennabi continues his review of the idea of the social network and links it to a special chapter on colonialism. After explaining that social relations are the backbone of society and the secret of its success and survival, Bennabi confirms that colonialism and its men have the shrewdness and experience that allows them to realize this and deal with it in a way that serves their interests, far from apparent military methods such as cannons, tanks and armies that peoples confront. Bennabi teaches us here the phrase "divide and conquer", as they realize that a single needle sting in the right place in the social network is enough to paralyze it. Bennabi links this to the social vacuum. In this way, he compares that Arab and Islamic societies did not confront such problems, while Soviet society defended its relationship against these problems with deterrent measures to solve them (Bennabi, 1986, p.82-93).

In a special chapter called "Defending the Social Network", Malek Bennabi believes that humanity has always worked to protect its social network, and that divine laws and positive laws are attempts to protect that network that determines the effectiveness of society and its chances of survival, whether materially or morally, because the social network is what allows a society to enter the cycle of civilization. He first refers us to his concept of civilization, which is that a person learns how to live in a group, while realizing the importance of social relations in organizing human life, for its historical function (Bennabi, 1986, p.94).

Bennabi redefines civilization through culture and science after there has been confusion today in the use of terminologies, especially by societal rodents. He believes that culture is nothing but learning civilization and using our conscientious and mental faculties in the world of people. It involves us in society as a whole and builds our relationship with it, while science is some of the results of civilization, that is, it is just an effort made by our minds when used in the world of things, so we learn from it how the world of things operates and that it is only a part of civilization, not all of it (Bennabi, 1986, p.96). Societal rodents that gnaw at the essence of civilization destroy society when they gnaw at its network of relationships that help it perform its joint activity. There are two types of betrayal of society: a type that destroys its spirit by destroying principles, morals, and spirit and creates a social vacuum. The second type destroys its means by directing creativity and moral virtues outside the world of facts and phenomena, which creates a social vacuum in it, which announces the disappearance and decline of civilization and progress (Bennabi, 1986, p.97-98).

Bennabi calls for envisioning this problem and formulating it in the language of social education, which must be effective in influencing the three worlds (people, ideas and matter). Bennabi defined it as teaching each individual the art of life with his peers, i.e. teaching him how to be civilized, and summarized it in the word: culture. Bennabi believes that if social education cannot influence the social triad, and is not effective in forming a network of relationships, then it means nothing, just like culture in that regard. He calls for going beyond defining it to the stage of realizing it in an educational program that is suitable for changing the human being (Bennabi, 1986, p.101).

Finally, Malek Bennabi speaks in a chapter about the primary conditions for social education. In order to confront any social problem in an artistic way, our work should not be limited to assuming solutions that have been proven correct outside our country, but rather we must provide the necessary environment to implement the solutions we envision. Because the ready-made solutions we inherit will not succeed due to the surrounding circumstances that are different from the world of the idea or the imported solution. Malek emphasizes the idea of (importing solutions) - solutions to the social vacuum in the network of social relations - where he mentions that solutions that have borne fruit in certain circumstances do not necessarily - after importing them - achieve the same success, as the solution component is not limited to the materials that compose it, but there are other factors that do not appear in the picture that are the reason for its success, as we import the materials that compose it leaving the factors of its success, and this is what generates its failure in the short or long term.

We must also realize

defines society as: a group of individuals that always produces means of change with the knowledge it holds of the goal it seeks through this change. The real society, from his point of view, is the group that changes within a time frame.

The human group acquires the attribute of (society) when it begins to move, that is, when it begins to change itself in order to reach its goal. This is consistent with the moment of the birth of a certain civilization, and the birth of society is an event that constitutes the emergence of a form of shared life and also records the starting point for the movement of changing life. Algerian society is in dire need of appreciating this concept and understanding it well, considering that the basic mission of societies is change, which is something we are missing today.

Although Bennabi clearly suggests a transformative essence of society and his definition relies on the transformation societies go through, we note that not all societies evolve in a clear linear and goal-oriented ways as Bennabi suggests. Many of societies and cultures experience periods of stagnation or even regression before experiencing any development after that, so the idea of Bennabi that a real society is marked by constant change marginalize some societies that prioritize stability and preservation of traditions.

According to him, society consists of three worlds: “the world of people,” “the world of ideas,” and “the world of things.” such worlds are linked together by the fourth world, which is the network of social relations. The first thing that society does when it is born is to build a network of social relations. Ibn Nabih gives an example of this with the birth of the Islamic society in Medina, where the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, established brotherhood between the Muhajireen and the Ansar. Conversely, when society declines, its network of social relations is torn apart, as was the case with the disintegrating Islamic society that was invaded by colonialism. The network of relationships means the ability to cooperate and coordinate between these three worlds and to use ideas and things in their proper place - what is required of them - and the high morals under which society can produce its civilization.

Society forms its network of social relationships by transforming the being whose description is that of a “species” into an “individual” - that is, its semi-biological description - into a “person” - that is, into a social being. Culture is the environment that shapes the individual’s entity and provides him with social ties, which refers us to the concept of civilization where man learns how to live in a group, and realizes the importance of social relations in organizing human life, for its historical function.”

Bennabi emphasizes from “species” to “individuals as a cornerstone of societal progress, but his conceptualization may fail to fully address the complexities of postmodern societies, as globalization, and digital communication and the expansion of culture borders leading to multiculturalism, all these factors challenge the simple transition from species to individuals that Bennabi suggests.

Malek Bennabi explained that the birth of a society begins with the formation of its social relations, and this network is formed in a group of historical circumstances and conditions according to different points of view according to different schools of thought, and religion plays an important role when it inspires the social structure in the form of administrative rules and legislative principles, moral values, worship, traditions, which is a group that contributes to the cohesion of the social network that links the three worlds that make up society.

