

Social and educational thought in the thought of Malik Bennabi**Received date: 07/02/2025****Accepted date: 19/11/2025**

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Abstract:

The current study aims to identify the educational concepts in the thought of Malik Ben Nabi, providing the research with the ground on which it is based and at the same time drawing the framework within which it will move. He paid special and deep attention to the most important educational and social concepts

Related to the social system,

through which Malik Ben Nabi analysed the Islamic and European civilisation in terms of its emergence and development, investigated the causes of its collapse and decay, discussed the foundations on which it rests, the obstacles that hinder its progress, the issues and challenges it faces, and offered solutions to save it from its demise.

Keywords: Educational-concepts; social order; educational planning; social issues; social wealth.

Introduction:

Malik Ben Nabi believes that confusion in concepts does not give the concept the ends for which it was created. Borrowing concepts from other sciences and using them in the human sciences without adapting them makes things more ambiguous. He insists on knowing the general framework in which education is formed; as every educational project needs a preconception about understanding the educational process and its purpose, as well as planning for it, defining the social environment in which it will be practised, and clarifying the concepts that support the establishment of its project. Thanks to these elements, any society achieves the goal and objective it expects from education.

Therefore, we will try to identify some educational and social concepts, which can be considered among the necessary keys to identify the educational thought of Malik Ben Nabi, who believes that terms in our sociology should be defined according to the historical and social context, otherwise it becomes closer to literary discussions, and also to avoid confusion with the terms of Western sociology in light of the civilizational conflict.

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From the above, the following questions arise:

□ *What are the most prominent educational concepts in Malek Bennabi's thought?*

□ *What are the most prominent social concepts in Malek Bennabi's thought?*

Chapter I: Malik Ben Nabi's Educational Concepts:

1. The concept of education:

When talking about education, we find it difficult to give a specific and comprehensive definition of it, as there are many of these definitions that differ according to the philosophy or view of education, as some see it as 'a necessary process to face life and its requirements, and to regulate public behaviours in society in order to live among the community in an appropriate manner, and its necessity for both the individual and the community, and its necessity for the human individual is to preserve his race, direct his instincts, regulate his emotions and develop his tendencies, and transfer the cultural heritage to him, and patterns of behaviour that the group accepts, and the necessity of education for both society and individuals appears in the transfer, preservation and purification of cultural heritage'⁽¹⁾.

The process of education 'derives its foundations, methods and objectives from society and its culture because the socialisation processes undertaken by education achieve the membership of the new generation in society by teaching them the group's language, thought, traditions, customs, values and skills, and the social origins of education can be understood through the social conditions and psychological patterns prevailing in community education'⁽²⁾.

Education in general is the development of physical, mental and moral functions until they reach their perfection through training and education.

However, for Malik Ben Nabi, education 'seeks to clarify the importance of adapting man psychologically and socially by providing him with practical ideas with which to face his own circumstances.'⁽³⁾

Ben Nabi also emphasises that 'it is not a set of theoretical rules and concepts that have no power over reality, over the world of persons, the world of ideas, the world of things. It is not the product of learned men and sailors of science, who know all the words of dictionaries, without knowing what these words translate into facts, good or bad, or those who know the principles and teachings of Islam. Every fact does not

affect the social triad: People, Ideas, Things, is a dead truth ⁽⁴⁾.

The researcher believes that humans are the only living organism capable of self-awareness and realising what they are doing, and they are constantly changing according to natural, environmental and climatic factors. He does not live in isolation, but interacts with everyone around him. Man is an integral part of society, and each individual in society is a member of it to form a solid building of society. The relationship between man and society is achieved by preparing the individual, modifying his actions and taming his instincts, and this can only happen through education, which instils in him the basic fundamentals he needs during his journey with himself or with his community.

According to Malik Ben Nabi, 'the integration of the individual into a social network is a process of displacement, and at the same time it is a process of selection, and this double process takes place under normal conditions, i.e. in the case of organised society - the school - and this is what is called education' ⁽⁵⁾.

