

## **Reason and Its Limitations in the Thought of Abdullah Laroui**

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### **Abstract:**

The project of Abdullah Laroui is considered one of the most important intellectual projects in the Arab world. Through it, he aimed to establish an Arab modernity, by means of a group of intellectual works, among the most important of which is the concept of reason. Laroui does not provide us with a clear concept of this reason nor does he give us a theory in this field; rather, he attempts to show us how this Arab-Islamic reason thinks through his reading of this reason from its beginnings up to the present day, that is, the method or approach by which this reason produces itself.

Laroui attempted to establish a distinction between two types of reason. The first is that the reason intended by the hypothesis of the correlation between religion and reason does not signify the meaning conveyed by the concept of reason in its classical philosophical contents, nor in its modern usage in human thought. The second is that reason and rationality are not purely theoretical matters determined by the degree to which a given thought enjoys logical and methodological coherence, or by its ability to construct a coherent system of ideas and knowledge. Rather, they are primarily practical matters, related to the extent to which the idea is embodied in reality and transformed from conviction into material behavior, manifested in actions, relations, and institutions. Through this distinction, it can be said that Abdullah Laroui distinguishes between theoretical reason—which dominated Arab philosophical thought throughout its history—and practical reason, which is a necessary reason in order to change Arab reality in the first place.

The aim of this study is to examine the concept of reason in contemporary Arab philosophical thought, to highlight the status of reason in the writings of Abdullah Laroui, to clarify the limitations that Laroui assigned to it, and to reveal the reasons that led him to reject absolute reason and replace it with practical reason.

**Keywords :** Reason – Absolute reason – Practical reason – Modernity – Reality

### **Introduction**

Reason is among the issues that have imposed themselves on contemporary Arab philosophical discourse. Most intellectual projects call for rationality and attempt to establish a new rationality opposed to classical rationality, which was subject to the authority of religion and made an instrument serving Arab societies. The ultimate goal of this is to change reality for the better by interrogating reality through reason and diagnosing the condition of societies rationally in order to find the necessary solutions to the crisis of backwardness and decline, which is primarily due to the absence of reason, which itself is a means of creativity. Thus, wherever

backwardness and dependency are found, reason is in a state of almost total absence. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that reason has limits at which it stops, and it also has a specific domain that it cannot violate, and this domain is reality.

The names of reason in contemporary Arab thought have multiplied between reason, thought, and ideology, yet all of them have one goal, namely the advancement of the Arab-Islamic nation. Contemporary Arab projects therefore call for the return of rationality to the ground of reality and its liberation from the world of theorization. Among the projects that advocate reason and rationality is the project of Abdullah Laroui, who attempted to study reason from the perspective of function, emphasizing its practical aspect. Reason acquires its meaning only through its applications, and the reality of the Arab nation is in need of practical reason in order to change it. Laroui's interest in reason was primarily pragmatic, as he established a distinction between practical and theoretical reason, while emphasizing the importance of practical reason celebrated by Western modernity. But what is the concept of reason in contemporary Arab philosophical thought? What is the status of reason in the writings of Abdullah Laroui? In what does the limitation assigned to it by Laroui consist? And what are the reasons that led him to reject absolute reason and replace it with practical reason?

### **The Concept of Reason**

#### **Linguistically:**

In language, reason (‘aql) means restraint and prohibition. It was named so by analogy with the hobble of a camel, because it prevents its owner from deviating from the right path just as the hobble prevents the camel from straying. It was also said that reason was named so because it restrains its possessor from falling into dangers, that is, it holds him back. It was said: reason is the faculty by which the human being is distinguished from other animals. It is said: so-and-so has an intelligent heart and an inquiring tongue; and he understood and comprehended the matter, meaning he grasped it. Reason is also used in the sense of confinement and retention; it is said to the addressee, “Grasp what is said to you,” that is, retain its knowledge lest it slip away from you.

As for Lalande, he says: “Reason is a faculty or cause; in French, *Raison*, and in Latin, *Ratio*, meaning *Logos*.” Among the meanings of reason in language is to comprehend and reflect upon something; it is said that someone reasoned, meaning he recognized the error he was upon. The rational person is the one who perceives and understands matters. As shown in Greek and Arab heritage, reason is spoken of in many senses. What the majority say about the human being is that he is rational, and the reason that theologians repeat on their tongues when they say, “This is what reason necessitates” or “reason negates.”

