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# Intellectual Education: Towards The Establishment Of A Systematic Civilisational Advancement Of The Islamic Nation Abdelmajid Najar's Vision As A Model

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## Abstract:

This study attempts to define the elements of intellectual education that Najar has built on his plan in reforming the Islamic nation's approach and its application to reality, within its objectives towards the desired progress of civilisation, based on monitoring the obstacles of its renaissance at the level of methodological structures, which are represented in: the imbalance of inclusiveness, realism and causality. From there, Najar has formulated the elements of intellectual education, which are specifically represented by: a comprehensive view, realism, consolidation and critical comparison; these elements ensure the good thinking of the Islamic nation and the rationalisation of its civilisational process.

**Keywords:** Intellectual Education, Comprehensive View, Realism, Consolidation, Comparison, Causality.

## Introduction:

The current focus of the Islamic vision is to guide and enlighten the consciousness of Arab and Islamic societies about the need to consider successful remedies for their civilisational leap. This is achieved by theorising and creating the conditions for the practice of civilisational action. The challenge of civilisational progress in the Islamic world has become an urgent and distressing cognitive ordeal,

stemming from a multifaceted and diverse historical accumulation, influenced by multiple and complex factors, burdened with traditional colonial references, modernity and postmodernity values, with their political backgrounds, cognitive contexts, cultural heritage, and dimensions of economic dominance and international leadership. This state of alertness does not organise its maps or define its compass except in the light of a guiding methodology that combines principles and objectives. This is based on laying the foundations of a sound intellectual education and revealing its effectiveness in the process of reform and civilisational progress in the Arab and Islamic world.

Intellectual education thus emerges as an important gateway among the avenues of social change in general, and as a strategic choice dedicated to cultural and civilisational construction in particular. It is in this context that the efforts of the contemporary Islamic thinker Abd al-Majid al-Najjar are concentrated. He was concerned with diagnosing the crisis of the Islamic nation and identifying the causes of the obstacles to its progress, which he called the triangle of obstacles. He then gradually outlined ways to qualify the Islamic nation to regain its functional role and achieve its missing civilisational testimony. Here, intellectual education stands out as a remedial mechanism for an important aspect of civilisational progress, namely the methodological aspect. This aspect is capable of shaping and regulating the patterns of thought on a solid and integrated basis, in accordance with its moral references in its principles and objectives, enabling it to successfully transform ideas from mere existence in force to effective existence in action.

The importance of intellectual education stems primarily from the failure of many reform projects to achieve a renaissance since the civilisational shock that awakened the consciousness of the Islamic world. The question "Why did Muslims fall behind?" remained unanswered. This calls for a re-evaluation of the methodological mechanisms through which these projects formulated their ideas and implemented their methods. In this sense, practical civilisational progress is largely dependent on theoretical intellectual foundations and the practical assumption of their roles. Moreover, the discussion on the ways of civilisational progress cannot be separated from the venerable human being endowed with the grace of intellect and the faculty of thought. It is man who creates civilisations, because every civilisation does not emerge from nothing, but from a motivating idea that is materialised into reality through a well-defined methodology. This requires revising, refining and developing the intellectual structures carried by the Muslim individual, and nurturing the minds of the nation's children on this basis. This is in keeping with their humanity as Allah's representatives on earth, bearers of a message and entrusted with a responsibility.

Based on the above, this research paper aims to outline the elements of intellectual education and its concept as proposed by Abd al-Majid al-Najjar. It also seeks to highlight the methodological deficiencies in the current reality of Muslims and the deepening of the state of civilisational absence resulting from these deficiencies. Furthermore, it seeks to explore the prospects of intellectual education within the framework of resuming the cycle of civilisational construction and the inherent connection between intellectual construction and the desired civilisational action. Consequently, it deepens the awareness of the importance of intellectual education and its role in the progress of civilisation. In addition, it aims to surpass the results of the intellectual hybridity produced by modernity and its representations in terms of the formation of values and principles, as well as their practical implementation.

It seems that the analytical approach is the most suitable method to elucidate and explain the position of intellectual education within the process of civilisational progress of the Islamic nation. This approach makes it possible to understand its contexts, the structure of its elements, and to monitor its achievements. In this regard, there have been numerous works that have addressed issues of intellectual education, such as the efforts of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, which focuses on the Islamisation of knowledge with the aim of intellectually and scientifically revitalising the nation, bridging the gap between religious and secular (worldly) education, and establishing a truly monotheistic cosmic vision. Notable works include titles such as "Intellectual Construction: Its Concept, Levels and Maps" and "The Methodology of Knowledge Integration: Introductions to Islamic Methodology" by Fathi Hassan al-Malikawi, "The Intellectual Crisis and Methods of Change" and "Reforming Islamic Thought" by Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, "Islamising Knowledge: General Principles and Plan of Action" by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, "The Crisis of the Muslim Mind" and "Contemporary Islamic Reform: A Sociological Methodological Reading" by Abdulhamid Abu Sulaiman, and other intellectual works.

Contemporary Western discourse is also interested in issues of thought, education and their relationship. Examples include books such as "Thought and the Future: An Introduction to Complex Thought" and "The Seven Essential Knowledges for Future Education" by the French philosopher Edgar Morin.

It seems that the strong link between intellectual education and civilisational progress is consistently and comprehensively manifested in Al-Najjar's intellectual project, which dealt with the jurisprudence of Islamic civilisation and its factors. Intellectual education is considered one of its essential components. Based on the above, we pose the following central problematic question: If intellectual education is an active element among the factors of the civilisational

testimony according to Al-Najjar, the question arises: What are the elements of intellectual education according to him, and how do they contribute to the civilisational progress of the Islamic nation in today's world? This question will be addressed through the following questions: What are the civilisational challenges facing the Islamic nation in terms of intellectual education within Al-Najjar's intellectual project? What are the elements and characteristics of intellectual education according to Al-Najjar? And what are the prospects of intellectual education in reform and civilisational progress according to Al-Najjar?

### **First: The context of intellectual education in Al-Najjar's intellectual project and its justifications.**

#### **1- Intellectual education and its place within the question of civilisation in the Islamic world:**

The discussion of intellectual education in the context of Al-Najjar cannot be separated from the question of civilisation. Al-Najjar paid attention to the problem of the Islamic nation's civilisational testimony and considered the study of the factors of its civilisational absence as an important factor in its advancement and progress. Therefore, it is necessary to refer to the procedural concept of civilisation in Al-Najjar's perspective, which states that "civilisation is a state of human social relations with specific characteristics in relation to the individuals of the society and the land they inhabit. It is a state in which these relations produce a pattern of life in which material and spiritual achievements grow, coloured by different shades of civilisation from one to another"<sup>1</sup>. Al-Najjar also emphasised the role of the process of education and acquisition in the process of civilisation, as he stated: "Civilization is not an innate state in human nature, so that its achievement becomes necessary by the requirements of nature. Rather, it is an acquired state that man establishes through his free will on the basis of internal and objective factors that lead to it"<sup>2</sup>.

The idea, especially the religious idea, is considered one of the most influential factors in the emergence of Islamic civilisation. It shapes and enhances the process of civilisation and gives it its distinctiveness. This is evident in Al-Najjar's description of civilisation as the elevated stage of human movement, a concept deeply rooted in the worship of God. It is one of the aspects of achieving the Caliphate, which is fundamentally based on the worship of God, as the verse

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<sup>1</sup>- Al-najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Jurisprudence of Islamic Civilisation: "Witnesses to the Civilization of the Islamic Nation," vol. 1, Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 2nd edition, 2006, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>- Al-najjar AbdulMajid. Delegation in the Jurisprudence of Civilization, Al-Tajdeed Magazine, Issue 1, First Year: January 1997 / Ramadan 1417 AH, p. 89.

indicates: "I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Qur'an 51:56) Therefore, civilisation in this sense is a human journey towards God, measured by competence and integrity in fulfilling the mission of the Caliphate according to the orders and recommendations of the successor. No other civilisation shares this meaning with the Islamic civilisation<sup>3</sup>.

Al-najjar identified three major fundamental factors that have deepened the state of civilisational absence experienced by the Islamic nation today. He attributed these factors to the following:

The first factor can be traced back to the ideas that shape the Muslims' understanding of existence, the universe and life.