The researcher believes that through this idea, Malik Ben Nabi indicates that the determination of an individual's social status is done by determining his educational and cognitive achievements.

Malik Ben Nabi set a basic goal for education: 'To teach the individual the art of living with his fellows, that is, to teach him how to civilise' ⁽⁶⁾. *This is linked to the necessity of collective action and the interaction of individuals with each other in accordance with the socio-religious environment.*

The researcher believes that education is an individual necessity on the one hand and a social necessity on the other. Education is responsible for guiding the individual towards effective adaptation in this changing age, and by adaptation we do not mean surrendering to the products of civilisation, whatever they may be. It is also responsible for the development of a sense of commonality, as education achieves the process of social belonging. The aim of education is for the individual to have a spiritual and mental energy that helps him to distinguish and respond correctly to the products of civilisation.

2. Educational planning:

Educational planning is based on prioritising priorities, achieving goals, employing all human resources, and formulating educational policy, taking into account various historical, social, political,

economic and other influences and criteria.

Malik says: *'The process of reorganisation and reorientation (construction and activation) should be the first task in the plan of the Islamic renaissance, because it is its realisation that creates the first condition for transforming the efforts within the scope of this renaissance into effective efforts. This work was done in the first Islamic society thanks to the sponsorship of the Qur'anic idea, not as concepts studied and taught by jurists in Sharia, but as a working and influential "truth", which directly collects in its system all the actions and signs performed by the individual.'*⁽⁷⁾

Educational planning has important characteristics that Malik tried to highlight, including: 'The organisation, life and movement of society, even its chaos, inactivity and stagnation, are all functionally related to the system of ideas circulating in that society; if this system changes in one way or another, all other social characteristics are modified in the same direction. Ideas as a whole are an important part of the tools of development in a given society.'⁽⁸⁾

We understand from this that Malik Ben Nabi wanted to point out one of the important characteristics of educational planning, namely realism. We must know the current educational reality and its intellectual system and then relate it to the social reality, so that we can develop an implementable educational plan that will help in the development of society.

'What is meant by an intellectual system is the set of ideas and concepts that circulate in a culture and constitute its frame of reference, so that it determines the nature of the relationship of the ideas held by a person with religious or ideological beliefs, labour, objects, history, culture, the other, the desired goals and the means to reach them, and everything.'⁽⁹⁾

The researcher believes that the educational plan should be comprehensive, as it includes the internal elements of the educational process, as well as taking into account the various fields with which the educational system interacts, as there is no meaning in an educational plan that highlights the objectives and ignores the means of achieving them, and this is what we observe in current educational plans.

Malik Ben Nabi concludes that 'the importance of ideas in the life of a given society manifests itself in two ways: They either influence as factors for the advancement of social life, or, on the contrary, as

pathogenic factors that make social growth difficult or impossible.⁽¹⁰⁾

The researcher believes that educational planning is a necessity, as it represents the set of initial perceptions that exist about the educational project; represented by the set of ideas that society holds about its educational project in the past and the current reality and what it can add to this project of new ideas and perceptions in the future. These ideas are represented in the foundations and desired goals of education according to the characteristics of the society. In other words, the intellectual system of any society reflects on education, either making it a real investment or vice versa, as it is the tool for the formation of the human being, the creator of development in all its fields.

Malik says: 'If we study the aspects of activity in a particular country, we must, in order to understand them, return them to the framework of a civilisation, from which life derives its forms, and in which the individual always forms his ideas and forms of activity, according to the pattern created by centuries and generations.'⁽¹¹⁾

The researcher believes that the educational plan should be continuous and flexible, so that each plan is linked to the previous one, and that the plan should have sufficient flexibility, so that it can be modified according to circumstances. Any educational planning that departs from the historical, social and cultural basis of the society and in accordance with the spirit of the group will inevitably lead to disappointment.