Ibrahim Madkour said about reason that it is “that by which truth is distinguished from falsehood and correctness from error... Reason is also applied to the highest forms of mental operations in general, and to demonstration and inference in particular. It also refers to the self-evident principles upon which all rational people agree, namely the principle of identity, the principle of non-contradiction, and the principle of causality.”

#### **Terminologically:**

Reason is among the concepts for which it is difficult to provide a comprehensive and exclusive

definition, as its definitions differ from one philosopher to another. Aristotle held that there is reason in actuality and reason in potentiality; one is active and the other passive, and neither dispenses with the other, since each completes the other. Reason in actuality is the reason that apprehends the forms of existing things and their manifestations. As for reason that fails to perform its task, it remains reason in potentiality; but if it performs its assigned role, then it is active reason. His later commentators called reason in actuality “active intellect” and attributed to it qualities that elevate it above the material world and absolve it from perishing.

Al-Farabi held that “the active intellect is a separate form that was not in matter nor will it ever be.” He also saw that religion and philosophy do not contradict one another, nor are there differences between them, because both branch from one origin that contains knowledge, truth, and life, namely the active intellect. It is from this those philosophers and prophets draw.

Al-Farabi also distinguished between two types of reason: theoretical and practical. Regarding theoretical reason, he said: “It is a faculty by which we naturally obtain—without inquiry or measurement—certain knowledge of universal necessary premises which are the principles of sciences, such as our knowledge that the whole is greater than its part... This reason may be in potentiality when these first principles are not yet acquired; when they are acquired, it becomes reason in actuality and its preparedness to deduce the rest becomes stronger. This faculty cannot err in what it obtains; rather, all the knowledge it attains is true and certain and cannot be changed.” As for practical reason, he said: “It is a faculty by which a person, through abundant experience and prolonged observation of sensible things, acquires premises enabling him to determine what should be chosen or avoided among matters whose action belongs to us.” Thus, reason for al-Farabi has many meanings, as he affirmed when he said: “The names of reason are of many kinds: one is that by which it is said to the majority that the human being is rational; another is the reason that theologians repeat on their tongues when they say, ‘This is what reason requires or negates.’”

As for Ibn Sina, he regarded it as the link between the unseen world and the visible world. Among Islamic philosophers and scholastics, it refers to the intellect in its reception of mental forms and is also called the hylic intellect. It is the sum of intellectual dispositions, mental habits, and basic beliefs of an individual or of a society, and mentalities differ according to environment.

Taha Abdurrahman says in defining reason that in the “Greek sense, reason is a self, that is, an independent being existing within the human being... it is the Logos, as expressed. This concept of reason has no basis in any of the foundational Islamic texts. All that we find is that reason is an act among acts, like hearing, tasting, seeing, and smelling.” Thus, Islamic reason is not the reason spoken of by the Greeks. This indicates that the concept of reason changes from one society to another and from one civilization to another. In Islam, reason is one of the perceptive acts performed by the human being.

### **The Concept of Reason in Arab Thought:**

The subject of reason received great attention from Arab thinkers, who conducted extensive research in this field, especially since the emergence of Islam and its elevation of the status of reason, which is mentioned in the Qur’an 48 times. Muslims became aware of the importance of reason and the necessity of employing it in all fields that contribute to improving the life of

the Muslim and Arab individual. The issue of monotheism and proving the existence of God is among the most important matters in which reason was used. Among the verses indicating the use of reason is His saying: “Indeed, the worst of creatures in the sight of God are the deaf and dumb who do not reason,” and His saying: “Do they not reflect upon the Qur’an, or are there locks upon their hearts?” and His saying: “They have hearts with which they reason.” In this verse, we notice the association of reason with the heart; the heart is the instrument of reasoning just as the ear is the instrument of hearing and the nose the instrument of smelling. Thus, the heart performs the function of reasoning.