The second factor is attributed to the methodological approach through which they conceive the implementation of beliefs and visions in practical life.

The third factor relates to the psychological state in which they find themselves, in terms of its impact on their willpower, whether it is strong or weak, motivating or lacking. Civilization can only be achieved through an active free will that transforms aspirations into concrete realities that shape life. When willpower weakens, ideas and methods become ineffective and futile<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, Al-Najjar categorised the factors of civilisational absence into what he called the "triangle of obstacles": the obstacle of ideas, the obstacle of methodology, and the obstacle of willpower.

Al-Najjar's notion of "thought" encompasses the persuasive ideas that interpret existence, the universe and life. It implies that the perception that a nation has of the truth of existence, the universe and life is what drives it towards civilisational construction. Moreover, it is the nature of this perception that determines the direction and uniqueness of the emerging civilisation, and even shapes its destiny<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, the emergence and destiny of a civilisation are determined by the degree of conviction that the vision - in its interpretation of the truth of existence, the universe and life - holds and instils in the minds of the Islamic nation. It is noteworthy that every civilisation originates from a certain idea, a vision that determines the course of its emergence, development and destiny. For the Islamic nation, this vision is defined by the Islamic creed.

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<sup>3</sup>- Al-najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Jurisprudence of Islamic Civilisation, Previous Source, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup>- Al-najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Factors of Civilization Witnesses, "Witnesses to the Civilization of the Islamic Nation", Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 2nd edition, 2006, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup>- The previous source, p. 18.

The distortion of the idea had a significant impact on the distortion of the nation's thinking, psyche and conscience, which in turn affected the individual Muslim and the collective. It has hindered reform efforts and cultural development. Abu Sulayman Abdul Hameed Ahmed points out that 'the first and most dangerous of these distortions was the distortion of the Islamic cosmic vision, which forms the framework of the nation's thought and culture. It is no longer a comprehensive, unifying cosmic vision capable of providing comprehensive guidance and direction for the Muslim's thinking, conscience, relationships and systems<sup>6</sup>. Just as a clear vision leads to building, so its distortion leads to decay.

While Islamic civilisation emerged primarily from the idea of the Islamic creed, Muslims needed a methodology to translate these civilisation programmes into practical reality. Thus, methodology becomes a fundamental element in the rise and flourishing of Islamic civilisation. It should be noted that the methodology adopted by any civilisation is inevitably influenced and greatly influenced by the underlying idea. In fact, it could be argued that the methodology is a product of the idea and bears its imprint. Its effects are profound because the way people think and behave is largely shaped and adapted by the nature of the idea that fills their minds<sup>7</sup>.

Al-Najjar believes that the dilemma facing Muslims today is not the search for the image of truth to be applied in their lives, since that image is preserved in the essence of the texts. Rather, their problem is how to move from their current reality to that truth, so that the ideal becomes reality and truth replaces falsehood. According to Al-Najjar, it is not just a matter of knowing the truth, but of internalising it and embodying it in one's actions. From this perspective, Al-Najjar asks a direct question: What are the characteristics of the thought that can outline the plan for the transition from reality to truth and lead Muslims to the paths of progress?<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, he emphasises: "The idea is a conviction in the mind that drives it to become a reality in life, manifesting itself as a tangible embodiment of civilisation in reality. But for it to become a tangible reality, it can only be achieved through a methodology that addresses the project and transforms it into an achievement in reality. This is because the idea does not materialise directly into practical achievements on its own, but rather takes shape in various forms within the

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<sup>6</sup>- Abu Suleiman, AbdulHameed Ahmad. The Collapse of Islamic Civilization and its Reconstruction "Cultural and Educational Roots", 1st edition, Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2016, pp. 47-48.

<sup>7</sup>- Alnajjar, AbdulMajid. The Role of Freedom of Opinion in Intellectual Unity Among Muslims, Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1st edition, 1992, p. 31.

<sup>8</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Investigations into the Methodology of Islamic Thought, Lebanon: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1st edition, 1992, pp. 176-177.

circumstances that unfold in reality. Therefore, it is through these circumstances that the idea becomes effective in the reality of life"<sup>9</sup>.

There is therefore a close relationship between the transformation of the vision into a civilised reality and the methodology by which it is formulated to be implemented in reality. Al-Najjar states: "The motivating idea of civilisation can be approached with a sound methodology that drives it and leads to civilisational construction. However, if it is addressed with a flawed methodology, despite its inherent validity, it will not yield much or may yield nothing in reality. How many valuable and noble ideas exist only in the mind because the transformative methodology to bring them into tangible existence is lacking? This is the case with the virtuous cities and lofty ideals that many philosophies, doctrines and religions have extolled, but which in most cases have not been transformed into a civilised reality due to a deficiency in the transformative methodology"<sup>10</sup>.

Al-Najjar adds a third factor necessary for a nation to achieve civilisational progress, and that is a strong will. He states that: "If a nation has a sound idea about the universe and life, and also a sound methodology for formulating and implementing this idea, but lacks a strong internal will to implement the idea according to this methodology, it will not be able to rise with civilisation or move towards it. This is because the achievements of civilisation depend on a strong will that drives the nation to transform ideas, plans and programmes into tangible material and spiritual realities"<sup>11</sup>.

Indeed, Al-Najjar has drawn a significant link between the presence of a strong will and civilisational achievements, and the consequences of weakness or decline. He states: "When the will becomes weak or is defeated for one reason or another, these ideas remain trapped in the mind or manifest themselves in reality in a weak and feeble way, and are not sufficient to create a significant civilisation. Just as this is true of the emergence of civilisations, it is also true of their decline and disappearance when a strong will is present but later affected by stagnation"<sup>12</sup>. This is a general summary of Al-Najjar's understanding of the concept of civilisation and its treatment. Since the focus of the research is on the second factor of civilisational factors, namely the flaws in methodology and the role of intellectual education in addressing them, we will continue to highlight the deviations in the methodology of thought of Muslims.

## **2- Manifestations of deviations in the methodology of Muslim thought:**

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<sup>9</sup>- AL-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Factors of Civilizational Witnesses, Previous Source, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup>- The previous source, pp. 39-40.

<sup>11</sup>- The same source, pp. 71.

<sup>12</sup>- The same source, pp. 71-72.

Al-Najjar aimed to expose the methodological flaws in the current intellectual and behavioural reality of Muslims. The following are examples:

### **2-A- Imbalance of realism:**

By realism, Al-Najjar means "the consideration of material and human reality as a fundamental element in the formulation and implementation of development projects, where it serves as the basis for formulation and is constantly referred to for its modification and improvement during its actual implementation<sup>13</sup>". Imbalance of realism, on the other hand, refers to "the total or partial neglect of this reality in the formulation and implementation of reform projects, and the total or partial reliance on a theoretical framework that deals with mental perceptions, taking it as the primary basis, far from the data and elements of the reality that needs to be addressed<sup>14</sup>". Therefore, the concept of realism is defined by Al-Najjar as a fundamental principle in the methodology that transforms vision into reality. It means that the reform project takes the elements of material and human reality as its primary basis in formulating the civilisational project in its various stages and developments.

However, despite the importance of realism, the situation of Muslims today, and even for some time, has led to an imbalance of realism as a methodological approach in their thinking and behaviour with regard to the construction of reform visions and their implementation. The methodology tends to blatantly disregard the reality in which Islamic life unfolds and instead construct idealistic images to evaluate it independently, without fully considering its facts and realities except in a few aspects. These images are then imposed on it by force, often disregarding its actual facts and data. As a result, the methodology is characterised by a clear deviation in its realism aspect and a tendency towards abstract idealism in an attempt to promote progress<sup>15</sup>.

Al-Najjar has indeed captured this aspect when he states: "It is therefore a manifestation of a methodological deficiency characterised by the reluctance of current Islamic thought to engage in a realistic study of Islamic life, especially human life, from a descriptive and analytical perspective. Instead, it often resorts to a sweeping judgmental view that leads directly to a general rejection without a scientific examination of the details and causes. This is a clear deviation in the aspect of realism as a methodology of thought and behaviour, which leads to other distortions<sup>16</sup>".

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<sup>13</sup>- The same source, p. 41.

<sup>14</sup>- The previous source, same page.

<sup>15</sup>- The same source, pp. 41-42.