Malik Ben Nabi gives us an example: 'The third world countries, in their struggle against colonialism, built a militant ideology aimed at independence. When they became independent, they lost the motivation to move social energy and ideologies, as individual activity deviated towards privacy and individualism again, and the crisis was determined by the fact that these peoples have independence and have work projects but do not have an ideology.'⁽¹²⁾

The researcher concludes that educational planning stems from the need of education itself for planning, the fact that the problems of education are intertwined and integrated, and that the solutions to be provided must be comprehensive and balanced, deriving their principles from reality, united by a single comprehensive vision and a unified framework. If the Arab-Islamic society wants to start formulating its educational problems and envisioning solutions to them,

education must have its own cultural, social, ideological and civilisational specificity.

Islamic societies today need a solid foundation for the beginning of their educational project in building man and society. Education performs the function of alerting and inciting; alerting man to the danger around him and inciting him to prepare to confront it, and the need to bring about change for the better in order to achieve the high form of life that Malik Ben Nabi called 'civilisation'.

Chapter I I: Malik Ben Nabi's Social Concepts

1. Description Society:

Society is built on individuals, and each member of society is a factor in its construction, and this explains the common sense towards meeting and living in a group, within common and mutual interests. There must be something that unites individuals, there must be a common ideology, there must be values that unite them, there must be principles that unite them.

Malik describes this by saying: 'At the level of a simple insect such as the bee, we see that social life is a necessity for the individual's being, as he would throw himself into perdition if he separated from it, and man, like the bee, cannot isolate himself from society and try by his own effort, if he is destined to die.'⁽¹³⁾ Malik Ben Nabi has moved away from the accepted literary terminological definition that society is: 'A gathering of individuals with common customs, living under the same laws, and having common interests.'⁽¹⁴⁾ Malik believes that this definition is 'an external, descriptive definition that does not give the slightest explanation of the historical (function) assigned to such a grouping.'⁽¹⁵⁾

If we want to define Malik Ben Nabi's concept of society, we find that he links it to two factors that he considers important: Temporal movement (change) and historical function. 'Any community that does not evolve and change within the limits of time is outside the dialectical definition of the word society'⁽¹⁶⁾

He also says: 'In order to give our subject a logical definition, we must relate it to the coefficient of time, in order to determine the psychological and social significance of this coefficient. From this point of view, society is: A group that constantly changes its social characteristics by producing the means of change while knowing the goal it seeks behind this change.'⁽¹⁷⁾



Ben Nabi attributed our lack of understanding of the concept of society in terms of its historical function to a fundamental point: 'We did not scrutinise the terminology of sociology, so we understood that society may be a number of individuals living as they wish, whatever the links between them, this is not society, this can be called the remnants of a society that performs its function towards the individual and achieves individual comfort... It is not a number of individuals but something special, a structure and not a pile of individuals, a structure with agreed sacred things'⁽¹⁸⁾.

Through this identification of the social function of society through the historical movement, this function obliges society to provide social guarantees to its members within a certain system of a humanitarian nature, in which rights and duties are defined, and this society must provide its members with forms of high quality life, security, and stability, in other words, to provide its members with the most important moral and spiritual foundations that help it to move and grow.

2. The Social Education:

Socialisation, or as Malik Ben Nabi called it, social education, is the process of social normalisation based on educating the individual and transforming him from a biological and organic being to a cultural and social being, and one of its most important mechanisms is social interaction, and social education contains a set of values, norms and ideals that help the individual to adapt relatively to society and integrate with other individuals to form his network of relationships with them.

Malik Ben Nabi defines it as 'an effective means of changing man, teaching him how to live with his peers, how to form with them the set of forces that change the conditions of existence for the better, and how to form with them the network of relations that allow society to fulfil its common activity in history.'⁽¹⁹⁾

Social education aims to build an integrated and adaptive human being. The individual does not acquire the quality of humanity through genetic factors alone, but rather through socialisation in all its religious, educational, cultural, civilisational and historical dimensions.