Reason was used in debates and discussions that revolved primarily around doctrinal religious issues. The Mu‘tazilites were among the most famous groups that relied on reason in addressing these matters. They considered reason to be the guide of the human being to the path of truth and that through it one can attain correctness. They exalted reason and emphasized the necessity of using it, especially in divine matters. Their interest in reason led them to give priority to reason over transmitted texts; that is, the human being is not in need of a revealed message to perceive the existence of God, for through reason he can prove His existence and unity. Ahmad Amin said about the Mu‘tazilites’ exaltation of reason: “In my opinion, if the teachings of the Mu‘tazilites in these two matters—namely the authority of reason and freedom of will—had prevailed among Muslims from the time of the Mu‘tazilites until today, Muslims would have had a different position in history than their present one. Submission incapacitated them, determinism paralyzed them, and reliance held them back.” Nevertheless, it can be said with the Mu‘tazilites that liberating reason leads the individual to creativity and the production of knowledge that elevates him intellectually and socially. The Arab nation today is in need of employing reason to free itself from the reactionism that still binds it and hinders its progress. Reviving reason “creates boldness, opens horizons for thought, and pushes toward activating reason, so that reactionary movements do not arise nor do attempts to halt progress succeed, for such attempts and movements only bear fruit in climates of suppressing thought, freezing it, and sanctifying tradition.”

The reason that the Mu‘tazilites sanctified and gave great attention to was later sanctified in favor of the religious text by the Ash‘arites and many scholars and imams. This was due to their adherence to the religious text, and this religious patterning of reason continued to dominate contemporary Arab thinking until the emergence of many intellectual projects carrying the banner of reason and rationality, such as those of Muhammad Abed al-Jabri, Taha Abdurrahman, and Mohammed Arkoun, among other Arab Muslim thinkers. Despite their differences in starting points and principles, their aim was one: to rationalize the reality of the Arab individual, that is, to direct reason toward reality and to remove sanctity from heritage.

Taha Abdurrahman held that affirming the absoluteness of heritage leads to affirming the absoluteness of reason, which cannot be accepted, because reason has limits that it does not transcend. Reason is connected to the heart and is one of its acts; thus, it cannot be upright without the heart. On this basis, he distinguished between three types of reason: abstract reason, guided reason, and supported reason. Abstract reason does not mean the intellect that abstracts sensibles from their matter, but rather practical practices detached from religion. This type of rationality “has no certainty, neither regarding the benefit of the chosen ends nor the

effectiveness of the specified means to achieve them.” This type applies to modern Western rationality, which gives great attention to means, making it predominantly procedural without interest in the value dimension. In contrast, guided reason focuses on the value dimension and not on the effectiveness of means, because its source of value is religion, which is certain and free from doubt; thus, the values derived from it are certain. Taha Abdurrahman says that reason is guided “because it takes its values from the texts of revelation, even if it falters in adopting the means to achieve these values, for it may think it has derived these means from the revealed texts, but in reality it has taken their outward form and missed their essence.” Supported rationality means taking values, ends, and means from the law. He defines supported reason as “the act by which its possessor seeks knowledge of the realities of things through descending in the ranks of religious practice, performing supererogatory acts in addition to fulfilling obligatory acts in the most perfect manner.” This is the type he emphasizes due to its effectiveness; only through supported rationality can an Arab-Islamic modernity be built that derives its spirit from religion, not from matter, unlike Western modernity, which has fallen into moral and value crises despite its scientific and material development.

As for Mohammed Arkoun, he called for the humanization of Islamic reason and the removal of its absoluteness in order to open space for creativity and production that contribute to building and advancing society. This cannot occur except by liberating reason from the religious and heritage references that dominated it for centuries. Reason should not be treated as an absolute essence; it must be questioned and transformed into an effective reason serving reality and building society, because reason “is not a transcendent truth or an alienated identity, nor a pure essence free from the impurities of irrationality, nor an innate apparatus corrupted from outside by theologians and politicians as most modernists imagine. Rather, it is an intellectual activity that produces truths and rationalities as much as it weaves illusions and irrationalities.” Arkoun thus called for the humanization of reason to overcome the theological view that marked it in the Middle Ages, which led him to study Islamic reason historically. He saw that reason underwent transformations from religious reason to foundationalist reason, then philosophical reason, then positive reason, and finally emergent reason. This development also applies to Islamic reason, which moved from Qur’anic religious reason to classical rational reason, then scholastic repetitive reason, and later to the stage of renaissance and national and Islamic revolution. Emergent reason is a necessary demand if the Arab nation seeks progress. Hence Arkoun calls for adopting an exploratory open reason that “goes beyond all that preceded and expands and deepens in reality that liberating knowledge led by Enlightenment reason in Western Europe.”