<sup>16</sup>- The same source, p. 44.



The imbalance of realism has had a profound impact on hindering the progress of civilisation, as it represents a flaw in the methodology of dealing with reality, which needs to be changed, whether in terms of thinking or application. Al-Najjar believes that one of the prerequisites for the renaissance of any nation is the formation of a methodological consciousness that directs the mind to study the reality of current conditions. This involves analysing these conditions, examining their elements and intricacies, and identifying the causes and reasons that have led to backwardness and hindered progress. Based on this understanding, the obstructive disease becomes clear, which is a necessary condition for building a perception of a treatment plan and implementing it in reality.

Therefore, if a nation tries to get out of its predicament by following an idealistic path that overlooks its reality in order to devise solutions based on mere imagination, it will continue to stagnate. These solutions will not address the underlying causes and will not bring healing because these causes remain unidentified. Moreover, the solutions will not be formulated according to their needs<sup>17</sup>Indeed, realism is a methodological characteristic of great importance that must be taken into account when formulating reform projects. If, for any reason, it is neglected in whole or in part, the project is likely to fail..

## **2-B-The imbalance of causality:**

By the term causal thinking, Al-Najjar means thinking based on linking causes with their effects and results with their antecedents. It recognises that results are produced only by their specific causes, whether in nature or in human life. Consequently, it rejects all mythical and legendary explanations that undermine causality and jump to imaginary causes that have no real connection to the real underlying causes<sup>18</sup>.

The imbalance of causal thinking refers to going beyond the law of causation in reasoning, where, in the association between antecedents and results, it attributes results to causes other than their true antecedents. It introduces antecedents that lead to results that cannot naturally follow from them because of their mismatch. The imbalance in causal thinking may escalate to the level of mythical and illusory thinking, or it may diminish to a mere neglect of the causal relationship in certain situations where this relationship is concealed or hidden<sup>19</sup>.

According to Al-Najjar, some manifestations of imbalance in the reality of Muslims include a deviation in:

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<sup>17</sup>- The same source, pp. 48-49.

<sup>18</sup>- The previous source, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup>- The same source, p. 52.

### **-the doctrinal dimension of causality.**

The doctrinal framework of causality is defined in the essence of reliance on Allah. Indeed, reliance on Allah is based on taking the necessary means that He has ordained as a system for the universe and life. This is because Allah is the ultimate source of all results, for He is the Sustainer of everything. However, His reliance on results is based on the laws and norms that He has established as a general system for creation. Therefore, those who rely on Him by following His laws will find success in the outcome of their actions. On the other hand, those who deviate from His laws are not really relying on Him because they have violated His laws. Thus, the result of their actions will be loss due to the disruption of proper reliance on Allah. This meaning is encapsulated in the statement of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him: "If you really rely on Allah with the trust due to Him, He would provide for you as He provides for the birds; they go out in the morning with empty stomachs and return full in the evening<sup>20</sup>". This means that the true essence of reliance on Allah is to adhere to the means and causes that Allah has commanded us to follow. This is the way to attain the provisions and blessings that come as a result of true reliance on Allah.

Al-Najjar observed that there is a significant deviation in the doctrinal dimension of causality, especially in the aspect of reliance, among many Muslims. These individuals mistakenly believe that Allah grants success to their endeavours without those endeavours following the established laws of causality in the universe. As a result of this misconception, they either abstain from any action or engage in actions that are not in accordance with the proper means. They expect divine blessings and provisions without truly adhering to the principles of true dependence on Allah. This attitude can be described as a position of complacency, where individuals expect results without actively engaging in the appropriate causes and actions<sup>21</sup>.

In contrast to the above doctrinal deviation, which disregards the proper means and encourages complacency, there is another opposing imbalance. This imbalance is characterised by the belief held by some that the causes alone determine the results, without any consideration of Divine Providence. In this perspective, the doctrinal dimension disappears completely, and it becomes a purely materialistic view, whether out of ignorance or conscious intention. This is the situation of some Muslims today who have been influenced by the dominant Western cultural mindset, which is based on a materialistic perception of the universe and life.

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<sup>20</sup>- The same source, p. 53.

<sup>21</sup>- The same source, p. 54.

When these individuals pursue their efforts to revitalise Islamic life from this perspective of causality independent of divine will, they become lost on a path where reliance on Allah does not serve as the driving force for taking appropriate means. Often, they end up feeling frustrated in their material development and experience failure in individual and social human development<sup>22</sup>. Based on this, a deviation in the doctrinal dimension of causality has resulted in neglecting the ways of reliance based on taking the means that Allah has established in the universe, and instead resorting to complacency. This leads to a deficiency and corruption in belief regarding the necessity of striving in life and taking the necessary means to achieve success.

### **-The intellectual aberration of causality:**

Muslims today suffer from a general weakness in their understanding of causality. This is reflected in the lack of interest in exploring the laws of nature and society, as evidenced by the apparent neglect of scientific research in Islamic countries. In contrast, Western societies prioritise scientific research and allocate considerable resources to its advancement. In conclusion, a large proportion of Muslims lack the mentality of scientific inquiry, which is an expression of the understanding of causality. Scientific inquiry is essentially an exploration of causal relationships in nature and life. Scientific inquiry here does not refer to specialised and in-depth research conducted by specific institutions, but rather to the logical arrangement and classification of elements related to a problem or phenomenon, through which the causal relationships between its elements are discovered. This serves as a basis for understanding and developing practical solutions for life. Unfortunately, this logical approach is lacking in many Islamic minds today<sup>23</sup>.

### **2-C- deviation in comprehensiveness:**

The term "comprehensiveness" as intended by An-Najjar refers to the act and behaviour whereby a person assumes a supervisory role over a wide area, perceiving dimensions in all directions and organising the individual elements according to holistic principles. In this regard, the act of perception encompasses as much data as possible, enabling a deeper understanding of the truth and ensuring its maximum accuracy. Similarly, actions are based on the assessment of their widest possible effects and consequences. All of this takes place within a comprehensive framework in which the details are integrated into the whole,

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<sup>22</sup>- The previous source, p. 56.

<sup>23</sup>- The same source, pp. 57-58.

allowing for a wide range of cognitive and behavioural interactions within the individual's environment<sup>24</sup>.

Deviation in Comprehensiveness' refers to the condition in which a person, in their quest for knowledge and understanding of the Truth, limits themselves to a small amount of data from which the Truth can be discerned. They fail to grasp or understand the truth in its entirety, perceiving only a small part of it. Similarly, in their efforts to achieve good through their actions, they see only the immediate and apparent effects of those actions, without considering the distant consequences and effects that may be contrary to the intended good. This leads to an error of judgement and a deficiency in performance, as it hinders the realisation of benefits for the individual<sup>25</sup>.

Imad al-Din Khalil emphasised the methodological value of the element of comprehensiveness, which is often overlooked, by stating: "Unfortunately, some of our intellectuals are afflicted with a fragmented perspective towards positions, ideas and things, lacking the comprehensive vision necessary for an objective evaluation of any new issue in the fields of thought and life<sup>26</sup>". This imbalance is further confirmed by An-Najjar's comment on this deviation, which states: "The behaviour of adopting a partial approach in perception and estimation, where judgments are formed and applied on the basis of partial data and within a narrow scope, leads to a disturbance in estimation and a deficiency in performance in achieving human interests<sup>27</sup>.

During the prosperous era of Islamic thought. It was nurtured by Qur'anic education, which fostered a comprehensive formation of thought. It expanded the scope of its contemplation to include everything possible in the world of the visible and the world of the invisible, without any restrictions in the pursuit of truth. In addition, Islamic thought was distinguished by its judgments, which encompassed a wide range that included the effects and consequences of each judgment. This approach largely avoided contradictions that lead to disruptions in actions and even harmful results contrary to the intended benefit. This comprehensiveness in Islamic thought was a fundamental factor contributing to the richness of opinions and their soundness, which served as a primary catalyst for civilisation and prosperity<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup>- The same source, p. 59.

<sup>25</sup>- The previous source, pp. 59-60.

<sup>26</sup>- Khalil, Imad al-Din. *Quranic Horizons*, Lebanon: Dar al-Ilm Lil-Malayin, 2nd edition, 1982, pp. 83-84.