Malik Ben Nabi concludes that any idea of social education must come from: 'In order to influence the way of life in a society and the behaviour of its constituent models, in other words: In order to build a

system of social education, we must have very clear ideas about the relationships and reflections that regulate the use of vital energy, at the level of the individual and at the level of society. Thus we see that whatever changes the soul changes society.⁽²⁰⁾

Malik Ben Nabi's emphasis on social education 'does not mean that it is an education that sacrifices the individual for the sake of society, as is the case with Marxist and Durkheimian theories. This relatively excessive attention to the social aspect is only an expression of the relative rather than absolute primacy of social education, a strategic primacy justified by the historical circumstances of underdeveloped Muslim society.'⁽²¹⁾ That is, social education was created for the benefit of both the individual and society.

3. The Social Relations Network:

The central issue that has occupied many researchers in contemporary educational studies is the issue of how to form a sound social network. Researchers have considered education as a means to develop this network; through education, the individual realises how to fulfil his social roles and thus establish good and sound relationships. This is done by knowing the roles, positions and social norms that help the individual to integrate into the general social structure and contribute to its development and continuity, as it is education that produces social relations and shapes social and cultural awareness.

The ability to identify the causes of the dissolution of social relations and the ability of individuals to address them requires awareness and understanding, because there is a relationship between understanding and awareness of the issue, and this is what education provides us with.

➤ The Stages in the development of social networks:

The network of social relations is of great importance in analysing the mechanisms of building a historical society, as 'the first action performed by a given society in the process of changing itself is conditional on the completion of this network of relations. Thus, we can decide that the network of relations is the first historical act that a society performs at the time of its birth...The meeting that represents the first act performed by a society at its birth is a faithful and powerful translation of its network of relations.'⁽²²⁾

'The 'work' of society is not merely the (spontaneous) agreement between persons, ideas and things, but the synthesis of these three social worlds, a synthesis whose direction and extent bring about the

'change' of life, or, more precisely, the evolution of this society: The evolution of this society... History actually begins before these worlds are formed.⁽²³⁾

According to Malik Ben Nabi, it is social relations that form that network that has a great impact on the emergence of societies and that contributes to the cyclical movement in history; therefore, it is not just an effect resulting from the addition of people, ideas and things to a particular society.

- **The birth (spiritual) stage:**

'It can be interpreted in two ways, firstly in the language of sociology when we say: It corresponds to the network of social relations when it is at its most intense, not at its most extended, and this intensity is what is suggested by the phrase 'the monolithic structure', and we can also interpret this stage in the language of psychology when we say: 'It corresponds to the stage in which the individual is at his best, i.e., the conditions in which his system of reflex actions is at its most socially effective and his vital energy is at its most organised.⁽²⁴⁾

This is the mental age for any society, because it has two advantages: All its forces are in motion, and this motion is always upward, and this is the dynamic stage in which any tendency towards inaction or stillness is condemned.

- **The stage of destabilising relationships:**

'Society enjoys its network of social relations, when it is at its most extensive and expansive, but also when it has some blemishes on its face, some shortcomings. At this stage, society continues to grow thanks to the speed gained, but not all its forces are in motion, and what is in motion may not be on the upward path: One part of the energy has gone dormant, and another part has gone into the abyss. One set of energies is no longer working, and another set is working in the opposite direction, in other words: Against the ideal of society.⁽²⁵⁾

- **The stage of regression (ego inflation):**

'Individualism prevails according to the liberation of instincts, and the network of social relations disintegrates completely: This is what is known in history as the age of decadence, as well as the age that created in Islamic society the conditions of susceptibility to colonisation and colonisation.⁽²⁶⁾

4. The social wealth:

Teamwork has become a contemporary civilisational requirement to overcome the issues of individual work, avoid many of its negatives and rationalise decision-making, but this contemporary civilisational requirement requires preparation and preparation in terms of both intellectual, practical and training aspects, and by intellectual preparation, we mean the formation of the necessary knowledge about teamwork, the knowledge base that generates belief in it as a practical behavioural approach and provides full conviction.

