

TOWARD A WORLDVIEW FOR CIVILIZATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
A STUDY OF THE ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW

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*Introduction*

Building civilization and developing the civilizational capacities of human society has always been among the crucial priorities of man on earth. Throughout the course of human history, the attention of man has been captured by this phenomenon which embodies "the very *raison d'être* of collective human experience."<sup>1</sup> The many civilizations that man has splendidly initiated and developed reflect the intensity of efforts, resources and sacrifices put forward to build real human civilizations with lasting impact on the civilizational development of humanity and its destiny.

In broader terms, civilization,<sup>2</sup> in a preliminary theorization,

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<sup>1</sup> Osman Bakar, *Malik Bennabi's Philosophy of Science*, A paper presented at International Seminar On Malik Bennabi, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> September 1991, organized by the Institute of Advanced Studies (IPT), University Malaya and Berita Publishing, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Khaldūn provides a preliminary theorization of civilization in the following passage: "This is what civilization means. (The necessary character of human social organization) is explained by the fact that God created and fashioned man in a form that can live and subsist only with the help of food. He guided man to a natural desire for food and instilled in him the power that enables him to obtain it. However, the power of the individual human being is not sufficient for him to obtain the food he needs, and does not provide the food he requires to live...It is beyond the power of one man alone to do all that, or even part of it, by himself. Thus he cannot do without a combination of many powers from his fellow beings...Through cooperation, the need of a number of persons, many times greater than their own number, can be satisfied... It is absolutely necessary for man to have co-operation of his fellow man....Consequently, social organization is necessary for the human species...This is the meaning of civilization, the object of science under discussion." See 'Abd al-Rahmān bin Muḥammad Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: an Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), vol. I, pp. 89-90, 91.

entails many aspects, such as: 1) a dynamic process for human association and advancement<sup>3</sup> or "perhaps the act of building;"<sup>4</sup> 2) "the necessary character of human social organization;"<sup>5</sup> 3) a "degree of fairly advanced culture, in which the arts and sciences, as well as political life are well developed...internal social hierarchies, specialization, cities and large populations and the growth of mathematics and writings;"<sup>6</sup> 4) and a "well-established, complex society, which crucial characteristics would include the emergence of towns and cities; an increasingly specialized division of labor; the development of trade, manufacture and commerce, centers of local and national political and legal administration, systems of communication and literacy, and an elite culture of artistic and religious expression;"<sup>7</sup> 5) a real achievement in terms of material and spiritual development; 6) a sense of creative response<sup>8</sup> to challenges and obstacles that befall man in his life pursuits; 7) and finally, a dynamic and intelligent realization of a worldview in a complex human context. Hence, one may consider civilization as "an enterprise of creativity, innovation and expansiveness, both in time and space."<sup>9</sup>

Given the nature of civilization and its multifaceted aspects, the fact that has always been present in the history of its development is that no civilization is without a worldview. Whether one projects civilization as process or state of advancement or real

<sup>3</sup> See Nibert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), pp. 1-50.

<sup>4</sup> Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: 1968), p. 2156.

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>6</sup> E. B. Taylor, *Dictionary of Anthropology*, Special Indian Edition (Dehli: Goyl Saab, 1988), p. 117. See also Taylor, *Primitive Culture* (New York: Brentano's, 1924), p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> David Jary and Julia Jary, *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, ed., Eugene Ehrlich (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 48.

<sup>8</sup> See Arnold Toynbee, *The Study of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), vols. 1-5.

<sup>9</sup> Chandler Keith, *Beyond Civilization* (United States of America: Rivendell Publishing Company, Inc, 1992), p. 32.