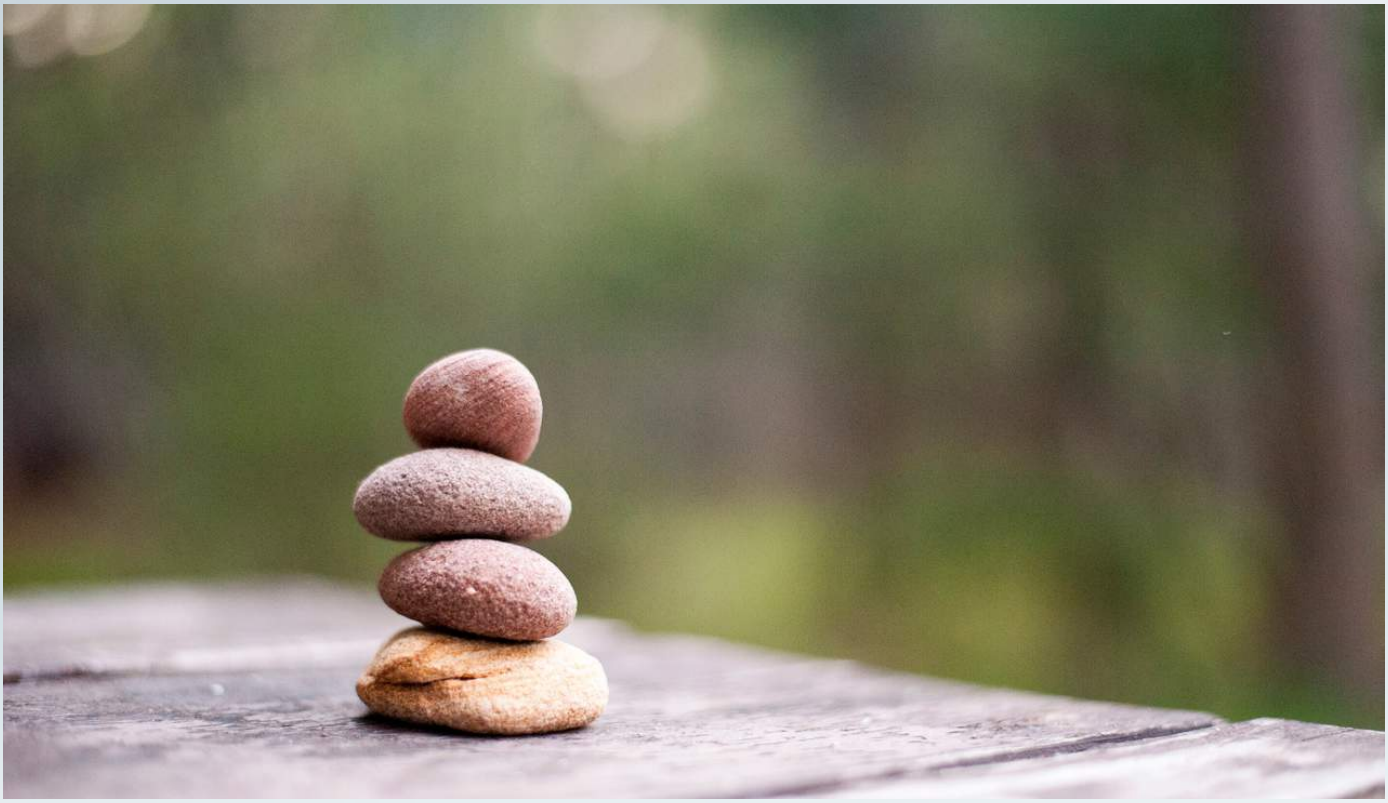
March 2022, Issue No.18

THE 5D THINKING NEWSLETTER

A UNIQUE APPROACH TO READ THE UNIVERSE



Special read: "Wishing Upon a Shooting Star" by Aisha Alowais

SNEAK PEAK OF WHAT'S INSIDE:

- *5D Thinking on Rocks and the Rock Cycle*
- *"We Are All Messengers" by Dr. Colin Turner*
- *"Webs of Steel" by Saba Irshad*
- *The Socio-Intellectual Foundations of Malek Bennabi's Approach to Civilization (book review by Malik Bilal)*

Welcome to the eighteenth edition of

The 5D Thinking Newsletter!