As for Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, he assumed the responsibility of liberating Arab reason, considering reason the engine of reality. He defines Arab reason as “nothing other than this thought of which we speak: thought as an instrument of theoretical production fashioned by a specific culture, namely Arab culture.” Reason in its essence is linked to ethics and behavior; therefore, he paid great attention to moral reason, going beyond the Greek approach that made reason primarily epistemic. The Arab individual needs to employ reason especially in the value-behavioral domain. Al-Jabri also held that the Arab nation needs to rationalize its heritage to purge it of innovations, superstitions, and naive ideas unrelated to reality or history, which have

only contributed to regression. He called for an epistemological study of heritage and of Arab reason in terms of its structure, cognitive formation, and productive mechanisms, because this reason “derives its identity from heritage and at the same time is not dissolved in it; it stands on a modern foundation while preserving its specificity.” A critical study of Arab reason is thus capable of defining its identity and directing it correctly.

Reason occupies a major place in contemporary Arab projects that cannot be reduced to the works of Mohammed Arkoun, Taha Abdurrahman, and Mohammed Abed al-Jabri alone. There are other projects and philosophical approaches no less important. Nevertheless, it can be said that these projects, in general, still remain in the realm of theorization and have not descended into reality to be embodied in it, even though their origin is contemporary Arab reality.

### **Reason and Its Determinants in the Thought of Laroui:**

#### **The Concept of Reason According to Laroui:**

Al-Arwi views that the concept of reason is among the unclear concepts in Arab culture, and it is not possible to define the concept of reason by returning to this culture, which has made the concept of reason limited. This return also reveals the inability of Arabs to comprehend a new and modern concept of reason. When we use the word reason within the limits of our traditional culture, we say something different from what others say today; thus there is no response or mutual understanding. We think we are speaking about self-evident truths while we are immersed in ambiguities. Between our word and their word, there is simply a separating difference, which is history. Accordingly, the concept of reason in Al-Arwi’s view was based on Arab heritage and also on the Western concept of it, and the distinction between the two concepts is due to history.

Al-Arwi views that “reason is the method that enables the rationalization of the particular intelligible; reason, as it was, is not the exposition of the absolute and its interpretation as a condition for knowing the truth of every part.” That is, reason is the tool we use to understand the particulars existing in reality and in the sensory world. The feature of reason is the absolute; therefore, it is necessary to transcend this absoluteness, because “when the logic of the absolute prevails in a society, as it did with us in the past, every thinker becomes subject to it: the sage, that is the physician, or the philosopher, the mystic, the jurist, and the theologian, all follow the same method.” Ibn Rushd is considered the best example of this, because Ibn Rushd the philosopher, in Al-Arwi’s view, explains Aristotle just as Ibn Rushd the jurist explains Malik’s Muwatta.

Reason, in Al-Arwi’s view, is also a means of change that opens the way for many sciences to appear in all fields. Every act of reason produces new knowledge different from what preceded it, contributing to the development of society at all levels. Al-Arwi gives an example of this from modern Western reason, where Galileo excelled in science, Descartes in physics and philosophy, Montesquieu in law, Rousseau in politics, Hume in ethics, and Darwin in life science, and so on.

Abdullah Al-Arwi distinguishes between two types of reason: absolute reason, which is a classical traditional reason, and modern open reason. The first leads us to backwardness and decline, while the second leads us to enlightenment and progress. Therefore, if today we insist

on adhering to the reason of the past, we inevitably move toward backwardness, and this becomes an obstacle to our progress. But if we wish to keep pace with modernity, we must adhere to a reason whose primary subject is reality, with all that this reality carries of political, ethical, and scientific dimensions, in order to bring about an enlightened revolution.

Abdullah Al-Arwi's concern was not focused on establishing a precise and clear concept of reason as much as he sought to critique Arab reason in its absolute and traditional form. Thus, the purpose of critique is to question Arab reason and reveal its points of weakness and fragility; challenging them leads us to identify the necessary solutions to overcome its crises, especially in the field of politics and public ethics, for that has a profound impact. Politics requires standing before events and diagnosing them based on their reality, that is, their present, not their past.