<sup>27</sup>- Al-najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. *Factors of Civilizational Witnesses*, Previous Source, p. 60.

<sup>28</sup>- The same source, p. 60.

The main manifestations of the imbalance in comprehensiveness and its negative effects are as follows:

**- Partiality of cognitive material:**

An-Najjar argues that contemporary Islamic thought is characterised by narrowness and limitations in the material used as a cognitive basis for the search for truth. As a result, cognitive inquiry often leads to errors of judgement or deficiencies. This is because it is confined to limited data that does not fully capture the truth and may even lead to opposite conclusions. Some Muslims today seek truth only through the legacy left by their predecessors, without broadening the scope of inquiry to include current situations and events. They also fail to include general human knowledge and sciences. As a result, the result of such research is an incomplete idea. It may have been appropriate for the circumstances in which the heritage was created, but it lacks validity in new situations and conditions. If the scope of research were to be broadened to include contemporary developments alongside the heritage, the result would be more accurate and closer to the truth<sup>29</sup>.

On the other hand, another group of Muslims today seek the truth in order to develop life through the prevailing systems of the materially advanced world. They take these systems as the material for research and study, often confining themselves to them. They do not broaden the scope of research to include the historical experience of Islamic civilisation, which includes the realistic composition of the Muslim nation in its cultural, psychological and social dimensions. The result of such limited research is a deficient image that cannot effectively drive life towards progress. This is because bias in perception and research produces only limited conceptions that do not possess the elements of truth necessary to drive progress. In contrast, during the era of Islamic civilisation, comprehensive vision and extensive material resources contributed to the creation of an accurate image that promoted progress. This is different from the fragmented thinking that prevails today, which grasps only disjointed and incomplete truths that lack the power to drive history forward. This is one of the reasons why Islamic reality is stagnating and struggling to move forward<sup>30</sup>.

**-The bias of temporal estimation:**

An-Najjar suggests that limiting the temporal domain in which thought operates to evaluate judgments within a narrow range undermines the resulting outcome. This is because any judgement that is intended to have a positive impact on reality

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<sup>29</sup>- The previous source, p. 61.

<sup>30</sup>- The same source, pp. 62-63.

can only achieve its purpose if it is evaluated on the basis of a broad temporal expanse that includes the past for learning, reflection and benefit, the present with its data and conditions to be addressed, and the future with its effects and implications. Conversely, if the construction of judgements is restricted to a limited part of time, such as only the past, present or future, temporal fragmentation becomes a factor of weakness, if not of error, in the construction of judgements<sup>31</sup>.

An-Najjar characterises the current state of Islamic thought by showing that it is afflicted by this temporal fragmentation, where a comprehensive view of time is lacking when considering a matter or engaging in a particular action. Instead, there is a tendency to isolate a particular period which becomes the focus of evaluative consideration, and to limit the formulation of ideas or judgments to that particular period. As a result, those ideas or judgments fail to respond to the demands of reform and revitalisation because of the effects of temporal fragmentation<sup>32</sup>.

The characteristics of Western thought, while foreign to the Islamic arena, neglect the future temporal dimension. As a result, contemporary Islamic thought, in many of its assessments, fails to provide anything of substance for the present time. When the future arrives, these estimates prove inadequate and efforts are wasted. A prime example of this is urban and architectural planning, which does not take into account the demands of future population growth, social development and cultural evolution. Instead, it focuses on current conditions, or what is close to them. After years, these plans become inadequate to meet the needs, causing serious problems and suffering for the inhabitants of these cities and hindering their productive lives<sup>33</sup>.

The future-orientated perspective occupies a weak place in Islamic thought as a whole, to the extent that a significant proportion of Muslims are almost excluded from the temporal realm in their judgements, even in the present. They consider only the past as the relevant time frame. They seek solutions in history, not for the sake of learning and reflection, but to use the past as a measure of judgement and as a basis for their estimations. Thus, when they consider a particular problem and seek a solution, they isolate it from the present and the future, and focus only on a particular period in the past. This narrow temporal focus hinders their ability to think holistically and to consider the implications and consequences. This limitation manifests itself in the restriction of independent thinking and its

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<sup>31</sup>- The same source, p. 63.

<sup>32</sup>- The same source, p. 64.

<sup>33</sup>- The previous source, same page.

closure. This temporal fragmentation leads to a scattered vision and the loss of the path to revival.

In contrast to this fragmentation, another faction has emerged that isolates the present from the continuum of time, focusing on it alone in the evaluation of ideas and judgements, and ignoring the past. These individuals are in love with Western civilisation and have convinced themselves that the Islamic nation's past is of no use to its present and only serves to perpetuate backwardness. Therefore, they believe it is necessary to separate from and neglect this past in order to develop the present. They limit their perspective to the present and seek remedies within the general framework of Western civilisation and its models. They then try to impose these models on Muslim society in order to bring about a renaissance. This fragmented approach to time separates its various elements from each other, causing the historical context of the Islamic nation to disappear. However, it is impossible to accurately assess and reform the present without taking into account the historical realities and contributions of the Islamic nation<sup>34</sup>.

#### **-The bias of the evaluative perspective:**

In its present state, Islamic thought suffers from imbalances caused by the fragmentation of knowledge and the limited search for truth. In addition, there is a temporal fragmentation in the assessment of judgments. Moreover, there is another deficiency characterised by the "fragmentation of the observation and study of issues and problems for the purpose of judgement". This means that these issues are isolated from each other in the context of the examination, without being connected within a comprehensive framework that encompasses all the issues. The study of one issue is not linked to the study of others, leading to potentially contradictory results. Instead, there should be integration and support between the different issues to ensure coherence and consistency<sup>35</sup>.

Indeed, the comprehensive Islamic perspective, while it acknowledges this inclusiveness as a fundamental doctrinal principle, often deviates from it in its methodological approach. This can be observed in various aspects of thinking and behavior, where there appears to be a fragmentation in the way issues are investigated, leading to contradictions in their judgments. An illustrative example of this fragmentation in evaluative perspective can be seen in the focus on the minutiae of ethics as a basis for preaching and a measure of religious commitment, while neglecting the broader issues of Islamic jurisprudence and the requirements of preaching in light of the current reality. Some, for instance, emphasize the issue of growing a beard as a strict religious matter, while in many Islamic countries,

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<sup>34</sup>- The same source, pp. 65-66.

<sup>35</sup>- The same source, pp. 66-67.

this practice has become a criminalized act that can lead to imprisonment or suspicion and strict scrutiny. Similarly, some give significant importance to the issue of shaking hands with women, while many Muslims would turn away from religion if they were confronted with such matters. As a result, the overall mission of preaching faces setbacks due to partial issues that preachers may choose to postpone addressing<sup>36</sup>.

The loss of the comprehensive, holistic vision inevitably leads to the loss of the correct perspective that values things according to their true significance and organises them according to their importance in achieving benefits. It also leads to improvisation and lack of planning, as well as a failure to perceive situations in their interrelated spheres. This leads to a serious lack of balance between things and situations in order to recognise what is important and essential. There is also a significant weakness in the understanding of priorities to achieve the welfare of the nation<sup>37</sup>.

### **3-Conceptual relations regarding the concept of intellectual education and its justifications:**

Al-Najjar's discussion of the obstacles to progress has led us to realise that methodological orientation is crucial to the manifestation of the idea that leads to progress. While social progress depends on sound plans characterised by theoretical and practical correctness, the adjustment of Islamic thought in general means "reformulating it with methodological qualities through which research, guidance and the management of the affairs of the nation are practised. These qualities should serve as a firm foundation from which original and unimpeded results can emerge. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to cultivate the intellect over a long period of time until these qualities become ingrained, so that thinking can adapt accordingly<sup>38</sup>".

Al-Najjar refers to "the intellect" as the power within human beings that enables them to perceive intangible meanings. It enables the transition from the known to the unknown, as well as the ability to distinguish between similarities and contradictions and to make value judgments based on them. The intellect follows a specific path in its movement towards acquiring knowledge, guided by certain rules and principles. This path is commonly called "thinking" or "thinking<sup>39</sup>".

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<sup>36</sup>- The previous source, pp. 67-68.

<sup>37</sup>- The same source, pp. 70-71.

<sup>38</sup>- The source itself, page 149.