Dear Subscriber,

Ramadan Mubarak and welcome to the eighteenth edition of the 5D Thinking newsletter!

In this issue, you will find a brief summary and link to the 5D thinking topic "Rocks and the Rock Cycle" where we take the time to reflect on the significance of rocks in our everyday lives and use the character lessons derived from observing the Rock Cycle to learn how to live in a more meaningful and moral way.

Also in this edition, Dr. Colin Turner reminds us in his article "We Are All Messengers" that we are constantly communicating messages to others about how we see the world through what we choose to say and do. Dr Turner opens our eyes to how the use of certain words or phrases in everyday conversations leads others to interpret our personal life philosophies.

In "Wishing Upon A Shooting Star", Aisha Alowais takes you on an incredible journey through a meteor shower using the 5D thinking perspective. Likewise, again using the 5DT approach, in the article "Webs of Steel", Saba Irshad invites you to observe and analyze the spider's fascinating web-making capabilities.

In this issue, you can also read about the 5D Thinking Team's upcoming Ramadan program for children.

Remember, you can unsubscribe at any time by clicking on the link at the end of the newsletter. We hope to continue to inspire you with the Five Dimensional (5D) Thinking Approach to education.

On behalf of the 5D Thinking Team,

Nadine Kamal

5D Thinking Approach on Rocks and the Rock Cycle

What is the surface of the Earth made of? Think about the ground beneath your feet, your car and your house. The surface of our planet is known as the Earth's crust.
The crust is composed of nothing but rocks, soil, and minerals.
In the newly released 5D thinking topic, we explore the Earth's beautiful rocks through the 5D thinking approach.

In the **first** dimension, Analytical Thinking, we explore how rocks are made of various minerals and contain organic material such as fossilized plants or animals. We explain the Rock Cycle in terms of weathering, erosion, deposition, metamorphism, and volcanic process. We also highlight some fascinating facts about rocks and the Rock Cycle.

Next, in the **second** dimension, Analogical Thinking, to better appreciate the Rock Cycle, we reflect on the recycling process of plastic bottles. We learn how this process involves a number of carefully calculated steps and efficient machinery.

Then, in the **third** dimension, Critical Thinking, we analyze the recycling process and conclude that it cannot occur without the trucks that collect the recyclables, or without the action of workers or worker-operated machines who physically sort the plastic into different types. Thus, we argue that the Rock Cycle, which is both a delicate and highly beneficial process, cannot occur without the work of an even higher Source of intelligence, knowledge, and power.

In the **fourth** dimension, Meditative Thinking, we reflect on how the formation of rocks is linked to the entire universe at both the macro and micro levels. At the micro-level, for the Rock Cycle to exist, minerals within each rock need to possess specific physical and chemical properties. At the macro level, the Rock Cycle functions through the apparent collaboration between the Sun, the atmosphere, the oceans, the force of gravity and the solar and galactical systems in which they all exist. Thus, we conclude that the delicate and efficient system of the Rock Cycle shows that the Creator is All-Wise. The abundance of rocks and minerals shows that He is the Most Generous.

Finally, in the **fifth** dimension, the Moral Thinking dimension, we invite readers to reflect on the vital importance of rocks and the Rock Cycle for sincere appreciation. We also derive certain character lessons as we reflect on the process and outcomes of the Rock Cycle.

To read more about the 5DT approach to the Rock Cycle, please click

We Are All Messengers

Dr. Colin Turner

Everything that we do, or say, contains within it a message about how you see the world. Whether it is a smile or a frown, a word of kindness or an outburst of anger, your actions and your words frame how you are interpreting your situation and, indeed, your own existence. Since we cannot help but act and converse, we are sending out messages all the time, and those messages help to inform others who we are and what we are about.

This means that even on the level of everyday conversation, we are responsible for the impressions we give and for the statements of meaning that we issue. For example, "It's horrible weather today, isn't it?" may, when said to a friend, not provoke much of a reaction. But at the back of that friend's mind, your words will settle and form part of your friend's impression of you and your understanding of the world. And with the words "It's horrible weather today, isn't it?", that impression will be of someone who thinks that weather can actually be 'horrible'. When in fact, there is never anything horrible about any kind of weather: 'horrible' is a subjective value judgement which has actually nothing to do with the state of the atmosphere. But for the friend who has heard these words, the impression will be that you are someone who believes that the Creator actually creates 'horrible' things and situations. The words, "Isn't it?" suggest, also, that you are looking for confirmation of your opinion. That is, you want your friend to agree that the Creator's creation is horrible! So, with the simple words, "It's horrible weather today, isn't it?", you are in fact saying that you think that some of the things your Creator creates are horrible, and that you hope that others will agree with you.