### **1 / The Sheikh's reason and its limitations:**

The Sheikh's reason is among the forms of reason that Al-Arwi was concerned with criticizing, primarily because of the contradictions it contains. This reason, in his view, was behind Arab backwardness and was a cause that prevented their progress, because it is an eminently traditional and fundamentalist reason that returns to the past and withdraws into it. The Sheikh's reason, in Al-Arwi's view, is threefold: religious reason, political reason, and the reason of the Sheikh of technique.

The religious Sheikh's reason is self-centered; it views the West as opposed and contradictory to it, and sees the relationship between Arabs and the West as one of conflict between opposing dualities such as heritage and modernity, authenticity and contemporaneity. From this perspective, the Sheikh's view of the West is religious, because he rejects the West from the angle of religious difference; Islam is better than Christianity and different from it in teachings and principles, and therefore one should not follow the Western path of modernization. However, the paradox into which the religious Sheikh's reason falls expresses its incapacity and deficiency, as on the one hand it rejects following the West, and on the other hand declares that it does not monopolize Western democracy and freedom. In this regard, we ask: why does religious reason forbid following the West and condemn it? Yet at the same time we find it benefiting from everything the West offers. Here Al-Arwi speaks about the issue of the lawful and the unlawful, where the religious Sheikh deals with new issues from a pragmatic perspective and attributes every Western progress and discovery to Islam and the Arabs, considering Muslims to have preceded it, except that "the Sheikh of today is less connected than the Sheikh of yesterday to old Arab production; he returns to the ancestors and bypasses centuries of interpretation and independent reasoning" in order for his interpretations to be somewhat in harmony with the spirit of his time.

Abdullah Al-Arwi, in his study of the religious Sheikh's reason, addressed Muhammad Abduh, who is among the advocates of the Arab renaissance, as he viewed his interest in reason from a religious perspective; that is, he did not go beyond that religious outlook in dealing with Islamic reason, especially since Muhammad Abduh experienced "the dilemma and paradoxes between the West and the Arabs, between science and progress, between gentleness and authority, and so on; rather, he is a model of the prevailing Arab discourses: liberal, technical, and Salafi."

As for the political Sheikh's reason, it is a reason that appoints itself to protect the Islamic state and care for its people, combining religion and modernization in order to manage the affairs of the people. This type of reason is less fanatical than religious reason because it attempts to open up to the West, even if to a limited extent, in order to benefit from what the West has achieved, especially in terms of means and thought. However, despite claiming openness and resisting reduction and classification—since it claims democracy, liberalism, nationalism, universality, and so on—this claim is intended to serve the interests of this Sheikh, who through his discourses seeks to preserve his position and authority within society, because he always makes openness have a goal that does not affect his status within society.

As for the Sheikh of technique's reason, it calls for science, development, industry, and the necessity of mastering and advancing it, distancing from myths and legends and following everything useful. If society wishes to develop, it must pay attention to industry, and in this case it must benefit from the West and employ what it has achieved in industry, as if the West in this case is a reference in industry. However, the call of the Sheikh of technique to industry and its development is not devoid of a religious aspect, since the ultimate aim is not this world but the hereafter.

The Sheikh's reasons, despite their call for liberation and openness, are limited in scope; the freedom they celebrate is freedom outside the home. He calls for liberating women and giving them more freedom without this freedom touching his wife and daughters.

**The Khaldunian reason and its limitations:**

Abdullah Al-Arwi devoted himself to studying the issue of reason in Ibn Khaldun in view of the importance of his works in history, civilization, and politics. To clarify the place of reason for him, he resorted to the distinction that Ibn Khaldun established between three worlds: the world of elements, the world of formation, and the world of events. The latter, the world of events, is the domain within which reason operates, because reason is always linked to what the human world contains of facts, so that reason becomes a tool serving the human self, thus becoming a practical instrument not limited to the field of theorization only, as was prevalent before among many philosophers who viewed reason as the key to opening the unseen world and proving the existence of God. But with Ibn Khaldun this view of reason changed. Al-Arwi says: "At this very point Ibn Khaldun differs from all philosophers, sages, and mystics; he differs from Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, and even Ibn Rushd who is close to him and undoubtedly his first teacher." The difference lies in their view of the function and field of reason. Although Ibn Rushd was known for reason and rationality, his rationality was limited and did not transcend the circle of the religious text, which makes reason for them a religious reason incapable of rationalizing reality and unrelated to it, unlike the Khaldunian reason, which made reality its primary subject and ultimate aim.