<sup>39</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Knowledge in the Islamic Context: Reflections on Epistemic Jurisprudence 1, Tunisia: Tunisian Company for Publishing and Arts Development, 1st edition, 2016, pp. 69-70.



In this context, Al-Najjar refers to "thought" as the methodology employed by the mind in the pursuit of truth. It does not refer to the content derived from insights and ideas, as it is commonly understood by many on the basis of prevailing usage, contrary to the true meaning of "thought" in its linguistic connotation and its technical usage in the Islamic heritage<sup>40</sup>. According to Al-Najjar, thinking is defined in another context as "the methodology by which the human mind seeks to comprehend theoretical and practical truth<sup>41</sup>". In short, thought, according to Al-Najjar, is "the methodology of the mind in the acquisition of knowledge<sup>42</sup>".

Regarding the relationship between the mind and thought, Al-Najjar believes that "the mind is the tool through which thinking occurs, and thinking is the movement of this tool in its cognitive pursuit. Ideas, on the other hand, are the culmination of what the mind achieves through the conceptualisations that result from thinking. Because of the strong connection between these three elements, there can be an interchange in their connotation. The term 'thought' can be used to refer to the mind, or the term 'mind' can be used to refer to thought, or the term 'thought' can be used to refer to ideas. All this is due to the interdependence between these elements, and the context determines the specific meaning when these terms are used interchangeably<sup>43</sup>".

The dangers of thought to the growth and development of life are undeniable. The extent to which thought adheres to the principles of sound reasoning determines its connection with truth and its potential to lead to a flourishing life. Conversely, deviation in thought can lead to regression and decline. The Noble Qur'an has warned against these dangers through various means and direct and indirect references to the paths of righteousness and corruption. In the first aspect, Allah says: "That Allah may distinguish the wicked from the good, and place some of the wicked on top of others, and heap them all together and cast them into Hell. They are the losers. (Quran 3:137). This verse contains a reference to the realistic methodology of examining historical evidence in order to draw lessons from the consequences faced by deniers and opponents of the truth. Similarly, in the second aspect, Allah says: "And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and men. They have hearts that they do not understand, eyes that they do not see, and ears that they do not hear. They are like cattle, and they are more astray. They are the heedless. (Quran 7:179). This analogy compares these people to cattle because they do not direct their minds towards the right way of thinking<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Cultural Witness Factors, same source, p. 147.

<sup>41</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. Knowledge in the Islamic Context, same source, p. 68.

<sup>42</sup>- The same source, p. 66.

<sup>43</sup>- The same source, p. 69.

<sup>44</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Cultural Witness Factors, same source, p. 148.

When one examines the methodology of thought followed by Muslims today, one truly realises that the crisis facing the Islamic nation is largely a crisis of thought. This crisis is manifested in the stagnation of Islamic thought in producing avenues of development and, consequently, its failure to bring about a renaissance. This is because Islamic thought has deviated from its original characteristics shaped by Qur'anic guidance, and as a result its ability to discern the right paths has been hindered, whether in terms of understanding theoretical truth or planning scientific projects. Therefore, according to Al-Najjar, intellectual education has become a remedial mechanism to address the issue of methodology.

Al-Najjar asserts that education, in one of its meanings, is the process of nurturing individuals with certain qualities in order to achieve a desired goal that these qualities help to achieve. As for intellectual education, according to Al-Najjar, it refers to "the formulation of the methodology adopted by the mind in its thinking (which is thought) on certain foundations that enable this thinking to be sound and lead to the realisation of the intended goal, which is the attainment of the truth to the fullest extent possible". In Al-Najjar's cognitive perspective, the mind is predisposed to a variety of different approaches to thinking based on the methodological qualities with which it has been nurtured. These qualities are the fundamental determinants of accuracy or error in the perception of truths<sup>45</sup>.

According to Al-Najjar, although the mind is inherently built on logical principles, these principles can be obscured for various reasons. While they may be sufficient for grasping simple truths that are close to their source, they are insufficient for grasping complex and distant truths. Thought, therefore, requires an education that instils qualities based on innate principles and their evolved counterparts, in accordance with the complexity and depth of the truths it seeks to acquire.

Because of the strong correlation between the mind and thinking, intellectual education can be interchangeably called mental education. This is because the mind, which is the apparatus of thought, although represented by a series of necessary sciences, as many define it, is closer to being considered as a force that can be developed through acquisition, in order to protect it from obscurity and train it in movements that strengthen its performance. Thus, the strengthening of cognitive faculties within oneself constitutes mental education, while the guidance of their methodology in perception and performance constitutes intellectual education. This is because education here focuses on performance, while elsewhere it focuses on the instrument itself<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup>- The same source, same page.

<sup>46</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. Knowledge in the Islamic Context, same source, p. 70.

Indeed, the Noble Qur'an has shown great concern for the liberation of the mind as a methodological basis for thought. This is because methodology plays an important role in the intellectual movement of individuals and civilisation as a whole. We know that without methodology there is no path that can lead to goals, regardless of the efforts and contributions made<sup>47</sup>.

However, this intellectual methodological revolution introduced by the Noble Qur'an experienced a significant regression in its elements. Islamic thought gradually began to diminish its realistic perspective on nature and life scenes, turning towards abstractions and adopting the path of Greek visual logic. As a result, the sensual sciences gradually fell behind the theoretical sciences in terms of priority. In addition, Islamic thought tended more and more towards spiritual contemplations divorced from reality, influenced by divergent Sufi perspectives imported from ancient Eastern cultures<sup>48</sup>.

Al-Najjar attributes this to a lack of response to the duality of knowledge within the modern education system, which disperses thought and fails to provide a single criterion for judgement. This imbalance has led to a disruption in the methodology of thought with which young minds operate, preventing them from achieving leadership and innovation. Minds trained in traditional schools also lack the ability to think productively and independently. Therefore, according to Al-Najjar, the solution lies in a genuine and serious re-evaluation of the intellectual approach within the Islamic educational system, guided by the Qur'anic directives and inspired by the experience of Islamic civilisation, while benefiting from modern educational systems<sup>49</sup>. On this basis, Al-Najjar proceeded to formulate the elements of intellectual education.

## **Secondly, according to Abd al-Majeed Al-Najjar, the basic elements of intellectual education are as follows**

### **1- Comprehensive perspective:**

Comprehensive perspective is a methodological quality through which the mind seeks the truth in order to build its life on it. It involves a thorough examination of the subject of inquiry with full energy, both in its content and in its temporal dimensions. It ensures that no aspect is neglected or excluded from the direction

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<sup>47</sup>- Khalil, Emad al-Din. *On the Formation of the Muslim Mind*, Al-Faisal Press, 1st edition, 1989, p. 36.

<sup>48</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. *Knowledge in the Islamic Context*, same source, pp. 72-73.

<sup>49</sup>- The same source, p. 74.

of inquiry, and it focuses on specific aspects on which judgements are based and reports and plans are formulated<sup>50</sup>.

The comprehensive perspective also involves approaching issues from all angles and gathering all relevant data in order to ensure a thorough understanding and arrive at the truth. By thoroughly examining the data relating to the research topic and gathering all relevant information, it illuminates the pathways to uncovering its reality. On the other hand, a partial and limited perspective that focuses only on certain data and aspects often leads to a biased opinion and fails to reveal the whole truth<sup>51</sup>.

The comprehensive perspective enables the thinker to consider the widest possible range of aspects related to the research topic. It ensures that nothing relevant to the research question is left unexamined, without excluding any element for any reason. On the other hand, the partial and limited perspective is characterised by focusing on a narrow area within the research topic. In the first approach, opinions are closer to the truth, whereas in the second, other relevant data may be overlooked if not taken into account<sup>52</sup>.

According to Al-Najjar, if a Muslim is educated with a comprehensive and inclusive perspective, he will find himself converging with others who have arrived at the same result through the same methodology. Conversely, they may find themselves at odds with others if they take a different approach<sup>53</sup>.