And so although you probably don't mean to give that impression, that is the impression that you are in fact giving. Similarly, if you tell someone how 'lucky' you are, you are saying something else about your Creator's creation, namely that there are some things which happen arbitrarily, without His will. Or perhaps you will look at a beautiful cherry tree and say, "Oh, isn't Mother Nature wonderful?", thus attributing another of the Creator's creatures to something that is non-existent.

We are all messengers, in a sense. What messages have you sent out today? And are there any of them that you would like to 'unsend'?

Wishing Upon A Shooting Star

Aisha Alowais

They say make a wish when you see a shooting star, and it shall be granted. The truth is, those shooting stars are chunks of larger space rocks that burn up upon entry into the Earth's atmosphere. Scientifically, they are known as meteors. Their parent bodies could be meteoroids (rocks), which are smaller fragments of asteroids, or comets (icy bodies mixed with some rocks and dust). When meteors do not completely burn, they survive and make their way to land on Earth and are called meteorites. It is then that scientists collect them for analysis purposes since they are the oldest record of the formation of our solar system.

It is also worthwhile to mention that these beautiful bodies can have a moon or other planetary origins, and most of them are found in the asteroid belt located between Mars and Jupiter. While it is true that meteors appear randomly, there are dates when they appear more often during what is known as a 'meteor shower'. Depending on the month, meteors vary in their presence; during December the Geminids meteor shower results in about 150 meteors per hour, while in April, the Lyrids meteor shower, results in 18 meteors per hour.[1] If you have not seen meteors yet, head to a place with no light pollution, and observe the beautiful drama of the sky.

What if we wanted those meteors to appear at a certain time? And in a specific place? Well, meteors are not in our control, but fireworks are! However, fireworks require much more human effort than meteors. In fact, meteors do not need human intervention at all, let alone them being free of cost, unlike fireworks. Also, while meteors could be dangerous if they were big in size, fireworks could be much more harmful in that they can cause injuries and property damage. Furthermore, fireworks also harm the environment by causing extensive air pollution. In terms of similarities, both meteors and fireworks can appear in various colors. Meteors with high calcium content may appear as a purple streak of light, while fireworks having barium chloride gives a luminescent green color.

The question is, when and why were fireworks made in the first place? Historians believe that fireworks originally developed in the second century B.C. in ancient Liuyang, China. The first natural "firecrackers" were bamboo stalks that when thrown in a fire, would explode with a bang, warding off evil spirits. Then, during the period 600-900 AD, a Chinese alchemist is said to have mixed potassium nitrate, sulfur and charcoal to produce a black, flaky powder – the first "gunpowder". This powder was poured into hallowed out bamboo sticks, and later stiff paper tubes, forming the first man-made fireworks. This invention made its way to Europe and was widely used for religious festivals and public entertainment.

[1] https://www.amsmeteors.org/meteor-showers/meteor-shower-calendar/

[2] https://www.americanpyro.com/history-of-fireworks#:~:text=Many%20historians%20believe%20that%20fireworks,air%20pockets%20in%20the%20bamboo.

Wishing Upon A Shooting Star

Aisha Alowais

Today, fireworks are used worldwide to celebrate special ceremonies. Clearly, the invention of fireworks developed through the centuries and required experience to produce them. Fireworks require the mixing of black powder with different chemicals or metals. When it reacts with heat, the chosen additive produces a certain colour. Do you think wind can bring these metals and chemicals together and produce fireworks? Will it light the fuse? Will it take into consideration the safety of the people in the surrounding area? How about a child mixing those chemicals and lighting a fuse? This would likely result in severe injury to the child should the mixture “randomly” work. Therefore, it is obvious that there must be a maker behind fireworks, and someone who lights the fuse.