Ibn Khaldun's interest in reality was manifested in human civilization, which made him a pioneer in using experimental reason, because his study of civilization was a scientific and realistic study governed by reason in explanation, proof, and analysis, especially from the historical perspective that led him to criticism and verification by subjecting the historical phenomenon to rational study in order to reveal what it contains of extraordinary elements far

from reality and unacceptable to reason, in order to build the science of civilization on a scientific foundation free from the myths that history previously carried. Thus “the Khaldunian domain moves from civilization to the world of events only, leaving the rest to others; the direction of history is from the world of events to civilization.” Therefore, it can be said that Ibn Khaldun gave great importance to the practical aspect at the expense of the theoretical aspect, in view of the benefit of action for the individual and society, which led him to enter the world of politics in order to address the issues of his time and seek to change and transcend them and find solutions, because the logic of politics is reason.

**Modern reason:**

Speaking about modernity inevitably leads us to modern and contemporary Western civilization, because it is the civilization that ignited in the spirit of modern Western man the desire for change, which cannot be achieved except through work and reliance on reason. In Abdullah Al-Arwi’s view, the West did not achieve development by relying on religion or by clinging to heritage; rather, this development resulted from liberating reason from all the constraints that bound it throughout the Middle Ages. Thus, the fundamental feature that marked Western modernity was reason and rationality, and Arab society needs such rationality in order to emerge from the state of backwardness and stagnation it has suffered for centuries due to regressive thinking and attachment to heritage that no longer has any effectiveness in changing contemporary Arab reality.

The reason celebrated by Western modernity was not the theoretical reason in which Arab thought still flounders, but practical reason, or what is known as reason in action, because this reason places reality at the forefront of its concern and makes it its axis. This is clearly manifested in the philosophy of Descartes, considered the father of Western rationalism, where reason occupied a great place by directing it toward reality and making it a tool in the service of man. The primary aim of relying on reason for Descartes was to tame nature and make it subject to human authority and control, as Descartes stated when he said that we should make ourselves masters and possessors of nature. This control is achieved through liberating reason so that it may innovate in science, thus turning the slogan of modernity into reason, work, and science. With the union of this triad, man can achieve progress and development at all levels and thus emerge from the age of decline and stagnation, of which Arab and Islamic civilization is a prime example.

Abdullah Al-Arwi believes that the Arab individual must set work before his eyes and employ his reason in everything that contributes to his advancement and development instead of being concerned with matters that are of no benefit and only increase his decline and backwardness. Arab Islamic civilization lacks a fundamental feature, which is rationality. Reason alone is capable of questioning heritage and studying reality objectively. The absence of rationality and attachment to heritage have resulted only in backwardness at all levels, whereas the rationality witnessed by Western modernity achieved development in all fields. Liberating reason builds the nation, while clinging to heritage and fundamentalist reason inevitably leads it toward regression, as is the case with the Arab Islamic nation, which restrained reason from thinking and made religion the primary driver of society instead of reason, without realizing that reason

is the only tool through which one can deal with this reality. Religion—or more precisely, heritage—in Al-Arwi's view is incapable of keeping pace with the age. It is not possible to apply old heritage and employ it to study current reality, because constants and variables have changed greatly. We are now in an era that imposes rupture and the replacement of heritage with reason, and emulation of Western modernity through imitating its mechanisms and principles.