If we take the conceptualization of Bennabi that religion plays an important role in inspiring the social structure, we note that his view does not address the challenges posed by religious fragmentation in some societies or the decline of religiosity in modern societies, furthermore, the reliance on moral values that Malek Bennabi poses underestimates the role of power dynamics and economic inequalities, which can equally influence the robustness of a society's relational network.

The factors for the birth of a society are summarized according to Bennabi in:

To be moving in history, working on challenge and response, interacting with the three worlds (ideas, people, things) within which this change occurs, the most important of which is the idea of religion, as the moment of the birth of society is linked to it and for its purpose society seeks and moves.

society is organized in a network of purposeful relationships (belief, laws...) that preserves the society's purpose by preserving its structure through the sanctity of its principle, and this does not mean complete dissolution in the id, but rather what is meant by it is what links the individual (the ego) to society (the id).

Society, as Bennabi sees it, ranges in the density of its social network between two limits: the first limit is when society is at the peak of its growth and each individual is connected to the group of members of society, and the second limit is the state of a disintegrated society that has turned into individuals with no connection between them.

Society in a state of decline (the second limit) is a sick society whose individuals' egos have become so inflated that the existence of the common collective factor becomes difficult. All the factors contributing to the disintegration of society lie in the disease of its network of relationships, that disease which is represented by the inflation of the ego. Even if society is rich in ideas which do not prevent it from falling if harmony is absent between its individuals and they are unable to perform a joint activity that moves them toward a specific goal. Bennabi's emphasis on "joint activity" as a remedy is compelling but somewhat vague; we suggest that defining specific mechanisms or processes in such solution such as cultural dialogue, inclusive governance, or educational improvements, could make his solutions more actionable and applicable rather than general definitions and concepts.

What distinguishes our current stage is that individuals in a disintegrated society, in reason of the inflation of their egos and the disintegration of the collective spirit, debate takes place among them, and each of them contribute in the debate not to find solutions to the problems but to find proof of what they wants. This inflation of the self is an indication that the network of relationships is no longer correct, as the moral law watches over the network of social relationships, and violating this law tears this network apart, and religion is what creates the social relationship and unites hearts, and the weaker religion is, the greater the social vacuum in which there is no relationship between people. And on the contrary, the believing society is like a building, each part of which strengthens the other and there is no social vacuum in it.

Ignorance, poverty and colonialism are considered the trinity of the enemy that destroys societies and wipes them out of existence, so Malek Bennabi sees that the alliance of ignorance, poverty and colonialism, which he described as the devil, is the worst thing that can befall societies, enslaving them and subjecting them to

experiments by applying the phrase "divide and conquer", and there is no evil that befalls society, individuals and groups, and weakens its relationships with each other, except that one of the sides of this trinity extends into it. It is the duty of every society that wants to follow the path of civilization or maintain it to protect its network of social relations by reducing the divisive, negative effects in society and increasing the documented, wanted effects in the relationships between individuals, by teaching them how to live together, how to build a cohesive cultural system that preserves the cohesion and ties of society through effective and positively influential social education, while being careful not to borrow solutions and ideas from the past or from abroad without preparing the necessary environment for their implementation.

In his pursuit to identify destructive factors to societies, he stated poverty and ignorance and colonialism. This model does not account for internal factors such as corruption, environmental degradation, or even authoritarian governance that may have the same effect – if not more- on destroying a given society. Furthermore, the solution Bennabi provides (strengthening the network of social relations) lacks realistic strategies for addressing systemic inequalities or internal and external factors that undermine and threaten such networks and societies.

7- Conclusion

What is stated in the book “Birth of a Society” is part of Malek Bennabi’s project on civilization, which he defined as the product of three elements: man, soil, and time. According to him, every civilization requires an initial capital consisting of man, soil, and time. It is composed of these three basic elements, and it must be composed of the moral factor - which necessitates its cohesion - and without this factor, the process is likely to result in a shapeless, fluctuating pile, unable to take a direction or maintain it, or have a destination instead of being a specific whole in its structure and in what it aims for.

He explored civilization from a social perspective, emphasizing its role as the basis of societal issues and distinguishing it from primitive societies. A historical society, characterized by civilization, represents its beginning and development. He assumed that religion acts as a catalyst that transforms society from a static primitive state into a dynamic historical society. The introduction of religion into society represents the pivotal moment of its birth, as its development begins alongside societal progress. This development is evident through the collective interactions within society, which shape the effectiveness of its spheres: ideas, individuals, and material aspects.

Social relations are what provide the necessary links between ideas and things within the scope of the joint activity carried out by a society. The elements of civilization that Malek Bennabi arrived at through analysis, civilization = human + soil + time. the problem of civilization is represented by three primary problems, which are: the problem of man, of soil and the problem of time, here Bennabi links between the aforementioned trilogy of civilization and what he wrote previously about the three worlds. And the link between them is: the network of social relations, As a way to achieve a common goal, which is civilization, and if the wealth of a certain society depends on the quantity of its ideas on the one hand, it is linked to the importance of its network of relations on the other hand, Man cannot advance except by the existence of a creative social network with other people, with ideas and with things.

This social space that enables ideas to pass through it with complete integration and circulation, this space that inspires man in his dealings with the world of things so that he is not a dead individual without a soul, goal or vision, but rather a person who interacts with his surroundings, this space that places society in a high degree of internal harmony in which ideas are diverse and different but united by a common ground in which there are primary values and common goals. This book makes us realize our lack of awareness that enables us to establish the constants that preserve social networks and remove the rodents (as Malek Bennabi called them) that tamper with them and try to tear them apart, and our need for thinkers like Malek Bennabi who put all their efforts into analyzing social changes and searching for pesticides for those rodents is increasing.

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