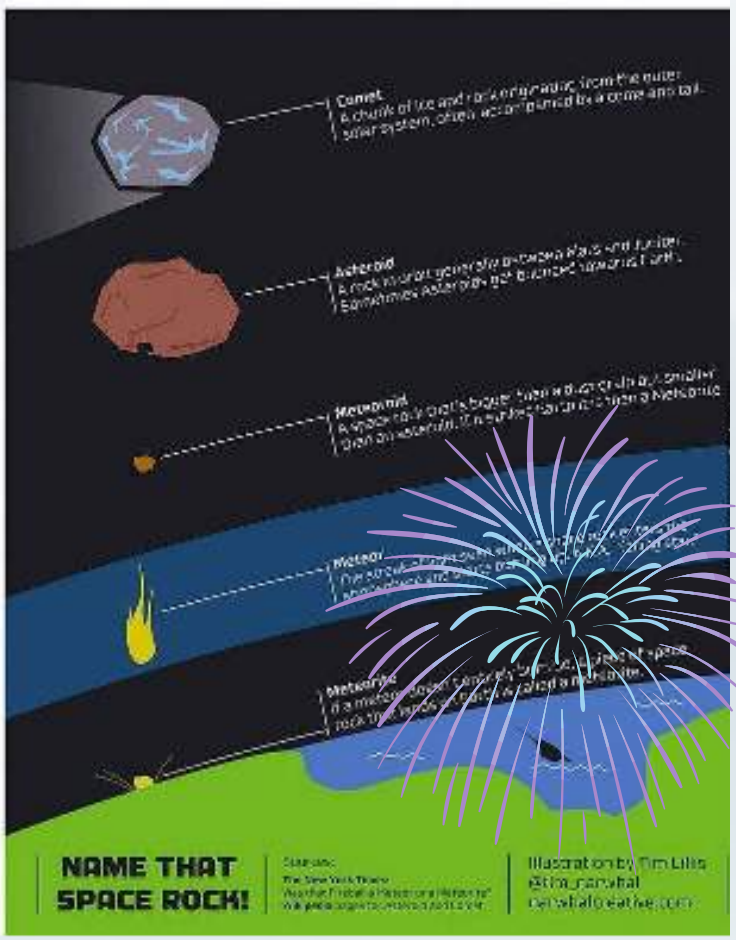
Similarly, meteors could not have been made by accident or by nature. The elements they consist of did not randomly appear nor did they create themselves. How can nature produce a silicon element with a different atomic structure and number than a nickel for example? How can it decide whether to make a gas or a metal? Looking at the home of meteors- the asteroid belt, on what basis did nature decide to place them there? Are we merely “lucky” that most meteors land either in the sea or in an uninhabited desert? Do meteors have a sense of consciousness to make them care for people and keep them from harm? Is a meteor aware of the elements it is made of? Of course not. There must be a Creator of meteors, a Creator who created elements that eventually manifested as planets, asteroids, and everything else. Nature, chance, and cause do not have the will, knowledge or power to make meteors. They cannot even direct a meteor and tell it where to go. Indeed, there must be wisdom behind the existence of meteors and their designated location. It is through fallen meteors that scientists were able to understand how our solar system formed including our planet Earth and all other planets. It is through observing meteors that scientists understood the phenomenon of meteor showers. Meteors are but one sign among many others that point out the secrets of the universe and its Creator.

For us to observe meteors, we need to have eyes. For meteors to be observed by our eyes, there must be an atmosphere where entering meteoroids could burn and appear as meteors. For that to happen, there need to be meteoroids roaming around in the solar system that were a result of asteroids smashing into each other. On a micro level, each of these bodies needs to be made of some elements like oxygen, silicon, magnesium and iron- with certain ratios- for them to be classified as space rocks. Each meteorite, when found by scientists and amateurs, needs to be treated delicately and analyzed using various techniques to determine its age- thereby determining the age of the solar system. Indeed, the macro and micro levels are profoundly intertwined and are connected to the universe at large.

Wishing Upon A Shooting Star

Aisha Alowais

Therefore, we understand that the Maker of meteors must be the Maker of the entire universe along with its building blocks such as the elements found within them. He must be the All-Powerful who creates and controls the paths of these meteors. He must be the Most Merciful who blessed us with an atmosphere that protects us from meteors. He must be the All-Knowing who inspired humans to inspect and investigate meteorites to understand His signs in the universe. He must be the Most Beautiful who embellished the sky with beautiful stars and dazzling meteors. Meteors tell us about His name The Manifest when they appear in the sky, and His name The Hidden when analyzed.



Although they are often small in size, meteorites are of great value. They each differ in their appearance and components, reminding us that we are beautifully different from each other.