## **2-Realism :**

It refers to the training of the Muslim mind to normalise its thinking in the search for truth, to evaluate situations and judgements, and to find solutions to the problems presented on the basis of the reality represented by the elements of nature and the scenes of human life, past and present. The mind should take these elements and scenes as the primary material for observation and research, seeking to understand their intrinsic truth and the hidden realities beyond sensory perception but comprehensible to the intellect. With this characteristic, the mind moves intellectually between phenomena and meanings, causes and effects, perceiving both the manifest and hidden aspects of truth within the limits

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<sup>50</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Cultural Witness Factors, same source, p. 150

<sup>51</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. The Role of Freedom of Opinion in Intellectual Unity Among Muslims, same source, p. 33.

<sup>52</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. Knowledge in the Islamic Context, same source, pp. 79-80.

<sup>53</sup>- The same source, p. 80.

of its perceptive capacity. It builds on all this to formulate its ideas in both material and spiritual dimensions<sup>54</sup>.

The attribute of realism also means that the researcher's search for truth starts from reality. It recognises the importance of considering reality in order to assess and address problems. However, it does not mean that this reality should dictate or determine judgements and conclusions about the facts. Rather, it serves as a crucial factor in the process of evaluation and analysis<sup>55</sup>.

Al-Najjar contrasts realism with abstract idealism. By abstract idealism, he refers to a mental quality in which the mind remains detached from tangible reality, absorbed in contemplation that begins with ideal concepts and ends with them, without comparing them to observable reality<sup>56</sup>.

When thinking is nurtured with this characteristic, it starts from the data of reality, which is an objective material shared by observers. This creates a unified starting point that brings researchers and observers together on a common ground where they converge towards an objective shared understanding. This convergence often leads to agreement on the final results, guaranteeing consensus and reducing the causes of division.

However, when thinking becomes abstract in the evaluation of judgments and positions, individuals or groups construct idealised opinions and conceptions that are susceptible to each person adopting their own particular viewpoint. These viewpoints are not subject to the objective reality that needs to be addressed. This can lead to differences in judgement, with each person clinging to their own idealised perspective and ignoring the opposing idealised perspectives of others. This can lead to cognitive and social damage<sup>57</sup>.

### **3-The concept of unity or oneness ( tawhid):**

has a methodological meaning which is a characteristic of guided thinking in Islamic thought. It is not just a creedal meaning. With this methodological characteristic, the mind directs itself in the search for truth by reconciling the available data and connecting them on the basis of similarity and resemblance. It unifies them under a semantic criterion that serves as a fundamental principle for understanding and justification, on which visions and solutions are built. This characteristic ensures that cognitive judgements are unified in their standard, resulting in coherence and non-contradiction. This applies both to cosmic

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<sup>54</sup>- The same source, p. 83.

<sup>55</sup>- The same source, p. 85.

<sup>56</sup>- The same source, p. 83.

<sup>57</sup>- The same source, p. 84.

knowledge, which is based on the unity of principles in experimentation, and to religious and human knowledge, which is based on the unity of principle and purpose<sup>58</sup>.

The oneness of God ( tawhid) is the essence of Islamic civilisation. Accordingly, it is stated: "Every discipline should be formulated in such a way as to embody the principles of Islam in its methodology, strategy, data, problems, objectives and aspirations. Every field of knowledge must be reconfigured to be in harmony with Islam through a fundamental axis, which is "Tawhid."<sup>59</sup>

#### **4- Critical Comparison (Enlightenment):**

An-Najjar refers to 'criticism' as a methodological attribute of thought through which one moves in the pursuit of truth and the formulation of reformative frameworks. It involves gathering and comparing different, even conflicting, pieces of information and subjecting them to scrutiny and evaluation in order to reach a balance that leads to discernment and judgement<sup>60</sup>. Criticism, as already indicated, means that the intellect follows a cognitive path in which it reconciles opposing opinions, confronts different possibilities, and then examines and tests them on the basis of this confrontation. This process of comparison and criticism is an important factor in rationalising thought and arriving at the truth<sup>61</sup>.

With this quality, the mind remains open to different opinions on the subject of its enquiry, including opposing and contradictory views. It examines them through the lens of comparison, without excluding or neglecting any of them from the scope of investigation. Everything that is relevant to the subject under consideration is placed on the table of inquiry. The mind then engages in a back and forth exploration between these points of view, subjecting them to scrutiny and criticism. Through this process, it strives to retain that which seems closer to the truth and to discard that which seems closer to falsehood. Ultimately, it arrives at a determination of what it believes to be correct with respect to the research topic<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. The Role of Freedom of Opinion in Intellectual Unity Among Muslims, same source, p. 33.

<sup>59</sup>- Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi. Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles - Action Plan - Achievements, Beirut: Dar Al-Hadi for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, 1st edition, 1995, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Cultural Witness Factors, same source, p. 175.

<sup>61</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. The Role of Freedom of Opinion in Intellectual Unity Among Muslims, same source, p. 38.

<sup>62</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. Knowledge in the Islamic Context, same source, p. 86.

As for the intellectual methodological characteristic that opposes critical comparison, Al-Najjar calls it "linear thinking". In this approach, the mind restricts itself to considering only one opinion or perspective related to the research topic, excluding divergent views. It does not allow itself to deviate to the right or left to see what lies outside the line drawn. As a result, it lacks the opportunity to compare the opinions presented in the subject, and it lacks the opportunity for criticism and scrutiny. As a result, it tends to lean towards what appears to be correct, without the opportunity for convergence between the proponents of different or conflicting opinions and doctrines. It fosters a sense of prejudice and denies the natural feeling of hostility towards that which contradicts it, regarding it as unknown. This is in contrast to linear thinking, which creates barriers in people's minds and can lead to hostilities that create cultural and social imbalances within society<sup>63</sup>.

Upon investigation, it becomes clear that those who deviate furthest from the truth and engage in extremism, causing social unrest, are often individuals who lack knowledge of the ideas of others. They confine themselves to their own opinions, which they regard as the absolute truth, without considering any other perspective<sup>64</sup>.

### **5-Dialogue and freedom of expression:**

In order to achieve intellectual unity among Muslims, Al-Najjar introduced the element of "dialogue" (al-Hawariyya) and freedom of opinion. It is a quality by which the mind is encouraged to extend its intellectual movement to the minds of others. It presents its ideas, explaining and supporting their truth, in order to convey them to those minds and subject them to scrutiny. It also reaches out to those minds to explore their opinions, to consider them, and to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. This is done in a reciprocal interaction between minds, where doctrines disseminate their ideas and beliefs for exchange, understanding, criticism, correction, and even adoption<sup>65</sup>.

The intellectual attribute that opposes dialogue is "intellectual closure" (al-inglaz al-fikri). It is the state of mind when it is confined to its own opinion, without seeking to present that opinion to others, or to inquire what others have come to on the same subject, in order to benefit from any truth that may have escaped it. When thinking is nurtured with the attribute of closure, it shrinks from extending itself to the opinions of others and becomes like someone living on an isolated island. As a result, opportunities to adjust mental perspectives are lost and

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<sup>63</sup>- The same source, pp. 86-87.

<sup>64</sup>- The same source, p. 88.

<sup>65</sup>- The same source, pp. 89-90.

persistence in error becomes prevalent. This, in turn, leads to the emergence of causes of conflict between minds. Therefore, the quality of dialogue guides the cognitive path and eliminates the causes of tension and dysfunction in society<sup>66</sup>.

Freedom of expression encompasses two important elements: firstly, the freedom to think and to think freely, without being forced to do so by others. Secondly, the freedom of individuals to express the opinions they have arrived at through observation and research, to disseminate them among people, and to defend and persuade others of their validity. This is perhaps the most important aspect of freedom of expression. Freedom of opinion also extends to accepting and endorsing opinions received from others, expressing agreement with them, seeking to convince others of their validity, and disseminating them among others<sup>67</sup>.

One might think that freedom of thought and expression is a source of division rather than a cause of convergence. Therefore, some individuals deliberately restrict freedom of expression in order to preserve what they claim is collective unity and prevent potential fragmentation and division. However, Al-Najjar believes that this perception and the resulting restrictions are clearly mistaken, because "when Muslims are given freedom of expression and are encouraged to think independently, to form opinions, to present and defend them, then all their thoughts, ideas and disputes are put on the table for discussion and evaluated through dialogue and argument with others. They learn what is true and what is false, what is strong and what is weak. This becomes a means of engaging with others who hold different views, while holding fast to what has been proved true through free dialogue, and reconsidering what has been proved invalid through dialogue<sup>68</sup>".

