



INSTITUTE OF OBJECTIVE STUDIES, NEW DELHI (INDIA)

Two-day International Conference in hybrid mode on

“Personality, Thought and Times of Malek Bennabi”

On March 18-19, 2023 at New Delhi (India)

CONCEPT NOTE

Towards the last decades of the 6th Century, the human society, world over, was facing many challenges, including irrationality, subjugation, slavery, racial conflicts, tribal rivalries, regional bias, caste and class prejudices, chauvinism, conflicts, superstition, exploitation of women, erosion of basic social values and lack of clarity in faiths.

The birth of Prophet Muhammad ^{saw} in 570 CE came as a boon to humanity, who in the year 610 CE called humanity as one whole body, best of the creations, towards levelheadedness, application of mind and sagacity; voicing concerns for sufferers of all kinds by then operating clumsy negativities, violence in thought and action and prejudices. That timely call of the Prophet Muhammad ^{saw} resulted into a strong movement and caught the attention of the world with much seriousness. Acceptance came from the people who wanted the situation to be corrected and obstruction from those who were interested in enjoying the status quo. In spite of the multiple challenges, the voice of well being for humanity raised by Prophet Muhammad ^{saw}, being most balanced, got place in the hearts of all foes and friends and became dominant enough to bring a substantial change in the situation on the ground. It potentially raised the human society largely above the prejudices and confusions, which were bringing it enormous suffering and unrest.

Pursuant to the efforts and steadfastness of the followers of the Prophet Muhammad ^{saw}, universal brotherhood, rule of law, equality, fairness and justice evolved as cultural values and the norms for governance. The impact of this movement is even today prominent in all parts of the world in the form of transformation it effectuated and got reflected in terms of equitability, social and political democracy, constitutionalism, fair trade practices, public endowments and recognition of property rights of all.

At the turn of the 20th Century, Muslims, who had substantially contributed to the promotion of harmony, knowledge, system development, peace and progress, faced recession and crash in their principal position as contributors and genuine leaders fairness and progress of humanity. The ideal strength of the perennial basic thought in the message put forward by Prophet Muhammad ^{saw} has made it sustain even after the downturn. However, Muslim scholars have written much on the Muslim principles and policies providing ground for their relevance to the present-day world globally in many languages. Many more scholars, world over, have tried to explain the reasons for the slump with an urge to bring back the glory to humanity which Muslims had carried forward to push aside newly emerging inequalities, prejudices and conflicts leading to bloodshed in contemporary world, whose thought deserves an objective exposition and understanding for creating clarity in thought and accuracy in action. One such scholar, worth the name, is Malek Bennabi, who was born on 1st January 1905 and passed away

on 31st October 1973. He lived during this most crucial phase of Muslim depression, two world wars and a severe cold war and wrote extensively on the theme of Muslim recession and measures to regain their lost potential to create a better world.

Malek Bennabi was an Algerian writer and philosopher, who tried to put forward the idea that the reason for the Muslim backwardness was the nonexistence of new ideas in that society. He projected it by coining the phrase *civilizational bankruptcy*. Bennabi argues that to recuperate their past splendour, Muslims have to create an environment of empowerment of individual for satisfying their spiritual and material wants with a feeling of reward for their industry and creativity.

It is quite essential to note that Bennabi, though born in Constantine (Algeria), was educated in Algeria and Paris in the discipline of engineering. Later he based himself in Cairo and studied philosophy, history and sociology, where he stayed till 1963. After his return to Algeria, Bennabi was absorbed by new scientific discoveries and creations, which made him think about the birth of cultures and civilisations with developments in the 19th Century. His focus got more on the understanding of Muslim issues which were prominently demanding an explanation in the context of the receding of people, who had once taught humanity the lessons of justice and progress.

In his book, *Les Conditions de la Renaissance* (1948), Bennabi is said to have defined culture as the approach to life and fetching of a society to being which includes aesthetic, ethical, pragmatic, and technical standards. According to him, various formulations of ideas are born only when these values are clearly defined. New thinking leads to new ideas and a dynamic society fostering a drive of vivacity for an innovative refinement. His book, *The Question of Culture* (1954), is also notable wherein he explains the organisation, progress, stagnation, functional relations in society and deterioration. Ideas, according to Bennabi, are a foundation for development in society. If the society comes to a stage like "renaissance", it shows that the society 'is enjoying a wonderful system of ideas' to provide solutions to problems.

Many Muslims attribute their loss of gleam and glitter, in present times, to atrocious situation caused by the lack of weapons and wherewithal/banks with them. Is that a truism? That may be a million dollar question, but it should not be allowed to heap up. Scholars like Malek Bennabi would rather look for promotional ideas to create a drive forward to prosperity.

These are very important thoughts put forward by this Muslim Scholar, Malek Bennabi, who wrote many books, which need to be studied with due concern to find out the pre-text of the current unfavourable situation, with reference to the past and with a possible vision for future. His sensitivities, feelings and concerns also need a sharing among the scholars for more advancement. His suggestion that the Arab and other Muslim states, particularly those not possessing an expected material power, should prioritise the task of focussing on the issues of deficiencies, and progress needs to be taken seriously.

IOS conference on Malek Bennabi

In its furtherance of the programmes on International Personalities, the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, will be organising a two-day international conference in

hybrid mode on “**Personality, Thought and Times of Malek Bennabi**” on **March 18-19, 2023 at New Delhi (India)**.

Themes for Deliberations

While it is worthwhile to highlight the life and times of Malek Bennabi in international perspectives comprehensively, certain suggestive aspects of the broader theme are noted below for deliberations at the conference:

1. Background, Education and Personality of Malek Bennabi
2. Global Social, Political and Economic Situation in Times of Malek Bennabi
3. Main Challenges faced by Muslims in the 19th and 20th Century, as defined by Malek Bennabi
4. Causes for Political, Social and Economic Recession of Muslims in the 19th and 20th Century
5. Emergence of Thought for Revival and Renaissance of Muslim Society as propounded by Malek Bennabi and other Contemporary Thinkers
6. Criticality of Methodology and Measures for Progress suggested by Malek Bennabi
7. Relevance of the Thought of Malek Bennabi to present day Circumstances

Participation:

Academicians, scholars, administrators, social workers, policy makers, promoters of international cooperation, etc., from anywhere in the world are invited to participate.

Language:

The language of presentation will be English.

Important Dates

Last date for submission of abstracts (in pdf & doc. file)	February 10, 2023
Notification of acceptance/rejection of abstracts	February 15, 2023
Last date for submission of full paper (in pdf & doc. file)	March 10, 2023

Registration and Abstract Submission:

<https://forms.gle/CQAB1Z2Ntcy9PpF59>

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