Were it not for meteors, the formation of the planets would have still been a mystery. In ancient times, the appearance of a meteor was documented, and it was only after compiling their writings that scientists were able to classify meteor showers and know beforehand their timings.

This teaches us that as humans we need a lot of time and experience to comprehend a phenomenon. It also teaches us that all ancient civilizations took part in shaping the science of meteors as we know it today. Similarly, we must continue our collective efforts in science for the benefit of humanity yet be mindful of the Only Maker of every single part of this universe. Moreover, the sudden appearance of meteors, especially the ones not belonging to a certain meteor shower, remind us of our impotence and lead us to realize that He is the Only All-Powerful, All-Knowing One. Indeed, to appreciate meteors we should realize the Maker of these beautiful bodies whenever we observe them, we should reflect on how such small space rocks hold the key to understanding the solar system, and we should be grateful to the Most Bountiful for giving us such precious extraterrestrial rocks.

Webs of Steel

Saba Irshad Ansari

Have you ever noticed fine threads hanging from the ceiling in a remote corner of your home or a small spider landing on top of your work desk? Spiders are fantastic creatures. Their webs are more common during the monsoon season but did you know that they are actually stronger than steel? There are 40,000 species of spiders on Plant Earth, everywhere except Antarctica. They belong to the kingdom Animalia and to the class Arachnida and order Araneae. These arthropods have eight legs, chelicerae with fangs that may give quite a venomous bite, and spinnerets that extrude silk. Spiders are predators and feed on small insects, but larger species are recorded to have preyed upon birds and lizards. “Spiders use a wide range of strategies to capture prey: trapping it in sticky webs, lassoing it with sticky bolas, mimicking the prey to avoid detection, or running it down. Most detect prey mainly by sensing vibrations, but the active hunters have acute vision and hunters of the genus Portia show signs of intelligence in their choice of tactics and ability to develop new ones.” Some species like the Black Widow and Brown Recluse spider are poisonous and can cause serious damage to human beings leading to death. Most spiders eat flies and other insects by trapping them in their webs. They are known to inject a digestive fluid into their prey and suck out the liquified remains. Every species produces silk but not all of them build webs. The silk is made up of flexible protein fiber and is very strong. They spin webs to trap their prey, build tiny chambers for their eggs, and to line their homes. Many spider species can run fast and jump quite high. Their heads and bodies are covered with tiny hairs which help them sense movements around them. “A thread of spider silk is five times stronger than a steel thread of the same weight.”

Having said that let us have a look at the process of making steel and its threads to draw an analogy with the threads a spider produces. Steel is made from iron ore or scrap by getting rid of impurities such as nitrogen, silicon, phosphorous, sulfur, and excess carbon. Alloying elements such as manganese, nickel, chromium, carbon, and vanadium are then are added to it. The steelmaking process requires a great deal of care to avoid dissolved gases such as oxygen and nitrogen and to ensure the quality of liquid steel.

Earlier, in the medieval age, crucible steel was made by melting cast iron or pig iron because of its high carbon content and low melting point as steel and iron were very difficult to melt using charcoal. India, Sri Lanka, and Central Asia have a rich history of producing steel swords and other items using the wootz process.

Webs of Steel

Saba Irshad Ansari

The modern steelmaking process has three steps. The first step involves smelting iron into steel. The second step involves adding or removing other elements such as alloying agents and dissolved gases. Steel sheets, rolls, etc., are formed in the third step. The whole process of steelmaking requires lots of energy for smelting which is often done at blast furnaces or electric furnaces that require a high voltage of electricity. We learned that a lot of effort, knowledge, will, and money is required to make simply one batch of steel sheets. Huge machines are required along with a massive team to work in a steelmaking factory. So, it is logical to say that in its usable form, the steel did not occur on its own- there is a group of people who work behind the scenes. Similarly, do you not think it is reasonable to say spiders have a Maker too? The similar characteristic features spiders exhibit are universal. Hence, is it not pointing to the One Hand who is responsible for creating them? Moreover, spiders are part of the ecosystem at large, so, what is the amount of knowledge, will, and power the Maker of the spiders possesses? Who has given spiders the ability to spin webs that are stronger than steel of the same weight? So, do you not think that spiders are created by someone who has Absolute Knowledge? Are spiders not a sign of the One who is All-Wise and the Best of Fashioners? Spiders are connected to the entire universe because these tiny animals are dependent upon other insects to survive. They are also dependent upon the air, sun, water, etc. This long chain of interdependence indicates their interconnectedness.