According to Al-Arwi, the first foundation upon which modernity was built is reason, which he divides into two parts: modern reason, manifested in modern Arab thought, and old reason, on which the Arab world relies and which he considers the cause of its backwardness and decline, making it late and incapable of keeping pace with the progress and prosperity experienced by the Western world in various fields, examples of which are seen in politics, war, economy, culture, and education. The Arabs' reliance on what they consider cultural heritage is the direct and principal cause that made them lag behind other societies. All this led Arab societies and the Arab Islamic world as a whole to dependency, stagnation, and backwardness, culminating in colonization and decline. There is no escape for us Arabs except to engage in modernity and the modernist project by abandoning the glorification of inherited reason in which we take pride. All this led Al-Arwi to speak about the concept of modern reason in its Western meaning. Reason in Arab Islamic culture, according to Al-Arwi, has always remained limited by the idea of the absolute; that is, above every reason there is a higher reason, the absolute or knowledge or certainty in the absolute sense. This made reason confined by absolute reason; in this sense, reason became that which restrains and limits reason, not that which releases and sets it free. What restrains reason and establishes it as reason is knowledge, and thus Arab reason turned into a reason compelled to dissolve into unreason that appears as if it were the ultimate and perfection of reason. Thus Arab culture made reason in its first sense subordinate to a prior intelligible that is not intelligible, determining and even disabling it. Therefore Abdullah Al-Arwi says that the reason celebrated by Islamic culture is a concept attached to it and distinct from what is known as Islam itself in contemporary society, where Al-Arwi affirms that “when actions are subject to rules leading to goals, the perspective inevitably shifts from moral to logical, and the determining factor in this case becomes another type of reason, which some at the end of the twentieth century in Europe called rationality.”

The issue of rationality is among the issues that have always surrounded conscious and active humanity, appearing in one way or another within modern society, where the second reason glorified by Western modernity became the indicator upon which modern society is based. As Al-Arwi says: “This matter has been established and rooted, and since we live under its shadow, whether we accept it or not, it is the essence of yesterday's colonization and today's dependency. There is no escape for us but to accept distinction and acknowledge that reason is two kinds.” That is, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of reason: modern reason, which is required, and the reason of the past, which imposes the absolute and makes the Arab individual its captive.

Al-Arwi sees that we cannot ignore acknowledging that reason is divided into a reason concerned with conduct or the idea embodied in an act whose aim is to examine the conditions of the conformity of means to set goals, whatever they may be. In this regard he affirms that

the first is the reason of the absolute and of abstract beings, of the limited and of names, as well as the reason of speech and the cosmos; the second he considers the reason of events and multiple human actions. There is a fundamental breach between those who distinguish between them and those who do not.

Despite speaking about the religious, political, and technical Sheikh's reason, as well as about the issue of reason in Ibn Khaldun, Abdullah Al-Arwi, specifically in his book *The Concept of Reason*, divides reason into several designations, linking each name to its discursive fields. He speaks of absolute reason, the reason of reason, then scientific reason, the reason of the unseen, the reason of number, the reason of acquisition, the reason of jihad, and the reason of illusion. All these designations that Al-Arwi gave to the concept of reason differ according to the subject they address. Through this division we conclude that we cannot speak of a single concept of reason; concepts multiply according to the multiplicity of fields and domains. Each concept is linked to its specific field; for example, the reason of jihad, in which he speaks about jihad in various fields, especially war in Ibn Khaldun, through what he remained silent about and what he declared.

**Conclusion :**

In conclusion, reason is among the mechanisms that have received great attention in contemporary philosophical thought in general and Arab thought in particular, in view of the contemporary human need for it. However, this interest is not recent but has roots in the first attempts witnessed by Greek civilization as well as the philosophies of the Middle Ages. Yet their employment of reason was limited; its use had a narrow scope. Among the Greeks it was linked to supreme moral values and theorizing about what could be beneficial to man; that is, the function of reason was limited to theorization. In the Middle Ages, reason was linked to the religious text and could not transcend its limits. This employment of reason remained strongly present in Arab and Islamic thought, where Muslims did not free themselves from subordination to the religious text but rather became more withdrawn around it. In this case Abdullah Al-Arwi excludes Ibn Khaldun and considers him to have distinguished himself from other philosophers by directing reason toward reality instead of keeping it soaring in the sky of theorization. However, his interest in reason tied it to politics and civilization, which created for us a reason limited by civilization and unable to open to others. In this case Abdullah Al-Arwi calls for the necessity of working to create an Arab reason similar to its Western counterpart, making a rupture with everything that is regressive, traditional, and conventional in order to bring about an Arab renaissance and achieve an Arab modernity at all levels. Thus modern reason becomes the reason that the Arab world needs if it wishes to catch up with Western society.

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