Through freedom of expression, ideas can be presented for examination, analysed, discussed and debated, allowing the correct ones to be identified. This leads to conviction and the elimination of fanaticism.

In the case of intellectual repression within closed sectarianism, Al-Najjar believes that ideas that remain imprisoned gradually rise in the individual's mind to the level of absolute certainty, even if they were initially doubtful. The opposing ideas of others are perceived as false and misguided. Eventually the repressed individual becomes antagonistic towards those who hold conflicting ideas,

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<sup>66</sup>- The same source, p. 90.

<sup>67</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. The Role of Freedom of Opinion in Intellectual Unity Among Muslims, same source, pp. 43-45.

<sup>68</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. The Civilizational Horizons of Islamic Existence in the West, Paris: European Institute for Human Sciences, 1st edition, 2005, p. 67.



opposing them and growing in a direction contrary to their own. This may manifest itself in practical forms of conflict and confrontation which may escalate to the point of violence<sup>69</sup>.

**Thirdly, the attainment of the elements of intellectual education for civilisational progress can be approached from the following perspectives:**

**1- Levels of achieving comprehensiveness:**

In order for Islamic thought to be corrected, it should be comprehensive in its outlook. This can be achieved on three levels: objective comprehensiveness, temporal comprehensiveness, and logical comprehensiveness.

**1.A. Objective comprehensiveness:**

Objective comprehensiveness means that the intellect, in its cognitive orientation, embraces all subjects of knowledge and makes them subjects of investigation without limiting itself to specific fields of knowledge. It does not restrict itself to exploring and considering any aspect of truth. Therefore, every subject is inherently capable of being an object of intellectual contemplation and a basis for the discovery of truth<sup>70</sup>.

One implication of objective comprehensiveness is that Islamic thought should have a comprehensive orientation, encompassing both the material and metaphysical realms of truth and providing a new foundation for life. In addition, Islamic thought should engage in research and exploration of all aspects of general human knowledge, including the sciences of the past and present, the beliefs and religions of different cultures, and their cultural achievements. All these should be open to intellectual scrutiny because the human heritage, whether in agreement or disagreement, contains both beneficial and harmful truths. By examining it, one can benefit from what is true and guard against the harm of what is false, ensuring that it does not seep into the Muslim community in one way or another<sup>71</sup>.

If Islamic thought adopts a comprehensive approach that includes research and study of the cultural and intellectual achievements of humanity in general and of Muslims in particular, it will discover treasures of truth in various fields that are indispensable for the revival of Islamic life. This is because truth is distributed among humanity in varying degrees, and the broader the scope of inquiry, the greater the share of truth that can be attained. Perhaps this is one of the meanings

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<sup>69</sup>- The same source, pp. 67-68.

<sup>70</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Cultural Witness Factors, same source, p. 152.

<sup>71</sup>- The same source, p. 153.

of the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Wisdom is the lost property of the believer, so wherever he finds it, he has a greater right to it".

By engaging with diverse knowledge and cultural contributions, Islamic thought can benefit from the wisdom and truths found in different disciplines and perspectives<sup>72</sup>. This inclusive approach enriches the intellectual landscape of Islamic discourse and facilitates the rejuvenation of Islamic life in a more holistic and inclusive manner<sup>73</sup>.

### **1-B-Temporal comprehensiveness:**

Temporal comprehensiveness means that the mind, in its evaluation of judgments, should be attentive to all stages of time: past, present and future. It should not limit its judgments to a single temporal dimension, ignoring or excluding others from consideration. Rather, it should consider the whole of time. Thus it considers the present independently of the past and the future, and it considers the future independently of the past and the present<sup>74</sup>.

When thinking is characterised by temporal comprehensiveness, it explores the evaluative judgments from which programmes are formulated for the life of Muslims in various aspects. It begins with the present temporal reality of that life, then delves into the roots from which that reality emerged in the past. It also looks to the future, where the stage is set for the implementation of these programmes. When implemented, they become effective in bringing about positive change and improving life on the path of progress. They are built on the concept of movement across different temporal spaces and carry within them the power of motivation and impetus. If, on the other hand, they are built on a partial stage, they carry the meaning of stagnation, without the power of movement<sup>75</sup>.

### **1-C- Logical comprehensiveness:**

Logical comprehensiveness refers to the approach of thinking in considering the comprehensive relationship between the elements of the subjects under study. It means that the examination of the details of these elements leads to a comprehensive conceptualisation that encompasses them all. Evaluations and judgements are formed on the basis of this holistic understanding. These evaluations and judgments are rooted in the comprehensive consideration of the

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<sup>72</sup>- The same source, p. 154.

<sup>73</sup>- Narrated by Ibn Majah, Book of Asceticism, Chapter of Wisdom.

<sup>74</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Cultural Witness Factors, same source, p. 155.

<sup>75</sup>- The same source, p. 156.

details represented by the overall inclusive meanings, rather than focusing on the details in their fragmented and scattered state.

Contemporary Islamic thought suffers from a significant deficiency due to a logical flaw in the arrangement of the elements of examination. In many cases, it fails to integrate the details in their totality and instead treats them in their individualistic state when formulating perspectives and judgements. As a result of this deficiency, he falls into many errors. The carpenter believes that the life of Muslims, like the life of any nation, is determined by multiple and interrelated factors. Evaluating and directing this movement can only be achieved by examining it in a way that moves from the details of these factors to their overarching principles, which encompass them all. By considering the relationship between these factors and their effects, a comprehensive treatment can be proposed. However, if treatment plans are based on detailed and fragmented factors, they will not be able to bring about progress and development<sup>76</sup>.

## **2- Realism:**

For Islamic thought to regain its realistic character, it needs three fundamental aspects:

### **2-A- Recognition of reality:**

According to Al-Najjar, reality in this context refers to the material existence of the universe as well as the conditions and events of human life. Acknowledging reality means believing that reality, in its various manifestations, is a source and starting point of knowledge. It is therefore indispensable. It is not to be belittled or despised, nor is it an evil to be avoided or dismissed in the search for truth. It is essential in constructing the images and perspectives to which life should adhere. Establishing this understanding in the mind is a fundamental element of realism as a characteristic of methodological thinking<sup>77</sup>.

### **2-B- Realism of Approach:**

If recognising reality means recognising it as a genuine and necessary source of knowledge, it follows that in order to complete the attribute of realism, the mind should take reality as its starting point in the process of knowledge. It should turn to reality in its first step of seeking truth through investigation and study, in order to make theoretical judgements and determine the facts it arrives at<sup>78</sup>. Al-Najjar emphasises that realism of approach means taking reality as the starting point for

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<sup>76</sup>- The same source, pp. 157-158.

<sup>77</sup>- The same source, p. 160.

<sup>78</sup>- The source itself, pages 161-162.

diagnosing and describing its current state. It does not imply that the existing state is inherently correct or that it should be given legitimacy solely on the basis of its existence<sup>79</sup>.

### **2-C- Realism of evaluation:**

Realism of evaluation means that the mind adopts an approach to evaluating a treatment plan based on what it requires and the circumstances it involves. It involves considering the aspects of truth and correctness and striving to correct deviations and errors in order to gradually raise the realistic image to be addressed to the ideal example it should be. The intended evaluation here refers to the corrective plan that is developed to improve reality and drive it towards growth, whether in its specific components or in its overall structure. This plan, in accordance with the attribute of realism, should be formulated on the basis of an understanding of the causes of reality and their immediate and long-term interactions. As a result, it becomes a realistic plan that carries within itself the potential for implementation, formulated according to reality. It therefore has the capacity to bring about change and progress for the better<sup>80</sup>.

When thinking is nurtured with the attribute of realism, it becomes a unified starting point that brings researchers and observers together on a common ground. They converge in their goal and arrive at common results. However, when thinking becomes abstract in the evaluation of judgements and positions, each individual or group constructs their own opinions and ideal perceptions. These perceptions are susceptible to the development of individual doctrines because they are not subject to the objective reality that needs to be addressed. As a result, differences of judgement arise, and each party clings to its own conclusions in a way that excludes the perspectives and ideals of others. This leads to collective cognitive and social damage<sup>81</sup>.