In turn, this interconnectedness proves that the One who has created spiders must be the One who has created the whole cosmos. Surely, He must be the Most Gracious who has caressed the cosmos artistically to perfection. He must be extremely Powerful to execute everything which works in perfect synchronization and harmony with each other.

Spiders might not be everybody's favorite creatures. They appear to be a nuisance by spinning webs anywhere and everywhere but, like everything else, spiders are indeed samples of God's bounties. They might themselves be pests but they are also pest controllers because they feed on mosquitoes, fleas, flies, etc. and help us curtail various diseases. Their venom is used for medicinal purposes.

On a lighter note, what if there were no spiders? We wouldn't have the Spiderman series! Spiders may be commonly associated with spooky movie scenes but their web designs have also inspired many artists. Spiders put much effort into building webs- a phenomenon that serves to teach us many lessons.

By witnessing the action of spiders, we learn to work with the innate potential that God gave us. Spiders are designed to spin webs. We are also designed with a purpose. Our purpose is to worship the Creator through the use of good words and actions. We must adopt the moral values bestowed upon us by the Creator of the Universe to become better human beings. We must be hardworking and diligent to unleash our potential for good outcomes. We must reflect on the Almighty's creations and remember his gifts to us. As we study what spiders do, we must realize that everything that is done directly or indirectly serves others. We must also go beyond self-serving to help people and animals. So the next time you see a spider, watch it from a safe distance, reflect on the bounties of God and be thankful for the presence of free pest control servants.

[1] "Spider". Wikipedia. Retrieved Feb 25, 2022, from https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spider
[1] "Spiders". National Geographic. Retrieved March 08, 2022, from https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/facts/spiders
[1] "Spiders". Retrieved March 08, 2022, from https://www.dkfindout.com/us/animals-and-nature/invertebrates/spiders/
[1] "Steelmaking". Wikipedia. Retrieved March 09, 2022, from https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steelmaking
[1] "Crucible steel". Wikipedia. Retrieved March 09, 2022, from https://en.mwikipedia.org/wiki/Crucible_steel

The Socio-Intellectual Foundations of Malek Bennabi's Approach to Civilization by Badrane Benlahcene (A Book Review by Malik Bilal)

Malek Bennabi (10905-1973), the Algerian thinker and Muslim intellectual, is, unfortunately, lesser-known outside the Arab world. Since Bennabi wrote either in Arabic or French, his incredible work regarding critical analysis and conceptualization of cultural and civilizational issues remained relatively inaccessible. This was, most probably, for two apparent reasons. First, the intellectual level of the language and content, given its technicality and construction, was undeniably higher than the ordinary reader's. More precisely, it lacked the popular emotional and political appeal; a dominant decolonizing articulation found in the writings of, for example, Maududi and Syed Qutb. Second, these few translated works were insufficient to describe the comprehensiveness of Bennabi's scheme of thought. Nevertheless, having realized the significance of Bennabi's approach and method to the renaissance question, Arab intellectuals became more interested in translating and communicating Bennabi's ideas globally. In this context, Benlahcene's exploration and explanation of the socio-intellectual foundations of Malek Bennabi's approach to civilization is a worthy effort.

The first part comprises three chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the concepts and approaches to civilization. Applying binary vocabulary, i.e., literal and terminological, the author defines the concept of civilization in binary traditions, i.e., Western scientific tradition and Muslim scientific tradition. The comparison provides a clear sense of overlap and divergence between the two traditions regarding the meaning and development of the concept of civilization.

Chapter 2 starts with the following opening remarks, "[I]n the 1930s, Bennabi realized that the crisis of the Muslim world could not be diagnosed by means of a superficial analysis" (p. 32). This is hereby suggesting that the crises demand a new analytical and pathological study of the elements of civilization. In this chapter, the author discusses Bennabi's conceptualization of the elements of civilization. Benlahcene painstakingly presents Bennabi's approach in sequential order of the definition of civilization, civilizational equation, the concept of three realms, and the concept of the social relations network. In the author's assumption, Bennabi has criticized the notion proposing colonization, lack of resources and lack of scientific progress as the major causes of the decline of the Muslim world. Instead, Bennabi theorizes the idea of colonizability- "vulnerability to be colonized"- as the fundamental cause of decadence (p. 33). While critically examining how and why decadence emerges and functions, the author provides an organized and coherent explanation of the different dimensions of Bennabi's core diagnosis that, "[T]he problem of every people, in its essence, is that of its civilization (p. 33)."