'The wealth of a society is not measured by the amount of (things) it has, but by the amount of ideas it has.'⁽²⁷⁾ 'The effectiveness of (ideas) is therefore subject to the network of relationships, so if the wealth of a given society depends on the quantity of its ideas on the one hand, it is linked to the importance of its network of relationships on the other.'⁽²⁸⁾

Thus, community building requires a continuous and programmed movement to build a healthy personality from birth, through diligence and systematic work to instil good values in the personality of a person from the beginning of his/her upbringing and growth, because they will grow with him/her and become an integral part of his/her physical and intellectual composition at the same time, so that society gets a productive individual with a practical personality, always ready to work in a group approach and engage with it, away from the selfishness that kills the talent.

➤ The fragility of social relations:

The phenomenon of the fragility of social relations has spread recently, which calls for research into the causes of this new phenomenon. This is what happens when the parties to the educational process stop respecting and appreciating each other; this means that social relations turn from a source of psychological comfort and social stability to a source of evil and harm.

Malik Ben Nabi says this: 'When the tension in the threads of the network loosens, and it is unable to carry out the common activity effectively, it is a sign that the society is sick and on its way to its end. If the network disintegrates completely, the society is doomed.'⁽²⁹⁾

It is worth noting that in such cases, the individual is not content to end his relations with the other person peacefully, but seeks to destroy him in a way that makes him suffer throughout his life, or spread lies about him to harm him, his reputation or his family, or to trap him to

stop his scientific or practical career, or to stop his achievements. This has given man a heart of a cold nature in some situations that does not move a knife except in the navel or the street, and even the human level, as he has become accustomed to the scenes of injustice and corruption carried by individual selfishness in all social institutions, as he lives in an atmosphere of reformist relations, and as an inevitable result, man is familiar with the general atmosphere of the society in which he lives.

'A corrupt relationship in (the world of persons) has its rapid consequences in (the world of ideas) and in (the world of things). The social fall of the (world of persons) inevitably extends to ideas and things, in the form of poverty and want.'⁽³⁰⁾

This has made social relations in the educational field in particular, and social relations in general, turn into a wide field of conflict between its various segments in all sectors and different institutions, and individual interest prevails over the general interest, so that we end up with a torn social system, and selfishness prevails in all daily dealings between individuals. The researcher argues that the predominance of individual interest in most educational institutions makes its members forget the educational objectives on which these institutions are based, whether it is a family, a school, etc. etc.

However, the researcher believes that in order to get out of this predicament, there must be a sound and balanced upbringing, as upbringing is the culmination of family, street, school and media education; and if we consider the family as the first seed in the family society, the father and mother must keep up with the latest developments in knowledge and continuous reading about other people's experiences in education, and consult specialists from sociology and psychology. So that they can give the child the basics of common sense, in a way that is appropriate for all the stages he goes through. There is no education without the world of ideas and no sound social relations without proper education.

Conclusion:

Malik Ben Nabi's main concern was how to build a civilised society for civilised people and at the same time how to preserve it, develop it, and guide it for the better in order to return to the historical cycle of human civilisation. He concluded that the network of social relations is the crucial element in linking the three worlds: The world of people, the world of ideas, and the world of things. If this interaction and linkage

between these worlds takes place, we must know the issues of the social system so that they do not continue to undermine the overall structure of society.

Education, as a subset of the general structure of society, has a social system consisting of social actors, who interact with each other according to rules, values and standards, to achieve specific goals. Education is responsible for guiding the individual towards achieving collective interests, as it represents the incubator for the gathering of individuals who develop various relationships among them, which allows the establishment of strong social bonds. Malik revealed to us that the social system maintains the construction of society by balancing the ambitions, desires and needs of the elements of society (individuals, groups, social systems) with the goals and objectives of social entities (organisations or institutions). Through the network of social relations that the individual establishes with his surroundings, he acquires the ABCs of primary education, his values, standards and personality.

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