### **3- Mechanisms for achieving unity:**

The rationalisation of Islamic thought in this attribute is achieved by bringing together the following elements:

#### **3-A- Unity of purpose:**

Unity of purpose means that Islamic thought, while seeking the truth, constructs life plans that are closely linked to a unified goal. All its activities follow an interrelated path leading to the realisation of this goal. This unified goal is the

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<sup>79</sup>- Same source, page 164.

<sup>80</sup>- The source itself, pages 164-165.

<sup>81</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. Knowledge in the Islamic Context, previous source, page 84.

constructive development of the earth in its comprehensive sense, elevating humanity both materially and spiritually towards a connection with Allah. When this unity of purpose becomes an inherent characteristic of thought in a methodological sense, every idea and notion adapts to this unified goal, either directly or indirectly. Though the paths of this thought may take various turns, their ultimate direction converges on a single point, which is the unified goal<sup>82</sup>.

### **3-B- Unity of Causality:**

Al-Najjar's term "Unity of Causality" refers to the idea that thought, in its movement within the realm of knowledge, is intimately connected to a causal unity from which the various partial phenomena are derived. In this context, when one approaches these phenomena for understanding, one goes beyond them to uncover the common causes that underlie them. This enables a correct understanding of the reality of things. This is achieved by identifying the common links represented by their unified fundamental principles. The same applies to the movement of thought in constructing conceptualisations and developmental visions of life. In this respect, one's conceptualisations and visions are also based on the unified causes to which the elements of ideas in the conceptualisations can be traced, as well as the expected results and outcomes of these conceptualisations and visions. It is a causal unity in understanding and a causal unity in shaping the image and plans of Islam. Thought should be based on this notion of causal unity, for without it it would not be able to understand the phenomena of life or plan its development<sup>83</sup>.

### **4- Mechanisms for achieving criticality:**

Criticality is a quality that the mind gradually develops through practice until it becomes a methodological disposition that is applied in its cognitive movement and in the construction of visions and plans for individual and social life. This quality is achieved only through three essential elements. If one of these elements is disturbed, the whole criticality collapses and leads to dissolution. These elements are

#### **4-A- Element of Freedom of Orientation:**

Freedom of Orientation means that the mind is free in its movement of thought, not bound by restrictions that direct it in one direction and prevent it from turning in other directions. These restrictions can be internal, such as inclinations that cause the mind to consider only one particular line of thought while ignoring other

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<sup>82</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid Omar. Factors of Civilizational Witnesses, previous source, pages 169-170.

<sup>83</sup>- The source itself, pages 171-172.

opposing lines. This is what is meant by the following verse: "And if there had been any gods in them other than Allah, they would have been corrupted. Thus is Allah, the Lord of the Throne, exalted above what they describe" (Quran 21:22).

Restrictions can also be represented by external constraints resulting from adherence to a heritage that directs thought along a particular line and creates a barrier between it and other alternative lines. This is what is meant by the following verse: "And when it is said to them, 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'We will rather follow what we found our fathers in. Even if Satan were to invite them to the punishment of the Blaze?'" (Quran 31:21).

Restrictions can also manifest as the guardianship of a priest, leader or elder who exercises material and spiritual tyranny over thought, imposing a particular vision and preventing other visions. This is similar to what Pharaoh did, as recorded in the following verse: "O great ones, I did not know that you had a god other than me. Then kindle for me, O Haman, [a fire] on the clay, and build for me a tower, that I may see the God of Moses. Verily, I think he is among the liars." (Quran 28:38)<sup>84</sup>.

**4-B-The element of objective confrontation:** refers to the tendency of thought, in its cognitive movement, to investigate, in every subject within the realm of knowledge, whether of nature or of thought itself, its counterpart - namely, materials that contradict it to a significant or minimal extent - in order to juxtapose and confront them on the platform of research. In this way, the mind is provided with an extended domain of interrelated subjects that are deliberately sought out with the aim of establishing a deliberate confrontation between the subjects of knowledge, rather than relying on accidental or fortuitous circumstances<sup>85</sup>.

#### **4-C- The element of discrimination and judgement:**

as intended by Al-Najjar, refers to the direction of thought, after gathering the material of knowledge through a comprehensive collection, to critically examine it. It involves comparing and contrasting different aspects, passing judgement on them and striking a balance between them. This process ultimately leads to the clarification of the aspects of agreement and disagreement between them, revealing the characteristics of correctness and error. Through this discernment, what is true is distinguished from what is false, and the mind makes judgments that select what is correct to be used as the basis for new construction. It creates

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<sup>84</sup>- The previous source, pages 177-178.

<sup>85</sup>- The same source, pages 178-179.

another cycle of visions and ideas, discarding that which is obsolete so as not to introduce factors that might undermine or corrupt the new structure.

The element of discrimination and judgement is the essence of the critical quality. The preceding elements, though necessary conditions, do not necessarily lead to it. Though thought may be free in its direction, gathering material in a comprehensive manner, it may subsequently construct its ideas and perspectives from a mixture, without distinguishing between the strong and the weak, or between the sound and the flawed. This is due to the inability to engage in criticism and examination and to separate the wheat from the chaff. Therefore, criticism and discrimination are elements that go beyond mere collection and confrontation and require additional conscious intention and specific practice<sup>86</sup>.

### **5-Freedom of expression:**

Is capable of producing individuals with a broad educational background, open to different doctrines and orientations. It ensures that they are educated to engage in consultation and free exchange of ideas, evaluating controversial issues on the basis of evidence and proof. This freedom directs the mind to the vast realm of reality, encompassing its good and its evil, in order to grasp its truth and then to deal with it. It is not confined to ideals and fantasies, so that there is no shock when confronted with reality<sup>87</sup>.

### **Conclusion :**

Based on the above, the following is a summary of the conclusions and recommendations of this analytical study:

This study aimed to explore the role of intellectual education in establishing a methodology that guides the Islamic nation towards empowering its civilisational witnesses. It serves as a link between the idea of the Muslim individual and the determination that fuels his ambitions, sharpens his self and will, and translates them into reality. Moreover, this study is part of an integrated intellectual project that addresses the factors of the rise of the Islamic nation and its overcoming of the current state of civilisational absence at the global level. After exposing the various disorders that afflict thought, Al-Najjar proceeded to establish principles that enable thought to acquire and nurture the mind.

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<sup>86</sup>- The source itself, page 180.

<sup>87</sup>- Al-Najjar, AbdulMajid. The Role of Freedom of Opinion in Intellectual Unity Among Muslims, previous source, page 85.

Conceptually, intellectual education can be seen as aiming to train the Muslim mind to adopt certain methodological qualities that would lead this perspective to a higher level of truth and correctness.

From a cognitive perspective, the elements of intellectual education relate to the methodological aspect of the civilisational project that seeks reform and renaissance, considering methodology as a bridge to transform the vision into a tangible civilisation.

- Inclusiveness: This involves broadening the scope of inquiry to include all subjects of research in the cognitive orientation of the mind.
- Realism: It means starting from the material reality of the universe and human life in contemplation.
- Unity: It serves as an organising thread of vision and a methodological characteristic of thought. The mind seeks the truth and formulates reform plans by harmonising and unifying the data into a meaningful standard upon which visions and solutions are built.

From a methodological point of view, if methodology is generally the bridge that translates ideas into reality, intellectual education is the fundamental and constructive ground through which the mind operates.

This research raises in the minds of intellectual elites the need to develop our understanding of ourselves, to understand the identities of others and their ways of thinking, in order to pave the way for intellectual independence through an educational model that takes into account the specificities of the Islamic cognitive model and benefits from human intellectual acquisition. The problem of renaissance in the Islamic world is an explicit civilisational challenge, whose language is science and whose weapon is the careful choice of methodology. Moreover, the advances brought about by the digital revolution require that the demand for civilisational progress be met by adopting specific mechanisms and methodologies that serve as means to an end. This should be achieved by establishing intellectual methods that unify perspectives in observation and contemplation.

This underscores the need for deeper research that goes beyond mere contemplation and focuses on practical application, expanding its discursive domain within our organisation, in education and culture, and in our curricula, preceded by the treatment and development of our ethics. It requires the formulation of curricula, not curricula that challenge or go against the tide of globalisation, but curricula that find a place among the imported curricula.



What are the mechanisms for activating the divine approach in the fields of education and culture, for aligning them with the knowledge system of Revelation?

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