Chapter 3 presents Bennabi's interpretation of the movement of civilization. The author begins by unpacking Bennabi's view of the cyclical movement of civilization; its pattern, psycho-temporal conditions, identity and character, and the notion of the cycle (pp. 66-67). Then, the three phases of the "cyclical phenomenon," i.e., spiritual phase, rational phase and instinctive phase are explored with special reference to Islamic civilization. Bennabi's view of the interaction- the starting point of the civilizing process or historical action- between an idea (religion in Bennabi's theory) and the natural man (man of fitrah) and the sociological and psychological changes, as a result this interaction, have been analysed (p. 69).

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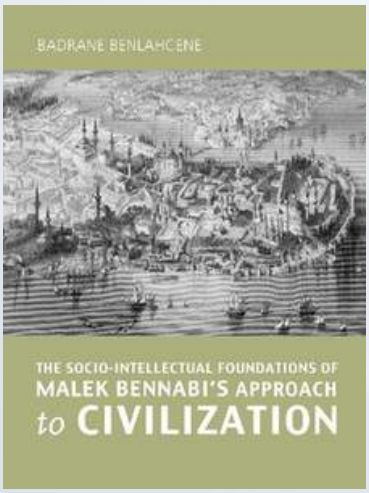

The second part comprises chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 is devoted to examining the internal-social factors that influenced Bennabi's civilizational theorization. The author applies the internal-social dimension of Mu to analyze the impact of internal factors such as family, religion, education, intellectual interaction, and social activism on Bennabi's approach to the functionality of civilization.

Chapter 5 examines the external-social factors that influenced Bennabi's diagnosis of civilizational problems. The author applies the external-social dimension - macro-level analysis- of Mu to analyze the impact of two external factors, i.e., the colonization process and decolonization process on Bennabi's approach to civilization.

The author provides a picture of Algeria before colonization in order to make it understandable, by comparing, how "totalitarian colonialism" ruptured and damaged the Algerian society; its culture, polity, religion, and identity. The author also underlines the operating tools of French colonialism; Christianization, imposition of the French language, demographic change and impoverishment policy (p. 147). According to the author, analysis of the interface between Algerians and colonizing factors led Bennabi to develop the concept of "colonizability"; an internal propensity to accept external effect (p. 154). Colonizability, the author posits, is Bennabi's core diagnosis of the problems of Muslim civilization.

The third part comprises chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 examines the internal-intellectual factors, applying Mu, which influenced Bennabi's approach to civilization. Chapter 7 analyzes the impact of "externally borrowed" intellectual concepts, terms and methods on Bennabi's formulations. According to the author, in Bennabi's case, the external-intellectual dimension involves the impact of the Qur'an and Sunnah, Muslim reformist thought, psychology, philosophy, and natural science. The Quran and Sunnah, the author posits, have shaped the ontological and epistemological aspect of Bennabi's intellectual attitude toward understanding the meaning of civilizational change (pp. 209-215). The author explains how the Qur'anic verse, "Verily, never will Allah change the conditions of a people until they change their inner selves" inspired Bennabi's idea of "change in human conditions" (p. 211). According to Benlahcene, psychology, particularly the ideas of Freud, Jung and Piaget, helped Bennabi to understand the two important ideas related to his civilizational equation; the "psychological role of religion" and the "transformation of human personality" (pp. 223-231).

To conclude, despite a few repetitions (seemingly unavoidable) and typos, I can recommend this book to students and scholars who are interested in: Muslim reformist thought, Muslim renaissance movements, Muslim personalities, Islam and decolonial discourse, and Muslim cultural and civilizational thought. The book provides, through an exploration of Bennabi's ideas, convincing answers to many critical questions related to the decadence of Muslim civilization, the rise of Muslim liberation movements, Muslims and scientific progress of the West, and the renaissance of Muslim civilization. More profoundly, the book suggests, applying Bennabi's framing, alternatives to modernism, political activism and Sufi quietism; approaches to the renaissance phenomenon developed and applied within the Muslim world.

READING THE UNIVERSE

5D THINKING

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Click on the image below to view the YouTube clip on the Rocks topic through the 5D Thinking approach.

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